

Water Pipit

Anthus spinoletta

Category A

Very rare vagrant.

8 records

Breeds in mountainous regions of central and southern Europe, often at considerable elevations above or at the edge of the tree line. In winter moves to lower ground throughout inland central Europe, north-west to Belgium and the Netherlands, with small numbers regularly in southern England (Snow & Perrins, 1998). In Kent it is an uncommon passage migrant and winter visitor, particularly to the Stour Valley (KOS, 2020).



Water Pipit at Samphire Hoe (Geoff Burton)

The first local record was found by Paul Howe and Rob Lee at Copt Point on 30th March 1985 but there was a 23 year wait until the second, which was found by Geoff Burton at Samphire Hoe on the same date in 2008. This was quickly followed by one seen by Dylan Wrathall at Botolph's Bridge later that year on the 26th October and another at Samphire Hoe that lingered between the 17th and 21st March 2010.

In 2017 one was found by Ian Roberts at Donkey Street on the 5th November 2017, where it remained for at least two weeks, with perhaps the same bird seen there on the same date the following year, lingering into January 2019. Later in 2019 two (possibly involving a returning bird) were seen there on the 7th December, with one of these being seen intermittently until mid-March 2020, and one was seen again from October 2020.

The records by year are shown in figure 1.

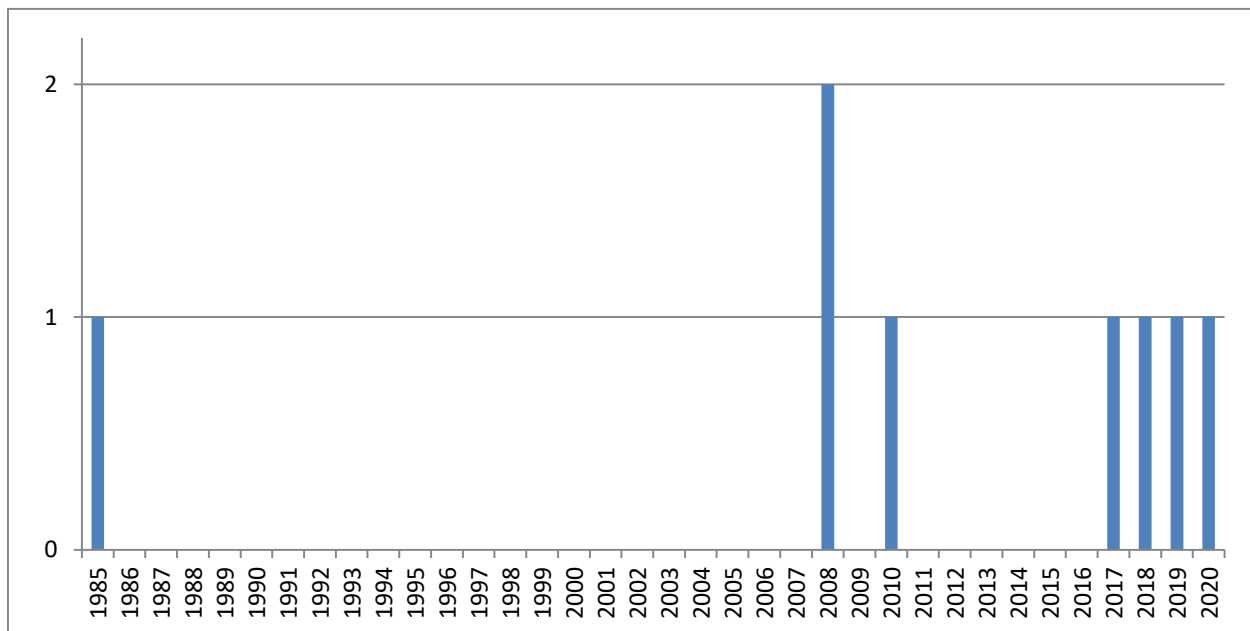


Figure 1: Water Pipit records at Folkestone and Hythe

The first two records occurred on 30th March (week 13), with two in late October (week 43/44), two in early November (weeks 45 and 46), one in early December and a long-stayer which was found in January (week 3), as demonstrated by figure 2.

There have been three coastal records, at Copt Point and Samphire Hoe (2), and the others were inland along the canal cutting near Botolph's Bridge and in the Donkey Street/Willop Sewer area. Figure 3 shows the distribution of records by tetrad.

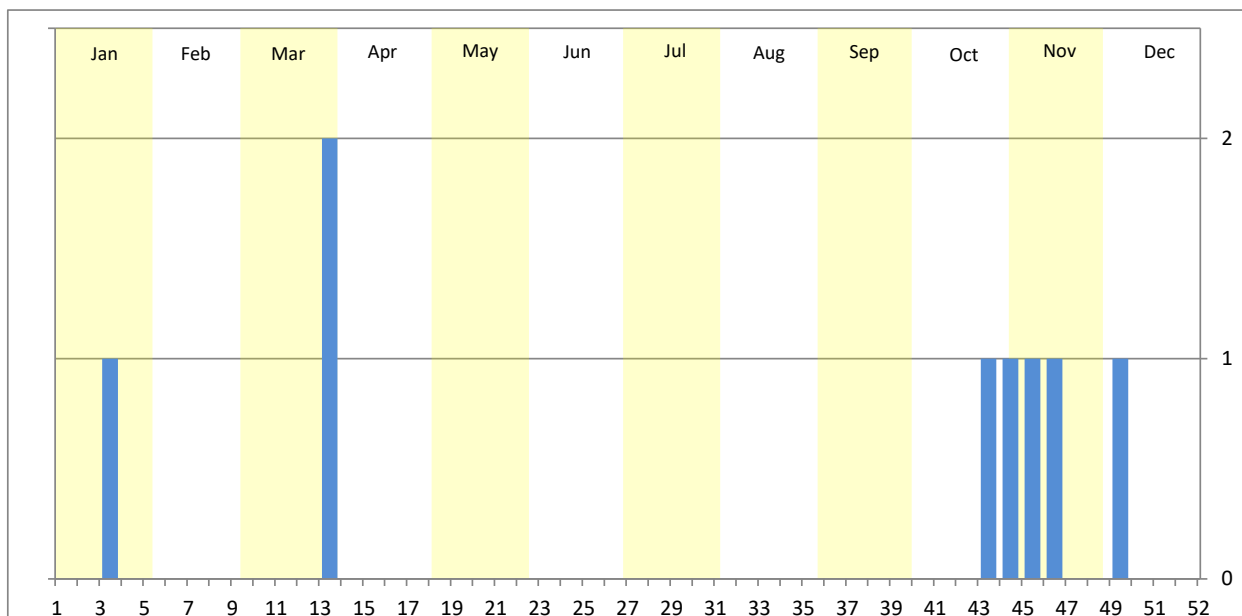


Figure 2: Water Pipit records at Folkestone and Hythe by week

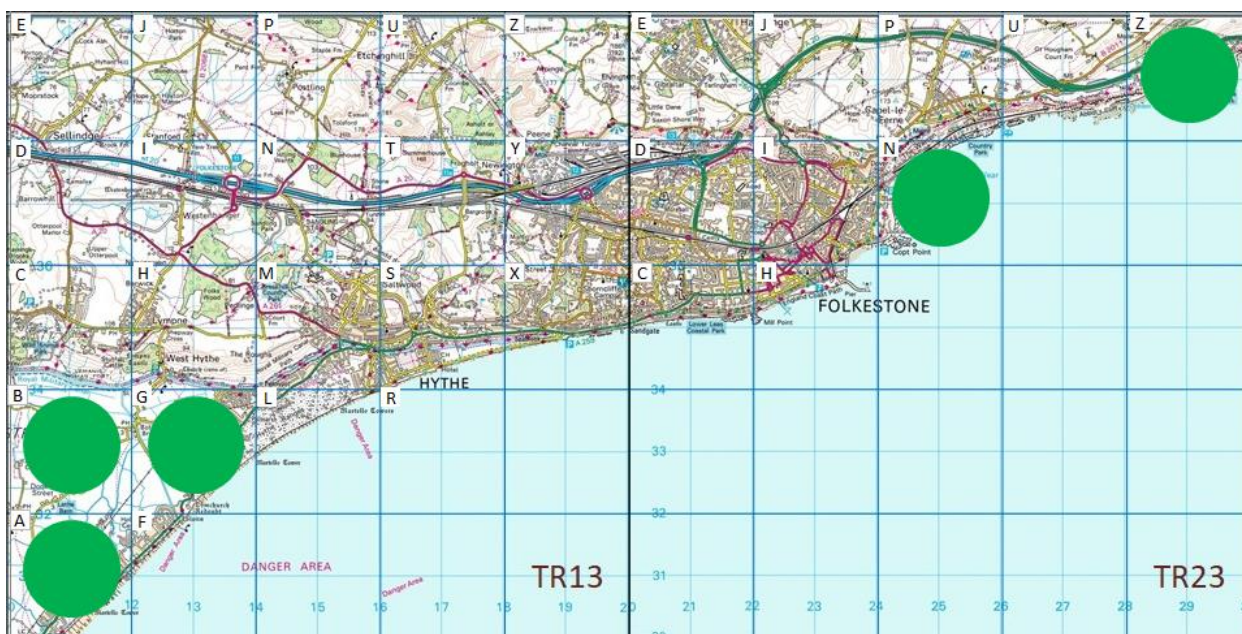


Figure 3: Distribution of all Water Pipit records at Folkestone and Hythe by tetrad

The full list of records is as follows:

- 1985** Copt Point, one, 30th March (P. Howe, R. Hollingsworth)
- 2008** Samphire Hoe, one, 30th March to 2nd April, photographed (G. J. A. Burton, I. A. Roberts, P. Holt, D. E. Smith)
- 2008** Botolph's Bridge, one, 26th October (D. Wrathall)
- 2010** Samphire Hoe, one, 17th January to 21st March, photographed (G. J. A. Burton, P. Holt, I. A. Roberts)
- 2017** Donkey Street, one, 5th to at least 17th November, photographed (B. Harper, I. A. Roberts)
- 2018** Donkey Street, one, 5th November to at least 1st January 2019, photographed (B. Harper, I. A. Roberts)
- 2019** Donkey Street, two, 7th December, with presumably one of the same at the Willop Basin on the same day (B. Harper) and at Donkey Street from 1st January to at least 15th March 2020 (B. Harper, I. A. Roberts)
- 2020** Donkey Street, one, 30th October intermittently to at least 5th April 2021 (B. Harper, I. A. Roberts, J. J. Thompson)

References

Kent Bird Reports. Kent Ornithological Society

Snow, D. & Perrins, C.M., 1998. *The Birds of the Western Palearctic*. Oxford University Press.

Acknowledgements

The tetrad map images were produced from the Ordnance Survey [Get-a-map service](#) and are reproduced with kind permission of [Ordnance Survey](#).



Water Pipit at Donkey Street (Brian Harper)



Water Pipit at Samphire Hoe (Geoff Burton)