

Egyptian Goose

Alopochen aegyptiaca

Category C1

Rare migrant

16 records

Breeds ferally in England (originally in East Anglia), having been imported into the country as early as the seventeenth century, and also in Belgium and the Netherlands, with a few pairs in France (Snow & Perrins, 1998).

Ticehurst (1909) mentioned that numerous examples of this species had been shot in Kent, presumably almost all escapes from captivity and Harrison (1953) added another from 1937.



Egyptian Geese at the Willop Basin (Ian Roberts)

Taylor et al (1981) stated that it had been recorded annually in the county since 1970, with the first summering pairs in 1975. The majority were thought to originate from the growing feral population in East Anglia. Clements *et al* (2015) reported that although birds had been present in Kent for many years it had been slow to establish a breeding population with the first successful pairs not recorded until 2008. At the time of the last atlas it was restricted to west Kent, in the catchments of the Darent, Medway and Teise rivers. Outside of the breeding season birds are prone to wandering.

The latest Kent Bird Report stated that the feral population continues to slowly establish itself in the county, although the stronghold continues to be in the west, however it is now breeding at lakes in the Ashford area (KOS, 2020).

It was first recorded locally in 1996, with another the following year, but then a 13 year gap followed until the next sighting in 2011, as demonstrated by figure 1. It has been recorded annually however since 2013 with increasing frequency and this seems likely to continue if the population is increasing and spreading eastwards in Kent.

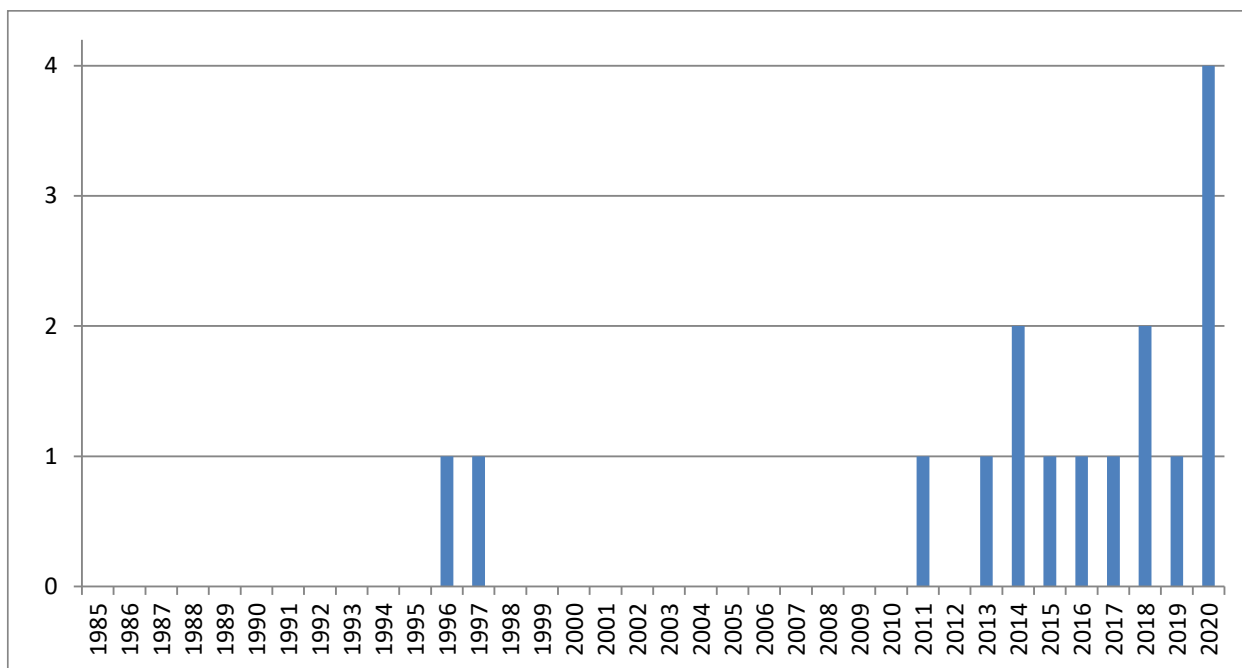


Figure 1: Egyptian Goose records at Folkestone and Hythe

The first four occurred in January, between the 2nd (week 1) and 23rd (week 4), with the others in February (4), March (2), April (5) and May, as demonstrated by figure 2. Seven of the records were seen on single dates but one remained from January until April (92 days).

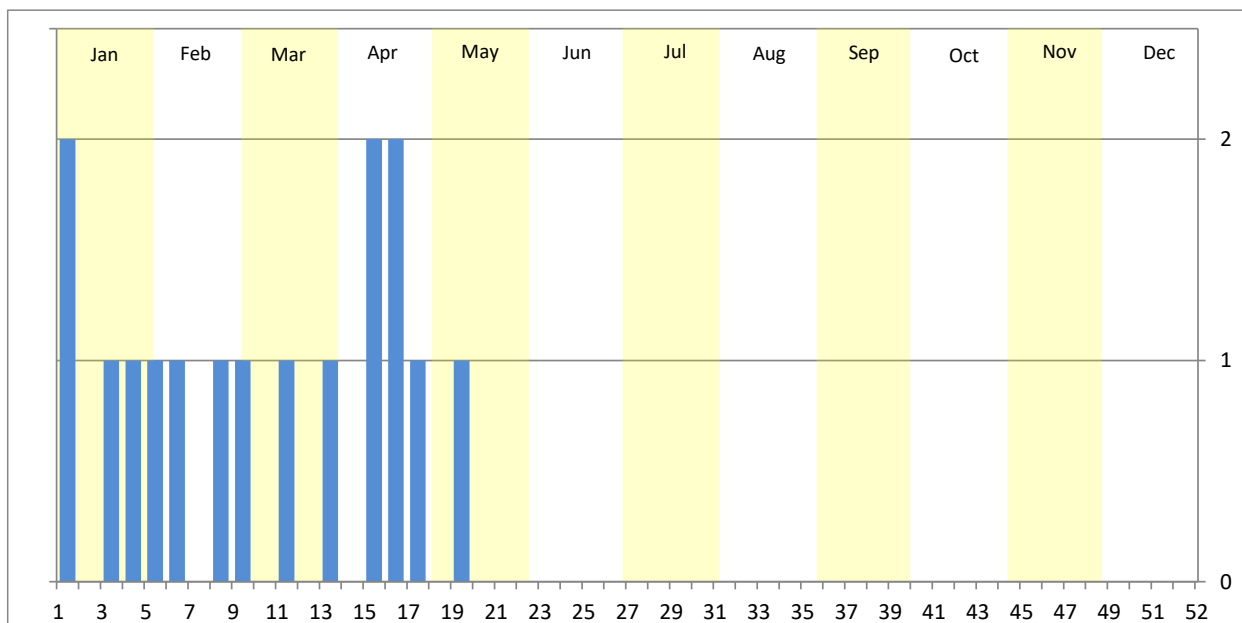


Figure 2: Egyptian Goose records at Folkestone and Hythe by week

Figure 3 shows the distribution of records by tetrad. The first record involved one flying over Folkestone and the next a long-staying individual that frequented the Hythe Canal/Nickolls Quarry area for over three months.

The recent records are from Nickolls Quarry (four), Willop Basin/Willop Sewage Works (4), Samphire Hoe (3), Seabrook (2) and the canal in Hythe town.



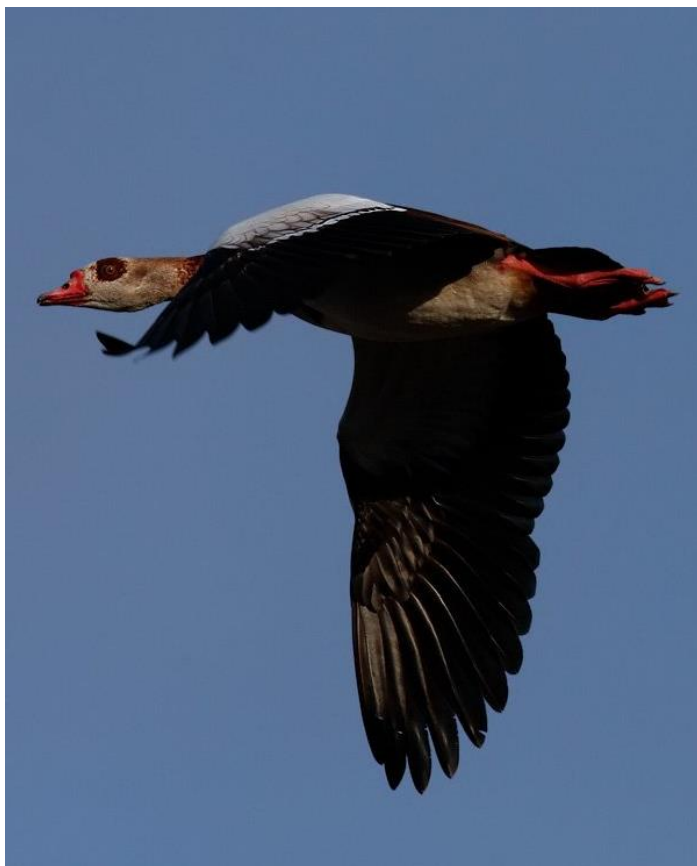
Figure 3: Distribution of all Egyptian Goose records at Folkestone and Hythe by tetrad

The full list of records is as follows:

1996 Folkestone, one flew low to the east, 21st January (D. A. Gibson)

1997 Hythe Canal (Hythe Town), one, 4th to 21st January, and again on 16th March and 6th April, also seen at Nickolls Quarry on at least 4th, 8th and 13th March with anglers reporting it several times either side of those dates, photographed (I. A. Roberts, R. K. Norman, G. Redfern, P. Howe)

- 2011** Nickolls Quarry, five flew in from west, circled and flew back west, 4th January (I. A. Roberts). Flock included an albino individual and had been previously seen at Dungeness
- 2013** Samphire Hoe, two flew east, 23rd January, photographed (I. A. Roberts)
- 2014** Willop Basin, five, 11th April, photographed (I. A. Roberts, J. Tomsett)
- 2014** Willop Basin, one, 7th May (B. Harper)
- 2015** Nickolls Quarry, two flew west, 27th February, photographed (I. A. Roberts)
- 2016** Hythe Canal (Hythe Town), one, 3rd to 6th February, photographed (I. A. Roberts, N. Webster, P. Howe *et al*)
- 2017** Willop Basin, seven, 21st February (I. A. Roberts)
- 2018** Samphire Hoe, two flew west, 15th March (I. A. Roberts)
- 2018** Nickolls Quarry, two, 31st March (B. Harper)
- 2019** Samphire Hoe, four flew south, 27th April, photographed (M. Collins, B. Woolhouse)
- 2020** Willop Sewage Works, six flew east, 7th February (B. Harper, I. A. Roberts)
- 2020** Nickolls Quarry, one, 8th April (B. Harper)
- 2020** Seabrook, one flew east, 17th April (P. Howe)
- 2020** Seabrook, one flew east, 20th April (P. Howe)



Egyptian Goose at Nickolls Quarry (Brian Harper)

References

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Acknowledgements

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Egyptian Goose at Hythe (Ian Roberts)