

## ROOKERIES IN EAST & SOUTH KENT



*Rookery, Wikimedia commons*

Starting in 2004 my wife & I have undertaken an annual survey of Rookeries in parts of East & South Kent. While the results would probably not stand up to any scientific scrutiny they do, I think, give a snapshot of the status of the species in this part of Kent. Initially the survey followed on from those undertaken by the late Maurice Davenport in the 1970's covering the area lying to the north of the A2 on a line from Faversham to Whitfield. In the first year (2004) twelve rookeries were found and with three exceptions all have been surveyed every year up to 2018. The three exceptions, a site between Eythorne & Elvington has not been used since 2013 another some two miles to the east close to the Eastry bypass was last used in 2015 and that in Sandwich was abandoned in 2013. In the years 2005 to 2010 a further eight Rookeries were found in the catchment area and from 2011 we have extended our survey to include parts of the Elham valley and the Romney Marsh. This year a total of 49 locations produced 1,097 nests.

The survey period is completely dependent on the emergence of new spring foliage, nests that are clearly visible one week can be obscured a few days later. The earliest date on which we have started is 25<sup>th</sup> March and the latest 18<sup>th</sup> April with the last week of March the most favoured period. The sheer logistics of covering what is an increasing area, from Lydd to Stodmarsh, means that the survey takes place over a minimum of two days.

I have in sufficient data to compare current figures with those from the surveys conducted by Maurice Davenport. It is worth noting however that in the two years 1970 & 1972 at least 36 Rookeries were in situ in and around a round the Thanet area including Minster & Monkton, today there are six. The Quex Park site contained 242 nest in 1970, never more than 20 since 2012. A site on Monkton marshes held 160 while a second site in that area held 80 nests. A long abandoned site at Cleve Court had 70

### The largest Rookeries are listed below

|                 | <b>Grid Ref.</b> | <b>Year first Surveyed</b> | <b>Number of years Surveyed</b> | <b>Min &amp; Max numbers</b> |
|-----------------|------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Lydd Town       | 041210           | 2011                       | 6                               | 120 - 180                    |
| West Hythe      | 123342           | 2016                       | 3                               | 70 - 83                      |
| Monkton Village | 280653           | 2004                       | 15                              | 18 - 79                      |
| Stodmarsh       | 217601           | 2004                       | 13                              | 30 - 62                      |
| Kent Univ.      | 143602           | 2010                       | 9                               | 29 - 47                      |

**Smallest Rookeries (Surveyed for a minimum of 8 years)**

|                          | <b>Grid Ref</b> | <b>Year first surveyed</b> | <b>Number of years surveyed</b> | <b>Min &amp; Max numbers</b> | <b>Notes</b> |
|--------------------------|-----------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------|
| New Romney Nr Kent Trust | 078261          | 2011                       | 8                               | 6 - 23                       |              |
| Upstreet                 | 230632          | 2010                       | 9                               | 3 - 16                       |              |
| Sarre                    | 258651          | 2004                       | 14                              | 7 - 22                       |              |
| Eythorne Village         | 283491          | 2010                       | 9                               | 6 - 22                       |              |
| Whitfield                | 300445          | 2008                       | 11                              | 0 - 16                       | A            |
| Acol                     | 307672          | 2004                       | 13                              | 5 - 22                       |              |
| Minster                  | 310646          | 2004                       | 15                              | 2 - 19                       |              |
| Westgate-on-sea          | 315696          | 2010                       | 9                               | 3 - 23                       |              |
| Sandwich Town            | 327580          | 2004                       | 9                               | 9 - 23                       | B            |

A = No nests in 2014; B = Abandoned from 2014. New site nearby from 2016

**The number of sites surveyed each year.**

| <b>2004</b> | <b>05</b> | <b>06</b> | <b>07</b> | <b>08</b> | <b>09</b> | <b>2010</b> | <b>11</b> | <b>12</b> | <b>13</b> | <b>14</b> | <b>15</b> | <b>16</b> | <b>17</b> | <b>18</b> |
|-------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 14          | 11        | 15        | 12        | 18        | 13        | 20          | 25        | 22        | 25        | 38        | 39        | 43        | 44        | 49        |

**Number of nest counted each year.**

Top row is the total number for all sites. The bottom row, in red, are the totals for the 12 original sites in East Kent and that with the three exceptions mentioned in the text have been surveyed every year.

| <b>2004</b> | <b>05</b> | <b>06</b> | <b>07</b> | <b>08</b> | <b>09</b> | <b>10</b> | <b>11</b> | <b>12</b> | <b>13</b> | <b>14</b> | <b>15</b> | <b>16</b> | <b>17</b> | <b>2018</b> |
|-------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-------------|
| 288         | 240       | 373       | 197       | 348       | 214       | 470       | 646       | 421       | 312       | 746       | 816       | 917       | 939       | 1,097       |
| 233         | 229       | 288       | 172       | 275       | 168       | 308       | 278       | 260       | 251       | 260       | 239       | 211       | 202       | 266         |

**John Websper**