

Greenish Warbler

Phylloscopus trochiloides

Category A

Very rare vagrant

2 records

Breeds across mid-latitude Europe from southern Finland and the Baltic states eastwards. A westward spread was noted in the second half of the nineteenth century, sometimes in waves, but the western limits of the range are constantly fluctuating with no proof of breeding in many areas where occurs more or less regularly. Invasion years appear to be related to high temperatures in May and June. First confirmed breeding during this period in Sweden (1953, and regular on Gotland at least since 1980s), Denmark (1980), Germany (1990), Norway (1991), Czech Republic (1992) and Slovakia (1994). Britain saw an increase in spring records and singing birds in the latter part of the nineteenth century, first featuring in the Rare Breeding Birds Panel reports in 1983 when a male stayed in a Perthshire woodland for over a month, then in 1992 when eight singing males were recorded (all single date records) and in 1993 (two single date records and two males which held territory at Folkestone Warren). Appearances since however have been mainly limited to short-staying singing males. Winters in the Indian sub-continent.

There had been c.450 records nationally to the end of 2005 when the British Birds Rarities Committee removed it from the list of species which it assessed. Kent had produced a total of 23 records to the end of 2010, seven in spring (all in June, between the 1st and the 20th) and the others in autumn, with 15 between the 24th August and 27th September, and a particularly late bird at St. Margaret's Bay on 27th October 1982.

Spring birds tend more towards the south of the county, with records from Dungeness (3), St. Margaret's Bay (2), Folkestone Warren and Kingsgate, whilst autumn birds have had a more northerly bias: Bishopstone / Reculver area (4), Bockhill / St. Margaret's Bay (3), Dungeness (3), Thanet (2), Sandwich Bay (2), Grain and Samphire Hoe.

The first Folkestone and Hythe record involved two singing males found by Dale Gibson in Folkestone Warren in trees below the Capel-le-Ferne Café on the 15th June 1993. Both birds then proceeded to hold territory until the 22nd June, with at least one lingering until the 1st July, and they became a popular attraction during their stay, being enjoyed by many observers. The record appears in the Rare Breeding Birds Panel report for that year and on the basis of the BTO definitions this would be classed as 'probable' breeding.

The second area record involved an autumn migrant found at the eastern end of Samphire Hoe on the afternoon of the 27th September. This individual also became well-watched, remaining in the area until the 1st October, and shared its favoured sycamore patch with a Yellow-browed Warbler during part of its stay.

The records by year are given in figure 1.

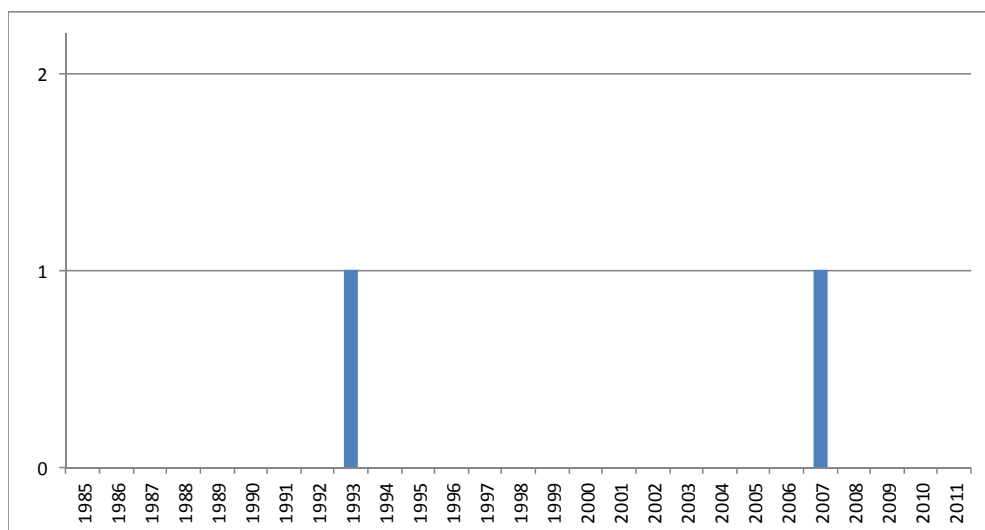


Figure 1: Greenish Warbler records at Folkestone and Hythe

The records by week are shown in figure 2.

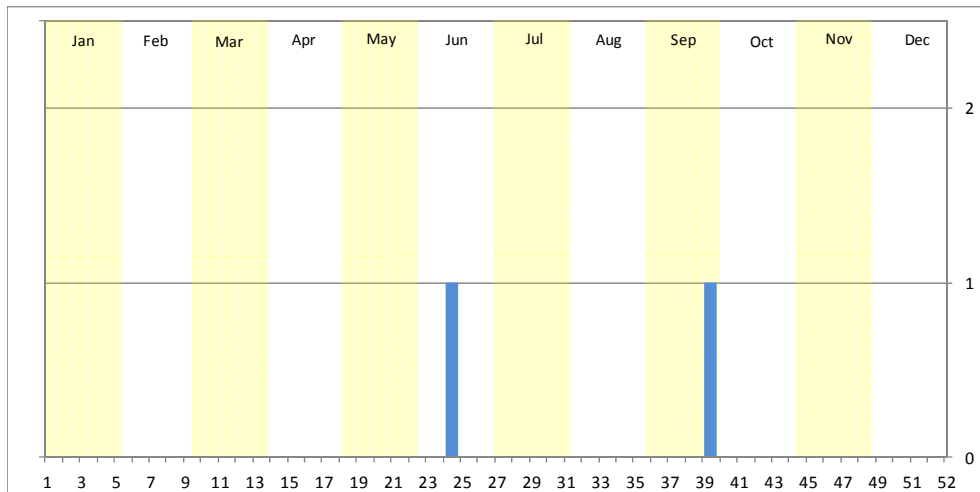


Figure 2: Greenish Warbler records at Folkestone and Hythe by week

Confirmation of the area records follow:

1993 Folkestone Warren, two, in song, 15th June to 22nd June, with at least one remaining to 1st July, video-recorded (D. A. Gibson *et al*)

2007 Samphire Hoe, one, 27th September to 1st October (P. Holt *et al*)