

Ruff

Calidris pugnax

Category A

Rare migrant and winter visitor

33 records

A scarce and localised breeding species in Britain (c.10 females in suitable habitat annually but breeding not confirmed since 2007), 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.

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

First recorded in the Folkestone and Hythe area in the old pit at Nickolls Quarry 1952, with further records in the Nickolls Quarry / West Hythe area in 1957 (2), 1958 (2) and 1960.



Ruff over Crete Road East (Brian Harper)

There was a gap of over 30 years however until the next, in 1991, but since then it has been recorded with some regularity, particular in the late 1990s and first half of the following decade, as shown by figure 1. An exceptional total of six records occurred in 2003 and there were three in 2014.

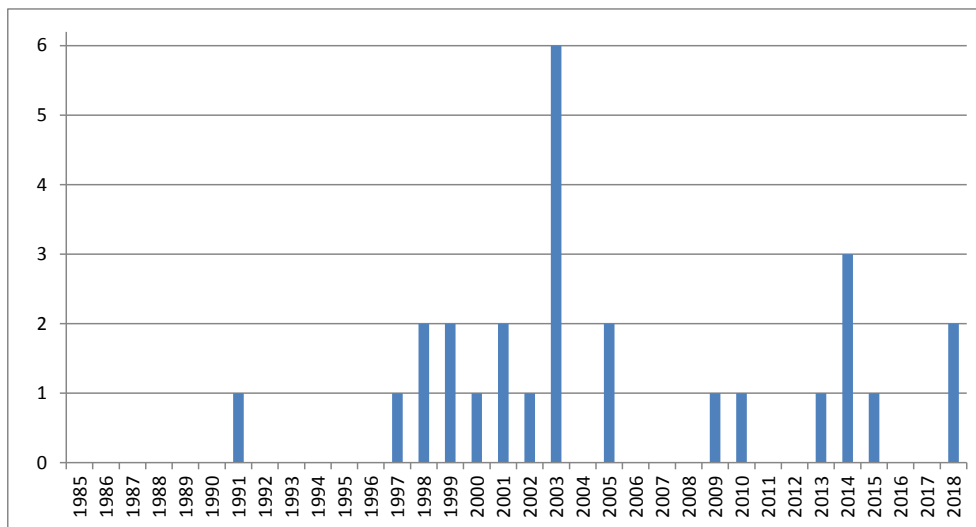


Figure 1: Ruff records since 1985 at Folkestone and Hythe

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

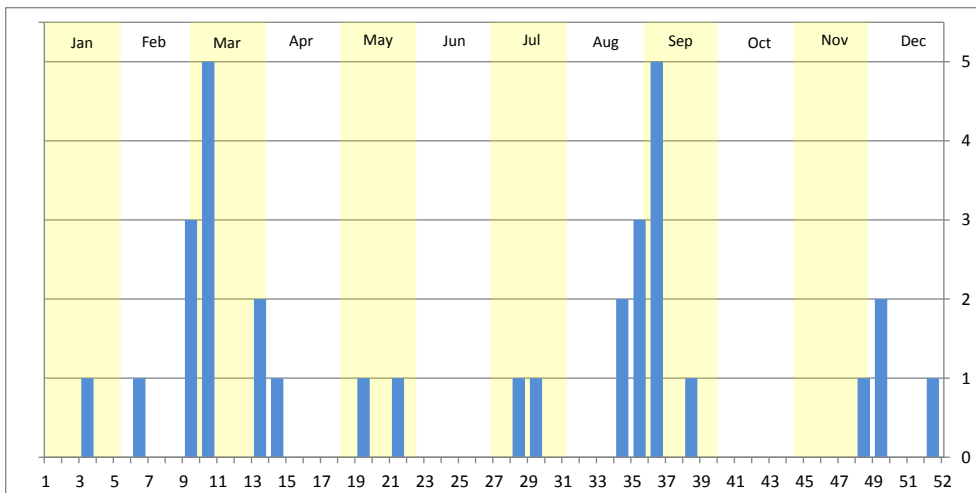


Figure 2: Ruff records at Folkestone and Hythe by week

Most of the early records were from Nickolls Quarry but there have been no sightings there since 2003. The Willop Basin has hosted seven of the nine most recent records, one of which fell within the BTO/KOS Atlas recording period (2007 – 2012), as shown in figure 3.

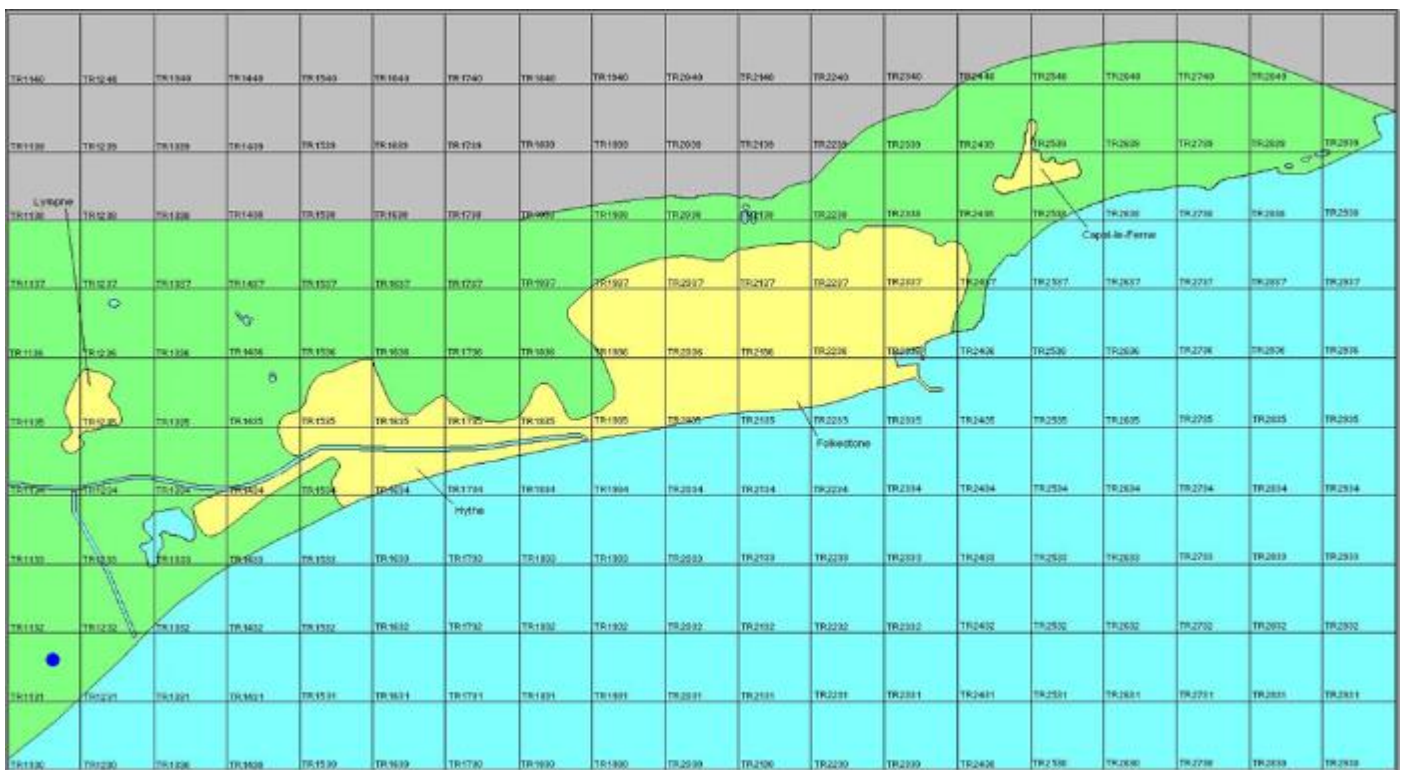


Figure 3: Wintering distribution of Ruff at Folkestone and Hythe (2007 – 2012 BTO/KOS Atlas)

The full list of records is as follows:

- 1952** Nickolls Quarry, two in the old pit, 20th to 22nd August, 1 to 27th August (R. K. Norman)
- 1956** West Hythe, one seen in “winter 1956/1957” (E. J. Pilcher)
- 1957** Hythe, two at Pennypot farm, 28th December (R. K. Norman), site now developed as housing estate
- 1958** Nickolls Quarry, one in the old pit, 2nd April (R. K. Norman)
- 1958** Nickolls Quarry, five in the old pit, 22nd May (R. K. Norman)
- 1960** Nickolls Quarry, one in the new pit, 27th March (R. K. Norman)
- 1991** Botolph’s Bridge, two, 20th January (R. K. Norman)
- 1997** Capel-le-Ferne Café, moulting adult flew in off the sea, 10th July (D. A. Gibson)
- 1998** Nickolls Quarry, one, 4th September (R. K. Norman)
- 1998** Abbotscliffe, pair flew in off the sea, 17th September (D. A. Gibson)
- 1999** Nickolls Quarry, two, 23rd to 24th August (R. K. Norman)

- 1999** Church Hougham, juvenile in fields by Hougham Court, 27th August (I. A. Roberts)
- 2000** Abbotscliffe, two flew east, 3rd September (I. A. Roberts)
- 2001** Willop Outfall, one, 4th March (I. A. Roberts)
- 2001** Nickolls Quarry, one, 7th May (R. K. Norman)
- 2002** Nickolls Quarry, one, 1st September (R. K. Norman)
- 2003** Nickolls Quarry, eight, 1st March (R. K. Norman)
- 2003** Botolph's Bridge, one, 8th to 14th March (I. A. Roberts)
- 2003** Nickolls Quarry, one, 26th March (I. A. Roberts)
- 2003** Nickolls Quarry, one, 16th July (R. K. Norman, I. A. Roberts)
- 2003** Nickolls Quarry, male, 1st to 2nd September (R. K. Norman)
- 2003** Nickolls Quarry, female, 3rd to 4th September (R. K. Norman)
- 2005** West Hythe (Donkey Street), two, 4th March, photographed (I. A. Roberts)
- 2005** West Hythe (Burmarsh Road), three, 5th March, with one remaining to 7th (R. K. Norman, I. A. Roberts), possibly same as above
- 2009** Willop Outfall, one, 7th February (I. A. Roberts)
- 2010** Willop Outfall, one, 5th December (I. A. Roberts)
- 2013** Willop Outfall, one, 29th November, photographed (I. A. Roberts, B. Harper)
- 2014** Crete Road East, three flew east, 7th September, photographed (B. Harper)
- 2014** Princes Parade, Seabrook, one flew west, 9th September (N. Webster)
- 2014** Willop Outfall, three, 6th December, with one remaining to 7th December (R. K. Norman, B. Harper)
- 2015** Willop Outfall, two males and a female, 8th to 12th March (B. Harper, I. A. Roberts)
- 2018** Willop Outfall, one, 5th to 7th March (I. A. Roberts, R. K. Norman)
- 2018** Willop Outfall, two, 11th March (B. Harper)



Ruff at the Willop Basin (Ian Roberts)