

KOS News

The Newsletter of the Kent Ornithological Society

Number 543 March 2023



Ring-necked Duck by Tim Gutsell

- News & Announcements •
- Burnt Geese •
- Scandinavian Rock Pipit • A Trip to Tring •
- Bird Sightings – JANUARY - FEBRUARY 2023 •
- Fifty Years Ago •

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I am writing this at my desk looking out onto the hedge that runs behind my pond. It is a bright but spectacularly squally day, with most of the garden bird life seeking shelter and avoiding my bird feeders. All except one smart male Blackcap picking at a fat ball in the shelter of an ivy thicket. He has been here two or three days now, but is he a recent arrival from overseas or a wandering, wintering bird? It is hard to be sure, both Blackcaps and Chiffchaffs are regular winter birds in East Kent and my first Chiff was on January the sixth and one or two were present even through the coldest weather. It would be rather nice if he found a mate and took up residence in the "Blackcap nest box", a patch of bramble and nettles at the bottom of the veg garden where they have bred in the past.

We have a bumper newsletter this month, with an epic analysis of Branta Geese revealing all sorts of puzzles and an interesting report on an exclusive visit to the BM(NH) Tring from Chris Cox.

I have been fortunate to spend a good deal of time at Tring in the past. My early training as a taxidermist has allowed me to donate many specimens to the collection from birds found moribund or dead. Probably the most spectacular consignment was a remarkably small frozen box containing a Purple Heron and a Little Egret, both found in the county by KOS members and passed to me for scrutiny and preservation! Access to the collections at Tring is by appointment only, largely due to limitations of space and specialist staff, but genuine requests for assistance are usually kindly met, these days the cost of transport is the greater obstacle for me!

Good birding

Norman

News and announcements

AVIAN INFLUENZA GUIDANCE

Avian Influenza, or 'Bird Flu', is currently a major problem particularly in colonies around the North Sea, with high levels of sickness and mortality seen in many areas, including Kent.

If you find a dead or dying bird, avoid touching it directly if possible. If you have to move a dead bird please use protective gloves or a plastic bag and dispose of the bird by wrapping it and putting it in your general household waste, making sure you wash your hands thoroughly afterwards.

Any dead waterfowl, seabirds, or birds of prey, as well as other wild birds if five or more are found, should be reported to Defra.

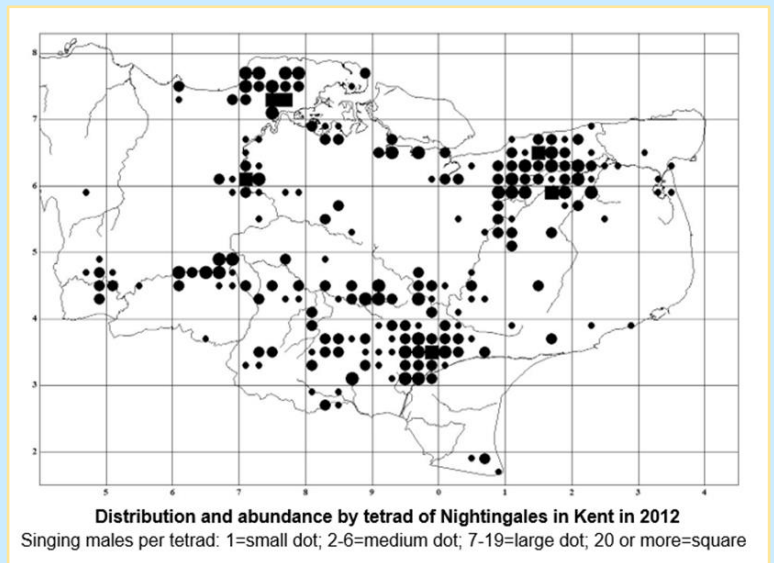
You can contact them on 03459 33 55 77, or by email at defra.helpline@defra.gsi.gov.uk.

If you have visited any of the reserves or birding sites in Kent, it is recommended that you wash or anti-bac your hands before leaving.

Finally, if you feed the birds in your garden, it is always advisable to keep your feeders clean using a mild (1:20) disinfectant/water solution. Don't leave old food on the feeders, always change water daily, and wash your hands thoroughly when finished. This helps to control other pathogens including Trichomoniasis and Salmonella

KOS Nightingale Survey 2023

It's over ten years since the last national Nightingale census (see **2012** map), which confirmed that Kent is the most important county for them. KOS is organising a survey this spring, so that we can track the population trend since 2012, identify which areas have most, and continue to promote their conservation.



We'll need lots of volunteers, but it won't be too difficult or time-consuming. The survey involves two visits to a one-kilometre square in the period 27th April-14th May. Visits should be made between first light and 0830 (i.e. not at night, when paired males may not be singing) – a perfect time to be out enjoying the spring countryside.

To take part, visit the [survey website](#), and select the square or squares you'd like to cover. Some of them will hold lots of Nightingales, some none, but all the results are important to be able to know how well they are doing. And even if you don't find any Nightingales, the survey provides an opportunity to record other scarce birds, and also mammals, such as deer, which may affect Nightingale habitat.

Once a square is allocated to you, you will be able to download instructions, recording form and a map on which to record the locations of singing Nightingales. But to summarise the key parts of the instructions:

- Two daytime visits are required between 27th April and 14th May, ideally a week or more apart, with the first visit during the first seven days;
- Squares should be searched from first light to 08.30, covering all suitable Nightingale habitat within the square;
- Record dates and times of visits, and the locations of Nightingales, on the recording form and map;
- Record simple habitat data from a list of codes provided;
- Record other notable bird species and mammals such as deer and wild boar.

Nightingales are in trouble, so take a look at the website and please help if you can – and good luck! Thank you.

[KOS Nightingale Survey](#)

Additional Records of Nightingale

It is important that all Nightingales are reported this year. Any singing males recorded outside of the KOS survey should be reported using BirdTrack, KOS sightings database or eBird. It is important that an accurate location is provided to avoid double counting birds that others may have recorded during their survey visits. Please give a 6-figure grid reference of the bird's location if possible or at least the 1km square reference. The KOS sightings database allows a pin to be dropped on a satellite map which automatically generates a full grid reference for the record.

If birds are heard in adjacent squares whilst doing the survey, please make a note of the number of birds, and which 1km square(s) they are in, on the recording form. If possible, provide grid references.

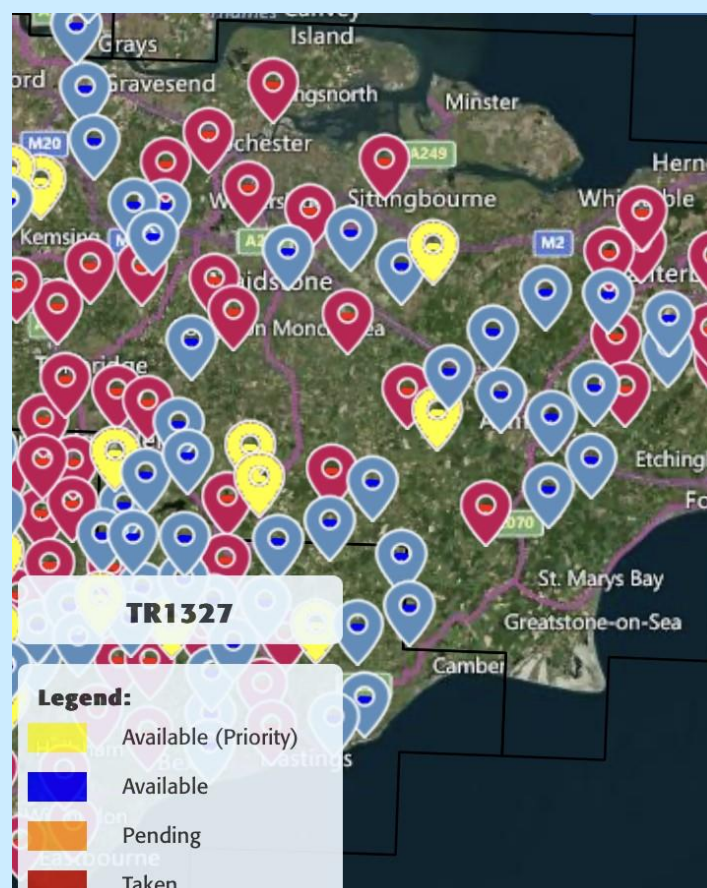
In all cases of additional records, it would be helpful if an indication of habitat could be provided.



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BREEDING WOODCOCK SURVEY 2023 – AN UPDATE

The British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) are coordinating a survey of breeding Woodcock using randomly selected woodland sites across Britain and Northern Ireland during 2023. First conducted in 2003, and repeated in 2013, the survey aims to give a recent review of the population status of birds in the UK and to investigate the bird's woodland habitat preferences.



THE PICTURE SO FAR...

We've had a fantastic response to the Woodcock Survey in Kent with 50 % of our squares covered. **Thank you** to everyone who has signed up to the survey, your commitment is hugely appreciated!

There are a few priority sites still available. If we can get full coverage of priority sites it will give us a much more realistic picture of the population status and range of the Woodcock in Kent as a breeding bird.

Please take a moment to look at the list of vacant priority sites below:

TQ9158 – Mintching Wood near Doddington, Sittingbourne

TQ5064 – Beechen Wood near Lullingstone Country Park, Shoreham

TQ5363 – Dunstall Woods near Shoreham

TQ6137 – Oxpasture Wood near Bells Yew Green, Tunbridge Wells

TQ7438 – Old Park Wood near Colliers Green, Goudhurst, Cranbrook

TQ7535 – Angley Wood near Cranbrook

TQ9242 – The Forest near Pluckley, Ashford

If you are unable to find a suitable site to survey but would still like to take part please go to the BTO Woodcock Survey page (link below) and take a look at the interactive map where you will be able to see other available sites, marked in blue. : www.bto.org/our-science/projects/woodcock-survey

BACKGROUND – WHY HAVE A WOODCOCK SURVEY?

Although almost 1.5 million Woodcock visit Britain to over-winter, the resident population is believed to stand at a much lower figure of approximately 55,000 males. Results from the BTO national Woodcock survey in 2003 and 2013 showed a population decline of 29%, prompting the Woodcock to be added to the UK Birds of Conservation Concern Red List in 2015.

Due to their crepuscular behaviour and cryptic camouflage the best way to count woodcock is by looking for displaying males during the breeding season. Males take to the air and display above areas of woodland, grunting and calling whilst making circuits over the tree tops. The best way to see these is to be positioned below the tree canopy level, in an opening – a path cross-section or woodland glade – so as to give the best view of the sky and a greater chance of seeing these unusual birds.

You can take part by selecting an area in Kent to survey using the interactive map on the BTO project home page. : www.bto.org/our-science/projects/woodcock-survey

All you need to do is register on the BTO website and sign up for the project.

WHAT DOES THE SURVEY INVOLVE? – AN OVERVIEW

- A total of 4 visits to your selected survey area
- 1 visit in APRIL: one daytime or early evening RECCE to establish the best place to locate the count point*
- MAY TO JUNE: three evening SURVEY visits (75 minutes in total: 15 mins before sunset and 60 mins after sunset), at least one week apart
- The survey involves counting 'roding' male Woodcocks (see below for more information on roding behaviour)

* if tree growth and closed canopy impairs visibility meaning there isn't a suitable count point within the survey square you may reposition yourself up to 400 metres outside the square if necessary.

* existing counters can change their count point if tree growth impairs visibility of the survey area.

- NOTE – if you don't see any woodcock during the first 2 dusk survey visits, there is no need to carry out the third survey.

- NOTE – you may like to continue to count the same area annually, although there's no obligation to do this.

What do I need to know?

It's good to familiarise yourself with the roding behaviour and call of the Woodcock before your survey visits. Male Woodcock perform a flight display at dawn and dusk, grunting and whistling whilst flying over an area of woodland, attracting the attention of females, like an aerial lekking system.

Follow this link to hear a typical roding Woodcock flight call: <https://xeno-canto.org/48091>). You can find more examples of their calls and other information on the BTO Woodcock Survey resources page www.bto.org/our-science/projects/woodcock-survey/resources . Please follow the link to view a short video by GWCT to get a better idea of what the survey involves. www.gwct.org.uk/game/research/species/woodcock/breeding-woodcock-survey/

What impact will this survey have?

The 2023 survey will be key to providing the best possible assessment of the breeding population status of the Woodcock in the UK as well as further helping to understand the causes of the population decline. This data will help to inform conservation projects and habitat management for this species in the future.

Once the survey period is finished the Regional Organiser, Heather Mathieson, will give an overview of the survey results so we can understand better the state of the breeding woodcock population in Kent and you can see the overall picture and gain an insight into the crucial part you played in the survey.

Why are their numbers in decline?

There are several possible contributing factors to the decline in the woodcock resident population. Climate change and habitat loss are two major key factors, causing a decline in the range of this species. Increased temperatures has resulted in previously wet or damp wooded areas drying out impacting the abundance and availability of the woodcock's diet. In addition to this their preference for mixed or deciduous woodlands with dense understory could mean that there is less suitable breeding habitat available to successfully lay and rear broods.

Recording other species

In addition to watching the skies for roding woodcock you may like to record any other species you encounter on your survey. There is a good chance you may hear various songbirds during the dusk chorus and may be lucky enough to see or hear crepuscular and nocturnal species such as the Tawny Owl, Woodcock, Nightjar and Nightingale.

Please record these sightings, and if you could, share this data with the Woodcock Survey Regional Organiser (Heather Mathieson– heather.maggie.mathieson@gmail.com). Heather will compile the data and share the findings once the survey season is finished. Your records will be included in the KOS Kent Bird Report. This is a great opportunity for us to gain a really useful insight into the status of some of our perhaps lesser known woodlands across Kent.

You can also add your bird list on the BirdTrack app. For more information about BirdTrack go to <https://www.bto.org/our-science/projects/birdtrack>

If you have any questions about the survey or would like more information please email the BTO Woodcock RO, Heather Mathieson heather.maggie.mathieson@gmail.com

RECORDING BREEDING BIRDS



Song Thrush nest by Steve Roberts

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. Report your sightings to the County Bird Recorder (KOS, Barry Wright) and the BirdTrack website (www.birdtrack.net)
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 used by BTO BirdTrack are now also incorporated in 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 Migration.

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 **N**est or eggshells found in current season.

FL Recently **F**Ledged 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 **O**ccupied **N**est.

FF Adult carrying **F**aecal sac or **F**ood for young.

NE **N**est containing **E**ggs.

NY **N**est with **Y**oung seen or heard.

SEABIRD MONITORING PROGRAMME (SMP)



Roof top Gulls (BTO)

As previously reported, the above survey is now organised by the BTO, who have taken on this responsibility from the JNCC (Seabird Monitoring Programme). The SMP is now under the leadership of Sarah Harris, who has left her position as organiser for BBS/WBBS. The programme retains its partner organisations, JNCC and RSPB. Details of how the programme will be modified going forward are still being worked on but there is scope for wider participation than has been the case in the past. For further details please see www.bto.org/our-science/projects/seabird-monitoring-programme

Within Kent it is now possible for volunteers to register and sign up to count sites with breeding Gulls, Terns, Fulmars or Cormorants. These can be coastal or inland sites and all are marked on the Map of Seabird Monitoring Sites which can be accessed via the above link. This shows the current sites registered in Kent and for which data has been submitted in the past or as part of the recent JNCC Seabirds Count. By zooming in to view the master sites, any component ones will be revealed. Clicking on a site will start the process of requesting to become a counter. Once registered and allocated the site, you can then enter breeding data from visits you make. Hopefully this is something that you would continue to do each year, in much the same way as volunteers do for schemes such as the Heronry Census. You will be making a valuable contribution to our knowledge of the state of UK seabirds! Thanks.

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

Surveys

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

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

Burnt Geese

At the very beginning of the systematic list, in current taxonomy, are the geese in the genus *Branta*. These are a mixed bunch. They include the Brent Goose (truly wild and a winter visitor), Canada Goose (a resident from released stock), Barnacle Goose (a bit of both), and a few scarcer species and subspecies. Six species are recognised globally by IOC at present (www.worldbirdnames.org/new/), but I'll be covering eight taxa including two distinctive subspecies.

I hope that readers of the newsletters find these articles summarising the status of birds in Kent interesting. Putting them together is an absorbing occupation even though some missing or contradictory information is frustrating. For this one, I've been able to tie some loose ends on Barnacle Geese thanks to Robin Mace who produced a file of all records from the KOS database, to Bob Knight who drew attention to colour-marked geese at Higham and sent me the full details, to Graham Catley for more information on marked birds, and to Martin Casemore for updates on recent trends at Scotney Court. Thanks also to Norman McCanch who saved me from an error and Richard Collins who threw light on the error event. And, of course, none of it would be possible if many, many people had not submitted records over the years.

Dark-bellied Brent Goose



Dark-bellied Brents by Dan Oates

The Brent Geese flocking to the Kent coast in winter belong to the dark-bellied subspecies *Branta bernicla bernicla* that breeds in the tundra of the Arctic region of Russia. They are relatively well-studied birds on the breeding grounds, on migration and in the wintering areas of western Europe. I am following BOU taxonomy in treating the various Brents as subspecies; if you want to call them species, fine.

Historically in Kent, the Brent Goose was a winter visitor in only small numbers, though occasionally present in “immense flocks” in hard winters (Ticehurst, *A History of the Birds of Kent*, 1909). The largest flock recorded in the first half of the twentieth century was 300 on the Swale in January 1937 (Gillham & Homes, *Birds of the North Kent Marshes*, 1950) and subsequently numbers dipped to a very low level, with a county total of only 51 in 1946/47 (Taylor *et al.*, *Birds of Kent*, 1981). This decline, driven by hunting pressures, habitat loss and disease in their preferred winter food plant eel-grass *Zostera*, was experienced throughout the range of the Dark-bellied Brent Goose.

A slow increase beginning in the 1950s resulted in wintering totals of up to 750 on the Medway and 1,000 on the Swale by the mid 1970s, and substantial passage off all coasts becoming apparent at certain seasons (*Birds of Kent*, 1981). This increase continued until the 1990s, when about ten years of decline occurred after which gentle growth resumed, although that may now have stalled. Figure 1 shows the annual maxima in the five principal wintering areas in Kent from 1977/78 onwards. Note that the y-axis is truncated at 20,000 and the combined total for 2011/12 reached 20,204.

Figure 1 also shows, as a purple line, the annual WeBS indices for England – as can be seen, this closely matches the pattern of Kent numbers. The Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) data were downloaded from the WeBS Report Online (Frost *et al.*, 2021, Waterbirds in the UK 2019/20: The Wetland Bird Survey). WeBS is a partnership jointly funded by the BTO, RSPB and JNCC, in association with WWT, with fieldwork conducted by volunteers.

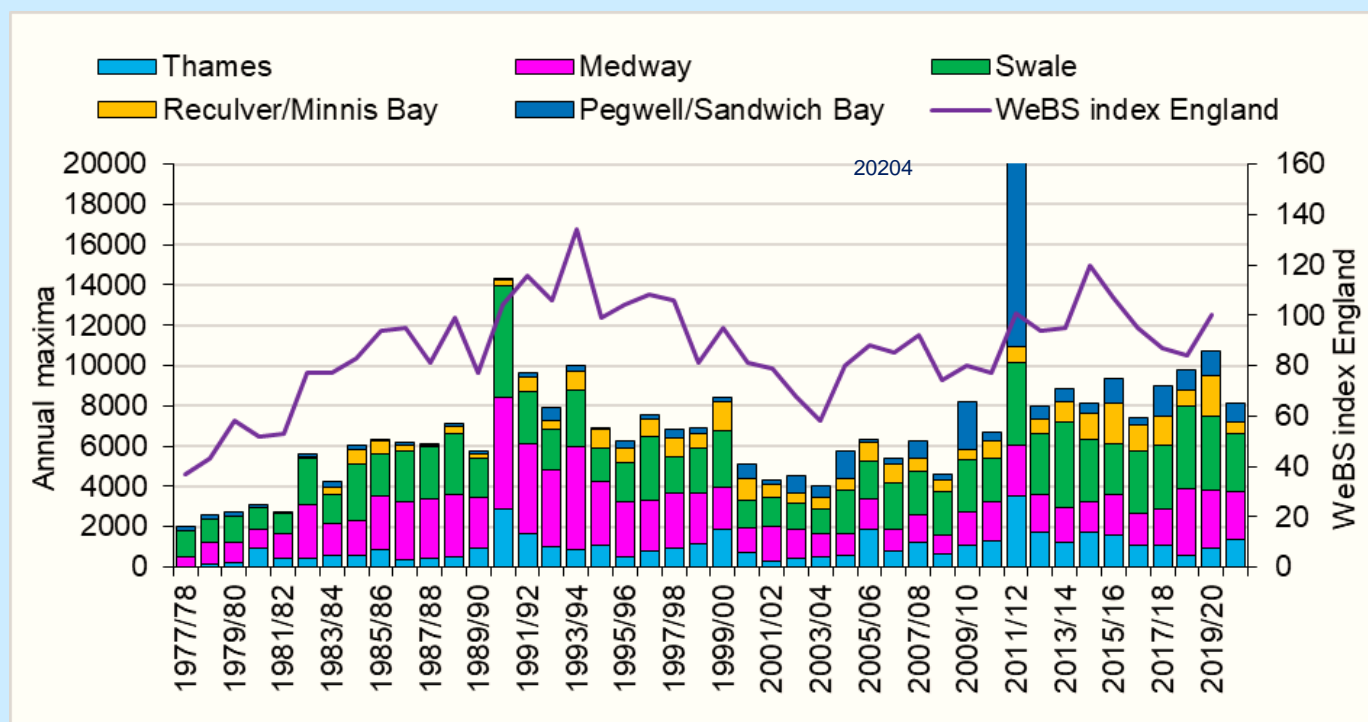


Figure 1. Brent Goose: annual maxima, 1977/78-2020/21

The area maxima shown in Figure 1 are not necessarily simultaneous. The counts include some which were short-lived use of the area by migrants (but note that passage at Dungeness is dealt with separately below). The most notable example is the exceptional count of about 9,300 at Pegwell and Sandwich Bays on 9th October 2011. Because of such occurrences, the column totals may slightly exaggerate the county totals at any one time – though of course if they took turnover into account, they would be considerably higher.

The east and south coasts of England are at the centre of the wintering areas of Dark-bellied Brent Geese, and Kent forms a vital part of it. The thresholds for geographic importance (areas are defined as important for a species if they hold 1% or more of the relevant population) are 980 for the British population and 2,100 for the international (in this case, world) population (*BTO WeBS Report Online*).

Table 1 shows the average maxima for the principal wintering areas in Kent for the five years 2015/16-2019/20 and the percentages of the national and international populations that those totals represent. Individually and, even more so, combined, these areas can be seen to be of major importance for Brent Geese.

Table 1. Importance of areas in Kent for Brent Goose			
The table shows the mean peaks for 2015/16-2019/20 and the percentage of the national and international populations they represent.			
	Mean peak	% national	% international
Thames	1052	1.1	0.5
Medway	2307	2.4	1.1
Swale	3326	3.4	1.6
Reculver/Minnis Bay	1494	1.5	0.7
Pegwell/Sandwich Bay	1081	1.1	0.5

The increase in wintering Brent Goose numbers was presumably helped by the limited recovery of *Zostera* and reduced hunting pressure but was also boosted from the early 1970s by the geese starting to feed on arable crops, notably winter wheat, as well as on the mudflats, saltmarsh and grazed pastures. The practice was boosted by the increasing amounts of (tender and nutritious!) winter wheat grown on former grazing marshes just inside the sea walls; typically, the geese start the winter using intertidal areas but move to arable land as the natural food is depleted.

It is not certain why there was a hiatus in the trend of increase in the 1990s, nor why second phase of increase has now (probably) ceased. Various reasons seem possible. It could be that birds are 'short-stopping' as climate change makes continental winters less severe, though I've not seen any suggestion of that. The population here in winter could be at the limit of what the habitats will support. Alternatively, there could well be problems in breeding areas. The former three-year cycle in production of young (tied to the so-called lemming cycle – look it up as I don't want to use space here) seems to have broken down because of the changing climate in the Arctic, so that there are no longer frequent years when goose productivity is high while predators concentrate on lemmings.

Brents can be seen in Kent in every month of the year, though during June-August most records are of lingering birds in single figures. Figure 2 illustrates the pattern of numbers through the year in the main wintering areas. It is a

pretty straightforward build-up from the first arrivals in September to the peak in January-February, then decline with the last birds (bar a few lingering in summer) in May.

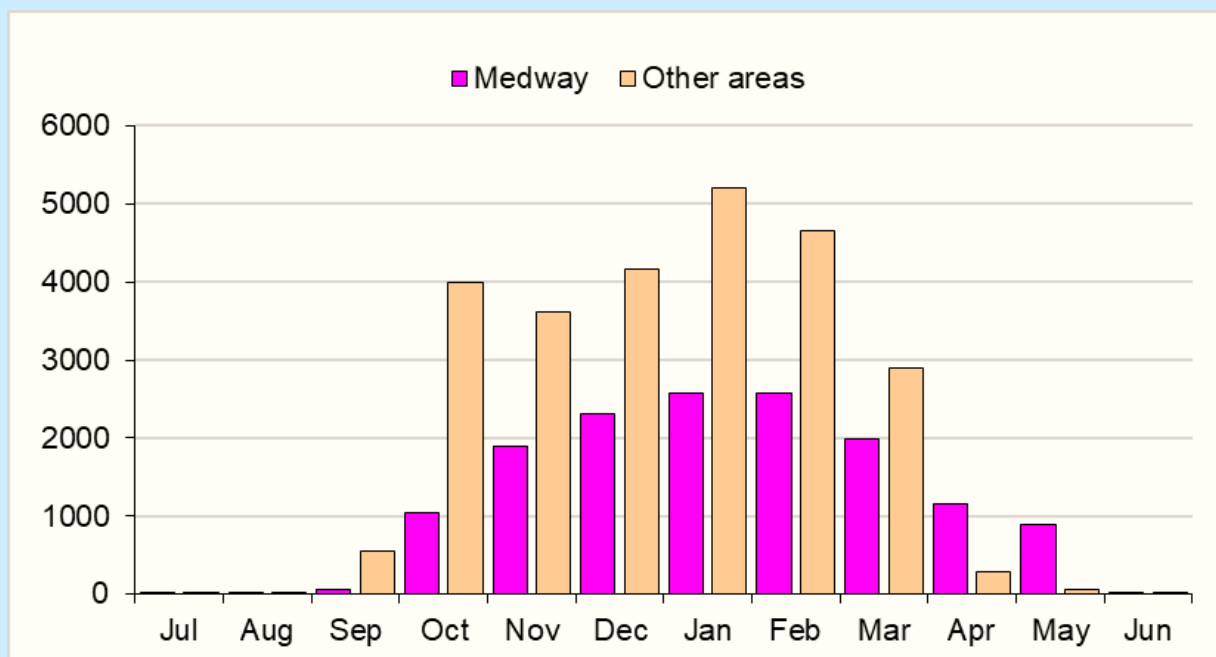


Figure 2. Brent Goose: seasonal pattern of occurrence, 1977/78-2021/22

As you'll see, I've separated the pattern for the Medway from that of the other areas combined. This is to illustrate a couple of spatial differences in the seasonal distributions. First, there is a pronounced peak in October for the 'other areas'. That represents the early arrivals in those areas (and in the Thames estuary in general, capitalising especially on large *Zostera* beds in Essex), and also the inclusion in the data of short-lived presence of migrant flocks such as those at Pegwell Bay mentioned above. The second feature is the retention of birds later in the Medway than in other areas, with hundreds remaining in May when most have gone elsewhere. That has been evident throughout the period. I don't know why the Medway should be so favoured, but it's a phenomenon also apparent in the Wash (see e.g. BTO *Migration Atlas*).

With the growth of Brent Goose populations, offshore passage has become a feature of the Kent birding year. This is most evident in spring at Dungeness, where it has been most consistently recorded. However, some large movements can also be seen in east Kent in spring, and around the whole coast in autumn. Figure 3 shows the average monthly totals moving east and west at Dungeness, for the period 1990/91-2020/21 (shown as July-June years as this is a winter visitor).

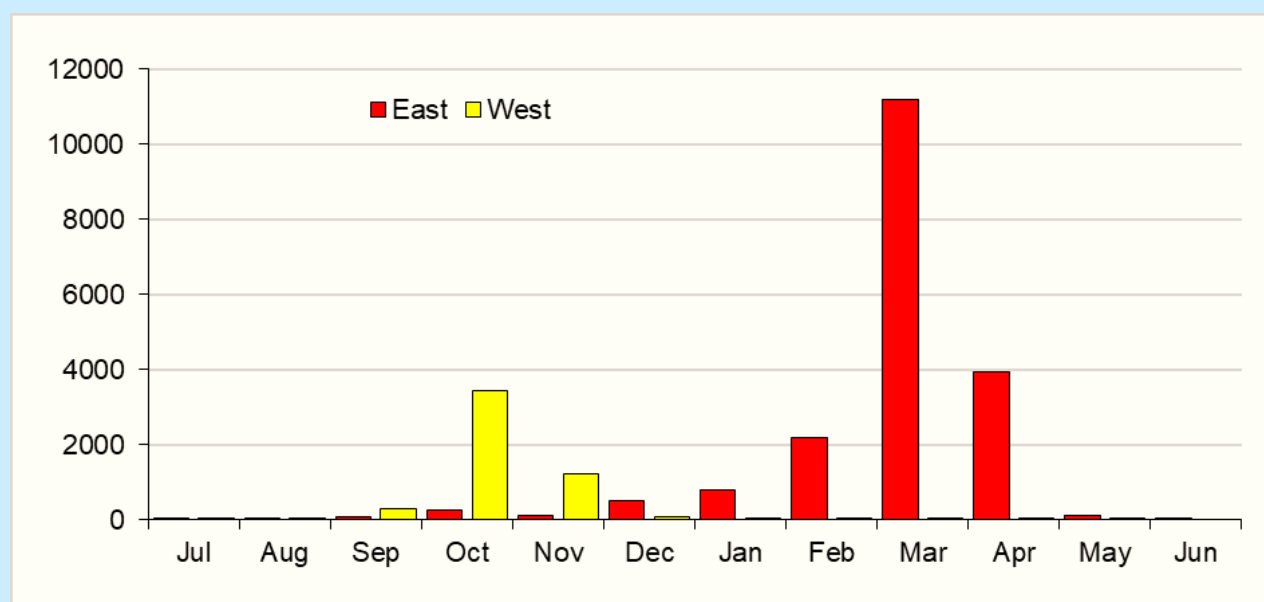


Figure 3. Brent Goose: mean monthly passage at Dungeness, 1990/91-2020/21

As can be seen, spring passage is much larger than autumn passage. My theory is that this is because Brent Geese are well-adapted to life in Britain and most have learnt to fly on the left when going along the English Channel.

Further evidence in support of this is that quite a few of the largest autumn counts have involved geese moving north and then west around Thanet, thus also keeping left.

There is an alternative explanation, that birds arriving from Russia in autumn remain on the continental side before crossing to Essex and these sometimes overshoot slightly, then being seen recovering their position by flying around east Kent, while in spring large counts are seen when prevailing winds push the geese close to Dungeness and other points along the Kent coastline.

When populations have been at high levels, there are often substantial overland movements of Brent Geese in autumn. Typically, these are on alignments from the Thames or Medway to Maidstone, Tonbridge and beyond towards the Sussex coast. These movements were first noted in 1975 (Jeffrey Harrison, *Kent Bird Report* 1975 pp 95-98 & 1976 p 88-90). By the way, the KBRs also contain a helpful summary of Brent Goose distribution and migration during 1970-1979 (John van der Dol, *Kent Bird Report* 1980: 69-74).

Table 2 lists all single date counts of 5,000 more passage Brent Geese. Table 3 lists all inland counts of 500 or more, including those made near the north Kent marshes of birds that were heading to the south and inland. Note that these are all counts made at single locations. In the case of the inland movements, I've not mentioned the smaller counts made on the same dates, and it is certain that totals moving on a broad front, as on 23rd October 1982, were considerable, sometimes involving thousands of geese.

Table 2. Large counts of passage Brent Goose All counts of 5,000 or more are included. Spring counts green ; Autumn counts brown .	
1986	6,315 W at Foreness & 5,540 N + 384 S at Sandwich Bay on 2nd November
1993	7,000 E at Dungeness on 9th March; 5,900 W at Reculver on 14th October
1996	5,796 E at Dungeness on 9th March; 5,822 E at Dungeness on 18th March
2004	4,820 SW + 383 NE at Bockhill on 9th October
2006	10,080 E at Dungeness on 13th March, 5,000 E at Dungeness on 24th March
2008	7,255 arriving from the north at Grain on 30th October
2012	5,500 E Dungeness on 15th March, 6,200 E Dungeness on 16th March
2013	5,769 E Dungeness on 4 th April; 5,500 W Dungeness on 12th October
2014	7,000 arriving from the north at Leysdown on 30th October
2018	6,200 W at Dungeness on 18th October

Table 3. Large overland counts of Brent Goose All counts of 500 or more are included.	
1980	630 S at Langley on 29th October; 500 S at Snodland on 2nd November
1982	1,960 SW at Northward Hill, 770 S at Gillingham & 600 S at Langley on 23rd October; 760 SW at Northward Hill on 25th October; 566 S at Tonbridge on 6th November
1984	1,096 S at Bough Beech on 9th November
1999	500 S at Lower Halstow on 17th October

I haven't listed all of the spring passage totals at Dungeness. These are given in Dungeness Bird Observatory reports (and often in KBRs). They are highly variable; during 1977-2021 the total has been as low as 1,168 in 1978 and as high as 46,927 in 1996. Three other years saw totals exceeding 30,000: 1993, 2006 and 2013. Broadly speaking, the pattern matches the wider population trend but naturally numbers will be affected by weather conditions concentrating birds along the Kent shore (or not).

There are, surprisingly, only three ringing recoveries of Dark-bellied Brent Goose affecting Kent in the *BTO Online Ringing Report*. Two were birds ringed on the Taymyr peninsula breeding grounds in 1995 and 2005, one found on Conyer Marshes in 1998, the second found on Chetney Marshes in 2006. Both had collided with overhead wires. The third individual was ringed on spring migration near Hamburg in Germany in 1984 and found dead on the beach at Margate in February 1986. There is a problem with the online ringing report, because sightings of colour-ringed birds don't always find their way in. I have bumped into details of one Kent colour-ring sighting, of a bird ringed at Baie Bourgneuf in western France in December 1978 and seen at Sandwich Bay in April 1979, but know others have been seen.

Pale-bellied Brent Goose



Pale-bellied Brent's, Pembrokeshire by Craig Lewis

Several distinct populations of Pale-bellied Brent Goose *Branta bernicla hrota* exist. The two which occur regularly in Britain and Ireland are (a) those which breed in arctic Canada and winter mainly in Ireland and (b) those which breed mainly in Svalbard (Spitzbergen) and winter in Denmark, the Netherlands and Lindisfarne, Northumberland. Some mixing does occur, but the populations are largely discrete from one another, and from other subspecies of Brent Geese.

Even though some large wintering populations are not that far away, Pale-bellied Brent Goose has always been quite scarce in Kent. I have been through the records and Kent Bird Reports, extracting all records that I could find (though it's possible one or two were missed – as a subspecies it has not always been given a separate entry in KBRs).

The first record is of one shot near Lydd on 10th December 1906 by Guy Mannering and included in his collection which is (or was) in Maidstone Museum. This record was not mentioned by the 1981 *Birds of Kent*; however, the wording there does not exclude it and I know of no reason for it to be unacceptable.

The second also was shot by Guy Mannering, at Pegwell Bay on 19th February 1929 and he saw nine there on 9th February 1935. At around that time or a bit later, Tom Gregory also reported occasionally seeing small gaggles in east Kent (Harrison, *Birds of Kent*, 1953). Harrison himself saw 16 at Pegwell Bay on 1st March 1936. Between 1906 and 1946, there were six records (omitting Tom Gregory's undefined sightings) involving 31 individual birds.

Occurrence from 1952 onwards is shown in Figure 4. It was far from annual in the 1950s and 1960s, but blank years have become the exception since then. The greater frequency can be attributed to the population trend of Pale-bellied Brents (both relevant populations have been increasing), though it may also have been influenced by greater ability to identify and report the subspecies.

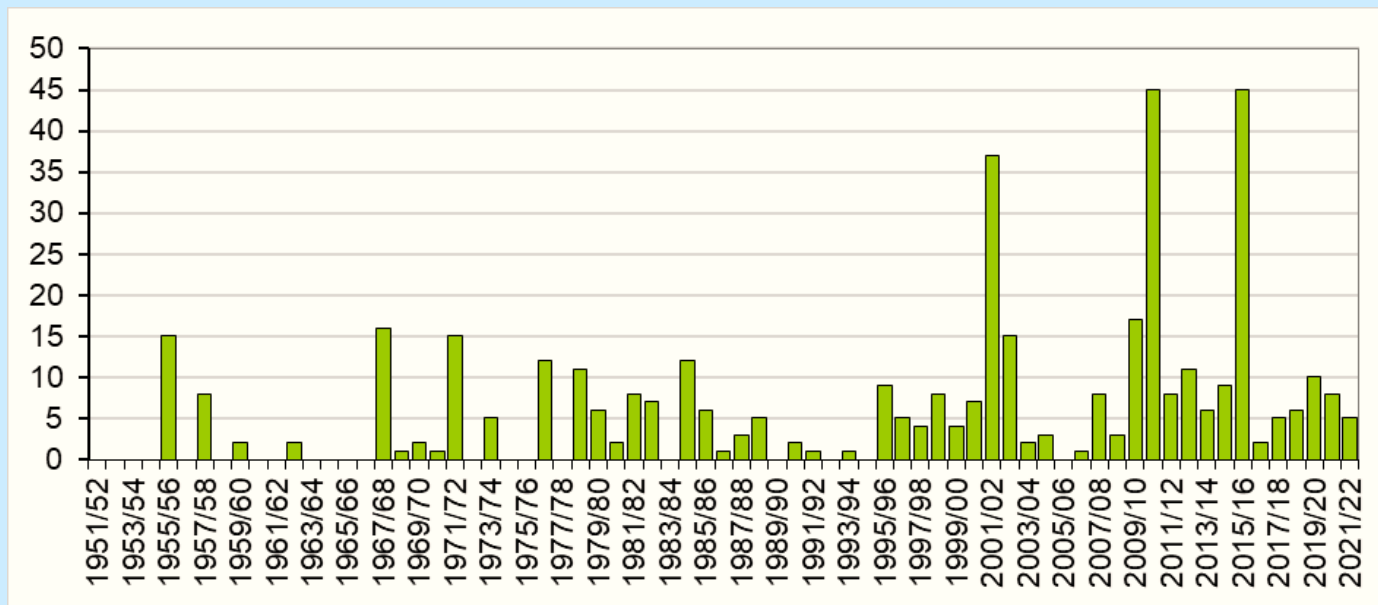


Figure 4. Pale-bellied Brent Goose: annual totals, 1951/52-2021/22

There have now been flocks of ten or more on quite a few occasions, and more than 20 in 2002, 2010-11 and 2016. These records are summarised in Table 4. On a few occasions, flocks have remained for several weeks. It is probably no coincidence that the records of 1979 and 2010-11 coincided with very cold weather, which presumably forced birds out of the Netherlands.

Table 4. Large counts of Pale-bellied Brent Goose	
All counts of 10 or more are included.	
1936	16 at Pegwell Bay on 1st March
1956	12 on Chetney Marshes on 17th March
1967	16 at Sandwich Bay on 10th December
1971	15 at Shellness, Sheppey, on 29th December
1977	12 at Sandwich Bay on 11th April
1979	A flock at Sandwich Bay during 25th January-27th February peaked at 11 on 24th-25th February
2002	22 at Pegwell Bay on 26th March
2003	A flock at Pegwell Bay during 10th January-25th February peaked at 11 on 18th February
2010/2011	A flock at Pegwell Bay from 20th December 2010 to 8th February 2011, always 10 or more, and reaching 26 on 21st-22nd December and 27 on 3rd-4th January
2011	10 on Romney Marsh during 15th-29th January, assumed to be some of the birds earlier at Pegwell Bay
2016	12 at Pegwell Bay on 4th March
2016	27 flew E at Dungeness and were later seen at Pegwell Bay on 2nd May, including one colour-ringed bird

The pattern of occurrence through the year (Figure 5) is broadly speaking a rise and fall around a peak in early January, though there's more than a suggestion of passage during March-early May. The earliest in the winter were two at Sandwich Bay during 12th-26th September 2001 and two at Reculver during 16th-24th September 1979. In spring, the only May records have been the 27 on 2nd May 2016 (see Table 4 and below), one flying E at Dungeness on 10th May 2001 and three at Shellness on 14th May 1946.

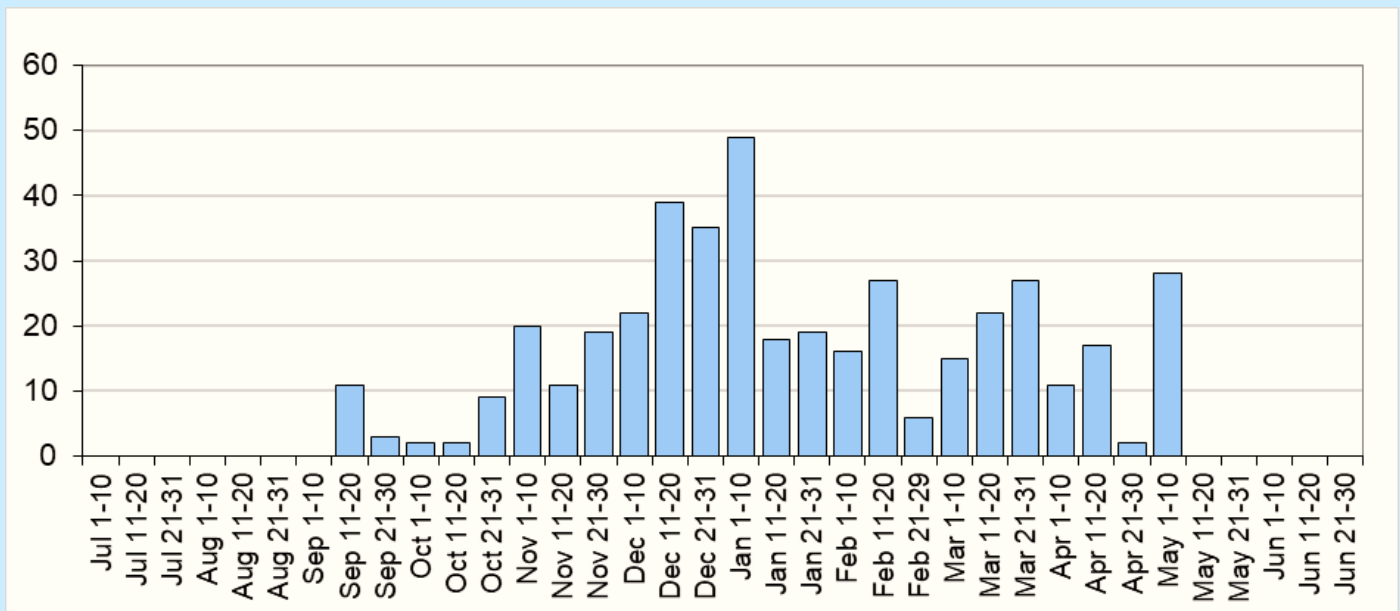


Figure 5. Pale-bellied Brent Goose: seasonal pattern of occurrence, 1951/52-2021/22

One colour-ringed Pale-bellied Brent has been seen in Kent. It was in the flock of 27 seen first at Dungeness and then in Pegwell Bay on 2nd May 2016. It had previously been sighted wintering on the Normandy coast in France. Heading north-east up the Channel, it might have been expected to be one of the Svalbard population, but in fact had been ringed in May 2010 in western Iceland, a staging area for the arctic Canadian population.

Despite that surprising finding, it seems likely that most of the Pale-bellied Brent Geese occurring in Kent do belong to the Svalbard population. The appearance of flocks during severe weather, mentioned above, supports that theory, since many waterfowl based in areas such as Denmark and the Netherlands, important wintering areas of the Svalbard geese, appear in Kent in such conditions.

Black Brant



Black Brant, Reculver by Chris Hindle

Black Brant is the Pacific equivalent of Brent Goose, breeding either side of the Bering Strait in Siberia and Alaska and in north-west Canada. There were some nineteenth century claims of the subspecies in Britain, but the first accepted

record was in Essex in 1957. Since then, probably helped by growing Brent populations to act as ‘carriers’ of vagrants, and by better optical equipment, Black Brants have become known as regular winter visitor in small numbers to areas frequented by Brents.

Black Brant records have been considered by the British Birds Rarities Committee (BBRC) until June 2005, and subsequently by the KOS Rarity Panel. Throughout, there have been difficulties in deciding how many have occurred. First, individuals often remain at a location for prolonged periods but, if there are gaps in the record, it’s hard to know if it’s the same or a different bird after a gap. Likewise, if one is in one location for a while and a little later there is one in another location, are they the same or different? Also, it is thought very likely that some individuals have become permanently attached to Dark-bellied Brent Goose populations and re-appear with them in successive winters.

In counting numbers of a rarity, we try not to double count. Thus, the Bonaparte’s Gull at Oare Marshes for ten summers is counted as one bird, on the grounds that it would be daft to treat it as ten individuals. With the Black Brants, it is less straightforward as there has clearly been more than one bird in some winters. When a distinctively-plumaged young bird turns up, it helps, as that must be new – but I can only find one such example in Kent: in the St Mary’s Marshes and Yantlet area in January 2006. All other records seem to be adults or have no age recorded.

There have also been birds believed to be hybrids between Black Brant and Dark-bellied Brent Goose. I’ve noticed mentions of these on the Swale in January 2011 and January-February 2020, and at Reculver in November 2021, but there may well have been others. They are excluded from my analysis.

The first Black Brant in Kent was one seen by Jeffrey Harrison on the Medway in February 1974 (exact date not known). Figure 6 shows the numbers of individuals seen each winter from the first through to 2021/22 (but note that I don’t yet have 2022 records). There appears to have been a progressive increase, though whether that is genuine or merely a reflection of observers being better able to find them, we don’t know. The chart shows as ‘annual totals’ birds recorded for the first time and also as ‘repeat visits’ the instances of birds believed to return in successive winters: one in 1997/98 and the other in both 2013/14 and 2014/15. It’s possible that more such repeat visits have occurred, but the current estimate is that 56 individuals have occurred in the county. (Actually, my guess is that there have been many more duplicates...)

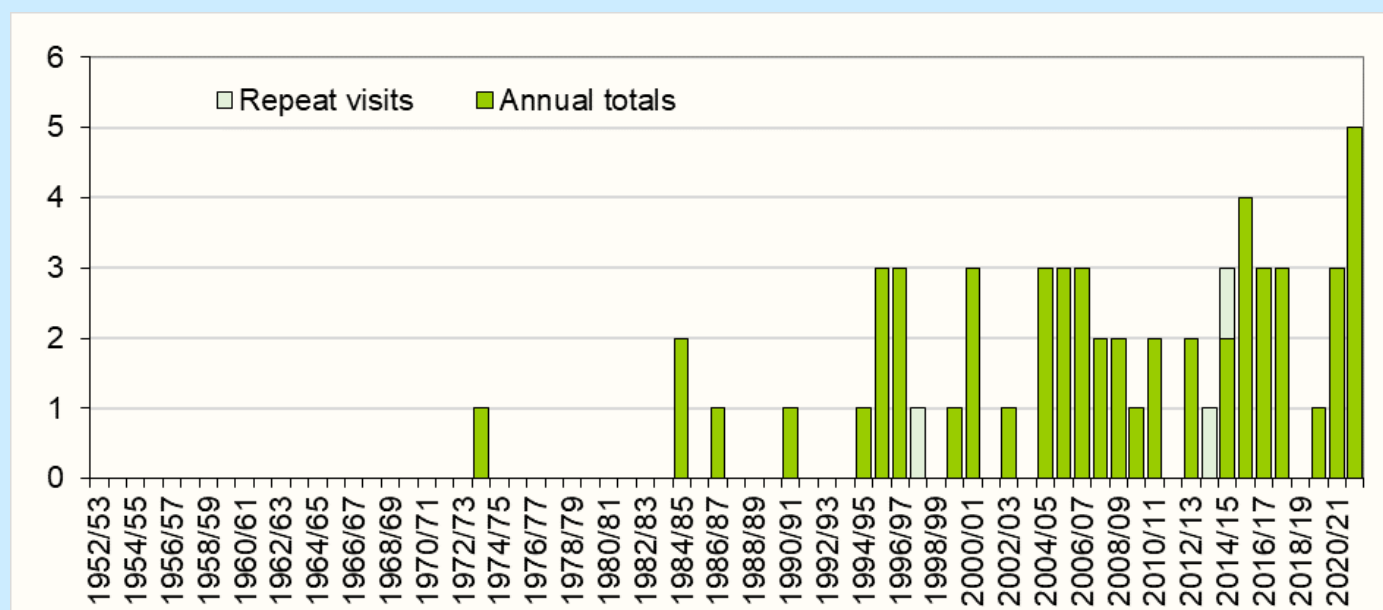


Figure 6. Black Brant: annual totals, 1952/53-2021/22

The majority of records have involved single birds, but there have occasionally been two together, beginning back in January 1985 when there were two on Sheppey. The Swale and Medway have been favoured areas, with quite a few also using the coast eastwards to Swalecliffe and Reculver, or westwards up the Thames. There are so far just two records of Black Brants in the wider Dungeness area.

Figure 7 shows the seasonal pattern of occurrence. The ‘finding dates’ are when individuals were recorded for the first time. The additional, paler blue, shading represent dates when birds found earlier continued to be seen (including those first seen in previous winters). First dates are clearly biased towards the early part of winters (50% of birds were found during 1st October-10th December). For all records, there is a more even spread across winter from October to March, around a January peak, with a small tail of lingering birds and spring migrants in April-May.

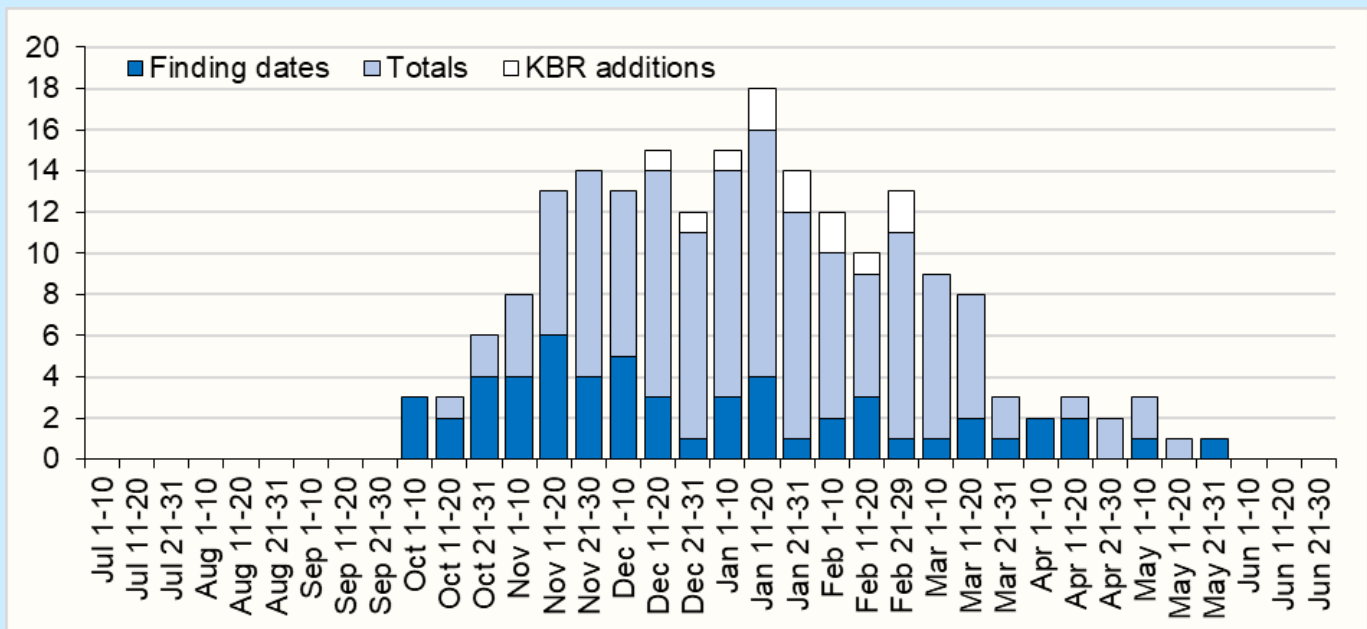


Figure 7. Black Brant: seasonal pattern of occurrence, 1952/53-2020-21

I have also included in Figure 7, as 'KBR additions', a few pre-2006 sightings that appear in Kent Bird Reports but not in BBRC reports. By convention, these should not form part of the official Kent record, but I have put them in because I suspect they are oversights in what is in many respects, as I've said above, a messy record. Mostly, these additions were short-lived extensions of the dates recorded by BBRC but they do include one at Reculver during February-March 1991 (assumed to be the same as one on the Swale in autumn 1990) that was the only Kent record in the calendar year 1991.

The earliest sightings of Black Brant in autumn were at Motney Hill on 1st-2nd October 2000 and at Shellness during 2nd-29th October 2000. My suspicion is that they may have been the same bird (though I don't know the timings on the 2nd), but they're counted as different by BBRC. The latest in spring were one at Yantlet Creek that stayed until 19th May 2007, and one at Lower Halstow on 27th May 2017.

The *BTO Online Ringing Report* contains a recovery of Black Brant for Kent. I tried to get to the bottom of this years ago, but without success. The bird was ringed as an adult male in western Alaska in July 1965. The finding details give a date in January 1977 in brackets and the location as 'Caterham area (Kent)'. I cannot find a key to the use of brackets in dates but assume it means reported (rather than found) on that date or something similar. Caterham is well into Surrey, but the co-ordinates given are indeed in Kent, near Crockham Hill, and more than 10km from Caterham. This is not prime Brent Goose habitat and, indeed, the bird was said to be alive but in captivity on the recovery date. Black Brant was a taxon considered by BBRC in 1977 but there seems to be no BBRC record of this bird. The whole thing is odd but, as we don't know where the bird was when captured, it can't be counted as a Kent record.

Red-breasted Goose



Red-breasted Goose with Dark-bellied Brents, South Swale by Mark Chidwick

I remember seeing what was, at the time, the first record of Red-breasted Goose in Kent, at Westbere back in October 1978. Thirty-nine years later I came across a pair with young, no more than ten miles away. I regret to say that the first record was, twenty years after the event, demoted to unacceptable as a record of a wild bird, and the other was in a waterfowl collection. The species is just too pretty and consequently, with many in collections, it is difficult to be sure whether one is seeing a genuinely wild bird or not. The general rule seems to be that, unless the bird is with Brent Geese, forget it!

Including the Westbere bird, I am aware of about fourteen individuals recorded in Kent as free-flying escaped birds, mostly singles but with two on the Hoo peninsula and at Swale NNR in April and June 2008. There are eight individuals considered to be wild birds, as listed in Table 5. Note that the sightings in 1993 and 1995 were considered to belong to one bird, as were the sightings in 2012 and 2013.

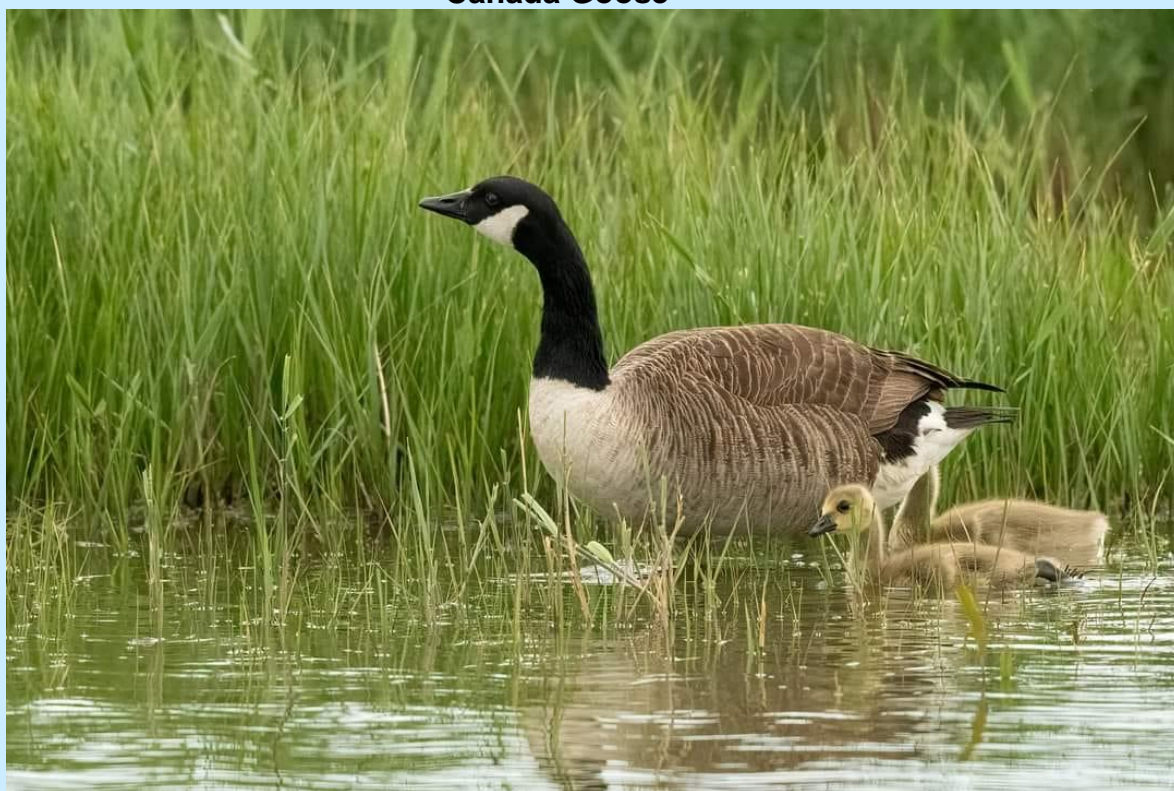
Table 5. Red-breasted Goose records in Kent	
1985	An adult at Shellness, Sheppey, during 7th January-11th February
1985	An adult on Chetney Marshes during 19th January-23rd March
1985-1986	An adult on St Mary's Marshes on the Thames during 25th November to 22nd January (the last date is that given by the KBR; the BBRC report says 'early January')
1993	An adult on Sheppey on 26th-28th December; also seen in Essex in early 1993 and early 1994
1995	An adult, assumed to be the same as in 1993, on Sheppey and the Swale from 14th January to 5th February
2005	One on Chetney Marshes on 9th November
2010	One flew S at Greatstone and W at Dungeness on 2nd December
2011	One at Sandwich Bay on 8th February, thought to be the same as a bird seen elsewhere on the English south coast before and after that date
2012	An adult at South Swale nature reserve during 14th-23rd October, believed the same as a bird in Hampshire from 24th October
2013	One flew E at Oare Marshes on 6th April; believed to be the same as that at South Swale in October 2012

Nene

This is *Branta sandvicensis* but, unlike Sandwich Tern, not named after the town, nor even the eponymous Earl's fast food, but the Sandwich Islands – as Hawai'i was named by Captain Cook. (Yes, I know Hawai'i is just one of the islands but I'm using the name as for the fiftieth of the United States.) It is restricted as a wild bird to Hawai'i, living on the volcanic slopes of several of the islands. Once numerous, it declined through predation by humans and introduced mammals (or are they the same thing?), so that by 1950 fewer than 50 remained in the wild. A programme of captive breeding and subsequent release on the islands by Peter Scott and the Wildfowl Trust has enabled the number to rise to around 3,000 and, while the species isn't yet wholly secure, it was saved from near-certain extinction.

The Nene, or Hawaiian Goose, can now be seen quite easily in wildfowl collections. It was something of a surprise to find only one record of escaped birds listed in Kent Bird Reports. This involved two birds seen at Seaton gravel pits on 31st March 2001. However, thanks to Norman McCanch, who saw one of the birds on 21st April, and Richard Collins, who remembers them being there and also saw one on 1st November, it seems likely that they were hybrids – and online photographs of Canada Goose x Swan Goose look similar (though not identical) to Norman's sketch. So, we are still awaiting the first Kent record of Nene – unless anyone knows better.

Canada Goose



Canada Goose family by Tracey Mantle

The Canada Goose was introduced to Britain a long time ago, in the seventeenth century, but remained a species of wildfowl collections for almost three hundred years. Escapes from collections established themselves in the wild during the twentieth century, and the process was boosted by additional releases, such as those by the Kent Wildfowlers' Association in our county during the 1950s and 1960s at Sevenoaks, Leybourne and Dungeness (Taylor *et al.*, *Birds of Kent*, 1981).

As a medium-distance migrant in North America, in their natural range, Canada Geese have the potential to cross the Atlantic, and there are some accepted British records of believed to have arrived from America naturally as vagrants, but none in Kent. However, a bird, assumed to be an escape, considered to belong to the subspecies *parvipes* (part of the *canadensis* complex and one of the races capable of reaching Britain) was seen at Seaton gravel pits on 27th-28th April 2002.

Ticehurst (*History of the Birds of Kent*, 1909) listed a handful of records but retained Canada Goose in square brackets, since they were all from semi-domesticated flocks. Harrison (*Birds of Kent*, 1953) included it on the county list as it was by then met with in a feral state, but mentioned rather few counts, all in single figures apart from 36 seen in the north Kent marshes on 11th February 1940.

Numbers remained low in the 1950s: one in 1956 was said to be "the only satisfactory report in the last four years". The first mention in Kent Bird Reports of breeding activity was of seven pairs at Sevenoaks, three near

Tonbridge and one at Eastwell Park in 1961. From then on, there was a fairly rapid build-up in numbers, predominantly in the western half of the county, reaching 354 at Sevenoaks WR in September 1969. In the early 1970s, peak counts included 450 at Leybourne, 367 at Bough Beech, 350 at Sevenoaks, 266 at Mote Park and 200 at Leeds Castle. There was known to be interchange between these localities, however, and the total across that part of Kent was thought to be around 600. Maxima elsewhere included 74 at Dungeness and 40 in the Stour valley.

The continued rise since 1977 is illustrated in Figure 8. In common with other waterfowl, mostly wintering species, my data for Canada Goose are organised in July-June years. This is not ideal for a resident and largely sedentary species but I've stuck with it and, since Canada Goose numbers peak in early autumn, it's not too bad. There are also approximations in the data that should be mentioned. For some years, I have summed counts for several zones into area counts; that may sometimes result in exaggerated totals if birds move between the zones (which we know they do). But conversely, counting is seldom comprehensive, with even key sites missed at times and less significant ones seldom counted, and that results in totals being below the true level. Despite all that, I believe that the trend is shown well by the chart.

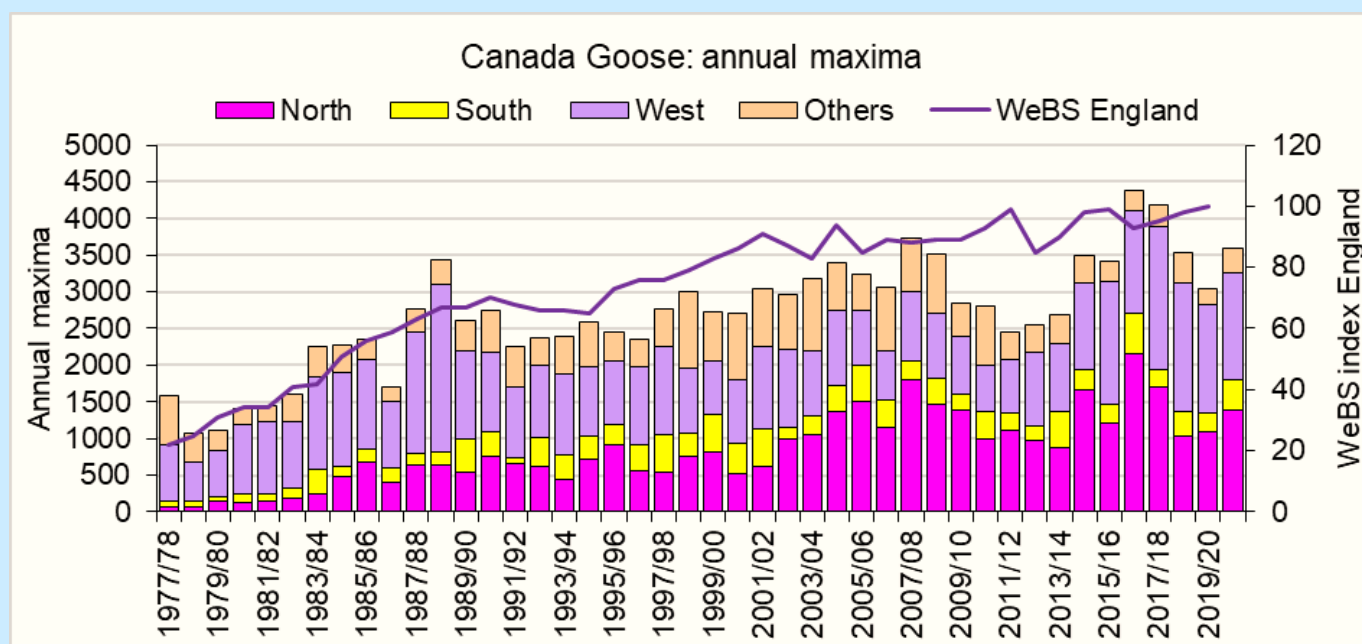


Figure 8. Canada Goose: annual maxima in Kent, 1977/78-2020/21

There has been increase throughout the period since 1977. The short-lived dip around 2010 could be real but I suspect that it's more likely a result of less effective counting at that time. The chart also includes the WeBS index for England (obtained from the BTO website, see above under Brent Goose) which follows a very similar trajectory to the Kent totals. In both cases, the rate of increase has gradually fallen – and is it possible that it has now levelled out?

Recent Kent Bird Reports estimated that the midwinter population was around 2,000 birds. I suspect that is a bit of an under-estimate and, in any case, the peak counts in most areas tend to be in August or September when flocks form containing all the new young. In Table 6, the totals in various areas of the county are shown (calculated with the provisos mentioned above) for a recent five-year period. This suggests that the average county population at its early autumn peak is now around 3,500. That is about 2.2% of the estimated British non-breeding population of 160,000 birds (APEP4, *British Birds* 113: 69–104).

Table 6. Canada Goose: mean and maximum totals, 2016/17-2020/21		
	Mean	Maximum
Thames	364	881
Medway	517	972
Swale	593	748
East Kent	154	219
South Kent	345	550
Central Kent	156	200
West Kent	1324	1453

The estimated breeding population in Kent during the 2008-2013 atlas years was 1,000-1,500 pairs, representing 1.9-2.8% of the British population, and thus corresponding fairly closely with the non-breeding population estimates. Figure 9 shows the breeding distribution from the Kent Breeding Bird Atlas 2008-13. There had been considerable range extension (50% more occupied tetrads) since the previous atlas in 1988-94 but there were still some areas, including

parts of the east Kent lowlands and between Ashford and Romney Marsh, where one might expect further expansion. Canada Geese nest beside lakes and ponds, including those in urban areas, favouring islands that are relatively predator-free and areas with nearby grassland for feeding. They don't seem so keen on rivers and especially narrow watercourses, where predation risk is higher and open take-off routes may be limited.

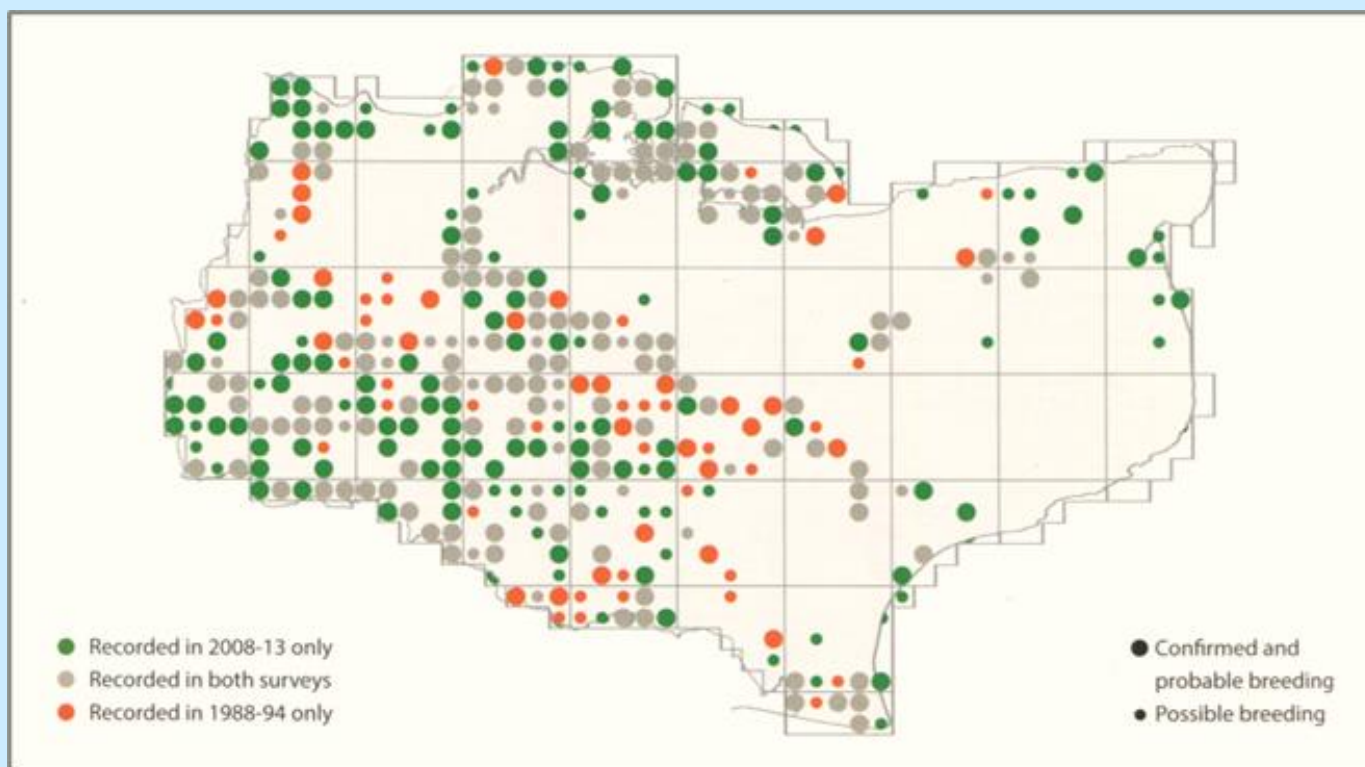


Figure 9. Canada Goose breeding distribution 2008-2013

Of about 430 ringing recoveries affecting Kent, all but nine have been in Kent or neighbouring counties (London, Surrey, Sussex and Essex). There is no sign that Kent birds join the moult migration to the Beaulieu Firth performed by many that breed in the English midlands and elsewhere (*BTO Online Ringing Report*). The longest distance movements within Britain affecting Kent have been birds coming from Nottinghamshire (217 km) and going to the West Midlands (206 km). However, there is one noteworthy recovery, of a bird ringed as a nestling near Stockholm in Sweden in July 1977 and found in Dover in February 1979 (1,380 km). Swedish naturalised Canada Geese are partially migratory, and it may be significant that the recovery date was during a period of very cold weather both here and on the continent. At the time, it was the first foreign ringed Canada Goose to be found in Britain but there have since been a few others.

A more typical lack of wanderlust was shown by one ringed as a nestling in Kingston upon Thames in 2002, seen in Orpington in 2003 and then in Swanley each year during 2013-2015 and again in 2020 and 2021. At 19 years of age, that is the oldest Canada Goose yet recorded in Kent (the BTO scheme record is almost 32 years).

Barnacle Goose



Barnacle Goose by Tracey Mantle

Historically, the Barnacle Goose was very rare in Kent. Ticehurst and Harrison described it as an occasional visitor to the coast, putting in most appearances during cold weather. In the period covered by the *Birds of Kent* (1981), with more observers, there were more records but the species remained predominantly a rare cold weather visitor. The largest flocks known up to 1978 were about 40 in the Swale during 1914-18, 24 at Kingsferry in January 1958 and 21 at Capel Fleet in February 1963. From then on, with increasing global populations, there have been more, but the increasing number of feral birds has complicated understanding of Barnacle Goose's status.

Figure 10 illustrates the numbers of Barnacle Geese believed to be of wild origin recorded in each winter from 1977/78 onwards. The totals are the highest number thought to be in the county at any point during December-February (ignoring turnover, i.e. not the totals estimated to have occurred throughout those three months). I have also indicated with shaded squares those winters in which at least one month had a mean temperature in south-east and central southern England below 2.5°C (Met Office data from www.metoffice.gov.uk/research/climate/maps-and-data/uk-and-regional-series).

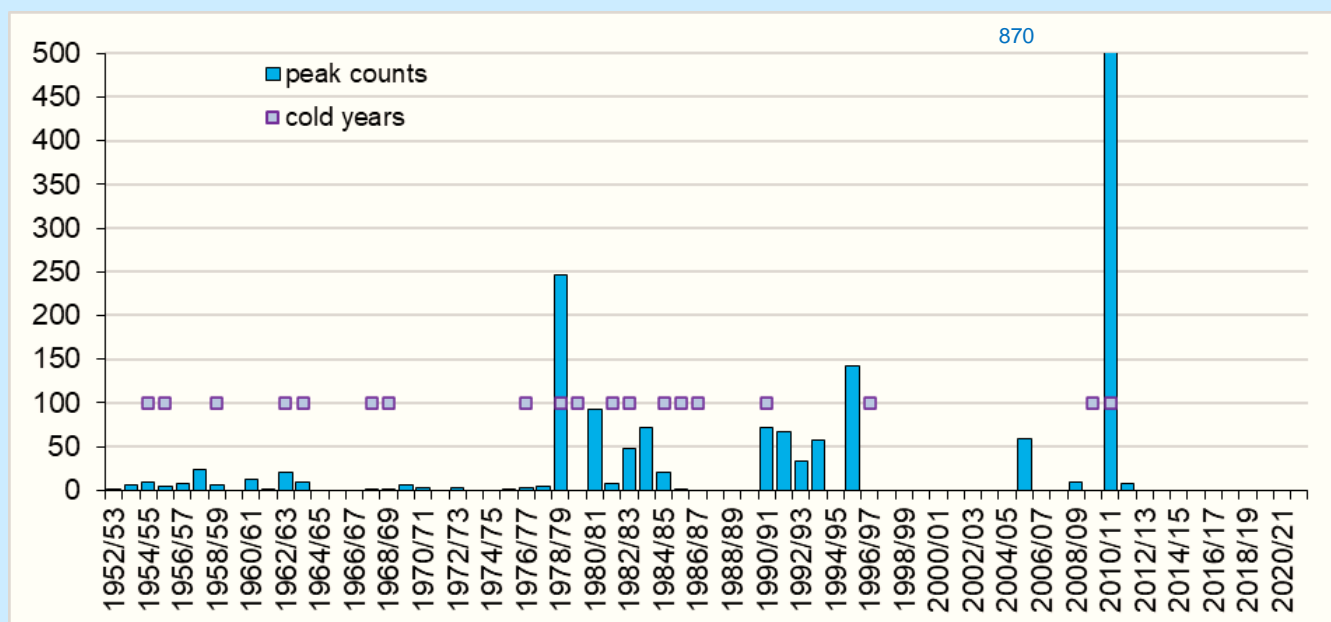


Figure 10. Barnacle Goose: annual peak counts of 'wild' birds

The correlation between Barnacle Goose influxes and cold weather is only moderately strong. It was certainly true for the two largest arrivals in February 1979 and December 2010, and that in February 1996 was only just outside my temperature threshold (that month's mean temperature was 2.6°C). February 2006 was not especially cold, but that year's influx did coincide with arrivals of White-fronted Geese. I'll come on to more of the difficulties of deciding what is a wild Barnacle Goose below but first, in Table 7, I've listed all counts in Kent (excluding those in 1914-18) of 25 or more that were thought to be of Arctic-breeding stock.

Table 7. Barnacle Goose: winter influxes of 25 or more		
1979	24th February-10th March	40 on Sheppey, 92 on the Stour marshes and 114 on Denge Marsh
1981	18th February-7th March	37 at Shellness then Egypt Bay, plus 56 on Sheppey
1984	16th March	72 NE at St Margaret's Bay
1991	2nd-23rd February	Up to 25 at Capel Fleet
1992	29th January-4th February	45 at Stodmarsh and 33 at Minnis Bay
1993	6th-8th February	34 at Hythe
1993	29th November-31st December	Up to 28 at Elmley and Capel Fleet
1996	22nd February-25th March	Up to 62 on Sheppey, 30 at Dungeness RSPB reserve on 22nd February and 59 E at Dungeness on 9th March
2006	4th February-4th March	About 49 boosting feral flock at Dungeness/Scotney Court
2010	27th November-2nd January 2011	Peaks included 150 on the Swale, 148 at Reculver, 390 at Pegwell Bay and 210 additional to feral birds at Scotney Court

All populations of Barnacle Goose have increased since the early twentieth century. These include those nesting in Greenland that winter in western Scotland and Ireland, those from Svalbard wintering on the Solway Firth, and those from arctic Siberia wintering on the German and Dutch coast. There's little doubt that birds occurring in Kent, historically at least, are mostly from the Siberian population, and that they come over the North Sea when conditions on the continent make feeding (grazing) there impossible. However...

Breeding outside the Arctic began in the Baltic in the early 1970s and reached the Netherlands in the early 1980s. This European population had reached up to 55,000 birds by the first decade of this century (there were some 6,000 pairs nesting in the Netherlands by 2005) and is now around 90,000. This information is from Feige *et al.* (2008) *Vogelwelt* 129: 244-252 and AEW (2020, 2021) *Barnacle Goose population status reports*. The origin of these 'temperate-breeding' Barnacle Geese is thought to have been a combination of birds escaping from wildfowl collections and others that failed for whatever reason to migrate to the Arctic. To put the total into perspective, the whole Siberian-European flyway population, including European breeders, is estimated to have increased from 200,000 birds around 1990 to 1.4 million now.

The Baltic breeding birds are at least partially migratory while those in the Netherlands are mainly sedentary. Although there was thought to be little interchange of individuals between the three 'wild' populations, there is between the European and Siberian populations (Feige *et al.* 2008), and it's now impossible to know whether those that arrived in Kent in, for example, 2006 and 2010 belonged to the wild Siberian population or the naturalised European population.

There are also feral breeding populations in Britain, such as in those well-known outposts of the Arctic: the Humber estuary and Bedfordshire. The total is 'officially' estimated to be 4,400 individuals (Frost *et al.*, 2021, *Wetland Bird Survey*, BTO) but may well be higher. Small numbers breed in Kent in at least some years, though I suspect the list that follows is incomplete. It has been recorded at Eastwell Park (one-two pairs each year during 1973-77), Boughton Monchelsea (one pair in 1995), Dungeness (one-three pairs in some years during 2003-23) and Leeds Castle. Barnacle Goose status at Leeds is unclear, with little information being reported; the only definite count was of 15 birds sitting on nests in 2018; it would be good to have more details from there.

The non-breeding feral population in Kent grew quickly from the first report in 1966. Figure 11 shows annual peaks in each of the KOS recording areas – but note that these are not necessarily mutually exclusive. This chart is by calendar months – ideally it would have been by July-June years but I've not had time to re-jig it yet. I have extended it to 2023 but please note that I have only limited data for 2022 and especially 2023. The main area used by feral Barnacle Geese is at Scotney Court gravel pits and sometimes at the nearby Dungeness RSPB reserve. Some counts away from south Kent may well be the same birds, heading to or from Scotney Court, and there is a belief that some of the large flocks seen at Leeds Castle, such as 120 in February 2016, are indeed the same.

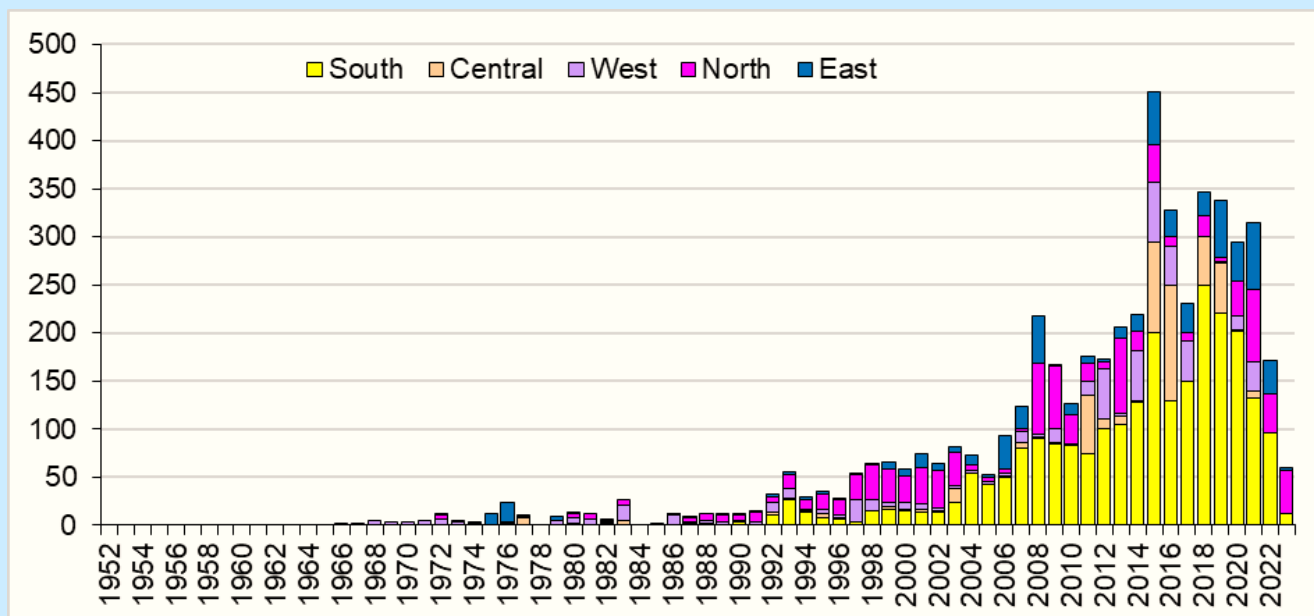


Figure 11. Barnacle Goose: annual peak counts of 'feral' birds, 1952-2023

The highest count at Scotney Court seems to be 250 in December 2018, and there have been several other years with peaks there of 200 or more. The Kent Bird Report for 2018 includes some higher totals for the Dungeness area but I think those include duplication of counts. Figure 11 suggests that the increase had stalled or gone into reverse by 2021. That may or may not have genuinely been the case but numbers since then, and especially in winter 2022/23, have been far lower (KOS doesn't yet have fully collated data but the maximum I've heard of at Scotney Court in 2022/23 is only 14). Possibly they have been affected by bird flu, though the decline seems to have started prior to the current outbreak.

The wintering flock in south Kent is (or, rather, was) too big to be accounted for by Kentish breeding birds – unless the Leeds population is bigger than described above. Some may derive from Leeds Castle, but until recently I thought that Bedfordshire was the main origin. Ringing recoveries between Bedfordshire and Kent exist, such as an adult colour-ringed in Bedfordshire in July 2005 and subsequently seen in Dorset in May 2007, Scotney Court in December 2007, across the Channel at the Baie de Somme in April 2008, at Rutland Water three days later, and at Leeds Castle in July that year. However, we now know that birds can arrive in Kent from elsewhere. In January 2023 (i.e. later than the period covered by this review), two flocks of Barnacle Geese appeared in Kent, some with neck collars: eleven at Higham Marshes and three at Swale NNR. All but one had been marked on Teesside in north-east England, the other in the Lake District, not previously known as sources of wintering Kent geese. They had been marked (as fully-grown birds, not youngsters) in July 2022 and seem to have remained on Teesside until early December before moving south; three of them had been recorded at Weir Wood reservoir in Sussex on 2nd January. I don't have all the details, though I do know that the Swale NNR birds were seen in February in East Yorkshire and north Lincolnshire. In addition, one marked at Holkham in Norfolk was present with three unringed birds for one day at Scotney Court GP on 19th February 2023.

See <https://waterbirdcolourmarking.org/barnacle-geese/> for more on this colour-marking scheme.

Continental naturalised Barnacle Geese are probably also a source of the Kent non-breeding population. There have been sightings in Britain of colour-marked birds from the Netherlands but I've not been able to trace details in time for this newsletter. The substantial and quite widespread influxes in 2020 and 2021, including counts of up to 70 on Worth Marshes, and coinciding with arrivals of White-fronted Geese, seem to point to them coming from the Netherlands. It's possible that some of those birds now come across on a regular basis, not just in cold weather. In Figure 10 and Table 7 above, I've treated those recent influxes as feral birds, though they could include both Siberian and Dutch breeding birds.

The seasonal pattern of occurrence of Barnacle Geese makes it clear that Arctic breeders must be at most a minority of the birds visiting Kent. Figure 12, covering a recent ten year period, shows substantial arrivals in August, a month or two before significant arrivals could be expected from Greenland, Svalbard or Siberia.

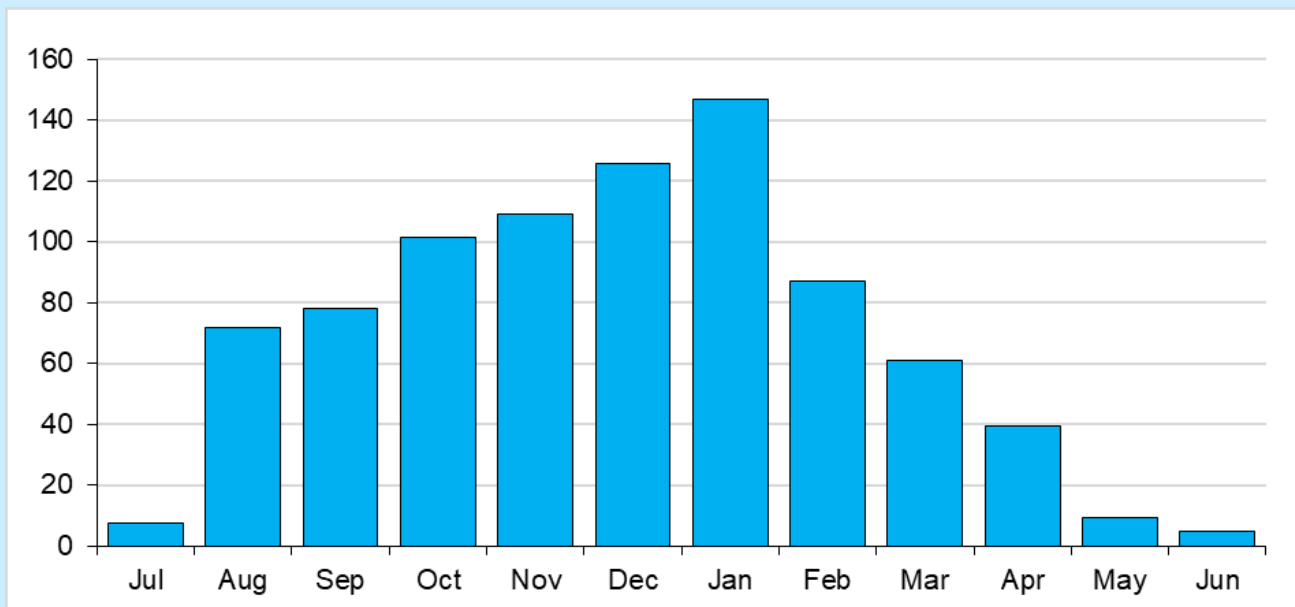


Figure 12. Barnacle Goose: mean monthly maxima, 2011/12-2020/21

Finally, on these baffling Barnacles, back to the question of interchange between breeding populations. There is another ringing recovery affecting Kent, of an adult male ringed in January 2007 at Durness in Sutherland, close to the north-west tip of the Scottish mainland and seen at Scotney Court on 5th and 12th December 2007. Durness is an area used by birds from the Greenland population, either wintering there or continuing to Islay or elsewhere in the Hebrides or Ireland. From this one record, we can't tell if was a Greenland bird that somehow diverted to Kent, or a feral bird that linked up with the Greenland flocks somewhere – but it's interesting nonetheless.

Relevant to that are the results of ringing Barnacle Geese in a breeding population in Strathspey in Scotland (Mitchell *et al.*, 2021, *Scottish Birds*, 41:1, 3-9). Many of them were found to winter with the Solway Firth flocks, with some seen in Norway on passage towards Svalbard, but one bird was shot on passage in Iceland, thus having joined the Greenland population. Evidently interchange is not so unusual as thought when there were only the three wild populations. I have been finding out more about Barnacle Geese in Kent almost daily and I now am less sure of things than I was at the start! If you notice something that's not right in this or other newsletter articles, why not drop a note to the editor, preferably with the facts to back up the correction.

Cackling Goose

The smaller subspecies of Canada Goose *Branta canadensis* were once just that but eventually were separated as a full species, Cackling Goose *Branta hutchinsii*. This is now on the British list, with over sixty records already accepted as being vagrants from America – but none in Kent so far. There are some records of presumed escaped birds, though, and I've managed to trace thirteen involving probably eleven individuals. I've made judgements about which records were probably of the same birds, those including two that each appeared in two successive years. How reliable the identifications were, I don't know (the Kent Bird Reports used various scientific names, some of which may never have been legitimate), but let's assume they were all Cackling Geese of some sort.

The first was one at Stodmarsh on 1st-5th January 1980 and the most recent one on the sea near Hythe on 3rd October 2020. Two have been seen together at Headcorn reservoir on 8th February 2003 and at Grove Ferry on 18th August 2006 but others were singles. The dates of occurrence have been spread throughout the year, with no indication of marked autumn arrivals of storm-driven migrants.

Incidentally, I have no idea why the taxonomists have placed Barnacle Goose between Canada and Cackling. Ours not to reason why...

Andrew Henderson

Scandinavian Rock Pipit

Back in the KOS News for January 2020 (No.524) I wrote a short paper on Rock and Water Pipits in the hope of clarifying the identification of these sometimes-confusing pipits. I included several great photos taken mostly in Kent and mentioned some key features of the Scandinavian sub species *Anthus petrosus littoralis* as I know that it can be an ID challenge at times.

Subsequently I met a few people who were somewhat sceptical about Rock Pipits coming to Kent all the way from Scandinavia, so it was good to find that Chris Hindle had found a colour ringed bird at Reculver which proved the point. Even better from a personal perspective was when I actually got to see it for myself, feeding along the seawall.

Chris was able to provide the following details;

SCANDI ROCKIT, RECVLVER

Today I received the ringing data of the colour ringed Rock Pipit we saw on the rocks at Reculver on January 15th. It had been ringed by Marton Bernsten of the Lista Ringing Group on 30th September 2022 at Farsund, Vest-Agder, NORWAY and had flown 826 km SSW to reach Reculver. CHH

Further, Chris Dighton had managed to take a good photo of the bird allowing some scrutiny of its plumage. As is often stressed, in winter they are barely distinguishable from our locally breeding *A.p.petrosus*.



Scandinavian Rock Pipit by Chris Dighton

Grateful thanks to Chris Hindle, Chris Dighton and Kjell Mork Soot, of The Norwegian Rock Pipit – project who provided the original ringing details.

Norman McCanch

A visit to Tring

The British Museum of Natural History at Tring should not be confused with the well-known South Kensington site. Lying on the edge of the Buckinghamshire town of Tring, it was established by Walter Rothschild as a private museum in a property given to him as a twenty-first birthday present in 1889. Walter was obsessed by natural history from an early age and his love of collecting was funded by his banking family but for many years he was obliged to work at the bank for five days a week, something he hated! Through his museum he employed about 400 collectors world-wide who sent specimens of animals from around the world, notably birds and butterflies. He was particularly interested in

Cassowaries and had 64 live individuals roaming Tring Park, along with a number of live Giant tortoises. Rothschild and his staff at Tring would study the specimens and describe the new species discovered in this way. The first curator, Ernst Hartert, enhanced the scientific reputation of Tring by adopting modern systematics and developed the trinomial system for subspecies. The excellent book, *Whose Bird?* lists 12 bird species described by Rothschild or Hartert.

Although painfully shy, Rothschild delighted in showing his increasing collection, especially the birds, to interested visitors but his downfall was his weakness for women. Pretty actresses came and went but a liaison with a married aristocrat led him to be blackmailed by her and other previous mistresses. His debts mounted despite his considerable wealth from the family bank and in 1931 he was forced to sell his collection of bird skins to the American Museum of Natural History. Walther Rothschild died in 1937 and his remaining collection was given to the Natural History Museum at South Kensington. The 'bird room' moved to a new wing at Tring in the 1970's and became the Sub-Department for ornithology of the Natural History Museum.

Our esteemed Editor, among other KOS members, has visited the bird collection at the Natural History Museum at Tring to identify a rare bird or for other research purposes on many occasions. After the lifting of lockdown I was fortunate to be invited by the BTO to a behind the scenes visit to Tring. The railway station is some distance from the centre of town, apparently because the Rothschilds refused to have the railway on their land. The museum is an amazing treasure trove of ornithological history, with 750,000 specimens, mostly skins but including skeletons, birds in spirit and even nests, as well as one million eggs. The site also has a library of almost every ornithological book ever published and original artwork from the great bird illustrators.

The BTO has links with the BMNH as it was based in Tring for many years before relocating to Thetford. In the late 1960's the BTO acquired the bird skin and egg collection of the late Capt. Vivian Hewitt, eventually selling much of it to the NHM because such things were not "politically correct" at that time. Also, Harry Witherby had sold his collection to the NHM in 1933 to fund the establishment of the BTO and the maintaining of the ringing scheme. As the Hewitt collection was being sold off, I had the opportunity to buy an Ostrich egg for £5, which would have paid for a tankful of petrol back then. It still has pride of place on my bookshelf.

During our visit we were shown specimens of Great Auk and Passenger Pigeon and Hein van Grouw demonstrated how some of the less scrupulous collectors, such as Meinertzhagen, could create "new" species from composite skins to suit their particular ends.



Mounts and skins, including Great Auk, Passenger Pigeon and Snowy Owl by Chris Cox

The Curator of Birds, Dr Alex Bond, showed us some of the significant skins, such as a Chaffinch collected by Thomas Pennant and a Loggerhead Shrike from the Bahamas, shot by Neville Chamberlain and identified by James Bond, author of the *Birds of the West Indies*. Alex explained the need to keep adding to the collection by what is known as "passive collecting", accepting birds that had met an accidental death, so that the progress of plumage change and speciation can be monitored. The skins are held in vast banks of filing cabinets and opening one at

random, we saw a range of mountain *Phylloscopus* species, to my surprise all jumbled together but precisely and essentially tagged with name date and location.



Loggerhead Shrike and Carolina Parakeet by Chris Cox

The collection of eggs was particularly fascinating, perhaps because the hobby is now illegal, although I suspect many a senior birder can recall searching hedgerows for birds' nests. Tray upon tray of the most beautifully patterned eggs included those of Guillemot and Red-backed Shrikes, whose subtle variations led to the latter's downfall as a British breeding bird. Pride of place went to the Great Auk egg from Walter Rothschild's collection, although Hewitt had had no fewer than 13 (and four stuffed birds). The only British birds' eggs now added to the collection are those confiscated from convicted egg collectors, which if properly noted, are too valuable to destroy.



Guillemot eggs by Chris Cox



Great Auk egg by Chris Cox

We were also shown the library of early natural history books including such great illustrators as Audubon, Gould and Wolf. The museum at Tring is an important record of the progress of natural history and is well worth a visit as a reminder of how much we owe to these dedicated collectors and the scientific research that is carried on there today.

With thanks to Dr Alex Bond, Hein van Grouw and Douglas Russell.

Further reading

Whose Bird?, Boelens & Wakins, Helm 2003

The Bird Collectors, Mearns & Mearns, Academic Press 1998

Captain Vivian Hewitt and the fate of his collection of bird's eggs and specimens Clugston & Fuller 2021

<https://doi.org/10.37819/biosis.002.03.0128>

Neville Chamberlain, Angler, Birdwatcher, Farmer, Prime Minister. Wright.J 201

Chris Cox

KENT BIRD SIGHTINGS FOR JANUARY and FEBRUARY 2023 - 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 in this newsletter.*

WEATHER

The first half of **January** continued with the mild, unsettled and wet theme of the last weeks of December, but this proved to be a month of two halves with much drier and colder weather from mid-month although temperatures gradually edged up in the final week. This was also a particularly sunny month being the second sunniest on record, just behind 2022.

February overall was milder and drier than average with high pressure influencing the weather for much of the time. It was unsettled initially, and again for a time mid-month, but the month was remarkable for its dryness and was UK's driest February since 1993 with for instance only 5.50mm of rain falling at Bishopstone.

PARTRIDGE TO WILDFOWL

What may have been the same **Black Brant** was seen at Reculver Marshes on Jan 13th, at Swalecliffe on Feb 2nd, at Whitstable on the Feb 20th and at North Foreland on Feb 27th-Mar 1st whilst a **Pale-bellied Brent Goose** was seen at Reculver on Jan 3rd and Feb 16th.

During January, up to 32 **Barnacle Geese** were recorded from Swale NNR with three at Sandwich Bay on Feb 10th with one still there on the 13th and four flying E at Reculver on the 19th.

A **Pink-footed Goose** was seen at Otford between Jan 2nd and 8th and on Feb 26th whilst one was also seen at Stodmarsh on the Jan 6th.

As many as 210 **Russian White-fronted Geese** were seen at Swale NNR during January and February with up to 85 recorded from High Halstow, Northward Hill, Reculver, Sandwich Bay, Dungeness RSPB, North Foreland, Leysdown-on-Sea, Oare Marshes, Grove Ferry/Stodmarsh, Swalecliffe, Tankerton, Capel Fleet, Lade, Scotney and Conningbrook.

During these two months up to 61 **Bewick's Swans** were seen at Walland Marsh and up to 11 birds were seen at Dungeness RSPB, Oare Marshes, Elmley, Leysdown-on-Sea, Swale NNR, St Mary's Marsh, Reculver, Stoke Marshes and Capel Fleet.

During January and February up to five **Whooper Swans** were seen at Walland Marsh and Dungeness RSPB.

As many as 25 **Egyptian Geese** were seen at Bough Beech, Dunorlan Park, Whetsted GPs, Gravesend, Dungeness RSPB, Brooksend, Seaton, Grove Ferry/Stodmarsh, Oare Marshes, Botolph's Bridge, Godmersham, Conningbrook, Dartford Marshes, Worth Marshes, Sandwich Bay, Fordwich, River Darent, Chartham, Folkestone, Haysden, Sevenoaks WR, Bough Beech and Reculver.



Egyptian Geese by Kieron McDonnell

A **Ruddy Shelduck** was found at Haysden CP on Jan 11th where it remained intermittently to the Feb 20th but was also seen flying S at Knockholt and Bough Beech on Jan 18th.

Up to 12 **Mandarin Duck** were recorded from Bough Beech, Selling, Folk's Wood, Selling and Chesterfield Wood whilst a **Red-crested Pochard** was reported from Sevenoaks WR on Jan 15th.

A female **Ring-necked Duck** was found at Stodmarsh on Jan 6th and remained there into early March.



Ring-necked Duck by Bryan East

A **Scaup** was seen at Swalecliffe on Jan 23rd whilst another was reported from DBO on Feb 8th and as many as six **Velvet Scoter** were seen at DBO, Coldharbour, Minnis Bay, Sandwich Bay, Walmer and North Foreland.



Goosander by Martin Garwood

During January and February up to 21 **Goosanders** were seen at Bough Beech, Haysden, Botolph's Bridge, Whetsted GPs, Nickoll's Quarry, West Hythe, Seabrook, Hythe, Reculver, Minnis Bay and Canterbury.

NIGHTJAR TO WADERS

Single **Red-necked Grebes** were reported flying past North Foreland on Jan 20th and 27th and Feb 3rd whilst one flew E at DBO on the Jan 24th and one was seen there on Feb 12th and 22nd. There was also one reported inland from Bough Beech on Feb 17th with another off St Margarets-at-Cliffe on Feb 28th.

The **Slavonian Grebe** first seen at Cliffe Pools in December was still there on Feb 7th and a bird was also seen on the Swale at Oare Marshes on Jan 7th.

Up to 18 **Purple Sandpipers** were seen at Foreness, Dover Harbour, Swalecliffe, Hampton, Broadstairs, North Foreland and Swalecliffe.

A **Little Stint** was seen at Scotney on Jan 6th with two there on the 30th and one or two **Jack Snipe** were seen at DBO, Sandwich Bay and Willop Basin whilst during January single **Spotted Redshank** were reported from Cliffe Pools and Pegwell Bay.

GULLS TO SHEARWATERS

During January up to four **Little Gulls** were seen at DBO, Sandwich Bay and Folkestone.

A juvenile **Glaucous Gull** flew S at Worth Marshes on Jan 9th, one was seen at Foreness on Feb 13th, a second calendar year bird flew S at North Foreland on the 15th and a juvenile was seen at Pegwell Bay on Feb 25th and 26th. Up to eight **Caspian Gulls** were recorded from Dungeness with one or two seen at Pegwell Bay, Sandwich Bay, St Margarets-at-Cliffe, Margate, Leysdown-on-Sea, Deal, Dartford Marshes, North Foreland and Foreness whilst one or two **Yellow-legged Gulls** were seen at DBO, Reculver, Walpole Bay and North Foreland.

A **Sandwich Tern** flew E at DBO on Feb 19th.

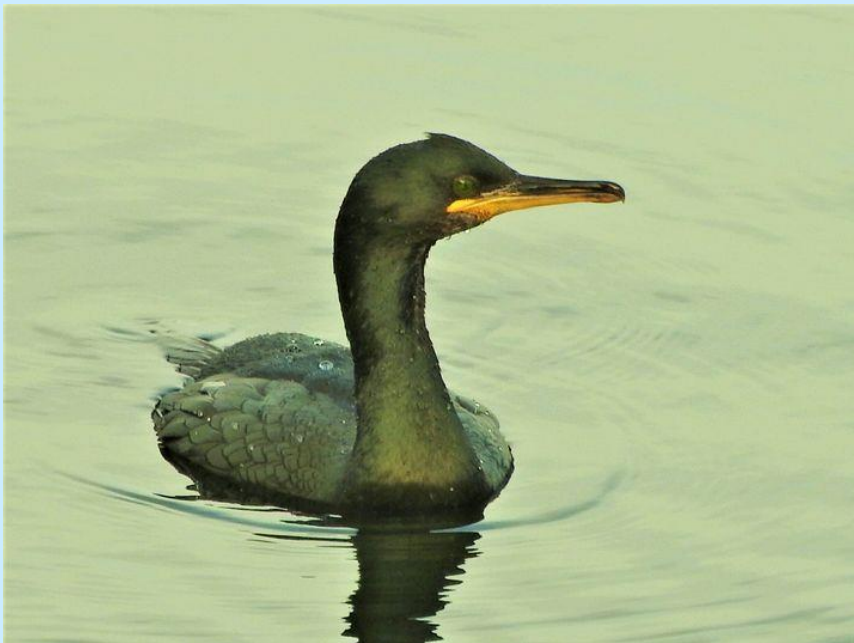
During January and February one or two **Great Skuas** were seen at DBO and North Foreland and two **Little Auks** were reported flying S at North Foreland on Jan 7th.

During January and February single **Black-throated Divers** were reported from Bockhill, Sandwich Bay, Seasalter and North Foreland and one or two **Great Northern Divers** were seen at Swalecliffe, Tankerton, Minnis Bay, Margate, Cliffe Pools, North Foreland and Foreness.

WHITE STORK TO WOODPECKERS

An adult **White Stork** was seen at Worth Marshes from Jan 20th to the end of February

One or two **Shags** were seen at North Foreland, Sandwich Bay, Samphire Hoe, Ramsgate Harbour and Chatham Maritime.



Shag by Martin Garwood

The two long staying **Glossy Ibises** at Dungeness RSPB were seen regularly throughout January and February and were joined by another bird between Jan 16th and Feb 3rd and two on the Feb 19th.

During January and February up to three **Spoonbills** were recorded at Harty Marshes, North Foreland, Worth Marshes, Sandwich Bay, Oare Marshes, Ham Road GPs, Scotney and Dungeness RSPB and single **Bitterns** were seen at Oare Marshes, Ham Road Pits, Capel Fleet and Dungeness RSPB.

As many as 11 **Cattle Egrets** were seen at Dungeness RSPB, Stodmarsh, Grove, Chislet Marshes, Oare Marshes, Worth Marshes, Collard's Lake, Port Lympne, Botolph's Bridge, Sandwich Bay and West Hythe and one or two **Great White Egrets** were seen at Dungeness RSPB, Oare Marshes, the Swale, Stodmarsh/Grove Ferry, Sandwich Bay, Chartham, Worth Marshes, Fairfield, Chislet Marshes, Cheyne Court, Seaton, Donkey Street and West Hythe.

A maximum of five **Hen Harriers** was seen at Cliffe Pools, Swale NNR, Dungeness RSPB, Stodmarsh/Grove Ferry, South Swale LNR, Conyer, Oare Marshes, Seasalter, Capel Fleet, Stoke Marshes, Elmley, Denge Wood, Minster Marshes, Graveney and Harty Marshes.



Hen Harrier by Mike Gould

As many as eight **Red Kites** were recorded from Gravesend, Bough Beech, Brokes Mill Farm, Sandwich Bay, Instead Rise, Oare Marshes, Birling, Faversham, Sellindge, Sevenoaks WR, Ham Street, Newnham, Goathurst, Stodmarsh and Birling Downs whilst up to 39 roosted at Knockholt.

A **Black Kite** was reported from Walderslade on Jan 13th and a **Rough-legged Buzzard** flew S at Hothfield Common on Jan 5th.

During these two months up to three **Long-eared Owls** were recorded at three sites in **East**, one in **South** and two in **North** whilst as many as six **Short-eared Owls** were seen at Reculver, Seasalter, Foreness, Lydd, Elmley, Capel Fleet, Pegwell Bay, Swalecliffe, Deal, Worth Marshes and Sandwich Bay.

FALCONS TO HIRUNDINES

Single **Merlins** were seen at Stodmarsh/Grove Ferry, Seaton, Sandwich Bay, West Hythe, Seasalter, Oare Marshes, North Foreland, Swalecliffe, Chislet Marshes and Harty Marshes.



Merlin by Steve Reynaert

The **Great Grey Shrike** first at Hothfield Common in November was seen there again between Jan 2nd and 8th.

As many as eight **Ravens** were recorded from Reculver, Leigh, Swale NNR, Sandwich Bay, Worth Marshes, Greenhill, Whitstables, Folkestone, Dunorlan Park, Southborough, Cheriton, Blean Woods, Appledore, Swalecliffe, Bough Beech, East Blean Woods, Graveney, West Hythe, Chislet Marshes, Stodmarsh, North Foreland, Canterbury, Furnace Pond and Cliffe Pools.

A single **Waxwing** flew S at Oare Marshes on Jan 1st and four were reported from Gillingham on Jan 26th with two at Hollingbourne on Jan 27th.

Single **Woodlarks** flew W at Cliftonville on Feb 4th and S at North Foreland on the 18th whilst two were recorded at DBO on Feb 22nd.

WARBLERS TO WHEATEARS

Up to three **Penduline Tits** were seen intermittently at Elmley Brickfields from Jan 17th to Feb 9th and almost certainly included the two birds that were present at the same site between Dec 10th and 17th 2022.



Hume's warbler by Peter Maton

The **HUME'S WARBLER** first seen at Dover in December was still there on Feb 17th whilst another bird was found at Enbrook Park, Folkestone from Feb 11th where it remained until the end of the month and yet another was found at Elmstone on Feb 22nd and remained there until the 24th.



Pallas's warbler by Andy Taylor

A **Pallas's Warbler** was discovered at Swalecliffe on Jan 2nd and was present there until the Feb 9th and a **Siberian Chiffchaff** was identified at Shuart Farm on Jan 7th.

One or two **Dartford Warblers** were seen at Reculver, DBO, Dungeness RSPB, Scotney, Elmley, Sandwich Bay, Oare Marshes, Foreness, Church Woods, Finberry, Chislet Marshes and Plumpudding.

As many as seven **Firecrests** were recorded from Port Lympne, Shuart, DBO, Sandwich Bay, Dunorlan Park, Fordwich, Oare Marshes, Chislet Marshes, Paraker Wood, Shorncliffe, Kemsing and Enbrook Park. In addition, on Jan 24th, there were 15 counted at Old Park, Canterbury.

A **Ring Ouzel** seen at East Malling in December was reported from there again on Jan 2nd.

Single **Black Redstarts** were seen at Reculver, Sandwich Bay, Oare Marshes, Seasalter, Cliftonville, Sevenoaks, Staplehurst, Westbrook, North Foreland, South Swale LNR, Westgate, Kingsdown, Dover, Scotney, Dymchurch and Foreness.

SPARROWS TO BUNTINGS

A **Richard's Pipit** flew N at Sandwich Bay on Feb 8th.

In January and February as many as 14 **Water Pipits** were seen at Stodmarsh/Grove Ferry, Worth Marshes, Oare Marshes, Dartford Marshes, Cliffe Pools, Swale NNR, Elmley, Swanscombe Marsh, Chislet Marshes and Dungeness RSPB.

As many as six **Hawfinches** were counted at Godmersham during these two months.



Hawfinch by Peter Maton

In January and February as many as eight **Snow Buntings** were seen at Reculver but had decreased to four by the end of February whilst eight also flew E at Swalecliffe on Jan 21st.

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, Twitter, Facebook, WhatsApp and the RBA Hotline.

Records have been contributed by A. Appleton, B. Benn, Bockhill Birders, R. Bonsor, Bough Beech (per A. Ford), E. Brown, N. Burt, G. Burton, F. Cackett, J. Cantelo, J. Carnell, P. Carr, M. Casemore, J. Chantler, P. Chantler, M. Chidwick, K. Cutting, DBO (per D. Walker), B. East, P. Eerdmans, A. Farrar, D. Faulkener, Folkestone and Hythe Birds (per I. Roberts), Foreness Bird Group, C. Gibbard, M. Gould, R. Heading, A.

Hindle, C. Hindle, M. Hindle, M. Hollingworth, G. Howard, S. Huggins, M. Kennett, S. Kennett, J. King, A. Lawson, O. Leyshon, A. Lipczynski, K. Lord, R. Mace, A. Malone, J. Massey, N. McCanch, S. McMin, S. Message, S. Mills, S. Mount, M. Norman, R. O'Reilly, M. Orchard, J. Partridge, A. Perry, J. Perry, K. Privett, M. Puxley, R. Rackliffe, S. Reynaert, I. Ridgers, M. Roser, B. Ryan, Samphire Hoe (per P. Holt, and P. Smith), SBBO (per A. Lipczynski and S. Walton), I. Shepherd, D. Smith, D. W. Smith, P. Smith, W. Stoneham, M. Sutherland, Swale NNR (per R. Smith, D. Faulkner, I. Davidson), A. Swandale, A. Taylor, X. Taylor, P. Trodd, M. Warburton, M. Wilson, T. Wilson, J. Woolgar, B. Woolhouse, B. Wright, M. Wright and J. Young.

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 and they are then entered 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 2022 and 2023 KOS Rarities have recently been accepted by the KOS Rarities Panel based on published photos or from descriptions submitted.

2022

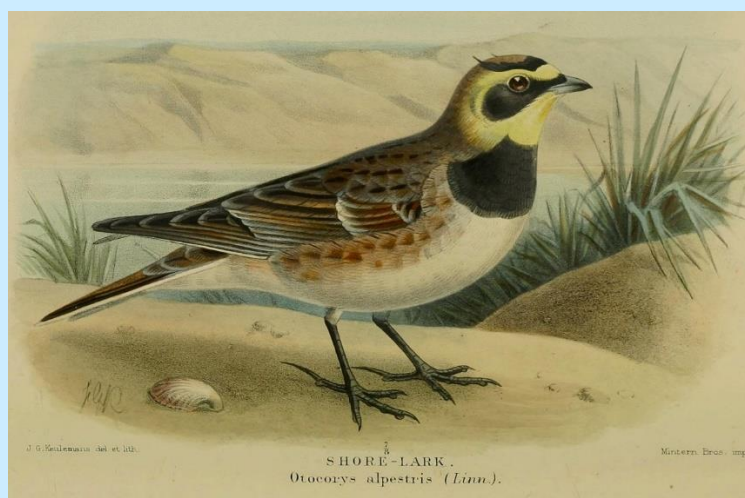
Red-rumped Swallow	Sandown Castle, Deal	Nov 10th-11th
Rough-legged Buzzard	Swale NNR	January 1st
Iceland Gull (adult flying S)	North Foreland	December 8th
Black Guillemot	Dungeness	August 2nd
Black Guillemot	Dungeness	August 2nd
Siberian Chiffchaff	Minster Sewage Works, Thanet	Jan 27th-Feb 5th
Icterine Warbler (ringed)	DBO	June 2nd
Barred Warbler	North Foreland	October 12th
Red-breasted Flycatcher (female)	Dungeness	April 13th

2023

up to 3 Penduline Tits	Elmley Brickfields	Jan 17th-28th
Siberian Chiffchaff	Shuart Farm	January 7th
Ring-necked Duck (female)	Stodmarsh.	Jan 6th-Feb 28th
Rough-legged Buzzard (flew S)	Hothfield Common	January 5th

Fifty Years Ago

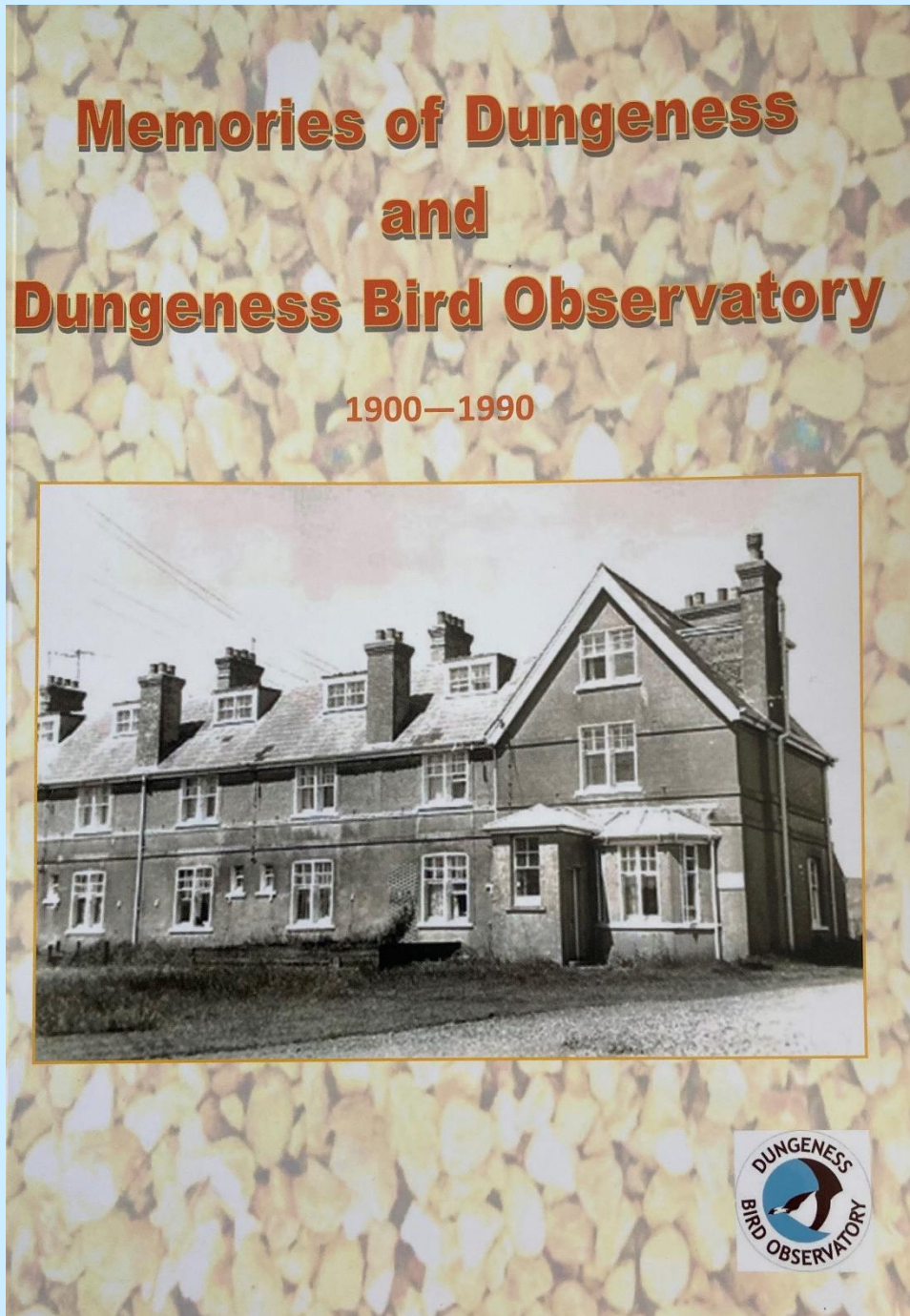
Shore Lark



Shore Lark by JG Keulemans (PDI)

In the East the record of 52 birds at Reculver on January 1st (CHH) was the largest flock ever recorded in Kent.

A New Book



A comprehensive history of Dunge and the observatory, ideal for anyone with an interest.
Illustrated, 144 pages

Available from the observatory shop, link below.

[Dungeness Bird Observatory : Our Shop](#)