

Avocet

Recurvirostra avosetta

Category A

Scarce migrant

70 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 Nickolls 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 28 years. 2001 remains the best year so far with eight records, as shown in figure 1.

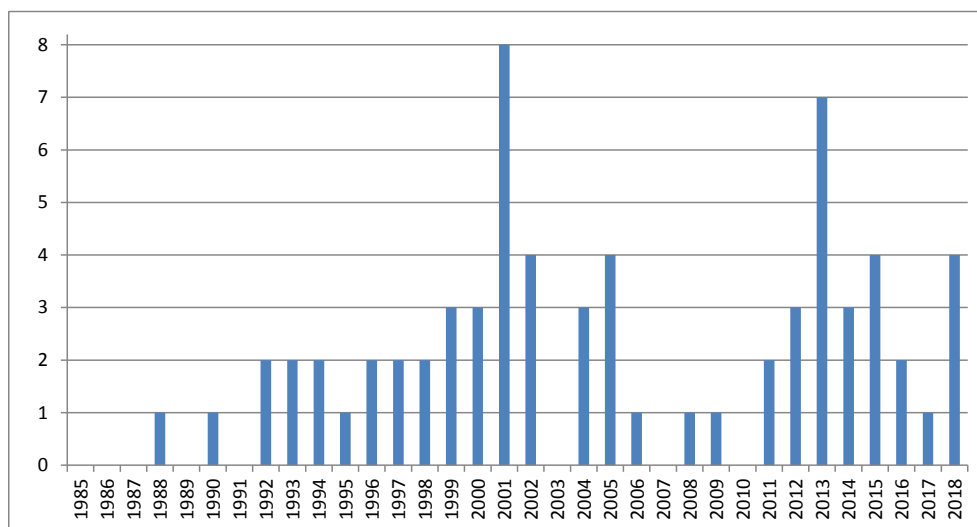


Figure 1: Avocet records since 1985 at Folkestone and Hythe

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.

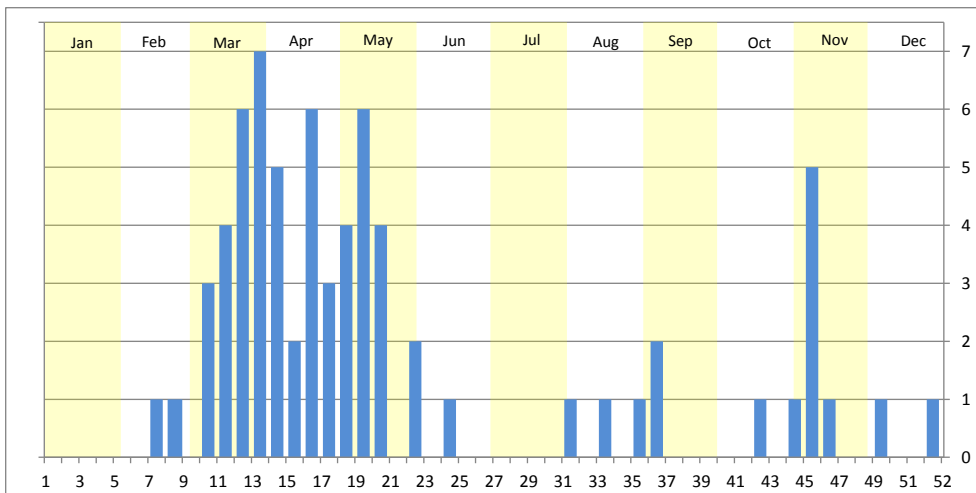


Figure 2: Avocet records at Folkestone and Hythe by week

Records were fairly evenly split between the coast and Nickolls Quarry but there has been one sighting at this latter site since 2006 (when the habitat became less attractive to waders). The totals to date are Nickolls Quarry (21), Copt Point (14), Samphire Hoe (14), 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 Nickolls 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 Nickolls 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 Nickolls Quarry, four, 18th March (R. K. Norman)

1997 Nickolls 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 Nickolls Quarry, one, 4th April (R. K. Norman)

1999 Nickolls Quarry, one, 23rd April (I. A. Roberts)

1999 Nickolls Quarry, one, 12th November (R. K. Norman)

2000 Nickolls Quarry, one, 3rd April (R. K. Norman)

2000 Copt Point, eight flew east, 6th May (D. A. Gibson, I. A. Roberts)

2000 Nickolls 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 Nickolls Quarry, three, 22nd April (R. K. Norman)

2001 Copt Point, 15 flew east, 13th May (I. A. Roberts)

2001 Nickolls 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 Nickolls Quarry, one, 29th March (R. K. Norman)

2002 Nickolls Quarry, three, 18th April (I. A. Roberts)

2002 Nickolls Quarry, juvenile, 2nd to 8th August (R.K. Norman, I. A. Roberts)

2002 Nickolls Quarry, adult, 15th August (R. K. Norman, I. A. Roberts)

2004 Nickolls Quarry, one, 29th March (R. K. Norman)
2004 Nickolls Quarry, one, 1st April (R. K. Norman)
2004 Nickolls 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 Nickolls Quarry, two, 16th May (R. K. Norman, I. A. Roberts)
2006 Nickolls 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)
2018 Samphire Hoe, four flew east, 14th March (I. A. Roberts)
2018 Nickolls Quarry, two, 17th March (B. Harper)
2018 Samphire Hoe, nine (in groups of 3 and 6) flew east, 24th March (I. A. Roberts)
2018 Samphire Hoe, one flew east, 21st April (I. A. Roberts)