

# Puffin

*Fratercula arctica*

Category A

Very rare vagrant.

6 records,  
6 birds

*World/British distribution (Snow & Perrins 1998):*

Breeds along western and northern coasts in north-west France, mainly western and northern Britain, Ireland, Iceland, Fenno-Scandia, European Russia, Greenland and North America south to Maine. It is strongly dispersive and essentially pelagic outside of the breeding season, being scarce in the southern North Sea and eastern English Channel.

*Kent status (KOS 2022):*

It is a scarce passage migrant and winter visitor to the county.

Montagu (1802) wrote that the Puffin bred “on the stupendous cliffs of Dover” but Ticehurst (1909) could only locate two summer records in the county, both found on the Thames, and considered that “at the present time, and certainly for the last sixty years, the Puffin has been only a winter visitor to the coast of Kent, where it occurs in far smaller numbers than either the Guillemot or Razorbill, but, like them it is occasionally washed ashore or driven inland by gales”. It was not included in Knight and Tolputt’s “List of birds observed in Folkestone and its immediate neighbourhood” (1871).

Harrison (1953) considered it to be an irregular autumn and winter visitor but Taylor *et al.* (1981) found it to be regular in occurrence in autumn, particularly along the north coast of the county, but scarce in spring (when a greater proportion of records came from the south coast).

It was during the review period of Taylor *et al.* (1952-76) that the first local record occurred, when David Musson found one dead at Folkestone on the 8<sup>th</sup> February 1960. The next, and first live record, involved one reported off Copt Point on the 17<sup>th</sup> February 1986, whilst Dale Gibson watched one sit on the sea for 30 minutes just offshore of Folkestone Pier on the 7<sup>th</sup> August 1995.

There have been three further records: one seen flying east past Copt Point with a small group of Guillemots on the 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2000, one flying east past Folkestone Harbour on the 19<sup>th</sup> January 2002 and one flying east past Samphire Hoe on the 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2019. The records by year are shown in figure 1.

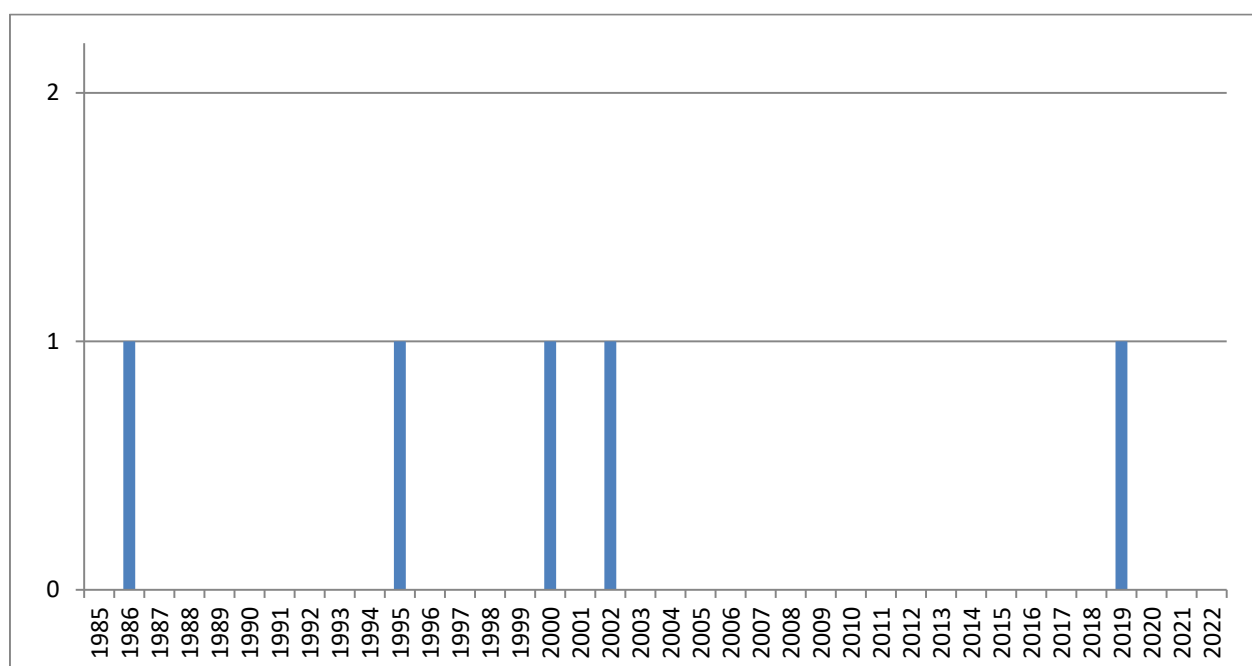


Figure 1: Puffin records at Folkestone and Hythe since 1985

There have been three winter records (in January/February), two in spring (late April/early May) and one in summer/early autumn (in early August), as demonstrated by figure 2.

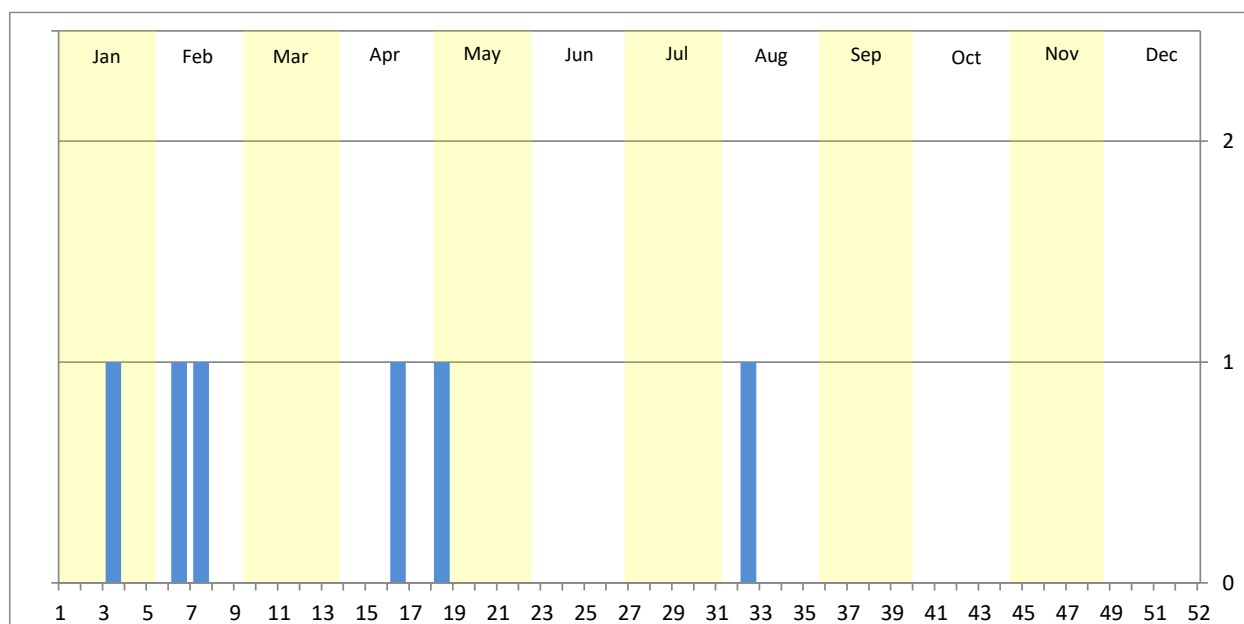


Figure 2: Puffin records at Folkestone and Hythe by week

All records are from the Folkestone/Copt Point area, apart from the most recent at Samphire Hoe. Figure 3 shows the distribution of records by tetrad.



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

The full list of records is as follows:

- 1960** Folkestone, one found dead, 8<sup>th</sup> February (D. F. Musson)
- 1986** Copt Point, one, 17<sup>th</sup> February (reported)
- 1995** Folkestone Pier, one on the sea, 7<sup>th</sup> August (D. A. Gibson)
- 2000** Copt Point, one flew east, 2<sup>nd</sup> May (D. A. Gibson, I. A. Roberts)
- 2002** Folkestone Harbour, one flew east, 19<sup>th</sup> January (reported)
- 2019** Samphire Hoe, one flew east, 22<sup>nd</sup> April (S. M. Cutt)

## **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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