

Twite

Carduelis flavirostris

Category A

Rare passage migrant

21 records

Breeds in upland Britain and Norway, wintering around eastern and southern coasts of Britain, southern Sweden, Denmark and central Europe. There was a widespread decline in Scotland in the twentieth century, which is reflected by the reducing numbers of winter and passage birds further south. It is an increasingly irregular and steadily declining passage migrant and winter visitor to Kent.

Henry Ulyett in his *Rambles of a Naturalist Round Folkestone* (1880) includes this species in the list of those recorded in the neighbourhood of Folkestone, within a radius of six miles from the town hall. Whilst this range extends further inland than the current Folkestone and Hythe area, it is likely that it the record would have been from the coast, and so would most probably have been within the modern boundary. The first definitive, dated records of Twite in the Folkestone and Hythe area were in 1960, when there were three sightings – one at Nickoll’s Quarry and two at Folkestone.

There were no further records until 1984, since when the species has occurred with some regularity, as shown by figure 1. There have, however, only been four records since 2000, including two intriguing and possibly related sightings from the Cheriton area in February 2017.

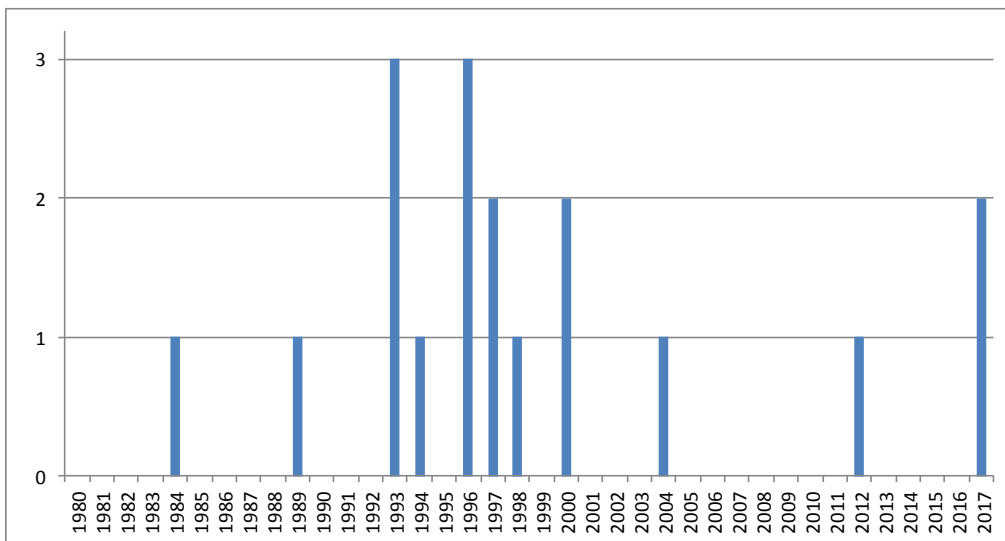


Figure 1: Twite records since 1980 at Folkestone and Hythe

The majority (67%) of records have occurred in late autumn, between the 12th October (week 41) and 8th November (week 45), with two in January, three in February and two in March, as shown in figure 2.

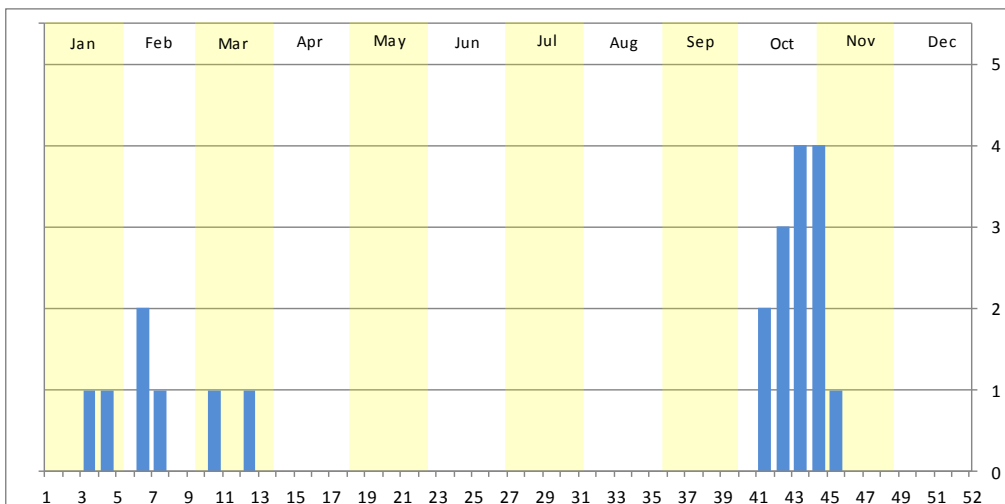


Figure 2: Twite records at Folkestone and Hythe by week

The distribution of winter records recorded in the BTO/KOS Atlas (2007 – 2012) is shown in figure 3. This record relates to a flock which flew south over Saltwood in January 2012. The other records are predominately coastal, with six at Nickoll's Quarry, five at Abbotscliffe, two at Copt Point, two at Cheriton, Folkestone (unspecified location) and Samphire Hoe, and singles at Folkestone Warren, Hythe Ranges and Mill Point.

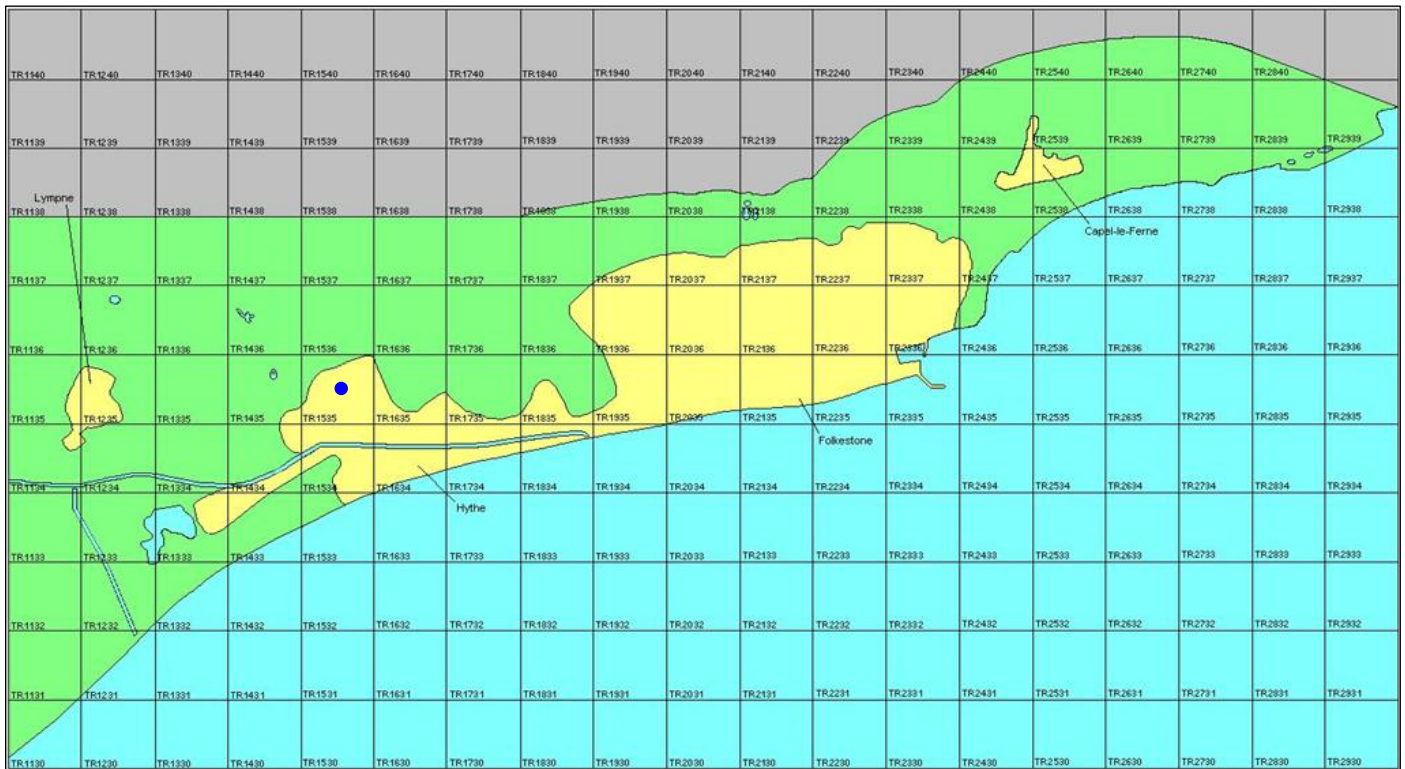


Figure 3: Wintering distribution of Twite at Folkestone and Hythe (2007 – 2012 BTO/KOS Atlas)

The full list of dated records is as follows:

- 1960** Nickoll's Quarry, three at new pit, 23rd March (R. K. Norman)
- 1960** Folkestone, two flew west, 13th October (D. F. Musson)
- 1960** Folkestone, six flew west, 8th November (D. F. Musson)
- 1984** Copt Point, 12 flew west, 21st October (R. Hollingsworth)
- 1989** Mill Point, eight flew west, 1st November (I. A. Roberts)
- 1993** Hythe Ranges, one flew south-west, 17th January (R. K. Norman)
- 1993** Nickoll's Quarry, one flew west, 17th October (R. K. Norman)
- 1993** Abbotscliffe, 12, 29th October (D. A. Gibson)
- 1994** Nickoll's Quarry, seven flew west, 27th October (R. K. Norman)
- 1996** Nickoll's Quarry, one with Linnets, 17th February (R. K. Norman)
- 1996** Abbotscliffe, eight flew west, 19th October (D. A. Gibson)
- 1996** Abbotscliffe, one flew west, 23rd October (D. A. Gibson)
- 1997** Nickoll's Quarry, two, 26th October (R. K. Norman)
- 1997** Abbotscliffe, two, 30th to 31st October (D. A. Gibson)
- 1998** Abbotscliffe, 14 flew west, 12th October (D. A. Gibson)
- 2000** Nickoll's Quarry, one, 5th March (R. K. Norman)
- 2000** Samphire Hoe, one with Linnets, 19th October (D. E. Smith)
- 2004** Samphire Hoe, one, 2nd November (P. Holt)
- 2012** Saltwood, small flock (one seen but several heard) flew south, 24th January (P. Howe)
- 2017** Cheriton (Shearway area), eight, 6th February (J. Varley)
- 2017** Cheriton (Broadmead Village), c.20-30, 9th February (J. Wood), possibly related to above sighting