

Lesser Crested Tern

Thalasseus bengalensis

Category A

Very rare vagrant.

1 record

Breeds in Libya, the Red Sea area south to Somalia, the Persian Gulf east to India, Madagascar, the Maldive Islands, New Guinea and Australia. One or two pairs have bred in some years in Spain and Italy. Libyan birds pass through the Straits of Gibraltar to winter in West Africa. Red Sea and Persian Gulf populations disperse south along African coast and east towards India (Snow & Perrins, 1998).

There had been nine British records up to the end of 2019, including a female which returned to the Farne Islands, Northumberland each summer between 1984 and 1997, but none since 2005 (BBRC, 2021).

The only area record involved one seen by Rob Lee at Copt Point on the 17th September 1984. It was originally submitted as a Royal Tern, but only accepted as a Royal or Lesser Crested Tern (KOS, 2021). However the observer has had subsequent field experience of Royal Tern and is certain of the identification as Lesser Crested Tern.

It seems highly probable that this sighting relates to the long-staying Northumberland individual that was also seen in Kent on two subsequent occasions: flying east past Dungeness on the 6th May 1989 and at Pegwell Bay on 22nd August 1996.

The record by week is given in figure 1

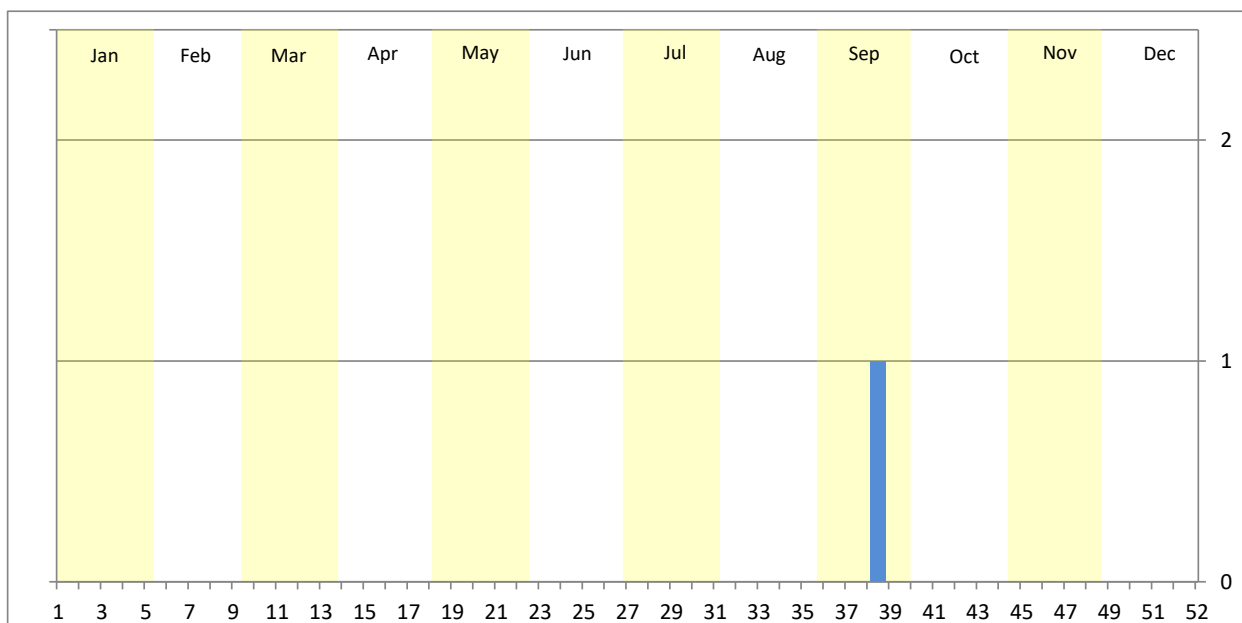


Figure 1: Lesser Crested Tern records at Folkestone and Hythe by week

Figure 2 shows the distribution of records by tetrad.



Figure 2: Distribution of all Lesser Crested Tern records at Folkestone and Hythe by tetrad

Confirmation of the only area record is as follows:

1984 Copt Point, one, 17th September (R. Lee)

References

BBRC statistics: <https://www.bbrc.org.uk/main-information/statistics> (accessed 2021)

Kent Bird Reports. Kent Ornithological Society

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

Snow, D. & Perrins, C.M., 1998. *The Birds of the Western Palearctic*. Oxford University Press.

Acknowledgements

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