

## Ruff

*Calidris pugnax*

Category A

Rare passage migrant and winter visitor. 36 records,  
63 birds

*World/British distribution (Snow & Perrins 1998):*

A scarce and localised breeding species in Britain, France and the Low Countries, with much larger numbers in Fenno-Scandia and Russia. The total winter range extends from western Europe and West Africa eastwards to India, but by far the largest numbers winter in Africa.

*Kent status (KOS 2022):*

A regular passage migrant and winter visitor to Kent. Breeding was suspected in the past, but never proven.



Ruff over Crete Road East (Brian Harper)

Ticehurst (1909) and Harrison (1953) recorded small numbers in Kent in spring and autumn, with an increase in wintering records in the 1940s, whilst breeding may have occurred, particularly in east Kent around 1900, but confirmatory evidence is lacking. Neither author made mention of any local occurrences and it was not included in Knight & Tolputt's "List of birds observed in Folkestone and its immediate neighbourhood" (1871).

Taylor *et al.* (1981) remarked upon a considerable increase in numbers during their review period (1952-76) and it was during this time that the first local records occurred. Roger Norman saw two "in the old pit" at Nickolls Quarry on the 20<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> August 1952 (with one remaining until the 27<sup>th</sup> August), whilst Eric Pilcher saw one at West Hythe in "winter 1956/1957" and Roger saw another two at Pennypot Farm (since developed as housing estate) on the 28<sup>th</sup> December 1958. This era saw yet another three records: one at Nickolls Quarry on the 2<sup>nd</sup> April 1958, five there on the 22<sup>nd</sup> May 1958 and one there on the 27<sup>th</sup> March 1960, but there were no further sightings for three decades, when two were seen at Botolph's Bridge on the 20<sup>th</sup> January 1991.

It was noted almost annually between 1997 and 2005, including an exceptional total of six records in 2003. Many of the sightings from this time were at Nickolls Quarry where an area of shallow water, islets and mud existed at the site, which attracted a range of migrant waders, but the habitat was then filled during 2006.

Since then, it has occurred intermittently, with 12 records in the 17 subsequent years, as shown by figure 1.

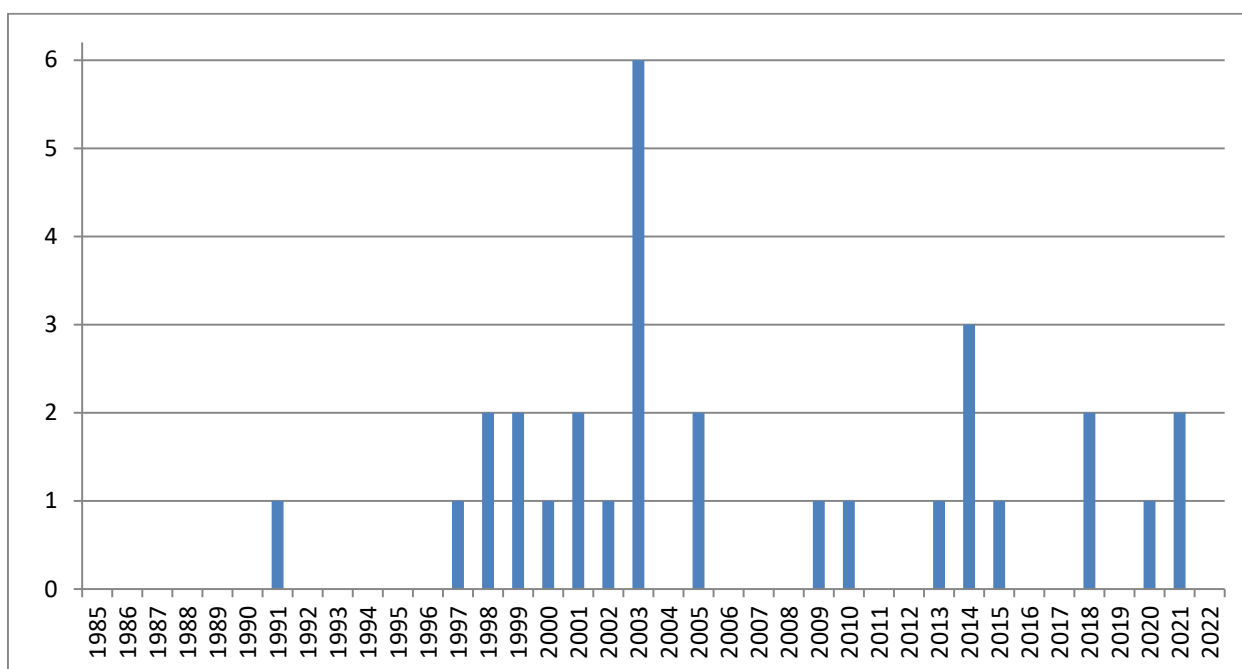


Figure 1: Ruff records at Folkestone and Hythe since 1985

The records by week are given in figure 2. The Ruff has been recorded in most months of the year, though there are distinct peaks in early March (with seven records between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>) and late August/early September (with ten records between 20<sup>th</sup> August and 9<sup>th</sup> September).

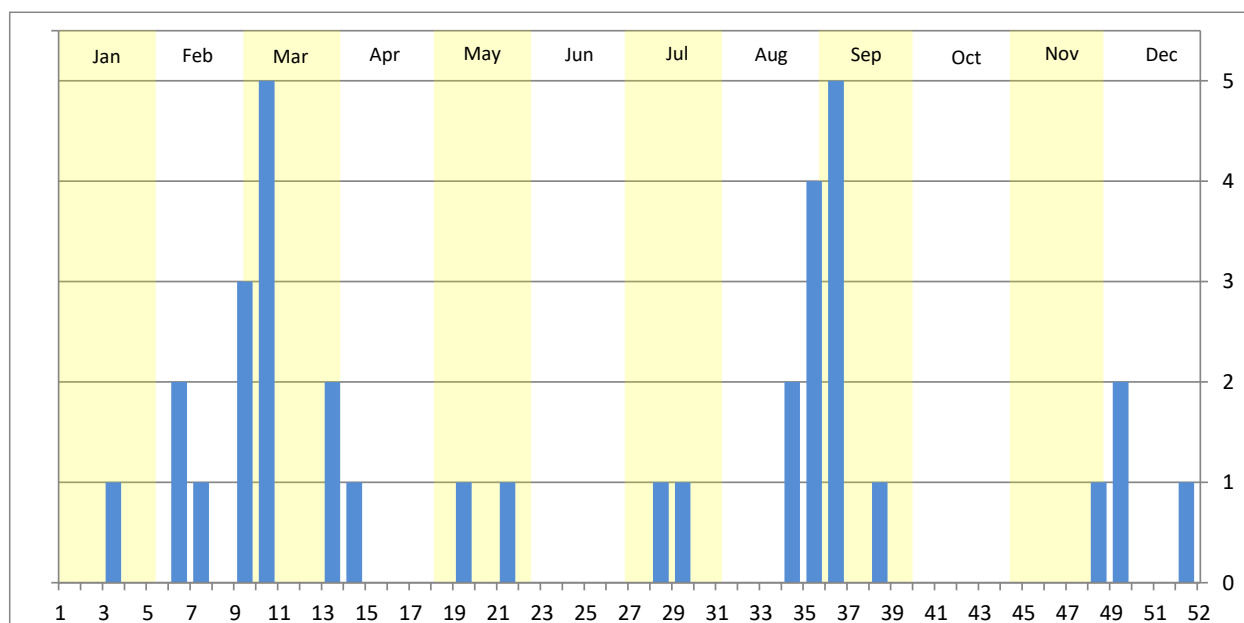


Figure 2: Ruff records at Folkestone and Hythe by week

Figure 3 shows the location of records by tetrad. Most of the early records were from Nickolls Quarry but there have been no sightings there since 2003. The Willop Basin/Willop Sewage Works area has hosted nine of the 11 most recent records.

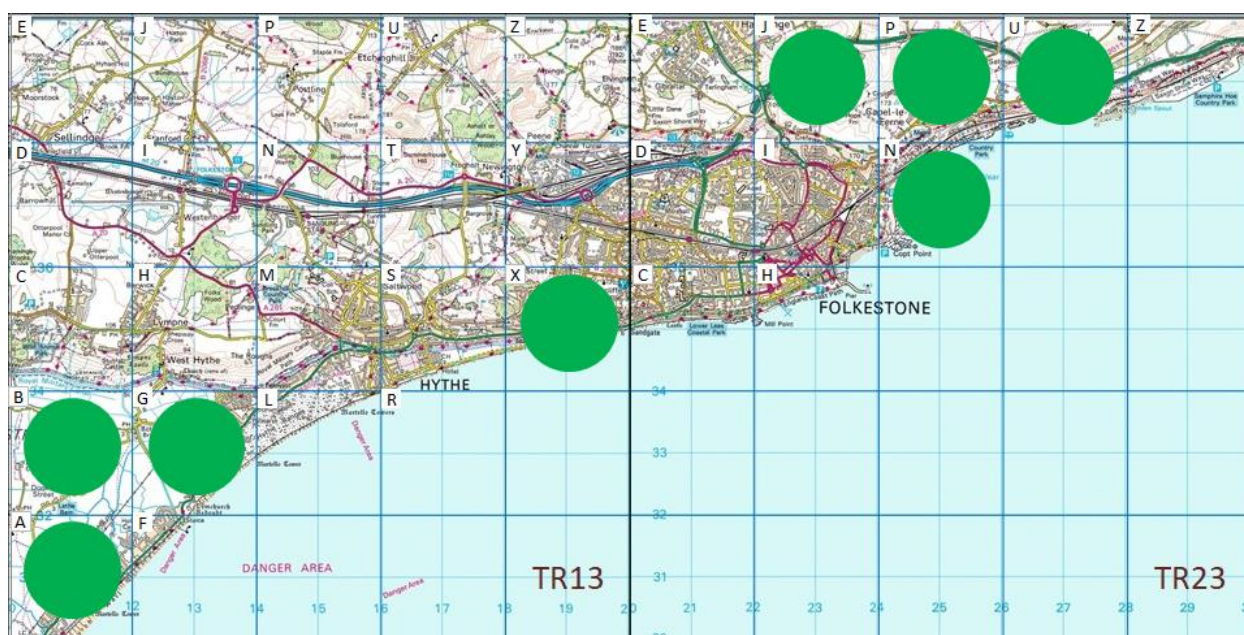


Figure 3: Distribution of all Ruff records at Folkestone and Hythe by tetrad

The full list of records is as follows:

- 1952** Nickolls Quarry, two in the old pit, 20<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> August, 1 to 27<sup>th</sup> August (R. K. Norman)
- 1956** West Hythe, one seen in "winter 1956/1957" (E. J. Pilcher)
- 1957** Hythe, two at Pennypot farm, 28<sup>th</sup> December (R. K. Norman), site now developed as housing estate
- 1958** Nickolls Quarry, one in the old pit, 2<sup>nd</sup> April (R. K. Norman)
- 1958** Nickolls Quarry, five in the old pit, 22<sup>nd</sup> May (R. K. Norman)
- 1960** Nickolls Quarry, one in the new pit, 27<sup>th</sup> March (R. K. Norman)
- 1991** Botolph's Bridge, two, 20<sup>th</sup> January (R. K. Norman)

**1997** Capel-le-Ferne Café, moulting adult flew in off the sea, 10<sup>th</sup> July (D. A. Gibson)  
**1998** Nickolls Quarry, one, 4<sup>th</sup> September (R. K. Norman)  
**1998** Abbotscliffe, pair flew in off the sea, 17<sup>th</sup> September (D. A. Gibson)  
**1999** Nickolls Quarry, two, 23<sup>rd</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> August (R. K. Norman)  
**1999** Church Hougham, juvenile in fields by Hougham Court, 27<sup>th</sup> August (I. A. Roberts)  
**2000** Abbotscliffe, two flew east, 3<sup>rd</sup> September (I. A. Roberts)  
**2001** Willop Outfall, one, 4<sup>th</sup> March (I. A. Roberts)  
**2001** Nickolls Quarry, one, 7<sup>th</sup> May (R. K. Norman)  
**2002** Nickolls Quarry, one, 1<sup>st</sup> September (R. K. Norman)  
**2003** Nickolls Quarry, eight, 1<sup>st</sup> March (R. K. Norman)  
**2003** Botolph's Bridge, one, 8<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> March (I. A. Roberts)  
**2003** Nickolls Quarry, one, 26<sup>th</sup> March (I. A. Roberts)  
**2003** Nickolls Quarry, one, 16<sup>th</sup> July (R. K. Norman, I. A. Roberts)  
**2003** Nickolls Quarry, male, 1<sup>st</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup> September (R. K. Norman)  
**2003** Nickolls Quarry, female, 3<sup>rd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> September (R. K. Norman)  
**2005** West Hythe (Donkey Street), two, 4<sup>th</sup> March, photographed (I. A. Roberts)  
**2005** West Hythe (Burmarsh Road), three, 5<sup>th</sup> March, with one remaining to 7<sup>th</sup> (R. K. Norman, I. A. Roberts), possibly same as above  
**2009** Willop Basin, one, 7<sup>th</sup> February (I. A. Roberts)  
**2010** Willop Basin, one, 5<sup>th</sup> December (I. A. Roberts)  
**2013** Willop Basin, one, 29<sup>th</sup> November, photographed (I. A. Roberts, B. Harper)  
**2014** Crete Road East, three flew east, 7<sup>th</sup> September, photographed (B. Harper)  
**2014** Princes Parade, Seabrook, one flew west, 9<sup>th</sup> September (N. Webster)  
**2014** Willop Basin, three, 6<sup>th</sup> December, with one remaining to 7<sup>th</sup> December (R. K. Norman, B. Harper)  
**2015** Willop Basin, two males and a female, 8<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> March (B. Harper, I. A. Roberts)  
**2018** Willop Basin, one, 5<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> March (I. A. Roberts, R. K. Norman)  
**2018** Willop Basin, two, 11<sup>th</sup> March (B. Harper)  
**2020** Willop Sewage Works, one, 27<sup>th</sup> August (B. Harper)  
**2021** Donkey Street, one, 10<sup>th</sup> February (I. A. Roberts, B. Harper)  
**2021** Willop Basin, one, 16<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> February (B. Harper, I. A. Roberts)

## 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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Ruff at the Willop Basin (Ian Roberts)