

# Little Stint

*Calidris minuta*

Category A

Very rare vagrant

12 records

Breeds in high-arctic coastal tundra, migrating through Europe to winter in Africa, with variable numbers wintering in Europe (predominately in coastal areas).

A regular passage migrant to Kent, being more numerous in autumn, with a few overwintering in most years. In certain conditions, when easterly winds are prevalent in autumn, large numbers can occur in the county and on the British east coast in general.



Little Stint with Dunlin at Nickoll's Quarry (Ian Roberts)

First recorded in the Folkestone and Hythe area in 1956, with subsequent records in each of the next two years, but then with a gap of over thirty years before the next in 1992. Following a record at Abbotscliffe in 1992, Little Stints were recorded at Nickoll's Quarry in five consecutive years, as shown in figure 1. During this time an area of shallow water, islets and mud existed at the site, which attracted a range of migrant waders, but the habitat has since been altered and is no longer attractive to the species. Ten years after the last at Nickoll's Quarry, one was attracted to a flooded field at the Willof Basin in October 2012, with another there the following November.

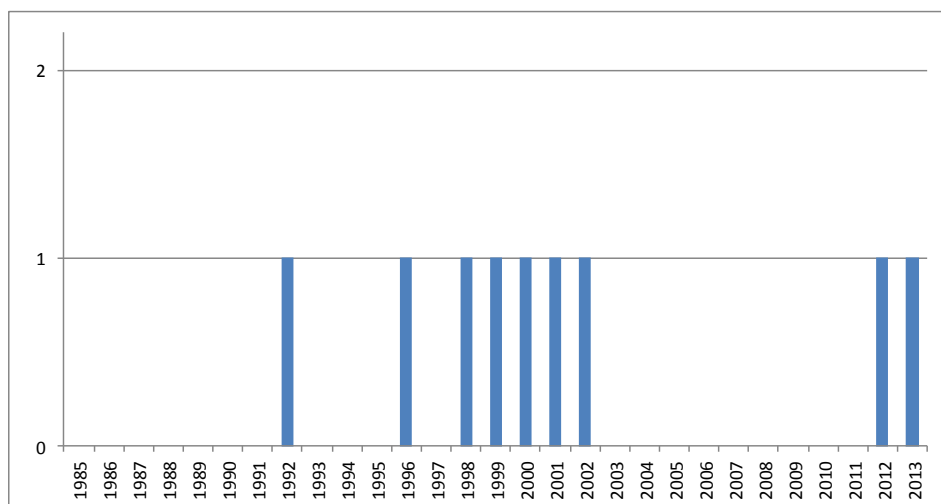


Figure 1: Little Stint records since 1985 at Folkestone and Hythe

The majority have occurred between the 8<sup>th</sup> and the 25<sup>th</sup> September (weeks 36 to 39) with two records in spring (in May 1958 and May 2002), one in early autumn (in July 2000) and the most recent two in October and early November, as demonstrated by figure 2.

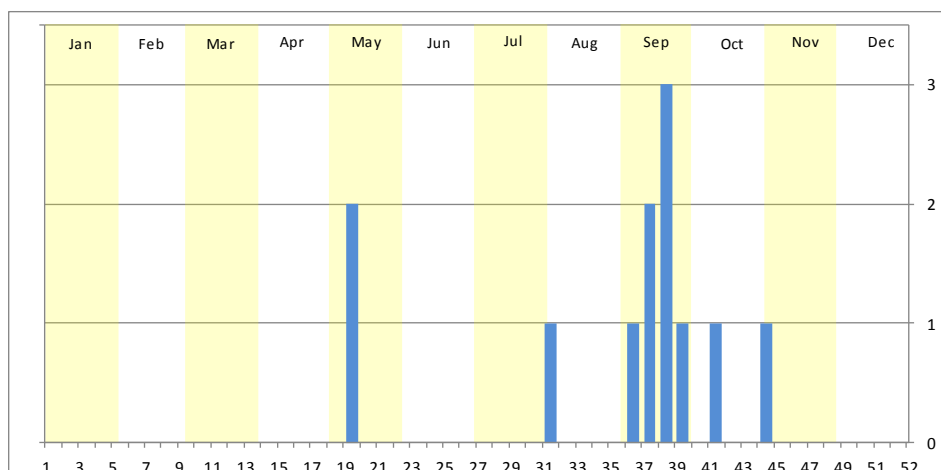


Figure 2: Little Stint records at Folkestone and Hythe by week

All records are from Nickoll's Quarry with the exception of a flock of three which were seen flying in off the sea at Abbotscliffe in September 1996 and the most recent two records at the Willop Basin in October 2012 and November 2013. The former were part of a major influx of Little Stints and Curlew Sandpipers to the eastern coast of Britain at this time, with a flock of three of the latter species seen flying over Capel-le-Ferne the following day. The same conditions also produced good numbers of passerine migrants in the Folkestone and Hythe area, including an Ortolan Bunting and over 40 Ring Ouzels. Interestingly the October 2012 Willop Basin also occurred at the same time as an influx of Ring Ouzels and 2013 was a particularly good autumn for that species.

The full list of records is as follows:

- 1956** Nickoll's Quarry, one, 8<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> September (R. K. Norman)
- 1957** Nickoll's Quarry, up to three, 17<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> September (R. K. Norman)
- 1958** Nickoll's Quarry, one, 9<sup>th</sup> May (R. K. Norman)
- 1992** Nickoll's Quarry, one, 13<sup>th</sup> September (R. K. Norman)
- 1996** Abbotscliffe, three flew in off the sea, 21<sup>st</sup> September (D. A. Gibson, J. A. Gibson)
- 1998** Nickoll's Quarry, two, 16<sup>th</sup> September (R. K. Norman)
- 1999** Nickoll's Quarry, juvenile, 25<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> September (I. A. Roberts)
- 2000** Nickoll's Quarry, one, 30<sup>th</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup> July (D. A. Gibson, R. K. Norman, P. Haines)
- 2001** Nickoll's Quarry, one, 18<sup>th</sup> September (R. K. Norman)
- 2002** Nickoll's Quarry, one, 11<sup>th</sup> May, photographed (I. A. Roberts)
- 2012** Willop Basin, one, 13<sup>th</sup> October (I. A. Roberts, B. Harper)
- 2013** Willop Basin, one, 2<sup>nd</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> November (B. Harper, I. A. Roberts)

In addition, two unidentified stints, presumably either this species or Temminck's Stint, flew east past Copt Point on the 8<sup>th</sup> May 2001.