



Little Gull by Phil Smith

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As I write this piece today Spring appears to have put its nose above the parapet. A brief walk out at Grove Ferry today was greeted by bright sunshine, mild conditions and my first singing Chiffchaff of the year. Depending on one's own experiences it has been an odd winter here in East Kent. Not much rain, not that cold, but windy and above all dull and gloomy. As I have been confined to garden birding for most of the time I am very grateful to see the sun and hear the birds singing in the early morning. We seem to have regained our local Mistle Thrush pair so that I can hear three males laying the law down at dawn. More pleasing we have Song Thrushes singing at either end of the garden after an absence of two years. Less satisfactory is reflecting on a winter with no Great spotted woodpecker, Greenfinch, Brambling or Siskin at our feeders. Time will tell, but hopefully this is a temporary glitch and we will see them again.

This is the time of year when we are filled with the anticipation for the arrivals of summer visitors, although there is always that fear that this year some may not return. I remember the great Whitethroat Crash of 1967/8 when drought in the Sahel first seriously affected 'our' birds. Most of those species that winter in the Sahel zone are much less numerous than formerly. Paradoxically climate change seems to be driving changes in migration strategies, some species reducing the extent of their journeys and avoiding some of the associated costs.

Alongside the summer visitors I always spare a thought for our winter birds, heading off to breeding grounds far to the north and east of us here on the western fringe of Europe. This year many of those species are going to be affected on their journeys by hostility and destruction in Ukraine but it is hard to foresee what the outcomes might be for any of them. Ukraine and Crimea is the stronghold of the great Bustard which formerly bred in Britain and now only does so in semi-captivity. I have only had the privilege of seeing this majestic species on the puszta of the Hortobagy in Eastern Hungary, and I fear that events playing out now may adversely affect a species already at odds with the modern world. This may seem a trivial concern against the backdrop of so many innocent people murdered and displaced, but years ago I had a friend from the region who was very proud of the Bustards and promised to show them to me one day. Sadly, we lost contact when he returned home and my thoughts are for him, the bustards and all peace-loving people who value the world we live in.

At the end of this newsletter is an advertisement for some excellent short videos of Kent birds produced by our member Nick Smith, proceeds from which will be donated to the Ukraine Appeal

Good birding

Norman

News and announcements

WINTER LOW-TIDE COUNTS ON THE SWALE 2021-22

Congratulations to the team of 22 volunteers who completed four counts of more than 100,000 birds in the 2,500 hectares of intertidal habitat on the Swale. Now we have the task of writing up the results, so look out for a more detailed report in the next year or so. Low Tide Counts provide the crucial information needed to assess the potential effects on waterbird populations of a variety of human activities which affect the extent or value of intertidal habitats, such as dock developments, proposals for recreational activities, tidal power barrages, marinas, and housing schemes. For more information see [Low Tide Counts Methods | BTO - British Trust for Ornithology](#)

If you are interested in joining the team monitoring birds in the Swale or would like to join for a taster session, please contact Brian Watmough brianrwat@yahoo.co.uk.

BTO HERONRY CENSUS



In Kent, Grey Herons have been declining during the last ten years and we are not sure why. Looking at the 90 years of counts, heronries clearly come and go and new heronries may have been missed. So, if you see herons nesting away from the regular colonies at Northward Hill, Graveney, Swanscombe, Fordwich, Lydd, Lympe, Eccles Island, Bough Beech, Sevenoaks and Frittenden please let me know.

Another reason to look out for nesting herons is the chance of finding rarer heron species. Little Egret is now well established as a breeding species, but colonies can be surprisingly hard to find as they nest later in the season when trees are in leaf. Purple Heron nested at Dungeness in 2010, Cattle Egrets started breeding in Kent in 2019, Great White Egrets and Spoonbills regularly nest elsewhere in the UK and even Glossy Ibis are now seen widely in Kent.

If you see signs of any of these rarer herons breeding, please do not publicise it but report it, in confidence, either to me as the Kent RBBP representative and Regional Organiser of the Heronry Census, or Barry Wright as the County Recorder.

Brian Watmough

Brianrwat@yahoo.co.uk.

RECORDING BREEDING BIRDS

Every year the KOS receives thousands of records either directly from the KOS website or from platforms like BirdTrack or eBird. Every year authors of species accounts in the Kent Bird Report try to make sense of these reports. For breeding records, the task would be a lot easier if observers gave more information on the bird's behaviour. There are nationally agreed codes for both making sure you do not disturb the birds and to determine if a bird is possibly, probably, or definitely breeding. Please use them. If you are concerned that reporting a breeding bird may lead to disturbance you can report it directly to the Kent Recorder, Barry Wright umbrellabirds66@gmail.com

BIRDWATCHERS' CODE. [Watching birds | The Birdwatchers' Code - The RSPB](#)

1. Avoid disturbing birds and their habitats – the birds' interests should always come first.
2. Be an ambassador for birdwatching.
3. Know the law and the rules for visiting the countryside and follow them.
4. Send your sightings to the County Bird Club (KOS)/Recorder (Barry Wright), Birdtrack website (www.birdtrack.net) or e-Bird website (www.ebird.org).
5. Think about the interests of wildlife and local people before passing on news of a rare bird, especially during the breeding season.

EVIDENCE OF BREEDING

The following breeding codes are used by both BirdTrack and the KOS sightings database. During the breeding season (usually taken as 1 April to 31 July, but some species breed earlier and later!), please try and add the most appropriate code, if possible, to your record submission, especially for less common species.

Non-breeding

F Flying over.

M Observed but suspected to be still on **M**igration.

U Observed but suspected to be sUmmerring non-breeder.

Possible Breeder

H Species observed in breeding season in suitable nesting Habitat.

S Singing male present (or breeding calls heard) in breeding season in suitable breeding habitat.

Probable Breeding

P Pair observed in suitable nesting habitat in breeding season.

T Permanent Territory presumed through registration of territorial behaviour on at least two different days, a week or more apart, at the same place, or many individuals on one day.

D Courtship and Display, judged to be in or near potential breeding habitat.

N Visiting probable Nesting site.

A Agitated behaviour or anxiety calls from adults, suggesting probable presence of nest or young.

I Brood patch on adult, examined in the hand, suggesting Incubation.

B Nest Building or excavating nest hole.

Confirmed breeding.

DD Distraction-Display or injury feigning.

UN Used Nest or eggshells found in current season.

FL Recently Fledged young or downy young. Careful consideration should be given to likely provenance of any fledged juvenile capable of significant geographical movement.

ON Adults entering or leaving nest site in circumstances indicating Occupied Nest.

FF Adult carrying Faecal sac or Food for young.

NE Nest containing Eggs.

NY Nest with Young seen or heard.

RARE BREEDING BIRDS (RBBP SPECIES) IN KENT

The following list gives the typical RBBP species recorded in Kent in recent years. It is very important to submit all confirmed or suspected breeding records of these species, using the recording systems and evidence of breeding codes detailed above. Whilst caution should be exercised when submitting breeding records of any RBBP species, it's important to know breeding locations for the Kent and UK RBBP ornithological archives. Records giving location details (OS grid or 1km square reference) can be marked sensitive on BirdTrack and eBird, whilst there is a now a sensitive button on the KOS sightings database which will prevent public disclosure of the record on the website (although it will be visible to yourself as the record submitter). In many cases, such as broods of ducks and fledged waders, reporting locations is not an issue.

For some species, more robust breeding populations or inaccessible nest sites lessens the effect of disturbance. However, for species marked * the location of breeding birds should not be publicly disclosed or discussed, especially not on social media, as these species are particularly vulnerable to disturbance from unscrupulous birders and photographers, gamekeepers and pigeon fanciers, and egg collectors.

Please submit records of these species directly to the County Bird Recorder – Barry Wright umbrellabirds66@gmail.com or the Kent RBBP rep. Brian Watmough brianrwat@yahoo.co.uk

Common Quail
Garganey
Shoveler
Wigeon
Pintail
Common Pochard
Turtle Dove
Spotted Crake*
Black-necked Grebe*
Black-winged Stilt*
Avocet
Little Ringed Plover
Mediterranean Gull
Little Tern
Eurasian Bittern
Cattle Egret
Little Egret

Honey Buzzard*
Goshawk*
Marsh Harrier
Long-eared Owl*
Short-eared Owl*
Lesser Spotted
Woodpecker
Hobby
Peregrine Falcon*
Golden Oriole*
Bearded Tit
Woodlark
Marsh Warbler*
Savi's Warbler*
Dartford Warbler
Black Redstart
Hawfinch

COLOUR RINGED REDSHANK-REQUEST FOR SIGHTINGS.

The Swale Wader Group [Swale Wader Group - Home \(swalewaders.co.uk\)](http://swalewaders.co.uk) have started a five-year project colour ringing project on Redshank. Redshank numbers are declining nationally and the study aims to provide information on the origins of Redshank wintering in north Kent and the dispersion of our local breeding population. Please report any sightings to Brian Watmough brianrwat@yahoo.co.uk .



Colour ringed Redshank at Birchington (Photo by Michael Baldock)

Surveys

Current surveys are usually posted on the KOS website, for further information please contact Murray Orchard at murray.orchard@live.co.uk

Kent Ornithological Society

Annual General Meeting 4th May 2022 7.30pm

Once again we propose to hold the AGM via zoom.

A link to the meeting is provided below but it will also be e mailed to members nearer the time, along with the agenda, minutes of last year's meeting and nominations to the committee supporting papers

Nominations for the committee should be received by 27th April 2022

There will be an opportunity to ask questions of the committee. If possible these should be e mailed to the Honorary Secretary before the 27th April 2022

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85807367078?pwd=WmdLRjlGZ0pVeXlGbTRlemxjSEh3dz09>

Can you help KOS to continue to grow and develop?

These are busy times for KOS with a number of exciting projects underway or in the pipeline, * in addition to our target of reaching 1,000 members by 2024.

We are looking to add new members to the executive and other committees to help us in these important tasks as well contributing to the day to day running of the Society.

There are currently vacancies on the Executive Committee which we hope to fill at this year's AGM. If you feel that you could contribute then we would like to hear from you.

We are interested in anyone who feels that they can contribute to the work of the committee especially if they have skills or experience in the following areas

- financial or accounting experience to support the work of and deputise for the Treasurer
- database experience to support the work of the archivist to collate and manage our bird records
- communications or website experience to support the membership committee to improve the way we communicate with our members and the public
- organisational skills to develop and run a programme of on line talks on behalf of the Membership Committee

If you don't feel you can help, perhaps you know someone else with the skills or experience that you might like to suggest or recommend?

If you would like more information or would like to discuss these opportunities please contact Andre Farr, Chair andre.farrar57@gmail.com or Chris Roome, Vice Chair chrisroome105@icloud.com

* Current or pipeline projects include

- replacing our master database in which all our bird records are archived
- digitalising our pre 2004 paper records so they can be incorporated into the archive
- creating a new digital Birds of Kent
- developing our website further to develop new features and provide better information to members
- creating a fund to support environmental projects and initiatives around the county
- increasing our influence so we can better represent the interests of bird watchers in the county

We would like to encourage members to contribute items or photographs for inclusion in the newsletter, especially regarding birds in Kent. If you are interested, I am always happy to offer advice or assistance to aspiring authors. To facilitate page composition text needs to be presented as a Word document, photos or illustrations as j-peg files.

Norman McCanch (Editor) : nvmccanch@hotmail.com

We like to keep in touch with all our members, so if you change address, email address or phone numbers please remember to inform our membership secretary, Chris Roome. He can be contacted at:

Chris Roome, Rowland House, Station Rd., Staplehurst TN12 0PY

Tel: 01580 891686 e-mail: chrisroome105@icloud.com

Articles

The Raven at the Foreness (apologies to Ellis Peters)



Raven by Russ Blackman

Simon Mount wrote "Just read the KOS Newsletter and really liked the crows article. The mention of the Raven at Foreness in 1986 brought back memories."

I was sitting with Kevin Lord on the clifftop, just 100 yards East of the sewage works. We were in that little dip, right on the edge which had the grass bank behind that sheltered us from a SW wind. We were laughing and joking, watching the world go by "laughing and jokingusual stuff! Suddenly there was a

thump on the grass bank behind us. In fact it made us jump. We looked back and there staring at us was a Raven, at eye level about 8 feet away! It must have been the thud as it landed.

We had seen Ravens in Scotland and also abroad, never in Kent of course. It was in immaculate plumage with no rings. We stared at the Raven and it stared back at us. It was a moment of mutual shock. We stood up and it did the usual sideways lolling and some hopping along the grass. It seemed totally unconcerned and in fact mildly interested in us. Kevin has always maintained since that it had been attracted by the screaming. After a quick chat and agreeing it must be an escape, we decided we ought to 'rescue' it. I think we were concerned it would not survive or be attacked by something. In hindsight that is quite ridiculous considering the size and power of the species.

Kevin strolled forward and the bird just let him pick it up. At that point it uttered some strange calls and some words "....cor...go.....mind out....". In my notebook it just says a tame Raven picked up. A rather downbeat note, probably because it couldn't be counted. It would be many years before we had a tickable one at Foreness.

We walked with it to our seawatching hide under the old HM Coastguard building. Inside we let it go and it happily perched on the back of a chair. I remember we fed it some strips of raw bacon. Kevin took it home where he had an empty outside pen sometimes used for keeping oiled Guillemots. It did not like it in there and initially became agitated.

A day or so later, Kevin took it down to Sussex where he had located a man who kept 5 Ravens in a large aviary. I believe he may have had something to do with the Tower of London, taking on sick birds.

The whole episode was a bit bizarre and another Foreness classic. Kevin always thinks we should have kept it as a Foreness pet. One day I will tell you about the Red Setter that headed SW 'in off' on a seawatch!

Simon Mount

Great-crested Grebes breeding in mid-winter

Since the start of the pandemic, I have been regularly birding the Fordwich-Westbere marshes. During that time, I have been pleased to note a large number of **Great-crested Grebe** using the lakes in the area but rather disappointed not to find one of the rarer grebes amongst them. So, when I saw a **Great-crested Grebe** with a distinctly smaller companion on the 31st January 2022 I raised my binoculars in anticipation of finally finding a **Red-necked** or **Slavonian Grebe** (even against the light the head-shape ruled out **Black-necked**). However, what swam into my view momentarily completely flummoxed me as it was clearly neither species but as I took in the humbug stripes on the neck all was resolved; it was a young **Great-crested Grebe**! I quickly scanned around and found a second adult grebe with three more youngsters. Hardly what you'd expect to see in mid-winter!



Adult and three young 31st January



Well grown youngster 31st January

Back home I checked in the venerable but still authoritative '**Handbook of British Birds**' (1940) which told me that the species incubation period was 28 days. As the young were clearly several weeks old, the eggs must have been laid in mid-December at the latest.

To put this into context the same reference told me that "*exceptionally full sets* (i.e. a clutch of eggs) *have been found in March*" and '*at times August-September*' but that, although they occasionally breed April, the breeding season is "*.... usually from May onwards ...*".

Reference to the '**Birds of the Western Palearctic**' (1977) pushed the earliest date back a little further as it reports that '*laying in January recently confirmed*' but notes that eggs being laid in February was still '*exceptional*'. Digging further, I also found a reference to **Great-crested Grebes** building a nesting platform on 12th November 1984 ('*British Birds*' 1988 Volume 81 Issue 5) although breeding did not take place.

Hence this would seem to be the first evidence of **Great-crested Grebe** laying eggs in December and raising their young in January. The only question to be resolved is whether this should be regarded as a very late or very early record of breeding.



Adult and one of the youngsters 23rd February

On a subsequent visit some weeks later I found the youngsters practically full grown and thriving.

John Cantelo

SCARCE AND RARE TERNS IN KENT

Sixteen distinct types of terns have been recorded in Kent. I say 'types' as the list includes one either/or category and one distinct subspecies. This article covers the eleven types that are relatively scarce or rare, none of which has ever had more than 30 recorded in Kent in any one year. The terns that I am *not* including are Sandwich, Little, Common, Arctic and Black. I will, however, be including a twelfth tern in case any accidents befall the first eleven.

Help in preparing this article came from Barry Wright and the whole of the KOS Rarity Panel, Geoff Burton, Martin Sutherland, Keith Naylor and Alan Knox.

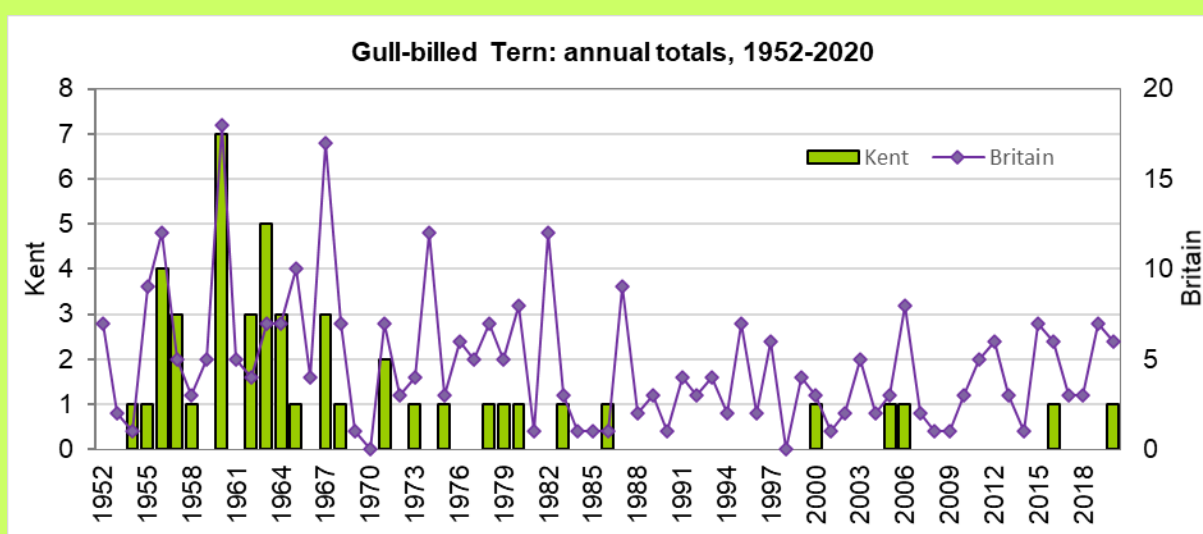
Gull-billed Tern



Gull-billed Tern by Steve Ashton

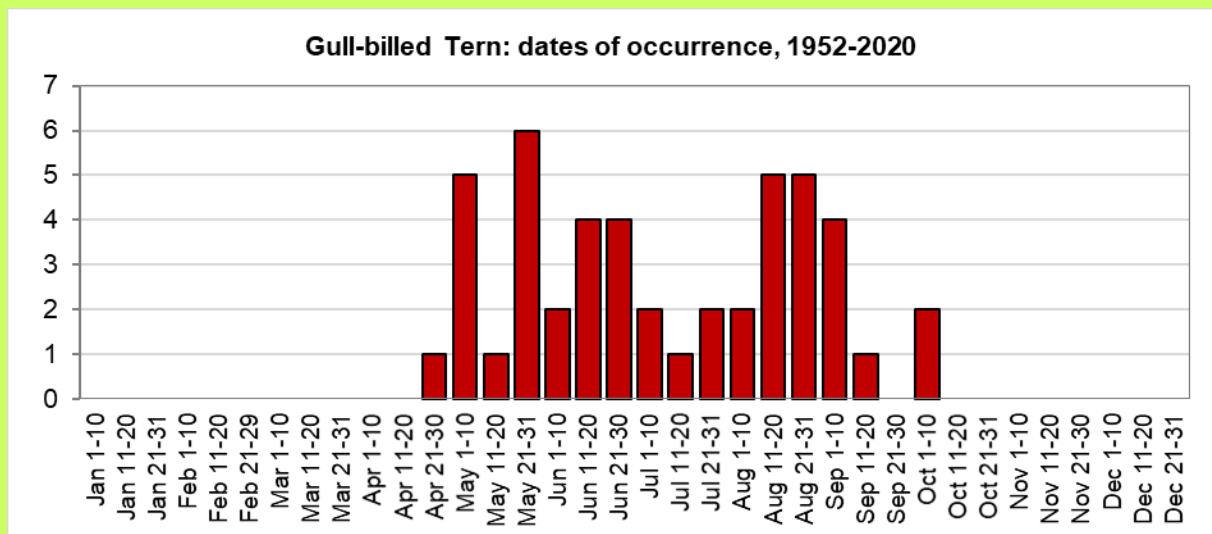
Norman Ticehurst (*History of the Birds of Kent*, 1909) wrote "Like other ornithologists of his time, Plomley [a doctor practising in Lydd who collected many bird specimens and left manuscript notes used by others] was unable to distinguish this species from the commoner Sandwich Tern". That has remained a problem to the present day, and the species has one of the higher rejection rates for records submitted to the British Birds Rarities Committee (BBRC). At close range, identification is straightforward but, at distance when the yellow bill tip of Sandwich Tern becomes invisible, mistakes can be made.

The first for Kent is considered to be one killed probably near Sandwich some time prior to 1824; it was thought to be a young Sandwich Tern but was identified by Dr John Latham into whose collection it went. The next one was shot, probably near Lydd, in June 1839 and two more specimens were collected in the nineteenth century, then a long gap ensued before one was seen in 1940, and more frequent sightings began in the modern era in 1954. The first chart below shows the annual totals in Kent (and also in the whole of Britain from BBRC statistics), while the second chart shows the seasonal pattern.



The frequency of Kent records in the 1950s through to the early 1970s is mirrored by the national statistics, which is not surprising as the majority of sightings at that time were off the Sussex and Kent coasts. No fewer than 30 of the 47 individuals recorded in Kent between 1952 and 2020 were at Dungeness, with nine of the others at Sandwich Bay. Between 1956 and 1971 there were seven records of two or more birds, all at Dungeness; all other Gull-billed Terns records in Kent have been of singletons. The largest groups were three flying E on 25th May 1957, three on 19th June 1960, and three adults and a first-summer bird on 26th June 1963, with the adults still there on the 27th.

The decline in Kent and national records is aligned with major declines in the breeding population in Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands (see J M Sanchez et al., 2004, *Bird Conservation International* 14: 335–351). More widely in Europe, the species is believed to be increasing.



The seasonal pattern shows spring and autumn peaks with some records through the summer. The two earliest Gull-billed Terns in Kent were on 25th April. One was seen feeding over “a fresh marsh in east Kent” on 25th April 1940; it was seen by T C Gregory and my assumption is that the location was Cottington. The other was one feeding at ‘the patch’ at Dungeness on 25th-26th April 1966. There are no other April records but some in the first week of May. An earlier record, at Sandwich Bay on 17th-18th April 1966 was published in the KBR but was not accepted by the British Birds Rarities Committee and so cannot be counted. The latest records in the year, and the only ones after 17th September, were one at Shellness on 1st October 1960 and one at Allhallows on 4th October 1975.

Finally, for Gull-billed Tern: this article covers only to 2020 but I should mention that one was seen near Chartham on 22nd July 2021. This was the furthest inland record for the county, previous instances being one at Hacklinge (barely inland) on 9th August 1954 and one at Stodmarsh on 22nd August 1964.

Caspian Tern

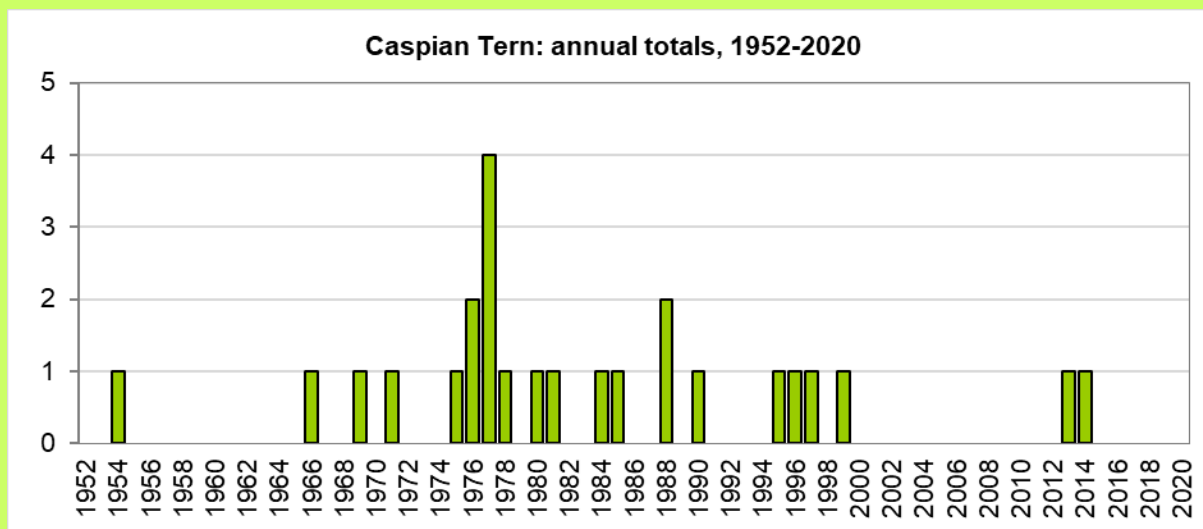


Caspian Tern (wikicommons)

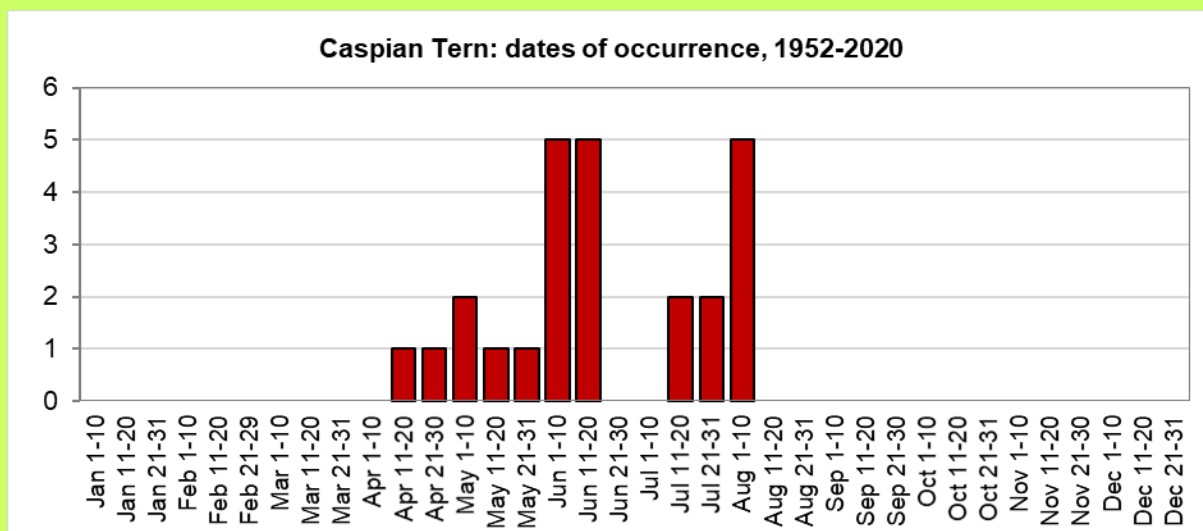
The first accepted record of Caspian Tern for Kent was one that struck the Dungeness lighthouse, at night in a gale, on 9th October 1935 (*British Birds* 34: 223).

A second record in 1935, of one seen near Deal on 15th November, was included by Harrison (*The Birds of Kent*, 1953) and Taylor, Davenport & Flegg (*Birds of Kent*, 1981) but is now regarded as unacceptable (per Historical Rare Birds) on the basis of the inadequate description; it would have been the only November record for Britain. There are also some older records from the nineteenth century and 1914 (see Ticehurst and Harrison) that are generally thought unacceptable.

A further 25 records have occurred from 1954 onwards, as shown in the first chart below. Fifteen of them were in the 1970s and 1980s and the species has become decidedly rare since 2000. Most have been singletons and the only year in which two were seen together was 1977. On 3rd June that year, one flew S at Sandwich Bay in the morning and two later appeared fishing offshore before flying N; while three may have been involved, the record is counted as two birds. On 16th June, two were seen off Margate, assumed to have been different from the Sandwich Bay birds.



Of the 26 individuals, 17 have occurred around the coast from Dungeness to Pegwell Bay, and four between Thanet and Oare Marshes. Six have been seen inland, four of them in the Stour valley (one of which was also seen at Pegwell Bay) and the others at Maidstone and Bough Beech reservoir.



More have been found in spring (16) than in autumn (10); the second chart illustrates the pattern. The earliest by quite a margin was one flying S off Kingsdown on 19th April 1971; the next was one at Bough Beech on 30th April 1995. None have been seen between 18th June and 11th July, and the autumn records are mostly compressed into a short period with the latest in the modern era being on 6th August. Three different birds have occurred on that date: on at Stodmarsh in 1981, one seen from a ferry 20 minutes out of Dover in 1985 and one at Dungeness in 2014. There is also the 9th October record from 1935 (see above) which stands out in a Kentish context, but there are other British records at about that time.

Royal Tern



Royal Tern (wikicommons)

This is the twelfth tern. A bird at one time believed to be a Royal Tern was at Sandwich Bay on 28th-29th July 1965. It was accepted as such by the British Birds Records Committee (*British Birds* 61: 361) as the first for Britain but, from the start, there were concerns about its identity. Even the Sandwich Bay Bird Observatory Report for 1964-65 says “the possibility of Lesser Crested Tern cannot be excluded”. And, indeed, a review many years later (*British Birds* 101: 721) concluded that there were too many anomalous features for the record to stand, and it now is merely a mystery of history.

Lesser Crested/Royal Tern

Two birds placed in this either/or category have been recorded in Kent. They were at Dungeness RSPB reserve on 26th June 1982 and at Copt Point, Folkestone, on 17th September 1984. They seem not to have been formally accepted as such by the British Birds Rarities Committee (BBRC) – they are not in the BBRC statistics – but their existence is mentioned in the commentary of Lesser Crested Tern records in *British Birds* 83: 468, where they are referred to as Lesser Crested or Royal. To add to the confusion, the *Kent Bird Report* for 1982 (p.40) published the first record as a Royal Tern, the 1985 KBR (p.47) said it was Royal/Lesser Crested and the 1989 KBR (p.59) says that they had both been accepted by BBRC as ‘large orange-billed terns’ either Lesser Crested, Royal or Elegant Tern (but I’ve not traced any formal acceptance as such). Furthermore, I see that BirdGuides in their online British & Irish Records Archive treat both as Lesser Crested but, again, I’m not aware of that decision having been made by BBRC.

Lesser Crested Tern



Lesser Crested Tern (wikicommons)

There are two records, seven years apart, of one and the same Lesser Crested Tern in Kent. These were at Dungeness on 6th May 1989 and at Pegwell Bay on 22nd August 1996. They were presumed to have involved the female present on the east coast of England for at least 15 years, and which paired with a Sandwich Tern on the Farne Islands in several years. The first official record of this bird was in Norfolk in August 1983 and the last on the Farnes in July 1997; it's tempting to wonder whether the Lesser Crested/Royal Tern records described above actually were the same individual.

Bridled Tern



Bridled Tern (wikicommons)

There are two acceptable records of this tern of tropical and sub-tropical seas. The first was one found dead and partially decomposed by Guy Mannering at Dungeness on 19th November 1931. It was an adult male, moulting from summer to winter plumage (*British Birds* 28: 91). This was the first of just 25 examples of this species found in Britain, and the latest in the year by over a month. It was identified as belonging to the race which inhabits the Red Sea and Persian Gulf.

The other Bridled Tern seen in Kent was one feeding in the Thames at Swanscombe on 2nd June 1991. The two observers who found it, Paul Larkin and Barry Wright (now chairman of the KOS Rarity Panel), had gone to the area to see a White-winged Black Tern. As they say, one good tern deserves another.

Ticehurst (*History of the Birds of Kent*, 1909) mentioned an earlier record, of one said to have been captured on a lightship in the Thames estuary in September 1875. It was not clear which lightship it was, and most listings have treated the record as though it belonged to Essex. In any case, later examination of the specimen revealed that it was moulting from winter to summer plumage and thus could not have been obtained as stated (*British Birds* 28: 94). The record is now regarded as unacceptable.

Sooty Tern



Sooty Tern (wikicommons)

There is only one acceptable Kent record of Sooty Tern. This involved an adult seen at Dungeness on 9th July 1984. It had been seen at Rye Harbour, in Sussex, earlier the same day. In some listings, however, the first Sooty Tern for Kent was one seen by J R Tart, one of the pre-war 'watchers' at Dungeness, on 29th June 1935 (*British Birds* 29: 187). This has been included on the online KOS Kent List but there are doubts. Harrison (*The Birds of Kent*, 1953) regarded the record as substantiated but it was omitted, without comment, by Taylor, Davenport & Flegg (*Birds of Kent*, 1981). It seems likely that the latter authors thought the details insufficient to support specific identification. The entirety of the bird's description in *British Birds* is "Mr. Tart saw its very dark upper plumage and light underside; he noted that it was larger than the Common Terns, but with a shorter tail and a slower wing beat." The KOS Rarity Panel has recently (January 2022) confirmed that the record is not acceptable.

Ticehurst (*History of the Birds of Kent*, 1909) mentions a specimen then in Dover Museum, of unknown origin, which everyone has thought unacceptable. Harrison gives details of two supposedly shot at Jury's Gap in April 1914 and seen 'in the flesh' by some of the usual suspects including H W Ford-Lindsay. These were thrown out as Hastings Rarities in the 1962 *British Birds* review and fortunately, if there are still believers in the Hastings Rarities, Jury's Gap was transferred to Sussex many years ago and isn't in the KOS area – so they're not our concern anyway.

Roseate Tern



Roseate Tern (wikicommons)

Ticehurst (*History of the Birds of Kent*, 1909) knew of only two unsatisfactory hearsay records. The first supposedly acceptable record in Harrison (*The Birds of Kent*, 1953) was of a male shot near Lydd on 26th August 1915 (*British Birds* 9: 158) but I am not entirely convinced by this record (and it was omitted without comment from *Birds of Kent*, 1981). The species was not rare enough to have been considered as a potential Hastings Rarity but it was reported by H W Ford-Lindsay who was involved, for better or worse, in many of the records later expunged in the 1962 *British Birds* review (see Sooty Tern above). Also, the specimen – in late August – was said to have “a beautiful rosy tint” on the underparts; this is unlikely at that season.

It's probable that Roseate Terns were passing through Kent, but overlooked, during the periods reported by Ticehurst and Harrison. However, once the 1915 and earlier records are discounted, the first for Kent becomes two seen at Dungeness on 1st May 1924, with one on 21st May the same year. They were then seen in several more years before the war.

Taylor, Davenport & Flegg (*Birds of Kent*, 1981) summarise the Roseate Tern's status during 1952-1977 as “regular passage migrant and summer visitor in very small numbers”. Its status in the early twenty-first century is little different. They also mention the summer records at Dungeness during 1924-1938 but conclude that no proof of breeding was established. That was modified in the 1981 Kent Bird Report (KBR), hidden away in the amendments on p.64, saying “singles were seen in the Dungeness ternery in many years between 1924-38. One-two pairs were present in 1931 and annually between 1934-37, and single pairs were known to breed in 1934 and 1937”. I believe that information came from H G Alexander (*Seventy Years of Birdwatching*, 1974), although my reading is that proof of breeding was not obtained in 1934 but was strongest in 1931 and especially 1937.

The species again bred at Dungeness during 1976-1984, generally with one pair present though with two in 1980 and four in 1981. The latter was the most productive year with four young raised. There was again one pair in 1990, though that was unsuccessful and no further nesting has been reported.

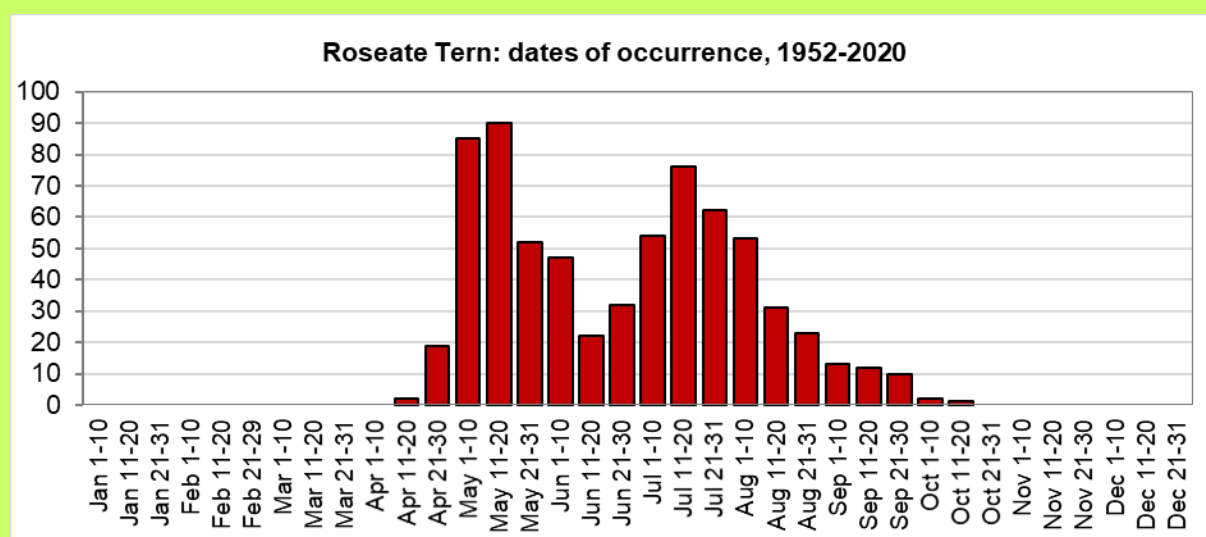
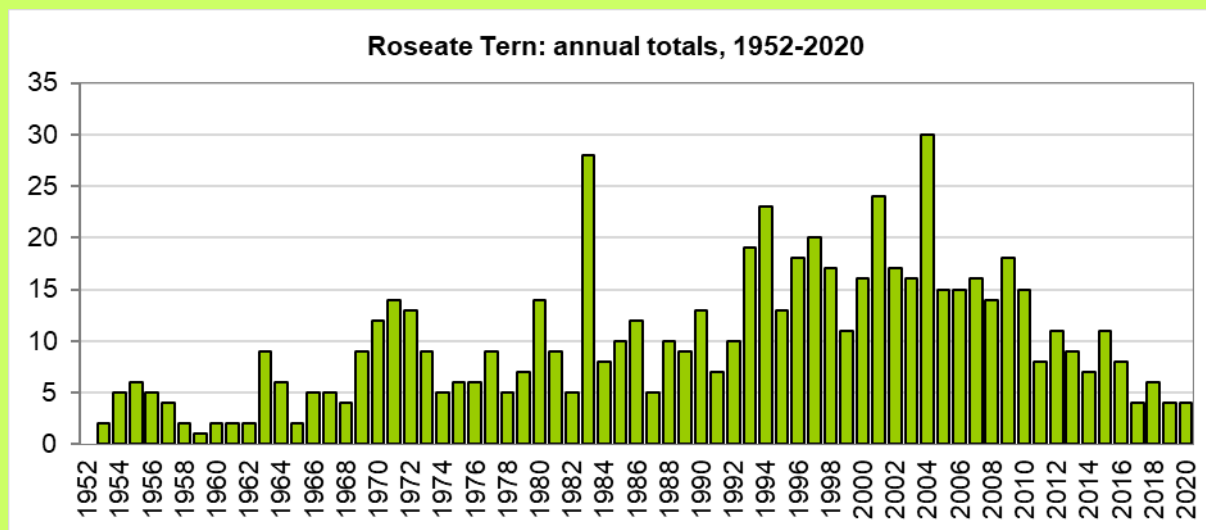
The estimates of numbers seen each year during 1952-2020 are approximate for several reasons:

- In some years, KBRs summarise occurrence over a period. For example, a report may say “up to three offshore on 19 dates in period” without indicating how many individuals were thought to have been involved.
- Similarly, when records are specified more precisely, it's not possible to know whether birds seen on successive or nearby dates were the same or different. Sometimes, but not always, the KBRs do suggest what may have been thought, but it's still a matter of judgement as to what was most likely.
- In early years, knowledge of tern identification was not as well developed as now and, during the 1960s, there was a tendency for some terns at Dungeness to be misidentified as Roseate. This was corrected by Taylor, Davenport & Flegg (*Birds of Kent*, 1981) but without specifying which records were still

thought to have been Roseate – so again I've had to use my judgement (or rather, to be honest, guessed).

- During the period when there were breeding or summering birds at Dungeness, the reports may not mention others that passed through the area as migrants.

Despite these provisos, I feel that the patterns shown in the charts below do summarise the trends fairly well. The rise in annual totals from the 1950s to 1970s is probably related to the growing numbers of birdwatchers. The continuing rise after that, I suggest, is partly connected with improved identification skills and the growth of dedicated seawatching. From about 2000 there has clearly been a decline, with the average annual total during 2016-2020 being 5.2 and contrasting with 17.7 during 1996-2000. Complete data for 2021 are not yet available but I am aware of only one in that year (Pegwell Bay, 31st July).



The seasonal pattern of occurrence shows Roseate Tern to be primarily a passage migrant with peak numbers in the first half of May and the second half of July. The earliest in the year, seen from a boat off Dungeness, was on 19th April 1978; there have been several others during 20th-22nd April in various years. In autumn, there is quite a long 'tail' of records extending into October, with the latest being singles at Dungeness on 9th October 1993 and 12th October 2000.

The recent decline in frequency in Kent runs counter to the trend in the small British breeding population, which has increased from about 60 pairs in the early 1990s to 124 pairs in 2019 (Rare Breeding Birds Panel). The longer-term trend in Britain and the North Atlantic generally has been one of steep decline, however, and the species is largely restricted to very few breeding locations. Worldwide, the population and range are large and the IUCN regard the species of 'Least Concern' whereas it is Red-listed in the UK.

Forster's Tern



Forsters Tern (wikicommons)

There are two Kent records of this North American species. The first was an adult seen by M J & J P Pointon at Westbrook on 11th October 1986. The second was a first-winter bird present for some time at Seabrook, even landing on the beach, on 26th November 2016. Presumably the same bird had been seen on the Stour estuary on the Suffolk/Essex border on the 19th-21st November.

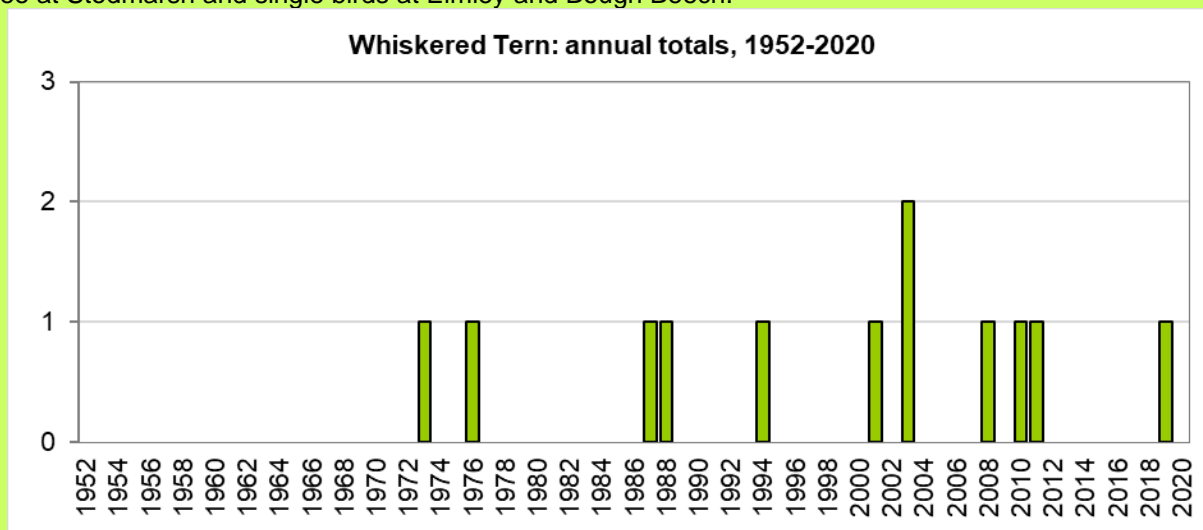
The Seabrook individual was the twenty-first to be recorded in Britain from the first in 1980. Up to 2020, no more had occurred.

Whiskered Tern

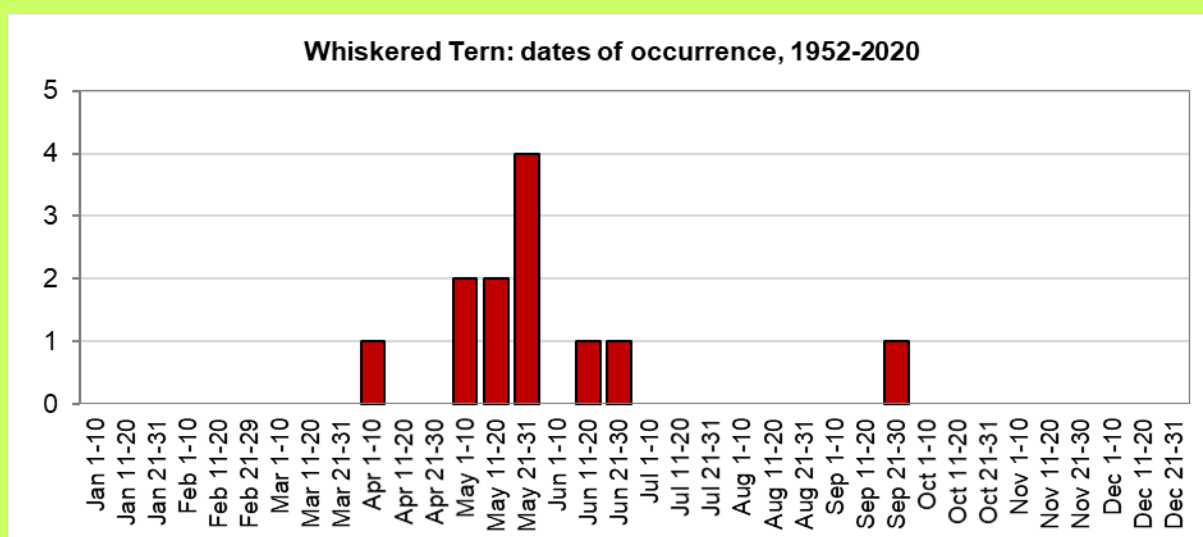


Whiskered Tern (wikicommons)

The first acceptable Whiskered Tern for Kent was found by Geoff Harris and Eric Parrinder at Bough Beech reservoir on 17th June 1973. Including that one, there have now been twelve examples recorded in the county, as shown in the first chart below. The one year with two was 2003, when there was an adult at Dungeness in May and a first-year bird on 26th-27th September, the only autumn record for Kent so far. Seven of the twelve have occurred at Dungeness, with three at Stodmarsh and single birds at Elmley and Bough Beech.



The first of the eleven spring records was one at Elmley on 10th April 2011. That is an unusually early date but there were several in Britain that year in the first half of April including one on Benbecula on the 5th-8th and birds in Dorset and Kent on the 10th; those appear to be the only British records prior to 14th April. The remaining spring Kent records span the period 5th May (one on the Dungeness RSPB reserve in 1994) to 21st June (one at Stodmarsh in 1987; *British Birds* says it was an adult but the KBR said first-summer).



Going back to earlier times, the dread Hastings Rarities are served up again, with added confusion as a garnish. Ticehurst (*History of the Birds of Kent*, 1909) mentions, without confirming that the bird was in Kent, an adult female said to have been shot “between Rye Harbour and Dungeness” on 14th August 1905, four others having been shot in Sussex earlier in the month. Harrison (*The Birds of Kent*, 1953) says that the Kentish example out of the five shot was a male, obtained on 10th August 1905. The *British Birds* review of Hastings Rarities lists six for 1905, five on 9th August ‘shot at’ Pevensey, Rye or Rye Harbour, all in Sussex, and one on 10th August at Pevensey, Sussex – and thus with no mention of Kent or the 14th. When one reaches this point, the tendency is to think: well, they’re all rubbish, so who cares? Let’s move on to the other Hastings record: two (Harrison calls them a pair) said to have been shot near Lydd in May 1918.

White-winged Black Tern



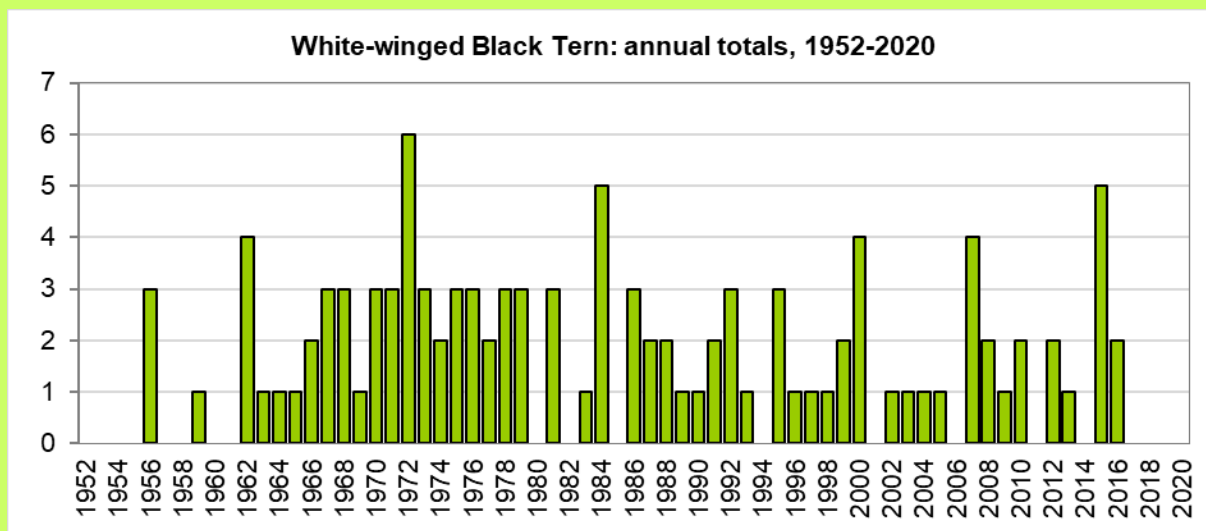
White-winged Black Tern (wikicommons)

The first two White-winged Black Terns for Kent were seen by Colonel Willoughby Verner as he was 'lying up' on Wicks Wall, on the Sussex boundary, on 30th May 1891 (Ticehurst, *History of the Birds of Kent*, 1909). Colonel Verner was an interesting man of varied interests and skills. He was an expert in military topography, developing field sketching methods and having a compass named after him; he was in the Boer War and went on to be the official historian of the Rifle Brigade. Living in Gibraltar, he studied the local birdlife and provided the illustrations for Howard Irby's *The Ornithology of the Straits of Gibraltar* (1895). Also, while there in 1911, he was one of the first to investigate and study palaeolithic cave paintings. How many of us can claim such achievements?

Anyway, his record has stood the test of time, unlike the next five records between 1904 and 1922 which are consigned to the dustbin of Hastings Rarities. They included a flock at the Open/Oppen/Hoppen Pits at Dungeness of which five were supposedly shot.

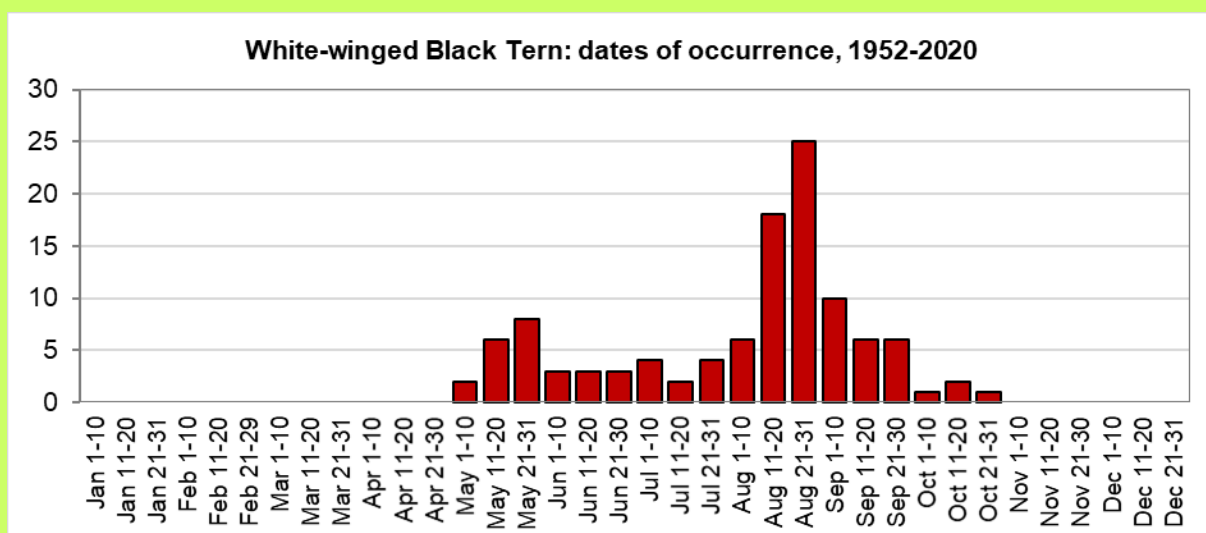
Acceptable records resumed with one at Dungeness on 17th May 1937 and one offshore between Sandgate and Hythe on 15th May 1951. The latter was seen by Rear Admiral Sir Henry Woodward, but you will be relieved to hear that I do not know anything about him. From 1952 to 2020, 110 White-winged Black Terns are recorded for Kent, as shown in the first chart below.

As with so many rarities (not to mention commoner birds), there are signs of a decline in frequency of occurrence since the 1970s and 1980s. The annual average during 1970-1989 was 2.4 but it was only 1.4 during 1990-2019. The peak years were 1972 (six: an adult in early June and five young birds in July-September), 1984 (five: an adult in June and four young birds in August), and 2015 (five: two adults in May, an adult in July and two young birds in August).



During those peak years, all of the birds (except one in 1984 at Grain) were at Dungeness. So, it will not be a surprise that of the 114 individuals recorded in Kent, 74 (65%) have been at Dungeness or nearby at The Wicks or Lydd. The remaining birds have been seen around the coast and up the Thames estuary, and occasionally inland (e.g. eight at Stodmarsh/ Grove Ferry and three at Bough Beech).

The second chart shows the seasonal pattern of occurrence. Birds can occur any time from May to October but there is a pronounced peak in the second half of August. The earliest record in the year was one at Dungeness RSPB Reserve on 6th May 2000 and the latest was one at Bough Beech reservoir on 26th-30th October 1976. A little under half of records have involved birds being present on a single date, but some stay much longer. On nine occasions, birds have remained for fourteen days or more, the maximum being 33 days by one at Dungeness from 11th August to 12th September 1972.



One of the interesting (or is it frustrating?) parts of pulling together information for accounts such as this is that various discrepancies in the records are uncovered. Examples affecting White-winged Black Tern include the following. One at Dungeness in August 1968 is said by the KBR to have stayed to the 24th but the *British Birds* entry gives the dates 5th-16th August (we have a policy of following BB for species considered by their records committee). One at Lade Pits and Dungeness reserve in June 1991 appears in the KBR but seems not to have been submitted to BBRC, so can't be counted. For August 2007, when the species was no longer a BBRC rarity, the KBR gives different information for one at Bough Beech from the online Kent List – is one or the other correct, or were there actually two? All these things take time to resolve, and in some cases may now be so long in the past that we cannot be sure of the facts.

These accounts, therefore, are not perfect but small imperfections probably don't affect the overall patterns and trends of occurrence. And, of course, not every rare or scarce bird is seen. We only have to look at the tracks of satellite-tagged eagles to realise that a huge bird can cross our county without being reported. The chances of terns or warblers being missed are far higher. And, it has to be admitted, some genuine sightings of rare species end up being lost to the record because they are not adequately documented.

American Black Tern



American Black Tern (wikicommons)

As I mentioned at the beginning, Black Tern is too common to feature in this article, but the American subspecies *Chlidonias niger surinamensis* is sufficiently distinct to be included (and it is one of the subspecies for which records are considered by the British Bird Rarities Committee).

There has been one record in Kent, of a juvenile on Dungeness RSPB reserve in 2018. It was found on 21st August by Stephen Message with the identification backed up by David Walker and fortunately remained there until 30th August, giving many people the chance to see it. An article describing the bird and its finding is in the *Kent Bird Report* 2018 pp.242-243. It was the sixth to be found in Britain, the first having been in 1999.

Andrew Henderson

Photo Essay : Marsh Tit

One of the regular features on bird related social media in the county is a photo with the query “is this a Marsh tit or a Willow Tit?”. This species pair is notoriously difficult to separate at times, although within the county and the wider Southeast it is a trifle academic as Willow Tit has been effectively extinct in Southeast England for over a decade. Even so, people ask the question, and it can be a difficult decision, most of the suite of characteristics are ambiguous and even the calls need a degree of familiarity to instil any confidence. I have been fortunate to live at times where both species occurred in the same area of woodland, albeit separated by subtleties of niche, but I do occasionally struggle with a first encounter on my infrequent trips home to West Wales.

Amongst the most reliable character is a relatively new one; Marsh tits frequently show a prominent pale spot on the cutting edge of the upper mandible close to the gape. It sounds vague, but a good view and a better photograph shows this character well. Recently Bob Knight took an excellent series of pictures of Marsh tits which are quite enlightening.

Bob wrote “ There was good activity from Marsh Tits in Bredhurst Woods this morning, mainly the 'pylon valley' area. The birds were fairly vocal especially the usual 'pitchoo' call, making them easier to locate. Five were seen. One pair spent much time presumably extracting seeds from the prickly heads of Burdock. Another held a large seed down with the feet and hammered it with its bill until the contents could be extracted”.

The accompanying photos show some key features which combined give a fair degree of confidence in the identification of this species.



This photo shows the pale spot on cutting edge at the base of the bill. It also shows the neat bib and glossy black cap.



Here the pale spot is still visible and also the generally pale flanks and pinkish-grey mantle. A pale wing panel can be a useful field mark for Willow tit, but this photo shows that pale outer fringes on the secondaries are also present in Marsh tit, though they are less prominent on the closed wing.



This photo shows that angle of view and lighting can make the dark cap appear dull, resembling a Willow tit. It is always prudent to watch these birds for as long as possible to confirm identification features.



A feature not often seen in the field but very useful for birds in the hand is shown in this final photograph. Notice that the outer tail feather is almost as long as the longest feathers, giving a generally square-ended tail. Willow Tits have the two outer tail feathers visibly shorter, giving a more rounded tail shape. This is very hard to see in the field.

Bob Knight

KENT BIRD SIGHTINGS FOR JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2022 - Chris Hindle

*Species printed in **red** require descriptions or good quality photographs to be accepted by the British Birds Rarities Committee (species in capital letters) or the KOS Rarities Committee (species in lower case). The results of these committees' deliberations are regularly published on the KOS website.*

WEATHER

The weather at the beginning of **January KENT** was very mild, with a strong south-westerly flow, but from the 4th it was colder with night frost after which it turned milder again around mid-month. Rainfall during the month was less than a third of average with only 20.5mm of rain falling at Bishopstone. It was also the third sunniest January since 1919.

The weather at the start of **February** was quite settled and mild, but it soon became much more unsettled with a particularly stormy spell between the 16th and 21st which included three named storms. Storm Eunice on the 19th produced winds of 78 mph at Lydd and 77 mph at Langdon Cliffs and also blew down one of the chimneys at the Isle of Grain Power Station.

PARTRIDGE TO WILDFOWL

A wintering **Quail** was flushed at Sandwich Bay on Jan 15th and 16th and then seen again on Feb 2nd.

The **Black Brant** first seen in the Reculver/Minnis Bay area during December was still there on Feb 25th and was joined by another bird on Jan 22nd and from Feb 13th-25th. Single birds were also recorded at Hoo from Jan 12th-14th, Oare Marshes from Jan 22nd-23rd and Swalecliffe on Feb 7th. During January and February single **Pale-bellied Brent Geese** were seen at Reculver, Minnis Bay, Swalecliffe and Leysdown-on-Sea with two at Minnis Bay on Feb 25th.

As many as to 360 **Russian White-fronted Geese** were recorded from Swale NNR with up to 327 at South Swale LNR, 118 at Worth Marshes and 120 at Lade and with smaller numbers seen at Dungeness, Brooksend, Minnis Bay, Leysdown-on-Sea, Capel Fleet, East Peckham, Allhallows, Seaton, Cliffe Pools, Oare Marshes, North Foreland, Swalecliffe, and Foreness.

During January and February up to 32 **Barnacle Geese** were present at Sandwich Bay.



Barnacle Goose by Terry Laws

A **Pink-footed Goose** was seen at Westenhanger from Jan 22nd-26th and a **Tundra Bean Goose** was seen at Sandwich Bay on Jan 4th and 9th with two there on the Jan 6th and one at Dungeness RSPB on Jan 31st.

During January and the first part of February up to 48 **Bewick's Swans** were seen at Walland Marsh and Dungeness with as many as eight at Worth Marshes, Cliffe Pools, Capel Fleet, St Mary's Marsh, Grove Ferry and Worth Marshes.

A **Whooper Swan** was seen at Capel Fleet from Jan 4th-9th and there were up to seven at Walland Marsh from Jan 4th-Feb 27th with two at Sandwich Bay, one at Cliffe Pools on Jan 9th and two flying W at West Dartford on Jan 17th. Five were also reported from Kenardington on Feb 20th.

As many as 20 **Egyptian Geese** were seen at Bough Beech, Foreness, Dungeness RSPB, Furnace Pond, Westbere, Cliffe, Conningbrook, Godmersham, Swalecliffe, Collard's Lake, Belgar Farm and Swanscombe Marshes with up to 28 **Mandarins** recorded at Bedgebury with smaller counts at Bough Beech, Thornden Woods, Bysing Wood and Willop Basin.

A male **Ring-necked Duck** seen at Little Murston NR from Feb 19th-23rd was the twenty seventh record of this species for the County.



Ring-necked Duck by Barry Wright

The male **Scaup** first seen at New Hythe in 2021 was still there on Feb 27th whilst one was reported from Cliffe Pools on Jan 5th and Feb 26th with a male reported from North Foreland on Jan 15th and a female at Murston on Feb 14th.

During January and February up to six **Velvet Scoter** were seen at DBO, Sandwich Bay, Seasalter, Tankerton, Bockhill, Herne Bay, Reculver, Botany Bay, North Foreland and Foreness.

A red-head **Smew** was reported from Dungeness RSPB from Jan 1st to the end of February.

During January and February as many as 13 **Goosanders** were recorded at Bough Beech, West Hythe, Conningbrook, Lade, Chartwell NR, Dungeness RSPB, Fordwich, New Hythe, Greatstone, North Foreland, Sevenoaks WR, Swalecliffe, Cliffe Pools, Hever Castle, Bedgebury and Reculver.

NIGHTJAR TO WADERS

During January single **Slavonian Grebes** were recorded at Swalecliffe on the 1st and 5th, North Foreland on the 5th, in the Swale on the 7th with two at Dungeness RSPB on the 18th and 19th. In February one was reported from North Foreland from the 13th-16th with one at Riverside CP on the 14th.

During these two months a maximum count of 11 **Purple Sandpipers** was made at Broadstairs, Dover Harbour, Margate Harbour, Minnis Bay, Hythe, Folkestone Harbour, Dumpton Gap and Grain.



Purple Sandpipers by Mike Gould

In January and February up to five **Jack Snipe** were recorded from Romney Salts, Kennington, Chislet Marshes, Willop Sewage Works, Northward Hill and DBO and during these two months, 12 **Spotted Redshank** were reported from Greatstone-on-Sea with single birds seen at Pegwell Bay, Minster, Riverside CP, Scotney, Murston, Otterham, Harty, Milton Creek and Cliffe Pools.

GULLS TO SHEARWATERS

Single **Little Gulls** were seen at Oare Marshes, Bough Beech, Chillenden, Botolph's Bridge, North Foreland and DBO.



Little Gull by Phil Smith

A **Glaucous Gull** was reported flying W at Folkestone on Jan 2nd whilst a second winter **Iceland Gull** was seen at Dungeness from Jan 4th-10th and also from Feb 8th until the end of the month.

During January and February up to five **Caspian Gulls** were recorded from Dungeness, Sandwich Bay, Pegwell Bay, St Margaret's-at-Cliffe, Deal, Worth, Dartford, Walmer Beach, Seasalter and Shakespeare Beach and one or two **Yellow-legged Gulls** were seen at DBO, Reculver, Faversham Creek, Oare Marshes and Dover Harbour.

The first **Sandwich Tern** of the spring was seen at Lydd on Feb 19th.

During January and February up to three **Great Skuas** were seen at DBO, Sandwich Bay and North Foreland and a **Pomarine Skua** was reported flying S at North Foreland on Feb 13th.

The **Black Guillemot** first seen at Swalecliffe in 2021 was still there intermittently until Jan 25th.

One or two **Black-throated Divers** were reported from Sandwich Bay, Cliffe Pools, Seasalter, North Foreland, Swalecliffe, Westgate and Reculver and as many as three **Great Northern Divers** were recorded at Reculver, Swalecliffe, Tankerton, Hampton, North Foreland, Shellness and Dover Harbour.



Great Northern Diver by Peter Maton

A **Sooty Shearwater** was reported flying S at North Foreland on Feb 15th.

Up to four **Shags** were seen at Dover, Reculver, Bockhill, DBO, Samphire Hoe, Swalecliffe, Chatham, Ramsgate Harbour, Sandwich Bay, Sandgate, Foreness, North Foreland, Dover Harbour and Folkestone Harbour.

WHITE STORK TO WOODPECKERS

The **White Stork** first seen on Nov 28th was still at Worth Marshes at the end of February. One also flew over Kingsdown on Jan 21st.



© Steve Young

Glossy Ibis by Steve Young

The two long staying **Glossy Ibises** were still at Dungeness RSPB at the end of February with single birds also seen at Swalecliffe, Oare Marshes, Allhallows, Deal, Grain, Pegwell Bay and Cliffe Pools. In addition, 11 Glossy Ibis were seen at Sandwich Bay for 20 minutes on Jan 14th before they flew off north.

A **Spoonbill** was seen at Swanscombe Marshes on Jan 4th and 5th and at Cliffe Pools on Jan 12th. There was also one at Stodmarsh on Feb 27th.

No **Bitterns** were recorded in the Stour Valley during January for the first time in 22 years but there was a record of one at Dungeness RSPB. In February, however, one was seen at Elmley on the 1st and another at Stodmarsh on the 6th.

As many as eight **Cattle Egrets** were seen at Plumpudding Stables, Dungeness RSPB, Oare Marshes, Cliffe Pools, Stoke Marshes, Seaton, Ickham, Conyer, Luddenham, Wickhambreaux, Littlebourne, Bekesbourne, Stoke, Fairfield and Elmley.

In January and February up to three **Great White Egrets** were seen at Dungeness RSPB, Whetsted GPs, Grove Ferry/Stodmarsh, Chislet Marshes, Seaton, Elmley, Swale NNR, West Hythe, Tonbridge, Sandwich Bay, Donkey Street, Lullingstone Castle, Bedgebury, Westbere, Bishopsbourne and Willop Basin.

Up to four **Hen Harriers** were seen at Grove Ferry/Stodmarsh with one or two at Sandwich Bay, Seasalter, Worth Marshes, Walland Marsh, Swale NNR, Graveney Marshes, Leysdown-on-Sea, Westbere, Victory Wood, Castle Coote, Cheyne Court, Capel Fleet, Shellness, Bekesbourne, Appledore and Oare Marshes.



Red Kite by Ian Stewart

During these two months as many as five **Red Kites** were seen at Bough Beech, New Hythe, Godmersham, Stour Valley, Chartham Mill, Newnham, Swalecliffe, Stalisfield Green, Kingsdown, Shellness and Knockholt.

A **Rough-legged Buzzard** was reported from Swale NNR on Jan 1st.

In January and February, between 25 and 28 **Short-eared Owls** were recorded on Sheppey with up to four seen at Reculver, Seasalter, Conyer, Graveney, Swanscombe, North Foreland and Sandwich Bay and single **Long-eared Owls** were seen at Elmley, Hythe and Reculver Marshes.

FALCONS TO HIRUNDINES

One or two **Merlins** were seen at Hythe, Reculver, Bromhey Farm, Chartham, Elmley, Stodmarsh, Swalecliffe, Worth Marshes, Oare Marshes, Bough Beech and Cooling Marshes.

Up to six **Ravens** were seen at Bough Beech, Samphire Hoe, Tonbridge, Reculver Marshes, Minnis Bay, Graveney, North Foreland, Bekesbourne, Sene Wood, Seabrook and Newnham.

A **Waxwing** was photographed in a Ramsgate garden on Jan 9th and a **Woodlark** flew W at Foreness on Feb 22nd and was seen again on the 25th.



Shorelark by Alex Perry

Up to seven wintering **Shorelarks** were still present at Leysdown-on-Sea at the end of February.

A **Swallow** was reported sitting on overhead wires at Old Romney on Jan 14th.

WARBLERS TO WHEATEARS

The **HUME'S WARBLER** first seen at Bockhill on Dec 22nd was still there on Feb 27th and the **Dusky Warbler** first seen at Fordwich on Dec 13th was there on Feb 23rd

. Single **Chiffchaffs** at Kingsdown and Lower Hope Point on Feb 26th were the first migrants of the year.

Single **Siberian Chiffchaffs** were seen in West Brook Valley on Jan 21st and at Minster Sewage Works from Jan 27th-Feb 5th.



Dusky Warbler by Jonathan Dodds

The **Eastern Lesser Whitethroat** first seen at Sandwich Bay on Dec 6th was still there on Jan 3rd. During January and February and one or two **Dartford Warblers** were seen at Reculver, Samphire Hoe, DBO, Uplees, Oare Marshes and Sandwich Bay.

As many as four **Firecrests** were seen at Bockhill, Denge Wood, Oldstairs, Collard's Lake, North Foreland, Canterbury, Enbrook Park, Adisham, Godmersham and Shuart.

During these two months up to four **Black Redstarts** were seen at Dungeness with one or two at Samphire Hoe, North Foreland, Reculver, Palm Bay and Dover Harbour.

SPARROWS TO BUNTINGS

Up to 13 **Water Pipits** were recorded from the Grove Ferry/Stodmarsh/Westbere area with smaller numbers at Worth Marshes, Seaton, North Foreland, Swanscombe Marshes, Dungeness RSPB, Minster Marshes, Dartford Marshes and Oare Marshes.



Hawfinch by Denis Tayler

As many as 19 **Hawfinches** were reported from Shadoxhurst, Westerham, Painter's Forstal, Eastling, Challock and Bedgebury Pinetum whilst a **Crossbill** was reported from Denge Wood on Feb 3rd.

In January and February one or two **Lapland Buntings** were seen at Sandwich Bay, Reculver, Fan Bay and Shellness and up to nine **Snow Buntings** were recorded from Sandwich Bay, Bishopstone, Dungeness, Seasalter, Langdon Hole, Dover, Conyer, Shellness, Graveney Marshes and Folkestone.

DBO = Dungeness Bird Observatory **BBRC** = British Birds Rarities Committee
RSPB = Royal Society for the Protection of Birds **BOU** = British Ornithological Union
"The Patch" = the warm water outflow from Dungeness Nuclear Power Station
NNR=National Nature Reserve **NR**=Nature Reserve **LNR**=Local Nature Reserve
FC = Field Centre **WR** = Wildlife Reserve **GP** = Gravel Pits **CP** = Country Park

CONTRIBUTORS

This summary owes much to the contributors to the various sites in "Latest Sightings" on the KOS Website at www.kentos.org.uk, KOSForum, Twitter and the RBA Hotline.

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Please send records for this review to Chris Hindle at christopherhindle@hotmail.com

Records sent to me may not all be used for this report as I try to extract the more interesting sightings, however all records are equally important and I forward them to the appropriate Area Recorders who enter them all onto the KOS database.

Please also send to me any descriptions or photos of rare birds so that they may be assessed by the relevant committee.

The following 2021 and 2022 KOS Rarities have been accepted by the KOS Rarities Panel based on published photos or from descriptions submitted.

Black Guillemot	Swalecliffe	Nov 4 th -Jan 25 th
Siberian Chiffchaff	Swalecliffe	Nov 12 th -Dec 11 th
Siberian Chiffchaff	Fordwich	December 14 th -31 st
Dusky Warbler	Fordwich	December 13 th -31 st
Eastern Lesser Whitethroat (ringed)	Sandwich Bay	Dec 6 th , &19/12&3/1
Bluethroat	Bockhill	October 10 th
Black Brant (2 on 21/1 &13-25/2)	Reculver	2021-February 19 th
Black Brant	Hoo	January 12 th -20 th
Black Brant	Oare Marshes	January 22 nd -23 rd
Black Brant	Swalecliffe	February 7 th
Dusky Warbler	Fordwich	2021-February 23 rd

Fifty Years Ago

Serin



Serin by H Gronvold (PDI)

Serin -- The only report was of one at Ash-next-Sandwich on Mar. 24th (WGH)

KBR 1972

I have put together a series of short (running time approximately 20 minutes depending on title) films showing some of the better known birding sites around South East Kent and many of the birds that are found there.

The titles can be downloaded here:-

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All proceeds from the sale of these films via the KOS newsletter will go to the
Emergency Disasters Committee - Ukraine Humanitarian Appeal
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