

Black Stork

Ciconia nigra

Category A

Very rare vagrant.

5 records,
5 birds

World/British distribution (Snow & Perrins 1998):

Breeds in central Iberia and eastern France through central Europe and forested temperate regions of Russia to Siberia. Most are migratory, wintering in tropical Africa and south and south-east Asia.

Kent status (KOS 2022):

It is a rare vagrant to the county.

British (BBRC) records to end 2020: 289

Kent (KOS) records to end 2020: 27



Black Stork at Sellindge (Derek Smith)

Ticehurst (1909) gave details of four records in Kent in the nineteenth century, whilst Taylor *et al.* (1981) stated that apart from a probable escape in 1957, the only more recent county record was of one seen on Romney Marsh in autumn 1958. It remained an exceptional rarity in Kent until the 1980s, when singles were noted in 1982, 1983 and 1988, with two in 1989. Following further sightings in 1991 (2) and 1993, the first area record occurred in 1995, when John van der Dol watched one arriving in off the sea at Folkestone on the 22nd June.

After several more were found in the county in the 2000s, the next local record involved one seen by Sean McMinn as it flew north-east over Hythe on the 8th June 2011, whilst a first-summer bird was seen by Paul Howe, Nigel Webster and Sean McMinn as it passed over Saltwood and then Hythe on the 7th August, before later being seen at Dungeness.

Most recently Derek Smith saw an adult at Sellindge on the 5th and 6th June 2021, with it presumably having roosted in the area overnight (and presumed to have been the same as one seen over St. Margaret's Bay and South Foreland on the 3rd June), and later the same year Ian Roberts saw a first-summer bird flying north over Crete Road East on the 15th July, with what was presumed to be the same wandering individual flying east over Folkestone two days after (and presumed to have been the same as one seen at Stodmarsh and later in Surrey and then in Cornwall in May, at Worth Marshes on the 10th July and flying west over South Foreland earlier on the 15th July, at in Sussex later that day, before being seen again locally on the 17th July) (BBRC, 2022).



Black Stork at Crete Road East (Ian Roberts)

Nationally, the trend is very similar. It was a very rare bird during the 1950s and 1960s, with a total of just four records, but there were 16 in the 1970s and 28 in the 1980s. A further 200 were logged between 1990 and 2016, at an average of 7.4 per annum, with totals of 18 recorded in both 2013 and 2015.

However, there may be signs of a subsequent decrease, with an average of 3.6 national records per annum since (BBRC no date). In the Kent Bird Report for 2016 it was noted that the “Black Stork has become almost an annual visitor, this is the twelfth record this century” (KOS 2018), but there were no further sightings until the two that were seen locally in 2021 (KOS no date).

The records by year are shown in figure 1.

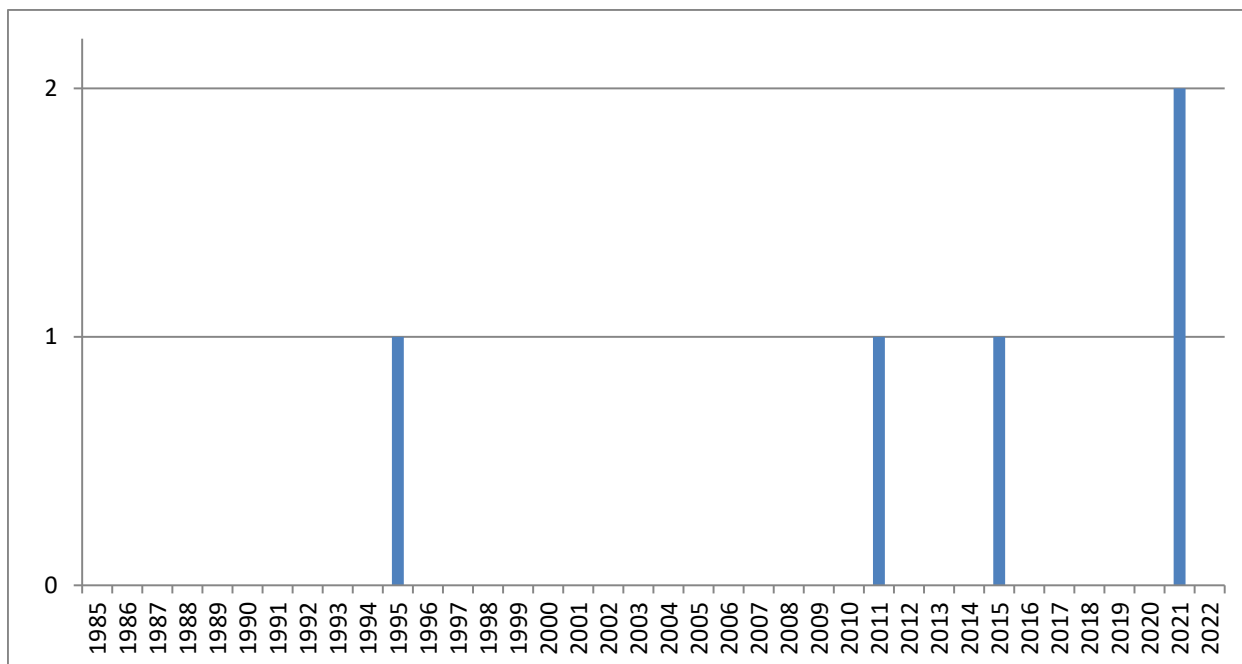


Figure 1: Black Stork records at Folkestone and Hythe

In Kent there have been sightings in all months from April to October, with a peak in May and June. Locally three have been seen in June, with singles in July and in August, as shown by figure 2.

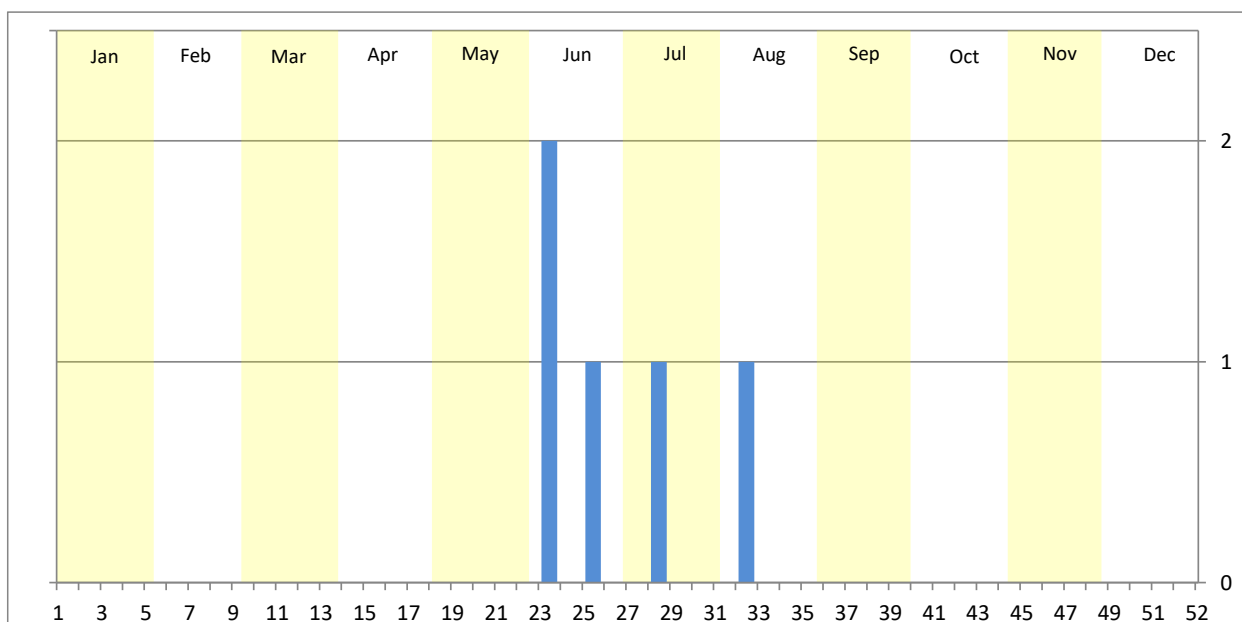


Figure 2: Species records at Folkestone and Hythe by week

Figure 3 shows the location of records by tetrad.



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



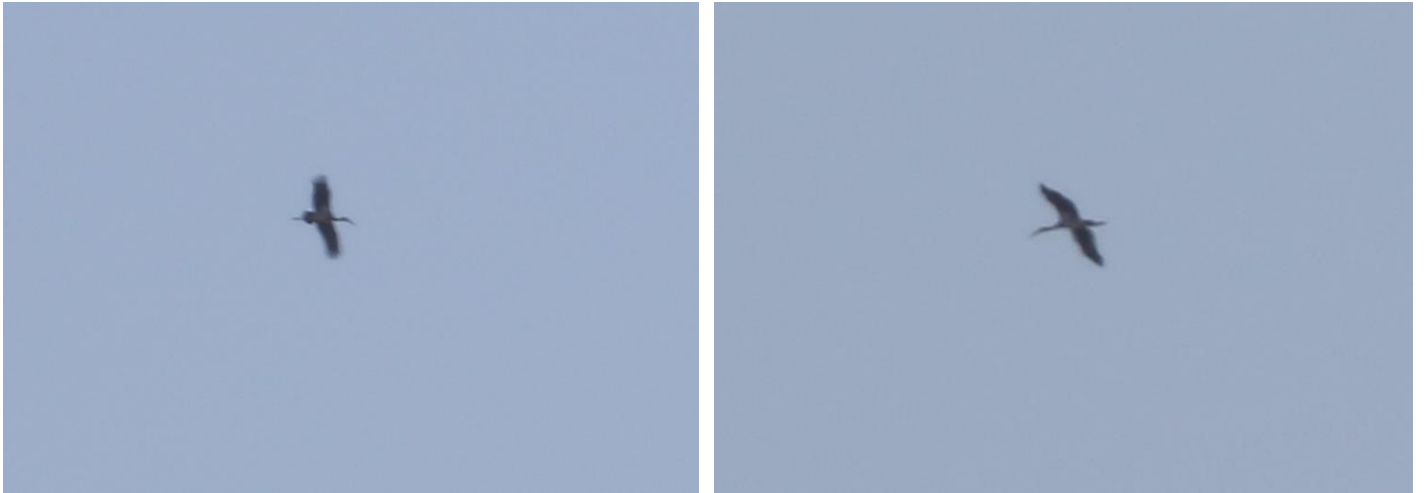
Black Stork at Sellindge (Derek Smith)

The full list of records is as follows:

- 1995** Folkestone, one flew in off the sea, 22nd June (J. H. van der Dol)
- 2011** Hythe, one flew north-east, 8th June (S. McMinn)
- 2015** Saltwood and Hythe, first-summer (2CY) flew west, 7th August (P. Howe, S. McMinn, N. Webster), later seen and photographed at Dungeness
- 2021** Sellindge, adult (2+CY), 5th to 6th June, when flew high north-east, photographed (D. Smith), presumed to be the same seen at St. Margaret's Bay and South Foreland on the 3rd June

2021 Crete Road East, first-summer (2CY) flew north, 15th July, photographed (I. A. Roberts), having earlier that day been seen flying west over South Foreland and later in Sussex (also presumed to be the same as one seen in Kent, Surrey and Cornwall in May)

2021 Folkestone, first-summer (2CY) flew east, 17th July (I. A. Roberts), presumed same as above



Black Stork at Crete Road East (Ian Roberts)



Black Stork at Dungeness (Martin Casemore), the same bird earlier seen at Hythe

References

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Acknowledgements

The tetrad map images were produced from the Ordnance Survey [Get-a-map service](#) and are reproduced with kind permission of [Ordnance Survey](#).

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