

Avocet

Recurvirostra avosetta

Category A

Scarce migrant

66 records

A well scattered and localised breeding species across Europe. Declined in the north-west of the continent in the nineteenth century but recovered in the twentieth, with quite a rapid increase in the latter part of that century, particularly in Britain and the Netherlands (both seeing over 100% increases). Migratory in the northern part of the breeding range, grading to dispersive in the south. British-bred birds generally remain within the country in winter, though there is a movement mainly of East Anglian birds to the south-west of England.

An increasing breeding summer visitor, passage migrant and winter visitor to Kent. The 2010 Rare Breeding Bird Report gave a total of 196 confirmed breeding pairs in the county, across 9 sites.



Avocets at the Willop Basin (Brian Harper)

The first Avocet to be recorded in the Folkestone and Hythe area was in 1958, when one circled over the gravel pit at Nickoll's Quarry, but there was a thirty year gap until the next (in 1988). Since then however it has occurred regularly, in line with the increase in the county, with records in all but three of the last 25 years. 2001 remains the best year so far with eight records, as shown in figure 1.

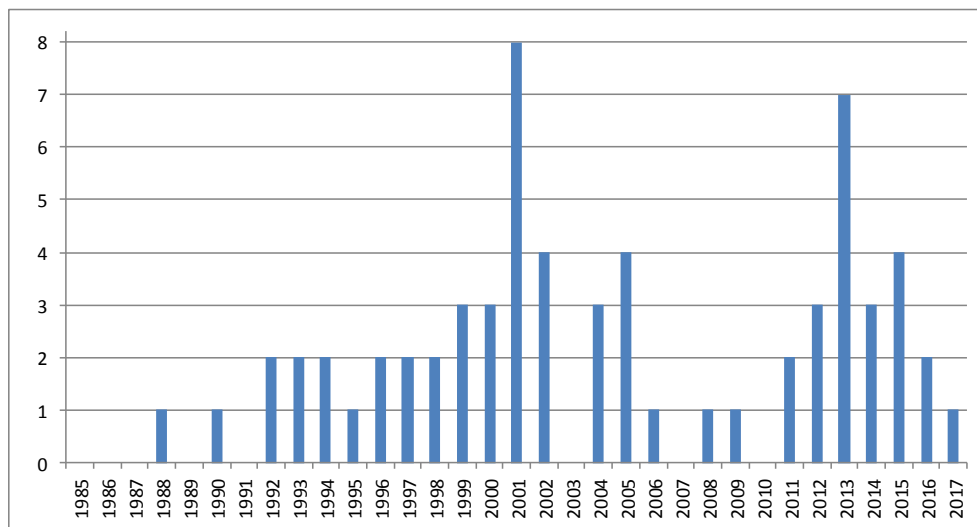


Figure 1: Avocet records since 1985 at Folkestone and Hythe

Figure 2 shows the arrival dates by week. 77% have occurred in spring, between 18th February and 17th June, though with a peak in late March to early May. There have been five records in August or early September, with the remainder having been seen from mid-October to late December. Just over half of the sightings involve one or two birds and there have been some relatively large flocks recorded, with a maximum count of 30 heading west past Hythe Ranges on the 9th November 1992.

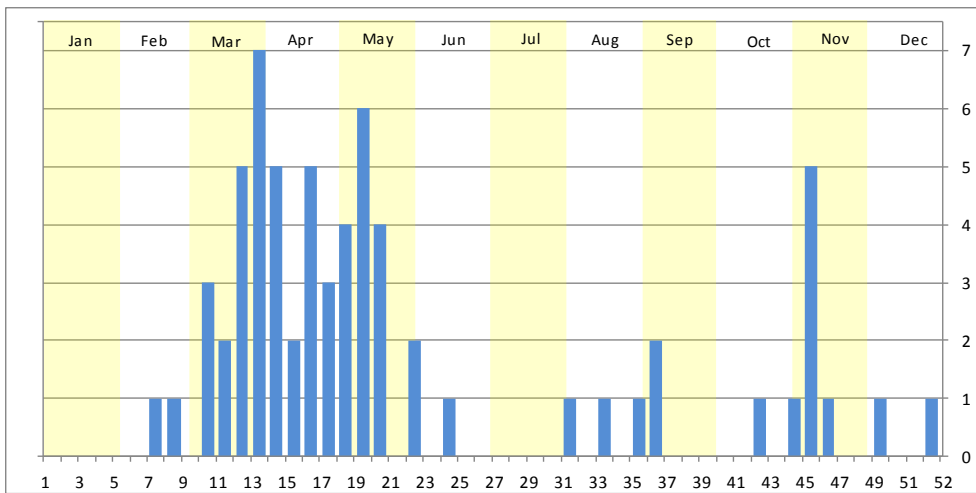


Figure 2: Avocet records at Folkestone and Hythe by week

Records were fairly evenly split between the coast and Nickoll's Quarry but the last sighting at this latter site was in 2006, since when the habitat has become less attractive. The totals to date are Nickoll's Quarry (20), Copt Point (14), Samphire Hoe (11), Mill Point (8), Hythe Ranges / Redoubt (7), Willop Basin / Outfall (4) and Hythe / Princes Parade (2).

The full list of records is as follows:

- 1958** Nickoll's Quarry, one flew in from the south and circled the new pit but did not land, 20th April (R. K. Norman)
- 1988** Mill Point, 13 flew east, 8th May (I. A. Roberts)
- 1990** Mill Point, one flew east, 24th April (I. A. Roberts)
- 1992** Hythe Ranges, two flew west, 14th April (R. K. Norman)
- 1992** Hythe Ranges, 30 flew west, 9th November (R. K. Norman)
- 1993** Copt Point, four flew east, 10th May (D. A. Gibson)
- 1993** Copt Point, four flew east, 17th May (D. A. Gibson)
- 1994** Copt Point, four flew east, 3rd May (D. A. Gibson)
- 1994** Nickoll's Quarry, one, 19th October (R. K. Norman)
- 1995** Copt Point, five flew east, 2nd November (D. A. Gibson)
- 1996** Copt Point, one flew east, 18th April (I. A. Roberts)
- 1996** Copt Point, one flew east, 11th May (I. A. Roberts)
- 1997** Nickoll's Quarry, four, 18th March (R. K. Norman)
- 1997** Nickoll's Quarry, one, 30th March (R. K. Norman)
- 1998** Mill Point, one flew east, 24th March (D. A. Gibson)
- 1998** Copt Point, seven flew east, 30th April (I. A. Roberts)
- 1999** Nickoll's Quarry, one, 4th April (R. K. Norman)
- 1999** Nickoll's Quarry, one, 23rd April (I. A. Roberts)
- 1999** Nickoll's Quarry, one, 12th November (R. K. Norman)
- 2000** Nickoll's Quarry, one, 3rd April (R. K. Norman)
- 2000** Copt Point, eight flew east, 6th May (D. A. Gibson, I. A. Roberts)
- 2000** Nickoll's Quarry, one, 6th September (I. A. Roberts)
- 2001** Copt Point, four flew east, 25th March (D. A. Gibson)
- 2001** Hythe Ranges, one on the beach, 30th March (P. Haines)
- 2001** Nickoll's Quarry, three, 22nd April (R. K. Norman)
- 2001** Copt Point, 15 flew east, 13th May (I. A. Roberts)
- 2001** Nickoll's Quarry, three, 17th June (I. A. Roberts)
- 2001** Hythe Redoubt, four on the sea then flew west, 9th November (R. K. Norman)
- 2001** Copt Point, one on the sea, 9th November (I. A. Roberts)
- 2001** Samphire Hoe, one flew east, 9th November (I. A. Roberts)
- 2002** Nickoll's Quarry, one, 29th March (R. K. Norman)
- 2002** Nickoll's Quarry, three, 18th April (I. A. Roberts)
- 2002** Nickoll's Quarry, juvenile, 2nd to 8th August (R.K. Norman, I. A. Roberts)
- 2002** Nickoll's Quarry, adult, 15th August (R. K. Norman, I. A. Roberts)

2004 Nickoll's Quarry, one, 29th March (R. K. Norman)
2004 Nickoll's Quarry, one, 1st April (R. K. Norman)
2004 Nickoll's Quarry, two, 28th May (R. K. Norman)
2005 Mill Point, two flew east, 29th March (I. A. Roberts)
2005 Samphire Hoe, three flew east, 2nd April (I. A. Roberts)
2005 Samphire Hoe, seven flew east, 17th April (I. A. Roberts)
2005 Nickoll's Quarry, two, 16th May (R. K. Norman, I. A. Roberts)
2006 Nickoll's Quarry, two flew over, 2nd June (Reported)
2008 Samphire Hoe, one flew east, 28th March (I. A. Roberts)
2009 Copt Point, 11 flew east, 24th April (D. A. Gibson)
2011 Samphire Hoe, 12 flew east, 21st March (I. A. Roberts)
2011 Samphire Hoe, two flew east, 30th April (I. A. Roberts)
2012 Hythe Ranges, one flew in from west and landed on beach, 10th March (B. Harper, M. Harper)
2012 Copt Point, 15 (13 flew east, 2 flew west), 25th March (D. A. Gibson, I. A. Roberts)
2012 Willop Outfall, 14 (flocks of 6 and 8) flew west, 8th December (B. Harper, M. Harper)
2013 Samphire Hoe, one flew east, 20th February (I. A. Roberts)
2013 Willop Basin, six, 9th March, photographed (B. Harper)
2013 Samphire Hoe, eight flew east, 9th March (I. A. Roberts)
2013 Samphire Hoe, nine flew east, 22nd March (I. A. Roberts)
2013 Samphire Hoe, six flew east, 24th March (I. A. Roberts)
2013 Princes Parade, one flew east, 8th April (B. Harper)
2013 Samphire Hoe, one flew west, 11th November (I. A. Roberts)
2014 Willop Basin, three flew west, 12th April (B. Harper)
2014 Hythe Redoubt, three flew west, 28th August (B. Harper)
2014 Hythe Beach, one flew west, 27th December (I. A. Roberts)
2015 Willop Basin, one, 17th March (B. Harper, I. A. Roberts)
2015 Mill Point, two flew east, 14th May (I. A. Roberts)
2015 Mill Point, five flew east, 15th May (B. Harper)
2015 Mill Point, four flew east, 9th September (B. Harper)
2016 Copt Point, two flew west, 5th May (D. A. Gibson)
2016 Mill Point, two flew east, 12th May (B. Harper)
2017 Hythe Redoubt, one, 18th February (I. A. Roberts)