

Wood Lark

Lullula arborea

Category A

Rare passage migrant

33 records

Breeds across lower and middle latitude Europe, including southern Britain where there about 3,000 pairs. Migratory in the northern half of its breeding range, wintering primarily within the southern half of the breeding range. In Kent it is a scarce passage migrant and winter visitor, and a rare breeding species.

Henry Ulyett in his *Rambles of a Naturalist Round Folkestone* (1880) includes the Wood Lark in the list of species recorded in the neighbourhood of Folkestone, within a radius of six miles from the town hall, however this range extends further inland than the current Folkestone and Hythe area, so is not conclusive evidence of occurrence here.



Wood Lark at Samphire Hoe (Ian Roberts)

First recorded at Folkestone and Hythe in 1958, when Roger Norman saw one at Hythe Ranges on the 13th March, followed by another there on the 22nd August 1961. In the meantime one had been seen flying west over Folkestone on the 5th November 1960. There was a gap of over thirty years until the next in 1993, but it has been recorded with some regularity since, with 28 sightings in 25 years since 1993, as shown in figure 1. The best year to date was 2012.

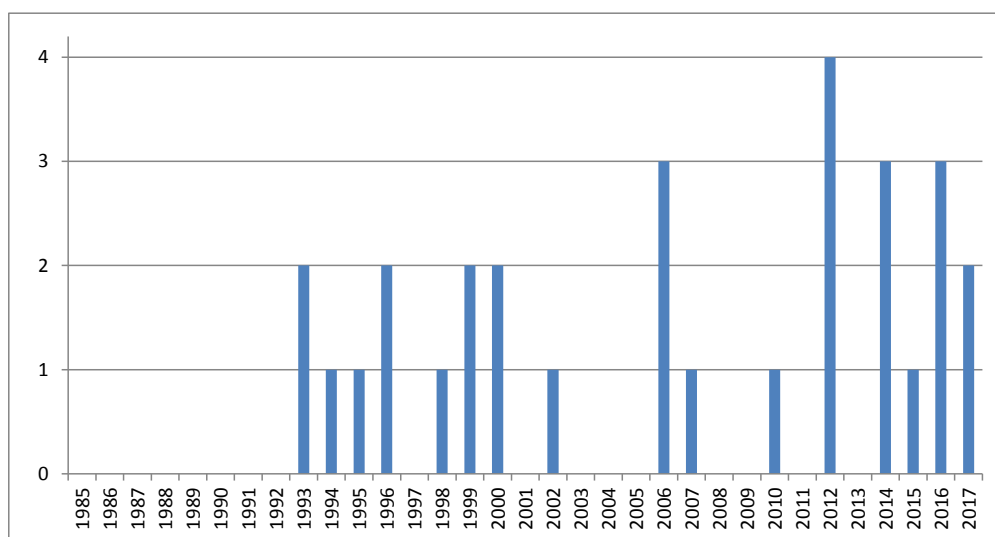


Figure 1: Wood Lark records since 1985 at Folkestone and Hythe

For every spring record to date there have been two in autumn. Those in spring have occurred between the 4th March (week 9) and 16th April (week 16). Apart from a very early record on 22nd August 1961 and two late ones in December 2014 and 2017, all other autumn records fall between the 24th September (week 39) and 19th November (week 47).

The records by week are given in figure 2.

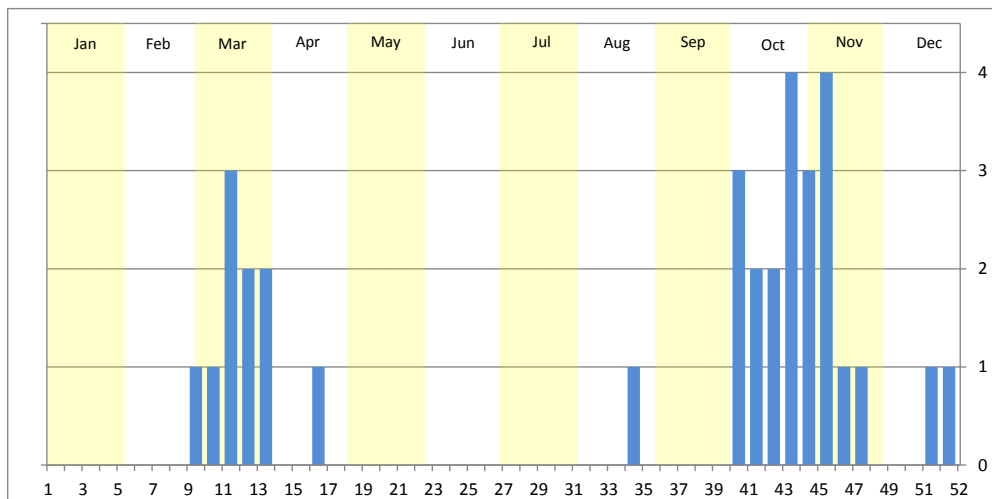


Figure 2: Wood Lark records at Folkestone and Hythe by week

20 records are from the cliffs (Abbotscliffe and Capel-le-Ferne), with three at Samphire Hoe, and singles at Church Hougham and an unspecified location in Folkestone. Elsewhere there have been five in the Hythe Ranges / Fisherman's Beach area and three at Nickolls Quarry.

The full list of records is as follows:

- 1958** Hythe Ranges, one, 13th March (R. K. Norman, W. S. Nevin)
- 1960** Folkestone, one flew west, 5th November (D. F. Musson)
- 1961** Hythe Ranges, one, 22nd August (R. K. Norman)
- 1993** Capel-le-Ferne, one, 18th March (D. A. Gibson)
- 1993** Abbotscliffe, one flew north-west, 10th October (D. A. Gibson)
- 1994** Capel-le-Ferne, one, 27th October (D. A. Gibson)
- 1995** Capel-le-Ferne, one flew east, 9th October (D. A. Gibson)
- 1996** Capel-le-Ferne, one, 28th March (D. A. Gibson)
- 1996** Capel-le-Ferne, one, 17th October (D. A. Gibson)
- 1998** Abbotscliffe, two in gully, 3rd October (D. A. Gibson, I. A. Roberts)
- 1999** Church Hougham, one flew north, 7th October (I. A. Roberts)
- 1999** Abbotscliffe, one flew west, 7th November (I. A. Roberts)
- 2000** Nickolls Quarry, one, 5th March (R. K. Norman)
- 2000** Abbotscliffe, one, then west, 30th September (I. A. Roberts)
- 2002** Nickolls Quarry, one, 24th October (R. K. Norman)
- 2006** Samphire Hoe, one, 16th April (P. Holt)
- 2006** Abbotscliffe, one, 24th October (I. A. Roberts)
- 2006** Abbotscliffe, two flew in off the sea, 4th November (I. A. Roberts)
- 2007** Nickolls Quarry, one, 16th March (R. K. Norman)
- 2010** Abbotscliffe, one, 24th October (I. A. Roberts)
- 2012** Abbotscliffe, one flew west, 20th October (I. A. Roberts)
- 2012** Abbotscliffe, one flew west, 3rd November (I. A. Roberts)
- 2012** Abbotscliffe, one flew west, 7th November (I. A. Roberts)
- 2012** Abbotscliffe, one flew west, 15th November (I. A. Roberts)
- 2014** Abbotscliffe, one, 6th November (I. A. Roberts)
- 2014** Samphire Hoe, one, 19th to 20th November, photographed (R. Smith, P. Holt *et al*)
- 2014** Hythe Ranges, three, 28th December (S. McMinn)
- 2015** Fisherman's Beach, two, 31st October (S. McMinn)
- 2016** Abbotscliffe, two flew east, 21st March (I. A. Roberts)
- 2016** Abbotscliffe, one flew north, 23rd March (M. Varley)
- 2016** Abbotscliffe, one flew east, 25th March (I. A. Roberts)
- 2017** Samphire Hoe, one flew in off the sea, 4th March (P. Holt)

2017 Hythe Ranges, one, 22nd December (I. A. Roberts)