

# Spoonbill

*Platalea leucorodia*

Category A

Very rare vagrant

13 records

Has a scattered breeding distribution across mainly southern Europe, though with a reasonable population as far north as the Netherlands. Winters in Mediterranean basin and northern tropical Africa. An occasional breeder in Britain including at one site in Norfolk in 2010 where six pairs bred, raising 10 young. A summering bird was present in Kent in the same year, where it is an annual visitor in small numbers.



Spoonbill at Nickoll’s Quarry (Ian Roberts)

The first Spoonbill to be recorded in the Folkestone and Hythe area concerned one seen at the Willop Basin by Roger Norman on the 24<sup>th</sup> March 1950. After a forty year gap a party of five were seen in 1991, with further sightings in 1996 and 1997, then six between 2000 and 2004 (including two in the latter year), as shown in figure 1. However there followed a ten year wait until the next, in 2014, with three year gaps between the next two.

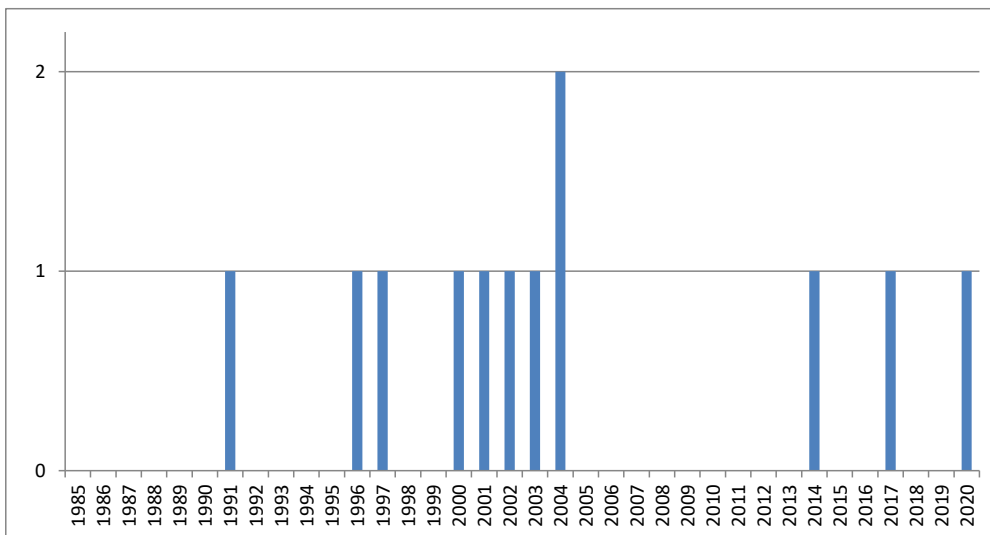


Figure 1: Spoonbill records since 1985 at Folkestone and Hythe

Records are quite well spread, as demonstrated by figure 2, though can broadly be grouped into spring (3<sup>rd</sup> March to 12<sup>th</sup> May), summer (23<sup>rd</sup> June to 31<sup>st</sup> July) and autumn (October) occurrences.

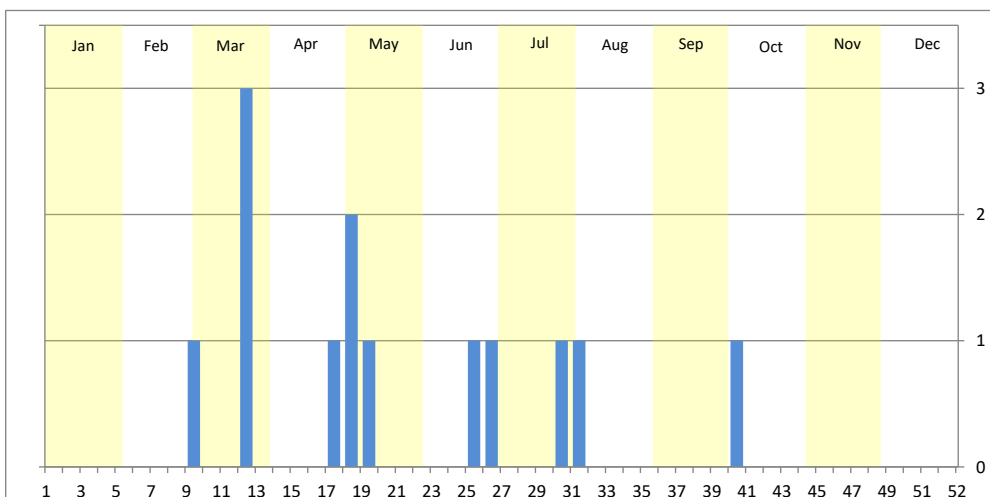


Figure 2: Spoonbill records at Folkestone and Hythe by week

The spring records are mostly from Copt Point, though with singles at the Willop Basin, Nickolls Quarry, Seabrook and Mill Point, whilst the autumn record was at Abbotscliffe. Three of the four summer records were at Nickoll's Quarry, including the only bird which lingered overnight in 2003, with the other seen flying over Saltwood. One of the area records involved a flock of five, but all other sightings have related to singletons.

The full list of records is as follows:

**1950** Willop Basin, one, 24<sup>th</sup> March (R. K. Norman)

**1991** Nickolls Quarry, five, 31<sup>st</sup> July, also seen flying east over Hythe Ranges (R. K. Norman). Earlier seen flying north-east over Dungeness RSPB

**1996** Copt Point, one flew east, 3<sup>rd</sup> March (D. A. Gibson)

**1997** Nickolls Quarry, one sub-adult, colour-ringed, 12<sup>th</sup> May (I. A. Roberts, D. A. Gibson)

**2000** Copt Point, one flew east, 3<sup>rd</sup> May (D. A. Gibson, I. A. Roberts)

**2001** Abbotscliffe, one flew west, 3<sup>rd</sup> October (D. A. Gibson)

**2002** Copt Point, one flew west, 23<sup>rd</sup> March (I. A. Roberts)

**2003** Nickolls Quarry, one, 26<sup>th</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> June, photographed (R. K. Norman, I. A. Roberts)

**2004** Nickolls Quarry, one, 21<sup>st</sup> March (R. K. Norman)

**2004** Nickolls Quarry, one, 24<sup>th</sup> July (R. K. Norman)

**2014** Saltwood, one flew over, 23<sup>rd</sup> June (P. Howe)

**2017** Seabrook, one flew east, 23<sup>rd</sup> April (S. McMinn)

**2020** Mill Point, one flew west, 3<sup>rd</sup> May (C. Gillard)



Spoonbill at Nickolls Quarry (Ian Roberts)