

Dipper

Cinclus cinclus

Category A

Very rare vagrant.

5 records

The race *gularis* breeds in northern and western Britain and undertakes only limited movements, vacating mountain streams in favour of lower reaches, and continuing to coasts and estuaries in severe weather. The nominate form breeds in Fenno-Scandia and is subject to medium or long-distance partial migration, with some birds staying in breeding areas as long as water continues to flow, others moving into Denmark, southern Sweden and the Baltic states, and a very small number occasionally crossing the North Sea to the British east coast. The form *aquaticus* occurs in middle and southern Europe and is not known to have occurred in Britain (Snow & Perrins, 1998).

It is a rare vagrant to Kent, with 30 Kent records to end of 2019 (KOS, 2021). There were four records in the county in both the 1980s and 1990s, but one at Hollingbourne, near Maidstone in December 2018 was the first since 1999. The first eleven were considered to be of the British *gularis* whilst all records since 1950 were thought to have been of the Black-bellied form *cinclus* or were of undetermined race.

As BBRC (2021) warn, sub-specific identification is less than straightforward, especially as the nominate form may have some restricted chestnut on the belly and may therefore approach the appearance of *gularis* or *aquaticus*, whilst some *gularis* may potentially lack any chestnut, therefore resembling nominate *cinclus*. BBRC currently “take the pragmatic view that birds with little or no chestnut on the belly in eastern Britain (particularly in ... lowland south-east England away from the range of *gularis*) are likely to be nominate *cinclus*.”

Ticehurst (1909) recorded that “in the Folkestone Museum there is a Dipper shot many years ago on the Royal Military Canal at Hythe, part of the collection of the late Major H. W. Deedes, of Saltwood Castle”. There was another in the Tournay collection at Hythe, which may have been collected locally, though Ticehurst considered this “doubtfully acceptable” even as a Kentish specimen. Ticehurst considered the specimens which he examined to be of the British race. Ticehurst places in square brackets a record of a specimen of the nominate race said to have been shot at Folkestone, and in the museum of that town, as he was unable to confirm it.

The first dated record refers to one seen on the Hythe Canal by William Nevin from the 22nd February to the 3rd March 1955, which was also the first record that was considered to be confirmed as being of the nominate form in the county.

The second dated record was found by D E Chittenden at Sandling Park on the 20th January 1974 and the third related to a long-staying, although elusive, bird found by C. Lock and seen intermittently in the Brockhill Country Park area between the 11th January and 31st March 1989. The most recent was sighted by Steve Tomlinson at Beachborough Lakes on the 29th November 2016.

The records by year are shown in figure 1.



Figure 1: Dipper records at Folkestone and Hythe since 1985

The records by week are given in figure 2

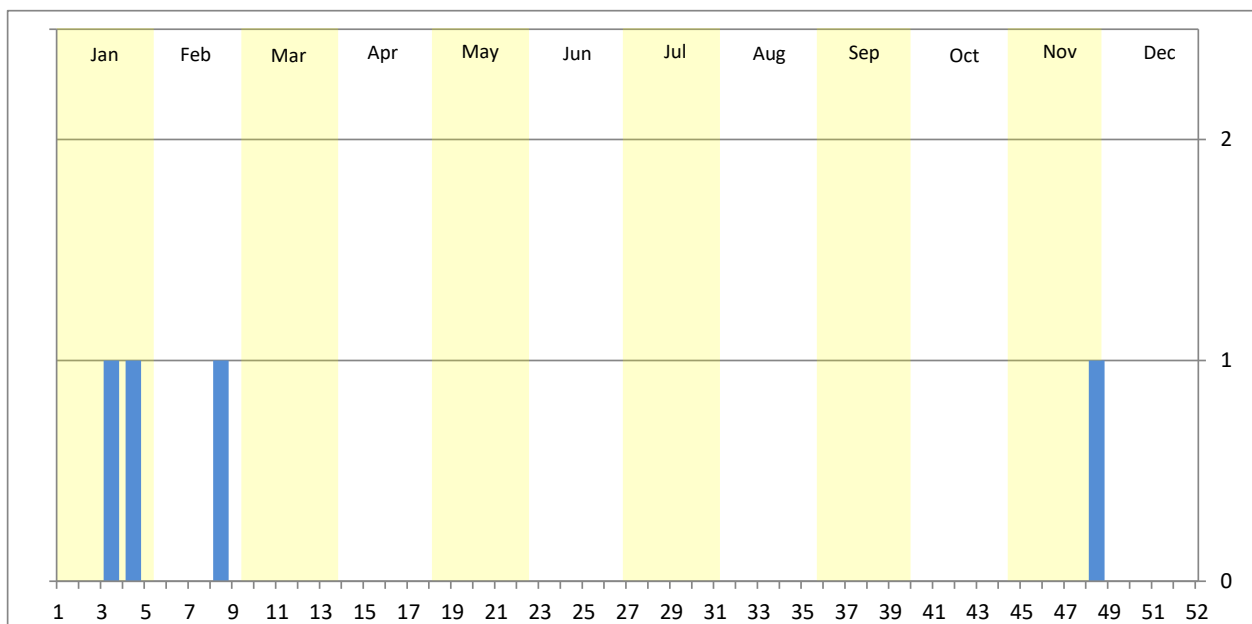


Figure 2: Dipper records at Folkestone and Hythe by week

Figure 3 shows the distribution of records by tetrad.



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

The full list of dated records is as follows:

1955 Hythe Canal, one, 22nd February to 3rd March (W. S. Nevin)

1974 Sandling Park, one, 20th January (D. E. Chittenden)

1989 Brockhill Country Park, one, 25th January to 31st March (C. Lock, J. P. Siddle *et al*)

2016 Beachborough Lakes, one, 29th November (S. Tomlinson)

References

BBRC, no date. *Subspecies Information*. <https://www.bbrc.org.uk/subspecies-information/waxwings-to-buntings> (accessed 2021)

Kent Bird Reports. Kent Ornithological Society

KOS Kent list: <https://kentos.org.uk/kent-list> (accessed 2021)

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Acknowledgements

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