

# Avocet

*Recurvirostra avosetta*

Category A

Scarce migrant

70 records

A well scattered and localised breeding species across Europe. Declined in the north-west of the continent in the nineteenth century but recovered in the twentieth, with quite a rapid increase in the latter part of that century, particularly in Britain and the Netherlands (both seeing over 100% increases). Migratory in the northern part of the breeding range, grading to dispersive in the south. British-bred birds generally remain within the country in winter, though there is a movement mainly of East Anglian birds to the south-west of England.

An increasing breeding summer visitor, passage migrant and winter visitor to Kent. The 2010 Rare Breeding Bird Report gave a total of 196 confirmed breeding pairs in the county, across 9 sites.



Avocets at the Willop Basin (Brian Harper)

The first Avocet to be recorded in the Folkestone and Hythe area was in 1958, when one circled over the gravel pit at Nickolls Quarry, but there was a thirty year gap until the next (in 1988). Since then however it has occurred regularly, in line with the increase in the county, with records in all but three of the last 28 years. 2001 remains the best year so far with eight records, as shown in figure 1.

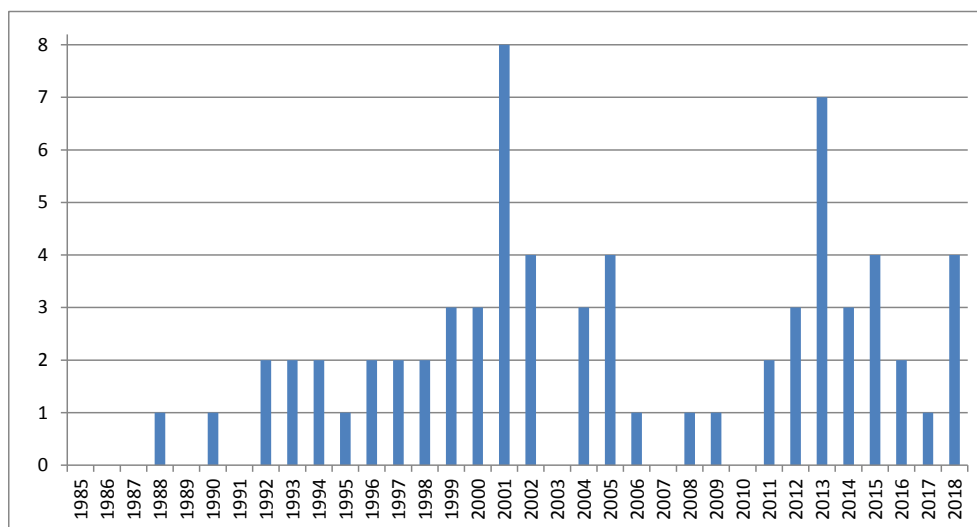


Figure 1: Avocet records since 1985 at Folkestone and Hythe

Figure 2 shows the arrival dates by week. 77% have occurred in spring, between 18<sup>th</sup> February and 17<sup>th</sup> June, though with a peak in late March to early May. There have been five records in August or early September, with the remainder having been seen from mid-October to late December. Just over half of the sightings involve one or two birds and there have been some relatively large flocks recorded, with a maximum count of 30 heading west past Hythe Ranges on the 9<sup>th</sup> November 1992.

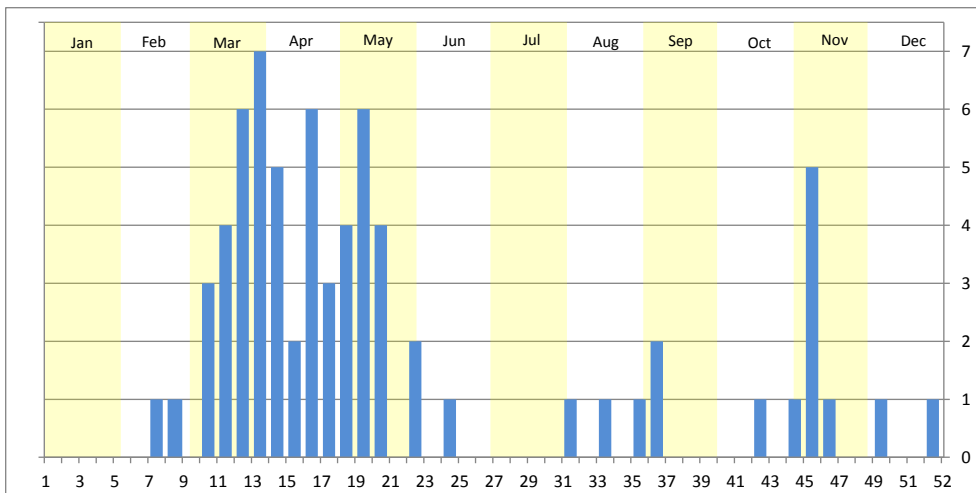


Figure 2: Avocet records at Folkestone and Hythe by week

Records were fairly evenly split between the coast and Nickolls Quarry but there has been one sighting at this latter site since 2006 (when the habitat became less attractive to waders). The totals to date are Nickolls Quarry (21), Copt Point (14), Samphire Hoe (14), Mill Point (8), Hythe Ranges / Redoubt (7), Willop Basin / Outfall (4) and Hythe / Princes Parade (2).

The full list of records is as follows:

**1958** Nickolls Quarry, one flew in from the south and circled the new pit but did not land, 20<sup>th</sup> April (R. K. Norman)

**1988** Mill Point, 13 flew east, 8<sup>th</sup> May (I. A. Roberts)

**1990** Mill Point, one flew east, 24<sup>th</sup> April (I. A. Roberts)

**1992** Hythe Ranges, two flew west, 14<sup>th</sup> April (R. K. Norman)

**1992** Hythe Ranges, 30 flew west, 9<sup>th</sup> November (R. K. Norman)

**1993** Copt Point, four flew east, 10<sup>th</sup> May (D. A. Gibson)

**1993** Copt Point, four flew east, 17<sup>th</sup> May (D. A. Gibson)

**1994** Copt Point, four flew east, 3<sup>rd</sup> May (D. A. Gibson)

**1994** Nickolls Quarry, one, 19<sup>th</sup> October (R. K. Norman)

**1995** Copt Point, five flew east, 2<sup>nd</sup> November (D. A. Gibson)

**1996** Copt Point, one flew east, 18<sup>th</sup> April (I. A. Roberts)

**1996** Copt Point, one flew east, 11<sup>th</sup> May (I. A. Roberts)

**1997** Nickolls Quarry, four, 18<sup>th</sup> March (R. K. Norman)

**1997** Nickolls Quarry, one, 30<sup>th</sup> March (R. K. Norman)

**1998** Mill Point, one flew east, 24<sup>th</sup> March (D. A. Gibson)

**1998** Copt Point, seven flew east, 30<sup>th</sup> April (I. A. Roberts)

**1999** Nickolls Quarry, one, 4<sup>th</sup> April (R. K. Norman)

**1999** Nickolls Quarry, one, 23<sup>rd</sup> April (I. A. Roberts)

**1999** Nickolls Quarry, one, 12<sup>th</sup> November (R. K. Norman)

**2000** Nickolls Quarry, one, 3<sup>rd</sup> April (R. K. Norman)

**2000** Copt Point, eight flew east, 6<sup>th</sup> May (D. A. Gibson, I. A. Roberts)

**2000** Nickolls Quarry, one, 6<sup>th</sup> September (I. A. Roberts)

**2001** Copt Point, four flew east, 25<sup>th</sup> March (D. A. Gibson)

**2001** Hythe Ranges, one on the beach, 30<sup>th</sup> March (P. Haines)

**2001** Nickolls Quarry, three, 22<sup>nd</sup> April (R. K. Norman)

**2001** Copt Point, 15 flew east, 13<sup>th</sup> May (I. A. Roberts)

**2001** Nickolls Quarry, three, 17<sup>th</sup> June (I. A. Roberts)

**2001** Hythe Redoubt, four on the sea then flew west, 9<sup>th</sup> November (R. K. Norman)

**2001** Copt Point, one on the sea, 9<sup>th</sup> November (I. A. Roberts)

**2001** Samphire Hoe, one flew east, 9<sup>th</sup> November (I. A. Roberts)

**2002** Nickolls Quarry, one, 29<sup>th</sup> March (R. K. Norman)

**2002** Nickolls Quarry, three, 18<sup>th</sup> April (I. A. Roberts)

**2002** Nickolls Quarry, juvenile, 2<sup>nd</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> August (R.K. Norman, I. A. Roberts)

**2002** Nickolls Quarry, adult, 15<sup>th</sup> August (R. K. Norman, I. A. Roberts)

**2004** Nickolls Quarry, one, 29<sup>th</sup> March (R. K. Norman)  
**2004** Nickolls Quarry, one, 1<sup>st</sup> April (R. K. Norman)  
**2004** Nickolls Quarry, two, 28<sup>th</sup> May (R. K. Norman)  
**2005** Mill Point, two flew east, 29<sup>th</sup> March (I. A. Roberts)  
**2005** Samphire Hoe, three flew east, 2<sup>nd</sup> April (I. A. Roberts)  
**2005** Samphire Hoe, seven flew east, 17<sup>th</sup> April (I. A. Roberts)  
**2005** Nickolls Quarry, two, 16<sup>th</sup> May (R. K. Norman, I. A. Roberts)  
**2006** Nickolls Quarry, two flew over, 2<sup>nd</sup> June (Reported)  
**2008** Samphire Hoe, one flew east, 28<sup>th</sup> March (I. A. Roberts)  
**2009** Copt Point, 11 flew east, 24<sup>th</sup> April (D. A. Gibson)  
**2011** Samphire Hoe, 12 flew east, 21<sup>st</sup> March (I. A. Roberts)  
**2011** Samphire Hoe, two flew east, 30<sup>th</sup> April (I. A. Roberts)  
**2012** Hythe Ranges, one flew in from west and landed on beach, 10<sup>th</sup> March (B. Harper, M. Harper)  
**2012** Copt Point, 15 (13 flew east, 2 flew west), 25<sup>th</sup> March (D. A. Gibson, I. A. Roberts)  
**2012** Willop Outfall, 14 (flocks of 6 and 8) flew west, 8<sup>th</sup> December (B. Harper, M. Harper)  
**2013** Samphire Hoe, one flew east, 20<sup>th</sup> February (I. A. Roberts)  
**2013** Willop Basin, six, 9<sup>th</sup> March, photographed (B. Harper)  
**2013** Samphire Hoe, eight flew east, 9<sup>th</sup> March (I. A. Roberts)  
**2013** Samphire Hoe, nine flew east, 22<sup>nd</sup> March (I. A. Roberts)  
**2013** Samphire Hoe, six flew east, 24<sup>th</sup> March (I. A. Roberts)  
**2013** Princes Parade, one flew east, 8<sup>th</sup> April (B. Harper)  
**2013** Samphire Hoe, one flew west, 11<sup>th</sup> November (I. A. Roberts)  
**2014** Willop Basin, three flew west, 12<sup>th</sup> April (B. Harper)  
**2014** Hythe Redoubt, three flew west, 28<sup>th</sup> August (B. Harper)  
**2014** Hythe Beach, one flew west, 27<sup>th</sup> December (I. A. Roberts)  
**2015** Willop Basin, one, 17<sup>th</sup> March (B. Harper, I. A. Roberts)  
**2015** Mill Point, two flew east, 14<sup>th</sup> May (I. A. Roberts)  
**2015** Mill Point, five flew east, 15<sup>th</sup> May (B. Harper)  
**2015** Mill Point, four flew east, 9<sup>th</sup> September (B. Harper)  
**2016** Copt Point, two flew west, 5<sup>th</sup> May (D. A. Gibson)  
**2016** Mill Point, two flew east, 12<sup>th</sup> May (B. Harper)  
**2017** Hythe Redoubt, one, 18<sup>th</sup> February (I. A. Roberts)  
**2018** Samphire Hoe, four flew east, 14<sup>th</sup> March (I. A. Roberts)  
**2018** Nickolls Quarry, two, 17<sup>th</sup> March (B. Harper)  
**2018** Samphire Hoe, nine (in groups of 3 and 6) flew east, 24<sup>th</sup> March (I. A. Roberts)  
**2018** Samphire Hoe, one flew east, 21<sup>st</sup> April (I. A. Roberts)