

# Hen Harrier

*Circus cyaneus*

Category A

Rare migrant and winter visitor.

46 records

Breeds quite widely across northern Europe, including upland Britain, but also numerous in France and Spain. Northern populations are migratory, though do not move far, wintering in lowland Britain for example.

A regular passage migrant and winter visitor to Kent, with occasional larger influxes.

The first area record was in 1955 but there were no more until 1979. Subsequent sightings occurred in 1983, 1984 and 1985, with relatively regular occurrences thereafter, as shown in figure 1. It is unpredictable in its appearances though with three 'blank' years from 1999 to 2001 followed by a peak of four sightings in 2002.



Hen Harrier at Botolph's Bridge (Brian Harper)

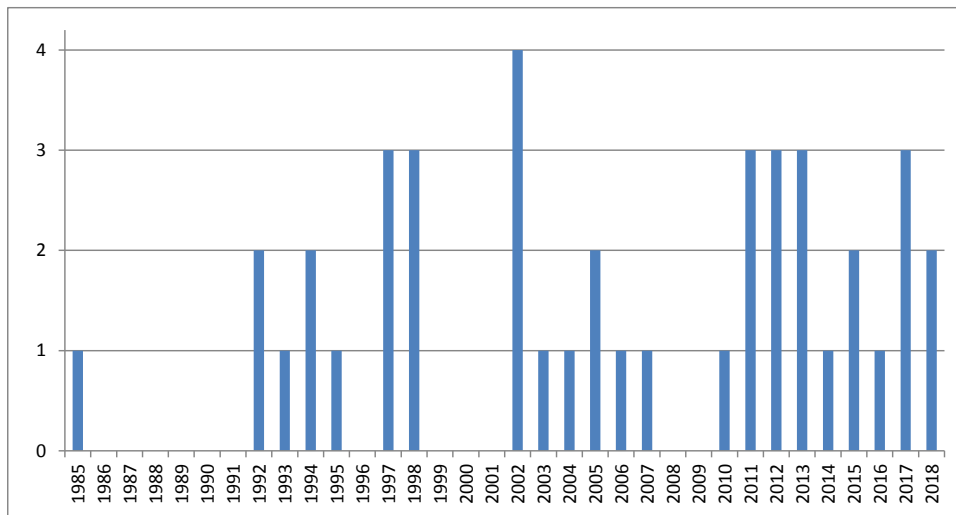


Figure 1: Hen Harrier records since 1985 at Folkestone and Hythe

Figure 2 shows the arrival dates by week. The earliest autumn arrival was on 14<sup>th</sup> September (2017, when two were seen), with one further record in September and 18 in October and November. These presumably relate mostly to migrant birds as there have been just two in December. The first week of January has produced three, with two others in that month, four in February and two in March, some of which, though not all, were associated with periods of severe weather.

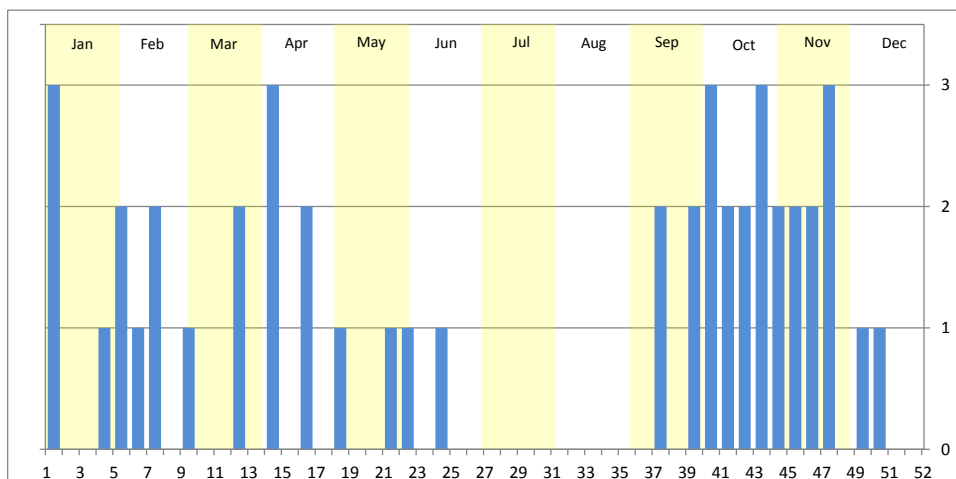


Figure 2: Hen Harrier records at Folkestone and Hythe by week

Six spring migrants have been seen in April, with three particularly late birds seen in late May (1997), 3<sup>rd</sup> June (2013) and 11<sup>th</sup> June (2011).

The distribution of winter records recorded in the BTO/KOS Atlas (2007 – 2012) is shown in figure 3. Overall records have been fairly evenly divided between the cliffs from Copt Point to Samphire Hoe (20) and the Botolph's Bridge/ Nickolls Quarry area (20), with others seen over Cheriton / Folkestone (3), Saltwood (2) and Beachborough Lakes.

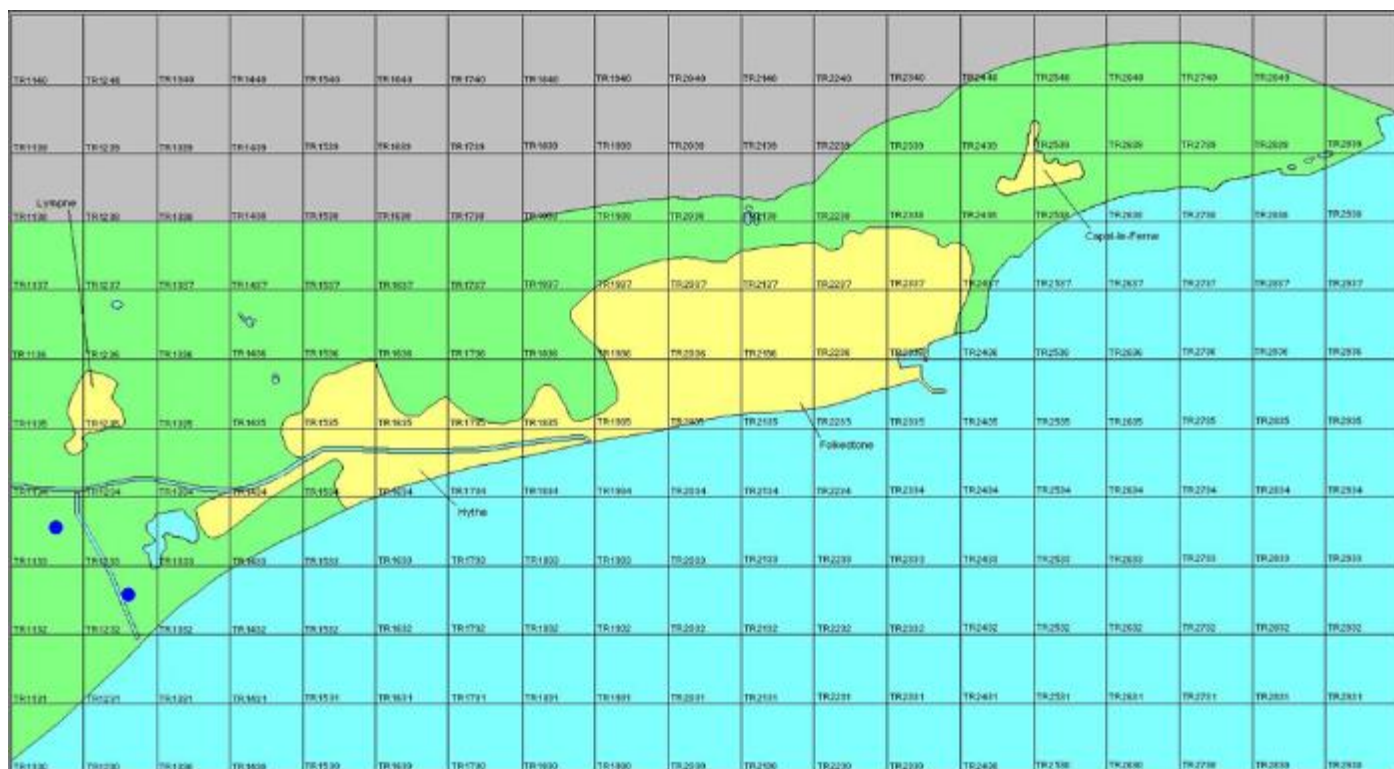


Figure 3: Wintering distribution of Hen Harrier Goose at Folkestone and Hythe (2007 – 2012 BTO/KOS Atlas)

The full list of records is as follows:

- 1955** Botolph's Bridge, one, 2<sup>nd</sup> April (J. Perrot)
- 1979** Nickolls Quarry, immature/female, 24<sup>th</sup> January (R. K. Norman)
- 1983** Copt Point, immature/female, 4<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> January, presumed to be same individual (R. Hollingsworth)
- 1984** Copt Point, immature male, 21<sup>st</sup> October (R. Hollingsworth)
- 1985** West Hythe, male, 27<sup>th</sup> February (C. Lock)
- 1992** Nickolls Quarry, immature/female, 9<sup>th</sup> February (I. A. Roberts)
- 1992** Nickolls Quarry, immature/female, 29<sup>th</sup> April (R. K. Norman)
- 1993** Abbotscliffe, one flew in off the sea, 22<sup>nd</sup> October (D. A. Gibson)
- 1994** Abbotscliffe, male flew west, 2<sup>nd</sup> April (I. A. Roberts)
- 1994** Folkestone, male flew west, 8<sup>th</sup> October (D. A. Gibson)
- 1995** Copt Point, immature/female flew west, 21<sup>st</sup> November (D. A. Gibson)
- 1997** Cheriton, immature/female flew north-east, 18<sup>th</sup> February (D. A. Gibson)
- 1997** Cheriton, immature/female flew north, 16<sup>th</sup> April (D. A. Gibson)
- 1997** Abbotscliffe, immature/female flew out to sea, 26<sup>th</sup> May (D. A. Gibson, R. Lee, I. A. Roberts)
- 1998** Abbotscliffe, male flew in off the sea at 08:35, 4<sup>th</sup> October (D. A. Gibson, J. A. Gibson, I. A. Roberts)
- 1998** Capel-le-Ferne Gun Site, male flew in off the sea at 13:15, 4<sup>th</sup> October (D. A. Gibson, J. A. Gibson, I. A. Roberts)
- 1998** Folkestone Warren, immature/female, 19<sup>th</sup> November (reported)
- 2002** Botolph's Bridge, one, 2<sup>nd</sup> January (I. A. Roberts)
- 2002** Abbotscliffe, one flew west, 30<sup>th</sup> October (I. A. Roberts)
- 2002** Nickolls Quarry, male, 25<sup>th</sup> November (I. A. Roberts)
- 2002** Botolph's Bridge, one, 9<sup>th</sup> December (I. A. Roberts)
- 2003** Nickolls Quarry, immature/female, 18<sup>th</sup> February (I. A. Roberts)
- 2004** Abbotscliffe, male flew north, 9<sup>th</sup> October (I. A. Roberts)
- 2005** Botolph's Bridge, one flew south west over Lower Wall Road, 31<sup>st</sup> January (C. Philpott)

- 2005** Samphire Hoe, immature/female, 16<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> November, also at Abbotscliffe on the 18<sup>th</sup> (P. Holt, I. A. Roberts)
- 2006** Abbotscliffe, male flew in off the sea, 4<sup>th</sup> November (I. A. Roberts)
- 2007** Chesterfield Wood (Saltwood), immature/female flew east, 29<sup>th</sup> September (I. A. Roberts)
- 2010** Nickolls Quarry, immature/female, 2<sup>nd</sup> January (G. Spencer, N. Spencer)
- 2011** Botolph's Bridge, male, 11<sup>th</sup> June, photographed (B. Harper)
- 2011** Saltwood, one flew north, 22<sup>nd</sup> October (P. Howe)
- 2011** Botolph's Bridge, immature/female, 6<sup>th</sup> November (M. Kennett)
- 2012** Hougham Valley, immature/female flew east then west, 15<sup>th</sup> April (M. Kennett)
- 2012** Abbotscliffe, one flew out to sea, 2<sup>nd</sup> October (D. A. Gibson)
- 2012** Botolph's Bridge, male, 15<sup>th</sup> December (B. Harper, M. Harper, I. Roberts)
- 2013** Folkestone, male, flew north, 8<sup>th</sup> April (D. A. Gibson)
- 2013** Samphire Hoe, one flew west, 2<sup>nd</sup> June (I. A. Roberts)
- 2013** Samphire Hoe, male flew in off the sea, 11<sup>th</sup> November (L. Collins)
- 2014** Samphire Hoe, one flew west, 15<sup>th</sup> October (D. E. Smith)
- 2015** Lower Wall, West Hythe, male, 21<sup>st</sup> March (B. Findlay)
- 2015** Abbotscliffe, immature/female flew north, 16<sup>th</sup> October (M. Varley)
- 2016** Beachborough Lakes, male flew west, 27<sup>th</sup> September (S. Tomlinson)
- 2017** Capel-le-Ferne, female, 29<sup>th</sup> January (D. Richards)
- 2017** Abbotscliffe, immature/female flew in off the sea, 14<sup>th</sup> September (M. Varley)
- 2017** Hythe, immature/female flew in off the sea, 14<sup>th</sup> September (S. McMinn)
- 2018** Botolph's Bridge, female, 25<sup>th</sup> March, photographed (B. Harper)
- 2018** Beachborough Lakes, one flew south, 14<sup>th</sup> November, photographed (S. Tomlinson)



Hen Harrier at Botolph's Bridge (Brian Harper)