

White Stork

Ciconia ciconia

Category A

Very rare vagrant

9 records

Breeds on the continent from Spain, through France, into Germany and beyond into eastern Europe and Russia. Some winter in the southern part of the breeding range but the majority migrate to tropical Africa, Iran or the Indian sub-continent. There has been a significant decrease in the north and west of the European range which has been offset to some extent by reintroduction schemes.



White Stork at Folkestone (Dale Gibson)

A rare migrant to Kent, with reintroduced and escaped birds now occurring more frequently.

First recorded at Folkestone and Hythe in 1993, but with a further 7 records over the next 13 years, as shown in figure 1. However there has been only one sighting since 2006.

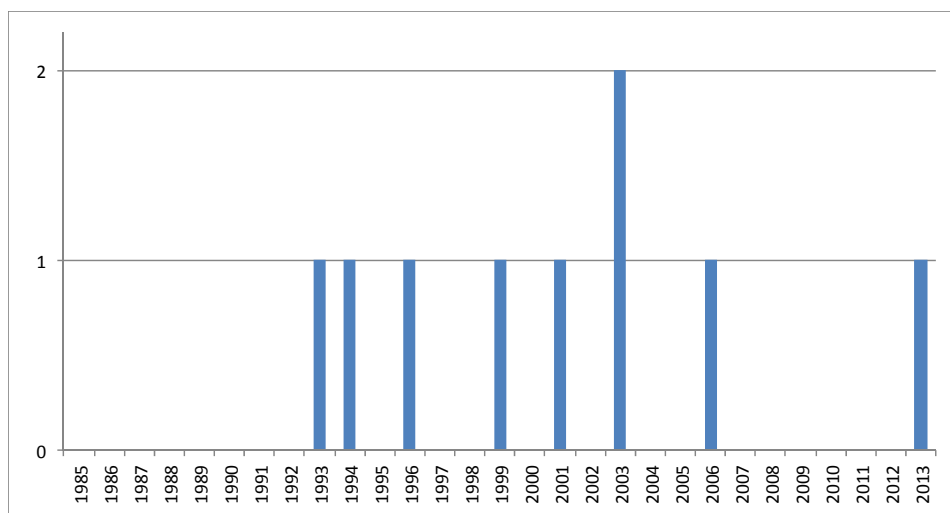


Figure 1: White Stork records at Folkestone and Hythe

Records are fairly widely spread between the 1st April and 30th September. The arrival dates by week are shown in figure 2.

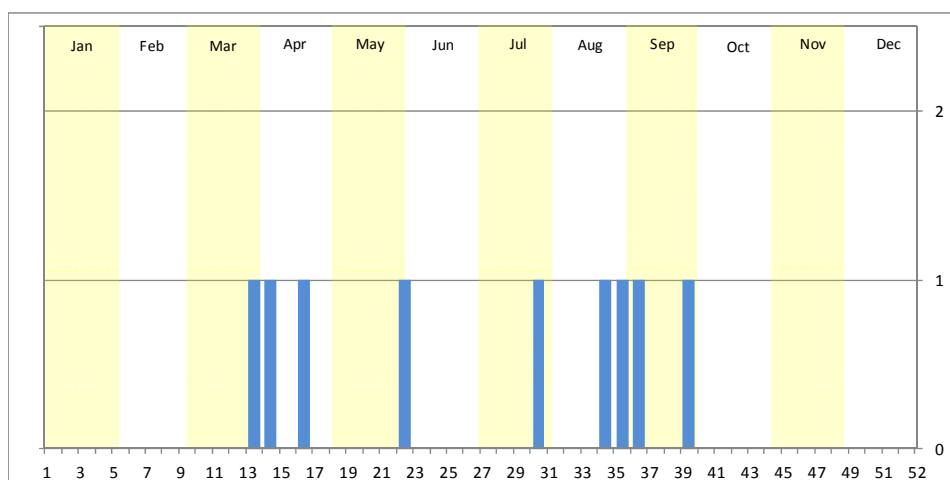


Figure 2: White Stork records at Folkestone and Hythe by week

Five records are of birds seen flying over the Cheriton / Folkestone, with the others relating to single sightings at Abbotscliffe, Capel-le-Ferne and Hythe.

Escaped birds have been occurring with increasing frequency in Kent and the origin of some birds is difficult to determine. The majority of Folkestone and Hythe records have occurred in the migration seasons of spring and autumn, with two birds having been seen arriving in off the sea. The record from 2001 has perhaps the worst credentials for consideration as a wild bird, being seen in summer, and at a time when a bird known to be an escape was wandering fairly widely in south and east Kent. However even this might have been a genuine vagrant encouraged across the Channel by the warm weather prevalent at the time.

The full list of records is as follows:

1993 Cheriton, one flew north-west, 1st June (D. A. Gibson)

1994 Capel-le-Ferne, one flew in off the sea then north-east, 21st August (D. A. Gibson)

1996 Folkestone, one flew south-west, 21st April (D. A. Gibson)

1999 Cheriton, one flew west, 30th September (D. A. Gibson), also reported over Hythe Redoubt later that day. It had earlier been seen flying in off the sea at Dover, and was later seen in the Dungeness/Lydd area

2001 Folkestone, one, around 26th July (D. A. Gibson), of unknown origin (as described above)

2003 Abbotscliffe, one flew east, 31st August (D. A. Gibson, I. A. Roberts)

2003 Hythe, one flew west, 6th September (I. A. Roberts)

2006 Folkestone, one circled for 45 minutes, then flew north-west, 1st April, photographed (D. A. Gibson, I. A. Roberts)

2013 Folkestone, one, 6th April, photographed (D. A. Gibson)