

Long-tailed Tit

Aegithalos caudatus

Category A

Breeding resident and passage migrant.

World/British distribution (Snow & Perrins 1998):

A widespread breeding species across much of Europe except the extreme north. It is mainly sedentary in most years over much of its range, but irregular irruptive movements are known from central and northern areas, which may occasionally reach eastern England.

Kent status (KOS 2021):

In Kent it is a widespread resident and occasional migrant.



Long-tailed Tit at Seabrook (Brian Harper)

The Long-tailed Tit was included in Knight and Tolputt's "List of birds observed in Folkestone and its immediate neighbourhood" (1871). This list covered an area of six miles radius from Folkestone town hall, therefore extending further inland than the current Folkestone and Hythe area, so this does not provide conclusive evidence of its occurrence here. However, Ticehurst (1909) considered it to be "a common resident in the county and is generally distributed, being most plentiful in the wooded districts", so there can be little doubt that it was to be found locally.

Breeding atlas distribution

Figure 1 shows the breeding distribution by tetrad based on the results of the 2007-13 BTO/KOS atlas fieldwork.

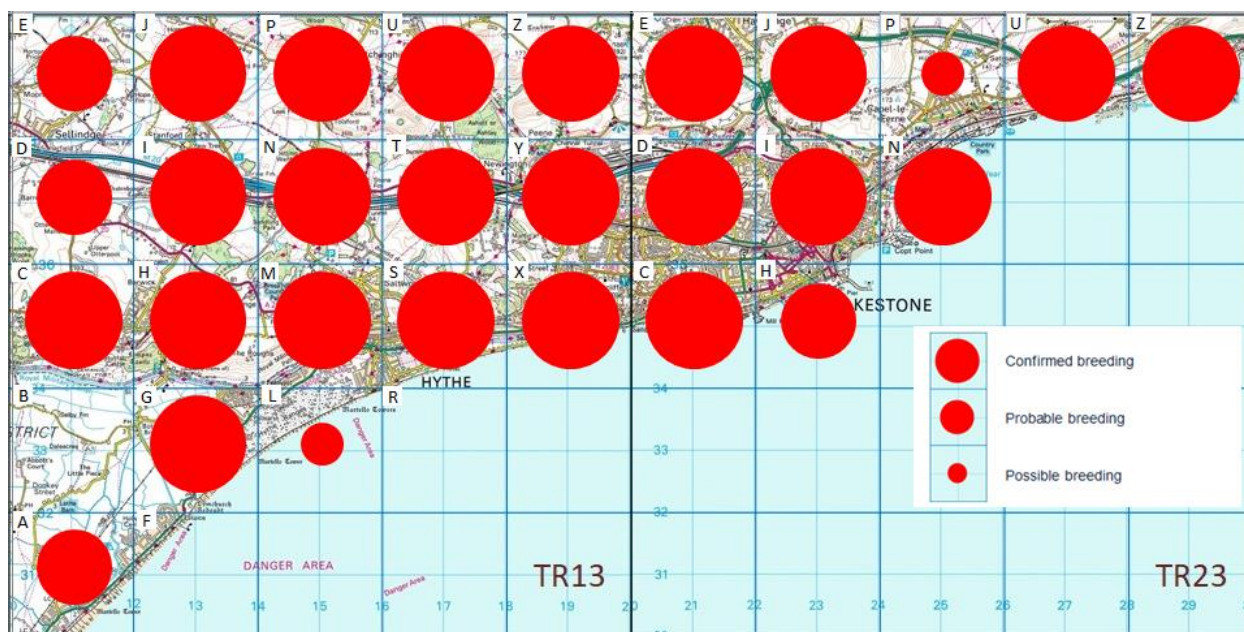


Figure 1: Breeding distribution of Long-tailed Tit at Folkestone and Hythe by tetrad (2007-13 BTO/KOS Atlas)

Breeding was confirmed in 22 tetrads, with probable breeding in four more and possible breeding in two others. The table below shows how this compares to previous atlases (Taylor *et al.* 1981; Henderson & Hodge 1998). The confirmed and probable breeding categories have been combined to account for differing definitions of these in the first atlas.

Breeding atlases	1967 - 1973		1988 - 1994		2007 - 2013	
Possible	1	(3%)	2	(6%)	2	(6%)
Probable/Confirmed	5	(16%)	19	(61%)	26	(84%)
Total	6	(19%)	21	(68%)	28	(90%)
Change			+15	(+250%)	+7	(+33%)

The table below shows the changes in tetrad occupancy across the three atlas periods.

Trends	First to second atlas (1967-73 to 1988-94)	Second to third atlas (1988-94 to 2007-13)	First to third atlas (1967-73 to 2007-13)
Local	+250%	+33%	+367%
Kent	+53%	+31%	+101%

The increase has been mirrored in the county atlases, which demonstrated a 53% increase in occupied tetrads across Kent between the first and second atlases and a further 31% increase by the third tetrad. However, their numbers are prone to wide fluctuations between breeding seasons, suffering heavy mortality during severe winters and recovering rapidly during sequences of mild winters (Clements *et al.* 2015).

Breeding birds occupy woodland of all types, hedgerows, scrub and gardens and so are well-distributed across the area and found in almost all tetrads.



Long-tailed Tit at Princes Parade (Nigel Webster)



Long-tailed Tit at Beachborough (Steve Tomlinson)

Overall distribution

Figure 2 shows the distribution of all records of Long-tailed Tit by tetrad, with records in 29 tetrads (94%).

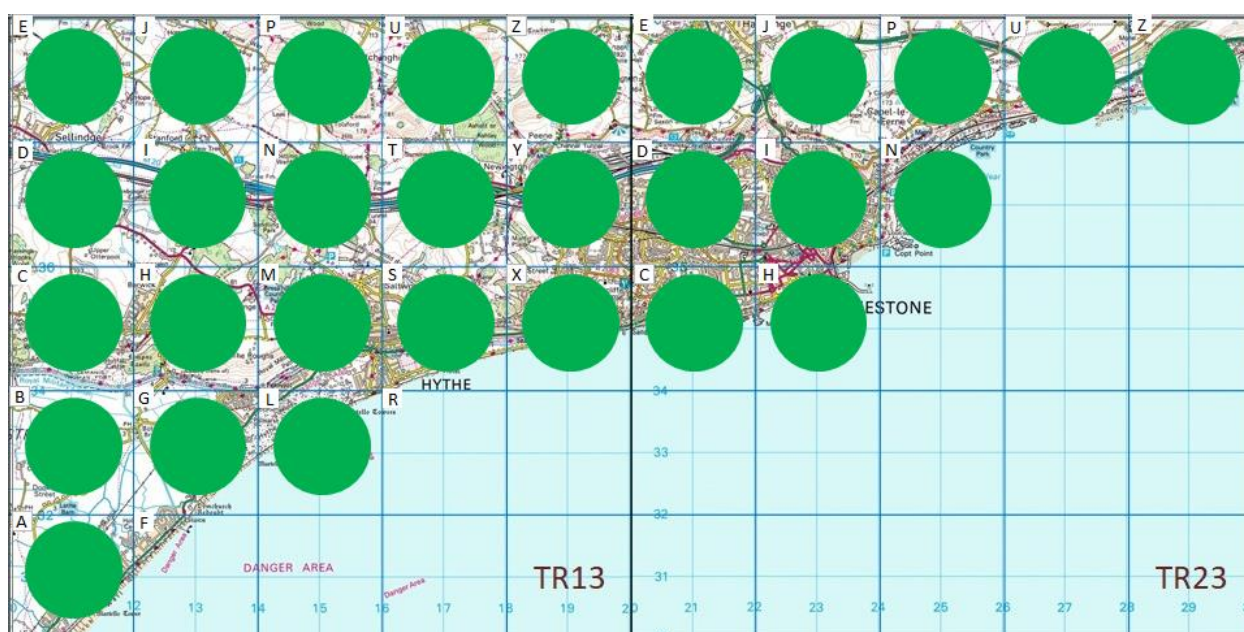
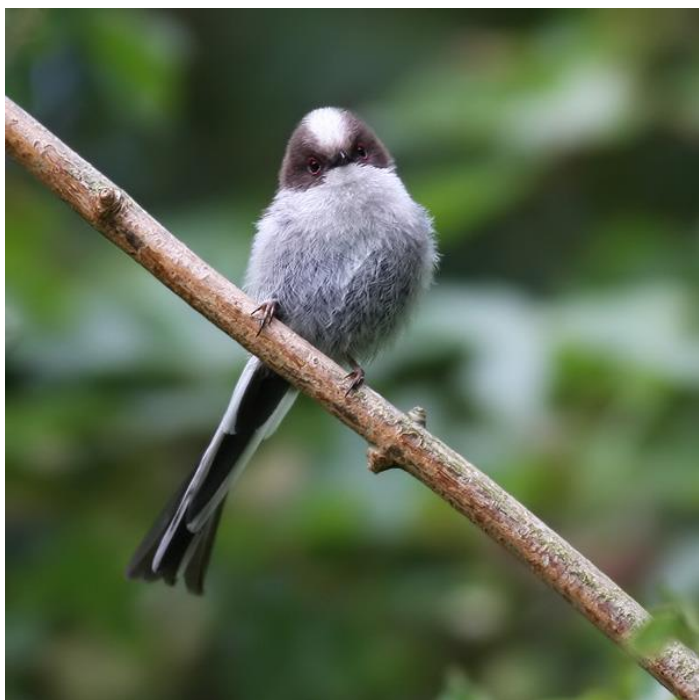


Figure 2: Distribution of all Long-tailed Tit records at Folkestone and Hythe by tetrad

The largest counts have involved post-breeding flocks, for example 44 at Nickolls Quarry on the 6th July 2000, or groups in autumn or early winter, some of which may have included migrants, with counts over 30 having comprised 35 at Copt Point on the 25th September 1984, 40 at Folkestone on the 19th November 1996, 40 in Folkestone Warren on the 28th October 2003, 40 at Mill Point on the 16th November 2003 and 55 at Beachborough Park on the 11th December 2018.

There have been several records of birds passing over Abbotscliffe in spring and autumn which appear to relate to at least local migrants, with double-figure counts having involved 10 flying east on the 20th October 2010, 10 arriving in off the sea on the 6th October 2019, 12 flying high to the north on the 6th October 1999 and 14 flying in/east on the 28th October 2001.



Long-tailed Tit at Little Stone Wood (Brian Harper)



Long-tailed Tit at Pond Hill Road (Brian Harper)



Long-tailed Tits at Abbotscliffe (Ian Roberts)



'Northern' Long-tailed Tit at Samphire Hoe (Phil Smith)

Northern Long-tailed Tit

Aegithalos caudatus caudatus

The northern form *A. c. caudatus* occasionally reaches eastern England and there have been two local records: the first involved two seen by David Musson at Folkestone on the 31st March 1960 and the second involved one seen with eight British race Long-tailed Tits (*A. c. rosaceus*) by Phil Smith at Samphire Hoe on the 16th February 2016.

References

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Acknowledgements

The tetrad map images were produced from the Ordnance Survey [Get-a-map service](#) and are reproduced with kind permission of [Ordnance Survey](#).

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Long-tailed Tit at Abbotscliffe (Ian Roberts)