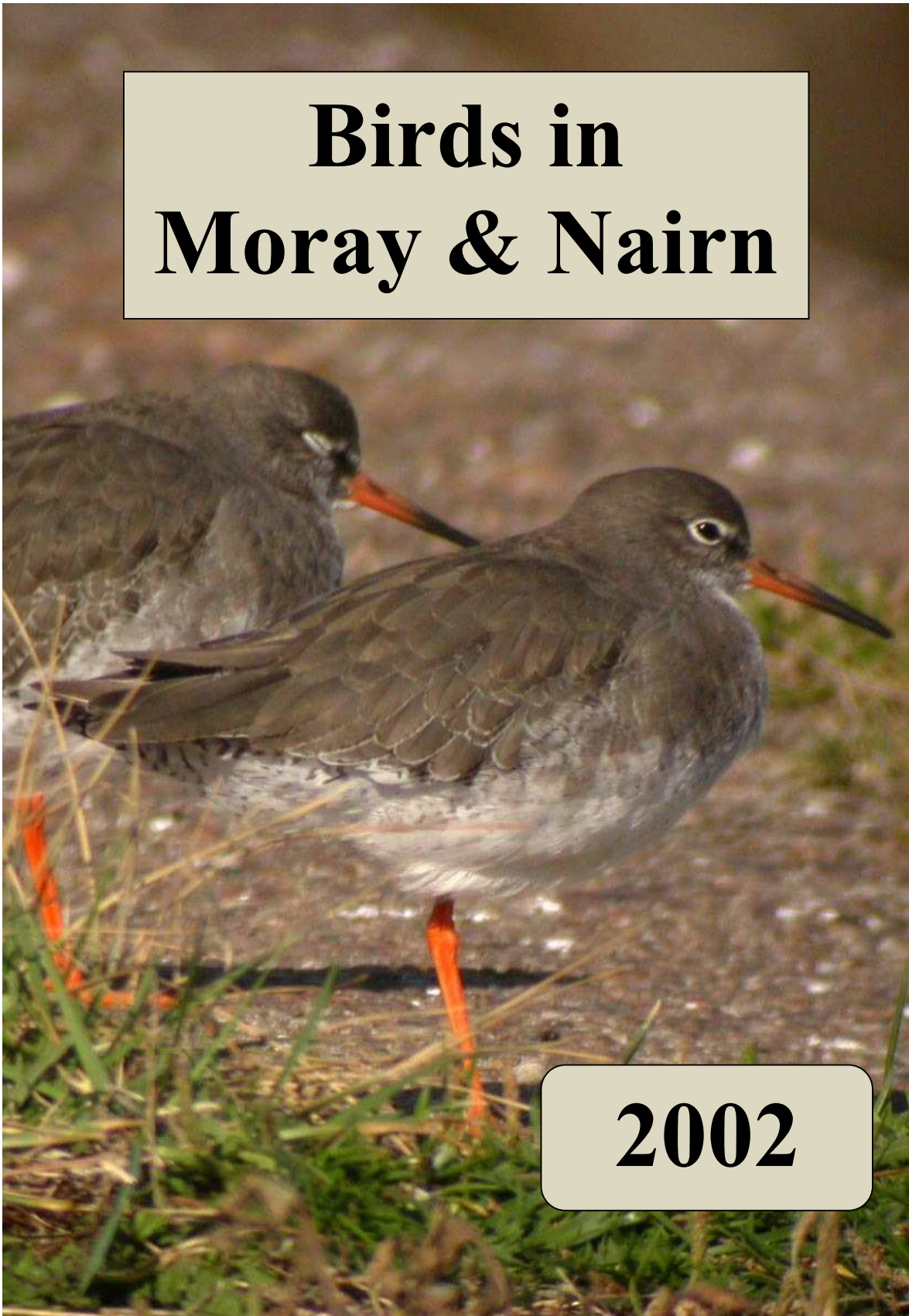


Birds in Moray & Nairn



2002

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MORAY & NAIRN BIRD REPORT
No.18 - 2002

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Compiled by Martin Cook, with assistance from John Mackie (waders) and Bob Proctor (wildfowl).

Edited by Martin Cook (Scottish Ornithologists' Club Recorder for Moray & Nairn).

Cover photograph: Redshanks, Portgordon 28 September 2003 (© Martin Cook)

INTRODUCTION

Review of the year

Without a doubt the most exciting ornithological development in Moray & Nairn during 2002 was the start of fieldwork for the Breeding Bird Atlas – a five-year project undertaken in collaboration with our North-east Scotland colleagues. Many people have commented on the value of visiting areas of our countryside not normally associated with particular bird interest. It serves to highlight what scant knowledge we have of the true distribution of some of our less common species. With over 600 ‘tetrads’ to be surveyed during the five years every contribution is of great value. If you have not been involved so far and would like to record birds in spring and summer please contact Martin Cook (see below) who will provide more details of what is required. The methodology is simple, the fieldwork highly enjoyable and the results of great value.

In summer our tiny populations of Slavonian Grebes, Little Terns and Black Guillemots showed signs of increase and Little Ringed Plovers nested again. A mini ‘Quail year’ saw 13 calling birds but they provided no evidence of nesting; nor did the Lesser Whitethroat which sang briefly on the Lein at Kingston in May. Record numbers of Rose-coloured Starlings nationally were represented in Moray by birds at Hopeman in July and Mosstodloch in August.

Outwith the breeding season the focus of interest switches to our winter visitors and migrants. Although not an exceptional year for rarities, 2002 provided plenty of interest. In the early part of the year gull-watchers were rewarded with record numbers of Iceland Gulls, two Mediterranean Gulls and the first two Yellow-legged Gulls for our area. In autumn a record three Sabine’s Gulls provided fly-past sightings at Lossiemouth and Portknockie. Among the winter wildfowl, American Wigeon and Surf Scoter are now to be expected but the appearance of Green-winged Teals is a new development with as many as three on Loch Spynie in autumn. Also on the increase are Garganey – up to 11 gracing a number of freshwaters around the area in spring. Two Cranes at Roseisle moved to Kinloss and Dyke in March and a White Stork was equally unmissable near Forres in April.

Autumn wader migration was poor with very few Little Stints, Curlew Sandpipers or Ruff. Seabird passage was also thin although two Grey Phalaropes were seen offshore in November. A brief period of rain and easterly winds in early September resulted in a fall of passerine migrants in early September, most notably a record six Pied Flycatchers at Strathlene. Later a Great Grey Shrike put in a brief appearance at Kinloss.

Submission of records

The area covered by this Report is Moray and that part of Highland which corresponds to the former Nairn District. Lochindorb, formerly at the southern tip of Moray, now falls outside the revised Moray boundary which runs along the A939. A small part of the former Nairn District boundary lies along the western shore so records from the loch continue to be included in the Report.

All records for inclusion in the 2003 Report will be welcomed by the Moray & Nairn Bird Recorder at the following address:

Martin Cook
Rowanbrae, Clochan, Buckie, Banffshire AB56 5EQ
Tel. Clochan (01542) 850296
e-mail: martin.cook9@virgin.net

Important records do not have to be of unusual birds. Every local bird watcher can help because many more records of common species are needed. For example, a much greater sample size of summer migrant arrival dates would be valuable. Please submit your records at regular intervals or in a single batch as soon as possible in January 2004.

Once again the Editor is very pleased to acknowledge the generous financial support of Walkers Shortbread Ltd, Aberlour.

The Editor gratefully acknowledges the help of John Mackie and Bob Proctor in the preparation of the species accounts. Once again Bob has produced the Ringing Report.

ASSESSMENT OF LOCAL RARITY RECORDS

The Moray & Nairn Rarities Committee exists to consider records of local rarities which do not fall within the scope of the British Birds Rarities Committee or the Scottish Birds Rarities Committee.

There follows a list of those species (or subspecies) which are considered by the Moray & Nairn Rarities Committee. If you see one of these species please contact the area Recorder as soon as possible for a description form.

Please note that this list has been updated as from 2000.

Black-necked Grebe	Crane	Richard's Pipit
Balearic Shearwater	Little Ringed Plover	Yellow Wagtail
Leach's Petrel	Temminck's Stint	Bluethroat
Bittern	Pectoral Sandpiper	Lesser Whitethroat
Little Egret	Buff-breasted Sandpiper	Icterine Warbler
White Stork	Grey Phalarope	Yellow-browed Warbler
Spoonbill	Red-necked Phalarope	Firecrest
Bewick's Swan	Long-tailed Skua	Bearded Tit
Bean Goose	Mediterranean Gull	Red-backed Shrike
Green-winged Teal	Sabine's Gull	Great Grey Shrike
Garganey (not adult male)	Roseate Tern	Hawfinch
Ring-necked Duck	Black Tern	Common Rosefinch
Ruddy Duck (not adult male)	Turtle Dove	Lapland Bunting
Surf Scoter (not adult male)	Nightjar	
Honey Buzzard	Hoopoe	
Hobby	Wryneck	
Spotted Crake	Shore Lark	
Corncrake	Water Pipit	

Subspecies:

Cormorant (*P.c.sinensis*) Rock Pipit (*A.p.littoralis*)
 Chiffchaff (*P.c.tristis/abietinus*)

Also records in the following categories:

All 'firsts' for Moray & Nairn

The first five records for any species in Moray & Nairn

Out-of-season records for a species (e.g. Willow Warbler in December)

Significant out-of-habitat records for a species (e.g. coastal Ravens).

OBSERVERS CONTRIBUTING TO 2002 REPORT

I.Addis, A.J.H.Anderson, S.Benn, S.Bennett, R.Berger, W.R.P.Bourne, T.Bowditch, G.Brind, D.Brown, G.Brown, P.&I. Brown, Anne Burgess, D.Butterfield, R.P.Campbell, M.Chapman, J.Connell, M.J.H.Cook, B.Cosnette, J.K.Craib, M.Dearman, C.Donald, W.Dunlop, A.Edward, H.Farquhar, T.Finnemore, I.Ford (IFo) I.Francis, R.Fraser, D.Galloway, G.George, C.A.Gervaise, D.A.Gibson, P.Gordon Smith, I.Green, N.Hancock, S.Hannah, J.J.C.Hardey, E.Harwood, D.Hay, R.F.Hewitt, J.Hinde, P.T.Hirst, D.Jardine, H.Lamont, D.Landsman, J.D.Law, A.J.Lawrence, A.Leitch, I.McDonald, J.&H.MacDonald, P.McDonald, J.D.H.Mackie, I.McLennan, S.Milligan, T.Moodie, M.Morrison, R.Morrison, S.Murphy, M.Newell, P.Osborn, A.Perkins, I.Phillips, J.Poyner, R.Proctor, D.M.Pullan, S.F.Ross, R.A.Shewan, L&R.Simpson, D.Slater, A.Smith, I.Smitton, I.S.Suttie, I.Sutton, W.G.Taylor, S.Thain, A.Young.

CHRONOLOGICAL SUMMARY OF THE YEAR

JANUARY

1st 43 Snipe Kingsteps, 2nd 1 Canada Goose Windyridge, 131 Brambling Muirton, 3rd 1 Surf Scoter Burghead Bay, 70 Brambling Roseisle, 4th 4 Red-necked Grebe Burghead Bay, 1 Kingfisher Lossie estuary, 5th 1 Mediterranean Gull Lossiemouth, 30 Twite Lossiemouth, 6th 14 Twite Findhorn Bay, 7th 8 Waxwing Nairn, 8th 8 Slavonian Grebe Burghead Bay, 9th 1 Smew Loch Flemington, 12th 40 Brambling Kingston, 13th 33 Brent Goose Nairn Bar, 33 Pintail Nairn Bar, 28 Grey Plover Nairn Bar, 193 Sanderling Nairn Bar, 116 Purple Sandpiper Buckie, 11 Jack Snipe Kingsteps, 1 Little Auk Burghead Bay, 27 Twite Nairn/Culbin Bars, 15th 1 Little Auk Linkwood, 1 Little Auk Mosstodloch, 16th 1 Waxwing Nairn, 17th 2 Surf Scoter Nairn/Culbin Bars, 19th 1 Black Scoter Findhorn, 26th 9 Waxwing Lossiemouth, 27th 2 Waxwing Aberlour, 30th 1 Surf Scoter Burghead Bay, 1 Ruddy Duck Loch Spynie, 25 Twite Nairn, 31st 40 Brambling Rafford.

FEBRUARY

4th 36 Snipe Kinloss, 5th 45 Brambling Ordiquish, 9th 100 Brambling Drainie, 250 Goldfinch Ordiquish, 10th 23 Brent Goose Delnies, 10 Pintail Findhorn Bay, 13 Scaup Nairn Bar, 6 Jack Snipe Kingsteps, 62 Twite Nairn/Culbin Bars, 2 Raven Cromdale Hills, 12th 1 Green-winged Teal Loch Spynie, 14th 126 Brambling Auchindoun, 38 Twite Auchindoun, 19th 1 Waxwing Forres, 23rd 1 Mediterranean Gull Myreside, 24th 200 Brambling Westerfolds, 25th 1 American Wigeon Loch Oire, 27th 7 Waxwing Forres.

MARCH

3rd 1 Mediterranean Gull Loch Oire, 15th 2 Crane College of Roseisle, 24th 1 Swallow Loch na Bo, 26th 1 Sand Martin Loch Oire, 28th 1 Wheatear Kingston.

APRIL

2nd 1 Scaup Loch Spynie, 6th 1 Scaup Cooper Park, 7th 1 Kingfisher Spey Bay, 1 Willow Warbler Elgin, 10th 2 Mandarin Lossiemouth, 1000 Golden Plover Montgrew, 11th 10 Black-throated Diver Burghead Bay, 13th 1 Green-winged Teal Nether Dallachy, 14th 3 Iceland Gull Lhanbryde, 16th 1 Scaup Loch Spynie 17th 1 Waxwing Dufftown, 21st 4 Gadwall Kingston, 22nd 1 House Martin Elgin, 24th 1 White Stork Invererne.

MAY

4th 1 Whitethroat Loch na Bo, 6th 1 Black-tailed Godwit Kingston, 9th 1 Wood Warbler Kellas, 10th 1 Yellow-legged Gull Nether Dallachy, 11th 2 Garganey Loch Spynie, 12th 1 Green-winged Teal Loch Spynie,

1 Garganey Cloddach, 4 Ruddy Duck Loch Spynie, **13th** 1 Yellow-legged Gull Lossie estuary, **14th** 1 Swift Lossiemouth, 1 Lesser Whitethroat Lein, **16th** 1 Scaup Loch Spynie, **17th** 4 Black-tailed Godwit Loch of the Clans, **18th** 2 Black-tailed Godwit Lossie estuary, **19th** 66 Sanderling Lossiemouth, **20th** 2 Little Stint Spey Bay, **21st** 2 Garganey Cloddach, **26th** 2 Garganey Kingston, **29th** 8 Manx Shearwater Burghead, 1 Little Ringed Plover Kingston, **31st** 2 Garganey Drumdivan.

JUNE

1st 1 Green-winged Teal Loch Spynie, 1 Green Woodpecker Glenernie, **2nd** 2 Canada Goose Cloddach, 2 Little Gull Loch Spynie, **4th** 12 Canada Goose Drumdivan, 2 Yellow-legged Gull Lossiemouth, **6th** 1 Quail Bogmoor, **8th** 1 Green Woodpecker Teindland, **9th** 1 Quail Clochan, **11th** 1 Green Woodpecker Ferness, **12th** 1 Canada Goose Lossie estuary, 1 Quail Crosslots, **15th** 1 Little Gull Kingston, **18th** 1 Quail Garmouth, **19th** 1 Quail Burgie, **20th** 1 Quail Enoch, **26th** 1 Garganey Loch Flemington.

JULY

4th 2 Quail Brandston, 2 Quail Leuchars, 2 Quail Newton of Innes, **5th** 1 Quail Wester Oldtown, 1 Quail Mains of Clunymore, 1 Wood Sandpiper Drumdivan, **9th** 2 Little Ringed Plover Kingston, **10th** 1 Rose-coloured Starling Hopeman, **11th** 2 Dotterel Ben Aigan, **13th** 1 Kingfisher Tugnet, **20th** 13 Manx Shearwater Lossiemouth, **21st** 1 Raven Ben Rinnes, **22nd** 2 Little Ringed Plover Kingston, 1 Little Stint Kingston, **26th** 1 Black-tailed Godwit Kingston, **27th** 31 Black-tailed Godwit Lossiemouth, **28th** 3 Little Ringed Plover Kingston, **31st** 1 Ruddy Duck Loch Spynie.

AUGUST

3rd 1 Green Sandpiper Nether Dallachy, 1 Wood Sandpiper Kingston, **4th** 99 Sanderling Lossiemouth, 2 Curlew Sandpiper Buckpool. 1 Wood Sandpiper Loch Spynie, 1 Rose-coloured Starling Mosstodloch, **9th** 1 Black-tailed Godwit Drumdivan, **11th** 3 Green Sandpiper Montgrew, **14th** 1 Short-eared Owl Kingston, **15th** 44 Whimbrel Kingston, **16th** 11 Black-tailed Godwit Lossiemouth, **18th** 1 Scaup Loch Flemington, **21st** 1 Black-tailed Godwit Kingston, 1 Kingfisher Loch Spynie, **22nd** 4 Ruff Cloddach, 1 Black-tailed Godwit Lhanbryde, 1 Black-tailed Godwit Cummington, **23rd** 1 Surf Scoter Burghead Bay, **24th** 12 Black-tailed Godwit Delnies, 1 Green Sandpiper Montgrew, **26th** 2 Little Stint Kingston, 4 Ruff Dipple, 2 Black-tailed Godwit Lossiemouth, **27th** 25 Black-tailed Godwit Delnies.

SEPTEMBER

4th 1 Black-tailed Godwit Lossiemouth, 1 Kingfisher Lossie estuary, **6th** 2 Curlew Sandpiper Findhorn Bay, **8th** 1 Short-eared Owl Netherton, **10th** 1 Redstart Strathlene, 3 Whinchat Strathlene, 6 Pied Flycatcher Strathlene, **12th** 1 Swift Strathlene, 1 Whinchat Strathlene, **14th** 1 Sooty Shearwater Lossiemouth, **15th** 155 Pink-footed Goose Dufftown, 4 Gadwall Loch Spynie **15th**, 1 Little Stint Montgrew, 3 Pomarine Skua Lossiemouth, **17th** 12 Pintail Burghead, **21st** 20 Scaup Culbin Bar, 5 Pomarine Skua Lossiemouth, 25 Arctic Skua Lossiemouth, 16 Great Skua Lossiemouth, **22nd** 10 Skua Lossiemouth, **23rd** 1 Sooty Shearwater Tronach Head, **25th** 1 Pomarine Skua Lossiemouth, 1 Sabine's Gull Lossiemouth, **27th** 13 Brent Goose Lossiemouth, **28th** 28 Greylag Goose Lossiemouth, **29th** 51 Red-throated Diver Spey Bay, 10 Slavonian Grebe Burghead Bay, 43 Brent Goose Burghead Bay, 27 Brent Goose Lossiemouth, 2 Pomarine Skua Portknockie, 1 Whinchat Kingston, 2 Ring Ouzel Lossiemouth, **30th** 1 Kingfisher Aberlour.

OCTOBER

1st Kingfisher Lossie estuary, **2nd** 1 Kingfisher Loch Spynie, **3rd** 9 Whooper Swan Hopeman, **5th** 9 Brent Goose Findhorn, **6th** 54 Red-throated Diver Nairn/Culbin Bars, 5 Black-throated Diver Burghead Bay, 11 Brent Goose Lossiemouth, 14 Brent Goose Buckpool, 62 Snipe Kingsteps, 36 Brent Goose Nairn, 1 Pomarine Skua Strathlene, 84 Brambling Burghead, **10th** 1 Redstart Covesea, **12th** 1 Redstart Kingston, **14th** 1 Sabine's Gull Lossiemouth, 1 Sabine's Gull Portknockie, **15th** 15 Little Grebe Loch na Bo, 1 Great Grey

Shrike Kinloss, 16th 40 Barnacle Goose Kinloss, 18th 66 Brambling Auchindoun, 19th 1 Red-necked Grebe Loch Spynie, 20th 92 Brambling Earnfield, 21st 1 House Martin Loch Spynie, 22nd 1 Scaup Loch Spynie, 27th 5 Pintail Miltonhill, 207 Brambling Lower Cabrach, 29th 1 Smew Loch Spynie, 1 Kingfisher Lossie estuary.

NOVEMBER

2nd 3 Green-winged Teal Loch Spynie, 1 Scaup Loch na Bo, 1 Short-eared Owl Burghead, 3rd 1 Green-winged Teal Kingston, 6 Jack Snipe Lein, 1 Black Redstart Lossiemouth, 4th 1 Swallow Elgin, 5th 1 Greenshank Kingston, 1 Kingfisher Lossie estuary, 8th 1 Grey Phalarope Lossiemouth, 10th 1 Swallow Lossiemouth, 14th 1 Grey Phalarope Burghead Bay, 1 Great Skua Roseisle, 16th 1 Waxwing Kinloss, 17th 1 Canada Goose Hempriggs, 1 Kingfisher Cooper Park, 1 Swallow Kingston, 1 Smew Loch Flemington, 19th 2 Swallow Nairn, 24th 1 Sooty Shearwater Strathlene, 25th 2 Great Northern Diver Culbin Bar, 1 Great Crested Grebe Lein, 2 Waxwing Glen of Rothes, 26th 3 Great Northern Diver Burghead Bay, 28th 14 Little Grebe Findhorn Bay.

DECEMBER

1st 9 Mandarin Elgin, 4th 6 Pintail Loch Spynie, 6th 3 Great Northern Diver Burghead Bay, 7th 1 Brent Goose Lossiemouth, 8th 13 Brent Goose Nairn Bar, 1 Scaup Loch Spynie, 1 Surf Scoter Nairn/Culbin Bars, 22 Grey Plover Nairn Bar, 8 Jack Snipe Kingsteps, 18th 3 Great Northern Diver Burghead Bay, 19th 3 Great Northern Diver Culbin Bar, 21st 3 Water Rail Loch Spynie, 28th 25 Brambling Elgin, 29th 1 Kingfisher Elgin.

SPECIES ACCOUNTS

The following terms are used at the start of each species account to denote relative abundance:

Breeding species:

Occasional	Has bred but none in most years
Rare	1-10 pairs in most years
Scarce	11-50 pairs
Fairly common	51-200 pairs
Common	201-500 pairs
Very common	more than 500 pairs

Non-breeding species:

Rare	1-20 records in total
Very scarce	Not rare but less than 10 in most years
Scarce	10-50 in most years
Fairly common	51-200 in most years
Common	201-500 annually
Very common	more than 500 annually

Red-throated Diver *Gavia stellata*

Rare breeder. Common autumn and winter visitor offshore.

Summer: Inland, where breeding has taken place in the past, was a pair on 29 Apr (RP), but no subsequent sightings. 1 Lochindorb 2 Aug (RBe). The only coastal record during June-August was 1 Lossiemouth 20 July – surely under-recorded to some extent.

Best spring counts offshore, in April, were 14 Burghead Bay 8th, 10 Lossiemouth 4th and 9 Boar's Head Rock 27th.

Best monthly counts offshore in each winter period were:

	Jan	Feb	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Nairn/Delnies	11	nc	nc	nc	2	3
Nairn/Culbin Bars	35	3	nc	54 (6 th)	25	18
Burghead Bay	7	1	9	1	6	4
Spey Bay	1	nc	51 (29 th)	nc	nc	7

nc = no count received

Clearly these data are very incomplete – observers are encouraged to count divers in all months.

Along rocky coasts away from the shallow bays, the best count was 12 Burghead-Hopeman 6 Oct. More unusual were single birds in the Lossie estuary on 21 Feb and 5 March, in Lossiemouth harbour 6 Nov and in Buckie harbour 8 Dec. One Loch Spynie 24 Sept-7 Oct (many obs.) was only the second record at this very well watched site.

Black-throated Diver *Gavia arctica*

Rare breeder. Scarce autumn and winter visitor offshore.

Even fewer reports than usual of this scarce species.

In Findhorn/Burghead Bay, the most favoured site, monthly maxima were 2 on 4 Jan and 19 Jan, 10 on 11 Apr, 1 on 1 May, 1 on 23 Aug, 2 on 29 Sept, 5 on 6 Oct and 3 on 25 Nov.

Elsewhere, one/two birds were at Spey Bay 24 March (1) and 13 May (1), Hopeman 26 Nov (1), Lossiemouth 22 Jan (1), 4 Apr (1), 16 Aug and 17 Oct (2) and Nairn Bar 6 Oct. Unusually, one was watched catching a large trout c1km upstream on the Lossie estuary on 10 Feb (RAS).

Great Northern Diver *Gavia immer*

Scarce visitor offshore.

Very small numbers but a wide range of dates and localities. Maximum together only 3 Burghead Bay 26 Nov, 6 Dec and 18 Dec, and 3 Culbin Bar 25 Nov and 19 Dec. Otherwise records were of single birds (27) or two together (11). Outwith the Sept-April period, records were:

Spey Bay: 2 on 8 May, 2 on 20 June. No reports of the April-May build-up noted here in recent years.

Burghead Bay: 1 on 3 May.

Lossiemouth: 2 on 4 May, 1 on 2 May, 12 May and 19 May. On 14 Nov a sick bird was found in Lossiemouth harbour.

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

Scarce breeder, scarce on the estuaries in winter.

Mid-winter: On breeding waters in January and December were 2 Loch na Bo 19 Jan (1 there on 14 Jan), 1 Cloddach 27 Jan, 6 Loch na Bo 10 Dec (1 there on 24 Dec) and 1 Loch Flemington 8 Dec.

Present in spring/summer (*italics* = proved breeding) at Altyre, Brodie, *Clochan*, *Cloddach quarry*(2 pairs), *Culbin Forest*, Dava (Loch Allan), *Loch na Bo*, *Loch Loy*, Loch of Blairs, *Loch Oire* (3 pairs), *Loch Park*, Loch Spynie, *Lochs of Bogmussach*, Lossie Forest (north pool), *Nether Dallachy* (2 pairs) and *Newton of Dalvey*.

Best post-breeding congregations in autumn were 15 Loch na Bo 15 Oct and 11 Loch Oire 21 Sept. Unusual was 1 Kellas House pond 7 Nov.

Coastal in winter: 8 Findhorn Bay 13 Jan and 14 there (Kincorth area) 28 Nov, 2 Delnies 10 Feb and 10 Nov, 2 Kingston in Jan and Sept-Dec, 1 Lossiemouth harbour 6 Oct and 1-2 in Nairn harbour in Jan-Feb and Nov-Dec.

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*

Rare breeder and very scarce offshore in autumn and winter.

One was found mortally injured in a shallow pool of water, where it had apparently crash-landed, on the Lein (Kingston) on 25 Nov (PGS).

Red-necked Grebe *Podiceps grisegina*

Very scarce migrant and winter visitor.

All coastal records in the Findhorn/Burghead Bay area where as many as 4 on 4 Jan (NH) and singles on 20 Sept (AJL), 5 Oct (NH), 5 Nov (JDHM,DS) and 30 Dec (DG). Inland, 1 Loch Spynie 19 Oct (DG).

Slavonian Grebe *Podiceps auritus*

Rare breeder. Scarce offshore in winter.

Breeding: An encouraging ten pairs held territory (one of them at two sites) but only six young were raised to fledging age. Breeding success in Moray & Nairn in recent years has been as follows:

Year	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Pairs	13	13	11	13	8	12	9	8	3	7	10
Young	8	5	7	12	2	2	5-6	1	3	11	6

Site 1 – One adult present 4 May-2 June and 1-5 July. A slightly promising sign at the loch which was once the Moray stronghold for the species.

Site 2 – First two back 31 March. Five pairs were present, plus one other adult bird (equalling the highest ever population here). All five pairs attempted to breed and four pairs were successful, raising five young to fledging. Last juvenile still present 24 Oct. One of the successful adults had been ringed during its moult near Inverness in autumn 2001 and made an unsuccessful attempt to breed in 2002 at Site 7, before moving to Site 2 in early July and raising two young.

Site 4 – Two pairs were present of which only one probably laid. No chicks were reared.

Site 7 – Three pairs on 5 May. Two pairs bred, one of which successfully raised one young. The other pair failed and then moved to Site 2 (over 30km away) where they raised two young.

Site 8 – One adult present 6 Apr, 25 Apr-24 May and 17 June. Three there 25 Apr and 2 on 1 May but no suggestion of breeding.

Site 9 – Four on 28 May but no further reports.

Site 11 – One pair present until mid June but not thought to have laid; also an unmated single bird. This is probably the first time that a pair has occupied this site although single adults have appeared late in the season in some years.

In autumn on freshwater were 1 Loch Spynie 11 Sept-2 Oct and 27 Oct (many obs.) and 1 Loch na Bo 19-23 Nov (JDHM,MJHC).

Coastal: Monthly maxima in Burghead Bay were:

Jan	Apr	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
8 (13 th)	1	10 (29 th)	2	6	6

(DMP et al.)

Elsewhere, 1 Boar's Head Rock 9 Nov, 4 Nairn/Culbin Bars 25 Nov (3 on 19 Dec), 2 Delnies 10 Feb (1 on 15 Dec), 1 Kingston 24 Jan and 1 Spey Bay 21 Dec.

Fulmar *Fulmarus glacialis*

Common breeder, very common offshore.

Breeding: 22 back on the cliffs Cummington 13 Jan.

Large numbers in spring around Lossiemouth sewage outflow where 430 on 28 March and 520 on 4 Apr.

No large scale passage movements noted – best only 49 past Lossiemouth in 30 mins on 7 Sept.

Sooty Shearwater *Puffinus griseus*

Very scarce migrant in late summer and autumn.

Only three records, each of a single bird – off Lossiemouth on 14 Sept (DS), off Tronach Head on 23 Sept (L&RS) and a very late bird flying east past Strathlene on 24 Nov (MJHC). This is the first November record for Moray & Nairn.

Manx Shearwater *Puffinus puffinus*

Scarce offshore in summer and autumn.

In early summer, 8E past Burghead 29 May (IFo). On 16 Aug a tight 'raft' of 10 birds was seen on the sea from a boat c2km off Lossiemouth (MJHC). Flying past Lossiemouth were 13 (3W,10E) on 20 July (DG),

3W on 21 Sept (DS) and 1E on 22 Sept (RP). Birds were seen passing Boar's Head Rock on 15 Aug (2E), 29 Aug (3E) and 12 Sept (3W) (TM). Elsewhere, 2 Kingston 18 July (TM) and 1 Nairn Bar 6 Oct (DJa).

Gannet *Morus bassanus*

Very common offshore in summer and autumn, fewer in winter.

Strongest passage movements past Lossiemouth were on 28 March (88W in 30 mins), 21 Sept (65W in 2 hours), 25 Sept (102W in 1 hour), 29 Sept (138E in 1 hour) and 8 Oct (234W in 2 hours) (JDHM,RP). Also 91W in 15 mins Portgordon 27 Sept and, in early October, 28 Culbin Bar 6th, 35 Findhorn 6th, 76 Nairn Bar 6th and 127W in 30 mins Strathlene 8th.

Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

Scarce resident and common winter visitor.

On 12 Nov, in 1 hour approaching dusk, 123 flew west past Covesea lighthouse (JDHM) – perhaps to roost on Covesea cliffs where 37 were counted on 31 Oct.

Best group count of the year was 62 Halliman Skerries 22 Aug. At Burghead, 25 on 5 Feb, 21 on 2 July, 27 on 14 Aug, 21 on 3 Sept and 20 on 30 Oct (JDHM). Along the Portgordon-Strathlene coast were 19 on 13 Jan, 38 on 5 Oct and 19 on 8 Dec. Other sites yielding counts of 15 or more were Burghead-Lossiemouth coast (22 on 18 Dec), Findhorn Bay (17 on 6 Oct), Lossiemouth (21 on 13 Jan, 22 on 10 Feb), Nairn (28 on 13 Jan) and Spey Bay (20 on 15 Sept).

In summer, 2 adults and 6 immatures on the cliffs at Covesea 9 June but nothing to suggest breeding.

Inland, monthly maxima at Loch Spynie were:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
4	9	5	4	4	2	0	0	0	5	7	9

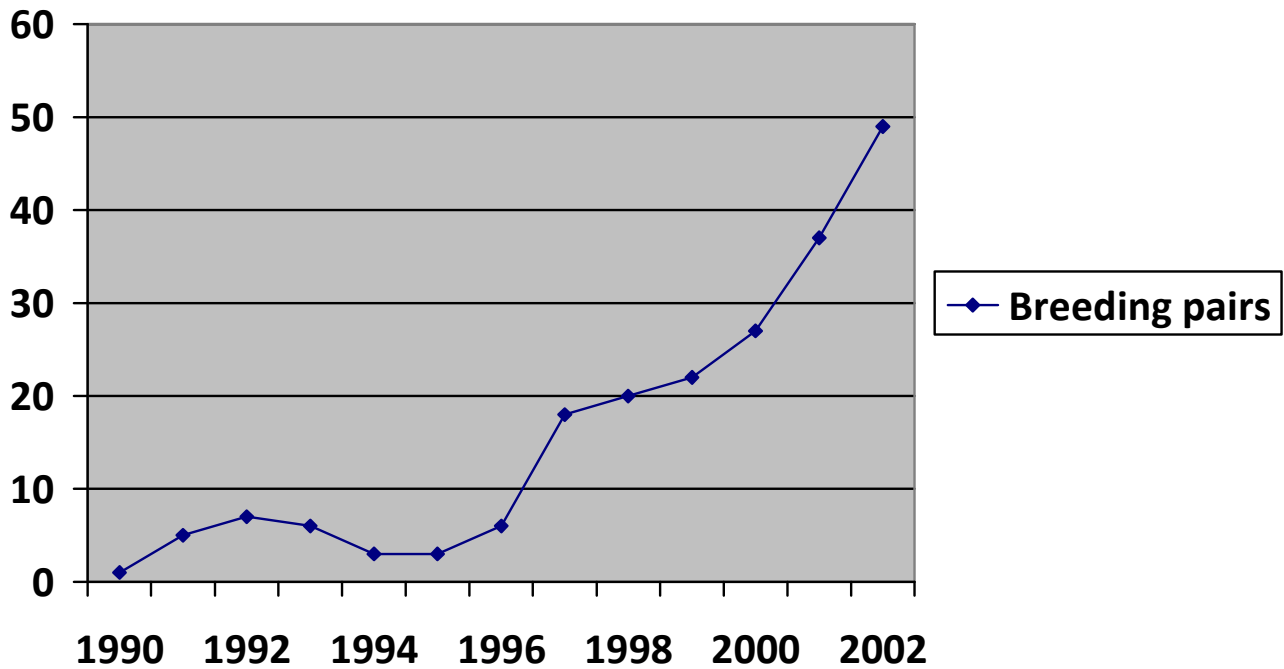
Birds showing the characters of Continental race *P.c.sinensis* were again present; 3 in Jan, up to 6 in Feb, 1 in June and 2 in Nov-Dec. (RP et al.). Other inland cormorants were at Aberlour (2 on 16 Jan, 1 on 16 March), Auldearn (1 on 3 Dec), Inchstelly (1 on 24 Jan), Kinermony (1 on 30 Nov), Loch Flemington (1 on 8 Dec), Loch na Bo (1-2 in Jan-March, 2 on 19 Nov, 3 on 23 Nov, 3 on 10 Dec), Loch of Blairs (1 on 25 Nov), Sanquhar Loch (1 on 15 Feb) and Windyridge (1 on 3 Dec).

Shag *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

Scarce breeder and common visitor, chiefly in winter.

Breeding: Another substantial increase on the Portknockie cliffs opposite the Bow Fiddle Rock where 40 occupied nests on 15 June (31 in 2001) (MJHC). Four pairs were nesting at Tronach Head on 13 July and five pairs at Covesea on 9 June (MJHC).

The number of breeding pairs in Moray (none in Nairn) has increased in recent years as follows:



Winter counts: Common in winter eastwards from Buckie to the Moray boundary at Cullen e.g. 117 Buckie harbour 6 Oct and min. 400 Portknockie roost 8 Dec. Scarce to the west of Buckie where best counts were 37 Burghead-Lossiemouth 22 Jan (32 there 26 Nov) and 24 Culbin Bar 25 Nov.

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

Scarce resident breeder.

Heronries: 11 nests Loch Spynie (RP), c6 nests Gardenhead (DC), 5+ nests Binsness (JDHM), 1 nest Claggan (AE), 5 nests Daugh of Kinermony (AE) and 1 nest Connage nr. Buckie (MJHC). Also bred Nether Dallachy.

On the estuaries in late summer and autumn, best counts in each month were:

	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Findhorn Bay	13	12	nc	9		39
Lossie estuary	13	6	15	15	6	6
Kingston	nc	13	11	nc	nc	nc

The remarkable count of 39 Findhorn Bay 8 Dec (CD) beats even the 33 there on 29 Sept 1996. Most together elsewhere were 5 Montgrew 15 Sept, 5 Nairn Bar 6 Oct, 4 Cloddach quarry 21 Sept and 4 Loch Flemington 13 Jan and 29 March. On rocky shores, single birds at Burghead 13 Jan and 6 July, Buckpool 12 July and Portknockie 24 July. Upcountry on 5 May were 1 Fleenas and 1 Ardclach.

White Stork *Ciconia ciconia*

Rare visitor.

One was watched feeding in a ploughed field near Invererne (Forres) on 24 Apr (JMacD). This is the 8th record for Moray & Nairn. Previous occurrences were in 1964, six records in the 1970s, and in 1995.

Mute Swan *Cygnus olor*

Scarce resident breeder and short-distance migrant. Common in winter.

Breeding: A national survey was undertaken in 2002, the results for Moray & Nairn are published later in this report. A total of 26 pairs were reported on territories. Of these, 17 pairs produced 56 young, the majority of which fledged. An 18th breeding pair, at Altyre, was subsequently reported but not included in the national survey.

Mean number of young probably fledging from those pairs known to have produced young:

Year	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Pairs	12	9	9	14	10	14	16	15	15	15	12	17
Young fledged	47	48	44	61	24	35	50	31	68	51	54	56
Mean	3.9	5.3	4.9	4.4	2.4	2.5	3.1	2.1	4.5	3.4	4.5	3.2

Maximum monthly counts of local flocks (excluding breeding birds in May-August) were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Findhorn	4	2	nc	9	31	18	5	nc	nc	18	nc	8
Lossie estuary	3	5	5	9	nc	2	nc	nc	nc	4	4	3
Loch Spynie	18	8	10			Breeders				40	39	55

Two non-breeding flocks were counted: Nairn (43 on 15 Apr, 14 on 28 Apr) and Kingsteps (12 on 28 Apr).

Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus*

Common migrant and winter visitor.

Winter-spring: After the blank last year, 1 site in Nairn District was used: Loch Loy (16 on 17 Jan).

In Moray, flocks were present at 10 sites, these were typically small groups (less than 10): Ardivot (5 on 1 Jan), Loch Spynie (max. 7 on 1 Jan & 24 Apr), Windyridge (3 on 7 Jan), Roseisle (5 on 1 Jan, 4 on 17 Feb), Newton of Struthers (5 on 7 Jan), East Grange (4 on 8 Feb), Culbin Bar (4 on 10 Feb), Elgin (8 flying over on 18 Mar) and Lossiemouth (2 on sea 25 Mar). Three flocks contained more than 10 birds: 11 Portknockie 5 Jan (on the sea), 10 East Grange 31 Jan and 23 in off the sea at Lossie estuary on 5 Mar.

Autumn: First flocks were seen on 3 Oct at Hopeman (9) and Lossie estuary (4): a typical arrival date. Small numbers seen over the next few days (15 Loch Spynie 4th, 9 Scarffbanks 5th and 13 Portknockie 6th). Main arrival occurred from 24-28 Oct with 12 flocks reported. A large flock was at Gilston (84 on 27th: inc. broods of 5, 5, 4, 2), Windyridge (41 on 28th) and Salterhill (62 on 30th). Generally flocks contained less than 20 birds. In November, flocks with 10 or more individuals were seen at Lossiemouth (30 on 5th flying east), Loch Spynie (87 on 6th), Gordonsword (max. 11 on 22nd) and Loch of Cotts (20 on 24th). Regular at Loch Spynie from 4 Oct – 21 Dec, largest monthly counts there included 37 on 18 Oct, 87 on 6 Nov and 10 on 4 Dec.

Winter: Seen at two sites in Nairn District: 1 on Loch Loy 3 & 7 Dec and 1 Nairn Bar 8 Dec (same?). In Moray, the only sighting away from Loch Spynie was 23 Sweethillock 4 Dec.

Pink-footed Goose *Anser brachyrhynchus*

Common migrant, increasing in winter.

Winter (January-mid March): No flocks were reported during the period in Nairn District. In Moray, two areas contained large flocks: Miltonhill (1400 on 26 Feb, c.3000 on 13 Mar) and Newton (c.1500 on 27 Feb). Elsewhere, much smaller flocks were recorded: 750 Kinloss 14 Mar and c.900 Miltonduff 20 Mar.

Spring passage: Five large flocks were reported during this period. In Apr c.2500 Whitehill, Burgie on 8th, 8000 Cloddach quarry on 9th, 4500 Hillhead on 11th and 3000 Findhorn Bay on 15th. The only large flock in May was also at Findhorn Bay (4600 on 1st). Seven other flocks during this period were all less than 300 birds.

Summer: One at Loch Spynie 24 & 25 May could have been a late migrant. However, it may also account for the record on 12, 22 & 23 Jun on the Lossie estuary. An additional record concerned 2 Findhorn Bay 23 Jun.

Autumn: First skein was 155 over Dufftown on 15 Sep (a typical date). Further arrivals occurred on 16th (6 reports) and 17th (2 reports). Small flocks reported regularly through the remainder of Sep. Main autumn arrival appeared to be in late October when 5000 Miltonhill on 19th, 600 Lhanbryde and 600 Bogmoor on 24th and c.2500 Easter Calcots on 28th. The roost at Loch Spynie was counted in Oct, Nov and Dec (DG) and graphically illustrate a rapid build-up in numbers and subsequent onward movement.

October			November		December	
19th	20th	26th	3rd	9th	14th	15th
2800	5800	10500	11700	3900	1200	1200

Winter: No Pink-footed Geese were reported from Nairn District. In Moray, large flocks during the period included: 630 Urquhart 9 Nov, c.1500 (max.) Miltonhill 13 Nov, 200 Findhorn Bay 8 Dec and 40 Garmouth 31 Dec.

White-fronted Goose *Anser albifrons*

Scarce winter visitor.

All birds were of the Greenland race. Only 9 records received for the whole year, all were of single birds. This and 1988 are now the two worst years since the MNBR was first published. Two birds could potentially account for all sightings.

Winter-spring: Singles were seen at Hempriggs 26 Jan (RFH) and Cloddach quarry 9 Apr (CAG).

Autumn: Singles were seen at Nairn (D&MG) and Gilston (adult) (RP) on 18 Oct.

Winter: All records were from Dec: Alves (6th), Easter Green (10th), Batchen, Miltonduff (18th), Pilmuir (18th) (RFH) and Pittendreich (30th) (DG).

Greylag Goose *Anser anser*

Common winter visitor and rare breeder.

Winter-spring: Flocks containing 500 or more birds were seen at 5 sites (max. counts only): 2500 Clochan 13 Jan, c.1300 Wester Manbeen 13 Jan, 1400 Newton 13 Mar, c.1200 Miltonduff 20 Mar and c.600 Findhorn Bay 15 Apr.

Summer: Breeding again confirmed at Lochindorb where 200 were present on 29 Jun (APe). On 6 Jul, a total of 154 were present including 30 juveniles (MJHC). This figure had dropped by 24 Jul to c.65, though still included "many young" (ISS). A brood was also seen on Loch Allan, Dava on 6 Jul containing 4 almost fully grown young (MJHC). Elsewhere, singles were present at Loch Spynie 1 Jun – 22 Aug (many obs.) and Kingston 25 May – 16 Sep (MJHC). At Montgrew, 5 (max. count) on 31 May were presumably the same seen there on 4 Sep (MJHC).

Autumn: The first skein involved 28 birds flying in off the sea at Lossiemouth on the typical date of 28 Sep. These were followed the next day by c.500 flying south-west over Elgin. Very few other flocks were reported for this period except: 562 Muirton and c.1000 Calcots on 28 Oct. The roost at Loch Spynie was counted in Oct, Nov and Dec (DG):

October			November		December
19th	20th	26th	3rd	9th	14th
1500	1800	2500	1900	3800	2100

Winter: Flocks over 500 included: c.1000 Drainie 1 Nov, c.1300 Gilston 7 Nov, c.1100 Muirton 26 Dec and c.2000 Pittendreich 30 Dec.

Canada Goose *Branta canadensis*

Scarce migrant in summer, rare in winter.

Winter-spring: Singles at Windyridge 2 Jan (RFH), Muirton 5 Jan (RP) and Miltonduff 13 Jan (RFH) probably referred to the same individual. Interestingly, a single wintering individual has been seen annually in the Miltonhill and Muirton areas since 1991 (though not located in 1998 or 1999). This individual is invariably with Greylag Geese and may relate to the same returning bird.

Migrants bound for the Beaully Firth moulting area included: 4 Tugnet 2 Jun (MJHC), possibly the same group of 4 seen on 3 Jun flying west at both Kingston (RP) and Kinloss (MJHC). Other records in Jun included 2 Cloddach quarry on 2nd (CAG), 12 Drumdivan on 4th (APe), 1 Lossie estuary on 12th (DG). In the Kingston area, 9 records from 30 Jun – 26 Oct of a single bird (MJHC).

Winter: One again in the Burghead-Kinloss-Alves area. Seen on 17 Nov at Hempriggs (with Pink-footed Geese) (DG) and at Kirkhill, Alves on 18 Nov (RFH).

Barnacle Goose *Branta leucopsis*

Scarce migrant and winter visitor.

A typical year with no records from Nairn District.

Winter-spring: Singles were seen at four sites: Hillhead 18 Jan, Miltonhill 2 Mar, Easter Coltfoot 3 Mar and Cloddach quarry 9 Apr.

Summer: A single at Tugnet on 2 Jun (MJHC). This record mirrors a single at Kingston on 6-10 Jun 1991.

Autumn: After the large numbers seen last year, a return to smaller numbers. Last year, arrivals were earlier than usual (in Sep), rather than Oct, which is typical for the species. The only large flock was 40 Kinloss 16 Oct, otherwise: 1 Culbin Bar 6th, 1 Earnside 7th, 3 flying east Strathlene 15th, 2 Portknockie 16th and 4 Miltonhill 19th.

Winter: Initially, 1 Muirton 3 Nov, then 2 on 8 & 16 Dec. This increased again to 4 from 22-30 Dec. Elsewhere, 2 Easter Greens 10 Dec.

Brent Goose *Branta bernicla*

Scarce migrant and winter visitor.

The majority of records assigned to race concerned the pale-bellied form *hrota*:

Winter: In the Nairn area, this race was seen at 3 sites but potentially all records relate to a single group wintering in the area. From 9 Jan – 1 Feb birds were seen frequently on the rocky shoreline below the golf clubhouse and the Altonburn. The largest count here was 31 on 19 Jan. On Nairn Bar, 33 were seen on 13 Jan. At Delnies, a group of 23 were seen on 10 Feb.

Autumn passage period (Sep-Oct): Arrival about 4 weeks later than last year. At Lossiemouth in Sep, 3 west on 26th, 2 & 11 west on 27th, 2 & 25 west on 29th. Also on 29th were 43 west at Findhorn/Burghead Bay. In Oct, seen at Findhorn (9 on 5th), Lossiemouth (6 west on 5th, 11 west on 6th), Lossie estuary (1 on 6th), Buckpool (14 on 6th) and Nairn (36 on 8th). The group at Nairn included a colour-ringed individual from the Svalbard/northeast Greenland population. During this period 1 unidentified to race at Lossiemouth west beach on 2nd.

Winter: 13 Nairn Bar 8 Dec and a single on the Lossie estuary on 7 & 25 Dec. Colour rings were read on the Lossie individual on the 25th and this individual was assigned to the east Canadian population. The only record of the dark-bellied race *berniola* concerned one on the Lossie estuary on 10-11 Jul (JDHM, DG).

Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*

Numerous spring and summer visitor and breeder.

Breeding: Broods were seen at Findhorn Bay (2 young) and Kingston (6 young).

Best monthly counts at coastal sites were as follows:

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Nairn/Culbin Bars	123	119	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	10	nc	71
Findhorn Bay	9	18	44	65	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	9	4	37
Lossie estuary	2	12	8	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0
Kingston	nc	nc	7	14	20	15	nc	1	1	0	0	0

The large counts at Nairn/Culbin Bars are reminiscent of similar monthly counts in early 1998. Numbers at Findhorn Bay, although relatively low, are similar to recent years.

Inland: Seen at 11 sites: Clochan (3 on 29 Mar: much lower compared to last year), Hillhead (1 on 8 Jul), Lhanbryde pig farm (2 on 14, 15 & 28 Apr), Loch Spynie (max. 6 on 10 Mar), Miltonhill (max. 10 on 6 Mar), Montgrew (2 on 25 & 31 May), Muir of Lochs (regular 1 Mar – 25 May: max. 7 on 12 May), Nether Dallachy (2 on 13 Apr), Roseisle maltings (2 on 17 Mar) Roseisle forest (1 on 3 May) and Speyslaw (1 on 4 May).

Mandarin *Aix galericulata*

Probable escape or feral origin.

On 10 Apr a pair was on the sea at Lossiemouth west beach (IFo). At the end of the year a group of 9 (5males, 2 1st-winter leucistic males, 2 females) were present on the River Lossie, between Old Mills and the Cooper Park, from 1-31 Dec (RAM, CAG, RP), and into 2003. Large trees with potential nest sites may lead to a future breeding attempt in the area. The origin of this group is difficult to assess as there is now a feral population in Strath Nairn (Farr) and a female was seen at a Goldeneye nestbox in Strath Spey (near Nethybridge). However, the leucistic individuals may suggest an escaped group.

This is the fourth occurrence in the Districts following a male on the River Nairn (1992), a pair at Edinkillie (1993) and female on the saltmarsh at Kingston (1996).

Wigeon *Anas penelope*

Common winter visitor and scarce breeder.

Breeding: In the traditional breeding area of west Moray and east Nairn broods were seen on 3 dates: F+b2 on 16 Jun (JDHM), 'fledged young' on 23 Jun (DMP) and F+b1 on 6 Jul (MJHC). Adults in the breeding area were recorded on 19 Apr (pair) (RP) and 6 Jul (pair) (MJHC).

Non-breeders in summer (May – Jul): At Loch Spynie, a continual presence through April – July, with the largest counts involving 12 on 9 Jul, and 8 on 5 Jun, 3 Jul & 7 Jul (JDHM, MJHC)). Two males at Cloddach quarry on 17 May (IF). At Kingston, present from 8 May – 30 Jun, with a max. count of 2M, 1F (on 11 May).

Winter: Monthly maximum counts at main coastal sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr		Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Nairn/Culbin Bars	1014	54	nc	nc		nc	12	nc	1702
Findhorn Bay	950	850	1600	160		500	700	880	1560
Lossie estuary	1865	1155	97	59		365	888	0	2083
Kingston	nc	nc	141	27		110	216	nc	270

The Lossie estuary flock appears to have stabilised at around 2000 individuals. The zero count for November was the result of the massive floods (see Loch Spynie comment below) (RP). An aberrant plumaged female returned for its' second winter (RP, CAG).

On freshwater:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr		Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Loch Flemington	72	127	nc	nc		nc	nc	nc	nc	111
Loch Loy	237	51	171	nc		nc	nc	nc	nc	nc
Loch Spynie	418	300	200	40		16	19	1000	2500	2500
Cloddach quarry	277	218	119	5		2	5	230	nc	304
Loch Oire	103	253	239	nc		0	20	140	385	57
Loch na Bo	160	152	71	nc		0	3	0	54	210

A rapid rise in numbers at Loch Spynie: 15 on 9 Oct, 353 on 29 Oct, 620 on 21 Nov, 1270 on 22 Nov, 2500 on 24 Nov and 2350 on 29 Nov. The high counts from 22 Nov onwards, appear to be the result of the massive flooding that hit Moray. This deposited large quantities of silt across the Lossie estuary, thus displacing much of the wintering flock from there (RP).

Maximum counts over 100 at inland sites included: 425 Miltonduff 27 Jan, 280 Miltonhill 27 Oct.

Migrants were noted at Lossiemouth (all flying west) in Sep: 15 on 23rd, 23 on 25th and 7 on 27th.

American Wigeon *Anas americana*

Vagrant.

The adult male was present at Loch Oire from 2001 (seen from 25 Feb-17 Mar) (EH *et al.*).

Gadwall *Anas strepera*

Scarce visitor.

Recorded in three areas this year.

Loch Spynie: Only present in late summer and the second winter period. Present from 31 Jul-1 Dec. All but one record involved males, the maximum count being 4 on 15 & 17 Sep (HF). The only record to involve a female, was as part of a pair seen on 27 Oct (CAG).

Kingston: Seen on two dates: 21 Apr (3M, 1F) (MJHC) and 12 May (pair) (APe).

Nether Dallachy: A male was seen on 13 Apr (MJHC).

Teal *Anas crecca*

Scarce breeder and common winter visitor.

Breeding: Confirmed at 2 sites: Loch of Bogmussach, broods of 2 & 5 seen on 9 May (JDHM) and Hillhead, where 'young seen' on 8 Jun (ISS).

Potential sites occupied during the breeding season included: 3 pairs Nether Dallachy forest pool 13 Apr, 4 pairs on Spynie Canal (Gilston) 14 Apr, a pair on the Dava 16 Apr and 2F nearby on Loch Allan 6 Jul, pair Inverblye 27 Apr, 5 Cloddach quarry 12 May, 1F Loch Loy 24 May, 4 Montgrew 31 May, 2M, 1F Garmouth viaduct 26 May, 9 Kingston 16 Jun, pair Miltonduff 9 Jun and a single Loch Spynie 7 Jul.

Monthly maximum counts from the main coastal/inland sites outside the breeding season were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Loch Flemington	9	3	nc	nc		nc	nc	nc	nc	2
Loch Loy	107	12	26	nc		nc	nc	nc	nc	5
Sanquhar Loch	64	7	nc	nc		nc	nc	nc	nc	nc
Findhorn Bay	10	370	nc	nc		nc	195	100	nc	975
Lossie estuary	2	0	0	0		0	7	0	0	0
Loch Spynie	845	50	300	10		8	nc	770	1700	1500
Cloddach quarry	161	65	38	10		33	11	40	nc	16
Loch Oire	88	168	38	nc		nc	nc	233	nc	10
Kingston	320	nc	31	20		80	150	66	nc	150
Montgrew	nc	nc	33	nc		50	63	nc	nc	nc

Record counts/estimates from Loch Spynie in Nov and Dec. These are the largest ever recorded in Moray & Nairn. The species is very unusual on the Nairn/Culbin Bars, therefore, the substantial count of 614 Culbin Bar 8 Dec is unprecedented (AY). Record-breaking counts at these two sites may suggest a major influx into the area during Oct-Nov.

Other coastal sites with records: 11 Boar's Head Rock 24 Mar.

Other inland sites holding over 50 individuals were: 51 Loch na Bo 14 Jan, 53 Tarras 17 Mar, 180 Fogwatt 26 Sep (110 still there 1 Oct) and 286 Spynie Canal 22 Dec.

Potential migrants included 3 flying west past Lossie harbour 27 Aug.

Green-winged Teal *Anas carolinensis*

Vagrant.

Loch Spynie – A single male was present on the loch from 2001, and was seen on 4 dates (12 & 21 Feb, 12 May, 1 & 2 Jun) (JDHM, MJHC, RP, CAG). On 2 Nov, 2 adult males and a first-winter male were seen together (RP). This is the first multiple occurrence for the area. Singles were subsequently seen from 3 Nov – 1 Dec (6 dates).

Kingston – A male seen from 3-10 Nov (MJHC *et al.*).

Nether Dallachy – A male was present on 13 Apr (MJHC).

These are the 5th to 7th records, involving up to six individuals, although some may relate to returning birds.

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*

Numerous resident breeder and common winter visitor.

Breeding: The mean brood size from 44 broods was 6.0 chicks. Four sites well away from the coastal strip were used: Edinkillie, Montgrew, Achdregnie, Loch Park and Glenlivet. Also a female on Loch Stuart (Dava) in July may have bred nearby.

Best monthly flocks in regularly counted areas were:

Freshwater:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Loch Flemington	85	162	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	7	nc	2
Loch Loy	28	18	14	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc
Brodie Castle	nc	65	18	8	nc	11	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	48
Sanquhar Loch	55	45	12	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	35	nc	nc
Loch Spynie	235	7	60	nc	nc	155	202	170	nc	7	92	367
Cloddach Quarry	101	42	12	9	15	39	63	211	55	150	nc	236
Loch Oire	113	108	37	9	11	nc	nc	nc	nc	32	nc	nc
Loch na Bo	117	141	108	12	nc	17	nc	nc	20	122	126	183

Other freshwater sites holding more than 50 individuals (max. counts) included: Dufftown (69 on 20 Jan), Windyridge (60 on 13 Feb), Montgrew (54 on 20 Aug), Loch of Blairs (85 on 13 Nov), Spynie Canal (132 on 22 Dec).

Coastal sites:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Nairn/Culbin Bars	48	1	nc	nc	nc	62	nc	299
Findhorn Bay	223	230	nc	nc	nc	40	nc	285
Lossie west beach	7	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	54
Lossie estuary	16	4	2	0	0	0	13	18
Portgordon-Strathlene	38	4	nc	nc	nc	5	nc	34

Other coastal sites holding more than 50 individuals included: Kingston (73 on 7 Aug) and Burghead Bay (256 on 3 Dec).

On 17 May, a pair was resting on the grass outside the entrance to Dr Gray's Hospital, Elgin (JDHM).

Pintail *Anas acuta*

Scarce winter visitor and migrant. Has bred.

Present at 11 sites (6 sites in 2001).

Nairn: 6 off the harbour at low tide on 12 Sep (RPC).

Nairn Bar: 33 on 13 Jan (DJa). This was the largest count for the year from any site.

Culbin Bar: 4 on 8 Dec (AY).

Loch Loy: 3M, 1F on 17 Jan (JDHM).

Findhorn Bay: 1M on 10 Jan (IA), then 7 on 13 Jan, 10 on 10 Feb (CD), 3M, 1F on 30 Mar (RFH), 3M, 2F on 1 Apr (AJL), 1M on 23 Jun (DMP) and 2 on 6 Sep (MJHC).

Miltonhill: 5F on 27 Oct (DMP).

Roseisle: 10 in a flooded field (EH).

Burghead: 12 on 17 Sep flew in off the sea (CR).

Loch Spynie: Present in the early part of the year from 5 Jan – 27 Apr (many obs.) most records relating to a male, but a pair seen on 13 Jan, 14 Feb, 13 Mar, 17 Mar. In the second half of the year seen from 26 Oct – 8 Dec (many obs.), max. count was 4M, 2F on 4 Dec (JDHM), although 3F were present on 1 & 8 Dec.

Loch na Bo: A male was seen on 15 & 19 Jan (EH, MJHC).

Portgordon-Strathlene: A female was with Mallards on 13 Jan (MJHC).

Garganey *Anas querquedula*

Rare in spring.

A further increase in records, with 6 sites holding birds. With a minimum of 11 individuals, this is easily the best year for records within the Districts, the previous best was two pairs seen in 1992.

Loch Flemington: 1F on 26 Jun (APe).

Drumdivan: 1M, 2F on 31 May (CG) and possibly another male on 21 Jun (APe).

Loch Spynie: 2M on 11 May (CAG).

Cloddach quarry: 1M on 12 May (JDHM, DG, CAG), then a pair on 21-22 May (APe, CAG).

Garmouth area: A pair, assumed to be the same, was seen at the Garmouth viaduct and Kingston 26 May (MJHC).

Shoveler *Anas clypeata*

Rare breeder and scarce migrant.

Best monthly counts at Loch Spynie for each sex are given below.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Males	0	0	0	3	1	2	1	0	0	0	1	1
Females	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sex unknown	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Max. total	0	0	0	5	2	2	1	0	0	0	1	1

Elsewhere: pair Drumdivan 21 Jun, 1M Kincorth (Findhorn Bay) 15 Apr, 1M Loch Oire 26-27 Mar.

Pochard *Aythya ferina*

Common winter visitor and occasional breeder.

Maximim monthly counts were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Loch Spynie	29	10	2	1	1	0	2	8	3	10	52	66
Cloddach quarry	1	nc	nc	nc	1	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	2
Loch na Bo	8	6	14	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	1	5	10

Winter maxima at Loch Spynie since 1987 are given below:

1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994
33	54	58	36	65	65	99	56
1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
64	33	17	36	69	61	27	66

The figure for 2002 is slightly above the average of 52 for the loch over the last 15 years.

Seen at 3 other sites: 4 Loch Flemington 9 Jan (after a gap of 2 years), 1 Loch Oire 14 Oct and 4 Loch of Cotts 21 Nov.

Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*

Scarce breeder and common winter visitor.

Breeding: The mean brood size from 9 broods was 5.9 chicks. Broods were seen at Cooper Park (Elgin), Loch Spynie and Loch Allan (Dava).

Other records during summer months included a pair Dallas Dhu 2 May, 5 Newton of Dalvey 2 May, 2 pairs Lossie Forest 11 May, 10M, 7F Cooper Park, Elgin 19 May, pair Miltonduff distillery 26 May (2M, 1F there 9 Jun) 3 Kingston 30 Jun, 5 Dava 16 Jun and 12 Loch Oire 29 Jun.

Monthly maximum counts (excluding ducklings) at main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Loch Loy	10	21	21	nc	4	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc
Auldearn	nc	nc	13	7	10	8	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc
Brodie Castle	5	10	6	6	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	8
Loch Spynie	59	38	20	109	57	29	25	141	120	135	76	77
Cloddach quarry	37	25	16	25	14	14	9	21	29	12	nc	74
Cooper Park	15	19	nc	12	18	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	11
Loch na Bo	24	26	28	nc	nc	0	nc	nc	32	37	35	23
Loch Oire	7	8	12	14	nc	12	nc	nc	nc	7	2	5
Kingston	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	3	nc	nc	29	20	nc	nc

Maximum counts exceeding 10 individuals at other sites included: 10 Loch Flemington 13 Jan, 15 Fochabers 15 Feb and 22 Lossie Forest (north pool) 24 Mar.

Scaup *Aythya marila*

Scarce winter visitor.

Inland records away from Loch Spynie after three consecutive blank years involved an adult female Cooper Park, Elgin 6 Apr (RP), 1 Loch Flemington 18 Aug (EH) and a female Loch na Bo 2 Nov (EH). At Loch Spynie a male on 2 Apr & 22 Oct and a female on 16 Apr, 16 May & 8 Dec.

Coastal records: In the early part of the year seen at Nairn Bar (11 on 13 Jan, 13 on 10 Feb) (DJa) and Culbin Bar (3 on 13 Jan, 1 on 10 Feb) (AY). In autumn/winter, seen at 5 sites: 1 Tronach Head 1 Sep & 9 Nov (L&RS), 20 Culbin Bar 21 Sep (APe), 1F Lossie estuary 19 Oct (DS), 1F Kingston 26 Oct (MJHC) & 1 on 3 Nov (NH) and 1F Burghead Bay 3 Nov (AJL).

Eider *Somateria mollissima*

Scarce breeder, common offshore.

Breeding: 12 'broods' reported, of which the mean brood size was 2.9 chicks. This is the average brood size for the previous 12 years.

Mean number of chicks calculated from distinct broods 1990-2002:

Year	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Broods	9	6	7	3	5	9	8	19	16	10	9	8	12
Mean	2.0	3.3	3.3	2.0	3.0	3.3	3.9	3.2	3.4	2.1	3.2	2.4	2.9

Maximum monthly counts at coastal sites (these are the same as previous co-ordinated counts):

	Jan	Feb	Oct	Nov	Dec
Nairn/Culbin Bars	130	198	307	146	361
Findhorn/Burghead Bay	541	nc	nc	53	25
Burghead-Hopeman	133	145	33	10	407
Burghead-Lossiemouth	260	nc	nc	171	118
Spey Bay	104	nc	nc	nc	49
Portgordon-Strathlene	113	176	16	nc	48

(RSPB *et al.*)

Flocks over 100 were counted at Culbin Bar (500 on 21 Sep), Buckpool (113 on 3 May, 116 on 11 Dec) and Speymouth (280 on 20 Jun).

The moult flocks off Kingston and Nairn contained 163 males on 30 Jun and 292 males on 12 Aug respectively.

Long-tailed Duck *Clangula hyemalis*

Common winter visitor offshore.

In summer, 9 off Burghead 1 May.

Maximum monthly counts were:

	Jan	Feb	Oct	Nov	Dec
Nairn	21	nc	nc	nc	2
Nairn Bar	107	207	75	nc	400
Culbin Bar	781	341	7	510	1450
off Findhorn	677	300	1036	500	1255
Burghead Bay	1250	37	nc	800	85
Burghead-Hopeman	45	35	nc	nc	25
Burghead-Lossiemouth	nc	nc	nc	82	62

The largest count recorded in the Districts was 15637 in Feb 1982 at the Burghead Bay roost. Large counts were also received from Kingsteps (230 on 17 Jan), Covesea (500 on 21 Apr), Lossiemouth (170 on 22 Jan), Kingston (100 on 24 Jan) and Spey Bay (123 on 21 Dec). The only inland record was 1F Loch Spynie 9 Dec. A two-hour watch from Lossie harbour on 5 Oct produced a total of 57 flying west.

Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra*

Common winter visitor, small numbers in summer.

Maximum monthly counts in autumn/winter were:

	Jan	Feb	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Nairn Bar	705	636	nc	47	nc	5720
Culbin Bar	1589	1794	1000	263	640	5100
off Findhorn	1250	nc	680	nc	1600	125
Burghead Bay	1200	350	1500	700	2000	77
Burghead-Hopeman	45	76	nc	nc	nc	nc

The counts in December from the Nairn and Culbin Bars are the largest recorded since publication of the MNBR in 1985. Record counts prior to 1985 were 14000 in Burghead Bay (Jan 74) and 7000 in Spey Bay

(Apr 78). Other substantial counts included: a flock off Findhorn on 23 Aug containing 2500 birds which was mainly Common Scoter though included 'dozens' of Velvet Scoter and c.200 flying east in 2 flocks off Portknockie.

In summer, seen in Burghead Bay: 70 on 3 Jun, 60 on 13 Jun and more unusual 1000 on 22 Jul.

An adult male of the North American race *M.n.americana* (Black Scoter) remained in Burghead Bay from 2001 and was present off the Findhorn dunes on 19 Jan (CD).

Surf Scoter *Melanitta perspicillata*

Rare, but regular, visitor.

A typical series of records from Burghead Bay and Nairn/Culbin Bars area involving males. It is difficult to accurately assess the numbers involved, but a minimum of three individuals can account for all the records in Moray & Nairn.

Nairn/Culbin Bars: 2 together on 17 Jan (CD). Singles seen off each Bar on 13 & 17 Jan (AY, DJa). In the second winter period singles were seen on 8 & 19 Dec.

Burghead Bay: A single male was seen on 2 dates in Jan (3rd & 30th) (AY, Bird Guides). No more records until 23 Aug (APe), then regularly from 1 Sep – 8 Nov (many obs.).

Velvet Scoter *Melanitta fusca*

Common winter visitor.

Maximum systematic counts for main areas were:

	Jan	Feb	Oct	Nov	Dec
Nairn Bar	63	162	nc	nc	500
Culbin Bar	300	298	19	190	420
off Findhorn	195	150	150	150	nc
Burghead Bay	235	nc	300	205	9

Record counts prior to 1985 were 2500 in Burghead Bay (Oct 75) and 5000+ in Spey Bay (Apr 78): substantially larger than more recent counts.

Generally, counts were below 15 at other sites except: 300 off Nairn 9 Aug, 20 Spey Bay 7 Jul, 15 Covesea 20 Jul and 15 Kingsteps 17 Jan.

Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*

Rare breeder and common winter visitor.

Breeding: At the traditional breeding site no chicks were seen this year. A group containing 1M, 2 imm M and 1F was seen in the area on 16 Apr. Inland summer records included individuals at Loch Spynie on 7 Apr where copulations and display were noted, the flock included 3M, 23F. 1F remained on the loch from May – Jul. The only other summer records involved 1 Newton of Dalvey 2 May and 1M Auldearn reservoir 16 Jun. Maximum counts on most frequented lochs were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Oct	Nov	Dec
Loch Flemington	5	8	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	7
Loch Loy	5	4	6	nc	nc	nc	nc	1
Loch of Blairs	12	10	10	0	nc	nc	7	4
Loch Spynie	4	16	23	54	3	20	46	29
Cloddach quarry	5	5	0	0	nc	nc	0	2
Loch na Bo	3	7	9	nc	nc	2	27	17
Loch Oire	2	3	4	nc	nc	0	1	6

Inland winter records from the River Spey included 4 on 12 Mar and 3 on 21 Dec at Aberlour, and 2 at Kinermony on 15 Dec.

Highest monthly counts in coastal areas were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Oct	Nov	Dec
Nairn/Culbin Bars	12	8	nc	nc	nc	2	4
Findhorn Bay	15	6	nc	10	nc	9	13
Burghead Bay	8	nc	nc	6	nc	3	2
Burghead-Hopeman	21	16	9	nc	0	4	17
Burghead-Lossiemouth	36	nc	nc	nc	nc	3	21
Lossiemouth	19	nc	nc	nc	2	5	18
Lossie estuary	7	9	5	0	1	1	2
Kingston/Tugnet	42	nc	10	nc	11	35	6
Portgordon-Strathlene	89	31	20	0	0	nc	7

A count of 89 from Portgordon 6 Jan.

Smew Mergellus albellus

Rare winter visitor.

Seen at 2 sites. At Loch Flemington an adult male was present again in both winter periods, from 9 Jan-10 Feb (DMP, DJa, RPC), then on 18 Nov (in eclipse) and 8 Dec (AL). This is presumably the same returning individual from December 1998.

At Loch Spynie a 'redhead' was present in the latter winter period from 29 Oct to 2003 (JDHM *et al.*).

Red-breasted Merganser Mergus serrator

Scarce local breeder and common visitor.

Summer: Breeding confirmed at only one site: Findhorn Bay F+b8 on 1 Jul (JDHM).

Mean number of chicks calculated from distinct broods 1990-2001:

Year	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Broods	5	9	8	5	6	9	4	8	7	2	5	3
Mean	7.0	7.7	9.4	7.0	7.2	10.6	4.3	7.0	5.6	5.5	7.8	8.7

Pairs in suitable breeding areas involved the River Findhorn at Mundole, where 3M, 1F on 28 Apr and 2M, 2F on 11 May (JDHM). Also a female on the River Spey at Rothes on 24 Jun showed anxiety (JDHM).

Records from the coast in summer included 5 Burghead Bay 10 May, 3 at the mouth of Findhorn Bay 9 Jun and 13 Findhorn Bay 1 Jul (10 still present 31 Jul).

Maximum monthly counts of coastal flocks outwith the mid-summer period were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Delnies	12	12	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	2
Nairn	1	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	3	6
Nairn/Culbin Bars	9	6	nc	nc	nc	223	2	nc
Findhorn Bay	18	9	nc	10	nc	2	7	8
Burghead Bay	7	nc	5	19	15	nc	5	8
Burghead-Hopeman	8	16	0	3	nc	2	3	3
Lossie estuary	4	0	0	2	0	0	0	0
Kingston/Tugnet	3	nc	1	6	nc	8	8	1
Portgordon-Strathlene	5	4	nc	0	nc	nc	nc	5

The count of 223 from Nairn/Culbin Bars included 196 from the Culbin Bar on 6 Oct (AY). Large numbers have not been regular here for several years, the last was 173 in 1999.

Three records from inland lochs: 1F Loch Spynie 5-20 Mar, 1F Loch of Blairs 16 Feb & 13 Mar and 2 Loch Flemington 8 Dec.

Goosander *Mergus merganser*

Widespread but scarce breeder.

Breeding: No records of confirmed breeding this year.

Birds in potential breeding areas included: 3 pairs R. Fiddich (Dufftown) 18 Mar, 1M Inchroly 5 May and a pair R. Spey (Bogmoor) 29 Apr.

Maximum monthly counts were received from:

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Loch Spynie	6	9	7	27	14	0	0	0	0	0	4	3
Lossie estuary	0	0	0	23	4	0	0	0	21	11	0	0
Speymouth	17	nc	1	6	32	36	98	82	54	nc	nc	nc

The peak counts of moulting birds at Speymouth 1985-2001 are:

1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993
50	60	148	87	122	140	10	29	133
1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
192	118	62	125	59	158	93	100	98

The mean count for 1985-2002 is 99 birds, therefore the 2002 count is one bird below the average.

Many of the 'main sites' did not receive records this year. Large counts were received from Culbin Bar (40 on 9 Aug) and Findhorn Bay (21 on 19 Aug).

Inland in winter were 3 Loch Flemington 13 Jan & 10 Feb, 2 Sanquhar Loch 15 Feb, 1 Loch Oire 7 Mar and 3 Boroughbriggs, Elgin 28 Dec.

Ruddy Duck *Oxyura jamaicensis*

Rare visitor.

Present at Loch Spynie: a female on 30 Jan (JDHM), then 3M, 1F on 12 May (MJHC, HF, CAG), dropping to 2M, 1F on 13 May (JDHM, DG). A female (same?) was seen on 31 Jul (JP).

Red Kite *Milvus milvus*

Formerly common breeder, now being reintroduced in North Scotland.

Three reports, each of a single bird, in separate west Moray localities in April and June, and in south-east Moray in August.

Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*

Very scarce visitor, usually in spring.

Records from one Moray & Nairn locality between 20 Apr-5 Sept.

Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus*

Scarce resident breeder, migrant and winter visitor.

Breeding: Twelve pairs were located – a welcome improvement over recent years. Ten pairs laid clutches with a mean clutch size of 5.12, above average for the area. Two nests failed at the egg stage for unknown reasons but the remaining eight were successful, fledging 22 young at a mean of 2.75 young per successful pair (JC).

Breeding success over recent years has varied as follows:

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Pairs located	16	8	6	6	12
Pairs laying	14	8	6	5	10
Mean clutch size	4.6				5.12
Pairs fledging young	8	4	6	5	8
Total young fledged	26	11	14	16	22
Mean young / successful pair	3.25	2.75	2.3	3.2	2.75

Lowland records, of single birds away from breeding areas, were at Ben Aigan 29 Oct, Drainie 15 Dec, Garmouth 14 Feb, Rafford 9 Feb, Darkland 1 Jan, Kingston 16 Feb and Miltonhill 17 March.

Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis*

Rare resident breeder.

Present in at least 8 localities in spring/summer with breeding proved in at least 3.

At other times/localities, 1 Loch Spynie 9 March (CAG) and 1 Caysbriggs 14 Oct (MJHC).

Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*

Common resident breeder.

Reported in the breeding season (Apr-July) at Aberlour, Auchindoun, Balloch More, Ben Aigan, Binn Hill, Binsness, Cairnty, Caysbriggs, Clochan, Cloddach, Conlait Wood, Cranloch, Culbin, Cummington, Dipple, Dufftown, Drummuir, Elgin, Enoch, Fochabers, Forres, Garmouth, Glacks of Balloch, Glenernie, Glen of Rothes, Gowk Hill, Hillpark, Hopeman, Inchberry, Kineddar, Kinloss, Loch Oire, Loch Spynie, Lossie Forest, Mayne, Orbliston, Orton, Roseisle Forest, Sanquhar, Tarras, Teindland and Tomintoul.

On 16 Aug off Lossiemouth one flew south over a boat c2km offshore, apparently crossing the Moray Firth (MJHC).

Buzzard *Buteo buteo*

Fairly common resident breeder.

Continuing to be very widespread throughout Moray & Nairn, inhabiting all but the very highest uplands. Frequent sightings of 4-6 together. Three pairs bred successfully RAF Kinloss.

One in Fochabers 25-26 Oct spent two days in wet weather walking round the cricket pitch catching worms! An exceptionally pale bird at Miltonhill in March-April had pale buff upper wings and extensively white underparts.

Golden Eagle *Aquila chrysaetos*

Rare resident breeder.

Two of the three usual/most recent breeding sites were checked: i) no sign of any breeding activity but one adult in the area 10 Aug, ii) not visited iii) pair bred unsuccessfully. (MJHC, JJCH, AE).

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*

Scarce summer visitor and breeder.

Arrival: First back was 1 Tugnet 30 March.

Most together in late summer were 8 Findhorn Bay 1 Sept and last of the year was 1 there 22 Sept.

Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*

Widespread but scarce resident breeder.

Breeding season (April-July) records from Aitnoch, Auchindoun, Balloch More, Barluack, Binn Hill, Blacksboat, Boat o' Brig, Braes of Enzie, Burghead, Carron, Caysbriggs, Cloddach, Charlestown, Coulait Wood, Craigs of Cuiddell, Croughly, Cummington, Dipple, Drummuir, Dufftown, Easter Bauds, Elgin, Enoch, Fochabers, Forres, Garmouth, Glack Harnes, Glacks of Balloch, Hopeman, Invererne, Kinermony, Kinloss (2 pairs bred), Kineddar, Kingston, Knock of Braemoray, Lein, Loch Oire, Loch Spynie, Lossie Forest, Mayne, Meikle Conval, Milton Brodie, Morinsh, Moy, Myreside, Orbliston, Orton, Inchberry, Parkhead, Pitairlie, Portknockie, Salterhill, Scoot More, Smallburn, Tarras, Teindland, Tomdow, Tomintoul, Tronach Head, Tynet, Wester Greens and Westfield.

Merlin *Falco columbarius*

Scarce resident breeder and migrant.

Breeding: 33 sites were checked of which only 16 were occupied by pairs; this is a low occupancy rate but full coverage was not achieved and some pairs may have bred undetected elsewhere. Fifteen of the pairs laid; mean size of seven clutches was 4.00. Thirteen pairs were successful, raising a total of 46 young at a mean of 3.5 young per successful pair— a good season despite poor weather conditions in May-June (JC,BC).

Outside the breeding season, single birds were seen in the coastal plain as follows: Drainie 1 March, Loch Flemington 3 Nov, Lossie estuary 21 Feb, Lossiemouth airfield 1 March and 27 Nov, Portgordon 30 Oct and Westerfolds 29 March.

Peregrine *Falco peregrinus*

Scarce resident breeder.

Breeding: Fifteen home ranges were checked. Of nine on grouse moors, only three were occupied and one of these was successful, fledging two young. Five other home ranges were occupied with four pairs fledging a total of seven young (JJCH,JC).

In the coastal plain, away from breeding sites, the seasonal distribution of records was:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
4	8	3	0	0	0	2	1	5	6	2	1

18 localities yielded records. One roosted on Elgin Cathedral in Jan-Feb and it, or another, was back there in Sept-Nov (RP,RMo et al.).

Red Grouse *Lagopus lagopus*

Very common resident breeder.

Ptarmigan *Lagopus mutus*

Common resident breeder.

On the outlying Ben Rinnes site, a female with 6 chicks 21 July and a flock of 17 on 6 Dec, the most recorded there in recent years (AE). Ptarmigan were definitely living on Ben Rinnes in 1947 and have probably been continuously present ever since (C. Brown).

Black Grouse *Tetrao tetrix*

Scarce resident breeder.

A lek just across the east Moray border contained 13 males and 1 female on 29 March (MJHC), and 13 males and 5 females on 21 Apr (NH). Elsewhere, 1-2 males Beatshach June-July and 3 there 26 Dec (AE), 1 male Little Balloch Hill 29 March (MJHC) and a pair Mannoch Hill 21 Apr (AE). Also reported in the Dava area in summer (ISS).

Capercaillie *Tetrao urogallus*

Scarce resident breeder.

In this and future Reports, Capercaillie records will be given under the broad geographical areas used in the 1999 Report. These areas will cover the same woodland blocks from year to year and will thus be comparable.

Area	Records in 2002
South-east Nairn	One pair with a brood of well-grown chicks on 6 July.
West Moray	Four leks held a total of 12-13 males and 8 females
North central Moray	None reported
South central Moray	One male on a road 31 Oct.
East Moray	Four lek sites held a total of 7 males and 4 females

Red-legged Partridge *Alectoris rufa*

Introduced scarce breeder. Commonly released.

Particularly numerous in the Dulsie/Drynachan area, at Meft (where 35 together on 15 Oct) and around Dufftown where pairs frequently encountered in the breeding season, although proof of feral breeding not obtained. Records in other areas included 2 Ballenlish 23 Sept, 2-3 Ben Aigan March-April, 1 Bridge of Avon 23 Sept, 2 Broom of Moy 10 July, 1 Clochan 19 May, 1 Daugh of Carron 16 Apr, 1 Easterton (Cabrach) 24 March, 10 Findron (Tomintoul) 23 Sept, 2 Hillpark 19 May, 7 Milton of Struthers 8 Sept, 1 Strathavon 22 Aug and 1 Tarras 15 Apr.

Grey Partridge *Perdix perdix*

Common resident breeder.

Breeding: pair with 8 chicks Burghead 24 July.

An exceptionally large covey of 36 was counted at Westerton (Inchberry) 28 Sept (NH). Otherwise, largest groups were 18 Lochyhill (Forres) and 18 Alves in autumn, 18 Kinloss 23 Oct, 13 Hillhead 24 Dec, 13 Salterhill 2 Nov, 12 Kinloss 21 Jan, 10 Findhorn Bay 22 Sept and 10 Gilston 9 Nov.

Quail *Coturnix coturnix*

Rare summer visitor and breeder, occasionally more numerous.

A very good year with 13 calling birds reported: 1 Bogmoor 6 June (TF), 2 Brandston 4 July (MJHC), 1 Burgie 19 June (ISS), 1 Clochan 9 June (MJHC), 1 Crosslots 12 June (JDHM), 1 Duffus Castle area June-July (MDe,SPFM,JDHM), 1 Garmouth 18 June (TM), 2 Leuchars 4 July and 2 Newton of Innes 4 July (MJHC) and 1 Wester Oldtown 5 July (JDHM). In 'Quail years' most records are from the coastal lowlands, so of particular interest were 1 calling Enoch 20 June (NH) and 1 calling Mains of Clunymore on several days from 5 July (WRPB). Both are upland sites near Dufftown.

Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus*

Very common resident breeder.

Present on Nairn/Culbin Bars on 13 Jan (5) and 10 Feb (1). A pure white plumaged bird but with red facial markings was at Miltonhill on 14 Apr.

Groups of released birds included 83 Kellas 10 Nov and 54 Innes House 8 Nov.

Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus*

Fairly common breeder and winter visitor.

Heard in the breeding season at RAF Kinloss (max. 2 on 1 May (AJL)), Lein at Kingston (3-4 pairs (PGS)), Loch Flemington (APe), Loch Loy (RPC) and Loch Spynie (MJHC).

Reports from Loch Spynie in all winter months, max. 3 on 21 Dec (JDHM). Also in autumn/winter were 1 Gilston 22 Dec (JDHM) and 1 Loch Flemington 6 Oct (DJa).

Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

Fairly common resident breeder.

Breeding proved (*italics*) or probable at Auldearn, Cloddach, Elgin (Cooper Park), Loch Oire, Longmorn, Lossie Forest, Montgrew, and Nether Dallachy.

Most together only 6 Loch Flemington 8 Dec.

Coot *Fulica atra*

Scarce resident breeder and fairly common winter visitor.

Breeding proved (*italics*) or probable at Cloddach (3 pairs), Loch Loy, Loch Spynie, Lossie Forest, Nether Dallachy, Newton of Dalvey and Wellhill (Culbin).

Maximum monthly counts on main lochs were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Loch Flemington	4	5	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	4
Loch Spynie	76	21	7	29	31	18	14	71
Loch Oire/na Bo	13	4	7	nc	2	6	7	7
Cloddach	0	1	nc	10	14	12	nc	14

Crane *Grus grus*

Rare migrant.

Two birds were found in a flooded field at College of Roseisle on 15 March (AS). On 16th they moved to Kirkton (Alves) and then west to Woodside (Kinloss). They remained here until 17th when they continued west and were last seen from a train as they fed in a field near Brodie (DMP,MJHC,PTH, NH,ST et al.). This is the 9th record for Moray & Nairn.

Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*

Very common resident breeder, winter visitor and migrant.

Breeding: Moving inland, 54 Cloddach 10 Feb and 35 Craigellachie 23 Feb. Several reached Dufftown by 27 Feb. In March, 150 Miltonduff distillery 3rd (down to 70 by 20th), 25 Loch Spynie tern platform 9th and 26 Marypark 12th. Territorial pairs at Cloves and Newton on 2nd and as far inland as Bridge of Avon by 15th.

Post breeding flocks were 17 Rothes 24 June and, in July, 25 Fochabers 7th, 90 Cloddach 14th and 20 Miltonduff 14th.

Spring, summer and early autumn counts at the coast:

May: 5 Lossie estuary 5th.

June: 26 Lossie estuary 29th, 30 Burghead 8th and 104 there 25th.

July: At Lossie estuary, 62 on 9th, 171 on 17th and 252 on 31st. At Burghead, 85 on 2nd and 152 on 11th. 620 Culbin Bar 27th.

August: 73 Lossie estuary 3rd and 146 there 20th. 51 Strathlene 3rd and 760 Findhorn Bay 7th.

Sept: 660 Findhorn Bay 9th, 110 Lossie estuary 18th and 169 there 24th. 149 Burghead 20th.

Winter maxima at the coast were:

	Jan	Feb	Oct	Dec
Nairn/Culbin Bars	1142	1070	1609	1332
Findhorn Bay	621	940	545	1420
Burghead-Hopeman	167	131	85	25
Lossiemouth	30	184	102	136
Portgordon-Strathlene	120	154	164	100

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*

Rare summer visitor and breeder.

At Kingston, 1 adult 29 May (IFo), 1 adult with 2 juveniles 9 July (MJHC), 2 juveniles 22 July (NH) and 3 birds 28 July (EH).

Breeding has also been suspected or proved in this area in 1996, 1999, 2000 and 2001.

Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*

Scarce resident breeder and very common migrant.

Breeding: Proven to be successful only at RAF Kinloss, where one pair with chicks 6 June, and on the Lein, Kingston where a chick was fledged for the first time since July 1993 (PGS). Two pairs Lossiemouth east beach and one pair Findhorn were unsuccessful. Inland, two pairs on territory Cloddach quarry 17 March-12 May and one pair Miltonduff 26 May.

Winter maxima at the coast were:

	Jan-Feb	Nov-Dec
Nairn/Culbin Bars	67	34
Findhorn Bay	25	19
Burghead-Hopeman	12	7
Lossiemouth	23	31
Portgordon-Strathlene	24	24

Elsewhere, 16 Delnies 10 Feb and on flooded land beside RAF Lossiemouth were 14 on 31 Oct, 20 on 8 Nov and 19 on 22 Dec.

Spring passage (April-early June): Best documented on the Lossie estuary where counts were made on 19 Apr (33), 27 Apr (50), 30 Apr (60), 1 May (96), 17 May (40), 27 May (46) and 2 June (32). At Burghead in May, 8 on 3rd, 11 on 8th and 44 on 29th.

Autumn passage (July-September): A brief peak evident in mid-late August but numbers generally unremarkable.

Lossie estuary: 35 on 31 Jul, 47 on 18 Aug.

Kingston: 21 on 9 July, 12 on 21 Aug.

Findhorn Bay: 87 on 16 Aug, 21 on 27th.

Burghead: In August, 23 on 2nd, 62 on 14th, 70 on 24th and 8 on 20 Sept.

Dotterel *Charadrius morinellus*

Scarce summer visitor and breeder.

A most unusual record of 2 Ben Aigan summit 11 July (GG). More expectedly, 4 Cairn Lochan 6 May (AE).

Golden Plover *Charadrius apricaria*

Common breeder, migrant and winter visitor.

Breeding: 6 Auchness, Dallas 10 March presumably en route to breeding quarters. 12km² of upper Cabrach moorland on the Moray/Aberdeenshire march were covered on 15 June and 20-26 breeding pairs located. Pairs in Moray were 2 Cairnbrallan, 4 Crespet Hill and 5 Sgors of Blackwater (IF).

In the lowlands in April was an outstanding flock of c1000 in summer plumage at Montgrew on 10th, dwindling to 175 by 29th (IP). Also in breeding plumage were 38 Kinloss 15 Apr.

Back at the coast was 1 Lossie estuary 24-30 Aug but 14 were still on Ben Aigan on 29 Nov (GG).

Winter coastal maxima were:

	Jan	Feb		Oct	Nov	Dec
Kinloss	47	nc		37	78	nc
Lossiemouth/Covesea	90	nc		99	60	nc
Burghead	0	0		0	47	102

Also, 150 Burgie 14 Nov and 77 Salterhill 24 Nov.

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*

Scarce autumn migrant and winter visitor.

The second very poor year in succession. The most reliable site, the Nairn/Culbin Bars, held 28 on 13 Jan, 13 on 10 Feb, 7 on 6 Oct and 22 on 8 Dec. Singles were on the Lossie estuary on 23 Apr and 27 Sept and overflying the town on 24 Sept. Elsewhere the only records were 1 Portknockie 10 Feb, 1 Kingston 21 Aug and 2 Findhorn Bay 8 Dec.

Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*

Very common migrant breeder, small numbers in winter.

Breeding: Early on territory was 1 pair Newton 27 Feb. In March, 5 pairs Standingstone 6th and, on 24th, 32 Cabrach House fields, many in display (incubating birds here by 26 Apr). First chicks were 3 Salterhill 19 May. Subsequently, pairs at Bantrach and Bogeney 20 May and, on 1 June, 3 pairs with chicks Mundole, 2 pairs Garmouth, 5 pairs Lochhill and 2 pairs Muir of Lochs. Later in June, 4 pairs with chicks Hillhead 8th, 3 pairs Miltonduff 9th and 5 pairs Kinloss 20th.

In midwinter, 11 Nairn Bar and 28 Strathlene on 13 Jan. Unusually large January flocks were 217 Tarras 20th and 200 Windyridge 26th.

Pre-breeding flocks:

February: 300 Silverhills 10th, 70 Windyridge 13th, 260 Mill of Grange 15th, 65 Westerton (Inchberry) 21st, 68 Sanquhar Mains 24th, 220 Drainie 24th, 64 College of Roseisle 24th, 150 Miltonduff 26th and 230 Newton 27th.

March: 300 Milltown airfield 2nd, 90 Tarras 2nd, 220 Cloves 6th, 300 Newton 13th, 160 Miltonhill 17th and 81 Roseisle 22nd.

Post-breeding flocks:

July: 23 Findhorn Bay 1st, 400 Cloddach 28th.

August: 24 Kingston 13th.

September: 40 Findhorn Bay 19th, 74 Montgrew 29th.
 October: 85 Windyridge 2nd, 180 Miltonhill 6th, 370 East Grange 8th, 57 Buckie 14th, 140 Loch Spynie 20th.
 November: 93 Westerfolds 1st, 235 Kinneddar 8th, 180 Salterhill 20th, 120 Windy-ridge 21st, 37 Muir of Lochs 23rd, 500 Loch of Cotts 24th.
 December: 600 Windyridge 4th, 40 East Calcotts 10th.
 Findhorn Bay, once a very popular site, was strangely devoid of Lapwings.

Knot *Calidris canutus*

Very common migrant and winter visitor.

Winter maxima were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Oct	Nov	Dec
Nairn/Culbin Bars	10	175	nc	9	nc	167
Findhorn Bay	475	270	nc	0	nc	0
Burghead-Hopeman	114	0	92	6	69	350
Lossiemouth	293	350	170	78	100	45
Portgordon-Strathlene	32	29	nc	0	nc	1

Counts in other months were:

April: 13 Burghead 10th.

May: 3 Lossiemouth 23rd, 1 Burghead 23rd.

July: 15 Burghead 20th, 20 Findhorn Bay 20th, 2 SP Lossiemouth 27th.

August: 20 SP Burghead 2nd, 16 (15 SP) Kingston 3rd, 4 SP Buckpool 11th, 2 Lossiemouth 16th.

September: 40 Findhorn Bay 6th, 5 Portgordon 23rd.

(SP = summer plumaged adults)

Sanderling *Calidris alba*

Scarce migrant and fairly common but very localised winter visitor.

Monthly maxima at the two best sites were:

Winter-spring:

	Jan	Feb	March	April	May
Nairn/Culbin Bars	193	113	nc	nc	nc
Lossiemouth	35	46	55	46	63

Late summer-autumn:

	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Nairn/Culbin Bars	96	nc	23	44	nc	113
Lossiemouth	2	99	29	60	57	25

The count of 193 at the Bars on 13 Jan (AY,DJa) is close to the record 203 there in October 2000. Also unusually numerous at Lossiemouth where 63 on 19 May and 99 on 4 Aug (DG).

On passage in May were 4 Burghead 5th. In August, at Burghead, were 14 on 2nd, 12 on 14th and 4 on 24th.

Elsewhere, 1 Kingston 21 Aug.

Little Stint *Calidris minuta*

Scarce migrant, mostly in autumn.

2 Spey Bay 20 May (JP). This is the first May record since 1992 when 1 was at Kingston on 23rd-24th.

Autumn passage was very disappointing for the 4th successive year. The only records were 1 Kingston 22 July, 2 there 26 Aug (NH) and 1 Montgrew 15 Sept (MJHC).

Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*

Scarce autumn migrant.

Only two records: 2 Buckpool 4 Aug (EH) and 2 Findhorn Bay 6 Sept (MJHC). The poorest year since 1989.

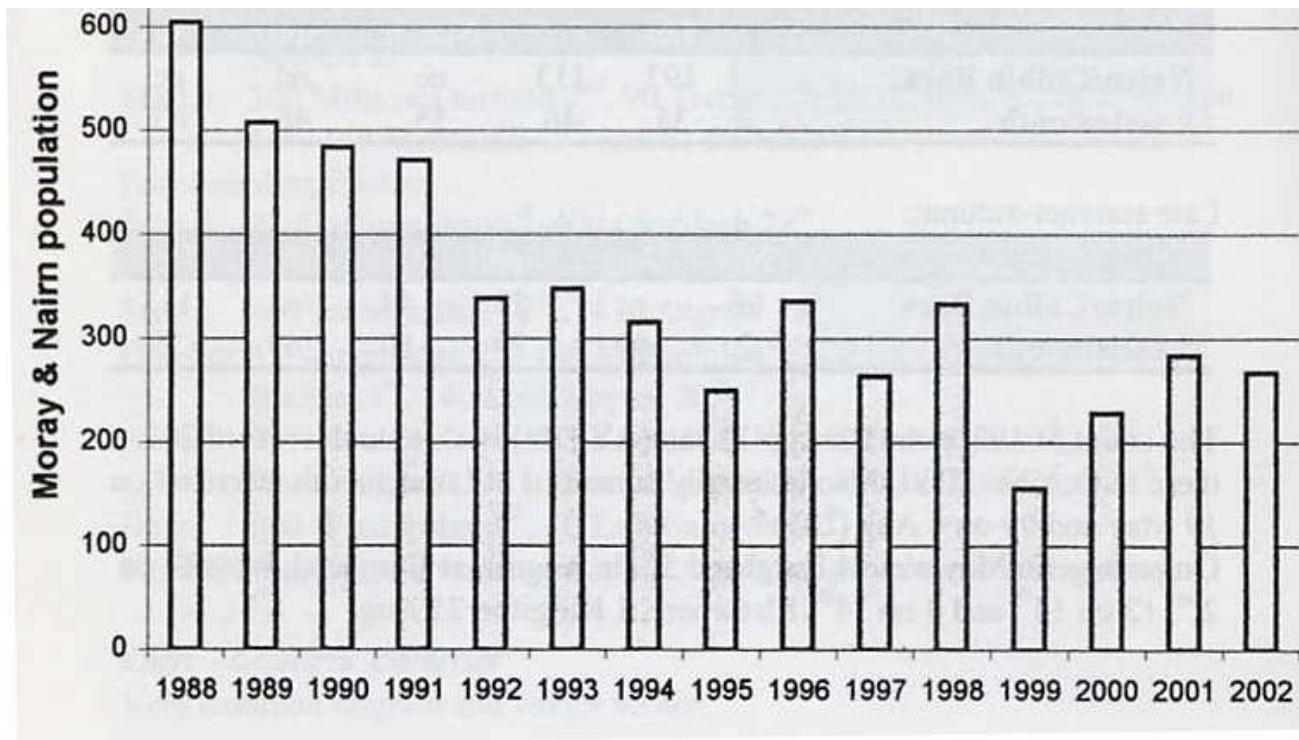
Purple Sandpiper *Calidris maritima*

Common winter visitor.

Main winter site maxima were:

	Jan-March	Oct-Dec
Delnies-Nairn	5	nc
Burghead-Hopeman	29	45
Lossiemouth	80 (26 Jan)	65 (17 Nov)
Portgordon-Strathlene	116 (13 Jan)	43
Cullen	nc	21

Combined maxima for Burghead-Hopeman, Lossiemouth and Portgordon-Strathlene in each winter over recent years have been as follows:



Perhaps some encouraging evidence that the local decline may be slowing.

Dunlin *Calidris alpina*

Scarce breeder, very common migrant and winter visitor.

Breeding: One pair with chicks Cairnbrallan, Cabrach 15 June (IF). Also present in the breeding season in the hills south of Dufftown at Balloch More, Meikle Balloch and Ben Main (NH).

Winter monthly maxima at main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Oct	Nov	Dec
Nairn/Culbin Bars	551	1664	104	nc	520
Findhorn Bay	700	620	980	c5000	2850
Lossiemouth	184	165	33	47	200
Portgordon-Strathlene	134	115	0	nc	93

3 were in flooded fields at Covesea 31 Oct.

Spring passage: Regular counting on the Lossie estuary revealed a small peak in mid April (max. 27 on 27th) and a stronger one in mid May (max. 73 on 18th). Elsewhere, 12 Kingston 13 May and 38 Burghhead 18 May. In mid summer, 19 Kingston 30 June.

Autumn passage (July-September):

Lossiemouth: 7 on 17 July and an influx late in the month when 54 on 29th and 86 on 31st. Small numbers during August when 25 on 1st and 46 on 18th were by far the best counts. Less than 10 throughout Sept until 45 on 26th and 43 on 28th.

Findhorn Bay: Few counts were made; 23 on 16 Aug and 100 on 9 Sept.

Kingston: Reasonable passage in July but small numbers thereafter. In July, 42 on 7th, 53 on 9th and 71 on 28th. In August, 30-35 on 3rd, 5th and 21st and less than 20 in September except 23 on 16th.

Elsewhere, 30 Covesea 28 July and 22 Culbin Bar 27 July.

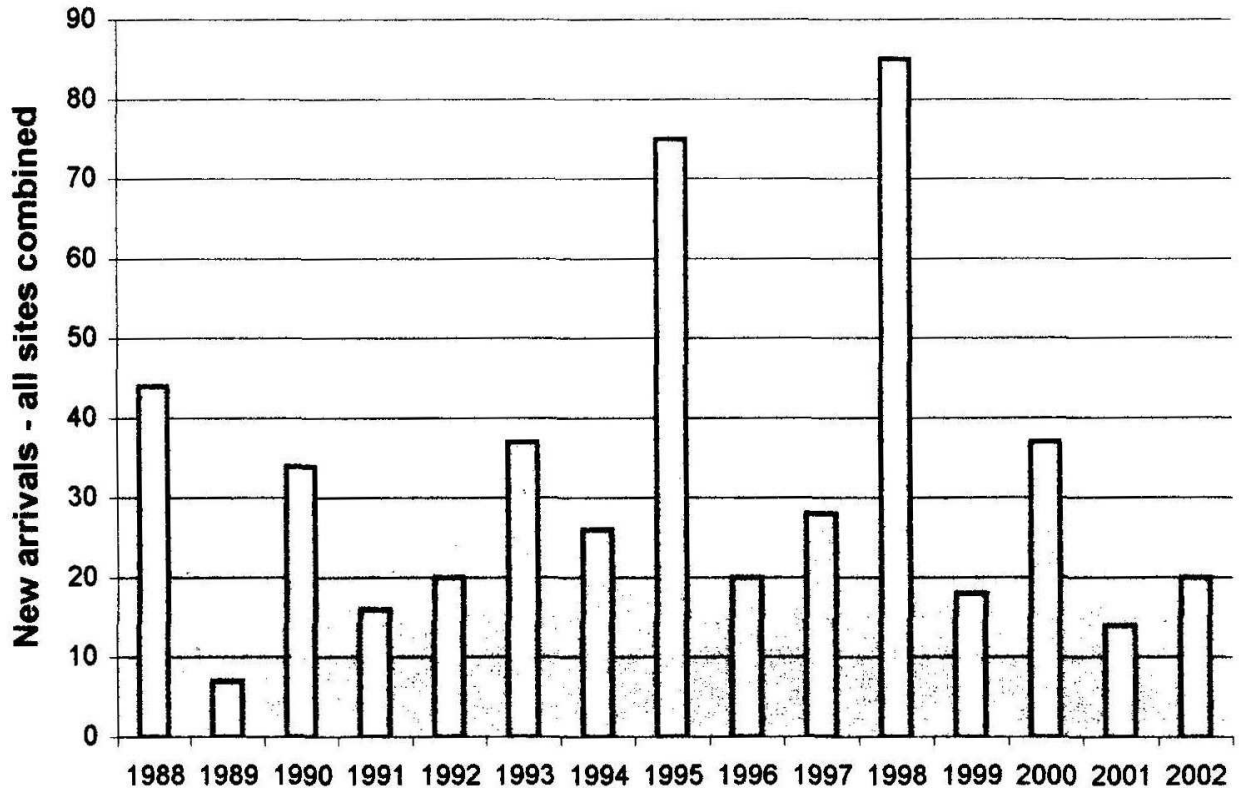
Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*

Scarce autumn migrant, rare in spring.

As with most passage waders, Ruff were distinctly scarce in 2002. There were no spring records; birds visited 7 sites in autumn between 14 July – 5 Sept and the maximum seen together was 4 birds.

At Kingston, singles on 14 July, 17-24 Aug and 5 Sept (RAS,MJHC). On the Lossie estuary, 1 on 5 Aug (HF) and 2 on 17 Aug (RP). Elsewhere, 4 Cloddach 22 Aug (DG), 2 Delnies pig farm 28 Aug (1 on 27th) (RFH) and 3 Drumdivan, Nairn 9 Aug (APe). On flooded fields in late August were 4 Dipple 26th (NH) and 2 Miltonduff 25th (JDHM).

The autumn passage of Ruff varies greatly from year to year, reflecting partly the number of birds passing through but also the availability of the shallow freshwater pools which they favour:



Jack Snipe *Lymnocyptes minimus*

Scarce migrant and winter visitor.

Winter-spring: 4 Kingsteps 9 Jan (DMP), 11 there 13 Jan and 6 on 10 Feb (DJa). 2 Kinloss 4 Feb and 19 Feb and 1 there 21 March (AJL). 1 Hillhead of Rannas 5 March (JH) and 1 Kingston 21 Apr (MJHC).

Autumn-winter: 1 Kingsteps 6 Oct and 8 there 8 Dec (DJa). On the Lein, Kingston were 2 on 12 Oct and 6 on 3 Nov (MJHC). Other singles, in December, were at Nairn Bar on 8th (AL) and Loch Spynie on 18th (JDL).

Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*

Common breeder and migrant.

Breeding: The only reports were of several drumming at Derrybeg on 26 May and 1 Achdregnie on 31 May.

Winter-spring: Best counts were at Kingsteps where 43 on 1 Jan and 19 on 10 Feb, and at Kinloss where 36 on 4 Feb and 29 on 19 Feb. Other congregations of 10 or more were 17 Lossie estuary 2 Jan and 20 on a flooded field at Myreside, also on 2 Jan.

Autumn-winter: 3 back early to Kingston 7 July. 3 Montgrew 24 Aug where numbers remained unusually low throughout. In September, 2 Cloddach quarry 29th, 17 Kingston 22nd and 4 Montgrew 29th. Subsequently an impressive 62 Kingsteps 6 Oct (27 there 8 Dec), 34 Lein (Kingston) 3 Nov and 17 Culbin Bar 8 Dec.

Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola*

Common resident breeder, scarce migrant and winter visitor.

Breeding: First roding reported Carron and Kinermony 25 March. Later in Newbold Wood, Forres 29 March-31 July and Brodie 1 July. Pairs with young at Wester Glenorney 1 June and Dulsie 7 May. Very interestingly an adult Woodcock was seen in flight carrying small young at Doune of Relugas (SB).

Frosty weather in early January produced 1 Clochan 1st, 2 Newbold 5th, 2 Chapelton 5th and 1 Findhorn Bay 6th. Later in January were singles at Speyslaw, Lhanbryde and Kinloss. Unusual February records were 1

dead in Elgin 7th and 1 flying along the main street in Portknockie on 9th. Coastal records in November were 1 Clochan 3rd, 1 central Lossiemouth 5th and 1 Kinloss 8th.

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*

Scarce migrant.

Only three spring records: 1 Kingston 6 May (P&IB), 4 Loch of the Clans 17 May (APe) and 2 Lossie estuary 18 May (JDHM).

In late summer-autumn birds visited six localities, between 26 July-4 Sept.

Kingston: 1 on 26-27 July (RAS,EH) and 1 on 21 Aug (MJHC).

Lhanbryde: 1 between 22 Aug-1 Sept (RAS,EH).

Drumdivan: 1 on 9 Aug (APe).

Cummingston: 1 on 22 Aug (RFH).

Delnies pig farm: In August, 12 on 24th, 25 on 27th and 3 on 28th (AJL,RFH).

Lossie estuary: 31 on 27 July (DG), 11 on 16 Aug (CAG), 2 on 26-29 Aug and 1 on 4 Sept (DG).

Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*

Very common winter visitor and migrant. Small numbers in summer.

Monthly maxima at main sites were:

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Bar	87	255	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	140	nc	8
FB	120	90	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	1	nc	50	nc	122
Bhd	60	42	3	nc	0	0	26	26	33	47	43	117
Los	9	7	2	1	1	0	4	1	1	1	1	5

(Bar=Nairn/Culbin Bars, FB=Findhorn Bay, Bhd=Burghead, Los=Lossiemouth)

The above table includes summer plumaged birds as follows: 7 Burghead 24 July, 26 Burghead 2 Aug and 4 Lossiemouth 17 July.

Elsewhere, 10 Nairn 24 Aug and 40 there 25 Sept. 16 passed Boar's Head Rock 15 Aug. At Kingston, where the species is unusual, single birds were present on 8 May and 17-22 Sept.

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*

Scarce migrant.

Spring: Single birds were at Lossiemouth on 27 Apr, 6 May and 21 May.

Autumn: 34 records were received between 7 July-1 Oct, 136 birds in total.

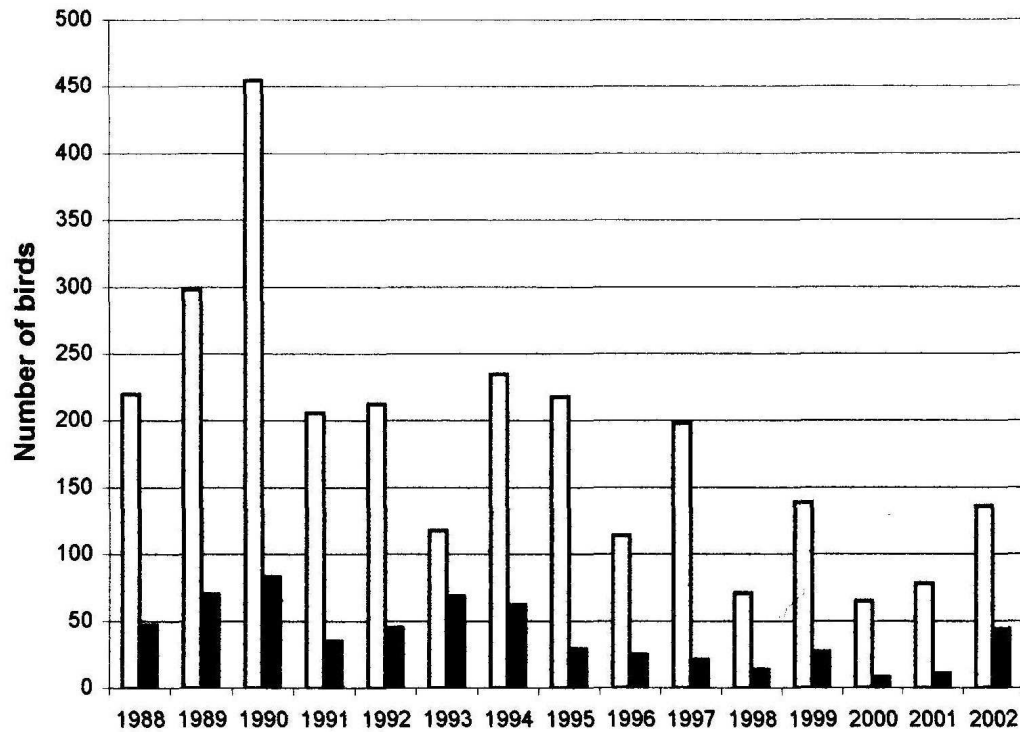
This is a slight increase over recent years although this is largely accounted for by one large flock.

Distribution of flock sizes was:

Flock size	1	2	3	4	7	8	18	44
No. of flocks	14	10	3	2	1	2	1	1

The largest flock, 44 Kingston 15 Aug (AFo), was the most seen together since 62 there in July 1994. The extent of duplication is uncertain, for example the two flocks of 8 were at Kingston on 9th and 13th July.

The size of the autumn passage, as represented by total number of birds recorded and maximum flock size, has declined in recent years:



Key: White bars = total birds, Black bars = maximum flock size

Curlew *Numenius arquata*

Common breeder. Very common migrant and winter visitor.

Breeding: In the coastal belt, 3 pairs Hillhead, Forres (2 using set-aside fields), and single pairs Shempston, RAF Kinloss, Loch of Cotts, Milltown airfield and Mundole. Upcountry, 7 pairs Bantrach-Lochenoun 30 May, 3 pairs Glenlatterach 21 June and single pairs Fleenas and Refouble.

Largest flocks in summer/early autumn were:

- July: 42 Findhorn Bay 4th, 82 Kingston 7th, 39 Clochan 12th, 97 Lossie estuary 17th and 150 Buckpool 20th.
- Aug: 350 Kingston 3rd, 70 Lossie estuary 25th, 190 Cloddach 25th and 250 Loch Spynie 26th.
- Sep: 275 Findhorn Bay 6th, 240 Kingston 16th and 71 Portgordon 28th.

Coastal winter maxima were:

	Jan	Feb	Oct	Dec
Nairn/Culbin Bars	284	304	392	199
Findhorn Bay	124	230	440	215
Burghead-Hopeman	4	70	12	0
Lossiemouth	0	4	156	6
Portgordon-Strathlene	10	10	16	96

Additional winter flocks were:

- Jan: 110 Loch Spynie 20th.
- Feb: 306 Windyridge 13th, 369 Newton 27th.
- March: 350 Burnside (Newton) 2nd, 55 Roseisle 22nd, 320 Miltonduff 24th, 60 Drainie 27th.
- Oct: 53 Loch Flemington 6th, 50 Kingston 26th, 150 Cloves 28th, 317 Gilston 30th, 41 Covesea 31st.
- Nov: 41 Covesea 9th, 289 Salterhill 20th, 157 Kinloss 26th.
- Dec: 131 Kirkhill 6th, 58 Muir of Lochs 24th, 21 Portknockie 21st, 92 Garmouth 31st.

Redshank *Tringa totanus*

Scarce breeder, very common migrant and winter visitor.

Breeding: Pairs in coastal/lowland areas were recorded at Hillhead 28 Apr, Tarras 2 May, Miltonduff 26 May and Montgrew 31 May. An anxious territorial pair were at Kincorth (Findhorn Bay) on 7 June.

Spring at the coast: Numbers on the Lossie estuary declined steadily from 236 on 2 March to 162 on 21 March, 127 on 12 Apr, 10 on 28 March and 1 on 18 May. At Burghead, 57 on 31 March, down to 9 on 14 March.

Single casual visitors inland were at Ardivot 1 Jan, Windyridge 19 Apr, Loch na Bo 30 Apr and Loch Spynie 23 Aug.

Late summer/autumn:

Lossie estuary: 4 on 3 July, 25 on 6 July followed by increasing numbers through July-August to a peak of 130 on 14 Aug. 106 on 26 Sept.

Burghead: 4 on 6 July, 23 on 11 July, 64 on 20 Sept.

Elsewhere, 540 Findhorn Bay 6 Sept, 52 Portgordon 28 Sept and 10 Kingston 22 Sept.

Winter: Monthly maxima at the coast were:

	Jan	Feb	Oct	Dec
Nairn/Culbin Bars	302	133	8	106
Findhorn Bay	125	330	100	420
Burghead-Hopeman	57	124	116	49
Lossiemouth	53	138	255	187
Portgordon-Strathlene	124	144	151	151

Other winter counts were 120 Delnies 13 Jan and 100 Nairn 30 Jan. Birds feeding on flooded fields near the coast were 8 Roseisle 22 March and near Balgreen (Covesea) 54 on 1 Nov and 18 on 22 Dec.

Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

Scarce migrant, very scarce in winter.

Spring: In April, 2 Lossie estuary 11th and 1 Findhorn Bay 15th. Nearer to summer was 1 Lossie estuary 29 June.

Late summer/autumn (July-October): Very scarce (or under-recorded) in Findhorn Bay where only 1-2 reported between 1 July-1 Sept. At other coastal sites, 2 Kingston 13 July, 3 there 22-28 July and 2 Lossie estuary 23 July. Inland, at Cloddach, singles on 30 July, 6-12 Aug and 21 Sept. Elsewhere, 1 Montgrew 24 Aug, 1 over Forres 24 Aug and at Loch Spynie 1 on 14 July, 2 on 24 July, 3 on 14 Aug and 1 on 12 Oct.

Very late for an autumn migrant was 1 Kingston 5-9 Nov but no overwintering birds were detected.

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*

Very scarce migrant, occasional in winter.

At Montgrew, usually the most reliable site, 3 on 11 Aug (MM,MJHC) and 1 on 24 Aug (MJHC). Also 1 Nether Dallachy 3 Aug (MJHC).

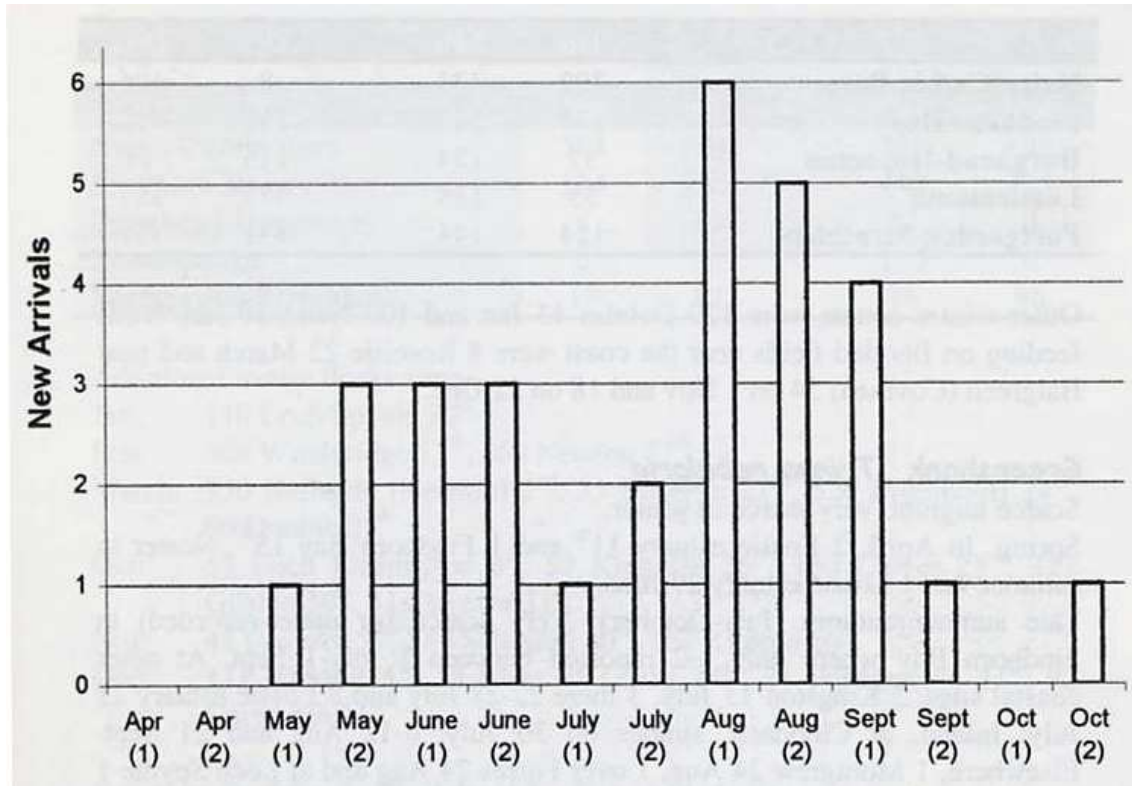
Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*

Very scarce migrant.

Three records in late summer: 1 Drumdivan 5 July (APe) (one of very few records from Nairn district), 1 Kingston 3-7 Aug (MJHC) and 1 flying east over Loch Spynie 4 Aug (RP).

1 Miltonhill 27 Oct (DMP) was the latest date ever recorded for the species in Moray & Nairn.

The half-monthly pattern of occurrence of Wood Sandpiper arrival dates has been as follows:



Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*

Summer visitor and common breeder.

Arrival: 1 Cloddach 17 Apr and 1 Nairn 21 Apr were the first reports.

Breeding: 2 pairs Cloddach (CAG), 6 pairs along a 2 mile stretch of the Dorback Burn at Culfearn (ISS), 3 pairs along the River Nairn below Howford Bridge, 2 pairs River Spey Dipple-Fochabers, 2 pairs River Spey Rothes, 3 pairs Glenlatterach and 2 pairs River Findhorn Waterford-Tyock (all JDHM).

Late summer/autumn: Highest coastal count was 17 Kincorth (Findhorn Bay) 1 July. At Kingston, 10 on 7-9 July and 14 on 27 July. Other coastal reports were 1 Cullen 10 July, 1 Hopeman 21 July and 2 Lossie estuary 31 July with 1 there 18 Aug.

Last of the year was 1 Fogwatt on the late date of 26 Sept.

Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

Common winter visitor, small numbers in summer.

Winter monthly maxima at main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Oct	Nov	Dec
Findhorn	45	nc	nc	42	nc
Burghead-Hopeman	70	48	77	52	83
Lossiemouth	40	16	23	14	4
Portgordon-Strathlene	263	195	221	nc	157

Other winter counts included 14 Delnies 13 Jan, 22 Culbin Bar 10 Feb, 33 Lossiemouth 17 March, 27 Burghead 31 March and 18 Covesea 12 Nov.

Spring-summer:

April: 43 Burghead 16th and 51 there 24th. 23 Hopeman 18th.

May: 1 Lossiemouth 15th.
 July: 1 Kingston 7th, 11 Burghead 24th, 4 Lossiemouth 28th.
 August: 6 Cullen 4th, 1 Kingston 8th, 16 Lossiemouth 27th, 55 Burghead 25th.

Grey Phalarope *Phalaropus fulicarius*

Rare visitor.

One was watched for 10 minutes on the sea close inshore off Lossiemouth on 8 Nov (RP). Another was watched flying east in poor weather in Burghead Bay on 14 Nov (IFo). These are the 4th and 5th records of the species in Moray & Nairn (a probable sighting off Lossiemouth in 2001 was not accepted by Scottish Birds Rarities Committee).

Pomarine Skua *Stercorarius pomarinus*

Scarce migrant offshore in summer and autumn, rare in winter.

A total of 12 birds were reported passing offshore, between 15 Sept-8 Oct. Off Lossiemouth were 3 west on 15 Sept (DS), 5 (3 west, 2 east) on 21 Sept (MJHC) and 1 west on 25 Sept (RP). Also 2 Portknockie 29 Sept (L&RS) and 1 Strathlene 8 Oct (MJHC).

Arctic Skua *Stercorarius parasiticus*

Fairly common migrant in summer and autumn.

All records came in the late summer/autumn period between 20 July-16 Oct. In total, 83 birds were seen of which 56 were passing Lossiemouth. Best day was 21 Sept when 25 passed (17 west, 8 east) in 3 hours (MJHC,DG,DS, JDHM). Other significant counts were 5 (4 west, 1 east) Lossiemouth 20 July (DG), 5 Findhorn 23 Aug, 8 west Boar's Head Rock 12 Sept (TM), 7 west Lossiemouth 15 Sept (DS) and 5 east Strathlene, also 15 Sept (MJHC).

Great Skua *Catharacta skua*

Scarce migrant in summer and autumn.

In mid summer, 1 Boar's head Rock 20 June and 2 Portknockie 9 July. Light late summer/autumn passage noted between 20 July-27 Oct, 72 birds in total. Only 1-2 birds per day except 5 flying west Portknockie 15 Aug (AFo), 16 west Lossiemouth 21 Sept (MJHC,DS,RP,JDHM) and 10 west there 22 Sept (DG,JDHM,DS). One very late bird off Roseisle Forest 14 Nov (IF).

Mediterranean Gull *Larus melanocephalus*

Rare visitor.

One 2nd winter bird, first seen on Lossie estuary on 16 Dec 2001, remained there until 23 Feb (many obs.). The same bird visited Myreside, Elgin, on 23 Feb (RP). Another, 1st summer, bird was on Loch Oire on 3 March (MJHC) – this is the 8th record for Moray & Nairn.

Little Gull *Larus minutus*

Very scarce visitor.

A very poor year saw only 2 records: 2 adults Loch Spynie 2 June (CAG) and 1 1st summer Kingston 15 June (MJHC).

Sabine's Gull *Xema sabini*

In an excellent year for the species, three juveniles were seen. One passed Lossiemouth 25 Sept (RP) and on 14 Oct two were seen flying east, 1 past Lossiemouth (DS) and 1 past Portknockie (MJHC). These are the 7th-9th records for Moray & Nairn, the others being in 1994 (2), 1995, 1997(2) and 2000.

Black-headed Gull *Larus ridibundus*

Very common resident breeder and winter visitor.

Breeding: Further increase Lochs of Bogmussach where 85 pairs on 23 May (JDHM). At other colonies, 16 pairs Fleenas 5 May, 60 pairs Garmouth viaduct 26 May (although 420 birds were in the area on 19 Apr), 15 nests Loch Spynie platform 12 May, 2 pairs Nether Dallachy 13 Apr and 3-4 pairs Tips of Corsemaul 7 June. Counts of 100 or more were 373 Lossie estuary 16 Feb, 242 Lhanbryde pig farm 19 March, 260 Cooper Park, Elgin 25 Dec (112 there 18 Jan), 200 Binsness 10 Feb, 200 Nairn 10 Nov, 116 Loch Oire 24 Feb and 100 Kingston 24 Jan.

Common Gull *Larus canus*

Very common resident breeder and winter visitor.

Breeding: Fairly good hatching success among c2000 pairs at Tips of Corsmaul 7 June; average clutch size 2.43. At nearby Tom Mor, also 7 June, c1500 pairs seemed to be less successful; average clutch 2.0 but many empty nests (WRPB). Colony counts (number of pairs) elsewhere were 65 Garmouth viaduct, 25-30 Ashgrove, Elgin, 25 Dava, 20 St Ninian's churchyard, Clochan, 2 Nether Dallachy pool, 1 Lein, Kingston and 1 Tynet. In Fochabers 15-20 pairs nested on the roof of Milne's High School and newly fledged juveniles were on the ground on 7 July (MJHC). Rooftop nesting is a relatively recent phenomenon for Common Gulls and this is the only known such colony in Moray & Nairn.

Counts of 300 or more were 1945 Loch Oire 24 Feb (RP), these birds attracted to feed at the nearby pig farm, 566 Nairn 10 Nov and 300 Kingston 24 Jan.

Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus*

Summer visitor and fairly common breeder. Very scarce in winter.

Arrival: First reports, in early March, were from Lossie estuary where 2 on 2nd-3rd, 3 on 9th and 1 on 12th. Also 4 Elgin 12th and 3 Cloddach 21st.

Breeding: c130 birds Tips of Corsemaul 7 June when 1 nest (3 eggs) was found (WRPB). One pair Bow Fiddle Rock. No counts made of nests on Elgin rooftops but breeding certainly continues there.

A large flock of non-breeders at Lhanbryde pig farm peaked at 141 on 29 June and a Moray record count of 178 on 7 July (MJHC). Good numbers also at Cloddach where 27 on 21 Apr, 56 on 12 May and 9 June, 51 on 14 July, 24 on 25 Aug and 14 on 29 Sept (JDHM,DG). Unlike 2001, no large flock on Lossie estuary where best counts were 23 on 18 May, 16 on 18 July, 12 on 18 Aug and 15 on 15 Sept. Counts elsewhere included 32 Loch Spynie 27 May and 29 Loch Oire (some of the Lhanbryde birds) 13 June. Three birds were seen in the winter periods: 1 Elgin 26 Jan, 1 3rd winter *graellsii* Lossie estuary 10 Nov and 1 1st winter Elgin 25 Dec (RP).

Herring Gull *Larus argentatus*

Very common resident breeder and winter visitor.

Breeding: 7 pairs bred Elgin Academy roof; 2 of the nests were less than 2m apart (ISS).

Peak counts on the Lossie estuary were c1000 on 15 Feb, 1350 on 12 March, 750 on 25 May, 1330 on 19 June and 970 on 28 Dec. Five adults of Scandinavian race *L.a. argentatus* were identified on 12 Dec (RP); the same day as a leucistic bird, resembling a 2nd winter Glaucous Gull at a distance, was also present. Other flocks of 300 or more were 1600 Nether Dallachy refuse tip 26 Jan (and 1580 at nearby Tugnet 16 Oct), 1221 Nairn 10 Nov (still 1204 there 15 Dec), 1100 Drainie pig farm 14 Apr, 780 Hopeman 8 Oct (also 480 there 18 Nov), 560 Findhorn Bay 28 Dec, 545 Kingston 24 Jan, 420 Loch Spynie 17 June (also attracted by the nearby pig farm) and 400 Lhanbryde (pigs again!) 27 July. On 18 Dec 991 were counted between Burghead-Lossiemouth.

Yellow-legged Gull *Larus (argentatus/cachinnans) michahelis*

Rare visitor.

The taxonomic status of this form remains confused and unresolved. It is variously considered a subspecies or a full species and clarification of the situation by the Taxonomic Sub-committee of the British Ornithologists' Union Rarities Committee is long overdue.

During 2002 detailed descriptions were received of two immature birds – the first records of this form in Moray & Nairn. One 3rd summer was seen and photographed at Nether Dallachy refuse tip on 10 May (LS) and a bird of this age, presumably the same, was on the Lossie estuary on 13 May (JP) and 4 June (RP). Also on 4 June a 2nd summer individual was on the Lossie estuary (RP). All of these records await a decision by Scottish Birds Rarities Committee.

Iceland Gull *Larus glaucooides*

Very scarce winter visitor.

During the early part of the year Moray hosted an unprecedented number of Iceland Gulls. On the Lossie estuary 2 birds remained from 2001; the 3rd winter was last seen on 9 March and the adult on 6 Apr. A 1st winter bird was seen on many dates between 4 Jan-23 May and 2 birds of this age were present on 17-18 Apr. one of these may account for the 1st summer bird on 28 June and 13 July. A 2nd winter/summer bird was seen on 11 Feb, 10 Apr, 21 Apr, two on 18 May and one on 4-13 June. At least 6 different individuals were involved during this period (DG,RP,JDHM et al.). During the same months birds were seen at seven other localities: 1 immature Brodie 6-7 Jan (CAG,AJL), 1 1st winter/summer Cloddach 24 March, 6-26 Apr and 28 May (JDHM,DG,CAG,APe), 1 1st summer Kingston/Tugnet 19 Apr, 3 May and 11 May (MJHC) and 1 adult there 5 Apr (IF), 1 2nd/3rd year Loch Spynie 11 Apr and 1 1st summer there 22 June (DG) and 1 2nd winter Westerfolds 23 Feb (RP). At the Lhanbryde pig farm and on nearby Loch Oire, 1st winter/summer birds were seen on many dates between 2 March-29 June; although usually a single bird was present there were 3 on 14 Apr (RP) and 2 on 27 Apr-3 May (DG,RP,EH). A 2nd summer bird was seen on 14 Apr (RP) and a different individual of this age on 27 Apr (DG). The exact number of different individuals present during this period is impossible to say – but may well have been 10.

The second winter period was, by contrast, remarkably quiet. The only record was 1 1st winter bird on the Lossie estuary 9 Sept (RP).

Glaucous Gull *Larus hyperboreus*

Very scarce winter visitor.

On the Lossie estuary the 2nd winter bird remained from December 2001 and was seen regularly until 3 May (RP,DG,JDHM et al.). A 2nd summer individual (the same?) was there on 4 June (RP). First winter/summer birds were present on 4 Jan (NH), 13-17 Apr (DG,JP), 2 May (DG), 12 May and 2 June (JDHM), and an adult was seen on 18 May (RP) and 28-29 June (DG). Elsewhere, 1 immature Kingston 3 Feb (CAG) and 1 2nd winter Portgordon 6 Jan (MJHC).

A 1st summer gull presumed to be a Glaucous X Herring hybrid was on Lossie estuary on 12 Apr (JDHM) and at Lhanbryde pig farm on 14 and 20 Apr (RP).

Great Black-backed Gull *Larus marinus*

Scarce resident breeder and common visitor.

Breeding: 2 pairs Portknockie 15 June – one incubating eggs, the other with 2 chicks.

Counts: Monthly maxima on the Lossie estuary were:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
(12)	(5)	(2)	89	23	118	67	64	426	553	102	97

The only counts received for Jan-March are unlikely to represent the true numbers present at those times. Around Speymouth, including Nether Dallachy tip, were 100 on 26 Jan, 73 on 17 March, 315 on 3 Aug, 270 on 1 Sept and 340 on 16 Oct. Significant counts elsewhere included 80 Buckie harbour 8 Dec, 48 Nairn/Culbin Bars 6 Oct, 46 Kinloss 16 Nov, 330 Nairn 10 Nov (185 there 15 Dec) and 173 Portknockie 25 Oct.

Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla*

Common breeder and very common migrant.

Breeding: 369 apparently occupied nests Covesea 9 June was 17 fewer than in 2001. A slight decrease also at Portknockie where 110 nests on 15 June (MJHC).

In autumn, 1200 on the sea around Boar's Head Rock 12 Sept and 550 at the mouth of the Spey 17 Aug. Counts of birds passing Lossiemouth were 208 west in 1 hour on 20 Aug, 233 (mostly west) in 30 mins 7 Sept, 153 west in 20 mins 8 Sept and 121 west in 1 hour 25 Sept.

Sandwich Tern *Sterna sandvicensis*

Very common summer visitor and occasional breeder.

Arrival: 2 Burghead 24 March then no further records until April, when 2 Burghead 3rd, 2 Lossiemouth 6th, 2 Spey Bay 7th and 2 Burghead Bay 8th.

Best counts in spring were 46 Findhorn Bay 15 Apr, 18 Lossie estuary 27 Apr and 61 Burghead Bay 1 May. Pairs were seen mating on the shore at Burghead on 13 and 18 May – but no suggestion of breeding in Moray & Nairn. Later in the year, 40 Nairn 10 Aug. A number of stragglers reported in October: 13 Burghead and 8 Nairn/Culbin Bars 6th, 3 Lossiemouth 7th and, lastly, 1 Strathlene 12th.

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*

Summer visitor and fairly common breeder.

Arrival: 2 Findhorn 11 Apr (JDHM) were the earliest ever recorded in Moray & Nairn.

Breeding: A very welcome increase took place in the colony on the artificial platform at Loch Spynie. Although the first bird was seen there on 21 Apr no breeding was started until the nesting Black-headed Gulls had departed in June. Tern numbers increased steadily from 11 on 12 May to 20 on 25 June, 34 on 7 July and c50 on 12 July. On 7 July there were 17 occupied nests. By 4 Aug there were numerous chicks of various ages and several fledged although the exact number is uncertain (CAG,MJHC et al.). On the River Findhorn at Mundole were 3 on 4 May and 1 pair on 23 June but there was no evidence of breeding (JDHM). On the River Spey at Aberlour were 1 on 11 May and 2 on 13 June (AE).

At the coast, 7 Lossie estuary 9 Aug and 18 Aug.

Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea*

Summer visitor and common but local breeder.

Breeding: A very disappointing season with a good number of breeding pairs but no chicks reared at any of the colonies. At RAF Kinloss, 220 adults 17 May and c75 incubating on 3 June. By 17 June the colony was deserted (AJL,MJHC). At Garmouth viaduct, on the Spey shingles, 25 pairs on 26 May, 60 birds on 11 June, and 28 incubating on 15 June; all gone by 1 July (MJHC,JDL). At Kingston, on the rivermouth shingles, 3 nests on 22 May, c10 pairs 15 June but nothing reared and the colony deserted by 7 July (TF,MJHC). In the Lossiemouth east beach dunes, 15-20 pairs with nests 25 May but only 1 remained on 8 June, with c30 egg shells scattered about the breeding area. On 13-20 June, up to 20 adults remained in the area and 2 further clutches were laid; nothing was reared (DG,MJHC).

Two adults Loch Spynie among the Common Terns 7 July (MJHC). Last in autumn was 1 Kingston 29 Sept.

Little Tern *Sterna albifrons*

Very scarce summer visitor and rare breeder.

Breeding: Site 1 – 1 bird 6-15 June (TF,MJHC). Site 3 – First 2 back 4 May, 10 by 25 May, max. 11 on 8 June. During June, one occupied nest 8th, two on 13th and one on 20th but nothing thereafter (DG,MJHC). Last records, 2 Kingston 17 Aug (MJHC), 2 Lossiemouth 19 Aug and 1 on 13 Sept (EH).

Guillemot *Uria aalge*

Very common offshore.

During summer, 1 close inshore at the Bow Fiddle Rock, Portknockie 15 June, 23 June and 7 July but no suggestion of breeding activity. 10 off Burghead 8 June and 80 there 24 Aug.

Off Lossiemouth in September were 260 west 16th, 121 west in 1 hour 25th, 220 west 28th and 359 east in 1 hour 30th. Around the same time, 130 Boar's Head Rock 29th. Substantial numbers of corpses were also found on the tide line in late September: 16 in c2km Cullen 20th, 28 Lossiemouth 15th and a further 26 there 29th.

Razorbill *Alca torda*

Very common offshore.

Breeding: Activity in summer around the Bow Fiddle Rock and adjacent mainland cliffs at Portknockie suggested that a breeding attempt may have taken place – or is likely to do so in the near future. On 15 June one pair was occupying a crevice in the mainland cliffs but the contents of the crevice was not visible. Eight other birds were on the sea close inshore. On 23 June, 2 pairs were on the cliffs and 9 birds on the sea. These pairs were still present on 9 July but not seen subsequently (MJHC). During the same period, 3 pairs were ashore on the north-facing side of the Bow Fiddle Rock but again no certain evidence of breeding was obtained (L&RS). The only previous instance of a Razorbill ashore at a potential breeding site was of a single bird at Covesea in May 1974.

On 12 Apr a heavy westward passage took place past Lossiemouth, with 271 counted in a 15 minute period (DG). Otherwise 40 off Lossiemouth harbour 22 Aug was the most seen together.

Black Guillemot *Cepphus grylle*

Scarce offshore, rare breeder.

Breeding: One pair bred Tronach Head in the usual crevice for the 17th successive year, raising two young. Nine adults were on the sea close inshore suggesting the presence of further breeding pairs in the area (MJHC). At Portknockie 3 pairs were seen visiting probable nest sites during the summer; and a maximum of 13 adults were seen on 17 June (L&RS,MJHC,PMcD).

A few birds passed offshore in most months, usually only 1-2 but 8 Boar's Head Rock 15 Aug, 4 Lossiemouth 21 Sept and 3 there 24 Sept.

Little Auk *Alle alle*

Scarce winter visitor.

1 dead Burghead Bay 13 Jan (DMP). Following stormy weather in mid November, two birds were found alive inland on 15th: one was on the Linkwood Distillery pool, Elgin (HL) and the other was in a garden in Mosstodloch. This was released at Tugnet on 16th (MJHC). Remarkably this is the second occasion on which a Little Auk has been found at Linkwood Distillery, the first being on 19th Dec 1996. On 24 Nov, 1 was on the sea in Burghead Bay (DMP) and 3 passed Strathlene (MJHC).

Puffin *Fratercula arctica*

Scarce offshore.

More reports than usual, including an interesting series of records around the cliffs of east Moray in summer. In this area, 1 flying around Bow Fiddle Rock, Portknockie 15 June and also 1 there on 7 and 14 July (MJHC,L&RS), 1 off Findochty 6 July (DG) and 2 carrying fish off Cullen on 15 June (SFR).

Most other records from the Lossiemouth area where 1 on 8 Apr (DG), 1 on 24 Sept (MJHC), 2 on 2 Oct (EG) and 2 on 6 Oct (DG,EG). Elsewhere, 1 Buckie 12 Aug (EH), 1 Burghead 10 Apr (IF) and 26 Nov (DB), 1 Culbin Bar 6 Oct (AY), 1 Findhorn 19 Sept (DMP) and 1 Portgordon 28 Sept (L&RS).

Feral Pigeon *Columba livia*

Very common resident breeder.

Counts of 100 or more were 396 Buckie shipyard 6 Oct, 200 Keith 31 Dec, 120 Lossiemouth 20 Dec and 100 Portknockie 14 Oct.

Stock Dove *Columba oenas*

Scarce resident breeder, formerly common.

Breeding season: Seen in the period late March-July at Clochan (2 on 4 May), Cotts of Innes (3 on 2 June, 1 on 22 June), East Grange (2 on 18 June), Elgin (1 on 7 Apr), Gordonstoun (1 on 15 Apr), Kinloss (10 on 19 June, 5 on 17 July), Knock Farm (1 on 1 June), Loch Spynie (song on 19 Apr, 1 on 18 May), North Alves (pair on 24 May), Pitgaveny Home Farm (song on 16 May), Scarffbanks (2 on 8 Apr and 3 June), Spynie Hill (1 on 31 May) and Urquhart (2 on 20 March, 18 Apr and 29 May).

At other times, 2 Calcots 3 March, 1 Linksfield, Elgin 5 Oct, 1 Muirfield, Elgin 12 Oct, 2 Muirton 2 Jan and 2 Duffus 6 Oct.

Woodpigeon *Columba palumbus*

Very common resident breeder.

Largest flocks reported were 700 Lochieposts, Miltonduff, 29 Dec, 600 Urquhart 14 Jan, 500 Kintessack 4 Feb, 500 Ardgyle 21 Nov (also 400 there 2 Apr) and 400 Muirton 5 Jan.

As in 2001, 2 active nests at Loch Spynie on 13 July were only c20m apart.

Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*

Very common resident breeder.

In Lossiemouth an early nest was located behind a TV satellite dish on 19 March. Best flocks were only 17 Clochan 30 Nov and 12 Miltonduff 8 Oct.

[Rose-ringed Parakeet *Psittacula krameri*

Escape.

On 21 June one spent an hour in the car park of Johnston's Cashmere Centre before flying away to the west (RAS).]

Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus*

Summer visitor and common breeder.

Arrival: Quite early with first reports in late April: 1 Kellas 26th, 1 Knockando 27th and 1 Rosarie 30th. In early May, 1 Newlands of Tynet 1st, 1 Teindland 2nd, 1 Roseisle Forest 3rd, 1 Lein, Kingston 4th, 1 Loch Spynie 4th and 1 Lochindorb 7th and 1 Ben Aigan 9th.

Barn Owl *Tyto alba*

Scarce resident breeder.

Breeding: Confirmed breeding at 9 sites and birds seen in 4 other localities in April-July.

Outside the breeding season, and away from known breeding sites, single birds were seen at Archiestown (Dec), Calcots (Feb), Elgin (Jan), Findochty (Jan), Georgetown (Oct), Hopeman (Nov), Minduff (March), Mundole (March) and Overton (Dec).

Tawny Owl *Strix aluco*

Common resident breeder.

Upcountry records were 4 Enoch 17 Jan and 1 Kynadrochit Lodge 15 Oct.

Hooting during the day at Loch Spynie on 6 and 12 Dec.

Long-eared Owl *Asio otus*

Scarce resident breeder.

Breeding: Confirmed at Altonside (young calling 3 June (AY)), Coltfoot (young calling 13 June (JDHM)), Gordonstoun (young calling 12 June (JDHM)), Inchberry (young calling (AY)), Kinloss (pair with 2 young 20 June (AJL)), Lochhill (young calling 4 July (MJHC)), Lochyhill (pair with 2-3 young in June (ISS,IP)), Muiry Wood, Forres (adult with 3 young on 21 June (ISS,IP)), Rosenewton (young calling 13 June (JDHM)) and Scotstonhill (young calling 4 July (MJHC)). Elsewhere in the breeding season, 1 Covesea 9 June, 1 Lein, Kingston many dates May-June, 1 Parks of Innes 22 May, 1 near Westerton and 1 Standingstone 13 June.

1 Portknockie 3 Nov was the only winter record.

Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus*

Rare breeder and very scarce migrant.

Breeding: The first proved coastal breeding since 1984 took place at RAF Kinloss where one pair raised two young (AJL). Inland, on the moors, 3 pairs bred in east Moray and single birds were seen elsewhere in 2 localities.

In late summer-winter, 1 Burghead 2 Nov (EH), 1 Kingston 14-26 Aug (I&PB,MJHC) and 1 Netherton 8 Sept (ISS).

Swift *Apus apus*

Summer visitor and common breeder.

Arrival: First appearances in May were very late: 1 Lossiemouth 14th, 1 Elgin 15th, 1 Forres 16th, 4 Kinloss 17th and 2 Nairn 18th.

Five nests found in central Lossiemouth.

Last noted Lossiemouth, Nairn, Elgin and Clochan 17-19 Aug. Unusually late lingerers at Loch Spynie in September where 4 on 4th, 5 on 5th and 2 on 10th. Last of the year was 1 Strathlene 12 Sept.

Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*

Very scarce visitor and occasional breeder.

On the River Spey, 1 Spey Bay 7 Apr, 1 Tugnet 13 July (RAS) and 1 Aberlour 30 Sept (AE) (other, second-hand, reports of a bird here in summer). Around the lower River Lossie, 1 Lossie estuary 4 Jan, 4 Sept, 1 Oct, 29 Oct and 5 Nov (CAG,DG,DS,JDHM), 1 Loch Spynie 21-26 Aug and 2-7 Oct (many obs.), 1 Cooper Park, Elgin 17 Nov (CAG) and 1 Oldmills, Elgin 29 Dec (RAM).

Green Woodpecker *Picus viridis*

Very scarce resident, scarce breeder in recent years.

Three records received. 1 calling Wester Glenorney 1 June (ISS) and 1 seen Ferness 11 June (RPC). These two localities are about 5km apart on the Nairn/Moray border. In a different area, 1 calling several times Teindland Wood 8 June (AY).

Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major*

Common resident breeder.

Five around Loch Spynie 7 Apr and 3 drumming Loch na Bo 30 March.

Skylark *Alauda arvensis*

Common breeder and migrant.

First song heard, in February, at Longmorn 6th, Cloddach 10th, Portgordon 10th and Nairn 13th.

Largest winter flocks were 75 Muirton 2 Jan, 60 Nairn/Culbin Bars 10 Feb, 37 Portknockie 6 Oct and 24 Knock Farm 31 Oct.

Sand Martin *Riparia riparia*

Summer visitor and common breeder.

Arrival: A few in late March: 1 Loch Oire 26th, 20 Loch Spynie 29th and 2 Findhorn Bay 30th. Large numbers Loch Spynie in late April where c120 on 22nd, c300 on 26th and c700 on 28th.

Colony counts (apparently occupied burrows) were 30 Cloddach quarry, 24 Corbiewell, 24 Findhorn coastal dunes, 180 Glen Rinnes sandpit (still by far the biggest colony), c80 Dufftown golf course, 30 Knockomie, 20-25 Knock Hill and 30 Wester Glenorney.

Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

Summer visitor and very common breeder.

Arrival: One exceptionally early bird was well watched at Loch na Bo on 24 March (DGa). (The earliest ever was on 23 March 1968; another was seen on 24 March 1982). No further reports until 7 April when 1 Spey Bay and 10 April when 1 Loch Spynie and 1 Tugnet. A protracted arrival thereafter with observers reporting 'firsts' on 13th (2), 16th, 19th (2), 20th, 21st (3) and 23rd (3). c650 Loch Spynie 28 Apr but still very few on territory in the Clochan area by 5 May.

Breeding: In the Lhanbryde barn, 6 pairs bred. Details were:

	No. of pairs	Average clutch	Average brood hatched	Average brood fledged
First brood	5	5.2	3.2	3.2
Second brood	6	5.0	4.6	4.6

Both clutch sizes and productivity were very similar to 2001 (RP).

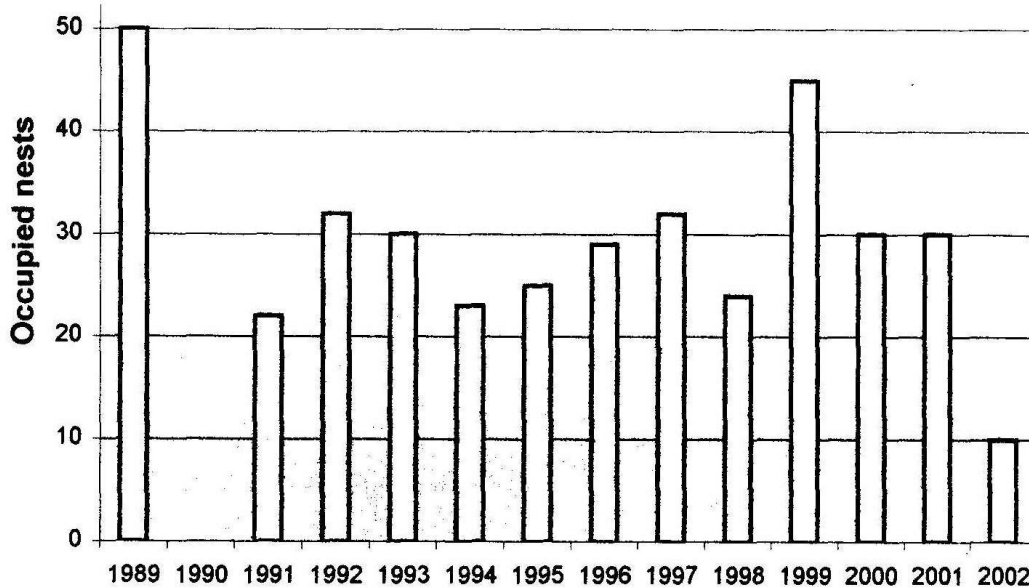
Few post-breeding flocks counted – 100 on wires Clochan 14 Aug and 107 there 11 Sept. Still 23 Forres 26 Sept. An unusually large number of records into late October and even November. On 18 Oct were 2 Milton Brodie, 2 Miltonhill, 3 East Grange and 3 Lossiemouth; later, 1 Elgin 20th and 3 Nairn 28th. In November, 1 Elgin 4th, 1 Lossiemouth 10th, 1 Kingston 17th and 2 Nairn 19th-22nd. There have been November records in 10 of the last 18 years, latest being 30th in 1997. In 2002, Swallows were absent from Moray & Nairn in only 3 months (Jan, Feb, Dec).

House Martin *Delichon urbica*

Summer visitor and common breeder.

Arrival: Compared with recent years, quite early. First, in April, 1 Elgin 22nd followed by returning birds in Lossiemouth and Mosstodloch on 25th, Duffus on 27th, Loch Spynie on 28th and Keith on 30th.

Breeding: a serious decline in the Buckie High School colony to only 10 apparently occupied nests. The size of this colony has fluctuated in recent years as follows:



Elsewhere, 8 apparently occupied nests Milne's High School, Fochabers (same as 2001) and only 1 pair found on the cliffs at Portknockie.

Last was 1 Loch Spynie 21 Oct.

Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis*

Summer visitor and common breeder.

1 Achdregnie 27 Apr, several Benrinnes Wood 1 July, song heard Glen Rinnes golf course 7 July, 1 Hill of Delnapot 8 June, 1 Loch na Bo 4 May and 1 Newlands of Tynet 1 May. 1 carrying food for young near Knockando in summer.

Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis*

Very common breeder and migrant.

Good numbers at Kinloss in spring where 87 on 25 Apr and 58 on 3 May. The only other significant counts received were 38 Windyridge 19 Apr and 23 Culbin Bar 8 Dec.

Rock Pipit *Anthus petrosus*

Scarce breeder, fairly common in winter.

Breeding: Newly fledged young at Buckie harbour and Covesea in early June.

Winter counts: Along the rocky shore between Portgordon-Strathlene were 49 on 13 Jan, 51 on 10 Feb, 48 on 6 Oct and 19 on 8 Dec. Elsewhere, 14 Nairn Bar 13 Jan, 10 Burghead 5 Oct and 6 Lossiemouth 16 Oct. Two Rock Pipits seen and photographed at Lossiemouth on 18 Nov (NH) showed characteristics of Scandinavian race *A.p.littoralis*. The suggestion that birds of this race may occur on our coast in winter was given further support by the arrival of 4 Rock Pipits in off the sea with a flock of winter thrushes on 8 Oct (NH).

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*

Summer visitor and common breeder. Scarce in winter.

Breeding: In June, 3 pairs River Nairn from Howford Bridge to the harbour and 2 pairs Rothes. On 5 May, 4 pairs located along c3km of the Dorback Burn at Culfearn, Braemoray.

Winter records were 1 Buckie harbour 13 Jan, 2 Kingston beach and 2 Sanquhar Loch 27 Jan, 1 Forres 17 Feb, 1 Elgin 17 Nov, 1 Urquhart 18-22 Nov and 1 Clochan 8-15 Dec.

Pied Wagtail *Motacilla alba*

Very common breeder and migrant.

Passage: 'White Wagtails' *M.a.alba* were seen only at the Lossie estuary where 1 on 26 Apr, 1 on 1 May, 2 on 2 May and 1 on 17 Sept (DG,JDHM).

Counts of Pieds were 55 Kingston 28 July, 47 Portgordon 27 Sept, 40 Loch Spynie 20 Oct, 28 Kinloss 8 Jan and 27 Rothes 24 June.

Waxwing *Bombycilla garrulus*

Irruptive winter visitor, scarce in most years but occasionally common.

A return to normality after the abundance of 2001.

Winter-spring: 8 Nairn 7-12 Jan rising to 11 on 16 Jan (RPC,JDHM), 9 Lossiemouth 26 Jan (SM), 2 Aberlour 27 Jan (NH), 1 Forres 19 Feb and 7 there on 27 Feb (RP,VJ) and 1 Dufftown 17 Apr (WRPB).

Autumn: 1 Kinloss 16 Nov and 2 Glen of Rothes 25 Nov (PTH) were the only records.

Dipper *Cinclus cinclus*

Common resident breeder.

Nests found at Chapelton (Glenlivet), under Forres railway bridge and at the falls at Sanquhar Loch. A pair around Lossie Green weir in central Elgin in March, May and Oct-Dec.

Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*

Very common resident breeder.

First song Kingston 11 Feb. 2 Culbin Bar 13 Jan and 5 Nairn Bar 6 Oct.

Dunnock *Prunella modularis*

Very common resident breeder.

First song Bishopmill, Elgin 23 Feb and Kingston 17 March. 3 Nairn Bar 6 Oct.

Robin *Erithacus rubecula*

Very common resident breeder and migrant.

Last spring song recorded by JDHMon 4 July; first autumn song on 2 Sept. In Oct, 4 Nairn Bar 6th and 8 Strathlene 12th.

Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*

Rare migrant.

1 Lossiemouth harbour 3 Nov (HF). This is the 14th record for Moray & Nairn.

Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

Summer visitor and scarce breeder. Very scarce migrant.

Song heard Culfearn (Braemoray) 5 May, Drynachan 7 May and near Craigellachie. Also in summer, a pair Scoot More and 1 near Drum of Carron.

Coastal migrants were 1 Strathlene 10 Sept (MJHC), 1 Covesea 10 Oct (JP) and 1 Lein, Kingston 12 Oct (MJHC).

Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra*

Summer visitor and scarce breeder. Very scarce migrant.

On 21 June, 3 pairs were located at Glenlatterach Reservoir (JDHM), a site now well established as a stronghold of the species in Moray. Also in the breeding season, 1M Benrinnes Wood 4 June (AE) and 1 singing near Sauchenbush (AY).

Coastal migrants were 3 Strathlene 10 Sept, 1 there 12 Sept (MJHC) and 1 Kingston 29 Sept (NH).

Stonechat *Saxicola torquata*

Scarce resident breeder and probable migrant.

Breeding: Inland moorland pairs located at Achdregnie (2), Auchlochan, Beatshach (2), Benrinnes Wood, Clashindarroch (Knockando), Forgie, Glack Harnes, Glenfarclas Distillery, Lynemore (Delnapot) and Sheals. Coastal/lowland pairs at Binsness, Burghead, Clashach Quarry, Cloddach, Culbin, Findhorn, Hopeman (2), Kinloss, Palmerscross (New Elgin), Portknockie and Strathlene. Also 1 Windyridge at this time. Four pairs were found along 4km of the coastal track westwards from Kingston (PGS).

Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe*

Summer visitor, fairly common migrant and local breeder.

Arrival: First on the coast were 1 Lossiemouth 28 March and 2 Strathlene 29 March, followed by 1 Findhorn 1 Apr and 4 Kinloss 4 Apr. Subsequently only a few reported with no significant migrant 'falls'.

Pairs reported during the breeding season at A'Choinneach, Achdregnie, Ben Rinnes, Hill of Mackalea, Inverblye, Knock of Braemoray and near Glenfarclas Distillery. Single birds on Ben Aigan 13 July and Lochan Buidhe 18 May. An interesting possibility of lowland breeding near Knock where an agitated pair was present in early June and at least one fledged juvenile was seen on 20 June (PO).

First back to the coast in July were 2 Kingston 9th, 1 North Alves 10th, 2 Burghead 11th and 2 Kinloss 12th. Later, 5 Kingston 1 Aug and 5 Strathlene 10 Sept were the best counts.

Ring Ouzel *Turdus torquatus*

Summer visitor and scarce breeder.

No information received from breeding areas. On 29 Sept, 2 coastal migrants feeding on elderberries near the Lossie estuary (NH).

Blackbird *Turdus merula*

Very common resident breeder, winter visitor and migrant.

Early song at Elgin on 27 Jan and Forres 9 Feb. Very early breeding suggested by a female carrying food in Forres on 15 March. At the end of the season still a newly fledged chick in Dufftown on 7 Aug.

Immigration at Lossiemouth on 29 Sept when 21 in the east beach dunes. Loose assemblies in autumn/winter were 20 Milton Brodie 18 Oct, 19 Dallas 7 Nov and 33 Cooper Park (Elgin) 12 Dec.

Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris*

Very common migrant and winter visitor.

Breeding: At an upland site in east Moray a pair was found on 11 May, one of which was carrying food. On 13 May the pair was relocated, and they were watched feeding two young (NH). Breeding has taken place previously in Moray & Nairn in 1972 near Tomintoul, in 1978 at Blackhills and, probably, in Glen Fiddich in 1988.

Winter-spring: Remaining common in coastal gardens in Lossiemouth in January, following severe weather movement to the coast in late 2001. Flocks of 30 or more were 80 Forres 5 Jan, 55 Dallachy 6 Jan, 100 Brodie 9 Jan (220 there 8 Apr), 170 Standingstone 10 Jan, 30 Knock Farm 17 Jan, 40 Gilston 12 Feb, 100 Clochan 23 Feb, 220 Spynie Palace 24 Feb, 300 Elgin 24 Feb, 250 Dallas 28 Feb (190 there 10 March), 200 Monaughty 2 March, 148 Kinloss 13 March (64 there on 5th), 80 Auldearn 22 March and 40 Cloddach 24 March.

Autumn: First arrival on 8 Oct when c1500 in off the sea at Burghead in 2 hours. No more until 15 Oct when 17 Loch na Bo and a few at Auchindoun. Later in the month, 50 Dufftown 20th, many small flocks flying inland over Forres 21st, many flocks Rafford area 26th, 320 Dallas 26th and 50 Miltonhill 27th. Flocks of 30 or more subsequently were 40 Westerfolds 1 and 20 Nov, 55 Kellas 7 Nov, 50 North Alves 13 Nov, 200 Gilston 23 Nov, 58 Mill of Grange 27 Nov, 180 Westerfolds 15 Dec, 60 Mossyards 26 Dec and 50 Wester Coltfoot 30 Dec and 240 Glen Rinnes 31 Dec.

Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos*

Very common breeder and migrant.

In the mid winter months, early January records were 2 Aberlour 2nd and 1 New Elgin 6th. In December, 1 Lossiemouth 18th, 5 around Portknockie harbour 21st, 1 singing Califer Hill 26th and 1 Elgin 28th.

Song began early in the year; first were at Lossiemouth 14 Jan, Lhanbryde 23 Jan, Clochan 28 Jan, Forres 6 Feb, Elgin 8 Feb and Kingston 9 Feb. No song at Dufftown until 10 March. Very numerous in a conifer plantation at Inverblye (Glenlivet) 27 Apr; 1 newly fledged juvenile in the wood indicated an exceptionally early start to breeding for this upland site. Adults carrying food at other upland sites were at Refouble 16 June and Glenlatterach 21 June. At the end of summer, newly fledged juveniles in Dufftown 7 Aug.

In autumn, 28 arrived off the sea at Burghead 8 Oct and 5 were at Strathlene on 12 Oct.

Redwing *Turdus iliacus*

Very common migrant and winter visitor.

Winter-spring: Reports of 50 or more were 50 Brodie 9 Jan, 70 Westerfolds 9 Jan, 150 Loch Oire 11 Jan, 50 Dyke 12 Jan, 100 Knock Farm 17 Jan, 50 Cooper Park (Elgin) 50 Jan, 50 Duffus castle 5 Feb, 150 Grange Hall 19 Feb, 95 Clochan 2 March and 50 Elgin 12 March. At Kinloss, quite numerous throughout Jan-March with peak counts of 120 on 18 Jan and 18 Feb, and 75 on 18 March. Last of the year (assuming it was not a breeder) was 1 in Glenlivet 27 Apr.

Autumn: First substantial arrival on 8 Oct when c5000 flew in off the sea at Burghead in 2 hours (NH). Also 3 flocks over Clochan that day. On 12 Oct, 50 Strathlene and a few over Lossiemouth and Elgin. On 13 Oct, c30 Ben Aigan and hundreds moving through Dufftown, stripping Rowan berries and heading away south-east. Few remained there on 15th but a few more appeared after snow on 20th (WRPB). On 21 Oct many small flocks were heading inland over Forres. Subsequently flocks of 50 or more were 70 Pitairlie 24 Oct, 50 New Elgin 25 Oct, 60 Westerfolds 1 Nov (still 50 on 20 Nov), 150 Easter Calcots 28 Oct, 80 Milton Brodie 5 Nov, 100 Urquhart 9 Nov and 60 Wester Kintrae 23 Nov.

Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus*

Common resident breeder and migrant.

Largest late summer/autumn flocks were 37 Cloddymoss 8 July, 50 Ben Aigan 29 July, 20 Tomintoul 2 Aug, 57 Scarffbanks 16 Aug (still 32 on 29 Aug), 10 Kinloss 9 Sept, 20 Sound Moor 9 Oct and 25 Standingstone 18 Oct.

Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella naevia*

Summer visitor and scarce breeder.

Singing birds were 1 Ben Aigan 12 May (seen on 1 June) (GG), 1 Fochabers 9 May (EH), 1 Glackmuick 16 June (WRPB) and 2 Rothes 9 Aug (NH).

Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

Summer visitor and common breeder.

Arrival: 1 singing Gilston 27 Apr was quite early; more usual dates were at Lein (Kingston) 2 May, Clochan 4 May and Loch Spynie 6 May.

Later, several well upcountry at Derrybeg, Ben Rinnes 26 May. Three singing birds Covesea clifftops 21 May and 1 in a conifer plantation Cummington 8 June. Five pairs Rothes 24 June.

At Loch Spynie 'Constant Effort Site' only 26% of 35 birds trapped for ringing were juveniles, indicating a poor breeding season compared with 2001 when 55% of the catch were juveniles (RP).

Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca*

Rare summer visitor and occasional breeder.

One singing Lein, Kingston 14 May – for the one day only (PGS). This is the 7th record for Moray & Nairn. All but two of these records have involved singing birds close to PGS's property on the Lein; previous years being 1991, 1992, 1998 and 2000. Clearly the habitat here must be suitable for the species but so far there has been no suggestion of a breeding attempt.

Whitethroat *Sylvia communis*

Summer visitor and common breeder.

Arrival: First appearances in early May when birds were found at Loch na Bo 4th, Gilston and Shempston 6th, Garmouth and Kinloss 7th.

On 21 May, 10 singing along 1.5km of Covesea cliff tops between Clashach Quarry and the coastguard lookout (JDHM). On 25 May, 6 singing in c700m along the western fringe of Buckpool golf course (MJHC).

Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin*

Summer visitor and scarce breeder.

Single singing birds were located at Waulkmill 13 May, Whiteash Hill 18 May, Loch Loy 24 May, Rothes 24 June and Kellas 4 July. During Atlas fieldwork, 2 were heard near Craigellachie, and single birds were at Inchberry, Bogmoor and Balnacoul. Also seen near Portknockie in the breeding season.

In autumn, 1 Clochan 15 Sept. Coastal migrants were 2 Strathlene 10 Sept and 1 Findochty 15 Oct.

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*

Summer visitor and fairly common breeder. Scarce migrant and winter visitor.

January-April: 1 Nairn 1 Jan, 1M Forres 4 Jan, 1M Kinloss 21 Jan and 1 Cawdor 22 Feb. In CAG's Elgin garden, 1M almost daily 1 Jan-31 March with 2M several dates 15-25 Feb and 13-15 March, and 3M on 9 Feb. Also 1F intermittently in Jan-Feb and 2F on 14 Jan.

Spring/summer: Singing birds were found at Aberlour, Aikenway, Altyre, Auchroisk, Auldearn, Balnacoul, Boath House, Bogmoor, Bridgend (Glenlivet), Broom of Moy (3), Brodie (3), Califer Hill, Carron, Cloddach, College of Roseisle, Cotts of Innes, Clunybeg, Craigellachie, Darkland, Darnaway, Deskie (Glenlivet), Drum Wood, Drumin (2), Fochabers (4), Garmouth viaduct, Hill of Urchany, Inchberry (2), Innes House (3), Jointure Wood, Kellas (3), Kincorth House, Kintessack, Kirkhill (4), Knockando (4), Loch Loy, Loch na Bo (2), Loch Oire, Loch Spynie (3), Loch na Bo, Mayne (2), Miltonduff, R.Nairn below Howford Bridge (3), Nether Birnie, Orton (2), Pittyvaich (Dufftown), Pluscarden, Rathven, Rothes, Sanquhar, Spynie Hill, Tearie, Washing Wells (2), Waterford, Waulkmill, and Whiteash Hill. The total of 82 singers (many found during Atlas fieldwork) exceeds even 1999 and 2000 when 73 were found.

Autumn: Single coastal migrants were at Strathlene 10 Sept, Findochty 15 Oct and 27 Oct, and Lossiemouth 25 Oct.

Late November-December: 1M Aberlour 12-15 Dec and 1F there 15-23 Dec. 1M Bishopmill (Elgin) 27-28 Dec and 2M Forres 21 Nov. In Academy St., Elgin, 1F on 12 Nov, 2M on 25 Dec and 1M on 26 Dec. Presumably many more were unreported.

Wood Warbler *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*

Summer visitor and scarce breeder.

1 singing Kellas oakwood 9 May (JDHM) – one of the few reliable sites in Moray & Nairn.

Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*

Summer visitor and scarce breeder. Scarce migrant and rare winter visitor.

Singing birds were heard at Altonside, Altyre, Bogmoor, Brodie (2), Broom of Moy (3), Buckie, Califer Hill, Carron, Caysbriggs, Charleston Wood (College of Roseisle) (4), Cotts of Innes (2), Dallas Dhu, Duffushillock (adults carrying food here), Fochabers (2), Garmouth viaduct (2), Hazelbank, Hill of Urchany (2), Kingsteps (2), Lein (Kingston) and Lossie Forest east of rifle range (6), Limekilns (2), Loch Loy, Loch Oire, Loch Spynie (2), Loch na Bo (4), Lossie Forest west, Mannachie, Maryfield, Mayne (adults seen carrying food), Monaughty Forest (7 – on 14 May), Mosstodloch (Balnacoul), Nairn, Newlands of Tynet, Newmill, Oakenhead, Oran, Pitgaveny, Pindler's Croft, Sanquhar Loch, Spynie Palace, Tugnet, Wallfield (Lochhill), Wellside, Wester Newforres (Rafford) and Whiteash Hill (2). A total of 72 singers, second only to 74 in 1998.

Autumn: In September, 1 Strathlene 10th, 5 seen or caught for ringing Clochan during 14th-29th, 1 Covesea lighthouse 29th and a very unusual record of 1 singing Tomintoul 27th. In October, 1 Elgin 1st, 1 Kingsteps 6th, 1 Loch Spynie 6th, 1 Nairn 7th, 1 Covesea lighthouse 10th, 2 Lein (Kingston) 12th, 1 Findochty 17th and 1 Lossiemouth 29th.

Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus*

Summer visitor and very common breeder.

Arrival: 1 singing Elgin 7 Apr (RP) equalled the earliest ever date for Moray & Nairn, in 1996. A few more appeared in mid April – Mosstodloch 14th, Nairn 16th and Kingston 19th but the main arrival was quite late. Various observers recorded their first on 19th (2), 21st (3), 22nd (1), 23rd (1) and 24th (5). Common thereafter with 12 Hill of Urchany 25th and good numbers singing round Allanreid and Inverblye in Glenlivet on 27th.

At Loch Spynie 'Constant Effort Site' 38% of 32 birds trapped for ringing were juveniles, compared with 46% of 26 birds in 2001 and 57% of 47 birds in 2000; a steady decline in productivity over the three years (RP).

Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*

Very common resident breeder and scarce migrant.

Visiting garden bird feeders early in the year were 2 Elgin 27 Jan and 1 Bogmoor 14 Feb, which was apparently feeding from peanuts.

At the coast in autumn were 11 Lossiemouth east beach 29 Sept, 7 Nairn/Culbin Bars 6 Oct, 2 Findochty 15 Oct and 1 there 17 Oct.

Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata*

Summer visitor and common breeder.

No meaningful arrival dates. Reported in the breeding season at Benrinnes Wood, Buckie, Forres, Kinloss, Knock Hill, Loch Spynie, Longmorn, Rathven and Scarffbanks.

Part of a small fall of migrants along the coast on 10 Sept were 1 Covesea lighthouse and 1 Strathlene.

Pied Flycatcher *Ficedula hypoleuca*

Very scarce migrant, occasional breeder.

On 10 Sept at least 6 migrants were in the gorse banks below the golf course at Strathlene (MJHC). This is the most ever seen together in Moray & Nairn, although there were 5 at Mayne, Elgin on 12 May 1989. The monthly distribution of all records has been as follows:

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
Records	0	6	9	1	0	3	0
Total birds	0	10	11	1	0	8	0

Unlike most summer migrant species, there have been more records of displaced migrants at the coast in spring than in autumn. The June and July records all refer to birds in upland breeding habitat. Breeding has been proved only twice – near Aberlour in 1968 and 1969 (only the adults of these pairs have been included in the above table).

(Bearded Tit *Panurus biarmicus*

Rare breeder.

No reports from Loch Spynie in 2002. Having been present every year in the period 1998-2001 it is very disappointing if the tiny population has died out.)

Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus*

Very common resident breeder.

Flocks of 15 or more were 30 Mundole 15 Sept, 26 Clochan 15 Sept, 21 Kellas 4 July, 17 Loch na Bo 15 Oct, 16 Spynie Palace 13 Feb, 15 Threapland 15 Oct and 15 Loch Spynie 22 Nov.

Small groups visited gardens to feed from peanut holders in Aberlour in January (6 on 4th) and Longmorn in February.

Crested Tit *Parus cristatus*

Fairly common resident breeder.

Nest boxes:

	Pairs	Average clutch	Average fledged brood/pair	
Lossie Forest	6	5.7	5.5	(MJHC)

In 1997, 100 deep nest boxes filled with wood-shavings were introduced in Lossie Forest. Since that time breeding success has been as follows:

Year	Pairs breeding in boxes	Average clutch	Successful pairs	Average fledged brood/ successful pair	Average brood/pair
1997	6	5.8	5	6.0	5.0
1998	1	6.0	1	6.0	6.0
1999	8	5.4	8	5.1	5.1
2000	12	5.7	12	5.3	5.3
2001	6	6.0	4	5.5	3.7
2002	6	5.7	6	5.5	5.5

On 23 Feb in Lossie Forest 8 were feeding among fallen pines in a single-species flock. Outside 'core' areas, 1 Daugh of Edinville 19 March, 1 juvenile Hill of Delnapot 8 June and 1 Whiteash Hill 18 May.

Coal Tit *Parus ater*

Very common resident breeder.

Nest boxes: Only 1 box occupied in Lossie Forest – a clutch of 10 eggs produced a brood of 9 fledged young.

Blue Tit *Parus caeruleus*

Very common resident breeder.

Nest boxes:

	Pairs	Average clutch	Average fledged brood/pair	
Lossie Forest	12	7.8	?	(MJHC)
Loch Spynie	9	9.0	6.8	(RP,CAG)

At Loch Spynie, 8 nests were successful, the other was predated after the young had hatched. First song Cooper Park, Elgin 30 Jan and a pair was visiting a nestbox in Bishopmill, Elgin as early as 15 Feb. Early for 2003 were 2 singing Cooper Park 20 Dec.

Great Tit *Parus major*

Very common resident breeder.

Nest boxes:

	Pairs	Average clutch	Average fledged brood/pair	
Lossie Forest	17	6.5	?	(MJHC)
Loch Spynie	12	8.4	5.6	(RP,CAG)

At Loch Spynie, 10 nests were successful, one clutch of eggs was deserted and one brood of young was found dead. First song heard at Kingston on 26 Jan.

Treecreeper *Certhia familiaris*

Very common resident breeder.

Nest boxes:

	Pairs	Average clutch	Average fledged brood/pair	
Lossie Forest	3	6.5	2.0	MJHC

One of the boxes suffered predation and broods were small in the others.

Four on Culbin Bar 6 Oct were unusual, as was one feeding on the sandstone bridge supports of Garmouth viaduct on 28 Nov.

Great Grey Shrike *Lanius excubitor*

Very scarce migrant and winter visitor.

1 Kinloss 15 Oct (AJL). This is the third successive year in which there has been a late autumn record.

Jay *Garrulus glandarius*

Scarce resident breeder.

Becoming ever more numerous and widespread .

Breeding season: April-July reports came from Aberlour, Aikenway, Allaloth, Altyre, Archiestown, Arndilly, Bin of Cullen, Blackhills, Brackenslack, Cairnty, Carn Crom, Caysbriggs, Conicavel, Corsekell, Craiglug, Cranloch, Culbin Forest, Darnaway, Dundurcas, Fochabers, Loch na Bo, Lochs of Bogmussach, Orton, Rathven, Scoot More, Scotch Hill, Sleepieshill Wood, Smithstown, Whiteash Hill and Whitefield. The only indications of breeding were an adult feeding young at Loch na Bo (AM) and a probable family party of 4 there on 23 July (EH).

At other seasons Jays were seen at Cawdor Wood (Sept), Caysbriggs (Feb,Oct,Nov), Ferness (Oct), Knock of Gowrie (Sept), Loch Loy (Dec), Loch na Bo (Jan-March,Oct,Nov), Loch Oire (Jan,March,Oct,Nov), Loch Spynie (Oct,Nov,Dec), Lochhill (Nov), Pitgaveny (Dec), Rothes (Oct), Scarffbanks (Nov,Dec), Sillyearn Wood (Dec), Sound Moor (Sept,Oct) and Torrieston. Over the last 10 years the number of localities providing Jay records has varied as follows:

1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
4	8	15	11	21	9	17	13	14	30

Clearly Jays are spreading rapidly through Moray & Nairn, although the apparent surge of occupied sites in 2002 is largely due to forested areas being visited as part of the breeding bird atlas fieldwork.

Magpie *Pica pica*

Fairly common resident breeder.

Noted in 27 localities during the year with breeding proved at Keppernach and Lein (Kingston). Up country at least as far as Lynemore, Glen Rinnes. Most together were 8 Newtyle 20 Dec.

Jackdaw *Corvus monedula*

Very common resident breeder.

One in Elgin 6 March showed the pale neck markings characteristic of Scandinavian race *C.m.monedula* (RP).

Rook *Corvus frugilegus*

Very common resident breeder.

Attendance at rookeries first noted at Rothes on 14 Jan. Subsequent rookery counts (apparently occupied nests) were 27 Auldearn, 69 Inchgower Distillery (Buckie), 12 Calcots (8 at NJ262645 and 4 at NJ255645), 42 Forres at NJ034587 and another 30 at NJ039589, 151 Balnacoul and another 25 at the nearby Mosstodloch main road junction, and at Rothes, 44 at the animal foodstuffs plant, 85 at the petrol station and 33 at the Spey.

Carrion Crow *Corvus corone*

Very common resident breeder.

Best monthly counts on the Lossie estuary were:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
30	25	23	16	8	32	75	35	43	26	45	90

Counts on the estuary (including Hooded and hybrid) on 27 Nov at 15 minute intervals from 1500hrs until 1545hrs revealed a steady increase from 33 to 39 to 47 and eventually 59. Presumably the build-up of a pre-roost gathering.

Elsewhere, 49 Pitairlie 4 Dec, 31 Bishopmill, Elgin 16 Oct and 14 together in South St., Elgin 4 March.

Hooded Crow *Corvus cornix*

Scarce visitor.

Following a decision by the British Ornithologists' Union Records Committee, Hooded Crow has been split from Carrion Crow as a full species, rather than a subspecies as previously. Many hybrids between the two species occur in Moray & Nairn, showing a range of appearance between the two extremes. Full Hooded Crows are relatively infrequent and it is doubtful whether such birds breed in our area. Observers are asked to examine apparently pure Hooded Crows very critically, especially any breeders.

In 2002, Hooded Crows or hybrids were seen on the Lossie estuary in most months:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Hooded		1				1	3		1			
Hybrid	3	2	1			2	4		2	2	2	2

Other Hooded Crows were 1 Boroughbriggs, Elgin 27 Feb, 1 Newton 13 March, 1 North Alves 13 March, 5 Apr and 30 Oct, 1 Elgin 14 March, 1 Burghead 21 March, 2 Binsness 7 June, 1 Portknockie 4 Aug, 1 Kingston 13-17 Aug, 3 Dallas 25 Aug, Cloddach 25 Aug, 1 Sound Moor 18 Sept, 2 Roseisle Forest 6 Oct, 1 Kellas 10 Nov, 1 Nairn harbour 25 Nov, 1 Findhorn 26 Nov, 1 Invererne 28 Nov, 1 drainie 2 Dec, 1 Pitairlie 4 Dec and 1 Beatshach 31 Dec.

Raven *Corvus corax*

Scarce visitor, formerly widespread breeder.

2 Creagan a'Chaise (Cromdale Hills) 10 Feb (AE) and 1 Ben Rinnes 21 July (AE) were the only records.

Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*

Very common resident breeder and winter visitor.

Nestboxes: all 9 nestboxes at Clochan were occupied, with broods fledging from each. Average brood size at fledging was 4.2, very similar to the 4.0 in 2001 and 4.3 in 2000 (MJHC).

On either side of the breeding season at Kinloss were 280 on 28 March and 320 on 5 June. On 26 Sept, 1600 were in the pre-roost gathering on the Milltown airfield masts before flying to roost at Loch Spynie. Many thousands were roosting here on 24 Nov.

Rose-coloured Starling *Sturnus roseus*

Rare vagrant.

In a year of exceptional numbers nationally, two adults were found in Moray & Nairn: 1 Hopeman 10-15 July (PTH,NH,EH) and 1 Mosstodloch 4-15 Aug (Mr&Mrs G.Brown,MJHC,AJL,RAS et al.). Another was near Loch Flemington on 21-22 June but was never seen inside the Nairn boundary and a second-hand report of 1 Forres 29 June was never substantiated. The Hopeman and Mosstodloch birds bring the local total to 8 (7 of them since 1987). Seven records have been in summer (June 4, July 2, Aug 1) and 1 in autumn (Oct).

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

Very common resident breeder.

Nestboxes: Very poor breeding success in Clochan nestboxes. 8 out of 10 boxes were occupied; broods died in 4 of the boxes and the other 4 pairs raised only 6 young between them, at an average brood size of only 1.5 (MJHC).

An adult was feeding juveniles on 31 May at Achdregnie, a hill farm in Glenlivet 4km from Tomnavoulin - the nearest significant human habitation. They breed here commonly.

Flock counts: 60 Lossiemouth harbour 22 Aug (40 on 19 Oct), 60 roosting Pinefield, Elgin 12 Jan, 57 Clochan 9 June and 45 Mulben 19 Sept.

Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*

Fairly common resident breeder.

Breeding season: Building in nestboxes at Longmorn commenced 17 March. Subsequently six boxes were occupied by pairs and all fledged broods successfully (H&JMacD). Evidence of breeding elsewhere was 1 pair Alves 9 Apr, 3 pairs in the base of large Rook nests Balnacoul (AY), 1 adult feeding juveniles Clochan 3 June, 1 pair East Grange 5 Apr and 2 May, 1 Philaxdale 8 May, 3 pairs Shempston area 25 June and 1 pair Duffus Castle 4 Apr (6 there 8 May) (JDHM et al.). 2 pairs raised two broods each in nestboxes at Duffus (MDe,EH).

In autumn/winter, numerous around Westerfolds as usual where 30 on 18 Feb, 50 on 13 March, still 40 on 8 May and 24 on 15 Dec. Elsewhere, 30 East Grange 5 Apr (4 there on 30 Dec), 14 Muirton 4 Jan, 22 Myreside 5 Jan and 17 Westerton 29 Apr. Smaller numbers were 1 Kingston 1 Jan, 5 Knock Farm 29 Nov, 1 Loch Flemington 6 Oct and 1 Nairn 7 Oct. Up to 4 regularly on bird table in Clochan.

Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*

Very common resident breeder, migrant and winter visitor.

First song Forres 9 Feb and Lein, Kingston 19 Feb.

Flock counts of 100 or more were: Winter-spring - 100 Wester Calcots 11 Jan 250, Findrassie 21 Jan, 200 Rafford 21 Jan, 250 Cloves 2 March, 350 Maviston 22 March. Autumn-winter - 650 Wellhill 8 Dec, 150 Burgie 17 Dec, 100 Caysbriggs 20 Dec, 150 Spynie Palace 21 Dec, 100 Miltonduff 29 Dec, 100 Knock Farm 29 Dec, 120 East Grange 30 Dec, 350 Nether Unthank 31 Dec and 200 Glen Rinnes 31 Dec.

Brambling *Fringilla montifringilla*

Fairly common winter visitor and migrant.

More numerous than usual in both winter seasons; the best year since 1993. Winter-spring: 3 Nairn 1 Jan, 131 Muirton 2 Jan, 70 Roseisle 3 Jan (22 on 27 Jan), 3 Lossiemouth 3 Jan, 1 Dufftown 4 Jan, 1 Forres 4 Jan, 1 Wester Greens 6 Jan, 34 Brodie 6 Jan, 4 Loch Flemington 9 Jan, 40 Kingston 12 Jan, 5 Knock Farm 17 Jan, 1 Meft 19 Jan, 2 Cummingston 29 Jan, 40 Rafford 31 Jan, 45 Ordiquish 5-9 Feb, 100 Drainie 9 Feb, 126 Auchindoun 14 Feb, 5 Binsness 15 Feb, 200 Westerfolds 24 Feb (still 25 on 13 March), 1 Scarffbanks 24 Feb, 1 Duffus 24 Feb, 3 Mill of Grange 27 March, 4 Fochabers 10 Apr, 1 Darkland 13 Apr and 2 Ben Aigan 27 Apr.

Autumn-winter: Arrival noted on 8 Oct when flocks of 51 and 33 flew in off the sea at Burghead. Thereafter, numerous in October in the Dufftown area where 66 Auchindoun 18th, 21 Enoch 18th, 92 Earnfold 20th and 207 Lower Cabrach 27th. Later, 4 Glen Rinnes 31 Dec. Nearer to the coast, 25 Boroughbriggs, Elgin 28 Dec was the only report.

Greenfinch *Carduelis chloris*

Very common resident breeder.

First song Lein, Kingston 10 Feb, nest building on 24 March.

Autumn/winter counts were 37 Culbin Bar 6 Oct, 30 Lossiemouth 19 Oct (feeding on rose hips in Station Park), 36 Scarffbanks 1 Dec and 40 Wellhill 8 Dec.

Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*

Common resident breeder.

Flock counts of 10 or more were 300+ Muldearie 21 Dec, 250 Ordiquish 9 Feb, 150 Easter Manbeen 29 Dec, 46 Tearie 8 Dec, 45 Bank of Roseisle 20 Sept, 40 Hempriggs 25 Jan, 40 Wellhill 8 Dec, 40 Myreside 22 Dec, 35 Knock Farm 29 Nov, 32 Kinloss 23 Sept, 30 New Elgin 30 Jan, 26 North Alves 27 Oct, 26 College of Roseisle 9 Nov, 25 Duffus 19 Dec, 20 Portknockie 30 July, 16 East Grange 25 Nov, 12 Findrassie 21 Dec and 11 Burghead 13 Jan.

The habit of visiting gardens to feed from peanut holders appears to be increasing. This behaviour was noted in Aberlour (1 on 25 Jan), Elgin (1 on 17 Jan), Fochabers (1 on 25 March, several on 12 Apr) and Lossiemouth (8 on 20 Jan).

Siskin *Carduelis spinus*

Very common resident breeder and migrant.

Very few Clochan in spring where only 27 ringed compared with an annual average of 122 over the last ten years.

Breeding populations estimated at 30 pairs Charlestown (Roseisle) 18 Apr and 35 pairs Hill of Urchany 25 Apr (JDHM).

Best flock counts were 140 Nairn 25 June, c50 Scarffbanks 24 Oct, 29 Nov and 12 Dec, and 30 Maryfield 21 Dec.

Linnet *Carduelis cannabina*

Very common resident breeder.

Flocks of 100 or more were 300 Roseisle 4 Feb, 300 Gilston 12 Feb, 156 Kinloss 19 Sept (57 on 26 July), 150 Knock Farm 31 Oct, 150 North Alves 13 Nov, 150 Bank of Roseisle 23 Nov, 140 Birnie 1 Oct, 130 Nairn Bar 6 Oct, 100 Wester Kintrae 12 Feb and 40 Portgordon 13 Jan.

Twite *Carduelis flavirostris*

Scarce resident breeder, a few on the coast in winter.

Upcountry, 38 Auchindoun 14 Feb (NH) and, in breeding habitat, 4 near Lochindorb 24 July (ISS).

In coastal areas in winter were 14 Findhorn Bay 6 Jan (CAG,AJL) and 8 there 16 March (ISS). At nearby Nairn/Culbin Bars, 27 on 13 Jan and 62 on 10 Feb (DJa), and near Nairn harbour 25 on 30 Jan-13 Feb (RPC). Interestingly, also 14 at the Bars on 10 July (GB). Elsewhere, 30 RAF Lossiemouth 5 Jan (RP) and 2 Darkland 25 March (EH).

Lesser Redpoll (Redpoll) *Carduelis cabaret*

Common resident breeder and migrant.

Breeding: A good number displaying at a colony at Tips of Clunymore 5 July, but few found elsewhere in the Dufftown area. At Glenlatterach, small colonies of 6-8 pairs found in two areas near the reservoir; one adult seen feeding four young.

Best winter counts were 20 Loch Oire 29 Jan and 14 Clochan 23 Dec.

Common Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra*

Irregular scarce visitor and probable scarce breeder.

Scottish Crossbill *Loxia scotica*

Probable common resident breeder.

Crossbill records in 2002, in order of flock size, were 50 Oakenhead Woods (Lossiemouth) 18 May, 50 Drum Wood 11 May, 35 Sluie 7 Apr, 30 Caysbriggs 27 March, 30 Darnaway 7 May, 20 Spynie Palace 21 Apr, 20 Binn Hill 11 June, 18 Roseisle Forest 3 May, 17 Cloddymoss 6 Oct, 12 Scarffbanks 31 Dec, 12

Loch na Bo 30 Apr (10 there 26 March), 10 Kinloss 19 March, 9 Hill of Delnapot 8 June, 9 Bantrach 30 May, 8 Achdregnie 31 May, 6 Miur of Holmie (Clochan) 9 June, 6 Loch of Blairs 12 Apr, 5 Daugh of Edinvillie 19 Apr, 4 Binsness 7 June, 4 Dava 16 June, 2 Monaughty Forest 19 May, 2 Loch Loy 4 Feb, 1 singing Cloddach 10 Feb, 1 singing Charlestown (Burghead) 18 Apr, 1 Balnacoul (Mosstodloch) 14 Apr, 1 Lochs of Bogmussach 4 July, and 1 York Tower 13 Apr. Also recorded, including juveniles, Wood of Allachie (Aberlour) 11 June and around Dufftown where numbers were very small compared with 2001.

Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

Common resident breeder.

Breeding: 5 pairs Hill of Urchany 25 Apr and 2 pairs Charlestown (Burghead) 18 Apr and 23 May. Also recorded in the breeding season at Arthur's Bridge, Auldearn, Broom of Moy, Cloddach, Fochabers, Laiken Forest (family party of 7 on 16 June) and Randolph's Leap.

Only small groups in winter; 9 Loch Spynie 28 Sept, 8 Mosstowie 8 Sept, 8 Urquhart 10 March, 8 Loch Oire 11 Jan, 7 Spynie Palace 21 Dec and 6 Berryburn 24 Nov (in Scots Pine far out on moorland) were the only groups over 5 encountered.

Snow Bunting *Plectrophenax nivalis*

Common winter visitor and rare breeder.

Winter counts: Best monthly counts at regular Snow Bunting sites on the coast were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Oct	Nov	Dec
Nairn/Culbin Bars (& east Nairn)	152 (13 th)	134 (10 th)	nc	0	nc	33 (8 th)
Lossiemouth east beach	56 (12 th)	70 (24 th)	50 (3 rd)	0	40 (24 th)	65 (29 th)

First back in autumn were 9 Roseisle Forest picnic area 5 Oct and 5 flying in off the sea Burghead 8 Oct. Near the coast, 2 Cullen 16-17 Oct and 1 Muirton 5 Jan. In the hills in winter were 70 Lecht ski centre 8 Feb (34 there on 14 Feb) coming to picnic scraps in the car park.

Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella*

Very common resident breeder.

In summer, 11 males singing along the west side of the R.Findhorn between Broom of Moy and Findhorn Bay 10 July.

Autumn/winter flocks were 60 Westerfolds 7 Jan, rising to 70 on 23 Feb, 45 Califer 2 March, 31 Shempston 22 Dec, 25 Knock Farm 31 Oct and 19 Lossiemouth east beach dunes 28 Dec.

Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus*

Common resident breeder.

Breeding activity noted in a wide range of habitats from the coastal strip to the moorlands near Dava where song heard Auchlochan 16 May. Records included 1 pair Derrybeg (Glen Rinnes) 26 May, 3 pairs Kinloss 2 Apr, male nest building Lossie Forest 11 May, 1 pair Duffus Castle moat 4 Apr, 3 singing Glenlatterach Reservoir 21 June and 1 singing Windyridge pool 29 June.

In coastal dunes in winter, 4 Nairn/Culbin Bars 10 Feb (8 there 6 Oct) and 14 Lossiemouth east beach 27 Sept. On farmland, 25 Knock Farm 31 Oct and 30 there 29 Nov.

Corn Bunting *Miliaria calandra*

Scarce resident breeder.

Birds located in spring/summer (singles unless stated and *singing birds in italics*) at *Bank of Roseisle* (visiting nest site in June), *Brandston*, *Buckie (2)*, *Clarkly Hill*, *Cotts of Innes*, *Easter Oldtown*, *Gollachy*, *Hilton of Delnies*, *Longmorn (2)*, *Mundole*, *Nether Unthank*, *Palmerscross (New Elgin)*, *Portgordon*, *Spey Bay/Tugnet* and *Stonewells* (food carrying seen). Two birds Duffus 12 July included 1 recently fledged juvenile.

An exceptionally large (for recent years) flock of 38 birds was perched in trees in Clochan on 3 May; a date when adults would be expected to be in breeding territories (MJHC). In winter, 8 Clochan 24 Dec was the largest flock reported.

ADDITIONS/CORRECTIONS TO 2001 REPORT

Barnacle Goose *Branta leucopsis*

Add: Groups of 40, 40 and 80 east past Strathlene 30 Sept.

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*

Add: 55 Loch Park 2 Dec.

Golden Eagle *Aquila chrysaetos*

Add: Site iii) pair bred unsuccessfully.

Capercaillie *Tetrao urogallus*

p33 the heading for column 2 of the table should read 'Records in 2001'.

Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*

Add: 1 River Spey, Fochabers 9 June.

Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

Add: 12 Cooper Park pond, Elgin 12 Feb.

Little Gull *Larus minutus*

Add: 1 adult Kingston 28 June.

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*

Add: 1F Tugnet 29 Sept was a coastal migrant.

OBSERVERS CONTRIBUTING TO 2001 REPORT

Add P. Gordon Smith.

DECISIONS OF BRITISH BIRDS RARITIES COMMITTEE

The following records **have** been accepted:

Red-breasted Goose	Redhill/Roseisle	Apr 2001
American Wigeon	Loch Flemington	March 2001
American Wigeon	Loch Oire	Oct-Dec 2001
Black Scoter	Burghead Bay	Oct 2001-Jan 2002

DECISIONS OF SCOTTISH BIRDS RARITIES COMMITTEE

The following records **have** been accepted:

American Wigeon	Loch Oire	Jan-March 2002
Rose-coloured Starling	Hopeman	July 2002
Rose-coloured Starling	Mosstodloch	Aug 2002

The following records **have not** been accepted:

Cory's Shearwater	Lossiemouth	Aug 2001
Grey Phalarope	Lossiemouth	Nov 2001

DECISIONS OF MORAY & NAIRN RARITIES COMMITTEE

The following records **have** been accepted:

White Stork	Invererne	Apr 2002
Mandarin (9)	Elgin	Dec 2002
Green-winged Teal	Kingston	Apr 2001
Green-winged Teal	Loch Spynie	Jan-June 2002
Green-winged Teal	Loch Spynie (3)	Nov 2002
Green-winged Teal	Kingston	Nov 2002
Green-winged Teal	Nether Dallachy	Apr 2002
Garganey	Spey Bay	Sept 2002
Crane (2)	Roseisle/Kinloss	March 2002
Little Ringed Plover (3)	Kingston	May-July 2002
Grey Phalarope	Lossiemouth	Nov 2002
Grey Phalarope	Burghead	Nov 2002
Mediterranean Gull	Lossiemouth/Myreside	Jan-Feb 2002
Mediterranean Gull	Loch Oire	March 2002
Sabine's Gull	Lossiemouth	Sept 2002
Sabine's Gull	Lossiemouth	Oct 2002
Sabine's Gull	Portknockie	Oct 2002
Black Tern	Tugnet	May 2001
Black Redstart	Lossiemouth	Nov 2002
Great Grey Shrike	Kinloss	Oct 2002

GRID REFERENCES OF MAJOR LOCALITIES MENTIONED IN THE SPECIES ACCOUNTS
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Aberlour	NJ265428	Hempriggs	NJ103638
Auldearn	NH918555	Hopeman	NJ145695
Ben Rinnes	NJ255355	Invererne	NJ033606
Binn Hill	NJ305655	Kellas	NJ172543
Bin of Cullen	NJ480643	Kellas oakwood	NJ157540
Binsness	NJ030628	Kinermony	NJ254420
Bogmoor	NJ357629	Kingsteps	NH903573
Bow Fiddle Rock	NJ495688	Kingston	NJ337655
Brodie	NJ978572	Kinloss	NJ065618
Broom of Moy	NJ020593	Kinneddar	NJ223693
Buckie	NJ425657	Knockando	NJ182429
Buckpool	NJ412653	Lecht	NJ245133
Burghead	NJ114689	Lein, Kingston	NJ334657
Burghead Bay	NJ080670	Lhanbryde	NJ275615
Burgie	NJ093595	Loch Flemington	NH810520
Cabrach	NJ385270	Loch Loy	NH933587
Califer Hill	NJ083570	Loch na Bo	NJ283600
Carron	NJ222414	Loch of Blairs	NJ023557
Cawdor	NH845500	Loch Oire	NJ886608
Caysbriggs	NJ248669	Loch Spynie	NJ235665
Clochan	NJ402608	Lochindorb	NH975365
Cloddach quarry	NJ200591	Lossie estuary	NJ243700
Cloddymoss	NH982599	Lossie Forest	NJ270680
College of Roseisle	NJ138665	Lossiemouth	NJ235710
Coltfield	NJ117637	Milltown airfield	NJ265655
Covesea	NJ186705	Milton Brodie	NJ092627
Craigellachie	NJ290450	Miltonduff	NJ182599
Cran Loch	NH945590	Miltonhill	NJ099630
Culbin Bar	NH965627	Monaughty Forest	NJ132595
Culbin Forest	NH990620	Montgrew	NJ453517
Cullen	NJ513671	Nairn	NH883567
Cummingston	NJ133690	Nairn Bar	NH922603
Dava	NJ005387	Pitgaveny	NJ240652
Delnies	NH845563	Portgordon	NJ395642
Drainie	NJ215687	Portknockie	NJ490685
Drynachan	NH865397	Roseisle	NJ138666
Dufftown	NJ325400	Sanquhar Loch	NJ041581
Duffus	NJ170688	Scarffbanks	NJ237663
Dulsie	NH932416	Spey Bay	NJ354653
Elgin	NJ215625	Speymouth	NJ345656
Findhorn	NJ040645	Strathlene	NJ449674
Findhorn Bay	NJ045625	Tarras	NJ062597
Findochty	NJ463680	Tomintoul	NJ170185
Fochabers	NJ345585	Tugnet	NJ348655
Forres	NJ035585	Urquhart	NJ286627
Garmouth	NJ338644		

MUTE SWANS BREEDING IN MORAY & NAIRN IN 2002

BOB PROCTOR

SUMMARY

A national census of Mute Swans occurred in 2002. All known breeding sites in Moray & Nairn were visited to establish the breeding status of each pair (*i.e.* territorial, nesting, brood present, failed) (Table 1). Additionally, all suitable breeding sites were checked at least once during the survey period. Non-breeding birds were counted in April, prior to any failed breeders joining non-breeding flocks. To confirm that breeding birds were still occupying sites, territories were checked soon after 28 April, thus giving a more accurate count of non-breeding birds.

A total of 52 breeding birds held territories this year; 38 were breeding birds, and a further 14 'territorial-only' birds (no breeding attempt) (Table 2).

A total of 62 non-breeding birds were located, of which 26 were in Nairn and 36 in Moray (Table 2).

RESULTS

Numbers of breeding birds have remained relatively stable since 1990 (Fig. 1). The total of 8 breeding birds (4 pairs) located in Nairn is unchanged from 1990. The 30 breeding birds (15 pairs) in Moray represents an increase of four pairs since 1990. This increase could have been higher because at least 4 pairs that were 'territorial-only' would probably have bred in a 'normal' year. Two of these territorial pairs (Loch of Blairs and Loch Oire) at least, were known to have obtained new partners during the breeding season.

Territorial pairs only increased slightly between the 1983 and 1990 surveys, but have shown a large increase from 1990 (Fig. 1). A total of 11 old sites were not used in 2002. Six sites were new since the 1990 survey.

DISCUSSION

The 1955/56 census only recorded occupied nests and non-breeders (Rawcliffe 1958). Subsequent surveys have split occupied sites into 'breeding birds' and 'territorial birds'.

From ringing, some individuals are not finding suitable breeding sites or partners until 10 years old (*i.e.* the new female at Loch Oire). Indeed, one individual ringed as a chick at the Cooper Park, Elgin is still a non-breeder at 15 years old. This may suggest that the breeding population is currently at its optimum capacity, and this may be confirmed by the large increase within the non-breeding population (Fig. 2). The non-breeding population has undergone an increase of 360% since the 1990 census.

Table 1: Summary of all known breeding sites in Moray & Nairn, including previously occupied sites.

Site ¹	Name	Details	Brood	Fledged
1.	Achavraat	Not occupied in 2002.	-	-
2.	Loch Flemington	Pair present in early Apr. Female incubating 28 Apr. Brood in late May.	5	5
3.	Loch Loy	Pair present 11 Apr. Brood present in late June.	5	?
4.	Cran Loch	Adult incubating 28 Apr. Adult in late June; no brood.	0	0
5.	Loch of Blairs	Adult present 20 March. Pair present 3 Apr; new pair.	'T' only ²	-

6.	Findhorn Bay	No breeding birds found in 2002.	-	-
7.	Sanquhar Loch	Pair present (DBF & DBH). Adult on nest 10 Apr. Pair not present on 13 May; assumed to have left with brood.	?	?
8.	Mosset Park	Not occupied in 2002.	-	-
9.	Kellas House	Not occupied in 2002.	-	-
10.	Miltonduff Distillery	Not occupied in 2002.	-	-
11.	Strypes	Not occupied in 2002.	-	-
12.	Loch na Bo	Pair present 16 March. Adult on nest 6 Apr. Brood present in June.	5	5
13.	Loch Oire	Male only present (U3572) up to 6 Apr when a new mate (U0716) was present. Pair throughout summer.	'T' only	-
14.	Fochabers Lake	Pair present (Female: U0714) on 10 March.	0	0
15.	Loch Park	Not occupied in 2002.	-	-
16.	River Isla	Not occupied in 2002.	-	-
17.	River Devron	Not occupied in 2002.	-	-
18.	Cooper Park, Elgin	New pair present from early Jan. Another pair also present in Feb. resulting in a territorial dispute. Adult apparently sitting on nest in mid-March. One pair only from mid-Feb throughout the breeding season, though occupancy intermittent due to public disturbance.	0	0
19.	Gilston	None present when site checked on 10 March. Pair present on 1 and 6 Apr. None present 27 Apr.	'T' only	-
20.	Spynie Canal	Pair present 7-10 March. Brood present from 1 June.	4	4
21 a.	Loch Spynie	Pair present 16 March. Pair with brood from 12 May.	8	8
21 b.	Loch Spynie	Pair present 16 March. Pair with brood from 10 June.	6	6
22 a.	Spey Bay	Pair present (Female: U1158) on 10 March. Female incubating at estuary site on 26 Apr.	3	3
22 b.	Spey Bay	Pair near Tugnet on 26 Apr, female incubating.	0	0
23	Lossie Forest	Pair present 13 Apr.	0	0
24 a.	Cloddach Quarry	Pair present 6 Apr. Adult incubating 28 Apr. Brood present in early June.	4	4
24 b.	Cloddach Quarry	Adult incubating 28 Apr.	0	0
25.	Brodie	Pair present 6 March [male ringed]. Brood present 2 June.	7	7
26.	Loch of the Clans	Not occupied in 2002.	-	-
27.	Lower Spynie Pond	Not occupied in 2002. No suitable habitat: pond dry.	-	-
28.	Boath House, Auldearn	None present when site checked on 6 March. Pair present 1 Apr. None present 28 Apr.	'T' only	-
29.	Nairn harbour	Pair present 1 Apr. Pair present with brood 2 June.	6	6
30.	Windyridge	Pair present 7 Apr.	'T' only	-
31.	Inchstelly	Adult present 20 March. Pair present 1 Apr.	'T' only	-
32.	Nether Dallachy	Pair present 14 Apr. (female incubating).	?	?
33.	Nether Unthank	Only one adult present 13 Apr. Pair, no evidence of breeding.	-	-
34.	Newton of Dalvey	Pair present in May. Pair with brood in June.	3	3

Notes:

1. Site numbers relate to previous summaries in Moray & Nairn Bird Reports 1992 & 1993.
2. 'T' only: are those sites where pairs were only territorial and no breeding attempt took place.

Sites 29-34 are new since the last surveys reported in MNBR 1992 & 1993. One site, Lower Spynie Pond, has been lost due to drying-out. Nine sites do not have pairs currently occupying them, despite these being past breeding sites and appearing to be still suitable: Achavraat, Loch of the Clans, Mosset Park, Findhorn Bay, Miltonduff distillery, Strypes, Loch Park, River Isla and the River Deveron.

Table 2: Census results for Moray & Nairn Mute Swan surveys in 1990 and 2002.

	1990			
	Breeding birds	Territorial birds	Non breeders	Total
Nairn	8	4	0	12
Moray	22	2	17	41

	2002			
	Breeding birds	Territorial birds	Non breeders	Total
Nairn	8	2	26	36
Moray	30	12	36	76

Non-breeders

Nairn total = 26

21 (20 ads., 1 1st y.) Nairn Harbour 11 Apr.

12 (ads.) Kingsteps 28 Apr when 14 (8 ads., 6 1st y.) in Nairn Harbour. Maximum count for these two sites is 20 ads., 6 1st y.

Moray total = 36

15 (14 ads., 1 1st y.) Findhorn Bay 7 Apr.

7 (6 ads., 1 1st y.) Lossie estuary 7 Apr.

2 adults Windyridge 7 Apr.

3 adults Loch Spynie 13 Apr.

3 (2 ads., 1 1st y.) Tugnet/Kingston 13 Apr.

2 1st y. Loch Oire 6 Apr and 13 Apr.

4 1st y. Fochabers Lake 6 Apr.

These non-breeding flocks were counted in April, prior to any potential failed breeders joining flocks. All breeding pairs (territorial or incubating) were checked after 28 April to confirm that none had failed and joined non-breeding flocks.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank Martin Cook, Charlie Gervaise, Duncan Gibson, John Mackie and Allan Perkins for helping with this survey and providing information on breeding swans.

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CHANGES IN SUMMER MIGRANT ARRIVAL DATES**MARTIN COOK**

Global warming is upon us and over the past 25 years the rate of warming has been greater than at any time during the last 1000 years. Over recent decades many changes have been documented in the distribution of plants, butterflies and birds; many of these changes are considered to be due in part to climatic change.

One aspect of ornithological interest is the effect of earlier and warmer springs on the arrival dates of our summer migrants. The following BTO Website provides a useful summary of what is known on a national basis:

www.bto.org/research/advice/ecc/eccsection62.htm

Three English regional studies have examined arrival data for the last 40-50 years. In each case a significant number of species examined showed a tendency towards progressively earlier arrival dates.

In Moray & Nairn we have systematically collected arrival dates for eight common summer migrants going back to 1985. In this short article this data has been examined for signs of earlier arrival in our small part of Scotland (Table 1).

Table 1. Mean first arrival date for each of three six-year periods between 1985-2002.

	1985-1990	1991-1996	1997-2002
Swift	10 May	9 May	8 May
Sand Martin	9 April	4 April	23 March
Swallow	14 April	12 April	10 April
House Martin	20 April	24 April	27 April
Wheatear	3 April	2 April	30 March
Sedge Warbler	30 April	29 April	29 April
Whitethroat	4 May	3 May	1 May
Willow Warbler	15 April	16 April	16 April

It must be stressed that this data is based on small sample sizes and there is no claim of statistical significance.

It can be seen from Table 1 that for 5 species (Swift, Sand Martin, Swallow, Wheatear and Whitethroat) the trend is towards progressively earlier arrival. For Sedge Warbler and Willow Warbler no change is evident while for House Martin there is evidence of a reverse trend towards later arrival. It will be interesting to see whether these apparent trends are reinforced in the light of records for future years – it is clearly important that we continue to collect migrant arrival dates.

RINGING REPORT

BOB PROCTOR

Numbers of birds ringed in Moray & Nairn during 2002:

	Full Grown	Pullus	Total		Full Grown	Pullus	Total
Mute Swan	3		3	Goldcrest	18		18
Sparrowhawk	2		2	Spotted Flycatcher	2		2
Oystercatcher		6	6	Long-tailed Tit	71		71
Herring Gull	1	3	4	Crested Tit		33	33
Black Guillemot		2	2	Coal Tit	18		18
Little Auk	1		1	Blue Tit	140	67	207
Woodpigeon	2	2	4	Great Tit	43	93	136
Barn Owl		5	5	Treecreeper	8	4	12
Grt.Spot.Woodpecker	2		2	Jackdaw	9	3	12
Swallow	3	42	45	Rook	1		1
Wren	34	5	39	Starling	298	37	335
Dunnock	15		15	House Sparrow	148	10	158
Robin	65		65	Tree Sparrow	5		5
Blackbird	94	8	102	Chaffinch	65		65
Fieldfare	2		2	Greenfinch	53		53
Song Thrush	12		12	Goldfinch	8		8
Redwing	22		22	Siskin	60		60
Sedge Warbler	30		30	Bullfinch	7		7
Whitethroat	12		12	Yellowhammer	1		1
Garden Warbler	1		1	Reed Bunting	5		5
Blackcap	11		11				
Chiffchaff	7		7				
Willow Warbler	65	2	67				
GRAND TOTAL					1344	322	1666

Recoveries in 2002:

All ringing recoveries reported to the end of February 2003 are included in this section with the more interesting ones given in full. Information was supplied by M.J.H.Cook, D.Gibson, R.Proctor, D.Slater, R.L.Swann and from Highland Ringing Group bulletins. Anyone finding a ringed bird in Moray or Nairn is asked to pass the details to Martin Cook.

Ringing details are given on the first line and recovery data on the second line. The age when ringed is given according to the EURING code, note however, that these numbers do not represent age in years:

- 1 Nestling or chick
- 2 Fully grown, year of hatching unknown
- 3 Hatched during year of ringing
- 4 Hatched before year of ringing, exact year unknown

- 5 Hatched in the previous year
 6 Hatched before the previous year, exact year unknown

m = Male f = Female J = Juvenile
 CES = Constant Effort Site

Recovery symbols: v Caught and released with ring
 vv Ring number read in field, or sight record of a colour-ringed bird
 vB Breeding when trapped
 + Shot or killed by man
 X Found dead or dying (F = Fresh, L = Long dead)
 ? Unknown circumstances

SLAVONIAN GREBE

An adult colour-ringed at Loch Ashie, near Inverness, in autumn 2001 was seen at Moray & Nairn breeding site 7 in early May where it bred and failed. It was then found at site 2 on 3 July where it bred successfully.

SHAG

1336959	1	080798	Isle of May	
	X	020599	Lossiemouth	176 km
1388543	1	260602	Isle of May	
	vv	241202	Buckie	170 km

GREY HERON

1292511	1	180594	Dalmore, Invergordon	
	X	030302	Findochty	80 km

MUTE SWAN

Z50366	8f	040887	Cooper Park, Elgin	
	X	200401	Cooper Park, Elgin	Local
U0909	1	230990	River Urie, Inverurie	
	X	200201	Lossiemouth	73 km

The extremes of Mute Swan movements: Z50366 was never seen away from the Cooper Park, while U0909 was seen at several locations around north-east Scotland including Loch Spynie, Kingston and Loch of Skene.

WHOOPE SWAN

A colour-ringed individual (PT4) was seen at Scarffbanks Farm on 5 October 2002. It was originally ringed on 21 February 2002 at Caerlaverock, and regularly seen there until 13th March.

PINK-FOOTED GOOSE

1361941	3m	051100	Balmedie	
	+	311200	Findhorn Bay	103 km

A typical record of a Pink-footed Goose remaining in north-east Scotland but travelling widely within the area.

BRENT GOOSE (LIGHT-BELLIED)

A colour-ringed individual from the Svalbard/northeast Greenland population was seen at Nairn in October. This individual was a juvenile male ringed at Hornsgard Ron, Nibe Bredning, Limfjorden, Denmark on 24 April 2001.

Another colour-ringed individual, this time from the East Canadian population, was seen at the Lossie estuary on 25th December. This individual was an adult female and was originally ringed at Hildsnes, Iceland on 25 May 2002.

WIGEON

FA58510	6f +	260297 --1201	Loch Flemington Ardersier	4 km
FA58522	5m +	260297 161101	Loch Flemington near Evie, Orkney	188 km
FA73989	4m +	301296 051002	Alturlie near Fochabers	64 km
FR24586	3F +	281200 241202	Newburgh, Aberdeen Findhorn Bay	103km

EIDER

HT04724	3f vv	210886 100202	Newburgh Lossiemouth harbour	89 km
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This individual is colour-ringed and probably accounts for all of the colour-ring sightings at Lossie harbour in recent years. Not many Eiders from this location travel round into the Moray Firth, most are found on the east coast between Rattray Head and the Firth of Forth.

MARSH HARRIER

FA64922	1 vv	300600 300402	Tayside Moray	145km
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BUZZARD

GF73341	1 X	220601 310102	Calrossie Woods, near Tain Sheriffston, Elgin	50 km
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OYSTERCATCHER

FR12594	8 X	090483 161101	Loch Flemington Blackrock, Louth, EIRE	425 km
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Two local (less than 5 km) recoveries were also received.

KNOT

XR67820	5 v	140294 230801	Lossiemouth Wainfleet Marsh, Lincolnshire	569 km
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BLACK-TAILED GODWIT

Two colour-ringed birds were seen at the Lossie estuary on 27 July 2002.

Bird 1:

Ringed as an adult male on 8 Aug 98 at Terrington, The Wash, Norfolk.

Re-sighted	160400	Ouse Washes, Cambs
	150301	Ouse Washes, Cambs
	160401	Ouse Washes, Cambs
	180401	Ouse Washes, Cambs
	240202	Welney WWT, Ouse Washes, Norfolk
	210402	Snettisham, The Wash, Norfolk

Bird 2:

An adult male ringed on spring migration on 27 Apr 2002 in Reykjavik, Iceland and re-sighted there on 1 May 2002.

TURNSTONE

XR67932	6	140294	Lossiemouth	
	v	041101	Panbridge, Carnoustie, Tayside	140 km

This shows a Turnstone changing its wintering site, and is very unusual because Turnstones are generally very site-faithful.

BLACK-HEADED GULL

A colour-ringed adult was seen at the Lossie estuary on 20 January. This was ringed at Kirkhill industrial estate, Aberdeen in either 1999 or 2000 as part of a study looking at dispersal patterns.

HERRING GULL

Colour-ring: JJH3

FA22673	1	160798	Hornoya, Vardo, Finnmark, NORWAY	
	vv	110700	Hamningberg, Batsfjord, Finnmark, NORWAY	
	vv	140402	Lossie estuary	2162 km

Colour-ring: 0501

	8	170102	Peckfield Landfill site, near Leeds	
	vv	231002	Lossie estuary	420 km
GF41926	1	300695	Hopeman	
	+F	220102	Hopeman	3 km

A series of records showing the large differences recorded in Herring Gull movements. The Norwegian individual is the first record from that country. It was colour-ringed at the eastern-most point in Norway and would have been an *argentatus* individual. The second colour-ringed individual was ringed as part of a bird management study at landfill sites and was probably breeding somewhere in northern Scotland. The Hopeman bird was shot at a pig unit.

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL

MA03193	1	290602	Rothiesholm, Stronsay, Orkney	
	X	120802	Lossiemouth	154 km

A colour-ringed individual (A71) was seen at the Lossie estuary on 19 October 2002, it was originally ringed as a chick at Badbea, Caithness on 28 June 2002.

Four individuals ringed as chicks at Nigg Oil Terminal were found dead in the Districts. One was ringed in 2000 and found at Findhorn. Three others were ringed in 2002 and were found at Findhorn, Lossiemouth and Nairn Bar.

COMMON TERN

XR25305	1	060787	Findhorn Bridge, Forres	
	X	040602	Nigg Oil Terminal	25 km
XS33484	1	220684	Nairn	
	X	200601	Nigg Oil Terminal	16 km

ARCTIC TERN

7201137	1	220782	Storholmen, Skodje, More og Romsdal, NORWAY	
	XF	240592	near Nairn	794km

This is the fourth record of a Norwegian-ringed Arctic Tern in Britain (J.Clark *et al.* 2002. Ringing Report 2001. *Ringing & Migration* 21:80-143). This individual was clearly of breeding age, and the date and location suggest that it was probably breeding locally.

GUILLEMOT

R31241	1	030702	Fair Isle	
	X	290902	Lossiemouth	223 km

ROBIN

E132439	3	070997	Avoch	
	X cat	240202	Portgordon	70 km

BLACKBIRD

CL19472	1	050702	New Elgin, Elgin	
	X	230702	New Elgin, Elgin	Local

This individual hit a window: a frequent cause of death for this species.

SEDGE WARBLER

4422867	3	100801	Le Massereau, Frossay, Loire-Atlantique, FRANCE	
	v	120502	Loch Spynie CES	1163 km
P631363	3J	280701	Sandwich Bay Estate	
	v(=m)	160602	Loch Spynie CES	772 km

The individual from the Paris ringing scheme had a high fat score, suggesting that an onward movement was imminent. It is only the second French-ringed Sedge Warbler to be found in the Districts. The first, found dead at Kingston, was also from Loire-Atlantique. There are now three movements to/from France, all have been to Departments adjacent to the Bay of Biscay. This region is considered a 'fattening-up' area for birds prior to their migration to wintering sites in the Sahel region of West Africa.

WILLOW WARBLER					
4Z7307	3	070899	Clochan, Buckie		
	v	030502	Portland Bill, Dorset		790 km
COAL TIT					
P646310	5	020102	Lossiemouth		
	vB(=f)	190502	Loch Spynie CES		6 km
BLUE TIT					
N408885	3	141101	Lossiemouth		
	vB(=f)	190502	Loch Spynie CES		6 km
GREAT TIT					
VF39473	1	240502	Loch Spynie		
	XF	130802	Pitairlie, near Elgin		1 km
Found dead on the road.					
ROOK					
EK27724	6	100286	Forres		
	X	230602	Forres		Local

Although a local recovery, this individual was at least 18 years old.

STARLING					
CL72527	5f	110102	Broadhaven, Wick		
	vB	120802	Bishopmill, Elgin		88km

CL72527 was breeding in Elgin when caught, though apparently wintering to the north. Two local movements occurred in Bishopmill, Elgin.

GOLDFINCH					
N771702	4f	130500	Invererne, Forres		
	v	010302	Upton Magna, Shropshire		550km

This record is unprecedented locally, the previous best movement being a bird ringed in December 1982 moving from Ardersier to Loch Spynie.

SISKIN					
N458644	5f	290498	Clochan, Buckie		
	v	210402	Logie Hill, Kildary		66 km
P275127	5m	290400	Clochan, Buckie		
	X	260302	Kirkby Lonsdale, Lancashire		380 km
N713868	5f	060299	Bishopmill, Elgin		
	X	010302	Bishopmill, Elgin		Local