

Ruff

Calidris pugnax

Category A

Rare migrant and winter visitor

31 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 Nickoll's Quarry 1952, with further records in the Nickoll's 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.

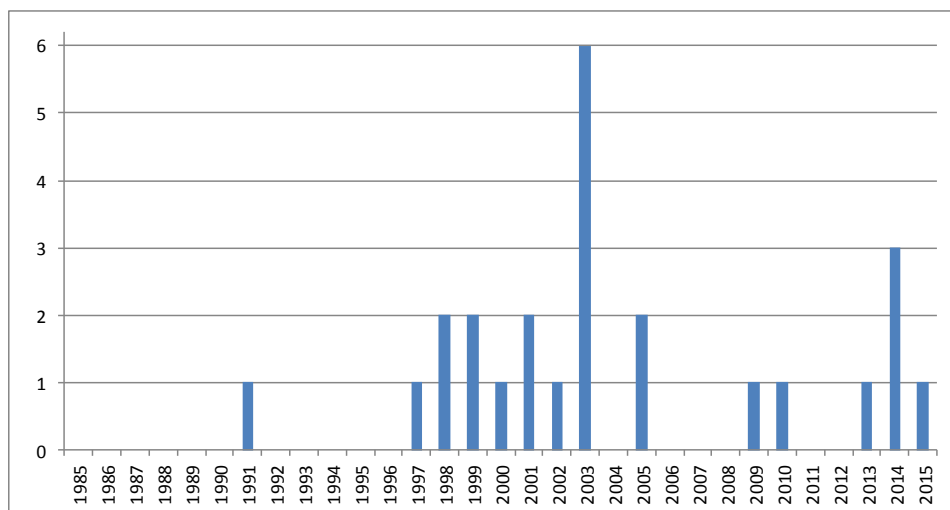


Figure 1: Ruff records since 1985 at Folkestone and Hythe

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 six records between the 1st and 8th) and late August / early September (with ten records between 20th August and 9th September).

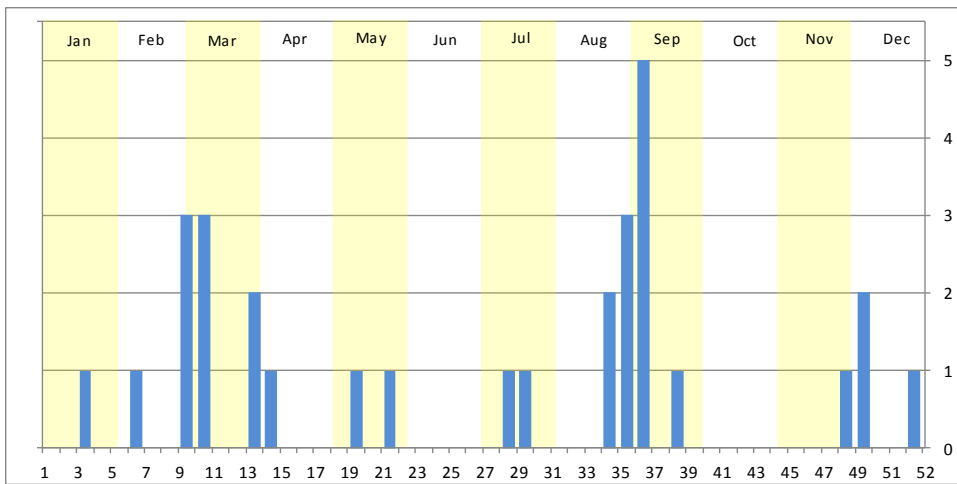


Figure 2: Ruff records at Folkestone and Hythe by week

Just under half of the records are from Nickoll’s Quarry, with almost another third from the surrounding Romney Marsh area, including six at the Willop Outfall, and most of the others from the cliffs. The Willop Outfall has hosted five of the seven most recent records, one of which fell within the BTO/KOS Atlas recording period (2007 – 2012), as shown in figure 3.

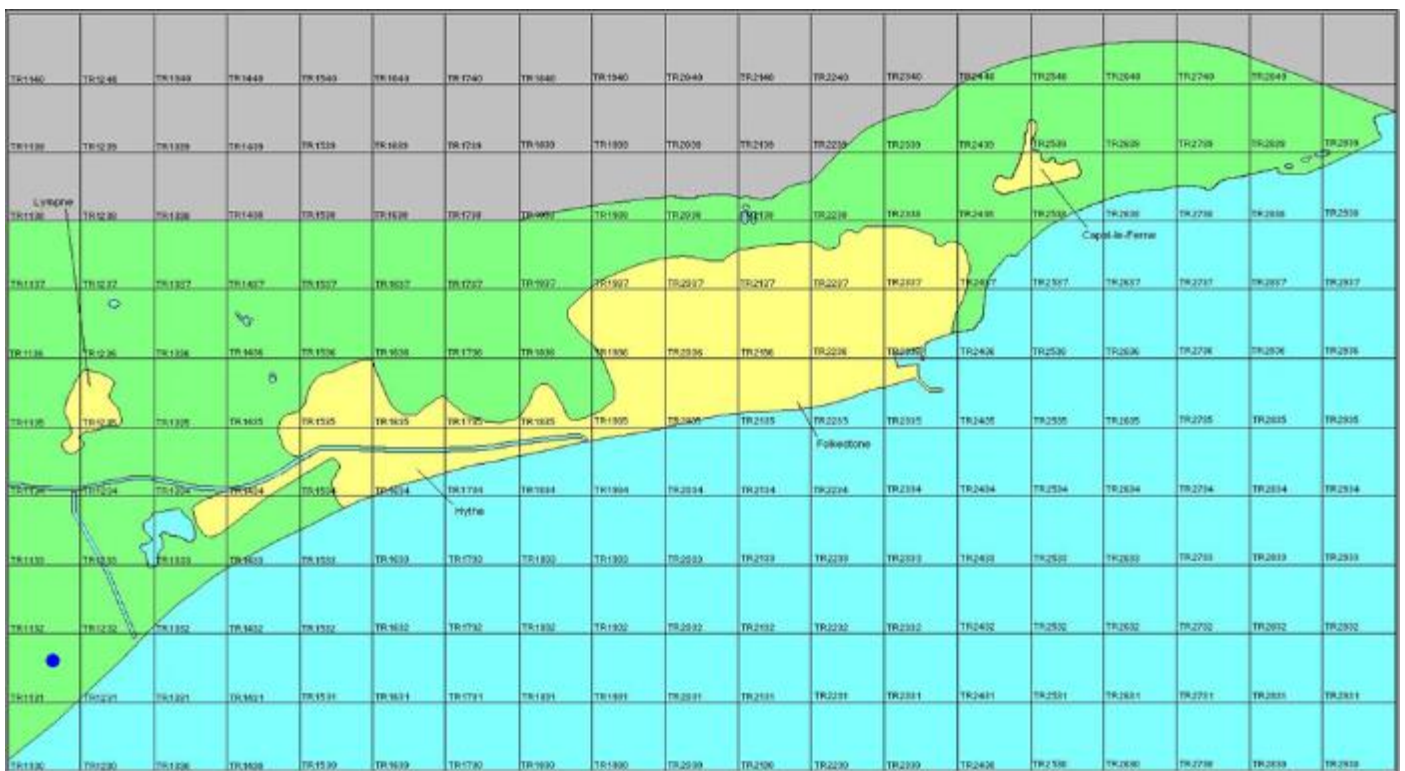


Figure 3: Wintering distribution of Ruff at Folkestone and Hythe (2007 – 2012 BTO/KOS Atlas)

The full list of records is as follows:

- 1952** Nickoll's 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** Nickoll's Quarry, one in the old pit, 2nd April (R. K. Norman)
- 1958** Nickoll's Quarry, five in the old pit, 22nd May (R. K. Norman)
- 1960** Nickoll's 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** Nickoll's Quarry, one, 4th September (R. K. Norman)
- 1998** Abbotscliffe, pair flew in off the sea, 17th September (D. A. Gibson)

- 1999** Nickoll's 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 Nickoll's Quarry, one, 7th May (R. K. Norman)
2002 Nickoll's Quarry, one, 1st September (R. K. Norman)
2003 Nickoll's Quarry, eight, 1st March (R. K. Norman)
2003 Botolph's Bridge, one, 8th to 14th March (I. A. Roberts)
2003 Nickoll's Quarry, one, 26th March (I. A. Roberts)
2003 Nickoll's Quarry, one, 16th July (R. K. Norman, I. A. Roberts)
2003 Nickoll's Quarry, male, 1st to 2nd September (R. K. Norman)
2003 Nickoll's 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)



Ruff at the Willop Basin (Ian Roberts)