

Tundra Bean Goose

Anser serrirostris

Category A

Very rare vagrant

8 records

Breeds in Fenno-Scandia and northern Russia, wintering in western Europe, mainly Germany, the Netherlands and France, with a small number in Britain.

A scarce passage migrant and winter visitor to Kent, generally in small numbers, with occasional larger flocks. Typically recorded between late October and early April, most commonly occurring during spells of hard weather.

Since December 2017 the British list (BOURC) has followed the IOC World Bird List which treats Tundra and Taiga Bean Geese as separate species.



Tundra Bean Geese at Botolph's Bridge (Dave Brown)

Almost all modern county records relate to the Tundra form and unassigned records are assumed to be this more likely species. The Bird Atlas (Balmer *et al*, 2013) shows no records of the Taiga form in Kent or along the southern coast of England.

Ticehurst (1909) records that he was informed by a Mr. H. Lemmon that a large number of Bean Geese were seen at Hythe in the hard winter of 1895-96: "they frequented some fields at the back of the town, where they picked up a precarious livelihood and a good number were shot. They were all in extremely poor condition, and some were hardly more than skin and bone".

This influx is presumably the source of a specimen in the Folkestone Museum which he mentions as being shot at Hythe.

Almost a century elapsed before the next was recorded at Folkestone and Hythe, in 1992, but there was another in the following year, and there have been five further records as shown in figure 1, though none since 2011.

The most recent four records were identified as Tundra Bean Geese but the first records were unassigned or unspecified, as was common practice at the time, though seem most likely to refer to this species.

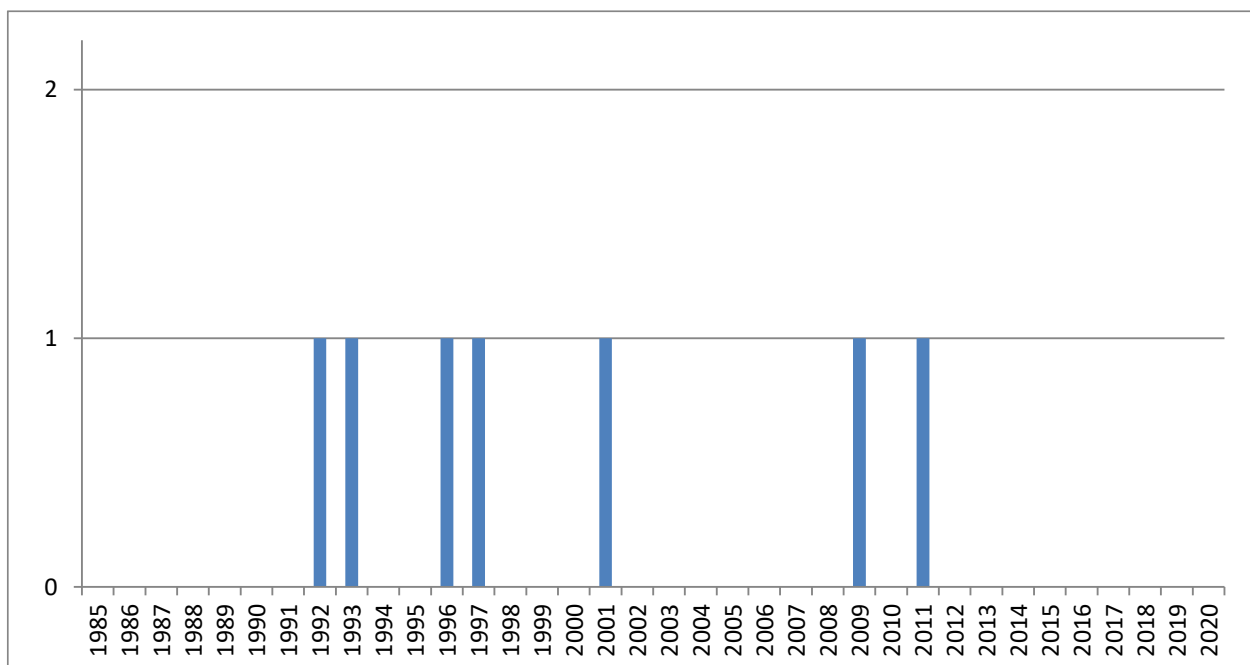


Figure 1: Tundra Bean Goose records at Folkestone and Hythe since 1985

The records by week are given in figure 2.

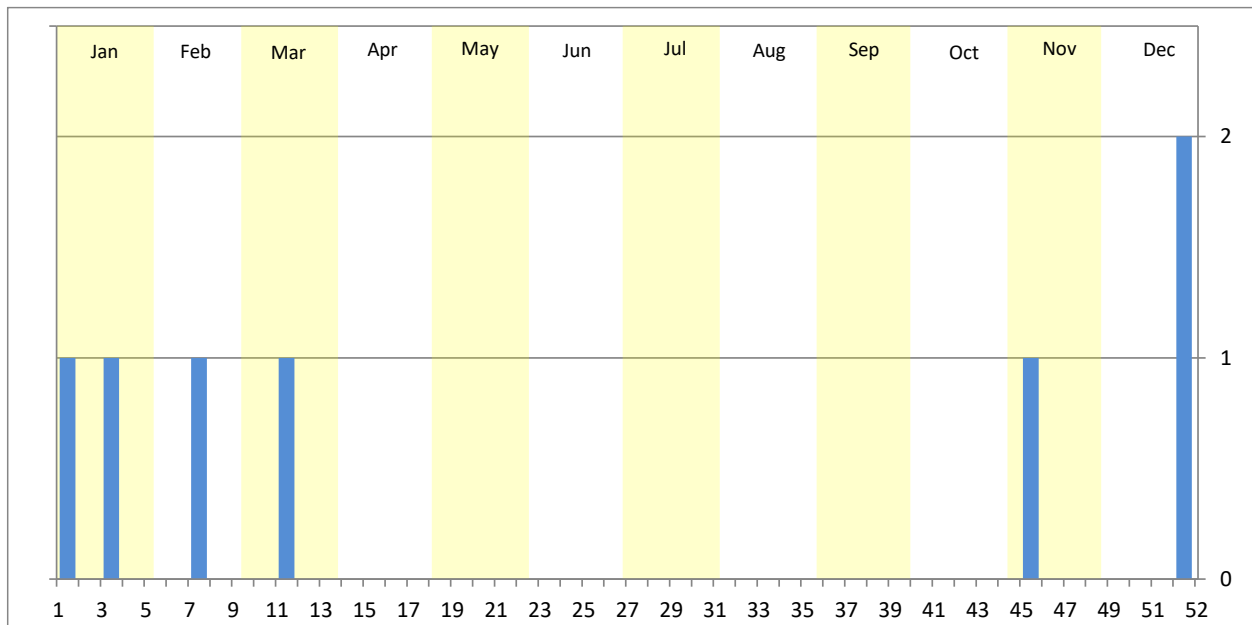


Figure 2: Tundra Bean Goose records at Folkestone and Hythe by week

The distribution of records is shown in figure 3. The records from coastal sites relate to migrants either in autumn (Abbotscliffe), spring (Hythe Ranges) or cold weather (Copt Point). There have been another four records from the Botolph's Bridge/Nickolls Quarry, two of which were particularly long-stayers, with a bird in 1997 remaining for 37 days and one in 2001/02 staying for at least 88, possibly 111, days.



Figure 3: Distribution of all Tundra Bean Goose records at Folkestone and Hythe by tetrad

The full list of records is as follows:

- 1895/96** Hythe, "a large number" [Bean Geese sp.], in winter (H. Lemmon)
- 1992** Copt Point, 21 [Bean Geese sp.] flew in off the sea, 17th January (reported)
- 1993** Hythe Ranges, two [Bean Geese sp.] flew south-east and out to sea, 13th March (R. K. Norman)
- 1996** Copt Point, five [Bean Geese sp.] flew west, 25th December (D. A. Gibson)
- 1997** Nickolls Quarry, one [Tundra Bean Goose], 15th February to 23rd March (I. A. Roberts, R. K. Norman)
- 2001** Botolph's Bridge/Nickolls Quarry area, one [Tundra Bean Goose] commuted between fields to roost on the quarry, 26th December to 24th March 2002 (I. A. Roberts, R. K. Norman), with further sightings of possibly a different individual on 14th and 16th April (R. K. Norman)

2009 Botolph's Bridge, three [Tundra Bean Geese], with a single White-fronted Goose, 2nd January, photographed (D. & S. Brown)

2011 Abbotscliffe, two [Tundra Bean Geese] in wheat field for ten minutes then flew west, 9th November (M. D. Kennett)

References

Balmer, D., Gillings, S., Caffrey, B., Swann, B., Downie, I & Fuller, R. 2013. *Bird Atlas 2007-11: The Breeding and Wintering Birds of Britain and Ireland*. British Trust for Ornithology

BOURC British list: <https://www.bou.org.uk/british-list/> (accessed 2020)

Ticehurst, N. F. 1909. *A History of the Birds of Kent*. Witherby, London.



Bean Geese (three birds on left) and White-fronted Goose at Botolph's Bridge (Dave Brown)

Acknowledgements

The tetrad map images were produced from the Ordnance Survey [Get-a-map service](#) and are reproduced with kind permission of [Ordnance Survey](#).