

Folkestone & Hythe birding and moths

Site guide: Copt Point

Location: Heading down Dover Hill from the Valiant Sailor take the first left (slip-road), then left again into Wear Bay Road. Continue round until the East Cliff Pavilion. Parking here or on road (TR 240364).

Facilities: The East Cliff Pavilion has a restaurant and there are public toilets on site. Shops in the nearby town.

Access/route: Seawatch from any vantage point on the point. Explore the bushes and scrub to the east for migrants. There are several paths down to the beach and which allow the gull roost on the rocks to be viewed. Disabled access is possible to the seawatching area, but the paths into the scrub and to the beach may prove difficult.

Birds: Red-throated Divers, Great Crested Grebes, Gannets, Kittiwakes, Guillemots and Razorbills are often numerous offshore in winter, with the occasional scarce diver or grebe.

March sees an up-channel passage of Brent Geese, ducks - including Garganey, and Sandwich Terns, with Black-throated Divers, Common Scoters, waders, Great and Arctic Skuas, and other terns joining in April, and Pomarine Skuas in May.

Windy weather in summer can produce Manx and Balearic Shearwaters, and in autumn Brent Geese, ducks, skuas and terns feature, with divers, grebes and auks again later in the year.

Mediterranean Gulls (below) are usually present in good numbers (often several hundred July-April, but with few if any in mid-summer) and can be found anywhere, with a roost on the rocks at low tide or on the grassy areas on the cliff-top and golf course at high tide. Good views are the norm and the birds come to breed. The gull roost is also worth checking for a white-winged or rare gull, and Shag, Purple Sandpiper and terns may also be seen.



The bushes at Copt Point, looking east towards Capelle-Ferne, Abbotscliffe and (in the distance) Samphire Hoe



The rocks at Copt Point, looking west towards the pier

Unusual species have included Black-throated and Great Northern Divers, Slavonian, Red-necked and Black-necked Grebes, Sooty, Mediterranean and Cory's Shearwaters, Storm and Leach's Petrels, Long-tailed Duck, Smew, Goosander, Dotterel, Grey Phalarope, Long-tailed Skua, Sabine's, Ring-billed, Iceland and Glaucous Gulls, Gull-billed, Caspian, Lesser Crested, Roseate and White-winged Black Terns, Little Auk and Puffin.



The bushes around the point hold common passage migrants in season, and have produced Wryneck, Icterine Warbler, Yellow-browed Warbler, Red-backed Shrike and Serin.

There is a small pond to the east of the point, which holds Chiffchaff and Firecrest in winter, with occasional Water Rail and (once) Spotted Crake. Stone Curlew has occurred on the beach.



Raptors can pass over here, as anywhere, and Honey Buzzard, Marsh Harrier, Goshawk, and Osprey have been recorded, whilst Little Egret, Purple Heron and Spoonbill have also been seen over-flying.

Regular: Regular: Red-throated Diver, Great Crested Grebe, Fulmar, Gannet, Shag, Brent Goose, Wigeon, Gadwall, Teal, Shoveler, Eider, Common Scoter, Red-breasted Merganser, Hobby, Grey Plover, Sanderling, Dunlin, Bar-tailed Godwit, Whimbrel, Common Sandpiper, Arctic Skua, Great Skua, Mediterranean Gull, Little Gull, Sandwich, Common and Arctic Terns, Guillemot, Razorbill, common passage migrants, Black Redstart and Firecrest.



Mediterranean Gulls - Copt Point. From top: adult, second winter and first winter.

Possible: Scarce divers and grebes, Manx, Mediterranean and Sooty Shearwaters, Little Egret, Pintail, Garganey, Velvet Scoter, Avocet, Knot, Purple Sandpiper, Greenshank, Pomarine Skua, Yellow-legged Gull, Little Tern, Black Tern and Water Rail.

Rarities: Cory's Shearwater, Storm Petrel, Leach's Petrel, Purple Heron, Spoonbill, Scaup, Long-tailed Duck, Goldeneye, Smew, Goosander, Honey Buzzard, Goshawk, Osprey, Spotted Crake, Stone Curlew, Dotterel, Black-tailed Godwit, Grey Phalarope, Long-tailed Skua, Sabine's, Ring-billed, Iceland and Glaucous Gulls, Gull-billed, Caspian, Lesser Crested, Roseate and White-winged Black Terns, Little Auk, Puffin, Wryneck, Icterine Warbler, Yellow-browed Warbler, Red-backed Shrike and Serin.