

Balearic Shearwater

Puffinus mauretanicus Category A

Rare passage migrant 42 records

Breeds only on the Balearic Islands. After breeding it disperses into Mediterranean then through Straits of Gibraltar into the Atlantic. The majority winter in the Bay of Biscay, with some as north as the Irish and North Seas. Most of the population leave the Mediterranean from May, peaking off Gibraltar in late June, and present in English Channel and North Sea mainly July to October (occasionally as early as mid-May or as late as December) (Snow & Perrins, 1998). A scarce but regular summer and autumn visitor to Kent, particularly off Dungeness (KOS, 2020).

It was not recorded in the Folkestone and Hythe area until 1995, but there have now been 42 sightings over the last 26 years, with a particularly good spell from 1997 to 1999 (with a total of 15), as shown in figure 1.

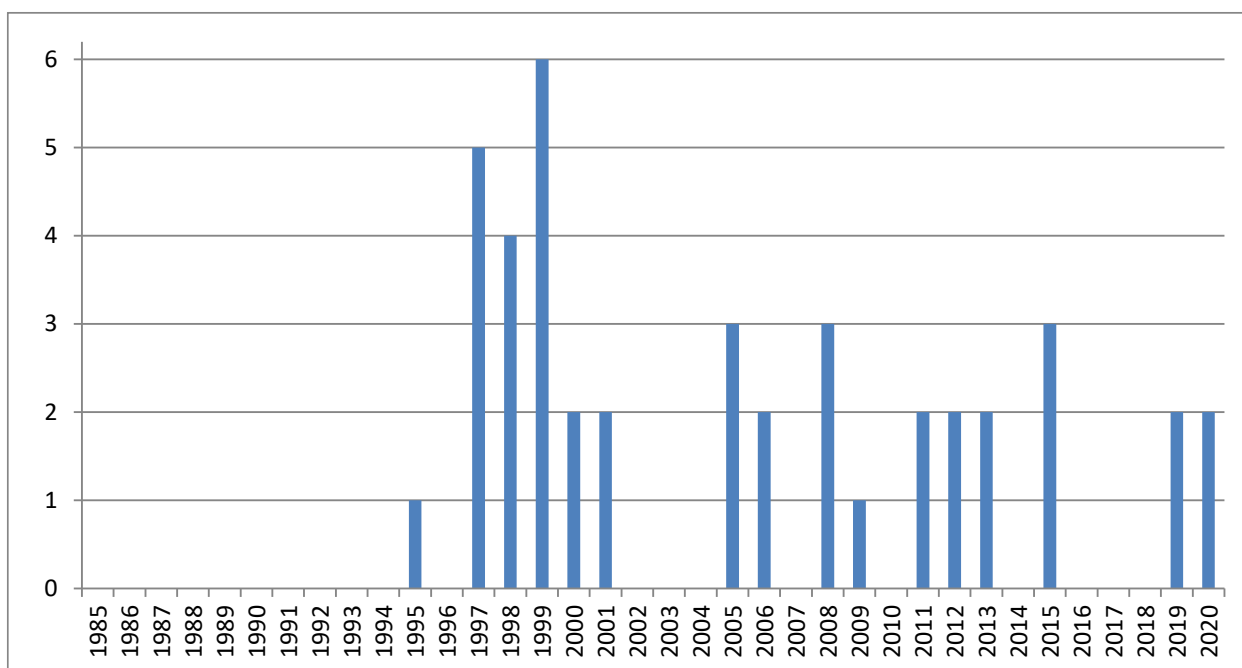


Figure 1: Balearic Shearwater records at Folkestone and Hythe

The records by week are given in figure 2.

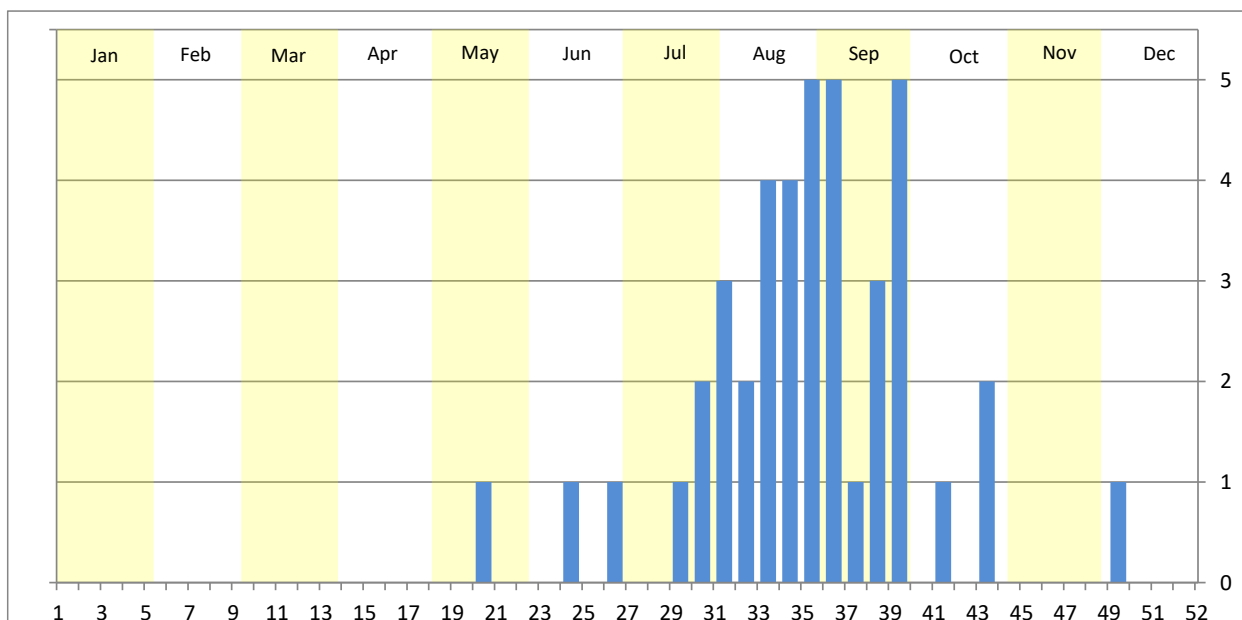


Figure 2: Balearic Shearwater records at Folkestone and Hythe by week

The majority of records (30) refer to single birds but the other 12 involve multiple sightings, with a maximum of four on the 18th September 1999 and 18th August 2013.

Figure 3 shows the distribution of records by tetrad.



Figure 3: Distribution of all Balearic Shearwater records at Folkestone and Hythe by tetrad

The majority of records are from Copt Point (25), with nine at Samphire Hoe, three at Hythe, three in the Hythe Ranges/Dymchurch Redoubt area and two at Mill Point.

The full list of records is as follows:

- 1995** Copt Point, one flew west, 5th September (D. A. Gibson)
- 1997** Copt Point, one flew east, 29th August (D. A. Gibson)
- 1997** Copt Point, three flew west, 30th August (D. A. Gibson, I. A. Roberts)
- 1997** Copt Point, one, 31st August (D. A. Gibson)
- 1997** Copt Point, one flew west, 4th September (D. A. Gibson)
- 1997** Copt Point, one flew west, 8th October (D. A. Gibson)
- 1998** Copt Point, two flew west, 27th June (D. A. Gibson, I. A. Roberts)
- 1998** Copt Point, one flew west, 23rd July (I. A. Roberts)
- 1998** Copt Point, two flew east, 9th September (D. A. Gibson)
- 1998** Copt Point, one flew west, 24th October (I. A. Roberts)
- 1999** Copt Point, one flew east, 18th May (D. A. Gibson)
- 1999** Mill Point, one flew west, 20th July (I. A. Roberts)
- 1999** Copt Point, one flew west, 14th August (I. A. Roberts)
- 1999** Copt Point, one flew west, 18th August (D. A. Gibson)
- 1999** Copt Point, four flew west, 18th September (D. A. Gibson, I. A. Roberts)
- 1999** Copt Point, two flew east, 20th September (D. A. Gibson)
- 2000** Copt Point, two flew west, 19th September (D. A. Gibson, I. A. Roberts)
- 2000** Copt Point, one flew west, 27th September (I. A. Roberts)
- 2001** Dymchurch Redoubt, one flew east, 6th August (R. K. Norman)
- 2001** Copt Point, one flew west, 18th August (I. A. Roberts)
- 2005** Mill Point, one flew west, 15th June (I. A. Roberts)
- 2005** Copt Point, one flew west, 25th August (I. A. Roberts)
- 2005** Samphire Hoe, one flew east, 11th September (I. A. Roberts)
- 2006** Copt Point, one flew west, 31st July (I. A. Roberts)
- 2006** Copt Point, one flew east then west, 3rd September (I. A. Roberts)
- 2008** Samphire Hoe, one on sea, 23rd July (I. A. Roberts)
- 2008** Samphire Hoe, two flew west, 1st August (I. A. Roberts)

2008 Samphire Hoe, one flew west, 3rd August (I. A. Roberts)
2009 Hythe Ranges, one flew west, 6th December (I. A. Roberts)
2011 Hythe Ranges, one offshore, 11th August (S. McMinn)
2011 Copt Point, one flew west, 6th September (I. A. Roberts)
2012 Copt Point, six flew west, 27th August (I. A. Roberts)
2012 Copt Point, two flew east, 23rd September (D. A. Gibson)
2013 Samphire Hoe, four flew west, 18th August (I. A. Roberts)
2013 Samphire Hoe, one flew west, 25th October (I. A. Roberts)
2015 Hythe, two flew west, 25th August (I. A. Roberts)
2015 Hythe, two flew west, 26th August (I. A. Roberts)
2015 Hythe, one flew west, 24th September (I. A. Roberts)
2019 Copt Point, one flew west, 27th September (M. J. Varley)
2019 Samphire Hoe, one flew west, 29th September (S. M. Cutt)
2020 Samphire Hoe, one flew east, 22nd August (S. M. Cutt)
2020 Samphire Hoe, two flew west, 30th August (S. M. Cutt)

In addition, there is a record of three unidentified shearwaters which flew west past Folkestone Pier on the 19th August 2013 which seems very likely to relate to this species.

References

Kent Bird Reports, 2018. Kent Ornithological Society

Snow, D. & Perrins, C.M., 1998. The Birds of the Western Palearctic. Oxford University Press.

Acknowledgements

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