

Dunnock

Prunella modularis

Category A

Breeding resident and passage migrant.

World/British distribution (Snow & Perrins 1998):

Breeds across most of Europe and Russia east to the Urals. Southern and western populations are mainly resident but northern and eastern breeders move to winter in south-west Iberia, the Mediterranean area and Turkey.

Kent status (KOS 2021):

In Kent it is an abundant resident and passage migrant.



Dunnock at Hythe (Brian Harper)

The Dunnock 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 "very common and generally distributed throughout the county", "found almost as numerous in the gardens and open spaces of towns as it is in the hedgerows and woods", 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.

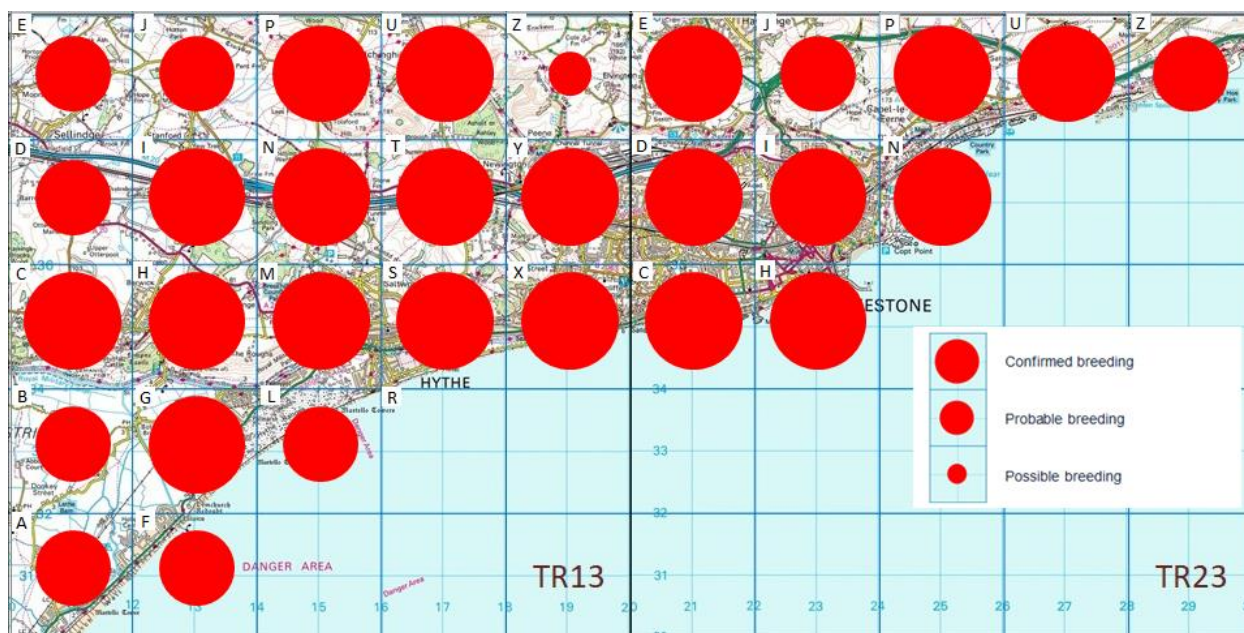


Figure 1: Breeding distribution of Dunnock at Folkestone and Hythe by tetrad (2007-13 BTO/KOS Atlas)

Breeding was confirmed in 20 tetrads, with probable breeding in nine more and possible breeding in one other. 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	0	(0%)	0	(0%)	1	(3%)
Probable/Confirmed	25	(81%)	30	(97%)	29	(94%)
Total	25	(81%)	30	(97%)	30	(97%)
Change			+5	(+20%)	0	(0%)

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	+20%	+0%	+20%
Kent	+12%	+1%	+13%

Henderson & Hodge considered that the infilling of gaps in distribution between the first and second county atlases was very probably due to increased coverage, with Robin and Wren showing a very similar gain pattern, and the same is likely to be true locally. Clements *et al.* (2015) considered that the status of the Dunnock in Kent appeared to be unchanged since the second atlas, whilst the BTO Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) trend for south-east England suggested that the population was stable.



Dunnock at Samphire Hoe (Phil Smith)



Dunnock at Beachborough Lakes (Steve Tomlinson)

Overall distribution

Figure 2 shows the distribution of all records of Dunnock by tetrad, with records in 30 tetrads (97%).

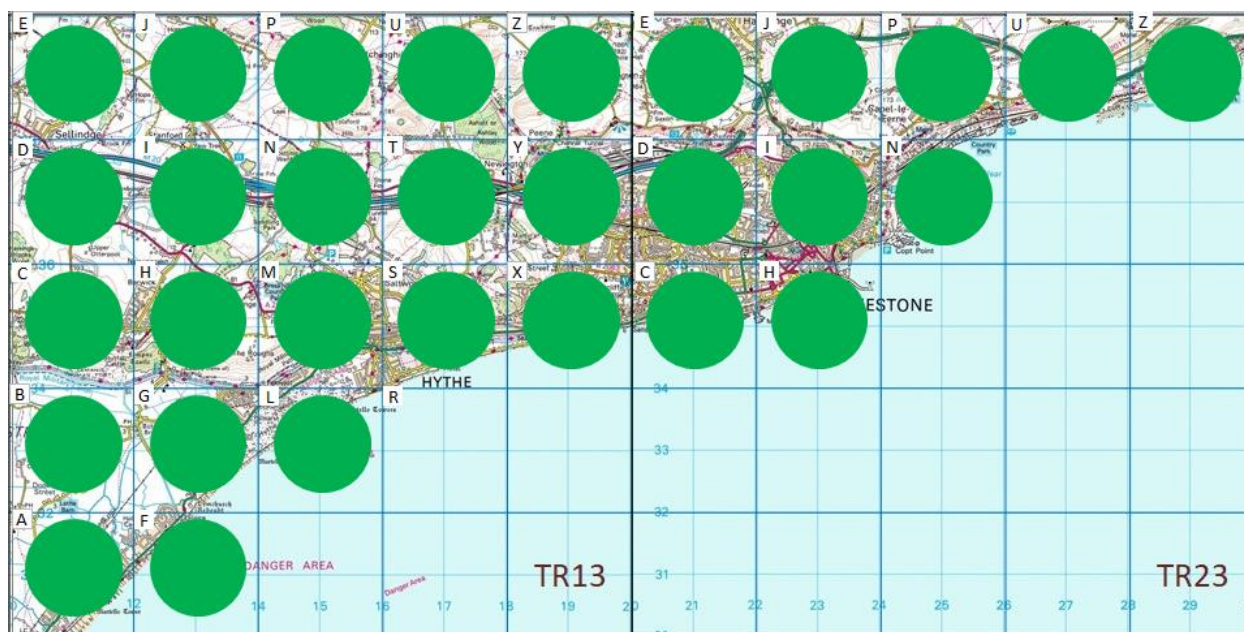


Figure 2: Distribution of all Dunnock records at Folkestone and Hythe by tetrad

Taylor *et al.* reported a regular autumn passage in Kent from late September to November, when influxes may be noted at coastal sites. Autumn migrants can appear to be quite obvious, with numerous notes referring to birds flying over high up, usually heading to the west.

Counts in excess of 20 have been noted on a number of occasions:

60 at Hythe Ranges on the 25th September 1957
25 at Hythe Ranges on the 6th October 1961
60 at Folkestone on the 23rd October 1981
80 at Copt Point on the 13th October 1984
24 at Mill Point on the 8th September 1988
30 at Folkestone on the 29th September 1992
30 at Hythe Ranges on the 24th October 1992
25 at Capel Battery on the 25th September 1998
26 at Capel Battery on the 2nd October 2000
23 at Capel Battery on the 24th September 2001
26 at Capel Battery on the 4th October 2001
35 at Capel Battery on the 13th September 2003
30 at Abbotscliffe on the 9th October 2005
60 at Princes Parade on the 15th October 2017



Dunnock at Seabrook (Brian Harper)



Dunnock at Botolph's Bridge (Brian Harper)

Taylor et al also referred to a small spring passage but there has been little evidence of this locally, although counts of 14 at Copt Point on the 4th April 1988, 12 at Capel Battery on the 11th April 2009 and 8 at Samphire Hoe on the 7th March 2016 were considered to be notable by the observers involved and may have included migrants.

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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Dunnock at Princes Parade (Brian Harper)



Dunnock at Princes Parade (Brian Harper)



Dunnock at Botolph's Bridge (Brian Harper)



Dunnock at Princes Parade (Brian Harper)