

## Great Northern Diver

*Gavia immer*

Category A

Rare migrant and winter visitor

34 records

Breeds in Iceland, Greenland and North America, wintering around coasts of western Europe.

A scarce passage migrant and winter visitor to Kent. The first autumn arrivals can be from mid-September, with a few individuals noted through the winter, before a small, but regular up-channel passage is evident in spring, particularly off Dungeness.

First recorded at Folkestone and Hythe in 1960, but then there were no further records until 1984. However it has been recorded with some regularity since, as figure 1 demonstrates, with records in 18 years since 1985, and a total of 31 logged over these 34 years.

It remains unpredictable in its appearance though locally with three records in four years, and none in others. Dedicated seawatching would probably reveal it to be annual on spring passage, in late April or May.



Great Northern Diver on Hythe Canal (Brian Harper)

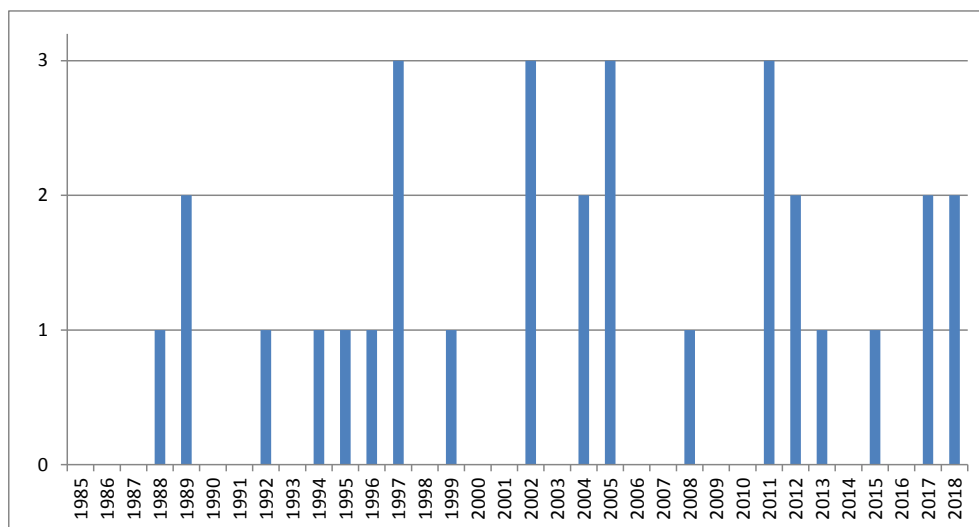


Figure 1: Great Northern Diver records since 1985 at Folkestone and Hythe

A particularly early bird was seen off Mill Point on the 17<sup>th</sup> (and 21<sup>st</sup>) September 1988 and an autumn migrant flew west past Copt Point on the 27<sup>th</sup> October 1997. The other records are split between winter occurrences from 14<sup>th</sup> November to 7<sup>th</sup> March, and spring migrants, which have been noted from the 9<sup>th</sup> April to the 21<sup>st</sup> May (weeks 15 to 21), as shown in figure 2.

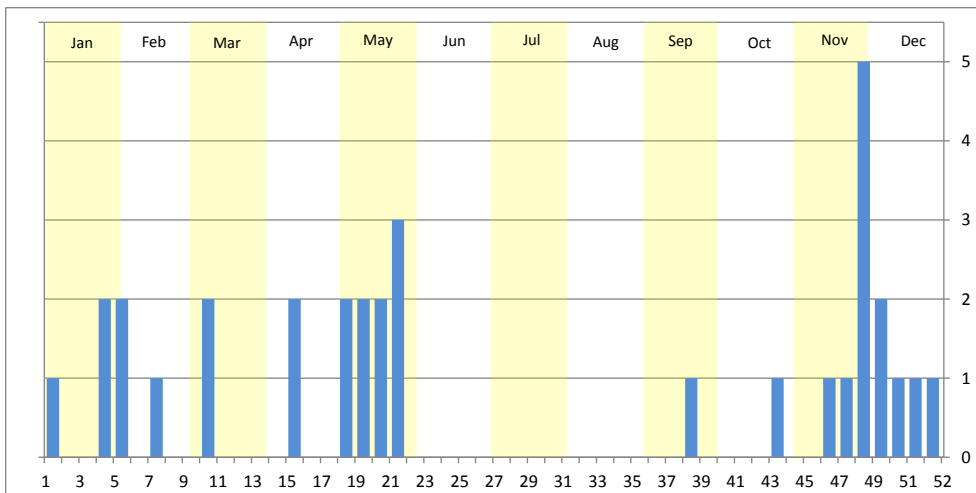


Figure 2: Great Northern Diver records at Folkestone and Hythe by week

The distribution of winter records recorded in the BTO/KOS Atlas (2007 – 2012) is shown in figure 3. The presence in three 1km squares in the Hythe area relates to a single bird which ranged widely along the canal between the 6<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> December 2011. This approachable individual was unusual as almost all other records are coastal: Copt Point (7), Sandgate (6), Samphire Hoe (5), Mill Point (4), Folkestone (2), Princes Parade (2), Folkestone Beach, Folkestone Warren and Hythe Redoubt, though there are two records from Nickolls Quarry.

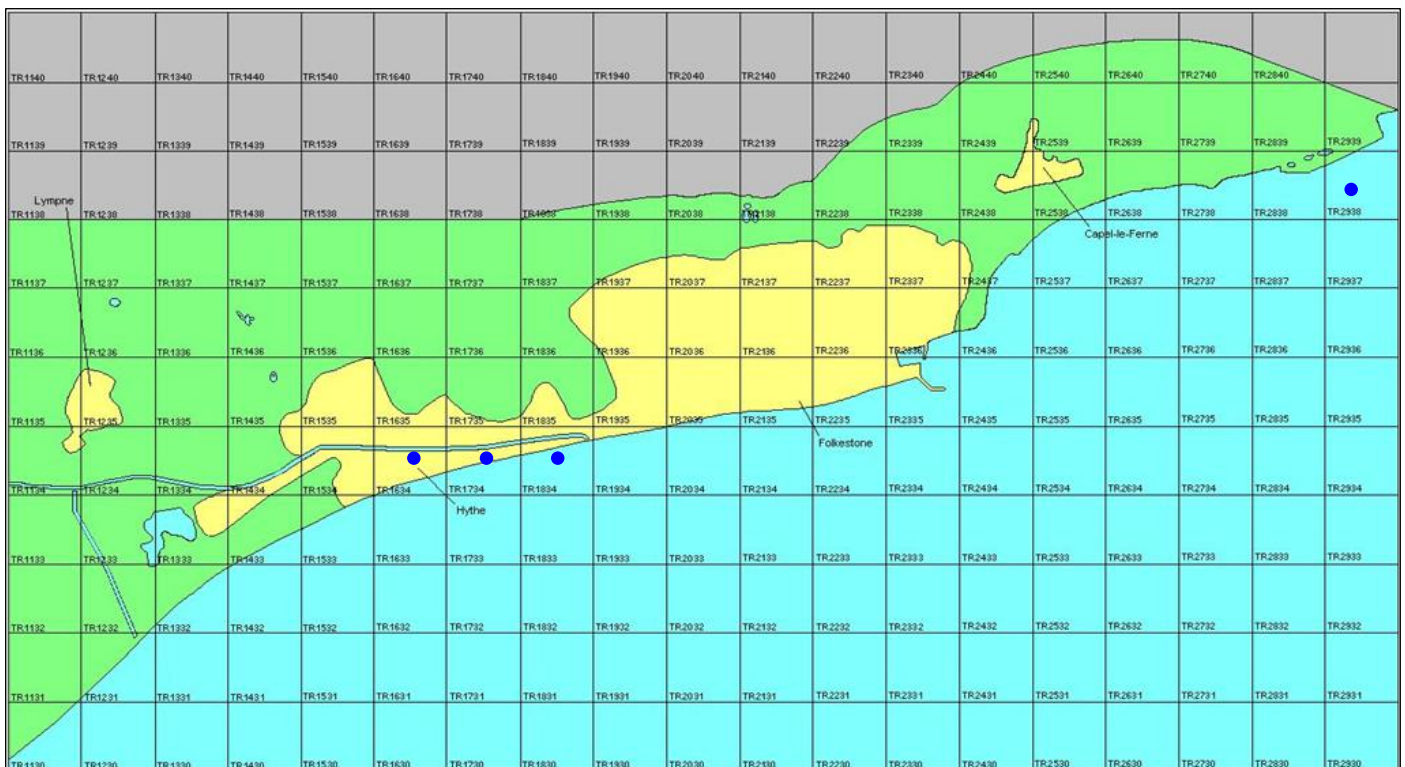


Figure 3: Wintering distribution of Great Northern Diver at Folkestone and Hythe (2007 – 2012 BTO/KOS Atlas)

The full list of records is as follows:

- 1960** Folkestone, one, 7<sup>th</sup> March (D. F. Musson)
- 1984** Folkestone, one, 21<sup>st</sup> May (per Kent Bird Report)
- c.1986** Nickolls Quarry, one in winter 1986 or 1987 (P. Wells)
- 1988** Mill Point, one in summer plumage, 17<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> September (R. C. Stone)
- 1989** Copt Point, one, 3<sup>rd</sup> January (per Kent Bird Report)
- 1989** Mill Point, one flew west, 12<sup>th</sup> February (I. A. Roberts)
- 1992** Nickolls Quarry, one in the west pool, 26<sup>th</sup> December (S. Hollands)
- 1994** Copt Point, one flew east, 21<sup>st</sup> May (D. A. Gibson)
- 1995** Sandgate, one, 17<sup>th</sup> December (D. A. Gibson)

- 1996** Sandgate, one, 13<sup>th</sup> December (P. Howe, H. G. Brown, R. Thorogood)  
**1997** Sandgate, two flew east, 22<sup>nd</sup> January (P. Howe)  
**1997** Sandgate, one flew east, 29<sup>th</sup> January (P. Howe)  
**1997** Copt Point, one flew west, 27<sup>th</sup> October (D. A. Gibson)  
**1999** Hythe Redoubt, one on the sea then flew west, 6<sup>th</sup> March (I. A. Roberts)  
**2002** Copt Point, one flew west, 1<sup>st</sup> May (I. A. Roberts)  
**2002** Copt Point, one flew west, 14<sup>th</sup> May (I. A. Roberts)  
**2002** Copt Point, one flew east, 28<sup>th</sup> November (I. A. Roberts)  
**2004** Sandgate, one offshore, 26<sup>th</sup> January (I. A. Roberts)  
**2004** Copt Point, two flew east, 21<sup>st</sup> May (I. A. Roberts)  
**2005** Samphire Hoe, one, 30<sup>th</sup> January (Reported)  
**2005** Copt Point, one flew east, 12<sup>th</sup> May (D. A. Gibson), also past Samphire Hoe (I. A. Roberts)  
**2005** Mill Point, one offshore, 27<sup>th</sup> November, photographed (I. A. Roberts)  
**2008** Samphire Hoe, one flew west, 9<sup>th</sup> May (I. A. Roberts)  
**2011** Copt Point, one flew east, 1<sup>st</sup> May (D. A. Gibson), also past Samphire Hoe (I. A. Roberts)  
**2011** Hythe Canal, juvenile ranging between Hythe and Seabrook, 6<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> December, photographed (M. Marsh, I. A. Roberts, B. Harper *et al*)  
**2011** Samphire Hoe, one, 7<sup>th</sup> December (D. E. Smith)  
**2012** Folkestone Beach, one flew east, 29<sup>th</sup> November (I. A. Roberts)  
**2012** Folkestone Warren, one feeding close inshore, 1<sup>st</sup> December (P. Chantler), possibly same as above  
**2013** Samphire Hoe, one, 19<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> November (P. R. Smith, M. D. Kennett)  
**2015** Mill Point, two flew east, 14<sup>th</sup> May (I. A. Roberts, B. Harper)  
**2017** Princes Parade, one on the sea, 14<sup>th</sup> November (B. Harper, I. A. Roberts)  
**2017** Princes Parade, one on the sea, 2<sup>nd</sup> December, photographed (I. A. Roberts)  
**2018** Between Sandgate and Seabrook, one on the sea, 9<sup>th</sup> April (N. C. Frampton)  
**2018** Samphire Hoe, one, 15<sup>th</sup> April (S. Cutt)



Great Northern Diver on Hythe Canal (Mark Tomlins)