

Yellow-legged Gull

Larus michahellis

Category A

Rare migrant

23 records

Breeding range has spread northwards since the 1970s from the Mediterranean up the Atlantic coast of France and the Rhone Valley, first breeding in Britain in 1995 (where still a very rare breeder, and most records relate to mixed pairs). Following this expansion to the north and west considerable post-breeding dispersal, particularly of young birds, takes place in these directions, from Mediterranean along rivers such as the Rhone and Rhine to large lakes in Austria, Switzerland and southern Germany, with some continuing on to the southern North Sea coast and south-east England.



Yellow-legged Gull at Mill Point (Ian Roberts)

A regular passage migrant to Kent. Not recorded at Folkestone and Hythe until 1980, but has been seen with some regularity since 1988, as figure 1 demonstrates.

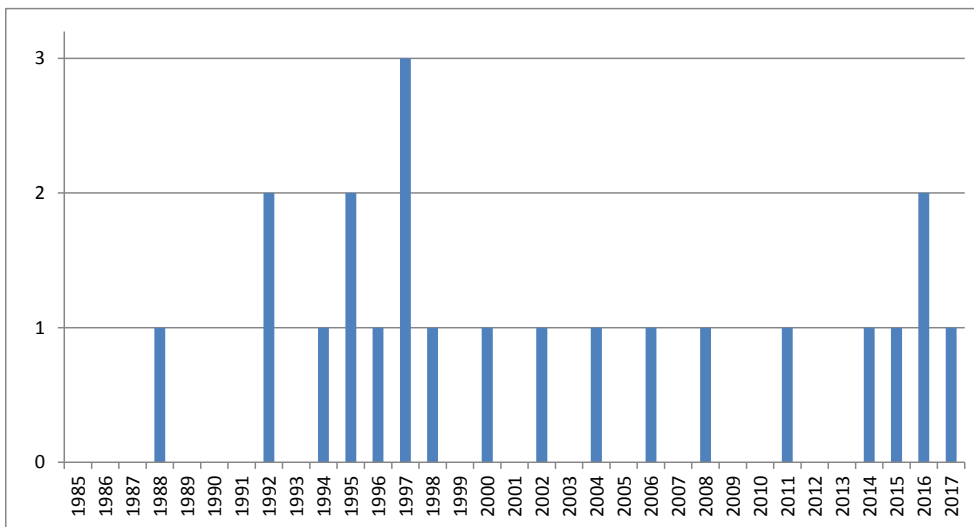


Figure 1: Yellow-legged Gull records since 1985 at Folkestone and Hythe

Records appear to fall into two distinct periods: late summer/early autumn, from the 3rd July to the 10th September (weeks 27 to 37); and late autumn/early winter, from the 27th October to 19th December (weeks 43 to 51), with a sightings in April and May, as shown in figure 2.

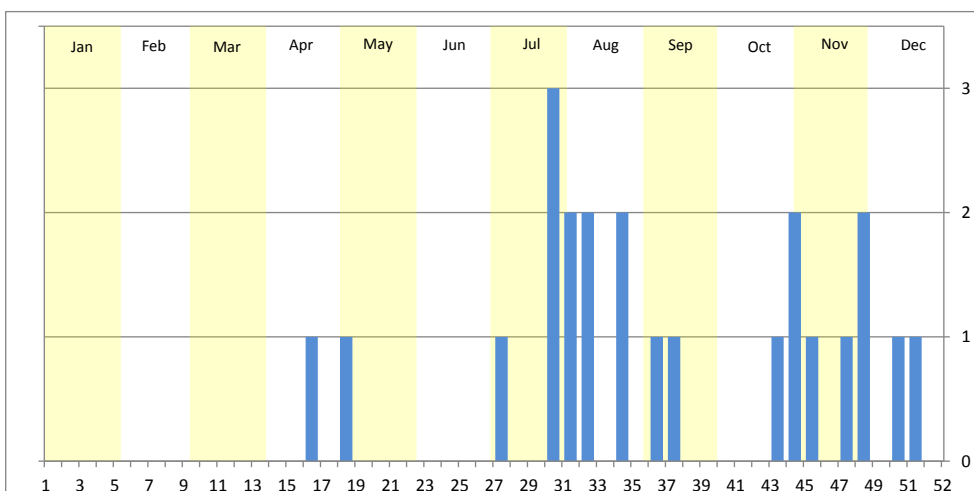


Figure 2: Yellow-legged Gull records at Folkestone and Hythe by week

The distribution of winter records recorded in the BTO/KOS Atlas (2007 – 2012) is shown in figure 3 – a single bird seen at Mill Point in November 2011. The majority of other records have been on the coast between Copt Point and Mill Point (11), with 6 at Nickolls Quarry, two at Hythe, and singles at Saltwood, Samphire Hoe and Sandgate.

Where the age of birds has been given all have been adults, which suggests that younger individuals are being overlooked.

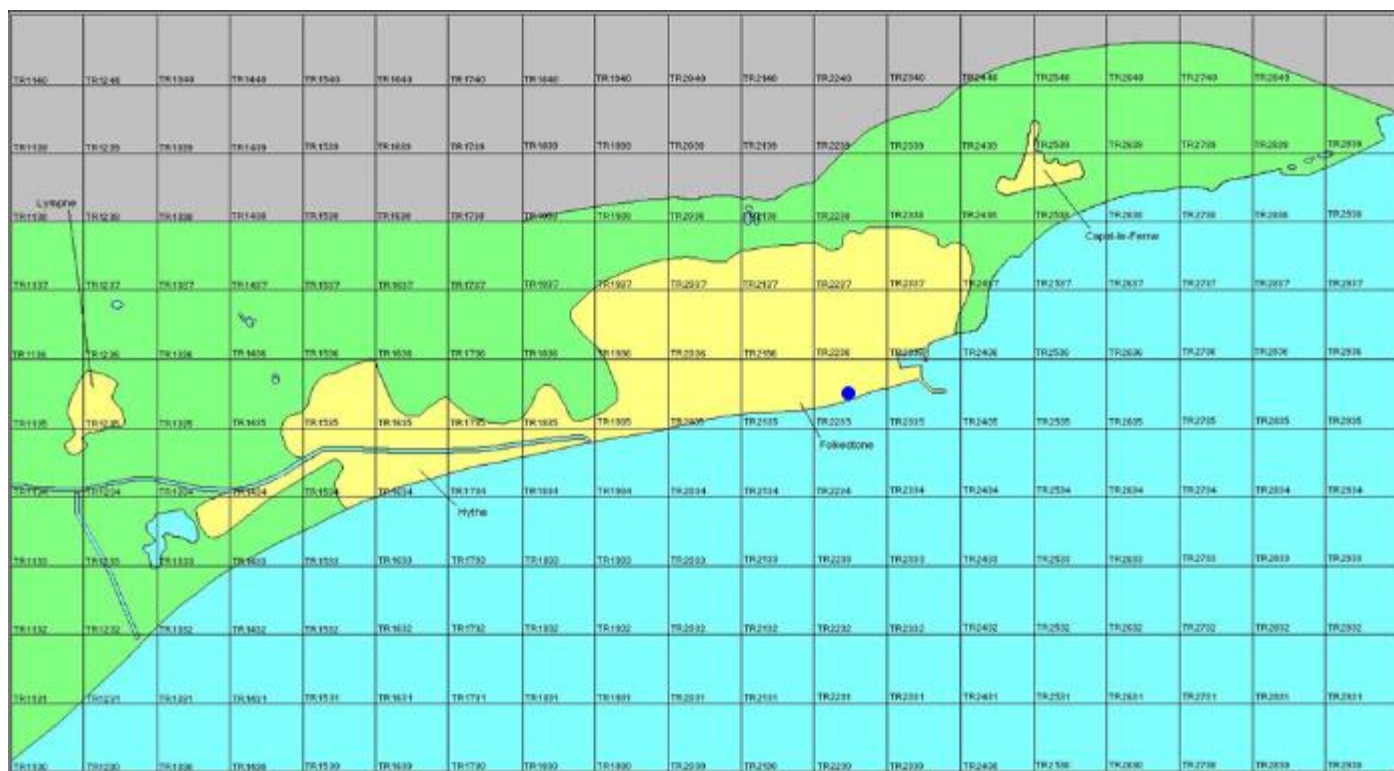


Figure 3: Wintering distribution of Yellow-legged Gull at Folkestone and Hythe (2007 – 2012 BTO/KOS Atlas)

The full list of records is as follows:

- 1980** Folkestone, one, 2nd November (reported)
- 1988** Mill Point, three adults, 5th September (IAR)
- 1992** Folkestone Harbour, adult, 3rd July (I. A. Roberts)
- 1992** Folkestone Harbour, adult, 8th August (I. A. Roberts)
- 1994** Nickoll's Quarry, adult, 29th November (R. K. Norman)
- 1995** Copt Point, one, 24th July (D. A. Gibson)
- 1995** Nickoll's Quarry, adult, 9th August (R. K. Norman)
- 1996** Nickoll's Quarry, adult, 21st August (I. A. Roberts, D. A. Gibson)
- 1997** Copt Point, adult, 30th July (D. A. Gibson)
- 1997** Copt Point, adult, 4th August (I. A. Roberts)
- 1997** Nickoll's Quarry, adult, 21st August (R. K. Norman)
- 1998** Copt Point, one, 1st November (reported)
- 2000** Copt Point, adult, 10th September (P. French)
- 2002** Nickoll's Quarry, adult, 27th October (I. A. Roberts)
- 2004** Nickoll's Quarry, adult, 11th December (R. K. Norman)
- 2006** Folkestone Beach, adult, 26th July (I. A. Roberts)
- 2008** Samphire Hoe, adult, 24th July (I. A. Roberts)
- 2011** Mill Point, adult, 8th November, photographed (I. A. Roberts)
- 2014** Hythe Imperial Golf Course, one, 21st April (N. Webster)
- 2015** Saltwood, one, 23rd November (G. Cooke)
- 2016** Sandgate, adult, 26th November, photographed (I. A. Roberts)
- 2016** Folkestone Harbour, adult, 19th December, photographed, video-recorded (I. A. Roberts)
- 2017** Hythe, one, 1st May (C. Nuttman)



Yellow-legged Gull at Mill Point (Ian Roberts)



Yellow-legged Gull at Sandgate (Ian Roberts)