

Black-tailed Godwit

Limosa limosa

Category A

Rare passage migrant

32 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 19th 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 31st May. Another was seen in 1984 and since then there has been a series of 29 records since 1990, including four in both 2000 and 2004, as shown in figure 1.

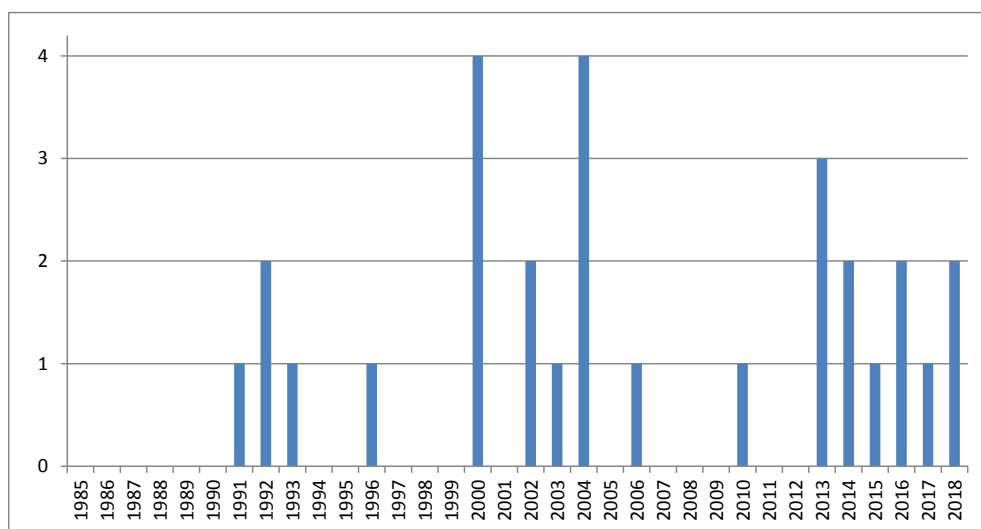


Figure 1: Black-tailed Godwit records at Folkestone and Hythe

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

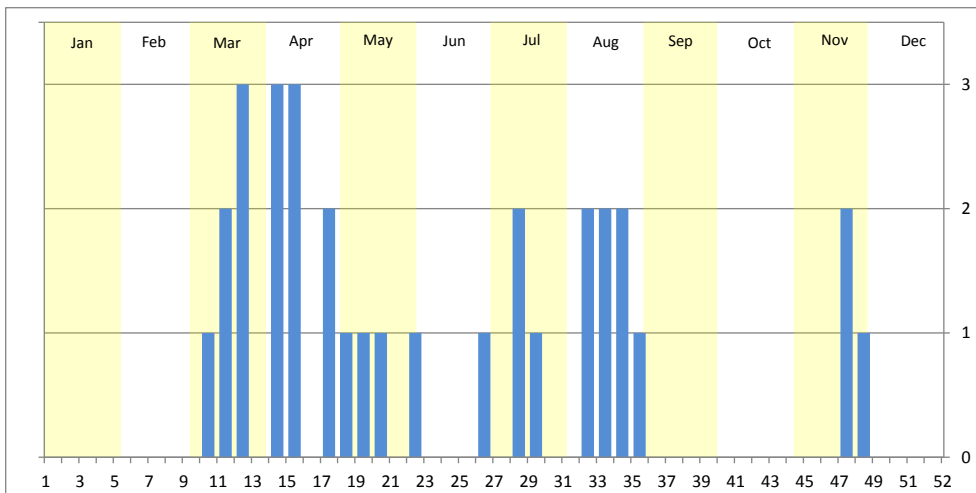


Figure 2: Black-tailed Godwit records at Folkestone and Hythe by week

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

The full list of records is as follows:

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



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

