

Richard's Pipit

Anthus richardi

Category A

Rare passage migrant.

19 records

Breeds in Siberian, wintering from Pakistan to Indo-China, and south to Malaysia. It is a scarce but regular visitor to western Europe, which occurs with quite high frequency considering its breeding range, even wintering regularly in southern Iberia (Snow & Perrins, 1998).

The Richard's Pipit is a rare but regular passage migrant to Kent, particularly in the autumn. There had been 160 county records to the end of 2018 and it has been occurring with increasing regularity, with almost annual records since 1980 (KOS, 2020).

Harrison (1953) made mention of a local record but stated that it "really has no value, as it is recorded as a 'probable' example. It relates to an alleged bird seen near Seabrook on the 24th April 1930 (*Brit. Birds*, xxiv, p.28)". He goes on to state that such uncertainties would really be far better left unrecorded. The original note is reproduced opposite for the record.

This would have been the first spring record for the county though it is not unknown at this season, with Harrison detailing one at Shellness on the 23rd April 1950 and there have been 11 since, between 15th April and 17th May (Taylor *et al*, 1981, KOS, 2020).

The first confirmed record in the Folkestone and Hythe area was in 1990, when one was found at Church Hougham on the 22nd September by Mark Kennett.

Since then it has occurred with some regularity, with another 18 records in the subsequent 30 years, as demonstrated by figure 1.



Richard's Pipit at Abbotscliffe (Ian Roberts)

28 **BRITISH BIRDS.** [VOL. XXIV.

PROBABLE RICHARD'S PIPIT IN KENT.

ON April 24th, 1930, I saw a strange Pipit, which I believe to have been a Richard's Pipit (*Anthus r. richardi*) near Seabrook in Kent.

The bird was on a piece of waste land, and my sister and I watched it for some five or ten minutes at a distance of about twenty yards.

The bird was obviously a Pipit, from its general brown colouring, fine beak and Wagtail-like habit. It was much larger than a Meadow-Pipit, and on looking carefully at the plumage I noticed at once some bright buff on the flanks. Then, suspecting it to be one of the rarer Pipits, I noted details of the plumage with as much particularity as possible.

A narrow streak of bright buff extended along the flanks, just below the edge of the wing, and below that was a paler sandy streak which merged into the dull breast-colour. The flanks were entirely without spot, as were the lower breast and middle throat.

The breast spots were confined to a gorget (more like a Sky-Lark than a Pipit) and to the sides of the throat.

The upper plumage was very definitely streaked, longitudinally, dark and light brown. The legs were light in colour.

ALICE V. STONE.

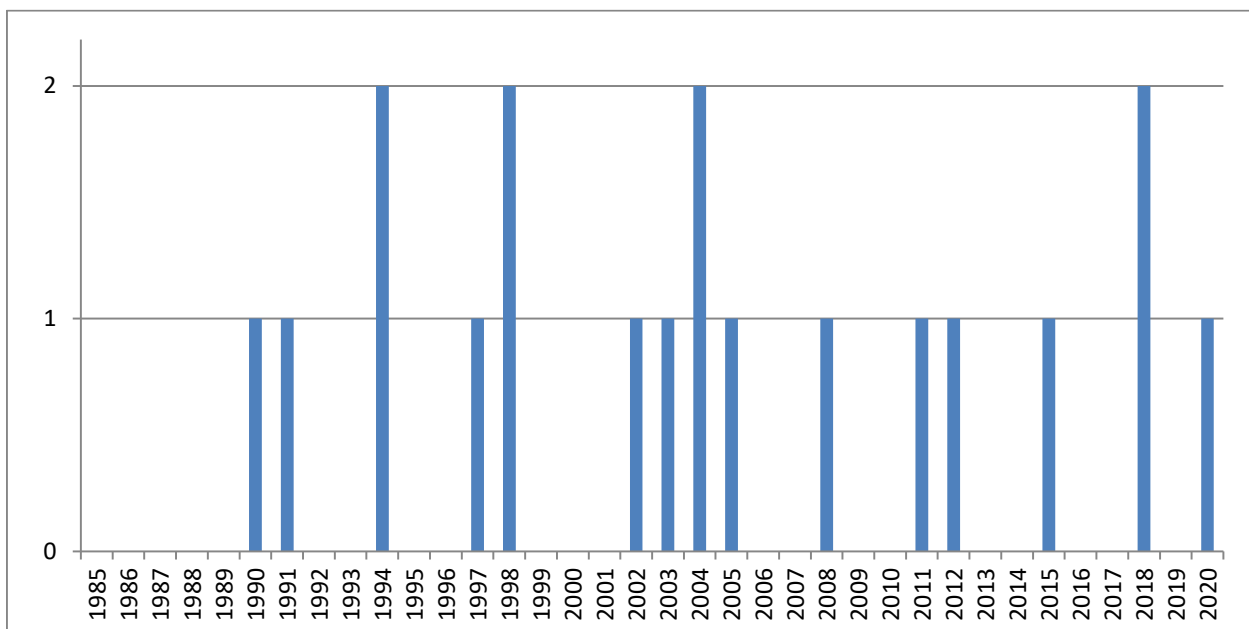


Figure 1: Richard's Pipit records at Folkestone and Hythe

Of the two large pipits that have occurred locally, Richard's is marginally more regular, and has a mean arrival date almost three weeks later in the autumn (14th October). Apart from the first record on the 22nd September (week 38) and the most recent on the 5th November (week 45), all others have been recorded in October (weeks 40-44), as demonstrated by figure 2.

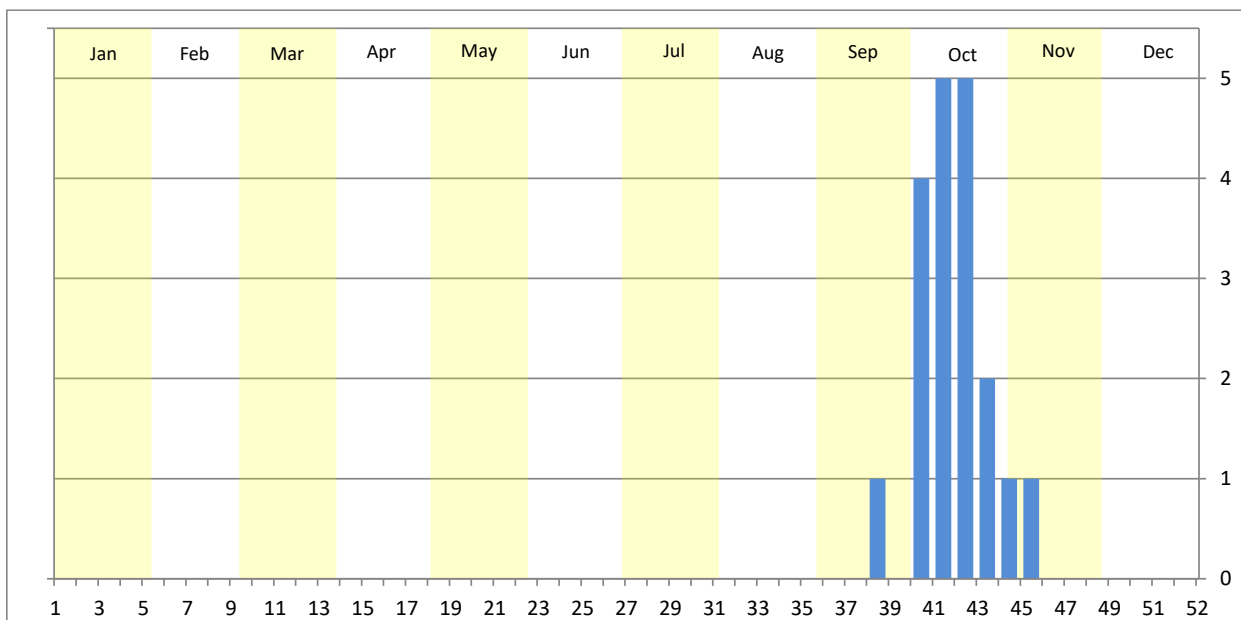


Figure 2: Richard's Pipit records at Folkestone and Hythe by week

Figure 3 shows the distribution of records by tetrad.



Figure 3: Distribution of all Richard's Pipit records at Folkestone and Hythe by tetrad

Aside from the first record (at Church Hougham) and one at Seabrook, all others have been from Abbotscliffe, though one in 2015 was also probably seen at Creteway Down.

The full list of records is as follows:

- 1990** Church Hougham, one, 22nd September (M. D. Kennett, S. Kennett, D. E. Smith)
- 1991** Abbotscliffe, two, 21st October, one remaining to the 22nd (I. A. & A. F. Roberts, D. A. Gibson, J. P. Siddle)
- 1994** Abbotscliffe, two, 1st October (D. A. Gibson)
- 1994** Abbotscliffe, one flew west, 24th October (D. A. Gibson)
- 1997** Abbotscliffe, one flew east, 13th October (D. A. Gibson)

- 1998** Abbotscliffe, one flushed from gully, then flew west, 6th October (D. A. Gibson)
1998 Abbotscliffe, one flew west, 13th October (D. A. Gibson, I. A. Roberts)
2002 Abbotscliffe, one flew east, 4th October (I. A. Roberts)
2003 Abbotscliffe, one, 19th October (I. A. Roberts, D. A. Gibson, T. Scotland)
2004 Abbotscliffe, one, 15th to 16th October (I. A. Roberts, J. A. Gibson)
2004 Abbotscliffe, one, 17th October, considered different to above (D. A. Gibson)
2005 Abbotscliffe, one flew west, 3rd October (I. A. Roberts)
2008 Abbotscliffe, one flushed from gully, then flew north-west, 9th October (D. A. Gibson, J. A. Gibson)
2011 Abbotscliffe, one, 17th October, photographed (I. A. Roberts)
2012 Abbotscliffe, one, 28th October (P. Edmondson, D. A. Gibson)
2015 Abbotscliffe, one flew east, 12th October, also probably seen earlier at Creteway Down (I. A. Roberts, D. A. Gibson)
2018 Abbotscliffe, one flew west, 14th October (I. A. Roberts)
2018 Seabrook, one flew west, 26th October (P. Howe)
2020 Abbotscliffe, one flew east, 5th November (I. A. Roberts)



Richard's Pipit at Abbotscliffe (Ian Roberts)

References

Harrison, J. M. 1953. *The Birds of Kent*. Witherby, London.

Kent Bird Reports. Kent Ornithological Society

KOS Kent list: <https://kentos.org.uk/kent-list> (accessed 2020)

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

Taylor, D., Davenport, D. & Flegg, J. 1981. *Birds of Kent*. Kent Ornithological Society

Acknowledgements

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