

Crane

Grus grus

Category A

Very rare vagrant.

12 records

Breeds from eastern Germany and Fenno-Scandia eastwards across Russia to Lake Baikal. Winters mainly in southern Europe, north Africa, and Turkey to south-west Iran. From the late 1970s large numbers have wintered in wetlands that had recently been created in east-central France (Snow & Perrins, 1998).

There has been a strong increase in the British population in recent years, partly fuelled by reintroductions in south-west England, although in the last three years the population has stabilised at around 35 pairs.



Cranes at Lower Wall Road (Ian Roberts)

The number of young fledged has also increased, and 22 in 2017 was a new record total. In 2017, 18 pairs bred in East Anglia and 11 in south-west England but the others widely scattered (Holling *et al*, 2019).

It is a rare passage migrant and winter visitor to Kent, occasionally occurring in larger numbers on autumn passage (KOS, 2020).

Rowland (1968) makes a reference to a record of Crane in the “Folkestone District”, though this presumably refers to an immature that wintered at Dymchurch from the 30th October 1963 to the 4th April 1964 (Taylor *et al*, 1981).

On the 16th October 1977 a flock of 26 seen over Ashford were subsequently “thought to have been seen leaving the coast at Folkestone” (Taylor pers. comm.), but the first definite record at Folkestone and Hythe was in 1982, with 11 further records from 1985 (ten of which have occurred since 2000) as shown in figure 1. Whilst most records refer to one or two birds, the two October records involved quite large flocks, mirroring the status in the county.

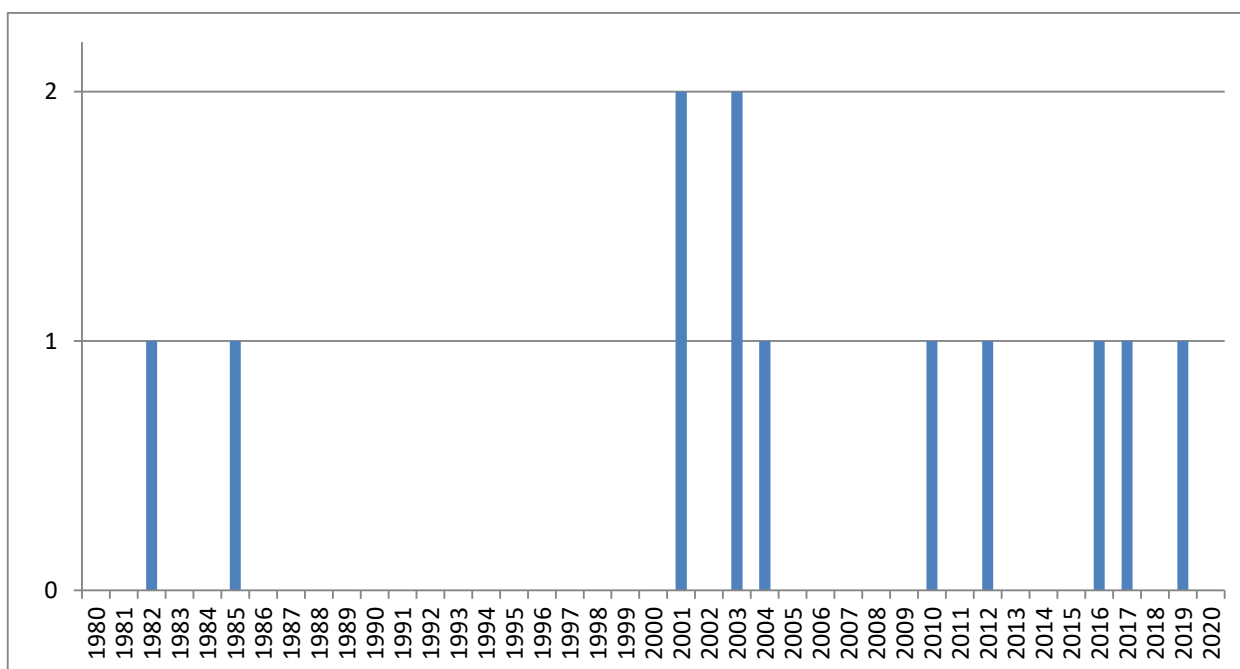


Figure 1: Crane records at Folkestone and Hythe

Records have been fairly well spread throughout the year, with the exception of the summer/early autumn months, as demonstrated by figure 2. There has been a single record in January, four between mid-March and mid-April, three in May, two in late October and two in late November/early December.

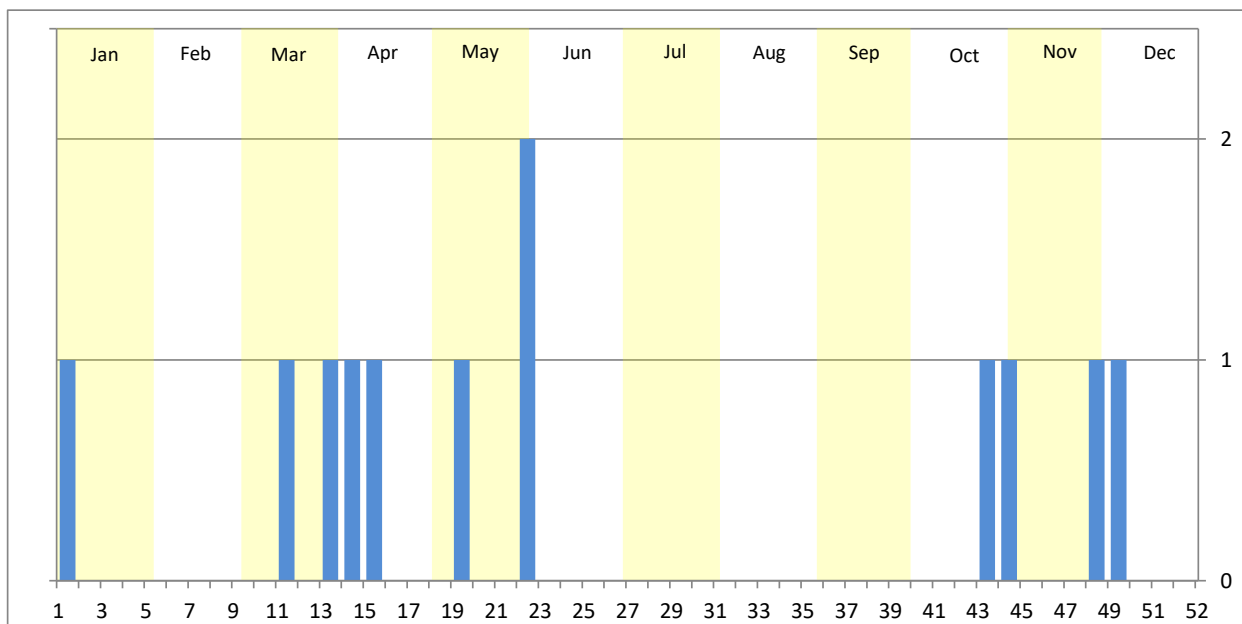


Figure 2: Crane records at Folkestone and Hythe by week

Figure 3 shows the distribution of records by tetrad.



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

There have been four records in the Romney Marsh area, four in the Hythe/Saltwood area and four in the Cheriton/Folkestone area (although these latter four have not been mapped as insufficient details were provided to identify the tetrad).

The full list of records is as follows:

- 1982** Cheriton, 18 flew over, 31st October (S. Boreham), part of an influx into Kent in late October and early November
- 1985** Cheriton, 71 flew south, 25th October (O. French, P. French), later seen heading out to sea off Dungeness
- 2001** Hythe, one in fields beside Blackhouse Hill, 27th March (R. K. Norman, P. Haines)
- 2001** Hythe Redoubt, one flew north-east, 26th November (R. K. Norman), earlier seen over St. Mary's Bay

- 2003** Lower Wall Road, three, 5th January, photographed (I. A. Roberts, D. A. Gibson *et al*)
2003 Palmarsh, two flew in off the sea, 28th May (reported)
2004 Hythe, one flew north, 13th April (reported)
2010 Willop Outfall, one, 5th December, photographed (B. Harper, M. Harper)
2012 Saltwood, two heard calling, 15th March (P. Howe), earlier flew south-east from Sandwich Bay
2016 Hythe, one, 7th April (per Rare Bird Alert)
2017 Cheriton, at least one heard, 28th May (R. Thorogood)
2019 Folkestone, two flew west, later seen over Horn Street, 13th May (P. Howe, J. Phillips)



Crane at the Willop Basin (Brian Harper)



Cranes over Folkestone (John Phillips)



Cranes at Lower Wall Road (Dale Gibson)

References

- Holling, M. & the Rare Breeding Birds Panel, 2019. Rare breeding birds in the UK in 2017. *British Birds*, 112: 706-758
- Kent Bird Reports. Kent Ornithological Society
- Rowland, H. M., 1968. *Some aspects of the natural history of the Folkestone District*. The Invicta Press, Ashford.
- Snow, D. & Perrins, C.M., 1998. *The Birds of the Western Palearctic*. Oxford University Press.
- Taylor, D., Davenport, D. & Flegg, J. 1981. *Birds of Kent*. Kent Ornithological Society

Acknowledgements

The tetrad map images were produced from the Ordnance Survey [Get-a-map service](#) and are reproduced with kind permission of [Ordnance Survey](#).