

2004 review

January

The commoner divers and grebes were only seen in small numbers, with the morning of the 16th seeing the best passage of both Red-throated Diver (80) and Great Crested Grebe (13) west past Mill Point. However both **Great Northern Diver** (feeding off Sandgate on the 26th) and **Slavonian Grebe** (on the sea off Mill Point on the 11th) were recorded in January.

Three Shags were on the sea off Copt Point on the 2nd, with another there on the 10th. Single Little Egrets were on the shore below Abbotscliffe on the 5th, and at Samphire Hoe on the 24th.

There was a noticeable wildfowl passage at sea on the 2nd, when 26 Pintail, 53 Wigeon, 3 Gadwall, 14 Brent Geese and 5 Shelduck flew east, but the only other movements of note were 2 Red-breasted Mergansers west and 22 Brent Geese east past Mill Point on the 6th, 2 Pintail west there on the 11th and 11 Wigeon east there on the 22nd. Numbers at Nickoll's Quarry were disappointing, with a peak of only 3 Pochard (18th and 23rd) and just 2 Wigeon (on 1st), 3 Gadwall (3rd), 3 Teal (27th) and 2 Pintail (31st). However a presumed escaped Fulvous Whistling Duck provided an exotic diversion there on the 13th. Sandling held 60 Teal, 20 Gadwall, 18 Mandarin, 4 Tufted Ducks, 3 Pintail and 2 Pochard on the 3rd.

A Peregrine at Nickoll's Quarry on the 13th was a good record for the site, and there were two inland sightings of Common Buzzard. Coot peaked at 68 at Nickoll's Quarry on the 27th, and a Water Rail was seen there on the 24th.

A Woodcock was flushed at Casebourne Wood on the 4th, and single Jack Snipe were at Nickoll's Quarry on the 27th and 31st, but Common Snipe peaked at just 8 there on the 13th. Green Sandpipers were seen on 4 dates in the Botolph's Bridge - Nickoll's Quarry area, with a peak of 2 on the 18th. A Purple Sandpiper was at Hythe Redoubt intermittently throughout the month.

A Great Skua flew west past Mill Point on the 11th, and single adult Little Gulls were seen there on the 8th, 11th and 31st. A count on the 17th produced 2,710 Black-headed Gulls and 1,280 Common Gulls roosting off Hythe fishing boats. Mediterranean Gulls were present in good numbers (as always) at Copt Point and in the Folkestone area in general but no counts were received, however one was at Nickoll's Quarry on the 29th.

Guillemots were seen in reasonable numbers on the 2nd (c.200), 16th (c.300), 28th (2-300) and 31st (c.200), and notable Razorbill counts included 15 west past Mill Point on the 6th, c.40 west there on the 16th, 58+ east past Samphire Hoe on the 20th and 50+ east past Mill Point on the 28th.

A bizarre incident on the 17th involved a Kingfisher flying out to sea from Hythe Ranges before being killed by gulls.

Passerine highlight of the month was a **Dartford Warbler** at Abbotscliffe on the 24th – the first winter record for the area. Warblers were also represented by a Blackcap at West Hythe on the 17th and single Chiffchaffs at Nickoll's Quarry and Joye's Road (Folkestone) in the last week of the month. A Firecrest was at West Hythe on the 5th.

A Nuthatch was at Brockhill CP on the 22nd, and Marsh Tits were seen at Sandling Park (17th) and Brockhill CP (2 on 22nd). Up to 7 Lesser Redpolls were at West Hythe throughout, and 12

Siskins were at Sandling Park on the 17th. The 3 Snow Buntings (from 2003) were seen again at Samphire Hoe on the 18th-20th, with at least 2 still present on the 24th.

February

The only movements of Red-throated Diver of note were at the very start of the month, with 45 west past Mill Point on the 1st and 30 west there on the 2nd. 25 Great Crested Grebes also flew west past Mill Point on the 1st and 24 were off Copt Point on the 4th. 57 Great Crested Grebes were counted off Hythe on the 13th and 10 at Nickoll's Quarry on the 26th was a good count for the site.

First migrant dates in February:

7th - House Martin

A single Shag in Folkestone Harbour on the 1st preceded an exceptional influx, with 9 off Copt Point on the 3rd, 10 on the 4th and a new area record of **15** there on the 7th. Numbers decreased quickly to 5 on the 8th, with up to 3 remaining in the area to the end of the month.

A Velvet Scoter west past Mill Point on the 1st was the only seaduck of note. Nickoll's Quarry again disappointed with just 2 Gadwall (7th), 31 Teal (27th) and peaks of only 2 Pochard (18th) and 2 Tufted Duck (26th). c.20 Mandarins flew over Pedlinge on the 9th.

The only wader count received was 8 Redshank on Folkestone Pier on the 4th. Nearby a Glaucous Gull was reported in Folkestone Harbour on the 1st, though not relocated. 235 Kittiwakes flew west past Mill Point on the 1st and c.100 were feeding off Copt Point on the 3rd.

Auk passage was noted early in the month, with counts of 510 Guillemots west past Mill Point on the 1st, 770 west there the next day, and 350 off Copt Point on the 3rd, decreasing to c.200 there on the 7th. Razorbills included 12 west past Mill Point on the 1st and up to 12 off Copt Point on the 3rd-4th.

Passerine highlight of the month was an exceptionally early House Martin which arrived in off the sea at Copt Point on the 7th. The long-staying **Cetti's Warbler** (from 2003) was again singing at West Hythe on the 15th, and a Firecrest was at Mill Point on the 8th. 2 Marsh Tits were at Pedlinge on the 18th and 4 Siskins flew west at Copt Point on the 4th.

March

The only movements of Red-throated Diver of note were at the very start of the month, with 45 west past Mill Point on the 1st and 30 west there on the 2nd. 25 Great Crested Grebes also flew west past Mill Point on the 1st and 24 were off Copt Point on the 4th. 57 Great Crested Grebes were counted off Hythe on the 13th and 10 at Nickoll's Quarry on the 26th was a good count for the site.

First migrant dates in March:

28th - Yellow Wagtail

27th - Sandwich Tern

18th - Little Ringed Plover
- White Wagtail

17th - Wheatear

16th - Chiffchaff*

6th - Firecrest*

*exc. wintering birds

The 1st saw the early winter period peak of Tufted Duck (8) at Nickoll's Quarry, with 4 remaining, and joined by 2 Pochard, the next day. Two Shags were still off Mill Point early in the month and remained until at least the 27th.

The first hints of spring passage were a Siskin east at Capel-le-Ferne on the 2nd, an *alba* wagtail in off the sea at Abbotscliffe on the 3rd and single Goldcrests behind the Café on the 2nd and at Mill Point on the 4th. A small movement at sea on the 5th comprised 21 Brent Geese, 5 Oystercatchers and a Curlew east past Hythe, with 2 Shoveler and 3 Wigeon offshore there.

The 6th produced the first migrant Firecrest, at the Gun Site, and the first visible migration of any note – with 120 Chaffinches, 300 Starlings, 3 Siskins, and 5 Sky Larks east there. A further 556 Chaffinches flew east at Capel-le-Ferne on the 7th, plus 6 Siskins and 2 Sky Larks. On the 8th 100 Chaffinches and 2 Siskins flew east at the Gun site, but more unusual was an apparent migration of 59 Great Tits (in 3 flocks) east there. Similar movements were noted elsewhere around the coast at the same time. 5 Siskins flew in off the sea at Copt Point on the 9th.

A period of colder weather halted any passage until the 15th/16th, when a small movement of Redwings and 1+ Fieldfare was noted over Hythe at night. The following morning the first migrant Chiffchaff of the spring was seen at Abbotscliffe and a Woodcock was flushed near the Café. Grounded thrushes included c.25 Redwings and 1 Fieldfare, and other migrants at the cliffs comprised 45 Chaffinches, 20 Meadow Pipits, 2 Reed Buntings and a Goldcrest. The 17th produced the first Wheatear at Copt Point, and at Abbotscliffe 200 Wood Pigeons, 4 Stock Doves, 2 Collared Doves and 24 Redwings flew west, with a Little Egret on the shore there. The first Little Ringed Plover and White Wagtail were at Nickoll's Quarry on the 18th, and Redwings were grounded by fog at Abbotscliffe (6) and Church Hougham (15).

A Woodcock was flushed near the Café on the 21st, and 2 Siskins flew west there. A singing Chiffchaff was in the Warren on the 22nd. The 23rd saw a good movement of Chaffinches at the cliffs, with 656 east, plus 40 Meadow Pipits, 17 Siskins and a Brambling in/east. Another Chiffchaff was by the Café. Visual migration was again evident at the cliffs from the 24th, with 136 Chaffinches, 15 Meadow Pipits, 6 Siskins and single Grey and *alba* Wagtails east on the 24th, 379 Chaffinches, 48 Siskins and a Tree Sparrow in/east on the 25th, and 251 Chaffinches, 20 Meadow Pipits, 11 Siskins and single Grey and *alba* Wagtails in/east at the cliffs on the 26th.

Attention turned to the sea on the 27th, when the first 3 Sandwich Terns of the year flew east past Copt Point, along with 340 Gannets, 9 Brent Geese, and 5 Shoveler. A further 358 Brent Geese and 6 Shoveler flew east past Copt Point on the 28th, when an Avocet and the first Yellow Wagtail were at Nickoll's Quarry, and at least 6 Chiffchaffs were singing in the area. Two summer-plumaged **Black-necked Grebes** on the sea off Seabrook on the 29th were a very good local record, and 13 Wigeon flew west there, whilst a Little Egret was seen at Samphire Hoe.

On the 30th 62 Chaffinches and 17 Siskins flew east at Capel-le-Ferne, but there were just 10 Brent Geese east at sea, with 6 Shoveler at Nickoll's Quarry. The 31st produced 41 Brent Geese, 42 Gannets and 14 Sandwich Terns east past Copt Point, plus 235 Chaffinches east there. Totals of almost 2,550 Chaffinches and 120 Siskins were logged passing east through the area in March.

A *littoralis* Rock Pipit was seen in Samphire Hoe in March but date unknown.

April

Good movement at sea was noted off Mill Point at the start of the month with 340 Brent Geese, 1,680 Common Scoters, 14 Red-breasted Mergansers, 16 Shoveler, 15 Teal, 2 Gadwall, 2 Velvet Scoters, 2 Black-throated and 19 Red-throated Divers, 32 Gannets and 15 Sandwich Terns east on the 1st, 882 Brent Geese, 2,550 Common Scoters, 27 Red-throated Divers, 39 Teal, 12 Wigeon, 10 Shoveler, 5 Gadwall, 26 Red-breasted Mergansers, 4 Grey Plovers, 4 **Black-tailed Godwits**, 4 Bar-tailed Godwits, 4 Curlew, 1 Whimbrel, 2 Dunlin and 98 Sandwich Terns east on the 2nd and 2 Arctic Skuas, 250 Brent Geese, 15 Eiders, 41 Sandwich Terns and 2 Shags east on the 3rd.

On land the first migrant Blackcap of the year was singing at Mill Point on the 1st, the first 4 Swallows were at Nickoll's Quarry on the 2nd, and another Swallow flew in off the sea on the 3rd. On the 4th there was a Blackcap and 2 Chiffchaffs by the Café, and 2 Firecrests and 3 Chiffchaffs were at Samphire Hoe on the 6th. At Nickoll's Quarry there was an Avocet and 6 Dunlin on the 1st, a Red-breasted Merganser on the 3rd, a **Common Bittern** reported on the 7th and the first Willow Warbler on the 8th.

Visual migration picked up at the cliffs in the second week of the month, with 16 Chaffinches, 15 Meadow Pipits, 14 Linnets and a Siskin in/east on the 7th, 52 Chaffinches, 26 Linnets and 5 Siskins east on the 8th, and 102 Chaffinches, 45 Meadow Pipits, 8 Siskins and a Brambling east on the 9th. The 9th also produced an **Osprey** north over Folkestone, a male Marsh Harrier in off the sea at the Gun Site and the first 4 Sand Martins in off the sea at the cliffs, plus 2 Swallows and 3 Wheatears. 82 Meadow Pipits, 12 Chaffinches, 8 Sand Martins, 2 Swallows and a Siskin flew in off at the cliffs on the 10th, and a White Wagtail was along the Hythe Canal.

On the 11th a Jack Snipe was at Abbotscliffe and a Merlin arrived in off the sea at the Café. 3 Swallows and 2 Sand Martins also arrived in off the sea, and 91 Chaffinches flew east. Two 'continental' Coal Tits and the first Whitethroat of the year were at the Gun Site on the 12th, and a White Wagtail arrived in off. At sea 2 Black-throated Divers, 2 Velvet Scoters and 49 Sandwich Terns flew east. On the 13th a **Crane** was reported north over Hythe and the first Tree Pipit was at the Gun Site, with 230 Sandwich Terns and a Slavonian Grebe east past Copt Point. 7 Swallows came in off, and at Nickoll's Quarry there were 10 Swallows, 2 Sand Martins and the first House Martin (since February).

Focus again switched to the sea from the 14th, when 170 Sandwich Terns and 3 Whimbrel flew east past Copt Point, and on the 15th the first 9 Common Terns of the year, 182 Sandwich Terns, 114 Common Scoter, 15 Eider, 30 Brent Geese and 2 Pintail flew east there. The first 6 Little Terns passed Mill Point the next day, and 270 Sandwich Terns, 105 'Commic' Terns, 60 Gannets, 139 Common Scoters, 5 Velvet Scoters, 38 Eider, 34 Shoveler, 9 Red-breasted

First migrant dates in April:

28th - Nightingale
27th - Serin
24th - Quail
22nd - Swift
- Ring Ouzel
- Cuckoo
21st - Arctic Tern
20th - Lesser Whitethroat
17th - Sedge Warbler
16th - Little Tern
- Common Sandpiper
- Black Redstart*
- Reed Warbler
15th - Common Tern
- Grasshopper Warbler
13th - Tree Pipit
12th - Common Whitethroat
9th - Osprey
- Sand Martin
8th - Willow Warbler
3rd - Arctic Skua
2nd - Swallow
- Whimbrel
1st - Blackcap*

*exc. wintering birds

Mergansers, 7 Gadwall, 2 Pintail, 9 Whimbrel, an Arctic Skua, a Bonxie, 2 Med Gulls and 2 Little Gulls also flew east. It was fairly quiet on the land, with 3 Whitethroats at the Gun Site on the 14th, the first Grasshopper Warbler, a Tree Pipit, a Willow Warbler, and a Yellow Wagtail, on the 15th, and the first migrant Black Redstart, Wheatear and 2 Yellow Wagtails on the 16th, plus a trickle of Swallows.

The first Common Sandpiper and Reed Warbler (2) of the year were at Nickoll's Quarry on the 16th, with the first Sedge Warbler there the next day. The 17th also produced 9 Swallows, 2 Sand Martins, House Martin, 2 Yellow Wagtails and 2 Redpolls in off at the cliffs, with single Wheatear and Willow Warbler there. A windy day on the 18th saw a dark phase "**Blue**" **Fulmar** and 2 Bonxies pass at sea. 2 Firecrests at the Gun Site were the only birds of note on the 19th, but on the 20th the first Lesser Whitethroat was at Abbotscliffe, together with 2 Wheatears, a Tree Pipit, a Willow Warbler and a Corn Bunting.

An easterly passage of 84 'commic' terns on the 21st included at least a couple of Arctic Terns (first of the year), and 131 Sandwich Terns and 3 Little Gulls also flew east, with 140 Gannets west. A Tree Pipit was at Mill Point and 6 Swallows arrived in off. There were no less than three firsts for the year on the 22nd – a Swift in off at Capel-le-Ferne, a Ring Ouzel at Samphire Hoe and a Cuckoo at Nickoll's Quarry. There was a notable arrival of Wheatears too, with about 25 along the cliffs, plus 7 Willow Warblers at Abbotscliffe and 5 at Samphire Hoe, and 22 Swallows and a Yellow Wagtail in off. Terns were again moving at sea with 95 Sandwich, 24 Common and 1 Little east. On the 23rd 27 Swallows, 20 Sand Martins, 8 House Martins, 2 Yellow Wagtails, a Tree Pipit and a Wheatear were seen arriving in off the sea

The 24th produced the highlight of the month when a **Quail** was flushed from the cliff-edge at Abbotscliffe. Single Ring Ouzel, Firecrest, Tree Pipit and 6 Yellow Wagtails were also seen there, and 6 Green Sandpipers were at Nickoll's Quarry. On the 25th 268 Sandwich Terns, 59 Commic Terns, 44 Common Scoter, 16 Whimbrel and 4 Red-breasted Mergansers flew east past Copt Point, and 15 Swallows, 2 Yellow Wagtails and 2 House Martins flew in off. 3 Lesser Whitethroats were at the Gun Site. At Nickoll's Quarry 3 Greenshank and a Green Sandpiper flew over, and a good selection of warblers there included a Cetti's, 9 Reed, 6 Sedge, 5 Blackcap, 3 Lesser Whitethroats and a Willow

A quieter day on the 26th saw just 40 Sandwich Terns, 4 Whimbrel and a Bonxie east past Copt Point in the morning, with 14 Common Terns and a Bonxie east past Mill Point in the evening, when 4 Swifts were feeding over the town. A Serin flew east over Copt Point on the 27th, and 290 Sandwich Terns, 14 Common Terns, 10 Eider, 9 Velvet Scoter, 21 Whimbrel, 5 Bar-tailed Godwits, 3 Black-tailed Godwits, 40 Dunlin, 60 Black-headed Gulls, 35 Common Gulls, 5 Med Gulls and 7 Little Gulls flew east. 18 Swifts, 37 Swallows, 6 Sand Martins and 4 Yellow Wagtails arrived in off.

The first Nightingale of the year was in song behind the Café on the 28th, but it was otherwise fairly quiet with single Wheatears at Hythe and Nickoll's Quarry, 59 Sandwich Terns and 2 Bonxies east past Copt Point, 2 Common Sandpipers on rocks there, and 3 Swifts and 2 Yellow Wagtails in off. Rain prevented much passage on the 29th, with just 20 Common Terns, 11 Sandwich Terns, 27 Gannets and a Whimbrel east past Samphire Hoe, and on land only a Wheatear at the Gun Site and 2 Wheatears, 2 Willow Warblers and Blackcap at Abbotscliffe were of note. However the month ended with some decent sea passage on the 30th, when 495 Sandwich Terns, 52 Gannets, 18 Fulmars, 235 Bar-tailed Godwits, 2 Knot, a Grey Plover and an Arctic Skua flew east past Copt Point. A Greenshank, 6 Common Sandpipers and 3 Wheatears were at Nickoll's Quarry.

May

The month began with the Nightingale still in residence behind the Café (to 15th), and the 1st also produced the first 2 Turtle Doves of the year there and a male Ring Ouzel below the Café. 25 Whitethroats and a Wheatear were at the Gun Site, and 4 Yellow Wagtails, a Sand Martin and 4 Swallows arrived in off. At sea 185 Sandwich Terns, 71 'Commic' Terns, 51 Dunlin, 25 Bar-tailed Godwits, 11 Whimbrel and 4 Arctic Terns flew east, and a flock of 14 Common Sandpipers at Copt Point constituted a site record. A further 8 Common Sandpipers were at Nickoll's Quarry.

First migrant dates in May:

19th - Spotted Flycatcher
- Whinchat
18th - Wood Warbler
10th - Black Tern
5th - Manx Shearwater
3rd - Garden Warbler
2nd - Hobby
- Pomarine Skua
1st - Turtle Dove

A Marsh Harrier and the first Hobby flew in off the sea at the Café on the 2nd, together with 54 Swallows, 5 Swifts, 3 Sand Martins, 3 House Martins, a Tree Pipit and a Turtle Dove. A Ring Ouzel was at Abbotscliffe, and a total of 3 Wheatears were in the area. In the evening single Pomarine Skua and Black-throated Diver passed Mill Point, and 53 Whimbrel, 30 'Commic' Terns and 2 Little Terns also flew east. The first Garden Warbler of the year was seen behind the Café on the 3rd, with a Cuckoo there also, and 50 Swallows, 4 House and 2 Sand Martins arrived in off. At sea 81 Sandwich Terns, 25 'Commic' Terns, an Arctic Skua and a Black-throated Diver flew east

On the 4th 210 Sandwich Terns, 155 Gannets, 30 Fulmars, 54 Common and 2 Velvet Scoters, 3 Arctic Skuas, a Bonxie and a Little Tern flew east past Copt Point, and a Hobby, 17 Swallows, 5 Swifts and 2 House Martins came in off the sea. Another Hobby was at Abbotscliffe, and 8 Dunlin was a good count for Nickoll's Quarry. The first Manx Shearwater flew west past Mill Point on the 5th, with 46 Common Scoters and 30 Sandwich Terns east, and a Hobby was seen over Lympne.

The 6th produced just a Cuckoo and 37 Swallows in off the sea at Abbotscliffe, and 100 Gannets and 40 Kittiwakes west at sea. Hirundines were again arriving on the 7th, with 101 Swallows, 44 House Martins and 10 Sand Martins in off at the cliffs. A Little Ringed Plover in off at the Cafe was a good site record, and a Tree Pipit also arrived there. There was some action at sea too on the 7th, with 59 Common, 34 Sandwich and 6 Little Terns, 6 Whimbrel and 2 Bar-tailed Godwits east, and a Little Egret was on the shore below Abbotscliffe.

The 9th saw a good passage of terns at sea, with 779 'Commic', 189 Sandwich, 12 Little and 3+ Arctic Terns east. Also moving were 5 Arctic Skuas, 32 Whimbrel, 17 Turnstone, 2 Bar-tailed Godwits, 8 Dunlin and a Little Gull east, and 179 Gannets west. 4 Tree Pipits flew in off the sea and 45 Swallows were in the area. Terns were again a feature on the 10th, with 378 'Commic', 176 Sandwich, 12 Little and the first Black of the year east. Also of note were 8 Arctic Skuas, 14 Velvet Scoters, a Little Gull, 43 Dunlin, 3 Grey Plover, 4 Turnstone and 3 Sanderling east. On the 11th a Little Egret flew west over Mill Point, but just 142 Sandwich Terns and 2 Bar-tailed Godwits passed at sea. 22 Swallows arrived in off.

Two **Red-rumped Swallows** arrived near the Café on the 12th and remained in the area all day, before moving to Abbotscliffe on the 13th (photos). 79 Swallows and 9 Swifts flew in off on the sea on the 12th, and c.150 House Martins were in the area. 2 Pomarine Skuas and 2 Shoveler flew east and a Shag was on the sea off Copt Point. On the 13th c.65 Swallows, 30 House Martins and 2 Sand Martins came in off, and arrival continued the next day with about 70 Swallows and 40 House Martins in off. 3 Black-throated Divers flew east at sea. The 15th produced 84 Swallows, 20 House Martins, 5 Swifts, and singles of Marsh Harrier, Hobby, Sand Martin, Turtle Dove, Cuckoo and Yellow Wagtail in off the sea at the cliffs.



Red-rumped Swallows - Capel-le-Ferne and Abbotscliffe - 12th to 13th May (Dale Gibson)

Highlight of the 16th was undoubtedly a flock of five **European Bee-eaters** which flew east over Samphire Hoe in the afternoon. A new Nightingale was singing in the Warren, and 28 Swallows, 10 Swifts, 3 Turtle Doves, Cuckoo and Sand Martin arrived in off the sea. The 18th produced another **European Bee-eater** (east over Abbotscliffe), and singing **Wood Warbler** behind the Café.



A Spotted Flycatcher at the Gun Site and a Whinchat at Samphire Hoe on the 19th were both firsts for the year, and single Cuckoos were at the Gun Site and the Café, and 2 Turtle Doves flew in off. On the 20th 2 Reed Warblers (unusual away from Hythe in spring) were in song at Copt Point and a Turtle Dove arrived in off at the Café. 2 Great Northern Divers and 2 Velvet Scoters flew east past Copt Point on the 21st, and 21 Swifts arrived. Another late migrant Reed Warbler was at the Gun Site on the 22nd, and a Siskin flew east. At Nickoll's Quarry 3 Little Egrets, 2 Common Sandpipers and a Dunlin were notable.

A Spotted Flycatcher was at Abbotscliffe on the 23rd, and c.100 Swallows, 35 House Martins, 20 Swifts and 2 Sand Martins flew in/east at the Café. 4 Turtle Doves arrived in off on the 25th. A first-summer Little Gull lingered off Copt Point on the 26th, and 18 Swifts flew east at the Gun Site. On the 29th a Hobby and c.200 Swifts were seen over Crete Road in the afternoon.

The month ended with a *hippolais* (Melodious or Icterine) warbler briefly at the Gun Site on the 31st, also a Lapwing west there.

June

June was predictably quiet with a trickle of hirundines and Swifts continuing to arrive, and just a couple of typical late spring migrants – a Turtle Dove in off the sea at the cliffs on the 3rd and a Reed Warbler at the Gun Site on the 4th. Two Lapwings in off the sea at the cliffs on the 5th was another usual mid-summer occurrence.

A movement of 435 Swifts west at Abbotscliffe on the 12th were most likely birds moving in search of food, but a **Red Kite** in off the sea at the Café the next day is more difficult to explain.

There were a few hints of return passage late in the month - 4 Curlews west past Mill Point and a Mediterranean Gull offshore on the 27th, a Meadow Pipit east over Hythe on the 28th, and 30 Swifts west at the Café on the 29th.

July

Honey Buzzards are often a feature of early July and this year there were 3 over the west end of Folkestone on the 6th and 2 over Hythe on the 11th. Two Grey Herons in off the sea at Mill Point on the 10th was another typical record, however an Arctic Skua east past Copt Point on the 8th was more unusual.

Return passage of Sand Martins was noted from the 11th, when 5 were at Nickoll's Quarry, increasing to c.40 there on the 12th and c.50 on the 14th. Waders began to trickle through from the same time, with a Green Sandpiper at Nickoll's Quarry on the 11th, Green and Common Sandpiper there on the 12th, and 3 Green Sandpipers, 2 Dunlin, 2 Common Sandpipers and a Little Ringed Plover on the 13th. Nickoll's Quarry also hosted a Little Egret from the 12th-15th.

On the 17th a **Wood Sandpiper**, a Greenshank, 6 Common Sandpipers and a Green Sandpiper were at Nickoll's Quarry. 3 Grey Herons flew in off the sea at Seabrook on the 21st and a Common Sandpiper was heard over Cheriton at night. By the 24th the Mediterranean Gull flock at Copt Point had built up to 180+ (including 7 juveniles), and another 4 juveniles were by Hythe Redoubt on the 27th.

An exceptionally early female-type **Red-backed Shrike** was at Abbotscliffe on the 26th, as well as the first 2 returning Willow Warblers. On the 27th a **Curlew Sandpiper** was seen at Nickoll's Quarry (to 29th) together with a Dunlin, a Snipe, 3 Green Sandpipers and 2 Common Sandpipers. The second **Wood Sandpiper** of the month at Nickoll's Quarry from 29th completed a good run of local rarities.

August

The **Wood Sandpiper** was still at Nickoll's Quarry on the 1st (and remained until the 8th). Also present were 3 Green Sandpipers, a Common Sandpiper, a Dunlin and a Snipe, with 4 Green Sandpipers the next day. 2 Willow Warblers and a Yellow Wagtail were at Abbotscliffe on the 1st, and a Corn Bunting was seen on the 3rd. On the 6th there were 3 Green Sandpipers, 2 Common Sandpipers, a Golden Plover and 4 Willow Warblers at Nickoll's Quarry, and the following day produced 3 Little Egrets, a Greenshank and 2 Dunlin there. Also on the 7th two Common Buzzards flew over Folkestone and a Reed Warbler was at Abbotscliffe.

Last migrant dates in August:

26th - Cuckoo

28th - Little Ringed Plover

There was a fine array of waders at Nickoll's Quarry on the 8th, with a **Spotted Redshank**, a **Black-tailed Godwit**, the long-staying **Wood Sandpiper**, 8 Green Sandpipers, 4 Little Ringed Plovers and 3 Common Sandpipers. The Gun Site hosted single Reed Warbler and Wheatear on

the 8th, and 2 Yellow Wagtails flew west over Abbotscliffe. 4 Willow Warblers were at the Gun Site on the 9th and there were 5 Dunlin at Nickoll's Quarry, with 6 Common Sandpipers there the next day, and a Greenshank on the 11th. At the cliffs on the 11th there were 8 Willow Warblers, 4 Lesser Whitethroats, 3 Yellow Wagtails and a Hobby.

Abbotscliffe produced a Reed Warbler, a Garden Warbler, 8 Willow Warblers and 2 Lesser Whitethroats on the 13th, also 15 Swifts and 3 Yellow Wagtails west, and a Marsh Harrier flew south-west over Hythe. A flock of **10 Black-tailed Godwits** east at the Gun Site on the 14th constitutes a record count for the area. Single Tree Pipit and Wheatear were also seen there, whilst a Whinchat and 4 Wheatears were at Abbotscliffe and 420 Swifts, 3 Yellow Wagtails and a Turtle Dove flew west.

An **Icterine Warbler** at Abbotscliffe on the 15th continued the good run of local rarities, and single Tree Pipit and Wheatear were also present there, with a Tree Pipit at the Gun Site, and 11 Yellow Wagtails flew west. However something of a lull followed before attention turned to the sea on the 19th, when 6 Black Terns, 70 Common Terns and 40 Sandwich Terns were feeding off Copt Point, with 4 Arctic Skuas, Bonxie, 2 Ringed Plovers and a Whimbrel past. At least one Arctic Tern was feeding with 50+ Common Terns off Copt Point the next day.

On the 21st 2 Whinchats were at Abbotscliffe with at least 8 Wheatears at Samphire Hoe. An **Osprey** flew east at Abbotscliffe on the 22nd, and there were 10 Willow Warblers, 12 Wheatears and 3 Whinchats there, 4 Wheatears at the Gun Site, and 19 Yellow Wagtails west. 3 Arctic Skuas flew west past Copt Point. 20 Yellow Wagtails flew west at Abbotscliffe on the 25th, and a Cuckoo was seen there on the 26th, when 30 Swifts went west. An Arctic Skua passed Copt Point on the 27th.

The 28th produced 4 Wheatears, 3 Whinchats and a Sedge Warbler at the cliffs, with 25 Sand Martins and 4 Yellow Wagtails west at the Gun Site the next day, plus a Tree Pipit there. Whinchats increased to 7 at Abbotscliffe on the 30th, with another Whinchat and 2 Wheatears at Hythe and a Garden Warbler at Samphire Hoe. The month ended well, with a **Wryneck**, Little Egret and Reed Warbler at Samphire Hoe on the 31st.

September

The 1st produced singles of Redstart, Spotted Flycatcher, Reed Warbler, and Sedge Warbler at Abbotscliffe, plus 5 Whinchats and 6 Wheatears, with a Spotted Flycatcher and a Wheatear at the Gun Site, and a Reed Warbler at Samphire Hoe. A Grey Wagtail flew over Abbotscliffe on the 3rd, and there were 5 Wheatears, 3 Whinchats and a Redstart there on the 4th, with another Grey Wagtail and a Great Spotted Woodpecker over. A Pied Flycatcher arrived at Abbotscliffe on the 5th, and a Redstart, 3 Reed Warblers, 3 Whinchats and 3 Wheatears were also present. 4 Whinchats were noted there the next day.

Last migrant dates in September:

10th - Spotted Flycatcher
15th - Willow Warbler
16th - Reed Warbler
27th - Hobby
- Sand Martin
29th - Tree Pipit
- Sedge Warbler
30th - Turtle Dove

On the 7th a Manx Shearwater, a Whimbrel and a Razorbill passed Copt Point. A new Pied Flycatcher was at Abbotscliffe in the evening, and it was joined by 10 Whinchats, 3 Wheatears and a Grey Wagtail the next day. Whinchats increased to 16 at Abbotscliffe on the 9th. The 10th saw an **Osprey** fly west at Abbotscliffe, and singles of Firecrest, Pied Flycatcher, Spotted

Flycatcher, Redstart, and Sedge Warbler were also present, together with 13 Whinchats and 2 Wheatears, and 15 Meadow Pipits flew east. A Common Buzzard flew west over Hythe and 110 Gannets, 4 Fulmars and 2 Razorbills were seen off Copt Point. Whinchats peaked at 19 at Abbotscliffe on the 12th, and 4 Arctic Skuas flew west past Copt Point the next day.

Return passage of Chiffchaffs became evident from mid-month with 10 at Abbotscliffe and 4 by the Café on the 15th, when Abbotscliffe also hosted 7 Whinchats, 2 Blackcaps, 2 Willow Warblers, a Wheatear and a Lesser Whitethroat, with 97 Meadow Pipits, a Grey Wagtail and a Great Spotted Woodpecker over. 21 Chiffchaffs were at Abbotscliffe on the 16th, and a Redstart, a Reed Warbler, 7 Blackcaps, 2 Whinchats and a Wheatear were also present. Meadow Pipits increased to 300 there and a Grey Wagtail and Great Spotted Woodpecker flew over.

The only Sooty Shearwater of the year flew west past Copt Point on the 18th, and a Bonxie, 2 Arctic Skuas and an Arctic Tern were also seen there. Back on land there were 14 Chiffchaffs, 6 Whinchats, 5 Wheatears, a Hobby, a Great Spotted Woodpecker, a Goldcrest, a Reed Bunting, 12 Yellow Wagtails and 2,000+ House Martins at Abbotscliffe on the 19th. A further 25 Chiffchaffs and 10 Blackcaps were seen below the Café and a Marsh Harrier flew in off the sea. The sea was again the focus on the 20th, when 3 Bonxies, an Arctic Skua and an Arctic Tern were seen off Copt Point.

On the 22nd 125 Meadow Pipits and 4 Yellow Wagtails flew west at Abbotscliffe, and a Wheatear and 6 Whinchats were present. 27 Chiffchaffs were counted at Abbotscliffe on the 24th and at least 3,000 House Martins and 1,000 Swallows were in the area. On the 25th Abbotscliffe yielded a Garden Warbler, 16 Chiffchaffs and 2 Whinchats, and 2 Common Swifts, a Hobby, a Merlin and 3 Golden Plover flew over. A Grasshopper Warbler was new at Abbotscliffe on the 26th, with Common Swift, Hobby and Merlin again at the cliffs.

A Snow Bunting was at Samphire Hoe on the 27th-28th, but it was quiet otherwise, with just a Hobby and c.2,000 House Martins west at Abbotscliffe on the 27th, a Red-throated Diver past and a Grey Wagtail over Samphire Hoe on the 28th, and a Sedge Warbler at Abbotscliffe on the 29th. About 20 Redwings were heard over Folkestone during the night of 29th/30th and the following morning produced a **Lapland Bunting** west at Abbotscliffe, and reports of 2 Hobbies and 2 Merlins at the cliffs.

October

21 Chiffchaffs and single Lesser Whitethroat and Great Spotted Woodpecker provided the only interest at the cliffs on the 1st, whilst on the sea 41 Brent Geese, 15 Teal, 10 Wigeon, 3 Red-breasted Mergansers, a Gadwall and 2 Dunlin passed Mill Point. A Manx Shearwater, 4 Arctic Skuas, 28 Little Gulls, 17 Arctic Terns, 8 Pintail, 4 Razorbills and 90 Gannets flew west past Copt Point on the 4th but it remained quiet on the land. A Grasshopper Warbler and a Ring Ouzel appeared at Abbotscliffe on the 5th, and there were c.20 Chiffchaffs, c.15 Goldcrests and 14 Blackcaps in the area. Single Merlin, Yellow Wagtail, Great Spotted Woodpecker and 3 Grey Herons flew west.

Last migrant dates in October:

1st - Lesser Whitethroat
- Common Whitethroat
5th - Grasshopper Warbler
7th - Yellow Wagtail
14th - Arctic Tern
- Common Tern
- Sandwich Tern
15th - Common Swift
- Whinchat
20th - Common Redstart
24th - Wheatear
28th - Arctic Skua

On the 7th 250 Starlings flew in off the sea at the Cafe, and 13 Sky Larks, 4 Reed Buntings, 2 Grey Wagtails, a late Yellow Wagtail, and a Great Spotted Woodpecker flew west. A further 570 Starlings arrived in off the sea at the Cafe the next day, and 14 Chaffinches, 9 Sky Larks and 4 Yellowhammers flew west, but the highlight of the 8th was a **Yellow-browed Warbler** at Abbotscliffe in the evening. Several Redwings had also appeared there by the evening and more were moving overnight. A male Hen Harrier flew north over at Abbotscliffe on the 9th and a **Honey Buzzard** was reported over Folkestone Harbour. 20+ Redwings were at the Gun Site, with a Fieldfare and several Redwings at Abbotscliffe, and an Arctic Skua and 100 Brent Geese passed at sea. On the 10th 47 Brent Geese, 20 Razorbills, 14 Dunlin, 3 Arctic Terns, an Arctic Skua and a Purple Sandpiper flew east past Mill Point, but there were just a few Redwings and Fieldfares of note on the land.

The 11th produced 2 Snow Buntings (to 20th) and a Ring Ouzel at Samphire Hoe, and a Firecrest at the Gun Site heralded the start of a small influx, with 12 at Samphire Hoe and singles at Abbotscliffe and behind the Café the next day. A Black Redstart was also at Samphire Hoe on the 12th. On the 13th there were Firecrests at Samphire Hoe (7), Abbotscliffe and Mill Point. Samphire Hoe also held 3 Ring Ouzels and 20 Redwings, and there were 12 Fieldfares at the Gun Site, with 2 Little Gulls past on the sea. A further 10 Little Gulls were seen off Mill Point the next day, together with a Red-breasted Merganser and an Arctic Tern.

A **Richard's Pipit** was found at Abbotscliffe on the 15th and 5 Ring Ouzels, 5 Firecrests, 11 Chiffchaffs, 4 Redwings and 2 Wheatears were also present there. 8 Reed Buntings, 2 Siskins, 2 Redpolls, a Brambling and a swift (probably common) flew over. 2 Firecrests were at Nickoll's Quarry, with 13 Chiffchaffs, 9 Goldcrests, 3 Tree Sparrows, a Whinchat, and a Jay there, and c.600 Swallows and c.600 House Martins moved west over Hythe in the afternoon. The **Richard's Pipit** was still present at Abbotscliffe on the 16th, but highlight of the day was only the second modern area record of **Corncrake** there. A Ring Ouzel, a Redstart, a Brambling, 4 Tree Sparrows, and 21 migrant Long-tailed Tits were also seen. Samphire Hoe produced 2 Ring Ouzels and c.1,000 House Martins were in the area. A second **Richard's Pipit** was at Abbotscliffe on the 17th and 140 Chaffinches, 500 Starlings, 17 Sky Larks, 11 Fieldfares, a Golden Plover and a Siskin flew in off the sea. A Ring Ouzel and a Black Redstart were at Samphire Hoe and a Merlin flew over the Warren.

A quieter spell followed with just 110 Goldfinches, 4 Reed Buntings, 3 Fieldfares, and a Brambling over Abbotscliffe on the 18th. A Redstart, a Black Redstart and a Wheatear were at Samphire Hoe on the 20th, and 6 Little Gulls, 2 Red-breasted Mergansers, 2 Razorbills and 2 Wigeon passed Mill Point, with 8 Redwings in off the sea there. A Firecrest was at Samphire Hoe on the 21st. 3 Little Gulls and a Grey Plover flew past Mill Point on the 22nd, and 11 Sky Larks arrived in off the sea. 3 Little Gulls were off Copt Point on the 23rd, with 4 Black Redstarts and 2 Wheatears at Samphire Hoe on the 24th.

Visual passage on the 26th included a **Lapland Bunting** east over Samphire Hoe, and 1,160 Wood Pigeons, 145 Stock Doves, 60 Chaffinches, 2 Siskins, 2 Bramblings, a Snow Bunting, a Tree Sparrow, and 2 Bullfinches mostly headed west over Abbotscliffe. There were also 2-3 Ring Ouzels in the area. On the 27th 2 Firecrests were by the Café, with a Firecrest and a Black Redstart at Samphire Hoe, joined by a Snow Bunting the next day, when 6 Little Gulls, 4 Brent Geese and an Arctic Skua flew west past Copt Point.

The month ended with another small influx of Firecrests, involving 4 in the Church Wood area and 2 behind the Café on the 29th, 3 by the Café on the 30th, and a total of 8 in the area on the 31st. The 29th also produced 4 Black Redstarts at Samphire Hoe, 2 Redpolls and 160 Lapwings over, and 17 Brent Geese and a Red-breasted Merganser past Mill Point. A further 3 Black

Redstarts were at Abbotscliffe on the 30th and on the 31st there was a Ring Ouzel in the Warren and c.30 Fieldfares in the area.

November

A Snow Bunting, a Redpoll and 2 Lapwings flew in/east at Abbotscliffe on the 1st, and a Snipe was also present there, with another Snow Bunting at Samphire Hoe. The latter site then produced a **Lapland Bunting**, a **Twite** and a late Garden Warbler the next day, when 118 Brent Geese and 11 Pintail flew west at sea. The 2nd also saw a Firecrest in a garden in the town, and further Firecrest were at Abbotscliffe (2) and Samphire Hoe on the 3rd. Abbotscliffe also hosted a Corn Bunting on the 3rd, and 3 Swallows and 8 Redpolls flew over there on the 4th.

Last migrant dates in November:

2nd - Garden Warbler
9th - Ring Ouzel
10th - Swallow
13th - House Martin
- Blackcap
20th - Chiffchaff

On the 5th 265 Wood Pigeons, 23 Stock Doves, 4 Swallows and a House Martin flew west at Abbotscliffe, and 121 Chaffinches arrived in off the sea over the Café the next day, plus singles of Snow Bunting, Brambling and Redpoll. Visual migration continued on the 7th, with 760 Starlings, 7 Sky Larks, 3 Bullfinches, 2 Redpolls, 2 Lapwings, a Marsh Harrier, and a Brambling in off the sea at the Café. 12 Swallows, 2 House Martins and a Chiffchaff were also seen there, and 20 Swallows and a Peregrine were noted over Hythe.

Samphire Hoe produced the only Short-eared Owl of the autumn on the 8th, and 2 Black Redstarts, 2 Blackcaps and 2 Fieldfares were also present. A **Dartford Warbler** was found at Abbotscliffe on the 9th (remaining until the 14th), when a Woodcock was flushed behind the Café and a late Ring Ouzel was at Samphire Hoe. 150 Golden Plovers flew north over the Café on the 10th, a Swallow flew east and a Lapwing came in off. On the 11th single Little Egret and Muscovy Duck were at Samphire Hoe.

Single Chiffchaffs were at Samphire Hoe on the 12th and at Mill Point on the 14th, and a late House Martin was at Hythe on the 13th, when a Blackcap and 2 Little Egrets were at Samphire Hoe. A solitary Snipe was the only bird of note at Abbotscliffe on the 16th, and a Common Buzzard was seen over Pedlinge on the 18th.

A **Little Auk** lingered briefly off Samphire Hoe on the 20th and 15 Red-throated Divers flew east there. A late Chiffchaff and 2 Goldcrests were at Abbotscliffe, and 36 Chaffinches arrived in off the sea there, with a Corn Bunting east. 7 Brent Geese flew west past Hythe on the 21st.

Samphire Hoe continued its good run with a superb **Dusky Warbler** on the 25th (to 28th) – a new bird for the area. The site also recorded 3 Black Redstarts, Snow Bunting, Little Egret and Water Rail on the 27th and Little Grebe and Fieldfare on the 28th. On the 30th 25 Common Scoter were offshore of Mill Point, with an Eider off Hythe and 2 Shelduck flew east there.

December

December was typically quiet. The only notable count of Red-throated Divers was 15 east past Mill Point on the 12th, and up to 5 Great Crested Grebes were at Nickoll's Quarry throughout, with Little Grebes there, at Botolph's Bridge (2-3) and at Samphire Hoe. Two Shags were at Samphire

Hoe on the 11th and 3 were offshore of Mill Point the next day. Little Egrets were seen at Nickoll's Quarry (c.1st to 6th, with 2 on 24th), Samphire Hoe (11th) and Botolph's Bridge (29th).

The Mute Swan flock in the Botolph's Bridge (Donkey Street) area peaked at 85 on the 24th, and attracted a Greylag Goose from the 24th. Ducks were in very short supply with just 1 Pintail, 2 Pochard and 1 Tufted Duck at Nickoll's Quarry (all on 12th) and 3 Teal there on the 27th, on which date 20 were flushed from the Willop Sewer. 13 Common Scoter were off Mill Point on the 12th. Up to 75 Coot were at Nickoll's Quarry, and a Water Rail was seen there on the 27th.

Two Jack Snipe were at Nickoll's Quarry on the 11th, when single Green Sandpiper, Redshank and Snipe were noted at Botolph's Bridge. 104 Golden Plover were counted in the Botolph's Bridge area on the 29th. 2 Razorbills were off Samphire Hoe on the 4th.

A Black Redstart was at Samphire Hoe on the 27th and a Snow Bunting was seen there on the 11th. Linnets were wintering along the Hythe Ranges (20) and between Hythe Hill and Lympne Hill (9).