

A photograph of a small green bird, likely a warbler, perched on a tree branch. The bird has a yellow stripe on its wing and is facing left. The background is a blurred green and brown, suggesting a natural outdoor setting. The bird is the central focus of the image.

Birds in
Moray &
Nairn

2016

Birds in Moray & Nairn in 2016

MORAY & NAIRN BIRD REPORT
No.31 – 2016

Published at www.birdsinmorayandnairn.org in January 2018

CONTENTS

	Page
How to submit records	3
Assessment of rarity records	4
Observers contributing to Birds in Moray & Nairn 2016	6
Species accounts	7
The first successful breeding of Red-spotted Bluethroats in Moray, in 2016 <i>Robert Ince</i>	96
Hobbies breeding in Moray in 2016 <i>Martin Cook</i>	103
Ringling Report 2016 <i>Bob Proctor</i>	105
Grid references of localities mentioned in the species accounts	116

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

Cover photograph: Yellow-browed Warbler at Portknockie, 7 October 2016 (Lenny Simpson).

Species account authors:

Mute Swan to Goosander (all wildfowl)	Bob Proctor
Quail to White-billed Diver (gamebirds and divers)	Martin Cook
Fulmar to Shag (including shearwaters)	Richard Somers Cocks
Little Egret to Coot (herons, grebes and rails)	Martin Cook
Raptors	Martin Cook
Oystercatcher to Snipe (all waders)	Duncan Gibson
Pomarine Skua to Great Black-backed Gull (skuas, auks, terns and gulls)	Richard Somers Cocks
Feral Pigeon to Corn Bunting (including pigeons, owls, crows, hirundines, tits, warblers, thrushes, chats, wagtails, pipits, finches and buntings)	Bob Proctor

This edition of Birds in Moray & Nairn, the 31st edition of the Moray & Nairn bird report, is available only online at www.birdsinmorayandnairn.org. For those who wish a hard copy, this can be printed from the website.

In addition to the species account authors, the editor would like to thank all those who have submitted their observations, and the photographers who have generously permitted the use of their images.

HOW TO SUBMIT RECORDS

There are two main ways in which you can submit your records:

1. To Birdtrack

The Scottish Ornithologists' Club is now a BirdTrack partner with the BTO, RSPB and BirdWatch Ireland.

BirdTrack is an exciting new web-based bird recording project that looks at migration movements and distributions of birds throughout Britain and Ireland. It provides facilities for observers to store and manage their own personal records as well as using these for the production of local bird reports, and to support species conservation at local, regional, national and even international scales.

The principle behind BirdTrack is that if you have been out birdwatching anywhere in Britain and Ireland, or merely watching birds in your garden, records of the birds you have seen (or indeed have not seen) can be useful data. Thus the scheme is year-round, and ongoing, and anyone with an interest in birds can contribute. Important results produced by BirdTrack include mapping migration timings and monitoring scarce birds. We know very little about the timing of arrival and departure of winter visitors and this is just one area in which BirdTrack will provide useful information. There are also many scarce birds where we would like to know much more about their populations. The SOC hopes that most birdwatchers in Scotland will soon adopt BirdTrack as their main bird recording and information sharing tool.

To find out more, or to register and get started, visit the BirdTrack website at www.bto.org/volunteer-surveys/birdtrack

2. To the Moray and Nairn Recorder

Records may be submitted periodically during the year or in one batch as soon as possible after the end of the year, and by the end of January at the latest. Although any format is acceptable, the Recorder would be very grateful to receive as many submissions as possible on Excel – a spreadsheet with appropriate headings may be obtained from the Recorder (see below). Minimum information required for each record should include species name, number, date and location (if possible with a 6-figure map reference, although a 4-figure map reference is often adequate).

More information on how, and where, to submit your records can be found in the ‘Submitting records’ section of the Birds in Moray and Nairn website at www.birdsinmorayandnairn.org/bird-recording/submitting-records/.

ASSESSMENT OF RARITY RECORDS

In order that an entirely accurate archive of records of rare and scarce species is maintained it is clearly important to apply consistent standards to the acceptance of such records. This is ensured through a system of assessment of written descriptions of the circumstances of the occurrence and of the bird itself. Those who make use of our reports in the future must have confidence that all published records have been scrutinised and considered acceptable by the birding community of today.

A three-tier system of record assessment exists:

British Birds Rarities Committee (BBRC) assesses records of extreme rarities, in a British context. The full committee contains ten voting members of which at least nine must vote in favour of a record for it to be accepted.

A list of species currently considered by BBRC can be found at www.bbrc.org.uk/currentrarespecies.htm

Scottish Birds Records Committee (SBRC) assesses records of birds rare in a Scottish context but not sufficiently rare to be assessed by BBRC. The committee consists of seven voting members of which at least six must vote in favour.

A list of species currently considered by SBRC can be found at www.the-soc.org.uk/sbrc-list.htm

Moray & Nairn Rarities Committee (MNRC) assesses slightly less rare Scottish species and all other local rarities. The committee consists of five voting members of which at least four must vote in favour for a record to be accepted. Current membership of MNRC is Martin Cook, Roy Dennis, Duncan Gibson, Bob Proctor and Dave Pullan.

The following species are currently on the MNRC list:

Bewick's Swan	Bean Goose	American Wigeon
Green-winged Teal	Garganey (except adult male)	Ring-necked Duck
Ruddy Duck (except adult male)	Surf Scoter (except adult male)	Balearic Shearwater
Leach's Petrel	Red-necked Grebe	Black-necked Grebe
White Stork	Spoonbill	Bittern
Little Egret	Great White Egret	Honey-buzzard
Rough-legged Buzzard	Hobby	Spotted Crake
Corncrake	Crane	Avocet
Little Ringed Plover (except lower River Spey)	American Golden Plover	Temminck's Stint
Pectoral Sandpiper	Buff-breasted Sandpiper	Red-necked Phalarope
Grey Phalarope	Long-tailed Skua	Sabine's Gull
Ring-billed Gull	Black Tern	Roseate Tern
Turtle Dove	Nightjar	Hoopoe
Wryneck	Green Woodpecker	Red-backed Shrike
Great Grey Shrike	Golden Oriole	Chough
Bearded Tit	Shore Lark	Yellow-browed Warbler
Reed Warbler	Icterine Warbler	Lesser Whitethroat
Firecrest	Nuthatch	Rose-coloured Starling
Bluethroat	Red-breasted Flycatcher	Black Redstart
Yellow Wagtail	Richard's Pipit	Water Pipit
Common Rosefinch	Hawfinch	Lapland Bunting

Other species recorded for the first time in Moray & Nairn, and not on BBRC or SBRC lists, are also assessed by MNRC.

If you find a rare species in Moray & Nairn, please contact the recorder (Martin Cook) who will provide forms and forward these to the relevant committee. Alternatively, further information and forms can be found and downloaded from the website at www.birdsinmorayandnairn.org/bird-recording/moray-nairn-rarities-committee/

Records of species on the lists of BBRC, SBRC or MNRC will only appear in *Birds in Moray & Nairn* following acceptance of the record by the relevant committee. It must be stressed, however, that the failure of a record to be accepted by a committee does not imply disbelief of the observer, or that the observer is mistaken in the identification; simply that not quite enough evidence has been assimilated by the observer in the time or conditions available.

OBSERVERS CONTRIBUTING TO *BIRDS IN MORAY & NAIRN 2016*

D Adams, H Addlesee, G Aitken (GA), J Allison, S Ankers (SA), A Archer, C Armour (CA), R Arnold, K Astill, T Backx (AB), L Bacon, I Bailey (IB), A D Baker, M C Bale, S Ball, K Barnes, B Bates, G Biggs (GB), J H Bingley (JHB), B Blackhall (BB), W G Blumsom, M Boothman, H Brooker, S Broyd, L Bruce, A N M Burns, C Burns, J R Butcher, M Butler, R Carberry, H Cartright, M Caton, J Chandler, A Chapman, P Chapman, B Chappell, D Clark, H Clark (HC), J A Clarke (JAC), K Clarke (KC), J Clarkson, B Clinch, A J Clunas, M Coath (MCo), S H Cohen, M & B Collier, M Collins (MC), J Common (JC), J Cook, M J H Cook (MJHC), B Cosnette (BC), J K Craib (JKC), M Cromar, G Cross, M G Crutch (MGC), K Cunningham (KCu), J A Dacre, R H Dennis (RHD), D Devonport, J Dingley, K Dixon, A N Douglas, P Douglass, A Douse (AD), D Dugan, K Duncan (KD), J Dyer, A Edward (AE), J Ensor, B Etheridge (BE), P L Evans, J Ewings, H Farquhar (HF), D Farr, P Fitch, A Floyd, I Ford, S J Foster (SJF), I Francis (IF), D Freeman, M Freestone, K Friday, D & M Galloway (D&MG), C A Gervaise (CAG), D A Gibson (DAG), A Gordon (AG), J D Gordon (JDG), P R Gordon (PRG), A Grady, I Green (IG), T Green (TG), K Guthrie (KG), K D Hall, H Hallershannon, S & R Hamilton, L Hamilton, G Hamlett, I Harris, J Harrison, C Hartwell, E Harwood (EH), M Hawkes, M C Hay, J Hendry, P Hibberd, I Hill (IH), A C Hilton (ACH), R D Hind, A Hogg (AH), J Hogg, C A Holter, P P Hyvonen (PPH), R Ince (RI), H Insley (HI), P Insole, R J Irvine, V Jack, C James, E Jensen, R Johnson (RJ), S E I Jones, A W L Joss, A D Kennelly, P Kerrison, K Kirkham-Brown, I M Lang, J D Law (JDL), A J Lawrence (AJL), T Lawson, P Lee, C G Leslie (CGL), D Leslie, D Lister, S Lister, N Littlewood, A MacAskill (AMa), D MacAskill (DMA), M A Macdonald, S Macgillivray, G MacGregor, M Mackay, M MacKinnon, H Maggs, D Main (DM), E Main, T Main, J Mair (JM), J H Marchant, B Marshall, G Marshall (GMA), S Massie, R A Mavor, P Mayhew, K McArdle, S McArdle (SM), J McDonald, F McHugh (FM), B McKelvie, G McMullins (GM), A McNee (AM), P Message, A Millar (AMI), S P Milligan, F Mitchell, M Mitchell, P Moore (PM), L Morrison (LM), W M Morrison (WMM), R Morrison, S Murkin, A Murray, M Murray (MM), S M Neal, M Neate-Clegg, F Newcombe (FN), I Noble, J O'Hanlon, P Osborn, N Osborne, S Pettit, D Pierce (DP), T Plant, J Pott (JPo), R Potter, J Poyner (JP), R J F Prentice (RJFP), G Prest (GP), A Price (AP), C Pitchard, R Proctor (RP), D M Pullan (DMP), D Puplett, J D K Rankin, M Ranner (MR), S Reed (SR), M A Reid, D Rennison (DR), A & F Ritchie (A&FR), H Ritchie, A Robertson, I Robson, H Rolton, S E Rosser, C Round, G E Scales, L Schofield (LSc), R D S Scott, J Scrimgeour, E Seal, B T R Seim, S Seright, J&B Shackleton (J&BS), C Sharpe (CS), M Sharpe (MS), C&D Shaw (C&DS), V Sheach Leith (VSL), B Sheldon, A Shields, A Sime, J Simpson, K Simpson, L Simpson (LS), R Simpson, C Smith, G & D Smith (G&DS), M Smith, R H Smith, A J Snowdon, R Somers Cocks (RSC), M Somerville, M M Souter (MMS), A Spiers, L Stewart, JA Sutherland, N Sutherland (NS), I S Suttie, J Sutton, P Sutton, P Swainson (PS), R W Swift, W G Taylor, S Taylor, S Thomas, B J Thompson (BJT), D Thompson, C Tolworthy, R B Tozer, P Treen, S Truluck, A E Turner (AET), R Turner, K Walshaw, M Warren (MW), J Watson, O Webb, K Wells, T J Wells (TJW), C West (CW), E Weston (EW), D Wheeler (DW), A Whitelee, M Whitton (MW), I Wilde, A Williams (AW), K Williams, S Willis, P Wills, J L Wilson, M Winsch, P Wood, K M H Wright, A Young (AY).

Apologies to anyone accidentally omitted.

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

Mute Swan *Cygnus olor*

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

Breeding: A total of 19 apparently occupied territories was recorded in 2016, with 12 pairs producing 66 young; of these, a minimum of 56 appear to have fledged. Breeding pairs at the Cloddach quarry increased to six, while Strypes was re-occupied after 14 years.

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

Year	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Pairs	19	10	14	17	17	13	19	13	17	11	12
Young fledged	110	51	59	57	84	53	53	73	43	38	56
Mean	5.8	5.1	4.2	3.3	4.9	4.1	2.8	5.7	2.5	3.5	4.7

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

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Loch Flemington	24	9	5			Breeders			34	49	40	61
Nairn harbour	2	4	3			Breeders			8	3	3	4
Loch Loy	8	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	2	nc	2
Loch of Blairs	7	7	2			Breeders			1	8	8	nc
Findhorn Bay	47	41	40	53	89	85	21	9	16	14	11	6
Lossie estuary	nc	nc	nc	3	nc	nc	3	nc	nc	1	nc	nc
Loch Spynie	50	23	12			Breeders			4	16	39	39
Cloddach	17	7	4			Breeders			nc	11	15	nc
Loch Oire	2	2	4			Breeders			2	2	2	2
Loch na Bo	nc	4	2			Breeders			9	7	8	1
Spey estuary	0	0	1	2	2	4	6	3	4	0	0	0

nc = no count received

Coastal records (max. counts): 2 Delnies 1 & 8 Jan, 2 Buckie harbour 9, 16 & 17 Jan, 2 Culbin Bar 24 Jan & 20 Feb, 1 Burghead Bay 9 May & 10 Aug and 4 Delnies-Nairn 18 Dec. During seawatches off Lossiemouth in Oct were 2 1CY west 17th, 2 adults west 18th and 3 west 19th.

Individuals in stubble fields were again more evident this year: 1 adult Windyridge 20 Mar, 5 1CY Middlefield 23 Mar-29 Apr, present Ardivot 20 Apr-4 May with Whooper Swans (max. count 6 adults 25-27 Apr), 10 Nether Birnie 4 May and 6 near Plewlands 5 & 12 Nov.

Bewick's Swan *Cygnus columbianus*

Rare visitor.

A group of four, consisting of an adult and 3 2CY, were initially located at Loch Spynie on 26 Jan (RHD, CJ, JS) before moving to Ardivot where they joined the Whooper Swan flock feeding in arable fields. What appears to be the same group, though only involving the adult and 2 2CY, was found at Loch of Strathbeg on 18 Feb. A single 2CY was then refound back at Ardivot on 20 Mar, again with the Whooper Swan flock, and remained in the area until 1 Apr. This is the fourth record in recent times, following 3 Culbin Bar 15 Nov 1963, 3 Milton Brodie 22-28 Nov 1984 and 2 Loch Flemington 3 Dec 1987.



Bewick's Swans, Ardivot 26 January 2016 (Duncan Gibson)



Bewick's Swan [front] with Whooper Swan, Windyridge 24 March 2016 (Gordon Biggs)

Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus*

Common migrant and winter visitor.

Winter-spring: In Nairn, three sites were used, all in January: Loch Flemington (6 on 1st, 14 on 5th & 1 on 11th), Clephanton (7 on 3rd) and Nairn harbour (2 west on 26th). In Moray, the number of sites used was more typical of a 'normal' year (15 sites compared to 35 in 2015). With an overall decline in records received compared to last year and generally smaller flocks recorded, this suggests that the species was more widespread and numerous last year. To compare 2016 and 2015, the same areas containing flocks in the early part of the year are used again:

- Findhorn Bay: Only eight records received compared to 26 in 2015. In January, 18 on 1st, 9 on 16th, 8 on 24th, 4 on 26th, in February, 12 on 4th, 1 on 10th, 34 on 13th and in March, 2 on 27th.
- Roseisle: None recorded in the Roseisle area this year compared to 26 flocks reported in 2015.
- Foresterseat: Only six records received in 2016 compared to 27 in 2015. Flocks were only recorded from Barmuckity and Calcots; in January, 17 on 2nd, 30 on 3rd, and 27 on 4th, in February, 41 on 20th, 4 on 27th, and in March 43 on 4th and 45 on 5th.
- Duffus: Six reports compared to seven last year. All records in March; 4 on 1st, 3 on 2nd, 4 on 15th, 20 on 16th and 12 on 21st.
- Loch Spynie: Present from 1 Jan-31 Mar. The majority of records were from arable fields at Ardivot and Windyridge. Unlike 2015 where counts from the loch and immediate area were low (less than 15), in 2016 four counts were over 100 and all were in March: 117 on 1st, 150 on 27th, 104 on 28th and 118 on 29th. For other flocks in this period, sizes were:

Group size	<20	21-40	41-60	61-80	81-100
Number	16	9	5	9	0
Largest count	18	30	55	79	-
Date of largest count	26-27 Mar	13 Feb	31 Mar	20 Mar	-

Flocks were reported from four other sites, none were particularly large. Maximum counts from these sites were: 10 Tillienought 9 Jan, 3 Cloddach quarry 10 Jan, 4 Cummingston 13 Mar and 28 Spey estuary 12 Mar. Off Lossiemouth were 12 west 21 Feb, 14 west 13 Mar and c.30 north-west 26 Mar.

Spring: The largest flock during this period was 60 Ardivot 1 Apr, numbers were then relatively constant at 15-20 from 6-28 Apr, elsewhere 41 Crosslots (Duffus) 1 Apr, 28 Loch Spynie 1 Apr, 19 Findhorn Bay 2 Apr, 3 over Forres 5 Apr and 6 Balormie pig farm 21 Apr.

Summer: No summer records were received.

Autumn: The first record for the autumn period were groups of 6 & 14 Findhorn Bay 29 Sep (a typical arrival date), with a further five flocks over Findhorn Bay and Netherton on 30th involving groups of 5, 8, 12, 14 & 16. In October, 43 flocks were counted, the majority were under 50, with five exceeding 100 individuals; 107 to roost Loch Spynie 26th, 173 Loch Spynie on 29th, 205 to roost Loch Spynie and, at Salterhill on 30th, 352 increasing to 476 later in the day.

In November, six sites held flocks over 100, these were all in the Gilston-Loch Spynie area: 563 Mid Mains (Gilston) 5th, 198 Gilston 12th, 150 West Mains (Duffus Castle) 12th, 104 Salterhill 13th, 289 Drainie 17th and 220 to roost Loch Spynie 19th. Elsewhere in November, counts recorded (max. for each site) were more typical of a 'normal' year: 65 Crofts of Dipple 2nd, 7 Nairn 10th (same? 7 Loch Flemington 13th), 8 Lossiemouth 13th, 75 West Mains (Duffus) 13th, 28 Gilston 13th, 12 Westerfolds 13th, 22 Muirton 13th, 10 Montgrew 13th, 1 Loch Oire 14th, 36 Findhorn Bay 15th, 8 Loch Loy 16th, 8 Rafford 16th, 17 north Elgin 16th, 21 Lower Hempriggs 17th, 60 Broadley (Clochan) 19th, 8 Cloddach quarry 20th, 6 Auldearn 21st, 69 Covesea 21st and 70 Cloves (Alves) 30th.

Winter (December): In Nairn, birds were recorded at three sites: Geddes (26 on 1st & 25 on 10th), Loch Flemington (19 on 18th) and Loch Loy (17 on 23rd). In Moray, seen at eight sites: 18 Ardivot 3rd, 16 Loch

na Bo 4th, 15 west Findhorn Bay 15th, 40 Loch Spynie 5th, 60 Darkland 10th, 16 Montgrew 12th & 18th, 13 Lochhill 26th and 4 Barmuckity 28th.

Brood sizes reported in Oct-Dec 2016 (compared to 2014 & 2015):

Brood size	1	2	3	4	5	6
2016 Frequency	9	17	10	9	0	0
2015 Frequency	10	5	8	2	1	1
2014 Frequency	3	14	16	7	6	0

There were less broods recorded in the early part of the year ($n=13$) compared to the second part of the year ($n=32$; which included 20 family groups in one field at Mid Mains, Gilston 5 Nov), however, despite these differences the mean brood size was very similar at 2.3 and 2.5 respectively.

Pink-footed Goose *Anser brachyrhynchus*

Very common migrant and winter visitor.

Winter (January-March): Reported at 12 sites from Nairn (17 sites in 2015), with seven flocks in excess of 1000: 1000 Auldearn 16 Jan & 11 Mar, 1100 East Delnies 12 Mar, 1300 Moss-side (Nairn) 20 Feb, 1500+ Nairn 31 Mar and 4000 Hardmuir 23 Mar (2000 on 27 Mar). Smaller flocks (max. counts) were seen at Culbin Bar (2 on 24 Jan), Loch Flemington (80 on 26 Jan), Nairn beach (90 on 26 Jan), Achavraat (30 on 9 Feb), Crook (Nairn) (3 on 23 Feb), Carse of Delnies (400 on 19 Mar) and Tomhommie (600 on 27 Mar).

In Moray, typically widely scattered flocks in the coastal strip, an increase to 20 flocks exceeding 1000 individuals this year (7 in 2015): Findhorn Bay (16 counts over 1000, largest 4300 on 6 Jan), Upper Hempriggs (1000 on 8 Feb), Crossley (3000+ on 12 Feb), Roseisle maltings (1000+ on 6 Mar) and Ardivot (1060 on 16 Mar).

Ranges of other flocks in Moray (less than 1000) were:

	1- 100	101- 200	201- 300	301- 400	401- 500	501- 600	601- 700	701- 800	801- 900	901- 1000
2016	20	16	7	3	3	2	3	4	1	0
2015	17	4	3	0	2	3	4	3	1	2
2014	30	7	1	2	6	3	2	3	0	3

Spring passage (max. counts): Typically the largest flocks seen during this period were from the Findhorn Bay area; 3550 Findhorn Bay 19 Apr (with a further 22 counts in excess of 1000 individuals). Only two other flocks in excess of 1000 were reported; 1000+ Nairn 11 Apr and 2000 Tomlucart 18 Apr. Maximum counts from other sites were; 900 Loch Flemington 7 Apr, 480 Broadley (Clochan) 10 Apr, 350 Kingsteps 11 Apr, 300 west Portknockie 11 Apr, 250 north-east Tomintoul 14 Apr, 136 Balormie pig farm 18 Apr, 96 Loch Allan (Dava) 19 Apr, 495 north Loch Kirkaldy 19 Apr, 15 Spey Bay 1 May and 140 west Cullen 6 May. On seawatches off Lossiemouth 156 west on 8 Apr, 43 west on 17 Apr and 5 west on 2 May.

Summer: Present again in Findhorn Bay during the summer: a single from 24 May-21 Jul. Summer records regularly occur in the Findhorn Bay area, most probably relate to injured birds.

Autumn: The first sightings during this period were from Findhorn Bay 14 Sep (a typical arrival date) and concerned groups of 4 & 14. Then daily from 15-22 Sep, mostly around Findhorn Bay (largest count 1142 on 19th), with other groups reported from Barmuckity (small groups on 15th), Loch Spynie (36 east 15th), Gallowhill (35 on 16th) and Tomintoul (80+ south-east on 16th). Another arrival from 27-30 Sep, when 15 sites recorded large groups, of these, six flocks were over 1000; 1414 Findhorn Bay 27 Sep, 1000s Burghead 28 Sep, 4240+ Netherton (Findhorn Bay) 28 Sep, c.6500 Findhorn Bay 29 Sep, 3000 Netherton (Findhorn Bay) 30 Sep and 10,500 Findhorn Bay 30 Sep.

Main arrival in October; 13 counts from Findhorn Bay were in excess of 20,000, with a further six in excess of 10,000 individuals. The largest estimate during this period in Findhorn Bay was 51,000 on 1 Oct (RHD), followed by 35,000+ on 2nd (GM), 50,000 on 3rd (RHD), 30,000 on 4th (IML), 40,000 on 5th (JDG), 30,000+ on 15th (GM) and 37,500+ on 16th (GM): these are the largest estimates in Moray since 30,000 in the Loch Spynie area on 30 Oct 2005. Much smaller numbers away from the Findhorn Bay area, maximum counts over 1000 included; 3150 Bailliesland 10th, 1400 Stynie Glebe (Mosstodloch) 18th and 4000 Barmuckity 29th. Largest counts in Nairn were 600 Carse of Delnies 3 Oct and 600 Loch Flemington 10 Oct. Well inland during October were 23 Monadh Fergie (Tomintoul) 29th.

In November, flocks over 1000 (max. counts) were seen at Moyness (4000+ on 17th), Cloddach quarry (1100 on 20th), Upper Auchenwreath (1740 on 23rd), Wester Delnies (*ca.*2000 on 28th) and Findhorn Bay (10,630 on 29th).

Winter: The largest flock recorded in December was 12,000 on 4th, with four other large counts (all over 1000) occurring in the Findhorn Bay area; *c.*10,000 on 3rd, 6000+ on 7th, 3000+ on 8th and 4600 on 18th. No other counts exceeded 1000 individuals.

A leucistic individual was reported from Montgrew 8 Oct.

White-fronted Goose *Anser albifrons*

Very scarce winter visitor.

One record was received and concerned 2 Drainie area 18 Oct (AJL), these were assigned to the European race *A.a.albifrons*.

This was only the fifth year since MNBR started that no records were received for the Greenland race *A.a.flavirostris*, previous years being 2013, 2011, 2010 and 2007.

Greylag Goose *Anser anser*

Rare breeder and very common winter visitor.

Winter-spring: Flocks containing 500 or more birds were recorded at three sites (seven sites in 2015), maximum counts at each site were: 570 Loch Spynie 1 & 23 Jan, 635 Ardivot 13 Feb and 641 Muirton 14 Feb. A return to smaller numbers wintering in the coastal area, presumably as the Icelandic population is wintering elsewhere. Nineteen other sites held small flocks (27 in 2015).

Range of all flock sizes reported containing less than 400 individuals January-April:

	1-100	101-200	201-300	301-400
2016	52	7	3	2
2015	63	8	1	3
2014	41	10	1	3
2013	51	6	8	3
2012	39	7	3	1

Well inland, and probably part of the Dava breeding population, were (max. counts): 200 Achavraat 9 Feb, 25 Newlands of Knockaneorn 9 Feb, 30 Dallas Lodge 7 Mar, 24 Little Aitnoch 13 Mar, 20+ Lochindorb 17 Mar, 4 Dunearn 21 & 28 Mar, 5 Ferness 22 Mar, 15 Black Loch (Dava) 24 Mar, 10 Auchloch 24 Mar, 9 Bogeney 24 Mar and 72 Aitnoch 28 Mar. Also well inland, but away from the traditional Lochindorb area, were 32 Inchnacape (Tomintoul) 14 Mar, and still 30 in fields there on 25 Mar.

Summer: In the Dava breeding area early in the season were (max. counts); 100+ Aitnoch 8 Apr, 50+ Dunearn 17 Apr, 2 Little Banchor 17 Apr, 2 Loch Kirkaldy 18 & 19 Apr, 2 Refouble 19 Apr, 14 on lochan opposite Black Loch (Dava) 24 Apr, 10 Burnside-Aitnoch 30 Apr, 1 Dava 14 May and a pair Black Loch 31 May. Elsewhere, in potential breeding habitat inland were 2 Aldunie (Cabrach) 7 Apr and 6 Lyne of Knockando 21 Apr, while in the coastal strip were 3 Lossie Forest 2 Apr.

Breeding (inland): In the area to the north of Lochindorb, breeding was only confirmed at Aitnoch ('some with young') 23 & 25 Jul (A&FR). Successful breeding was also confirmed at Tomintoul; a pair with chicks on 2 Jun (TJW). Presumed wandering individuals were also at Loch of the Cowlatt (4 on 4 Jul).

Breeding (coastal strip): Confirmed breeding in Lossie Forest; pair with a brood of 3 on 7 May (with 6 adults) and with a full-grown juvenile on 26 Jul (with 10 adults) (MJHC). At Findhorn Bay a pair with 5 juveniles 10 Jul (Mosset Burn), 'three family groups' 12 Jul and 'family groups' 21 Jul (GM) were suggestive of local breeding but could have moved onto the bay from elsewhere.

Non-breeding flocks were regular at Findhorn Bay between 7 May-30 Jul (though only one count this year was in excess of 100; 205 on 27 Jul). Also 2 Carse of Delnies 31 Jul.

Late summer: Frequently seen around the Findhorn Bay area during August where maximum daily counts over 100 were: 489 on 1st, 124 on 14th, 242 on 15th, 127 on 16th, 347 on 18th, 399 on 20th, 353 on 22nd, 225 on 23rd, 775+ on 27th and 1125+ on 28th. These birds are assumed to originate from the Lochindorb/Dava population relocating to the coast. Elsewhere, 250+ Woodhead 5 Aug, 9 Drumduan 9 Aug, 110 Brodie 11 Aug, 40 Druim farm 18 Aug and 18 Easterton 30 Aug.

Autumn: Difficult to assess which are local birds and which are Icelandic breeders returning in September. Five large counts recorded in early September (1st-11th) from Findhorn Bay: 1750 on 8th was the maximum count. Slightly later were: 1400+ Findhorn Bay 15 Sep, 500 Kinchyle 20 Sep and 2 Loch Flemington 28 Sep.

No count received for October exceeded 450 individuals; 8 Carse of Delnies 3rd, 128 Muckle Burn (Findhorn Bay) 4th, 350 to roost Loch Spynie 29th and 14 Loch Flemington 30th.

In November, flocks exceeding 100 individuals (max. counts) were: 235 Duffus 7th, 284 Gilston 13th, 430 Loch Spynie 19th, 460 Covesea 21st, 600 Clochan 23rd and 1030 Findhorn Bay 29th.

Winter (max. counts only): Two flocks exceeded 500 (compared to one in 2015): 3000+ roost Loch na Bo 4th and 642 Findhorn Bay 5th. Four other counts exceeded 100: 250 Geddes 1st, 410 Findhorn Bay 4th (102 on 18th) and 402 Loch Flemington 18th. Very low numbers were reported elsewhere: 6 Loch Flemington 1st, 5 Loch Spynie 1st, 80 Nairn 10th, 10 west Burghead 27th (7 on 29th) and 1 Lossie estuary 31st (unusual on the mud at the estuary).

Snow Goose *Anser caerulescens*

Rare visitor or escape.

One white morph in the Findhorn Bay area (RSC, DM, G&MG *et al.*) from 29 Sep-11 Oct was mostly seen around the bay, but also near Kinloss (3-4 Oct) and Milton Brodie (5 Oct).

Canada Goose *Branta canadensis*

Scarce migrant in summer, rare in winter.

Winter records (early): No winter records received again this year.

Spring (April-May): No records during this period were received.

Summer (June-July): Lower numbers than usual were recorded and only seen in June; 11 Cloddach quarry 4th, Loch Spynie 5th and 4 Spey estuary 8th. At Findhorn Bay only seen on three dates; 25 on 18th, 1 on 19th and 15 on 20th.

Autumn (August-October): Arrival at Findhorn Bay from mid-Aug; 1 on 9 Aug, increasing to 15 on 12 Aug then 16 from 14-31 Aug, and in September, present from 1st-17th, with numbers peaking at 106 on 3rd. Away from Findhorn Bay were 21 north-east Nairn harbour 9 Sep, 2 Loch Flemington 28 Sep and 1 Loch Spynie 8 Oct.

Winter records (late): Recorded at four sites in November; 1 Findhorn Bay 1st, 1 Clochan 21st, 1 Upper Auchencroft 23rd and 2 Loch Spynie 28th.

Barnacle Goose *Branta leucopsis**Scarce migrant and winter visitor.*

Winter-spring: Recorded at Findhorn Bay on 12 dates (22 Mar-18 May), with a maximum count of four on 22 Mar & 8 Apr, other counts included; 2 on 27 & 31 Mar, 5 & 8 Apr and singles on 22 & 24 Mar, 6 Apr & 18 May. Elsewhere, singles at Muirton 14 Feb and Cloddach quarry 12 Mar.

Summer: No records received this year.

Autumn: A record of a single on the Minister's Pool (Kingsteps) 31 Aug, the first flock of 13 Findhorn Bay 3-4 Sep, and then 1 Findhorn Bay 29 Sep & 10 Findhorn Bay 30 Sep, may have been early migrants or wandering individuals from the increasing feral population in Strath Spey. The first sightings in October were in the Findhorn Bay area (same flock as September?): 10 on 1st, 3 on 2nd-3rd and 5 on 4th. Very similar to last year with the main arrival in October; 4th (c.210 east Burghead Bay), 5th (max. count 278 Findhorn Bay) and 6th (210 Findhorn Bay). Elsewhere, smaller numbers reported in early October; 1 east Lossiemouth 5th and 4, 20 east & 35+ Spey estuary 6th. Then daily reports 8th-19th mainly from Findhorn Bay (max. counts 117 on 8th & 128 on 16th), otherwise generally smaller numbers reported during this period, 1 Loch Spynie 8th, 13 Loch Spynie 9th, 8 Bailliesland 10th, 105 east Spey estuary 14th, 7 east Lossie estuary, 30 off Lossiemouth & 24 Alves 15th, 9 Nairn Bar & 73 Portknockie 16th and 4 Stynie Glebe (Mosstodloch) 18th. Winter: Late in October and November only small numbers reported; Findhorn Bay (1 on 21, 24 & 29 Oct and 4 Nov, increasing to 2 on 10 Nov) and Moyness (3 on 17 Nov). In December, singles were reported from Findhorn Bay (8th) and Barmuckity (28th). Small numbers seen in November; 1 Loch Spynie 15th, 2 Montgrew 18th and 10 east Burghead 21st. Only one record in December: 1 Broadley (Clochan) on 17th.

Brent Goose *Branta bernicla**Scarce migrant and winter visitor.*

A group of Dark-bellied Brent Goose *B.b.bernicla* was present in the Lossiemouth area 18-29 Oct; an adult and 4 1CY were found on the Lossie estuary on 18th (RP), with six there on 22nd (MJHC, DM, GM). The family group of six were then seen at RAF Lossiemouth 24th-27th (AJL), Loch Spynie 29th (DAG) and back at Lossie estuary 29th (HF).

All other records related to Light-bellied Brent Goose *B.b.hrota* particularly the regular flock in the Nairn area which was recorded from Delnies eastwards to the Culbin/Nairn Bars.

Winter: Present in the Nairn area from 1 Jan-28 Apr; two reports exceeded 70 individuals (max. count 76 on 1 Jan).

Largest group size reported from the Nairn area 2007-2016:

2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
22	50	69	52	64	64	80	74	57	76

No records away from the regular Nairn areas in the early part of the year.

Autumn passage period (September-October): The first returning birds to the Nairn area was a group of 28 Nairn 19 Sep, which is a typical arrival date. Numbers quickly increased to the maximum count of 41 on 29 Sep. Away from the Nairn area; 1 1CY Findhorn Bay 29 Sep and 2, 4 & 10 Oct, 11 west Burghead Bay 27 Oct, 16 Burghead 28 Oct, 17 Burghead maltings 28 Oct (same 17 Findhorn Bay, then 18 on 28 Oct), 10 Loch Spynie 29 Oct, 10 (from Loch Spynie) Lossie estuary 29 Oct and 1 west Lossiemouth 30 Oct.

Winter: In the Nairn area, 14 reports in November, with a maximum of 67 on 29th. In December (10 records) with the maximum count of 74 on 3 Dec; the mean count during this period was 46, higher than the mean of 34 in both 2014 & 2015. Findhorn Bay 2 on 1-4 Nov (then 1 on 7-9 Nov) was the only reports away from Nairn.

Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*

Fairly common visitor in winter and spring. Scarce breeder.

Breeding: A total of 19 reports of broods received although this total includes known duplicates. Distinct broods were reported from Findhorn Bay (broods of 6 & 10), Cloddach quarry (brood of 5) and the Spey estuary (broods of 4, 10 & 12). These six broods give a mean of 8.7 chicks, similar to 2015. Away from confirmed breeding sites, seen in potential breeding areas at Loch Flemington, Gilston, Balormie pig farm (territorial disputes between two pairs), Loch Spynie, Lossie estuary, Lossie forest and Burnside of Birnie pool.

Best monthly counts at coastal sites were as follows:

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Nairn/Culbin Bars	42	71	60	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	121
Findhorn Bay	229	239	196	100	98	146	183	16	11	54	124	228
Lossie estuary	nc	2	2	2	4	nc	4	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc
Spey estuary	0	0	5	7	10	6	12	2	0	0	0	0

Two other sites with a large count: 34+ Carse of Delnies 25 Feb and 13 in a field Cloddach quarry 16 May.

On beaches: 2 Lossiemouth east beach 7 Jul and 5 Burghead Bay (Findhorn) 1 Sep.

Inland: singles Broadley (Clochan) 31 Mar & 30 Apr.

Offshore: 2 Burghead 18 Mar.

At Lossiemouth during seawatches: 1 adult east 20 Feb, 1 adult west 3 Mar, 31 adults east 1 Jul, 2 1CY 8 Aug and 1 adult west 12 Nov.

Mandarin Duck *Aix galericulata*

Probable escape or feral origin.

Cawdor/Croy area: 3 Dallaschyle 17 Jan, a pair Kilravock Castle 21 Feb & 17 Mar and in the autumn a pair and a female-type Holme Rose-Kilravock 25 Oct.

River Findhorn: 1 male on the River Findhorn, Logie 18 May.

Elgin: 1 male on the Cooper Park pond, Elgin 6 & 29 Mar.

Loch Oire: 1 on 23 Aug.

Loch Park: 1 male 16 Oct, then 2 males 13 Nov & 18 Dec.



Mandarin Duck, Cooper Park 29 March 2016 (Gordon Biggs)

Wigeon *Anas penelope*

Very common winter visitor and rare breeder.

Breeding: No breeding records were received this year. At Loch Kirkaldy 2 pairs on 19 Apr, a single 7 May and a male & 2 females on 10 Jun were in suitable breeding habitat.

Non-breeders in summer (May-July): Present Findhorn Bay 1 May-7 Jul (max. counts: 48 on 1 May, 28 on 23 Jun & 19 on 6 Jul), Balormie pig farm (male on 2-5 May), Cloddach quarry (2 pairs & a single male on 4 May & 5 on 25 Jun), Lossie estuary 5 May-29 Jun (pair on 5 May, male on 17-19 Jun, pair on 27 Jun and 3 on 29 Jun), Loch Spynie 5 May-21 Jul (a single, except 2 on 29 Jun) and Spey estuary (2 on 13 Jun).

Winter: Monthly maximum counts at main coastal sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Delnies area	100	nc	84	nc	4	125	25	60
Nairn harbour area	244	1	50	nc	nc	152	62	30
Nairn/Culbin Bars	655	188	nc	nc	340	338	nc	284
Findhorn Bay	530	775	188	232	3500	3800	3400	1087
Lossie estuary	1500	854	471	266	314	706	1174	648
Spey estuary	10	160	70	63	276	450	205	416

Other large coastal counts include: 217 Findhorn Bay 30 Aug, 220 Burghead Bay 14 Oct and 81 Portgordon-Strathlene 16 Oct.

Regularly seen on seawatches off Lossiemouth harbour, especially in the autumn period: max. 12 on 5 Sep.

On freshwater:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Loch Flemington	1	25	40	nc	nc	24	103	115	180
Loch Loy	50	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	25	44	180
Loch of Blairs	81	40	26	1	nc	nc	50	nc	nc
Loch Spynie	14	19	37	18	21	21	10	19	20
Cloddach quarry	652	180	510	4	nc	nc	500	891	nc
Nether Dallachy	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	9	10	19
Loch na Bo	nc	nc	6	nc	nc	nc	1	8	nc
Loch Oire	60	3	8	2	1	12	30	74	48

Other counts on freshwater included: 48 Miltonduff distillery pond 12 Mar and 285 Easter Bauds 30 Dec. Well inland were 3 Loch Leven 17 Oct and 130 Loch Kirkaldy 30 Dec.

Gadwall *Anas strepera*

Scarce visitor.

Findhorn Bay: 2 males and 1 female at the Mosset Burn 9 Apr (JDG), 1 on 8 May (AJL) and a pair 14-16 May (AJL, IB, HRo, A&FR, HR).

Gilston: A pair on 14 Apr (RHD).

Balormie pig farm: 1 male, regularly on the large pool and always associating with a female Mallard, 29 Apr-9 May (RHD, RP, DAG).

Loch Spynie: A pair on 4 Jan (DAG), otherwise singles on 2 Jan (RJI) and 1 male 14-15 Jan (MJHC). A pair on 12 & 15 Apr (CJ, CS, CAG), 1 male on 19 Apr (RAM, HF), increasing to 3 males on 20 Apr (RP, MJHC) and 1 May (HF), 2 males and 1 female

on 21 Apr (HF) and 3 birds on 24 Apr (HF). In the autumn, 1 on 13 Sep (Spynie Book), 2 males and 1 female on 17 Oct (JDL) and a pair 29 Nov (PRG).

Lossie forest: 1 male on the gravel pit 7 May (MJHC).

Loch Oire: 1 male 15 Oct and 7, 20, 24 & 30 Dec (DAG, MJHC). Also singles on 8 Jun, 23 Sep-23 Dec (EH) and 2 on 28 Dec (RLI).

Spey estuary: 1 male 26 Sep (MJHC).

Teal *Anas crecca*

Scarce breeder and very common winter visitor.

Breeding: There were no records confirming any breeding attempts this year.

Potential breeding sites occupied during the breeding season around the Dava included male Black Loch 23 May and a male on a lochan near Lochan Tùtach 31 May. Earlier in the season at other potential breeding sites around the Dava were: 2 Aitnoch 3 Apr, 3 males & 2 females Loch Kirkaldy 16 Apr and a pair and a male Loch Allan 19 Apr. Away from the Dava area were: 1 male Tomnamoon 12 Apr and 1 Glenlivet 29 May.

In the coastal strip: 11 Spey estuary 13 Jun, 3 males Mosset Burn 23 Jun, 1 Cloddach quarry 25 Jun and 1 Muirton 16 Jul.

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

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Loch Flemington	18	162	180	5	nc	1	3	nc	23
Carse of Delnies	nc	nc	26	nc	nc	nc	1	nc	18
Loch Loy	10	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	15	nc	10
Cran Loch	220	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	26	65	120
Lossie estuary	84	44	4	17	2	39	34	444	147
Loch Spynie	30	81	105	17	nc	4	50	45	27
Spynie Canal	380	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc
Cloddach quarry	14	20	4	3	nc	nc	105	39	nc
Loch Oire	12	13	11	14	4	10	48	40	55
Loch na Bo	nc	10	7	9	nc	1	nc	6	13
Spey estuary	nc	16	17	20	67	280	5	nc	64
Dallachy tip pool	nc	nc	nc	23	nc	nc	20	34	42
Montgrew	nc	nc	53	nc	72	128	98	nc	140

Records received throughout the year (max. monthly counts) at Findhorn Bay:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Findhorn Bay	42	140	285	143	20	3	12	250	390	345	320	310

Well inland during autumn/winter were 2 Loch Belivat 28 Mar and 50 Loch Kirkaldy 29-30 Oct.

Other counts (max.): 44 Balormie pig farm 4 Apr, 16 Gilston 21 Apr and 110 Easter Bauds 30 Dec.

Coastal records included: 80 Lossiemouth 6 Feb, 1 Portgordon-Strathene 16 Oct and 22 Boar's Head Rock 5 Dec. Regular during autumn seawatches off Lossiemouth harbour; max. count was 18 on 4 Sep.

A male showing mixed characters of Green-winged Teal × Teal seen at the Lossie estuary on 17 Jan (DAG) was presumably the individual from 31 Dec 2015. A previous record of a male showing mixed characters was also on the Lossie estuary (10 Jan 2010).

Green-winged Teal *Anas carolinensis**Rare visitor.*

At Loch Flemington, two males were seen on 13, 19 & 30 Mar and 8 Apr (JAC, RC, JP), while a single male was recorded on 14 occasions between 13 Mar-19 Apr (RHD *et al.*).

At the Lossie estuary, a male was present 19-21 Nov (RP, DAG, DM, MJHC), and then, presumably the same individual was seen at Loch Spynie 26 Nov (DAG).

A male showing mixed characters of Green-winged Teal × Teal seen at the Lossie estuary on 17 Jan (DAG) was presumably the individual from 31 Dec 2015. A previous record of a male showing mixed characters was also on the Lossie estuary (10 Jan 2010).

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos**Common resident breeder and winter visitor.*

Breeding: The mean brood size from six broods was 6.7 chicks.

Inland: Breeding confirmed only at Loch Allan. Also recorded in suitable breeding habitat at Dulsie Bridge, Loch Kirkaldy and Aldunie (Cabrach).

Coastal: Broods were seen at the Mosset Burn, Lossie estuary, Loch Spynie and the Spey estuary. Also recorded in suitable breeding habitat in the coastal strip at Loch Flemington, Kingsteps (Nairn), Nairn, Brodie Castle pond, Sanquhar Loch, Loch of Blairs, Balormie pig farm, Loch Oire, Portgordon and Buckie.

Best monthly flocks in regularly counted areas were:

Freshwater:

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Loch Flemington	10	28	8	6	1	nc	55	nc	37	125	59	72
Loch Loy	90	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	17	24	66
Cran Loch	30	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	6	19	2
Loch of Blairs	19	40	20	2	2	11	15	nc	20	30	nc	nc
Balormie pig farm	nc	nc	nc	35	33	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc
Loch Spynie	228	53	8	6	6	8	85	45	45	18	218	184
Cloddach quarry	73	52	42	51	28	19	nc	32	nc	88	207	nc
Loch Oire	3	35	16	11	6	nc	10	54	10	63	13	149
Loch na Bo	nc	150	10	3	nc	nc	nc	nc	4	15	42	25
Dallachy tip pool	nc	nc	nc	1	nc	8	nc	nc	1	12	48	7

Other freshwater sites holding more than 50 birds were: 50 Brodie Castle pond 25 Jul, 103 Montgrew 3 Sep, 70+ Loch Belivat 30 Oct and 90 Easter Bauds 30 Dec,

Well inland in winter were: 1 Dava moor 5 Jan, 10 Fanmore 25 Jan, 1 Carron 12 Feb, 1 Marypark 21 Feb, 4 Cragganmore 6 & 11 Mar, 3 Hillend (Drummuir) 9 Mar, 2 Tom an Uird 16 Mar, 2 Burn of Rothes 23 Mar and 4 Black Loch 30 Mar.

Coastal sites:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Delnies-Nairn	15	nc	9	nc	nc	11	nc	40
Nairn	118	34	40	60	100	120	100	138
Nairn/Culbin Bars	16	nc	nc	nc	nc	4	nc	nc
Lossie estuary	10	nc	nc	44	23	nc	nc	6
Spey estuary	nc	27	14	41	55	11	21	nc
Strathlene-Portgordon	61	35	nc	nc	nc	64	nc	88

Records received throughout the year (max. monthly counts) at Findhorn Bay:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Findhorn Bay	353	208	24	29	41	136	139	145	920	55	160	162

No other coastal site held more than 50 birds. Largest count was 25 Findochty 17 Jan.

Pintail *Anas acuta*

Fairly common winter visitor and migrant. Occasional breeder.

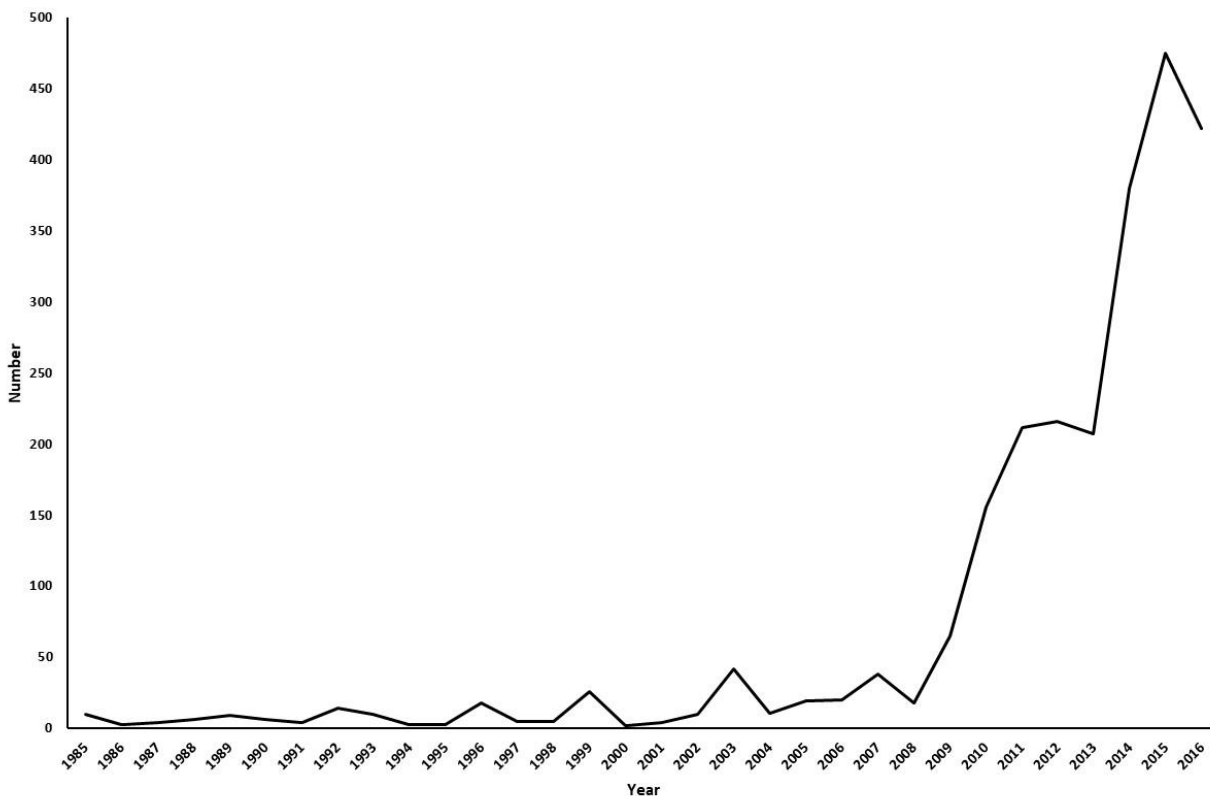
Loch Flemington: 3 on 16 Oct (KC, JAC).

Findhorn Bay: The only month without a record was July. Present from 2 Jan-12 Jun and 20 Aug-27 Dec. With the continuation of regular visits large numbers were again recorded during both periods providing 102 records (same as 2015) in excess of 100 individuals, maximum count in each period was 422 on 3 Jan (GM) and 408 on 19 Dec (GM).

Highest monthly counts in Findhorn Bay in 2016 were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Max. counts	422	405	351	151	28	2	0	6	54	362	317	408

Annual maxima of Pintail at Findhorn Bay 1985-2016:



Lossiemouth:	2 on 4 Oct (IML).
Loch Spynie:	Pair on 12 Apr (DAG, CJ, JS), 1 male 31 Oct (CAG) and 1 female 5 Nov (DAG, HF).
Loch Oire:	1 on 3 Oct (EH), 1 male on 22 Oct (DAG) and 1 female on 30 Dec (MJHC).
Spey estuary:	1 on 7 Sep and 2 on 9 Sep (MJHC).

Garganey *Anas querquedula*

Rare in spring.

A male was present on the Spey estuary 8 May (MJHC).

Shoveler *Anas clypeata*

Occasional breeder and scarce migrant.

Findhorn Bay:	No records until autumn, when present from 17 Sep-20 Dec (max. 9 on 4 Nov).
Cloddach quarry:	4 on 1 Oct and 2 females on 20 Nov.
Gilston:	2 males and 1 female on 10 & 14 Apr, and 1 male on 11 Apr.
Loch Spynie:	1 male and 2 females on 14-15 Feb, then 2 males and 1 female on 19 Apr. Later in the year, 3 females on 29 Oct. Records of two individuals involved a pair on 11 Jan & 13 Feb (included a 2CY male on latter date) and 2 females 24 Nov. Single males were seen on 26 Mar-11 Apr and 21 Oct, 2CY male on 17 Feb, and females on 16 Feb and 5 Nov. The 2CY male appeared to be the same as the Lossie estuary individual.
Lossie estuary:	A 2CY male 31 Jan and 2, 6 & 16 Feb (same as Loch Spynie bird) and two together (male and female/immature) on 11 Sep were the 12th-13th record for the site.
Loch Oire:	1 on 1 Apr. Late in the year, a pair on 22 Oct and 1 male 25 Oct-14 Dec.

Pochard *Aythya ferina*

Scarce winter visitor and occasional breeder.

Recorded at only two sites (five in 2015) and a return to its scarcity as a Moray & Nairn species.

Loch Spynie:	1 on 2 Jan (LM, RJI) was the only record in the early part of the year. Later in the year in September; 2 on 17th (JDL), 1 on 24th-25th (AET) and 1 on 30th (MJHC). In October; 1 male on 1st (RP, RHD) and 2 on 30th (TM). In November; 1 on 2nd (Spynie Book) and 4 (including at least 2 males on 5th (DAG, HF).
Portknockie:	An unusual record of a male swimming just offshore on 21 Nov (LS).

Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligala*

Scarce breeder and common winter visitor.

Breeding: Broods were only recorded in the coastal strip; Loch Flemington (7 chicks), Loch Spynie (4 & 6 chicks) and Lossie forest (3 chicks) giving a mean of 5.0 chicks per brood (5.5 in 2015).

Other potential breeding sites occupied during the summer months were at Loch Allan, Black Loch (Dava), lochan near Lochan Tùtach, Loch of Blairs, Cloddach quarry, Dallachy tip pool and Loch Oire.

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

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Loch Flemington	3	2	12	5	3	nc	1	nc	7	5	6	14
Loch of Blairs	nc	8	6	7	5	nc	nc	nc	nc	4	nc	nc
Loch Spynie	67	62	44	77	68	18	28	56	58	55	98	49
Cloddach quarry	59	69	60	21	36	26	nc	3	nc	38	4	nc
Cooper Park	35	23	16	nc	nc	nc	17	nc	nc	nc	13	7
Dallachy tip pool	nc	nc	nc	1	nc	3	nc	nc	4	7	6	3
Loch na Bo	nc	7	31	7	nc	nc	nc	nc	38	70	112	127
Loch Oire	9	6	55	80	35	31	25	20	41	10	15	18

Coastal records (max. counts) included records from Spey estuary (15 on 17 Jan), Findhorn Bay (3 on 10 Apr) and Hilton of Delnies (14 on 6 Oct).

Scaup *Aythya marila*

Scarce winter visitor.

An increase in numbers reported and sites used (3 in 2015).

- Nairn: The largest group was 11 on 18 Dec, otherwise 2 on 25 Oct, 6 on 30 Oct and 2 on 7 Dec.
- Findhorn Bay: A female on the bay 8 Nov, two females on 20 Nov and a single bird on 24 Nov. In December a group consisting of two males and three females were present on 9th.
- Burghead Bay: Most were recorded off Findhorn dunes and included a lone female 19 & 23 Sep, three on 3 Oct, increasing to eight on 2 Nov (2 on 13 & 26) and 4 Dec (all females), then 2 males & 3 females on 12-15 Dec, six on 16 Dec and seven (all females) on 18 Dec.

Records received from two inland sites this year.

- Loch Spynie: Present in the early part of the year; a single (unsexed) 2 Jan, male 13 Jan & 1 Feb and a female 5 Feb. Later in spring all records presumably related to the same individual: one on 5-7 Apr, sexed as male 10-19 Apr. In the second winter period present from 2 Oct-30 Dec (two counts exceeding 10: 11 females/immatures on 25 Dec and four males & 10 females on 30 Dec). Apart from a male on 2-7 Oct all other records (where the sex was given) were of females.
- Easter Bauds: A male on 15 May.

Eider *Somateria mollissima*

Scarce breeder, common offshore.

Breeding: One breeding record received from Portgordon where three chicks were attended by three females (MJHC).

Regular counts (max.) from coastal areas:

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Delnies-Nairn	nc	3	6	15	nc	nc	32	43	20	35	nc	11
Nairn	28	40	6	2	nc	nc	4	nc	8	22	nc	4
Culbin Bar	nc	12	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	2
Findhorn Bay area	4	nc	nc	nc	2	1	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc
Burghead Bay/ Burghead	150	64	100	30	5	42	62	81	118	520	400	120
Burghead-Hopeman	4	38	20	20	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	5	110	24
Hopeman	15	6	4	4	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	110	nc	nc
Lossiemouth	84	268	10	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	125	8	nc	60
Spey Bay	312	90	120	50	6	8	43	26	7	17	250	820
Portgordon-Strathlene	12	43	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	6	nc	11

Other counts were: c.30 Portknockie 14 Mar, 36 Buckie-Cullen 1 May and 26 Findochty 9 May.

In harbours (max. counts): 64 Burghead 3 Feb (C&DS) and 1 Lossiemouth 25 Dec (RP).

King Eider *Somateria spectabilis**Rare visitor.*

A male King Eider has been a regular winter visitor to the coast of Moray & Nairn since November 2009, with most records in the vicinity of Nairn or Burghead. Over the same period, a King Eider has been present in summer on the Ythan estuary in Aberdeenshire. Close examination of the dates of stay at these two locations shows no overlap and it is now considered that the same long-staying bird accounts for all records of King Eider since 2009. This position has been agreed by the SOC Recorders of Moray & Nairn and Aberdeenshire, and by Nigel Hudson, Secretary of British Birds Rarities Committee - and is set out in the Report on rare birds in Great Britain in 2014 (*British Birds* 108:565-633).

In 2016, the King Eider was seen locally in Moray & Nairn initially at Burghead in flight on 17 May (west) and on 19 May (east) (GH), then in eclipse plumage off Hilton of Delnies 3 & 4 Sep (DMP, TJW) and Burghead 3 Nov (TG). King Eider has now been recorded in Moray & Nairn in 25 of the last 41 years but, due to returning individuals, it is impossible to assess how many different birds have been involved.

Long-tailed Duck *Clangula hyemalis**Common winter visitor offshore.*

Coastal records in summer (June-July): No summer records were received this year.

Maximum monthly counts were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Oct	Nov	Dec
Delnies area	50	9	17	25	11	nc	50
Nairn area	26	160	8	3	340	20	50
Nairn/Culbin Bars	90	1	nc	nc	100	nc	48
Off Findhorn	5	nc	141	nc	70	79	33
Findhorn Bay	8	1	nc	nc	2	3	45
Burghead Bay	195	82	450	800	200	360	400
Off Burghead	400	700	106	61	242	1200	280
Burghead-Hopeman	30	300	9	4	2	34	152
Lossiemouth	75	79	100	36	58	86	334
Spey Bay	781	350	230	400	nc	nc	330
Portgordon-Strathlene	nc	5	nc	nc	nc	nc	17

The only record for individuals in harbours came from Burghead harbour: 4 on 27 Dec (3 on 29 Dec).

Other counts (over 50): 72 Cummingston 18 Feb.

On estuaries (max. counts): Lossie estuary (female 18 Oct-27 Nov) and Spey estuary (20 on 29 Mar).

Inland: female Loch na Bo 20 Oct and female Dallachy tip pool 20 Oct.

Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra**Common winter visitor, small numbers in summer.*

Summer records (May-July), maximum counts from each site, included: 20 off Burghead 22 May, 55 Spey Bay 29 Jun, 39 Roseisle 15 Jul and 35 Burghead Bay 18 Jul. Present off Lossiemouth throughout the year during seawatches, maximum count during this period: 75 on 1 May.

Maximum monthly counts were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Delnies-Nairn	nc	nc	24	1	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc
Nairn	4	9	nc	nc	nc	nc	70	nc	nc
Nairn/Culbin Bars	345	258	nc	nc	nc	nc	30	nc	669
Off Findhorn	nc	nc	8	20	nc	60	300	60	50
Burghead Bay	28	520	26	8	41	174	504	259	220
Burghead	100	70	110	25	nc	57	61	22	27
Burghead-Hopeman	9	100	100	20	nc	nc	nc	1	nc
Lossiemouth	34	27	172	55	20	35	84	17	10
Spey Bay (Boar's Head)	1227	300	65	720	nc	10	280	100	742
Spey Bay (off Tugnet)	nc	nc	315	nc	2	10	34	nc	nc

Velvet Scoter *Melanitta fusca*

Fairly common winter visitor.

Maximum records from recent WeBS counts show good numbers reported up to 2006 and then numbers becoming very low from 2008 onwards. Exceptional for recent years, three counts exceeded 50 individuals during 2016; 124 Nairn/Culbin Bars 16 Jan, 128 Burghead Bay 13 Feb and 67 Culbin Bar 2 Dec.

Maximum counts for main areas were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Oct	Nov	Dec
Nairn/Culbin Bars	124	40	nc	18	nc	76
Burghead Bay	6	128	4	20	40	7
Burghead	5	20	1	6	nc	nc
Lossiemouth	1	2	3	1	nc	nc
Spey Bay	2	11	nc	3	nc	5

In spring: 1 Burghead Bay 2 Apr, 6 off Burghead 2 Apr and 5 off Findhorn 5 Apr.

Coastal summer records included: 1 male Lossiemouth 21 & 30 May, 2 Burghead Bay 11 Jul, 1 west Lossiemouth 11 Jul and 4 Hilton of Delnies 31 Jul.

Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*

Rare breeder and fairly common winter visitor.

Breeding: No breeding or suspected breeding records were received this year. Early in the season at potential breeding sites were a female Black Loch (Dava) 19, 24 & 30 Apr and 2 birds on 11 May (MJHC, A&FR) and 2 Loch Allan 24 Apr (male on 26 May) (A&FR).

Summer records in the coastal strip included: 5 Loch Spynie 1 May, 1 Loch Oire 5 & 6 May, 7 Spey Bay 5 May and Spey estuary 26 May-20 Jul (max. count 8 on 6 Jun).

Maximum counts on most frequented lochs were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Loch Flemington	5	15	19	40	nc	2	5	5
Loch Spynie	34	28	51	23	1	4	9	6
Cloddach quarry	1	nc	2	nc	nc	nc	1	0
Loch na Bo	0	3	19	6	nc	3	9	4
Loch Oire	3	3	9	25	1	0	10	7
Dallachy tip pool	nc	nc	0	19	0	1	4	11

A spring build-up was evident on Loch Flemington, Loch Spynie and Loch na Bo.

Elsewhere, 4 Loch of Blairs 2 & 22 Feb, 4 Loch Belivat 28 Mar and 3 Loch Kirkaldy 28 Oct.

Well inland in the winter periods (max. counts): 1 River Findhorn (Logie) 9 Jan, 2 Black Loch (Dava) 25 Feb & 13 Mar, 6 Tom an Uird 16 Mar, 7 Loch Park 21 Mar and 1 Loch Allan 11 Nov.

On the River Spey were: 2 Marypark 21 Feb, 4 Aberlour 25 Feb, 2 Cragganmore 6 & 11 Mar, 1 Blacksboat 16 Mar, 1 Dipple 10 & 27 Dec and 3 Craigellachie 23 Dec.

Other inland records included: 2 Miltonduff distillery pond 9 Feb, 3 Gilston 21 Apr, 1 Cran Loch 23 Dec and 1 Loch Loy 23 Dec.

Maximum counts at most frequented coastal sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Oct	Nov	Dec
Delnies	3	2	7	nc	1	nc	5
Delnies-Nairn	nc	8	nc	nc	nc	nc	2
Nairn	17	7	6	nc	4	3	8
Nairn/Culbin Bars	9	4	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc
Findhorn Bay	32	40	40	23	14	18	15
Burghead Bay	1	1	nc	nc	nc	nc	2
Burghead	1	7	4	nc	9	3	7
Burghead-Hopeman	8	8	nc	nc	nc	3	11
Lossiemouth	3	5	8	2	nc	nc	nc
Lossie estuary	4	4	nc	1	nc	nc	1
Spey estuary	11	9	9	10	3	2	23
Portgordon-Strathlene	nc	1	nc	nc	nc	nc	5

Elsewhere, coastal records included 1 Findochty 17 Jan and 1 Portessie 17 Jan.

Red-breasted Merganser *Mergus serrator*

Scarce breeder, fairly common offshore.

Breeding: Four distinct broods were reported from Findhorn Bay, these included 8, 7 and 6 ducklings (GM, RSC), giving a mean brood size of 7.0. In potential breeding habitat records included a female River Nairn (Howford Bridge) 31 Mar, 3 pairs River Findhorn (A96 bridge) 8 May, 10 River Findhorn-mouth 8 May, 3 Spey estuary 19 May, male Broom of Moy 15 Jun and 1 River Findhorn (Sluie) 13 Jul.

Coastal records in summer (May-July): 2 Kingsteps area 1 May, 10 Tugnet 5 May, 3 Lossiemouth 16 Jul and 2 Carse of Delnies 31 Jul.

Monthly maximum counts at Findhorn Bay:

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Findhorn Bay	22	17	11	45	18	6	16	26	18	10	9	26



Red-breasted Merganser, Lossie estuary 19 January 2016 (David Main)

Maximum monthly counts at other sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Delnies area	4	2	19	1	5	3	nc	11
Nairn	8	15	5	4	1	2	4	6
Nairn/Culbin Bars	3	3	nc	nc	nc	210	nc	4
Burghead Bay	11	7	10	nc	17	18	14	10
Burghead	12	9	2	3	nc	nc	10	16
Hopeman	nc	8	nc	nc	nc	1	1	1
Lossiemouth	2	6	2	3	nc	4	nc	1
Spey Bay	nc	15	nc	3	nc	4	nc	5
Spey estuary	4	1	3	10	0	3	5	6

In harbours were: a pair Buckie 10 Jan and a female Burghead 30 Jan-1 Feb.

On estuaries in winter (max. counts): 3 males Lossie estuary 10 Jan and 5 Kingston 17 Jan.

Inland: 1 Loch Flemington 11 Jan.

Goosander *Mergus merganser*

Scarce breeder and fairly common visitor.

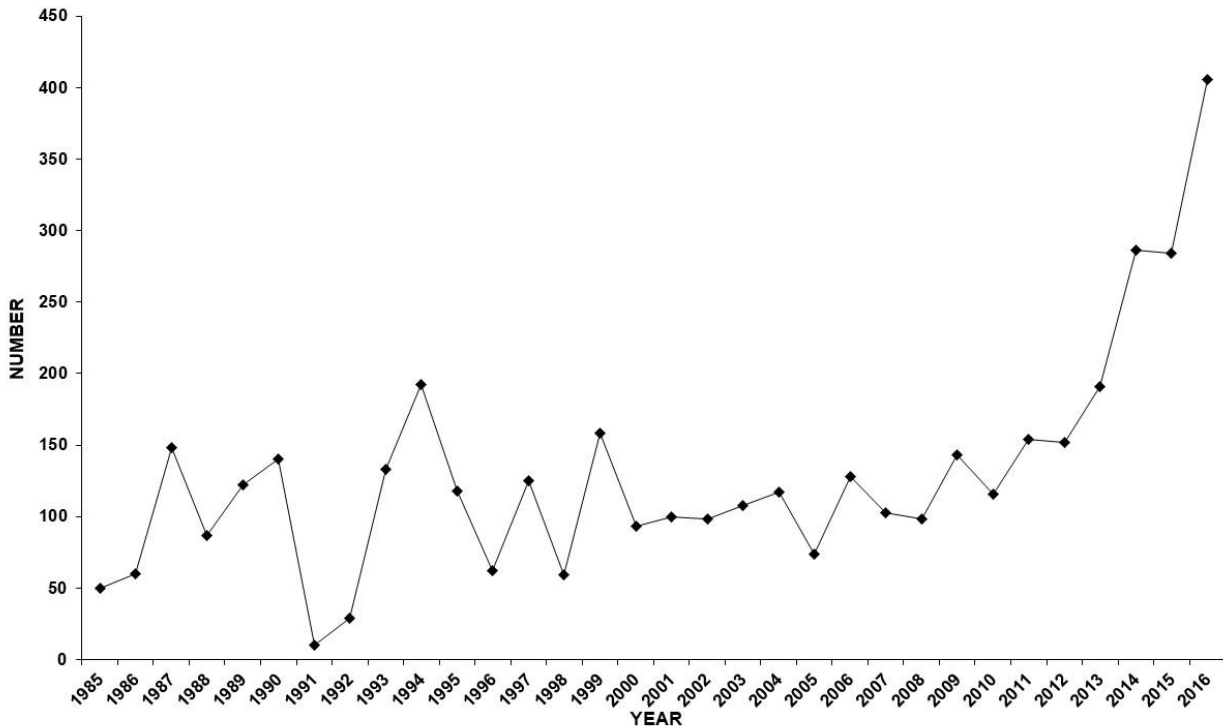
Breeding: Breeding was confirmed at only one site; two females with broods of 9 & 5 at Findhorn Bay 4 Jul (RSC, GM). This gives a mean brood size of 7.0 chicks.

Seen in potential breeding areas: 2 Cragganmore 11 & 20 Mar, 3 Culfoich More 16 Mar, female Muckle Burn (Lethen House) 15 Mar, 2 Black Loch (Dava) 24 Mar, 1 River Fiddich (Bridgehaugh) 7 Apr, male River Nairn (Househill) 15 & 27 Apr, 1 female River Spey (Rothes) 17 Apr, 2 females Loch Allan 19 Apr, 1 Bridgend of Genlivet 21 Apr, 1 Glenlivet (Packhorse Bridge) 21 Apr & 29 May, 4 River Findhorn (Sluie) 23 Apr, 2 females Blacksboat 1 May, female River Nairn (Fishertown) 3 May and 3 & 21 Jun, 3 River Livet (Drumin) 6 May and 30+ River Spey (Mosstodloch) 14 & 16 May.

Maximum monthly counts:

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Nairn area	1	nc	1	2	1	nc	nc	18	9	2	1	2
Findhorn Bay	1	15	nc	11	51	24	27	43	27	10	20	3
Burghead Bay	nc	2	nc	nc	nc	nc	35	56	30	52	2	nc
Loch Spynie	nc	3	3	5	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	1	nc	1
Lossie estuary	1	2	2	10	13	1	1	8	116	4	1	nc
Loch Oire	11	11	5	2	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	7	48	26
Loch na Bo	nc	nc	3	2	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	2	14
Spey estuary	3	2	nc	11	29	134	240	406	228	33	nc	1

Maximum counts at Spey estuary 1985-2016:



Elsewhere, 2 Cloddach quarry 13 Mar, 38 Portgordon 10 Jul & 4 Aug, 16 Buckie 25 Jul, 5 Lossiemouth 1 Oct, 1 River Lossie (Elgin Cathedral) 31 Oct and 1 Portgordon-Strathlene 16 Oct & 18 Dec.

Inland in autumn and winter were: 3 Dava 5 Jan, 1 Loch Allan 13 Jan & 8 Mar, 1 Logie 20 Jan, 2 Dallaschyle 17 Jan, 2 Cragganmore 13 & 16 Feb, 1 Delmore 16 Feb, 2 Sanquhar Pond 22-23 Feb, 3 Mosset Burn (Forres) 11 Mar, female Cooper Park pond (Elgin) 12 & 27 Mar, 5 River Spey (Aberlour) 22 Mar, 3 Scootmore 28 Sep, max. 3 Dipple 7-28 Dec, 2 River Nairn (Firhall) 18 Dec and max. 22 Montgrew 18 Dec.

[Muscovy Duck *Cairina moschata*

Escape.

A single was reported on 12 Jul at the Cooper Park pond, Elgin. The last report at the pond was in April 2014, suggesting that this is a new individual (RMO).]

Quail *Coturnix coturnix*

Rare summer visitor and breeder, occasionally more numerous.

In a very poor year for the species, the only report was of two singing birds at Easter Bauds on 21 Jun (AY).

In recent years the total number of singing Quail has varied as follows:

2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
8	8	4	4	2	9	0	0	3	3	2

Red-legged Partridge *Alectoris rufa*

Introduced scarce breeder. Commonly released.

No reports of breeding. Small numbers (up to five) were seen at Achavraat, Achdregnie, Altyre woods, Balnught, Bogeney, Burnside (Dunearn), Clunas, Dava, Dulsie Bridge, Dunearn, Dyke, Fornightly, Glenshiel Farm, Meikleburn, Moyness and Whitefold (Boath).

Records of slightly greater numbers were 20 Convalleys (Glen Rinnes) 6 Jan, 11 Refouble 27 Sep (and 10 there 27 Nov), 7 Ferness 18 Dec and 6 Cults Wood (Tomintoul).

Red Grouse *Lagopus lagopus*

Very common resident breeder.

Counts of 15 or more were 25 Ben Rinnes 4 Jan, 18 Hill of Mackalea 1 Feb, 17 Allt na Faraidh 18 Sep and 23 Carn Mor 5 May.

Ptarmigan *Lagopus muta*

Fairly common resident breeder.

The largest counts on Ben Rinnes were 18 on 16 Oct, 13 on 26 Jul and 12 on 1 Nov (AE, PRG). On 21 May, single males were in three different places on the hill (AE) - perhaps giving some indication of the breeding population. On 26 May, a pair and two other males were found (DDu).

In the Cairngorms, the only breeding report was of a female with a brood of 3 chicks on Cairn Lochan 6 Jul. Counts of 10 or more were 24 Cairn Gorm 10 Dec, 13 Cairn Lochan 23 Jun and 10 Lochan Buidhe 24 Aug.

Black Grouse *Tetrao tetrix*

Scarce resident breeder.

Recorded at Aitnoch (2 on 8 Apr, 4+ on 14 May), Aldunie (2 on 7 Apr), Auchmair (6 on 16 May, 3 on 22 Jun, 3 on 19 Jul, 1 on 30 Oct), Bank Farm (3 on 14 May), Cairn Cattoch (1 on 3 Feb), Craggan (2 on 30 Apr), near Dallas (1 on 8 Oct), Dava (2 on 11 Feb, 4 on 4 Jun), Dunearn (2 on 13 Feb), Glenmarkie (3 on 24 Apr), Inchroary (6 on 29 Mar, 3 on 29 Oct), Knock of Braemoray (5 on 1 Oct), The Scalp (3 on 17 Jan) and Tomintoul (6 on 27 Apr).

Capercaillie *Tetrao urogallus*

Scarce resident breeder.

Breeding: Birds persist at very low densities in Moray & Nairn, spread across a number of fragmented forests. Leks or single cocks were located in nine areas, containing a total of 14 males, two fewer than in 2015. (GMa, RSPB).

Grey Partridge *Perdix perdix*

Fairly common resident breeder.

Breeding season (April-July): Birds were seen at Bogheads, Coltfoot, Drainie, Golford, Hopeman, Kinloss, Kinnudie (Auldearn), Lower Mains (Findrassie), Moyness, Roseisle distillery and Williamston.

Additional sites where birds were seen at other times of year were Ardivot, Burnside (Dunearn), Carse of Delnies, Findhorn Bay (Netherton/Mosset Burn areas), Gallowhill, Garmouth, Hempriggs, Kinchyle, Kintrae, Mill of Grange, Milton of Grange, Scarffbanks, Seafield, Tarras, Tearie and Wester Coltfoot. The only reports of more than five birds together were 15 Roseisle distillery 5 Oct (13 there on 29 Sep), 15 Tarras 10 Nov & 24 Dec, 12 Hempriggs 20 Jan, 10 Kintrae 1 & 29 Jan, 7 Wester Coltfoot 17 Jan, 6 Burnside 26 Sep, 6 Moyness 2 Oct and 6 Seafield 27 Sep.

Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus*

Very common resident breeder.

Widespread - numerous around release points e.g. 86 Cragganmore 24 Oct.

[Reeves's Pheasant *Syrnaticus reevesii**Escape.*

1 male Bridge of Avon 18 Apr (NL).]



Reeves's Pheasant, Bridge of Avon 18 April 2016 (Nick Littlewood)

Red-throated Diver *Gavia stellata**Rare breeder. Fairly common autumn and winter visitor offshore.*

Summer: A pair was seen on one lochan in south Moray on 11 May and 22 Jul but there was no evidence of breeding either there or nearby (A&FR). A lochan in a different area held one adult on 4 Jul (SMa).

Best monthly counts at main coastal sites were:

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Nairn/Delnies	29	20	4	15	nc	0	0	nc	nc	7	nc	7
Burghead Bay	22	15	5	4	0	0	2	3	2	9	6	4
Lossiemouth (flying past)	55	59	24	7	4	1	2	2	9	12	18	11
Lossiemouth (on sea)	2	2	3	2	4	1	0	0	0	3	4	4
Spey Bay	65	6	5	11	1	0	0	8	2	41	6	23

The high Lossiemouth counts were 55 in 90 minutes on 1 Jan and 59 in 1 hour on 25 Feb (RP). The 65 birds in Spey Bay were also counted on 1 Jan, between Portgordon and Tugnet (MCI).

Elsewhere, a few were scattered along the coast in other sites. All counts were of five birds or fewer, except 9 flying past Strathlene on 4 Jan and 6 Cullen 1 May. One was inside Findhorn Bay, opposite Findhorn village, on 7-10 Jan.

Black-throated Diver *Gavia arctica**Rare breeder. Scarce autumn and winter visitor offshore.*

Upland lochs: One pair bred for the 10th successive year but failed to rear any young (IH).

Best monthly counts at main coastal sites were:

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Burghead Bay	5	7	8	20	nc	nc	1	nc	1	6	5	3
Lossiemouth (flying past)	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1
Spey Bay	0	0	0	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	1

The usual small spring build-up in Burghead Bay resulted in a best count of 20 on 3 Apr (RHD), though numbers in autumn were lower than usual with the best count of only 6 on 24 Oct (AJL).

Maximum counts at other sites included 4 off Nairn & Culbin Bars on 16 Jan, 2 Buckie harbour-Cullen 1 May and 3 off Tugnet (Spey Bay) on 2 Apr and 15 May.

Great Northern Diver *Gavia immer*

Scarce visitor offshore.

Best monthly counts at main coastal sites were:

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Nairn/Delnies	7	0	1	1	nc	0	0	nc	nc	0	nc	1
Burghead Bay	23	2	2	1	0	0	0	0	1	7	1	1
Lossiemouth (flying past)	110	9	4	1	2	0	0	0	0	6	4	17
Lossiemouth (on sea)	3	1	1	2	5	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Spey Bay	0	0	1	5	4	0	1	0	0	3	0	2

January-March: Remarkably numerous in January when 110 flew past Lossiemouth in two hours on 9th, followed by 45 in two hours on 10th (RP). Elsewhere, 29 flew past Burghead on 10th (JDG) and 23 were on the sea off Findhorn beach on 11th (RSC).

Spring: Fewer than in recent years but this may well be due to variable observer effort. Best counts were off Cullen where 5 on 20 Apr and 10 on 1 May. Also, 5 Lossiemouth 1 May and 5 in the Boar's Head area of Spey Bay on 28 Apr.

Offshore during June-August: 1 Spey Bay 1 Jul was the only report.

September-December: Light but regular offshore movement was detected again by regular seawatches off Lossiemouth (RP) - best days were 29 Oct (6 in 1 hour), 5 Nov (4 in 1 hour) and 27 Dec (17 in 1 hour). Elsewhere, 7 Burghead Bay 31 Oct and 3 Boar's Head Rock area 20 Oct.

White-billed Diver *Gavia adamsii*

Rare visitor.

Records from two sites in spring and one in mid summer. A long-staying bird was off Burghead between 18 Mar-12 May (JDG, PRG, MGC *et al.*). Probably the same bird, was seen off Lossiemouth on 7 Apr, 1 & 6 May (RP, DAG, AJL, MW).

Very unusually, a bird in full wing moult was found in Burghead Bay, close to Findhorn dunes, on 10 Jul and remained there until 16 Jul (RSC, MJHC *et al.*).



White-billed Diver, Burghead Bay 11 July 2016 (Richard Somers Cocks)

Fulmar *Fulmarus glacialis*

Common breeder, very common offshore.

Breeding: Return indicated by 18 back on cliffs at Cummington on 11 Jan rising to 20 by 17 Mar. At Findochty 150 were seen on 17 Jan and nearby 11 were at Bow Fiddle Rock (Portknockie) on 28 Apr.

Passage: From January to July counts were relatively low with the only totals over 20 past Lossiemouth in 1 hour being 29 on 3 Feb, 33 on 16 Apr, 97 on 25 Apr, 44 on 18 May and 50 on 25 May. Late summer then saw further high counts including 83 on 8 Aug, 42 on 21 Aug and 70 on 4 Sep. Apart from the latter sighting in September where the passage was largely eastwards, all other sightings showed a predominantly westwards passage (RP).

Great Shearwater *Puffinus gravis*

Rare migrant in late summer and autumn.

Four were observed at Lossiemouth on an easterly passage on 8 Sep (RP). [This record is still under consideration by SBRC].

Sooty Shearwater *Puffinus griseus*

Very scarce migrant in late summer and autumn.

Only three sightings in 2016, all being seen off Lossiemouth with a single bird on 27 Jul, two on 4 Sep and another single on 22 Oct (RP).

Annual totals since 2006 have been as follows:

2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
1	38	11	0	7	605	11	1	27	8	4

Manx Shearwater *Puffinus puffinus*

Fairly common offshore in summer and autumn.

First sighting of the year was a single bird off Lossiemouth on 9 Jan. Regular passage was seen at Lossiemouth between mid May and early September with the highest one hour counts of 16 on 18 May, 12 on 15 Jun, 13 on 12 Jul, 75 over 2 hours on 8 Aug and 55 on 4 Sep (RP). Other sightings at Burghead included 8 on 22 Aug (C&DS) and 2 on 15 Oct (JDG).

Storm Petrel *Hydrobates pelagicus*

Summer and autumn visitor offshore, probably very common at night.

Good numbers trapped and ringed at night give a small snapshot of the abundance of Storm Petrels which are present off our coast during darkness in late summer. Between 6 Jul-31 Aug, birds were caught at Burghead (19) (BB), Strathlene (1) (MJHC), near Boar's Head Rock (8), Tronach Head (12), Portknockie (53) and Findochty (10) (all AY). The only daytime record was of one passing Lossiemouth on 8 Aug (RP).

Gannet *Morus bassanus*

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

Only a few sightings were reported in the first two months, with an exception being 100+ in 1 hour on 3 Jan seen on an easterly passage past Burghead (MGC). By the end of March a few more were seen with 188 in 1 hour off Lossiemouth on 27 Mar, 21 off Burghead on 27 Mar and 38 off Findhorn on 9 Apr.

At Lossiemouth regular sea-watches were conducted throughout 2016 and the maximum passage recorded over a 1 hour period was as follows (RP):

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
16	2	188	381	219	160	691	200	523	1163	814	84

Elsewhere, the most numerous sightings were also in autumn and early winter. Counts of 200 or more included 400 off Tugnet on 25 Sep, 960 past Burghead in 2 hours on 15 Oct and 1083 on 31 Oct, and off Findhorn 225 on 13 Oct and 215 on 27 Oct.

Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

Rare breeder and fairly common winter visitor.

Breeding: A substantial increase to 11 occupied nests at the recently-founded Covesea colony on 19 Jun (MJHC). The number of occupied nests since the colony was started in 2011 have been:

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Occupied nests	1	2	2	4	7	11

Coastal: Counts of 25 or more were 25 Covesea (on cliffs away from breeding sites) 19 Jun, 50 Nairn 7 Oct (and 35 there 24 Oct), 31 Culbin Bar 16 Oct, 39 Burghead 31 Oct (and 45 there 22 Nov), 28 Burghead-Hopeman 16 Oct, 30 Hopeman 4 Oct, 70 off Lossiemouth 22 Sep and, between Portgordon and Strathlene, 29 on 16 Oct and 32 on 18 Dec.

The pattern of occurrence at selected sites is revealed by maximum monthly counts:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Loch Spynie	23	5	5	2	1	2	3	2	4	5	9	7
Spey estuary	0	1	0	2	0	0	4	10	15	20	nc	9
Findhorn (bay mouth)	5	5	2	37	4	3	5	6	22	31	68	3

Inland: Mostly at Loch Spynie - see table above. Elsewhere, one at Cloddach Quarry (Elgin) on 10 Jan and 13 Mar, three sightings at Loch no Bo (Llanbryde) in Dec with a maximum of 3 on 30th, and single birds at Aberlour on the Spey on 12 Jan, 2 Feb and 29 Nov. Further downstream on the Spey near Fochabers up to two were seen 7-10 Dec. Single birds of the continental race *P. c. sinensis* were sighted at Loch Spynie on 13 & 17 Feb and 7 Dec (RP).

Shag *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

Fairly common breeder and very common visitor, chiefly in winter.

Breeding: At Portknockie/Bow Fiddle Rock cliffs, numbers were slightly down at 73 occupied nests on 22 Jun. Numbers also down to 77 occupied nests at Tronach Head on 22 Jun. No change in numbers at Covesea, where 21 occupied nests were counted on 19 Jun (MJHC).

Over the last ten years the occupancy of the three colonies (apparently occupied nests) has been as follows:

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Portknockie	73	79	79	76	85	93	86	66	77	73
Tronach Head	21	23	26	60	58	53	86	72	80	77
Covesea	13	11	14	14	17	14	16	18	21	21

Several high counts were recorded elsewhere including 210 at Findochty on 17 Jan, 60 at Cullen on 1 May, and 221 Portgordon-Strathlene on 16 Oct which included 215 at Buckie harbour. At the end of the year there were 36 at Lossiemouth on 18 Dec.

Bittern *Botaurus stellaris*

Rare visitor.

One found at Loch Spynie on 23 Jan (RSC) was subsequently seen on 11, 21 & 23 Feb and 6 March (CAG, GB *et al.*) - presumably the same bird overwintering at the loch. This is the 6th record since 1900 - the last was also at Loch Spynie, in January-March 2013.



Bittern, Loch Spynie 23 January 2016 (Richard Somers Cocks)

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

Rare visitor.

One was seen around the south end of Findhorn Bay between 9-16 May (RHD, GM, RSC, MJHC) and regularly between 19 Sep-23 Nov (ISS, GM, RSC *et al.*). What was presumably the same bird was then found at Kingsteps on 2 Dec (STr), and was last seen there on 18 Dec (GP). During the period of summer absence from Findhorn Bay, a Little Egret was seen inland at Lachlanwells (near Alves) on 17 Apr (IG) and at Cloddach gravel pit on 26-28 May (MMu, DM *et al.*). On 23, 25 & 27 May, one appeared on the Lossie estuary (RP, HF *et al.*) - presumably the same bird commuting between here and Cloddach.

Due to the lack of any overlap in site dates it is assumed that only one Little Egret was involved in all the 2016 reports - the 11th record for Moray & Nairn.



Little Egret, Lossie estuary 23 May 2016 (Gordon Biggs)

Great White Egret *Egretta alba*

Rare visitor.

One was in the Loch Spynie area between 2 Jan-5 Mar (JHe, DAG, RP *et al.*). Although frequently seen at the loch, it also frequented the banks of the River Lossie and various ditches nearby. This is the 4th record for Moray & Nairn, all since 2009.



Great White Egret, Calcots 2 January 2016 (Bob Proctor)

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

Fairly common resident breeder.

Heronries: Nine apparently occupied nests Loch Spynie 30 May (RP), at least 10 nests in the Binsness (Findhorn Bay) heronry 8 May (EJ), 2-3 nests close to Lossiemouth cemetery 6 May (EJ) and several pairs nested at Aberlour near Walkers Shortbread factory (AE).

As usual, the largest congregations were on the three estuaries where best monthly counts were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Findhorn Bay	4	5	17	10	14	23	23	12	16	21	10	6
Lossie estuary	4	1	1	3	4	5	8	11	7	11	4	3
Spey estuary	nc	nc	nc	1	2	2	4	2	3	4	2	nc

Best days at each site were 23 Findhorn Bay 29 Jun & 12 Jul, 11 Lossie estuary 18 Aug & 30 Oct and 4 Spey estuary 30 Jul & 18 Oct.

The only counts of five or more elsewhere were at Loch Flemington where 8 on 16 Jul and 6 on 1 & 18 Dec. Frequently recorded on rocky shores such as those between Burghead-Hopeman, at Lossiemouth harbour and west beach, and at Buckie, Findochty and Portknockie.

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

Scarce breeder, scarce on the estuaries in winter.

Monthly maximum counts on main freshwater sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
L. Flemington	2	3	8	5	3	nc	7	nc	24	7	3	3
Loch of Blairs	0	0	6+	4+	6+	6+	6+	nc	7	nc	nc	nc
Loch Spynie	1	3	4	12	6	2	23	27	33	23	2	1
Loch Oire	0	0	3	4	4	6	7	8	7	8	8	1
Loch na Bo	0	0	1	1	nc	nc	nc	nc	14	2	2	2

Elsewhere, at Cloddach gravel pit, 22 on 6 Aug, 25 on 1 Oct and 15 on 23 Oct.

Mid-winter: Elsewhere on freshwater in January or December were 4 Brodie Castle lake 22 Jan, 2 Dipple 10 Dec and 1 Easter Bauds 30 Dec.

Present in spring/summer (*italics* = proved breeding) at Black Loch (Dava), *Brodie Castle lake*, *Cloddach gravel pit*, Easter Bauds, Loch Allan (Dava), Loch Flemington, Loch Kirkaldy, *Loch of Blairs*, Loch na Bo, *Loch Oire*, Loch Park (4 pairs), *Loch Spynie (7 pairs with broods 26 Jul [MJHC])*, Lossie Forest gravel pit and Newmill pond (Nairn).

Largest post-breeding congregations in late summer/autumn were 33 Loch Spynie 17 Sep, 25 Cloddach gravel pit 1 Oct and 24 Loch Flemington 9 Sep.

Coastal in autumn-winter: Regular in Findhorn Bay (mostly around the creeks of the south and west sides) where the highest count was 15 on 16 Oct. Maximum monthly counts here were:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
11	9	4	0	0	0	1	7	12	15	13	8

Also seen irregularly on the Lossie estuary (1-2 in January-February and November-December, 3 on 27 Nov) and Spey estuary (1-2 late August-December, 3 on 5 Dec).

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*

Occasional breeder, and very scarce offshore in autumn and winter.

One remained in Findhorn Bay, usually at the north end off Findhorn village, during 10 Jan-8 Feb (ISS, GM, RSC *et al.*) and was last seen, offshore in Burghead Bay, on 9 Feb (GM). On 26-27 Apr, a bird in breeding plumage was back off Findhorn village (GM, RSC).

Elsewhere, single birds were seen off Burghead on 4 Jan (PJ) and 28 Mar (PRG).



Great Crested Grebe, Findhorn 18 January 2016 (Richard Somers Cocks)

Red-necked Grebe *Podiceps auritus*

Very scarce migrant and winter visitor.

One was on the Lossie estuary on 9 Jan (RP, DAG, GB).



Red-necked Grebe, Lossie estuary 9 January 2016 (Gordon Biggs)

Slavonian Grebe *Podiceps auritus*

Scarce offshore in winter, formerly rare breeder.

No freshwater records.

Coastal: In Burghead Bay, monthly maxima were:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
11	6	4	1	9	6	7
(24th)	(25th)	(21st)	(22nd)	(25th)	(3rd, 21st)	(5th)

Elsewhere, 1 Kingsteps 16 Jan, 4 Nairn/Culbin Bars 16 & 21 Jan, 1 Culbin Bar 24 Jan, 1 Nairn Bar 13 Feb and 1 Spey Bay (Boar's Head Rock area) 2 & 6 Oct. In breeding plumage was 1 Findhorn Bay 12 May.



Slavonian Grebe, Findhorn Bay 12 May 2016 (Richard Somers Cocks)

Honey-buzzard *Pernis apivorus*

Rare breeder.

The only record, close to the most recent breeding area, was of a single male on 28-30 Jul (AH) and 18 Aug (MGC).

Red Kite *Milvus milvus*

Occasional breeder, reintroduced in Highland and North-east Scotland.

Breeding: A pair was present near Cawdor in April, where breeding took place in 2014-15, but breeding was not confirmed in 2016 (BE). Very positive events in the Findhorn valley where two pairs bred. One pair raised two young but the other pair was probably unsuccessful (RHD).

Numerous sight records were received from the Findhorn valley (and nearby) at all seasons. Elsewhere, in autumn/winter, 1 Auldearn 25 Aug (C&DS), 1 Creagan a' Chaise (Cromdales) 21 Sep (PS), 1 Findhorn Bay 22 Mar (PRG, GM), 1 Little Balloch Hill 11 Dec (MWh) and 1 Wester Galcantray 17 Jan (GA).

Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*

Occasional breeder and very scarce visitor.

The only records at Loch Spynie were of a female/immature on 17-30 Oct (JDL, CAG, TM).

Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus*

Rare resident breeder, very scarce migrant and winter visitor.

Breeding: In west Moray and Nairn, 16 former sites were checked and six of these were occupied by pairs. Only two pairs were successful, raising two young and one young. Of the four unsuccessful pairs, one failed during, or prior to, egg laying and the other three nests were believed to have been predated (JKC). In east Moray in May, a male was seen at one site and a 'ringtail' at another but there was no evidence of breeding (IF, MJHC).

Outside the breeding season, 1 female Creagan a' Chaise 21 Sep (PS), and 'ringtails' at Darkland (JDL) and Lossie estuary (KCu) both on 3 Oct (possibly the same bird) and 1 Moor of Tore 30 Oct (G&DS).

Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis*

Rare resident breeder.

Breeding: Five pairs were located in Moray, and the nests of three of them were found. Three young fledged from one nest, an unknown number from the second, and the third failed (AY). Single birds were seen in spring or summer in eight other localities.

Autumn/winter: Single birds were seen at Cabrach 17 Feb (AG), Carn Tighearn 17 Feb (SR), Cragganmore 6 Oct (NS, CA), Glenmullie 13 Oct (BJT), Lone Hill 17 Feb (JDG), Scarffbanks 10 Jan (RHD) and Tomnamoon 2 Sep (MGC).

Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*

Common resident breeder.

Breeding season (April-July) records included birds/pairs at Bishopmill (Elgin), Buckie, Burgiehill, Cluny Hill, Coltfoot, Elgin cemetery, Findhorn Bay, Forres, Kerrow, Kingsmills (Elgin), Kinloss, Loch Flemington, Loch Spynie, Lossiemouth, Tomintoul and Tomnamoon.

Buzzard *Buteo buteo*

Common resident breeder.

Groups of five or more together were 6 Pluscarden 28 Mar, 6 Clochan 30 Mar, 5 Tomnabae 14 Mar, 5 Roseisle 11 Apr and 5 Loch Kirkaldy 29 Oct.

Golden Eagle *Aquila chrysaetos*

Rare resident breeder.

Breeding: At the three usual/most recent breeding sites: i) 1-2 birds were in the general area in February and October but the breeding site was unoccupied, ii) the site was occupied by a pair but the outcome is unknown, iii) a pair bred and raised one young - the first to be reared there for several years (EW).

Away from breeding areas, 2 immature birds Ben Rinnes 9 May (HH).

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*

Scarce summer visitor and breeder.

First back at a nest was on 29 Mar, and five nests were reoccupied by 31 Mar (RHD). First on the estuaries were 1 Lossie estuary 30 Mar and 1 Findhorn Bay 2 Apr.

Breeding: In west Moray & Nairn, nine pairs nested - one more than in 2015. Beatrice sadly died in the Pyrenees on her northward migration, and a new young female joined her old mate and reared two young at B16. All 9 pairs laid eggs and all were successful with a total of 19 young - two more than 2015. Seven of them were translocated and released in the Basque Country - fourth year of five year project. The breeding productivity at 2.1 young per pair was the same as 2015, which is on the high side. In east Moray, the population (which mainly fishes at the mouth of the Rivers Spey and Lossie) is still growing. There were nine pairs in 2016, which equals the west Moray & Nairn group. Seven, possibly eight, pairs laid eggs but heavy continuous rain in June (five days and nights in the Fochabers-Keith area) caused the complete loss of

four broods of small young. Three pairs were successful and reared a total of eight young. The breeding productivity was 0.88 young per pair, which reflects the poor weather in east Moray compared to west Moray. (RHD).

Largest congregations, as always, were in Findhorn Bay where highest counts were 7 on five dates in August and 8 on 11 Sep. Best counts on the other estuaries were 2 Lossie estuary on various dates and 3 Spey estuary 5 & 10 Aug. Last of the year was 1 Findhorn Bay 25 Sep.

Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus*

Scarce breeder and winter visitor.

Recorded at Loch Spynie at all seasons - usually only 1-2 birds calling but 4 on 20 Mar. A juvenile appeared on several occasions beside the hide in late August (LSt).

Elsewhere, 1 Loch Oire 20 Jan (RS), 1 Loch Flemington 22 Feb (KK) and 7 Apr (JDG), 1 near Mulben 23 May (MJHC) and 1 Findhorn Bay 25 Oct (PRG).

PHOTO

Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

Fairly common resident breeder.

Breeding proved (*italics*) or probable at Brodie Castle pond, Cloddach gravel pit, Dallachy pool, Easter Bauds, Loch Flemington, *Loch of Blairs*, *Loch Oire*, *Loch Park* and Loch Spynie.

Largest counts were made at Loch Flemington where 8 on 1 Jan, 15 on 9 Sep, 14 on 16 Oct and 10 on 23 Nov. Also numerous at Loch Spynie, where 12 on 20 Oct and 11 on 21 Nov, and at Loch Oire, where 6 on 17 Aug, 8 on 30 Sep and 6 on 3 Nov. Elsewhere, five or more were seen only at Loch Loy (6 on 21 Oct) and Dallachy pool (5 on 23 Nov).

Coot *Fulica atra*

Scarce resident breeder and winter visitor.

Breeding proved (*italics*) or probable at Brodie Castle, Dallachy pool, Easter Bauds, *Loch Oire* and *Loch Spynie*.

Maximum monthly counts on main lochs were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
L. Flemington	4	3	4	1	nc	nc	1	nc	11	5	4	5
Loch Spynie	13	19	13	8	2	10	22	12	24	11	17	21
Loch Oire	1	0	2	5	5	7	8	7	8	5	4	1

Elsewhere, 2 Cooper Park (Elgin) 12 Jul were unusual.

Crane *Grus grus*

Rare visitor.

One was seen, in flight, near Buckie on 21 Apr (STh).

Stone Curlew *Burhinus oedicanus*

Rare vagrant.

One was observed for c.45 minutes in a potato field near Kintessack on 25 Jun (RPo). This is the second record for Moray & Nairn. The first record was from June 1987 on upland sheep pasture near Dunphail.

Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta**Rare visitor.*

Three birds were seen feeding together in Findhorn Bay on 22 Apr (GM, RSC). They had left by the following day, when three Avocets (probably the same birds) appeared on the Ythan estuary in Aberdeenshire. This is the ninth record for Moray & Nairn. Apart from an old record from 1887, there have been five records in the period of 1969-86, one from 2010 and one from 2015.



Avocets in Findhorn Bay, 22 April 2016 (Richard Somers Cocks)

Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus**Very common resident breeder, winter visitor and migrant.*

First inland was a very early individual at Cloddach quarry on 12 Jan. Not far from the coast were 12 Hopeman pig farm 11 Jan and singles there on 30 & 31 Jan. Also at a pig farm at Balormie (Drainie) were two on 24 & 27 Jan. The first noted on the tern nesting platform at Loch Spynie was one on 5 Feb. Still in the coastal lowlands, 1 Moycroft industrial estate (Elgin) 8 Feb, 2 Miltonduff distillery pond 9 Feb, 14 Cloddach quarry 16 Feb, 11 Hopeman pig farm 17 Feb and 11 Kinneddar 21 Feb. The habitat at Balormie pig farm attracted five, including a group of three displaying, on 17 Feb, 13 including a pair displaying on 20 Feb and four on 21 Feb.

First up-country were at Aberlour where 1 on 9 Feb and 6 on 14 Feb. There was another single at Cragganmore on 16 Feb.

Pre-breeding inland flocks of 20 or more included 108 Cloddach quarry 24 Feb with 88 there 13 Mar. Balormie pig farm had 41 on 27 Feb, 25 on 29 Feb and 27 on 6 Mar. Thirty-four at Aberlour 3 Mar, c.30 Upper Milton of Moyness 7 Mar, 55 Marypark 11 Mar, 22 Blacksboat 16 Mar and, well up-country, 30 Aldunie (Cabrach) 7 Apr.

Breeding: During February in Elgin there were various records in the vicinity of potential breeding sites; on the 25th there was a single over Elgin cemetery, one at the mart area on the 26th, and on the 27th there were singles at Cooper Park pond and Linkwood, pairs were also seen on the roofs of the Town Hall and Halfords on the same day. Three were also displaying on Halfords roof 6 Mar. An adult was at the potential breeding site of the old sawmill at Elgin 24 Mar. At The Oaks (Elgin) one pair on the roof and another in an adjacent field 3 Apr and an adult was in Elgin cemetery 21 Apr. Further inland, display was noted at Half Davoch 5 Mar and on 18 Mar three were displaying at Knockando and a pair displaying at Rothes. On the tern platform at Loch Spynie there were 2 on 8 Mar, 1 on 13 Apr, a nest noted on 28 Apr and a suspected incubating adult there the next day. This is the second year in succession that the platform has been used as a nesting site. Adults were carrying food at Bishopmill (Elgin) 30 Apr and Elgin cemetery 17 May. On 24 May two adults were with one chick at Easter Goldford (Nairn). At the Elgin Town Hall, there was a brood of three on 25 May. In the old section of Lossiemouth cemetery there was a brood of three on the 25 May with three nearly fledged chicks at the same location 11 Jun. In the new section of the same cemetery there was a brood of two and an unhatched egg on 25 May. On 26 May there was a pair at Moray College, whose chicks were predated, and at RAF Lossiemouth there was a pair with a nest. Another pair with a nest at Easter Balcroy (Nairn) 14 Jun. An anxious adult was at Covesea 19 Jun. A rather precarious nest site on the stones in the middle of the easternmost roundabout on the A96 at Forres was noted with an incubating adult there 19 & 22 Jun. At Essil cemetery (Garmouth) there was an adult incubating a clutch of three 29 Jun and chick was seen there 9 Jul. At Moray College a fully grown chick was seen 9 Jul. Records were also received from other potential breeding sites but breeding was not confirmed.

The only inland post-breeding flock was 30 Tomintoul 31 Jul. One individual was noted at Aberlour as late as 13 Sep.

Spring, summer and early autumn peak counts of ten or more at coastal localities:

- April: 50 Burghead 1st, 68 Nairn 5th, 30 Lossie estuary 6th, 290 Findhorn Bay 9th.
- May: 10 Nairn 2nd, 172 Findhorn Bay 18th.
- June: 179 Findhorn Bay 11th, 21 Lossie estuary 25th, 10 Nairn 25th.
- July: 15 Kingsteps 16th, 16 Spey estuary 18th, 30 Burghead 21st, 255 Lossie estuary 25th, 135 Carse of Delnies 31st, 519 Findhorn bay 31st.
- August: 641 Findhorn Bay 9th, 83 Lossie estuary 21st.
- September: 670 Carse of Delnies 3rd, 98 Lossie estuary 4th, 1000 Findhorn Bay 9th, 10 Hopeman 25th, 104 Burghead 26th.

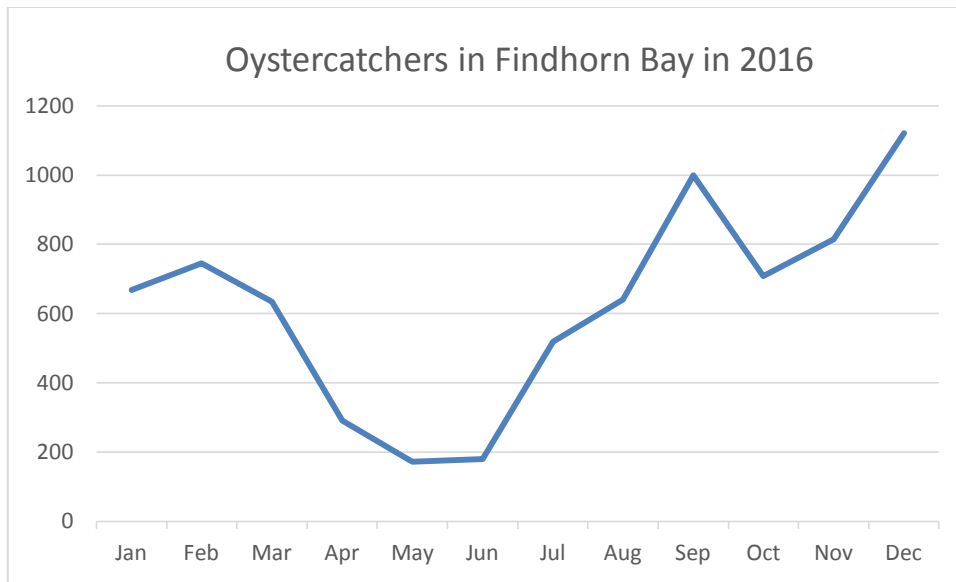
Winter maxima at the coast were:

	Jan	Feb	Oct	Dec
Nairn/Culbin Bars	*1030	*1225	*850	*1275
Findhorn Bay	668	746	800	1121
Burghead-Hopeman	75	95	186	234
Lossiemouth	82	36	109	76
Portgordon-Strathlene	20	54	98	100

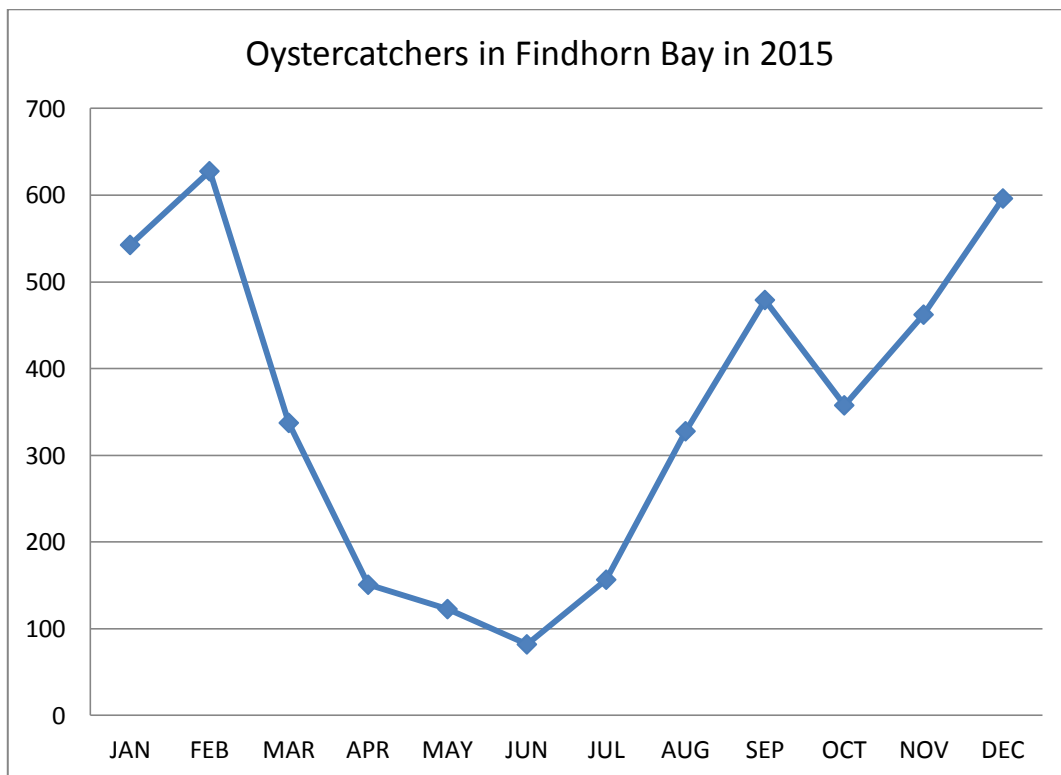
*Combination of Nairn & Culbin Bar counts – counting carried out concurrently.

Outwith the above dates there were maxima at Findhorn Bay of 634 on 2nd Mar and 886 on 1st Nov. Elsewhere, 670 at Carse of Delnies 3rd Sep.

In Findhorn Bay, average daily maxima in each month were as shown below:



The 2016 graph bares a similarity to the equivalent graph from 2015 below.



Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola**Scarce autumn migrant and winter visitor.*

Highest counts were:

	Jan	Feb	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Nairn/Culbin Bars	0	2	0	3	0	17
Findhorn Bay	0	0	4	4	0	0
Lossiemouth	1	0	4	2	0	0

Notable counts were 17 Nairn bar 18 Dec (GP) and out with the above locations, 8 Carse of Delnies 3 Oct (JDG).

No spring records were received. The first to return from breeding grounds was a female in breeding plumage in Findhorn Bay on 14 Jul (RSC & GM).

2016 was another poor year with low numbers. The highest counts since 2006 have been:

2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
18	17	20	24	11	46	27	16	16	20	17

The highest Grey Plover count in Moray & Nairn was 130 at the Bars on 14 Oct 1978.



Grey Plover, Lossie estuary 29 September 2016 (David Main)

Golden Plover *Charadrius apricaria**Common breeder, migrant and winter visitor.*

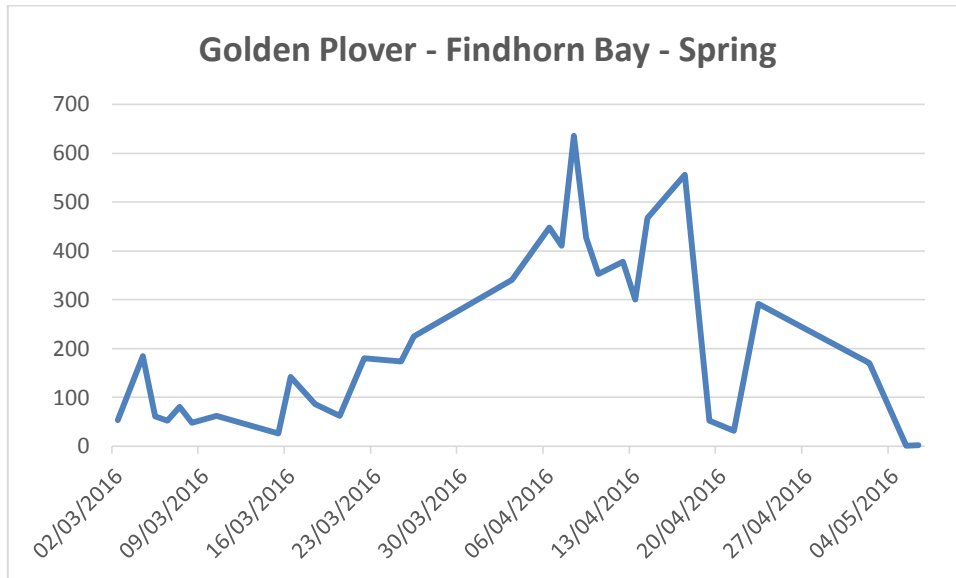
First up-country in potential breeding territory were 7 Tomlea (Knockando) 23 Feb. This was followed by 1 Dava 10 Mar, minimum of 2 Tom Trumper (Glenlivet) 17 Mar, 2 Ben Rinnes 29 Mar and 4 Refouble 3 Apr. During April, pre-breeding flocks were 130 Aldunie (Cabrach) 7th, c.30 Refouble 8th, c.30 Loch of Boath 23rd and 30 Burnside-Little Aitnoch 30th. At Carn Mor there were 14 on 5 May. Other records at Refouble were 4 on 17 Apr, 1 on 27 Apr and 3 on 11 May. Elsewhere, calling heard at Aldivalloch (Cabrach) 6 May and two at Carn an t-Suidhe 29 May.

Breeding: although various records received from potential breeding grounds, the only confirmed breeding was of a pair with one chick at Carn Liath 9 Jul (KW).

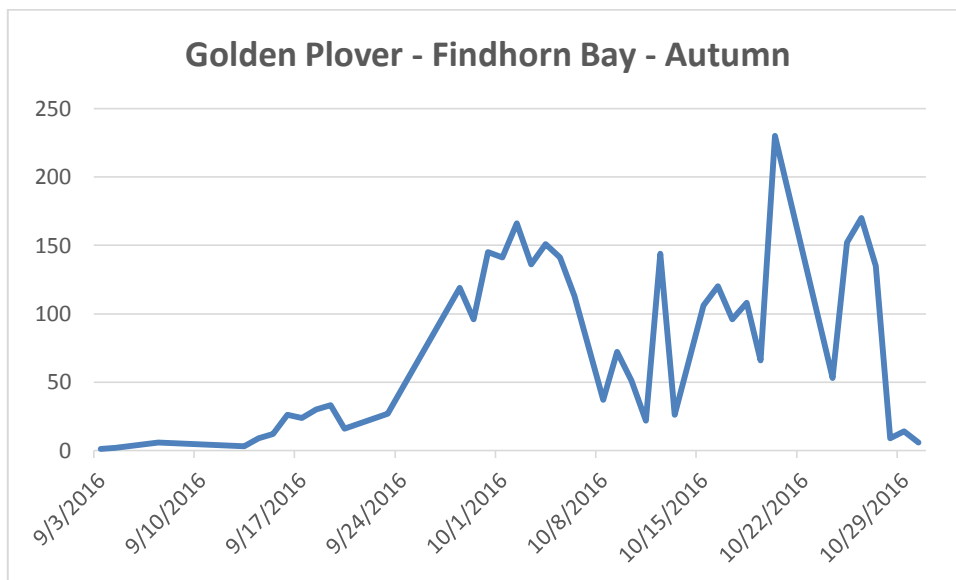
Post breeding flocks that remained up-country included, 8 Carn Ealasaid 17 Jul, 28 Ben Rinnes 14 Aug, 9 Knochan 25 Aug, 19 Creag an Tarmachan 21 Aug, 68 Ben Rinnes 21 Oct, 18 McHattie's Cairn 24 Oct, 3 Ben Aigan 11 Dec, 7 Corryhabbie Hill 17 Dec and 16 Little Conval 30 Dec.

The first back in to the coastal lowlands, presumably returning from breeding grounds, was one in the dunes at Findhorn 15 Jul.

The movement of Golden Plover during spring is illustrated in the graph below with a peak of 634 on 8 Apr.



The movement of Golden Plover during autumn is illustrated in the graph below.



Winter coastal maxima were:

	Jan	Feb	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Kinloss	0	0	48	4	0	0
Findhorn Bay	189	173	145	230	256	156

Dotterel *Charadrius morinellus*

Scarce summer visitor and breeder.

Most records from the Cairngorms plateau area. On Cairn Lochan, a single and another two on 20 May (PRG), one on 4 Jun (ADK) and 4 on 23 Jun (JP). Birds were 'present' on Beinn Mheadhoin 4 Jun (JDKR) and two were reported on the plateau on 23 Jun (KB). At Carn Ealasaid, between Tomintoul and Cock Bridge, were 2 on 17 Jul (DM). No records of confirmed breeding were received.

Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*

Scarce resident breeder and very common migrant.

Breeding: the only records received were from the dunes area at Findhorn. One pair were back in breeding territory 26 May. Two adults and two juveniles were noted there 7th & 10th Jul. Four adults were seen there 3 Aug and two adults and one juvenile were on a shingle spit at the mouth of the Bay 5 Aug. (RSC).

The pattern of occurrence over the year at Findhorn Bay and at the Lossie and Spey estuaries (maximum monthly counts) was:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
F Bay	28	42	37	214	1946	27	6	154	159	57	28	27
Lossie	10	29	0	28	30	6	9	50+	50	19	14	0
Spey	0	0	6	17	141	17	30	113	16	4	0	0

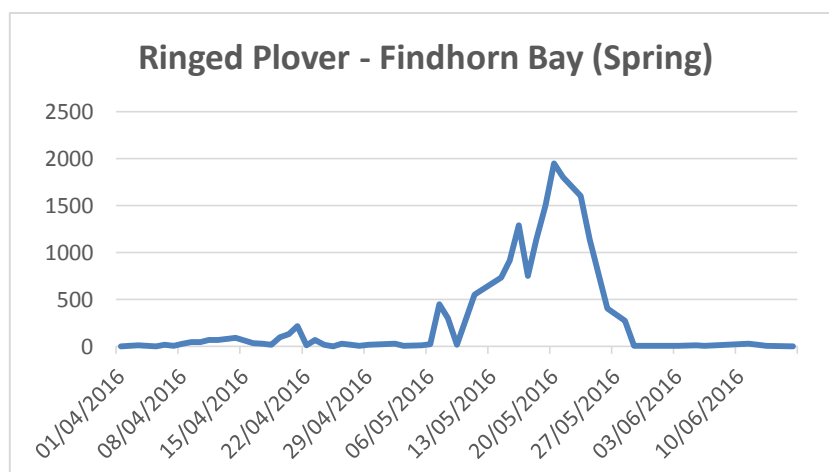
Winter maxima at the coast were:

	January-February	November-December
Nairn/Culbin Bars	6	7
Findhorn Bay	42	29
Kinloss	9	22
Burghead-Hopeman	10	9
Lossiemouth	29	14
Portgordon-Strathlene	22	12

Elsewhere, at Covesea beach, were 25 on 11 Feb and 18 on 17 Dec.

Spring passage (April-early June)

Findhorn Bay: regular counts during this period are shown in the graph below with a strong movement during May with a peak of 1946 on the 21st (GM).



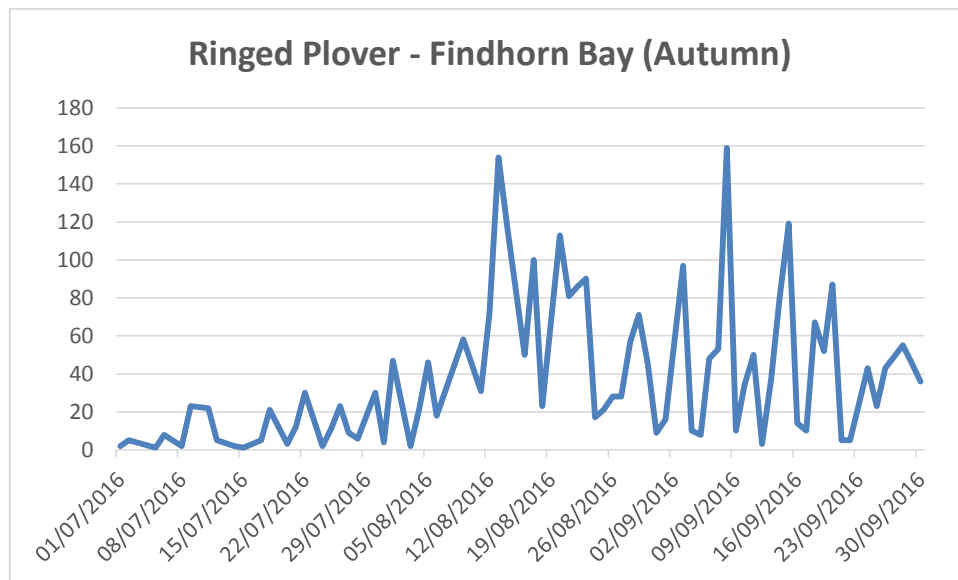
At the Spey estuary the highest count was 141 on 21 May coinciding with Findhorn Bay. Also in spring and moving slightly inland from the coast, there was one single bird on a ploughed field at Nethererton (south of Findhorn Bay) 6 Apr and another single at Balormie pig farm (Drainie) 5 May.

The highest spring migration counts are illustrated in the table below. All counts were from Findhorn Bay apart from the 2006 record from Lossie estuary. This year's peak of 1946 is the highest for Moray & Nairn.

2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
299	196	476	413	156	1500	1000	450	985	1200	1946

Autumn passage (July-September):

Findhorn Bay: regular counts during this period are shown in the graph below with fluctuating numbers during this period and peaks of 154 on 13 Aug and 159 on 8 Sep.



At the Spey estuary the highest count during this period was 113 on 20 Aug and at Lossiemouth it was 50+ on 16 Aug.

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*

Rare summer visitor and breeder.

A poor year with only two records received. A single bird was recorded at the Spey estuary 24 Apr (SL) and another at Tugnet 5 May (MJHC).

Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*

Very common migrant breeder, small numbers in winter.

First up-country were 2 Ballindalloch 28 Feb.

Pre-breeding flocks up-country included 20 Ballindalloch 2 Mar (30 there the next day), 84 Inchnacape (Tomintoul) 14 Mar, 90 Braes of Glenlivet 17 Mar, 50 near Tomintoul 25 Mar and 30 Aldunie (Cabrach) 7 Apr.

Breeding: In the coastal lowlands, at Moyness there were records of up to eight adults on a few occasions during March & April. On 11 May there were two adults with at least two chicks and on 24 May there were two adults with two chicks. Display was noted at Birnie Pool 4 May. At Balormie pig farm (Drainie) a brood of four tiny chicks was seen 7 & 8 May. At Auldearn a pair raised two young 12 Jun and, on 25 Jul at

Burnside, there was one adult with one chick. Records were also received from other potential breeding grounds in the coastal lowlands.

Up-country, in the Dunearn area there was a pair on 15 Mar, 4 on 17 Apr, one nesting beside Burnside farm 24 Apr and three adults and a chick 20 May. Nearby at Refouble there were one adult with two chicks 24 May. Two were displaying at Knockando 18 Mar. At Mains of Inverourie (Strath Avon) 23 adults were counted some with few day old broods 27 Apr and at Tomintoul 45 adults were counted many with few-day-old broods 28 Apr. Five “alarming” adults were reported south of Inchrory Lodge 12 Jun. Records were also received from other potential breeding grounds from up-country.

The only post breeding flock from up-country was 180 at Scalán (Glenlivet) 27 Jul.

During October, flocks of 100 or more included 600 Carse of Delnies on the 1st, the highest count of the year, and 250 on the 3rd. At Loch Spynie 175 were counted on the 17th. At Draine 330 were there on the 18th and nearby at Balormie on the 19th there were 200+.

In mid-winter (January-February and November-December) the largest numbers were mostly from Balormie with monthly maxima from there of 315 on 23 Jan, 349 on 21 Feb, 123 on 28 Nov and 410 on 20 Dec. There were however 160 at Spey Bay also 28 Nov. Elsewhere there were c.150 at Ardivot 9 Jan.

The pattern of occurrence over the year at Findhorn Bay and the Spey estuary (maximum monthly counts) was:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
F Bay	100	11	26	6	10	25	2	0	131	21	0	6
Spey	0	0	1	0	0	1	132	38	13	0	0	0

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*

Scarce migrant.

Spring: First of the year was fairly early with one at the Netherton south end of Findhorn Bay 6 Apr (RHD).

The next records were on a more typical arrival date of 21 Apr when 5 Netherton and 3 Lossie estuary.

Throughout April and May, 28 coastal records were received from Findhorn Bay in the west to Portknockie in the east, 16 of which were from Findhorn Bay area. Nineteen of these records were of one or two birds.

The largest groups were recorded at the Spey estuary with 7 on 30 Apr and 11 on 8 May. The last May record was one at the Lossie estuary on the 23rd. One rather unusual date was of a single heading east at Kingston 19 Jun.

The table below shows the spring arrival dates for the preceding ten years:

2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
23 Apr	22 Apr	27 Apr	24 Apr	22 Apr	21 Apr	4 May	21 Apr	8 Apr	6 Mar

Autumn: Extreme dates of passage were 6 Jul at Burghead and 24 Sep at Lossiemouth. Fifty-one records, mostly of one or two birds, were received but duplication is probable. The largest flocks were recorded at the Spey estuary. During July there were flocks of 12 on the 20th, 35 on the 21st (MCo), 12 on the 22nd and 19 on the 28th. In August there were five on the 26th, six on the 28th and in September five flew over on the 4th. Two inland records were received, one at Loch Spynie 18 Jul and a single south over Elgin cemetery 20 Jul.



Whimbrel, Lossiemouth 12 June 2016 (Gordon Biggs)

Curlew *Numenius arquata*

Common breeder. Very common migrant and winter visitor.

Breeding: A small pre-breeding flock of nine was at Black Loch (Dava) 22 Mar. Later, 20 Aldunie (Cabrach) 7 Apr and 6 Tomintoul 28 Apr.

Records from a vast array of potential inland breeding grounds (although little in the way of confirmed breeding records) included the Upper Knockando area with a single at Kirdelbeg 14 Mar, two in the vicinity 23 Mar and a one displaying at Corglass Farm 15 May. At Tomnamoon a single was back 14 Mar, 5 on 16 Mar and a pair back in breeding territory 9 Apr. In the Dallas area, pairs were at Leonach 16 Mar and at Coldhome and Coldwells 17 Apr. Elsewhere, 1 Ben Rinnes 29 Mar, 2 Fox Hill (Knock of Braemoray) 5 Apr, 1 Hillend (Drummuir) 6 Apr, 1 Dulsie 11 Apr, 2 Burnside (Dulsie) 17 Apr. Close by, at Refouble, 3 on 27 Apr, three adults with three chicks 23 Jul and, on 25 Jul, two adults with two chicks (A&FR). Just east, at Little Aitnoch, 2 on 17 Apr, and 1 on 13 Apr and 14 Jul. At Wester Glenernerney (Glenernerie) there were 2 on 20 Apr and close by at Edenkillie Church there was 1 on 14 May. Four were in the fields at Newley (Glass) 4 May. A single was at Carn Mor (Tomintoul) 5 May and 2 at Loch Kirkaldy 7 May. At Auchmair (Cabrach), 8 on 16 May, 4 on 22 June and one remaining 19 Jul. A pair was at Loch Tree (Dava) 31 May and a single bird was south of Inchrory Lodge 12 Jun. East of Aultmore there were singles at North Crannoch 13 Jun and Gallowhill 20 Jun.

Post-breeding up-country flocks consisted of 34 adults above Dava 17 Jun with 12 in the vicinity 22 Jun. On 21 Jun, 21 Aitnoch and 8 Little Aitnoch, and at Bridge of Knockach (Glenernerie) there were 11 on 29 Jun.

In the coastal lowlands, at Kinloss there was a pair with a single chick on 4 Jul.

The highest counts of post-breeding flocks in early summer/autumn from the most popular coastal locations were:

	June	July	August	September
Findhorn Bay	246	381	397	369
Lossiemouth	8	60	27	28
Spey estuary	0	165	170	320

Coastal winter maxima were:

	January	February	October	December
Nairn/Culbin Bars	*182	*177	*86	*123
Findhorn Bay	412	342	346	207
Burghead-Hopeman	4	**42	***50	4
Lossiemouth	13	231	17	19
Portgordon-Strathlene	0	9	19	50

*Combination of Nairn & Culbin Bar counts – counting carried out concurrently.

** Hopeman only

***Burghead only

During November there was a maximum count of 238 in Findhorn Bay and elsewhere 173 at Balormie pig farm (Drainie) 28 Nov.

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*

Scarce migrant.

Early winter: No early winter records were received.

Spring: First was 1 Findhorn Bay 31 Mar. Fifteen records were subsequently received from Findhorn Bay between 31 Mar-23 May, all fewer than ten except 22 on 4 Apr and 23 on 5 Apr.

Elsewhere, the only inland record was 1 Cloddach Quarry 4 May.

Autumn (Late June-November): First to return were 2 Cloddach Quarry 25 Jun. The first coastal records were of a large flock of 55 at Findhorn Bay 28 Jun (RSC).

Monthly maxima from the main sites were:

	July	August	September	October
Findhorn Bay	29	39	20	18
Lossie estuary	3	1	0	0
Spey estuary	3	0	23	2

Elsewhere, there were no other coastal records, but inland there were singles at Balormie pig farm (Drainie) 7 Aug and Montgrew 13 Sep.

Late winter (November-December): In Findhorn Bay, 1-2 were recorded on 19 days and also 4 on 28 Nov and 10 Dec.

Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*

Common winter visitor and migrant. Small numbers in summer.

Monthly maxima at main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Nairn/Culbin Bars	*c.300	*25	0	0	*77	0	36
Nairn	21	16	50	56	11	9	8
Findhorn Bay	54	53	45	40	29	15	85
Burghead	101	50	34	11	20	10	13
Lossiemouth	8	30	5	3	4	3	4

*Combination of Nairn & Culbin Bar counts – counting carried out concurrently.

Elsewhere, at Carse of Delnies, was a maximum of 65 on 3 Oct.

During the remaining months the only counts of 10 or more were 10 Findhorn Bay 5 Apr, 19 Findhorn Bay 19 Apr and 11 Burghead 16 Aug.

Last in spring was two at Findhorn Bay 26 May and first back was a single at the same location 20 Jun.

Maximum annual count at any site since 2006 has been:

2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
300	436	198	75	107	204	150	90	137	145	c.300

The last count exceeding 1000 was back in winter 1996-97.

Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

Common winter visitor, small numbers in summer.

Winter monthly maxima at main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Oct	Dec
Delnies-Nairn	0	9	21	12
Nairn/Culbin Bar	1	14	0	0
Findhorn	49	48	47	61
Burghead	56	41	61	31
Burghead-Hopeman	0	20	38	75
Lossiemouth	1	5	c.30	11
Spey estuary	25	0	25	14
Portgordon-Strathlene	0	116	110	79

Spring: maxima in spring months were 83 Burghead harbour 10 Mar and 13 Spey estuary 20 Apr.

The last record was a single at Spey estuary 26 May and the first to return was a single at Lossie estuary 1 Jul.

Late summer-autumn: Spey estuary had the highest counts in July and August with 12 on 30 Jul and 31 on 22 Aug. During September there were 40 at Spey estuary on the 15th but the highest count was 68 on the shingle near the Beach Bar at Lossiemouth on the 21st.



Turnstone, Nairn 3 August 2016 (Jack Harrison)

Knot *Calidris canutus*

Very common migrant and winter visitor.

Winter maxima were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Oct	Nov	Dec
Nairn/Culbin Bars	725	250	0	12	0	0
Burghead	890	15	c.200	250	250	305
Findhorn Bay	2650	820	760	282	950	398

Poor numbers recorded this year with only two flocks from Findhorn Bay in excess of 1000. Outwith the above locations there were c.2000 on the west beach at Nairn 18 Dec.

Spring: Focusing on Findhorn Bay, during April numbers exceeded 100 on most days, the highest count being 1038 on the 3rd. In May the only count in excess of 100 was 108 on the 23rd. The last spring record was most likely 44 on the 25 May prior to a sixteen day period with no records.

Summer: 6 Findhorn Bay 11 Jun, included one adult in breeding plumage.

Autumn: Peak migration illustrated at Findhorn Bay with 420 on 31 Jul and 328 on 1 Aug. During September the maximum numbers were from Burghead with 160 on the 13th, 150 on the 19th and 120 on the 22nd. During this period the highest count from the Spey estuary was 29 on the 20th Jul. At Hilton/East Delnies there was a flock of 150 on 31 Jul coinciding with the Findhorn Bay peak.



Knot, Lossiemouth 22 March 2016 (Margaret Sharpe)

Ruff *Calidris pugnax*

Scarce autumn migrant, rare in spring.

A poor year with only 19 records received. All were in autumn - the last spring record was in 2010.

First were 9 Balormie pig farm (Drainie) on 7 Aug, a typical date. Dates for the first autumn migrants in recent years have been:

2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
03/08	18/08	11/08	30/07	04/09	07/08	03/08	28/07	12/08	08/08	06/07

Other sightings from Balormie during August were 8 on 8th, 1 adult and 10 juveniles 11th, 1 adult and 6 juveniles 12th (all males), 1 juvenile male 13th and 4 on the 18th. All other records were coastal. At Findhorn Bay during August there were 2 juveniles 13th and singles on 17th, 21st, 24th & 29th. During September there were singles on 4th, 9th and two on 10th. At Lossie estuary one flew west 21 Aug. At Spey estuary four were recorded 17 Aug and, during September, 2 on 23rd, 1 on 26th and 2 on 30th.

Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*

Scarce migrant.

Spring: One adult in breeding plumage in Findhorn Bay 20-24 May (RSC *et al.*)

Autumn: First was 1 adult at Spey estuary 26 Jul and 2 there 28 Aug (MJHC). In Findhorn Bay, 1 juvenile 1-9 Sep (RHD *et al.*) and another bird 2-9 Oct (GM *et al.*). At Lossie estuary during September, 1 on 3rd (DAG) and 2 on 26th (AB), at least one remaining until 29th.



Curlew Sandpiper, Findhorn Bay 20 May 2016 (Richard Somers Cocks)

Sanderling *Calidris alba*

Scarce migrant and fairly common but very localised winter visitor.

Monthly maxima at the four best sites were:

Winter-spring:

	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June
Nairn/Culbin Bars	68	*85	0	0	0	0
Lossiemouth	20	50+	59	0	3	4
Findhorn Bay	10	14	17	3	45	0
Nairn	35	0	40	0	0	0

*Combination of Nairn & Culbin Bar counts – counting carried out concurrently.

Late summer-autumn:

	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Nairn/Culbin Bars	0	0	52	144	0	79
Lossiemouth	3	25	80	67	63	28
Findhorn Bay	16	17	11	1	14	8
Nairn	0	2	76	80	52	c.90

Maximum counts at other locations included 40 Kingsteps 16 Jan, 63 Covesea beach west of Lossiemouth 11 Feb, 35 Hopeman 6 Sep and 20 Burghead 18 Dec. Exceptionally numerous at the Spey estuary for a brief period in late July - 38 on 20th, 96 on 21st, 78 on 22nd and 15 on 26th.

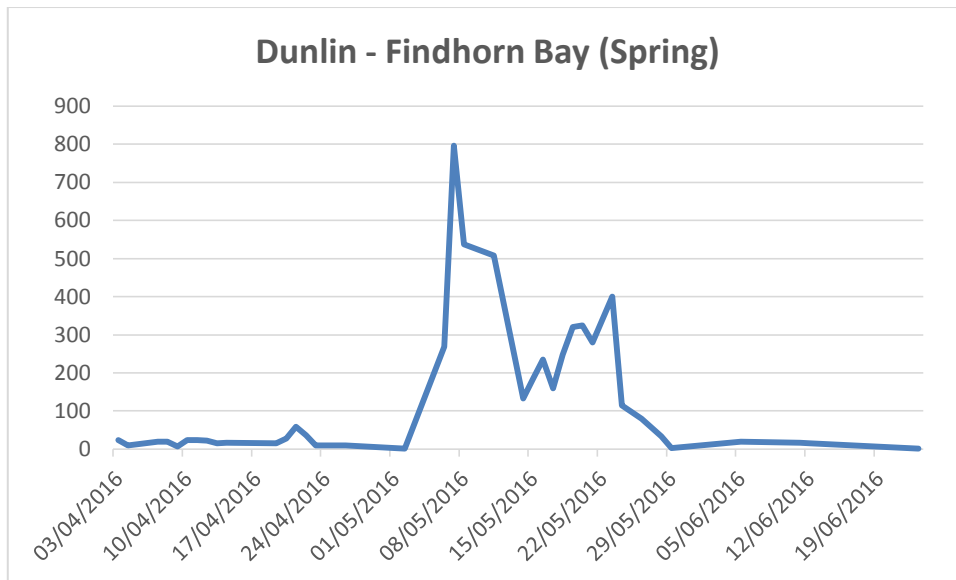
At Findhorn Bay, still 2 on 28 May and, even later, 4 Lossiemouth east beach 14 Jun which were likely to be the last prior to departure to the breeding grounds. The first to return were 3 Lossiemouth east beach 7 Jul.

Dunlin *Calidris alpina*

Scarce breeder, very common migrant and winter visitor.

Breeding: no records were received from potential breeding grounds.

Spring passage (April-June): Counts in Findhorn Bay are shown below:

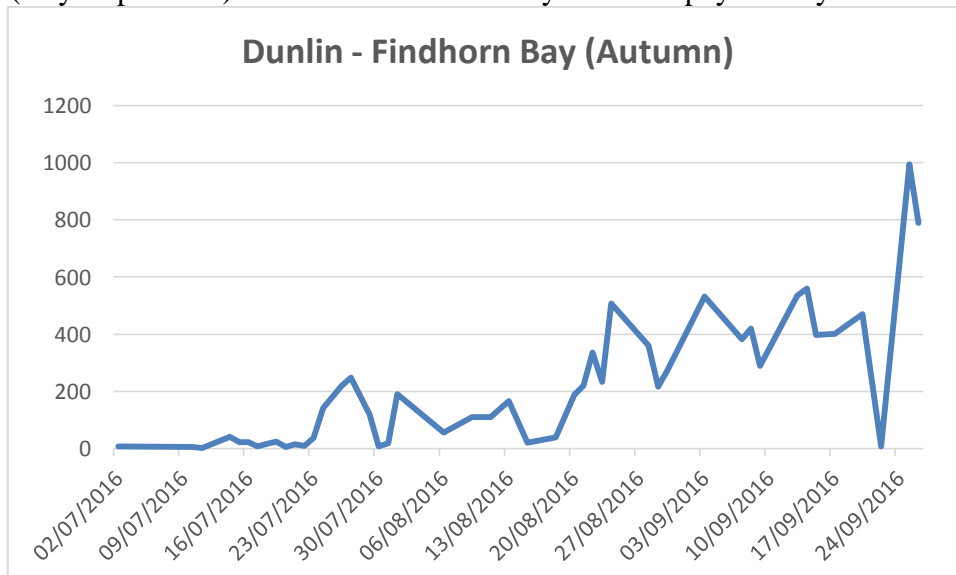


Main passage took place during May with a peak number of 796 on the 7th.

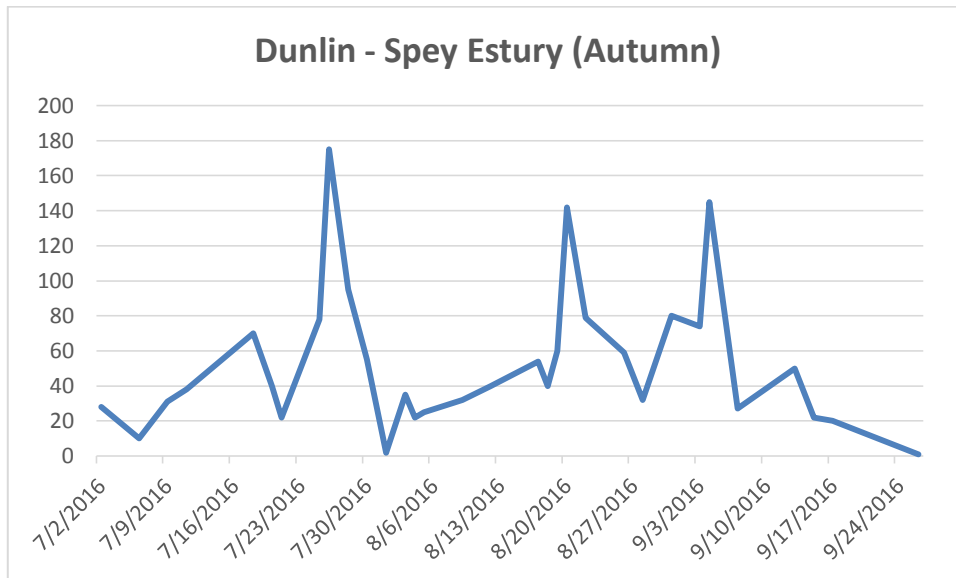
Elsewhere, at Spey estuary in May, there were 20 on 6th, 41 on 8th, 25 on 18th, 49 on 19th and 63 on 23rd the same date as Findhorn Bay held 400.

No inland records were received.

Autumn passage (July-September): Counts in Findhorn Bay and the Spey estuary are shown below:



Fluctuating numbers during this period. However the initial July and August movement, with a maxima of 248 on 27th July will be of the race *schinzii* which are on migration and will leave Scotland in winter. The later August and September movement will be of the race *alpina* which will over-winter here.



Autumn migration through the Spey estuary peaked during July, as in the previous two years. The July maxima of 175 on 26th will be of the race *schinzii* coinciding well with the Findhorn Bay movement. The August peak of 142 on 20th and the September peak of 145 on the 4th are indicative of the migration of the *alpina* race.

Inland, at Balormie pig farm (Drainie) during August there were two on 7th, a single on 8th, nine on the 11th, five on 12th and fourteen on the 18th.

Winter monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	January	February	October	November	December
Nairn/Culbin Bars	*682	0	1	0	*125
Findhorn Bay	1540	1635	838	1248	1718
Lossiemouth	135	200	19	41	57

*Combination of Nairn & Culbin Bar counts – counting carried out concurrently.

The highest count during March was c.1650 at Findhorn Bay on 5th.

Purple Sandpiper *Calidris maritima*

Common winter visitor.

Numbers recorded were similar to 2015.

Main winter site maxima were:

	January-March	October-December
Nairn	12	3
Burghead-Hopeman	*7	0
Lossiemouth	40	57
Portgordon-Strathlene	**10	16

*Hopeman only

**Buckie only

Yearly maximum flock sizes since 2005 have been:

2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
95	54	73	144	100	120	100	73	45	19	60	57

Last in spring were three on the rocks off Lossiemouth north pier 7 May and the first to return was a single at Lossiemouth west beach 5 Sep. The variability of arrival dates from breeding grounds for the previous eleven years is indicated below:

2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
20/08	?	14/07	18/10	03/09	14/09	16/10	20/09	09/09	23/07	27/09

Little Stint *Calidris minuta*

Very scarce migrant, mostly in autumn.

A very poor year with only a few autumn records. At the Spey estuary, 1 on 4 Aug, 1 on 17, 20 and 31 Aug and 1 on 3-7 Sep (MJHC *et al.*). At Findhorn Bay, 1 on 25 Aug (GM) and 10 Sep (RSC), and 1 Lossie estuary 15 Sep (SMc).

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*

Common summer visitor and breeder.

Arrival: On 16 Apr, 1 on the River Spey at Delnapot, followed on 17 Apr by 2 on the Spey at Knockando and 1 on the River Findhorn at Balnught. On 21 Apr, 3 Bridgend of Glenlivet, 1 near Tombae and, in the coastal lowlands, 1 Gilston.

The first arrival dates (in April) since 2006 were:

2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
23rd	15th	20th	9th	17th	12th	10th	15th	10th	17th	16th

Breeding: Up-country from potential breeding ground, calling was heard in the Findhorn valley east of Drynachan 23 Apr and a single at Blacksboat 1 May. At the Packhorse Bridge (Glenlivet) 2 on 6 May and 1 Dallasbraughty 30 May. On 12 Jun, two were giving alarm calls south of Inchrory Lodge and three pairs on the River Avon near Foal's Craig, north of Inchrory. In the coastal lowlands at Cloddach quarry there was a pair and one other adult 30 Apr, 1 on 2 May, a pair on 3 May, four adults displaying on the pools 4 May and on 25 Jun there were three adults, two of them anxious, at different sites. One bird was still remaining at the quarry 6 Aug. At another gravel pit in the Lossie forest there was a pair and another adult 7 May. On the River Lossie in Elgin, near Decora, there was 1 on 5 May. Throughout May and June there were several records received from the lower reaches of the rivers Findhorn and Spey but no confirmation of breeding. On the Mosset Burn, an adult and juvenile 25 Aug, but the breeding location was not necessarily close by. The Spey estuary was once again the best site for post-breeding assemblages with 31 on 29 Jun and during July, 29 on 2nd, 8 on 6th, 32 on 9th, 25 on 11th and 11 on 18th. Smaller numbers elsewhere *e.g.* 7 Lossie estuary 31 Jul & 3 Aug and 7 Findhorn Bay 1 Aug. Last in autumn, 2 Mosset Burn (Findhorn Bay) 27 Aug. There was a very unusual record of a wintering bird on the River Spey at Dipple on 8-10 Dec (MWh, MJHC). A bird on the River Spey at Fochabers on 28 Nov 1997 was also presumed to be over-wintering. Dates for 'last departing migrant of the year' have fluctuated greatly:

2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
2 Sep	21 Sep	4 Sep	31 Jul	28 Sep	19 Aug	28 Aug	19 Sep	8 Sep	27 Aug



Common Sandpiper at Dipple, 10 December 2016 (Martin Cook)

Spotted Sandpiper *Actitis macularius*

Accidental.

On 16 May an adult in breeding plumage was feeding in the muddy banks of the Mosset Burn on the south side of Findhorn Bay (RSC *et al.*). This is the second record of this North American species for Moray & Nairn, the first record was at Loch Spynie on 25 May 1999.



Spotted Sandpiper, Mosset Burn 16 May 2016 (Richard Somers Cocks)

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*

Very scarce migrant, rare in winter.

January-March: One 20 Mar there was one on a gravel pool at Cloddach quarry (DAG).

Spring: One at the Gilston pools on 20-21 Apr (RM, RHD) was the only record.

Autumn migration and into winter: The only July record was 2 Lossie estuary on 5th (HF). Inland at Montgrew (Keith), 1 on 21 Aug and 27-28 Aug (WMM, MJHC), and 2 on 1 Sep (still 1 on 2 Sep) (WMM). Also, 1 Spey estuary 7 Sep (MJHC). At the south end of Findhorn Bay, around Netherton and the Mosset Burn, one (probably the same bird) was reported on 10 days between 25 Aug-18 Nov (GM, MW, PRG et al.).

Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus*

Very scarce migrant.

A poor year with only one bird, in Findhorn Bay 6-9 Sep (RHD, RSC, JDG).

Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

Scarce migrant, very scarce in winter.

Spring (late March-June): In the Findhorn Bay area there were records received from nine days from 10th Apr until 28th Jun, all of which were of single birds apart from two 16th Apr, three 16th Jun, two 23rd Jun and three 26th Jun. At the Spey estuary, and the last spring record, there was one on 29th Jun.

Late summer-autumn (July-October): The first noted returning individuals were at Lossie estuary and at the Old Findhorn Channel 5th Jul. Remaining in the Findhorn Bay area, other records were received on thirty-seven days during this period until 16th Oct, seventeen of which were of single birds, seven were of two birds and five were of three birds. Five were reported on 1st, 18th & 21st Aug and 9th & 11th Sep, seven on 27th Aug and 10th Sep and eight on 15th Sep (RSC). At the Lossie estuary there were other records received from 25th Jul until 30th Sep, five were of one or two birds, one record of three birds and two of four birds. There were five on 31st Jul and 7th Aug, seven on 5th Aug and the highest count on nine on 6th Aug (HF). One was also heard off Lossiemouth during a seawatch 1st Oct. Elsewhere there were coastal records on single birds from Spey estuary 4th, 5th & 22nd Aug, Burghead 26th Aug and Carse of Delnies 3rd Sep. Inland, during this period there were single birds calling overhead at Balormie (Drainie) 11th Aug and Loch Spynie 27th Aug & 4th Sep.

One winter record was received of a single at Binsness 24th Nov (ISS).

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*

Very scarce migrant.

A poor year with only two records, both of single birds at Montgrew on 18 and 22 Aug (WMM, MJHC).

Redshank *Tringa totanus*

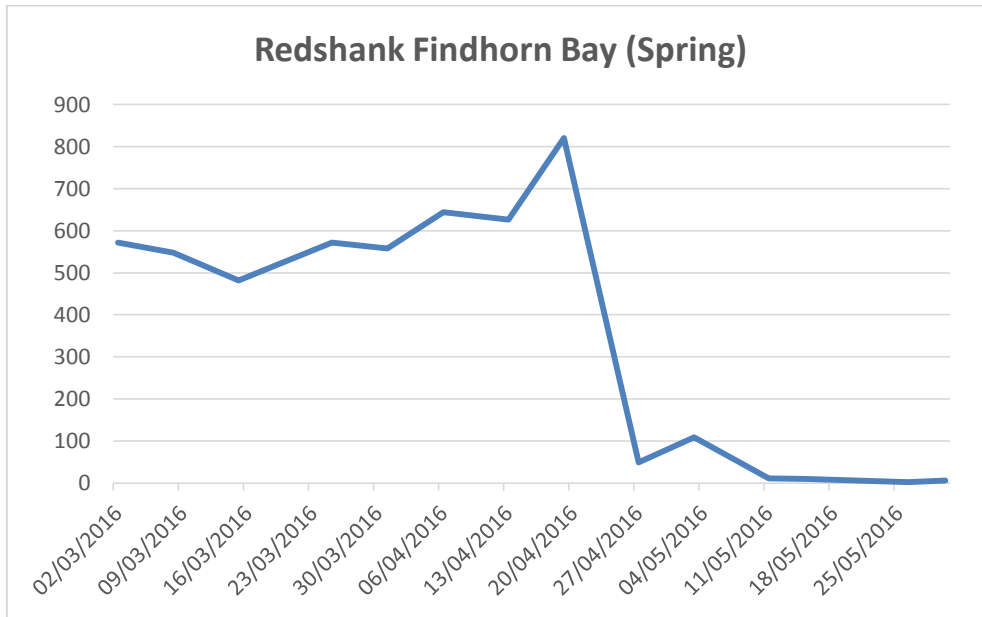
Scarce breeder, very common migrant and winter visitor.

Breeding: Up-country, 1 Braes of Glenlivet 17 Mar, 6 Aldunie (Cabrach) 7 Apr (and 2 on 22 Apr, 4 Tomintoul 28 Apr, 1 Croughly 17 May and two pairs along the River Livet (Glenlivet) 29 May.

At the coast, one pair bred on the saltmarsh on the south side of Findhorn Bay. The pair was seen on 8 May and frequently thereafter, and with one juvenile on 30 Jun (RSC, GM *et al.*). One flew south over Loch Spynie 15 Jul.

Spring (March-May):

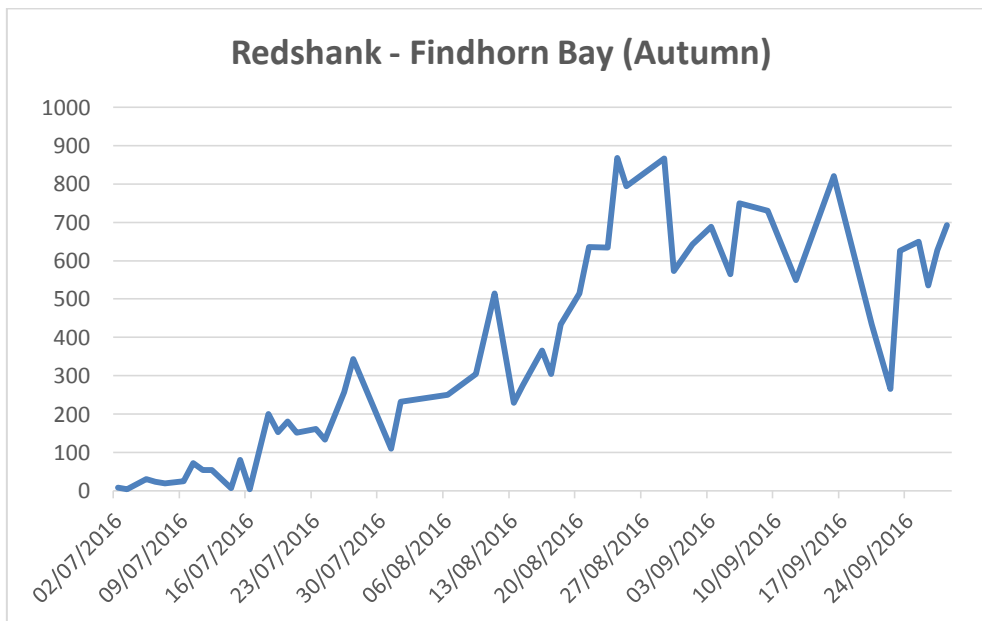
Weekly maximum counts in Findhorn Bay (RSC, GM) revealed the following pattern with a sharp decline following the peak of 820 on 19 Apr.



Peak count during March was 572 on the 25th. Elsewhere, 120 Carse of Delnies 12 Mar.

Late summer-autumn (July-September):

The pattern of steady increase in Findhorn Bay is shown below:



The peak count during this period was 866 on 29 Aug.

Highest counts (monthly maxima) elsewhere were:

	July	August	September
Nairn	8	26	68
Lossiemouth	58	53	16
Spey estuary	53	13	11

Also 40 Carse of Delnies 31 Jul and 47 there 3 Sep.

Winter: Monthly maxima at the coast were:

	January	February	October	December
Nairn/Culbin Bars	*6	*21	0	*43
Carse of Delnies	100	0	300	230
Nairn	100	150	145	75
Findhorn Bay	472	404	838	912
Burghead-Hopeman	22	18	70	36
Lossiemouth	34	32	20	35
Portgordon-Strathlene	18	62	112	74

*Combination of Nairn & Culbin Bar counts - counting carried out concurrently.

Also, in Findhorn Bay, the November maximum was 556.

Maximum winter counts in Findhorn Bay since 2007 have been:

2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
905	1080	828	536	500	599	513	870	845	912

Jack Snipe *Lymnocyptes minimus*

Scarce migrant and winter visitor.

First winter period: Single birds were seen at Kingsteps on 1 Jan (RHD, MGC), 24 Jan (PM), 21 Feb (GP) and 3 Mar (MGC).

Early spring: One flushed at Loch Spynie 24 Apr (HF).

Autumn-winter: One inland in a felled area of Altyre woods 3 Nov (MGC). All other records from the coast; 1 Kingsteps 16 Oct (GP), 1 Kinloss 21 Oct (AJL), 1 Findhorn 27 Nov (CW) and 5 Kingsteps 18 Dec (GP).

Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola*

Common resident breeder, migrant and winter visitor.

Early winter: Forty-four records received during January, February and March, thirty-nine of which were of one or two birds. Records of three or more were 6 Dipple 17 Jan, 5 Gelnferness Mains 21 Jan, 6 Shempston 21 Jan (5 there 1 Feb) and 3 Loch Spynie 8 Feb. On 8 Feb, one was sitting under a bush in a garden in Keith until disturbed.

Breeding: Very few records – single birds reported during April in Sanquhar Woods 19th, Tomnamoon 26th and Craggan (Glenlivet) 30th. Roding noted at Tomnamoon 5 May and 17 Jun with multiple sightings of a single bird over the following month (MGC). Roding also reported at Broom of Moy 17 Jun (IB).

Autumn-winter: First was 1 Altyre Woods 29 Sep. Twenty-four records between 11 Oct-30 Dec from a variety of locations – coastal, costal lowlands and up-country. All records were of 1-2 birds except 4 Shempston 2 Dec and 13 there (flushed during Pheasant shooting) 30 Dec (AJL).

Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*

Common breeder and migrant.

Breeding: The only reports of drumming were 2 Tomnamoon 11 Apr and 1 Aldivalloch (Cabrach) 6 May. Also in the Cabrach area, 4 seen on 7 Apr and single birds at Auchmair 29 Jun & 19 Jul, and 2 on 23 Jul.

Winter-spring (January-March): Nine records from Kingsteps, with the highest count of 7 on 1 Jan. Carse of Delnies also had 7 on 16 Jan & 19 Feb and 7 again beside the River Isla at Grange (Keith) 9 Jan. At Nairn Bar, 4 on 21 Feb. A few other records of 1-2 birds from the coastal lowland sites also during this period.

Autumn-winter: At Tomnamoon, 1 on 5 Sep, 2 on 8 Oct and 1 on 19 Oct. Well up-country was 1 Birchfield (Glen Avon) 19 Oct. Highest count at Montgrew pool was 14 on 7 Sep. The remaining 40 records were from the coastal lowlands, 23 of which were of single birds. The only records of five or more were 6 Cloddach

quarry 1 Oct, 5 Findhorn 27 Nov and (holding the best numbers as usual) 18 Kingsteps 16 Oct and 17 there 18 Dec (GP).

Maximum winter counts since 2007:

2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
42*	55	41	60	45	6	83*	65*	13*	*18

* at Kingsteps.

The largest congregation in Moray & Nairn was 134 at Culbin October 1995.

Pomarine Skua *Stercorarius pomarinus*

Very scarce migrant offshore in summer and autumn, rare in winter.

A few sightings again this year all off Lossiemouth. Single birds were seen offshore during September on 4th, 8th, 9th, 16th, 23rd and 26th. The last sighting was a single bird on 1 Oct (RP).

Arctic Skua *Stercorarius parasiticus*

Fairly common migrant in summer and autumn.

Spring: The only sightings were of a single birds in Spey Bay on 14 May (AJL) and flying west past Lossiemouth on 26 May (RP).

Summer: A single bird was seen off Findhorn on 28 Jun (RSC), and three recordings at Lossiemouth during July with 3 on 11th, 1 on 27th and 2 on 30th (RP).

Autumn: Numerous sightings at Lossiemouth and Findhorn between August and October. Highest counts at Lossiemouth included 2 on 26 Aug, 4 on 11 Sep, 13 on 23 Sep and 10 on 1 Oct (RP). At Findhorn there were 4 on 11 Aug, 6 on 12 Aug, 3 on 17 Aug and the last sighting was a single bird on 16 Sep (RSC). Elsewhere, single birds were seen off Burghead on 4 Aug and Delnies (Nairn) on 17 Aug, and 2 were noted at Hopeman on 10 Oct. The only other sighting was a single bird at Spey Bay on 14-15 May.



Arctic Skuas, Findhorn beach 11 August (Richard Somers Cocks)

Great Skua *Stercorarius skua*

Fairly common migrant in summer and autumn.

Winter: An exceptional number of mid winter records. On 3 Jan, one was off Lossiemouth (RP) and another at Nairn (MGC), and on 4 Jan another one was off Lossiemouth (JM). Another bird was seen off Culbin sands on 20 Feb (KK).

Spring: Four sightings at Lossiemouth with 1 on 25 Apr, 2 on 29 Apr and 1 on 24 & 25 May. Elsewhere, 1 Burghead 26 Apr.

Summer: In July four records from Lossiemouth with 2 on 9th, 1 on 12th & 14th, and 2 on 31st. (RP). The only record elsewhere in July was a single bird at Burghead on 20th.

Autumn: In August-November there were eight dates with records at Lossiemouth, mostly single birds except sightings of 2 on 8 Aug, 26 Aug and 11 Sep (RP). The only other sightings were 1 off Findhorn on 18 Aug, 1 off Burghead on 13 Sep and 1 off Delnies (Nairn) on 1 Oct.

Puffin *Fratercula arctica*

Very scarce offshore.

First sighting of the year was one at Burghead on 12 Jan (MGC). Three other sightings recorded at Burghead; 2 on 27 Mar, 1 on 14 Sep and 1 on 15 Oct (JDG, RHD). At Lossiemouth from February to October there were fifteen days with records which included 7 on 27 Feb, 13 on 21 May, 2 on 4 Sep and the last sighting of a single bird on 18 Oct (RP). The only other sighting was a single bird at Delnies (Nairn) on 20 Sep. In January and February there were also three dead birds found in Findochty harbour, Burghead harbour and on Lossiemouth west beach.

Black Guillemot *Cephus grylle*

Scarce breeder and scarce offshore.

Breeding: Highest count of adults on the sea below breeding cliffs at Portknockie was 12 on 7 Mar (LS). At Tronach Head the high count in spring was 21 on 11 Apr. The long-term traditional crevice at Tronach was occupied on 22 Jul with one nest visible with 2 young (MJHC). Although breeding at these sites is apparent among the small number of birds present, the success rates are difficult to ascertain owing to the inaccessibility of the nests on these cliffs.

Other counts early in the year included 3 off Nairn on 2 Jan, 4 off Burghead also on 2 Jan and 9 around the harbour at Buckie on 9 Jan. Away from the east Moray breeding area, highest counts in autumn were from Delnies (Nairn) with 28 on 3 Sep and 22 on 20 Sep (DMP, MJHC). At Lossiemouth regular sea-watches were conducted throughout 2016 and the maximum passage recorded over a 1 hour period was as follows (RP):

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
40	11	8	2	1	1	3	14	19	13	6	11

Razorbill *Alca torda*

Scarce breeder, very common offshore.

Breeding: At the Portknockie colony, 79 adults were at potential breeding sites on cliff ledges on 22 Jun (MJHC).

Highest numbers offshore were recorded in spring and included a high count at Burghead of 1200 on 8 Apr. In 1 hour counts at Lossiemouth the peak passage recorded was 4125 on 27 Mar and 2546 on 1 Apr. Elsewhere, significant counts this year included 75 off Findhorn on 2 Apr, 150 at Cullen on 1 May and later in the year at the Boar's Head Rock area (Spey Bay) 129 on 10 Oct. Regular sea-watches were conducted at Lossiemouth throughout the year and the maximum one hour passage counts for each month were as follows (RP):

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
20	90	4125	2546	109	2	5	0	422	71	17	4

Little Auk *Alle alle*

Very scarce visitor in autumn and winter. Occasionally more numerous.

Another good year for sightings, particularly in early January when stormy weather offshore resulted in many reports from along the coastline. Some of the earliest sightings were at Nairn with 6 on 1 Jan, 14 on 2 Jan and 10 on 3 Jan (RHD, TJW). On 4 Jan there were 49 recorded in 1 hour off Strathlene (Buckie) (MJHC), 6 off Lossiemouth, 20 off Burghead and on 5 Jan another 9 off Delnies (Nairn) (JM, PJ, MJC). Sightings continued in the early part of the year and at Burghead in January there were 30 on 5th (C&DS), 12 on 7th and 5 on 11th. Off Findhorn in Burghead Bay there were 4 on 2 Jan, 5 on 7 Jan and 14 on 10 Feb (RJI, RHD). At Lossiemouth 15 were recorded over 2 hours on 10 Jan (RP). Reports of up to 2 birds continued at these locations until early Feb. Only a few reports at the end of the year. At Burghead there was 1 on 17 Oct and 4 on 4 Nov, and at Lossiemouth single birds on 15 & 19 Nov, and 1, 4 & 25 Dec. The only other sighting was at Portgordon harbour of 1 on 5 Nov (HC).



Little Auk passing Findhorn dunes, 7 January 2016 (Richard Somers Cocks)

Guillemot *Uria aalge*

Very common offshore.

Breeding: On the seaward side of the Bow Fiddle Rock (Portknockie), 5 adults were seen on a ledge on 5 May. On 19 July, a clearer view from a boat revealed 17 adults on ledges, of which one appeared to be brooding a chick. On 22 June, 7 adults were on the mainland cliff opposite to Bow Fiddle Rock - but none were present in early July. (MJHC). This is the first time that breeding has been suspected in Moray & Nairn.

Many of the sightings early in the year came from west of the area, with significant counts including 200 on 2 Jan and 400 on 5 Jan off Delnies (Nairn), 28 on 8 Jan off Findhorn, and at Burghead 60 on 6 Jan & 36 on 28 Mar. There were also 112 on 4 Jan off Strathlene (Buckie). Peak counts in the year occurred in spring with 688 on 18 May and 1350 on 21 May recorded in 1 hour off Lossiemouth (RP). Other notable counts included 200 off Burghead on 18 Apr, 500 off Cullen on 1 May and 230 offshore from Buckie to Cullen on 1 May. On the sea off Lossiemouth harbour there were 220 on 17 May. Over the summer months a few sightings of small numbers mainly off Lossiemouth. By mid September counts started to increase again with 16 on 22 Sep off Burghead, 21 on 3 Oct off Nairn, 14 on 12 Oct off Findhorn, 64 on 15 Oct again off Burghead, and 30 on 20 Oct off Tugnet (Spey Bay). At Lossiemouth regular sea-watches were conducted throughout 2016 and the maximum passage recorded over a 1 hour period was as follows (RP):

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
159	9	11	36	1350	68	16	2	71	141	150	56

Little Tern *Sterna albifrons*

Very scarce summer visitor and rare breeder.

First of the year were 5 at Spey estuary on 6 May (MJHC). Over the rest of May there were a further 10 sightings at Spey estuary with a high count of 17 on 19 May. At Lossiemouth east beach there were six

sightings mid May to mid June with a maximum of 12 on 14 Jun. Breeding was also evident with at least 3 nests noted on 16 Jun (MS). By July up to 3 birds had returned to Spey estuary with the last sighting of 1 on 26 Jul. Elsewhere the only other records were on Findhorn beach where 14 sightings were reported from early Jul to mid Aug. The maximum count was 10 on 24-25 Jul and an adult and 1CY was also noted on 10-11 Aug (RSC).

Black Tern *Chlidonias niger*

Very scarce migrant.

A single bird was seen at Spey Bay on 16 Sep (MJHC).

White-winged Black Tern *Chlidonias leucopterus*

Rare visitor.

An adult was seen on the River Spey near Garmouth viaduct on 21 Jun (S&RH). This is the 3rd record for Moray & Nairn, following single birds at Loch Spynie on 15 May 1993 and 20 July 1994.

Sandwich Tern *Sterna sandvicensis*

Very common summer visitor and occasional breeder.

Winter: There was a very unusual winter sighting of a single bird off Nairn west beach on 1 Jan (RHD, MGC).

Arrival: The first spring arrival of the year was 1 in Burghead Bay on 21 Mar. First sightings at other locations were 1 Burghead 27 Mar, 4 Nairn 28 Mar, 3 Lossiemouth east beach 28 Mar and 2 Spey estuary 7 Apr. Highest count in spring was on Findhorn beach with 152 on 3 May (RSC).

First arrival dates in the last ten years have been as follows:

2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
31 Mar	3 Apr	22 Mar	25 Mar	27 Mar	18 Mar	3 Apr	25 Mar	12 Mar	21 Mar

Breeding: No breeding in 2016. Breeding was last confirmed in Moray & Nairn in 2005.

First juveniles with adults from colonies outwith Moray & Nairn were noted from mid July. From the colour-ringed birds observed at Findhorn most of the juveniles had come from the Forvie NNR on the Ythan Estuary. Some had also arrived from breeding sites on the Northumbrian coast. Counts over 100 observed at Findhorn in August-September included 120 on 10 Aug, 107 on 3 Sep and 126 on 6 Sep (RSC). Elsewhere high counts included 142 on shore at Portgordon on 23 Aug, 112 off Nairn on 31 Aug, 43 at Lossie estuary on 8 Sep and 35 off Burghead on 19 Sep.

Half-monthly maximum counts of flocks on the shore at Findhorn, Lossie estuary and Spey estuary in July-September were:

	Early Jul	Late Jul	Early Aug	Late Aug	Early Sep	Late Sep
Findhorn	63	84	120	82	126	4
Lossie estuary	0	2	nc	nc	43	0
Spey estuary	0	0	3	5	2	10

Best passage count in spring past Lossiemouth was 111 in 1 hour on 23 Apr. During June and July, passage counts were generally low with a maximum of 22 on 15 Jun. By late summer and autumn, counts had increased once more and included 84 on 26 Aug, 89 on 20 Sep and the final sighting was a single bird on 17 Oct (RP).

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*

Summer visitor and fairly common breeder.

Arrival: First sightings were 4 off Burghead and 1 on Findhorn beach on 26 Apr.

Breeding: At Loch Spynie, numbers of apparently occupied nests on the platform were well down on the previous year with a maximum of seven on 17 Jun. By 6 Aug there were 24 adults and 8 chicks on the platform. At the Spey estuary, no confirmation of nesting although 10 were seen around a well-vegetated island near the Garmouth viaduct on 27 Jun, and birds were present there for most of July with a maximum of 17 on 15 Jul (MJHC). Inland, Common Terns bred again on the roof of Walkers factory in Aberlour where 3 adults and a juvenile were seen on 5 Jul (AE).

High counts on Findhorn beach occurred in mid August with a maximum of 187 on 15 Aug. Numbers then dropped before peaking at 76 on 3 Sep with the last sighting of 48 on 11 Sep (RSC). One hour passage counts at Lossiemouth during summer included 15 on 8 Jul, 22 on 11 Jul, 24 on 27 Jul, 26 on 8 Aug and a final sighting on 1 on 25 Sep (RP).

Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea*

Summer visitor and fairly common breeder.

Arrival: First returning birds were 1 on a seawatch at Lossiemouth on 2 May and 10 at the Spey estuary on 5 May.

Breeding: c.130 adults were at an island colony in the River Spey near the Garmouth viaduct on 27 Jun. The island was thickly vegetated and the incubating birds were not visible (MJHC).

Several high counts recorded at the Spey estuary including 112 on 6 Jul, 126 on 15 Jul, 163 on 21 Jul and 205 on 26 Jul (MJHC). On Findhorn beach high counts included 24 on 18 Jul, 68 on 25 Jul, 52 on 30 Jul and a final sighting of a juvenile on 4 Sep (RSC). A number of passage sightings at Lossiemouth during July and August with a maximum of 18 in one hour on 31 Jul (RP). Last sighting of the season was a single bird which flew east past Buckpool on 16 Oct (MJHC).

Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla*

Very common breeder and migrant.

Breeding: A decrease in apparently occupied nests (AON) at the Covesea colony with 488 AONs on 19 Jun. At Portknockie, 220 AONs were counted on 22 Jun (MJHC). In addition, a further 44 AONs were counted from a boat on the seaward side of the Bow Fiddle Rock on 19 Jul (MJHC). Numbers of AON in the past 10 years at these colonies are as follows:

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Covesea	474	420	468	535	540	590	425	569	627	488
Portknockie	238	263	332	355	360	365	233	336	260	264

High counts elsewhere along the coast in late summer included 71 Nairn 14 Sep, 780 on Findhorn beach 21 Aug, 70 Burghead 4 Aug, 1240 Spey estuary 6 Oct and 153 Portgordon 8 Sep. Peak one hour passage counts offshore this year recorded from Lossiemouth included 838 on 29 Apr and then in late summer/autumn 867 on 31 Aug, 501 on 26 Sep and 506 on 1 Oct. The maximum monthly one hour passage counts taken at Lossiemouth throughout the year were as follows (RP):

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
51	55	480	838	268	107	608	867	501	506	25	73

Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus**Fairly common resident breeder and very common winter visitor*

Breeding: Numbers at Loch Spynie were back up this year after a poor 2015. Seventeen apparently occupied nests (AON) were counted on 26 May and 10 small chicks visible on 30 May. One AON was also observed on old railway sidings at Elgin on 21 May (RP). No other breeding or nests noted, although birds were seen widely through the area.

Counts over 400 on Findhorn Bay included 448 on 23 Jul, 466 on 31 Jul, 547 on 14 Aug and a peak of 558 on 23 Aug (RSC, GM). From these counts it was estimated that 5-8% were 1CYs. Elsewhere on the coast, significant counts included 112 Nairn 26 Jul (SPM), 400 Lossie estuary 30 Aug (RP) and 50 Spey estuary 1 Aug. Highest counts of the year were seen inland at Balormie pig farm (RAF Lossiemouth) with 1013 on 31 Jan and 2020 on 14 Feb. Later in the year there were 280 on 21 Aug (RP). Other notable counts from inland sites included 230 following a plough near Clochan on 13 Mar, and at Loch Spynie there were around 1000 on 17 Jan and 640 on 21 Nov. Loch Spynie and Balormie pig farm are relatively close (3 km) so some of these counts may involve the same birds. The highest count for Cooper Park pond (Elgin) was 40 on 27 Feb (RP).

Little Gull *Hydrocoloeus minutus**Very scarce visitor.*

First sighting of the year was an adult at Lossiemouth on 4 Jan (JM) followed by one at Nairn on 13 Jan (KB) and another on 24 Feb (KK). Other single birds were at Lossiemouth on 10 Mar, 25 Apr and a 2CY on 7 Nov (AS, RP, DD). Single birds were recorded at Burghead on 7 Sep and 4 Nov (AL). The only other sightings were at Findhorn where there was a 2CY bird on 6 Jul and then up to two 1CY birds 4-7 Sep, and a final sighting of an adult on 15 Nov (RSC, AL).



Little Gull, Findhorn beach 4 September 2016 (Richard Somers Cocks)

Mediterranean Gull *Larus melanocephalus**Very scarce visitor.*

The recent trend of increased sightings of this bird continued in 2016 with numerous reports, most of which were from the Lossiemouth area. The first sighting though was at Delnies (Nairn) on 1 Jan (RHD, MGC). At Lossie estuary an adult was present on 16-17 Jan, 5 Feb, 12 Sep, 30 Oct and 9 & 30 Dec (DM et al). At nearby Loch Spynie sightings were reported 15 Jan and 10 & 25 Feb (PLE, CAG, HF). At Balormie pig farm, up to 2 adults were seen 23, 24 & 26 Jan, one of which was assessed as being the same bird that had been on Lossie estuary a week earlier (RP). Further sightings came on 27 Feb, 3 Mar and 28 & 30 Nov. Given the proximity of these three sites to each other it is very probable that the same bird was involved on some of these reports. The only other reports were of an adult at Portgordon on 21-22 Feb (DM, MJHC) and an adult off Findhorn on 10 Oct (CR).



Mediterranean Gull, Portgordon 21 February 2016 (David Main)

Common Gull *Larus canus**Very common resident breeder and winter visitor.*

Breeding: No counts made at the Beinn a' Chruinnich (Lecht ski centre) colony this year. At the Tips of Corsemaul site (east of Dufftown) only around 170 birds were visible on 4 May (IF). In Elgin a number of sites identified which included at least 33 apparently occupied nests (AONs) at the old sawmill on 21 May, 2 AONs at the cemetery on 21 May, 4 AONs at the Tyock industrial estate on 11 May and also single nests on 6 Jun at the Town Hall and Aldi supermarket (RP). Elsewhere, a single AON at Lossiemouth cemetery on 11 Jun, another AON at Broadley (Clochan) on 13 Jun, several pairs breeding at Aberlour on 3 Jul and 80 birds seen at the Inchrory SSSI river shingle colony on 12 Jun (IF).

Significant flock counts away from breeding areas early in the year included 300 Roseisle on 10 Jan, 400 Findhorn on 6 Feb, 1150 Balormie pig farm (RAF Lossiemouth) on 14 Feb and 250 Hillend (Drummuir) on 29 Feb. High counts were reported again later in the year at Spey estuary with 560 on 23 Sep and 610 on 10 Dec, and in fields at Clochan with 730 on 28 Dec (MJHC).

Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus**Summer visitor and scarce breeder. Very scarce in winter.*

Wintering: Recorded in both winter periods. At the start of the year, the first sighting was a 4CY at Lossie estuary on 2 Jan. There was an adult at Lossie estuary on 5-23 Jan and probably the same bird was at nearby Balormie pig farm on 23-30 Jan. A 3CY bird was on the Lossie estuary on 23 Jan and 20 Feb - and on the

latter date a different 3CY was at Balormie. A single bird was also noted at Burghead on 21 Jan (AB). At the end of the year there were three sightings of an adult at Lossie estuary between 18 Nov and 5 Dec, and similarly an adult at Balormie on 1 Dec which was probably the same bird. It is likely that the Lossie estuary bird was over-wintering as one has been seen at this location in recent years.

Arrival: By late March there were reports of sightings at a number of locations. Highest counts included 3 adults Cooper Park pond (Elgin) 27 Mar, 7 Broadley (Clochan) 10 Apr, 4 Findhorn Bay 11 Apr, 14 Loch Oire 20 Apr, 9 Cloddach quarry 30 Apr and 10 Cullen 1 May.

Breeding: Several sites were identified around Elgin. On 11-12 May there were 17 apparently occupied nests (AONs) on roofs on the Tyock industrial estate, 1 AON on the Pinefield industrial estate, 1 AON on Halfords roof, and on 21 May 2 AONs at the old sawmill and 2 AONs at the old railway sidings. Another AON was seen at Aldi supermarket on 6 Jun. Elsewhere, a single AON was seen on the roof of a medical practice in Lossiemouth on 15 Jun.

Highest counts of the year included 25 Forres 1 May, 19 Lossie estuary 23 May, 27 Cloddach quarry 22 Oct and 14 Nairn 24 Oct.

Herring Gull *Larus argentatus*

Very common resident breeder and winter visitor.

Breeding: A survey of central and suburban Elgin revealed a total of 156 apparently occupied nests or broods of small chicks, mostly on roofs (RP). These were located at Tyock Industrial Estate (74), Pinefield Industrial Estate (23), in or close to central Elgin (47), New Elgin (10) and Bishopmill (2). In Lossiemouth, 26 pairs were found to be breeding (RP). Elsewhere, a minimum of four pairs bred in Nairn (BB).

Monthly maximum counts on the Lossie estuary, at Loch Spynie and at Nairn were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Lossie	41	72	298	121	165	132	53	2466	209	400	1097	1700
Spynie	470	10	1050	119	85	1000	220	nc	50	60	890	2100
Nairn	850	300	150	nc	45	30	180	70	200	80	40	455

Elsewhere, counts over 400 included, at Balormie pig farm, 2000 on 10 Jan, 4000 on 30 Jan, 3500 on 14 Feb and around 1000 on 28 Nov. Around Hopeman, where another large pig farm was located, there were 500 on 16 Jan, 680 on 2 Apr and 450 on 28 Apr. At Findhorn-Burghead there were 400 on 24 Jan, at Cloddach quarry 570 on 24 Feb and at the Spey estuary 440 on 13 Jun.

Iceland Gull *Larus glaucoides*

Very scarce winter visitor.

As always with this species, duplication is impossible to discount fully as mobile individuals around the coastal strip may relate to more than one sighting. Observers are requested to note the ages of individuals involved, and whether birds are considered the same or different to any others seen around the same period to assist in obtaining a full picture of the number of individuals seen.

Another good year, but once again difficult to ascertain the exact number of birds. It is probable that like 2015 there were 20+ birds in 2016.

- Burghead: A 3CY reported flying west on 31 Mar and another sighting on 1 Apr (RP, PT).
 Hopeman: Thirty two reports up to 10 Apr with nearly all including a 3CY, but in addition a second 3CY was seen on 27 Mar and 5 Apr. A 2CY was present on 4 & 9 Jan and a 2CY with an adult on 7 Mar (many obs). There were no sightings later in the year.
 Balormie pig farm: An adult on 10 Jan was joined by 3CY on 23 Jan (different from Hopeman individual) and both were seen on numerous occasions till end of Apr. A 4CY was also present on 17-21 Feb. At the end of the year a 3CY was seen on 1 Dec (RP, MJHC, AJL).

- Lossie estuary: Given the proximity of the Balormie pig farm to the estuary, many of the sightings from these two sites are likely to involve the same birds. Numerous sightings from Jan-Apr of an adult and a 3CY which it is assessed were the same as the Balormie birds. An additional adult was seen on 5 Jan and a 4CY was also reported on 31 Jan. Single 3CY birds were seen passing on 25 Feb and 12 Mar. In early summer a 2CY was seen on 2 & 26 May and 6 Jun. At the end of the year a 3CY was present between 26 Nov - 5 Dec, and an adult on 3 Dec (many obs).
- Loch Spynie: A 3CY was present on 10 Jan and on 16 Jan 2 adults were seen, neither of which were assessed to be the Lossie estuary bird. Further sightings of an adult occurred on 5 Feb, 17 Feb and 18 Mar. A 4CY was seen on 26 Feb and a 2CY at the nearby pig farm on 20 Mar. At the end of the year a 3CY was recorded on 28 Nov and 17 Dec. (AB, CG, DAG, MJHC).
- Llanbryde: At the pig farm an adult on 20 Jan and a 2CY on 16 Feb (DD).
- Urquhart: Three sightings of single birds on 4, 11 & 22 Feb. One was an adult another a 3CY (EH)
- Loch Oire: Five sightings of single birds on 4, 11, 17 & 22 Feb and 2 Mar (EH).
- Spey Bay: A 1CY between Boar's Head Rock and Lossiemouth on 16 Dec (MJHC).
- Elgin: One at Cooper Park on 13 Mar (LM).
- Cloddach quarry: A 3CY on 30 Apr (MJHC).
- Culbin Sands: One on 20 Feb (KK).



David main
Iceland Gull, Lossie estuary 26 May 2016 (David Main)

Glaucous Gull *Larus hyperboreus*

Very scarce winter visitor.

Another year with a good number of sightings.

- Nairn: A sighting on beach on 22 Feb (KK).
- Hopeman: A 3CY on 22 Mar (PRG) and a 2CY (or possibly 3CY) sighting on 11 Jun (HA).
- Lossie estuary: The first sighting was a 2CY on 4 Jan which was followed by further sightings of a 2CY on 6 Mar and 11 Jun (DAG, DM, AB). Later in the year a 1CY on 25 Sep and a 2CY on 17 Oct (HF, RP).
- Loch Spynie: Early in the year a 2CY was seen on 23 & 25 Feb and 13, 17, 19 & 20 Mar (HF, DL et al).
- Spey estuary: A 2CY was seen on 29 Mar and later in the year single 2CYs were sighted on 10 Aug and 28 Sep (MJHC, GM). A probable 2CY seen in flight on 8 Oct (DAG).
- Llanbryde: A 2CY at pig farm on 30 Sep (MJHC).

Great Black-backed Gull *Larus marinus**Scarce resident breeder and common visitor.*

Breeding: On 22 June, 2 pairs were at Portknockie and 1 pair at Tronach Head.

Overall, numbers through the year were broadly similar to 2015, although the maximum at Lossie estuary was lower with 189 on 13 Sep (RP). At Spey estuary in late summer/autumn numbers peaked at 380 on 12 Oct (MJHC). These estuaries are only about 10 km apart and the extent of interchange between these two flocks is uncertain. Lesser numbers were also present at Findhorn which peaked at 49 on 24 Apr (RSC).

Maximum monthly counts were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Lossie estuary	7	54	29	45	28	3	10	100	189	11	15	75
Spey estuary	150	10	64	125	2	nc	185	275	364	380	nc	nc
Findhorn	25	10	nc	49	14	nc	30	27	36	15	37	18

The only other coastal counts to exceed 25 were at Burghead with 30 on 6 Feb and 30 on 30 Oct, at Nairn with 40 on 6 Feb, at Hopeman with 40 on 6 Feb, and at Cullen with 40 on 1 May. Loch Spynie had reasonable numbers early in the year with 50 on 13 Jan.

Feral Pigeon *Columba livia**Very common resident breeder.*

The only reports of flocks exceeding 100 were 360 Buckie harbour 4 Jan, c.250 Bow Fiddle Rock (Portknockie) 17 Jan and 130 Nairn 20 Jan.

Stock Dove *Columba oenas**Scarce resident breeder.*

Breeding season: One confirmed breeding record, using a nestbox, at Loch Spynie (CAG). Territorial individuals were recorded at Darnaway, Darkland and Gordon Castle (Fochabers). Reported in the period late March-July: 2 Balormie pig farm 23 Apr and 2 Westerfolds Cottages 10 May, otherwise singles at Darnaway 29 Jul, Dyke 27 Jun, Nairn east beach 31 Jul, Cloddach quarry 14 May and Darkland 14 May.

Autumn/winter records from additional localities were 10 Balliesland 2 Jan, 2 Lesmurdie (Elgin) 15 Jan, 1 Linksfield 13 Feb, 2 Carron 16 Feb, 1 Nairn 24 Feb, 1 Dipple farm (Fochabers) 6 Aug, 1 Balormie pig farm 11 Aug, present Urquhart 19 Aug, 4 Alves 5 Sep and 1 Cloddach quarry 6 Oct.

Woodpigeon *Columba palumbus**Very common resident breeder.*

The early start to the breeding season was indicated by an adult sitting on a nest Bishopmill, Elgin 25 Feb (though abandoned a week later) and a pair copulating Linkwood (Elgin) 17 Mar. In the early part of the year, flocks consisting of 100 or more included: 350 Sunbank, Lossiemouth 1 Jan, 500 Ballindalloch 2 Jan, c.250 Burgie 2 Jan, c.350 Bishopmill, Elgin 10 Jan, 100 Muirton 6 Feb, 200 Burghead 13 Feb, c.300 Cairnfield 15 Feb, 100 Garline 28 Feb, 190 Roseisle 29 Feb, 200 Marypark 3 Mar and 150 Roseisle distillery 7 Mar. A possible movement was noted on 1 Jan when 60 flew south-west over Lossiemouth. In summer, 116 Tomnamoon 22 Jun was the largest count received. No large movements recorded this year; 140 Cragganmore 24 Oct and c.300 Moyness 18 Nov were the only counts exceeding 100 individuals later in the year.

Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto**Very common resident breeder.*

The majority of counts received involved less than 10 individuals, however, four locations held 10 or more: 23 east of Kingsteps (Nairn) 17 Nov, 22 Elgin (West End) 22 Dec (19 on 28 Nov and 21 on 8 Dec), 11

Kingston 23 Oct and 10 Roseisle maltings 13 Nov. Well inland were 4 Tomintoul 13 Apr (2 on 21 Apr & 22 Aug and singles 23 Jul & 26 Aug).

Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus*

Summer visitor and fairly common breeder.

Arrival: First record was a single Wellheads 17 Apr (also 20 & 28 Apr), followed by one at Loch of Boath 23 Apr. Breeding confirmed at Loch of the Cowlatt when a juvenile, being fed by a Meadow Pipit, was found on 4 Jul and a juvenile Drummin Castle 31 Jul. Subsequently seen or heard in May-June at Aldunie-Torniechelt (Cabrach), Allanreid, Altyre Woods, Balnught, Black Loch (Dava), Burn of Aultmore, Cairnty (3), Corglass farm, Croughly, Dava, Dulsie Bridge, Dusach, Findhorn Bay, Gallowhill, Glack Harnes (Ben Rinnes), Johnstripe (pair), Kellas, Levrattich, Loch Tree, Lodge Wood, Mains of Inverourie (3), Knauchland, Rosarie, Tilliglens, Tomintoul (3) and Tomnamoon.

Barn Owl *Tyto alba*

Scarce resident breeder.

Breeding season reports (April-July) were received from: Barmuckity, Bruntlands, Chapleton (Forres), Clunas, Craigellachie, Cullen, Daugh of Kinermony, Feddan, Ferness, Loch Spynie, Lower Hempriggs (Kinloss), Lynemore (Dunearn), Macallan distillery, Pitgaveny, Scarffbanks farm, Sheals (Glass) and Wellheads.

The number of breeding season localities reported in the last 14 years:

2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
15	11	13	21	10	9	5	0	1	9	5	9	8	17

At other times of year, reports came from the following additional sites: Alves (Sep), Auldearn junction (Dec), Balnacoul (Dec), Balormie (Feb), Ben Rinnes distillery (Sep), Boldow (Knockando) (Jan), Brodie (Jan), Coleburn distillery (Jan), Craigellachie (Nov), Darkland (Dec), Daugh of Carron (Jan), Inchberry (Feb, Oct), Loch Kirkcaldy (Oct), Lower Rafford (Jan), Lynebeg (Cawdor) (Sep), Macallan distillery (Jan, Dec), Mains of Kirdell (Sep), Mulben (Dec), Mundole (Jan), Orton (Jan), Regaule (Feb), Shempston (Jan), Strathlene (Aug), Wester Hardmuir (Jan) and Westerfolds (Feb).

The total number of localities from which Barn Owls were reported (at any time of year) since 2003 is:

2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
33	31	27	31	21	40	20	11	13	21	12	30	47	39

A welcome increase in the number of breeding season reports. Although there was a slight decrease in the overall number of localities which provided sightings, the last three years continue to show a healthy recovery after the weather-related population crash of 2009-11.

Tawny Owl *Strix aluco*

Common resident breeder.

Records received from 19 typical localities. Breeding confirmed Croy (two juveniles) 15 May and Gallowhill (juvenile) 6 Jul. Birds heard calling during the day at Newtyle and Lossie Forest.

Long-eared Owl *Asio otus*

Scarce resident breeder.

The only record received concerned a single at Craigroy 23 Apr (MGC).

Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus*

Rare breeder and very scarce migrant.

Breeding: Present in summer in moorland breeding habitat were 2 Carn Ruigh Thuim (Dava) 19 Apr (SR), 1 Dunearn 20 Apr (RPo) and 1 Dava village 22 May (JP). Seven other summer records were near the coast where breeding is unlikely though not impossible: 1 Bogmoor 1 May (SHC), 1 Bloomfield (Findochty) 1 May (LS), 1 Chapleton (Forres) 8 May (J&BS), 1 Kinloss 9 May (AJL), 1 Findhorn Bay (Carse area) 16-22 May (RHD, RSC, GM), Hillhead (Portknockie) 6 Jun (LS) and 1 Portknockie 19 Jun (KS).

Autumn: A single at Kinloss 13 & 16 Sep (AJL) was the only record.

Winter records: 1 Portknockie 9, 11 & 16 Jan, increasing to 2 on 19-20 Jan (RS, LS & DM) and 1 Carse of Delnies 16 Jan (DMac).



David main

Short-eared Owl, Portknockie 29 January 2016 (David Main)

Swift *Apus apus*

Summer visitor and common breeder.

Arrival: A similar range of arrival dates in May compared to 2015 with three sightings on 5th at Bishopmill, Elgin (2 at Buccaneer filling station and 2 at Fraser Avenue likely to be the same birds), Lossiemouth (2 along Commerce Street) and Garmouth (2), then two sightings on 6th at Burghead (2) and Balvenie (Dufftown) (c.20).

No individuals were reported entering roof spaces this year.

No large concentrations reported during the early-mid summer period, best counts were c.40 Loch Spynie 26 Jun, 34 Lossiemouth 30 Jul and 20 Elgin cemetery 19 Jul.

The largest concentration in August was c.100 Heathfield (Croy) on 9th, with two records in late August at Loch Spynie (1 on 27th & 2 on 31st). September Swifts are unusual: single migrants noted during seawatches at Lossiemouth 5 & 12 Sep (RP). Remarkably therefore, the last records of the year were much later: 2 Spey estuary 6 Oct (CJ, JS) and a single Burghead 7 Oct (RJ, MGC). There have only been four previous October records and three in November.

Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*

Very scarce visitor and occasional breeder.

Breeding season records (April-July): Singles were seen in the breeding season at the Lour Burn (Aberlour) 26 Apr (AE), River Spey (Mosstodloch) 15 & 20 May (SMu, MJHC) and Loch Spynie 27 May, 25 Jun and 26 & 28 Jul (Spynie Book, CAG).

At other times, 1-2 birds were seen at:

Findhorn Bay area: Regular around Findhorn Bay/Mosset Burn/Binsness with 18 sightings in the autumn and early winter period: September (eight dates from 10th-29th), October (eight dates from 1st-17th) and November (twice from 10th-13th) (GM, RSC *et al.*).

Cragganmore-Blacksboat: one on 6 Mar (NS, CA).

Aberlour: seen around The Haugh pond 9 & 21 Feb (AE) and River Spey 7 Mar (AE) & 1 Oct (KD).

Elgin: singles on the River Lossie at the Mansion House 23 Aug (MM) and the Cathedral 13 Nov (LM).

Lossie estuary: one about 1 km upriver from the caravan park 1 Nov (DD).

Loch Spynie: seven reports from 3 Aug-22 Oct (GB, Spynie Book).

Loch Oire: singles seen on 1 Jan (DD), 24 Aug (EH), 28 Aug (RS), 4 Sep (CJ, JS) and 2 on 4 Nov (EH).

Spey estuary: one seen from Tugnet 18 Aug (JHo) and on the Kingston lagoon 15 Sep (MJHC).



Kingfisher, Findhorn Bay 16 September 2016 (Richard Somers Cocks)

Hoopoe *Upupa epops*

Rare visitor.

One was seen on top of a telegraph pole at Tugnet before flying away west across the Spey 5 May (MJHC, HB). This constitutes the 20th record for Moray & Nairn. The last sighting was in 2008.

Month of discovery for the 20 individuals:

Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov
3	6	1	0	1	2	5	2

Green Woodpecker *Picus viridis*

Very scarce visitor.

One seen or heard in woodlands beside the River Spey in the Cragganmore/Delnapot/Inveravon area on 27 Jan (JDG), 12 Feb (NS, CA) 2 & 10 Mar (TL) and 24 May (PRG). Also 1 seen Lethen 23 Jul (JH).

Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major*

Common resident breeder.

Widespread in woodlands and visiting garden feeders.

Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*

Scarce resident breeder.

Breeding season (April-July) records included birds/pairs at Aitnoch, Altyre woods, Blackhillock, Bridgehaugh, Carse of Delnies, Coltfoot, Craggan (Glenlivet), Craigroy (pair bred), Creag Bhuilg, Findhorn Bay, Hardmuir, Hill of Edinvale, Inchrory, Kerrow, Kinloss, Loch Kirkaldy, Lossiemouth airfield, Moyness, Refouble, Sluie (pair bred), Tomintoul, Tomnamoon, Tronach Head and Whiteinch.

Additional sites, with birds seen in other months, were Alves, Auchmair, Burghead, Carn Kitty, Craighead, Dipple, Drainie, Dyke, Fornightly, Forres, Glaschyle, Hillhead, Johnstripe, Knock of Braemoray, Loch Allan, Loch Spynie, Lossie estuary, Milltown wood (Nairn), Newlands of Knockaneorn, Shempston and Sliabh Banneach (Glen Avon).

Merlin *Falco columbarius*

Scarce resident breeder and migrant.

Breeding: 53 sites were checked and 12 of these were found to be occupied by pairs, 8 or 9 of which laid clutches. Five pairs were successful, and these raised 14 young between them. Mean brood size (fledged young per laying pair) overall was 1.6-1.8, but better in west Moray and Nairn, at 2.5-3.3, than in east Moray, at 0.8 (BCo, JKC).

Occupation and breeding success in west Moray were the lowest in 25 years, with only one site occupied, and this pair failed before or during egg-laying (JKC). The three Nairn area nests were all successful (JKC). In relation to Moray east of the Spey, Brian Cosnette commented: "Fieldwork coverage was similar to recent years. Good weather in spring this year enabled many areas to be surveyed earlier on. However conditions into May and June were truly appalling. Prey species such as pipits were late in breeding or failed completely. Many Merlin pairs failed early or gave up. This was mirrored elsewhere in eastern Scotland but proved to be most apparent in Moray. All the cases of breeding failure were thought to be related to the poor weather. Occupation of laying birds and resultant breeding and productivity rates were the lowest on record".

Outside the breeding season, single birds were seen in the lowlands at Blacksboat 2 Mar, Cawdor 13 Feb, Caysbriggs 20 Dec, Findhorn Bay 1 Oct, Kinloss 5 Oct and Lossiemouth 7 Dec. Remaining in the uplands in late autumn or winter were single birds at Loch Kirkaldy 29 Oct and in Glenfiddich (near the Elf House) 17 Dec.

Hobby *Falco subbuteo*

Rare visitor. Has bred.

A pair bred and raised two young in a pinewood east of Elgin (DR, EH, MJHC). This is the first recorded breeding by Hobbies in Moray & Nairn. A more detailed account can be found on page 103 of this Report. One was also seen at Tugnet beside the Spey estuary on 31 Aug (TG).



Hobby, Tugnet 31 August 2016 (Toby Green)

Peregrine *Falco peregrinus*

Rare resident breeder.

Breeding: Eleven sites were checked of which three were occupied by pairs and one by a single adult. Two of the pairs bred successfully, both raising three young (MJHC, AY, JKC).

In late summer-winter, single birds were reported from Arradoul (Jan), Balormie (Feb), Ben Macdui (Aug), Burghead (Aug, Sep, Dec), Carse of Delnies (Sep, Oct), Chapelton (Feb), Clochan (Jan, Dec), Cragganmore (Mar), Craighead (Dec), Culbin Bar (Dec), Duffus Castle (Oct), Findhorn Bay (Jan-Apr, Jul-Dec [two birds on five occasions]), Findochty (Jan), Kinloss (Feb, Sep), Loch Spynie (Feb, Oct, Nov), Logie (Sep), Lossiemouth (Jan, Sep), Lower Broadshaw (Oct), Moyness (Nov), Muirton (Oct), Nairn Bar (Jan, Feb), Netherton (Oct), Rafford (Jan), Rothes (Aug), Spey estuary (Sep), Tomnamoon (Apr) and Whitefolds (Mar).

Great Grey Shrike *Lanius excubitor*

Very scarce winter migrant.

One at Loch Kirkaldy 28-30 Oct (MGC, RHD, A&FR, JM, RP). This constitutes the seventh record this century, following other single birds at Scarffbanks in October 2000, Findhorn in November 2001, Kinloss in October 2002 and April 2008, Archiestown in December 2011 and Teindland in December 2014.



Great Grey Shrike, Loch Kirkaldy 28 October 2016 (Alison Ritchie)

Magpie *Pica pica**Common resident breeder.*

Recorded at Ardivot, Balormie pig farm, Bank of Roseisle, Ben Aigan, Blervie Castle, Boharm, Broadley, Burghead, Burgie Mains, Carse of Delnies, Clochan, Clovenside cemetery (Forres), Coldholme, Covesea, Cummingston, Dallas Dhu distillery, Dipple, Drainie, Earlseat, East Bank (Roseisle), Easter Milton (Nairn), Elgin, Findorn (bay, village & dunes), Forres, Gallowhill, Greenbrae Cottage (Hopeman), Hillend (Drummuir), Hillhead (Forres), Hilton, Hopeman, Inchgower distillery, Keith, Kinermory, Kingsteps (Nairn), Kinloss, Loch Flemington, Loch Spynie, Lochyhill, RAF Lossiemouth, Lossie estuary, Lossiemouth, Mill of Tynet, Moyness, Mulben, Mundole, Nairn, North Crannoch, Plewlands, Roseisle, Roseisle maltings, Salterhill, Shempston, Slackend, Tarras, Urquhart, West Beach (Lossiemouth), Wester Lawrenceton, Whiteinch, Williamston (Hopeman) and Woodend.

Frequency of group sizes reported:

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2016	91	22	12	4	4	2	2
2015	58	48	9	1	1	2	2

Largest groups were 7 Tarras enterprise park (Forres) 28 Dec, 7 Findhorn 29 Dec, 6 Kingsteps (Nairn) 5 Mar and 6 Kinloss 26 Oct.

Uncommon well inland, so singles at Ben Aigan 11 Jan, Coldhome 30 Mar and Boharm 28 Jul were notable, and could conceivably relate to the same individual.

Jay *Garrulus glandarius**Fairly common resident breeder.*

Breeding season: April-August reports came from Aldroughty (Elgin), A98 (near Fochabers), near Mill of Tynet, Arr Farm, Auldearn, Bognafuaran Wood, Collie Farm (Orton), Conicavel, Crook (Nairn), Croy, Darkland (7 together), Ferness, Findhorn Bay, Kinloss, Loch Spynie (10 together) and Sanquhar Woods.

At other seasons, Jays were seen at A941 (Spynie Canal), Arndilly, Balormie, Ben Aigan, Binsness, Bishopmill (Elgin), Bogmoor, Brodie, Burn of Mossat, Carron, Cloddymoss, Cragganmore, Craighead, Craigroy, Dallas Dhu, Darnaway, Dipple, Dounduff, Fairyhill, Fornightly, Glenferness Mains, Glenshiel Farm, Gow Moss, Cluny Hill (Forres), Holme Rose-Kilravock, Inshoch Wood, Kinloss, Knockhomie (Forres), Kronyhillock Wood, Lhanbryde, Loch na Bo, Loch of Blairs, Loch Oire, Loch Spynie, Logie Wood, Lossie Forest, Lower Broadshaw, Muir of Linksfield (Elgin), Muirton, Peathillock (Dunphail), Quarry Wood (Elgin), Scarffbanks Farm, Scootmore, Shaw Hill, Shempston, Spynie Canal, Spynie Palace, Tarras, Teinland, Tomnamoon, Auchenreath, Wester Galcantray, Wood of Conerock and Findrassie Wood.

The largest count this year was 12 together Loch Spynie 4 Sep.

Jackdaw *Corvus monedula**Very common resident breeder.*

Counts of 50 or more involved 350 Cragganmore 6 Mar (150 on 11 Mar), 220 Morinsh Forest 1 Jan, 100 Roseisle 6 Feb, 80 Netherton 10 Oct, 72 Scootmore 28 Sep, 58 Lossie estuary 11 & 24 Sep, 50 Tom an Uird 17 Jan, 50 Howford Bridge (Nairn) 23 Jan, 50 Muirton 6 Feb, 50 Delmore 12 Feb, 50 Forres 26 Mar, 50 Aldunie (Cabrach) 7 Apr and 50 Dipple 27 Dec. A partially leucistic individual was seen at Tomintoul 27 Aug.

Rook *Corvus frugilegus**Very common resident breeder.*

One colony count received: 63 apparently occupied nests Arradoul 5 May.

Highest counts were 300 Loch Flemington 26 Jan, 300 Roseisle 6 Feb, 200 Muirton 6 Feb, 150 Ferness 21 Jul, 120 Dipple 10 Dec and 100 Kinloss 2 Jan.

Carrion Crow *Corvus corone*

Very common resident breeder.

Breeding: An adult collecting nest material Bishopmill (Elgin) 31 Mar, a pair collecting nest material Elgin cemetery 1 Apr, an adult incubating in a roadside tree along the A96 near Lhanbryde 16 Apr, a nest with four eggs in a small broom bush Findhorn Bay 23 Apr and two fledged young Bishopmill (Elgin) 9 Jul.

Maximum counts from areas with regular observations:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Delnies area	2	3	10	3	2	2	nc	nc	31	7	nc	nc
Nairn area	13	10	30	5	10	3	4	1	3	nc	7	10
Findhorn Bay	4	5	nc	20	nc	nc	7	nc	8	20	1	nc
Lossie estuary	71	15	nc	28	51	51	61	71	78	nc	nc	nc

Elsewhere, groups of 10 or more (maximum counts) included; 70 Loch Femington 2 May, 65 White Ash 29 Jan, 60 Dipple 28 Dec, 58 Balormie pig farm 17 Apr, 25 Culbin Bar 24 Oct, 20 Hopeman 6 Feb, 17 Findochty 17 Jan, 10 Hillend (Drummuir) 21 Jan, 29 Feb & 6 Apr, 10 Muirton 6 Feb, 10 Forres 9 Mar, 10 Rosehall (Keith) 22 Mar, 10 Wellheads (Clochan) 2 May, 10 Loch Spynie 21 Jul and 10 Kingston 28 Dec.

As in March and April 2015, Carrion Crows were again recorded on seawatches off Lossiemouth harbour, these were flying west well out into the Moray Firth: 3 on 6 Mar, 6 on 13 Mar and 5 on 17 Apr (RP).

Hooded Crow *Corvus cornix*

Scarce visitor and rare breeder.

Maximum monthly counts of pure Hooded Crows (or Carrion x Hooded hybrids very closely resembling Hooded) were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Delnies area	2	1	1	1	1	1	nc	nc	1	4	nc	nc
Nairn area	8	12	3	2	nc	1	7	2	7	20	6	4

The largest count of 20 was from the Nairn harbour area on 24 Oct (JO).

Nairn: singles, unless noted, were seen at Bankhead, Culbin Bar (2 on 20 Feb), Easter Cotterton and Loch Flemington (max. 3 on 4 Feb).

Moray: One count exceeded five individuals: 6 Findhorn 18 Nov. Singles, unless noted, were seen at Brodie, Burghead (2 in Feb, Apr & May), Cabrach (2 on 12 Jul), Cloddach quarry, Findhorn Bay (3 on 28 Apr), Forres, Hopeman (2 on 16 Jan), Kinloss (2 on 23 Apr), Roseisle (5 on 27 Oct) and Urquhart (2 on 6 Jan & 8 Jul).

Hybrids: no counts exceeded five individuals. Singles (unless noted) were recorded at Balormie pig farm, Buckie, Culbin Bar, Delnies, Elgin (2 on 26 Jul), Findhorn Bay (3 on 14 Jan), Forres (3 on 26 Jul), Lossie estuary (3 on 23 May & 3 Sep), Nairn (5 on 7 Dec) and Nairn-Delnies (3 on 20 Sep).

Raven *Corvus corax*

Scarce visitor and rare breeder.

Coastal breeding: One pair bred at the usual site at Tronach Head but the outcome was unknown. The adult pair was present 18 Mar-14 May (MJHC, HRo, A&FR, HR) and ranging to Findochty 8 May (JC).

Coastal records in winter presumably involving the Tronach Head birds included: 2 Bow Fiddle Rock 17 Jan (MJHC), 'present' Portknockie 24 Jan (JC) and 1 Strathlene 21 Feb (MJHC). Otherwise, 1 flying west Findhorn 22 Feb (RSC), then 4 flying north-west Bishopmill, Elgin 1 Sep (RP), with 1 on the ground RAF Lossiemouth 3-4 Oct (DM) and 2 flying east Findhorn 24 Oct (RSC); possibly related to part of the earlier flock over Elgin.

Inland breeding: the sites at Parkmore, Dufftown (IF) and Scurren of Well (AE) were not occupied this year. Reports elsewhere in the uplands (max. counts) included: 2 Aldunie (Cabrach) 16 Oct, 1 Ferness 20 Jan, 1 Beinn Mheadhoin 24 Aug, 3 Ben Macdui 1 Aug, 2 Ben Rinnes 4 Jan & 29 Mar, 2 Blue Hill 24 Mar, 1 Braes of Glenlivet 17 Mar, 1 Cairn Gorm 10 Dec, 5 Carn Ealasaid 17 Jul, 2 Carn Mor 5 May, 1 Clashnoir (Glenlivet) 5 Sep, 2 Coire Raibert 21 Nov, 3 Craggan (Glenlivet) 1 May, 16 Creag Veann 6 Jun, 2 Darnaway 14 Nov, 'present' Glenferness 12 Jul, 2 Hill of Mulderie 23 Jul, 1 Moor of Tore 22 Dec, 19 Scalán (Glenlivet) 27 Jul, 9 Tom Trumper 16 Aug and 2 Tomintoul 17 May & 10 Jun.

Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*

Very common resident breeder and scarce migrant.

Song noted at Sleepieshill 4 Feb, Tomnamoon 11 Mar and Chapelton 11 Mar. Juveniles noted at Altyre 15 Jul. Counts of 10 or more included: c.30 Dufftown 9 Jan, 16 Culbin Bar 24 Jan (12 on 18 Dec), 14 Cragganmore 28 Sep and 10 Shaw Hill 17 Apr.

Firecrest *Regulus ignicapilla*

Rare migrant and winter visitor.

An individual found freshly dead in a car radiator in Elgin on 7 Jan had been ringed as a juvenile female at Heysham, Lancashire on 14 Sep 2015 (a distance of 401 km) (PWo). This is the sixth record for Moray & Nairn - previous records being 3 Dorback Burn (near Relugas) 4 Oct 1970, and singles Clochan 2 Nov 1980, Conicavel 15 Nov 2007, Deskford 5 Dec 2009 and Greenside Cottage (Windyridge) 6 Nov 2015.



Firecrest, Heysham (Lancashire) 14 September 2015 (Pete Marsh)



The same Firecrest as above, Elgin 7 January 2016 (Philip Wood)

Blue Tit *Cyanistes caeruleus*

Very common resident breeder.

Nest boxes:

	Pairs	Mean clutch	Mean fledged brood (all pairs)	Mean fledged brood (successful pairs only)	
Broadleaf sites*	18	6.6	5.9	6.2 (n=17)	(HC)
Conifer sites **	11	7.4	6.5	7.1 (n=10)	(HC)

* Broadleaf sites were at Keith, Cairnfield, Cloddach, Birkenhill and Pinefield (Elgin)

** Conifer sites were at Knauchland, Cloddach, Thomshill and Caysbriggs

Clutch sizes were similar to 2015 but fledged broods of successful pairs were larger in both broadleaf (5.4 in 2015) and conifer (4.8 in 2015) woodland.

The proportion of juveniles caught per adult for ringing at the Loch Spynie 'Constant Effort Site' was 1.7:1, up from 0.9:1 in 2015 (RP).

Counts exceeding ten were 13 Nairn 22 Mar and 12 Cragganmore 24 Oct (11 there on 13-21 Feb).

Great Tit *Parus major*

Very common resident breeder.

First reports of song were in January; Clochan on 18th and Loch Spynie on 30th.

Nest boxes:

	Pairs	Mean clutch	Mean fledged brood (all pairs)	Mean fledged brood (successful pairs only)	
Broadleaf sites *	17	4.8	4.5	4.8 (n=16)	(HC)
Conifer sites **	16	5.0	5.0	5.0 (n=16)	(HC)

* Broadleaf sites were at Keith, Cairnfield, Cloddach, Birkenhill and Pinefield (Elgin)

** Conifer sites were at Knauchland, Cloddach, Thomshill and Caysbriggs

As with Blue Tits, fledged broods of successful pairs were larger than in 2015 in both broadleaf (4.1 in 2015) and conifer (3.7 in 2015) woodland.

Productivity, as assessed by ringing at the 'Constant Effort Site' at Loch Spynie, was 3.8 juveniles caught per adult, a considerable increase compared to 0.0 in 2015 (RP).

The only count exceeding ten birds was 13 Cragganmore 13 Feb.

Crested Tit *Lophophanes cristatus*

Common resident breeder.

Nest boxes:

	Pairs	Mean clutch	Mean fledged brood (all pairs)	Mean fledged brood (successful pairs only)	
Lossie Forest	3	5.7	5.7	5.7	(MJHC)

Singing recorded at Darnaway 8 Apr and a pair and two juveniles were seen in Burghead Woods 18 Jun (MGC). Recently fledged young in Whiteash Hill Wood 1 Jun (MJHC).

Unusual in the coastal strip was 1 Loch Spynie feeders 7 Feb (CAG) (7th record for Loch Spynie).

Away from the coastal forests, reports from other areas were (max. counts): 1 Burn of Rothes 3 Feb, 3 Darnaway 27 Dec, 2 Dava lochans 18 Dec, 2 Ferness 30 Oct, 1 Hill of Mulundy 10 Jan, 1 Loch Allan (Dava) 19 Apr, 2 Loch Kirkaldy 13 Aug, 1 Newlands of Knockaneorn 9 Feb, 4 Newtyle 20 Sep, 3 Shaw Hill 17 Apr, 1 Sleepieshill Wood 6 Aug, 2 Teinland 23 Oct, 3 Tilliglens 15 Mar, 1 Torrieston 24 Nov and 1 Wood of Conerock 4 Feb.

Coal Tit *Periparus ater*

Very common resident breeder.

First song Linkwood, Elgin 19 Jan.

Groups of 10 or more were: 30 Shaw Hill 17 Apr, 20 Tom an Uird 17 Jan, 18 Loch Spynie 7 Feb (10 on 13 Jan), 16 Tomnamoon 31 Dec, 15 Gallowhill 3 Dec (10 on 12 Feb), 14 Lossiemouth Forest 6 Feb, 11 Cragganmore 24 Oct, 10 Bogeney 1 Oct and 10 Rafford 9 Aug.

Bearded Tit *Panurus biarmicus*

Former rare breeder.

A pair seen in the Loch Spynie reedbeds on 17 Jan (JDL) and a single heard on 19 Jan (MGC) was the first records there since 2014. Birds were present at Loch Spynie 1998-2006 (when breeding was confirmed), 2008 & 2014. Also present in 2014 at the Kingston reedbed.

Skylark *Alauda arvensis*

Very common breeder and migrant.

First song Covesea 12 & 13 Feb. Song reported from only two other localities in February (Lossiemouth east beach on 22nd and Burghead-Cummingston 26th). Autumn song between Portgordon-Strathlene on 16 Oct. Counts of 10 or more included: 40 Netherton 10 Oct (12 on 29 May, 13 on 13 May and 10+ on 15 Jun), 16 Carse of Delnies 19 Mar, 15 Balormie pig farm 24 Jan, 15 Balgreen (Covesea) 14 Sep, 10 Nairn 6 Mar and 10 RAF Lossiemouth 14 Apr.

Migrants flying south included records from Loch Spynie (23 on 15 Sep, 13 on 20 Sep, 14 on 1 Oct and 12 on 2 Oct) and Portknockie (8 on 5 Oct and 26 on 16 Oct). Other potential migrants were 3 over Lossiemouth harbour 13 Mar.

Sand Martin *Riparia riparia*

Summer visitor and very common breeder.

Arrival: A typical arrival date in late March when 'present' Loch Flemington 30 Mar, this follows the very early arrivals in 2014 and 2015. Only small numbers had arrived in the first week of April (e.g. 4 Loch Flemington 1st, c.20 Loch Spynie 3rd, 'present' Loch Oire 5th and 10 Portgordon 7th). A total of 17 sites reporting birds from the second week of April; largest concentrations at Loch Spynie with c.200 on 9th and 100 on 13th.

Colony counts: two counts on 11 Jun from the Quarry Pool colony on the River Spey (Mosstodloch) gave totals of 2800 and 2993 freshly dug holes (AY); this remains by far the largest colony in Moray & Nairn but how the count of fresh burrows translates to occupied nests is almost impossible to determine with accuracy. Numbers recorded at other colonies were: 23+ birds around a colony at Nairn golf course 5 May, ca.10 pairs Clashach quarry 19 Jun and c.30 Findhorn dunes 13 Jul.

No large post-breeding congregations reported. Last record was 5-6 Burnside 23 Sep.

Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

Summer visitor and very common breeder.

Arrival: In early April, the first individual was seen at Burghead on 5th, followed by 9 Portgordon on 6th. These were slightly earlier than the arrival date of 9 Apr in 2014 & 2015. Small numbers arrived daily to mid-April: 2 Burghead 8th, 1 Spey estuary 8th, 2 Portgordon 10th, 1 Spey Bay 11th, 1 West Beach, Lossiemouth 12th, 1 Loch Flemington 13th, 'present' Loch Oire 13th and 1 Loch Spynie 13th.

Late summer flocks: 68 Tomluncart 29 Sep (50 there 26 Sep), 50 Tomnamoon 8 Aug and 50 Wester Lochend 24 Aug were the largest reported. Seen daily to mid-Oct then no records until the last report of 2 The Maggot (Nairn) 30 Oct.

House Martin *Delichon urbicum*

Summer visitor and common breeder.

Arrival: The first, seen at Portgordon 6 Apr, was slightly early (previous earliest records were 'several' Loch Spynie 5 Apr 2009 and 2 Portknockie 6 Apr 2012).

Arrival dates for last 10 years (all in April):

2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
21st	17th	14th	5th	11th	9th	6th	17th	9th	13th

Only seven sites with reports from mid April: 2 Lossiemouth west beach 12th, 1 Nairn 17th, 'present' Burghead 21st, 2 Lossiemouth 21st, 10 Moor of Tore 23rd, 4 Banerach 26th and 3 Cullen golf course 28th.

Breeding: The Buckie High School colony had 5 occupied nests on 15 Jul (one less than 2015). Confirmed breeding was also recorded at Brodie Castle, Elgin (Marleon Field), Forres (Grant Park & Kristoff's Restaurant), Nairn (Hawthorn Gardens) and Tomnamoon.

Late summer counts: At Kinloss barracks c.120 on 17 Aug, c.80 Inchgower distillery 21 Aug and c.250 Lethen 25 Aug.

Last reports were both on 30 Sep at Lossie estuary (1) and Househill, Nairn ('present').

Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus*

Very common resident breeder.

The largest flocks reported were 30 Scootmore 28 Sep, 28 Findhorn Bay (Carse) 11 Nov, 23 Teinland 30 Oct, 22 Dipple 28 Dec and c.20 Loch Spynie 7 Dec. A further twenty counts involved 10 or more birds.

The proportion of juveniles caught per adult for ringing at the Loch Spynie 'Constant Effort Site' was 3.2:1, up from 2.5:1 in 2015 (RP).

At feeders in gardens were 5 Achareidh (Nairn) 28 Sep, 11 Bishopmill, Elgin 23 Dec, 10 Buckie 8 Jan and 2 Forres 15 Mar.

Yellow-browed Warbler *Phylloscopus inornatus*

Rare migrant.

Singles were found along the old railway line at Portknockie 5-8 Oct (MJHC, RP, LS *et al.*), Clochan 11 Oct (trapped and ringed) (MJHC) and Roseisle Forest 18 Oct (MGC). Three records in a year is unprecedented, and they constitute the 9th-11th records in Moray & Nairn. Previous records, all of singles, have occurred at Lossiemouth (Oct 1998, Oct 2014), Loch Spynie (Sep 2001, Oct 2015), Portknockie (Oct 2005, Oct 2015), Strathlene (Oct 2006) and Covesea (Oct 2014).



Yellow-browed Warbler, Clochan 11 October 2016 (Martin Cook)



Yellow-browed Warbler, Portknockie 7 October 2016 (David Main)

Wood Warbler *Phylloscopus sibilatrix**Summer visitor and rare breeder.*

One singing at Whiteash Hill wood 25-29 May (MJHC *et al.*). Just hanging on; none in 2015 or 2014, one record in 2013, none in 2012, one in 2011 and none in 2010.



Wood Warbler, Whiteash Hill Wood, 29 May 2016 (Martin Cook)

Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita**Summer visitor and fairly common breeder. Scarce migrant and rare winter visitor.*

Winter: A single at Loch Spynie 17 Jan (JM, DM).

Arrival: First arrival dates in March were similar to last year; Cloddach quarry 20th, Brodie Castle 24th, Urquhart 25th, Dipple 27th, Garmouth viaduct 27th, Nairn 28th, Phorp Wood 28th (2), Woodside 28th (2), Brodie 29th, Muiry Wood (Forres) 30th, Loch of Blairs 31st and Newmill pond 31st.

In April, 9 Waterford-River Findhorn on 8th and 8 Nairn-Cawdor on 9th. Recorded at 46 sites in April. Recorded elsewhere through the summer, mostly singles, at 46 sites including: Altyre, (3), Arr Farm, Binsness, Blairnafade, Blervie Castle, Bognafuaran Wood, Brodie Castle (2), Broom of Moy, Buckie, Cloddach, Crook (Nairn), Croy, Dallas Dhu distillery, Easter Balcroy, Easter Lawrenceton, Gallowhill, Hillhead, Howford, Inshoch, Kellas, Kingsteps (Nairn), Kinloss, Kintessack, Knocknagillan, Lhanbryde cycle route (4), Loch of Blairs, Loch Spynie (3), Loch Loy (2), Lossie Forest (6), Lower Rafford, Maviston Farm, Meikle Urchany, Milton of Balnagowan, Muirton, Nairn, New Arr, Old Newton of Budgate, Orton, Phorp area (2), Rafford, Raitloan, Sanquhar woods, Spey Bay (4), Teinland (5), Wardend and Woodside.

During the year, 33 were trapped at Loch Spynie and 30 at Clochan, which is more than normal at both sites. Autumn records in September-October from: Ballgreen (Covesea), Binsness (2), Bogeney (2), Broom of Moy, Carse of Delnies, Clochan, Cragganmore, Elgin, Findhorn Bay, Forres (3), Half Davoch, Hopeman, Househill (Nairn), Kingston, Lhanbryde sewage works (2), Loch Flemington, Loch na Bo, Loch Oire, Loch Spynie, Maviston Farm, Nairn, Phorp area, Portknockie, Rafford, Tomnamoon and Wardend.

Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus**Summer visitor and very common breeder.*

Arrival: Singles at Tomnamoon 14 Apr and Delnies 16 Apr. Arrival continued on 19th (3 sites) and on 20th (4 sites) before a large arrival on 21st (21 sites) and widespread thereafter.

Productivity, as measured by ringing at the 'Constant Effort Site' at Loch Spynie, was 1.1 juveniles caught per adult – up slightly from 0.7 in 2015 (RP).

Subsequent counts of 10 or more were 11 Sanquhar Woods 6 May and 10 Phorp area 3 & 29 May.

Last record was a single at Forres 7 Oct (AR).

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*

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

January-March: Noted in gardens and at feeders in Forres (male regular 7 Feb-27 Mar), Duffus (1 on 27 Feb), Elgin (male 28 Jan), Lhanbryde (female 8 Jan, male 19 Jan) and Buckie (male 2-4 Feb).

Spring/summer: First recorded on 14 Apr at Buckie and 15 Apr at Househill (Nairn). Other mid-late April records included; Delnies 16th, 3 Findhorn Bay 21st, Mains of Moy 21st, Nairn 22nd, 4 Loch na Bo 23rd, Loch Spynie 23rd, Lossie Forest 26th, Crook Wood 27th and 7 Findhorn Bay (river to the bay) 28th.

Widespread across Moray & Nairn throughout May-July.

Productivity, as measured from individuals trapped for ringing at the 'Constant Effort Site' at Loch Spynie, was 2.0 juveniles per adult, up from the 0.5 recorded in 2015 (RP).

Autumn: In September a single at Loch Spynie on 14th was the only record. In October, recorded from Loch Spynie (male & female on 2nd, male on 17th & 21st), Cragganmore-Blacksboat (female on 5th), Cragganmore (male & female on 11th & 13th), Half Davoch (female on 23rd) and Nairn (male on 30th).

November-December: a male on 4 Nov, then a male & female Nairn 4 Dec, male Loch Spynie 27 Nov, female Elgin 28 Nov and a male Bishopmill, Elgin 4 & 6 Dec.

Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin*

Summer visitor and scarce breeder.

Recorded in the breeding season at two, nearby, locations: 2 singing near the River Spey, Mosstodloch 11 May (then a single 14 & 20 May) (MJHC) and one singing along the Speyside Way at Bogmoor 14 May (C&MS, JDL, AY).

Whitethroat *Sylvia communis*

Summer visitor and very common breeder.

Arrival: Appeared to be later this year with no April records received. In early May, singles were recorded at Lossie estuary 3rd, Tugnet 5th, Burghead-Cummingston 6th, Hopeman 8th, Findochty 8th, Tronach Head 9th, Urquhart 9th, Kinloss 11th and Loch Flemington 13th. More widespread from late May.

One East Delnies 3 Sep was the last report received.

Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella naevia*

Summer visitor and scarce breeder.

Recorded at only 6 sites (7 sites in 2015 and 13 sites in 2014). Singles were heard 'reeling' at Kinloss 5 May, Spynie Canal 7 May, Raefin (Braes of Enzie) 14 May, Glentauchers distillery (Mulben) 23 May, Chapelton (Forres) 14 & 18 Jul and Loch Flemington 16 May.

Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

Summer visitor and common breeder.

Arrival: The first was 1 Spynie Palace reedbed 23 Apr, then 2 Loch Spynie 24 Apr and 1 Cloddach quarry 30 Apr. A slow arrival again this year with only 6 sites recording individuals by mid-May.

Breeding: At the 'Constant Effort Ringing Site' in the north-east fen at Loch Spynie, the number of juveniles caught per adult was 1.0:1, up slightly from 0.3:1 in 2015. Recently fledged juveniles were reported from Cloddach quarry 26 Jun and 2 Loch Spynie 27 Jun.

Last record was 1 Portgordon 27 Jul.

Waxwing *Bombycilla garrulus*

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

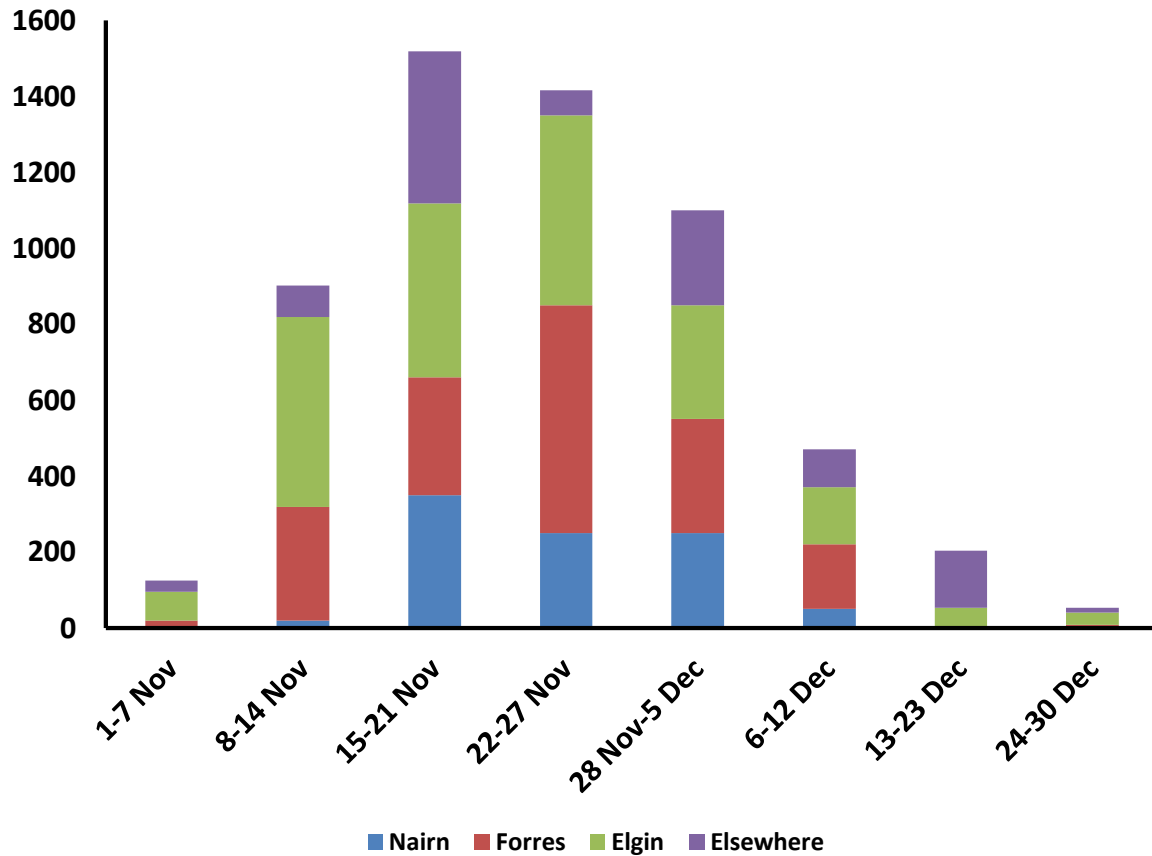
Winter-spring: In the first part of the year, the only record concerned 8 Elgin (Pluscarden Road) 28 Feb. Presumably this was the same group that was seen there on 14 Dec 2015.

Autumn-winter: First flocks during this period were 13 Gow Moss 22 Oct (47 & 32 on 30 Oct), 3 Lossiemouth 25 Oct and 29 Moor of Tore 28 Oct. A good influx followed these early autumn records, with weekly flocks recorded during the remainder of the period.

- 1-7 Nov: 15 Ramphlat Wood (Altyre) 2nd, 30 Teindland 5th, 20 Balnakeith (Forres) 7th and 75 Elgin cemetery 7th.
- 8-14 Nov: 82 Dava 8th, 19 Nairn 12th, 20 Lossiemouth 13th (2 on 14th), 3 Western Greens 14th, 3 Beachans 14th, 7 Altyre Woods 14th. In Forres, 16 reports mainly from the Mannachie Road/Grantown Road/Knockomie Gardens area from 9th-14th, with the largest count of 230 on 9th and *c.*300 on 14th. One group of 10 Sanquhar Woods 10th may have been different. In Elgin, 19 reports received from 8th-14th, with the largest estimates being *c.*500 on 11th and *c.*300 on 12th. Possibly involving different flocks were 70 Marleon Field and 50 Morrision Road, Bishopmill on 13th, around the Cathedral/Pansport/ Maisondieu Road area where the largest group was 80 on 11th, 150+ Institution Road 11th and 31 Elgin cemetery 14th.
- 15-21 Nov: 12 Altyre Woods 15th (1 on 16th), 40 Urquhart 15th, 38 Rafford 18th, 24+ Lhanbryde 18th, 400+ Mosstodloch 18th (100 on 15th, 170 on 19th and 250 on 21st), 40-50 Bogmoor 18th, *c.*350 Nairn 19th (300 on 21st), 8 Lossiemouth 19th, 50-60 Spey Bay 19th, 25 Buckie 19th, 30 Burghead 19th, 30+ Fochabers 20th, *c.*80 Achareidh 21st, 21 Kinloss 21st, 21 Loch Oire 21st and 50+ Kennieshillock 21st-23rd. In Forres, the flock around Mannachie Road/Grantown Road/Knockomie Gardens area remained with a count of 310 on 15th from a photograph. A group of 20 over the High Street (Forres) on 16th may have been different. In Elgin, reported flocks included *c.*200 Pluscarden Road 16th, 458 Elgin cemetery 18th, 300+ Bishopmill 21st and 300 Elgin 31st, with smaller groups in these areas during this period.
- 22-27 Nov: 30+ Rafford 22nd, 15 Loch Oire 23rd, 64 Fochabers 23rd, 50+ Torrieston 24th, 15 Bridge of Tynet 24th, *c.*20 Loch of Blairs 25th, *c.*30 Hopeman 25th, 50+ Threaplands (Lhanbryde) 25th, 300+ Forres enterprise park 26th (*c.*230 on 28th), 66 Glenferness 27th and 250 Nairn cemetery 28th. In Forres, the largest report was 600 on 24th, the Knockomie Garden flock was still in the area with a maximum of 300 on 25th-28th and 45 Forbeshill 26th. Large flocks also continued in Elgin; *c.*500 on 23rd at the Cathedral, 200+ Esmonde Gardens (Bishopmill) 26th and probably the same 200 Marleon Field (Bishopmill) 27th, 354 Elgin 27th and *c.*200 Linkwood (Elgin) 28th. A group of 50+ Pluscarden Road 27th might be the only flock that was different in this period as they were present in the area over the previous three weeks.
- 28 Nov-5 Dec: 100+ Glenferness 30th, 1 Tomnamoon 30th, *c.*40 Balnaroid (Cawdor) 1st, 135 Moor of Tore 1st, 25 Littlemill (Nairn) 2nd, 23 Darkland 2nd, *c.*30 Achareidh 4th, *c.*250 Briach (Rafford) 4th, *c.*40 Broom of Moy 4th and 29 Braes of Allachie (Aberlour) 4th. In Nairn, the large flock continued with 250 on 29th, 100 on 30th and 100+ on 4th. In Forres the flock around Knockomie gardens had dispersed leaving only *c.*30 on 4th, 300 Forres enterprise park 29th, 126 Tesco 29th and *c.*90 Forbeshill 29th. In Elgin still large flocks during this period; *c.*300 Edgar Road 1st, 300 Elgin cemetery 2nd, *c.*250 Town Hall 2nd and 200+ West End 2nd.
- 6-12 Dec: 100+ Aberlour 6th, 14 Marcassie Farm (Rafford) 6th, 30 Kintessack 7th & 11th, 22 Linkwood (Elgin) 8th, 30+ Broom of Moy 10th, 20+ Wester Moy 11th, 6 Findhorn 10th, 30 Knockando 10th and *c.*50 Glen Grant distillery (Rothies) 12th. Flocks around Nairn starting to disperse and smaller numbers being recorded; 43 & *c.*25 on 8th, *c.*50 on 9th and 20 on 11th. Similar in Forres where 170 Mannachie Road 8th was the only sizeable group, otherwise 50 on 6th & 10th, 10 on 6th, 20 on 7th, *c.*30 on 8th, 14 on 10th and 25 on 12th. Also similar in Elgin where the largest group was 150 Elgin cemetery 6th, 86 on 7th (also 36 Dr Gray's Hospital & 10 Main Street, New Elgin) and 56 on 8th & 9th.
- 13-23 Dec: 150+ Miltonduff 15th, 12 Laiken Forest 16th, 18 Rafford 16th, 18 Aberlour 22nd and 33 Moor of Tore 22nd (11-20 present 16th-23rd). Only a single reported from Forres, on 22nd. Also in Elgin, much smaller flocks reported with 40 on 13th, 23 on 17th and 53 on 22nd.

24-30 Dec: A continuation of smaller flocks being reported, 12 Moor of Tore 24th, 12 Bogmoor 27th and 1 Findhorn 30th. In Forres, one report of 9 on 28th. In Elgin flocks much smaller; 32 on 24th, 16 on 25th, 15 on 28th and 4 on 29th.

Maximum flock count for each weekly period from Nairn, Forres, Elgin and 'Elsewhere':



Waxwings, Forres 13 November 2016 (Gordon Biggs)

Treecreeper *Certhia familiaris*

Very common resident breeder.

Notable records included counts of 4 Howford Bridge (Nairn) 14 Sep, 3 Firhall (Nairn) 9 Apr and 3 Cragganmore 24 Oct. One regular in a Forres garden 29 Feb and 9 Oct-11 Dec.

Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*

Very common resident breeder.

Breeding confirmed at Tilliglens and Loch Spynie. At Loch Spynie Constant Effort ringing site, the ratio of juveniles to adults was 2.4:1, up slightly from 1.9:1 in 2015 (RP).

Best winter counts were 12 Shaw Hill 17 Apr, 9 Whiteness Head 19 Mar, 8 Kingsteps (Nairn) 5 Mar, 7 Nairn 6 Mar, 7 Firhall Bridge (Nairn) 22 Mar and 6 Bogeney 18 Dec.

Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*

Very common resident breeder and winter visitor.

A pair used a nest hole in a tree at Loch of Blairs producing at least one chick (A&FR). Following the breeding season, a flock of juveniles estimated at 400 on 20 Jul at Minton Point, Findhorn Bay, also a late summer flock included 200 Bemuchlye 31 Jul. Large pre-roost flights included 5000 Loch Spynie 26 Oct, still 3000 on 19 Nov (JDL) and 1000 Elgin (at the Asda store) 29 Nov (RP).

Dipper *Cinclus cinclus*

Common resident breeder.

Breeding: Song heard Elgin (River Lossie at Landshut Bridge) 9 Jan. A pair nest building River Lossie beside Cooper Park (Elgin) 18 Mar and another pair copulating Firhall (on River Nairn) 6 Apr. At Sanquhar Pond, nest building 22 Feb & 3 Mar and then carrying food 28 Apr.

Elsewhere in the breeding season records received from: Aberlour, Bantrach (River Divie), Bridgend of Glenlivet, Cragganmore-Blacksboat, Delmore, Dulsie Bridge, Elgin (Tyock Burn, Edgar Road), Mundole area (River Findhorn), Lhanbryde (River Lossie near cycle way), Hillend (Drummuir), Holme Rose-Kilravock, Househill (Nairn), Howford Bridge (River Nairn), Kilravock Castle (Croy), Knockandhu distillery, Nairn, The Lecht, Lethen, Tom an Uird and upper Glen Avon.

At other times of the year localities holding Dippers were: Dallaschyle, Findhorn Bay, Logie, Old Newton of Budgate, River Lossie (Cloddach), Dipple, Glenlivet, Marypark, Mosset Burn, Muckle Burn (Boghole Wood), River Nairn (Jubilee Bridge), River Findhorn (Altyre), Nairn cemetery and Tor Elick (Glen Fiddich).

Ring Ouzel *Turdus torquatus*

Summer visitor and scarce breeder.

Breeding: A pair with two juveniles at Craig Bhuilg 12 Jun (IF).

Inland at potential breeding sites included an early single at Tom Trumper 17 Mar (MJHC). Later at Inchrory a single on 29 Mar (PMo), then 2 singing and a pair at three areas near Inchrory Lodge 12 Jun (IF). Elsewhere, singles at Stac an Fharaidh (Cairngorm) 31 May (KMHW), Glen Avon & Linn of Avon 16 Jul (SW) and Carn Ealasaid 17 Jul (DM).

Autumn: a male Scalan (Glenlivet) 9 Oct (NS, CA) and one with Redwings at Tor Elick (Glen Fiddich) 16 Oct (PO).

Blackbird *Turdus merula*

Very common resident breeder, winter visitor and migrant.

Breeding: Males singing Linkwood (Elgin) 21 Jan & 16 Feb. A clutch of three eggs was found along the north embankment Loch Spynie 27 May. Adults seen carrying food at Balmageith (Nairn), Shore Street (Lossiemouth), Queen Street (Lossiemouth) and Elgin cemetery.

Counts of 10 or more included 30 Milntoduff 9 Feb, 24 (in garden) Forres 8 Jan (21 on 16 & 21 Jan), 15 Nairn 22 Mar and 12 Dipple 7 Dec.

A leucistic individual with a white head and neck was seen in Forres 7 Nov.

Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris*

Very common migrant and winter visitor.

Winter-spring: A total of 27 reports (47 in 2015) of flocks of 20 or more were received from 22 sites, largest counts were: 120 Easter Bauds 24 Feb, 100+ Inchbroom 4 Jan and 100+ Craigfield 5 Feb.

Last in spring: 15 Tomintoul 28 Apr.

Autumn: One over the west end of Elgin 4 Oct was on a typical arrival date, quickly followed by 31 Portknockie 6 Oct, 6 Gow Moss 8 Oct and 10 College of Scalan 9 Oct. Almost daily arrivals reported to the end of the month, with the largest flocks being 125 Gow Moss 22 Oct, 100+ Refouble 17 Oct, 100 Tomintoul 16 Oct, 100 Ferness 30 Oct, 90 Aldunie (Cabrach) 16 Oct and 80 Tor Elick (Glen Fiddich) 16 Oct.

Winter: A total of 23 reports (20 in 2015) were received of flocks containing 20 or more from 18 sites, largest counts were c.340 Craighead 2 Dec (200+ on 4 Dec), 100 Salterhill 24 Dec, 90 Knock of Braemora 18 Dec, 82 Findhorn Bay 28 Dec and 80 Maryhill (Orton) 28 Nov.

Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos*

Very common breeder and migrant. Scarce in winter.

Mid winter: As usual, over-wintering birds were almost exclusively found, in very small numbers, in close proximity to the coast. In January, 2 Clochan 4th, 'present' Spynie Palace 7th, 1 Nairn 8th, 2 Spey estuary 8th, 1 Clochan 8th, 2 Househill (Nairn) 15th, 1 Nairn 19th, 1 Kingsteps (Nairn) 19th, 1 Hopeman 19th, 1 Loch Spynie 19th and Urquhart 19th. In February, 1 Milntoduff 9th, 1 Kinloss 13th, 1 Linkwood (Elgin) 13th-14th and 1 Brodie Castle 20th.

By March, well established in coastal areas, still less common inland with upcountry records comprising 2 Hillend (Drummuir) 9th, 4 Marypark 11th, 5 Cragganmore 11th, 3 Fanmore 11th and 2 Bogeney (Knock of Braemora) 24th. Largest number was 9 Whiteness Head 19 Mar.

Breeding: First brief song Clochan 8 Jan, with more sustained singing Linkwood (Elgin) 13 Feb. Food gathering included 2 Tomnamoon 2 May.

Potential migrants were 2 Quarry Road (Lossiemouth) 15 Sep and 3 Portknockie 11 Oct.

In November, 1 Burghead 8th and 1 Elgin 20th-21st & 28th. In December, 1 Elgin 2nd, 1 Darkland 4th, 'present' Urquhart 7th and 1 Dipple 8th & 10th.

Redwing *Turdus iliacus*

Very common migrant and winter visitor.

Winter-spring: Reports of flocks of 20 or more were received from 10 sites; 100 Kilravock Castle 17 Mar (30 on 19 Jan), 90 Pitgaveney 7 Jan, 60+ Brodie Castle 20 Feb, 50+ Nairn 1 Mar, 50 Elgin cemetery 11 Jan, 30 Rothes 10 Jan, 28 Loch of Blairs 3 Mar, 24 Logie steading 14 Feb, 20 Tomnamoon 26 Jan and 20 Howford Bridge (Nairn) 13 Feb. Last in spring was 1 Wellheads (Clochan) 26 Apr.

Breeding: No breeding records were received this year.

In October, first were 2 Cragganmore 6th and 5 Half Davoch 7th. Larger groups in October were; 100 Glenmullie Forest 13th, 200+ flying over Cragganmore 13th, c.400 Cragganmore 14th, 140 Gow Moss 22nd, 180 Loch Kirkaldy 29th and 100 Ferness 30th.

Autumn-winter: Flocks of 20 or more were recorded at Craighead (150+ on 20 Nov, 200+ on 4 Dec), Dallasbraughty (45 on 1 Nov), Sanquhar Woods (c.50 on 10 Nov), Forres enterprise park (29 on 25 Nov, 34 on 4 Dec), Kinloss (24 on 21 Nov, 32 on 22 Nov) and Orton (220 on 28 Nov, 163 on 1 Dec).

Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus*

Very common resident breeder and migrant.

Breeding confirmed at Tomnamoon, Glenferness woods and Craigroy. Song recorded at Darnaway, Linkwood (Elgin) and Rosarie (Mulben). Flocks of 10 or more (maximum counts at each site) were 50+ Kronyhillock Wood 9 Sep, 39 Tomnamoon 26 Aug, 34 Teinland 23 Oct, 30 Blairnamarrow (Tomintoul) 8 Sep, 15 College of Scalán 9 Oct, 15 Gallowhill 12 Oct and 10 Hardmuir 31 Jan.

Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata*

Summer visitor and common breeder.

Arrival: First of the year was again on 12 May with one Johnstripe and 'present' Tomintoul. Pairs were seen at Balnacoul 20 May, Rosarie 1 Jun and Ben Aigan 5 Jun, a nest was located at Culbin 10 Jun and later in the season at least two juveniles were seen at Tilliglens 19 Aug.

Summer reports elsewhere came from Alves, Balintore Wood, Baxters (Mosstodloch), Binsness, Cragganmore, Croughly (3), Dunearn, Elgin, Fochabers (2), Gallowhill (3), Glenmulliach Forest (2), Inchroary, Kellas, Knockando distillery, Marypark, Mill Buie (Dallas), Ordiequish (2), Roseisle, Sluie (2), Teinland and Urquhart (2).

More reports in Sep; 1 Scarffbanks 1st, 2 Logie steading 3rd, 1 Gallowhill 4th (2 on 15th) and 1 Newtyle Forest 15th. Last report 1 Gallowhill 17 Sep.

Robin *Erithacus rubecula*

Very common resident breeder and migrant.

Winter-spring: Largest count was 14 Shaw Hill 17 Apr.

Breeding: A newly fledged juvenile was reported from Elgin cemetery 3 Jun.

Productivity at Loch Spynie, as measured by ringing at the Constant Effort Site, was 3.8 juveniles per adult - up from 2.0 in 2015 (RP).

Autumn: 18 Cragganmore 24 Oct was the largest count. Potential migrants were 15 Balgreen (Covesea) 14 Sep and 5 Portknockie 5 Oct.

Winter: Largest count in this period was 7 The Maggot (Nairn) 13 Nov.

Bluethroat *Luscinia svecica*

Rare migrant. Has bred.

A pair of Red-spotted Bluethroats (*Luscinia svecica svecica*) bred and fledged at least one young in arctic-alpine habitat in the Moray uplands (RI). This is the first recorded breeding by Bluethroats in Moray & Nairn. A more detailed account can be found on page 96 of this Report.

Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

Summer visitor and scarce breeder. Very scarce migrant.

Only six records were received: singing male Dulsie-Drynachan 23 Apr (DAG), singing male Dunearn 23 Apr (DAG), 1 Croughly 28 Apr (HFM), singing male Cabrach 6 May (MJHC), 1 Bridge of Tommore 14 May (DM) and singing male Mill of Tommore 14 May (DAG).

Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra*

Summer visitor and scarce breeder. Very scarce migrant.

A pair Gow Moss 21 Jul (AY) and singles Craggan (Glenlivet) 30 Apr (JCo), Tomintoul 16 Jun (MMS) and a juvenile Little Aitnoch 20 Jul (HR, FR).

Stonechat *Saxicola rubicola*

Scarce resident breeder and migrant.

Breeding season: Coastal: occupied sites (*italics* = confirmed breeding) were Covesea, Findhorn Bay, *Findhorn dunes*, *Hopeman*, *Kingston*, *Kinloss*, Lossie estuary, Lossie Forest and Hilton of Delnies.

Inland: *Altyre Woods*, Ben Rinnes, *Brown Muir*, *Cairnty*, Dyke, *Gow Moss*, Little Aitnoch, *Loch Kirkaldy*, *Ordiequish*, *Refouble* and Suie (Glenlivet).

Birds were recorded in additional localities in autumn and winter as follows:

Coastal: Balormie pig farm (Jan, Dec), Burghead (Oct), Burghead-Hopeman (Aug, Dec), Carse of Delnies (Sep), Culbin Bar (Jan, Oct), Cummington (Jan), Hopeman-Clashach (Oct), Kingsteps (Nairn) (Mar), Lossiemouth (Oct), Nairn (Sep), Nairn Bar (Feb, Oct, Dec), Portgordon (Sep), Portknockie (Jan), RAF Lossiemouth (Oct), Strathlene-Findochty (Jan) and Whiteness Head (Mar).

Inland: Altyre moors (Feb), Auchmair (Cabrach) (Oct), Berryburn (Oct), Black Loch (Dava) (Feb), Bogoney (Jan, Oct), Dallasbraughty (Nov), Darkland (Sep, Dec), Dava (Feb), Hill of Glaschyle (Oct), Johnstripe (Nov), Knock of Braemoray (Mar, Sep, Nov), Ladderfoot (Glenlivet) (Oct), Loch Flemington (Mar, Dec), North Crannoch (Oct, Dec) and Tomnamoon (Oct).

Largest count was 10 along the old railway line between Bantrach and Knock of Braemoray on 1 Oct (PRG).

Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe*

Summer visitor and fairly common breeder and migrant.

Arrival: First was 1 Portknockie 13 Mar, followed well inland by 1 Dava 16 Mar and 2 Inchroy 29 Mar. Small numbers on the coast in early-mid April (Burghead 1 on 4th, 7 Portgordon-Burn of Tynet 6th, 1 Findhorn Bay 7th, 1 Hopeman 9th, 1 Netherton 12th-13th, 1 Spey Bay 14th and 2 Findhorn Bay (Carse) 14th). By mid-late April a few more on the coast but still not widespread; only one inland report in late April was 1 Glen Markie (Dufftown) 24th.

Breeding: In upcountry breeding habitat were 1 Aldivalloch (Cabrach) 6 May, 4 Aldunie-Torniechelt 6 May, 5 Auchmair (Cabrach) 22 Jun, 1 Ardclach 5 Jul, 6 Ben Macdui 6 Jul, brood 3 Ben Rinnes 26 Jul, 'several' Cabrach 14 May and Tomnamoon 7 Jul.

First back in coastal areas (but with no evidence of breeding there) were juveniles at Scarffbanks Farm 3 Jul, Lossie estuary 9-12 Jul and Findhorn 28 Jul.

Others, still present throughout June-July, on the coast were recorded at Kinloss barracks, RAF Lossiemouth, Lossiemouth (west beach) and Strathlene.

In August and September, records usually consisted of 1-2 birds except (max. counts): 7 Kinloss 10 Aug, 6 Auchmair (Cabrach) 16 Aug, 6 Spey estuary 28 Aug, 4 Ben Macdui 28 Aug & 15 Sep, 4 Burghead 31 Aug, 4 Carse of Delnies 3 Sep, 3 Netherton 3 Sep, 6 Strathlene 3 Sep, 3 Findhorn Bay 3 & 7 Sep, 4 Nairn 4 Sep, 9 Kingston 5 Sep, 4 Fochabers-Inchberry 11 Sep, 9 Balgreen (Covesea) 14 Sep and 3 Lossie estuary 16 Sep.

In October, seen at Carse of Delnies (3 on 1st, 1 on 3rd), Chanonry, Elgin (1 on 3rd), Clashach Cove (1 on 4th), Lossiemouth west beach (1 on 7th) and Clash of Scaln (1 on 9th).

Dunnock *Prunella modularis*

Very common resident breeder.

First song, in February, at Elgin cemetery 5th & 19th.

Breeding: a nest along the north embankment at Loch Spynie produced 3 chicks (RP). Productivity at Loch Spynie, as measured by ringing at the Constant Effort Site, was 0.7 juveniles per adult (RP).

Recorded well inland: 2 Aldunie (Cabrach) 7 Apr, 1 Auchloch 24 Mar, 2 Bogoney 1 Oct and 1 Tomintoul 15 Oct.

Largest count was 8 Tomnamoon 24 Feb.

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

Very common resident breeder.

Three counts over 50 were received, all from The Maggot, Nairn: 60 on 28 Aug & 27 Oct and 55 on 16 Jan. Upcountry, maximum counts received were; 5 Aldunie (Cabrach) 7 Apr, 20 Archiestown 26 Jul, 6 Avondale (Glenlivet) 18 Mar, 6 Cragganmore 13 Feb & 24 Oct, 2 Knockando distillery 12 Feb and 20 Tomintoul 2 Jun.

Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*

Common resident breeder.

Breeding: Confirmed at Forres 29 Jun & 7 Jul and Bishopmill (Elgin) 31 May where fledglings were seen in gardens and Croy 9 Aug (nest box). Four pairs bred in nest boxes at Clochan.

Elsewhere, maximum counts at each site in the breeding season; 1 Aldunie (Cabrach) 7 Apr, 2 Kingsteps (Nairn) 23 Apr, 2 Scarffbanks Farm 30 Apr, 3 Netherton Farm 30 May, 1 Woodend 31 May, 1 Delnies Wood 19 Jun, 1 Nairn 19 Jun and 2 Gallowhill 20 Jun.

At other times, maximum counts at sites included: 80 Urquhart 2 Aug, c.50 Scarffbanks Farm 27 Nov, 30 Milnorduff 9 Feb, 23 North Crannoch 8 Jan, 20 Longmorn 15 Feb, c.20 Mains of Gollachy 7 Oct, 15 Darkland 4 Jan, 10 Easter Bauds 24 Feb, 8 Netherton 11 Nov, 4 Lhanbryde 28 Nov, 2 Clochan 18 Jan, 2 Croy 19 Jan, 2 Forres 3 & 9 Dec and singles Balliesland 3 Jan, Moyness 3 Feb, Lethen 29 Feb, Gallowhill 18 Mar & 15 Aug, Shenval 28 Mar, Seafield 1 Aug, Kinneddar 5 Sep, Loch Oire 5 Sep, Archiestown 9 Oct, Rafford 22 Dec and Wester Moy 27 Dec.

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*

Summer visitor and common breeder. Very scarce in winter.

Winter: 1 Fornightly 2 Jan, 6 Feb & 4 Dec, 2 Lossiemouth harbour 4 Feb (1 on 1 Dec), 1 Lossiemouth 6 Feb, 1 Milnorduff 9 Feb, 1 Tyock Burn (Elgin) 9 Feb, 1 Nairn 26 Feb & 21 Nov, 1 Nairn cemetery 1 Nov, 1 Buckpool 18 Dec, 1 Buckie harbour 18 Dec, 1 West Beach (Lossiemouth) 26 Nov, 1 Cummingston 28 Nov, 1 Moyness 2 Dec, 2 Portgordon-Strathlene 18 Dec and 1 Cloddach 30 Dec.

Breeding: Potential occupied sites (*italics* = confirmed breeding) were Altyre Burn, Auchmair (Cabrach), Ballindalloch distillery, Balnught, *Bridgend of Glenlivet*, Cloddach, Collie Farm (Orton), Cooper Park (Elgin), Dallas, Dallas Dhu, Dulsie Bridge, Findhorn Bay, Fornightly, *Gallowhill*, Logie steading, River Findhorn, River Spey (Mosstodloch), Nairn (Househill & Howford), *Sluie*, Spey estuary, Tomintoul and Tomnamoon.

At other times (max. counts): 1 Burghead 16 Aug, 1 Cragganmore-Blacksboat 10 Mar, 2 Craigellachie 23 Mar, 1 Fornightly 7 & 13 Mar, 5 Gallowhill 3 Sep, 6 Kilnmaichlie 28 Mar, 5 Kilravock Castle 17 Mar, 2 Little Kildrummie 21 Mar, 1 Logie steading 27 Aug & 5 Sep, 1 Lossiemouth harbour 19, 22 & 29 Oct, 2 Mains of Kirdells 13 Sep, 2 Mosset Burn (Findhorn Bay) 21 & 30 Aug and 13 Oct, 2 Muckle Burn 4 Sep, 3 Nairn 31 Aug & 9 Sep, 2 Nairn-Delnies 16 Oct, 3 Netherton 3 Aug, 5 River Findhorn 26 Aug, 1 Sanquhar Pond 10 Mar, 2 Scarffbanks Farm 15 Sep, 1 Tomnamoon 15 Mar, 18 & 21 Aug and 1 Whitemire 21 Mar.

Pied Wagtail *Motacilla alba*

Very common breeder and migrant.

Three large counts at the Kingston reedbed night time roost where 603 on 23 Sep, 466 on 26 Sep and 247 on 6 Oct (AY). Other notable counts of Pied Wagtails *M.a.yarellii* (exceeding 20 individuals) were 40 (roost) Loch Spynie 26 Oct, 32 Harbour Street, Nairn 2 Feb and 31 Lossiemouth 24 Jan. A further 12 counts were in excess of 10 individuals. Adults feeding a brood at Lossiemouth harbour 9 Jul. Recorded well inland at Aldunie (Cabrach), Auchmair (Cabrach), Ballindalloch distillery, Bridge of Avon, Burnside, Burnside-Little Aitnoh, Cabrach, Cragganmore, Dunearn, Loch Kirkaldy, Logie, Refouble, Scootmore, Tombae and Tomintoul.

Passage: A good year for sightings of 'White Wagtails' *M.a.alba*. Although no count exceeded nine individuals the spread of records was more widespread with 19 sites involved (8 in 2015). In spring, recorded at Balormie pig farm 20 Apr-8 May, with the largest count for the year being 9 on 21 Apr. Numbers elsewhere (max. counts); 1 Gilston 21 Apr, 4 Lossie estuary 21 Apr, 1 Lossiemouth (Fulmar Road) 25 Apr, 1 Wellheads (Clochan) 25 Apr, 2 Findhorn Bay 27-28 Apr, 1 Garmouth 30 Apr, 5 Burghead 1 May, 1 Nairn harbour 3 May, 7 West Beach (Lossiemouth) 4 May and 1 Nairn golf course 5 May. In late summer/autumn (max. counts); 1 Lossie estuary 18 Aug & 11 Sep, 2 Balormie pig farm 28 Aug & 16 Sep, 5 Montgrew 2 Sep, 2 Hilton of Delnies 4 Sep, 1 Burghead 6 Sep, 3 Moray crematorium (Broadley) 12 Sep, 3 Spey estuary 13 Sep, 1 Lossiemouth 15 Sep, 3 Lossiemouth harbour 20 Sep, 1 Portgordon harbour 2 Oct, 8 Kingston reedbed 6 Oct and 1 Strathlene 17 Oct.



White Wagtail, Burghead 30 April 2016 (Tony Backx)

Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis*

Summer visitor and common breeder.

Arrival: Firsts reports, in April, were 1 Phorp/Newtyle 20th, 1 Dulsie-Drynachan junction 23rd, 1 Phorp 24th, 2 Wellheads (Clochan) 24th, 1 Altyre 26th, 1 Craggan (Glenlivet) 30th, 1 Tomnamoon 30th and 1 Romach Hill 30th.

Subsequent reports (max. counts) in breeding habitat were: 1 Craggan (Glenlivet) 1 May, 1 Black Hillock Well (Cabrach) 6 May, 1 Whiteash Hill Wood 7 May, 1 Glenmulliach Forest 16 May, 2 Tomnamoon 19 May, 'present' Knockando distillery 24 May, 2 Rosarie 1 Jun, 2 Tilliglens 7 Jun, 1 Inchroy Lodge 12 Jun, 4 Phorp/Newtyle 13 Jun (included 2 juveniles), 1 Gow Moss 14 Jun (carrying food), 6 Altyre Woods 24 Jun (including a juvenile) and 1 Ordiequish 31 Jul.

Last of the year was a single migrant south over Loch Spynie 20 Sep.

Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis*

Very common breeder and migrant.

Winter: The largest counts during this period were at coastal sites: 24 Kinloss 18 Feb, 16 Nairn Bar 13 Feb and 11 Balormie pig farm 31 Jan. Inland records received for the early winter period were 2 Knock of Braemoray 15 Jan, 7 Hillend (Drummuir) 21 Jan, 2 Dallas Moor 27 Jan, 2 Burn of Rothes 3 Feb, 1 Wood of Conerock 4 Feb and 1 Miltonduff 9 Feb.

Spring: Largest count in March was 26 Kinloss 7th. Moving inland in early spring were 1 Tom Trumper 17 Mar, 2 Loch Kirkaldy 21 Mar, 1 Glenferness Mains 21 Mar, 1 Ferness 22 Mar, 1 Knock of Baraemoray 24

Mar, 4 Bogoney 24 Mar, 5 Auchlochan 24 Mar, 4 Romach Hill 27 Mar, 12 Tomnamoon 28 Mar and 1 Black Loch (Dava) 30 Mar.

On spring passage during seawatches off Lossiemouth harbour (all flying west): 2 on 3 Mar, 22 on 27 Mar, 4 on 7 Apr and 1 on 8 Apr. Probable migrants included 5 Burghead 27 Mar.

Late April again produced some large counts (mainly from 23-27 Apr) which also corresponded with migrants off Lossiemouth on 27th; 112 Balormie pig farm 23rd, 34 The Maggot (Nairn) 24th, 43 Balormie pig farm 24th, 76 Kinloss 25th and 142 Balormie pig farm 27th. Other counts of 20 or more were: 40 Aldunie (Cabrach) 7 Apr, 32 Tomnamoon 16 Apr (20 on 9 Apr) and 22 Balormie pig farm 17 Apr.

Summer: Largest counts were Findhorn (17 on 21 Jul), Findhorn dunes (10+ on 13 Jul) and Burnside-Little Aitnoch (10 on 14 Jul). Recorded from 14 other sites in the summer from sea-level to the Cairn Gorm plateau.

Autumn: In mid-late Sep, migrants were noted on the Spey estuary (35 on 7 Sep) and a single in off the sea at Lossiemouth 10 Sep, was followed by 16 on the Lossie estuary on 11 Sep (only 3 on the estuary on 10th). Two large counts from well inland during this period involved 50 Burnside (Dunearn) 28 Aug and 50 Knock of Braemoray 13 Sep, with 20 still on the Cairn Gorm plateau 6 Sep, while on the coast, 54 Lossie estuary 19 Oct was the largest count.

Winter: In the later winter period still well inland were 9 Knock of Braemoray area 18 Dec and singles Ben Rinnes 1 & 12 Nov, Corryhabbie Hill 17 Dec, Glen Fiddich 17 Dec, Glen Livet 17 Dec and Dava 18 Dec. The largest coastal count was 5 Findhorn 27 Nov.

Rock Pipit *Anthus petrosus*

Scarce breeder, fairly common in winter.

Breeding season: First song at Burghead 25 Feb. 1 Covesea ('anxious') 19 Jun and 1 Portknockie (carrying food) 22 Jun. Counts of five or more were 5 Findochty 17 Jan, 12 Portknockie 21 Feb, 5 Burghead 5 Apr, 5 Cullen 1 May, then later in the year large counts of c.20 on the beach at Strathlene 3 Sep and 51 Portgordon-Strathlene 16 Oct (24 there on 18 Dec of which 11 at the fish factory west of Buckie harbour). Records received from 18 other coastal sites but generally only 1-2 individuals.

Brambling *Fringilla montifringilla*

Fairly common winter visitor and migrant.

Uncommon again this year. In the early part of the year singles, unless otherwise noted, were: male Wellheads (Clochan) 5 Jan (MJHC), Forres (garden) 15 Jan (AR), female Moor of Tore 18 Jan (G&DS), Craigellachie 20 Jan (RS), male Tomnamoon 25 Jan (MGC), 3 Blacksboat 27 Jan (JDG), Longmorn 2 Feb (BS), 5 Cragganmore 13 Feb (1 on 16 Feb & 6 Mar) (PRG), 3 Dyke 24 Feb (AP), Cragganmore (garden) 2 Mar (NS, CA), Dyke (garden) 2 Mar (C&DS), 2 Moyness 3 Mar (JH), female Portknockie 7 Mar (LS), 3 Loch Flemington 12 Mar (JDG), 5 Moyness 3 Apr (A&FR) and male Auchinhandoch (Dufftown) (garden) 30 Apr (FM).

Later in the year; 7 College of Scaln 9 Oct (JDL), 10 Cragganmore 11 Oct (NS, CA), Blacksboat 13 Oct (NS, CA), 2 Craigroy 29 Oct (MGC), Ben Rinnes 1 Nov (DL), Torrieston 24 Nov (DM), Forres (garden) 25 Nov (AR) and the only large flock of the year; 55 Arndilly 26 Nov (AY).

Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*

Very common resident breeder, migrant and winter visitor.

First song heard at Elgin cemetery 21 Jan & 3 Feb, then Urquhart 3 Feb, Clovenside cemetery (Forres) 8 Feb and Brodie Castle 3 Mar. Six sites held flocks consisting of 100 or more individuals: 400 Blacksboat 27 Jan, 250 Pluscarden 10 Jan, 250 Pitgaveny 20 Feb, 200 Dounduff 19 Dec, 170 Cragganmore 27 Jan & 13 Feb (120 on 21 Feb) and 160 Inchberry 16 Jan, with a further six sites holding flocks with 30 or more individuals.

Hawfinch *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*

Rare visitor.

One at Wester Galcantray 28 Apr (MSo) is the 10th record for Moray & Nairn and the first since 2012. Five have been in April, one in July, two in October and one in December.



Hawfinch, Galcantray 28 April 2016 (Margaret Somerville)

Common Rosefinch *Carpodacus erythrinus*

Rare migrant.

An adult male at Longmorn 19 Jun (B&SS) was the 3rd record for Moray & Nairn following a 2CY male singing in willow scrub behind Hopeman east beach on 30-31 May 2008 and an adult male (found dead) at Burnside of Geddes (near Nairn) on 7 June 1996.



Common Rosefinch, Longmorn 19 June 2016 (Brian Sheldon)

Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

Very common resident breeder.

Counts of 10 or more included 22 Lossiemouth 17 Jan, 20 Swiles (Dufftown) 17 Jan, 19 Newtyle 30 Nov (18 on 31 Oct & 11 on 17 Nov), 18 Teinland 23 Oct (16 on 10 Dec) and 11 Altyre 2 Dec.

Greenfinch *Chloris chloris*

Very common resident breeder.

First song Elgin cemetery on 16 Feb. A recently fledged brood seen at garden feeders Bishopmill, Elgin 9 Jul.

Flocks of 10 or more included 10 Waterford (Forres) 10 Jan, 10 Nairn 6 Feb, 10 Burghead 6 Feb, 10 Cragganmore 16 Feb and 10 Forres 9 Mar.

Linnet *Linaria cannabina*

Very common resident breeder.

A pair was seen in a felled area of Altyre Woods 11 May, with juveniles present on 4 Aug, and juveniles were seen at Tomnamoon 21 Jun. Flock counts of 50 or more were recorded at 25 sites (21 sites in 2015). Largest counts (100 or more) were: 400 Darkland 2 & 9 Jan, c.400 Clochan 3 Dec (118 on 16 Oct, 200 on 21 Oct), 350 Balormie pig farm 23 Jan (320 on 26 Jan), 260 Teinland 23 Oct, c.260 Findhorn Bay 13 Oct (100 on 5 Oct), c.250 Covesea 5 Dec (150+ on 3 Mar), 200+ Milton of Grange 16 Oct, 200 Spey estuary 31 Aug (c.200 16 Aug & 25 Sep, 160 on 21 Jul), 200 Spey Bay 5 Sep, 200 Portgordon 5 Sep, 200 Urquhart 3 Mar, 160 Dufftown 11 Apr, 150 Portknockie 7 Mar, 150 Loch Spynie 25 Sep, 140 Hillend (Drummuir) 29 Feb, 100+ Hopeman 19 Jan and 100 Loch Flemington 12 Mar.

Twite *Linaria flavirostris*

Scarce resident breeder and winter visitor.

The usual flock around Findhorn Bay saltmarsh provided the only records. Counts included 23 on 18 Feb (GM), c.20 on 6 Mar (DAG), 11 on 4 Oct (IML) and 18 on 28 Nov (RHD).



Twite, Netherton (Findhorn Bay) 7 March 2016 (Gordon McMullins)

Lesser Redpoll *Acanthis cabaret*

Common resident breeder and migrant.

Breeding season: No confirmed breeding records were received this year. Records during the breeding season were received from: singing Auchmair (Cabrach), Burnside-Little Aitnoch, Clochan, Forres (garden), Gallowhill, Househill (Nairn), Inchrory, Kingsteps (Nairn), Lethen Bar (Nairn), Loch Kirkaldy, Moor of Tore (feeders), Roseisle and Shaw Hill. Flocks of 100 or more included 180 Teindland 30 Oct, 160 Logie Wood 9 Dec, 150 Loch Flemington 12 Mar, 125 Maryhill (Orton) 28 Nov and 112 Gow Moss 8 Oct.

Common (Mealy) Redpoll *Acanthis flammea*

Rare winter visitor and migrant.

A total of nine records from four sites: 2-3 Loch Flemington 12-14 Mar (JDG, RHD, MJHC) and 1 Culbin Bar 24 Jan (AY). At Gow Moss, 1 on 21 Oct, 2 on 22 Oct and 2 on 30 Oct (AY) and at Teindland, 9 on 30 Oct, 1 on 13 Nov, 2 on 17 Nov and 3 on 10 Dec (AY). Of this total of 23 birds, 13 were trapped and ringed among flocks of Lesser Redpolls, and it seems likely that this species is a lot more numerous in winter in Moray & Nairn than the small number of records would suggest.



Common (Mealy) Redpoll, Gow Moss 22 October 2016 (Alastair Young)

Common Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra*

Common resident and irruptive migrant breeder.

Scottish Crossbill *Loxia scotica*

Probable common resident breeder.

In view of the virtual impossibility of separating these species in the field without recording the calls, all crossbill records are combined.

Flocks of 10 or more (max. counts at each site) were: 60 Wood of Conerock 4 Feb, 56 Teindland 30 Oct, 52 Tomnamoon 9 Apr, 50 Burnside of Rothes 3 Feb, 32 Maryhill (Orton) 28 Nov, 28 Morinsh 1 Jan, 18 Altyre 26 Apr, 25 Glenferness Mains 21 Jan, 19 Tilliglens 12 May, 18 Inchberry 29 Oct, 18 Newtyle 24 May, 17 Roseisle Forest 28 Feb, 17 Cragganmore 11 Aug, 12 Teindland 7 May, 15+ River Spey (Mosstodloch), 15 Darnaway 25 Oct & 27 Dec, 13 Moor of Tore 20 Jan, 10 Dunphail 2 Jan, 10 Glenmullie Forest 13 Oct, 10 Glen Fiddich 16 Oct and 10 Ballentore Wood 29 Oct.

Smaller groups and singles recorded at Altyre Woods, Bogeney, Culbin, Dusach, Lethen Bar, Roseisle, Shaw Hill, Tomnavoulin, Newtyle, Arthur's Bridge, Ben Aigan, Binsness, Blue Hill, Carn Muldonich, Carron, Clashdhu, Cloddach, Clovenside cemetery (Forres), Dallas Moor, Darkland, Dava Moor, Dunearn, Easter Balcroy, Elchies Forest, Gallowhill, Glaschyle, Hopeman, Kinloss, Loch Kirkaldy, Loch of Blairs, Loch Boath, Lossiemouth Forest, Newlands of Knockaneorn, Ordiequish, Oxhill, Phorp, Pluscarden Forest, Romach Hill, Scat Hill, Urquhart, Whiteash Hill Wood and Whitemire.

Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis**Very common resident breeder.*

Flocks of 10 or more (max. count at each site) included: 140 Darkland 4 Jan, 65 Findhorn 14 Feb, 64 Clochan 30 Oct, 46 Kinloss 8 Sep, 40 Gallowhill 4 Sep, 40 The Maggot (Nairn) 27 Oct, 30 Burghead 6 Feb, 30 Miltonduff 9 Feb, 30 Bogheads 11 Jul, 30 Blervie Castle 15 Sep, 25 Hillend (Drummuir) 21 Jan, 25 Netherton 7 Feb, 21 Tomnamoon 27 Sep, 20 Carse of Delnies 3 Oct, 19 Culbin Bar 2 Dec, 19 Findhorn Bay 12 Nov, 18 Kingsteps (Nairn) 5 Jan, 17 Cults Wood 18 Sep, 14 Tomintoul 14 Sep, 10 Moyness 4 Jul and 10 Cragganmore 28 Sep.

Siskin *Spinus spinus**Very common resident breeder and migrant.*

Flocks of 20 or more (max. count at each site) included: 126 Arndilly 21 Nov, 32 Moor of Tore 18 May, 28 Oak Hill 8 Oct, 20 Burghead 6 Feb and 20 Shaw Hill 17 Apr.

Snow Bunting *Plectrophenax nivalis**Common winter visitor and rare breeder.*

Prior to the breeding season, in the Cairngorms, 1 Fords of Avon 31 Mar (PMo). The only other inland record was: 3 Ben Rinnes 4 Jan.

Breeding: Seen at five sites on the Cairngorms plateau: a) 1 on 6 May (MB), b) 5 on 4 Jun (PRG) and 4 on 6 Jul (SMN), c) 2 on 26 May (JP), d) 2 on 23 Jun, 2 males & a female on 26 Jun and a male and a juvenile on 6 Jul (JP, TJW, SMN) and e) 2 on 12 May and a single on 20 May (MJHC, PRG).

In late autumn and winter seen at Ben Macdui (4 on 1 Aug, 10 on 15 Sep and 30 on 30 Oct), Cairn Gorm (2 on 9 Oct) and Cairn Lochan (23 on 9 Oct). Elsewhere, 1 Hill of Mackalea (Dufftown) 1 Feb, 1 Ben Rinnes 3 Dec increasing to 5 on 18 Dec and 3 Dufftown 4 Jan.

Winter: At three coastal sites, monthly maximum counts were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Oct	Nov	Dec
Nairn/Culbin Bars (and east Nairn)	0	18	60	0	nc	50
Findhorn Bay area	8	2	0	0	2	0
Lossie estuary & east beach	35	24	0	0	0	2

Elsewhere, coastal reports (max. counts) included 26 Carse of Delnies 8 Jan, 10 Nairn west beach 1 Jan, 8 Burghead Bay 7 Jan, 2 Lossiemouth west beach 4 Jan, 2 Spey Bay 22-23 Oct and 2 Portknockie 21 Nov.



Snow Bunting, Findhorn 18 February 2016 (Richard Somers Cocks)

Corn Bunting *Emberiza calandra*

Scarce resident breeder.

In the early part of the year (January-March), recorded at four sites; Auchintae (9 on 14 Feb), Clochan (12 on 27 Feb, 34 on 23 Mar & 26 on 30 Mar), Easter Bauds (42 on 13 Mar, increasing to 68 on 16 Mar) and Portgordon (26 on 16 Mar & 1 singing 30 Mar).

Breeding season: Singles, unless otherwise noted, were seen or heard singing in the coastal lowlands at Balormie pig farm (singing on 23 May & 4 Jun), Brackley (1 on 23 Jun), Portgordon (1 on 14 & 21 May, 26 Jul and 3 on 27 Jul).

In winter, 1 Muirton/Drainie junction 25 Dec.

Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella*

Very common resident breeder.

First song recorded on 22 Feb at Lossiemouth east beach. A regular flock of 100+ was encountered at Easter Bauds where initial counts were 75 on 16 Jan, increasing to 160 on 13 Feb, then 185 on 13 Mar (AY). These are the largest counts of Yellowhammer since 2011 when 270 were at Bankhead (Brodie) and c.250 at Clochan. Flocks of 20 or more (max. counts) were: 120 Orton 16 Jan, 80 Garmouth 7 Mar (60 on 25 Mar), 45+ Dipple 29 Oct, 45 North Crannoch 24 Feb, 35 Kinloss 11 Oct, 27 Wester Greens and 20+ Moyness.

Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus*

Very common resident breeder.

In January-March, flocks of 10 or more were recorded on two occasions: 13 Bailliesland 3 Jan and 10 Garmouth 25 Mar. Smaller groups or singles recorded at 13 other sites. Well inland during this period were 3 Knock of Braemoray 15 Jan and a male Tomnamoon 17 Mar.

Breeding: The largest counts during this period were four at Loch Flemington 18 Apr and Portgordon 27 Jul. The proportion of juveniles to adults trapped for ringing at Loch Spynie 'Constant Effort Site' was still low at 0.3, but up slightly on 2014 (0.0:1.0) (RP).

Present in the breeding season at Aldunie (Cabrach), Altyre, Brackley, Buckie, Chapelton (Forres), Delnies Wood, Easterton, Findhorn Bay, Gallowhill (Keith), Gallows Hill (Forres), Hilton of Delnies, Lhanbryde cycle path, Loch Kirkaldy, Loch Loy road, Loch of Blairs, Loch Spynie, Lossiemouth, Lower Auchenreath, Moyness, Nairn, Netherton, Tarras, Tomluncart, Tomnamoon and Tugnet.

The largest count received in the autumn was 43 roosting Kingston reedbed 6 Oct. The largest count in winter was 3 Findhorn Bay 25 Nov. One still well inland at Bogeney 18 Dec.



Reed Bunting, Loch Spynie 31 March 2016 (Gordon Biggs)

THE FIRST SUCCESSFUL BREEDING OF RED-SPOTTED BLUETHROAT (*Luscinia svecica svecica*) IN MORAY**ROBERT INCE**

Red-spotted Bluethroats (*Luscinia svecica svecica*) were observed, very unexpectedly, in arctic-alpine habitat in an upland area of Moray over 900 metres asl, between 23 June and 2 August 2016.

The male was observed singing and displaying. Both sexes, but particularly the female, were very secretive and extremely difficult to observe. At least one of an unknown number of chicks fledged. This is the first verified successful breeding of Red-spotted Bluethroat in Moray and only the third in Scotland.

It seems appropriate to put on record a full account of events surrounding this occurrence.

26 June 2016

Visibility was poor, with dense low cloud, and I sat drinking tea and puffing on my pipe until the fog started to lift. I walked to the site where Phil Golder had reported seeing a Bluethroat on 23 June and settled down to wait. After about 20 minutes, a small brownish bird landed on a stone c.40 m. to the east of me. Through the binoculars, I thought that this might be a female Bluethroat. Aware that my camera has greater magnification in telephoto mode, I took a few shots which I could enlarge on the screen. I could see a prominent white supercilium, confirming to my satisfaction that this bird was almost certainly a female Bluethroat. Unfortunately the bird had its back to me the whole time before it flew off.

I thought I could hear a male Bluethroat singing in the distance and am familiar with Bluethroat song due to my visits to northern Scandinavia in the 1980s and 90s. The male bluethroat was singing from the top of a stony outcrop. I looked around for a suitable observation position that gave me good views and somewhere I could sit on the ground with a good backrest. The place I chose was c.75 m. from what I came to recognise as this Bluethroat's favourite song post.



Photo Robert Ince, August 2nd, 2016

Male Red-spotted Bluethroat, 2 August 2016 (Robert Ince)

I watched and listened for three hours and observed interaction between the male and the female. On the female's arrival below his song post, the male chased after her and they flew near to the ground, in close proximity, around stones and briefly gained altitude to *c.*4 m. above the terrain before immediately returning to close-to-ground chasing. This happened very quickly, too quickly for me to video or photograph.

In the three hours that I sat and watched, I saw the female only three times. She always flew low to the ground and always to within a few metres of the singing male Bluethroat. The female 'visited' the male on his song post at 1000 hrs, 1050 hrs and 1120 hrs. On two occasions, chasing took place. She always appeared from, and returned to, the stony area immediately south-west of this song post.

The male Bluethroat was quite mobile. He would sing from his favourite song post, fly up into the sky, singing and then, still in song, he would glide, tail outstretched, to a rock. Here he would sometimes sing and at other times remain silent before repeating his aerial display and returning to his favourite song post. I estimated that he did not venture more than 150 m. from his song post.

Having established that there was in fact a pair, all further monitoring by me was done under licence.

4 July 2016

The forecast was for showers developing in the middle of the day so I thought there would be an opportunity for observation during the early part of the morning. I sat in the same spot as on 26 June but I neither saw nor heard any birds. I was not surprised, as contrary to the forecast, it was already raining. I moved to a slightly more elevated position as I thought it would provide a better position to observe any possible activity.

After 50 minutes, when the rain stopped, I heard the male Bluethroat singing. It was a short song, just the "chek chek" part of the song. I could not see the bird but estimated that it was probably 100 m. south of my position. Intermittently, between showers, I was able to hear the "chek chek" and to photograph the male for record purposes. An hour later the male sang again from the mound, this time mimicking a Snow Bunting, just the short Snow Bunting song. It did this several times before disappearing behind the back of the mound.

Mimicking of both natural and man-made sounds appears to be quite common in Bluethroats; McCallum (2007) describes one particular male that mimicked more than fourteen different species of birds as well as frogs and crickets! He also describes how this bird gave a perfect impression of an old fashioned diesel engine. Ryabitshev (1998) studying Willow Warblers in the taiga describes one male Bluethroat mimicking an Ass.

More showers came in, during which all bird song and activity ceased. The male Bluethroat re-appeared on the mound and gave its short "chek chek" song and was briefly joined by the female. The almost continuous vibrant singing and gorgeous aerial displays of 26 June were now absent, replaced with just the short and periodic song and no display. This same behaviour was recorded by Portenko (1989) in the Chukchui peninsula. Although the male re-appeared on the mound once the rain stopped, I suspected that the nest and female may be somewhere close by. However, the showery weather made it inappropriate to search for the nest - the wellbeing of the bird and its possible nest/eggs being the most important priority. After four and a half hours observation, I decided to quit as the rain was by then relentless.

12 July 2016

Rain followed by hill fog and low cloud persisted throughout the watch period of six and a quarter hours with intervals of brightness when the sun broke through. I sat and watched at three positions, near to where I had observed the female Bluethroat on 26 June and 4 July. With the rain abating it was at least one and a half hours before bird foraging activity was at its highest, with Meadow Pipit juveniles and a single Wheatear juvenile all foraging near or in sight of me at my observation position.

The female Bluethroat landed and briefly foraged before alighting on top of a stone approximately 15 m. from my observation position. She sat there for only 2-3 seconds. I immediately raised my binoculars and my impression of her was a small light brownish bird with prominent supercilium as described earlier. Additionally I noted a faint blue tinge under the chin and a somewhat mottled necklace but she flew off, before any opportunity to photograph her. This brief sighting was the only time I observed the female in the entire six hour watch. At no time did I either see or hear the male.

14 July, 19 July and 24 July 2016

All three days commenced with hill fog and low cloud with showers later on during the watch on 24 July. On each day, four and a half hours were spent in passive observation. No Bluethroats were seen or heard.

28 July 2016

After a poor start, cloud lifted rapidly and within twenty minutes all low cloud had lifted and it remained sunny for the rest of the day. Approximately 200 m. from the site, a small bird was foraging amongst the vegetation at the base of a large stone. Its body was in shadow but at the base of the tail I could just about make out some paprika red and I knew I had a Bluethroat. The bird came out of shadow and I immediately saw the white supercilium which confirmed this. My first impression was that I actually had a juvenile as it had a 'fluffy' appearance. It was hopping around, foraging, and I knew it was not the stunning male bird, nor did I think it was the female as it didn't appear to have the mottled 'necklace' that I remembered from the 12 July sighting. All this was happening very fast with the bird constantly hopping around in and out of shadow. I moved to a position where I had previously observed the adult Bluethroats. For the next three and a quarter hours, I slowly searched and re-traced my earlier track and sat and watched without further sighting of the juvenile bluethroat that I was sure I had seen. But as the area is riddled with so much dead ground, I thought that, after five hours, the chance of observing the juvenile again was poor, so I headed home.

2 August 2016

Initially the weather was beautiful, a stunning blue sky and a light breeze. My first watch was where I had first seen the female Bluethroat and 200 m. from where I thought I saw a fledgling on 28 July. I sat here for 30 minutes and observed only a male Wheatear. I changed position a couple more times for 30 minute periods, seeing nothing. My final move was to a position not far from where I had previously watched the adult Bluethroats, where I thought I would stay for one more hour to see if a Bluethroat appeared.

I suddenly spotted movement on a large stone, some 50 m. away. Up went the binoculars and I could see the striking blue throat of the male. My first thoughts were to get a photographic record and I fired off 15 shots of the male. What I did not know at the time of shooting those frames, only revealed when examining the images on my computer, was that the male Bluethroat had small food items in its bill. I then watched the male drop to the ground and I thought I saw movement from two birds. Through my binoculars I saw

something move quickly and guessed it might be a fledgling. I saw the male fly off low. I moved slowly forward and saw movement - my binoculars confirmed a fledgling Bluethroat.



Male Red-spotted Bluethroat with food, 2 August 2016 (Robert Ince)

The fledgling had the signature paprika-red colour at the base of its stubby tail. Several pin feathers were visible and these can be clearly seen on both the still photos and video. The fledgling would occasionally call and open its bill widely. It scurried and hopped about - there was no flying, just a gliding and fluttering hop, at best, and this behaviour is captured on the video footage I was able to snatch. Some twelve minutes later I became aware that the adult male had returned. He foraged in a wet mossy area and had a food item in his bill that was too small for me to identify through my binoculars.

I found that the male would tolerate my presence only so long as I was at least 40 m. from the fledgling. When the fledgling hopped to within ten metres of me, the adult male remained on a rock until the fledgling had hopped further away from me and nearer to him. If the fledgling became aware of the male carrying food items, it hopped and scrambled at quite high speed towards the adult, its bill open and often emitting sounds.



Red-spotted Bluethroat male with fledgling, 2 August 2016 (Robert Ince)

The fledgling was observed foraging in an area between c.10-40 m. from my observation position - pecking at unidentified items which I presumed to be tiny insects. For the next 45 minutes or so, I was able to watch the fledgling forage up to 20 m. away, hopping among the stones. Once, unaware of me sitting there, it came within 5 m. The adult male was either having difficulty in finding food for the fledgling or, possibly, it was feeding another fledgling (or fledglings) that I could not see. Just sitting still in one position, I was able to observe, take photos and video. None of my passive observation appeared to disturb the birds. Throughout my 1 hour 35 minute observation of the fledgling, it did not venture far. It kept to the shallow gully, moving perhaps no more than 50 m. along its length and, although it did venture occasionally to the north and more open side of the gully, it mainly kept to the south side, which had more stones and crevices in which to hide. The fledgling's area of activity was no more than 20 m. from the position of the adult female Bluethroat I had spotted on 26 June.



Red-spotted Bluethroat fledgling, 2 August 2016 (Robert Ince)

It is also interesting to note that the area of fledgling activity observed was just 30 m. from where I had sat earlier that morning. Despite this, the fledgling activity cannot be observed from that spot due to the topography of the terrain. Additionally, due to the adult male flying so low above the terrain, it too would also likely have gone unnoticed by me. At no time did I see the female Bluethroat and so it is not known whether she was dead or was alive and feeding another fledgling(s) elsewhere - brood division with fledgling dispersion is well known in this species (Anthonisen, Krokene & Lifjeld 1997).

From a beautiful start to the morning, it rapidly clouded over and a keen wind developed. I left whilst the fledgling was still foraging in the shallow gully. I now had proof of successful breeding and, with the weather worsening I decided to go home. I had hoped to visit the site for further observations later in the week but the weather was dire with very strong winds. Most of Moray was plunged into a period of storm and continuing bad weather. It is unknown whether the adult and fledgling Bluethroats survived. I made three further visits to the site without observing any Bluethroats.

Considering that there was a mismatch between the late arrival of the Bluethroats, the onset of breeding and optimum food supply, it is remarkable that at least one Bluethroat fledged. The maximum food availability in the area in 2016 was in mid June when there was a good supply of craneflies. Red-spotted Bluethroats are long distance migrants but the 2016 pair arrived a month too late for optimum breeding conditions.

Habitat

All observations of these Red-spotted Bluethroats were within an area of less than five hectares of arctic-alpine habitat. This habitat is found above the natural tree line in Scotland of *c.*640 m. and contains a similar range of species to those which occur in the tundra of the far north and in mountain ranges such as the Alps or Norwegian mountains.



Arctic-alpine habitat on the Cairngorms plateau in Moray in May (Robert Ince)



Arctic-alpine habitat, similar to the Bluethroat breeding site, June 2016 (Robert Ince)

The Bluethroats bred in a rocky environment which is snow covered for six to eight months of the year with winds sometimes exceeding 100 mph and where the few plant species are adapted to a very short growing season. Plant life is low growing and sparse, limited to a small area with Mat-grass (*Nardus stricta*), some Mountain Sedge (*Carex bigelowii*), Starry Saxifrage (*Saxifraga stellaris*), Fir Clubmoss (*Lycopodium selago*) and Parsley Fern (*Cryptogramma crispa*). Additionally, in moist areas, there is a dense carpet of mosses and lichens. The habitat used by these Bluethroats is atypical, if not unique. I cannot find in the literature any previous nesting attempts by this species in this type of terrain.

Known breeding attempts of Red-spotted Bluethroat in the UK

Breeding of Red-spotted Bluethroat in the UK prior to 2016 has only been confirmed on three occasions (Forrester *et al.* 2007). The first was at Insh Marshes (Inverness-shire) in 1968, but the eggs were predated. The first successful breeding was also at Insh Marshes, in 1985, following a large spring influx of migrant Bluethroats (Murray 1987). The second successful attempt occurred in 1995 (Benn 1995) a few kilometres from Tomatin (Inverness-shire), also following an above-average spring migrant influx (Forrester *et al.* 2007, Murray 1987). In 2016, however, there was no reported above-average spring influx of Red-spotted Bluethroats. On 7 August 1995, a first year male Red-spotted Bluethroat, in post-juvenile moult, was mist-netted on the Beaully Firth (Harvey 1995). It is highly probable that this individual was the result of breeding in Scotland.

Singing males have been observed several times during the breeding season (Forrester *et al.* 2007). It is probable that other breeding attempts by Red-spotted Bluethroats go unreported, partly due to a large area of Scotland being seldom visited by field naturalists with the stamina required for long days in relatively demanding terrain.

On 23 May 1987, Rik Smith found a freshly predated male Red-spotted Bluethroat near Feith Buidhe during the Mountain Ecology Project (Cook 1992). There is no mention in the literature of a female Red-spotted Bluethroat being present at that time - or any other evidence that a breeding attempt was made.

References

- Anthohisen, K., Krokene, C., and Lifjeld, J.T. 1997. Brood division is associated with fledgling dispersion in the bluethroat (*Luscinia s. svecica*), *The Auk*, Vol. 114, No.4.
- Benn, S. 1995. Successful breeding of Bluethroat in Scotland. *Scottish Birds* 18(2):114.
- Cook, M. 1992. *The Birds of Moray and Nairn*. The Mercat Press, Edinburgh.
- Forester, R.W., Andrews, I.J., McNemy, C., Murray, R., McGowan R., Zonfrillo, B., Betts, M., Jardine, D., and Grundy, D. 2007. *The Birds of Scotland*, The Scottish Ornithologists' Club, Aberlady.
- Harvey, I.H. 1995. Juvenile Bluethroat in Inverness-shire. *Scottish Birds* 18(2):115.
- McCallum, J. 2007. *Arctic Flight*, Langford Press.
- Murray, R.D. 1987. Bluethroats in Scotland during 1985. *Scottish Birds* 14:168-174.
- Portenko, L.A. 1989., *Birds of the Chukchi Peninsula and Wrangel Island Vol II*, New Delhi : Published for the Smithsonian Institution and the National Science Foundation, Washington, D.C., by Amerind Pub. Co.
- Ryabitshev, V. 1998. *One Season in the Taiga*, Russian Nature Press.

HOBBIES BREEDING IN MORAY IN 2016*MARTIN COOK*

On a date near the end of July 2016, David Rennison was walking in woodland, a few miles from Elgin, when he found a pair of Hobbies. He mentioned this to Eddie Harwood who had heard a bird calling in the same area which, with the benefit of hindsight, seems likely to have been an anxious Hobby.

On 2 August, EH phoned to tell me about the Hobbies and later that day I went to investigate. I walked through the area and was disappointed by the lack of any calling birds. However, I continued to scan the trees with binoculars and eventually found an adult Hobby perched near the top of a tall dead Scots Pine tree.

On 3 August, I returned with Roy Dennis and we were soon 'greeted' by an adult calling anxiously. As we watched, a second adult appeared carrying what was almost certainly a Sand Martin in its talons. We tried to follow every move of this bird in the hope that it would lead us to a nest but after a while we lost it among the trees. We then searched the area looking for disused crows' nests which might have been taken over by the Hobbies. We found one nest high in a Scots Pine but, despite a small amount of white droppings on the Bracken at the foot of the tree, there was no good evidence that this was the nest being used by the Hobbies.



Adult Hobby near Elgin, 3 August 2016 (Martin Cook)

My next visit was on 6 August. On approaching the site, both adults became highly agitated and the reason was soon apparent - two fledged juvenile Hobbies were perched high in Scots Pines in an open area of the forest. After obtaining some photographs, I left the area - anxious that the calling adults should not draw attention to the site. I returned on 10 August and initially found one adult and the two juveniles. A while later, the second adult appeared, carrying food but was too distant for me to be certain of the nature of the prey. As this adult was clearly not going to feed the juveniles while I was in the area, I left.

Two days later, on 12 August, the juveniles appeared to have left the site. I had a brief view of one adult flying swiftly over the trees but there were no further sightings that day or on a further visit a few days later.

The area occupied by this family of Hobbies consisted of open Scots Pine woodland - part of an extensive forest. This section of the forest had been felled in recent years but a number of tall pines were left in an otherwise open clearing and each time the juveniles were seen they were perched in these trees. Unfelled and denser Scots Pine woodland, typical of a fairly mature plantation, surrounded the open site where the

birds were observed. Assuming that the nest was not far away then the surrounding plantation was likely to have contained crows' nests suitable for use by the Hobbies.



Juvenile Hobby near Elgin, 10 August 2016 (Martin Cook)

Prior to 2016, there had been only 14 records of Hobbies in Moray & Nairn. The most recent, on 18 June 2015, was a bird hunting Sand Martins at a colony on the River Spey near Fochabers. It may, or may not, be coincidental that the only prey item identified at the 2016 breeding site was also a Sand Martin. In any event, no Hobbies were found at the 2016 site when I visited in 2017.



Adult Hobby, near Elgin 10 August 2016 (Martin Cook)

RINGING REPORT 2016

BOB PROCTOR

Numbers of birds ringed in Moray & Nairn during 2016:

	FG*	Pullus	Total		FG*	Pullus	Total
Fulmar	1		1	Chiffchaff	72		72
Storm Petrel	90		90	Willow Warbler	103		103
Shag		8	8	Blackcap	36		36
Hen Harrier		6	6	Whitethroat	3		3
Goshawk		6	6	Sedge Warbler	78	2	80
Sparrowhawk	2	1	3	Waxwing	22		22
Oystercatcher		7	7	Treecreeper	20		20
Lapwing		25	25	Wren	74		74
Common Sandpiper	2		2	Starling	132		132
Snipe	1		1	Dipper	23	3	26
Black Guillemot		3	3	Blackbird	121	13	134
Common Gull		3	3	Song Thrush	20	4	24
Herring Gull		10	10	Redwing	105		105
Woodpigeon	2			Robin	175		175
Collared Dove	5		5	Stonechat	1		1
Tawny Owl	4	1	5	Dunnock	140	9	149
Great Sp. Woodpecker	24		24	House Sparrow	317	5	322
Merlin		9	9	Tree Sparrow	54	15	69
Peregrine		4	4	Pied Wagtail	288		288
Magpie	2		2	Meadow Pipit	33		33
Jay	1		1	Brambling	7		7
Jackdaw	1		1	Chaffinch	352		352
Goldcrest	272		272	Bullfinch	21		21
Blue Tit	409	238	647	Greenfinch	157		157
Great Tit	238	181	419	Linnet	83		83
Crested Tit	28	29	57	Lesser Redpoll	281		281
Coal Tit	276	39	315	Common Redpoll	14		14
Sand Martin	379		379	Goldfinch	409		409
Swallow	193	12	205	Siskin	1073		1073
Long-tailed Tit	144		144	Yellowhammer	9		9
Yellow-browed Warbler	1		1	Reed Bunting	90		90
				TOTALS	6387	634	7021

*FG=full grown

From: Robinson, R.A., Leech, D.I. & Clark, J.A. (2017) The Online Demography Report: Bird ringing and nest recording in Britain & Ireland in 2016. BTO, Thetford (<http://www.bto.org/ringing-report>, created on 7 August 2017).

Recoveries in 2016:

All ringing recoveries reported for 2016 are included in this section with the more interesting ones given in full. Anyone finding a ringed bird in Moray or Nairn is asked to pass the details to Bob Proctor or 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

WHOOPEE SWAN

A2663	?	040891	Skjalftavatn, ICELAND
(Yellow DTZ)	VV	120216	near Hopeman
A8469	Ad.f	050809	Sandvatn, Myvatnsheidi, ICELAND
(Yellow Y5X)	VV	150316	Ardivot
	VV	200316	Windyridge
	VV	270316	Ardivot
A6661	Ad.f	150804	Anavatn, Jokuldalsheidi, ICELAND
(Yellow 74N)	VV	140307	Scarrataing-Tenston, Orkney
	VV	130110	Dunkirk, near Little Downham, Cambridgeshire
	VV	170112	Welney WWT, Norfolk
	VV	110113	Mare Fen, Littleport, Cambridgeshire
	VV	270316	Ardivot
A9002	Ad.m	090813	Svartarvatn, Bardardalur, ICELAND
(Yellow BVL)	V	060814	Svartarvatn, Bardardalur, ICELAND
	VV	200415	Hamrar, Reykjadal, ICELAND
	V	110815	Svartarvatn, Bardardalur, ICELAND
	VV	270316	Ardivot

A9257 (Orange ZNA)	Ad.f	060814 110815 270316	Svartarvatn, Bardardalur, ICELAND Svartarvatn, Bardardalur, ICELAND Ardivot
ZY8739 (Orange YHS)	? VV VV VV	250215 251115 050116 160116	Caerlaverock, Dumfries Broadley, near Buckie Moss of Barmuckity Caerlaverock, Dumfries
XY2639 (Orange YNK)	? VV	250216 211116	Martin Mere, Lancashire Loch Spynie

DTZ was seen 23 years and 7 months after ringing – it has only five years to go to beat the UK longevity record.

PINK-FOOTED GOOSE

1460370 (UAH)	5m VV VV	050114 110114 180416	Blackburn Kinellar, Blackburn Balormie pig farm
------------------	----------------	----------------------------	---

Collar CDX was originally ringed at Loch Eye on 5 Nov 2005 and seen in 2016 at Loch Spynie on 19 Nov. In the intervening period it has been seen at Kinross, Durham, South Ronaldsay, Edzell, Evie (Orkney), Ljosavatnsskard (ICELAND), Harray (Orkney), Whitley Bay (Northumberland, nr. Godafoss (ICELAND)), and in Moray at Lower Hempriggs, Corskie (Garmouth), Broadley (Clochan), Mosstodloch, Batchen (Miltoduff) and Muir of Lochs.

LIGHT-BELLIED BRENT GOOSE

GF79601	6f X	250115 100416	Nairn Nairn
Blue 6 Blue 1	? VV	080212 021216	Greystones Golf Driving Range, Co. Wicklow, EIRE Nairn

STORM PETREL

2594013	4 V	010715 140816	Faraid Head, Highland Portknockie	151 km
2698701	4 V	070815 270816	Tronach Head, near Portgordon Porth Iago, Llangwnnagl, Gwynedd	552 km
2698766	4 V	150816 060916	Portknockie Tarbat Ness, Highland	57 km
2621792	4 V	300716 010816	Scurdie Ness, Angus Strathlene, Buckie	114 km
2686815	4 V	300716 040816	Isle of May Burghead	179 km

2686825	4 V	050816 290816	Isle of May Burghead	179 km
2698744	4 V	300716 040816	Boar's Head Rock, Spey Bay North Ronaldsay, Orkney	195 km
2698784	4 V	240816 270816	Portknockie Faraid Head, Highland	151 km
2715143	4 V V	050815 090716 290716	Souter Lighthouse, Tyne and Wear Collieston Burghead	268 km 333 km
2715223	4 V	230716 250716	Whitburn Country Park, Tyne and Wear Boar's Head Rock, Spey Bay	324 km
2720411	4 V	290716 150816	Burghead Fair Isle	231 km
2729008	4 V	260716 020816	North Ronaldsay, Orkney Findochty	190 km
2708461	4 V	260716 030816	North Ronaldsay, Orkney Burghead	199 km
2719374	4 V	230716 150816	North Ronaldsay, Orkney Portknockie	190 km
2719389	4 V	230716 040816	North Ronaldsay, Orkney Findochty	190 km
2729154	4 V	270716 150816	North Ronaldsay, Orkney Portknockie	190 km
2717739	4 V V	060816 140816 260816	Fair Isle Portknockie Faraid Head, Highland	216 km 208 km
2711741	4 V	220716 150816	Fair Isle Portknockie	216 km
CORMORANT				
5157964	1 ?	220692 110716	Ceann Leathad, near Berriedale Buckie	65 km
SHAG				
1472236	1 X	090615 180916	Isle of May Spey Bay	166 km

1473769	1 VV	190614 050216	Isle of May Buckie harbour	169 km
1478695	1 XF	030714 170116	Fidra, Firth of Forth Lossiemouth	186 km
1478805	1 XF	080614 170216	Fidra, Firth of Forth Burghead	187 km
1478831	1 XF oil	080614 230116	Fidra, Firth of Forth River Lossie, Lossiemouth	186 km
1484058	1 X	110615 310116	Inchkeith, Firth of Forth Nairn	180 km
1484093	1 XF	110615 210216	Inchkeith, Firth of Forth Hopeman	188 km
1484189	1 X	110615 130216	Inchkeith, Firth of Forth Buckie	184 km
1492388	1 VV	210616 251016	Isle of May Buckie harbour	169 km

OYSTERCATCHER

FA38524	7 XF	220990 011016	Belfast harbour Findhorn Bay	363 km
FA68033	8 VV	181294 070416	Findhorn Bay Lossie estuary	21 km
FP47394	5 X	261214 170416	Ardullie Point, Cromarty Firth Milltown airfield	69 km
FP56279	8 VV=B VV=B VV=B	121003 270714 140515 260516	Whiteford Sands, Gower, Swansea Moray College UHI, Elgin Moray College UHI, Elgin Moray College UHI, Elgin	672 km 672 km 672 km

RINGED PLOVER

A colour-ringed individual seen on the Lossie estuary on 17, 23 & 29 Apr 2016 (and 7 Apr 2014) was originally ringed at Hayling Island, Hampshire on 18 Sep 2013.

BLACK-TAILED GODWIT

EL69059 (RR+ON)	? VV VV	050910 211115 040516	Langstone Harbour, Portsmouth, Hampshire Pulborough Brooks, West Sussex Findhorn Bay
--------------------	---------------	----------------------------	--

BAR-TAILED GODWIT

K04703	3	110916	Klepp, Rogaland, NORWAY	
(Yellow NAA)	VV	011016	Burghead	538 km
	VV	061016	Hopeman	534 km
K05510	3f	080916	Kragero, Telemark, NORWAY	
(Yellow NNA)	VV	270916	Lossie estuary	763 km

KNOT

The colour-ringed individual from Griend, Texel, The Netherlands (ringed on 24 Mar 2015) and sighted at the Lossie estuary on 31 Dec 2015, was resighted on the estuary on 2 & 8 Jan 2016.

SANDERLING

NB00725	?	210516	Ebb of the Riv, Sanday, Orkney	
	VV	221216	West beach, Lossiemouth	182 km

REDSHANK

DD01684	Adult	290814	Findhorn Bay	
	V	300816	Tain	33 km

GREENSHANK

A colour-ringed individual, ringed in Sutherland on 29 May 2010, was seen in Findhorn Bay on 2 July 2015 and 5 July 2016. Each year since ringing this individual has been seen in spring/summer in Sutherland and in Essex each autumn/winter. The 2016 sighting in Findhorn Bay appears to confirm that this is a stop-over site before an onward flight to Essex?

SANDWICH TERN

DE35887	3	160810	Ythan estuary	
(White EBT)	VV	1508-010913	Punta Spigolo, Staranzano, Gorizia, ITALY	1673 km
	VV	14-160614	Coquet Island, Northumberland	223 km
	VV	170416	Lossie estuary	89 km

COMMON GULL

EY34343	1	300612	Tillypronie	
	XF	250416	Mulben, Keith	45 km
5116632	?	280201	Mandal, Vest-Agder, NORWAY	
(White J555)	VV	291016	Lossie estuary	636 km

The Norwegian individual was last seen in Mandal in 2002 before being seen at Lossie estuary 14 years later!

HERRING GULL

Only movements over 100 km are given in full below:

NS002829	1	090706	Kandalakshskiy Nature Reserve, Murmansk, RUSSIA	
(White KX02)	VV	210107	Cooper Park, Elgin	
	VV	241207	Loch Spynie	
	VV	160208	Loch Spynie	

	VV	281208	Loch Spynie	
	VV	041211	Lossie estuary	
	VV	150112	Loch Spynie	
	VV	271216	Lossie estuary	2102 km
ES16164	1	160614	Kandalakshskiy Nature Reserve, Murmansk, RUSSIA	
(White KL86)	VV	170316	Kirkcaldy, Fife	2226 km
	VV	150716	Lossie estuary	
	VV	181016	Lossie estuary	2100 km
FA40864	1	280713	Nordfugløy, Karlsøy, Troms, NORWAY	
(JX464)	VV	200216	Lossie estuary	1784 km
FA42106	1	100714	Storholmen, Sande, Møre og Romsdal, NORWAY	
(J969H)	VV	160815	Lossie estuary	
	VV	050416	Lossie estuary	
	VV	110416	Lossie estuary	
	VV	090716	Lossie estuary	
	VV	150716	Lossie estuary	
	VV	240716	Lossie estuary	692 km
GR75806	3	301113	Rainham tip, Greater London	
(W4DT)	VV	280216	Rymer Barn, Barnham, Suffolk	100 km
	VV	050316	Minsmere, Suffolk	129 km
	VV	070316	Rymer Barn, Barnham, Suffolk	100 km
	VV	030716	Lossie estuary	726 km
GR92859	7	080314	Pitsea landfill site, Essex	
(J7FT)	V	070516	Lossie estuary	728 km
GV31815	5	260216	Harwood Whin landfill site, York	
(Y:144)	VV	150716	Lossie estuary	
	VV	030916	Lossie estuary	
	VV	100916	Lossie estuary	
	VV	271116	Lossie estuary	

ES16164 is the third Herring Gull from the Kandalakshskiy Nature Reserve near Murmansk, Russia. The previous sightings of colour-ringed individuals: NS002829 (KX02) details above and ES006630 (K811) seen at the Lossie estuary (2004, 2011) and Loch Spynie (2007-10, 2012).

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL

HW57268	1	070713	Old Slains, Aberdeenshire	
(T:025)	VV	070516	Lossie estuary	90 km

A total of 19 colour-ringed individuals from various Caithness colonies were reported, mainly from the Lossie estuary.

BLACK-HEADED GULL

Yellow 2CN7	3J	280816	Ythan estuary	
	VV	301016	Lossie estuary	

EY34831	1 VV	250613 090316	Tomintoul Letham, Fife	105 km
EX51439	4 VV VV VV VV	251013 161114 010115 011115 270216	Cooper Park pond, Elgin Cooper Park pond, Elgin Cooper Park pond, Elgin Cooper Park pond, Elgin Cooper Park pond, Elgin	Local
KITTIWAKE				
EX33795	4 VV	260616 220816	Isle of May, Fife Findhorn Beach	175 km
WOODPIGEON				
FC03602	3 XF shot	140802 191116	Clochachan, Buckie Drybridge, Rathven	5 km
GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER				
LE25203	3 X	120812 110516	Cairnfield, Buckie Meiklepark, Aberdeenshire	53 km
KESTREL				
EK06984	1 XF	180615 190216	near Cawdor Trerieve Farm, Donderry, Cornwall	795 km
FIRECREST				
EPT969	3f XF	140915 070116	Heysham, Lancashire Elgin	401 km
BLUE TIT				
D634458	3J V	060815 130316	Loch Spynie Nigg Ferry	45 km
GREAT TIT				
Z617503	? X	090715 270116	Keith Dornoch	74 km
CRESTED TIT				
D210942	1 V	090613 231016	Whiteash Hill Wood, Fochabers Teindland Forest, near Rothes	9 km
SAND MARTIN				
D411481	3 V	100714 230816	Seaside Syke, Errol, Perthshire Kingston reedbed	143 km
Z614302	3 V	280815 111015	Kingston reedbed Charca de Suarez, Motril, Granada, SPAIN	2326 km

CHIFFCHAFF

HNA763	2	221015	Alridge Lodge Farm, West Midlands	
	V	240416	Torrieston	566 km

JRR108	4	020916	Clochach, Buckie	
	V	301116	Cottam, Nottinghamshire	500 km

BLACKCAP

Z428099	3	140915	Clochach, Buckie	
	V	280416	De Haan, West-Vlaanderen, BELGIUM	804 km

BLACKBIRD

CT69110	6f	050215	Elgin cemetery	
	XF cat	100416	Elgin	Local

FIELDFARE

LH96379	5m	190115	Clochach, Buckie	
	XF	230616	Lehtimaki, Vaasa, FINLAND	1595 km

REDWING

9X22775	?	251010	Merksplas, Antwerp, BELGIUM	
	V	180115	Clochach, Buckie	860 km

HOUSE SPARROW

VZ83447	3J	270616	Buckie	
	X	210716	Buckie	Local

LESSER REDPOLL

D611355	3m	301114	Teindland Forest	
	V	200116	Brigstock, Northamptonshire	592 km
	V	160216	Brigstock, Northamptonshire	592 km

S367091	3	011016	Gow Moss, Keith	
	V	151116	Wakefield, West Yorkshire	449 km

Z230231	4	181214	Teindland Forest	
	V	281215	Brandon Fen, Lakenheath Fen, Suffolk	616 km

Z230445	5m	010115	Ordiequish Forest	
	V	080916	Giljastolen, Gjesdal, Rogaland, NORWAY	568 km

Z495642	6	250115	Mulderie Wood	
	V	181215	Railway Covert, Cambridgeshire	592 km

Z520502	6f	140315	Ordiequish Forest	
	V	300416	Cockley Cley, Swaffham, Norfolk	601 km

Z931303	3m	111015	Great Livermore, Suffolk	
	V	301016	Gow Moss	632 km

GOLDFINCH

Z617407	6m	290615	Greenside Cottage, Lossiemouth	
	Sick	230916	Lossiemouth	3 km

SISKIN

14168499	5m	080416	Zerlegem, West-Vlaanderen, BELGIUM	
	V	090716	Clochach, Buckie	817 km
	V	260716	Clochach, Buckie	817 km
D043410	6m	210313	Cairnfield, Buckie	
	V	070416	Golspie	69 km
D195118	5f	070213	Romsey, Hampshire	
	V	080416	Clochach, Buckie	744 km
D250242	5m	230213	Baldwins Hill, East Grinstead, West Sussex	
	V	270313	Baldwins Hill, East Grinstead, West Sussex	
	V	110716	Clochach, Buckie	746 km
D451680	3J	160513	Keith	
	V	220316	Chelmondiston, Suffolk	672 km
D507002	6m	160513	Keith	
	V	100416	Poynton, Cheshire	470 km
S036807	3J	280516	Durriss, Aberdeenshire	
	V	150716	Clochach, Buckie	76 km
S239242	5m	110416	Stocksfield, Northumberland	
	V	270516	Clochach, Buckie	306 km
S288167	5m	300416	Kildary, Highland	
	V	040716	Clochach, Buckie	66 km
X630033	5m	180316	Antsey, Leicestershire	
	V	180416	Clochach, Buckie	564 km
Y448248	3J	270712	Vayne Farm, Fern, Angus	
	V	150716	Clochach, Buckie	99 km
Y769873	4m	020512	Clochach, Buckie	
	V	130216	Great Livermere, Suffolk	638 km
Y853688	6m	200316	Deandarden Wood, Buckinghamshire	
	V	020516	Clochach, Buckie	683 km
Z050854	4m	170915	Llangorse Lake, Powys	
	V	290416	Clochach, Buckie	634 km

Z323748	5m V	310116 100416	Romsey, Hampshire Clochan, Buckie	744 km
Z428234	4m V	170416 190416	Clochan, Buckie Deer Park Forest Croft, Highland	70 km
Z709440	5m V	310316 130516	Newton, Lancashire Clochan, Buckie	413 km
Z724969	6f V	060416 180416	Stocksfield, Nothumberland Clochan, Buckie	306 km
Z731313	6m V	100316 190516	Harvey's Meadow, Hungerford, Berkshire Clochan, Buckie	698 km
Z789795	6m X	040716 120716	Berriedale, Caithness Aberlour	80 km
Z844179	6m V	020316 140416	Romsey, Hampshire Clochan, Buckie	744 km
Z917311	5f XF	180216 090616	Hollow Farm, Worplesdon, Surrey Letterfourie	725 km
Z944423	? V	130316 110416	Halstead, Essex Inchberry, Fochabers	672 km
Z985093	5f V	230316 080416	Bourne Farm, West Midlands Clochan, Buckie	564 km

GRID REFERENCES OF LOCALITIES MENTIONED IN THE SPECIES ACCOUNTS

Aberlour	NJ2642	Balnugh	NH8840
Achagour	NH9346	Balormie	NJ2167
Achareidh	NH8656	Balvalley Moss	NJ3725
Achavelgin	NH9150	Balvenie	NJ3242
Achavraat	NH9148	Banchor	NH9140
Achdregnie	NJ2424	Bank Farm	NJ3929
Achnatone	NH9149	Bankhead	NH9658
Achmore	NJ2631	Bardonside	NJ2154
Ailnack	NJ1414	Barmuckity	NJ2461
Aitnoch	NH9839	Barns of Bynack	NJ0405
Allaburn	NJ1961	Bauds of Cullen	NJ4766
Aldivalloch	NJ3626	Beatshach	NJ2737
Aldroughty	NJ1862	Beinn a' Chaorainn	NJ0401
Aldunie	NJ3626	Burnside of Geddes	NH8851
Alltachbeg	NJ3626	Beinn a' Chruinnich	NJ2313
Altnaglander	NJ1628	Beinn Mheadhoin	NJ0201
Altyre Woods	NJ0253	Bellandy	NJ2832
Alves	NJ1362	Bellie cemetery	NJ3561
Archiestown	NJ2344	Ben Aigan	NJ3048
Ardclach	NH9545	Ben Avon	NJ1302
Ardgye	NJ1563	Ben Macdui	NN9999
Ardivot	NJ2267	Ben Main	NJ3535
Arndilly	NJ2848	Ben Rinnes	NJ2435
Arthur's Bridge	NJ2567	Berryburn	NJ0545
Auchbreck	NJ2028	Bin of Cullen	NJ4764
Auchenhalrig	NJ3761	Binn Hill	NJ3065
Auchindoun Castle	NJ3437	Binns	NJ3164
Auchinhandoch	NJ3338	Binsness	NJ0362
Auchlochan	NJ0241	Birchfield	NJ1614
Auchmair	NJ3828	Birkenhill	NJ2260
Auchnarrow	NJ2123	Bishopmill	NJ2163
Auchroisk	NJ3351	Black Loch	NJ2163
Auchtertyre	NJ1858	Blackhillock	NJ2044
Auldearn	NH9155	Blacksboat	NJ1838
		Blackwater Lodge	NJ3328
Backlands	NJ1469	Blairnafade	NH8451
Badcheer	NJ3532	Blinkbonnie	NJ3365
Badentinan	NJ2957	Boar's Head Rock	NJ2867
Badnafrave	NJ2015	Boat o' Brig	NJ3251
Bailliesland	NJ2565	Boath	NH8845
Balblair	NH8051	Bogeney	NJ0243
Ballcorach	NJ1526	Bogheads	NH9155
Ballindalloch Castle	NJ1736	Boghole	NJ9655
Ballnellan Burn	NJ1326	Bogmoor	NJ3562
Ballochford	NJ3633	Bognafuaran	NH8954
Balnacoul	NJ3146	Boldow	NJ1740
Balnaspirach (Nairn)	NH8654	Bow Fiddle Rock	NJ3561NJ4968

Braes of Enzie	NJ3959	Cawdor	NH8449
Braidbog	NJ4963	Caysbriggs	NJ2466
Brandston	NJ2865	Charlestown of Aberlour	NJ2642
Bridge of Avon	NJ1835	Clackmarras	NJ2458
Bridge of Brown	NJ1220	Clarkly Hill	NJ1368
Bridgend	NJ3731	Clashach	NJ1570
Broadley	NJ3961	Clochan	NJ4060
Brodie Castle	NH9757	Clockeasy	NJ2962
Brodieshill	NJ1059	Cloddach	NJ1958
Brokentore	NJ1854	Cloddymoss	NH9860
Broom Knowe	NJ1059	Clovenside	NJ0459
Broom of Moy	NJ0159	Clunas Reservoir	NH8646
Broombank	NH9255	Cluny Hill	NJ0458
Broomton	NH9654	Cnoc Lochy	NJ1621
Brown Muir	NJ2555	Coire Raibeirt	NJ0003
Bruntland	NJ1264	Coldburn	NJ1449
Buckie	NJ4165	Coldhome	NJ3639
Buckpool	NJ4165	Coleburn	NJ2455
Budgate	NH8349	College of Roseisle	NJ1366
Burghead	NJ1169	Coltfield	NJ1163
Burghead Bay	NJ0867	Conglass Water	NJ1916
Burgie Wood	NJ0958	Conicavel	NH9953
Burnside	NH9440	Cook's Cairn	NJ3027
Burnside of Birnie	NJ2259	Corbiewell	NJ3165
Burnside of Dipple	NJ3256	Corryhabbie Hill	NJ2829
Burnside of Enzie	NJ3960	Cotts of Innes	NJ2766
Burnside of Geddes	NH8851	Coulmony	NH9747
Byres	NJ3562	Covesea	NJ1870
		Covesea Skerries	NJ1971
Cabrach	NJ3827	Coxton	NJ2660
Cairn Ballantruan	NJ1524	Coxtontower	NJ2660
Cairn Gorm	NJ0003	Crachies	NH9453
Cairn Lochan	NH9802	Craigellachie	NJ2844
Cairn Uish	NJ1750	Craigmill Lodge	NJ1052
Cairneyhillock	NJ2658	Craigroy	NJ1250
Cairnfield	NJ4162	Cragganmore	NJ1636
Calcots	NJ2563	Cran Loch	NH9459
Cantsford	NJ0754	Croftglass	NJ2530
Cardhu	NJ1843	Crofts of Buinach	NJ1855
Cardnach Farm	NJ1942	Crofts of Dipple	NJ3259
Carn a' Chrasgie	NJ1942	Cromdale Hills	NJ1226
Carn a' Gharbh-ghlaic	NH8935	Crook	NH8854
Carn Allt a' Chlaiginn	NJ3230	Crooked Wood	NJ2762
Carn Daimh	NJ1824	Croy	NJ1657
Carn Liath	NJ2515	Cruats Farm	NJ4968
Carn Mor	NJ2618	Culbin Bar	NH9662
Carn na Sguabaich	NH8736	Culbin Forest	NH9862
Carron	NJ2241	Cullen	NJ5167
Carse of Delnies	NH8356	Cummingston	NJ1368
Catherinebraes	NJ2544	Cunninghaugh	NJ3564

Dallas	NJ1252	Elchies	NJ2245
Dallas Dhu	NJ0356	Elgin	NJ2162
Dallas Lodge	NJ1052	Elginshill	NJ2663
Dallasbraughty	NJ0346	Feakirk	NJ0344
Darkland	NJ2662	Fèith Buidhe	NJ0909
Darnaway Castle	NH9955	Ferness	NH9644
Daugh of Kinermony	NJ2441	Ferniefield	NJ3064
Dava	NJ0038	Findhorn Bay	NJ0462
Delmore	NJ2442	Findochty	NJ4668
Delnabo	NJ1617	Findrassie	NJ1965
Delnapot	NJ1737	Fochabers	NJ3458
Delnashaugh	NJ1835	Fodderletter	NJ3458
Delnies	NH8356	Fogwatt	NJ2357
Deskford	NJ5061	Fords of Avon	NJ0403
Dounduff	NH9949	Foresterseat	NJ2562
Drainie	NJ2168	Fornighty	NH9350
Drumdivan	NH8454	Forres	NJ0358
Drumduan Mill	NH9156	Foynesfield	NJ0358
Drumfurrich	NJ2944	Garbh Uisge Beag	NH9900
Drumin	NJ1830	Garbh Uisge Mòr	NH9900
Drummuir	NJ3844	Garlinebeg	NJ1741
Drybridge	NJ4362	Galcantray	NH8148
Drynachan	NH8639	Garmouth	NJ3364
Dufftown	NJ3239	Garmouth viaduct	NJ3464
Duffus	NJ1668	Gateside	NJ3647
Duffus Castle	NJ1867	Geddes	NH8852
Dulsie	NH9341	Gervally	NH9948
Dulsie Bridge	NH9341	Gilston	NJ2066
Dunearn	NH9341	Glack Harnes	NJ2836
Dundurcas	NJ2950	Glacks of Balloch	NJ3534
Dunnyduff Wood	NJ4449	Glass	NJ4239
Dunphail	NJ0047	Glen Avon	NJ1006
Dyke	NH9858	Glen Gheallaidh	NJ1338
Dykeside	NJ1159	Glen Latterach	NJ1951
Earnhill	NJ0160	Glen Lossie	NJ1347
Earnside	NJ1062	Glen Rinnes	NJ2834
East Mains	NJ2066	Glenallachie	NJ2741
East Meur Gorm Craig	NJ1504	Glenfarclas Distillery	NJ2138
Easter Allanaha	NJ1062	Glenferness	NH9443
Easter Calcots	NJ2563	Glenlatterach Reservoir	NJ1952
Easter Cloves	NJ1461	Glenmarkie	NJ3837
Easter Galcantray	NH8148	Glenmullie	NJ1916
Easter Gaulrig	NJ1514	Gollachy Burn	NJ4064
Easter Greens	NJ0449	Gordonstoun	NJ1869
Easter Lawrenceton	NJ0858	Gordonsward	NJ2564
Easter Newforres	NJ0658	Gow Moss	NJ3853
Easterton	NJ2156	Gownie	NJ2842
Edinkillie	NJ0246	Greenside	NJ2656

Half Davoch	NJ0451	Kirkhill	NJ2462
Hardmuir	NH9556	Kirkmichael Church	NJ1423
Heathfield	NH8050	Kirkton	NJ2462
Heldon Wood	NJ1257	Knauchland	NJ5651
Hempriggs	NJ1063	Knock of Braemoray	NJ0141
Herricks	NJ4549	Knock of Gownie	NJ2942
Highland Boath	NH8844	Knockanbeg	NJ2632
Hill of Glenroads	NJ3031	Kronyhillock Wood	NH8349
Hill of Mackalea	NJ3638	Kylnadrochit Lodge	NJ1419
Hill of Maud	NJ4662	Ladder Hills	NJ2719
Hillhead	NJ2058	Ladycroft	NJ2444
Hill of Mulundy	NJ1053	Laggan	NJ3436
Hillpark	NJ4360	Lagganauld	NJ2026
Hills of Cromdale	NJ1226	Lagganvoulin	NJ1817
Hilton of Delnies	NH8456	Laikenbuie	NH9052
Holme Rose	NH8048	Lecht	NJ2413
Hopeman	NJ1469	Leids Hill	NJ4126
Househill	NH8855	Lein	NJ3365
Howford	NH8753	Lethen Bar	NH9351
Humbrack	NJ2556	Lethenhill	NJ1058
Hunt Hill	NJ2346	Lhanbryde	NJ2761
Inchberry	NJ3155	Lintmill	NJ5165
Inchbroom	NJ2566	Little Aitnoch	NH9640
Inchnacape	NJ2020	Little Pitlurg	NJ4245
Inchrory	NJ1708	Little Urchany	NH8748
Innes House	NJ2764	Loch Allan	NH9939
Innesmill	NJ2863	Loch Belivat	NH9547
Inshoch Wood	NH9558	Loch Dallas	NJ0947
Inveravon	NJ1837	Loch Flemington	NH8152
Invererne	NJ0360	Loch Kirkaldy	NH9641
Inverharroch Farm	NJ3831	Loch Loy	NH9358
Inverlochy	NJ1324	Loch Noir	NJ0945
Johnstripe	NJ0447	Loch of Blairs	NJ0255
Keith	NJ4250	Loch of Boath	NJ0255
Kellas	NJ1754	Loch of the Clans	NH8353
Kerrow	NH9941	Loch Oire	NJ2860
Kilravock	NH8149	Loch Park	NJ3543
Kilravock Castle	NH8149	Loch Romach	NJ0652
Kinermony	NJ2541	Loch Spynie	NJ2366
Kingsteps	NH9057	Loch Trevie	NJ0944
Kingston	NJ3365	Lochan Buidhe	NJ2366
Kinloss	NJ0661	Lochan Tùtach	NH9840
Kinneddar	NJ2269	Lochanan a' Ghubhais	NH9840
Kinnudie	NH9055	Lochbuie	NJ2153
Kintessack	NJ2269	Lochindorb	NH9736
Kirdellbeg	NJ1741	Lochs of Bogmussach	NJ1347
		Lochyhill	NJ0559
		Logie	NJ0150
		Logieburn	NJ2656

Longmorn	NJ2358	Muir of Miltonduff	NJ1859
Lossie estuary	NJ2469	Muir of the Clans	NH8352
Lossiemouth	NJ2370	Muirhead	NJ0863
Lower Auchenreath	NJ3763	Muirton	NJ2268
Lower Blairnain	NJ2738	Muiry Wood	NJ0558
Lower Bogrotten	NJ4861	Mulben	NJ3550
Lower Dallachy	NJ4861	Mulderie Mains	NJ3950
Lower Hempriggs	NJ1064	Mundole	NJ0156
Lyne of Knockando	NJ1745	Myreside	NJ2164
Lynemore	NJ1438		
		Nairn	NH8856
Macbeth's Hillock	NH9656	Nairn Bar	NH9260
Machattie's Cairn	NJ3547	Nether Bellandy	NJ2833
Mains of Kirdells	NJ1739	Nether Birnie	NJ2059
Mains of Balnagowan	NH8154	Nether Dallachy	NJ3663
Mains of Moyness	NH9553	Nether Meft	NJ2764
Manachie Farm	NJ0356	Netherbyre	NJ1557
Manbeen	NJ1959	Netherton	NJ0361
Maryfield	NJ2364	Newbold Wood	NJ0558
Marypark	NJ1938	Newforres Wood	NJ0657
Maviston	NH9458	Newton nursery	NJ1663
Meikle Balloch Hill	NJ3534	Newton of Darnaway	NH9853
Meikle Coire Riabhach	NJ2513	Newton of Innes	NJ2866
Meikle Conval	NJ2937	North Darkland	NJ2662
Meikle Kildrummy	NH8553		
Mid Mains	NJ1966	Oldtown	NJ1367
Middlefield	NJ0360	Ordiquish	NJ3357
Midwood	NJ4261	Ordbreck	NH8747
Mill of Grange	NJ0460	Orton	NJ3153
Millhill	NJ3158	Overton	NJ2745
Milltown	NJ2758		
Milltown of Laggan	NJ2834	Paddockhaugh	NJ2058
Milton Brodie	NJ0962	Parks of Innes	NJ2763
Miltonduff	NJ1860	Paul's Hill	NJ1140
Miltonhill	NJ0963	Penick	NH9356
Monadh an t-Sluich Leith	NJ2617	Philaxdale	NJ1667
Monahoudie Moss	NJ2243	Pitairlie	NJ2465
Monaughty	NJ1260	Pitchroy	NJ1738
Moniemouies	NJ2756	Pitgaveny	NJ2465
Montgrew	NJ4551	Pittendreich	NJ1961
Moor of Tore	NJ1054	Pluscarden	NJ1456
Morinsh Forest	NJ2330	Portgordon	NJ3964
Moss of Barmuckity	NJ2461	Portknockie	NJ4868
Moss of Birnie	NJ2051	Porttannachy	NJ3864
Mosstodloch	NJ3360		
Mossyards	NJ1566	Quarrywood	NJ1864
Moycroft	NJ2362		
Moyness	NH9553	Rafford	NJ0656
Muir of Holmie	NJ4161	Recltich	NJ2834
Muir of Linksfield	NJ2264	Redhill	NJ1661

Reekimlane	NJ3625	Thomshill	NJ2157
Refouble	NH9540	Tips of Corsemaul	NJ3939
Relugas	NH9948	Todholes	NJ1054
Rhinturk	NJ3632	Tom nan Clach	NH8634
Rinour	NJ1740	Tomachar	NJ2432
Rosarie	NJ3849	Tomachlaggan	NJ1522
Roseisle Forest	NJ1166	Tombreck	NJ1218
		Tomcork	NJ1349
Salterhill	NJ2067	Tomintoul	NJ1618
Sanquhar Loch	NJ0458	Tomnamoon	NJ0450
Scabbed Hill	NJ4160	Tomnavoulin	NJ2126
Scalan	NJ2419	Tormore Distillery	NJ1534
Scarffbanks	NJ2366	Torrieston	NJ1658
Scout Hill	NJ3331	Tronach Head	NJ4768
Scotsburn	NJ2760	Troves	NJ2459
Scotstonhill	NJ2662	Tugnet	NJ3465
Seafield	NJ0261	Tynet	NJ3861
Shaw Hill	NH9748		
Sheanspark	NJ3645	Upper Bruntlands	NJ1943
Shearleat	NH8641	Upper Dallachy	NJ3662
Shelter Stone	NJ0001	Upper Knockando	NJ1843
Sherriffmill	NJ2062	Upper Mulben	NJ3652
Sheriffston	NJ2561	Urchany	NH8748
Sluie	NJ0052	Urquhart	NJ2862
South Darkland	NJ2661		
Spey Bay	NJ3767	Wallfield	NJ2965
Spey estuary	NJ3564	Waterford Fm	NJ0259
Speymouth	NJ3564	Waukmill	NJ2362
Speyslaw	NJ3465	Well of The Lecht	NJ2315
Spynie canal	NJ2366	Wellheads	NJ3860
Spynie Palace	NJ2365	Wellhill	NJ0061
St. John's Meads	NJ0155	Wester Calcots	NJ2463
Stob Bac an Fhurain	NJ1303	Wester Delnies	NH8355
Stoneyford pond	NJ0455	Wester Elchies	NJ2542
Strath Avon	NJ1425	Wester Gaulrig	NJ1513
Strathlene	NJ4467	Wester Manbeen	NJ1960
Stronachavie	NJ1318	Wester Newforres	NJ0657
Strondow	NJ1644	Westerfolds	NJ1967
Strypes	NJ2758	Westertown	NJ1925
Succoth	NJ2935	Whiteash Hill	NJ3857
Suie	NJ2724	Whitefolds	NJ2425
Surradale	NJ1665	Whitetree	NJ1156
		Whitewreath	NJ2357
Tanzie	NJ3146	Windyridge	NJ2367
Tapp	NJ1447	Wood of Mulderie	NJ3751
Tarras	NJ0659		
Teindland	NJ2655	Yellowbog	NJ1448
Tervieside	NJ2330		
The Scalp	NJ3636		
Thief's Hill	NJ3654		

