

Blue-cheeked Bee-eater

Merops persicus

Category A

Very rare vagrant

1 record

The main breeding range within Western Palearctic is in Egypt, Turkey and Russia, with a small population in Morocco. Winters in Africa (Snow & Perrins, 1998).

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.

The record is shown in figure 1.

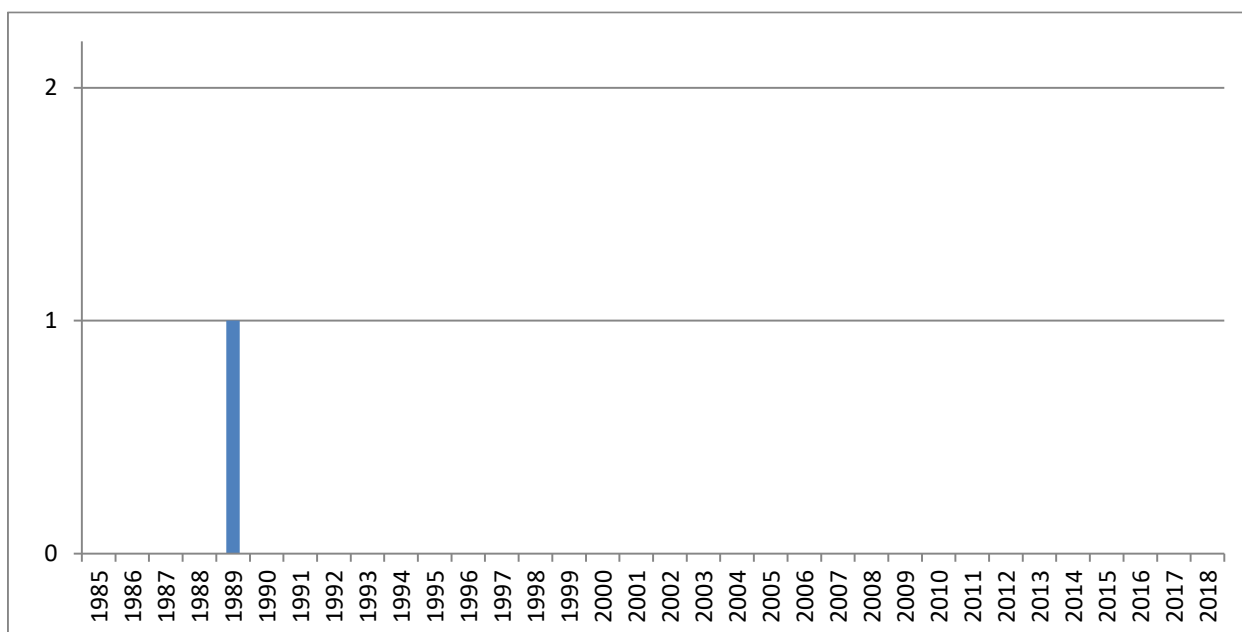


Figure 1: Blue-cheeked Bee-eater records at Folkestone and Hythe

The record by week is shown in figure 2 and figure 3 shows the location of the sighting (by tetrad).

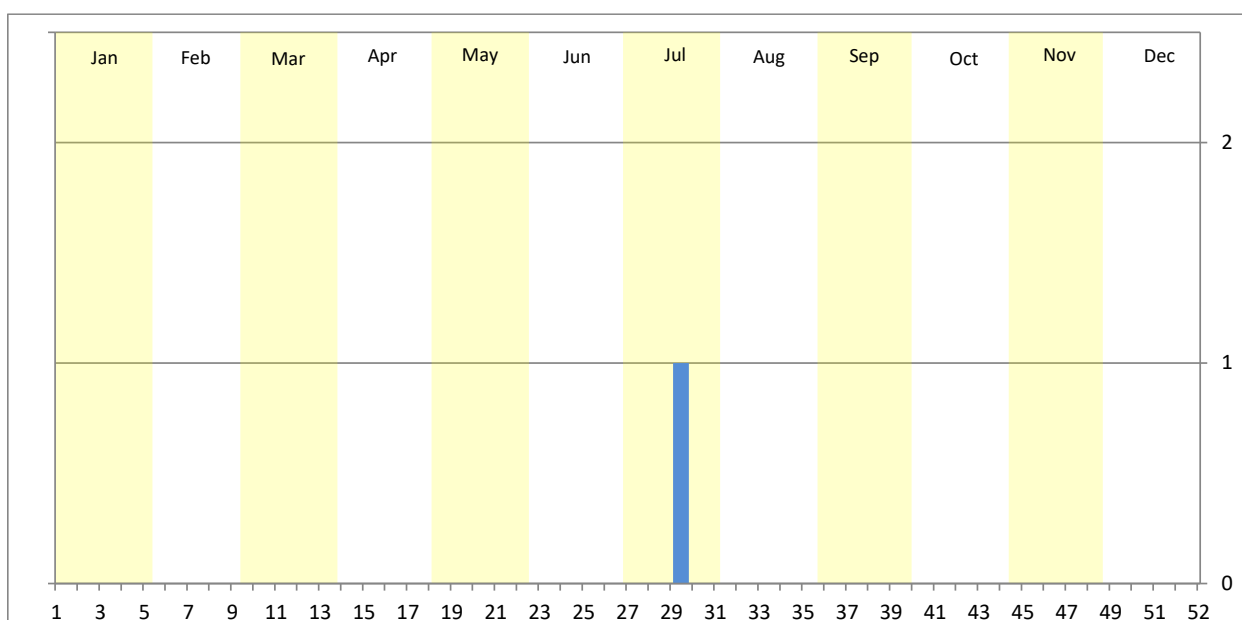


Figure 2: Blue-cheeked Bee-eater records at Folkestone and Hythe by week



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

The local record was the first for Kent and there has been one subsequent record, at Bockhill on the 22nd July 2009 (KOS, 2020).

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.

Confirmation of the single area record is as follows:

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

References

BBRC statistics: <https://www.bbrc.org.uk/main-information/statistics> (accessed 2020)

Kent Bird Reports. Kent Ornithological Society

KOS Kent list: <https://kentos.org.uk/kent-list> (accessed 2020)

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](#).