

Great Northern Diver

Gavia immer

Category A

Rare migrant and winter visitor

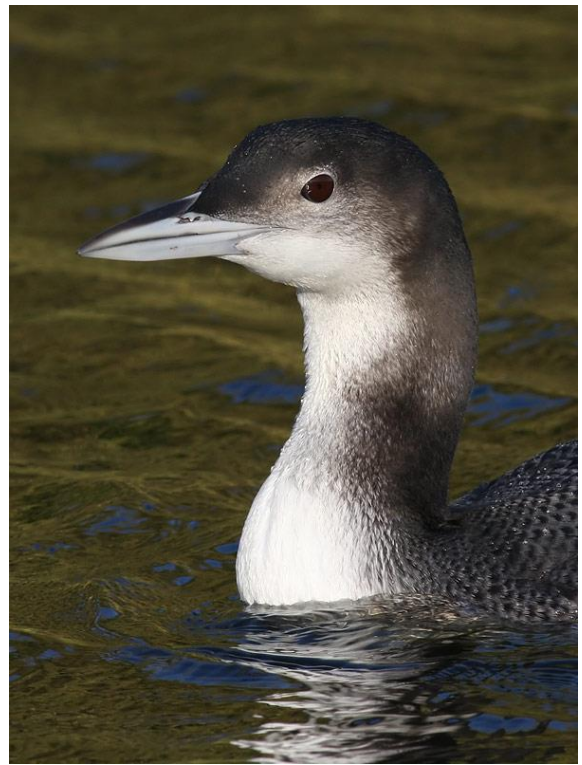
32 records

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 15 years since 1985, and a total of 29 logged over these 27 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)

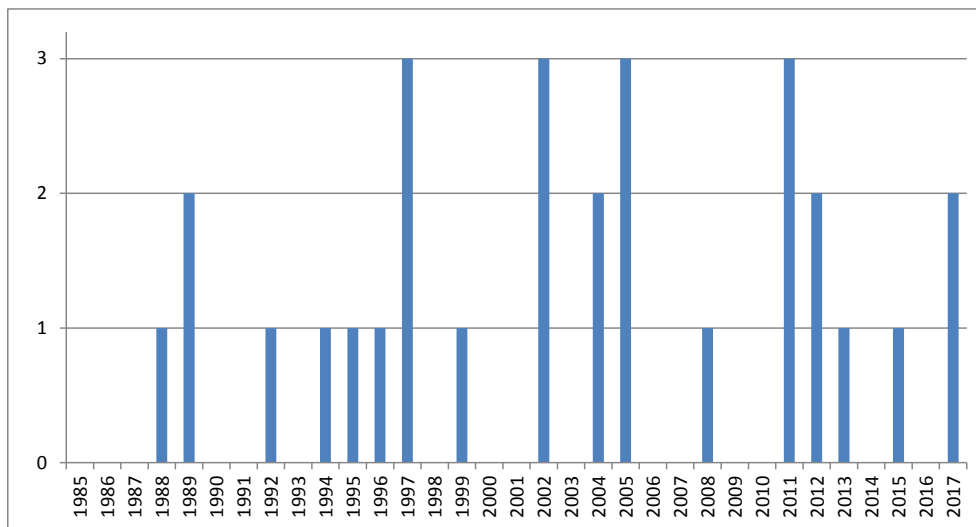


Figure 1: Great Northern Diver records since 1985 at Folkestone and Hythe

A particularly early bird was seen off Mill Point on the 17th (and 21st) September 1988 and an autumn migrant flew west past Copt Point on the 27th October 1997. The other records are split between winter occurrences from 14th November to 7th March, and spring migrants, which have been noted from 1st to 21st May (weeks 18 to 21), as shown in figure 2.

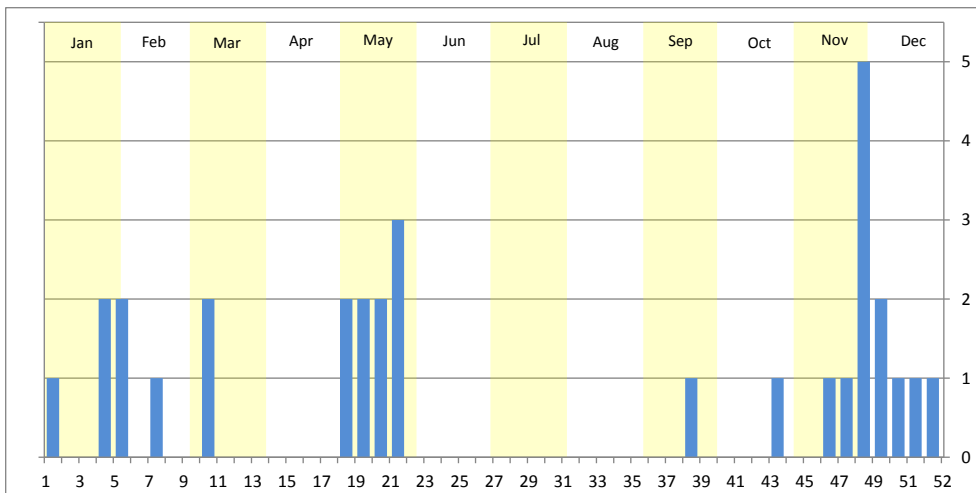


Figure 2: Great Northern Diver records at Folkestone and Hythe by week

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 6th and 11th December 2011. This approachable individual was unusual as almost all other records are coastal: Copt Point (7), Sandgate (5), Mill Point (4), Samphire Hoe (4), Folkestone (2), Princes Parade (2), Folkestone Beach, Folkestone Warren and Hythe Redoubt, though there are two records from Nickoll’s Quarry.

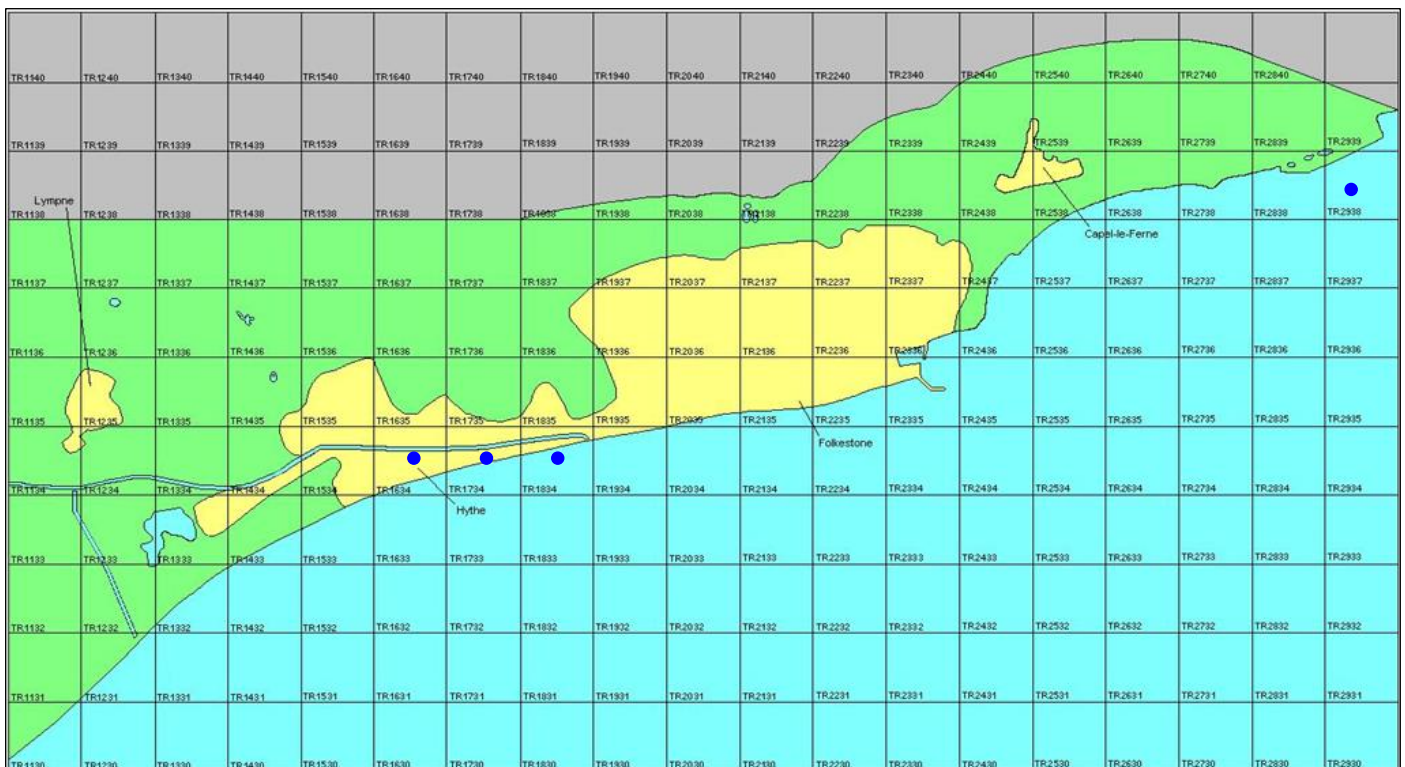


Figure 3: Wintering distribution of Great Northern Diver at Folkestone and Hythe (2007 – 2012 BTO/KOS Atlas)

The full list of records is as follows:

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

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



Great Northern Diver on Hythe Canal (Mark Tomlins)