

Icterine Warbler

Hippolais icterina

Category A

Very rare vagrant

8 records

Breeds in middle and upper latitudes across Europe, from northern France, through the Low Countries, into Fenno-Scandia, and east through central Europe into Russia. Also extends south-east to the Black Sea. Very little overlap with range of Melodious Warbler which occupies the south-west of Europe. Winters in sub-Saharan Africa, chiefly south of equator.



Icterine Warbler at Abbotscliffe (Dale Gibson)

A rare but regular passage migrant to Kent in spring and, especially, autumn. There had been 228 records to the end of 2009.

The first Folkestone and Hythe record was on the unusually early autumn date on 21st July. This bird at Lympne was aged as a juvenile and the observer stated that it was “tempting to think it was locally bred”, though presumed it to be an early migrant. There have been seven subsequent records, six of which were coastal autumn migrants, with a more typical arrival date range, and the most recent involved the only spring record to date. The records by year are shown in figure 1.

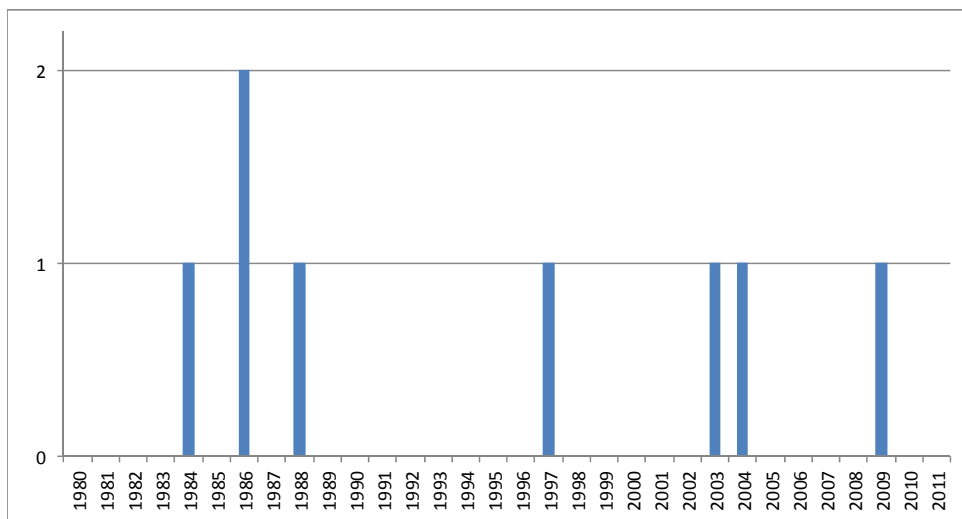


Figure 1: Icterine Warbler records at Folkestone and Hythe

As stated above there is one spring record, in mid-May, and seven in autumn, one on 21st July and the others between the 15th August and 9th October. The distribution of the records by week is shown in figure 2.

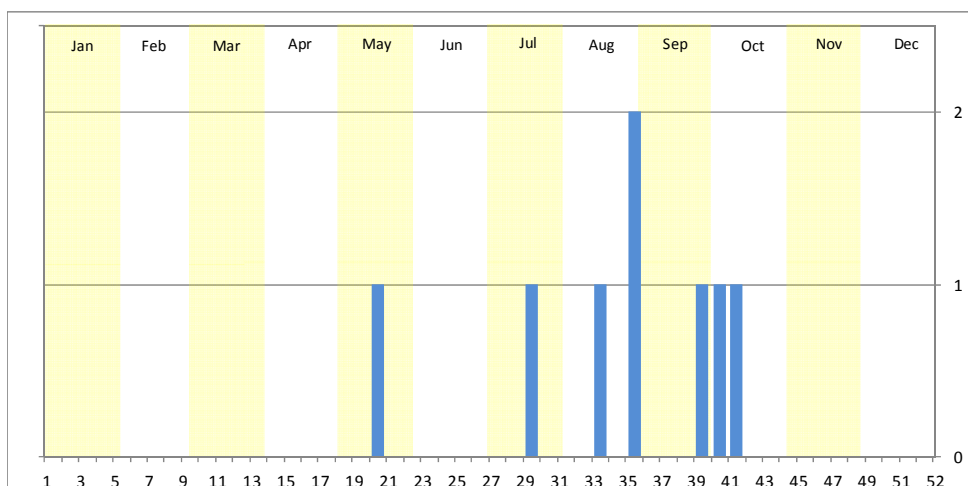


Figure 2: Icterine Warbler records at Folkestone and Hythe by week

The full list of records is as follows:

- 1984** Lympne, juvenile, 21st July (Kent Bird Report)
- 1986** Copt Point, one, 30th August (reported)
- 1986** Copt Point, one, 9th October (reported)
- 1988** Mill Point, one, 5th October (I. A. Roberts)
- 1997** Abbotscliffe, one, 25th September, photographed (D. A. Gibson, I. A. Roberts)
- 2003** Samphire Hoe, one, 28th August (P. I. Holt, G. J. A. Burton, D. E. Smith)
- 2004** Abbotscliffe, one, 15th August (I. A. Roberts)
- 2009** Samphire Hoe, male, in song, 14th May (I. A. Roberts)

In addition, there are two records of unidentified *hippobolais* warblers, either this species or Melodious Warbler (and in both cases thought probably the latter, but the brevity of views did not allow the identification to be confirmed), at Nickoll's Quarry on the 14th August 2002 and Capel-le-Ferne Gun Site on the 31st May 2004.