

Temminck's Stint

Calidris temminckii

Category A

Very rare vagrant

2 records

Breeds in Arctic Fenno-Scandia and Russia, with occasional pairs in Scotland. Winters from the Mediterranean Basin and northern Afrotropics across the Middle East and eastwards across southern Asia to Japan.

A scarce but regular passage migrant to Kent in both spring and autumn. The majority of spring records have occurred in May, whilst autumn passage peaks in September.



Temminck's Stint at Nickoll's Quarry (Ian Roberts)

First recorded in the Folkestone and Hythe area at Nickoll's Quarry in May 2000, with another there in May 2002 when a single Little Stint was also present, offering a unique opportunity to see both species together here. During this time an area of shallow water, islets and mud existed at the site, which attracted a range of migrant waders, but the habitat has since been altered and is no longer attractive to waders.

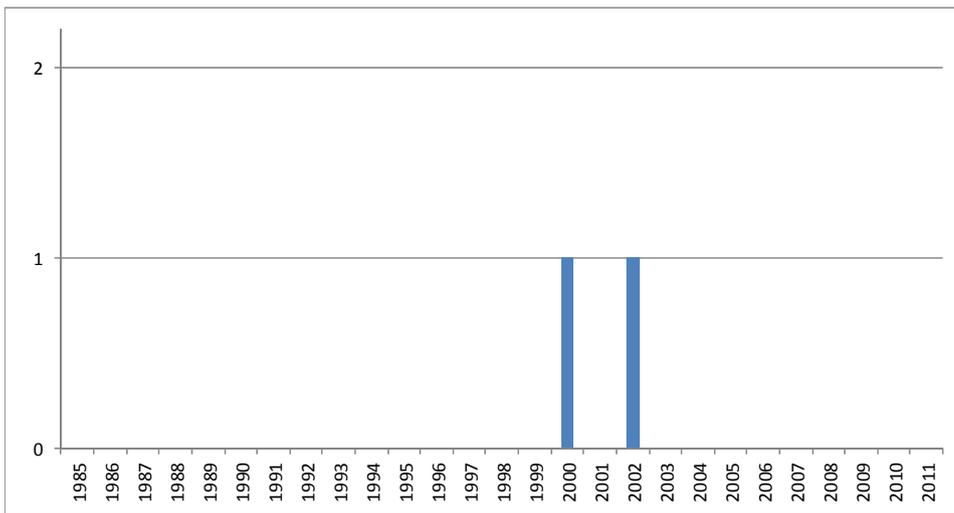


Figure 1: Temminck's Stint records at Folkestone and Hythe

Both records occurred in the first half of May, as demonstrated by figure 2.

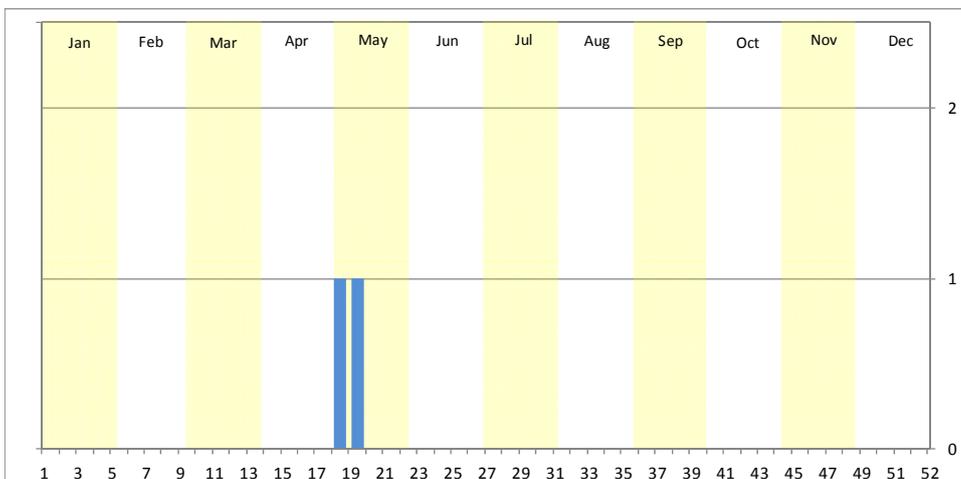


Figure 2: Temminck's Stint records at Folkestone and Hythe by week

The full list of records is as follows:

2000 Nickoll's Quarry, one, 5th May (I. A. Roberts, D. A. Gibson)

2002 Nickoll's Quarry, one, 11th May, photographed (I. A. Roberts)

In addition, two unidentified stints, presumably either this species or Little Stint, flew east past Copt Point on the 8th May 2001.

An account of the first area record is given below:

Temminck's Stilt at Nickoll's Quarry

5th May 2000

(Ian A Roberts, Dale A Gibson)

Weather conditions:

The day began cold with a strong (force 5-6) north-easterly wind and a few fog patches, but the evening felt milder and the wind had eased slightly.

Circumstances of the find:

I arrived at the western part of Nickoll's Quarry to check for waders at about 18:15 and was pleased to find that good numbers of Common Sandpipers had appeared, with about 10 present. They had flushed quite early, as I approached the shallows, but I continued out towards the edge to see if anything else was lurking. As I did so, I noticed a very small wader quite close, which ran away a few feet before 'freezing'. As I raised my binoculars I think I was already expecting to see that it was a stint but was amazed to see it was a Temminck's!

I felt that I was a bit too close for comfort so backed off, but luckily it seemed reluctant to flush. I took a few mental notes before 'phoning DAG and fetching the 'scope from the car. I relocated it quite easily and watched it from a safe distance as I waited for DAG to arrive and see it, which he duly did, although there was a brief scare when it towered up and flew around for a few minutes before returning. Once DAG had arrived we approached to within 20 feet of the bird and had superb views. I took the following description over the 45 minutes or so that I was there.

Description of the bird:

Age / sex: A summer-plumaged adult

Size, structure, jizz: Size as Little Stint (much smaller than Common Sandpiper) but shape more attenuated and long-winged. Moved with horizontal posture and furtive, creeping action, with some crouching. Flew once on high, erratic course, calling frequently, before returning.

Head and upperparts: Slight supercilium over eye, but head generally quite plain brownish. Darkish-centered feathers in scapulars gave a somewhat spotted effect to otherwise brownish upperparts.

Underparts: 'Clouded' buff-brown breast, with quite neat pectoral band, and white belly below.

Bare parts: Legs pale, yellowish-green. Lower mandible showed a pale, yellowish base.

Call: Distinctive dry trilling call given frequently in flight - 'tirrr-tirrr-tirrr'.

Comments on the record:

May 2000 saw a notable influx of Temminck's Stints to the county and Britain as a whole. After two in late April, there were about 80 in Britain in May at around 40 sites, with the main arrival between the 4th and 7th May.

The record was accepted by the Kent Ornithological Society Rarities Committee and appears in the Kent Bird Report for that year.