

# Black-tailed Godwit

*Limosa limosa*

Category A

Rare passage migrant

33 records

The nominate race breeds mostly across mid-latitude Europe with a large population in the Low Countries, but only small numbers (60-70 pairs) in Britain, and winters mainly in Africa. The race which breeds in Iceland winters in western Europe.

A passage migrant and winter visitor to Kent. Breeds in small numbers (six pairs with a status of at least possible breeding in 2010, one of which was confirmed).



Black-tailed Godwits at Battery Point (Brian Harper)

Ticehurst in his *A History of the Birds of Kent* (1909) records that Folkestone Museum had a specimen but the source of it was unknown.

The first confirmed sighting at Folkestone and Hythe was in 1956, when at Nickoll's Quarry on the 19<sup>th</sup> August Roger Norman recorded that "at 05:45 hours one flew in from the south, stayed in the old pit for a half-hour then set off north-west minutes before four more flew across the pit, heading south-west". The next record was in 1968 when the late Geoffrey Munns saw one at Hythe on the 31<sup>st</sup> May. Another was seen in 1984 and since then there has been a series of 30 records since 1990, including four in both 2000 and 2004, as shown in figure 1.

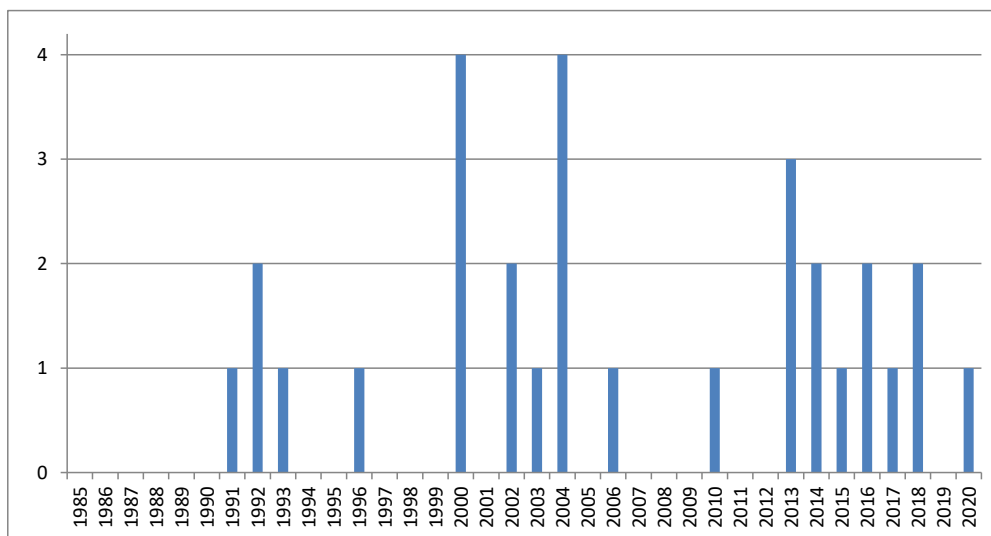


Figure 1: Black-tailed Godwit records at Folkestone and Hythe

Records have occurred in all months between March and August, with a peak in early April (when there have been six records between the 2<sup>nd</sup> and the 10<sup>th</sup>), except for two sightings November 2013 and one in December 2014, as demonstrated by figure 2.

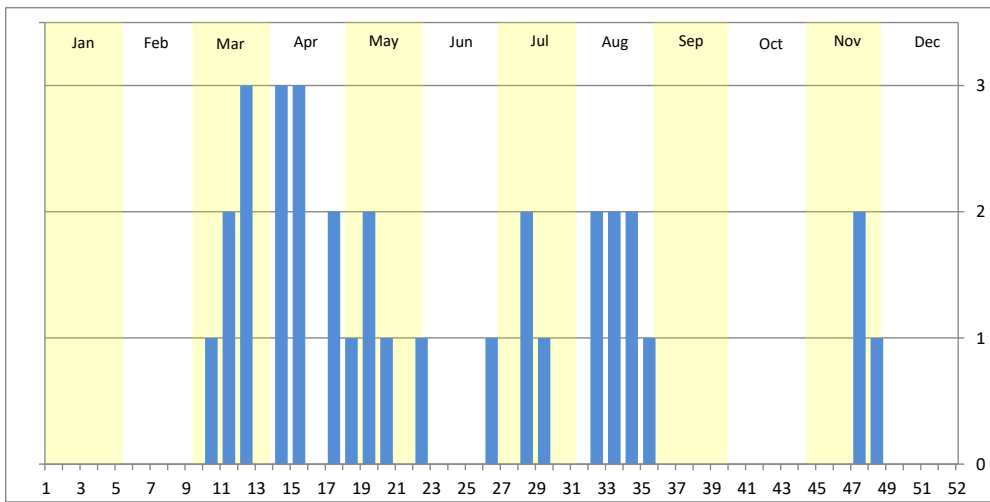


Figure 2: Black-tailed Godwit records at Folkestone and Hythe by week

Almost half of the records are from Nickolls Quarry, with the others at coastal sites as follows: Samphire Hoe (6), Abbotscliffe (3), Mill Point (3), Willop Basin (3), Copt Point (2), Hythe Ranges (2), Battery Point, Capel-le-Ferne and Folkestone Warren.

The full list of records is as follows:

- 1956** Nickolls Quarry, five, 19<sup>th</sup> August (R. K. Norman)
- 1968** Hythe, one, 31<sup>st</sup> May (G. F. A. Munns)
- 1984** Hythe Ranges, one flew east, 9<sup>th</sup> August (R. K. Norman)
- 1991** Hythe Ranges, seven flew east, 6<sup>th</sup> April (R. K. Norman)
- 1992** Nickolls Quarry, four circled the pit but did not land, 3<sup>rd</sup> April (R. K. Norman)
- 1992** Abbotscliffe, four flew west, 26<sup>th</sup> August (I. A. Roberts)
- 1993** Abbotscliffe, four flew east, 23<sup>rd</sup> August (I. A. Roberts)
- 1996** Nickolls Quarry, one present for most of the day, 16<sup>th</sup> March (R. K. Norman)
- 2000** Nickolls Quarry, one, 9<sup>th</sup> April (R. K. Norman)
- 2000** Copt Point, one flew east, 10<sup>th</sup> April (I. A. Roberts)
- 2000** Nickolls Quarry, seven, 14<sup>th</sup> May (R. K. Norman)
- 2000** Nickolls Quarry, two adults, 9<sup>th</sup> July (I. A. Roberts)
- 2002** Abbotscliffe, one flew east, 23<sup>rd</sup> March (I. A. Roberts)
- 2002** Nickolls Quarry, one, 30<sup>th</sup> June (R. K. Norman)
- 2003** Nickolls Quarry, three, 12<sup>th</sup> July (reported)
- 2004** Mill Point, four flew east, 2<sup>nd</sup> April (I. A. Roberts)
- 2004** Copt Point, three flew east, 27<sup>th</sup> April (I. A. Roberts)
- 2004** Nickolls Quarry, one, 14<sup>th</sup> August (R. K. Norman)
- 2004** Capel-le-Ferne Gun Site, ten flew east, 14<sup>th</sup> August (D. A. Gibson)
- 2006** Samphire Hoe, one flew east, 24<sup>th</sup> April (I. A. Roberts)
- 2010** Samphire Hoe, 21 flew east, 10<sup>th</sup> August (D. E. Smith, P. R. Smith, P. I. Holt)
- 2013** Battery Point (Seabrook), 29 flew west, 6<sup>th</sup> May, photographed (B. Harper)
- 2013** Samphire Hoe, two flew west, 21<sup>st</sup> November (I. A. Roberts)
- 2013** Willop Basin, one, 23<sup>rd</sup> November, photographed (B. Harper, M. Harper, I. A. Roberts, R. K. Norman)
- 2014** Willop Basin, one briefly then flew east, 15<sup>th</sup> March (I. A. Roberts)
- 2014** Willop Basin, five, 1<sup>st</sup> December, photographed (I. A. Roberts)
- 2015** Nickolls Quarry, three, 9<sup>th</sup> April (I. A. Roberts)
- 2016** Samphire Hoe, eight flew east, 13<sup>th</sup> March (per D. E. Smith)
- 2016** Folkestone Warren, one flew west, 17<sup>th</sup> July (R. Lee, B. Harper, I. A. Roberts)
- 2017** Mill Point, four flew east, 24<sup>th</sup> March (I. A. Roberts)
- 2018** Samphire Hoe, ten flew east, 24<sup>th</sup> March (I. A. Roberts)
- 2018** Samphire Hoe, c.150 flew west, 8<sup>th</sup> May (I. A. Roberts)
- 2020** Mill Point, four flew east, 6<sup>th</sup> May (I. A. Roberts)



Black-tailed Godwits at the Willop Basin (Ian Roberts)

