

Folkestone & Hythe birding and moths

Site guide: Hythe Bay

Location: Approaching from the west on the A259 turn right into Twiss Road (just after Hythe town centre, opposite the Bell Inn). Follow this to the end then turn left onto the sea front. From the east pass through Sandgate then take the left turn onto the coast road just before the garage. There is ample parking along the road, or at car parks at both ends.

Facilities: There is a kiosk and Café at the eastern (Seabrook) end of the promenade, and a kiosk and Restaurant at the west (Hythe) end. The Fountain pub (Seabrook) is also easily reached.

Access/route: The promenade allows the sea to be scanned at any point. There are two paths linking the seafront to the canal, which is lined by paths on either side, and a complete circular route can be taken from the Hotel Imperial along the front to Seabrook and back along the canal. There is disabled access and the whole route is flat. The beach and rocks at Sandgate, just to the east, are also worth a look.

Birds: Red-throated Diver and Great Crested Grebe are numerous on the sea in winter, and Great Northern Diver, Red-necked, Slavonian, and Black-necked Grebes have occurred. Eider, Common Scoter, and Red-breasted Merganser are also frequent.

There are often feeding flocks of Gannets, gulls, and terns offshore, which may attract Arctic Skuas in autumn. Seawatching is better further east out of the bay at Mill Point, but Brent Geese, ducks, waders, and terns may be seen, and there is an old record of White-winged Black Tern.

Purple Sandpipers (opposite) winter on the groyne off the Hotel Imperial and Stade Street, and Turnstones can be found on the beach. Roosting gulls are worth checking as these have included Iceland.

The golf course has had Shore Lark and Snow Bunting in winter, and often attracts White Wagtails and Wheatears in spring, but is best checked early before there is too much activity.



Osprey - Hythe Canal - Sept-Oct 2005



Purple Sandpiper - at the regular roost off Stade Street

Gulls tend to loaf here and Mediterraneans are often present. Stonechats winter and Black Redstart has occurred.

The canal has attracted Slavonian Grebe, Goldeneye, and Goosander and Water Rail are frequent. Kingfishers and Reed Warblers breed, with Sedge Warbler on passage, and Blackcap and Chiffchaff in winter. Red Kite and Osprey have occurred and a Hoopoe was seen at Seabrook in 2003.

Regular: Red-throated Diver, Great Crested Grebe, Gannet, Grey Heron, Eider, Common Scoter, Red-breasted Merganser, passage Brent Geese, ducks, waders and terns, Kestrel, Water Rail, Moorhen, Purple Sandpiper, Turnstone, Arctic Skua, Mediterranean Gull, Kingfisher, Stonechat, Wheatear, Reed Warbler, Blackcap, Chiffchaff

Possible: White Wagtail, Black Redstart, Sedge Warbler, Snow Bunting

Rarities: Great Northern Diver, Red-necked, Slavonian and Black-necked Grebes, Goldeneye, Goosander, Red Kite, Osprey, Iceland Gull, White-winged Black Tern, Hoopoe, Shore Lark