



Yellow Warbler by Louise Kahan

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Here we are again, another new year after a memorable Christmas period, for some birders at least. For my part it was a quiet time of garden birding and a few walks around the adjacent fields. This proved interesting, with several Blackcaps in places where I had not seen them before and a few more Song Thrushes than previous years. I usually expect to start hearing the odd snatch of Mistle Thrush song, but none so far. A trip out to Pegwell produced some distant Snow Buntings and a Peregrine. For various reasons birding has been low on my list of priorities, but hopefully as we move away from the solstice things might perk up a bit.

It seems to be a feature of midwinter and my age that we seem to be losing old friends from Kent birding. Most recently Peter Laslett passed away. While not a regular KOS member Peter was an enthusiastic birder and always good company, part of the community that saw birding in Kent begin to take off post war, building both the KOS and Sandwich Bay Bird Observatory.

These days studying birds seems to be less attractive to people when compared with photography or identification to garner ticks. It is easy to see why, modern life makes demands on people's time and quick rewards and instant gratification are the order of the day. Fewer people are prepared to investigate puzzling observations or long term trends. Where this will lead us in the future is uncertain, but there are many threats to birds and their environment that need the attention of focused minds to provide the necessary information to challenge the pressures of business industry and corporate greed.

Good birding
Norman

News and announcements

KOS Newsletter January 2025

Avian Influenza

Please continue to be vigilant and keep your eyes open for any signs of unusual mortality in any wild bird species and to **report these to Defra for testing.**

We are only able to track the spread of avian influence with the help of birdwatchers who submit their sightings.

Report dead and sick birds

- Record in the [BirdTrack app](https://www.bto.org/our-science/projects/birdtrack) <https://www.bto.org/our-science/projects/birdtrack> . This allows researchers to follow the disease's geographical spread and rapidly assess potential impacts on populations.
- Report to [Defra](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/report-dead-wild-birds), so that if needed, dead birds can be collected for testing <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/report-dead-wild-birds> or call 03459 33 55 77 (call charges may apply)

Future BTO Surveys

Heathland Birds Survey 2025

A new national survey of heathland birds (Nightjar, Woodlark and Dartford Warbler) is taking place this year, in partnership with the RSPB. The previous population estimates made for these species are now almost 20 years old, based on data from surveys undertaken at a time when all three species had undergone a substantial increase in both population size and range. Both Woodlark and Dartford Warbler were at their most northerly recorded UK breeding range extents, while Nightjar was regaining ground in northern England and even into Scotland.



- In 2004, the Nightjar population was 4,600 territories (churring males).
- In 2006, Dartford Warblers numbered 3,214 territories and the Woodlark population was 3,064 territories.

We urgently need updated population estimates to assess how breeding numbers and range for each of these species have changed throughout the UK and Channel Islands. We also need to know how birds are faring on the network of protected heathland sites that support the majority of the populations of these specialist species. **However, the survey is not limited to heathland and the aim is to record all birds of each species in whatever habitat they are in.** The Heathland Birds Survey has been designed to cover the current known distribution of Woodlark, Nightjars and Dartford Warblers, but also to pick up recent range expansion or contraction. The data collected will be used to calculate up-to-date population figures for key protected sites, as well as wider national and regional population estimates. The data may also help with future designations of other important sites for heathland birds.

Not all of these species figure strongly in Kent, mainly due to our lack of heathland, which is generally the preferred habitat (although some areas do exist around Pembury, Hothfield and on the Blean) so there are only a few squares (1km) to be surveyed for Woodlark and Dartford Warbler. However, Kent does have a population of Nightjars, mostly in woodland habitats, which have been the subject of BTO surveys at intervals in the past (1981, 1992 and 2004), and so, after an interval of 20 years, it will be great to survey Nightjar again and get an update on its status in Kent. In terms of the other species, the occasional pair of Woodlark and Dartford Warbler do sometimes breed, but they are RBBP (Rare Breeding Bird Panel) species and survey effort will be directed to a few local observers for the known breeding sites. The proposed list of 1km squares for the survey has already been reviewed and many unsuitable ones have been discarded. A few squares with past breeding records have also been added, and the final list will be sent to Regional Organisers in late January.

The Heathland Birds Survey will open for registration in late January, when volunteers will be able to sign up for the survey, request survey sites and access the online data entry system through the online project portal.

- All volunteers must follow BTO's Guidance for volunteer fieldworkers and the organisation's Code of Conduct.

Volunteers will make between two and four visits for each of the species during the species' survey periods:

Woodlark (15 February – 31 May) – two early morning visits between sunrise and 11 a.m.
Dartford Warbler (1 April – 30 June) – two early morning visits between sunrise and 11 a.m.
Nightjar (25 May – 15 July) – two evening visits covering the two-hour period after sunset, or the two hours prior to sunrise. We recommend a daytime recce visit before the survey is undertaken.
Further details of the survey, and participation in Kent, will be given in the March Newsletter. In the meantime, please visit the BTO website for the survey [Heathland Birds Survey | BTO - British Trust for Ornithology](#)

Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS)

If you would like to participate in this survey, please sign up as before and request a site, or contact your WeBS Local Organiser who will advise on what to do (see below). WeBS Local Organisers in Kent;

Thames, Murray Orchard - murray.orchard@live.co.uk

Medway, Bob Knight - riknight53@gmail.com

Swale, Brian Watmough - brianrwat1@gmail.com

Pegwell Bay, Steffan Walton – steffan.walton@hotmail.co.uk

Dungeness area, Dave Walker – dungenessobs@vfast.co.uk

All other areas (including East and West Kent), Murray Orchard - murray.orchard@live.co.uk

Please report colour-ringed waders - Brian Watmough

There are three projects colour ringing waders in Kent.

At Elmley NNR, the conservation trust is working with the Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust and the Swale Wader Group to colour mark head-started **Curlew** as part of a five-year project. Sightings of these birds give information on the survival of these birds – are they surviving as well as naturally hatched birds? And on their movement - are these birds imprinting on the area they hatched? or will they fly off with other Curlew to Northern Europe?

The Swale Wader Group are also colour ringing **Redshank** and **Black-tailed Godwit**. The Black-tailed Godwit are part of a long-standing international project involving collaboration with universities in UK, Iceland and Portugal.



Image credit: Steve Duffield

We are colour ringing Redshank to find out where the birds go in summer? and how they use the Swale? We are already getting interesting results. This summer a bird was seen in South Uist in June and probably nested there, another bird was seen at Cley in Norfolk in July and then seen two weeks later at Oare. Local observations also show how moulting birds disperse along the Kent coast once they have finished moulting.

The success of these projects is enhanced by reporting colour ringed birds and there is a network of committed observers reporting colour rings. However, often when I meet other birders, they may say “yes, I saw a colour- ringed bird, but I have not reported it”, the excuse being someone else will have done so or “I never receive feedback”. If you see a colour ringed bird, please take the time to read all the rings and report your observations.

Colour ringed birds can be reported at <https://cr-birding.org> and more information at <https://www.bto.org/our-science/projects/bird-ringing-scheme/about-ringing/why-colour-mark-birds>

For colour ringed Redshank email brianrwat1@gmail.com,

For Black-tailed Godwit email blackwits@hotmail.co.uk

Help Monitor Kent's Lesser Spotted Woodpeckers in 2025



Image credit: Heather Mathieson

Have you ever been lucky enough to encounter one of these little woodpeckers as it flits through the tree tops, or heard its rapid *keek keek keek* call or soft drumming? A little bigger than a House Sparrow, the Lesser Spotted Woodpecker is the smallest woodpecker species in Europe, weighing on average only 20g. These incredible birds are usually seen high in the canopy of old woodlands, parks, and other areas with mature trees and dead wood where they forage for insects and establish their territories. They differ from the Great Spotted Woodpecker, not only in size, but also in plumage. Lesser spots have a distinct white horizontal barring across their back and wings and lack the large white shoulder patches of Great Spotted Woodpeckers.

The Lesser Spotted Woodpecker (*Dryobates minor*) is one of the UK's most elusive and threatened bird species in the UK. Restricted to England and Wales, the species has suffering a rapid decline in the UK since around 1980. According to the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO), there has been an 81% decrease in population (1997-2022) with significant range contractions, leading to its classification as a red-listed species of high conservation concern. The BTO Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) data for Lesser Spotted Woodpeckers in the UK shows there was a 41% contraction in their breeding distribution between 1968-72 and 2008-11

(<https://www.bto.org/understanding-birds/birdfacts/lesser-spotted-woodpecker>).

To better understand their status and distribution in Kent, we are asking for your help in recording sightings this year, particularly during the pre-breeding and active breeding season (February–June). Your observations are crucial to helping us gain a better understanding of the distribution of this species in Kent and could help with future conservation efforts for this species.

What to Record

When you see a Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, please provide as much detail as possible, including:

1. **Number of birds seen:** Were there single individuals, a pair, or a small group?
2. **Sex:** Males have a red crown, while females do not.
3. **Location:** Use precise GPS coordinates or a *what3words* location using the app on your smartphone.
4. **Activity:** Note whether the bird is:

- **Foraging:** Searching for insects on branches or bark.
- **Drumming:** Rapid, repetitive pecking used to communicate.
- **Calling:** Vocalizations to attract mates or defend territory.
- **Displaying:** Territorial or courtship behaviours.
- **Perching or flying:** Resting or moving between locations

How to Submit Your Records

Please enter your sightings into one of the following platforms:

- **BirdTrack:** The BTO's free app accessible on your smartphone.
- **eBird:** Free recording App, accessible on your smartphone.
- **Kent Ornithological Society (KOS) website:** If you are based in Kent you can submit your records directly to the KOS database via their website www.kentos.org.uk

Share Your Photos!

If you're lucky enough to capture a photo of a Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, please email the image along with the location, time and date of your sighting to lesserspotsinkent@gmail.com.

*All images will remain the copyright of the photographer. Images will only be used for conservation and survey purposes, with full credit given to the photographer.

Learn about how to spot Lesser Spots

For further information and guidance on identifying Lesser Spotted Woodpeckers, please visit the links below.

- Woodpecker Network website <https://www.woodpecker-network.org.uk/index.php/species>
- Dr Ken Smith of the Woodpecker Network – Lesser Spotted Woodpeckers (lecture to the RBBP) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l1NeKBkZvWk>
- Greater and Lesser Spotted Woodpecker - identification video (BTO) www.bto.org/develop-your-skills/bird-identification/videos/bto-bird-id-great-lesser-spotted-woodpeckers
- BTO - UK Woodpecker identification guide https://www.bto.org/sites/default/files/shared_documents/gbw/associated_files/bird-table-63-woodpecker-identification.pdf
- Examples of Lesser Spotted Woodpeckers drumming and calls <https://xeno-canto.org/species/Dryobates-minor>

Get in touch

If you would like more information about the survey, please email Heather Mathieson (Survey Coordinator) (heathermathieson@outlook.com).

Happy woodpecker spotting!

KOS branded clothing.

Just a friendly reminder that our branded clothing is available for purchase through LogoThatPolo. You can find the link on the KOS website or search for Kent Ornithological Society on www.logothatpolo.co.uk. As the weather starts to cool down, it's the perfect time to pick up a hat, fleece or hoodie for yourself or as a Christmas present and don't forget a portion of the proceeds is given back to the society.

Martin Collins

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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:

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Obituary notice - PETER LASLETT (1936 – 2025)

Peter passed away on 6th January following a lengthy and debilitating illness. He was a well known and popular member of the East Kent birding fraternity. Peter was born at Woodnesborough but spent much of his adult life in Thanet. Except for his period of National Service in the Army (R.A.S.C.) he worked for the Wingham Engineering Co. While in the Army he became a Small Arms Instructor based in Germany. This long term exposure to gun fire led, in later life, to his becoming almost totally deaf. A handicap which he bore with great fortitude.

His introduction to `birding` came as a teenager when he met John Hollyer a friendship which lasted for some seventy years. Later on he made a number of visits over several years with his wife Jill to both America and Canada where one of his daughters was living. While there they travelled widely from California to Florida and he became very knowledgeable about the birds of North America. Nearer to home he became an integral part of a small group of friends from Sandwich Bay including Don Worsfold & Dennis Whittaker, who made frequent trips to France and the Netherlands, the latter often in the depths of "real winters", to experience the multitudes of geese and assorted wildfowl. Occasions he never tired of recalling included the site of some 600 Smew packed together on a half frozen polder close to Harderwijk. Peter was persistent in working his way through flocks of geese or waders long after his colleagues became keen to move on. His patience was rewarded when he found our first Red-breasted goose in Holland and on another occasion a Western Sandpiper at Les Attaques near Calais. His attention to detail and recall of dates was legendary but his driving ability less so. When driving Pete was constantly looking to the left or right for a bird rarely looking at oncoming traffic and often forgetting to drive on the right. After one particular hair-raising episode Mike Sykes who had experienced coming under fire when in Aden with the RAF had pleaded, "Stop the Car" but Peter never actually had an accident !

Peter was a kind and compassionate man who in the weeks before his passing wrote lengthy letters to many of his friends including John Hollyer and Phil Milton.

Our thoughts and condolences go out to his wife Jill and his daughters Sharon & Heather.

John Websper (January 2025)

Novel feeding by a Dunnock

On the 17th May 2024 I was watching from a hide overlooking the Restharrow Scrape at Sandwich Bay in the company of Mike Halliwell. It was a typical Spring day with a good range of common migrants and breeding birds present .

A male Pied Wagtail *Motacilla alba yarrelli* was collecting mostly *Tipulid* flies and their larvae from the grass strip in front of the hide and taking them to feed young nearby, returning after a brief time to continue foraging. I also noticed a small streaky brown bird feeding in the wet drawdown at the edge of the scrape which was frequently lost to sight. Eventually it emerged and revealed itself to be a Dunnock *Prunella modularis* . It was also carrying a beak full of invertebrates to an unseen nest and returning promptly. We had neither of us seen a Dunnock feeding in a pond margin previously and were curious to know what it was taking. Mike managed a series of photographs which revealed a clump of green invertebrates and some fragments of a darker creature.

This was beyond our capabilities to identify so I sent the photographs to the BM(NH) where Dr .Duncan Sivell identified the green items in the dunnock's bill as damselfly larvae *Zygoptera*, although it was not possible to identify the species. Also included in the prey bundle was a *Ptychoptera contaminata* (a species of "false crane fly"). Damselfly larvae (or nymphs) are aquatic, but they will need to come out of the water before turning into an adult suggesting that the Dunnock was either preying on larvae as they leave the water, or might have been picking them out of very shallow water' .The *Ptychoptera* the Dunnock caught is also often found around the edges of still water bodies.

A subsequent search of BWP Vol 7 revealed no evidence of Dunnocks foraging in wet marginal habitats, nor any record of *Zygoptera* or *Ptychoptera* amongst the prey of this species. This observation appears to record the first accounts of this foraging method and these prey items for this widespread and common species.



Dunnock with prey by Mike Halliwell

Norman McCanch and Mike Halliwell

BARN OWL RINGING AT ASH LEVEL 2010-2024



We first visited Goldstone Farm in 2010, and have now ringed 40 Barn Owls there. We try and make our first visit in June, when there is a chance of catching one, or possibly both, of the adults. We have been lucky to catch 12 adults, of which 4 were already ringed, see below. We monitor boxes at several farms in the area, and we can see from the 4 birds retrapped, that they like to stay nearby, but not necessarily in the same box from one year to another.

Birds ringed at Goldstone Farm:

	Full grown	Retraps/ PulliRecoveries	Total	
Kestrel	0	6	0	6
Stock Dove	2	4	0	6
Barn Owl	8	32	4	44
Total:	10	42	4	56

These birds were all in nest boxes, but there is always the chance of Barn Owls nesting in cracks between the straw bales in the big open barn, and we are watching out for them there.



1. Blocking the hole to stop adults escaping while we open the door



2. Ringing a young downy chick. The legs are already large enough to ring



1. Ringing, measuring, weighing and comparing older birds.



2. These three are fully fledged, ready to fly, but we put them back in the box.

Photos by David Lodge.

Recapture History

Ring number	Type	Age/ Sex	Capture Type	Date	Init	Details
Barn Owl						
GR67685	N	1		13/07/15	SLF	Ash Level (2414), Kent
	R	4F	Recaptured	13/06/16	JWB	West Stourmouth (1216), Kent (5 km, W, 336 days)
GC98003	N	4		07/06/10	RM	East Stourmouth (1221), Kent
	C	4M	Recaptured	20/09/11	JER	Ash Level (2414), Kent (3 km, E, 1 yr 105days)
GR67622	N	4F		13/06/16	JER	Ash Level (2414), Kent
	R	4F	Recaptured	24/06/19	JHT	Abbey Farm, Minster (1750), Kent (3 yrs 11days)
	R	6F	Recaptured	15/08/19	JWB	Ash Level (2414), Kent (3 yrs 63days)
GV76538	N	4M		02/07/18	JWB	Ash Level, Kent
	R	4M	Recaptured	14/06/21	TH	Ash Level (1752), Kent (2 yrs 347days)
	R	8M	Recaptured	26/06/23	CAT	Ash Level (2414), Kent (4 yrs 359days)

(Age code 1 is a nestling or pullus, 4 is an adult).

We can ring the nestlings from about 24 days old, when they are still white and fluffy, but the legs are already well developed, large enough to take the adult-size ring.

They normally fly at about 60 days old. If they are in a barn, they can fly around and practise landing on beams, and going back to the box, but if they are in a box on a pole, they have to get it right first time! Box 2414 is inside the tin cattleshed, 1752 is a box on a pole nearer the farm buildings.

We can see from the above captures, that they are not always faithful to the same box in subsequent years, but move around the area. Average movement is up to 10km, but occasionally a Barn Owl will make a longer movement of 50 or 100 kms.

The boxes are sometimes used by Kestrels, which we are very happy with, but also increasingly by Stock Doves. The Stock Doves clutter up the box with sticks and we need to clear the sticks out of the box when the Stock Doves have flown, to make room for the Barn Owls.

Barn Owls are a Schedule 1 species, which offers them special protection, and our ringing is done under licence from the British Trust for Ornithology, and is part of the Kentish Stour Countryside Partnership's nest box scheme. They have put up a large number of boxes, and we monitor about 60 each year.

We would like to thank Paul and Stewart Dunn for allowing us to visit their farm to monitor the Barn Owls, and for providing such splendid habitat for Barn Owls and their prey. Can you see what the flying bird in the first photo has caught? And thanks to Dennis Joiner and David Lodge for keeping an eye on activities and maintaining the boxes, and for guiding us round the farm and helping with the ringing. And thanks to David for the excellent photos, and to all the ringers, helpers and drivers who have helped us over the years.

Jan Pritchard and John Buckingham

ESCAPED BIRDS IN KENT

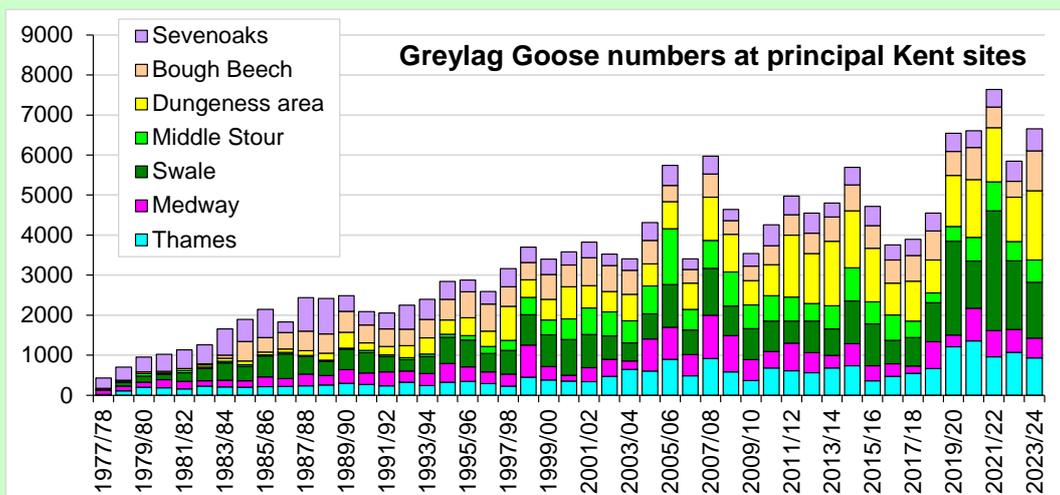


Escapees (Wikicommons)

Last November, KOS was contacted by the British Ornithologists' Union Records Committee (BOURC), asking for details of some records of escaped birds. This was part of their review of Category E records, including the compilation of 'voucher' record for each species. It was fairly easy to extract the relevant small bits of information but we took the opportunity to undertake a complete review of Kent records of escapes. By doing this, we have updated and extended the list of Kent escapes in the KOS News of July 2020.

Escapes and accidental or deliberate introductions have always been second-class citizens of the bird world, variously ignored or subject to derogatory terms such as 'plastics'. But perhaps they warrant more attention. After all, some have become well-established members of our avifauna and others pose interesting conservation questions. A few examples:

Two of our more numerous species of wildfowl (Greylag and Canada Geese) are primarily introductions/escapes, scarcely known in the county 70 years ago. Others, such as Barnacle and Egyptian Geese, may be following in their wake. They now are an integral part of wetland bird communities, and many would regret their disappearance from the point of view of their attractiveness not to mention adding four species to one's list. They may, however, pose threats to native species through competition for food and nest sites, and by damage to vegetation.



The story of the Ruddy Duck is well-known. An American import, escaping from the Wildfowl Trust and multiplying rapidly, it became a birders' favourite, even being chosen as the logo of the West Midland Bird Club. But it was perceived as posing a threat to the global population of the closely-related White-headed Duck, with which it had started to hybridise. The resulting cull, now complete barring a few stragglers, met fierce resistance from those who felt the species had a right to continued existence on this side of the Atlantic.

The growth of Rose-ringed (that's Ring-necked to you and me!) Parakeet numbers has worried people too, in this case because of risks to fruit crops and its habit of occupying nest holes of declining species such as Starling. This was first mentioned in the 1977 Kent Bird Report, when Brian Hawkes was gathering information on a species "which could reach pest proportions".

Some longer-established introductions are now honorary natives. I am not sure that birders would regard Pheasant and Red-legged Partridge in that way, because of the staggering numbers released each year, but there may be some people who do not realise that they are not native to Britain.

And then there is the Little Owl: a nineteenth century introduction which somehow has managed the trick of merging with our native bird communities and our affections.

To return to the review of Kent escapes... Most Kent Bird Reports (KBRs) have contained a list, at the end of the systematic list and currently forming Appendix 1, of "birds considered to be introductions, human-assisted transportees or escapees from captivity, and whose breeding populations (if any) are thought not to be self-sustaining". We compiled a file of all records held in those appendices, and also any records of escaped individuals of native species (e.g. White-fronted Goose) mentioned in the main systematic list. The latter element was less complete as we did not read through every KBR (!) and merely searched for key words such as 'escape'. We did, though, include records of hybrid birds mentioned in the appendices or, if we noticed them, in the main text. We also sought additional records from Sandwich Bay and Dungeness Bird Observatories, and extracted more from Folkestone Bird Reports and one or two other sources.

The resulting file of records has details of 298 taxa of birds. Most are full species (e.g. Scarlet Macaw), some are identified only to genus (e.g. Macaw sp), plus there are the hybrids. It should be noted that some of the hybrids are truly wild birds; a noteworthy example is the Pine Bunting x Yellowhammer trapped at Reculver in 2019, presumed to originate from the hybrid zone of the two species in Western Siberia.

The file has over 1,400 rows of data, some encompassing more than one record. Thus, there is a lot of material there, but our review still hasn't been complete, for several reasons. First, some observers will not have bothered to submit records of escapes – quite a few wandering Budgies will have simply been ignored, for example. It is sometimes difficult to be sure whether a bird has really escaped or not; does that Muscovy Duck in a marshland dyke count, or does it belong in the farmyard a mile away? Second, as mentioned above, some records may be hidden in the main KBR systematic lists and not transcribed. Third, some records may be on the old KOS record cards (scanned but unavailable) but did not get into KBRs. Finally, once a species had become so frequent in occurrence that it became tiresome to transcribe records (as happened for Barnacle Goose and Rose-ringed Parakeet for example), we stopped noting them.

An additional problem that sometimes was all too evident was that observers took less care over identification of a small escape than they might do with a large gull. And, I'm afraid, report editors have sometimes been a little lax over ensuring clarity. Let's have a few examples of these sorts of problem:

In 2002, a Black Bishop was reported at Sandwich Bay on 1st March. On 5th-7th March, a Black-winged Red Bishop was at Dungeness. The two species are very similar; can we be sure there was a widespread episcopal invasion rather than it being the same individual at both places?

In 1978, the KBR reports a Saddleback at Pluckley on 14th May, but with no scientific name. There is a very rare New Zealand endemic called Saddleback – could one really have escaped in the middle of Kent? It seems unlikely. It is also an old local name for Hooded Crow – but surely no-one would have submitted the record in that way. My suggestion is that it was a Cockatiel, of which there is a colour variant known as Saddleback, but we simply have to guess.

The genus *Lonchura* has lots of complications, often arising from changes in English names and taxonomic splitting. One example: a record in 1998 submitted as Chestnut Munia was given the scientific name *Lonchura ferruginosa* in the KBR. But that now belongs to White-capped Munia. Try as hard as we can to determine what was seen, we generally end up nun the wiser.

Taxonomic splits are a frequent problem. The many and varied names applied to small Canada Geese, some now known as Cackling, have been fun to disentangle. There are lots of Zebra Finch records, but usually we do not know which of the two species, formerly sub-species, was involved.

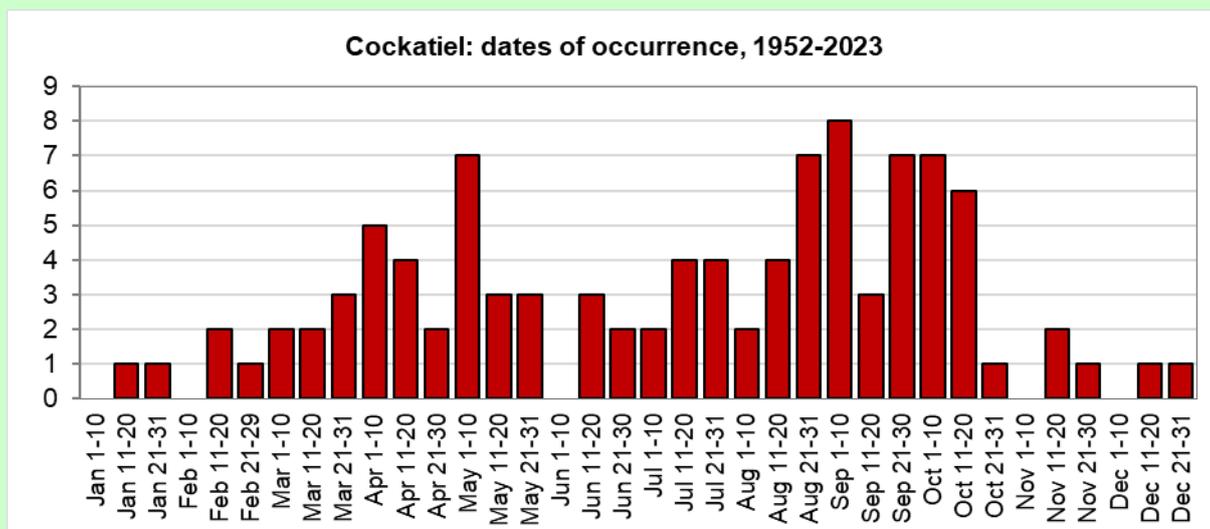
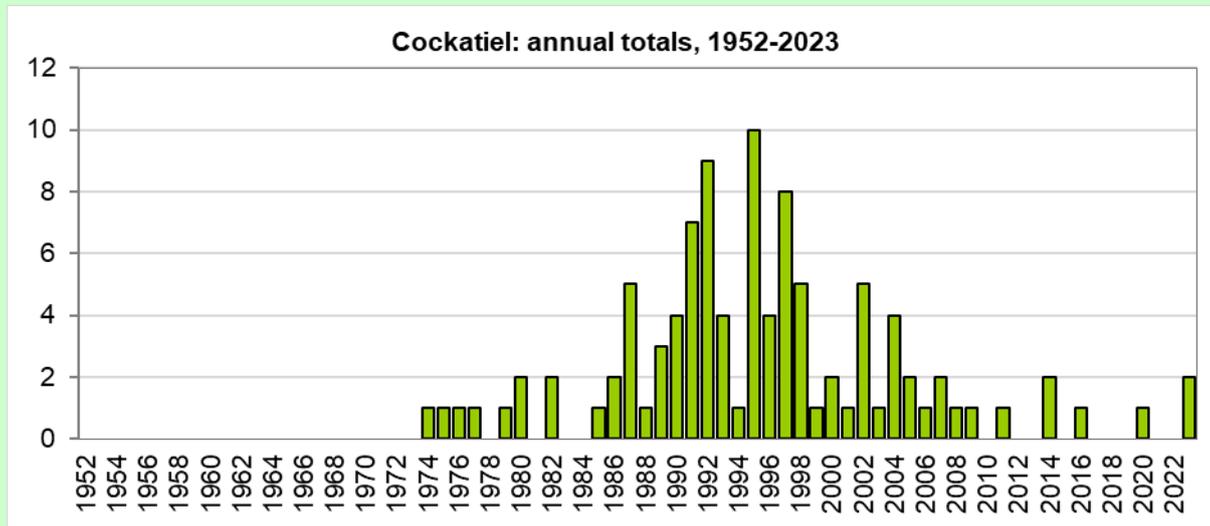
A record of a Red-breasted Weaver at St Margaret's Bay on 19th August 1978 was a bit of a puzzle. No such species seems to exist, though there is a Red-headed Weaver. Could that be it? Fortunately, an old report of Ian Hodgson's was to hand, which had no Weavers in 1978 but did have a Red-headed Bunting on that date which was not in the KBR.

Some errors were easier to correct. For several years, Harris's Hawk records in the KBR carried the scientific name *Aquila chrysaetos*. I think we could be pretty sure they weren't Golden Eagles.

Having compiled this large file of escapes, we do not intend to do anything with it ourselves. We have let BOURC have a copy and they have extracted, we are told, plenty of new detail from it. It would be a shame to forget about it, though. Two key recommendations for the future are:

- Find a volunteer to take on the maintenance of the list (and the correction of errors that will inevitably be included).
- Encourage more care over the identification and reporting of escaped birds. If you have an interest in this subject, why not get in touch (with the **Editor of the newsletter** in the first instance) to discuss what might be possible.

Some interesting patterns emerge from the escapes data. For example, why did the number of Cockatiels reported rise and fall around a peak in the mid 1990s, and why is their seasonal pattern of occurrence (similarly to that of Budgerigar as mentioned in a previous newsletter) biased towards spring and autumn migration periods? We don't think it is a genuine migrant from Australia.



Norman McCanch & Andrew Henderson

KENT BIRD SIGHTINGS FOR NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER 2024 - 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

November was a month of two very contrasting halves. The first half was dominated by high pressure leading to dull, dry and gloomy conditions. The anticyclonic gloom persisted until mid-month, at which

point there was a shift to lower pressure resulting in colder temperatures and even some snow. The second named storm of the season, Storm Bert, arrived on the 23rd and brought exceptionally wet and windy weather to the UK and a few days later the third named storm, Storm Conall, brushed along the south coast.

December was marked by a series of unsettled weather patterns across the UK. The month began with rain showers but Storm Darragh brought significant disruption from the 6th to the 8th, with heavy rain and severe gales. Following the storm, high pressure briefly built bringing calmer and colder conditions. However, changeable weather returned through to the 22nd when temperatures turned milder as a tropical maritime air mass arrived. The last few days of the month were unsettled,

PARTRIDGE TO WILDFOWL

The Seasalter **Black Brant** was still there on Nov 10th and one was seen and photographed at Leysdown-on-Sea on Dec 10th.

Four **Bean Goose sp.** were reported flying WSW at North Foreland on Nov 10th and what were probably the same birds were identified at **Tundra Bean Geese** at Worth Marshes on the 12th.

A **Pink-footed Goose** flew N at Reculver on Nov 2nd but there was an arrival of birds on Nov 5th with 24 at Worth Marshes, 21 at Stuart and 49 at Willop Basin. The Worth Marshes flock increased to 70 birds on Nov 7th with 25 still there on the 9th and as many as 72 in the Grove Ferry and Chislet Marshes areas from the Nov 11th to the 30th. There were also 14 seen at High Halstow on the 17th with two at Capel Fleet on the 22nd. During December 56 flew in off the sea at Samphire Hoe on the 3rd and there were 10 at Walland Marsh on the 14th and 15th, one at Shellness on the 14th, two at Worth Marshes on the 16th, 12 flying ESE at Furnace Pond on the 21st, two at Seasalter on the 29th and one at Sandwich Bay on the 30th.



Pink-footed Geese by Steve Ashton

Up to 31 **Russian White-fronted Geese** were seen at Worth Marshes, Sandwich Bay, Reculver, Cliffe Pools, Elmley NNR, Scotney GPs, Swalecliffe, Walland Marsh, Graveney, Seasalter, Swale NNR, Leysdown-on-Sea, St Margarets-at-Cliffe and Minster Marshes.

In November one **Bewick's Swan** went to roost at Dungeness RSPB on the 17th after which one or two were seen at Dungeness RSPB and there were five on the sea at Foreness on the 29th. A group of 17 arrived at Walland Marsh on Dec 4th and had increased to a maximum of 23 by the 14th and remained there until the end of the year. Eight flew W at Northward Hill on Dec 9th and seven were seen at Cliffe Pools on the 13th and 17th and Grain Marshes on the 23rd. At Dungeness RSPB 18 were seen on the 25th and seven flew W at Seasalter on the 29th.

Two **Whooper Swans** were seen at Dungeness RSPB between Nov 17th and 24th with two at Worth Marshes on the 26th. In December up to three were seen on Walland Marsh.

As many as 42 **Egyptian Geese** were seen at Bough Beech, Sevenoaks WR, DBO, Dungeness RSPB, Dartford Marshes, Nethergong, Faversham Creek, Worth Marshes, Reculver, Penshurst Place, Seaton and Godmersham with up to 16 **Mandarin** at Seaton, Nethergong, Hayesden, Furnace Pond and Bough Beech.

A **Ruddy Shelduck** was seen at Elmley between Dec 3rd and 8th and two **Red-crested Pochards** were seen at West Hythe on Nov 1st, whilst a drake **Scaup** was seen at Collard's Lake between Nov 10th and Dec 28th with one at Oare Marshes on Nov 12th.

Up to eight **Velvet Scoter** were recorded from DBO, Swalecliffe, Tankerton, Reculver, Herne Bay, Grenham Bay, Sandwich Bay, Pegwell Bay, Hythe, North Foreland, Foreness, Seabrook, Cliftonville, St Margarets-at-Cliffe, Samphire Hoe, Willop Outfall and Dymchurch.

A female/juvenile **Long-tailed Duck** flew W at Cliftonville on Nov 20th and another was seen at Dungeness RSPB on Nov 21st with two at Hythe on the 23rd. In December one was reported from DBO on the 1st with one at Dungeness RSPB from the 4th to the end of the year. At Foreness on Dec 8th one flew E with Common Scoter.



Long-tailed Duck by Ray Allen

The red head **Smew** seen at Worth Marshes in October was seen again on Nov 12th and a male was seen in the Swale at Elmley NNR on Dec 13th. **Please note that due to its increasing rarity Smew has been added to the list of species requiring a description or photo for acceptance for the Kent Bird Report.**

As many as 10 **Goosanders** were seen at Hayesden, Bough Beech, Reculver, Minnis Bay, North Foreland, Samphire Hoe, Oare Marshes, Singleton Lake, Conningbrook, Dunorlan Park, Swalecliffe, Grove Ferry, Sevenoaks WR, Stodmarsh and Cock Ash Lake.

NIGHTJAR TO WADERS

Single **Red-necked Grebes** were seen at Foreness and Seasalter on Nov 3rd and at Reculver on the 12th with two at North Foreland and one at Hythe on the 23rd and one at DBO on the 25th. In December singles flew N at North Foreland on the 6th and 20th.

A **Slavonian Grebe** was seen at Dungeness RSPB between Nov 1st and Dec 2nd with others reported from Cliffe Pools on the 2nd and North Foreland on the 4th with two on the sea off Reculver on the 12th and one at Swalecliffe on the 25th.



Black-necked Grebe by Mark Chidwick

As many as three **Black-necked Grebes** were identified at Worth Marshes, New Hythe, Reculver Marshes, Collard's Lake, Bartlett Creek, Cliffe Pools, Sandwich Bay and Dungeness RSPB.

A **Curlew Sandpiper** was seen at Swale NNR on Nov 3rd and one flew S at Deal on the 23rd whilst up to 22 **Purple Sandpipers** were seen at North Foreland, Foreness, Broadstairs Harbour, DBO, Margate, Botany Bay, Dover Harbour, Plumpudding and Swalecliffe.

A **LONG-BILLED DOWITCHER** was seen at Cliffe Pools on Nov 4th and Higham Bight on the 5th. It seems likely this is the same bird that had been seen in Essex in the days before and if accepted by BBRC will be the 16th record for Kent.

Single **Jack Snipe** were recorded from Sandwich Bay, Cliffe Pools, Bough Beech, Elmley NNR and Westenhanger.

A **Grey Phalarope** was seen at Sandwich Bay on Nov 21st with one the next day at North Foreland and one at Worth Marshes on the 23rd.

As many as five **Spotted Redshank** were seen at Dungeness RSPB, Higham Bight, Lower Halstow, Reculver Marshes and Cliffe Pools.

GULLS TO SHEARWATERS

A **Sabine's Gull** was reported flying S at North Foreland on Dec 8th.

As many as 159 **Little Gulls** were seen at North Foreland, DBO, Cooling Marshes, St Margarets, Swalecliffe, Sandwich Bay, Herne Bay, Hampton, Shellness and Reculver.

A juvenile **Glaucous Gull** was identified at Cliftonville on Nov 21st and one was seen at Dungeness from the Nov 25th to Dec 5th.



Glaucous Gull by Chris Bond

As many as 16 **Caspian Gulls** were counted at Dungeness, Cliftonville, Walpole Bay, St Margarets-at-Cliffe, Worth Marshes, Dover, Hythe Ranges, Pegwell Bay, Sandwich Bay, Deal, South Foreland, Foreness, North Foreland, Walmer, Folkestone, Minnis Bay and Dymchurch. One was also reported inland at **Bough Beech** on Nov 13th with three at **Ickham** on Dec 26th.

One or two **Yellow-legged Gulls** were seen at DBO, Dungeness RSPB, St Margarets-at-Cliffe, Folkestone, Pegwell Bay, Seaton and Cliffe Pools.

An unusually late **Black Tern** was reported from Shellness on Nov 12th.

Up to four **Great Skuas** were recorded from Reculver, Samphire Hoe, Dover, Shellness, Herne Bay, Swalecliffe and North Foreland whilst a **Pomarine Skua** was seen at Reculver and Oare Marshes on Nov 12th with another flying south at North Foreland on the 29th. On Dec 8th and 9th, Storm Darragh produced two at North Foreland and single birds at Reculver, Swalecliffe, Minnis Bay, Castle Coote and Oare Marshes.

In November up to five **Arctic Skuas** were seen at North Foreland, Sandwich Bay, Grenham Bay and DBO and on Dec 8th two were recorded at Shellness with single birds at Herne Bay, Castle Coote and Oare Marshes.

Four **Little Auks** were counted at North Foreland on Nov 21st when one was also found in Ramsgate Harbour. Others flew past Swalecliffe on the 26th and North Foreland on the 29th. During Storm Darragh on Dec 8th, one flew W at Reculver and on the 10th there were single birds recorded from Reculver, Sandwich Bay, Leysdown-on-Sea, St Margarets-at-Cliffe and Oare Marshes. On the 11th there were birds at Grenham Bay, North Foreland and Dover.

Two **Puffins** flew W at Reculver on Nov 12th and one flew S at North Foreland on Dec 3rd. Storm Darragh on Dec 8th produced a few birds on the north Kent coast with four seen at Reculver, one at Herne Bay, one at Swalecliffe and two at Oare Marshes. Three flew S at North Foreland on Dec 9th.

One or two **Great Northern Divers** were seen at Swalecliffe, Tankerton, Oare Marshes, Shellness, the Swale, Reculver, Foreness, Elmley NNR, Dungeness RSPB, Samphire Hoe, North Foreland, Hythe, DBO, Hadlow and Sandwich Bay and one or two **Black-throated Divers** were recorded from North Foreland, DBO, Walmer Beach, Dungeness RSPB, North Foreland, Sandwich Bay, Deal, Allhallows and Grenham Bay.

A **Leach's Petrel** was seen at Seasalter on Nov 10th with two off Hythe and single birds at North Foreland on the 23rd and singles at DBO on the 24th and 25th. In December one flew N at North Foreland on the 10th. A **Great Shearwater** flew W past DBO on November 25th. If accepted this will be only the eleventh record for Kent.

Single **Sooty Shearwaters** flew E at Dungeness on Nov 2nd and past Foreness and Grenham Bay on the 12th. During Storm Bert, on Nov 23rd and 24th, three birds flew past DBO and St Margarets with single birds at Walmer and Hythe on the 23rd and single birds were recorded at DBO and Sandwich Bay the next day. After this, one or two birds were at DBO on the 24th 27th and 29th. In December one flew past DBO on the 1st and another was reported from North Foreland on the 10th.

Three **Balearic Shearwaters** were reported flying S at North Foreland on Nov 2nd.

WHITE STORK TO WOODPECKERS

During these two months as many as 14 **Shags** were recorded from North Foreland with smaller numbers at Walpole Bay, Samphire Hoe, Sandwich Bay, Folkestone and Foreness.

As many as eight **Spoonbills** were seen at Oare Marshes, Faversham Creek, Capel Fleet, Harty Ferry and Cliffe Pools and one or two **Bitterns** were seen at Grove Ferry/Stodmarsh, Worth Marshes and Swale NNR.

As many as 20 **Cattle Egrets** were recorded from Stodmarsh/Grove Ferry, Seaton, Garrington, Hillborough, Worth Marshes, Oare Marshes, Bockhill, Westbere, Sevenoaks WR, Lydd Airport, Nethergong, Bockhill and Dungeness RSPB.

Up to five **Great White Egrets** were seen at Sandwich Bay, Worth Marshes, Oare Marshes, Dungeness RSPB, Hythe, South Foreland, Hayesden, Westbere, Chartham, Fairfield, Cliffe Pools, Hythe, Herne Bay, Grenham Bay, Bough Beech, Grain Marshes, Sevenoaks WR and North Foreland.

During these two months up to six **Hen Harriers** roosted at Stodmarsh/Grove Ferry and up to four were seen at Shellness, Elmley NNR, Swale NNR, Capel Fleet, Harty Marshes, Cooling Marsh, Uplees, Worth Marshes, North Foreland, Cliffe Pools, Oare Marshes, Dungeness RSPB, Seasalter, Northward Hill, South Foreland and Allhallows.

A **SCOP'S OWL** was seen and photographed at Broadstairs Cricket Club on the night of Dec 26th where it may have been present for at least five days. It was still there at the end of the month. This is the third Scop's Owl to be recorded in Kent following one caught alive, coincidentally, in Broadstairs in 1898 and one found injured at Crundale in 1971.



Scops Owl by Brendan Ryan

During these two months single **Long-eared Owls** were recorded at DBO, Elmley NNR and Aldergate and up to 12 **Short-eared Owls** were seen at Elmley NNR with one or two recorded from Reculver Marshes, Lade, DBO, Cliffe Pools, Shellness, Cooling Marshes, North Foreland and Foreness.

A **Hoopoe** was seen and photographed at Willesborough on Nov 25th and was still in the area on Dec 3rd whilst a bird was also seen Seasalter from Dec 4th-22nd.

FALCONS TO HIRUNDINES

During November and December up to three **Merlins** were recorded from Reculver Marshes, DBO, Sandwich Bay, Swalecliffe, Swale NNR, Bough Beech, Cliffe Pools and Shellness.

During November a peak of eight **Woodlarks** was recorded flying N at Bockhill on the 10th whilst during the month up to five recorded from Bough Beech, Cliftonville, North Foreland, Foreness, South Foreland, Marden, Minster Marshes, Dover, Walmer Beach, DBO, Sandwich Bay, Worth Marshes and Bockhill. In December, two flew S in off the sea at North Foreland on the 4th, another flew over DBO on the 6th and one flew SW at South Foreland on the 13th.

WARBLERS TO WHEATEARS

A **HUME'S WARBLER** was seen at DBO from December 1st-13th and was ringed at the Observatory on the 2nd and there were three **Yellow-browed Warblers** at DBO on Nov 1st with one still there the next day and others were discovered at Worth Marshes on the 2nd and 5th, one was ringed at Reculver on the 4th and another seen at Dover on the 7th and 8th. The last bird of the year was seen at South Foreland on Nov 16th.

A **Pallas's Warbler** was found at King George VI Park, Ramsgate on Nov 6th and was still present on the 9th and there was another at Kingsdown on Dec 1st.

It was a good year for **Siberian Chiffchaffs** with two ringed at DBO on Nov 1st, one ringed at Reculver on the Nov 4th whilst on the 8th one was ringed at Sandwich Bay and on the 9th another was seen at Copt Point. There was one at DBO and another ringed at Sandwich Bay on the 13th with one at the latter site on the 15th and one identified at Walmer Beach on Nov 26th. In December single birds were reported from Stodmarsh on the 4th and at New Hythe GPs from the 24th-27th.

As many as three **Dartford Warblers** were seen at Dungeness, Stodmarsh, Foreness, Abbotscliffe, Swalecliffe, Sandwich Bay, North Foreland and Elmley NNR.

The juvenile **Rose-coloured Starling** first seen at St Margarets at the end of October was still there on Nov 11th.

In November one or two **Ring Ouzels** were seen at Foreness, Samphire Hoe, Langdon Bay, South Foreland, Pegwell Bay, DBO, Worth Marshes and Cliftonville with the last bird at Langdon Cliffs on the Nov 20th.

In November up to six **Black Redstarts** were seen at Dungeness, North Foreland, South Foreland, Staplehurst, Shellness, Cliftonville, Shingleton, Swanscombe, Tonbridge, Tunbridge Wells, Furnace Pond, Kingsdown, Horsmonden, Willop Outflow, Hythe Ranges, Ramsgate, Cranbrook, Ham Road GPs and St Margarets.

SPARROWS TO BUNTINGS

A **Richard's Pipit** flew W at Foreness on Nov 14th and was still there on the 16th and as many as 16 **Water Pipits** were recorded from Stodmarsh/Grove Ferry with smaller totals at Oare Marshes, Elmley NNR, Pegwell Bay, Bough Beech, Capel Fleet, Funton Creek, Halling Marshes and Dungeness RSPB.

Good numbers of **Hawfinches** were still being seen throughout the County with as many as five birds recorded from 30 sites.

A **Crossbill** was seen at South Foreland on Nov 9th and a **Serim** flew N with Goldfinches at Bockhill on Nov 9th.

Single **Lapland Buntings** were seen at DBO and Sandwich Bay on Nov 11th and then single birds were recorded from Bockhill, Shellness, Pegwell Bay and North Foreland.

As many as seven **Snow Buntings** were recorded from Sandwich Bay, Pegwell Bay, Minnis Bay, Tankerton, Swalecliffe, Plumpudding, Bockhill, South Foreland, Langdon Bay, North Foreland, Leysdown-on-Sea and Shellness.



Yellow Warbler by Malachi Taylor

A male **YELLOW WARBLER** was found at New Hythe GPs on Dec 24th and stayed into 2025. When accepted by BBRC this American warbler will be a new species for Kent.

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, KOS Forum, Twitter and the RBA Hotline and BirdGuides.

Records have also been contributed by A. Appleton, Bockhill Birders, R. Bonsor, Bough Beech (per A. Ford), E. Brown, D. Bunday, N. Burt, G. Burton, F. Cackett, J. Cantelo, J. Carnell, P. Carr, R. Carr, M. Casemore, J. Chantler, P. Chantler, M. Chidwick, R. Collins, G. Coultrip, K. Cutting, DBO (per D. Walker), B. East, A. Edwards, P. Eerdmans, D. Ellingworth, A. Farrar, D. Faulkener, Folkestone and Hythe Birds (per I. Roberts), C. Gibbard, M. Gould, R. Heading, J. Headley, A. Henderson, A. Hindle, C. Hindle, M. Hindle, G. Hollamby, M. Hollingworth, P. Holt, G. Honey, M. Kennett, S. Kennett, J. King, R. Knight, G. Lee, O. Leyshon, A. Lipczynski, K. Lord, A. Malone, J. Massey, N. McCanch, S. McMinn, S. Message, A. Millar, S. Mills, S. Mount, R. O'Reilly, M. Orchard, J. Partridge, K. Privett, C. Powell, M. Puxley, R. Rackcliffe, B. Ring, M. Roser, K. Ross, B. Ryan, Samphire Hoe (per P. Holt and P. Smith), SBBO (per A. Lipczynski and S. Walton), Sevenoaks WR, I. Shepherd, D. Smith, P. Smith, R. Smith, W. Stoneham, B. Summerfield, M. Sutherland, Swale NNR (per D. Faulkner, B. Whatmore, T. Hilsden), A. Swandale, D. Taylor, P. Trodd, C. Turley, J. Turner-Moss, D. Tutt, M. Watts, A. Wells, C. White, M. Wilson, T. Wilson, J. Woolgar, B. Woolhouse, B. Wright, M. Wright and J. Young.

Send any 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 2024 KOS Rarities have recently been accepted by the KOS Rarities Panel based on published photos or from descriptions submitted.

2024

Black Brant	Leysdown-on-Sea	December 10th
Smew (redhead)	Seaton GPs	October 18th-19th
Stone Curlew	Stodmarsh	April 18th
Stone Curlew	Plumpudding	May 13th
Black-winged Stilt (juvenile)	Cliffe Pools	July 30th-31st
American Golden Plover (moulting adult)	Dungeness RSPB	Sept 14th-17th
White-rumped Sandpiper (adult)	Dungeness RSPB	July 27th
Pectoral Sandpiper (juvenile)	Dungeness RSPB	Sept 9th-14th
Pectoral Sandpiper (juvenile)	Elmley NNR	Sept 15th-16th
Red-necked Phalarope	Lade	September 6th
Iceland Gull (second winter flying E)	Reculver	February 26th
White-winged Black Tern (adult)	Cliffe Pools	June 26th
Cory's Shearwater (E then W)	Reculver	September 5th
Cory's Shearwater	Shellness	September 5th
Cory's Shearwater	Grain	September 5th
Night Heron (juvenile)	Oare Marshes	Aug 13th-Sept 14th
2 Purple Heron (adult)	Dungeness	March 13th-April 9th
Purple Heron	Minster Marshes	April 30th
Purple Heron	Sandwich Bay/Worth Marshes	May 2nd-26th
3 Purple Herons (2 adult, 1 immature)	Stodmarsh	May 8th-June 30th
Black Kite	North Foreland	June 3rd
Black Kite	Bockhill/South Foreland	September 3rd-4th
Montagu's Harrier (first summer)	Plumpudding & Brooksend	May 13th-15th
Red-footed Falcon (female)	Stodmarsh	May 10th-12th
Red-footed Falcon (male)	Worth Marshes	May 18th-19th
Red-footed Falcon (female)	Langdon Cliffs	May 23rd
Up to 3 Red-footed Falcon (females)	Worth Marshes	May 23rd-29th
Red-footed Falcon (juvenile)	Elmley NNR	Sept 15th-26th
Woodchat Shrike (male)	Dungeness RSPB	May 19th
Red-rumped Swallow	Worth Marshes	April 23rd-25th
Red-rumped Swallow	South Foreland	May 7th
Siberian Chiffchaff	Worth Marshes	February 20th-23rd
Siberian Chiffchaff (ringed)	DBO	October 15th
2 Siberian Chiffchaffs (ringed)	DBO	November 1st
Siberian Chiffchaff (ringed)	Reculver	November 4th
Siberian Chiffchaff (ringed)	Sandwich Bay	November 8th
Barred Warbler	Langdon Cliffs	September 16th
Rose-coloured Starling (adult flying W)	Reculver Marshes	May 27th
Rose-coloured Starling (juvenile)	Bockhill/St Margarets	Oct 27th-Nov 11th
Red-breasted Flycatcher (first year)	Kingsdown	October 5th
Red-breasted Flycatcher	Kingsgate	October 12th
Richard's Pipit (flying W)	Foreness	Nov 14th-17th
Little Bunting	Reculver Marshes	Sept 6th & 7th
Little Bunting (adult male)	Plumpudding Stables	October 29th

ASSESSMENT OF COUNTY RARITIES BY THE KENT ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

KOS Rarities Panel

The Rarities Panel which is part of the KOS Editorial and Records Sub-Committee is made up of six members each of whom is an experienced and widely travelled Kent birder.

All records of rare and scarce species submitted to the Society are considered either by the British Birds Rarities Committee or the KOS Rarities Panel before being accepted for publication in the Kent Bird Report.

Rarity descriptions and photographs may be sent to Chris Hindle at christopherhindle@hotmail.com

There are two lists at the end of this article, the first is of the rare birds that are assessed by the British Birds Rarities Committee and the next is of the rare and unusual birds that are assessed by the KOS Rarities Panel. Please be aware that BBRC decisions supersede those of the KOS.

Barry Wright umbrellabirds66@gmail.com liaises with the BBRC.

The KOS Assessment Process

It is important to emphasise that each record is assessed completely independently by individual Panel members and the decisions and comments relating to each record are unknown to other members during the assessment process.

For each record members of the Panel have three options:

Accept

Based on the details or good quality photographs provided there is sufficient evidence that a correct identification has been made.

Not Proven

Based on the details provided, there is insufficient evidence to confirm the identification or that other species have not been eliminated.

Pend

Based on the details provided there needs to be discussion by Panel members to determine the final outcome. Any pending records will be discussed at the next Editorial and Records Sub-Committee meeting for a final decision to be made.

Panel members return their decisions to Chris Hindle who then collates the initial decisions and comments relating to each of the records. At this stage, a decision is made on the status of the record:

Where a record has six 'accept' decisions the record is automatically accepted.

Where a record has six 'not proven' decisions the record is automatically not accepted.

All remaining records will be discussed, and a decision made at the next Editorial and Records Sub-Committee.

All accepted records will be published in the next KOS Newsletter.

The Panel fully understands the disappointment of a 'not proven' decision but in the vast majority of cases such a decision is based solely on the lack of detail in the description which either does not confirm the identification or fails to eliminate other species. Only in a very small number of cases does the Panel believe that a mistake has been made.

Additionally, the Panel is always willing to reconsider 'not proven' decisions but only where new information can be provided, for example a photograph that was not available at the time of the original submission.

Species requiring descriptions for acceptance by B.B.R.C. (December 2024)

Red-breasted Goose	Black-winged Pratincole	Eastern Olivaceous Warbler
Lesser White-fronted Goose	Ivory Gull	Savi's Warbler
Blue-winged Teal	Slender-billed Gull	Zitting Cisticola
Black Duck	Bonaparte's Gull	Asian Desert Warbler
Canvasback	Ross's Gull	Western Subalpine Warbler
Ferruginous Duck	Laughing Gull	Eastern Subalpine Warbler
King Eider	Audouin's Gull	Sardinian Warbler
Hooded Merganser	Gull-billed Tern	Short-toed Treecreeper
Black-browed Albatross	Caspian Tern	Swainson's Thrush
Pied-billed Grebe	Lesser Crested Tern	Black-throated Thrush
Black Stork	Bridled Tern	Dusky Thrush
Little Bittern	Sooty Tern	Thrush Nightingale
Green Heron	Forster's Tern	White-spotted Bluethroat
Squacco Heron	Whiskered Tern	Collared Flycatcher
Chinese Pond Heron	Tufted Puffin	Rock Thrush
Brown Booby	Pallas's Sandgrouse	Siberian Stonechat

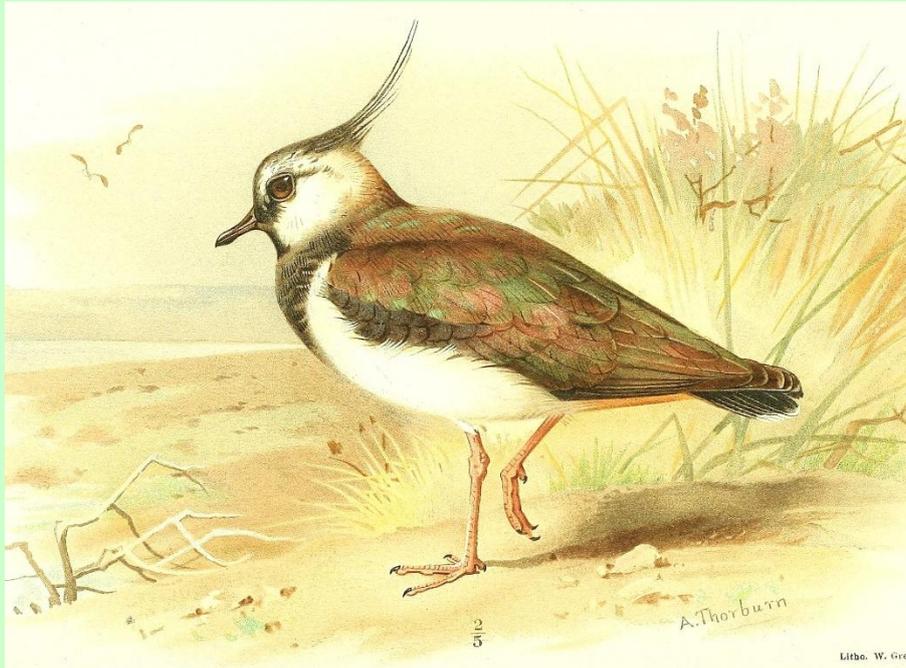
Short-toed Eagle	Oriental Turtle Dove	Isabelline Wheatear
Pallid Harrier	Great Spotted Cuckoo	Desert Wheatear
Great Bustard	Scop's Owl	Western Black-eared Wheatear
Little Bustard	Snowy Owl	Pied Wheatear
Little Crake	Tengmalm's Owl	Black-bellied Dipper
Baillon's Crake	White-throated Needletail	Alpine Accentor
American Coot	Pallid Swift	Ashy-headed Wagtail
Sociable Plover	Common Nighthawk	Eastern Yellow Wagtail
White-tailed Plover	Roller	Blyth's Pipit
Pacific Golden Plover	Blue-cheeked Bee-eater	Tawny Pipit
Greater Sand Plover	Lesser Kestrel	Red-throated Pipit
Tibetan Sand Plover	Gyr Falcon	Pine Grosbeak
Kentish Plover	Acadian Flycatcher	Trumpeter Finch
Broad-billed Sandpiper	Lesser Grey Shrike	Arctic Redpoll
Stilt Sandpiper	Masked Shrike	Two-barred Crossbill
Baird's Sandpiper	Red-eyed Vireo	Golden-winged Warbler
Least Sandpiper	Nutcracker	Common Yellowthroat
Great Snipe	Northern Willow Tit	Blackpoll Warbler
Terek Sandpiper	Eurasian Crag Martin	Pine Bunting
Wilson's Phalarope	American Cliff Swallow	Rock Bunting
Spotted Sandpiper	Iberian Chiffchaff	Rustic Bunting
Marsh Sandpiper	Western Bonelli's Warbler	Yellow-breasted Bunting
Greater Yellowlegs	Hume's Warbler	Yellow-browed Bunting
Solitary Sandpiper	Great Reed Warbler	Black-headed Bunting
Cream-coloured Courser	Paddyfield Warbler	Dark-eyed Junco
Collared Pratincole	Booted Warbler	American Yellow Warbler
Oriental Pratincole		

Species requiring description for acceptance by K.O.S.
(December 2024)

Taiga Bean Goose	Black Guillemot
American Wigeon	Alpine Swift
Green-winged Teal	Red-footed Falcon
Ring-necked Duck	Woodchat Shrike
Surf Scoter	Chough
Smew (from 2024)	Hooded Crow
Ruddy Duck	Willow Tit
White-billed Diver	Penduline Tit
Storm Petrel	Shore Lark (from 2024)
Cory's Shearwater	Short-toed Lark
Great Shearwater	Red-rumped Swallow
Night-heron	Dusky Warbler
Purple Heron	Radde's Warbler
Goshawk, <i>coastal records</i>	Arctic Warbler
Montagu's Harrier	Greenish Warbler
Black Kite	Blyth's Reed Warbler
Rough-legged Buzzard	Marsh Warbler <i>in autumn only</i>
Corncrake	Melodious Warbler
Spotted Crake	Icterine Warbler
Stone-curlew	Barred Warbler
Black-winged Stilt	Rose-coloured Starling
American Golden Plover	Red-flanked Bluetail
White-rumped Sandpiper	Red-breasted Flycatcher
Buff-breasted Sandpiper	Dipper
Pectoral Sandpiper	Citrine Wagtail
Red-necked Phalarope	Richard's Pipit
Lesser Yellowlegs	Olive-backed Pipit
Sabine's Gull, <i>except August to November inclusive</i>	Common Rosefinch
Ring-billed Gull	Parrot Crossbill
Iceland Gull <i>away from Dungeness</i>	Ortolan Bunting
Caspian Gull, <i>inland records only</i>	Girl Bunting
Roseate Tern <i>away from Dungeness, Pegwell/SBBOT</i>	Little Bunting
White-winged Black Tern	

In addition, descriptions should be submitted for rare subspecies including Black Brant, Greenland White-fronted Goose, Kumlein's Gull, Siberian Chiffchaff, Siberian Whitethroat, Grey-headed Wagtail and Northern Bullfinch. As well as these, unusual records may require notes or details to be supplied eg. inland records of seabirds, unusual numbers or out of season records.

Fifty Years Ago



Lapwing by Archibald Thorburn (PDI)

Lapwing

The high numbers on the coastal marshes recorded in the latter part of 1974 increased in the first two months of 1975 due to the very high water levels that resulted from heavy rainfall. In North just under 20,000 birds were recorded in January/February from the combined marshes of Thames, Medway and Swale. In East 4,000 were recorded from Sandwich Bay in February and 3,000 at Marshside. In South 5,000 were present on Walland Marsh in late January.

In contrast there were no exceptional numbers inland. In the same period the maximum counts from Central were 500 at Langley, 1,250 at Staplehurst and 1,300 at Sutton Valence. In West maximum counts were 700 at Hayesden, 1,000 at Sevenoaks and Sundridge and 500 at Yalding.

KBR1975