

Balearic Shearwater

Puffinus mauretanicus

Category A

Rare passage migrant

36 records

Breeds only on the Balearic Islands. After breeding disperses into Mediterranean then through Straits of Gibraltar into the Atlantic. The majority winter in the Bay of Biscay, with some as north as the Irish and North Seas. Most of population leave Mediterranean from May, peaking off Gibraltar in late June, and present in English Channel and North Sea mainly July to October (mid-May to December).

A scarce but regular summer and autumn visitor to Kent, particularly off Dungeness.

Not recorded in the Folkestone and Hythe area until 1995, but there have now been 36 sightings over the last 21 years, with a particularly good run from 1997 to 1999 (with a total of 15), as shown in figure 1. The majority of records (26) refer to single birds but the other ten involve multiple sightings, with a maximum of four on the 18th September 1999 and 18th August 2013.

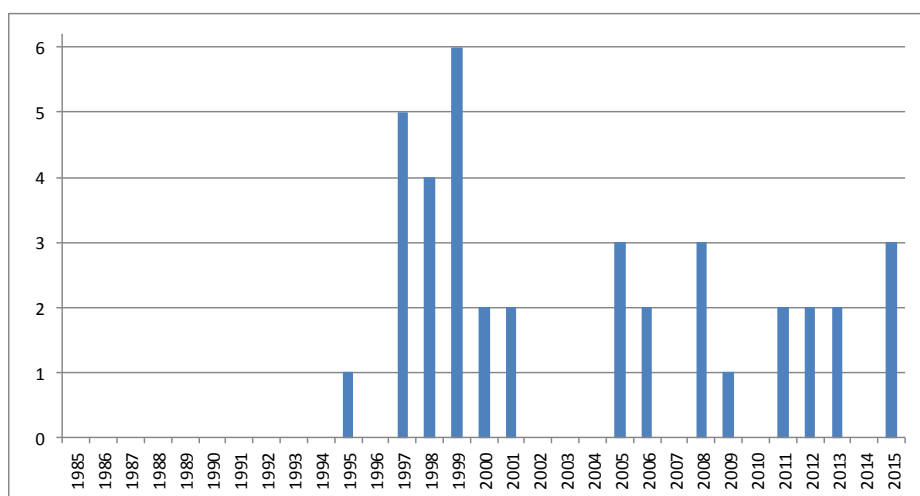


Figure 1: Balearic Shearwater records since 1985 at Folkestone and Hythe

There has been one record in May and two in June, but the majority have been recorded between 20th July (week 29) and 27th September (week 39), with a peak in late August/early September. There have been three October records, and one in December. The records by week are given in figure 2.

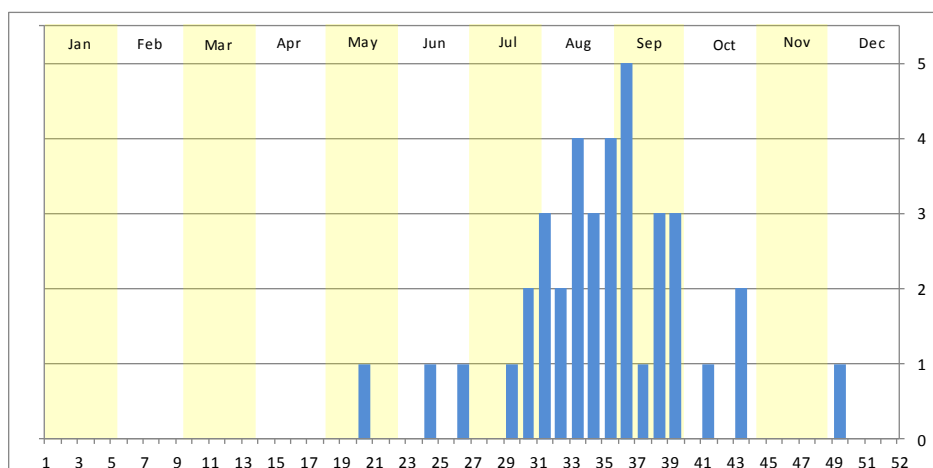


Figure 2: Balearic Shearwater records at Folkestone and Hythe by week

The distribution of winter records recorded in the BTO/KOS Atlas (2007 – 2012) is shown in figure 3. The records from the two adjacent 1km squares relate to a single individual that flew west close inshore along Hythe Ranges in December 2009. The vast majority of other records are from Copt Point (22), with six at Samphire Hoe, two at Mill Point, two at Hythe and two further sightings from the Hythe Ranges / Hythe Redoubt area.

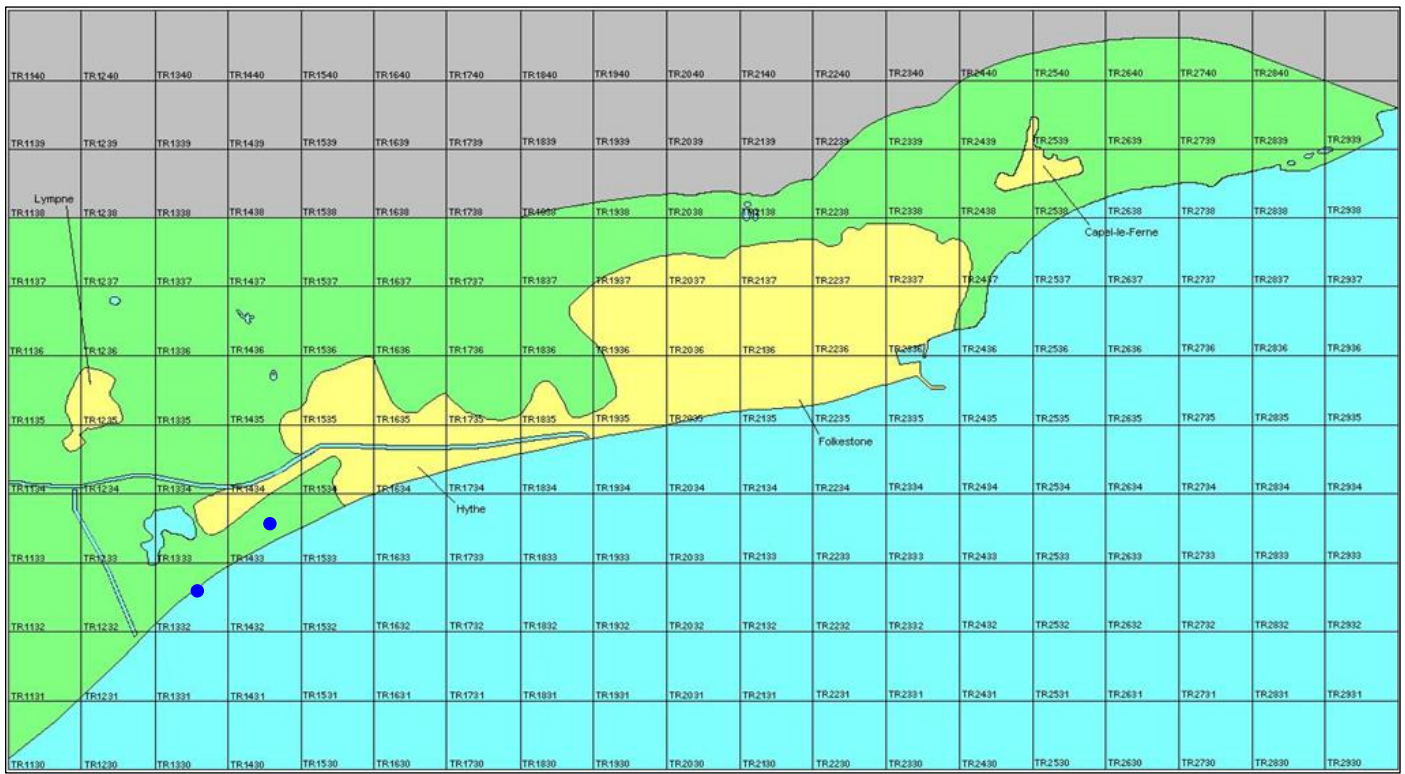


Figure 3: Wintering distribution of Balearic Shearwater at Folkestone and Hythe (2007 – 2012 BTO/KOS Atlas)

The full list of records is as follows:

- 1995** Copt Point, one flew west, 5th September (D. A. Gibson)
- 1997** Copt Point, one flew east, 29th August (D. A. Gibson)
- 1997** Copt Point, three flew west, 30th August (D. A. Gibson, I. A. Roberts)
- 1997** Copt Point, one, 31st August (D. A. Gibson)
- 1997** Copt Point, one flew west, 4th September (D. A. Gibson)
- 1997** Copt Point, one flew west, 8th October (D. A. Gibson)
- 1998** Copt Point, two flew west, 27th June (D. A. Gibson, I. A. Roberts)
- 1998** Copt Point, one flew west, 23rd July (I. A. Roberts)
- 1998** Copt Point, two flew east, 9th September (D. A. Gibson)
- 1998** Copt Point, one flew west, 24th October (I. A. Roberts)
- 1999** Copt Point, one flew east, 18th May (D. A. Gibson)
- 1999** Mill Point, one flew west, 20th July (I. A. Roberts)
- 1999** Copt Point, one flew west, 14th August (I. A. Roberts)
- 1999** Copt Point, one flew west, 18th August (D. A. Gibson)
- 1999** Copt Point, four flew west, 18th September (D. A. Gibson, I. A. Roberts)
- 1999** Copt Point, two flew east, 20th September (D. A. Gibson)
- 2000** Copt Point, two flew west, 19th September (D. A. Gibson, I. A. Roberts)
- 2000** Copt Point, one flew west, 27th September (I. A. Roberts)
- 2001** Hythe Redoubt, one flew east, 6th August (R. K. Norman)
- 2001** Copt Point, one flew west, 18th August (I. A. Roberts)
- 2005** Mill Point, one flew west, 15th June (I. A. Roberts)
- 2005** Copt Point, one flew west, 25th August (I. A. Roberts)
- 2005** Samphire Hoe, one flew east, 11th September (I. A. Roberts)
- 2006** Copt Point, one flew west, 31st July (I. A. Roberts)
- 2006** Copt Point, one flew east then west, 3rd September (I. A. Roberts)
- 2008** Samphire Hoe, one on sea, 23rd July (I. A. Roberts)
- 2008** Samphire Hoe, two flew west, 1st August (I. A. Roberts)
- 2008** Samphire Hoe, one flew west, 3rd August (I. A. Roberts)
- 2009** Hythe Ranges, one flew west, 6th December (I. A. Roberts)
- 2011** Hythe Ranges, one offshore, 11th August (S. McMinn)
- 2011** Copt Point, one flew west, 6th September (I. A. Roberts)

- 2012** Copt Point, six flew west, 27th August (I. A. Roberts)
- 2012** Copt Point, two flew east, 23rd September (D. A. Gibson)
- 2013** Samphire Hoe, four flew west, 18th August (I. A. Roberts)
- 2013** Samphire Hoe, one flew west, 25th October (I. A. Roberts)
- 2015** Hythe, two flew west, 25th August (I. A. Roberts)
- 2015** Hythe, two flew west, 26th August (I. A. Roberts)
- 2015** Hythe, one flew west, 24th September (I. A. Roberts)

In addition, there is a record of 3 unidentified shearwaters which flew west past Folkestone Pier on the 19th August 2013 which seems very likely to relate to this species.