

KOS News

The Newsletter of the Kent Ornithological Society

Number 528 September 2020



Wryneck by Steve Young

- News & Announcements • Turning over an old leaf
- Bird Sightings – JULY AND AUGUST •
- Fifty Years Ago •

Editorial

I begin this editorial with an apology to Martin Collins; in my last editorial I suggested that his comment of having reported the regular Oare Black-headed Gull Yellow 2FPX 8 times appeared dubious as I could not find those records on the NTGG's web page for the bird concerned. Martin has kindly pointed me at a somewhat cryptic feature of the web page by which only the first and latest reports appear on the map, other sightings being listed separately. I am most grateful for Martin's clarification and recognise his diligence in reading and reporting colour rings. Long may he continue to do so.

While the more extreme aspects of lockdown have eased slightly, I still find myself opting to restrict my travels due to a combination of family health concerns. I have been largely confined to garden birding and the immediate surroundings, with a few trips out to familiar places such as Grove Ferry and Oare Marshes. We continue to see large numbers of people out and about at some sites in the fine weather, with all the associated problems of parking and litter which seem to be inescapable these days. By no means all these visitors are birders or even interested in natural history, but I have a growing sense that bird watching has undergone something of a renaissance during lockdown with more people than ever out and about chasing remarkably few birds! If this new interest stands the test of time perhaps, we can gain a few new members and increased support for environmental issues.

Of course, you cannot please everybody! From a personal perspective I have always been a somewhat solitary birder (some might even say anti-social). Given that much of my birding in the last fifty odd years has focused on patch watching, ringing, nest recording and surveys it is not wholly surprising that I have never really been inclined to travel for a 'rare bird', preferring to find the odd unusual visitor to my own rather limited range of sites.

This aspect of my own birding is about to undergo some dramatic change, as due to a change of management I have now lost access to the 'local patch' that has absorbed so much of my birding efforts for the past twenty-six years. I must admit to feeling a little bereft and have been wondering whether it might be the time to wind down my birding and develop some of my other interests. Fortunately, this autumn has seen a flurry of the sort of things that make the season wonderful, Pied Fly's, Redstart, odd yankee waders, Barred Warbler and Wryneck to name just a few I have not managed to find!

Nonetheless, their presence is a sign that my future birding will need to shift its emphasis from endless counting, to perhaps more drawing and aesthetics, who knows?

Keep safe!

Good birding

Norman

News and announcements

IMPORTANT NOTICE

. The British trust for Ornithology has suspended all organised survey work for the current season. However, the details of current and future surveys are shown below in case any members are able to collect relevant data safely during the lockdown. This information would still be welcome for KOS archives and can be submitted through normal channels via Local Area Recorders, details on the KOS website.

RARE BREEDING BIRDS IN KENT

The Kent Ornithological Society, like other county bird clubs, coordinates records of rare breeding birds and submits them to the national Rare Birds Breeding Panel (RBBP). However, this is not straightforward. At a time when birders are being exhorted to be careful about publishing records of rare breeding birds on social media, we suspect that many observations are not reported. There are several ways in which you can help monitor rare birds and not risk publicising breeding locations.

1. Ensure you follow the bird watchers code, <https://www.bto.org/sites/default/files/u10/downloads/taking-part/health/bwc.pdf> and do not disturb the bird,
2. Always follow the RBBP guidelines for reporting on social media <http://rbbp.org.uk/>
3. Submit to the KOS database, <http://birdgroups.co.uk/kos/default.asp>, there is an automatic filter, which means that the records are not shown on the website but stored in the database,
4. Submit your records to Birdtrack, there is a similar filter and your observations will be secure.
5. You can e mail in confidence the county recorder Barry Wright umbrellabirds66@gmail.com or the county RBBP coordinator Brian Watmough brianrwat@yahoo.co.uk.

The RBBP <http://rbbp.org.uk/> collects data on the rarer species of birds breeding in the United Kingdom. Its records allow the production of annual totals of breeding pairs for each species on its list. It was formed in 1972 by representatives of the RSPB, the BTO, The Nature Conservancy Council and *British Birds*. The present Panel is made up of representatives of the Joint Nature Conservation Committee, RSPB, BTO, three independent members, and a Secretary and a report is published each year in *British Birds* and available on their website. Approximately 160 species are monitored by the RBBP, although the list is reviewed and changing so that in 2019 Cetti's Warbler will no longer be recorded but Turtle Dove is now being considered. Each year details of between twenty and twenty-five species are submitted by the KOS. Records from Kent are collated by the Kent Ornithological Society and submitted to the UK RBBP. These records form the basis for relevant sections in the annual KBR.

For more information refer back to the previous KOS May Newsletter.

Brian Watmough
ianrwat@yahoo.co.uk

BTO BREEDING BIRD SURVEY IN KENT

The BTO/JNCC/RSPB Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) is the main scheme for monitoring the population changes in breeding bird species of the UK. For volunteers in the project BBS is a great way to become familiar with a small area of local countryside whilst contributing valuable data to aid bird research and conservation.

Participation in BBS involves two early-morning visits in the spring to a local 1-km square site, to count all the birds seen and heard whilst walking two 1-km lines across the square. Prior to this there is an initial visit to recce the site and record the habitat of the square, while volunteers also have the option to make later visits in summer to survey for butterflies. Recording forms are sent out to each volunteer or can be downloaded from BBS online, and results of bird counts can also be submitted on the website.

If you can identify common birds by sight and sound then please consider taking on a BBS square – it is very rewarding! There are 135 1-km squares pre-selected for BBS in Kent, the vast majority already mapped with transect lines, though many sites require new volunteers for surveys.

Please take a look at the BBS webpages and use the map to find a square near you: <https://www.bto.org/volunteer-surveys/bbs/taking-part>. Complete the online form that will appear and as regional organiser I will then get in contact to allocate the square to you. Alternatively, just send

me an email (rjknight53@gmail.com) to register your interest in BBS for Kent, and suitable squares in your location can then be discussed.

You might carry out a survey in a location such as Boxley Warren which was a vacant site when I signed up for BBS in 2019, and though not all squares are as beautiful as this area they are of equal importance for monitoring breeding birds. I look forward to hearing from you!



Boxley Warren

Bob Knight

Appeal for 2020 breeding records

As a result of Corona virus, many reserve wardens and staff were furloughed. One result of this is that the usual monitoring of breeding birds did not take place this year. Despite the closure of hides and visitor centres, it was usually still possible for people to visit these reserves. If anyone has records of confirmed breeding noted during such visits, particularly for species of conservation concern, please can you submit them to the KOS/BirdTrack etc. These might involve a brood of Pochard or Shoveler, or waders with young, or recently fledged Bearded Tits. Please search your notebooks/blogs etc. All such records will help to assess the 2020 breeding season. Thank you.

KOS Turtle Dove Survey 2021

Readers will hopefully be aware, from previous newsletters, that the Society is planning to survey Turtle Doves in 2021. It has recently been announced that the RSPB, in conjunction with RBBP, intend to conduct a national survey of Turtle Doves next year.

Following discussion with the national organiser, it has been agreed that the Kent survey will continue as planned. Common methodology will be employed with survey squares set by the national survey to align with other core counties. Kent data will feed into the UK results. However, the Society will use its own online survey design which will also seek to gather records of additional species that are important within the county.

Full details of the survey and how to take part will be communicated in late winter/spring, but anyone wishing to volunteer should contact either:-

Murray Orchard (murray.orchard@live.co.uk)
Brian Watmough (brianwat@yahoo.co.uk)
or **Nicole Khan** (nicole.khan@rspb.org.uk)



LOW-TIDE COUNTS THE SWALE

Are you able to spend two or three hours a month between November and February to help monitor waterbirds on The Swale? If so, please read on and hopefully contact me to volunteer.

Throughout the year teams of birders monitor the numbers of birds using our estuaries as part of the Wetland Bird Survey (WEBS) organised by the BTO. These roost counts, which have been made for nearly fifty years, estimate the numbers of birds using the estuaries and show that the Swale regularly supports more than 60,000 waterbirds. However, these counts do not tell us which inter-tidal areas are important for the birds.

Low Tide Counts (LTC) are an important tool for monitoring bird populations on estuaries. A national programme is co-ordinated by the BTO as part of the Wetland Birds Survey (WeBS). Ideally LTC are completed every seven years but it is now ten years since the last count on the Swale

Unlike WEBS counts they are not coordinated and can be done any day within the month. The counts aim to record the densities of water birds using inter-tidal and other areas at low tides and are made two hours either side of low tide once a month from November to February.

The Swale is divided into more than 80 different sectors; however, it will be possible to amalgamate some of these sectors and to count several sectors on the same tide. We are especially looking for birders to count the extensive inter-tidal areas between Whitstable and Seasalter and at the eastern end of Sheppey.

Please will you let me know if you will be able to help.

There is more information on Low Tide Counts at <https://www.bto.org/our-science/projects/wetland-bird-survey/taking-part/low-tide-counts-methods>

Brian WATMOUGH

Brianwat@yahoo.co.uk

Surveys

Current surveys are usually posted on the KOS website, for further information please contact Murray Orchard at murray.orchard@live.co.uk

Kent Breeding Bird Atlas

We still have a modest stock of this useful publication which was well received on its release a couple of years ago. If you do not yet own a copy there will shortly be an opportunity to purchase some of the remainder of the stock at a reduced price. Keep an eye on the KOS web site for further details

Editorial and Records sub-committee

The KOS Editorial & Records Committee would like to hear from any individuals within the membership that would like to join the county rarity panel. Contact Barry Wright or Alan Fossey, (details above)

We like to keep in touch with all our members, so if you change address, email address or phone numbers please remember to inform our membership secretary, Chris Roome. He can be contacted at:

Chris Roome, Rowland House, Station Rd., Staplehurst TN12 0PY

Tel: 01580 891686 e-mail: chrisroome105@icloud.com

We would like to encourage members to contribute items or photographs for inclusion in the newsletter, especially regarding birds in Kent. If you are interested, I am always happy to offer advice or assistance to aspiring authors. To facilitate page composition text needs to be presented as a Word document, photos or illustrations as j-peg files.

Articles

Turning over an old leaf

Standing in a coastal sycamore wood on a grey October morning, a light easterly wind blowing, quiet apart from the ticks of Robins and the thin calls of Goldcrests. Then movement in the upper branches – but it's only a leaf that's been dislodged by the breeze. But wait, that other leaf's moving against the wind – it's slim, greenish, can't see any markings yet: why won't it show more of itself? Oh, there it is – just another Chiffchaff.

Familiar? But of course, what everyone is hoping for is something a bit rarer. For this Newsletter, in the season when most of the scarcer leaf warblers appear, I thought it might be of interest to summarise their current status in Kent.

Most of the species covered by this article have been recorded in Kent only in the last 70 years. With one exception, they were all national rarities when the British Birds Rarities Committee was formed in 1958. Did you realise that Yellow-browed Warbler was once a BBRC description species? It only lasted until 1962, though.

It seems improbable that these warblers didn't occur before 1950. It's more likely that, for various reasons, no-one noticed them. Those reasons probably include the way in which people looked for

birds (there weren't that many birdwatchers and hardly anyone hung around in coastal scrub in autumn), the relatively poor quality of optical equipment, the lack of understanding of the importance of calls, and – not least – the fact that identification books didn't cover most of these species.

There are seventeen species of *Phylloscopus* warbler on the British list, twelve of which have been recorded in Kent. I am not going to deal with Willow Warbler or Chiffchaff (and I'll leave reports of eastern races of Chiffchaff, including *tristis*, to someone with more patience). It's still quite a lot to fit in, so I'll often let the graphs speak for themselves.

The article includes records up to 2019, but note that at the time of writing final assessments of numbers present in that last year had not been made. A couple of references are made to 2020 records.

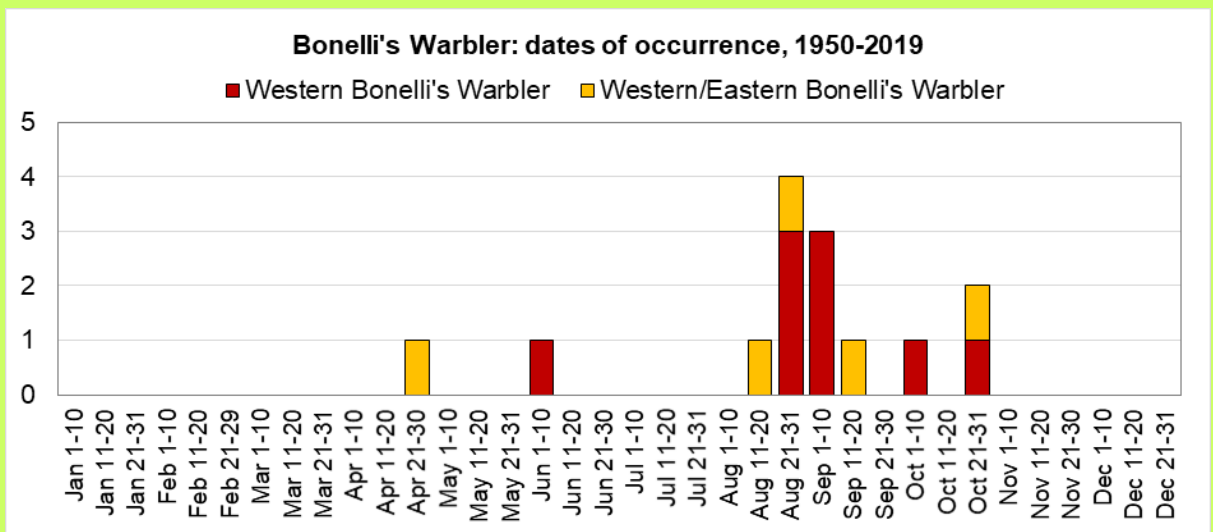
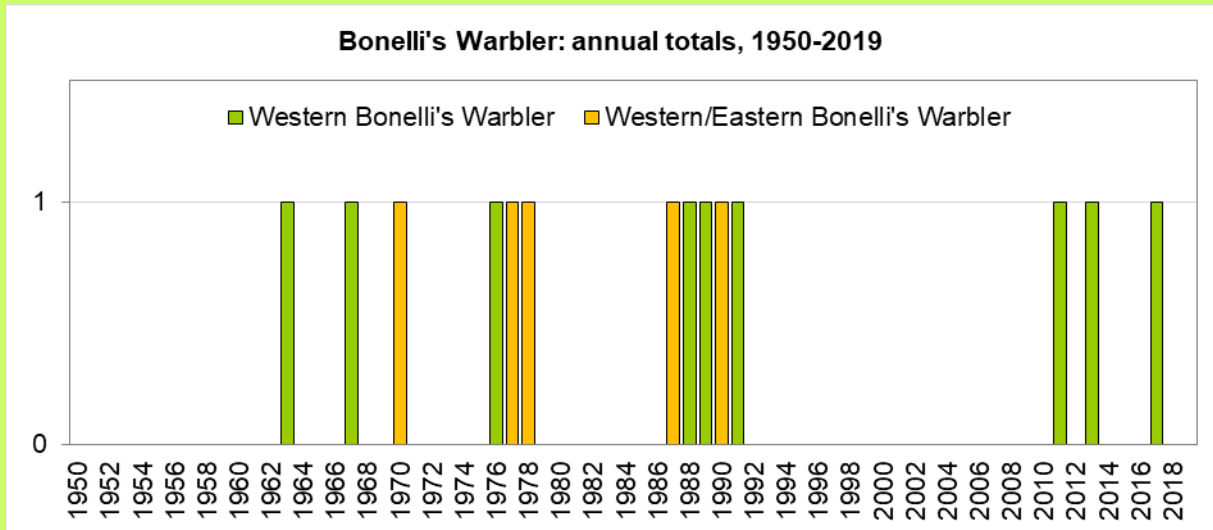
Western Bonelli's Warbler



Western Bonelli's Warbler, by Brendan Ryan

The two species of Bonelli's Warbler were split in the 1990s, and we are not certain to which species some of the earlier records belonged, so these are classed as Western/Eastern. However, it's likely that all or most were Western, since Eastern is far rarer (only eight British records up to 2018, contrasting with 148 Westerns). There are 14 Kent Bonelli's Warbler records: nine Western, the rest unspecified. No more than one has been found per year, from the first that was trapped and ringed at Dungeness on 2nd September 1963. They have been well-spread seasonally: one in late April, one in early June, and the rest between 19th August and 27th October.

An additional record, still not formally accepted, is of a Western Bonelli's at Reculver on 24th June 2020.

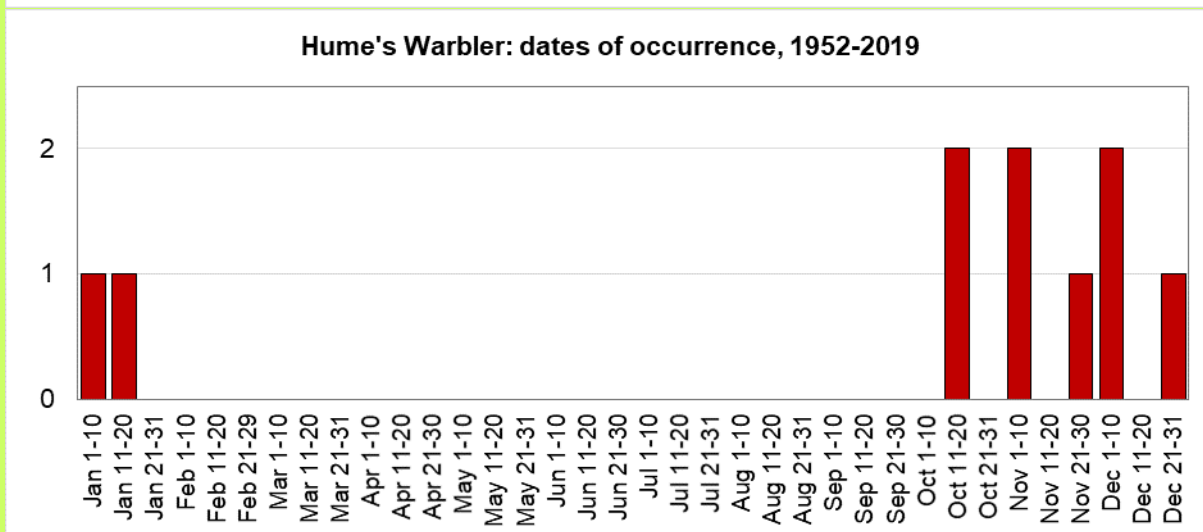
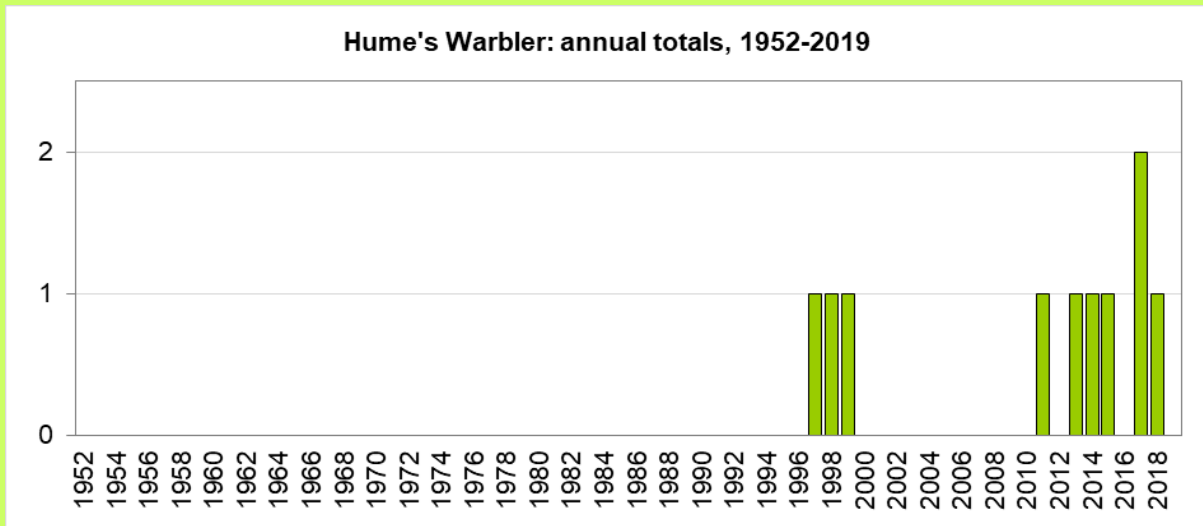


Hume's Warbler



Hume's Warbler by Tony Morris

Hume's Warbler evolved in the late twentieth century, finally separating from Yellow-browed in 1997. A few retrospective identifications have been made in Britain, but none in Kent, although there were some strong candidates. The first for the county remains one at Littlestone on 25th November 1997. There have now been ten individuals, all found in late autumn or early winter, the earliest (by two weeks) at Reculver on 16th October 1999. Four of the twelve appear to have been wintering: Ramsgate December 2013-March 2014, Dungeness January-March or April 2014, Cliftonville January 2017 and Lade/Littlestone November 2018-February 2019. Note that the seasonal charts in this article show the dates when birds were found, not the whole periods when they were present.



Yellow-browed Warbler

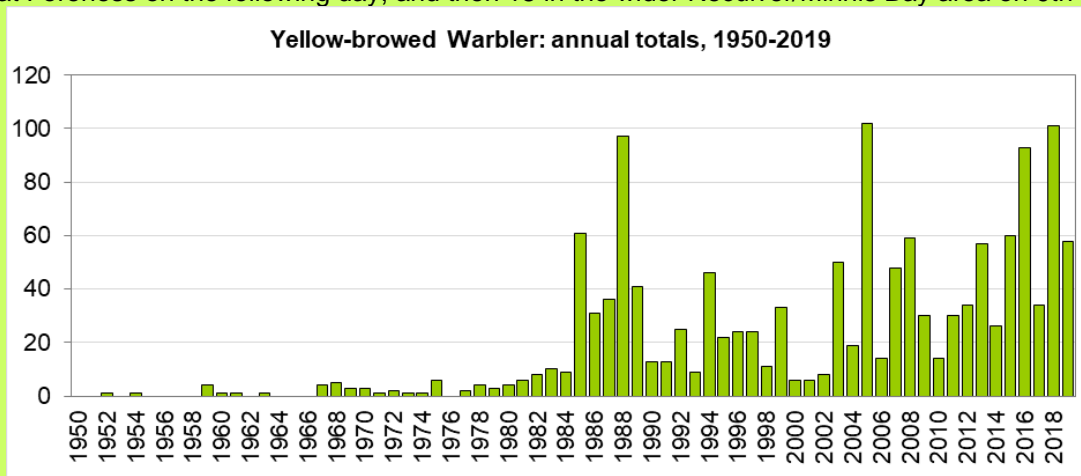


Yellow-browed Warbler by Barry Wright

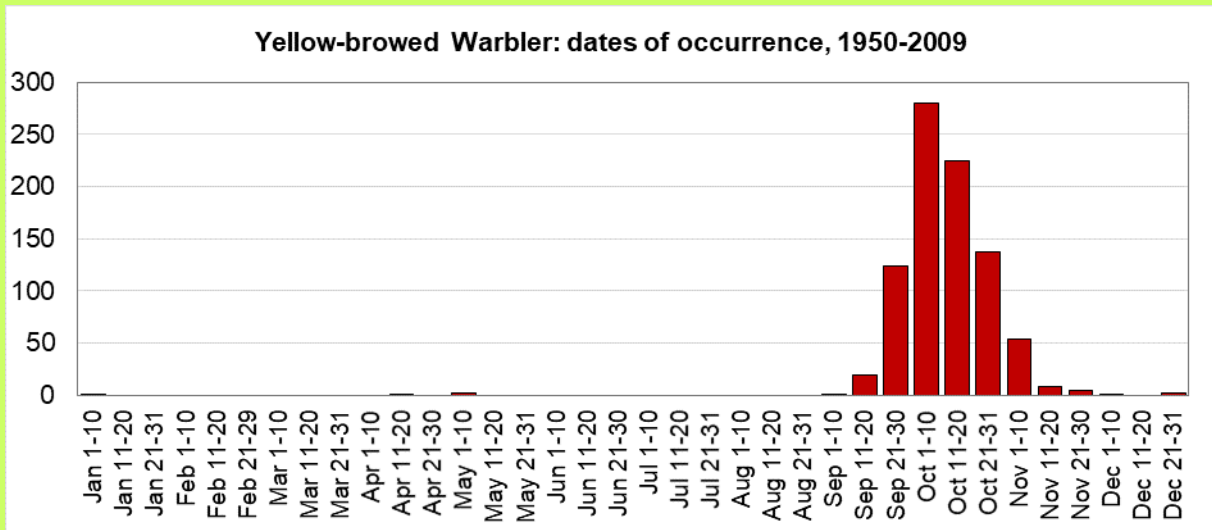
The first Yellow-browed Warbler in Kent was seen at Dungeness by H. G. Alexander on 24th September 1915, though the description in Harrison's Birds of Kent now looks a little odd and thin. It remained a rarity until the 1970s but since then has become a regular autumn migrant between mid September and early November. There are now too many to be certain how many occur each year. The annual totals chart includes estimates for several years when big numbers occurred, and the seasonal chart only shows records to 2009. There have been a few birds (some after 2009) in spring and, while coastal records predominate, especially from Reculver round to Dover, occasionally a bird is found inland.

The increase in numbers of Yellow-browed Warblers seen in western Europe is thought to be the result of a new migration route developing, with birds moving west and south, instead of east and south to the main wintering areas of south-eastern Asia. What has driven such a change is not known. It is possible that in earlier days some birds were following the western route, but with fewer observers, fewer birds were found.

The estimate for the total number of individuals recorded in Kent is 1,417. The largest groups, though I've not searched thoroughly for these, were probably 14 at Minnis Bay on 2nd October 1988 and 10 at Foreness on the following day, and then 18 in the wider Reculver/Minnis Bay area on 9th October



2005.



Pallas's Warbler

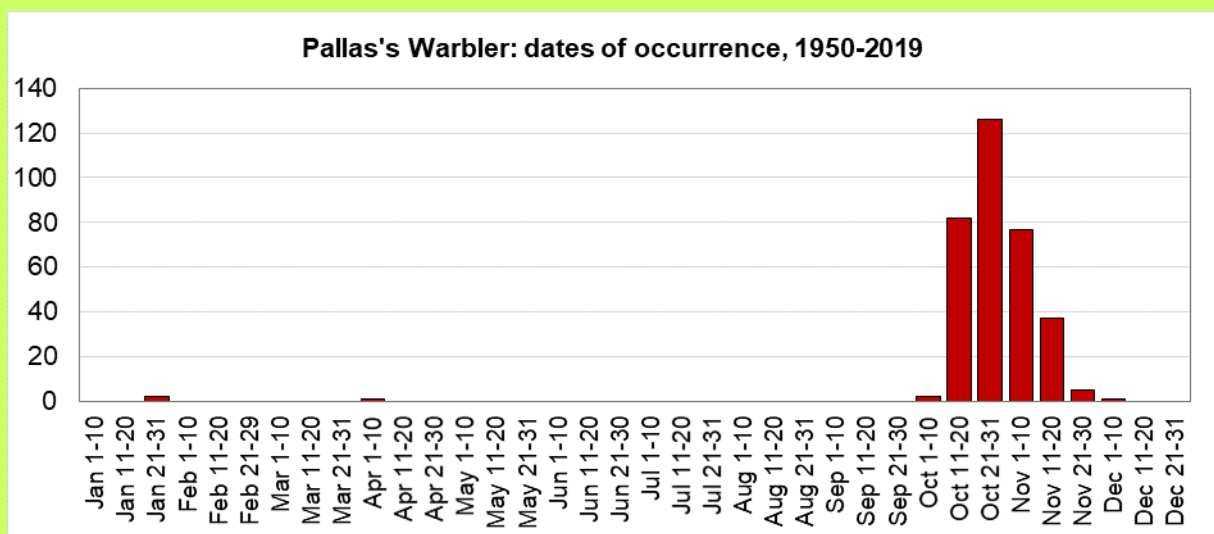
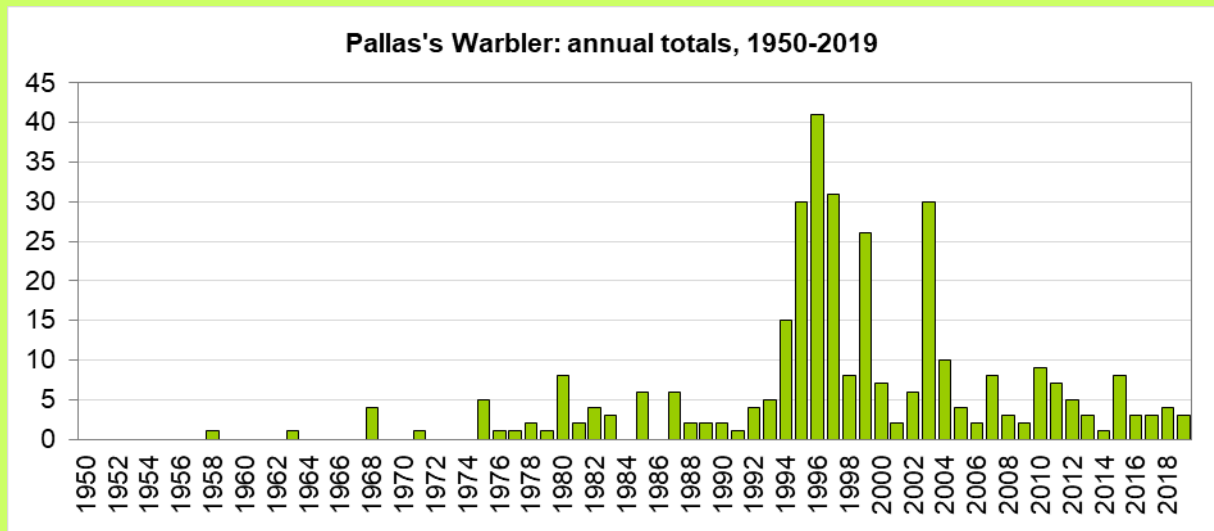


Pallas' Warbler by Richard Bonser

This species, shaped and patterned like a green humbug, is a great favourite of birders in autumn, helped by its distinctive features. The grand total, from the first at Sandwich Bay on 23rd November 1958 up to 2019, is 333. In the 1950s and 1960s, it was really rare, but from the mid 1970s, it became almost annual in Kent.

Numbers peaked during 1994-1999, when there was an average of 25 per year and a maximum of 41 in 1996. Since then, however, Pallas's has not matched Yellow-browed, and it has become scarce once again and, apart from 30 in 2003, there hasn't been more than ten in a year. Occurrence of two or more together was not uncommon in the peak years, but doesn't seem to have been recorded

since 2010. Totals of five were in the St Margaret's Bay area on 4th-5th November 1995 and on 25th October 1999.



This is another late autumn species, the majority of birds being found between mid October and mid November. Wintering individuals were at Crabble during January-April 2004 and Cheriton during January-March 2014, while a singing male found at Wouldham in April 2007 could have wintered there or been a migrant.

In common with other rare *Phylloscopus* warblers, Pallas's have been found almost entirely on the coast, a few up the Thames estuary, with only three or four more than a mile inland. The highest densities of records come from Thanet, and around the east coast, through to Dungeness.

Radde's Warbler

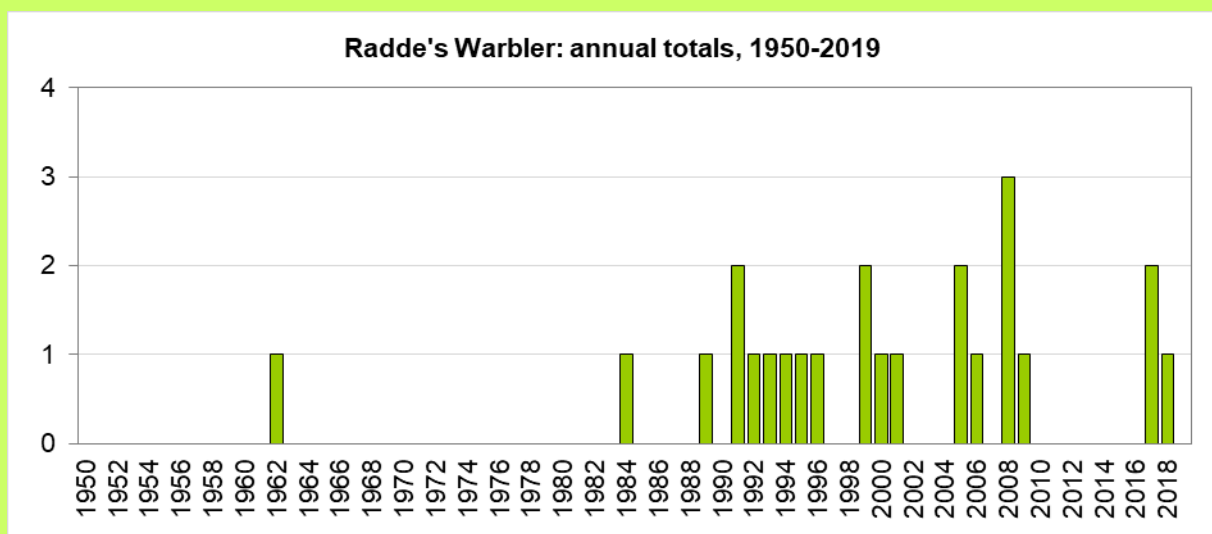


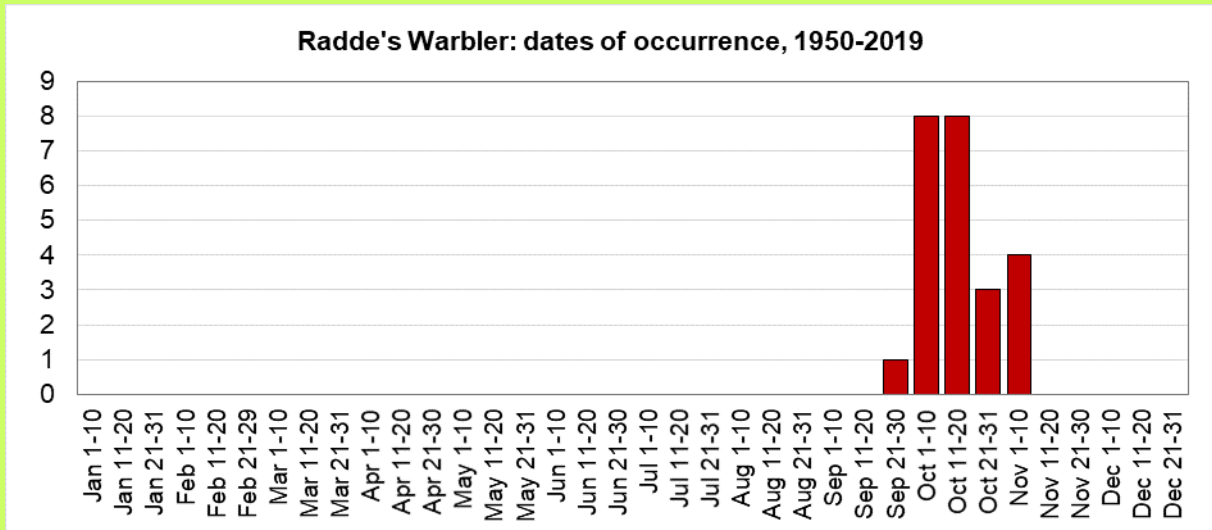
Radde's Warbler by Brendan Ryan

The first for Kent, and the third for Britain, was one trapped three times at Dungeness during 3rd-8th October 1962. A note in *British Birds* describing this says "no views were obtained in the field, for immediately it was released it would disappear into the nearest low scrub", behaviour all too familiar to would-be observers of this and Dusky Warblers. There has now been a total of 24 individuals found in the county, all from 1984 onwards apart from the first.

Ten have been in the wider St Margaret's Bay area, five at Dungeness, and with one exception the rest along the coast from Reculver to Sandwich Bay. The exception was the 1984 record, at Bough Beech reservoir on 28th October.

There has been one September record, on the 26th at Sandwich Bay in 2008, and four November records, between the 2nd and 4th. But as can be seen below, the majority (17) have appeared in the first twenty days of October.





Dusky Warbler



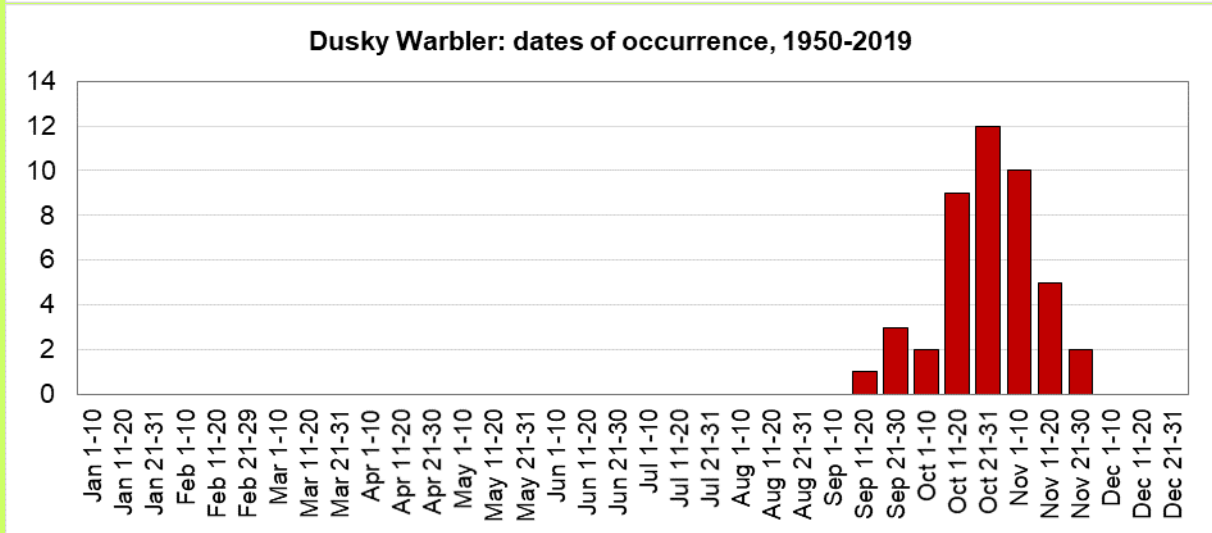
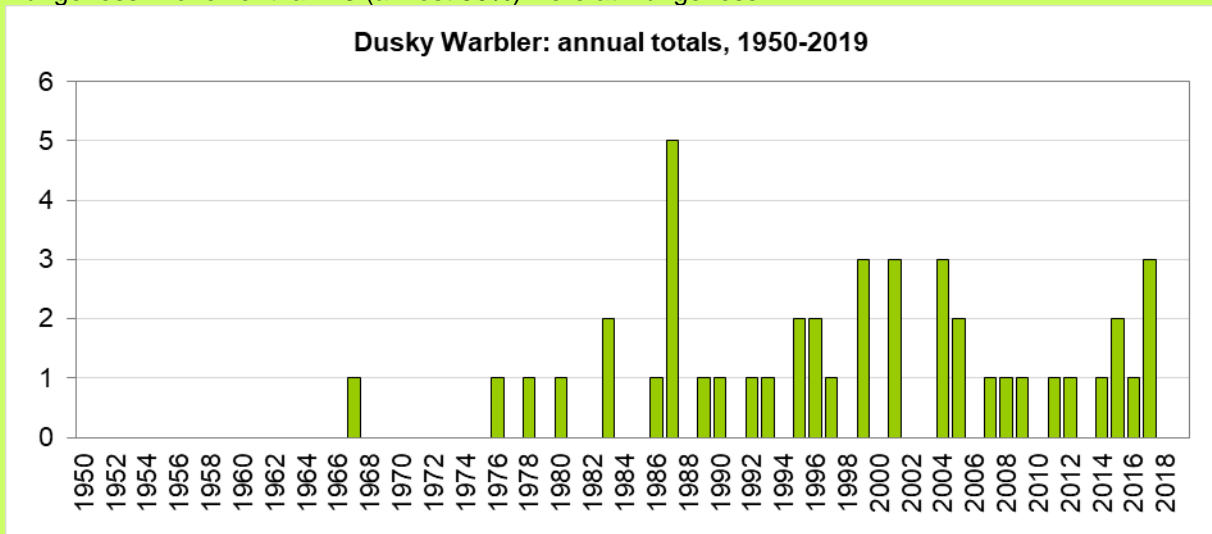
Dusky Warbler by Steve Ashton

With 44 individuals recorded, Dusky Warbler has been almost twice as frequent in Kent as Radde's. The first, though, was not until 10th-15th November 1967, when one was trapped at Dungeness. At least 14 of them and possibly more (but I don't have the full details) have been trapped – it is a very skulking bird.

All records have been, technically, of single birds in that they were found on different dates, but twice the presence of one individual overlapped with another. These were birds at Sandwich Bay on 30th-31st October and 31st October-5th November 1995, and at Dungeness on 4th-6th November and 6th-9th November 1999.

All Kent Dusky Warblers have been found in autumn, between 18th September and 25th-28th November. Most (77%) have occurred between 15th October and 15th November, and they are thus a little later on average than Radde's Warblers.

Two have been seen at Grain, but all the others were around the coast from Bishopstone to Dungeness. No fewer than 13 (almost 30%) were at Dungeness.



Iberian Chiffchaff



Iberian Chiffchaff by Brendan Ryan

It has been known for a long time that Chiffchaffs of the Iberian peninsula have a song that differs considerably from those breeding in Britain. Indeed, H. G. Alexander referred to this (in discussion of some odd Willow Warbler calls) in a note in *British Birds* on Birds at Dungeness in 1916. He commented that they “have a distinct song of the Willow-Wren type, although, so far as I know, it has not been shown that the Iberian Chiffchaff is worthy of even subspecific rank”. Note that he used the term “Iberian Chiffchaff”, though he seems unaware that German ornithologist von Homeyer had given the race the name *brehmii* in 1870. He was ahead of the field in drawing attention to the vocal differences; as late as 1954, the great authority Charles Vaurie said that *brehmii* was “not sufficiently distinct morphologically from nominate *collybita* to warrant nomenclatural recognition” as a subspecies, though he too did refer to the vocal differences.

The formal separation of Iberian Chiffchaff, now *Phylloscopus ibericus*, as a separate species from our common breeding bird by the British Ornithologists’ Union Records Committee eventually took place in 1998, and we are still discovering its true status in Britain.

So far, there have been five accepted records in Kent, all of singing males:

- 2001 One at Dungeness on 14th-17th April
- 2010 One at Walderslade from 29th April to 9th June
- 2016 One at Reculver on 20th April
- 2016 One at Northdown Park, Margate, on 23rd-28th April
- 2017 One at Seaton gravel pits from 30th March to 17th April

Greenish Warbler



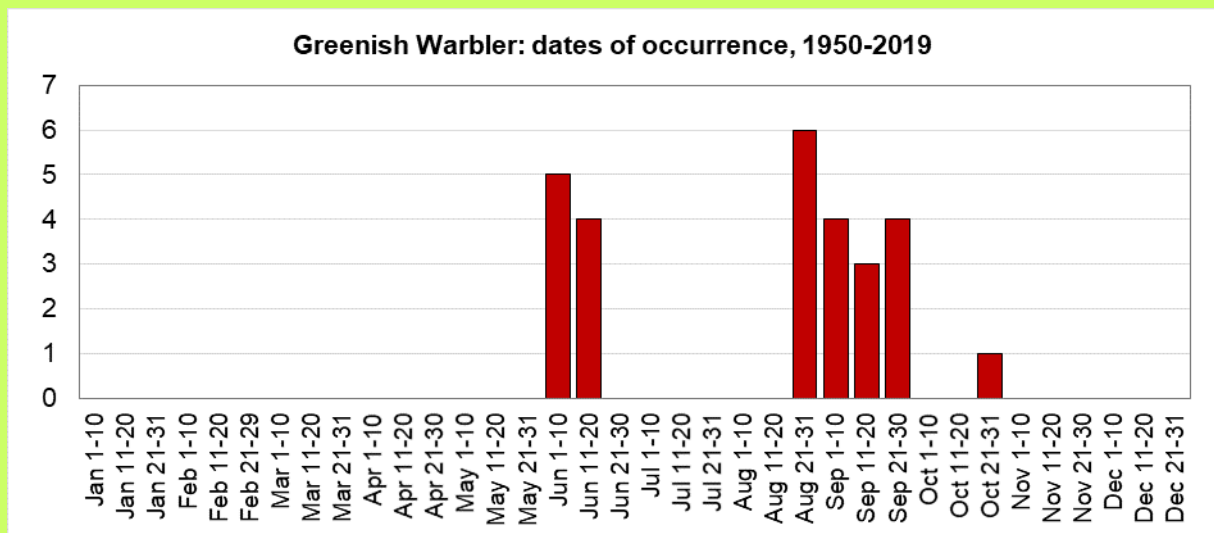
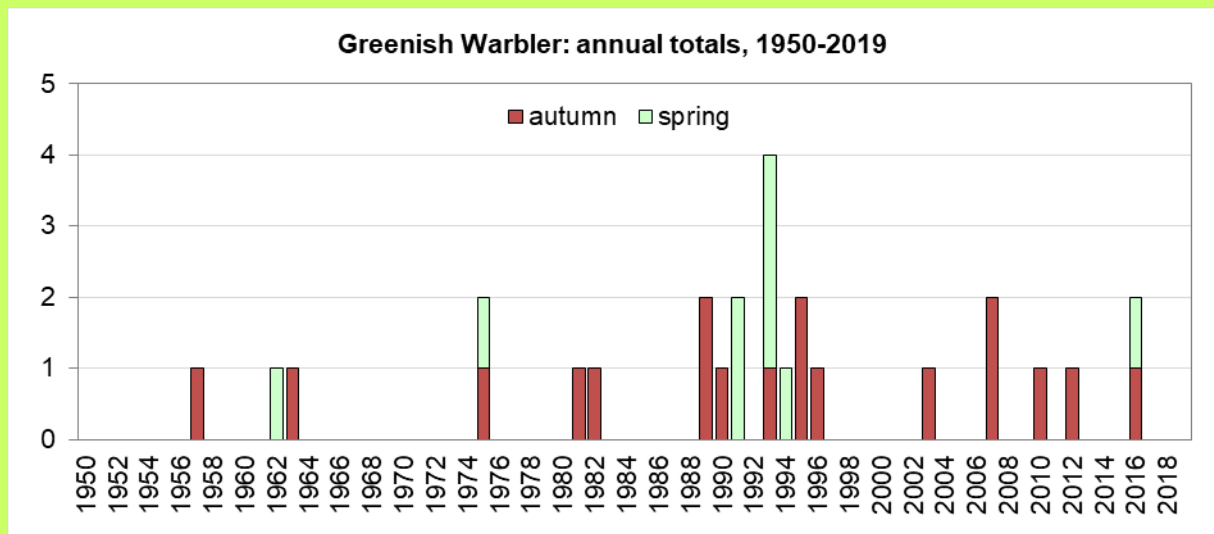
Greenish Warbler by Brendan Ryan

The first for Kent was trapped at Dungeness on 17th September 1957, which turned out to be a completely typical date. There have been 27 records up to 2019, almost half of which fell during 1989-1996.

Unlike most of the scarce leaf warblers, Greenish occurs quite often in spring, concentrated late in that season. One third of the records so far have involved birds first seen between 1st and 20th June. At least seven of these were singing males, including two together (and some people thought there were more than two) at Folkestone Warren, present from 15th June to 1st July 1993. Most records, though, are in early autumn between 24th August and 29th September, and there has been one later record at St Margaret's Bay on 27th October 1982.

Six individuals have been at Dungeness, six in the area between Kingsdown and South Foreland, with the remainder spread elsewhere mostly around the coast from Reculver to Folkestone. The one exception was seen at Kingsnorth on the Medway on 3rd September 2010.

There is a record, at this stage unconfirmed, of one briefly heard singing but not seen at Coxheath on 11th August 2020.



Arctic Warbler



Arctic Warbler by Alan Fossey

Arctic Warbler remains a rare bird in Kent, with only five records from the first in 1984. They have spanned just over a month in September-October.

1984	One at Sandwich Bay on 27th September
1995	One at Bockhill on 14th October
1996	One at Bishopstone on 1st-7th October
2016	One at Stonelees, Pegwell Bay, on 20th September
2017	One trapped at Sandwich Bay on 10th September

Other species

Three species of *Phylloscopus* breed regularly in Britain: Wood Warbler, Willow Warbler and Chiffchaff. As a breeding species in Kent, Chiffchaff has increased considerably over the past thirty years, and is now also fairly easily found in winter. Willow Warbler has declined sharply, both as a breeding bird – now becoming hard to find – and in the numbers occurring on passage.

There are other species on the British List, and further additions to that may happen as obscure Asiatic species are identified here by calls or chromosomes, or indeed as taxonomists amuse themselves by splitting the genus into increasingly tiny fragments. But I'll finish with a short account of Wood Warbler, always primarily a species of western oak woods, but once – fairly recently – a regular though scarce breeding species in the county.

Wood Warbler



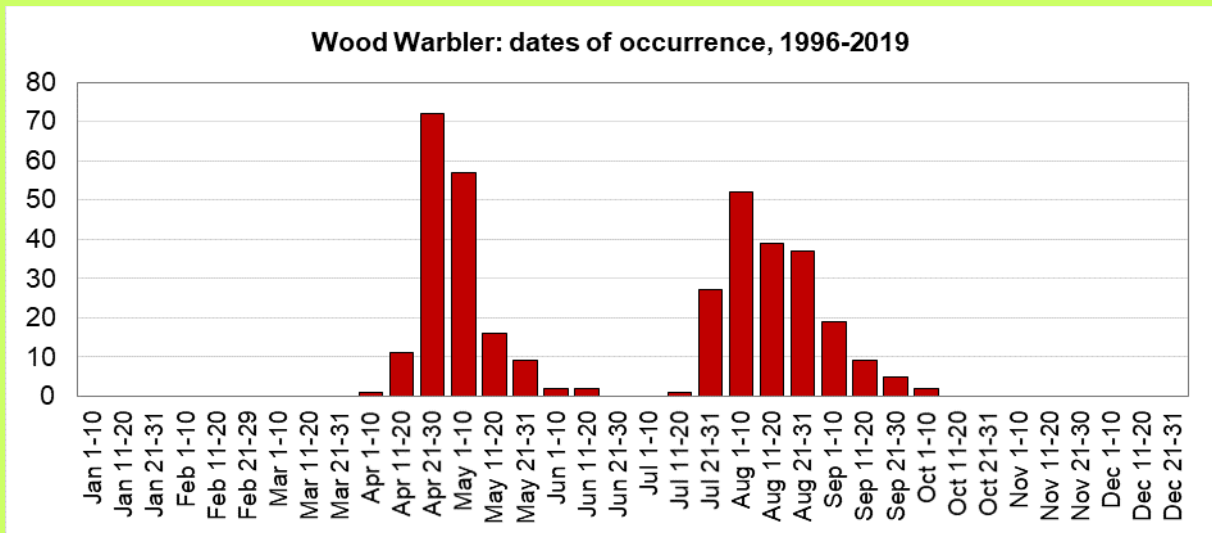
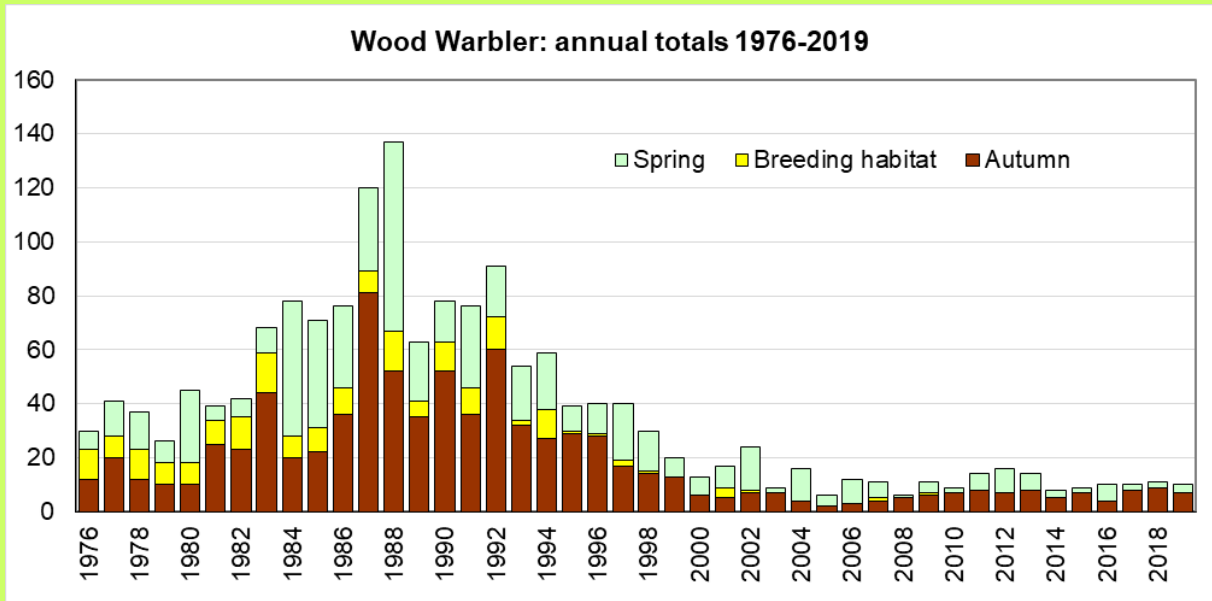
Wood Warbler by Steve Ashton

Both Ticehurst in 1909 and Harrison in 1953 described the Wood Warbler as numerous in western parts of Kent but more thinly spread in the east. As Ticehurst said, they favoured “woods that are furnished with tall oaks, beeches and occasionally firs, and that have little undergrowth”. This remained the case into the second half of the twentieth century, though the core distribution became increasingly restricted to areas near Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells.

There were still reports of territorial pairs and even successful nesting in those areas, and occasionally elsewhere, until the 1980s. The last record of young being fledged was from east Kent in 1988, and the last report of a nest was from the west in 1990. Singing males are still sometimes found in suitable woodland, though not every year, but mostly they are now present for only a day or so.

The first chart below shows the annual totals, separated into spring and autumn migrants, with those in breeding habitat forming a thin filling to the sandwich. This chart starts in 1976; before that, it becomes difficult to extract suitable data from the records to plot the changes. The second chart shows seasonal occurrence (based on the dates when birds were first seen). This covers the period 1996-2019, during which Wood Warbler has been only a migrant.

Over the past ten years, Wood Warbler has been truly a scarce species, with an average of eleven per year. (Provisional information for 2020 suggests at least 15 birds seen, so a little above average.) One interesting feature of the first chart is the relatively high numbers of migrants between about 1983 and 1996, before the decline to the current scarce status. Was this genuine, or did it represent increasing reporting of what was already becoming scarcer?



In finishing, I will quote Maurice Davenport's ditty from 1968, as a crucial aid to *Phylloscopus* identification:

Percy Pallas, feeling glum,
 Flashed his supercilium.
 "Can't mix me up with Yellow-browed,
 With one more stripe I've been endowed."

Andrew Henderson

KENT BIRD SIGHTINGS FOR JULY AND AUGUST 2020 - Chris Hindle

Species printed in **red** require descriptions or good quality photographs to be accepted by the British Birds Rarities Committee (species in capital letters) or the KOS Rarities Committee (species in lower case). The results of these committees' deliberations are regularly published on the KOS website.

WEATHER

July began with low pressure dominating and giving mainly cloudy weather with the occasional shower. Between the 10th and 22nd, high pressure ridged into southern England bring dry and sunny conditions. It was mainly changeable in the last week but there was a brief hot incursion on the 30th and 31st bringing unusually high temperatures. The 31st was the third hottest day on record with 38.5°C recorded at Faversham.

August started off with low pressure and showery, mostly cloudy weather. Between the 6th and 13th the weather turned hot with temperatures exceeding 30°C in the south east. The weather became unsettled mid-month with showers and from the 19th to 28th it was often windy with depressions heading in from the west when Storms Ellen and Francis brought especially windy conditions. It turned cooler and quieter for the last few days.

WILDFOWL

Up to 16 **Egyptian Geese** were seen at Cliffe Pools, Dungeness RSPB, Hayesden, Seaton, Conningbrook and Penshurst Estate with up to 13 **Mandarin Ducks** recorded from Bough Beech, East Peckham, Godmersham, Sevenoaks WR, Tonbridge, Whetsted GPs and Furnace Pond.



Garganey by Chris White

In July and August as many as three **Garganey** were recorded from Bough Beech, Stodmarsh/Grove Ferry, Dungeness RSPB, Cliffe Pools, Oare Marshes, Swalecliffe and Lade. In addition, there was a family party of seven birds seen at Worth Marshes on Aug 7th.

PARTRIDGE TO CORMORANT

A **Quail** was reported from Kennington on July 23rd, one was heard at Shoreham the next day whilst another was heard at Bridge on Aug 5th and yet another flew over Sandwich Bay at dawn on Aug 9th. One was also heard at Brabourne on Aug 16th and another was recorded at Lydd on the 31st.

Single **Sooty Shearwaters** flew past DBO on July 27th and Aug 13th, 21st and 23rd with two on the Aug 19th, but on the 25th with Storm Francis blowing hard there were six at DBO, two seen off Folkestone and one seen off South Foreland. On the north coast on Aug 30th single birds flew past Reculver and Minnis Bay.

In July, a single **Manx Shearwater** flew past DBO on the 4th with ten there on the 5th and then singles on the 9th, 10th, 15th and 25th, two on the 26th and three on the 27th. Three were also seen off Samphire Hoe on July 29th. In August there were singles at DBO on the 12th, 19th, 21st and 23rd with five on the 25th. One was also seen at Swalecliffe on the 26th and on the 29th there were three at Reculver and two at Swalecliffe whilst the next day saw three at North Foreland one at Grenham Bay.

During July single **Balearic Shearwaters** flew past DBO on the 4th and 26th whilst on the 27th there were three at DBO, one at North Foreland and one at Kingsdown. Two also flew past DBO on July 30th. At DBO, in August, there were 12 on the 19th and 27 on the 20th and after a stormy night 46 flew past on the 21st with 14 still around the next day and one on the 23rd and five on the 25th. Two were also seen off St Margarets-at-Cliffe on Aug 21st and singles were seen at Samphire Hoe on the 22nd, at Deal on the 23rd and at Sandwich Bay on the 25th and 28th. In strong northerly winds on Aug 29th two birds flew W past Reculver and Tankerton with one recorded at Shellness. Two also flew past Samphire Hoe on the 30th.

A **Red-necked Grebe** was seen on the Swale at Elmley on Aug 10th and a **Black-necked Grebe** was recorded at Dungeness RSPB from Aug 1st-28th.

Three **White Storks** flew S at Dartford on July 24th and during August single birds were recorded from Worth Marshes, Headcorn, Marshside, Cuxton, Chevening, Barham and Bridge.

An immature **Glossy Ibis** arrived at Dungeness RSPB on Aug 9th and remained there until the end of the month.

During July and August up to three **Spoonbills** were recorded from Grove Ferry, Pegwell Bay, Conyer, Oare Marshes, Dartford Marshes, Cooling Marshes, Elmley, Capel Fleet and Cliffe Pools.

A **Bittern** was seen at Cliffe Pools on Aug 10th with another at Worth Marshes on the 19th and one or two **Cattle Egrets** were seen at Cliffe Pools, Elmley, Oare Marshes, Swalecliffe, Lydd, Seasalter, Dartford Marshes and Northward Hill with up to six at Dungeness RSPB.

A juvenile **Purple Heron** was seen at Swale NNR from Aug 22nd-26th.



Purple Heron by Terry Laws

Up to five **Great White Egrets** were recorded from Dungeness RSPB, DBO, Oare Marshes, Capel Fleet, Cliffe Pools, Dartford Marshes, North Foreland, Bough Beech and Swale NNR.

During August as many as three **Shags** were seen at Samphire Hoe, Swalecliffe and Reculver with 20 flying W at Foreness on the 26th.

BIRDS OF PREY

Single **Ospreys** were reported from Dungeness RSPB on July 6th, at Bough Beech on the 13th and 17th and at Hythe on the 14th. During August one or two birds were reported from DBO, Dungeness RSPB, Edenbridge, Staplehurst, Reculver Marshes, Benenden, Riverside CP, Swalecliffe, Stoke, Bough Beech, Funton Creek, Canterbury, Elmley, Cliffe Pools, Lower Halstow and Sandwich Bay.

Up to three **Honey Buzzards** were seen at Dungeness RSPB, Sandwich Bay, South Foreland, Dover, Little Farthingloe, Walmer, Uplees, Langdon Cliffs, Lydd and Cheriton.



Honey Buzzard by Alex Perry

As many as three **Red Kites** were seen at Bough Beech, Shuart, Bockhill, Old Wives Lees, Penshurst Estate, Sellindge, Abbotscliffe, Langdon Cliffs, Faversham and Sandwich Bay.

RAILS TO WADERS

A **Spotted Crake** was reported from Grove Ferry on Aug 6th and a **Stone-curlew** flew over Ash on July 17th.

The **Black-winged Stilt** first seen at Dungeness RSPB on June 21st remained there until Aug 6th.

A **PACIFIC GOLDEN PLOVER** was reported from Reculver Marshes on Aug 16th. If accepted by BBRC this would be the fifth record of this species in Kent.

Two **KENTISH PLOVERS** (male and female/immature) were found at Pegwell Bay on Aug 24th. As a result of its increasing rarity in the UK this species has been added to the BBRC list of species needing descriptions in order to be accepted.

A **Dotterel** flew E at Reculver on Aug 18th and was seen again on the 27th whilst another was recorded at Worth Marshes on Aug 28th.

During these two months up to 10 **Curlew Sandpipers** were seen at Dungeness, Greatstone-on-Sea, Oare Marshes, Cliffe Pools, Stodmarsh, Foreness, Swalecliffe, Sandwich Bay, Lade, Pegwell Bay and Reculver Marshes.

A **Temminck's Stint** was identified at Cliffe Pools on Aug 25th and after the first bird on July 20th up to four **Little Stints** were seen at Cliffe Pools, Sandwich Bay and Oare Marshes.

An adult **Lesser Yellowlegs** found at Oare Marshes on July 12th was presumably the returning bird from last year. It remained there until the Aug 1st.



Lesser Yellowlegs by Tim Gutsell

Up to seven **Wood Sandpipers** were seen at Dungeness, Sandwich Bay, Worth Marshes, Grove Ferry, Swalecliffe, Swale NNR, Cliffe Pools, Littlestone-on-Sea, Bough Beech, Chartham, Reculver Marshes and Oare Marshes whilst one or two **Spotted Redshanks** were seen at Grove Ferry, Otterham Creek, Reculver, Oare Marshes, Cliffe Pools and Dungeness RSPB.

AUKS TO GULLS

On Aug 30th two **Sabine's Gulls** were identified at Oare Marshes with single birds reported from Grain CP and Reculver.

The regularly returning adult **BONAPARTE'S GULL** remained at Oare Marshes until Aug 30th.



Bonaparte's Gull by Steve Ashton

Up to three **Little Gulls** were recorded from Dungeness, Lade, Minnis Bay, Sandwich Bay, Shellness, Conyer, Seasalter and Oare Marshes.

As many as four **Yellow-legged Gulls** were seen at DBO, Reculver and Foreness but there were 34 counted at Cliffe Pools on Aug 8th whilst the first **Caspian Gull** of the autumn was a juvenile found at DBO on Aug 12th with others there on the 17th and 30th.

There was an impressive count of 200 **Little Terns** at Oare Marshes on the evening of Aug 8th.

During July and August up to 11 **Black Terns** were seen at Dungeness RSPB, DBO, Shellness, Bough Beech, Stodmarsh/Grove Ferry, Swanscombe, Lower Hope Point, Cliffe Pools, Foreness, Pegwell Bay and Lade, but on Aug 8th along the north Kent coast there were 80 at Oare Marshes, 36 at Shellness, 30 at Swalecliffe, four at Tankerton and seven at Foreness. There were 30 still present at Oare Marshes on the Aug 10th and 65 at Shellness on the 16th. With Storm Francis blowing hard on Aug 25th records included two at Cliffe Pools, four at Minnis Bay, one at Sandwich Bay, four at Pegwell Bay and 45 at DBO. On Aug 29th and 30th up to 12 birds were counted at Seasalter, Reculver, Swalecliffe, Shellness, Oare Marshes and Foreness.

As many as five **Great Skuas** were seen at DBO, Tankerton and Sandwich Bay but with the strong northerly winds on Aug 29th up to 62 birds were counted along the north coast at Reculver, Tankerton, Swalecliffe, Oare Marshes, Shellness, Grenham Bay and Seasalter. Birds were still moving through the next day and were recorded at all the north coast sites culminating with a day count of 55 birds in the Swale.

An adult **Pomarine Skua** flew into the Swale at Shellness on Aug 30th.



Arctic Skuas by Mike Gould

Single **Arctic Skuas** flew past DBO on July 4th, 9th, 10th and 27th. In August, up to 60 birds were reported from DBO with up to 10 seen at Minnis Bay, Reculver, Samphire Hoe, Walmer, Deal, Sandwich Bay, Copt Point, South Foreland, Foreness, Tankerton, Lade, Swalecliffe and Coldharbour.

In the northerly gales on Aug 29th, however, up to 73 birds were counted at Reculver, Tankerton, Swalecliffe, Oare Marshes, Grenham Bay and Seasalter. Birds were still moving through the next day and were recorded at all the north coast sites culminating with a day count of 300 birds in the Swale at Oare Marshes and Shellness.

On Aug 25th, with Storm Francis blowing in a SW gale, single juvenile **Long-tailed Skuas** were reported from North Foreland, Sandwich Bay, Deal and Kingsdown and on Aug 29th in a strong northerly wind two birds flew past Reculver and Shellness with single birds seen at Tankerton, Grenham Bay and Foreness. With the northerly wind not abating overnight up to 11 birds were counted in the Swale at Oare Marshes and Shellness with between one to four birds seen at Seasalter, Tankerton, Swalecliffe, Reculver and Margate.

A **Black Guillemot** flew E past St Margarets-at-Cliffe on July 27th.

DOVES TO RING-NECKED PARAKEET

A **Short-eared Owl** was seen at Sandwich Bay on July 20th with another at North Foreland on July 28th. In August, up to three birds were recorded at Dungeness RSPB, Swale NNR, Harty Ferry, West Hythe, Bockhill, Snodland, Luddenham, Ramsgate and Oare Marshes.

A **Wryneck** was reported from Reculver Bushes on Aug 16th with others seen at Dungeness RSPB on the 28th and at Langdon Cliffs with another ringed at DBO on the 31st.

On July 31st, a first summer male **Red-footed Falcon** flew W at Kingsdown and in the evening a female was reported at Grove Ferry.



Red-footed Falcon by Malcolm Freeman

A **Merlin** was seen at Swalecliffe on Aug 3rd and one was recorded at Oare Marshes on the 29th.

SHRIKES TO HIRUNDINES

The first **Red-backed Shrike** of the autumn was found at Abbotscliffe on Aug 31st.



Red-backed Shrike by Brendan Ryan

Up to five **Ravens** were seen at Bough Beech, Reculver, Swalecliffe, Pegwell Bay, Wouldham, Bockhill, Abbot's Court, Chilham and Sandwich Bay.

A **Woodlark** was identified at Halstow Marshes on July 28th.

CETTI'S WARBLER TO WHEATEARS

During July, a **Wood Warbler** was ringed at King's Wood on 17th, another was ringed at Sandwich Bay on the 20th and yet others were seen at DBO on the 21st, at Worth Marshes on the 27th and ringed at Sandwich Bay on the 29th and 30th. In August, others were found at Sandwich Bay on the 2nd, 4th and 9th taking their autumn total to nine birds with yet another bird in Sandwich on the 11th. Single birds were also found at Dungeness on Aug 14th and 16th.

A **Greenish Warbler** was reported singing briefly at Coxheath on Aug 11th and a first year **Marsh Warbler** was ringed at Shuart on Aug 3rd.



Marsh Warbler by Chris Hindle

A **Melodious Warbler** was found singing by the Old Lighthouse at Dungeness on July 6th and an **Icterine Warbler** was seen at Foreness on Aug 10th and another was ringed at Sandwich Bay on the 14th and still present on the 16th. One was also found at Leysdown-on-Sea on Aug 31st.

During July and August one or two **Grasshopper Warblers** were recorded from Reculver, Little Farthingloe, DBO, Shuart, Foreness, Bockhill, Kingsdown, Hope Point, Conyer and South Foreland.

There were up to three **Firecrests** recorded at Elham Park Woods, Hope Bay and Stelling Minnis and an elusive **Treecreeper** was found in the lighthouse garden at Dungeness on July 8th.



Rose-coloured Starling by Steve Reynaert

An adult **Rose-coloured Starling** was seen and photographed in a garden in Hildenborough on Aug 13th and a moulting female **Redwing** with a brood patch was an unexpected catch at Sandwich Bay on July 30th.

The first **Pied Flycatcher** of the autumn was found at North Foreland on Aug 3rd and then from the 9th to the 16th there was a significant arrival of birds with up to 12 recorded from 34 mainly coastal sites.



Pied Flycatcher by Nick Smith

During July and August up to four **Black Redstarts** were seen at Samphire Hoe, Sandwich Bay, Finberry, Langdon Cliffs, Bockhill, Dungeness RSPB, South Foreland, Abbotcliffe, Walmer and Ramsgate.

DUNNOCK TO BUNTINGS

A **Common Rosefinch** was reported to be singing at DBO on July 18th.

During these two months up to 30 **Common Crossbills** were reported from West Wood, Lympe, Foreness, Sandwich Bay, DBO, Shuart Farm, Penshurst, Littlebourne, Knole Park, Elham, Finberry, Tilmanstone, Beltinge, Selling, Abbotscliffe, Bockhill and Tonbridge.

An **Ortolan Bunting** was sound recorded on the night of Aug 16th at Sandwich Bay.

*DBO = Dungeness Bird Observatory BBRC = British Birds Rarities Committee
RSPB = Royal Society for the Protection of Birds BOU = British Ornithological Union
"The Patch" = the warm water outflow from Dungeness Nuclear Power Station
NNR=National Nature Reserve NR=Nature Reserve LNR=Local Nature Reserve
FC = Field Centre WR = Wildlife Reserve GP = Gravel Pits CP = Country Park*

CONTRIBUTORS

This summary owes much to the contributors to the various sites in "Latest Sightings" on the KOS Website at www.kentos.org.uk, KOSForum, Twitter and the RBA Hotline.

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Please send records for this review to:

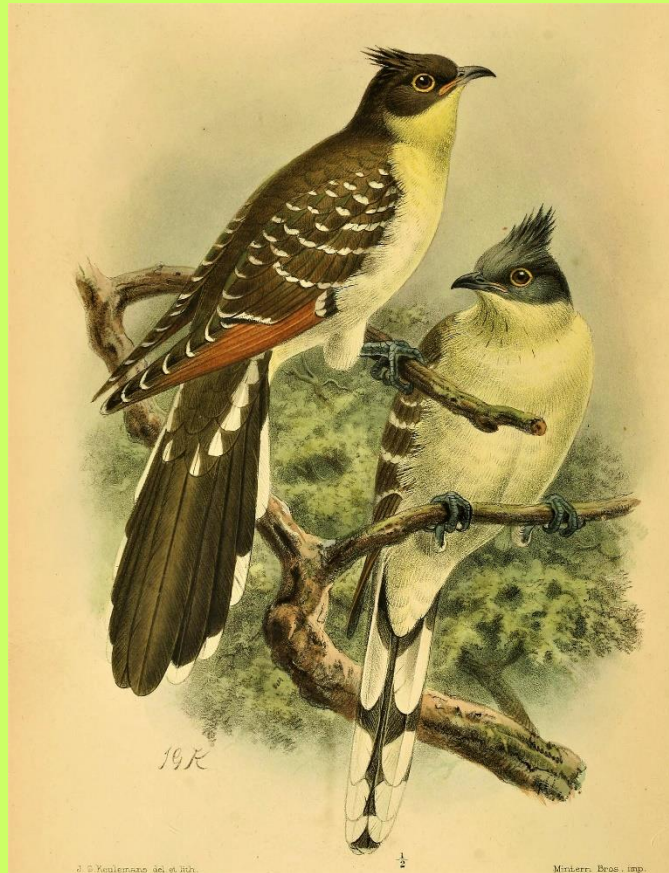
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Records sent to me may not all be used for this report as I try to extract the more interesting sightings, however all records are equally important and I forward them to the appropriate Area Recorders who enter them all onto the KOS database.

Fifty Years Ago

238. Great Spotted Cuckoo



Great Spotted Cuckoo by J G Keulemans (PDI)

An immature bird of this species, seen at Dungeness on Aug. 22nd(ECS,JTS), was the first for Kent and only the 13th record for the country.

KBR 1970
Norman McCanch