

# Goosander

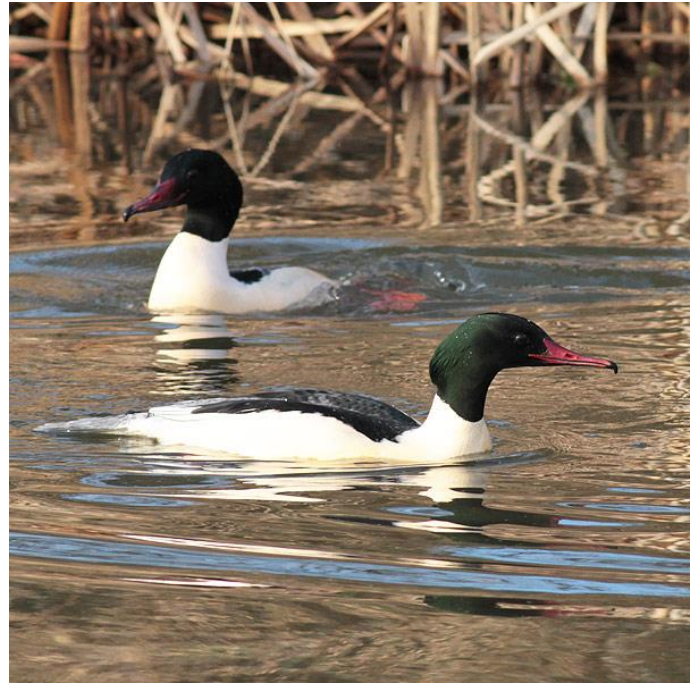
*Mergus merganser*

Category A

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.

*World/British distribution (Snow & Perrins 1998; Balmer et al. 2013):*

Breeds across much of northern Europe, Asia and North America. British breeders are mostly resident, moving small distances to lakes and sheltered estuaries. Those breeding in central and northern Scandinavia, Finland, the Baltic States and Russia migrate west to the Baltic and beyond to the Netherlands and Britain. There has been a significant range expansion within Britain in recent times: it has almost completely colonised Wales over the last 40 years, having also moved into south-west England and continues to spread southward from northern England, with a 112% increase in occupied tetrads across the country and an 87% increase in population trend.



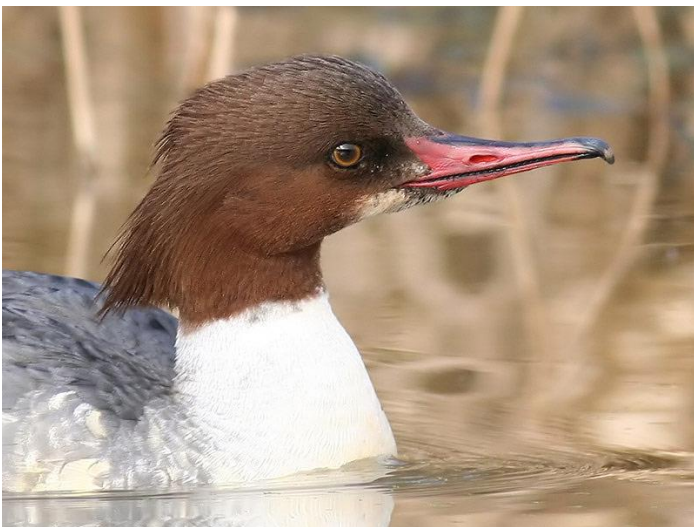
Goosanders at Seabrook (Brian Harper)

*Kent status (KOS 2021):*

It is an uncommon but regular passage migrant and winter visitor to Kent, with occasional cold weather influxes.

The Goosander was not included in Knight and Tolputt's "List of birds observed in Folkestone and its immediate neighbourhood" (1871) and Ticehurst (1909) considered it to be "only an irregular winter visitor to the estuaries, fleets and fresh-water lakes of Kent, and is of less frequent occurrence even than the Smew, the records being mostly of single birds or pairs at long intervals", with only "four of five specimens having been obtained" in Romney Marsh. Harrison (1953) noted an increase in its occurrence, stating that it had become "fairly regular in its incidence in the county", and the first local records followed soon after, when Geoffrey Manser saw one at Hythe on the 6<sup>th</sup> February 1954 and Roger Norman saw a drake at Nickolls Quarry in December of the same year. Roger also reported that a drake was shot at Nickolls Quarry in the 1955/56 winter (Norman 2007).

In cold weather on the 3<sup>rd</sup> February 1963, six were reported at Hythe and appear in the Kent Bird Report for that year (KOS, 1964). Neil Frampton noted one at Palmarsh in the early 1980s (no date provided) and nine drakes were reported there on the 19<sup>th</sup> January 1985, with one at Copt Point on the 23<sup>rd</sup> January of the same year.



Goosander at Seabrook (Brian Harper)



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There have been records in most years since 1991 and in all but one year since 2007, with a notable influx in 2010, as shown by figure 1. There had been a total of 90 area records (involving a total of 206 birds) to the end of 2022.

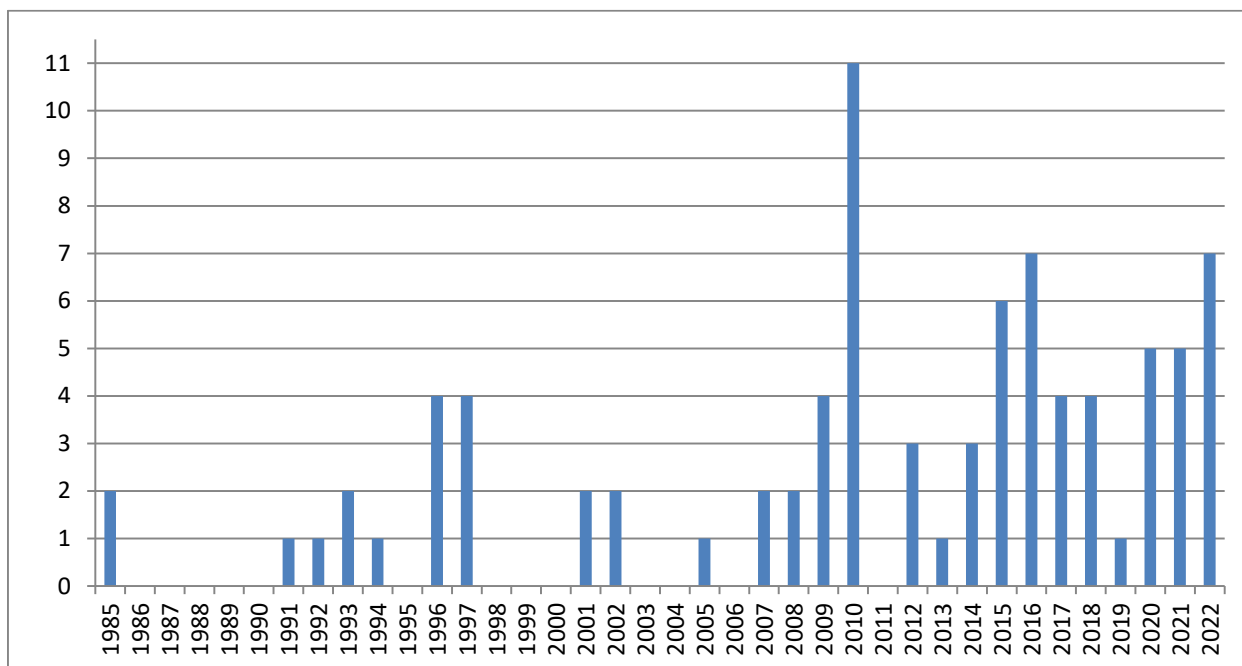


Figure 1: Goosander records at Folkestone and Hythe since 1985



Goosander at Seabrook (Brian Harper)

The records by week are given in figure 2. Apart from a recent record on the 18<sup>th</sup> October 2022 (week 42), all autumn/winter records have occurred between the 7<sup>th</sup> November (week 45) and the 27<sup>th</sup> February (week 9) and there have been seven spring records in March (2015, 2018, 2019 and 2021 (two)) and April (1994 and 2014). Winter arrivals are often, but not always, associated with cold weather.

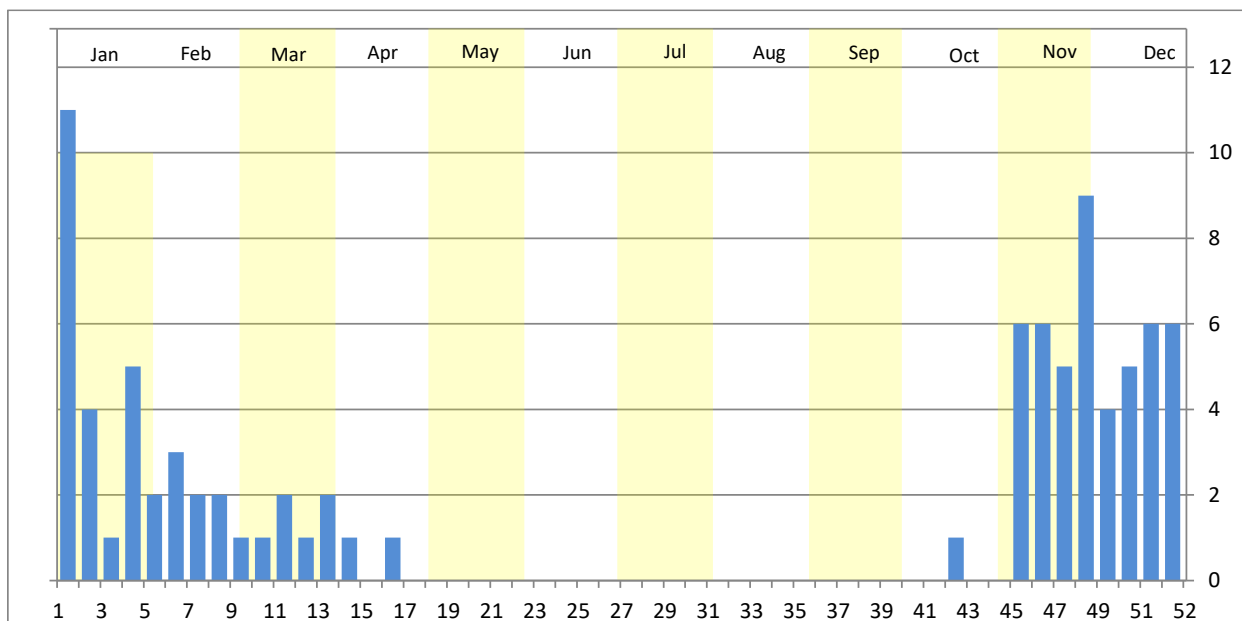


Figure 2: Goosander records at Folkestone and Hythe by week

### Overall distribution

Figure 3 shows the distribution of all records of Goosander by tetrad, with records in 16 tetrads (52%).

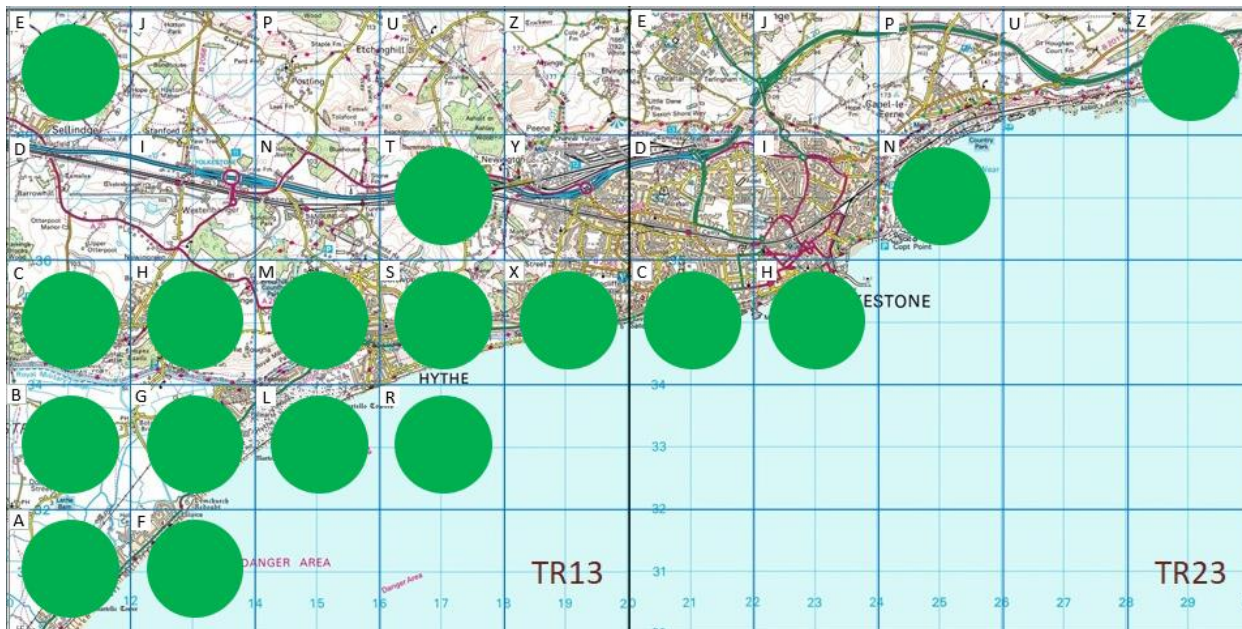


Figure 3: Distribution of all Goosander records at Folkestone and Hythe by tetrad

The majority of records have been seen along the Royal Military Canal between the Aldergate Bridge and Seabrook (20), along the canal cutting between West Hythe dam and the sea (17) or at Nickolls Quarry (17), with most of the others from the coast, with six at Samphire Hoe, four at Folkestone Beach/Mill Point, three at Copt Point and 15 in Hythe Bay, between the Dymchurch Redoubt and Sandgate. There have been inland records from Beachborough Lakes (in December 2015 and March 2019), Paraker Wood (a pair seen flying over on the 30<sup>th</sup> November 2008) and Cock Ash Lake (two in November 2022).

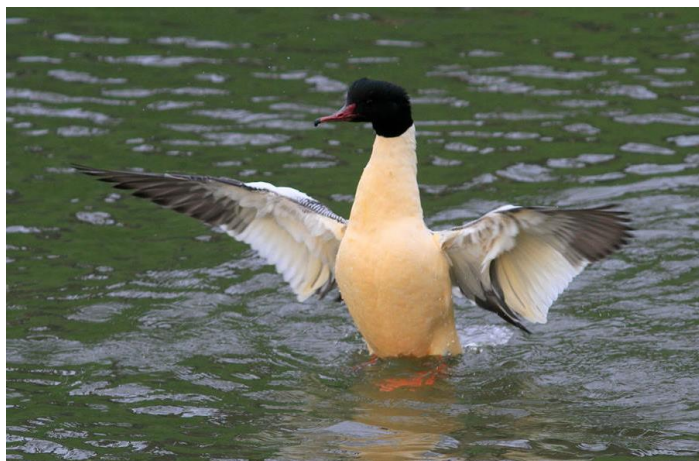
The full list of records is as follows:

- 1954** Hythe, one, 6<sup>th</sup> February (G. E. Manser)  
**1954** Nickolls Quarry, drake, December (per R. K. Norman)  
**1955** Nickolls Quarry, drake shot, winter 1955/56  
**1963** Hythe, six, 3<sup>rd</sup> February (per Kent Bird Report)  
**1980s** Palmarsh, immature/female, in period 1980-85 no date given (N. C. Frampton)  
**1985** Palmarsh, nine drakes, 19<sup>th</sup> January (per Kent Bird Report)  
**1985** Copt Point, one, 23<sup>rd</sup> January (per Kent Bird Report)  
**1991** Nickolls Quarry, drake, 17<sup>th</sup> December (R. K. Norman)  
**1992** Nickolls Quarry, immature/female, 29<sup>th</sup> December (R. K. Norman)  
**1993** Botolph's Bridge, immature drake, 2<sup>nd</sup> January (R. K. Norman)  
**1993** Nickolls Quarry, drake, 29<sup>th</sup> December (R. K. Norman)  
**1994** Copt Point, three flew east, 17<sup>th</sup> April (D. A. Gibson)  
**1996** Nickolls Quarry, two, 27<sup>th</sup> January (R. K. Norman)  
**1996** Sandgate, immature/female on sea, 11<sup>th</sup> February (J. C. Martin)  
**1996** Nickolls Quarry, two, 15<sup>th</sup> February, one remaining until 22<sup>nd</sup> February (R. K. Norman)  
**1996** Nickolls Quarry, two drakes and one female, 15<sup>th</sup> December, female to 22<sup>nd</sup> December (R. K. Norman)  
**1997** Nickolls Quarry, pair, 1<sup>st</sup> January (R. K. Norman)  
**1997** Seabrook, immature/female on canal, 3<sup>rd</sup> January (I. A. Roberts)  
**1997** Hythe, two immature/females, 4<sup>th</sup> January to 2<sup>nd</sup> February, photographed (P. Howe, I. A. Roberts *et al*)  
**1997** Mill Point, immature/female flew east, 5<sup>th</sup> January (I. A. Roberts)  
**2001** Copt Point, two flew east, 13<sup>th</sup> November (I. A. Roberts)  
**2001** Nickolls Quarry, immature/female, 14<sup>th</sup> December (R. K. Norman, I. A. Roberts)  
**2002** Nickolls Quarry, drake, 27<sup>th</sup> January (I. A. Roberts)  
**2002** Nickolls Quarry, three immature/females, 7<sup>th</sup> December (R. K. Norman, I. A. Roberts)  
**2005** Nickolls Quarry, immature/female, 4<sup>th</sup> December (R. K. Norman)  
**2007** Nickolls Quarry, immature/female, 20<sup>th</sup> December (R. K. Norman)  
**2007** Samphire Hoe, drake flew east, 30<sup>th</sup> December (Per D. E. Smith)  
**2008** Paraker Wood, pair flew north-west, 30<sup>th</sup> November (I. A. Roberts)  
**2008** Palmarsh, immature/female, "regularly in late December", presumed same at Nickolls Quarry, 6<sup>th</sup> January 2009 (B. Harper)  
**2009** Seabrook, immature/female on canal, 6<sup>th</sup> January to 2<sup>nd</sup> February, photographed (B. Harper, I. A. Roberts *et al*)  
**2009** Botolph's Bridge, three, 11<sup>th</sup> January (B. Harper)  
**2009** Seabrook, drake on canal, 28<sup>th</sup> December (B. Harper)  
**2009** Nickolls Quarry, two immature/female, 28<sup>th</sup> December, photographed (B. Harper)  
**2010** Hythe, drake on canal, 2<sup>nd</sup> January (I. A. Roberts)  
**2010** Botolph's Bridge, up to two immature/female, 2<sup>nd</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> January (B. Harper, I. A. Roberts)  
**2010** Botolph's Bridge, flock of 12 flew over, 20<sup>th</sup> February, photographed (B. Harper)  
**2010** Hythe, one on canal, 14<sup>th</sup> November (B. Harper)  
**2010** Hythe, three immature/females flew east at sea, 27<sup>th</sup> November (I. A. Roberts)  
**2010** Hythe, immature/female on the sea, 27<sup>th</sup> November (I. A. Roberts)  
**2010** Sandgate, five on the sea, 28<sup>th</sup> November (I. A. Roberts)  
**2010** Botolph's Bridge, one, 29<sup>th</sup> November (B. Harper)  
**2010** Seabrook, flock of 20 on the sea (inc. several drakes), 1<sup>st</sup> December (I. A. Roberts)  
**2010** Samphire Hoe, three flew east, 2<sup>nd</sup> December (M. Kennett)  
**2010** Botolph's Bridge, two pairs, 18<sup>th</sup> December, with up to three to 27<sup>th</sup> December, and one to 1<sup>st</sup> January 2011, presumed one of same at Nickolls Quarry on 30<sup>th</sup> December (B. Harper)  
**2012** Seabrook, three drakes on canal and sea, 7<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> January, with two to 11<sup>th</sup> January and one to 14<sup>th</sup> January, photographed (B. Harper, I. A. Roberts), presumed one of same at Hythe on 13<sup>th</sup> January (P. Holt)  
**2012** Hythe, pair flew west, 3<sup>rd</sup> February (I. A. Roberts)  
**2012** Botolph's Bridge, up to three (two drakes), 7<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> February, presumed same singles at Nickolls Quarry on 8<sup>th</sup> February and West Hythe on 9<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> February (B. Harper, R. K. Norman, I. A. Roberts)  
**2013** Botolph's Bridge, one, 30<sup>th</sup> November to 1<sup>st</sup> December (B. Harper)  
**2014** Samphire Hoe, drake flew east, 2<sup>nd</sup> April (M. Kennett)  
**2014** Samphire Hoe, three, 17<sup>th</sup> November (per D. E. Smith)

- 2014** West Hythe, immature/female, 20<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> December, photographed (D. Wrathall, B. Harper, I. A. Roberts *et al*), presumed same Botolph's Bridge 30<sup>th</sup> December.
- 2015** West Hythe, immature/female, 14<sup>th</sup> January to 14<sup>th</sup> March, photographed (A. Chambers, I. A. Roberts, E. Preedy *et al*), possibly same as above, also seen east to Hythe Roughts
- 2015** Seabrook, four flew west, 14<sup>th</sup> February (B. Harper)
- 2015** Botolph's Bridge, drake flew over, 21<sup>st</sup> February (B. Harper)
- 2015** Botolph's Bridge, two immature/female on cut then flew east, 8<sup>th</sup> March (B. Harper, I. A. Roberts)
- 2015** Hythe, drake, 3<sup>rd</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> December, also on sea off Hythe, and presumed same at Seabrook on 4<sup>th</sup> December, photographed (N. Webster, P. Smith, I. A. Roberts)
- 2015** Beachborough Ponds, two drakes flew over, 13<sup>th</sup> December (I. A. Roberts)
- 2016** Battery Point, one flew west, 10<sup>th</sup> January (B. Harper)
- 2016** Princes Parade, immature/female flew west, 10<sup>th</sup> January (B. Harper, I. A. Roberts, N. Webster)
- 2016** Princes Parade, three flew east, 27<sup>th</sup> February (N. Webster)
- 2016** Mill Point, immature/female on the sea, 7<sup>th</sup> November (I. A. Roberts)
- 2016** Hythe, immature/female flew east, 7<sup>th</sup> November (I. A. Roberts)
- 2016** Fisherman's Beach (Hythe), immature/female on the sea, 13<sup>th</sup> November (I. A. Roberts)
- 2016** Botolph's Bridge, 19<sup>th</sup> November to 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2017, possibly same as above (B. Harper)
- 2017** Botolph's Bridge, three (one drake) flew south-west, 1<sup>st</sup> January (B. Harper, I. A. Roberts)
- 2017** Botolph's Bridge, two drakes flew over, 22<sup>nd</sup> January (B. Harper)
- 2017** Dymchurch Redoubt, three offshore, 25<sup>th</sup> November (B. Harper)
- 2017** Nickolls Quarry, one immature/female, 19<sup>th</sup> December (I. A. Roberts)
- 2018** Botolph's Bridge, pair, 18<sup>th</sup> March (B. Harper)
- 2018** Mill Point, one flew east, 21<sup>st</sup> November (B. Harper)
- 2018** West Hythe dam, two, 25<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> November, with at least one to 30<sup>th</sup> November when it was also seen at Donkey Street, photographed (B. Harper, I. A. Roberts)
- 2018** Samphire Hoe, two flew west, 29<sup>th</sup> November (S. Cutt)
- 2019** Beachborough Lakes, drake flew south, 27<sup>th</sup> March (S. Tomlinson)
- 2020** Nickolls Quarry, one, 31<sup>st</sup> March (B. Harper)
- 2020** West Hythe dam, two, 8<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> November, photographed (D. Wrathall, I. A. Roberts)
- 2020** Botolph's Bridge/West Hythe dam, three, 15<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> November (B. Harper, I. A. Roberts), possibly including some of above
- 2020** Aldergate Bridge, immature/female, 3<sup>rd</sup> December (D. Wrathall)
- 2020** Aldergate Bridge, male, 9<sup>th</sup> December (B. Harper, D. Wrathall)
- 2021** Folkestone Beach, male flew east, 16<sup>th</sup> March (I. A. Roberts)
- 2021** Nickolls Quarry, pair, 22<sup>nd</sup> March (B. Harper)
- 2021** Botolph's Bridge, immature/female, 11<sup>th</sup> November (I. A. Roberts)
- 2021** Samphire Hoe, five immature/female flew west, 14<sup>th</sup> December, photographed (P. Smith)
- 2021** West Hythe dam, five immature/female, 17<sup>th</sup> December (D. Wrathall), possibly same as above
- 2022** West Hythe dam, four immature/female, 3<sup>rd</sup> January (D. Wrathall)
- 2022** West Hythe dam, 11 flew over, 24<sup>th</sup> January (D. Wrathall)
- 2022** Sandgate, three immature/female flew east, 18<sup>th</sup> October (C. Powell)
- 2022** Cock Ash Lake, immature/female, 5<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> November, with two immature/female on 13<sup>th</sup> November (I. A. Roberts, E. Ranford, T. Poole)
- 2022** Botolph's Bridge/West Hythe area, immature/female, 10<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> November (I. A. Roberts, B. Harper, D. Wrathall)
- 2022** Willop Outfall, one flew west, 19<sup>th</sup> November (B. Harper)



Goosander at Hythe (Nigel Webster)



Goosander at Hythe (Phil Smith)



Goosander at Seabrook (Esther Preedy)



Goosander at West Hythe (Dylan Wrathall)



Goosanders at Botolph's Bridge (Brian Harper)

## References

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## ***Acknowledgements***

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