

Hen Harrier

Circus cyaneus

Category A

Rare migrant and winter visitor.

44 records

Breeds quite widely across northern Europe, including upland Britain, but also numerous in France and Spain. Northern populations are migratory, though do not move far, wintering in lowland Britain for example.

A regular passage migrant and winter visitor to Kent, with occasional larger influxes.

The first area record was in 1955 but there were no more until 1979. Subsequent sightings occurred in 1983, 1984 and 1985, with relatively regular occurrences thereafter, as shown in figure 1. It is unpredictable in its appearances though with three 'blank' years from 1999 to 2001 followed by a peak of four sightings in 2002.



Hen Harrier at Botolph's Bridge (Brian Harper)

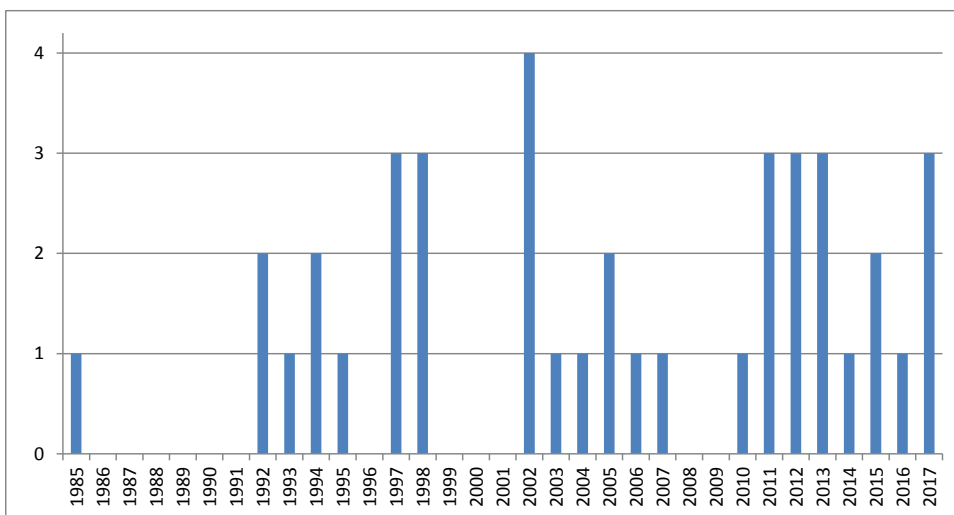


Figure 1: Hen Harrier records since 1985 at Folkestone and Hythe

Figure 2 shows the arrival dates by week. The earliest autumn arrival was on 14th September (2017, when two were seen), with one further record in September and 17 in October and November. These presumably relate mostly to migrant birds as there have been just two in December. The first week of January has produced three, with two others in that month, four in February and one in March, some of which, though not all, were associated with periods of severe weather.

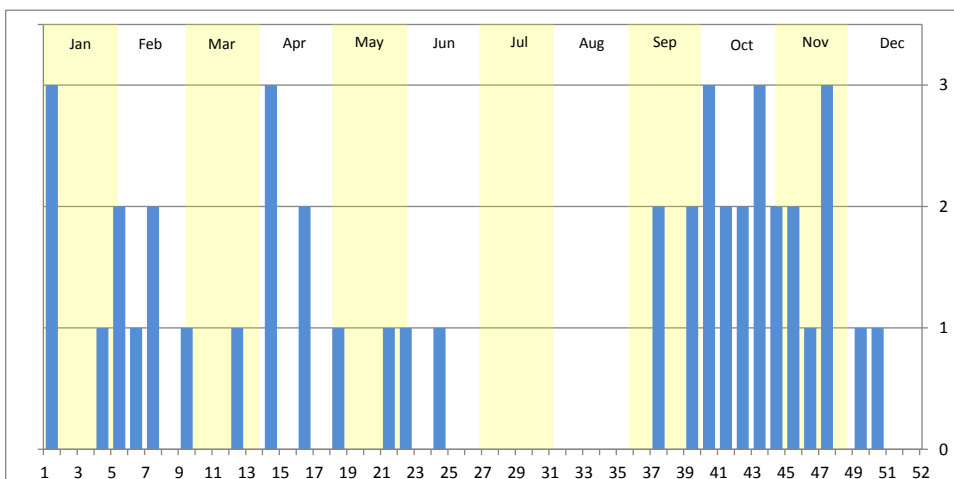


Figure 2: Hen Harrier records at Folkestone and Hythe by week

Six spring migrants have been seen in April, with three particularly late birds seen in late May (1997), 3rd June (2013) and 11th June (2011).

The distribution of winter records recorded in the BTO/KOS Atlas (2007 – 2012) is shown in figure 3. Overall records have been fairly evenly divided between the cliffs between Copt Point and Samphire Hoe (20) and the Botolph's Bridge / Nickoll's Quarry area (19), with others seen over Cheriton / Folkestone (3), Saltwood (2) and Beachborough Lakes.

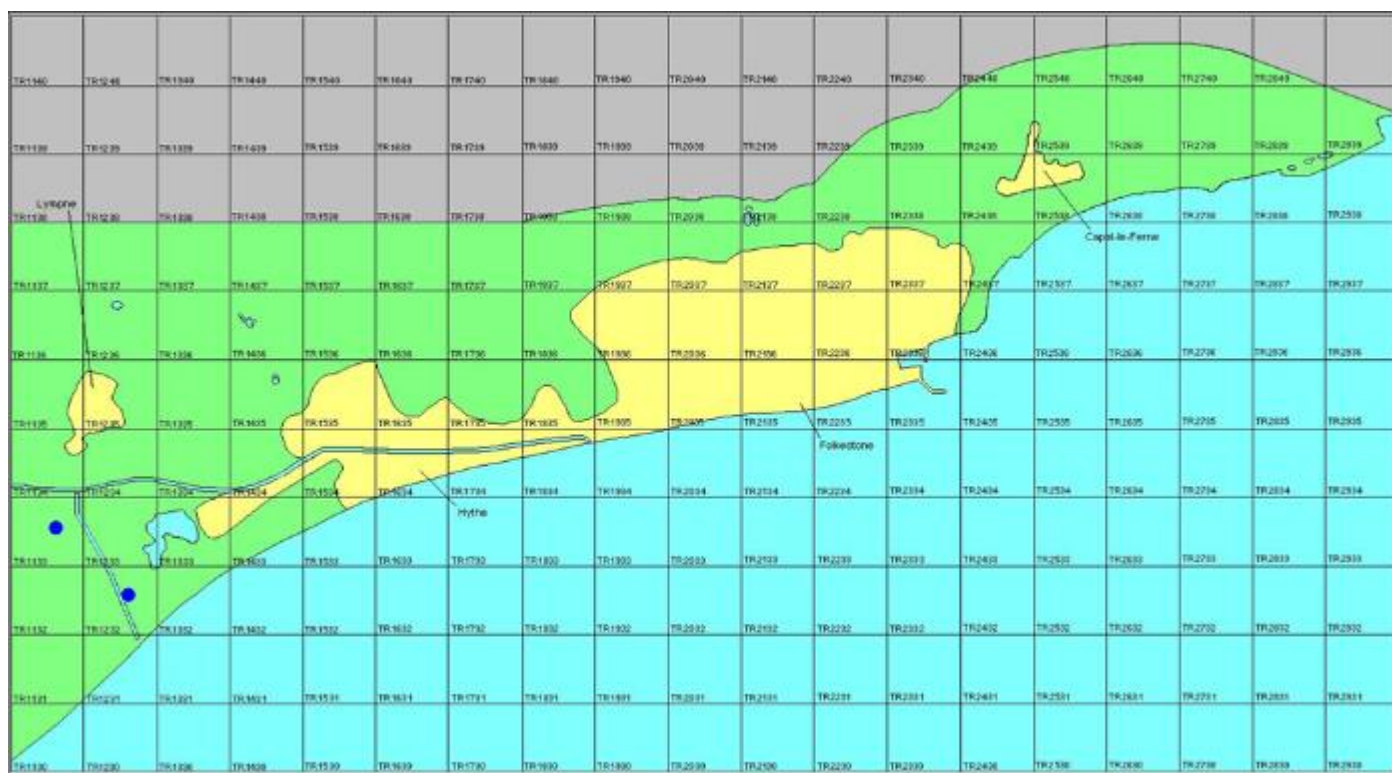


Figure 3: Wintering distribution of Hen Harrier Goose at Folkestone and Hythe (2007 – 2012 BTO/KOS Atlas)

The full list records is as follows:

- 1955** Botolph's Bridge, one, 2nd April (J. Perrot)
- 1979** Nickoll's Quarry, immature/female, 24th January (R. K. Norman)
- 1983** Copt Point, immature/female, 4th, 15th and 18th January, presumed to be same individual (R. Hollingsworth)
- 1984** Copt Point, immature male, 21st October (R. Hollingsworth)
- 1985** West Hythe, male, 27th February (C. Lock)
- 1992** Nickoll's Quarry, immature/female, 9th February (I. A. Roberts)
- 1992** Nickoll's Quarry, immature/female, 29th April (R. K. Norman)
- 1993** Abbotscliffe, one flew in off the sea, 22nd October (D. A. Gibson)
- 1994** Abbotscliffe, male flew west, 2nd April (I. A. Roberts)
- 1994** Folkestone, male flew west, 8th October (D. A. Gibson)
- 1995** Copt Point, immature/female flew west, 21st November (D. A. Gibson)
- 1997** Cheriton, immature/female flew north-east, 18th February (D. A. Gibson)
- 1997** Cheriton, immature/female flew north, 16th April (D. A. Gibson)
- 1997** Abbotscliffe, immature/female flew out to sea, 26th May (D. A. Gibson, R. Lee, I. A. Roberts)
- 1998** Abbotscliffe, male flew in off the sea at 08:35, 4th October (D. A. Gibson, J. A. Gibson, I. A. Roberts)
- 1998** Capel-le-Ferne Gun Site, male flew in off the sea at 13:15, 4th October (D. A. Gibson, J. A. Gibson, I. A. Roberts)
- 1998** Folkestone Warren, immature/female, 19th November (reported)
- 2002** Botolph's Bridge, one, 2nd January (I. A. Roberts)
- 2002** Abbotscliffe, one flew west, 30th October (I. A. Roberts)
- 2002** Nickoll's Quarry, male, 25th November (I. A. Roberts)
- 2002** Botolph's Bridge, one, 9th December (I. A. Roberts)
- 2003** Nickoll's Quarry, immature/female, 18th February (I. A. Roberts)
- 2004** Abbotscliffe, male flew north, 9th October (I. A. Roberts)

2005 Botolph's Bridge, one flew south west over Lower Wall Road, 31st January (C. Philpott)
2005 Samphire Hoe, immature/female, 16th to 17th November, also at Abbotscliffe on the 18th (P. Holt, I. A. Roberts)
2006 Abbotscliffe, male flew in off the sea, 4th November (I. A. Roberts)
2007 Chesterfield Wood (Saltwood), immature/female flew east, 29th September (I. A. Roberts)
2010 Nickoll's Quarry, immature/female, 2nd January (G. Spencer, N. Spencer)
2011 Botolph's Bridge, male, 11th June, photographed (B. Harper)
2011 Saltwood, one flew north, 22nd October (P. Howe)
2011 Botolph's Bridge, immature/female, 6th November (M. Kennett)
2012 Hougham Valley, immature/female flew east then west, 15th April (M. Kennett)
2012 Abbotscliffe, one flew out to sea, 2nd October (D. A. Gibson)
2012 Botolph's Bridge, male, 15th December (B. Harper, M. Harper, I. Roberts)
2013 Folkestone, male, flew north, 8th April (D. A. Gibson)
2013 Samphire Hoe, one flew west, 2nd June (I. A. Roberts)
2013 Samphire Hoe, male flew in off the sea, 11th November (L. Collins)
2014 Samphire Hoe, one flew west, 15th October (D. E. Smith)
2015 Lower Wall, West Hythe, male, 21st March (B. Findlay)
2015 Abbotscliffe, immature/female flew north, 16th October (M. Varley)
2016 Beachborough Lakes, male flew west, 27th September (S. Tomlinson)
2017 Capel-le-Ferne, female, 29th January (D. Richards)
2017 Abbotscliffe, immature/female flew in off the sea, 14th September (M. Varley)
2017 Hythe, immature/female flew in off the sea, 14th September (S. McMinn)