

Hen Harrier

Circus cyaneus

Category A

Rare migrant and winter visitor.

45 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)

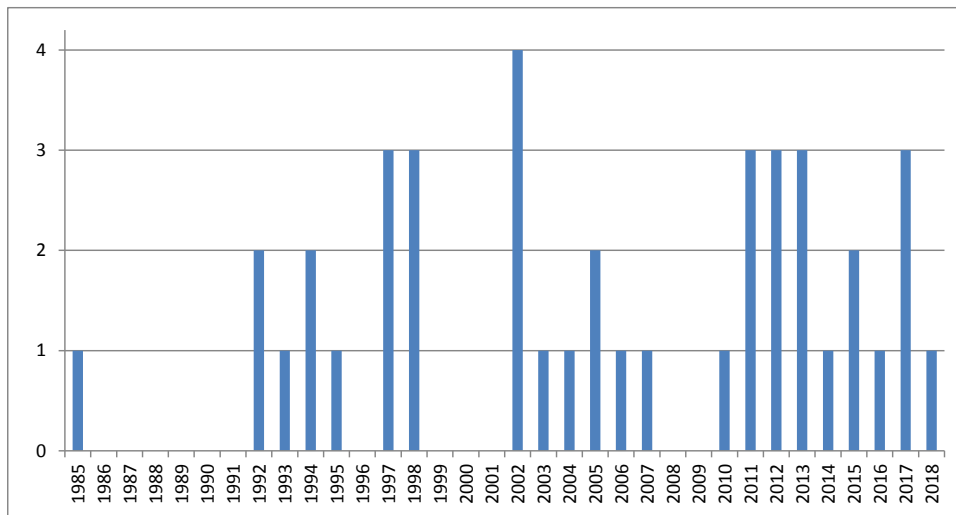


Figure 1: Hen Harrier records since 1985 at Folkestone and Hythe

Figure 2 shows the arrival dates by week. The earliest autumn arrival was on 14th September (2017, when two were seen), with one further record in September and 17 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.

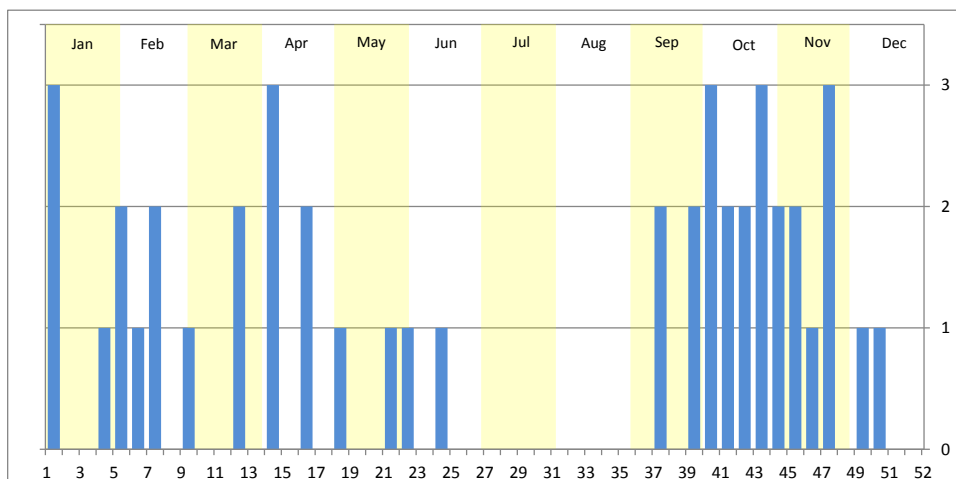


Figure 2: Hen Harrier records at Folkestone and Hythe by week

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

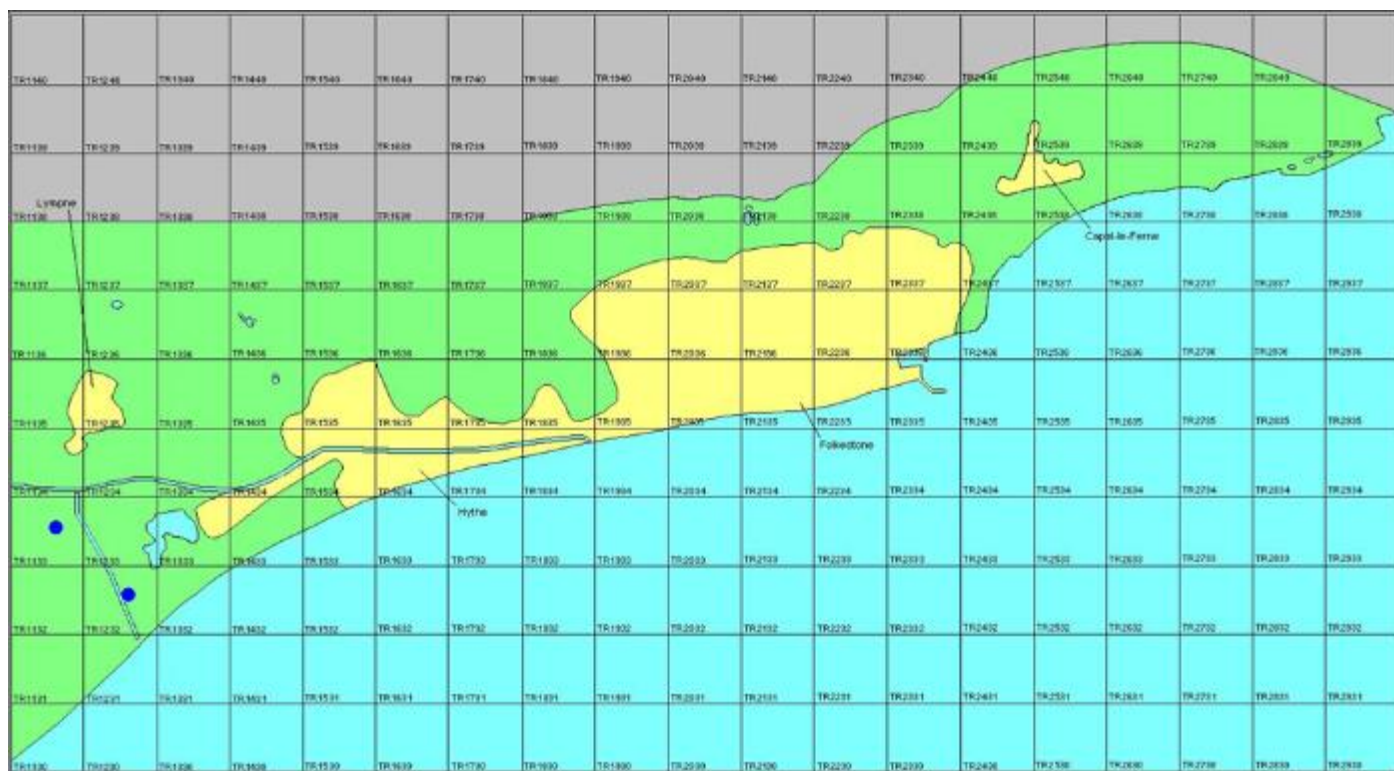


Figure 3: Wintering distribution of Hen Harrier Goose at Folkestone and Hythe (2007 – 2012 BTO/KOS Atlas)

The full list records is as follows:

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

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



Hen Harrier at Botolph's Bridge (Brian Harper)