

Bearded Tit

Panurus biarmicus

Category A

Rare migrant and winter visitor

21 records

Has a well-scattered distribution across mid-latitude Europe, being restricted to areas of suitable wetland. In Britain mainly in southern and eastern areas, with a minimum of 718 pairs across 57 sites in 2010 (Rare Breeding Birds Panel report). More northern populations are susceptible to hard winters. Basically fairly sedentary, but subject to eruptive (diurnal) movements.

A local breeding species in Kent, which is also a passage migrant and winter visitor to the county.



Bearded Tit at Nickolls Quarry (Ian Roberts)

First recorded at Folkestone and Hythe in November 1983, when a pair were seen in reeds between West Hythe and the West Hythe Dam by Neil Frampton, then almost ten years later two were reported in the same area in September 1993. One was seen briefly in the reeds at the south end of the main bay at Nickolls Quarry by Roger Norman in November 1998 before it flew off to the south-west. This site then saw a notable influx in autumn in 2001, when up to eight were present in reeds near the sewage works between the 28th October and 1st November, with two (thought probably to be a mobile part of same flock, although it is possible there may have been some 'turnover' of birds) in the long bay there on the 29th October. This record was part of a wider influx along the south coast of England, which also included the first area record away from the Marsh – two which flew west past Abbotscliffe on the 1st November.

Nickolls Quarry then hosted an over-wintering pair in 2006/07, with an additional bird present for at least a week in December, two in January 2012 and one in December 2013. There were at least five there in December 2014, with at least four remaining into early April 2015 raising hopes that they might breed, but there were no further sightings. Five were again present at the same site from January 2016 with a pair remaining until early April, with the male even heard singing but it departed soon after. There were four at this site again from November 2016 and a record count of 12 in October 2017. Nickolls Quarry has also hosted spring records of singles on the 16th March 2009 and 27th May 2012, and a pair on the 21st April 2018, though none were seen subsequently.

Elsewhere Samphire Hoe recorded its first in October 2010, Abbotscliffe attracted another in the same month and singles were seen at Beachborough Lakes in October and November 2017. The records by year are shown in figure 1.

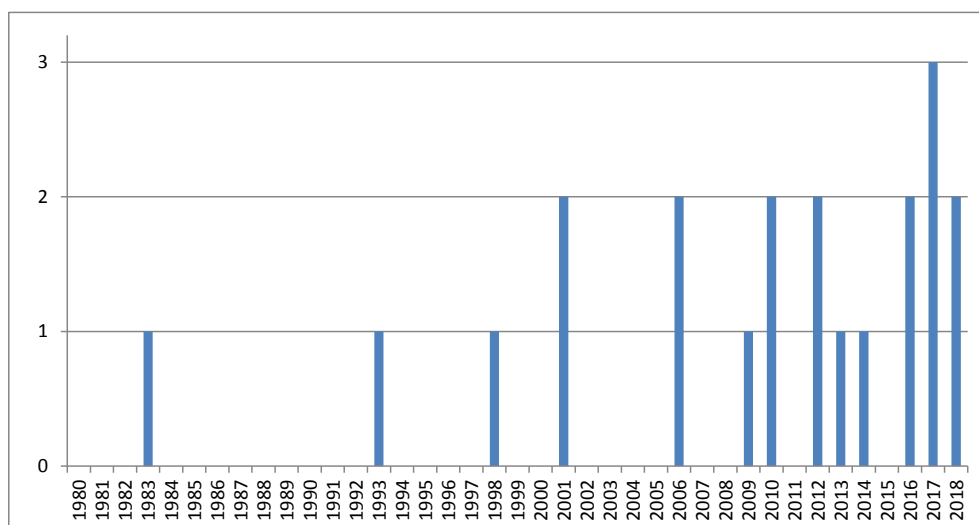


Figure 1: Bearded Tit records at Folkestone and Hythe

Most sightings have been in autumn, between mid-September (week 37) and mid-November (week 47), with others in December, January, March, April and May, as demonstrated by figure 2.

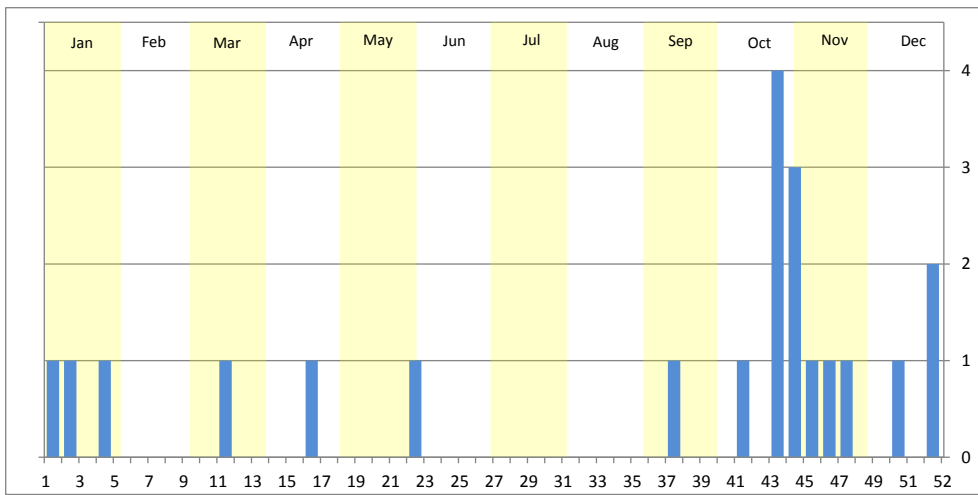


Figure 2: Bearded Tit records at Folkestone and Hythe by week

The distribution of breeding records recorded in the BTO/KOS Atlas (2007 – 2012) is shown in figure 3. The single record shown relates to one seen at Nickolls Quarry on a single date in May 2012.

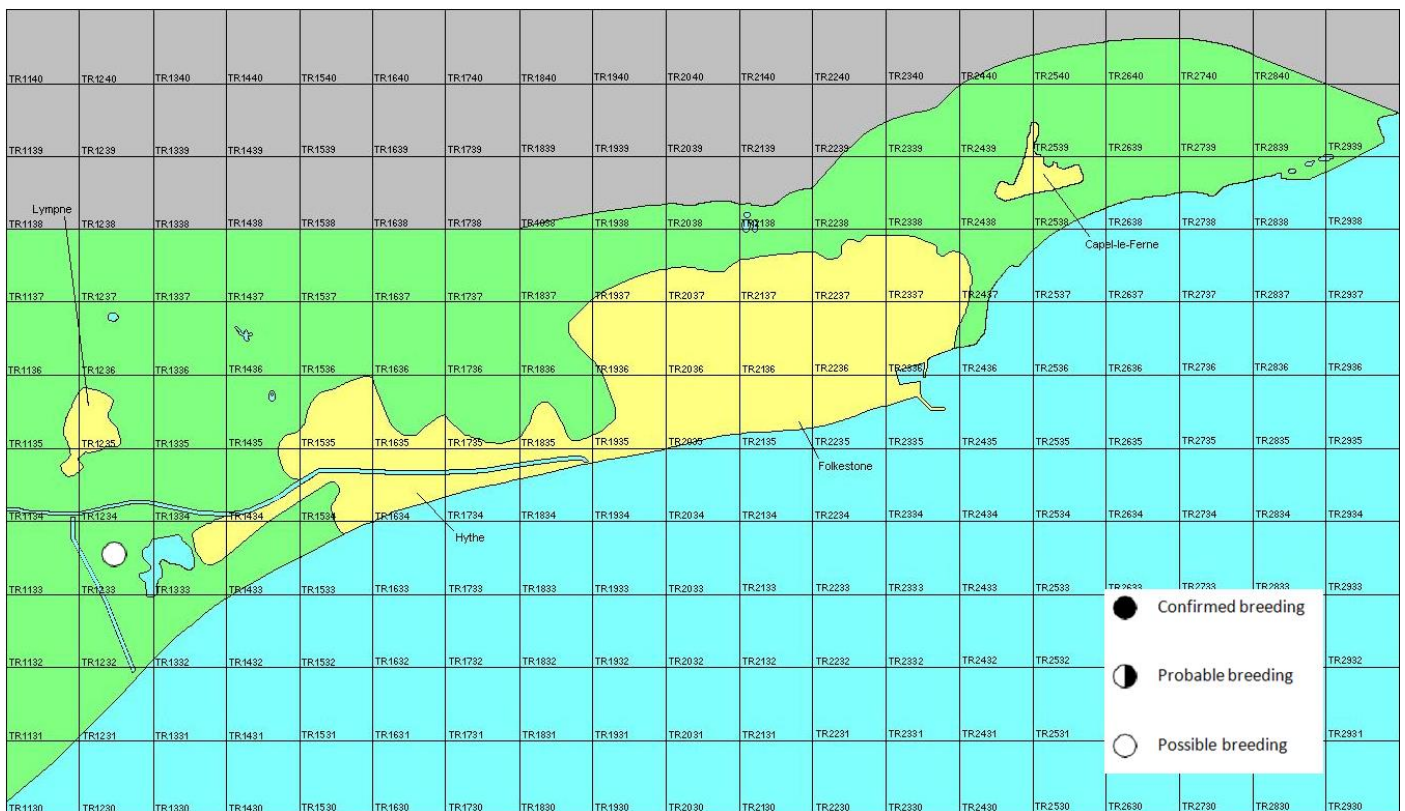


Figure 3: Breeding distribution of Bearded Tit at Folkestone and Hythe (2007 – 2012 BTO/KOS Atlas)

The distribution of winter records recorded in the BTO/KOS Atlas (2007 – 2012) is shown in figure 4. The single record shown relates to two seen at Nickolls Quarry on a single date in January 2012.

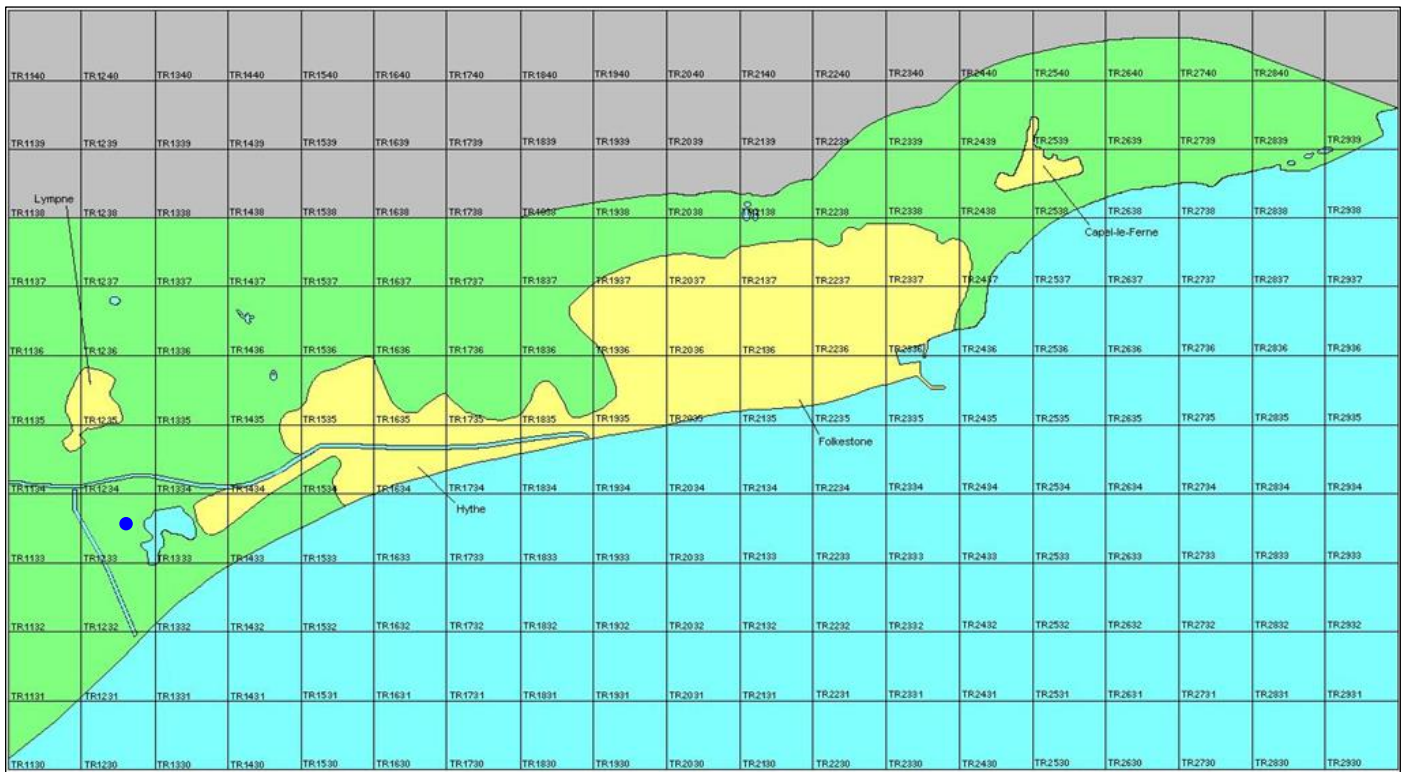


Figure 4: Wintering distribution of Bearded Tit at Folkestone and Hythe (2007 – 2012 BTO/KOS Atlas)

The full list of records is as follows:

- 1983** Botolph's Bridge, pair between West Hythe and West Hythe Dam, 3rd November (N. C. Frampton)
- 1993** Botolph's Bridge, two along the canal cutting towards West Hythe Dam, 14th September (per R. K. Norman)
- 1998** Nickolls Quarry, one, seen briefly then flew south-west, 12th November (R. K. Norman)
- 2001** Nickolls Quarry, up to eight, 28th October to 1st November (R. K. Norman, D. A. Gibson, I. A. Roberts)
- 2001** Abbotscliffe, two flew west, 1st November (I. A. Roberts)
- 2006** Nickolls Quarry, pair, 21st November to 2nd March 2007, photographed (R. K. Norman, I. A. Roberts), with additional female or immature from 10th to 17th December
- 2009** Nickolls Quarry, male, 16th March, photographed (I. A. Roberts)
- 2010** Samphire Hoe, one, 13th October (P. Holt, T. Prentice)
- 2010** Abbotscliffe, one in bushes then flew west, 24th October (I. A. Roberts)
- 2012** Nickolls Quarry, two immature/females, 10th January, photographed (I. A. Roberts)
- 2012** Nickolls Quarry, one, 27th May (M. Harper)
- 2013** Nickolls Quarry, male, 26th December to at least 5th January 2014 (B. Harper, R. K. Norman, I. A. Roberts)
- 2014** Nickolls Quarry, at least five, 28th December, with at least four remaining until 5th April 2015, photographed (B. Harper, I. A. Roberts, R. K. Norman)
- 2016** Nickolls Quarry, five (three males), 3rd January to at least 24th February, with a pair remaining until at least 2nd April, and the male to the 8th April, photographed (B. Harper, I. A. Roberts)
- 2016** Nickolls Quarry, two, 6th to 13th November, increasing to four (two males) on the 18th November and remaining until at least early January, photographed (B. Harper, I. A. Roberts)
- 2017** Beachborough Lakes, one flew west, 26th October, photographed (S. Tomlinson)
- 2017** Nickolls Quarry, 12, 28th October to at least 6th December, photographed (B. Harper, I. A. Roberts)
- 2017** Beachborough Lakes, one, 1st November (S. Tomlinson)
- 2018** Nickolls Quarry, two, 26th January (M. Varley), possibly involving some birds from 2017
- 2018** Nickolls Quarry, pair, 21st April, photographed (B. Harper)



Bearded Tit at Nickolls Quarry (Brian Harper)



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