

Tawny Pipit

Anthus campestris

Category A

Very rare vagrant

12 records

Breeds across mid-latitude and southern Europe. The nearest populations to Britain (France, Belgium, the Netherlands and Germany) have decreased over the last few decades. Winters in Africa, mainly south of the Sahara.

A rare passage migrant to Kent in both spring and autumn, but with records decreasing.

First recorded at Folkestone and Hythe in September 1992, when there were two within the space of ten days, and the following year produced three records within a five day period. The first spring record followed in 2004, and 2005 saw two different individuals on consecutive days, with the first having been found dead. The following 17 years have however only seen a further four sightings, though these did include the second spring record and the first two to be seen in October. The records by year are shown in figure 1. Of the two large pipits, Tawny is marginally the rarer, and has a mean arrival date almost three weeks earlier in the autumn (22nd September).

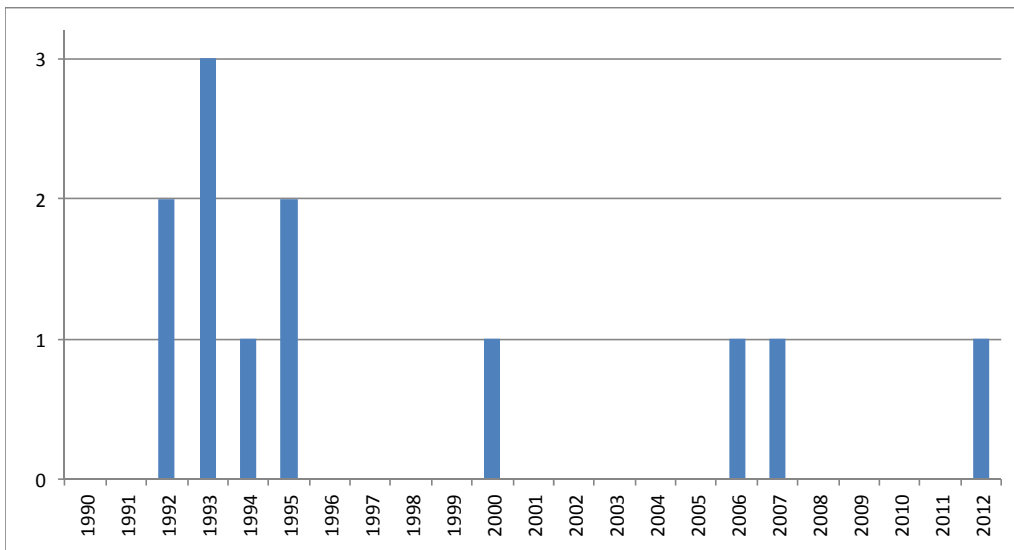


Figure 1: Tawny Pipit records at Folkestone and Hythe

There have been two spring records, both in week 22 (on 28th May and 1st June). Autumn records fall between 4th September (week 36) and 20th October (week 42), with the majority in September, as demonstrated by figure 2.

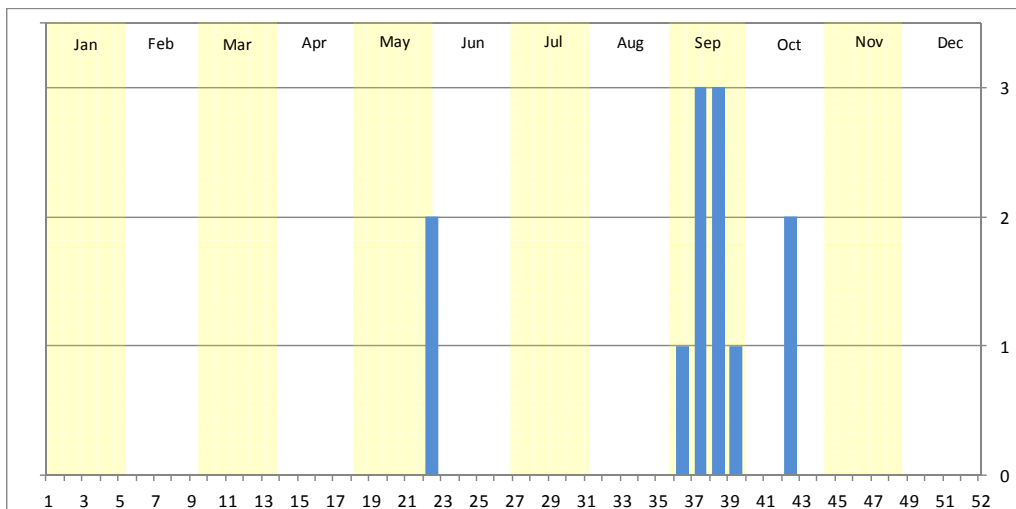


Figure 2: Tawny Pipit records at Folkestone and Hythe by week

All have been recorded from the cliffs, with eight at Abbotscliffe, three at Capel-le-Ferne (two at the Gun Site and one at the Café) and one in fields along Crete Road West.

The full list of records is as follows:

- 1992** Abbotscliffe, one flew in off the sea, 4th September (I. A. Roberts)
- 1992** Abbotscliffe, one, 13th September (I. A. Roberts)
- 1993** Abbotscliffe, one flew east, 15th September (D. A. Gibson)
- 1993** Abbotscliffe, one flew west, 18th September (D. A. Gibson)
- 1993** Crete Road East, one, 19th September (D. A. Gibson)
- 1994** Capel-le-Ferne (Gun Site), one flew in off the sea, 1st June (D. A. Gibson)
- 1995** Abbotscliffe, one flew east, 16th September, later found dead, possibly having been killed by a Sparrowhawk (D. A. Gibson)
- 1995** Abbotscliffe, one flew west, 17th September (D. A. Gibson)
- 2000** Abbotscliffe, one flew in off the sea, 24th September, sound recorded (D. A. Gibson, I. A. Roberts)
- 2006** Capel-le-Ferne (Gun Site), one flew in off the sea, 17th October (D. A. Gibson)
- 2007** Abbotscliffe, one in gully, then flew west, 20th October (D. A. Gibson)
- 2012** Capel-le-Ferne (Café), one flew north-east, 28th May (D. A. Gibson)