

Spotted Crane

Porzana porzana Category A

Very rare vagrant, possibly regular in the past. 1 recent record, 1 bird

World/British distribution (Snow & Perrins 1998, Holling et al. 2019):

It is patchily distributed across much of Europe eastwards into Asia but is scarce and its distribution is imperfectly known. A few winter in the Mediterranean basin but many are trans-Saharan migrants. In Britain it is a rare and sporadic breeding species, with up to around 25 pairs in some years.

Kent status (KOS 2021):

It is a rare passage migrant and occasional summer visitor in Kent.

Ticehurst (1909) found it “very difficult to say anything definite as to the status” of the Spotted Crane. He explains that “they are so skulking in habits and their haunts are so obscure that these birds are very seldom seen”. Nonetheless they had “been seen or shot at different times in all the marshes around the Kent coast, and most of the local bird-stuffers in those districts have had specimens through their hands at different times, and all the county museums contain examples from the same localities”. He goes on to state that in the early 1840s “they appear to have been quite common in Romney Marsh” and “eastward of this one or two have been obtained near Hythe and Folkestone, and Mr. Gray, the Dover bird-stuffer, has had several from that neighbourhood”. It is perhaps curious then that it did not feature in Knight & Tolputt’s “List of birds observed in Folkestone and its immediate neighbourhood” (1871) unless these specimens were acquired after this time.

Harrison (1953) thought that it probably still bred irregularly in the county and added mention of one in the Maidstone Museum that was “from Hythe”, whilst Taylor *et al.* (1981) suggested a change in status (on analysing the records from 1952 to 1976), to that of a passage migrant and winter visitor, rather than summer visitor. Clements *et al.* 2015 noted that there were two records during the most recent atlas period, both in 2008: singles at Stodmarsh in March and at Grove Ferry in June.

There has only been one fully documented and dated area record which concerns an individual found by Russell Heselden on the small pond in Folkestone Warren and which lingered for three weeks in late autumn 1982.

The record by year is shown in figure 1.



Figure 1: Spotted Crane records at Folkestone and Hythe since 1980

The record by week is given in figure 2.

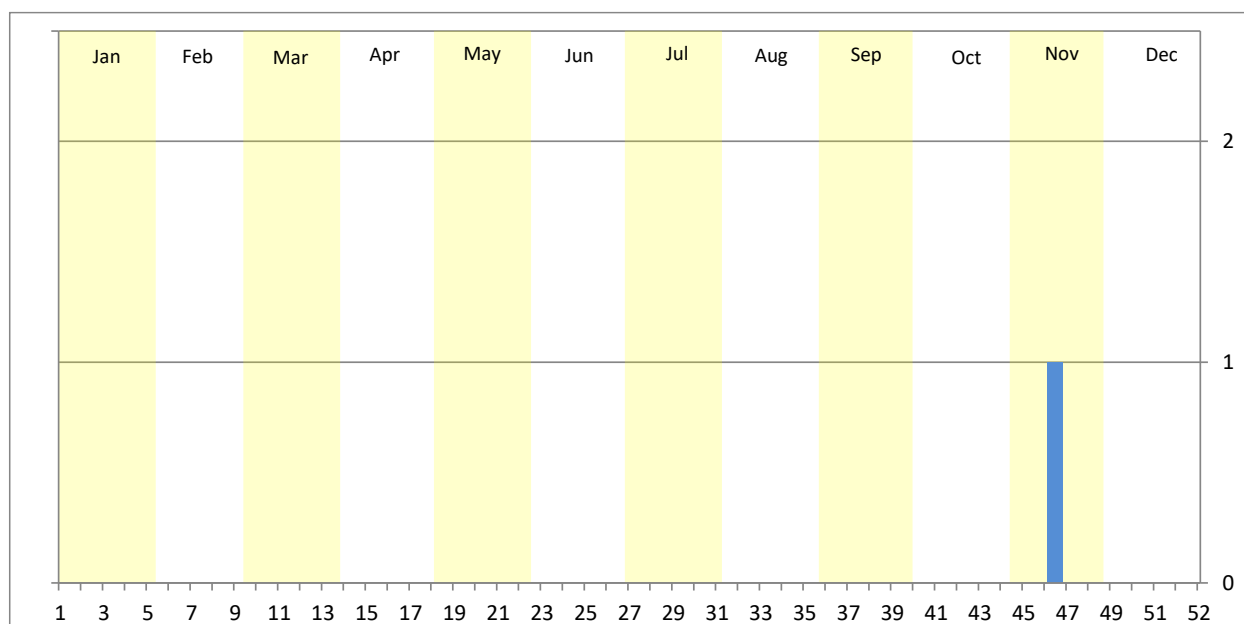


Figure 2: Spotted Crane records at Folkestone and Hythe by week

Figure 3 shows the location of record by tetrad. Early mentions are too vague for them to be mapped.

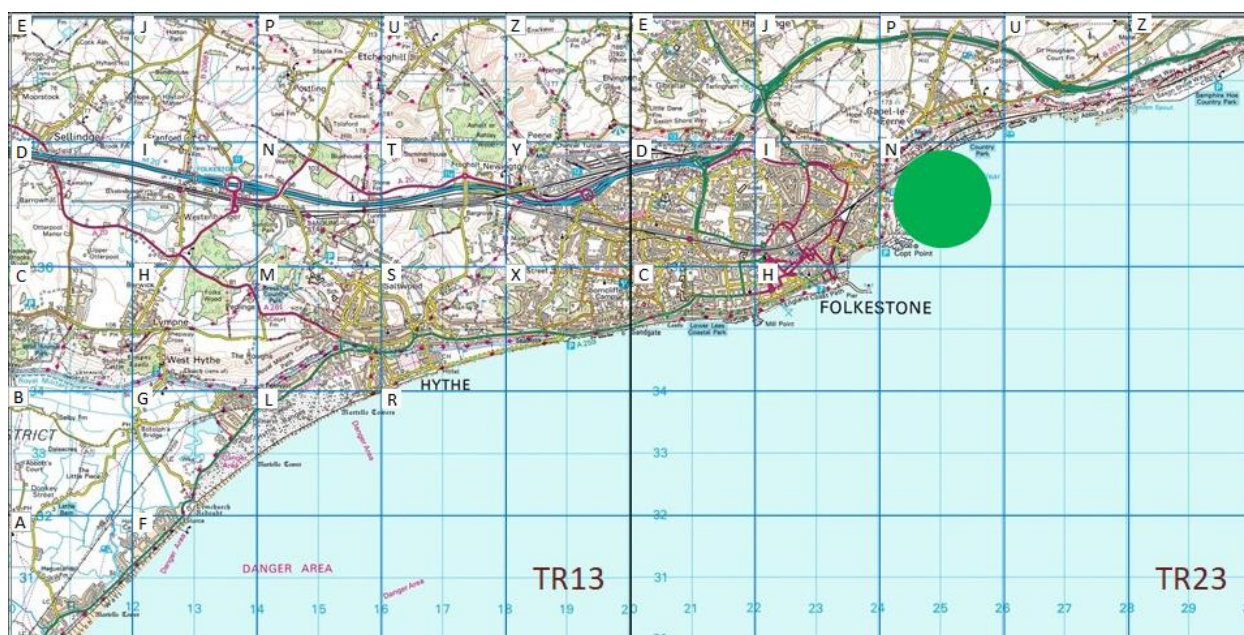


Figure 3: Distribution of all Spotted Crane records at Folkestone and Hythe by tetrad

Confirmation of the only fully documented area record is as follows:

1982 Folkestone Warren, one, 14th November to 6th December (R. G. W. Heselden)

References

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Knight, V. & Tolputt, F. 1871. List of birds observed in Folkestone and its immediate neighbourhood. *Fourth Annual Report of the Folkestone Natural History Society*. Available at: www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/46103

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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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