

Dipper

Cinclus cinclus

Category A

Very rare vagrant.

5 records,
5 birds

World/British distribution (Snow & Perrins 1998):

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.

Kent status (KOS 2022):

It is a rare vagrant to Kent.

British (BBRC) records to end 2020: 273 records of *C. c. cinclus*

Kent (KOS) records to end 2020: 30

Ticehurst (1909) concluded that there was “really ... no evidence at all that the Dipper was ever more than one of the rarest of the stragglers to our county”. He was able to document nine “sufficiently authenticated” records in Kent, which included one “on loan at the Folkestone Museum from the collection of the late Major H. W. Deedes, of Saltwood Castle ... that was shot many years ago on the Royal Military Canal at Hythe”.

Ticehurst also mentioned one that was in the Tournay collection at Hythe that may have been collected locally but was lacking details (that collection was known to contain many specimens that were collected elsewhere). In square brackets he made note that “Dowker stated [in his “A Tabulated List and Description of the Birds of East Kent, with Anecdotes and an Account of Their Haunts” (1899), p.26] on Gordon’s [the Dover taxidermist] authority that a specimen of the Northern Dipper (*Cinclus cinclus cinclus*) was shot at Folkestone and was in the museum there”. However, Ticehurst noted that “there are several specimens of the common British Dipper there, but I have been unable to find any trace of this bird”. Harrison (1953) added one further county record.

Ticehurst considered those specimens that he examined to have been of the British form *C. c. gularis*, whereas the seven records included within Taylor *et al.* (1981), having occurred in their review period (1952-76), were all considered to have been of the nominate continental form *C. c. cinclus*. These included the first dated local records: one found on the canal at Hythe by William Nevin on the 22nd February 1955 (which lingered until the 3rd March and was the first confirmed occurrence of the nominate form in the county) and one found by D. E. Chittenden at Sandling Park on the 20th January 1974.

The BBRC (2021) warned that 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*.”

There have been ten subsequent Kent records (KOS no date), two of which occurred locally: a long-staying, although elusive, individual found by C. Lock in the Brockhill Country Park area on the 11th January 1989 (which was seen intermittently until the 31st March) and one seen by Steve Tomlinson at Beachborough Lakes on the 29th November 2016. Both were considered to have been of the nominate form.

The records by year are shown in figure 1.

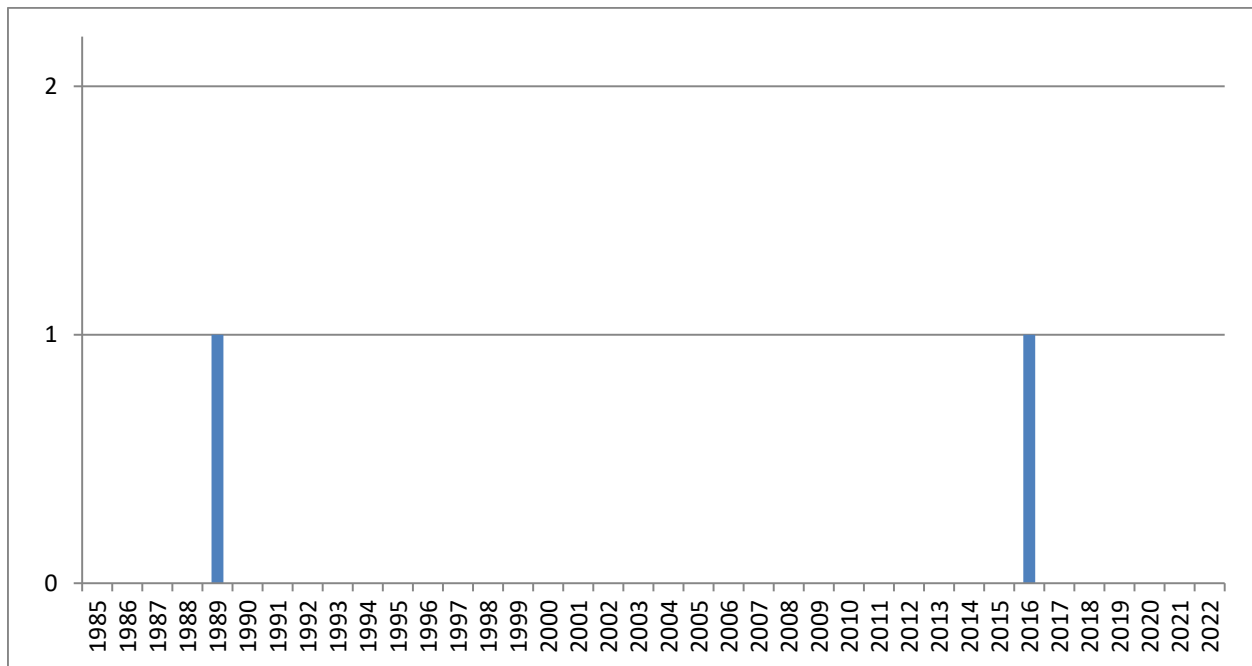


Figure 1: Dipper records at Folkestone and Hythe since 1985

The records by week are given in figure 2.

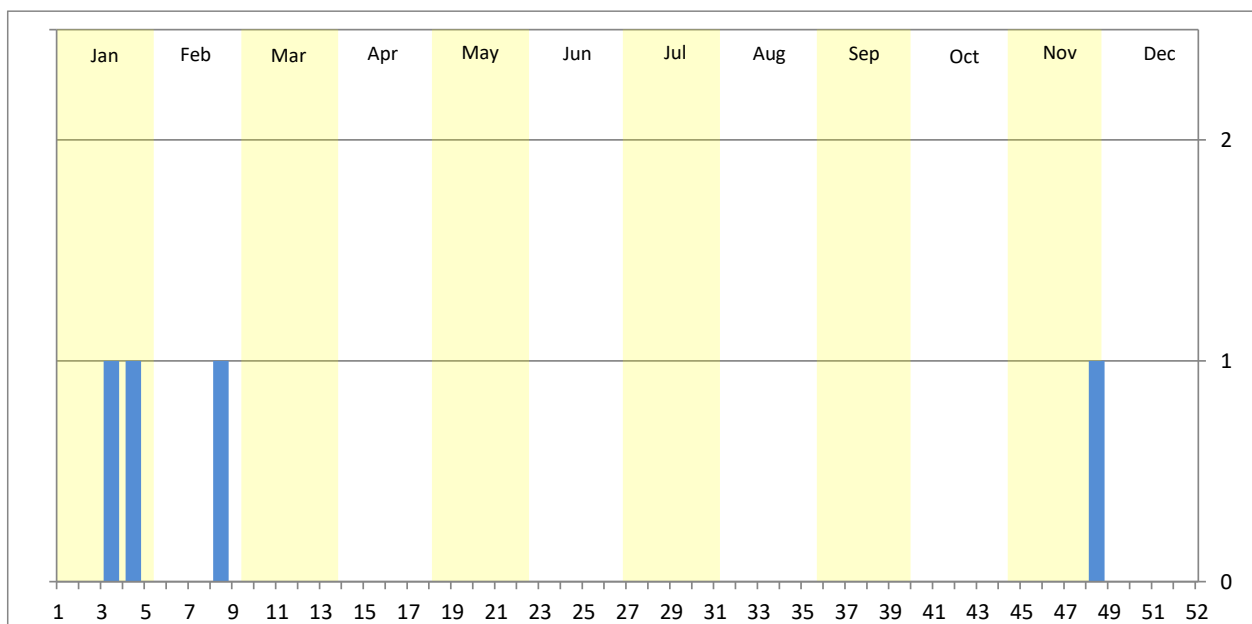


Figure 2: Species records at Folkestone and Hythe by week

Figure 3 shows the location of records by tetrad.



Figure 3: Distribution of all Species 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)

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Acknowledgements

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