

Bean Goose

Anser fabalis

Category A

Very rare vagrant

8 records

Breeds in Fenno-Scandia and northern Russia, wintering in western Europe, mainly Germany, the Netherlands and France, with a small number in Britain.

A scarce passage migrant and winter visitor to Kent in small numbers, with occasional larger flocks. Generally recorded between late October and early April, most commonly occurring during spells of hard weather. Almost all modern records relate to the tundra race, *rossicus*, and unassigned subspecies are assumed to be this more likely form.



Bean Geese at Botolph's Bridge (Dave Brown)

Ticehurst in his *A History of the Birds of Kent* (1909) records that he was informed by a Mr. H. Lemmon that a large number were seen at Hythe in the hard winter of 1895-96: "they frequented some fields at the back of the town, where they picked up a precarious livelihood and a good number were shot. They were all in extremely poor condition, and some were hardly more than skin and bone".

This influx is presumably the source of a specimen in the Folkestone Museum which he mentions as being shot at Hythe.

Almost a century elapsed before the next was recorded at Folkestone and Hythe, in 1992, but there was another in the following year, and there have been five further records as shown in figure 1.

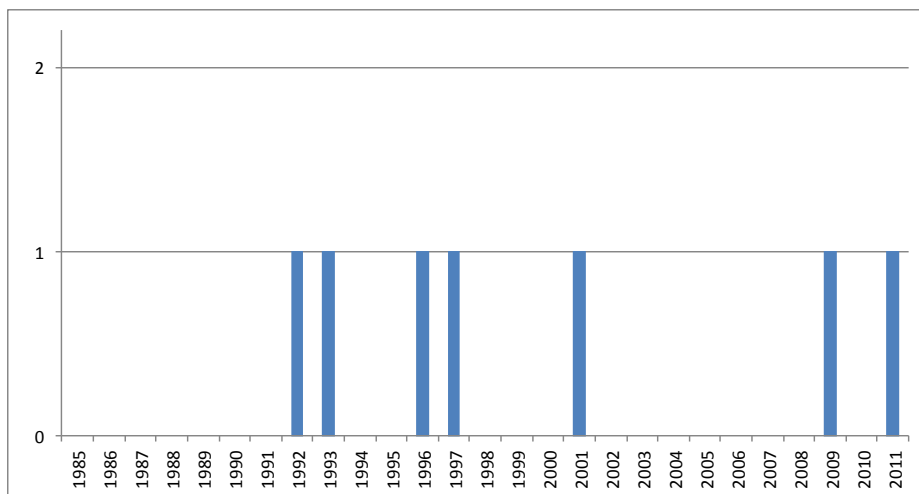


Figure 1: Bean Goose records since 1985 at Folkestone and Hythe

There has been one autumn record, on 9th November 2011 (week 45), and dated arrivals have mostly been in late December and January, with a peak of three between the 24th December and 2nd January, as shown by figure 2. There is also a record from February and the latest arrival was on 13th March (in 1993). There is an April record however this might have related to a long-staying individual which had been present since late December.

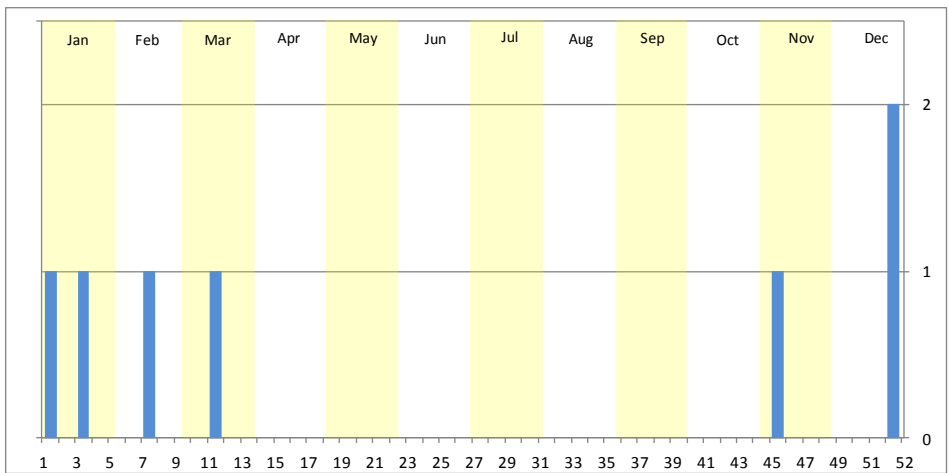


Figure 2: Bean Goose records at Folkestone and Hythe by week

The distribution of records is shown in figure 3. The records from coastal sites relate to migrants either in autumn (Abbotscliffe), spring (Hythe Ranges) or cold weather (Copt Point). There have been another four records from the Botolph's Bridge / Nickoll's Quarry, two of which were particularly long-stayers, with a bird in 1997 remaining for 37 days and one in 2001/02 staying for at least 88, possibly 111, days.

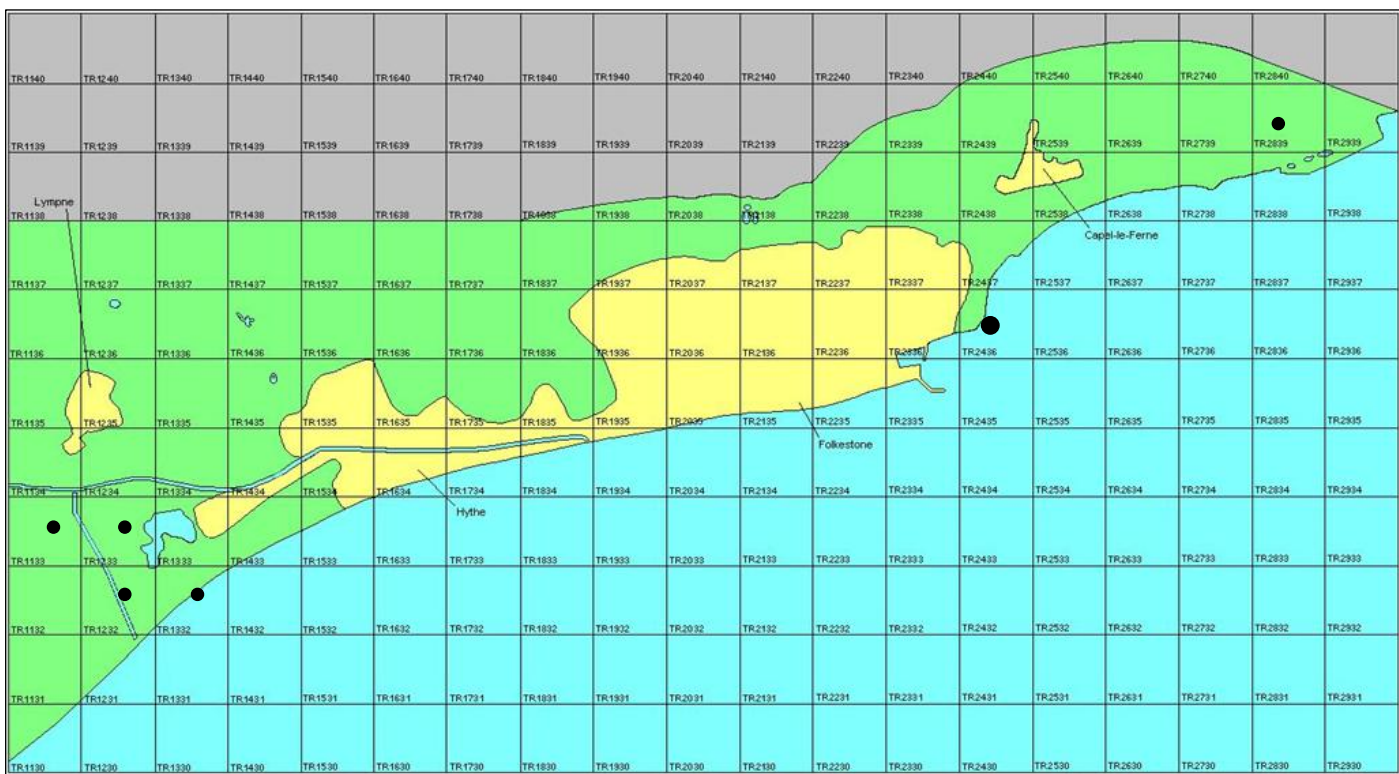


Figure 3: Occurrence of Bean Goose at Folkestone and Hythe by 1km square

The distribution of winter records recorded in the BTO/KOS Atlas (2007 – 2012) is shown in figure 4.

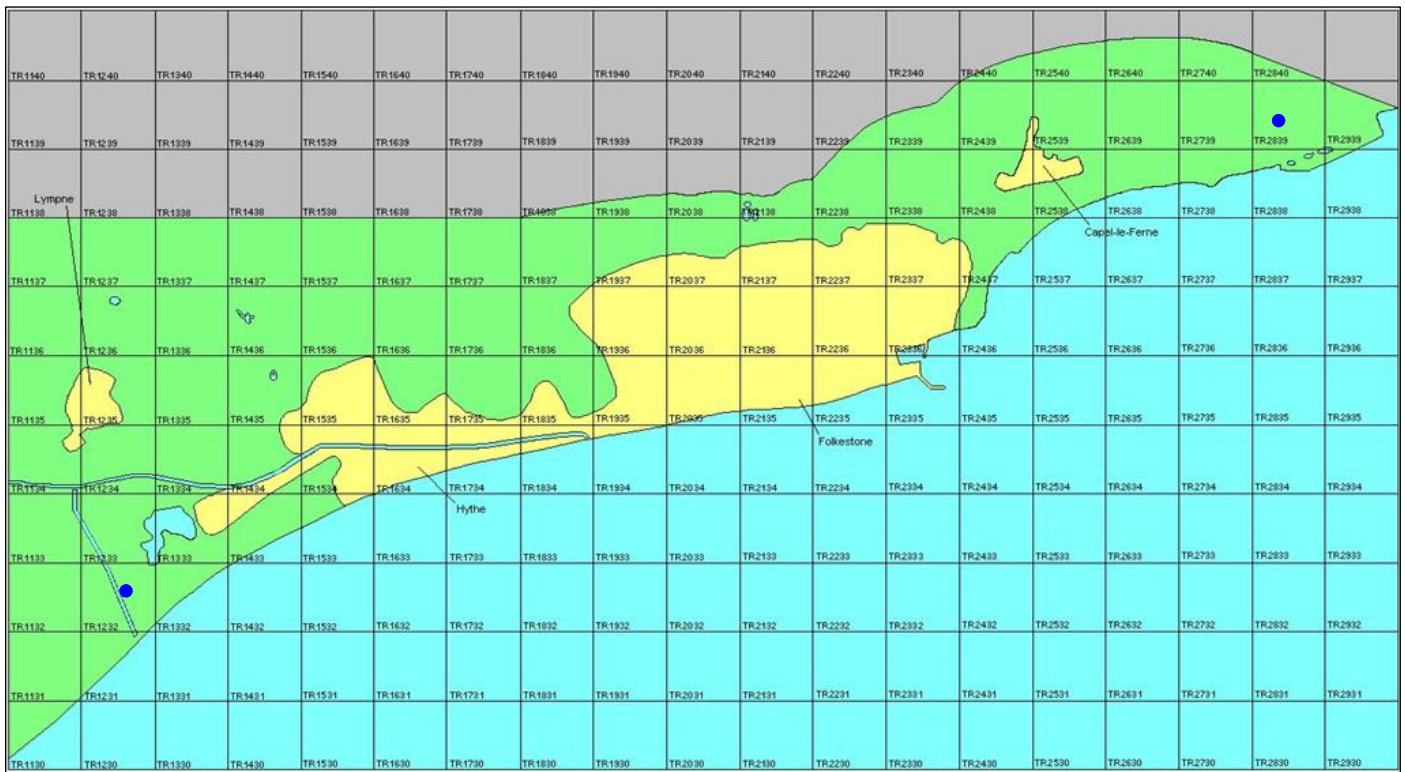
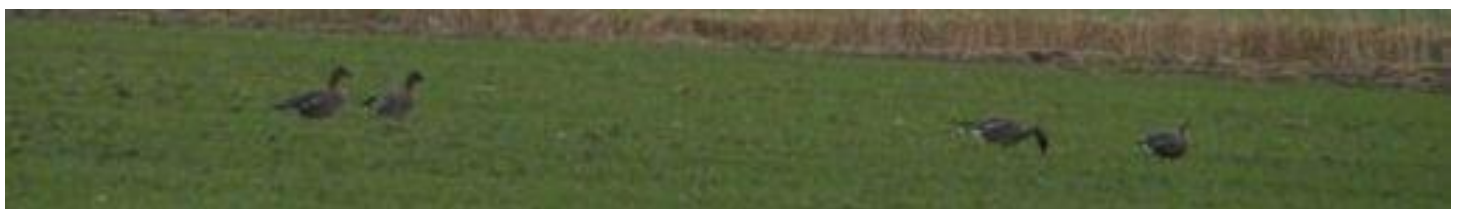


Figure 4: Wintering distribution of Bean Goose at Folkestone and Hythe (2007 – 2012 BTO/KOS Atlas)

All birds identified to form have been on the Tundra race *rossicus*. Those records which were not identified to form, or where it was not specified, were also likely to have been of this race.

The full list of records is as follows:

- 1895/96** Hythe, “a large number”, in winter (H. Lemmon)
- 1992** Copt Point, 21 flew in off the sea, 17th January (reported)
- 1993** Hythe Ranges, two flew south-east and out to sea, 13th March (R. K. Norman)
- 1996** Copt Point, five flew west, 25th December (D. A. Gibson)
- 1997** Nickoll’s Quarry, one of form *rossicus*, 15th February to 23rd March (I. A. Roberts, R. K. Norman)
- 2001** Botolph’s Bridge / Nickoll’s Quarry area, one of form *rossicus* commuted between fields to roost on the quarry, 26th December to 24th March 2002 (I. A. Roberts, R. K. Norman), with further sightings of possibly a different individual on 14th and 16th April (R. K. Norman)
- 2009** Botolph’s Bridge, three of form *rossicus*, with a single White-fronted Goose, 2nd January, photographed (D. & S. Brown)
- 2011** Abbotscliffe, two of form *rossicus* in wheat field for ten minutes then flew west, 9th November (M. Kennett)



Bean Geese (three birds on left) and White-fronted Goose at Botolph’s Bridge (Dave Brown)