

Crag Martin

Ptyonoprogne rupestris

Category A

Very rare vagrant.

1 record

Breeds across the Iberian Peninsula north to southern Germany and eastwards through the Mediterranean into central Asia and northern China (Snow & Perrins, 1998). It was first recorded in Britain in Cornwall in June 1988, with a further 13 sightings to 2020, including four in the last three years. The Crag Martin expanded its breeding range in the 1980s, colonising several new countries including Switzerland, Austria, Bulgaria and Romania and that decade also saw the first records for Sweden and Finland, followed in the 1990s by the first in Belgium, the Netherlands and Denmark.



Crag Martin at Samphire Hoe (Phil Sharp)

Despite its spread it remains extremely rare in Britain, perhaps because the population in Europe appears to be mainly sedentary, though birds from the nearest breeding areas, in southern France and southern Germany, move south after the breeding season. Returning birds may lead to the occasional spring overshoot (and the five records between April and June appear to conform to that pattern) but some Asian breeders are migratory and the five records in October/November may perhaps have their origins in that continent (BBRC, 2020, Holt *et al*, 2020).

The single area record relates to a bird that had previously been present at Kingsdown from the 21st November until it was seen flying south at 07:40 on the 28th November, arriving at Samphire Hoe 48 minutes later, where it was first seen by Martin Collins and Barry Woolhouse, before performing well for an admiring crowd throughout the day until it flew off high to the north-east at 15:30, later arriving to roost at Kingsdown. It repeated this behaviour from the 29th November to the 2nd December, feeding for a time at Samphire Hoe before returning to Kingsdown.

The single record is shown in figure 1.

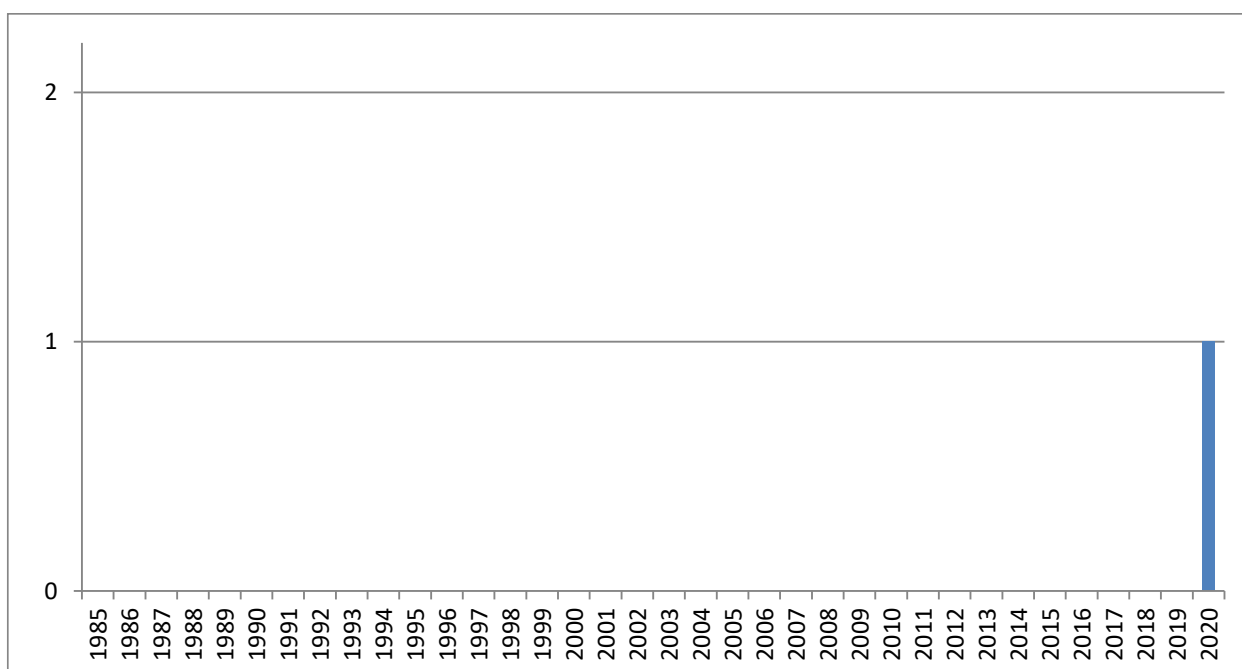


Figure 1: Crag Martin records at Folkestone and Hythe

The record by week is given in figure 2 and figure 3 shows the distribution by tetrad.

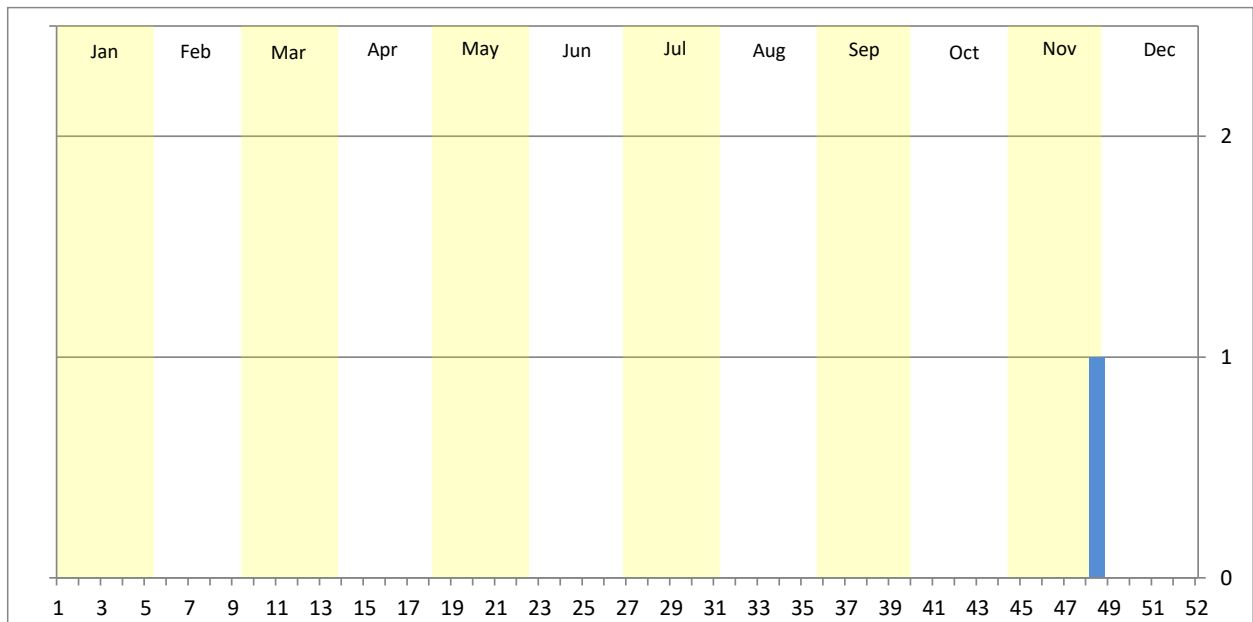


Figure 2: Crag Martin records at Folkestone and Hythe by week



Figure 3: Distribution of all Crag Martin records at Folkestone and Hythe by tetrad



Crag Martin at Samphire Hoe (Phil Sharp)



Crag Martin at Samphire Hoe (Steve Ashton)



Crag Martin at Samphire Hoe (Steve Ashton)

Confirmation of the only area record is as follows:

2020 Samphire Hoe, first-winter, 28th November to 2nd December, photographed, video-recorded (M. Collins, B. Woolhouse *et al*)

References

BBRC statistics: <https://www.bbrc.org.uk/main-information/statistics> (accessed 2020)

Holt, C., French, P. & the Rarities Committee, 2020. Report on rare birds in Great Britain in 2019. *British Birds*, 113: 585-655

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

Acknowledgements

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



Crag Martin at Samphire Hoe (Steve Ashton)





Crag Martin at Samphire Hoe (Mike Buckland)



Crag Martin at Samphire Hoe (Steve Ashton)