

Egyptian Goose

Alopochen aegyptiaca

Category C1

Rare passage migrant.

27 records,
64 birds

World/British distribution (Snow & Perrins 1998):

Resident in sub-Saharan Africa. Breeds ferally in England (originally in East Anglia), having been imported into the country as early as the seventeenth century, and also in Belgium and the Netherlands, with a few pairs in France.

Kent status (KOS 2022):

In Kent there is a feral population that is rapidly establishing itself in the county.



Egyptian Goose at Stone Farm (Brian Harper)

Ticehurst (1909) mentioned that numerous examples of this species had been shot in Kent (although he did not mention any local instances) and noted that most of the local museums contain one or more. He stated that “they had without doubt all escaped from that condition of semi-domesticity in which the species is so frequently kept in England”. Harrison (1953) added another from 1937.

Taylor *et al.* (1981) stated that it had been recorded annually in the county since 1970, with the first summering pairs in 1975. The majority were thought to originate from a growing feral population in East Anglia. Clements *et al.* (2015) reported that although birds had been present in Kent for many years it had been slow to establish a breeding population with the first successful pairs not recorded until 2008. At the time of the last atlas it was restricted to west Kent, in the catchments of the Darent, Medway and Teise rivers. Outside of the breeding season birds are prone to wandering. By 2020 there were at least 18 pairs breeding at 18 sites across the county, with most in the west but some as close as lakes in the Ashford area (KOS, 2022).

It was first recorded locally in 1996 when Dale Gibson saw one flying low east over Folkestone on the 21st January, whilst another was found on the canal in Hythe the following January and remained in the area for three months, ranging as far west as Nickolls Quarry on occasion. However, a 13-year gap ensued until the next record in 2011, when a flock of five flew over Nickolls Quarry on 4th January (this group included an albino individual and had been previously seen at Dungeness), whilst two flew east past Samphire Hoe on the 23rd January 2013. It has since been recorded annually and with increasing frequency, with eight records in 2021, as figure 1 demonstrates.

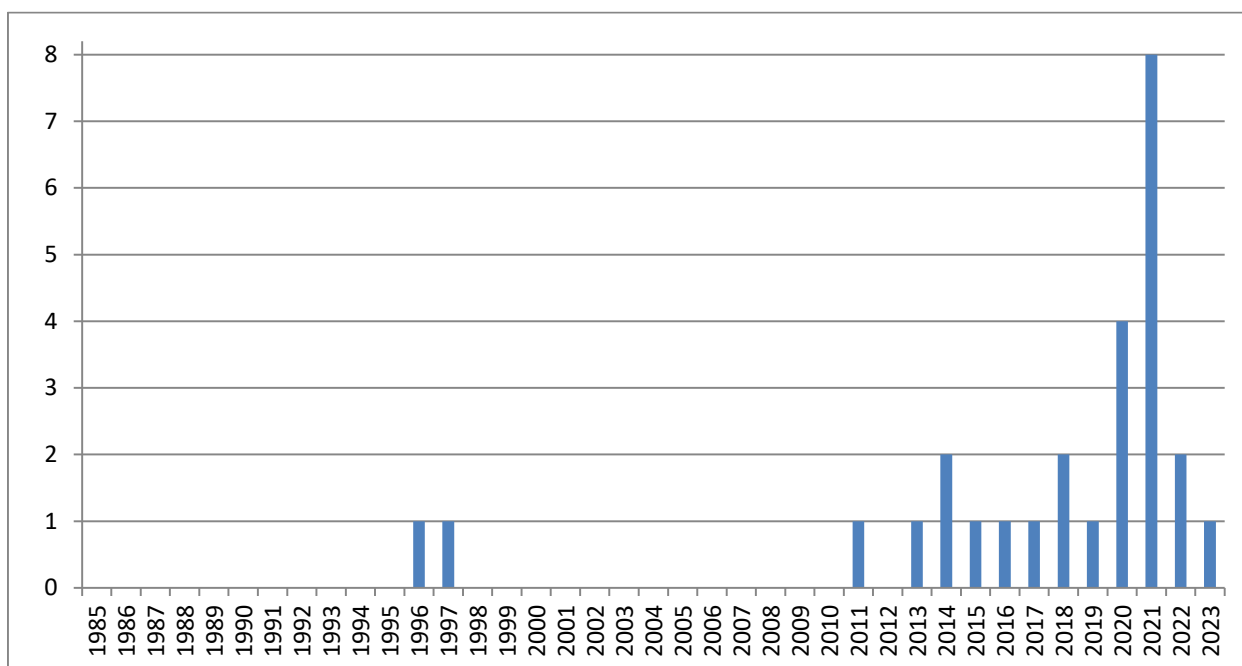


Figure 1: Egyptian Goose records at Folkestone and Hythe

All records have occurred between late December and early May, as demonstrated by figure 2, with one in December, six in January (including the first four records), seven in February, four in March, eight in April and one in May.

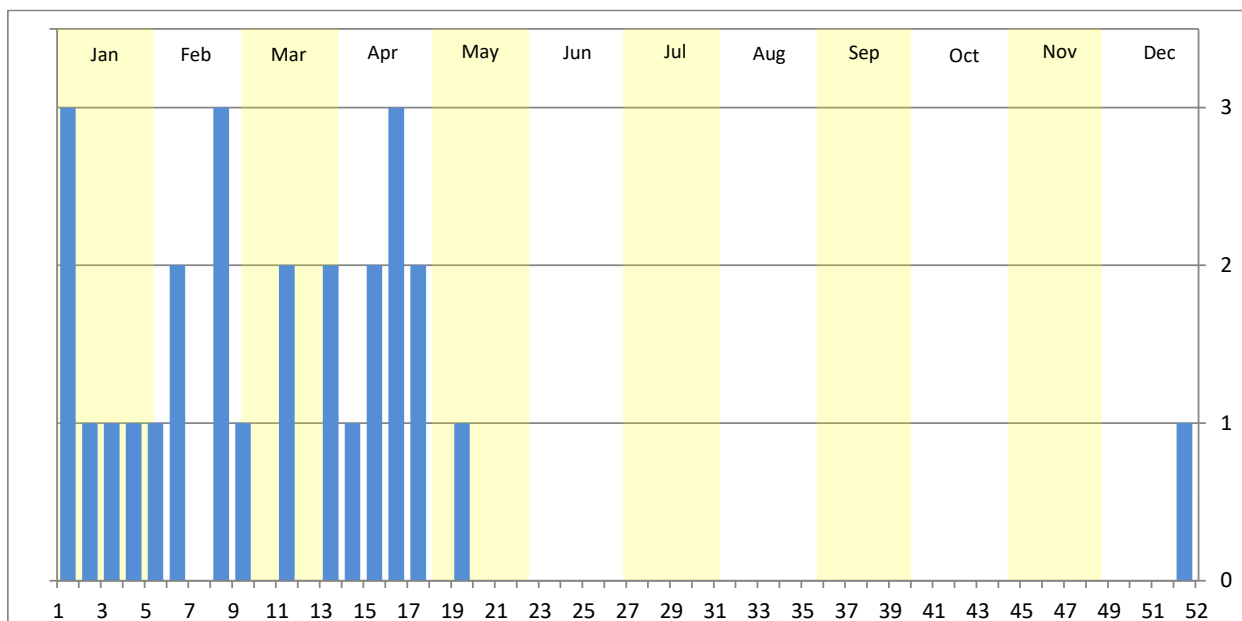


Figure 2: Egyptian Goose records at Folkestone and Hythe by week

There have been annual records at Cock Ash Lake since 2021, with two seen there in February 2021 and one in April of that year, whilst in 2022 a pair were present between the 16th April and 21st May, raising hopes that they may breed but no evidence was noted. One was again seen there in January 2023. If the population in Kent continued to increase and spread eastwards then future colonisation by this species would seem to be a distinct possibility.

Figure 3 shows the distribution of records by tetrad.



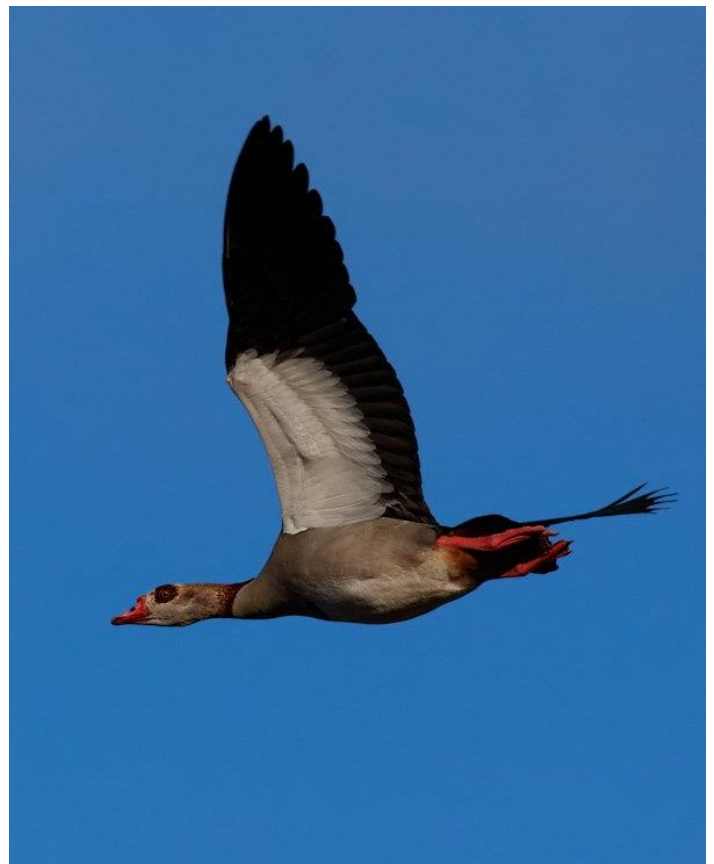
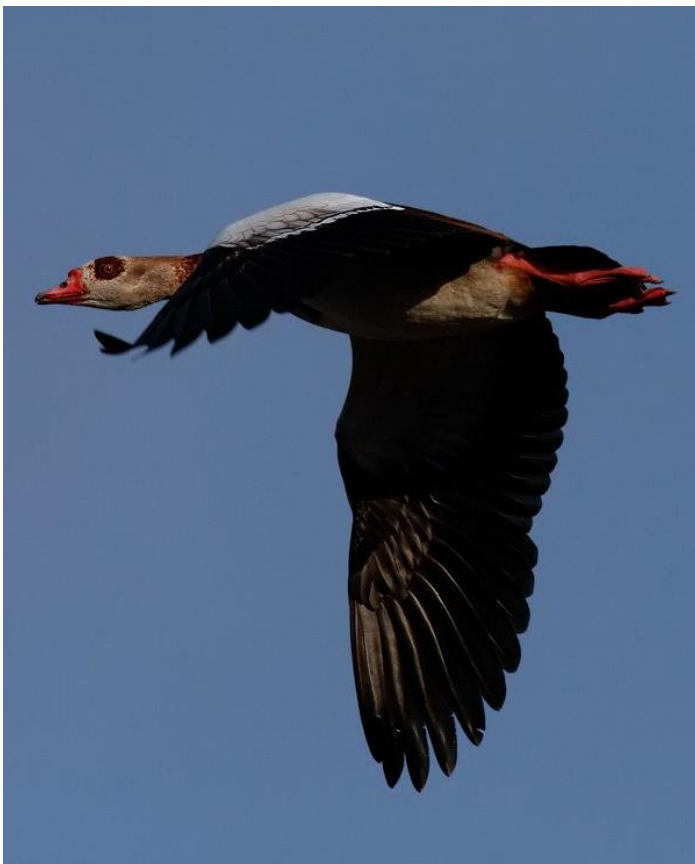
Figure 3: Distribution of all Egyptian Goose records at Folkestone and Hythe by tetrad

The full list of records is as follows:

1996 Folkestone, one flew east, 21st January (D. A. Gibson)

1997 Hythe Canal (Hythe Town), one, 4th to 21st January, and again on 16th March and 6th April, also seen at Nickolls Quarry on at least 4th, 8th and 13th March with anglers reporting it several times either side of those dates, photographed (I. A. Roberts, R. K. Norman, G. Redfern, P. Howe)

- 2011** Nickolls Quarry, five flew in from west, circled and flew back west, 4th January (I. A. Roberts)
- 2013** Samphire Hoe, two flew east, 23rd January, photographed (I. A. Roberts)
- 2014** Willop Basin, five, 11th April, photographed (I. A. Roberts, J. Tomsett)
- 2014** Willop Basin, one, 7th May (B. Harper)
- 2015** Nickolls Quarry, two flew west, 27th February, photographed (I. A. Roberts)
- 2016** Hythe Canal (Hythe Town), one, 3rd to 6th February, photographed (I. A. Roberts, N. Webster, P. Howe *et al*)
- 2017** Willop Basin, seven, 21st February (I. A. Roberts)
- 2018** Samphire Hoe, two flew west, 15th March (I. A. Roberts)
- 2018** Nickolls Quarry, two, 31st March (B. Harper)
- 2019** Samphire Hoe, four flew south, 27th April, photographed (M. Collins, B. Woolhouse)
- 2020** Willop Sewage Works, six flew east, 7th February (B. Harper, I. A. Roberts)
- 2020** Nickolls Quarry, one, 8th April (B. Harper)
- 2020** Seabrook, one flew east, 17th April (P. Howe)
- 2020** Seabrook, one flew east, 20th April (P. Howe)
- 2021** Willop Outfall, four flew east, later seen at Nickolls Quarry, 8th January (B. Harper, I. A. Roberts)
- 2021** Nickolls Quarry, one, 9th February (I. A. Roberts)
- 2021** Willop Basin, one, 12th to 15th February (I. A. Roberts), presumed same as above
- 2021** Nickolls Quarry, two, 20th February (I. A. Roberts)
- 2021** Cock Ash Lake, two, 20th February (I. A. Roberts)
- 2021** Seabrook, two flew east, 17th March (P. Howe)
- 2021** Radnor Park (Folkestone), one, 30th March (R. Thorogood)
- 2021** Samphire Hoe, four flew east, 8th April (I. A. Roberts)
- 2021** Cock Ash Lake, one, 29th April (I. A. Roberts)
- 2022** Cock Ash Lake, two, 16th April to 21st May (I. A. Roberts)
- 2022** Stone Farm (between Postling Wents and Bluehouse Wood), 24th to 27th December, photographed (B. Harper)
- 2023** Cock Ash Lake, one, 4th January (I. A. Roberts), possibly same as above



Egyptian Goose at Nickolls Quarry (Brian Harper)



Egyptian Goose at Hythe (Ian Roberts)



Egyptian Geese at the Willop Basin (Ian Roberts)



Egyptian Geese at Cock Ash Lake (Ian Roberts)

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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