

# Stone Curlew

*Burhinus oedicnemus*

Category A

Very rare vagrant.

2 records

It has a scattered distribution mainly across southern Europe and North Africa, extending eastwards to central Asia. It is mainly migratory in northern and eastern Europe, but often varying from partially migratory to resident in milder areas. Substantial numbers of European birds cross the Mediterranean to winter in Africa. It has undergone a widespread and often severe contraction of its range, due mainly to loss of suitable breeding habitat through intensification of arable farming and conversion of dry grassland to cultivation (Snow & Perrins, 1998).

In Britain it is restricted mainly to East Anglia and Salisbury Plain, where there are around 350 breeding pairs (Holling *et al*, 2019). It is now a rare passage migrant in Kent, with 63 records since 1977 (KOS, 2020).

Latham (1785) wrote of the Stone Curlew as ‘not uncommon’ in some parts of Kent, including the Downs. By Ticehurst’s time (1909), the numbers were obviously much lower and breeding restricted to Dungeness, where a small population persisted until around 1970 (Taylor *et al*, 1981).

Knight and Tolputt (1871) included the “Great Plover” (as it was then known) in their “List of birds observed in Folkestone and its immediate neighbourhood”. Whilst this range extends further inland than the current Folkestone and Hythe area, so is not conclusive evidence of occurrence here, it does suggest that the species was present locally, presumably on the Downs or possibly on the coastal shingle, in the days when it was more regular in the county.

In 1952 Roger Norman was informed by a Warrant Officer that one had been seen on the Hythe Ranges (in the vicinity of serial 18) in April of that year.

There has only been one modern area record, which involved one found by Dale Gibson at Copt Point on the 6<sup>th</sup> September 1990, with presumably the same individual being relocated there on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> October. On one occasion it was seen roosting with gulls on the beach!

The modern record is shown by year of occurrence in figure 1.

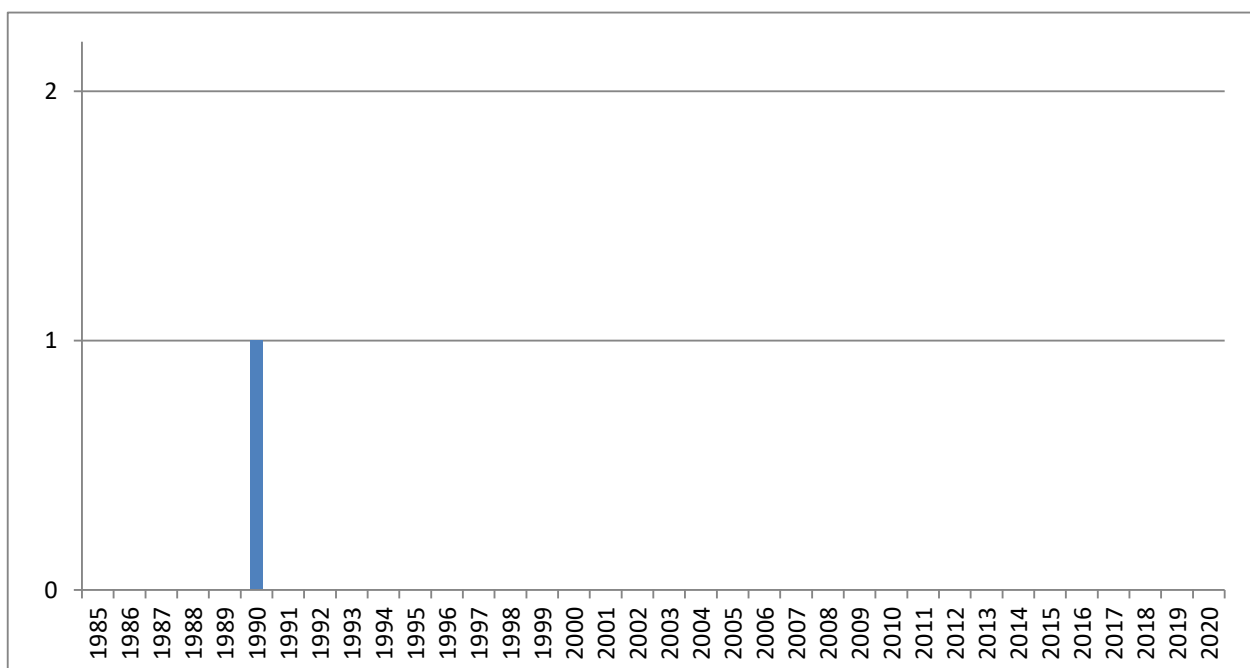


Figure 1: Stone Curlew records at Folkestone and Hythe since 1985

The modern record is shown by week of occurrence in figure 2. The earlier record was not specifically dated.

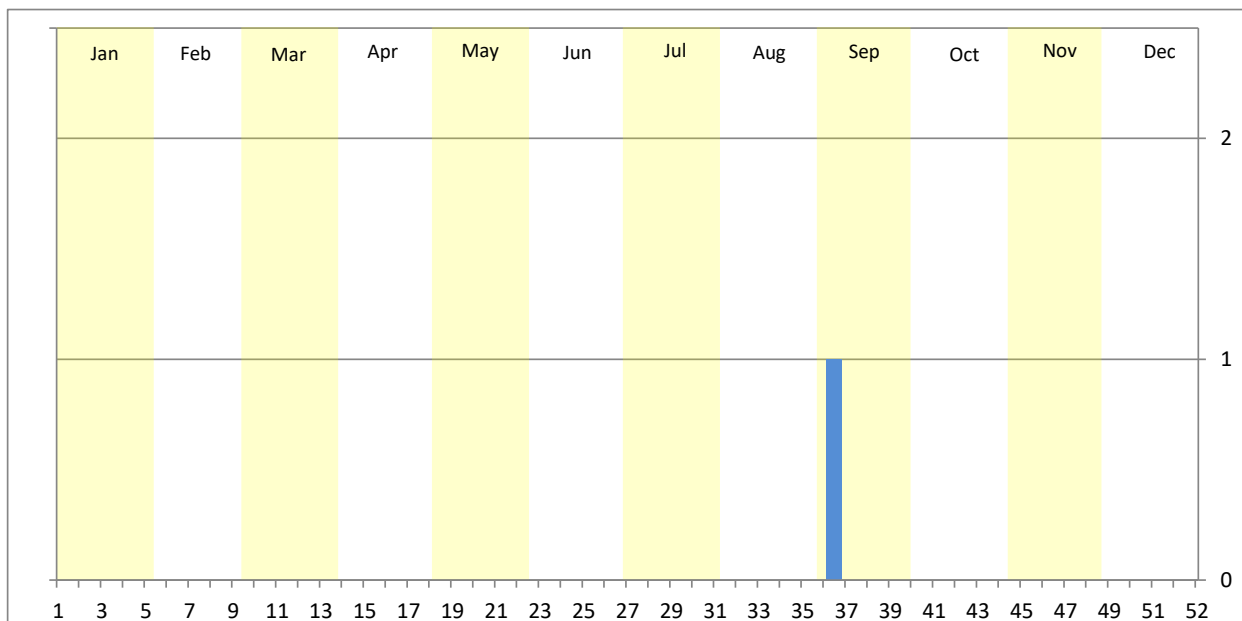


Figure 2: Stone Curlew records at Folkestone and Hythe by week

Figure 3 shows the distribution of records by tetrad.



Figure 3: Distribution of all Stone Curlew records at Folkestone and Hythe by tetrad

The full list of records is as follows:

**1952** Hythe Ranges, one, in April (per R. K. Norman)

**1990** Copt Point, one, 6<sup>th</sup> September, presumed same on 2<sup>nd</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> October (D. A. Gibson)

### References

Holling, M. & the Rare Breeding Birds Panel, 2019. Rare breeding birds in the UK in 2017. *British Birds*, 112: 706-758

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Taylor, D., Davenport, D. & Flegg, J. 1981. *Birds of Kent*. Kent Ornithological Society

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

### ***Acknowledgements***

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