

Folkestone & Hythe birding and moths

Site guide: West Hythe

Location: There is a free car park (Grid ref: TR 126343) located off the minor road between Botolph's Bridge and Lympe. Heading north from Botolph's Bridge turn left immediately after crossing the canal. Please be advised not to leave valuables in your car at this (or any other) site.

Facilities: None on site, but refreshment is available at Botolph's Bridge pub or at the County Members pub in Lympe.

Access/route: From the car park paths lead west to the new cut (and beyond), where there is a bridge and a sluice gate, enabling a different return route. It is possible to walk into Hythe to the east, but there is also a bridge half way along allowing a different return in that direction too.

Footpaths enable 'the roughs' to the north to be explored and it is possible to link Botolph's Bridge or even Nickoll's Quarry into a circular route. Disabled access should be possible here as paths are flat, without stiles, though have a tendency to become muddy in winter.

Birds: The heronry at Lympe Park Wood can be viewed from the canal footpath. Birds return as early February, and viewing is best then before leaves appear on the trees. Water Rails are easily seen in winter, and favour the small ditch to the north of the canal. Little Owl, Kingfisher, Green and Great Spotted Woodpeckers, Cetti's Warbler, Bullfinch and Yellowhammer are resident. Reed and possibly Sedge Warblers breed, as well as the usual common warblers, whilst Chiffchaff and Blackcap are regular in winter, with the occasional Firecrest. Siskin and Redpoll are usually frequent in winter, and Marsh Tit and Treecreeper have been seen.

Little Egret sometimes occurs, as does Hobby, and Cuckoo is regular. Rarer species have included Mandarin, Goldeneye, a Falcated Duck (of uncertain origin) and Red-backed Shrike, and Bittern has been reported.

Regular: Grey Heron, Water Rail, Cuckoo, Little Owl, Kingfisher, Green Woodpecker, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Cetti's Warbler, Sedge Warbler, Reed Warbler, Blackcap, Chiffchaff, Siskin, Lesser Redpoll, Bullfinch, Yellowhammer

Possible: Little Egret, Hobby, Green Sandpiper, Tawny Owl, Grey Wagtail, Firecrest, Marsh Tit, Treecreeper

Rarities: Bittern, Mandarin, Goldeneye, Red-backed Shrike.