

Glossy Ibis

Plegadis falcinellus

Category A

Very rare vagrant.

3 records,
3 birds

World/British distribution (Snow & Perrins 1998):

Across Europe its range contracted greatly in the twentieth century due to habitat loss and locally to hunting, most notably in Spain, Greece and Turkey. Elsewhere it has a localised and patchy breeding range extending across Asia to Australia, and into Africa, and also inhabits the Atlantic and Caribbean regions of the Americas. In autumn it withdraws south of the breeding range with small numbers wintering in the Mediterranean basin west to Morocco but most European breeders are probably trans-Saharan migrants. It returns in spring and re-occupies colonies in April, with some overshooting to northern Europe.



Glossy Ibis at Sandgate (Chris Powell)

Kent status (KOS 2022):

It has become a regular vagrant to the county in recent years.

Kent (KOS) records to end 2020: 91

A breeding population in Spain has become established since 1996 and increased significantly since 2006, expanding into southern France. This population has driven a marked change in status in Britain, with a first significant influx in 2007, when over 20 were recorded, and similar arrivals on an annual basis since 2009. It is known from ringing data that some of these birds originated in Spain and this is considered likely to be the case for the majority (Rowlands 2013). Rowlands commented that the Glossy Ibis appeared to be following the footsteps of several egret species, with a significant range expansion resulting in a marked increase in sightings in Britain, and it seems very likely that the increase will be sustained.

It was removed from the list of species that the British Birds Rarities Committee considered to be national rarities to the end of 2012, when over 700 had been logged, including a total of 131 in 2012 (BBRC no date), whilst an average of 94 per annum have been noted nationally since (White & Kehoe, 2020). A pair built a nest in Lincolnshire in 2014 but no eggs were laid and it has been noted to have attempted to breed in Britain since (Holling *et al.* 2014).

In Kent there were five historical records cited by Harrison (1953), then one at Swanscombe in 1974 and a famous long-staying individual which frequented the Stour Valley from 1975, being joined by another in 1979, with both remaining until 1985 and one until 1993.

There were further records at Dungeness in 1986, Brookland in 1990, and Dungeness in 2001 and 2007 before an exceptional influx in 2009 which involved eight records of up to 14 birds. The following year produced an unprecedented flock of 18 at Dungeness and there have been almost annual sightings in the county since.

The first area recorded related to one seen flying north over Port Lympne by Pete Coleman on the 8th December 2014. Further sightings have comprised one seen in flight between the Aldergate Bridge and West Hythe dam by David Mansfield on the 12th March 2022 and one flying west over Sandgate by Chris Powell on the 1st October 2022.

The records by year are shown in figure 1.



Figure 1: Glossy Ibis records at Folkestone and Hythe

The records by week are given in figure 2.

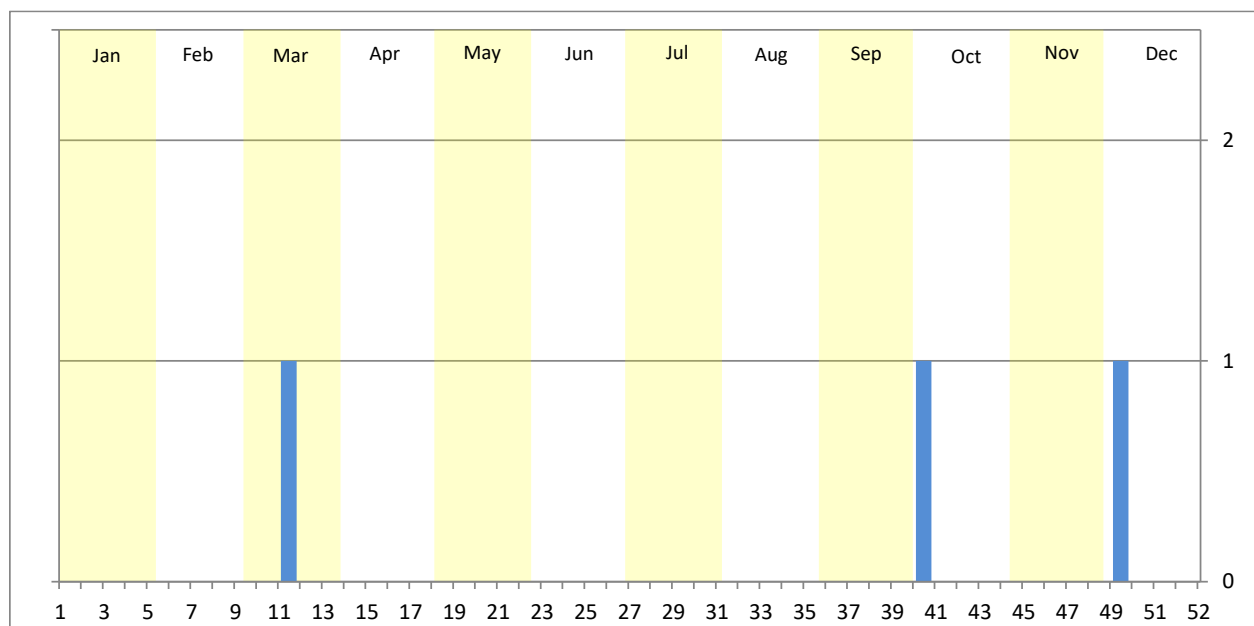


Figure 2: Glossy Ibis records at Folkestone and Hythe by week

Figure 3 shows the location of records by tetrad, with two having occurred in TR13 C and one in TR23 C.



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

The full list of records is as follows:

- 2014** Port Lympne, one flew north, 8th December (P. Coleman)
- 2022** West Hythe Dam, one flew over, 12th March (D. Mansfield)
- 2022** Sandgate, one flew west, 1st October, photographed (C. Powell)



Glossy Ibis at Sandgate (Chris Powell)

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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