

# Great Grey Shrike

*Lanius excubitor*

Category A

Very rare vagrant

14 records

Breeds across central Europe from France eastwards into Russia, also in Fenno-Scandia. Extreme northern populations vacate the breeding areas completely, and some southern populations are apparently sedentary; other populations consist of long-distance migrants, short distance migrants and sedentary birds. The winter range includes most of mid-latitude Europe from Britain (where scarce) eastwards, and south-eastwards as far as Turkey.



Great Grey Shrike at Samphire Hoe (Dale Gibson)

A rare autumn migrant and winter visitor to Kent.

The first record for the Folkestone and Hythe area relates to one noted by Ticehurst in his *A History of the Birds of Kent* (1909) from the Warren, Folkestone in 1893.

The next was seen and fully described by Miss H. M. Rowland on the golf links at Folkestone on the 20<sup>th</sup> October 1952. The golf links were an 18 hole course which occupied much of the kilometre square TR2137 south of the bypass and east of Cherry Garden Avenue, an area which is now occupied by Broadmead Village, the Folkestone Academy school and the Park Farm Industrial Estate. The same observer then found two “at Hythe” on 31<sup>st</sup> October 1960. There are no further details of this record but was one reported along Burmarsh Road, near to the present site of Nickoll’s Quarry, on the 10<sup>th</sup> November of that year, and Roger Norman saw one in the garden of ‘Marsh View’ on Burmarsh Road, Palmarsh a fortnight later. The three sightings quite possibly relate to one or maybe both of the same birds.

Fifteen years later there were two sightings in 1975 – singles seen at Folkestone by P. R. Hipkin on the 10<sup>th</sup> October and at Danton Lane by Paul Howe on the 22<sup>nd</sup> October – whilst, after a slightly longer gap, Dale Gibson saw one flying in off the sea at Abbotscliffe on the 15<sup>th</sup> October 1993.

Another decade on and there were seven records in the space of twelve years, all in October, five at Abbotscliffe, one at Samphire Hoe and one at Hythe Ranges. The records by year are shown in figure 1.

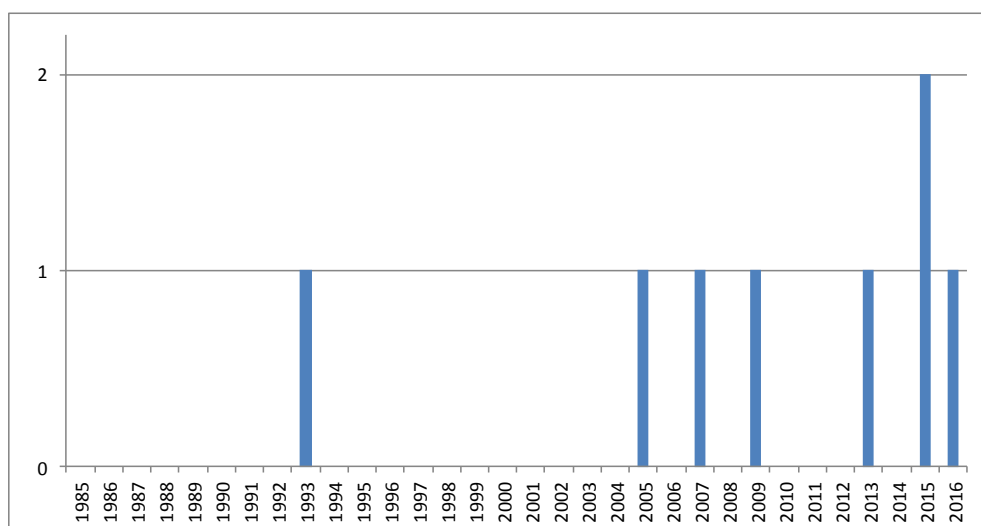


Figure 1: Great Grey Shrike records since 1985 at Folkestone and Hythe

All arrival dates have been in October (week 40 to 44), with the exception of a record of one on the 10<sup>th</sup> November (however this might relate to a bird previously seen in October). The records by week are given in figure 2.

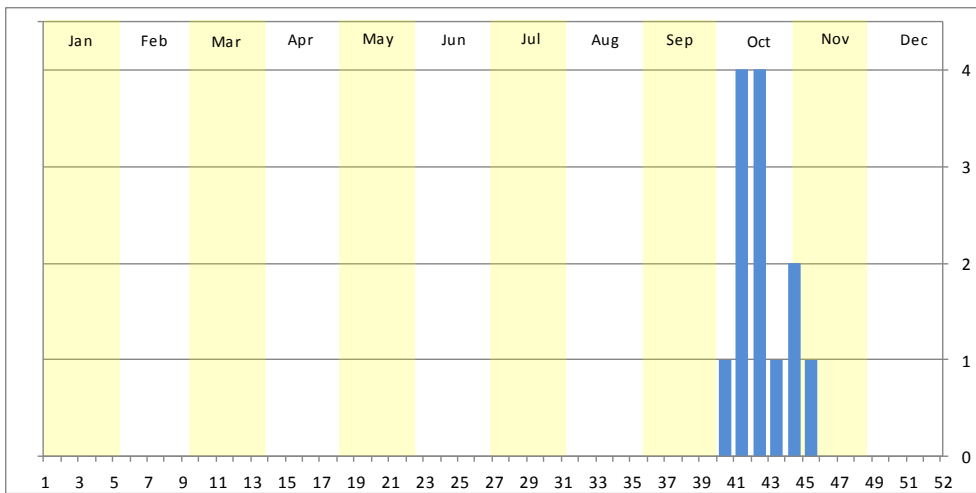


Figure 2: Great Grey Shrike records at Folkestone and Hythe by week

The full list of dated records is as follows:

- 1952** Folkestone, one, on golf links (see above), 20<sup>th</sup> October (H. M. Rowland)
- 1960** Hythe, two, 31<sup>st</sup> October (H. M. Rowland)
- 1960** Burmarsh Road, one, near Nickoll's Quarry, 10<sup>th</sup> (reported) and in garden of 'Marsh View', Palmarsh, 24<sup>th</sup> November (R. K. Norman), presumed same and both possibly same as above
- 1975** Folkestone, one, 10<sup>th</sup> October (P. R. Hipkin)
- 1975** Danton Lane, one, 22<sup>nd</sup> October (P. Howe)
- 1993** Abbotscliffe, one, flew in off the sea, 15<sup>th</sup> October (D. A. Gibson)
- 2005** Samphire Hoe, one, 8<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> October, also seen at Abbotscliffe, photographed (P. Holt, D. A. Gibson, I. A. Roberts *et al*)
- 2007** Abbotscliffe, one, then flew high to east, 4<sup>th</sup> October (I. A. Roberts)
- 2009** Abbotscliffe, one, 14<sup>th</sup> October (M. D. Kennett)
- 2013** Abbotscliffe, one, 30<sup>th</sup> October (M. D. Kennett)
- 2015** Abbotscliffe, one, 15<sup>th</sup> October (M. D. Kennett)
- 2015** Hythe Ranges, one, 18<sup>th</sup> October (B. Findlay)
- 2016** Abbotscliffe, one, 8<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> October (S. Cutt, I. A. Roberts, P. Edmondson)



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