

Blue-cheeked Bee-eater

Merops persicus

Category A

Very rare vagrant.

1 record

World/British distribution (Snow & Perrins 1998):

The main breeding range within Western Palearctic is in Egypt, Turkey and Russia, with a small population in Morocco. Winters in Africa.

Kent status (KOS 2021):

Rare vagrant.

British (BBRC) records to end 2020: 11

Kent (KOS) records to end 2020: 2

There had been just four British records before 1989 when a small influx of three birds occurred: one in Cornwall on the 1st June, one in East Yorkshire and Lincolnshire over the 8th to 12th July and the only local record at Church Hougham on the 18th July (presumed to be the same as the Yorkshire bird). There have been a further four sightings in Britain, in 1997, 2009 (2) and 2019, bringing the national total to 11. Most records have been from counties along the south and east coast of England, although it has also reached Highland and Shetland (BBRC no date; Holt *et al.* 2021).

The local record was the first for Kent and there has been one subsequent record, at Bockhill on the 22nd July 2009 (KOS no date).

The bird at Church Hougham was found by Mark Kennett in the late afternoon and remained for about 90 minutes, allowing Ian Hodgson to also see it before it flew off to the north.

The record by year is shown in figure 1.

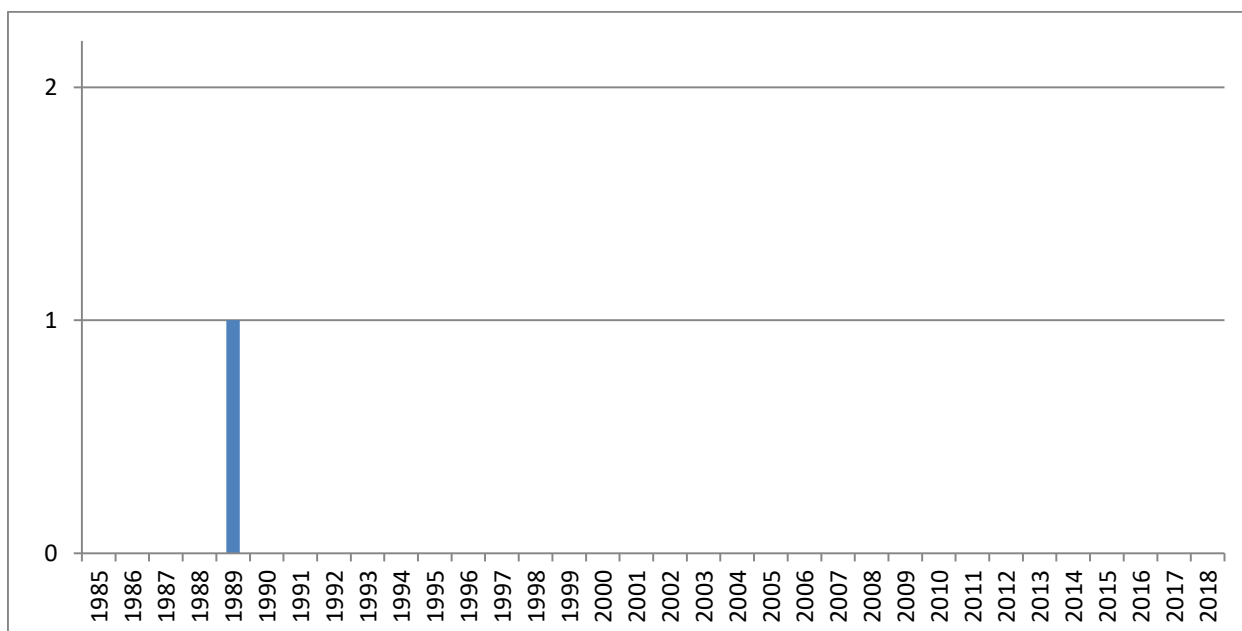


Figure 1: Blue-cheeked Bee-eater records at Folkestone and Hythe

The record by week is given in figure 2.

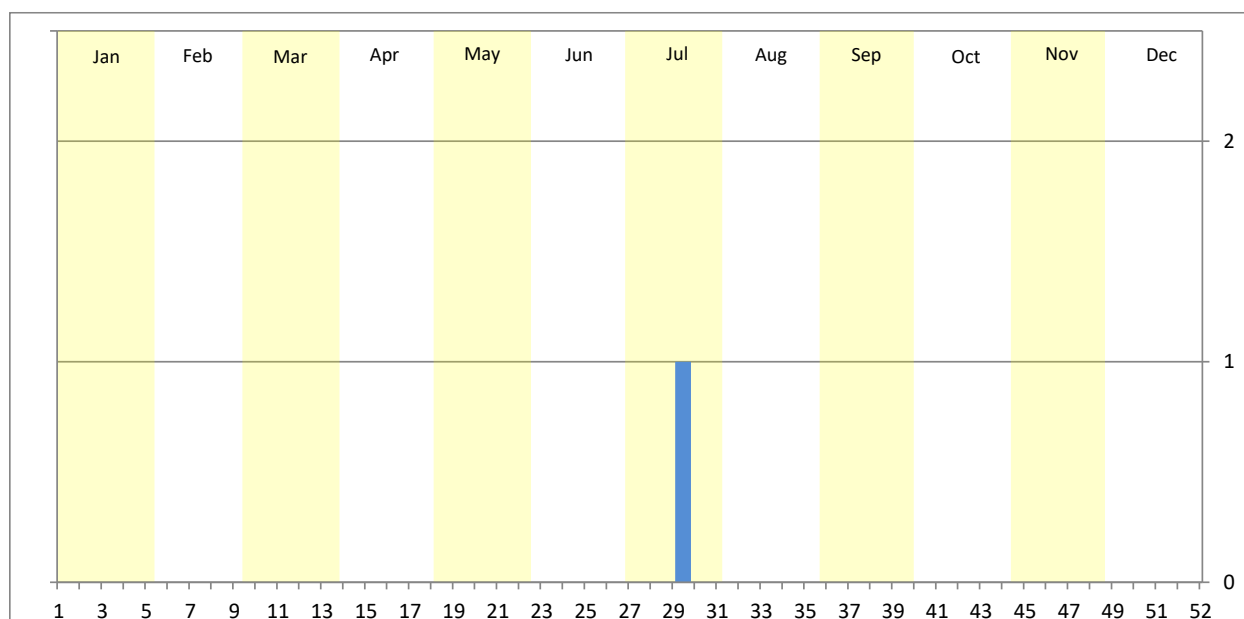


Figure 2: Blue-cheeked Bee-eater records at Folkestone and Hythe by week

Figure 3 shows the location of the record by tetrad.

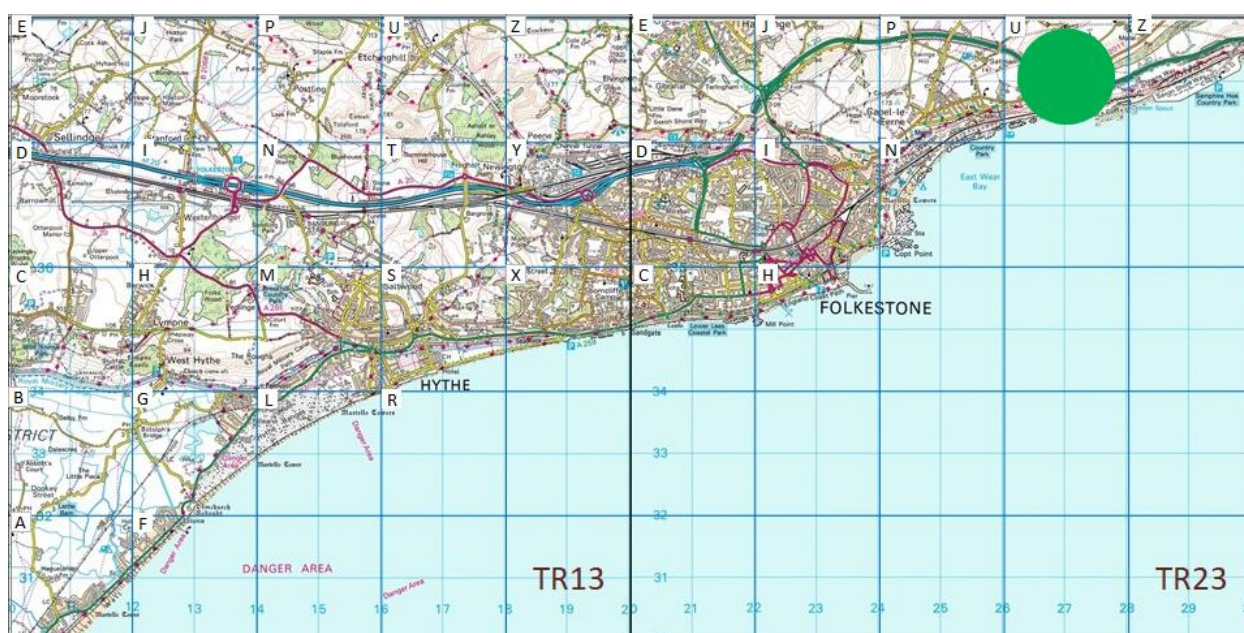


Figure 3: Distribution of all Blue-cheeked Bee-eater records at Folkestone and Hythe by tetrad

Confirmation of the only area record is as follows:

1989 Church Hougham, 18th July (M. D. Kennett, I. P. Hodgson).

An account of the first area record is given below.

References

British Birds Rarities Committee (BBRC). Statistics. www.bbrc.org.uk/main-information/statistics (accessed 2020).

Holt, C., French, P. & the Rarities Committee 2021. Report on rare birds in Great Britain in 2020. *British Birds* 114: 570-628.

Kent Ornithological Society (KOS). 1953-2021. *Kent Bird Reports*. Kent Ornithological Society.

Kent Ornithological Society (KOS). The Kent List. <https://kentos.org.uk/index.php/recording/the-kent-list> (accessed 2020).

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

Acknowledgements

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