

## Red-necked Grebe

*Podiceps grisegena*

Category A

Rare passage migrant and winter visitor. 35 records, 43 birds

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

Breeds across eastern Europe into Asia, and in North America. After breeding most disperse to tidal water. The principal wintering areas for European breeders are the coasts of Norway and Britain to the Bay of Biscay, and Baltic and Caspian Seas, with lesser numbers reaching the Black Sea and northern Mediterranean.

*Kent status (KOS 2022):*

It is a scarce passage migrant and winter visitor to Kent.



Red-necked Grebe at Sandgate (Ian Roberts)

Ticehurst (1909) regarded the Red-necked Grebe as a rare occasional visitor to the county, being almost as frequently recorded from fresh as from tidal waters, and provided the first local record, which was only the seventh for Kent: one shot off Sandgate in the winter of 1893 that was brought to Mr. Gray, the Dover taxidermist.

Little had changed by the time of Harrison (1953), whilst Taylor *et al.* (1981) considered it to be an uncommon winter visitor to the county and “probably the rarest of the [three scarce species of] grebes in Kent”, with an average of six records per year. It was during their review period (1952-76) that the next local records occurred, with Roger Norman seeing one at Nickolls Quarry on the 21<sup>st</sup> January 1951 and another there from the 9<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> March 1958 (Norman 2007). Then T. Grant saw one swimming east past Seabrook on the 2<sup>nd</sup> December 1967 and M. E. Upstone saw two “still showing chestnut on the neck” at Nickolls Quarry on the 23<sup>rd</sup> August 1973.

Henderson (2021) described how occurrences in the county increased significantly shortly after the review period of Taylor *et al.*, with the 1978/79 winter producing an exceptional total of over 80 records, which included two (one of which was dead) found by Dave Weaver at Nickolls Quarry on the 10<sup>th</sup> March 1979. As figure 1 demonstrates, Kent enjoyed relatively high annual numbers during the 1980s and 1990s and this period produced 21 local records, involving a total of 27 birds.

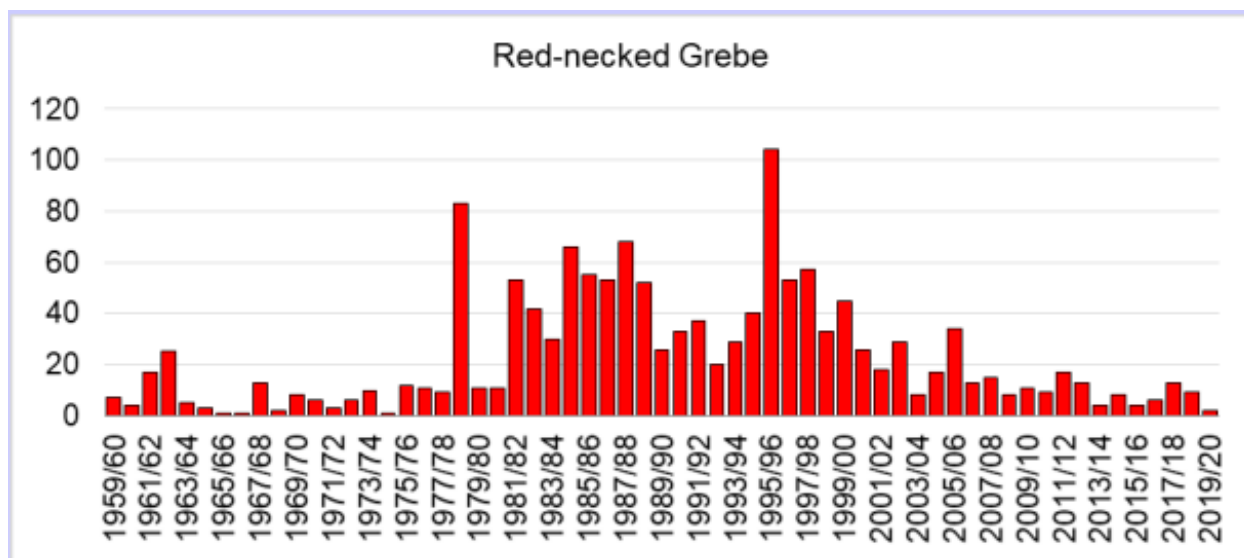


Figure 1: Red-necked Grebe records in Kent between 1959/60 and 2019/20

Reviewing the sixty-year period above, Henderson stated that “in the modern era, the three [scarce grebe] species have, on average, occurred at roughly similar frequencies”, with between 23 and 27 individuals of each reported per annum. However, he notes that this was “not true of the most recent period”, with Red-necked Grebe reverting to being the rarest of the three (with twice as many records of Slavonian and three times as many Black-necked).

Figure 2 shows a similar pattern locally to the overall trend within the county. In the 1980s and 1990s there were a total of 21 local records (at a rate of 1.1 per annum), including totals of three in 1983 and 1985, and four in 1996, but since the turn of the millennium there have been just eight records (at a rate of 0.4 per annum) and no year has seen more than two records.

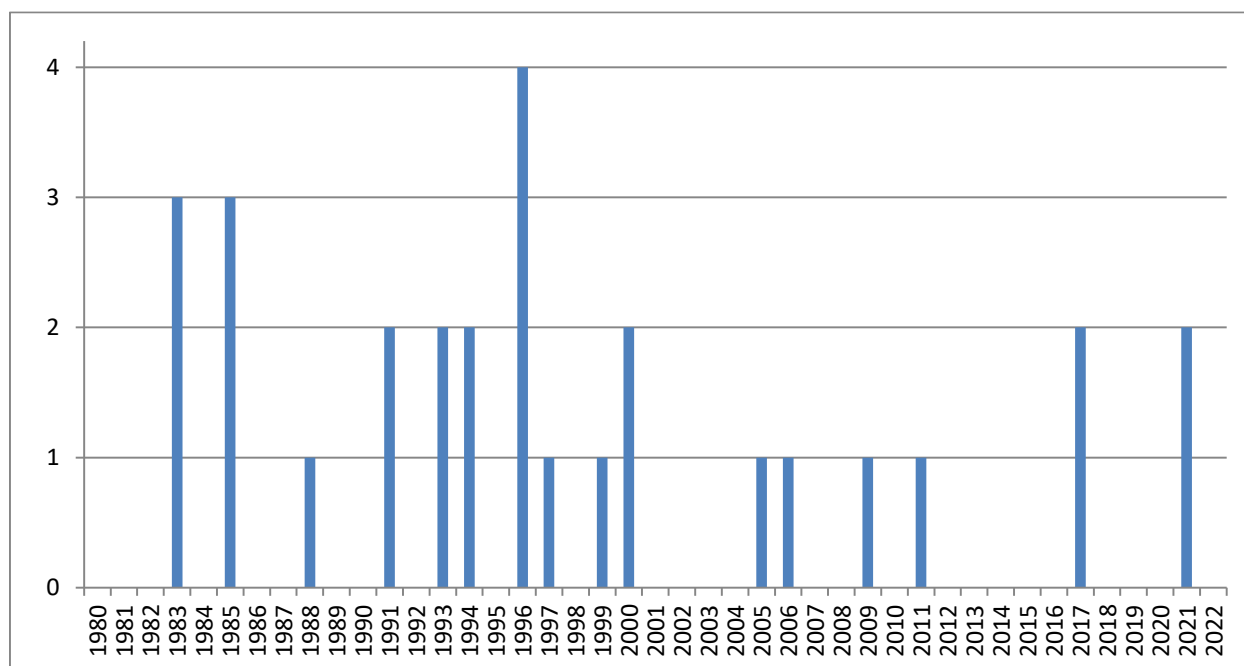


Figure 2: Red-necked Grebe records at Folkestone and Hythe since 1980

The earliest arrival date was the 23<sup>rd</sup> August (in 1973), with two records in each of September and October, and four in November. January and February have produced almost half (47%) of all sightings, with many associated with the onset of severe weather. There have been four March records and the latest was on the 7<sup>th</sup> April (2011). The records by week are given in figure 3, and there are further undated records in January and November.

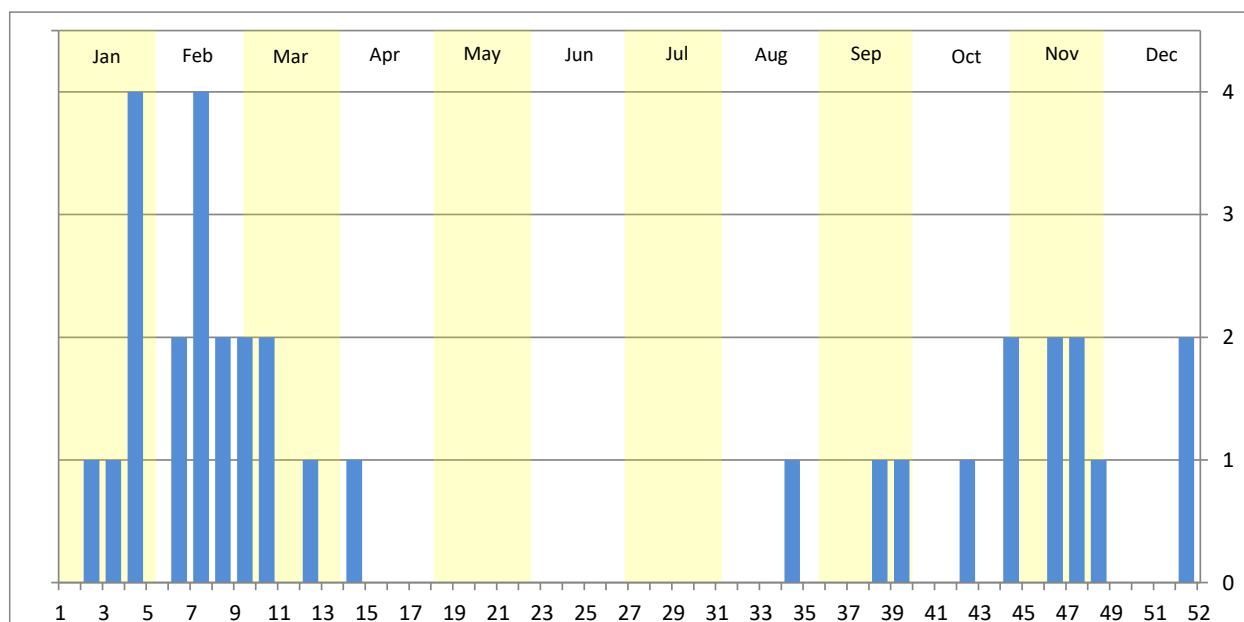


Figure 3: Red-necked Grebe records at Folkestone and Hythe by week

Records have been split between Nickolls Quarry (9) and coastal sites, where there have been two at Samphire Hoe, six at Copt Point and 13 in the bay between Folkestone Beach and the Dymchurch Redoubt. Figure 4 shows the location of records by tetrad.



Figure 4: Distribution of all Red-necked Grebe records at Folkestone and Hythe by tetrad

The full list of records is as follows:

- 1893** Sandgate, one obtained, in winter (per N. Ticehurst)
- 1951** Nickolls Quarry, one, 21<sup>st</sup> January (R. K. Norman)
- 1958** Nickolls Quarry, one, 9<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> March (R. K. Norman)
- 1967** Seabrook, one swimming east, 2<sup>nd</sup> December (T. Grant)
- 1973** Nickolls Quarry, two "still showing chestnut on the neck", 23<sup>rd</sup> August (M. E. Upstone)
- 1979** Nickolls Quarry, two, including one found dead, 10<sup>th</sup> March (D. Weaver)
- 1983** Copt Point, one, 18<sup>th</sup> February (reported)
- 1983** Folkestone, two, 22<sup>nd</sup> February (per Kent Bird Report)
- 1983** Folkestone, two, 29<sup>th</sup> September (per Kent Bird Report)
- 1985** Copt Point, one, 13<sup>th</sup> January (reported)
- 1985** Nickolls Quarry, one, 16<sup>th</sup> February (R. & S. Philpott)
- 1985** Copt Point, two, 23<sup>rd</sup> February (reported)
- 1988** Sandgate, one, in January (reported)
- 1991** Dymchurch Redoubt, one, 15<sup>th</sup> February (R. K. Norman)
- 1991** Copt Point, one flew west, 31<sup>st</sup> October (D. A. Gibson)
- 1993** Hythe, one in partial summer plumage, 7<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> February (I. A. Roberts *et al*)
- 1993** Hythe Ranges, two flew west, 26<sup>th</sup> December (R. K. Norman)
- 1994** Nickolls Quarry, one, 13<sup>th</sup> November (R. K. Norman)
- 1994** Nickolls Quarry, one, 23<sup>rd</sup> November (R. K. Norman)
- 1996** Sandgate, one, 5<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> February (P. Howe, H. G. Brown, R. Thorogood)
- 1996** Copt Point, two, 14<sup>th</sup> February (D. A. Gibson)
- 1996** Nickolls Quarry, one, 26<sup>th</sup> February to 8<sup>th</sup> March (R. K. Norman)
- 1996** Sandgate, one, 19<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> March (P. Howe, R. Thorogood)
- 1997** Sandgate, one, 24<sup>th</sup> January (P. Howe)
- 1999** Nickolls Quarry, one, 15<sup>th</sup> October (R. K. Norman)
- 2000** Copt Point, one flew west, 20<sup>th</sup> September (D. A. Gibson, I. A. Roberts)
- 2000** Hythe Redoubt, one, 28<sup>th</sup> December (P. Haines)
- 2005** Samphire Hoe, one flew west, 19<sup>th</sup> November (I. A. Roberts)
- 2006** Mill Point, one flew east, 27<sup>th</sup> January (I. A. Roberts)
- 2009** Hythe, one, 24<sup>th</sup> January (D. Brown)
- 2011** Hythe, one, 7<sup>th</sup> April (S. McMinn)

**2017** Mill Point, one on the sea, later seen off Sandgate, 4<sup>th</sup> November, photographed (B. Harper, I. A. Roberts)

**2017** Samphire Hoe, one, 13<sup>th</sup> November (P. Holt)

**2021** Seabrook, one on the sea, drifted west, 27<sup>th</sup> January (P. Howe)

**2021** Folkestone Beach, one on the sea, 1<sup>st</sup> March (I. A. Roberts)

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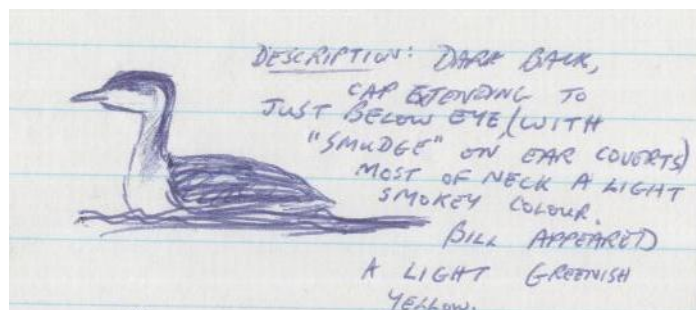
## Acknowledgements

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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Red-necked Grebe at Sandgate (B. Harper)



Red-necked Grebe at Seabrook in 1967 (T. Grant)