

# Purple Heron

*Ardea purpurea*

Category A

Very rare vagrant

6 records

Breeds across southern Europe with some as far north as north-eastern France and an isolated population in the Netherlands. Winters in sub-Saharan Africa. Decreasing across most of its range. First bred successfully in Britain in 2010 at Dungeness.

A rare passage migrant to Kent, scarcer in recent years. There were 134 county records to the end of 2010, but only 17 of those were in the last decade. The extreme arrival dates are 27<sup>th</sup> March and 13<sup>th</sup> November, with April and May accounting for the majority (55%) of records.



Purple Heron at Nickoll's Quarry (Ian Roberts)

First recorded at Folkestone and Hythe in 1983, with 5 subsequent records since 1985, including 2 in the last two years, as demonstrated by figure 1.

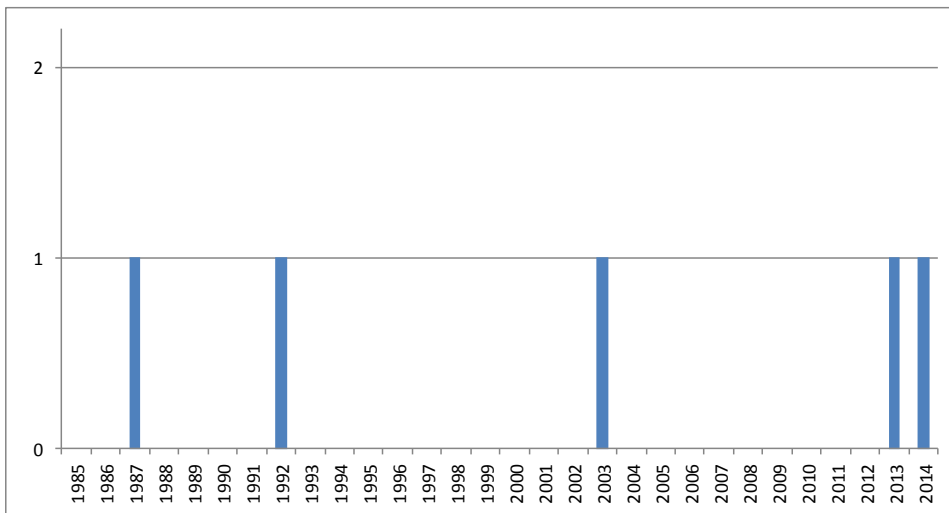


Figure 1: Purple Heron records since 1985 at Folkestone and Hythe

The records by week are given in figure 2, which shows three records in May (including two in week 20) and singles in April, July and October.

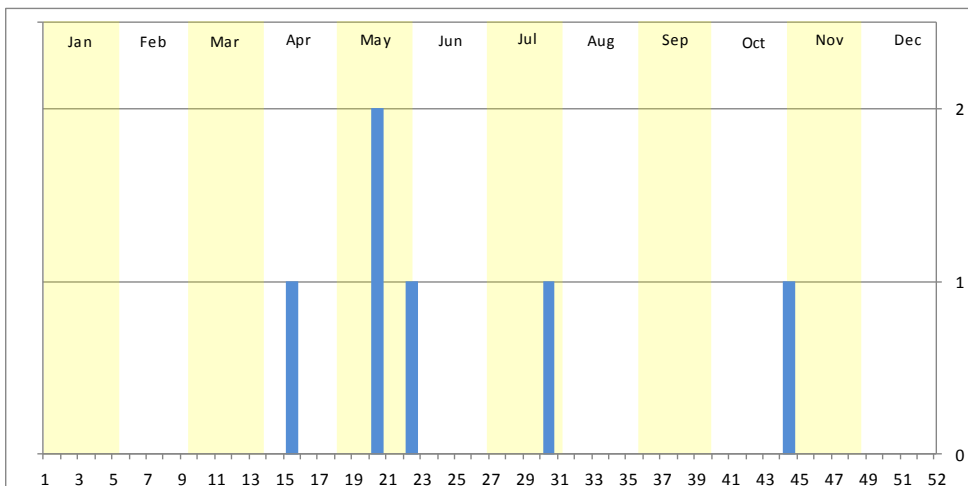


Figure 2: Purple Heron records at Folkestone and Hythe by week

The full list of records is as follows:

- 1983** Copt Point, one flew over, 30<sup>th</sup> October (D. A. Gibson, J. A. Gibson, R. Philpott *et al*)
- 1987** Folkestone Warren, one adult flew over, 28<sup>th</sup> July (K. G. Holland)
- 1992** Folkestone Harbour, one sub-adult flew in off the sea then north-west, 15<sup>th</sup> May (D. A. Gibson)
- 2003** Capel-le-Ferne Café, one flew east, 13<sup>th</sup> April (D. A. Gibson, J. A. Gibson, I. A. Roberts)
- 2013** Saltwood, one flew north, 31<sup>st</sup> May (P. Howe)
- 2014** Nickoll's Quarry, one flew in from east, circled and flew back, 16<sup>th</sup> May, photographed (I. A. Roberts)