

2005 review

January

The first half of the month was dominated by winds from the westerly quarter, which were occasionally strong (such as on the 2nd and 7th/8th) when the passage of fronts also brought wet conditions. It was generally fairly mild, though cooler and calmer days were interspersed, with frost on the 5th and 13th. From the 18th the winds turned more northerly or north-easterly and it felt colder, with some snow even on the 25th-26th, though not enough to induce any cold weather movement.

Red-throated Divers were noted passing west past Folkestone in the early part of the month, with 20 on the 2nd, 12 on the 4th and 42 on the 8th, and east on the 25th, with 35. A **Great Northern Diver** was reported at Samphire Hoe on the 30th. There was a good movement of Great Crested Grebes on the 8th, when 39 flew west past Mill Point, but otherwise 7 west there on the 4th and 16 off Hythe on the 29th were the only notable counts at sea. At Nickoll's Quarry there was a peak of 9 on the 22nd. Little Grebes were at Nickoll's Quarry (2 on the 26th) and on the New Cut (3-4 throughout).

Fulmars were seen off Mill Point on the 4th (2), Copt Point on the 8th (1 west) and Samphire Hoe (maximum 8 on the 15th), and peak counts of Gannet were 10 off Mill Point on the 4th and 28 west past Copt Point on the 8th. There was an apparent arrival of Shags late in the month, with one off Samphire Hoe on the 23rd, singles off Mill Point on the 23rd and 25th, 3 there on the 29th, and 4 reported off Samphire Hoe on the 30th. Little Egrets continue to be a regular feature, with 2 at Nickoll's Quarry and one west at West Hythe on the 1st, one at Nickoll's Quarry on the 13th, singles west over the New Cut and at the Willop Outfall on the 30th, and one near Botolph's Bridge on the 31st. Grey Herons had returned to the heronry at Lympne by the 22nd.

Donkey Street hosted up to 50 Mute Swans throughout and the Greylag Goose which joined them in 2004 lingered until about mid-month. Canada Geese were scarce, with just 8 by the New Cut on the 5th and 2 at Nickoll's Quarry on the 12th. 6 Brent Geese passed Mill Point on the 25th and one flew west past Hythe on the 26th, and on the 25th 10 Shelduck and 2 Wigeon also flew east past Mill Point. The only other Wigeon of the month were 5 west past Hythe Redoubt on the 1st.

23 Mandarin were counted at Sandling Park on the 2nd, when 6 Pintail and 25 Teal were also present. Teal were also seen on the Willop, with a peak of 30 on the 30th. Mallards were noted on the Hythe Canal (60), Sandling Park (40), Radnor Park (35), Botolph's Bridge (28), Brockhill CP (25), Samphire Hoe (20) and Broadmead Village (12) giving a wintering population of at least 220. Peak counts of Common Scoter were 8 off Hythe Redoubt (1st), 11 west past Copt Point (8th) and 7 off Mill Point (28th), and an Eider was reported off Samphire Hoe on the 30th. A male Hen Harrier flew south-west near Botolph's Bridge on the 31st and a Peregrine was seen there on the 8th. Water Rails were wintering at Nickoll's Quarry, West Hythe and Samphire Hoe, and Coots peaked at 70 at Nickoll's Quarry on the 26th.

40 Golden Plover were by Botolph's Bridge on the 1st, with 30 there on the 26th, and a Ringed Plover was at Hythe Redoubt on the 30th, when 3 Knot were at the Willop Outfall. Hythe Redoubt produced 6 Sanderling on the 16th, and up to 3 Purple Sandpipers were at Hythe throughout, with 7 reported there on the 30th, and one at Folkestone Warren on the 30th. Jack Snipe peaked at 3 at Nickoll's Quarry on the 26th, and Common Snipe also peaked on the same day there, with 14. A Woodcock was at Sandling Park on the 16th. 10 Curlew were at the Willop Outfall on the 30th, and Redshank were wintering at Copt Point (7), Botolph's Bridge (3) and the Willop Outfall (2). Single Green Sandpipers were at Botolph's Bridge on the 18th and Nickoll's Quarry on the 26th.

Turnstone were counted at Copt Point (8), Mill Point (27), Hythe Redoubt (41) and the Willop Outfall (17).

The only Kittiwake count of any note was 35 west past Copt Point on the 8th. A westerly passage of auks was noted past Folkestone early in the month, with 50 Guillemots and 5 Razorbills on the 2nd, 340 Guillemots and 5 Razorbills on the 4th, and 130 Guillemots on the 8th. A feeding flock of c.300 auks off Samphire Hoe on the 22nd-23rd included at least 10 Razorbills. The best auk movement of the month occurred on the 25th, when 1,110 Guillemots and 13+ Razorbills flew east past Mill Point.

A count of 22 Stock Doves at Botolph's Bridge on the 4th was noteworthy. Little Owls were at West Hythe and near Botolph's Bridge during the month, and Kingfishers were seen at West Hythe, Botolph's Bridge, Brockhill CP, and Nickoll's Quarry. About 12 Rock Pipits were at Samphire Hoe on the 23rd and Grey Wagtails were seen at Botolph's Bridge and Nickoll's Quarry. A Black Redstart was at Samphire Hoe on the 3rd, and Stonechats were seen there (max 3) and Abbotscliffe (1). The Botolph's Bridge area hosted good numbers of winter thrushes with up to 80 Redwings and 60 Fieldfares throughout, and elsewhere there were 22 Redwings and 6 Fieldfares east of Lympne on the 16th, and 5 Fieldfares at Sandling Park on the 2nd.

Cetti's Warblers were at Nickoll's Quarry on the 1st, near Botolph's Bridge on the 13th and 19th, and at West Hythe on the 22nd, and a Chiffchaff was along the Hythe Canal by the Roughs on the 31st. On the 2nd the Sandling-Brockhill area produced 2 Nuthatches, a Marsh Tit, and a Treecreeper, and a Marsh Tit was at Casebourne Wood on the 9th. A count of 400 Jackdaws at Nickoll's Quarry on the 1st was a record for the site. A Brambling was reported at West Hythe on the 1st, and Linnet flocks were east of Lympne (20 on 22nd) and by the New Cut (30 on 30th). A Snow Bunting was at Samphire Hoe on the 1st, with 2 there on the 23rd, 15 Yellowhammers were counted near Botolph's Bridge on the 8th and 3 Corn Buntings were along Donkey Street on the 30th.

February

The month began fairly calm and generally mild before a cool south-easterly breeze picked up between the 5th-7th. Calmer, milder and often overcast conditions returned from the 8th, then a front brought wind and rain on the night of the 11th/12th. A cold northerly brought some snow to higher ground on the 15th, which proved a foretaste of things to come – the last 10 days of the month seeing some real wintry weather, with regular snow showers, amounting to a covering of 2-3 inches on several days. The wind remained in the northerly quarter, and often led to considerable wind chill, particularly when it swung round to the north-east. Daytime temperatures remained generally above freezing though and little ice formed on open water.

Great Crested Grebes were present in reasonable numbers throughout, with a total of 67 in Hythe Bay on the 3rd, 63 off Hythe Redoubt on the 20th and 45 off Seabrook/Sandgate on the 21st being notable. Up to 6 were at Nickoll's Quarry during the month. Little Grebes were at Nickoll's Quarry (on the 23rd) and on the New Cut (max 5). Two Fulmars flew east past Mill Point on the 6th, with another 2 on the 12th. 3-4 Shags were present off Mill Point throughout.

Little Egrets were at the Willop Outfall on the 3rd and 13th, and singles seen on 3 dates at Nickoll's Quarry, with 2 there on the 7th and 4 reported for 2 days at the end of the month. Up to 44 Mute Swans remained in the Donkey Street area until at least 8th, before dispersing later in the month, and single immature Mute Swans (possibly the same bird) on the sea off Hythe on the 3rd, and flying west past Mill Point on the 4th, were more unusual records. At least 6 Canada Geese (3 pairs) had returned to Nickoll's Quarry by the 20th.

Brent Goose passage was noted off Mill Point on 3 dates, with 41 east on the 6th, 140 east on the 12th and 34 east on the 26th. About 20 Greylag Geese also flew east at Mill Point on the 6th. 14 Shelduck flew west at Hythe on the 4th and 2 flew east past Samphire Hoe on the 16th. At least 6 Mandarins remained at Sandling Park, and a Gadwall was seen there on the 23rd.

A single Wigeon was at Nickoll's Quarry on the 7th before the cold spell brought 12 there on the 25th, and the weather also encouraged a female Pintail (on 20th), a Pochard (on 26th) and up to 4 Tufted Ducks (1 from 23rd to 28th, with 4 on 25th) to visit the site. A Muscovy Duck at West Hythe on the 26th was an unusual sight. A female Eider lingered off Seabrook/Sandgate on the 2nd to 4th, and 2 Red-breasted Mergansers were reported off Copt Point on the 26th.

A Common Buzzard was at Pedlinge on the 15th and a male Merlin was seen near Botolph's Bridge on the 21st. Water Rails were again at Nickoll's Quarry (photo), and also at Botolph's Bridge on 11th and 17th. Up to 60 Coot were at Nickoll's Quarry throughout, and a pair of Oystercatchers returned to that site early in the month.

A good count of 16 Sanderling were at the Willop Outfall on the 1st, and up to 8 Purple Sandpipers were off Hythe throughout the month (photos), with 4 at Hythe Redoubt on the 6th. A count of 5 Jack Snipe at Nickoll's Quarry on the 3rd was a new record for the site, and 3 were still present on the 20th, together with 14 Common Snipe. A wintering flock of Curlew at the Willop Outfall peaked at 26 on the 3rd, and one flew east past Mill Point on the 24th. Green Sandpipers were seen on 3 dates in the west Hythe area. Turnstone were counted at the Willop Outfall (12), Hythe Redoubt (12) and Folkestone Harbour (20).



Purple Sandpiper - Hythe - February (Ian Roberts)

Two Tawny Owls were calling in Paraker Wood on the 4th, and a Short-eared Owl was reported flying east past Samphire Hoe on the 16th. Kingfishers were seen at West Hythe, Hythe Canal (Roughs), and Nickoll's Quarry. A Grey Wagtail was at Botolph's Bridge on the 11th and a Stonechat was at Nickoll's Quarry on the 25th. Up to 62 Fieldfares were in the Botolph's Bridge throughout, but Redwings numbered no more than 6 (at Nickoll's Quarry and Hythe).

Cetti's Warblers were near Botolph's Bridge on 2nd and 4th, and at Nickoll's Quarry on the 22nd. A Blackcap and 2 Chiffchaffs were along the Hythe Canal (Roughs) on the 8th, and 3 Chiffchaffs were seen there on the 19th. A Firecrest was at Mill Point on the 4th. Jackdaws were counted at Dibgate Camp (500 on the 4th) and near Botolph's Bridge (300 on the 15th).

Two Tree Sparrows were at Willop Outfall on 1st, with 12 Reed Buntings near Botolph's Bridge on the 18th and single Corn Buntings at the Willop Outfall on the 1st and near Botolph's Bridge on the 18th.

March

The month began cold, with some snow still lying from February, but there were little signs of any cold weather movement – 4 Tufted Ducks at Nickoll's Quarry on the 1st and 6 Pochards there on the 2nd being about all – indeed there were even signs of spring, with 80 Brent Geese and 8 Curlew east past Samphire Hoe on the 2nd and a male Blackcap (albeit probably a wintering bird) at Hythe on the 1st.

First migrant dates in March:

30th - Willow Warbler
- Blackcap*
28th - Firecrest*
26th - Sand Martin
20th - Garganey
- Swallow
19th - Sandwich Tern
18th - Black Redstart*
17th - Wheatear
- Little Ringed Plover
- Chiffchaff*
6th - White Wagtail

*excludes wintering birds

A change in conditions on the Continent on the 3rd, with particularly hard weather in the Netherlands, induced a notable influx of Lapwings with c.300 seen arriving in off the sea at Folkestone during the day and 6 grounded on playing fields in Hythe. 1,400 were counted in the Botolph's Bridge area on the 4th and birds continued to arrive on the 5th, with 4 in off the sea at the Hythe Redoubt and 1 in off at Samphire Hoe, and there were sightings from unusual localities: 9 at the latter site and 68 on the golf course and playing fields in Hythe. 1,400 were again counted in the Botolph's Bridge area on the 6th, but dispersal followed as the weather improved, with only 800 there the next day, and several large flocks were seen migrating back: 230 east past Hythe on the 8th and 675 (in 3 flocks) high to the north over the Botolph's Bridge area on the 10th. Just 3 were present at Nickoll's Quarry on the 11th, and stragglers involved one at Abbotscliffe on the 15th and 2 north-east over Nickoll's Quarry on the 17th.

Other waders were also affected with the highlight being 2 **Ruff** on Donkey Street on 4th, with 3 along Burmarsh Road on 5th (1 remaining to 7th). 2 Curlews over Hythe town on the 3rd were an unusual record, and 2 were on Donkey Street on 4th, with 3 at Nickoll's Quarry on 6th. 30 Golden Plover, 3 Redshank, and a Green Sandpiper were also in the Donkey Street/Botolph's Bridge area on the 4th. 23 Turnstone, 4 Redshank and 3 Ringed Plovers were counted in Folkestone Harbour on the 5th, when a further 25 Turnstone and 1 Ringed Plover were at Hythe Redoubt. A Snipe was a notable record for Samphire Hoe on the 5th and a Jack Snipe was at Nickoll's Quarry the next day. A total of 14 Oystercatchers were noted in the area on the 6th.

The cold weather also brought wildfowl, with 43 Wigeon, 13 Teal, 7 Gadwall, 21 Tufted Duck, and a Pochard at Nickoll's Quarry on the 4th – easily the largest duck count of the winter. An additional 4 Gadwall and a Red-breasted Merganser were also off the Hythe Redoubt on the 4th. Two Wigeon and 3 Teal were notable records for Samphire Hoe on the 5th, and a flock of 17 Pintail were on the sea off the Willop Outfall (remaining until the 6th). A further 2 Pintail were at Nickoll's Quarry on the 6th and 53 Teal and 4 Gadwall were seen on the New Cut south of Botolph's Bridge. 19 Wigeon at Nickoll's Quarry on the 7th was another notable count. Two flocks totaling 48 Greylag Geese flew east past Hythe on the 3rd.

The impact on passerines was minimal although 5 Sky Larks on a playing field in Hythe on 5th were certainly cold-weather migrants. A peak of 61 Meadow Pipits at Nickoll's Quarry on 4th might have been linked, as might an apparent increase in thrushes, including 62 Fieldfares and 32 Redwings at Botolph's Bridge on the 4th, 20 Song Thrushes at Nickoll's Quarry on the 6th and

18 Redwings there the next day. Some relief from the cold weather was provided during this period by the first White Wagtail of the year at Hythe Golf Course on the 6th and another wintering Blackcap along the Hythe Canal on the 7th.

The 8th saw the peak count of Great Crested Grebes, when 190 were on the sea between Hythe and Copt Point, and 4 Shags and 2 Red-breasted Mergansers were on the sea off Mill Point. 18 Red-throated Divers also flew east off Hythe. A light north-westerly breeze encouraged the first visual migration of the spring on the 9th, with 30 Chaffinches, 3 Meadow Pipits, a Sky Lark and an alba wagtail in/east at the Café at Capel-le-Ferne, and 3 Siskins flew east at Samphire Hoe the next day. 5 Gadwall were noteworthy at Nickoll's Quarry on the 11th and a count of 22 Snipe there was the largest of the winter. 3 Green Sandpipers at Botolph's Bridge on the same date may well have been migrants.

The wind again went north-westerly on the 12th and there was a steady trickle of Chaffinches over the Cafe amounting to 286 in 2.5 hours. 21 Siskins, 240 Starlings, 8 Stock Doves, 5 Sky Larks, 2 Linnets, and an alba wagtail also flew in/east there. A few more Chaffinches (66) and Siskins (6) flew east at the Café the next day, and 44 Starlings, 3 Stock Doves and a Reed Bunting also went over, but the highlight of the day was a **Waxwing** in Folkestone town centre (remaining to the 17th). A Snow Bunting was at Copt Point on the 13th and another or the same was at Samphire Hoe on the 14th-15th. 90 Brent Geese flew east past Samphire Hoe on the 14th.



Waxwing - Folkestone - 13th-17th March (Dale Gibson)

A quiet couple of days preceded a spell of mild weather from the 17th, which produced the first summer migrants of the year. A heavy overnight passage of Redwings and other thrushes on the 16th/17th heralded a change in conditions and the first Wheatear was at Samphire Hoe the next morning, with the first migrant Chiffchaffs there and at Nickoll's Quarry (4). The latter site also saw the first Little Ringed Plover flying over. Grounded Redwings were at Cheriton (60) and Samphire Hoe (12), but 7 Brent Geese east past the Hoe was the only interest at sea. Wheatears increased to a good count of 9 at Samphire Hoe on the 18th, and the first migrant Black Redstart, 3 Chiffchaffs, 6 Redwings, 6 Goldcrests, and 3 Snipe were also of note there.



Snow Bunting - Samphire Hoe - March (Ian Roberts)

On the 19th 106 Meadow Pipits, 122 Wood Pigeons and a Stock Dove flew in/east at the Café, and a Woodcock was flushed from bushes inland. 50 Fieldfares, 43 Redwings, and a Siskin flew over Abbotscliffe and the first 6 Sandwich Terns were off Hythe.

A freshening easterly wind produced 2 **Garganey**, 49 Pintail, 17 Gadwall, 28 Shoveler, 34 Wigeon, 18 Red-breasted Mergansers, 111 Common Scoter, 17 Shelduck, 497 Brent Geese, 72 Dunlin, 199 Black-headed Gulls, 4 Mediterranean Gulls, a Little Gull, 20 Sandwich Terns and 31 auk sp. all flying east past Mill Point in 3 hours on the 20th, whilst 36 Meadow Pipits flew in off the sea there and a Wheatear was on the beach. The first Swallow and a White Wagtail were at Nickoll's Quarry. 3 Siskin flew east at Samphire Hoe and 2 Wheatear were seen there. A first-winter **Glaucous Gull** was off Mill Point in the morning of the 21st, and 365 Brent Geese, 13 Pintail, a Shag, 3 Curlew, 3 Med Gulls, 45 Black-headed Gulls, 38 Sandwich Terns, 20 Guillemots and 2 Razorbills flew east there. A Common Buzzard flew over Samphire Hoe. The sea was again the focus on the 22nd, when 4 Velvet Scoters, a Little Egret, 4 Grey Herons, 38 Brent Geese, 5 Shelduck, 3 Red-breasted Mergansers, 46 Black-headed Gulls, 1 Mediterranean Gull and 28 Sandwich Terns flew east. Another Little Egret flew west near Botolph's Bridge.

Three Common Buzzards flew over Samphire Hoe on the 23rd, and 2 Black Redstarts were seen there, with another in a garden in Folkestone. A single Siskin flew east at the Gun Site. Just 2 Grey Herons and 2 Red-breasted Mergansers east past Samphire Hoe were of note on the 24th. A trickle of visual migration was noted on the 25th, with 13 Meadow Pipits, 12 Linnets, 5 Stock Doves and singles of Siskin, Reed Bunting and Grey Wagtail over the Cafe.

A northerly breeze produced a good movement of Chaffinches on the 26th, with 846 east at the cliffs, also 2 Brambling, a Swallow, the first Sand Martin, a Merlin, 15 Meadow Pipits, 21 Linnets, 4 Stock Doves and 112 Starlings east there. A Wheatear and 6 Chiffchaffs were at the Gun Site and Common Buzzard flew east over Folkestone in the afternoon. A Swallow, 25 Meadow Pipits and 3 alba wagtails struggled in despite dismal conditions on the 27th and 13 Red-breasted Mergansers and 3 Sandwich Terns went past at sea. 2 Firecrests, 4 Chiffchaffs, and 2 Black Redstarts were at Samphire Hoe on the 28th, 17 Meadow Pipits arrived in off at the Café and 2 more Common Buzzards flew east over Folkestone (a total of 7 migrants in the last 8 days). A moderate easterly on the 29th caused a light passage at sea, with 2 Avocets, 87 Brent Geese and 3 Sandwich Terns east past Mill Point, and 27 Meadow Pipits in off the sea.



Common Buzzards - Folkestone - 28th March
(Dale Gibson)

Fog produced a small arrival at Samphire Hoe on the 30th, including the first 5 Willow Warblers of the year (a good count for March). A Green Sandpiper was an unusual record for the site, and the first migrant Blackcap was seen. A Firecrest, 2 Black Redstarts, a Wheatear, 3 Fieldfares, 7 Chiffchaffs, 9 Redshank, and a Lesser Redpoll were also present. The month ended with 125 Brent Geese, 28 Sandwich Terns, and a Gadwall east at sea and 2 Wheatears at Mill Point.

April

After a quiet first day, an increasing south-easterly wind produced a good movement at sea on the 2nd, with 12 **Garganey**, 3 Avocets, 6 Velvet Scoters, 3 Eider, 17 Red-breasted Mergansers, 19 Shoveler, 3 Gadwall, 31 Red-throated Divers, 129 Sandwich Terns, 19 Fulmars, 16 Gannets, 141 Common Gulls, and 46 Black-headed Gulls east past Samphire Hoe. A calmer 3rd saw the first 6 Common Terns of the year fly east past Copt Point, but otherwise just c.100 Sandwich Terns and 5 Red-breasted Mergansers were notable at sea. The first Yellow Wagtail flew over Abbotscliffe and a Firecrest was present, and 4 Black Redstarts and a Blackcap were at Samphire Hoe. The 4th continued calm, but rather wet, and c.50 Goldfinches and 15 Siskin flew in/east at Samphire Hoe, with 6 Chiffchaffs and a Blackcap there.

First migrant dates in April:

- 30th - Wood Warbler
 - Sedge Warbler
 - Whinchat
 - Turtle Dove
- 27th - Reed Warbler
- 26th - Ring Ouzel
- 24th - Common Swift
- 19th - Common Sandpiper
 - Arctic Tern
- 17th - Little Tern
 - Lesser Whitethroat
- 16th - Hobby
- 14th - Nightingale
 - Arctic Skua
- 12th - House Martin
- 9th - Whitethroat
- 5th - Common Redstart
- 3rd - Yellow Wagtail
 - Common Tern

A westerly airflow dominated the next five days, and it was often blustery with below average temperatures, including a heavy frost on the night of the 8th/9th, but it was generally dry. There was little to be seen with a fine male Common Redstart at Samphire Hoe on the 5th being easily the highlight. The 8th saw a trickle of visual passage, with 20 Chaffinches, 23 Linnets, 8 Meadow Pipits, a Siskin, and a Swallow struggling in off the sea, and the 9th was similar with 12 Linnets, 6 Chaffinches, and a Siskin in/east and the first Common Whitethroat at Samphire Hoe.

The 10th was milder and 7 Swallows, 16 Meadow Pipits, and 40 Linnets arrived in off the sea, whilst 2 Spotted Redshank were heard over Folkestone at night. A calm 11th saw 3 Sand Martins fly in off the sea at the Cafe, and 75 Sandwich Terns and 12 Brent Geese went east past Samphire Hoe. Despite a cool north-westerly breeze the 12th produced the highlight of the month, in the form of a **Black Kite** east over Hythe. The first 2 House Martins were seen over Cheriton, and single Common Whitethroats were at the Gun Site and Samphire Hoe.

The wind veered round to the west on the 13th but it was fairly calm, and rain grounded a male Common Redstart, 5 Willow Warblers, 2 Whitethroats, a White Wagtail, a Wheatear, a Chiffchaff, and a Swallow at Samphire Hoe. The 14th remained wet and the wind continued round to the south-west. The drizzle deposited a singing Nightingale at Mill Point, whilst a brief dry spell allowed the first Arctic Skua and Bonxie of the year to pass by. 40 Gannets, 64 Common Scoter, 3 Common Terns, and a Little Gull also flew east and single Yellow Wagtail and Swallow arrived in off. The next day saw 270 Common Scoter, 34 Sandwich Terns, 18 Brent Geese, and 17 Gannets go east at sea.

The 16th was fairly calm and dry and the first Hobby of the year flew in off the sea at Samphire Hoe, together with 11 Swallows and single Yellow Wagtail and Redpoll. 356 Sandwich Terns, 96 Gannets, 27 Whimbrel, 13 Velvet Scoter, and a Shag flew east at sea there. Another calm morning saw 7 Avocets, 2 Little Terns, 12 Whimbrel, a Bar-tailed Godwit, 134 Sandwich Terns, 85 Gannets, 72 Common Scoter, 3 Mediterranean Gulls and a Tufted Duck pass Samphire Hoe. The first Lesser Whitethroat was noted at the Gun Site. The wind increased during the 17th and a

front passed through overnight, leaving a wet morning on the 18th, which yielded just 35 Sandwich Terns, 8 Common Terns, 40 Gannets, 46 Common Scoter, 6 Shelduck and 4 Whimbrel east at sea.

The 19th was a much better day, with a moderate easterly encouraging 450 'commic' terns, including 54+ Arctic Terns, 850 Sandwich Terns, 2,235 Common Scoter, 85 Brent Geese, 75 Gannets, 15 Whimbrel, 14 Velvet Scoter, 12 Red-breasted Mergansers, a Black-throated and 12 Red-throated Divers, and 2 Bonxies to move east at sea. The first Common Sandpiper was at Nickoll's Quarry. The next day was calmer and just 250 Sandwich Terns, 66 Gannets, 13 Common Terns and a Bonxie went east at sea. Single Lesser Whitethroat and Willow Warbler were at the Gun Site, and 4 House Martins and a Willow Warbler were at Abbotscliffe.

The next few days saw fairly gentle easterlies, with mostly dry conditions, and there was a steady trickle of birds moving east at sea, with 2 Grey Plovers, 10 Whimbrel, 82 Gannets and 34 Sandwich Terns on the 21st, 93 Gannets, 45 Sandwich Terns, 36 Common Scoter, 4 Shoveler and a Bonxie on the 22nd, 296 Sandwich Terns, 74 Gannets, 25 Whimbrel, 17 Common Terns, 5 Shoveler, a Bonxie and a Little Egret on the 23rd, and 37 Whimbrel, 10 Shoveler, 3 Arctic Skuas, a Bonxie and a Bar-tailed Godwit on the 24th. It was quiet on the land though, with just single Wheatear and Yellow Wagtail at Samphire Hoe on the 21st, and another Wheatear at Abbotscliffe on the 24th, when the first 2 Common Swifts, 27 Swallows, a House Martin and 2 Siskins flew in off the sea at the Café.

Following a day of heavy rain on the 25th there were a few grounded migrants evident the next morning, with the first 2-3 Ring Ouzels at Abbotscliffe, also a Wheatear and 3 Willow Warblers there, and 11 Wheatears at Samphire Hoe. The latter site also produced 4 Arctic Skuas, 260 Bar-tailed Godwits, 40 Brent Geese and 3 Red-breasted Mergansers east at sea. Single Greenshank and Common Sandpiper were at Nickoll's Quarry, and a Swift was seen there, with 3 more over Hythe. The wind increased from the west on the 27th and the only bird of note was the first Reed Warbler at Nickoll's Quarry. Moderate south to south-west winds on the 28th saw a Manx Shearwater, 2 Arctic Skuas, 2 Bonxies and 22 Bar-tailed Godwits fly east past Mill Point.

The 30th was warm, with a light southerly wind and fog patches, and produced the best arrival of the month, with a **Serin** singing briefly by the Royal Oak pub in Capel-le-Ferne, a Wood Warbler and the first Sedge Warbler singing at the Gun Site, the first Whinchat and a Ring Ouzel at Abbotscliffe, the first Turtle Dove at Hythe Golf Course, and totals of 10 Lesser Whitethroats, 5 Wheatears, 4 Reed Warblers, 2 Willow Warblers, a Common Redstart, 23 Swallows and c.40 Whitethroats in the area.

May

A calm and mild 1st saw a record day total of 46 Pomarine Skuas east past Samphire Hoe, and 2 Bonxies, 4 Black-throated Divers, 80 Bar-tailed Godwits, 155 Common Scoters, and 80 Sandwich Terns also flew east there, whilst c.50 Swallows, 15 House Martins, and 6 Swifts arrived in off the sea. The first Tree Pipit of the year was at Abbotscliffe and a Marsh Harrier flew east over Nickoll's Quarry in the evening.

First migrant dates in May:

15th - Spotted Flycatcher
10th - Honey Buzzard
- Cuckoo
9th - Montagu's Harrier
3rd - Black Tern
1st - Pomarine Skua
- Tree Pipit

Rain on the 2nd deposited a Nightingale and Reed Warbler behind the Café, but there was little else of note. A band of drizzle on the 3rd induced an excellent tern passage off Samphire Hoe, with 1,980 Common/Arctic (a record spring count), 750+ Sandwich, 33 Little, and the first Black

of the year passing east. 65 Gannets, 58 Bar-tailed Godwits, 9 Brent Geese, 8 Whimbrel, 6 Grey Plover, 6 Dunlin, 3 Arctic Skuas, and a Black-throated Diver were also caught up in the movement. It was quiet on the land however, with just single Wheatears at Samphire Hoe and Capel-le-Ferne.

A run of rather cool north-westerlies from the 4th encouraged hirundines and swifts to cross the Channel, with 48 Swallows (4th), 103 Swallows (6th), 38 Swallows, 23 Swifts, and 23 House Martins (7th), and 64 Swallows, 18 House Martins, and 18 Swifts (8th) being the more notable counts. Unsurprisingly, Hobbies were also incoming, with singles on the 4th and 6th, and Grey Herons appeared to be on the move, with 6 logged arriving in off the sea between the 4th and 8th. Grounded migrants were very scarce, with just a Tree Pipit at the Café on the 6th, a Siskin there on the 7th, and Wheatears at Hythe Ranges (3) and Nickoll's Quarry on the 8th of note. A trickle of waders comprised 3 Common Sandpipers at Nickoll's Quarry on the 5th, and 2 Common Sandpipers and a Dunlin there on the 8th, with a Dunlin at Hythe Ranges the same day.

The wind edged round to the north on the 9th which proved favourable for raptors, with a male **Montagu's Harrier**, a Marsh Harrier and a Hobby in off the sea at the cliffs on the 9th and a **Honey Buzzard** in off the sea at Abbotscliffe on the 10th. 168 Swifts, 69 Swallows and 11 House Martins also arrived on the 9th and 53 Swallows, 44 Swifts and 31 House Martins were noted the next day. The 10th also produced the first Cuckoo of the year, in off the sea at the Café.

During the 11th the wind picked up from the east and 2 Black-throated Divers, 2 Grey Plovers, and 102 Gannets flew east past Samphire Hoe. Moderate easterlies the next day produced another good movement of Pomarine Skuas, with a total of 32 passing the area, and a Great Northern Diver, 4 Arctic Skuas, 220 Gannets, 223 Sandwich Terns, 41 Common Terns, and 4 Little Terns also flew east. A trickle of waders throughout the day amounted to 140 Bar-tailed Godwits, 36 Whimbrel, 35 Grey Plover, 21 Sanderling, 5 Common Sandpipers, and 4 Knot. Despite similar conditions on the 13th much less was moving, with totals of 110 Gannets, 45 Sandwich Terns, 2 Arctic Skuas, 9 Bar-tailed Godwits, 4 Grey Plover, 3 Ringed Plover, 2 Whimbrel, a Knot and a Redshank east, and passage almost petered out completely on the 14th, with just single Arctic Skua and Little Tern of note.

A brief switch to south-easterlies on the 15th was enough to produce 2 **Honey Buzzards** and a Marsh Harrier in off the sea at the Café, the first Spotted Flycatcher of the year at Abbotscliffe, and totals of 67 Swallows, 24 House Martins, 20 Swifts, 2 Sand Martins and a Yellow Wagtail in off at the cliffs. 5 Common Sandpipers, 2 Dunlin, and a Redshank were at Nickoll's Quarry. The wind went back north over the next three days, but Spotted Flycatchers continued to arrive, with singles at the Café on the 16th and 18th, and hirundines did likewise, with 41 Swallows and 13 House Martins on the 16th, 35 House Martins, 21 Swallows, and 2 Sand Martins on the 17th, and 17 House Martins and 15 Swallows on the 18th. Two Avocets at Nickoll's Quarry on the 16th and the fourth Marsh Harrier of the month in off the sea at the Café the next day were also of note.

South-westerlies took hold from the 18th and led to six days of breezy and often rather damp weather, and there was little to be seen. Seawatching produced just one Arctic Skua east past Mill Point on the 21st and single Pomarine Skua and Manx Shearwater east there the next day. Swifts were the only birds moving on land, with 60 west over Nickoll's Quarry on the 21st and 28 in off the sea at Mill Point on the 22nd. The 25th was milder and fog grounded a scattering of late migrants - single Reed Warbler and Wheatear at Samphire Hoe and a Willow Warbler at Abbotscliffe. 21 Swifts, 10 House Martins, and 6 Swallows flew in off the sea.

The 27th was hot, with a light easterly, but delivered only 10 Swallows, 9 Swifts, 5 House Martins and a Turtle Dove in off the sea, a Corn Bunting west, at the cliffs. In complete contrast, the next day saw south-westerlies reaching force 7, and just 33 Swifts were logged moving west at the

Café. Light north-westerlies followed on the 29th, and the first Crossbill of the year flew east at the Café. 23 Swallows, 17 Swifts, 11 House Martins, a Sand Martin, and a Turtle Dove arrived in off the sea there. After early rain, the 30th was fairly calm and a little muggy - ideal for Swifts, with 90 counted flying in off the sea at the Café. 60 House Martins, 20 Swallows and 2 Sand Martins also flew in off there. Totals for the month were 648 Swifts, 696 Swallows, 431 House Martins, and 8 Sand Martins. A Hobby was at Nickoll's Quarry on the 30th and single Dunlin and Redshank there were unusually late migrants.

June

After a rather cool and breezy first week, a couple of fairly calm and warm days were enjoyed on the 9th and 10th, only for windier conditions to return for another week. After early fog on the 18th, a hot and humid week ensued, culminating in heavy thunderstorms on the 24th. A couple of fresher days followed, with a cooler northerly wind, but the month ended with warm, though somewhat unsettled conditions.

June, like the second half of May, failed to produce any real quality, however there were a few late migrants to be seen - the highlights of which were two migrant Marsh Warblers, at different areas of Nickoll's Quarry, on the 2nd and 4th (first and second records for the site). Neither lingered however, nor were they in suitable breeding habitat. Elsewhere single Cuckoos were at Abbotscliffe on the 11th and flying in off the sea at the Café on the 13th, and a Reed Warbler was singing at Samphire Hoe on the 15th.

15 Swifts flew west at Nickoll's Quarry on the 2nd, with 20 at Abbotscliffe on the 8th, and larger numbers were noted from the 11th when c.300 were at Abbotscliffe, with c.450 west past the Café the next day. Counts of 120 in/west at the Café on the 19th and 75 east there on the 25th were also notable. A few Swallows and House Martins continued to trickle in, particularly in the warm weather in the third week of the month, but neither reached double figures.

The only Hobbies noted were one east over Hythe on the 11th and one east past the Café on the 19th - completing a poor spring for the species. A Saker or Saker-type hybrid was reported over Folkestone on the 19th. Following the late May record, Crossbills flew west at the Café on the 19th (3) and 20th.

Moderate south-westerlies on the 15th produced the only notable sea movement of the month, with a Mediterranean Shearwater and 80 Gannets west past Mill Point, and 7 Shelduck, 13 Common Scoter and 12 Fulmars east. 16 Curlews also flew west there, heralding the start of a slow return passage of waders, which also included 17 Lapwings in off the sea at the Café on the 19th, 5 Lapwings at Nickoll's Quarry on the 22nd, increasing to 42 by the 26th, a Curlew east at the Café on the 25th, a Green Sandpiper at Nickoll's Quarry on the 26th, a Dunlin there on the 27th, and a Curlew at Samphire Hoe on the 29th.

July

July was generally dry and warm, though the last week was wetter and windier. The month was typically quiet, with a Laughing Dove (of unknown origin) in Cheriton from c.12th to at least 24th probably providing the most interest (photo).



Laughing Dove - Cheriton - July (Ian Roberts)

Passage waders are a usual feature of July, and included Greenshanks at Samphire Hoe on 9th and on 3 dates at Nickoll's Quarry, up to 3 Green Sandpipers at the latter site, and up to 3 Common Sandpipers there, with one at Samphire Hoe on the 9th and 2 there on the 23rd. 215 Lapwings were at Botolph's Bridge on the 2nd, and a Whimbrel flew over Nickoll's Quarry on the 10th. Single Grey Plover and Redshank flew west past Mill Point on the 25th and a Dunlin was at Nickoll's Quarry on the 29th-30th.

There was little at sea, with 2 Arctic Skuas east past Mill Point on the 30th and one off Hythe on the 31st being the most noteworthy sightings. 30 Common Scoter flew west past Mill Point on the 3rd, 12 Common Terns were off Mill Point on the 30th and a peak of 21 Sandwich Terns were at Nickoll's Quarry on the 28th. Samphire Hoe hosted Little Egrets on the 9th and 23rd, and single Hobbies were at Nickoll's Quarry on the 2nd and the Gun Site on the 29th.

Sand Martins are a traditionally early migrant, and the first was noted at Nickoll's Quarry on the 2nd. 17 flew west at Mill Point the next day, and 60 flew east over Cheriton on the 10th. 6 flew west at Abbotscliffe on the 19th, with 35 west at the Gun Site on the 29th and 36 west at Mill Point the next day.

The first returning Wheatear was at Samphire Hoe on the 23rd, 2 Sedge Warblers were at the Gun Site on the 28th, 6 Lesser Whitethroats were counted at Abbotscliffe on the 29th, and an early Blackcap was at Samphire Hoe on the 4th, however the passerine highlight was a Crossbill east over Folkestone on the 9th.

August

The first half of the month was fairly settled and, apart from a Honey Buzzard reported past at Café on the 2nd, was uneventful, with just a few common migrants - mainly Wheatears, Sedge Warblers, and Willow Warblers - noted. At Nickoll's Quarry the occasional Common Sandpiper and Dunlin were seen and a Little Egret was present for most of the month.

Last migrant dates in August:

28th - Swift

A northerly breeze on the 15th deposited a few migrants in the area, with 14 Willow Warblers, 4 Lesser Whitethroats, and a Garden Warbler at Nickoll's Quarry, and 8 Willow Warblers, 3 Whinchats and 2 Sedge Warblers at Abbotscliffe. The 16th was warmer and calmer, and a Marsh Harrier flew over Samphire Hoe, whilst 2 Reed Warblers and a Whinchat were at Hythe Redoubt,

and 4 Grey Herons flew west there. Another Marsh Harrier flew in off the sea at the Gun Site on the 17th, where there was also a Redstart, and Abbotscliffe produced 12 Sedge Warblers, 5 Whinchats, and 4 Reed Warblers. A Shag was offshore of Mill Point.

A light easterly on the 18th produced a Pied and 3 Spotted Flycatchers at the Gun Site, and 5 Crossbills flew east there. Despite overcast skies just 4 Whinchats and 2 Willow Warblers were notable at Abbotscliffe on the 19th, but the 20th saw a Garden Warbler, 3 Wheatears, a Whinchat, and single Reed and Sedge Warblers at Samphire Hoe, and 3 Sedge Warblers and a Whinchat at Abbotscliffe. 2 Swifts and 2 Tree Pipits overflew, and a Buzzard west flew over Folkestone.

On the 21st two Pied Flycatchers were at Samphire Hoe and a Honey Buzzard flew over Cheriton, and a Redstart, 4 Whinchats, 6 Willow Warblers, 3 Reed Warblers and a Sedge Warbler were at Abbotscliffe the next day, whilst 10 Sand Martins flew west there. A Common Buzzard was reported over the Gun Site on the 23rd, and a Pied Flycatcher was noted there. Single Reed and Sedge Warblers were at Samphire Hoe.

Moderate south-westerlies on the 24th produced just a single Black Tern off Mill Point, but a Mediterranean Shearwater flew west past Copt Point the next day. A Whinchat and 3 Sedge Warblers were at Abbotscliffe. On the 26th a Tree Pipit was grounded at Abbotscliffe, and single Swift and Wheatear were noted at Church Hougham. 2 Spotted Flycatchers, 7 Willow Warblers, 4 Swifts, a Grey Wagtail, a Turtle Dove, and a Great Spotted Woodpecker were at the Gun Site on the 28th.

The last 3 days of the month were warm and dry, and a Honey Buzzard flew south over Folkestone on the 29th, when 7 Sedge Warblers, 5 Whinchats, 5 Willow Warblers, a Reed Warbler, and a Wheatear were at Abbotscliffe. A Spotted Flycatcher was at the Gun Site on the 30th, but just 2 Whinchats and 2 Sedge Warblers were at Abbotscliffe. On the 31st 3 Whinchats and 2 Sedge Warblers were at Samphire Hoe.

September

September began warm and dry with a light north-easterly airflow, which produced 4 Grasshopper Warblers at Abbotscliffe between the 2nd and the 4th, the first of c.10 recorded there in the month. Other migrants included a Reed Warbler and 4 Whinchats at Abbotscliffe on the 2nd, two Sedge Warblers and 3 Wheatears there on the 3rd, and a few Willow Warblers, Blackcaps, and Lesser Whitethroats. A trickle of waders involved a Curlew east over Abbotscliffe on the 3rd, and 2 Green Sandpipers, 3 Curlew, a Common Sandpiper and a Dunlin at Nickoll's Quarry on the 4th.

Last migrant dates in September:

30th - Common Tern
- Sandwich Tern
28th - Turtle Dove
22nd - Sedge Warbler
21st - Garden Warbler
- Lesser Whitethroat
20th - Tree Pipit
- Yellow Wagtail
17th - Willow Warbler
13th - Spotted Flycatcher

An Osprey was seen over Folkestone on the 7th and a small arrival was noted at Abbotscliffe, with 10 Whinchats, 2 Wheatears, 2 Sedge Warblers, 5 Willow Warblers, 3 Chiffchaffs, and a Tree Pipit. The next day saw quality rather than quantity, with a **Wryneck** and 2 Grasshopper Warblers new in at Abbotscliffe, but little else of note. On the 9th three Grey Wagtails flew east over Abbotscliffe, and 4 Yellow Wagtails flew west, whilst 10 Yellow Wagtails and a Wheatear were at Church Hougham. A Crossbill flew over the Gun Site on the 10th, and a variety of migrants in the area included Redstart, Reed Warbler, Sedge Warbler, and Whinchat at Samphire Hoe, 4 Wheatears, 4 Whinchats, and a Sedge Warbler at Abbotscliffe, and 4 Wheatears at Church Hougham, whilst 2 Grey Wagtails and a Siskin flew over.



Osprey - Hythe - 12th September to 29th October (Ian Roberts)

South-easterlies on the 11th produced some movement at sea, with a Mediterranean Shearwater, 3 Bonxies, 6 Arctic Skuas, 12 Black Terns, 87 Commic and 2+ Arctic Terns, 11 Wigeon, 48 Teal, and 2 Knot past. The land was also productive, with a Grasshopper Warbler, a Sedge Warbler, and 7 Whinchats at Abbotscliffe, with 17 Yellow Wagtails over, and a Blue-headed Wagtail, a Tree Pipit, a Buzzard, 4 Wheatears, and 15 Yellow Wagtails at Church Hougham. An Osprey was found at Hythe on the 12th, and became the most popular bird of the month – giving exceptional views and remaining into October. Elsewhere on the 12th a Tree Pipit was noted at Abbotscliffe, 52 Wigeon passed Samphire Hoe and c.1,000 House Martins were feeding along the cliffs, with 14 Siskins east.

Two Tree Pipits, 2 Whinchats, a Reed Warbler, and a Spotted Flycatcher were at Abbotscliffe on the 13th, but cool northerly winds produced little over the next few days, until a Buzzard and 45 Siskins flew over the Gun Site on the 17th, and 2 Whinchats and a Tree Pipit were at Abbotscliffe, with 5 Black Redstarts, 5 Whinchats and 3 Wheatears at Samphire Hoe. 16 Siskins were logged at Abbotscliffe on the 18th, and a Sedge Warbler, 3 Whinchats, 5 Chiffchaffs, and 5 Blackcaps were present.

The third Osprey of the month flew east over Radnor Park, Folkestone on the 19th, but at the cliffs just 4 Siskins and 1,200 House Martins flew east. A light north-westerly induced a little more movement at Abbotscliffe on the 20th, with 19 Siskins, 7 Yellow Wagtails, 2 Grey Wagtails, a Tree Pipit, a Jay and 1,200 House Martins over. Single Garden Warbler and Grasshopper Warbler were new in at Abbotscliffe on the 21st, and there were 3 Wheatears there. A Buzzard lingered over Samphire Hoe, 15 Siskins flew east, and 6 Blackcaps and 6 Chiffchaffs were counted.

Two 'continental' Coal Tits at Samphire Hoe on the 22nd were a new species for the site, and a Firecrest was also of note there, but elsewhere there were just 3 Whinchats, a Wheatear, and a Sedge Warbler at Abbotscliffe, and a Golden Plover over the Gun Site. On the 23rd a Black Redstart, a Wheatear, a Grey Wagtail, and 5 Blackcaps were at Samphire Hoe. A cool northerly on the 24th produced a Lapland Bunting at Abbotscliffe, and 29 Siskins and 2 Grey Wagtails flew east. Green Sandpiper, Snipe, and Turtle Dove were at Nickoll's Quarry.

The wind picked up from the south-west over the next few days and attention turned to the sea, though there was little of note: 50 Gannets, 40 Common Scoter, 32 Commic Terns, 5 Dunlin, an

Arctic Skua and the first 5 Brent Geese of the autumn passed Copt Point on the 25th and a Little Gull, 5 Arctic Skuas, 20 Common Terns, and an Arctic Tern flew west past Mill Point on the 27th, when 4 Eider were offshore. The 28th saw cooler and clearer conditions and a Ring-necked Parakeet flew over Abbotscliffe, whilst 11 Siskins, 2 Grey Wagtails and a Redpoll flew east at Samphire Hoe, where 10 Chiffchaffs were counted. Similar weather the next day produced 130 Goldfinches and 10 Siskins east at the Café, but westerlies and rain returned on the 30th, and just 4 Arctic Skuas passed Mill Point.

October

A Lapland Bunting was at Abbotscliffe on the 1st and single Ring Ouzel and Firecrest were at Samphire Hoe. The Osprey was still present at Hythe (photo), and remained until at least the 29th. Northerly winds from the 2nd induced some visual passage, with 20 Redpolls, 57 Siskins, 160 Goldfinches, 250 Starlings, 180 Meadow Pipits, 9 alba wagtails, 2 Grey Wagtails, and 2 Dunlin over the cliffs, whilst the second **Wryneck** of the autumn was at the Capel-le-Ferne Café and a Grasshopper Warbler was at the Gun Site.

On the 3rd a **Richard's Pipit** flew west at Abbotscliffe, and 325 Goldfinches, 89 Siskins, 43 Chaffinches, 8 alba wagtails, and 4 Redpolls flew east. 150 Starlings and a Marsh Harrier flew in off the sea. The Ring-necked Parakeet was seen again at Abbotscliffe on the 4th, and a Redstart, 11 Chiffchaffs, and 15 Song Thrushes were also of note. 100 Goldfinches, 9 Siskins, 8 alba Wagtails, 2 Grey Wagtails, 2 Redpolls, and a Brambling flew over.

The first two Redwings of the autumn were at the Gun Site on the 5th, but just 20 Siskins and 2 Grey Wagtails flew over. At sea 19 Brent Geese and a Wigeon flew east. The wind went easterly on the 6th, and produced a **Yellow-browed Warbler**, a Firecrest, and a 'continental' Coal Tit at Samphire Hoe, whilst a small influx of thrushes comprised 10 Ring Ouzels, c.20 Redwings, and c.70 Song Thrushes at the cliffs. A single Ring Ouzel, 30 Song Thrushes, and 70 Blackbirds were noted the next day, and 365 Goldfinches, 30+ Siskins, and 2 Redpolls flew east. A superb **Great Grey Shrike** at Samphire Hoe on the 8th (until 10th, photo) continued the good run, but otherwise a Ring Ouzel at the Hoe and a Reed Warbler at Abbotscliffe were all that was of interest.

Last migrant dates in October:

27th - Swallow
23rd - Wheatear
15th - Whinchat
13th - Redstart
8th - Reed Warbler
3rd - Sand Martin
2nd - Grasshopper Warbler



above and below: Great Grey Shrike -
Samphire Hoe - 8th to 10th October (Dale
Gibson)

3 Ring Ouzels, 6 Tree Sparrows, 17 Siskins, and 2 Wheatears were logged at the cliffs on the 9th, but a quieter spell followed before moderate southerlies on the 12th led to 160 Gannets and an Arctic Skua passing Samphire Hoe. Early rain on the 13th cleared to reveal 2 Dartford Warblers, 3 Black Redstarts, and a Wheatear at Samphire Hoe, a Whinchat at Abbotscliffe, and a Redstart at Capel-le-Ferne (Green Lane). c.45 Siskins, 4 Redpolls, and 2 Little Egrets flew over.



Easterly winds returned on the 14th and a Ring Ouzel and 6 Redwings were seen at Samphire Hoe, with 5 Bramblings in fields at Capel-le-Ferne, and c.250 Goldfinches, 2 Siskins, a Redpoll, and 26 Golden Plover flying over. Visual migration at the cliffs on the 15th comprised a Lapland Bunting, 2 Crossbills, 5 Redpolls, 7 Bramblings, 7 Redwings, and 16 Tree Sparrows, and at least 50 Goldcrests were at Samphire Hoe. 140 Redwings, 15 Fieldfares, 4 Bramblings, 2 Redpolls, and 2 Grey Wagtails were at the cliffs the next day. A Dartford Warbler was at Samphire Hoe on the 17th and a Short-eared Owl, 2 Bramblings, 8 Reed Buntings, and 15 Redpolls flew east.

A spell of south-westerlies ensued and attention turned to the sea, though there was little of note, with just 45 Brent Geese past Copt Point on the 18th, and 90 Brent Geese, 10 Eider, and 2 Red-breasted Mergansers past Samphire Hoe on the 19th. Ring Ouzels were at Samphire Hoe on the 19th and at the Café on the 20th, when a Firecrest was also seen, and a Short-eared Owl was found dead at Samphire Hoe. Strong southerlies on the 21st produced a Sooty Shearwater past Copt Point.

North-westerlies followed and, as is often the case, induced some visual passage with 152 Stock Doves, 200 Goldfinches, 17 Siskins, and 15 Redpolls over the cliffs on the 22nd, and 1,325 Stock Doves, 570 Starlings, 250 Chaffinches, 58 Sky Larks, 28 Redpolls, 21 Siskins, 6 Bramblings, 9 Collared Doves, 8 Reed Buntings, 2 Bullfinches, 3 Sparrowhawks, a Marsh Harrier and a Corn Bunting in/west there the next day. 10 Ring Ouzels were at the cliffs on the 22nd and a Dartford Warbler was at Abbotscliffe on the 23rd.

Strong southerlies returned on the 24th and saw good passage at sea, with a **Long-tailed Skua**, a Sooty Shearwater, 2 Pomarine Skuas, 3 Bonxies, 16 Arctic Skuas, 64 Little Gulls, 124 Brent Geese, 10 Wigeon, 33 large auks, c.200 Gannets, and a good selection of waders: 2 Purple Sandpipers, 4 Dunlin, 3 Grey Plovers, 2 Curlew, a Bar-tailed Godwit, and a Sanderling past Mill Point. There was more west in the wind the next day, and consequently it was much quieter at sea, with just 1 Little Gull, 3 Eider and 9 Brent Geese past.

A westerly airflow dominated the rest of the month, and it was generally quiet. 6 Ring Ouzels were at Abbotscliffe on the 26th, and a Redpoll, 6 Siskins, and 14 Stock Doves flew over. Next day 220 Starlings, 80 Goldfinches, 50 Greenfinches, 3 Siskin, and a Redpoll were logged over Abbotscliffe, and 180 Starlings flew in off the sea on the 28th. 6 Ring Ouzels were at Samphire Hoe on the 29th and 7 Siskins flew over. On the 31st just 2 Ring Ouzels and a Black Redstart were of note at Samphire Hoe.

November

The month began quietly before strong south-westerlies on the 3rd produced a Sooty Shearwater and 6 Little Gulls past Copt Point. The next day was calmer with a cool westerly breeze and 154 Stock Doves, 145 Wood Pigeons, 10 Redpolls, 6 Siskins, 3 Bramblings, and 2 Bullfinches went west over the Café. Pigeon passage gathered pace on the 5th, with 1,855 Wood Pigeons, 500 Stock Doves, and 14 Collared Doves west at Abbotscliffe, and c.100 Chaffinches, 68 Bramblings, 38 Siskins, 6 Bullfinches, 2 Redpolls, 35 Sky Larks, 14 Fieldfares, 5 Reed Buntings, 2 Snow Buntings, a Corn Bunting, and 2 Marsh Harriers also flew west there.

A windy 6th saw a Marsh Harrier, a Peregrine and 280 Starlings struggle in off the sea at Mill Point, but just 4 Little Gulls, a Bonxie and a Grey Plover flew past. A Long-eared Owl (photo) spent the day roosting at Samphire Hoe on the 7th.



Long-eared Owl - Samphire Hoe - 7th
November (Paul Holt)

A brisk southerly the next day encouraged 3 Sooty Shearwaters, 8 Brent Geese, an Arctic Tern, and a Red-breasted Merganser past Copt Point, and single Little Egret and Ring Ouzel were at Samphire Hoe. Ring Ouzels increased to 2 at Samphire Hoe on the 9th, and these remained until the 15th, with at least one until the very late date of 26th, whilst others were at Abbotscliffe on the 13th and 18th.

In strong south-westerlies on the 10th a Leach's Petrel flew west past Samphire Hoe, whilst an Arctic Skua was offshore. An Arctic Tern, a Shag, and a Kingfisher were in Folkestone Harbour on the 11th, and 8 Siskins, a Brambling, and a Bullfinch flew over the Café the next day. 30 Chaffinches, 19 Stock Doves, 7 Siskins, 2 Redpolls, a Brambling, and a Bullfinch flew over Abbotscliffe on the 13th and there were late House Martins at the Gun Site and at Hythe. On the 14th a Marsh Harrier flew out to sea from Samphire Hoe and 30 Siskins went east, and a Dartford Warbler was seen there the next day. 3 Purple Sandpipers had returned to the rock groyne off Stade Street, Hythe, where they remained until the month's end, increasing to 6.

The weather turned colder on the 16th, a Hen Harrier (remaining until 18th) and a Water Rail arrived at Samphire Hoe, whilst a Snow Bunting, 2 Redpolls and 6 Siskins flew over the Café. A heavy frost on the 17th induced an impressive movement of Blackbirds, with 230+ at Samphire Hoe, and 60 Fieldfares, 30 Redwings, and 20 Song Thrushes were also recorded, whilst two Woodcock were a new species for the site. A Barn Owl was seen just north of Hythe, by junction 11 of the M20. A trickle of thrushes continued to arrive on the 18th, with 16 Blackbirds, 10 Fieldfares, and 2 Redwings at Abbotscliffe, whilst a Blackcap was at Samphire Hoe. A Red-necked Grebe and 10 Brent Geese passed Samphire Hoe on the 19th, 2 Lapwings flew in off the sea at Samphire Hoe and 550 Golden Plovers were counted at Hythe. 6 Siskins flew east over the Café.

Last migrant dates in November:

26th - Ring Ouzel
13th - House Martin
11th - Arctic Tern
10th - Arctic Skua

A quieter spell ensued with just a Chiffchaff and a Kingfisher of note at Copt Point on the 20th, and a single Golden Plover in off the sea at Samphire Hoe on the 21st. 31 Turnstones, 4 Redshank, and a Ringed Plover were in Folkestone Harbour on the 23rd and 2 Water Rails were at Samphire Hoe, increasing to 3 the next day. Two Snow Buntings were at Samphire Hoe on the 26th, where they remained until at least the end of the month.

A Great Northern Diver was feeding close inshore off Mill Point on the 27th, with an Eider and 13 Common Scoters also offshore. Next day a Ring-necked Parakeet flew over the Golden Valley area of Folkestone. Finally two Shovelers flew west past Samphire Hoe on the 29th.

December

December was generally fairly mild apart from a spell of cool north-easterlies just before mid-month and some fairly significant snowfall after Christmas, with up to 6 inches on higher ground. Although overnight temperatures fell to minus 4C there was no prolonged freezing and cold weather movement was rather limited.

The two cooler periods produced the only counts of Red-throated Divers, but even then these were just 45 east past Sandgate on the 13th, and 20 east at Hythe on the 28th. Up to 3 Great Crested Grebes and 3 Little Grebes were at Nickoll's Quarry throughout, and a Little Grebe was on the canal at Seabrook on the 27th. Fulmars had returned to Shakespeare Cliff by the 10th, when 8 were counted.

Highlight of the snowy weather was a group of 3 **Whooper Swans**, which flew east over Nickoll's Quarry on the 28th. Other cold weather movement the same day included 5 Tufted Ducks at Nickoll's Quarry, 5 Brent Geese east past Samphire Hoe and 6 Mallards displaced onto the sea off Hythe. Six Wigeon were on the sea off Hythe the following day, and 11 Shelducks were seen off Hythe Ranges on the 26th.

Earlier in the month a **Goosander** was seen at Nickoll's Quarry on the 4th, and a Pochard on the sea off Sandgate on the 13th was unusual, whilst 2 Eider off Copt Point on the 2nd were a more normal sight. 65 Mallard were counted at Hythe on the 11th.

A Buzzard was reported at Samphire Hoe on the 23rd, and up to 2 Water Rails were seen there in the first half of the month. Purple Sandpipers were at Hythe throughout, peaking at 8 in the high tide roost on the 31st. Up to 20 Snipe were at Nickoll's Quarry on the 28th, with 1-2 Jack Snipe there the same day. A Green Sandpiper was near Botolph's Bridge on the 17th.

A **Little Auk** was reported off Samphire Hoe on the 23rd, and a **Barn Owl** found dead on the roadside at Abbotscliffe on the 14th was another interesting record, especially following the one seen near Hythe in November.

Kingfishers could be seen at Nickoll's Quarry and along the Hythe Canal, whilst Grey Wagtails were at the latter site as well as in Cheriton. A Black Redstart remained at Samphire Hoe until at least the 10th, on which date 6 Stonechats were present there, with another at Hythe Ranges on the 26th.

A flock of 60 Redwings were seen arriving in off the sea at Hythe during snow on the 28th, and 5 at Samphire Hoe the same day were probably new arrivals. A Dartford Warbler was at Samphire Hoe on the 5th and 26th at least, and a Blackcap was reported in a Folkestone garden on the latter date. Up to 2 Chiffchaffs were wintering along the Hythe Canal.

Three Siskins flew over Samphire Hoe on the 6th and up to 40 were along Hythe Canal on the 31st. Flocks of 35 Greenfinches and 30 Linnets were noted at Hythe Ranges on the 26th.