

# Melodious Warbler

*Hippolais icterina*

Category A

Very rare vagrant

2 records

Breeds in France, Iberia, Italy and the north coasts of Morocco and Tunisia. Very little overlap with range of Icterine Warbler which occupies the more northern and eastern parts of Europe, though Melodious Warbler does appear to be expanding into Belgium, Luxembourg, Germany and Switzerland. Winters in west Africa.



Melodious Warbler at Capel-le-Ferne (Dale Gibson)

A rare but regular passage migrant to Kent. The first county record was at Dungeness in 1959, with a further 78 to the end of 2009. There were 67 records between 1960 and 1999, at a rate of 1.7 per year, but only 11 records in the most recent decade (a rate of 1.1 per year), which suggests a recent decline. The peak decade was the 1980s, with 25 records, though the 16 in the 1990s included one record relating to an exceptional influx in May 1996 which involved 17 birds at Dungeness. Around 35% have occurred in spring, mostly in May and early June, with the rest in autumn, mainly from late July to mid-September.

The only Folkestone and Hythe records occurred on the same day in 1995, when singing males were found by Dale and Jamie Gibson at Copt Point and Capel-le-Ferne Gun Site on 21<sup>st</sup> May. The records by year are shown in figure 1.

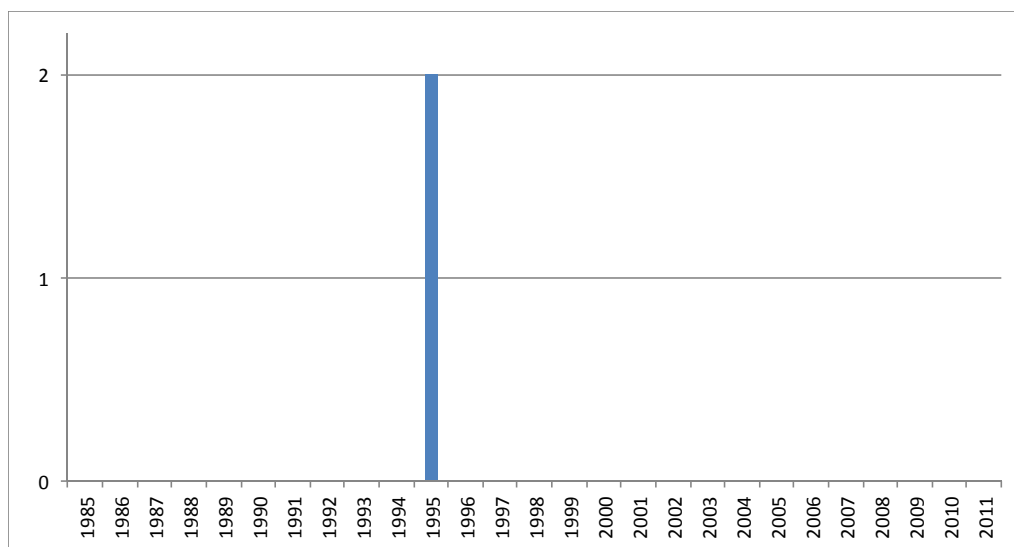


Figure 1: Melodious Warbler records at Folkestone and Hythe

The only area records to date were both in spring (week 21), as demonstrated by figure 2.

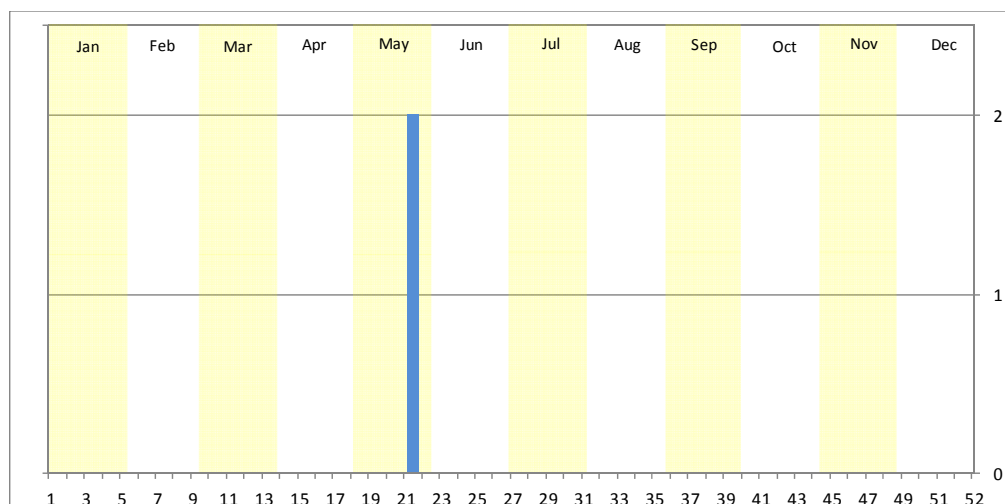


Figure 2: Melodious Warbler records at Folkestone and Hythe by week

The full list of records is as follows:

**1995** Copt Point, one, 21<sup>st</sup> May (D. A. Gibson, J. A. Gibson)

**1995** Capel-le-Ferne (Gun Site), one, 21<sup>st</sup> May, photographed (D. A. Gibson, J. A. Gibson)

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 14<sup>th</sup> August 2002 and Capel-le-Ferne Gun Site on the 31<sup>st</sup> May 2004.