



Birds in Moray & Nairn

2012

Birds in Moray & Nairn in 2012

MORAY & NAIRN BIRD REPORT
No.27 – 2012

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Compiled by Martin Cook, Duncan Gibson, Andy Jensen, and Bob Proctor.

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

Cover photograph: Sanderlings at Lossiemouth in October 2012 (Gordon Biggs).

EDITORIAL

This is the 27th annual edition of *Birds in Moray & Nairn* which was previously named, until 1998, as the *Moray & Nairn Bird Report*. It is the third edition to be published online and can be printed off if desired. Among many benefits of the online approach is that the report is searchable, and can be amended if necessary.

Following the glut of new species in 2011, no new species were added to the Moray & Nairn list in 2012 but a very healthy total of 206 species was recorded, only six fewer than in 2011. Some nationally rare species, such as King Eider and White-billed Diver are now expected annual visitors to Moray & Nairn, while others such as Little Egret, Hobby and Mediterranean Gull are now numerous in some parts of the UK but yet to show a pattern of regular occurrence in our area. Other notable species found in 2012 included Smew, Common Crane, Temminck's Stint, Sabine's Gull, Black Redstart and Lapland Bunting.

In addition to providing a vehicle for the annual *Birds in Moray & Nairn*, the new Birds in Moray and Nairn website www.birdsinmorayandnairn.org now contains a number of topical and informative features. 'Recent records' are frequently added and the excellent work of an increasing number of local bird photographers can be seen. All editions of *Birds in Moray & Nairn* back to 2001 can be accessed, and earlier editions will be added soon. Several new features are planned for the website in the future and all ideas and suggestions are welcome.

The editor would like to thank Duncan Gibson, Andy Jensen and Bob Proctor for their continued assistance in writing sections of the report, and also all those observers and photographers who have contributed their records and 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 (not ad.M)	Ring-necked Duck
Ruddy Duck (not ad.M)	Surf Scoter (not ad.M)	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	American Golden Plover	Temminck's Stint

Pectoral Sandpiper	Buff-breasted Sandpiper	Red-necked Phalarope
Grey Phalarope	Long-tailed Skua	Sabine's Gull
Mediterranean 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
Pallas's Warbler	Yellow-browed Warbler	Reed Warbler
Icterine Warbler	Lesser Whitethroat	Firecrest
Nuthatch	Rose-coloured Starling	Bluethroat
Black Redstart	Yellow Wagtail	Richard's Pipit
Water Pipit	Common Rosefinch	Hawfinch
Lapland Bunting		

Please note the addition of Red-necked Grebe and Green Woodpecker to this list in 2011 and of Rough-legged Buzzard, Great White Egret and Water Pipit in 2012.

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 2012*

F.Antley (FA), A.Backx (ABa), H.Barrett (HBar), B.Bates (BB), G.Biggs (GBig), W.R.P.Bourne (WRPB), P.&I.Brown (P&IB), A.Burgess (ABur), A.Campbell (ACamp), H.Clark (HC), J.Clark (JCl), M.Collins (MColl), G.Connell (GCo), J.Cook (JCC), M.J.H.Cook (MJHC), B.Cosnette (BCo), J.K.Craib (JKC), R.H.Dennis (RHD), D.G.Devonport (DGD), A.Douse (ADo), A.Edward (AE), B.Etheridge (BE), H.Farquhar (HF), D.Fisher (DFi), I.Francis (IFr), G.Garner (GGa), C.A.Gervaise (CAG), D.A.Gibson (DAG), R.Gomes (RG), A.Gordon (AGo), P.Gordon Smith (PGS), K.L.Guthrie (KLG), G.Hamlett (GHa), E.Harwood (EH), R.Hewitt (RFH), P.T.Hirst (PTH), R.H.Hogg (RHH), K.Horsfall (KHo), R.Humpidge (RHu), D.C.Jardine (DCJ), R.D.Johnson (RDJ), J.D.Law (JDL), A.J.Lawrence (AJL), N.London (NL), R.Lyle (RLy), R.McAdam (RMc), S.McArdle (SMc), A.MacAskill (AMca), J.&H.MacDonald (J&HMacD), F.McHugh (FMc), G.McMullins (GMcM), A.McNee (AMcN), D.Main (DMai), J.Matthews (JMa), E.Mitchell (EMit), W.M.Morrison (WMM), S.Murkin (SMu), A.Murray (AMu), M.Murray (MMurr), R.Murray (RMu), G.Nairn (GN), S.O'Kane (SO), K.Paterson (KP), D.Pierce (DPi), T.Poole (TP), G.Prest (GP), J.Preston (JPre), R.Proctor (RP), D.M.Pullan (DMP), D.J.Rennison (DJR), G.Scott (GSc), E.Seal (ES), M.Sharpe (MSh), L.Simpson (LSi), D.M.K.Slater (DMKS), R.Somers Cocks (RSC), B.Stewart (BS), N.Sutherland (NS), I.S.Suttie (ISS), P.Swainson (PSw), D.Tanner (DTa), W.G.Taylor (WGT), I.Thomson (ITHoms), J.Tweedie (JT), P.Webster (PWe), E.Weston (EWe), I.Wilde (IW), A.Williams (AW), R.Wilson (RW), I.Wood (Iwo), J.Wood (JWo), V.Wotton (VW), M.Wynn (MWy), 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: Following a national survey in 2002 it was decided to repeat the survey in Moray & Nairn by visiting as many previously occupied breeding sites as possible (see Mute Swan Survey 2012). Unfortunately, 2012 was very wet and cold during the summer, however, despite the poor weather a total of 25 apparently occupied territories were recorded (24 pairs and a single adult). A total of 19 pairs produced 74 young; of these, 53 appear to have fledged. The mean total of 3.8 fledged young in 2012 is slightly lower than the mean of 4.4 fledged young for 2002-2011.

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

Year	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Pairs	17	11	13	18	19	10	14	17	17	13	19
Young fledged	56	52	67	65	110	51	59	57	84	53	53
Mean	3.3	4.7	5.2	3.6	5.8	5.1	4.2	3.4	4.9	4.1	3.8

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	65	44	nc			Breeders			33	28	nc	11
Findhorn Bay	14	23	11	40	55	53	7	1	8	39	17	23
Lossie estuary	0	0	0	2	7	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Loch Spynie	108	114	46	52	42	17	30	35	49	67	94	101
Cloddach	31	26	nc			Breeders			nc	46	nc	49
Spey estuary	3	4	3	4	9	10	16	10	11	12	2	3

nc = no count received

No counts of ten or more individuals were received from other sites.

Coastal records included: 1 Nairn Bar 12 Feb.

Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus**Common migrant and winter visitor.*

Winter-spring: In Nairn District, five sites were used this year, compared to two in 2011. Largest counts from each site were: 17 Loch Flemington 15 Jan, 16 Kildrummie 23 Feb, 20 Delnies 21 Mar, 8 Cran Loch 13 Jan and 7 Loch Loy 11 Mar. The Loch Flemington, Kildrummie and Delnies flocks would appear to relate to the same group, while sightings at Cran Loch and Loch Loy suggest another group. In Moray, birds were recorded at nine sites (two more than 2011), largest counts from each site were: 20 Barmuckity 8 Jan, 5 Cloddach quarry 8 Jan, 41 Loch na Bo 27 Feb, 25 Lower Mains (Findrassie) 10 Mar, 57 Loch Spynie 13 Mar, 34 Gilston 15 Mar, 19 flying north Portknockie 27 Mar, 10 Muirton 31 Mar and a single adult Loch Oire 26 Feb and 5 Mar. Well inland during this period was one flying west at Archiestown 6 Jan.

Spring: The largest flock during this period was 16 Loch Spynie 1 Apr. Well inland were 4 flying north along the River Spey at Aberlour 9 Apr. In late spring a juvenile remained at Urquhart from 29 Apr-11 May.

Autumn: The first record for the autumn period was a single flying west over the Elgin-Lossiemouth road 18 Sep, with the first flock, consisting of 12 birds at Loch Spynie on the following day. The only other reports in September consisted of 3 Burghead Bay on 28th and a single at Loch Flemington on 30th. In October, 11 areas held flocks; the largest group was recorded at Duffus castle where an estimated 150 were present on 21st. No other flocks exceeded 100 individuals. Largest numbers from other sites in October involved 31 Findhorn Bay on 4th, 5 Montgrew 13th, 13 Cloddach quarry 21st, 5 Spey estuary 23rd, 27 Kinloss 27th, 62 Inchberry 28th, 37 Clochan 29th and 6 Loch Loy 29th. Three flocks were seen offshore from beaches: 12 Burghead Bay 24 Oct, 11 Burghead Bay 25 Oct and 4 flying west from the east beach, Lossiemouth 28 Oct.

In November, flocks with ten or more individuals were seen at 13 sites, the largest count was 120 North Darkland on 24th. Elsewhere, 7 Muir of Lochs on 2nd & 5th, 17 Loch Spynie on 3rd, 6 east Kingston on 3rd, 8 Lhanbryde on 5th, 18 Alves on 8th, 24 Clochan on 16th (regular all month), one west Burghead Bay on 17th, 49 Burnside of Dipple on 18th, 12 Loch Loy on 18th, 12 Findhorn Bay on 18th (regular all month), 18 Culbin on 19th, 23 Geddes on 22nd, 21 Salterhill on 24th, 76 Calcots on 25th, 4 over Bishopmill, Elgin on 27th, 90 Lochhill on 28th and 90 Loch na Bo on 28th.

Winter (December): In Nairn District, typically recorded from only two sites; 13 Loch Flemington on 16th and 10 Nairn Bar on 16th may relate to the same group. In Moray, seen at 14 sites: the largest count was 310 Garmouth on 17th (with 198 still present at Lochhill on 18th).

Bean Goose *Anser fabalis**Rare winter visitor.*

This species remained in the early part of the year from the 2011 influx. This influx resulted in a minimum of 42 birds, but potentially a maximum of 110 individuals, depending on the possibility of flock duplication. The vast majority of records in the 2011 invasion related to Tundra Bean Geese *Anser (fabalis/serrirostris) rossicus*, which some authorities consider to be a separate species.

Tundra Bean Goose

At Parks of Innes a group of 42 was seen on 7-8 Jan (RHD, MJHC, RP) and an estimated 20 still near Garmouth 15 Feb (ABa). Possibly the same as the flock of 42 seen at Lochhill on 18 Nov 2011.

Unspecified race

One group appears to be involved in an area south of Elgin (8 on 14 Jan [RHD]), then at the Cloddach quarry (2 on 22 Jan [CAG]). One remained at the Cloddach quarry on 22 Jan which appeared to have been injured by wildfowlers (MJHC).

Pink-footed Goose *Anser brachyrhynchus**Very common migrant and winter visitor.*

Winter (January-mid March): Much rarer in Nairn District until March when skeins (not counted) were seen over Nairn on 11th, and an estimated 3000 near Nairn on 11th & 23rd. Otherwise, a single individual seen on

Culbin Bar 15 Jan and Nairn Bar 12 Feb. Typical for Moray District, well scattered flocks were reported throughout the coastal area but only four sites contained flocks over 1000 individuals: 1500 Coltfoot 10 Jan, 7000 Milntown 23 & 29 Jan, 1800 Roseisle 21 Feb and 2000 Lochhill 16 Mar.

Spring passage (maximum counts): The largest flocks seen during this period were characteristically in the Kinloss/Findhorn Bay area; 4500 Findhorn Bay 3 Apr and 5000 (including two leucistic individuals) on 23 Apr, 2500+ Easter Newforres 24 Apr and 2500 Burgie 24 Apr. Elsewhere, numbers were typically much lower with the only sizeable flocks being an estimated 1000 Windyridge 1 Apr, 1020 Lochhill 11 Apr and an estimated 1000 Nairn 11 Apr. During this period another record of a leucistic individual (from Findhorn Bay?) was seen at Windyridge 1 Apr. Turnover at sites in April clearly shown at Broadley (Clochan) when 73 on 8th, increasing dramatically to 850 on 11th, dropping to 28 on 23rd and a slight increase to 80 on 24th.

Summer: No summer records were received this year.

Autumn: The first arrival was a skein of 250 flying west at Portknockie 4 Sep (LSi) (this is the earliest arrival date since MNBR started in 1985), however, other early skeins were also recorded on 7th over Forres (not counted) and on 9th when 270 at Findhorn Bay (the Portknockie skein?). Small skeins were recorded arriving at Lossiemouth 11 Sep: 75, 40 east, and 50, 22, 21, 21 & 7 coming onshore during a seawatch. Between 14-29 Sep a total of 15 skeins was reported, with the largest numbers seen on 12th (3000 Findhorn Bay) and 18th (2000+ Netherton [Findhorn Bay]). In October, the largest flocks were recorded at Findhorn Bay (9960 on 14th) and Duffus (4000 on 22nd). In November, flocks over 1000 were seen at Findhorn Bay (4000 on 19th, 1000+ on 14th and 23rd). The largest flock in Nairn District in November was 400+ at Culbin on 4th.

Winter (December): Typically for recent years, three large flocks were reported, all exceeded 1000 individuals: c.5000 Findhorn Bay on 17th, 2674 (counted from photographs) Clochan on 5th and c.2000 near Roseisle on 6th.

White-fronted Goose *Anser albifrons*

Very scarce winter visitor.

Three records related to the Greenland race *A.a.flavirostris* - the first since 2009.

Two were seen at Roseisle 21 Feb (RHD) and singles at Corskie farm (Garmouth) 18 Feb (amongst European White-fronted Geese [RP]) and Windyridge 1 Apr amongst Pink-footed Geese (DAG).

Flocks of European White-fronted Goose *A.a.albifrons* remained from the unprecedented influx which occurred from mid-November 2011.

Garmouth area: One flock was present in the Garmouth area in January and February. Around Parks of Innes a group of 40 were seen on 7 Jan (RHD) with an estimated 150 present on 8 Jan (RP). The group moved to Corbiewell (Garmouth) where 160 were feeding on short grass on 28 Jan (RP) and at least 101 were still present on 30 Jan (ABa). In mid-February the flock had moved a short distance to Corskie farm: 176 on 15th, 163 on 18th and 221 (largest flock in 2012) on 19th (ABa, RP). The flock was then relocated at Muir of Lochs (130 on 26 Feb) (RP).

Elgin area: A group of 12 was south of Elgin on 14 Jan (RHD).

Spey estuary: A single individual was seen 31 May (DMP, RHD).

Unspecified race

As both Greenland and European White-fronted Geese were present in the early part of the year, a single bird seen at Loch Spynie 10 Mar (DFi) could have related to either race. However, two at Duffus castle 21 Oct (CAG) probably related to Greenland White-fronted Geese.



European White-fronted Geese, Corbiewell January 2012 (Photo: Tony Backx)

Greylag Goose *Anser anser*

Rare breeder and very common winter visitor.

Winter-spring: Flocks containing 500 or more birds were recorded at only one site: 1000 south of Elgin 14 Jan. Seventeen other sites held small flocks, all under 400 individuals, confirming that this once common species has become more scarce locally as birds winter further north.

Range of all flock sizes reported containing less than 400 individuals January-April 2012:

1-100	101-200	201-300	301-400
39	7	3	1

Summer: Present around the Spey estuary 1 May-29 Jul (seen on 13 occasions), maximum count was seven on 1 & 16 May, some of the later sightings may have involved the nearby breeding pair. The only other records involved a single at Loch Spynie 20 May and a group of 24 flying east off Lossiemouth 10 Jun.

Breeding: At the Lochindorb breeding area a count of 750 on 20 Jun (RHD) was the only record received. The new breeding site found in 2011 at Cunninghaugh pool was used again this year; a pair present on 20 Apr, then seen incubating on 18 & 21 May (MJHC); the pool dried up in June and no young were seen.

Late summer: Reports from the coastal strip are still increasing during this period, presumably as a result of local post-breeding movements in July-early September but before the traditional arrival date for Icelandic breeders in late September. Apart from 25 Loch Loy 9 Sep all other records during this period were from the Findhorn Bay area where the maximum was an estimated 200 Netherton 30 Aug.

Autumn: Now difficult to assess which are local birds and which are Icelandic breeders returning in late September. The only large counts (100 or more) during October were: 103 Spey estuary on 20th (and 101 there on 28th), 100 Duffus castle on 21st and 135 Clochan on 29th. In November, only three counts exceeded 100 from three sites; 106 Spey estuary on 15th, 300 Nether Dallachy on 29th and 270 Clochan on 30th. The remaining four counts in November did not exceed 80 individuals.

Winter (December max. site counts only): Two sites recorded flocks over 500; Lochhill (1100 on 18th) and Clochan (820 on 1st, 1319 on 5th, 645 on 8th and 900 on 12th).

Ross's Goose *Anser rossii*

Rare visitor or escape.

One was present at Easter Newforres 23-28 Apr (RFH, RHD, AJL, RP, MJHC, FA, DAG) and was aged as a first-winter (RP). This is the second record for Moray following an adult in 1991 that frequented fields at Findhorn Bay 15-19 Mar, then moved to Muirton cottage, near Lossiemouth 23 Mar-16 Apr, prior to being seen on its northbound migration at Kinlochbervie (Sutherland) 16 May (*Birding World* 4(4):137-140 & *Rare Birds* 2(4):125-126).

Canada Goose *Branta canadensis*

Scarce migrant in summer, rare in winter.

Winter: One record, of 4 Nairn 2 Feb (DAG).

Summer and early autumn passage: Regularly seen at Findhorn Bay throughout June-September passing through Moray to the Beauly Firth moulting area. Records included, in June (1 on 11th, 6 on 13th, 8 on 15th and 4 on 19th), in July (9 on 23rd & 26th), in August (5 on 1st, 31 on 11th, 36 on 22nd, 24 on 26th, 100+ on 27th and 3 on 30th) and in September (35 on 1st & 3rd, 73 on 5th, 46 on 7th, 17 on 8th, 45 on 9th and 60 on 10th). Elsewhere, 3 Spey estuary 28 Aug.

Barnacle Goose *Branta leucopsis*

Scarce migrant and winter visitor.

Winter-spring: Seen at seven sites. A single in the Rosiesle area was seen at Coltfeld 28 Jan & 3 Feb and Roseisle 18 & 21 Feb. In April, 3 Findhorn Bay on 23rd and 2 Easter Newforres on 24th were considered to involve part of the same group. In late spring, another group of records that could relate to one individual concerned: 1 Spey estuary 8 & 26 May and 12 Jun, 1 Loch Spynie 23 May and 1 Lossie estuary 3 Jun (an adult in each case).

Autumn: Small numbers seen during September and October: 2 Lossie estuary 20 Sep, followed by 17 flying east Burghead 26 Sep, 3 flying south Findhorn Bay 28 Sep, 6 Findhorn Bay 14 Oct and 12 Spey estuary 14 Oct.

Winter: Only one record - 2 Clochan 5 Dec.

Brent Goose *Branta bernicla*

Scarce migrant and winter visitor.

All records assigned to a race, related to Light-bellied Brent Goose *B.b.hrota*.

Winter: Present in the Nairn area from 15 Jan-20 Apr; of the eight counts submitted during this period only one exceeded 60 individuals (max. count was 64 on 12 Feb), most counts were below 35 individuals. Elsewhere, singles on the foreshore at Burghead 28 Apr and Kingston 8 May.

Autumn passage period (Sep-Oct): Recorded daily at Lossie estuary 10-20 Sep, usually 1-3 individuals, but flocks of 15 on 10th and 12 on 17th-18th. Also 20 flying between Forres-Kinloss 10 Sep, 8 Findhorn Bay 15 Sep, 4 Delnies 16 Sep, 13 Nairn Bar 14 Oct and 19 Kingsteps 29 Oct. Three were seen on 8 Oct during a seawatch at Lossiemouth and then briefly at Lossie estuary.

Winter: From the Nairn area were 22 Nairn Bar 13 Nov, 28 Nairn west beach 11 Dec, 29 Nairn Bar 15 Dec and 31 Nairn 16 Dec.

Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*

Fairly common visitor in winter and spring. Scarce breeder.

Breeding: Broods were seen at Findhorn Bay (13 chicks) and the Spey estuary (10 newly hatched and two broods of large chicks contained six and four young). One crèche containing 24 young was seen Findhorn

Bay 4-7 Jul. In potential breeding areas were 'pairs' at Broadley (Clochan), Burnside of Birnie pool, Cloddach quarry, Loch Spynie and Lossie estuary. Display noted at Lossie estuary.

Best monthly counts at coastal sites were as follows:

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Nairn/Culbin Bars	145	124	nc	8	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	13	nc	130
Findhorn Bay	52	61	17	20	38	108	96	1	nc	nc	2	9
Lossie estuary	0	1	2	2	2	2	0	7	0	0	0	0
Spey estuary	0	4	9	6	7	5	2	4	1	0	0	0

The seven at Lossie estuary 9 Aug involved a group of juveniles which flew off east.

Counts from other coastal sites: 20 Delnies 22 Feb and 6 in flight Nairn west beach 26 Mar.

Mandarin Duck *Aix galericulata*

Probable escape or feral origin.

In the Elgin area a pair was present on the Cooper Park pond, Elgin 2-28 Jan (RP, RHD) and a single male was present at the Cloddach quarry 2 May (IFr, CAG). More unusual was a male Findhorn Bay 24 Oct (RHD). A pair was still present at Newton of Budgate (Cawdor) 6 April (JCI) - these are likely to have escaped from a collection at Clava (per Hugh Insley in MNBR 2011).

Wigeon *Anas penelope*

Very common winter visitor and rare breeder.

Breeding: Although no breeding was confirmed from the Dava breeding area, sightings of a single individual were received from the same lochan on 13 May (KLG) and 30 Jun (MJHC).

Non-breeders in summer (May-July): 6 males Findhorn Bay 7 Jun, 1-2 regular Loch Spynie 1 May-31 Jul (max. 4 on 10 & 29 May), 1 male Lossie estuary 27 May, 3 & 23 Jun and 1-3 Spey estuary 3 May-18 Jul.

Only one large count in late summer: 36 Findhorn Bay 10 Jul.

Winter: Monthly maximum counts at main coastal sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Nairn/Culbin Bars	358	461	nc	nc	nc	269	100	437
Findhorn Bay	636	701	26	60	600	1538	660	455
Lossie estuary	1200	1363	18	50	208	548	1200	798
Spey estuary	210	277	66	18	45	165	135	96

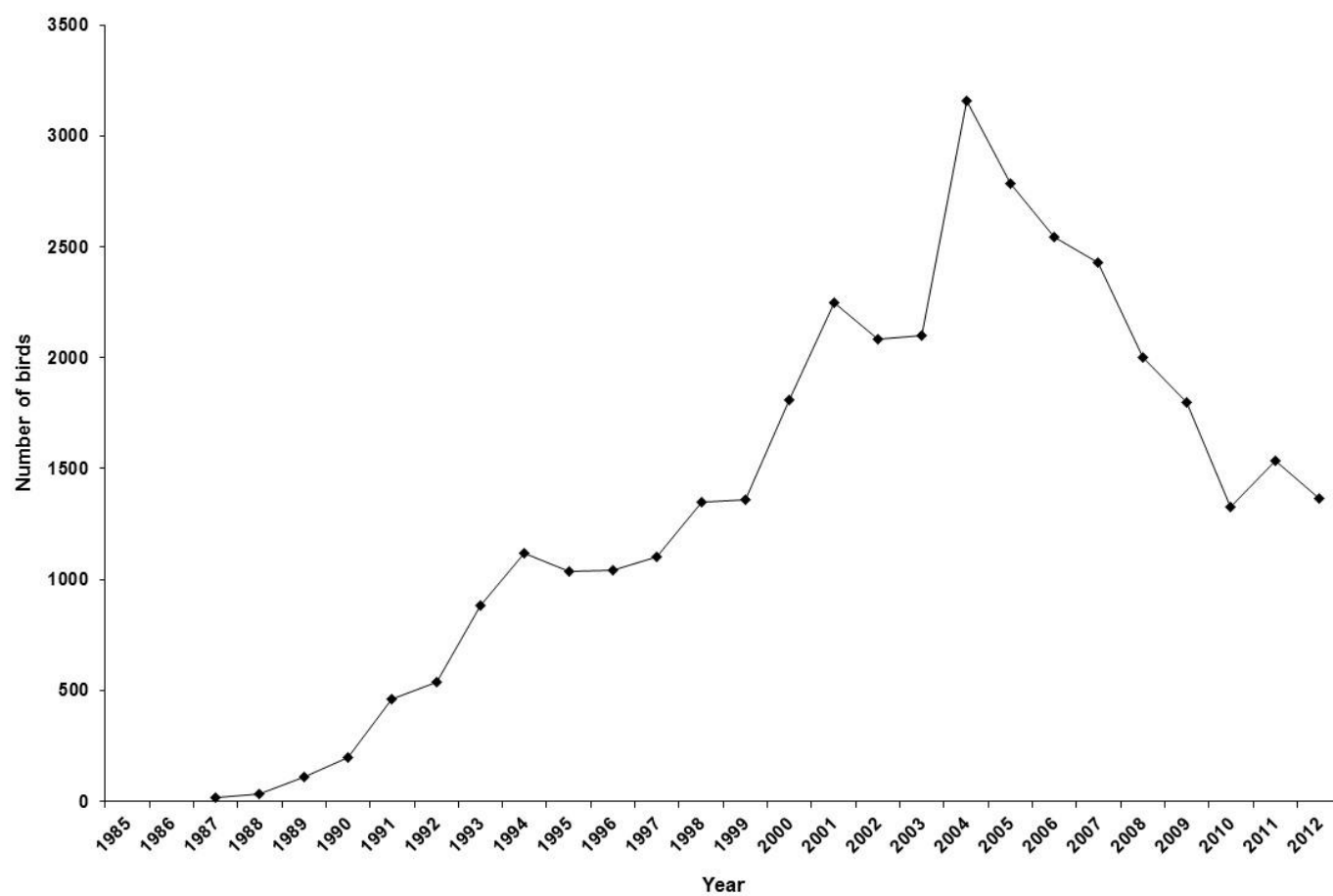
Maximum counts from other coastal sites included: 97 Burghead Bay 15 Jan, 1 male Gollachy Burn mouth 16 Jan, 18 River Nairn mouth 8 Jan, 40 Delnies 11 Dec, 4 Portgordon-Strathlene 16 Dec and 11 Delnies-Nairn 16 Dec.

Following a slight increase in numbers of Wigeon using the Lossie estuary in 2011, there was a slight decrease in 2012. The peak count of 3158 occurred in 2004.



Wigeon on the Lossie estuary, October 2011 (Photo: Bob Proctor)

Annual maxima of Wigeon at the Lossie estuary 1985-2012:



On freshwater:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Loch Flemington	59	12	nc	6	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc
Loch Loy	140	nc	129	8	nc	2	nc	40	nc
Loch Spynie	2	16	1	4	5	2	6	3	25
Cloddach quarry	220	209	nc	nc	nc	nc	90	nc	376
Loch Oire	123	86	21	33	nc	nc	74	nc	124

Maximum counts from other freshwater sites included: 41 Nether Birnie pool 2 Jan, 30 Cran Loch 13 Jan, 15 Dallachy tip pool 26 Jan, 61 Loch na Bo 26 Feb and 12 Loch of Blairs 4 Nov.

Gadwall *Anas strepera*

Scarce visitor.

Seen at seven sites (five in 2011).

Loch Flemington: A single male on 22 Jan (KLG).

Loch Spynie: A single female on 10 Mar (DFi) and a pair on 19 May (DAG).

Loch Oire: One record of a female on 17 Jan (EH). A male was present on 13 occasions throughout the year (EH, RHH) and there were 2 males on 20 Aug (EH).

Loch na Bo: A pair on 27 Jan (MJHC). Single males were recorded on 7 & 16 Oct and 8 Dec (MJHC) and two individuals were present on 21 Dec (HC).

Spey estuary: A pair 27-28 Apr and 1 May (MJHC). Two males on 9 Sep (RP).

Buckpool: A pair on 29 Jan (RP). Considered the same as the pair at Portgordon.

Portgordon: A pair at the Gollachy Burn mouth with Mallards on 15 & 17 Jan and 12 Feb (MJHC). Considered the same as the pair at Buckpool.

Teal *Anas crecca*

Scarce breeder and very common winter visitor.

Breeding: No confirmed breeding reports were received this year.

Potential coastal strip breeding sites included Loch Spynie (pair), Spey estuary, Cunninghaugh pool and Dallachy tip pool.

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

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Loch Flemington	1	10	nc	7	nc	nc	2	nc	1
Nairn/Culbin Bars	365	220	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	12
Cran Loch	250	nc	25	60	nc	25	nc	260	nc
Findhorn Bay	145	nc	45	50	130	nc	27	nc	30
Lossie estuary	62	84	32	30	0	10	20	94	68
Loch Spynie	100	200	30	70	1	6	150	20	308
Spynie Canal	150	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	130	300
Cloddach quarry	4	nc	nc	nc	2	nc	29	nc	4
Loch Oire	6	5	3	nc	nc	nc	2	nc	45
Loch na Bo	6	7	3	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	31
Spey estuary	125	73	75	65	117	173	147	60	88

Other large counts included: c.20 Burnside of Birnie pool 10 Mar, 30 Loch Loy 13 Apr, 31 Montgrew 1 Sep, 17 Netherton (Findhorn Bay) 5 Sep, c.100 Auchtertyre quarry (Miltonduff) 7 Oct and 42 Chapelton (Forres) 25 Nov.

Offshore records: 13 flying west Lossiemouth 25 Sep and 5 on the sea Tugnet 9 Sep.

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*

Common resident breeder and winter visitor.

Breeding: The mean brood size from eight broods was 7.3 chicks. All reported broods were within the coastal strip at Burnside of Birnie, Cloddach quarry, Cooper Park pond (Elgin), Loch Spynie, Loch Oire, Dipple and the Spey estuary. A female appeared to be sitting on a nest on the tern platform at Loch Spynie 9 May. Other potential sites occupied during the breeding season were Dava lochans, Cunninghaugh pool, Dallachy tip pool, Findhorn Bay and Lossie estuary.

Regular counts from freshwater sites:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Loch Spynie	202	158	11	5	5	nc	210	179	33	12	26	100
Loch Oire	80	54	18	15	7	14	167	nc	nc	42	nc	65

Other counts from freshwater sites:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Loch Flemington	62	44	nc	nc	2	nc	4
Loch Loy	50	nc	18	7	nc	90	nc
Cran Loch	35	nc	10	5	nc	30	nc
Cooper park pond (Elgin)	62	nc	nc	19	7	nc	26
Cloddach quarry	90	20	nc	nc	137	nc	150
Loch na Bo	93	106	21	nc	32	nc	114
Dallachy tip pool	18	9	nc	nc	nc	nc	5

Counts exceeding 50 on other freshwater sites included 50 Spynie Canal 21 Jan, 58 Brodie Castle pond 25 Jun, 89 Cloddach quarry 4 Aug, 50 Fochabers lake 20 Oct and 80 Chapelton (Forres) 25 Nov.

Coastal sites:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Nairn/Culbin Bars	207	182	nc	nc	nc	20	nc	132
Findhorn Bay	330	154	nc	10	nc	76	106	175
Lossie estuary	8	0	0	19	13	0	4	12
Spey estuary	18	10	39	72	101	60	30	8
Portgordon-Strathlene	182	139	nc	nc	nc	42	nc	137

Other coastal counts exceeding 50 birds included 58 Portgordon harbour 9 Jan, 86 Gollachy Burn mouth 23 Feb, 69 Lossie estuary 24 Jul and 109 Buckpool 14 Nov. Unusual records of five Portknockie harbour 4 May and seven in Buckie harbour (sheltering after storms) 29 Dec.

Pintail *Anas acuta*

Fairly common winter visitor and migrant. Occasional breeder.

Present at nine sites (five in 2011).

Nairn: A male on the River Nairn 27 Jan, 7 & 11 Feb (KLG, SMc).

Nairn Bar: 7 on 15 Jan and 5 on 16 Dec (DJa, GP).
 Culbin Bar: 2 on 3 Feb (RHD).
 Cran Loch: 2 on 11 Mar (ADo).
 Findhorn Bay: Recorded from 15 Jan-9 Apr and 16 Sep-31 Dec. Eight records in excess of 100. The count of 216 on 12 Feb (ABa, BE) now becomes the highest count ever recorded in Moray & Nairn, with the previous highest, also from Findhorn Bay, being 212 on 6 Feb 2011.

Maximum monthly counts at Findhorn Bay:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
85	216	nc	4	3	50	86	138

Loch Spynie: A pair on 18 Mar (LSi).
 Loch Oire: A female on 16 Oct (MJHC).
 Lossie estuary: A juvenile male on 28 Sep (RP, DAG).
 Spey estuary: A pair on 22 Mar (MJHC).

Garganey *Anas querquedula*

Very scarce migrant.

Present at one site.

Loch Spynie: A male on 8 May (FA) was the only record this year.

Shoveler *Anas clypeata*

Occasional breeder and scarce migrant.

Seen at four sites (two in 2011).

Burnside of Birnie pool: A male on 15 Jun (EMit).

Loch Spynie: Only present in April and October. In April, 1 male on 2nd, 25th & 26th (CAG, Spynie Book,) and a pair on 22nd (HF). In October, 1 female on 7th-16th (HF, DAG, JDL, RG).

Lossie estuary: A male flew downstream on 19 Apr and continued out to sea (RP).

Spey estuary: 1 on 5 Aug and 2 males on 23 Oct (MJHC).

Pochard *Aythya ferina*

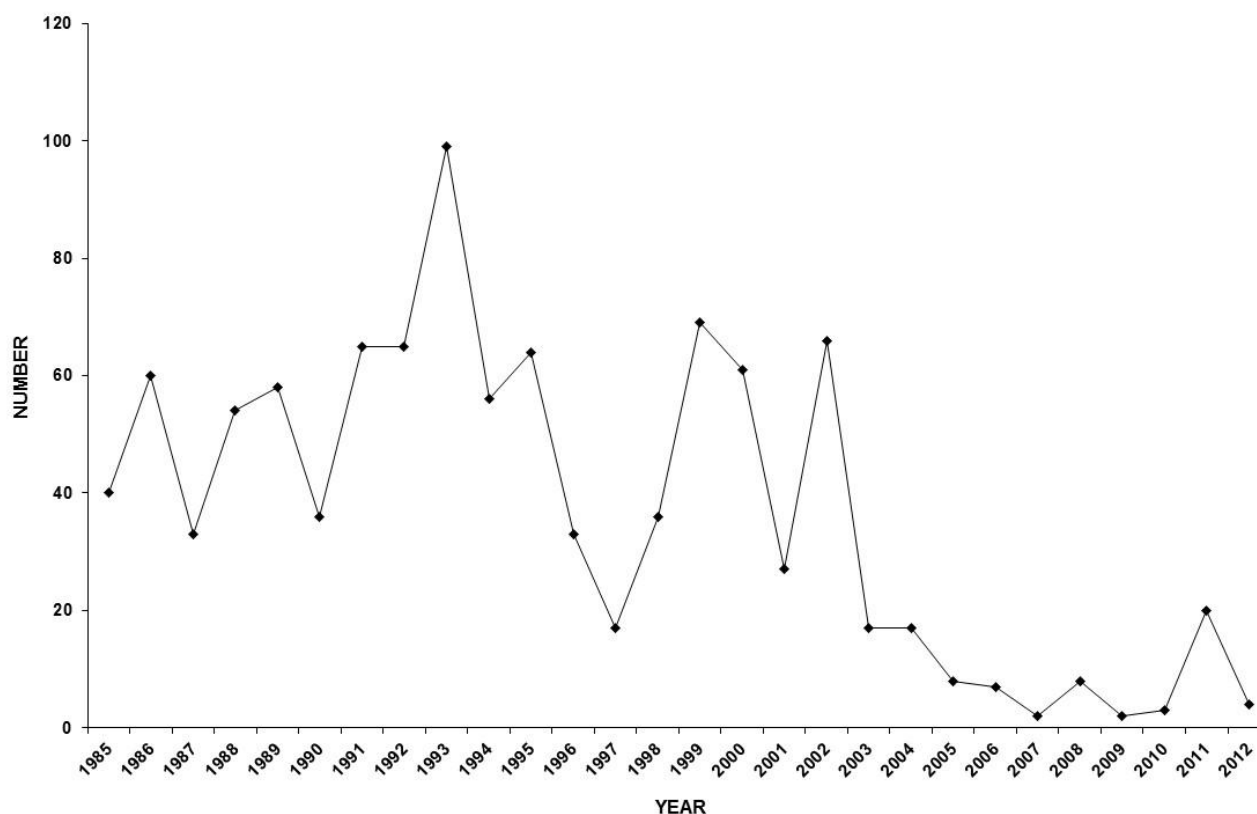
Scarce winter visitor and occasional breeder.

Recorded at two sites (five in 2011).

Fochabers lake: A male on 20 Oct (MJHC).

Loch Spynie: 3 on 1, 4, 27 & 28 Jan (RHD, MJHC, Spynie Book), otherwise 1-2 present 3 Jan-29 May. In late summer, 1 male on 14 & 29 Jul (DAG). Later in the year, 1 male on 13-17 Oct, increasing to 4 males on 15 Dec, before dropping to 2 males on 23rd and then just a single male on 28th & 30th (HF, DAG, RP, RG). Apart from a small influx in 2011, there has been an obvious decline in numbers at Loch Spynie since 2003.

Annual maxima of Pochard at Loch Spynie 1985-2012:



Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligala*

Scarce breeder and common winter visitor.

Breeding: The mean brood size from 11 broods was 6.4 chicks. Broods were only seen at Cooper Park pond (Elgin) and Loch Spynie. An Otter was seen eating one duckling at Loch Spynie 14 Jul (CAG), following an identical incident in 2011.

Other potential breeding sites occupied during the summer months included Burnside of Birnie pool, Cloddach quarry, Dava lochans (pair), Kingston and Loch Oire.

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

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Cran Loch	nc	nc	nc	2	nc	nc	nc	nc	1	nc	6	nc
Loch Spynie	73	96	45	46	28	3	29	51	37	63	92	76
Cloddach quarry	28	85	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	5	nc	28	nc	20
Cooper Park	22	31	12	7	0	0	0	0	3	13	12	34
Loch na Bo	25	41	20	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	58	nc	24
Loch Oire	4	9	32	13	10	8	8	nc	nc	5	nc	10
Spey estuary	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	1	nc	nc	7	12	2
Dallachy tip pool	5	3	nc	6	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	8	10	10

Elsewhere, the only other high counts received were 10 at both Loch Loy 11 Mar and Loch of Blairs 4 Nov.

Scaup *Aythya marila**Scarce winter visitor.*

On the sea, scarce again this year with only two records received: a single female Nairn/Culbin Bar 9 Feb (MWy) and a male off Nairn 28 Sep (DMKS).

At estuarine sites:

Findhorn Bay: 1 male on 10 Sep and a female on 22-23 Oct (GMcM).

Spey estuary: 1 female on 20 Oct and 2-11 Nov (four dates) (MJHC).

At freshwater sites:

Loch Spynie: In the early part of the year, a female was seen on 18 dates between 1 Jan-10 Feb. Two females were present on 20, 24 & 29 Jan and 3 & 7 Feb. (DAG, RP et al.)

Later in the year, in October, a pair on 17th (RSC) and a single female on 20th (DAG).



Female Scaup [right] with Tufted Ducks, Spey estuary November 2012 (Photo: Martin Cook)

Eider *Somateria mollissima**Scarce breeder, common offshore.*

Breeding: The only breeding record was a nest containing three eggs at Tronach Head 20 May (RMu).

Regular counts from Burghead Bay and Spey Bay:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Burghead Bay	110	46	134	100	15	nc	1	30	182	583	40	50
Spey Bay	17	10	176	9	7	nc	5	26	7	16	14	24

Other counts included:

	Jan	Feb	Oct	Nov	Dec
Delnies-Nairn	14	10	3	nc	29
Nairn/Culbin Bars	17	36	13	nc	5
Burghead-Hopeman	120	30	nc	nc	124
Portgordon-Strathlene	56	39	12	nc	36

No other counts over 100 were received.

Groups inside harbours included: Burghead (32 on 30 Jan, 35 on 29 Nov and 79 on 2 Dec) and Buckie (24 on 29 Nov).

A male with 'sails' suggestive of Northern Eider *S.m.borealis* was seen off Burghead on 4 Nov & 2 Dec (RP)



Eiders at Burghead, November 2012 (Photo: Tony Backx)

King Eider *Somateria spectabilis*

Rare visitor.

Seen in both winter periods in the Burghead area, however, only one male was recorded this year.

Early winter period: Only seen 13 Mar (FA).

Late winter period: Seen from 24 Sep-25 Dec (ES, DPi *et al.*).

King Eiders have been seen in Moray & Nairn in 21 of the last 37 years, although the likelihood of returning birds makes any assessment of the number of individuals involved very uncertain. All have been males.



King Eider, Burghead October 2012 (Photo: Tony Backx)

Long-tailed Duck *Clangula hyemalis**Common winter visitor offshore.*No coastal summer records (June-July) were received for the 5th consecutive year.

Coastal records in late spring: 8 Burghead 2 May.

Maximum monthly counts were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Oct	Nov	Dec
Delnies-Nairn	23	nc	nc	nc	20	nc	80
Nairn	49	nc	10	15	36	20	nc
Nairn Bar	268	90	nc	nc	340	nc	47
Culbin Bar	186	48	nc	nc	29	nc	105
Off Findhorn	nc	nc	20	5	450	100	60
Burghead Bay	140	120	900	6	221	40	135
Off Burghead	nc	nc	nc	200	60	nc	60
Burghead-Hopeman	11	5	nc	nc	nc	nc	22
Spey Bay	16	nc	21	41	44	10	5
Portgordon-Strathlene	5	9	nc	nc	nc	nc	5

Maximum counts from inside harbours included: 5 Buckie harbour 26 Apr, 1 Porgordon harbour 30 Dec and 1 Burghead harbour 29 Nov & 16 Dec.

One inland record, of a female on Loch na Bo 23 Dec (EH).

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

Maximum monthly counts were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Delnies-Nairn	21	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	1
Nairn Bar	234	125	nc	nc	nc	47	nc	58
Culbin Bar	52	22	nc	nc	nc	74	nc	41
Off Findhorn	nc	nc	50	nc	170	130	50	50
Burghead Bay	129	75	nc	200	nc	85	14	12
Burghead-Hopeman	39	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	27
Spey Bay	nc	4	225	nc	nc	89	nc	1

Other counts exceeding 50 individuals were 78 Spey Bay 16 Apr and 200 Burghead Bay 23 Apr.

Summer records included 12 Spey Bay 11 Jun.

Scoter sp: several large counts probably related to Common Scoter; 120 Roseisle 24 Jan, 140 off Findhorn 23 Mar, 250 Burghead 26 Apr and 140 off Findhorn 24 Oct.

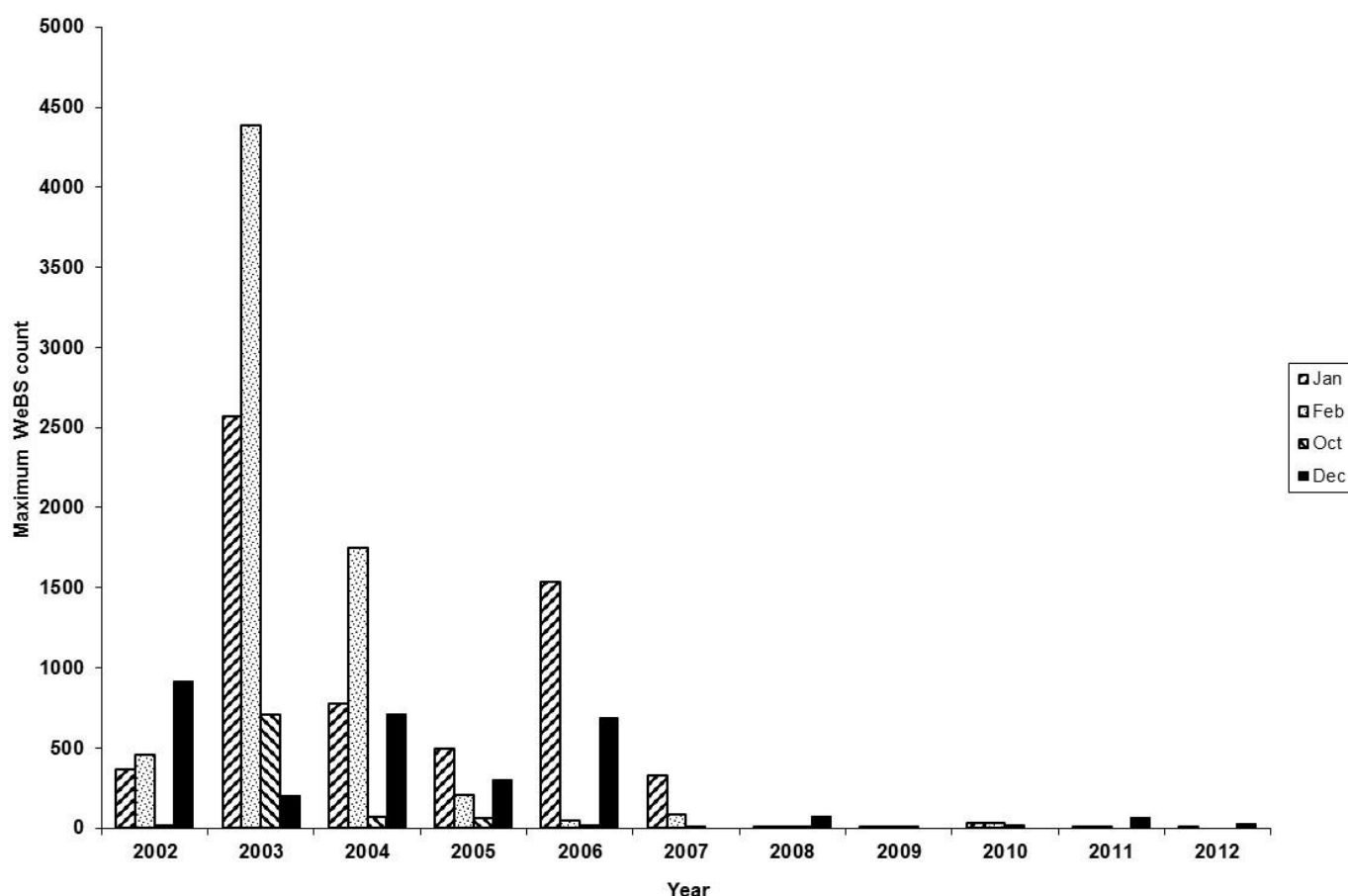
Velvet Scoter *Melanitta fusca**Fairly common winter visitor.*

Maximum counts for main areas were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Oct	Nov	Dec
Nairn Bar	20	5	nc	2	nc	13
Culbin Bar	2	27	nc	nc	nc	12
Burghead Bay	44	34	5	25	8	96
Spey Bay	11	nc	nc	2	nc	nc

These counts show the continuation of a major reduction in numbers.

Combined WeBS count for Velvet Scoter from Nairn and Culbin Bars 2002-2012:



In April, small groups were seen in Burghead Bay: 10+ on 21st, 8 on 23rd (off Roseisle Forest car park) and four on 23rd (off Findhorn).

Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*

Rare breeder and fairly common winter visitor.

Breeding: No breeding records were received this year.

Display was noted at Burnside of Birnie pool (29 Jan) and Loch Spynie (6 Jan & 26 Feb) with one pair copulating at Loch Spynie 8 Jan.

Spring records: Cloddach quarry (1 on 2 May) and Loch Spynie (latest was a female on 22 May).

Coastal summer records included 7 at the mouth of the Spey on 3 May and still 4 there on 8 May.

In winter, maximum counts on most frequented lochs were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Oct	Nov	Dec
Loch Flemington	9	15	nc	12	1	nc	16
Loch Spynie	70	47	29	34	15	30	37
Cloddach quarry	5	6	nc	nc	nc	nc	1
Loch na Bo	7	22	44	nc	3	nc	6
Loch Oire	3	2	4	nc	nc	nc	4
Dallachy tip pool	12	26	nc	5	5	2	10

The spring build-up in numbers was evident on Loch Spynie and Loch na Bo, with smaller spring increases on Loch Flemington and Dallachy tip pool.

Unusually, a female on Cooper Park pond, Elgin 2 Dec (RP).

Seen inland on the River Spey during the winter periods including at Aberlour (one on 4 Jan, 7 on 1 Feb & 5 Mar, 1 on 3 Dec and 2 on 13 Dec) and Dipple (4 on 3 Jan).

Maximum counts at most frequented coastal sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Oct	Nov	Dec
Delnies-Nairn	29	4	nc	nc	11	nc	7
Nairn	11	4	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc
Nairn/Culbin Bars	17	12	nc	nc	nc	nc	8
Findhorn Bay	13	6	nc	nc	nc	nc	3
Burghead Bay	9	8	13	15	10	13	9
Burghead-Hopeman	8	23	nc	nc	nc	nc	7
Lossie estuary	2	1	nc	2	nc	nc	3
Kingston/Tugnet	12	15	26	23	28	72	26
Spey estuary	nc	nc	nc	7	19	31	44
Spey Bay	nc	nc	12	nc	nc	nc	nc
Portgordon-Strathlene	9	5	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc

Coastal count: 15 Delnies 11 Dec.

Smew *Mergellus albellus*

Rare winter visitor.

A 'redhead' (female/immature male) was present at Loch Spynie 8 Feb-25 Mar (DJR *et al.*). A welcome return for the species following the blank year in 2011, the previous blank year being 2005.

Red-breasted Merganser *Mergus serrator*

Scarce breeder, fairly common offshore.

Breeding: A brood of six was seen at Darnaway 1 Jun (per ISS). Four adults were seen on the lower part of the River Findhorn 29 Apr (AJL).

Coastal records in summer (May-July): Findhorn Bay (max. count 22 on 15 Jun), Spey estuary (max. count 14 on 1 May).

Inland records: Recorded at Loch Spynie at both ends of the year. During the early winter period, 1 male on 25 Jan, 10 & 13 Feb (CAG, RP), 1 female on 31 Jan (Spynie Book) and both together on 30 Jan & 4 Feb (AMu, FA). Later in the year, 1 on 17, 20 & 31 Oct (RHu, Spynie Book), 1 female between 1-24 Dec (DAG, MJHC, JDL) and 2 females on 28 & 30 Dec (DAG, RP). With no sightings in November at this well watched site this suggests that different individuals may be responsible for the October and December sightings. At Cloddach quarry, 1 female on 22 Jan, 1 & 4 Apr (MJHC, CAG), 2 Loch na Bo 18 Nov (EH) and 1 male Spynie Canal 28 Dec (DAG).

Maximum monthly counts were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Delnies-Nairn	3	3	nc	nc	6	nc	nc	5
Nairn	nc	3	nc	nc	nc	28	nc	nc
Nairn/Culbin Bars	53	9	nc	nc	nc	53	nc	17
Findhorn Bay	1	2	nc	25	26	10	22	18
Burghead Bay	nc	23	15	6	nc	13	16	9

Off Burghead	nc	nc	nc	6	nc	4	nc	5
Lossiemouth	2	3	nc	nc	1	1	nc	2
Burghead-Hopeman	5	1	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	2
Kingston	nc	nc	1	9	nc	6	1	nc
Tugnet	4	3	1	14	3	9	2	7
Spey estuary	nc	nc	nc	10	nc	6	9	4
Portgordon-Strathlene	2	4	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	1

Unusual at Lossie estuary, and therefore of note well upstream of the footbridge, were single males 22 Jan, 29 Nov and 1 Dec (RP, MJHC) and 2 males 12 Nov and 15-16 Dec (RP, FMc).

In Buckie harbour in the first winter period were a pair on 4, 12 & 24 Jan and 27 Feb, increasing to 2 males and 1 female on 12 Feb, while in the second winter period a male was present on 26 & 30 Dec increasing to 2 males on 30 Dec (HC, MJHC).

Goosander *Mergus merganser*

Scarce breeder and fairly common visitor.

Breeding: No breeding data were received this year.

Seen in potential breeding areas were one pair River Spey (Aberlour) 8 Apr, one pair Burn of Aberlour (Aberlour) 15 Apr, 1 Whitebridge 12 May, one pair River Nairn (Nairn) 20 May, one pair Glenlatterach Reservoir 21 May, two pairs together River Spey (Boat o' Brig-St Mary's) 22 May, 1 female River Fiddich 27 May and 1 Loch Builg 21 Jun.

Inland records in summer: 5 males Loch Spynie 28 May,

Maximum monthly counts from coastal areas were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Culbin Bar	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	20	40	nc	6	nc	nc
Findhorn Bay	nc	nc	nc	2	56	26	32	28	52	20	8	3
Burghead Bay	nc	nc	nc	nc	15	26	24	40	17	2	nc	nc
Lossie estuary	0	0	0	0	34	12	0	34	18	3	0	0
Speymouth	1	nc	nc	22	56	86	121	152	133	13	3	nc

Elsewhere in summer, 64 Portgordon 29 Jul and 25 Strathlene 16 Aug.

Inland in winter, birds were seen at Aberlour (a pair on the River Spey on 4 Jan), Dipple (4 on the River Spey on 3 Jan), Cloddach quarry (max. 3 males and 3 females on 2 Dec) and at Elgin's Cooper Park lake (pair on 1 Jan, a female on 2 Jan, 2 males & a female on 21 Jan). Largest group was 15 Loch na Bo 21 Dec.

Quail *Coturnix coturnix*

Rare summer visitor and breeder, occasionally more numerous.

Unusually, no calling Quail were reported in Moray & Nairn in 2012. The number of calling birds reported in each of the last ten years is as follows:

2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
4	2	6	8	8	4	4	2	9	0

Red-legged Partridge *Alectoris rufa*

Introduced scarce breeder. Commonly released.

The usual scatter of records: 1 Bridge of Brown 29 May, 1 near Burghead 8 Oct, 1 Glenlivet 24 Mar, 1 Nether Dallachy and 2 Scarffbanks 26 Feb.

Red Grouse *Lagopus lagopus**Very common resident breeder.*

Four at Dava on 11 Dec was the only report received.

Ptarmigan *Lagopus muta**Fairly common resident breeder.*

The small outlying population on Ben Rinnes persists. Two pairs were seen on 29 Feb and there were 17 birds on 17 Nov, in groups of seven, six and four (AE).

Black Grouse *Tetrao tetrix**Scarce resident breeder.*

The only report was of six males near Dunphail on 25 May (RHD).

Capercaillie *Tetrao urogallus**Scarce resident breeder.*

Breeding: 10 active leks were known, containing a total of 16-17 males, down a little on the 20 males located in 2011. Two broods of young were found during the season (RSPB).

A male appeared in the east end of Nairn in early January and frequented gardens in the area until it was trapped on 31 Jan and relocated to more suitable habitat near Carrbridge (SMc,RHD). Another out-of-place bird was a female found in a Rothes garden on 22 Apr. It remained in the village until 24 Jan when it too was transported to better habitat, in Darnaway (JT).



Capercaillie in a Nairn garden, January 2012 (Photo: Seamus McArdle)



Female Capercaillie in Rothes, April 2012 (Photo: Jane Tweedie)

Grey Partridge *Perdix perdix*

Common resident breeder.

In the breeding season, 1 near Alves 14 May, 2 Caysbriggs 13 May, 2 Coltfoot 14 May (and 1 there 7 Jun), a pair Loch Spynie 28 May and 2 Sherrifston 5 May. At other times, 4 Burgie 1 Nov, 6 Kinloss 18 Sep (and 3 there 8 Mar), a covey Maverston 14 Jan, 18 Roseisle 24 Jan (still 9 there 28 Jan) and 1 Seafeld (Findhorn Bay) 31 Aug.

Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus*

Very common resident breeder.

The usual scatter of records from agricultural areas in lowland Moray. An unusual sight was a male bird standing on an unvegetated shingle island in the middle of the River Spey at Tugnet on 28 Oct.

Red-throated Diver *Gavia stellata*

Rare breeder. Fairly common autumn and winter visitor offshore.

Summer: One bird was on a lochan in the usual area of south Moray on 13 May (KLG) but no divers were present in the area in early July and there was no evidence of breeding.

At the coast in the April-July period, 2 Spey Bay 16 Apr & 12 May, 1 off Hopeman 19 Apr, 4 Burghead Bay 20 Apr (and 2 there 2 May and 7 Jul), 14 Kingston 8 May (also 5 there 6 May and 4 on 16 May) and 5 off Findhorn 10 Jul.

Best monthly counts offshore in each winter period were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Nairn/Delnies	nc	nc	nc	nc	6	4	0
Nairn/Culbin Bars	9	1	nc	nc	19	nc	6
Burghead Bay	1	6	4	nc	8	8	3
Spey Bay	3	2	29	5	10	20	0



Red-throated Diver off Findhorn, November 2012 (Richard Somers Cocks)

Black-throated Diver *Gavia arctica*

Rare breeder. Scarce autumn and winter visitor offshore.

Upland lochs: For the sixth successive year, one pair laid eggs – but, as in each of the previous years, the breeding attempt failed, for unknown reasons (IFr,MJHC).

Monthly maxima in Burghead Bay were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
0	0	36	6	3	0	0	0	0	2	2	1

(RHD, AJL, FA, GMcM *et al.*)

The spring gathering off Findhorn is now an annual event, with this year's peak count of 36 on 23 Mar (RHD).

Elsewhere, 1 Nairn Bar 15 Jan (DCJ), 2 Kingston/Tugnet 13 Mar and single birds there 15 Mar, 26-27 Mar & 16 May (MJHC).

Great Northern Diver *Gavia immer**Scarce visitor offshore.*

The only records of more than one bird were 5 Spey Bay (Boar's Head Rock area) 26 Mar (MJHC) and 2 off Tugnet 3 May (MJHC). All other records related to single birds in Burghead Bay (Jan, Feb, Apr, Jul, Dec), off Culbin Bar (Oct), and off Nairn Bar (Jan). Following storms, sheltering individuals were in Buckie harbour on 29 Dec (MJHC) and in Findhorn Bay on 31 Dec (GMcM).



Great Northern Diver in Buckie harbour, December 2012 (Photo: Martin Cook)

White-billed Diver *Gavia adamsii**Rare visitor.*

For the fifth successive year, White-billed Divers appeared off Burghead in spring. At least one bird was present between 12 Apr-3 May (JPoy, ABa et al.) and there were two on 19-23 Apr (FA, ABa, MJHC). In addition, a single bird was reported off Buckie on 13 Mar (GGa).

Fulmar *Fulmarus glacialis**Common breeder, very common offshore.*

Breeding: No reports of breeding were received this year, although birds were recorded as being on ledges on the cliffs at Portknockie for most of February indicating birds re-establishing nest sites.

Passage: Only one count exceeded 100 this year, 154 west past Lossiemouth in one hour 25 Aug (RP). Only one other count above 10 was received.

Sooty Shearwater *Puffinus griseus**Very scarce migrant in late summer and autumn.*

A return to normality this year after the exceptional total of 605 birds in 2011. In late August, 4 passed east off Lossiemouth on 29th (RP) with 5 birds noted the following day (ABa, DAG). In September, 1 was off Burghead on 1st, with the final record of the year being another single bird off the same site on 26th (ABa).

Annual totals since 2003 have been as follows:

2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
3	0	23	1	38	11	0	7	605	11

Manx Shearwater *Puffinus puffinus**Fairly common offshore in summer and autumn.*

The annual total was a maximum of 137 individuals, an average year. Estimated monthly totals were:

July	August	September	October
4	69	42	22

Spring: As in 2011, there were no spring records this year.

Summer: Only one record, 4 past Findhorn on 16 Jul (RHD).

Autumn: Peak numbers were recorded in August, with 69 birds on five dates. All records were from Lossiemouth aside from 20-30 in Burghead Bay on 13th, the highest count of the year (DMKS). In September, 42 birds were recorded on five dates, off Lossiemouth and Burghead. This includes one found alive on the road in Burghead on 15th, which was released off Lossiemouth the following day. The last of the year were 22 west past Lossiemouth 8 Oct (RP).

Gannet *Morus bassanus**Very common offshore in summer and autumn, fewer in winter.*

A reasonable year, with 16 counts of 100 or more in the late summer/ autumn period. Counts over 100 were received from Nairn, Findhorn, Burghead and Lossiemouth.

Peak counts in September were from Lossiemouth with 362 past in 30 mins on 11th, 258 in 30 mins the following day and 263 in 30 mins 18th (RP). In October, the peak count was 272 past Lossiemouth in 30 mins 27th.

In the winter periods, a single bird was seen off Lossiemouth 18 Feb (DAG), with an adult off Burghead 24 Feb (RHD). In the second winter period, a series of sightings of an immature bird in Findhorn Bay in late October and November (GMcM et al.) may relate to the same individual. Also 1 juvenile off Spey Bay 29 Nov.

Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo**Rare breeder and fairly common winter visitor.*

Breeding: The new 'colony' at Covesea, which started in 2011, increased to two nests, each with young on 21 Jun (MJHC).

Counts of 25 or more were 60+ Nairn harbour 11 Oct, 39 Portgordon-Strathlene 14 Oct (and 26 there 16 Dec), 36 Burghead-Hopeman 15 Jan (and 32 there 12 Feb), 33 at the mouth of Findhorn Bay 12 Oct and 28 at the mouth of the Spey 2 Sep.

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	8	2	4	5	2	0	0	0	1	9	4	8
Tugnet (mouth of Spey)	10	1	0	3	1	0	0	14	28	19	8	4
Findhorn (mouth of Bay)	nc	nc	nc	11	12	10	10	18	14	33	31	3

Inland: On the River Spey at Aberlour were 2 on 12 Jan, 1 on 29 Feb and, very unusually, a summer record of 1 on 22-26 Aug (AE). More records than usual were received from inland localities, with 1-2 reported from Archiestown (Nov), Birnie (Jan), Clochan (flying over in Jan), Cloddach quarry (Jan, Feb), Loch Oire (Dec) and Sanquhar Loch (Forres) (Dec). On the River Spey at Dipple were 3 on 3 Jan, and at Gilston there were 4 on 5 Jan. Unusually numerous on Loch na Bo where 4 on 27 Jan, 6 on 8 Dec and a remarkable 14 on 21 Dec (HC).

There were no records of birds of the continental race *P.c.sinensis*.

Shag *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

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

Breeding: At Portknockie/Bow Fiddle Rock cliffs, numbers continued to increase with 93 occupied nests on 19 Jun with many large young (MJHC). At nearby Tronach Head, 53 occupied nests were counted on the island and mainland cliffs on 23 June, a slight decline from the 58 in 2011 (MJHC). At Covesea, numbers also fell slightly, with 14 occupied nests 14 Jun (17 in 2011) (MJHC).

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

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Portknockie	43	47	49	49	73	79	79	76	85	93
Tronach Head	5	7	8	nc	21	23	26	60	58	53
Covesea	5	10	13	13	13	11	14	14	17	14

Counts: Away from breeding sites, in late summer/early autumn at Buckie harbour, 108 were roosting 29 Aug, rising to 163 on 24 Sep and peaking at 222 on 14 Oct, the highest count of the year.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

Rare visitor.

The bird found at Cloddach quarry on 20 Nov 2011 remained until 4 Apr (MJHC, CAG *et al.*), with a brief visit to Nether Birnie pool on 2 Jan (RP). This is the 6th record for Moray & Nairn.

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

Fairly common resident breeder.

Heronries: Nine occupied nests at Aberlour (AE) and 10 at Loch Spynie (RP).

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	7	0	1	5	3	6	8	18	23	11	4	3
Lossie estuary	2	2	0	2	5	3	3	11	4	8	3	3
Spey estuary	0	0	0	2	3	6	4	4	1	4	2	3

Groups of five or more elsewhere were 6 Cloddach quarry 8 Jan, 6 Loch Loy (eating frogs) 13 Apr and 6 flying high over Lhanbryde on 23 Sep.

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

Scarce breeder, scarce on the estuaries in winter.

Mid-winter: On freshwater in January and December were 2 Loch Spynie 8 Jan (and 1 on 24 Jan, and 30 Dec), 2 Loch Loy 13 Jan, 1 Loch na Bo 27 Jan and 1 Loch Flemington 16 Dec.

Present in spring/summer (*italics* = proved breeding) at Burnside of Birnie pool, *Cloddach quarry* (5 pairs), Cran Loch, *Dallachy tip pool*, Fochabers Lake, Laggan Farm (near Dufftown), Loch Loy, Loch na Bo, Loch of Blairs (4 pairs), *Loch Oire* (6 pairs with 5 visible nests and 1 brood 10 Jul [MJHC]) and Loch Spynie.

Largest post-breeding congregations in summer/autumn were 18 Loch Spynie 23 Aug (increasing to 20 by 16 Sep and still 11 on 22 Oct), 14 Loch Oire 4 Oct and 12 Loch Flemington 14 Oct.

Coastal in autumn/winter: Regular in Findhorn Bay, often in the south-west corner where 11 on 12 Feb and 7 on 14 Oct. Also, however, in the north of the bay near Findhorn village where 5 on 31 Oct, 7 on 2 Nov, 3 on 6 & 12 Nov, 6 on 29 Nov & 3 Dec and smaller numbers on many other dates. Also in winter around the Spey estuary, especially in the Kingston lagoon, where 1-2 throughout January-early March and early October-late December – occasionally more e.g. 3 on 20 Oct, 5 & 20 Nov and 25 Dec, and 4 on 2 Nov. Less frequent on the Lossie estuary where 1-2 on 5 dates in January-February and 2 dates in December. Elsewhere, 3 Carse of Delnies 11 Dec.

Red-necked Grebe *Podiceps grisegina*

Very scarce migrant and winter visitor.

1 Lossie estuary 15-16 Dec (RP) is the first for that site.

Slavonian Grebe *Podiceps auritus*

Rare breeder. Scarce offshore in winter.

Breeding: One pair seen nest building but failed to breed.

Site 2 - One adult appeared on 31 Mar and was still present on 1 Apr. There were no further records until 23 Apr when a pair was found. These birds remained until at least 12 May but no nest was found and there was no evidence of a breeding attempt. No birds were present in June and July but a fledged juvenile was seen on 10-11 Aug. The origin of this juvenile is unknown but it is very unlikely that it was reared at this site.

The only other inland record was 1 Loch Spynie 31 Oct (RHu).

Coastal: In Burghead Bay, monthly maxima were:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
42 (24 th)	4 (2 nd)	7 (13 th)	nc	4 (29 th)	16 (24 th)	7 (10 th -11 th)	8 (16 th)

(RSC, GMcM, FA et al.)

The very high count of 42 on 24 Jan (RHD) follows an autumn of exceptional abundance in 2011.

Elsewhere, 3 off Culbin Bar 16 Dec (AY), 1 Lossie estuary 26-29 Dec (RP), 1 off the mouth of the Spey 7 Feb (MJHC) and singles off Nairn/Nairn Bar on 15 Jan, 12 Feb and 14 Oct, with 2 there on 16 Dec (SMc, DCJ, GP).

Honey-buzzard *Pernis apivorus*

Rare breeder.

In the general area where breeding took place in 2007-09 and in 2011, four individuals were seen in three places but no nest was found (RHD). Additional records came from the same area on 6 Aug (RHH) and nearby on 3 Aug (RHD).

Red Kite *Milvus milvus*

Formerly common breeder, reintroduced in Highland and North-east Scotland.

Single birds were seen at Allt na Leacainn (north of Drynachan) 25 Jun (PSw), flying west over Findhorn Bay 12 Aug (DGD) and at Forgie 18 May (WMM).

White-tailed Eagle *Haliaeetus albicilla*

Rare visitor.

One was over Ballindalloch on 6 Oct (NS). Single birds have also been seen in recent years in the Cabrach (December 2010), Culbin (January 2008) and Inchroty/Lecht area (autumn 2009).

Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*

Occasional breeder and very scarce visitor.

A pair nested at one locality and raised 2 young (MJHC). The male was first seen on 14 Apr (DAG) and was joined by the female from 24 Apr (DJR). A second female/immature was seen intermittently between 7-22 May (CAG et al.). The last report of birds in the area was 2 on 1 Sep (DPi).



Marsh Harrier chicks in the nest, Moray July 2012 (Photo: Martin Cook)

Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus*

Rare resident breeder, very scarce migrant and winter visitor.

Breeding: Seventeen current and former sites were checked in west Moray and Nairn. Five sites were found to be occupied by pairs in west Moray (two more than in 2011) and one by a single female in Nairn. Three

pairs were known to have laid eggs, the average clutch size was 4.0. One pair was successful and reared four young. One pair failed at the large young stage and signs at the nest suggested the young were predated by a fox (this is the third year running that the nest has been predated by a fox). The third pair failed for reasons unknown but circumstantial evidence suggested that this nest had suffered from deliberate human interference. (JKC).

Thonly winter record was 1 Carse of Delnies 22 Feb (SMc).

Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis*

Rare resident breeder.

Breeding: At least three pairs reared young and two other pairs bred unsuccessfully.

Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*

Common resident breeder.

Breeding season (April-July) records included birds/pairs at Findhorn, Forres (along River Findhorn), Kingston, Kinloss, Linkwood (Elgin), Loch Spynie, Lossiemouth, Nairn and Tugnet.

One was chasing Starlings at the Ashgrove Road (Elgin) roost on 29 Dec.



Sparrowhawk, Clochan August 2012 (Photo:Martin Cook)

Buzzard *Buteo buteo**Common resident breeder.*

The only group of five or more together was 5 Wellheads (Clochan) 28 Dec on a newly sown field, apparently hunting for worms.

Golden Eagle *Aquila chrysaetos**Rare resident breeder.*

Breeding: At the three usual/most recent breeding sites: i) no breeding activity but a single bird was nearby on 6 May (MJHC), ii) a pair raised one young (RHD), iii) a pair bred but failed early in the breeding cycle (EWe).

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus**Scarce summer visitor and breeder.*

Late to arrive with no coastal reports until 1 Lossie estuary 11 Apr.

Breeding: In west Moray and Nairn, eight pairs nested, one fewer than in 2011. All eight pairs laid eggs and six were successful, rearing a total of 12 young. Of the two unsuccessful pairs, one clutch failed to hatch and the nest of the other pair blew out of the tree. In east Moray, four pairs nested, also one down on 2011. All four pairs were successful, rearing a total of eight young (RHD).

Away from nest sites, most together at one time were 4 over Easterton (Birnie) 14 Apr and 4 Findhorn Bay 19 Jun and 15 Aug. Last report of the year was 2 Findhorn Bay 16 Sep.



Osprey with catch of a flounder, Lossie estuary April 2012 (Photo: David Devonport)

Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus**Scarce resident breeder.*

Breeding season (April-July) records included birds/pairs at Ardivot, Netherton (Findhorn Bay), Cabrach, Dulsie Bridge, Glen Brown, Kinloss, Kingston, Tronach Head and Tugnet. Nests were found at Kinloss (with 5 young, on the army base) and at Tronach Head (2 eggs in an old crow's nest).

Merlin *Falco columbarius**Scarce resident breeder and migrant.*

Breeding: 45 sites were checked. As in 2011, 15 of these were occupied by pairs and one site by a single adult. Fourteen pairs laid clutches, three more than in 2011. Clutch size from three known clutches was 3.6. Eleven pairs were successful, and these raised 31 young between them, at a mean brood size of 2.2 per laying pair (2.8 per successful pair).

Productivity was greater in west Moray and Nairn (3.0 young/laying pair) than in east Moray (1.9 young/laying pair) – very similar to 2011 in both areas. In view of the appalling weather conditions from mid May through to July, breeding success was surprisingly good. (BCo, JKC).

Outside the breeding season, single birds were seen at Archiestown 25 Mar, Ardivot 26 Dec, Burghead 5 Nov, Kinloss 23 Jan & 27 Sep, Loch Flemington 22 Jan and Lossiemouth 26 Sep & 4 Nov.



Male Merlin on its Moray breeding territory in June 2012 (Photo: David Devonport)

Hobby *Falco subbuteo**Rare visitor.*

One flew west over Conicavel on 6 Aug (RHH). This is the 12th record for Moray & Nairn.

Peregrine *Falco peregrinus**Rare resident breeder.*

Breeding: At least two pairs bred in lowland Moray. One reared two young and the outcome of the other is unknown. In the uplands, a pair laid eggs at one site but no young were reared, and a single bird was at another traditional site. (MJHC, AE).

In late summer-winter, single birds were reported from Archiestown (Feb), Findhorn Bay (Jan, 2 on 26 Feb, 2 on 12 Aug, Oct), Burghead (Sep), Culbin Bar (2 on 12 Feb), Elgin (Mar), Lossie estuary (Aug, Nov), Tappoch (Jan), Tugnet (Aug) and Delnies (Jan).

Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus**Scarce breeder and winter visitor.*

During the breeding season, 1 Burnside of Birnie pool 13 Jun (MJHC), 1 Cran Loch 11 Mar & 13 Apr (ADo), 1 Loch Loy 11 Mar (ADo), 1 Montgrew 9, 18 & 29 Aug (WMM, MJHC) and calling several dates Loch Spynie, max. 3 on 3 May (RP et al.).

At other times, 1 Cran Loch 18 Nov (ADo), and 1 Lein (Kingston) 30 Dec (PGS). Several reports of calling birds at Loch Spynie in January-February and September-December (many obs.).

Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus**Fairly common resident breeder.*

Breeding proved (*italics*) or probable at Brodie Castle pond, Burnside of Birnie pool, Cran Loch, Fochabers lake, Loch Loy and Loch Oire.

As usual in freezing conditions at Loch Spynie, large numbers emerged from the reeds onto the ice to feed among the gulls – highest counts were 30 on 4 Feb and 23 on 9 Feb. Also numerous at Loch Flemington at this time where 16 on 12 Feb.

Other counts included 6 Cooper Park (Elgin) 9 Feb (and 5 on 1 Dec), and 12 Loch Flemington 14 Oct (and 15 on 16 Dec).

Coot *Fulica atra**Scarce resident breeder and winter visitor.*

Breeding proved (*italics*) or probable at *Burnside of Birnie pool*, *Cloddach quarry*, Loch Flemington, Loch Loy, Loch na Bo, *Loch Oire* (at least 4 pairs) and *Loch Spynie*.

Maximum monthly counts on main lochs were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Loch Flemington	2	0	nc	nc	2	nc	0
Loch Spynie	2	5	6	3	1	2	5
Loch Oire/na Bo	1	4	13	nc	8	0	1
Cloddach quarry	3	1	nc	nc	1	0	3

Crane *Grus grus**Rare visitor.*

One was at Newton (near Alves) on 30 Apr (ABa, MMurr).

Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*

Very common resident breeder, winter visitor and migrant.

Breeding: Extremely early inland were singles at Nether Birnie pool on 2 Jan (where 9 on 29 Jan) and Cloddach quarry on 7-8 Jan (where 4 on 22 Jan and 11 on 11 Feb). In Elgin, on 6 & 8 Feb there was one at a breeding site at Moray College, followed by 4 Cooper Park pond 19 Feb and 1 Elgin cemetery 28 Feb (where 2 were displaying on 2 Mar). Elsewhere, one on the tern nesting platform at Loch Spynie on 11 Feb (and 2 on 3 Mar), 1 Fochabers 17 Feb, 2 Milton airfield 26 Feb and pair at Burgie on 29 Feb. There was also a pair at Tynet on 1 & 10 Mar and another pair at Broadley 10 Mar. Well inland were 5 Aberlour 18 Feb and calling heard at Archiestown 29 Feb.

Pre-breeding inland flocks included 231 Cloddach quarry 26 Feb, 66 Dunphail 15 Mar and 86 Chapletown (Glenlivet) 24 Mar.

At or near the coast, two pairs with nests on the river shingle at Garmouth golf course 12 May, and one pair bred at Findhorn point. At Tronach Head, a nest with a clutch of three eggs on 20 May. Inland, on the River Spey shingles on 12 May were 2 pairs at Essil (one with a nest) and another pair with a nest at Dipple. Single chick broods were noted at Lossie estuary 12 Jun and, in Elgin, at Dr Gray's Hospital and The Oaks. At Aberlour there was a juvenile on a factory roof on 15 Jun.

Although there were no records of any inland post-breeding assemblies there were five birds remaining at Cloddach quarry 4 Aug and two, quite late inland, at Mulben 19 Aug.

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

Apr: 15 Findhorn Bay 10th, 16 Lossie estuary 12th and 18 Speymouth 16th.

May: 21 Binsness 28th, 12 Findhorn Bay 11th and 19 Lossie estuary 17th.

Jun: c70 Findhorn Bay 18th and 14 Lossie estuary 23rd.

Jul: 203 Findhorn Bay 27th, c270 Lossie estuary 19th, 99 Speymouth 29th and 57 in flight 21st.

Aug: 1190 Culbin Bar 18th, 320 Findhorn Bay 11th, 126 Lossie estuary 3rd and 53 Speymouth 18th.

Sep: c450 Findhorn Bay 30th, c50 Burghead 1st, 71 Lossie estuary 16th and 15 Speymouth 30th.

Winter maxima at the coast were:

	Jan	Feb	Oct	Dec
Nairn/Culbin Bars	1328	615	450	703
Findhorn Bay	417	737	c450	400
Burghead-Hopeman	223	168	14	152
Lossiemouth	41	54	77	75
Portgordon-Strathlene	135	68	35	75

Outwith the above dates there was a November maximum of 400+ at Culbin foreshore on the 27th. The count of 1328 at Nairn/Culbin Bars is the highest there since Dec 2008 when 1666 were counted.

Golden Plover *Charadrius apricaria*

Common breeder, migrant and winter visitor.

Breeding: Some early records from potential breeding grounds. During March one pair was at Dun Muir (Ladder Hills) on the 24th (MJHC) and a flock of 15 was at Hill of Mackalea (Dufftown) on the 28th (AE). One April record of an individual at Cabbrach on the 9th (DGD). Later, a pair and two single birds in the Carn Ghiubhais area on 31 May (DGD). Calling was heard at Scurran Burn (Ben Rinnes) 13 Jun (IFr). A post-breeding flock of 55 birds was on Ben Rinnes 3 Aug (AE).

First at the coast in autumn was 1 Lossiemouth east beach 23 Aug (MSh).

Winter coastal maxima were:

	Jan	Feb	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Kinloss	38	35	19	67	25	65
Findhorn Bay	nc	97	66	236	201	182

Outwith the above locations were 48 Wester Hardmuir 2 Feb and c40 flying east over Clochan on 4 Feb.

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*

Scarce autumn migrant and winter visitor.

At the Nairn/Culbin Bars were 27 on 15 Jan, 4 on 9 Feb and 27 on 12 Feb, suggesting a resident population in the high 20s. In the second winter period there were 12 at Nairn Bar on 16 Dec. On the Lossie estuary, 1 on 27-31 Mar and another on 17 Sep. In mid October, 2 Lossiemouth west beach on 13th and 1 Portgordon on 14th.

Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*

Very common migrant breeder, small numbers in winter.

Breeding: In the lowlands, single pairs were displaying at Milnorduff on 1 Mar and at Broadley on 11 & 22 Apr. A pre-breeding flock of 27 was at Coltfoot on 4 Mar. Near Alves on 14 May were two pairs with chicks. The first records from up-country were from Archiestown with 2 on 9 Jan, 9 on 14 Feb and 19 on 27 Feb. A pair was near Furness cross roads on 17 Mar, four pairs were at Bogeney on 18 Mar and 10 birds, with some display, were at Corrunich (Glenlivet) 24 Mar. In the Cabrach area on 9 Apr were 6 displaying at the Aldunie area and 8 displaying south-east of Milltown. Also up-country, four pairs at Bakebare, west of Corsemaul on 2 May.

On 16 Jun a flock of 36 was at Inchgower (Buckie).

Post-breeding flocks of 100 or more were 110 Speyslaw 21 Jul, c100 over Loch Spynie 29 Jul and 180 Coltfoot 5 Aug (120 there 6 Aug).

During September and October flocks of 20 or more included c20 near Alves 25 Sep, 31 Wester Coltfoot 29 Sep, 90 Loch Spynie 4 Oct, 80 Tugnet 4 Oct, 24 near Nairn 8 Oct, 20 Windyridge 18 Oct, 245 Kingston 20 Oct, 64 Cloddach quarry 21 Oct and 150 Ardivot 26 Oct.

In mid winter (January-February and November-December) flocks of ten or more included 65 Arradoul 1 Jan, 47 Strathlene 15 Jan, 75 Nether Birnie pool 29 Jan, 140 Kinloss 21 Feb and 15 over Clochan 26 Feb. In the second winter period around Loch Spynie/Ardivot were 90 on 2 Nov, 200 on 12-13 Nov and 250 on 15 Dec. Elsewhere, 43 Tugnet 9 Nov (10 there 15 Nov), c500 Milltown airfield 28 Nov, 32 Cloddach quarry 2 Dec and 40 Balgreen (Lossiemouth) 4 Dec.

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*

Rare summer visitor and breeder.

Once again only recorded on the lower River Spey. One was noted on the Spey estuary 11 Apr (MJHC). On the river shingles beside Garmouth golf course on 26 May there was one "behaving as if off eggs" but no nest was found (MJHC). On the Spey estuary, 2 on 2 Jul, 1 on 9 Jul (MJHC) and 1 on 16 Aug (DMP).

Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*

Scarce resident breeder and very common migrant.

Breeding: Several records received from potential breeding sites at or near the coast but breeding was only confirmed at Findhorn point where a pair reared two young (GMcM).

The only inland record was 1 Cloddach quarry 12 May.

Winter maxima at the coast were:

	Jan-Feb	Nov-Dec
Nairn/Culbin Bars	39	12
Findhorn Bay	21	18
Burghead-Hopeman	6	0
Lossiemouth	20	nc
Portgordon-Strathlene	11	26

Spring passage (April – early June)

Findhorn Bay: Evident from mid-late May with 100+ on 11th, 14th & 15th, 200+ on 16th & 17th and 100+ on 18th. An accurate count of 378 was made on 19th. Possibly as many as 1000 on 25th falling to c300 on 26th and 216 on 28th, after which numbers were greatly reduced.

Lossiemouth: Peak was c60 on 13 May.

Speymouth: Maximum count was 74 on 16 May.

Autumn passage (July – September):

Findhorn Bay: Single figures until 10 on 7 Aug, numbers then creeping up through August with 16 on 12th, 63 on 17th and a peak of 90 on 27th. A decline thereafter but still 39 on 27 Sep.

Kinloss: In mid September, good numbers roosted on the airfield - 48 on 17th, 104 on 18th, 84 on 19th and 58 on 20th.

Lossie estuary: Peak numbers towards the end of August with 39 on 20th, 62 on 21st and 45 on 22nd.

Spey estuary: Fluctuating numbers of up to 30 in July and early August followed by a strong passage in mid August with a peak of 106 on 15th and 137 on the 16th. Rapid fall in numbers thereafter with the last bird seen on 12 Sep. An unusual individual on 15 Aug had almost white upperparts but normal head markings (MJHC).

Dotterel *Charadrius morinellus*

Scarce summer visitor and breeder.

No records were received from the Cairngorms breeding grounds.

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*

Scarce migrant.

Spring: Rather a late arrival this year with no April records. First was 1 over Portknockie 4 May. Later, two records of single birds passing Lossie estuary on 13 May (also 1 there on 18 May) and at the Spey estuary, 1 on 18 May and 2 on 26 May.

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

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Date (April)	27 th	14 th	26 th	22 nd	23 rd	22 nd	27 th	24 th	22 nd	21 st

Autumn: Extreme dates of passage were 6 Jul and 9 Sep when single birds were at the Spey estuary and Findhorn Bay respectively. Throughout this period 50 records were received from Binsness to the Spey estuary with a total of 159 birds although duplication of counts is a possibility. Twenty-six of these records were of single birds or in some cases birds heard but not seen and assumed to be singles. Largest flocks were all at the Spey estuary where two flocks of 12 and 25 on 3 Aug, 20 on 6 Aug, 18 on 10 Aug and 11 on 16 Aug (MJHC).

Curlew *Numenius arquata*

Common breeder. Very common migrant and winter visitor.

Breeding: First up-country were 2 Archiestown 14 Mar and there was a pre-breeding flock of 25 at Chapletown (Glenlivet) on 25 Mar. Four were displaying in the Aldunie area (Cabrach) on 9 Apr and display was also noted at Beatshach (Ben Rinnes) on 2 May with two birds still there 13 Jun. also up-country were three pairs Carn Ghiubhais area 31 May. Nearer the coast, one pair Milltown airfield 14 Apr. Notable spring flocks were 104 near Milltown airfield 10 Mar and 169 near Loch Spynie 20 Apr.

Post-breeding flocks of 100 or more in early summer/autumn included:

July: At the Spey estuary, 130 on 14th & 24th and 181 on 31st. At Findhorn Bay, 150 on 15th, 200 on 16th & 21st, 150 on 23rd & 289 on 27th.

August: Maximum at Findhorn Bay was c500 on 10th. At the Spey estuary, 210 on 20th and 220 on 25th. A flock of 109 was in the fields west of Loch Spynie on 28th.

September: Findhorn Bay maximum was c350 on 3rd. On or near the Spey estuary were 166 on the 5th, 349 on 9th, 267 on 16th, 355 on 19th and 145 on 22nd. At Mains of Gollachy (Keith) were 119 on 18th.

Coastal winter maxima were:

	Jan	Feb	Oct	Dec
Nairn/Culbin Bars	191	220	64	177
Findhorn Bay	309	349	213	228
Burghead-Hopeman	22	29	2	84
Lossiemouth	140	18	160	2
Portgordon-Strathlene	38	9	47	7

Counts of 100 or more from other locations, including inland, during this period were 151 Cloddach quarry 22 Jan, with 265 there on 26 Feb. Near Loch Spynie were c100 on 31 Jan. During October there were 211 at Spey estuary on 4th and 120 on Nairn beach on 8th. In November, 230 Findhorn Bay 7th and 118 Easter Calcots 23 Nov.

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*

Scarce migrant.

Spring:

At Findhorn Bay, 4 on 30 Apr (AJL), 24 on 12 May and 3 on 14 May (RHD).

Autumn:

Spey estuary: 3 on 21 Jul, a short-staying very large flock of 66 on 24 Jul and 8 on 28 Jul (MJHC). No others until 9 on 29 Aug (MJHC) and last one on 16 Sep (RP).

Findhorn Bay: 4 on 27 Jul but no more until a large flock of 45 on 3 Sep (DMKS). Twelve on 12 Sep (GMcM) and up to 5 regularly through the rest of the month. No further records until 6 on 28 Oct.

Lossie estuary: First was 1 on 17 Jul, followed by 1 on 24 Jul, 2 on 18 Sep, 4 on 12 Oct and 1 on 15 Oct (CAG, DAG).

Montgrew (Keith): This is the only site where Black-tailed Godwits occur with any regularity. Birds were present almost continuously from 17 Aug until 10 Oct, usually up to 5 but 10 on 28-29 Aug and 13-14 on 14-17 Sep (WMM et al.).

The only other inland record was of a single bird flying over Loch Spynie 19 Sep (RMc).

Winter:

An unusual series of winter records in Findhorn Bay began in early November with 4 on 1st, 15 on 4th, 13 on 5th, 6 on 9th and 4 on 12th (GMcM, RSC et al.). It seems likely that these birds overwintered as 2 were seen on 5 Dec (RSC) and 4 on 16 Dec (BE, FA). These are the first December records since 2005.



Black-tailed Godwits in Findhorn Bay, December 2012 (Photo: Richard Somers Cocks)

Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*

Common winter visitor and migrant. Small numbers in summer.

Monthly maxima at main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Nairn/Culbin Bar	110	56	nc	nc	nc	150
Findhorn Bay	3	86	35	17	39	72
Burghead/Hopeman	6	7	0	6	0	40
Lossiemouth	2	6	15	13	7	2

Outwith the above locations were 74 Nairn east beach 15 Sep and 77 Delnies 16 Sep.

Another year of low numbers, the maximum of 150 at Nairn Bar on 16 Dec is down on 2011 and not much better than 2009 and 2010. The table below shows the maximum annual count at any site since 2002:

2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
255	265	420	215	300	436	198	75	107	204	150

During spring, 50 Nairn 14 Apr and 60 Culbin Bar 20 Apr. The last spring record was 1 Spey estuary 25 May and the first to return in autumn was a juvenile at Lossie estuary 8 Aug.

Turnstone *Arenaria interpres**Common winter visitor, small numbers in summer.*

Winter monthly maxima at main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Oct	Dec
Delnies - Nairn	16	8	14	6
Nairn/Culbin Bar	54	5	0	12
Findhorn	0	0	35	32
Burghead bay	66	55	29	18
Burghead-Hopeman	48	117	51	15
Lossiemouth	2	15	c50	25
Portgordon-Strathlene	168	149	117	128

The count of 168 on 15 Jan is the highest count since 200 on the same coastal stretch during January 2003.

In March, 45 Portgordon harbour on 18th. Very few on the Spey estuary over winter but a short-lived increase to 16 on 13 Mar and still 10 on 15 Mar – then no more than 5 until late April.

Spring: A brief but exceptional passage on the Spey estuary where a flock of 81 appeared on 22 Apr – 70 remained on 27 Apr and 63 the following day. In early May, 8 on 1st and 4 on 11th but no further records until late summer. Last in spring were 3 Nairn harbour 16 May.

Summer-autumn: Assuming it ever left Moray & Nairn, the first back from the northern breeding grounds was a single bird still in breeding plumage at the Spey estuary on 18 Jul. Later in July, 2 Spey estuary 24th, 5 flew west past Lossiemouth 24th and 2 Findhorn 29th. During August, a steady increase at Findhorn to 30 by 27th. The only other August count to exceed 10 was 19 flying west past Lossiemouth on 25th. In September, up to 36 Findhorn (on 7th) and 20 Nairn 16th.

Knot *Calidris canutus**Very common migrant and winter visitor.*

Winter maxima were:

	Jan	Feb	Oct	Nov	Dec
Nairn/Culbin Bars	480	260	nc	90	900
Findhorn Bay	240	221	96	83	146
Lossiemouth	0	2	5	0	0

This is the first year since 2003 that no counts exceeded 1000. Outwith the above locations, on 16 Dec, there were 600 on the shingle near Nairn harbour on a rising tide. It is however possible that this 600 may have formed part of the 900 counted on the same day at Nairn Bar. Also outwith the above dates was a notable 300 at Burghead on 23 Mar.

Only seven records during April & May, the last being 4 Findhorn Bay 28 May. First back from breeding grounds was 6 adults Spey estuary 24 Jul.

Throughout August and September 66 records were received, 51 of which were in single figures. Counts of 20 or more were:

Aug: 62 Culbin Bar 18th, c40 Findhorn Bay 6th (24 on 7th) and 21 Lossie estuary 29th.

Sept: At Findhorn Bay, 24 on 9th, c100 on 10th, 26 on 29th and 30 on 30th. Also 33 Burghead 24th.

Ruff *Calidris pugnax**Scarce autumn migrant, rare in spring.*

All records were in autumn.

July: 1 Spey estuary 28th (MJHC) and 1 Lossie estuary 28th (RP).

August: at the Spey estuary, 4 on 11th (KLG), 3 on 15th and 1 on 16th & 20th (MJHC). At the Lossie estuary, 1 on 16th-17th (ABa, DAG). At Findhorn Bay, 2 on 18th (DAG) and 1 on 28th (GMcM).

September: at Lossie estuary, 1 on 1st-2nd (DPi,DAG,HF), 6th-10th (HF,RP), a different individual on 9th (RP) and the last of the year on the 18th (CAG). At Spey estuary, 1 on 5th (ABa) and 9th (RP).

Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*

Scarce migrant.

An unusual spring record of 1 Kingston 16 May (MJHC). This is only the eighth spring record in Moray & Nairn.

Scarce in autumn when 1 Findhorn Bay 12-15 Aug (GMcM), 2 juveniles Spey estuary 29 Aug (MJHC), 1 juvenile Spey estuary 9 Sep and 1 juvenile Lossie estuary 10 Sep (RP).

No flock exceeding ten has been seen since 2008.



Curlew Sandpiper, Lossie estuary September 2012 (Photo: Tony Backx)

Temminck's Stint *Calidris temminckii*

Rare migrant and occasional probable breeder.

A single bird was present at Tugnet 18 May (MJHC). Since 1990 there have now been records in seven years - 1991, 1994, 1998, 2004, 2005, 2011 and 2012.

Sanderling *Calidris alba*

Scarce migrant and fairly common but very localised winter visitor.

Monthly maxima at the two best sites were:

Winter-spring:

	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June
Nairn/Culbin Bars	86	116	nc	nc	nc	nc
Lossiemouth	38	40	nc	nc	37	19

Late summer-autumn:

	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Nairn/Culbin Bars	nc	16	nc	36	24	61
Lossiemouth	15	57	11	59	30	40

The last birds recorded prior to heading north to breeding grounds were 19 Lossiemouth east beach on the very late date of 21 Jun – presumably held up by adverse weather conditions for migration. Very hard to be certain whether 36 Cullen beach 3 Jul were even later, or the first to be seen on return migration.

Dunlin *Calidris alpina*

Scarce breeder, very common migrant and winter visitor.

Breeding: No records were received from potential breeding grounds.

Winter monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Oct	Nov	Dec
Nairn/Culbin Bars	354	900	0	nc	468
Findhorn Bay	2180	2100	500	400	1000
Lossiemouth	127	200	28	nc	148

Spring passage not easy to pinpoint, but in May at Findhorn Bay there were 50+ on the 10th, 11th, 12th & 14th and 100+ on the 15th & 16th, the numbers then reducing but with a peak of c200 on the 26th. At the Spey estuary, few until 15 on 8 May and a peak of 44 on 16 May and up to 26 for the rest of May. Few in June when 15 on 18th was exceptional.

Autumn passage (July-September):

Fluctuating numbers throughout this period; Findhorn Bay held most in September, Lossie estuary in August and Spey estuary in July.

Findhorn Bay: Surprisingly scarce, often fewer than 10. Monthly maxima were 6 on 25 Jul, 10 on 23 Aug and 55 on 22 Sep.

Lossiemouth: Thirty-nine records received with monthly maxima of 7 on 28 Jul, 42 on 28 Aug and 20 on 10 Sep.

Spey estuary: In July, 10 on 2nd-6th, 21 on 9th, 31 on 14th and 41 on 23rd. A large influx late in July brought 185 on 26th, 200 on 27th and a peak of 338 on 28th. Then only 20-30 until mid August when another marked passage took place, with 65 on 15th-16th and 56 on 20th-22nd. Down to 21 by 29th and a similar number was present throughout September.

Purple Sandpiper *Calidris maritima*

Common winter visitor.

Main winter site maxima were:

	January-March	October-December
Burghead-Hopeman	7	2
Lossiemouth	73	65
Portgordon-Strathlene	47	39

Elsewhere, 3 Nairn 12 Feb and 16 Dec, 4 Portknockie 19 Feb and 2 Culbin Bar 19 Dec.

The highest counts at the main sites were in April when 87 on Lossiemouth harbour wall on 4th and 56 Buckpool (part of the Portgordon-Strathlene coast) on 7th.

The last spring record was 1 Burghead 12 May and the first in autumn was 1 Lossiemouth north pier 20 Sep.



Purple Sandpipers [with a Turnstone], Buckpool December 2012 (Photo: Martin Cook)

Little Stint *Calidris minuta*

Very scarce migrant, mostly in autumn.

Spring: Only one spring record – 1 Findhorn Bay 28 May (RHD).

Autumn: At the Spey estuary in mid August, 2 on 15th-16th and 1 on 17th-18th (MJHC,ABa,FA). Elsewhere, 1 Netherton lagoon (on the south side of Findhorn Bay) 22 Aug (RHD), 2 Lossie estuary 29 Aug (CAG) and 2 Findhorn Bay 9 Sep (AJL).

Pectoral Sandpiper *Calidris melanotos*

Rare visitor.

On 8 Sep a juvenile was on the Netherton pool, on the south side of Findhorn Bay (DMP). Another juvenile remained at Montgrew pool (Keith) between 15-26 Sep (RM, WMM, RP et al.). These represent the 10th & 11th records for Moray & Nairn. The previous records have been at Findhorn Bay July 1967, Kingston October 1986, Lossiemouth September 1988, Findhorn Bay May 1990, Montgrew September 1999, Kingston July 2000, Lhanbryde September 2000, Kingston July 2005 and Miltonduff pool August 2005.



Pectoral Sandpiper, Montgrew September 2012 (Tony Backx)

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*

Common summer visitor and breeder.

Arrival: First was inland on the Spey at Aberlour on the early date of 10 Apr, followed a few days later at the coast by 2 Spey estuary 16 Apr. A single bird was at Cloddach quarry 22 Apr and two were at the River Nairn in Nairn on 28 Apr.

The first arrival dates since 2002 were:

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Date (April)	17 th	18 th	18 th	17 th	23 rd	15 th	20 th	9 th	17 th	12 th

Breeding: Along the lower River Spey from the mouth to Garmouth viaduct, birds were present between 3 May-6 Jul and breeding was confirmed on the Kingston side of the estuary on 6 Jul where there was one pair with a newly fledged juvenile. Breeding activity was also indicated on 22 Jun at Garmouth viaduct, where 4 birds were showing territorial behaviour. Upstream between Boat o' Brig-St. Mary's, singles or pairs were noted at six locations on 22 May. Two were on the lower reaches of the River Findhorn on 5 Jun, 2 on the River Nairn in Nairn on 28 Apr and, up-country along the Drynahan valley, there were two pairs displaying on the river shingles on 29 Apr and two pairs at the same location on 20 May. On 'still' freshwaters, 1 Dallachy tip pool 18 May and single birds (presumably on passage) were at Loch Spynie on 12, 18 & 22 May. At Cloddach quarry there were three pairs on 9 Jun.

Post breeding assemblage was most noticeable on the Spey estuary where 24 on 29 Jun and 42 on 2 Jul (MJHC) – the highest count of the year. Subsequent July counts on the estuary were 14 on 6th, 22 on 9th, 23 on 14th, 25 on 15th, 20 on 21st, 10 on 22nd and 22 on 24th. Between 28 Jul-6 Aug, 6-8 remained but only single birds thereafter until the last on 19 Aug. The last record from inland was of 2 at Cloddach quarry on 10 Aug.

Dates for 'last record of the year' have fluctuated greatly over recent years:

2002	2003	*2004	*2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
26 Sep	25 Aug	5 Sep	16 Oct	14 Sep	2 Sep	21 Sep	4 Sep	31 Jul	28 Sep

* During the November of 2004 & 2005, on the Spey near Fochabers, there were records of what was presumed to be an over-wintering bird.

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*

Very scarce migrant, rare in winter.

The only record this year was of one at Findhorn Bay 11 Aug (RHD).

Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus*

Very scarce migrant.

The over-wintering bird, first recorded at Lossie estuary on 19 Nov 2011, remained on the estuary until 9 May (DAG, CAG et al.). A first-winter bird, it began to develop signs of breeding plumage from 8 Apr onwards.

One autumn record, of a juvenile bird also at Lossie estuary on 18 Aug (DAG, RP, ABa).



Spotted Redshank, Lossie estuary April 2012 (Photo: Tony Backx)

Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

Scarce migrant, very scarce in winter.

Spring (late March – June):

First were on 1 Apr when 1 over Lossiemouth and 1 Cloddach quarry. Also in April, 1 Spey estuary 13th and 1 Lossie estuary 21st. During May, 1 Lossie estuary 5th-9th and 2 Findhorn Bay 14th. Last in spring were 2 Findhorn Bay 10 Jun.

Late summer-autumn (July-October):

Findhorn Bay: Recorded on 15 dates between 5 Aug-14 Oct. Best counts were 5 on 22 Aug and 7 on 25 Aug (on the pool at the Netherton edge of the bay) (GMcM, RHD).

Lossie estuary: Recorded on 16 dates between 5 Aug- 3rd Oct. Mostly 1-2 but 3 on 22 Aug.

Spey estuary: First was 1 on 21 Jul but no more until 6 Aug. Regularly present thereafter until 6 Sep. Usually only a single bird but 2 between 25 Aug-3 Sep.

Inland, 1 Cloddach quarry 4 Aug and at Loch Spynie (flying over), 4 on 23 Aug, 2 on 26 & 28 Aug and 1 on 8 Oct.

Winter: A single bird, seen in Findhorn Bay on 7 & 11 Nov and 2 Dec (ISS, DAG) , looked set to over-winter.

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*

Very scarce migrant.

One spring record, 2 Spey estuary 26 May (MJHC). In late summer, 1 Spey estuary 8-16 Aug (MJHC, ABa, KLG) is likely to refer to a single individual.

Redshank *Tringa totanus*

Scarce breeder, very common migrant and winter visitor.

Breeding: A breeding pair was found on the marsh near the Mosset burn on the south side of Findhorn Bay on 26 May (GMcM). Only two records received from up-country, a pair displaying near Upper Howbog (Cabrach) 9 Apr (ISS) and 1 Aberlour 27 Apr (AE).

Spring (March-early June):

Findhorn Bay: large fluctuation in numbers through the period. Peak numbers of 200-300 were present during 27 Mar-17 Apr.

Lossie estuary: usually less than 10 but 23 on 29 Mar and 45 on 10 Apr.

Spey estuary: only very small numbers (maximum 8 on 15 Mar) and no evidence of passage.

Elsewhere, 19 Portgordon harbour 18 Mar, 20 Delnies 9 Apr and 30 Nairn 14 Apr. Just inland, two birds flew over Loch Spynie 15 Apr.

Late summer/autumn (Late June-September):

Findhorn Bay: between 18 Jun-29 Sep, 83 records were received. As in spring the numbers were fluctuating, however counts of 300 and above were recorded on 16 dates between 8 Aug-27 Sep. Highest counts, in the region of 400, were during September on 4th, 9th, 12th & 22nd.

Lossie estuary: counts also fluctuated with monthly maxima of 30 on 25 Jul, 33 on 18 Aug and 37 on 5 Sep.

Spey estuary: seldom more than 5 but short-lived influxes of passage birds resulted in 12 on 9 Jul, 25 on 18 Jul, 39 on 24 Aug and 21 on 29 Aug.

Elsewhere, 30 Nairn 15-16 Sep. At Portgordon harbour, 14 on 4 Sep and 27 on 6 Sep. Inland, 1 Montgrew (Keith) on 1 & 17 Sep.

Winter: Monthly maxima at the coast were:

	Jan	Feb	Oct	Dec
Nairn/Culbin Bars	77	77	0	56
Findhorn Bay	388	599	c470	464
Burghead-Hopeman	16	37	37	19
Lossiemouth	24	58	48	64
Portgordon-Strathlene	50	51	45	46

Also, in Findhorn Bay, counts on twelve November days exceeded 100, including a maximum of 327 on the 21st.

Jack Snipe *Lymnocyrtus minimus**Scarce migrant and winter visitor.*

Over the last three years there have been very few records, of small numbers of birds, and 2012 follows that trend with only five reports, each of single birds: at Nairn Bar on 15 Jan (DCJ), at Kingsteps on 22 Jan (RHD), at Cloddach quarry on 5 Feb (FA), at Nairn Bar on 22 Feb (DCJ) and a much later spring bird at the Spey estuary on 22 Apr (MJHC).

Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola**Common resident breeder, migrant and winter visitor.*

Early winter: 1 Nairn/Culbin Bar 9 Feb and 3 up-country at Knock of Gownie 14 Feb.

Breeding: First roding noted Carron 13 Mar; also at Muiry Wood (Forres) 25 May and the last roding at Newbold (Forres) 16 Jul. Elsewhere, a pair at Aldroughty 31 Mar.

Autumn/winter: 1 Duffus 7 Nov, 1 Hill of Spynie 10 Nov, 2 Kinloss 20 Nov, 1 Roseisle Forest 6 Dec and 1 up-country at Auchinhandoch (Dufftown) 8 Dec.

Snipe *Gallinago gallinago**Common breeder and migrant.*

Breeding: Drumming heard at Archiestown on 21 & 24 Mar, 27 Apr & 9 May - also noted at Ladderfoot (Glenlivet) 24 Mar and calling at Stronachavie (Tomintoul) on 29 Apr. Three pairs Carn Ghiubhais area 31 May. During March and April, birds in potential breeding grounds in the costal fringe were at Cran Loch, Loch Loy, Kingston and the north-east fen at Loch Spynie.

Winter-spring: only a small number of records received during early winter – 1 Cloddach quarry 8 Jan, 3 Nairn Bar 15 Jan (and 6 on 12 Feb) and birds present at Cran Loch & Loch Loy 13 Jan.

Autumn-winter: Present Spey estuary July-November where maximum 9 on 9 Oct. Inland at Montgrew, present 13 Aug-28 Sep with best counts being 16 on 13 Aug and 18 on 16 & 18 Aug. Present Cran Loch 9 Sep, singles at Findhorn Bay 30 Oct & 4 Nov, and 3 Netherton farm 30 Nov. An excellent count of 28 was at Chapelton (Forres) 25 Nov. An unusual winter record from up-country was 1 Suie (Glenlivet) 21 Oct (AE). The only December record was 2 Nairn Bar on 16th.

Pomarine Skua *Stercorarius pomarinus**Very scarce migrant offshore in summer and autumn, rare in winter.*

A very poor year with only one record - a single bird flying east past Lossiemouth 13 Oct (RP).

Arctic Skua *Stercorarius parasiticus**Fairly common migrant in summer and autumn.*

The annual total was a maximum of 60 birds, an average year. Estimated monthly totals were:

Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
7	41	10	2

Spring: No spring records were received in 2012.

Summer: In July, seven birds were recorded on five dates off Portknockie, Spey Bay and Lossiemouth.

Autumn: In August, records centred on Lossiemouth where 38 birds were recorded on seven dates, peaking at 17 on 25th (DAG) and 8 on 30th (DAG, ABa). Birds were also sighted from Burghead and Strathlene. In September, records comprised ten birds on five dates, with Lossiemouth again dominating records. Counts peaked at 6 on 12th (DAG). Two single birds were noted off Lossiemouth in October with the last record of the year being one flying west on 27th (RP).

Great Skua *Stercorarius skua**Fairly common migrant in summer and autumn.*

The annual total was a maximum of 86 individuals, a good year. Estimated monthly totals were:

May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
2	1	6	22	52	3

Spring: First, in May, was one off Hopeman on 3rd (A Ba) and another off Burghead two days later.

Summer: In June, one was off Portknockie on 19th, whilst in July there were five birds on four dates off Lossiemouth and another record from Portknockie.

Autumn: In August, most were reported off Lossiemouth with 20 birds on eight dates. On Aug 12, one was seen to attack, drown and then eat a juvenile Herring Gull (DAG). In September all records were from Lossiemouth (five dates) bar a single off Burghead on 24th; the peak count of the year occurred on 18 Sep when 32 flew west past Lossiemouth in 30 mins (RP). In October, 2 off Lossiemouth 8th and, last of the year, 1 flew west past Nairn on 14th (GP).

Puffin *Fratercula arctica**Very scarce offshore.*

A poor year with only one record – a single bird off Portknockie on 19 Jun (LSi). In recent years there have been just two records in 2011, four in 2010, one in 2009 and five in 2008. It is very likely that Puffins are more numerous offshore in summer than these few records suggest, but they pass offshore at a distance where they are not identified.

Black Guillemot *Cephus grylle**Scarce breeder and scarce offshore.*

Breeding: Highest counts of adults on the sea below breeding cliffs were 29 Tronach Head 18 Apr (MJHC) and 24 Portknockie 3 May (LSi). Breeding was confirmed at Tronach Head on 3 Jul when a brood of two was ringed in the usual crevice (MJHC). Many other pairs are clearly breeding unseen in cliff crevices.

Away from breeding areas, only records of 1-2 birds at Buckie (Dec), Burghead (Oct, Dec), Culbin Bar (Dec), Findhorn (Dec) and Lossiemouth (Aug, Oct, Nov, Dec). Storm-weakened birds were in Buckie and Burghead harbours in late December.



Black Guillemots in Buckie [left] and Burghead harbours, December 2012 (Photos: Martin Cook, Gordon Biggs)

Razorbill *Alca torda*

Scarce breeder, very common offshore.

Breeding: The colony at Portknockie continues to grow, with 64 adults on the cliffs on 3 May and 58 on 19 June. A minimum of six chicks were counted on 26 Jun. (MJHC, LSi).

At Tronach Head, 2 adults were seen on 18 Apr (MJHC) and a pair was on the stack on 20 May (RMu) – clearly a potential new breeding site.

Away from breeding areas, counts above 30 included 30+ Burghead Bay 15 Mar, 97 Spey Bay 26 Mar and 40 Burghead 22 Aug. Off Tugnet in August were 55 (including some adults with juveniles) on 8th, 41 on 20th, 48 on 24th and 38 on 31st.

Little Auk *Alle alle*

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

Another poor year, although an improvement on the two records in 2011. Noteworthy mid-winter records included 6 off Burghead 1 Jan (RHD) and 1 Burghead Bay 12 Feb (KHo). More typically, in late autumn, were 1 flying east past Portgordon 18 Oct (DGD), 2 west past Nairn 22 Oct (DMKS) and 1 at Burghead harbour entrance on 29 Oct (ABa). As is often the case with this species, one was found dead on Cullen beach 20 Nov (WMM). Rather luckier was the bird brought into a Roseisle house by a cat 11 Dec – it was unharmed and flew away strongly when released (HBar).



Little Auk, Burghead harbour October 2012 (Photo: Tony Backx)

Guillemot *Uria aalge*

Very common offshore.

Seven birds were close in off Portknockie cliffs on 19 Jun but none were ashore and there was no suggestion of breeding (MJHC).

The only counts to exceed 30 were c.200 off Findhorn 11 Aug and 30+ Burghead 2 Sep. On 14 Sep, 25 birds were found dead on the beach between Roseisle Forest picnic site and Burghead harbour slipway (ABa).

Little Tern *Sterna albifrons*

Very scarce summer visitor and rare breeder.

First of the year were 3 Spey estuary 27 Apr (MJHC). The third earliest return date in Moray & Nairn after 25 Apr 2006 and 26 Apr 2009.

Breeding: On the river shingles at Garmouth, were 2 adults on 18 May and an adult appeared to feed a concealed incubating bird on 26 May but there was no further indication of breeding (MJHC). No Little Terns were recorded on Lossiemouth east beach, or on the shingle beach bordering Lossie Forest.

Adults were briefly numerous on the Spey estuary in July when 1 on 7th, 11 adults on 9th, 5 on 13th, 13 on 14th and, last of the year, 1 on 21st.

Black Tern *Chilidonias niger*

Very scarce visitor in summer and autumn

After a blank year in 2011, two were recorded in 2012. An adult was at the mouth of the River Spey at Tugnet on 6-7 Jun (BS, MJHC) and a juvenile at Findhorn on 30 Aug (DMP).



Black Tern at the mouth of the River Spey, June 2012 (Photo: Benedict Stewart)

Sandwich Tern *Sterna sandvicensis*

Very common summer visitor and occasional breeder.

Arrival: The first record of the year was one flying west past Lossiemouth on 18 Mar (DAG), an exceptionally early bird and the earliest on record in Moray & Nairn. Other March birds included 1 Burghead Bay 23rd, 4 Lossiemouth 26th and 6 Findhorn 31st. First arrival dates in the last ten years have been as follows:

2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
26 Mar	28 Mar	1 Apr	1 Apr	31 Mar	3 Apr	22 Mar	25 Mar	27 Mar	18 Mar

The main series of arrivals followed from the first week of April onwards, when birds were widely spread along the coast, including 70 Nairn 14 Apr.

Breeding: No breeding in 2012. Breeding was last confirmed in Moray & Nairn in 2005.

First juveniles with adults from colonies outwith Moray & Nairn were noted from late June. Counts above 200 were all in August, including 239 Spey estuary 10th and c.230 Burghead 22nd. At Findhorn, c.200 on 17th rising to c.280 on 18th, c.200 on 21st and a peak of 450+ on 22nd, falling again to 290 on 27th.

Small numbers lingered into October, the last sighting of the year being 1 Nairn 22 Oct.

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	1	150	175	450	40	10
Lossie estuary	0	0	21	25	2	5
Spey estuary	1	6	239	105	25	4

Elsewhere, 230 Burghead beach 22 Aug and 120 Culbin Bar 18 Aug.

No large passage movements observed in autumn, best being 25 flying west past Lossiemouth in one hour on 4 Sep.

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*

Summer visitor and fairly common breeder.

Arrival: One was at the Spey estuary on 19 Apr, a typical date.

Breeding: At Loch Spynie, there were at least 15 apparently occupied nests on the platforms, with 11 feathered chicks on 10 Jul, 7 fledged/nearly fledged young (and 2 downy young) on 5 Aug and 6 well-grown young on 23 Aug (CAG, DAG, RP, MJHC, IFR). On the Spey river shingles at Garmouth, at least six pairs nested but the colony was washed out by high river levels on 24 Jun (MJHC). Further inland, one pair bred at Cloddach quarry (DAG, CAG, FA) but no young were reared. On the Spey at Aberlour, 1-2 adults were seen on three dates in May, and there were 4 on 7 Jul, but no evidence of breeding (AE). Another pair was on the Spey at Dipple on 12 May (MJHC).

Numerous on the Lossie estuary in mid August when 23 on 16th, 88 on 17th, 60 on 18th and 40 on 20th. Last of the year were 7 Nairn 12 Sep.

Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea*

Summer visitor and fairly common breeder.

Arrival: First returning bird was one at the Spey estuary on 13 Apr.

Breeding: On the Spey river shingles at Garmouth on 15 Jun were at least 40 visible nests with a total of 53 pairs (MJHC). Sadly the colony was washed out by the river in spate on 24 Jun and no young were reared. On the Lossie Forest foreshore, c20 pairs probably bred (50 adults there on 5 Jun (DAG) but the colony was deserted at the egg stage. At the ex-RAF base at Kinloss, c30 adults were seen briefly around the former breeding site but there was no evidence of a breeding attempt in 2012 (AJL).

Large numbers of 'commic' (Common or Arctic) terns were present at the Spey estuary in late June and July e.g. 182 on 29 Jun, 120 on 9 Jul, 185 on 21 Jul and a peak of 280 on 24 Jul (MJHC) - the vast majority of these were Arctic Terns. Only one juvenile was noted, which must have originated elsewhere in view of the complete breeding failure in Moray & Nairn in 2012.

Sabine's Gull *Xema sabini*

Rare migrant.

An adult flew west past Lossiemouth with a group of Kittiwakes on 15 Sep (DAG) and a juvenile flew west past the same site on 8 Oct (RP). These are the 13th and 14th records for Moray and Nairn.

Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla**Very common breeder and migrant.*

Breeding: An increase at both the Covesea and Portknockie colonies in 2012, continuing the upward trend of apparently occupied nests (AON) at both of these sites. There were 590 AON (with good numbers of chicks) at Covesea 20-21 Jun (MJHC). This represents a substantial increase over 2011, and numbers here are now the largest ever recorded. On 19 Jun, 365 AON at Portknockie included some with small young (MJHC). Numbers of AON in the past 10 years at these colonies are as follows:

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Covesea	347	397	302	437	474	420	468	535	540	590
Portknockie	122	109	158	246	238	263	332	355	360	365

Peak passage counts offshore this year were in late summer/autumn as is typical for this species. Counts over 200 comprised c.500 at Findhorn 11 Aug (RHD), c.250 Findhorn 22 Aug (GMcM) and 288 past Lossiemouth 4 Sep (RP).

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

Breeding: Numbers were slightly up at Loch Spynie, with about ten nests on the platform in late May (MJHC, RP) and 10 chicks on 11 Jun (CAG). Elsewhere, 20+ nests at Loch Dallas 21 May (RMu).

Counts of 100 or more included c.100 Loch Spynie 15 Jan, 146 Cooper Park pond (Elgin) 19 Feb, c.125 Lossie estuary 3 Aug, c.450 Findhorn Bay 11 Jul and 123 Loch Spynie 11 Nov.

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

Only two records. A juvenile was on the river shingles at Kingston on 25 Aug (MJHC) and it (or another) was on the Lossie estuary on 29 Aug (DAG, RP).

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

After no records in 2011, one or possibly two individuals in 2012 continued the recent trend of increased sightings of this attractive gull. An adult was at Burghead on 26 Sep (ABa) and probably the same bird was seen at Burghead on 7 Oct (AMcN). An adult at Lossiemouth on 1 Oct (DTa, RW) may relate to the same wandering individual or to a separate bird.



Adult Mediterranean Gull, Burghead October 2012 (Photo: Al McNee)

Common Gull *Larus canus*

Very common resident breeder and winter visitor.

Breeding: The colony at Tips of Corsemaul held 500 pairs 23 May (WRPB) and some 450 birds were dispersed over the Hill of Macklea colony at Glass 2 May (IFr). At Dunearn Lodge, 242 birds were at colony on 3 Jun (MJHC). Elsewhere up country, five pairs were at Balvenie distillery 27 May, a pair at Glenfiddich distillery the same day and a pair at Dipple 12 May. At the coast, approximately 30 pairs bred on river shingle at Garmouth golf course with many mobile young noted in mid June.

In Elgin, c.60 adults were noted over the Elgin cemetery breeding site at Linkwood 19 Jun, with seven broods or clutches at this site on this date and 22 Jun. Another clutch was at The Oaks (Elgin) on the latter date.

Flock counts in excess of 400 away from breeding areas included 400 attending ploughing at Maryfield 13 Mar and c.1400 Findhorn Bay 11 Jul (the highest count of the year). On the Spey estuary in autumn were 420 on 9 Sep, 486 on 16 Sep, 430 Tugnet on 7 Nov and 750 on 9 Nov.

Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus*

Summer visitor and scarce breeder. Very scarce in winter.

Wintering: Recorded in both winter periods. In the first winter period, 1 adult was at Loch Spynie 5 & 11 Feb (DAG). Although this may have been an early returning bird, there has been an adult in the Lossiemouth/Loch Spynie area in the winter period in recent years and it is tempting to speculate that a returning individual is involved, and accounted for this sighting.

In the second winter period, a single bird was on the Lossie estuary 2 Dec (DAG).

Arrival: Other than the potential early returning bird at Loch Spynie in early Feb, first arrivals were noted in early March when 1 Lossie estuary 2nd, 3 Loch Oire 3rd, 1 Tugnet 3rd and 1 Binsness 4th.

Breeding: About 10 apparently occupied nests were found around the Moycroft industrial estate (Elgin) on 26 May (RP) and one pair bred on Bow Fiddle Rock (Portknockie) (MJHC, LSi).

Largest counts of the year were 67 Kingston 2 Jul, 63 Pluscarden 13 Apr and 41 Lossie estuary 8 Jun.

After a blank year in 2011, birds showing the characteristics of the race *L.f.intermedius* were at Lossie estuary in June with one present on 3rd and two on 18th (RP).

Probable hybrid gulls, assumed to be of Lesser Black-backed Gull x Herring Gull parentage were seen on the Lossie estuary between mid April and late August. These birds superficially resemble Yellow-legged Gull, although subtle differences are present in structure, bare parts colouration and wing pattern. Their presence seems to coincide with the movements of Lesser black-backed Gulls.

Five different adults and a third year bird were recorded in the spring/early summer, with another adult in late August relating to one of these birds or another individual. Two of these birds are likely to be returning birds from previous years (one first recorded in 2007 and has a twisted right leg, another first recorded in 2009 and has a stump leg) (RP).

Elsewhere another probable hybrid adult was at Pluscarden 13 Apr (RP) although Yellow-legged Gull *Larus michahellis* could not be eliminated in this case.

Herring Gull *Larus argentatus*

Very common resident breeder and winter visitor.

Breeding: 62 apparently occupied nests were found around the Moycroft industrial estate (Elgin) on 26 May (RP), a pair had two young in Land Street, Elgin on 11 Jul (RP) and two pairs were nesting on roofs near Buckie High School on 11 Jul (MJHC).

Monthly maximum counts on the Lossie estuary were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
150	104	17	92	150	c.1300	123	823	c.850	300	292	64

Elsewhere, counts over 750 were c.1000 Loch Spynie 15 Jan (and 891 there 3 Feb) and 770 Kingston 31 Jul. On 3 Mar, 1369 were on Loch Oire and c.2000 were simultaneously at the nearby Lhanbryde pig farm giving a total for the area of 3000-3500 birds.

Probable hybrid gulls, assumed to be of Lesser Black-backed Gull x Herring Gull parentage were seen on the Lossie estuary between mid April and late August (see Lesser black-backed Gull section).

Iceland Gull *Larus glaucooides*

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.

A good year, difficult to ascertain the exact number of birds but perhaps 15-18 individuals were involved.

Buckie: A 2nd winter bird between 13-24 Jan (HC).

Clochan: An adult 10 Mar and a 1st summer bird 23-27 Apr (MJHC, HC).

Loch Oire/Urquhart: An adult was present from 2011 into 2012, remaining in the Loch Oire/Urquhart area until mid April (many obs). A different adult was present from 3-13 Mar (RP). A 1st winter bird was present 26 Feb - 1 Apr (many obs).

Loch Spynie: A 3rd winter bird was present between 5 Jan-15 Apr (many obs) and an adult was present 14 Jan-10 Feb (CAG, DAG) with it or another adult on 29-30 Mar (CAG). A 2nd winter bird was present on just one date, 21 Jan (DAG).

Lossie estuary: A 1st winter bird was recorded 5 Jan (ABa). An adult on 5 Feb (CAG) was possibly the same as the bird at Loch Spynie around this time. On 28 Apr a 3rd winter bird was present (A Ba) - potentially the long staying bird at Loch Spynie which was last seen in mid April.

Nairn: A 2nd winter bird was seen 19 Jan (ABa), and a bird of an unspecified age on 14 Apr (GHa).

Tugnet: A 1st winter bird was noted 6 Jan and another on 28 Feb (MJHC). On 3 Mar, a 3rd winter bird was present (DAG).

In the summer months, an unseasonal 1st summer bird was at Urquhart on 13 Jun (EH), possibly the 1st winter bird seen in the Loch Oire/Urquhart area earlier in the year which had gone unnoticed for a while.

In the second winter period the only sighting received was an adult at Loch Oire on 30 Dec (RP).

Glaucous Gull *Larus hyperboreus*

Very scarce winter visitor.

A slight return to form for this species with five individuals recorded in 2012, after a few lean years.

In the first winter period, the 1st winter bird at Burghead from late 2011 remained in the area until late January (many obs). A different 1st winter bird was also at the Scarffbanks farm entrance adjacent to Loch Spynie on 28 Jan (RP). A 1st winter on Loch Oire 31 Mar (RP) was easily attributed to being a separate individual however on account of its small size.

In the second winter period, two 1st winter birds were together on the Lossie estuary on 15-16 Dec (RP).



Iceland Gull in Buckie harbour, January 2012 (Photo: Hugh Clarke)

Great Black-backed Gull *Larus marinus*

Scarce resident breeder and common visitor.

Breeding: The only reports of breeding were three pairs on the cliffs at Portknockie 19 Jun (one of which had young and another was on eggs) and a pair with one chick at Tronach Head 23 Jun (MJHC).

Good numbers noted this year, especially at the Lossie and Spey estuaries in autumn. On the Lossie estuary numbers peaked at 642 on 27 Sep (RP) whilst at the Spey, numbers peaked at 560 on 12 Oct (MJHC). These estuaries are only about 10 km apart and the extent of interchange between these two flocks is uncertain. Maximum monthly counts were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Lossie estuary	30	13	13	53	55	64	30	204	642	201	86	56
Spey estuary	49	50	28	76	64	60	240	140	259	560	75	10

The only other coastal count to exceed 50 was 85 Strathlene 25 Aug.

Unusually numerous in the winter periods at Loch Spynie e.g. 73 on 6 Jan, 20 on 12 Feb, 40 on 13 Mar and 52 on 30 Dec.

Feral Pigeon *Columba livia*

Very common resident breeder.

Largest flocks reported were 170 Buckie shipyard 14 Oct, 155 Lossiemouth harbour 4 Dec and 125 Elgin 31 Aug.

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

Breeding season: Records in the period late March-July included 2 Beatshach (Ben Rinnes) 18 May, 9 Darkland 29 May, 1 Dipple 12 May, 2 Findhorn Bay 23 Apr, 2 Kinloss 25 Jun, 2 Loch Spynie 12 May and 2 Torrieston 13 Apr.

Autumn/winter records from additional localities were 1 Arradoul 6 Nov, 3 Milltown airfield 3 Feb, 1 Nether Birnie 2 Jan, 1 Tugnet 9 Sep and 7 Urquhart 8 Nov.

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

Flocks of 300 or more were 1500 Darkland/Woodside 15 Dec, 550 Dryburn (Dallachy) 15 Dec, 500 Loch Spynie 5 Dec, 450 Burnside of Enzie 13 Dec and 300 Broadley (Clochan) 2 Dec.

Song reported as early as 1 Jan (Kingston) and as late (or early for 2013) as 26 Dec (Garmouth). A recently-fledged juvenile was at Linkwood (Elgin) on 17 Oct.

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

The population continues at a relatively low level compared with former years. The only count to exceed nine was 14 Clochan 22 Jan.

Maximum counts since 1986 have been:

1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995
35	26	41	35	22	38	52	66	25	100
1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
22	24	26	17	31	32	17	19	20	22
2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012			
16	11	14	11	22	20	14			

Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus**Summer visitor and fairly common breeder.*

Arrival: No April reports. First song, in May, was heard at Archiestown on 1st, Glenlivet on 6th, Ben Rinnes on 7th and Lossie Forest on 9th.

Subsequently seen or heard at Aitnoch (May), Clochan (May), Cloddach (Jun), Coltfoot (May), Cullen (May), Dava (Jun), Dufftown (May), Dunphail (May), Findhorn (Jun), Glenlatterach (May), Kinloss (May), Knauchland (Rothiemay) (Jun), Highland Boath (May), St. Mary's (Orton) (May) and Waterford (Forres) (Aug).

Barn Owl *Tyto alba**Scarce resident breeder.*

After two severe winters, 2011-12 was rather less harsh and there was a small, but welcome, increase in records during the April-July breeding season. Birds were seen during this period at Carn Ghiubhais, Cullen, Dava, Forres, Inchberry, Keith, Overton, Portknockie, Spynie canal and Wellheads (Enzie).

The number of occupied breeding-season localities reported in each of the past 10 years has been:

2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
15	11	13	21	10	9	5	0	1	9

At other times of year, reports came from the following additional sites: Auldearn (Feb), Barmuckity (Jan), Bauds (Sep), Cawdor (Nov), Clochan (Mar), Covesea (Oct), Craigellachie (Mar, Nov), Georgetown (Ballindalloch) (Dec), Half Davoch (Nov), Hillhall (Oct), Marionburgh (Ballindalloch) (Dec) and Westertown (Dufftown) (Dec).

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
33	31	27	31	21	40	20	11	13	21

Tawny Owl *Strix aluco*

Common resident breeder.

Breeding confirmed at Aberlour, Auchinhandoch (Dufftown), Loch Oire and Mayne Lodge (Elgin).

High road mortality on the A96 between Ardgry and Quarrelwood where three were found dead in a two week period in July.

At Tomnavoulin, one was perched in the sunshine in a roadside tree in mid afternoon on 29 Apr.



Newly fledged Tawny Owls near Dufftown, May 2012 (Photo: Fiona McHugh)

Long-eared Owl *Asio otus*

Scarce resident breeder.

No breeding reports received for 2012. All records were in the autumn period: 1 Findhorn Bay 7 Oct (EH), 1 Half Davoch 31 Oct (RHD) and 1 Overton (Macallan Distillery) 26 Sep, 23 Nov and 26 Nov (AE).

Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus*

Rare breeder and very scarce migrant.

Breeding: Present in summer in breeding habitat in several localities around the Cabrach area where sightings included 2 near Cabrach House 9 Apr (IFr), 2 Elrick 15 Jun, 2 Hill of Bank 15 Jun, 1 Ardwell 24 Jun, 3 Balvalley Moss/The Rones 24 Jun (all FMc). The dates and distribution suggest two, and possibly three, pairs in the area. Another pair near Dunearn was occasionally seen within the Moray & Nairn boundary but the territory was probably centred to the south (PSw, SMc).

In the early winter period, 3 Coltfoot 2 Mar (still 2 there 23 Mar) (RHD), 2 Nairn Bar 9 Feb (MWy) (still 1 there 12 Feb [DCJ]) and 1 Portknockie 22 Mar (LSi).

Still in the coastal plain in early spring were 2 Kinloss 12 Apr (AJL) and 1 Salterhill 25 May (IWo).

On the south side of Findhorn Bay, between Netherton and Kinloss, one was seen almost daily between 29 Jun-13 Jul (GMcM) and again on 3 Aug (KLG), 18 Aug (GMcM), 3-7 Sep (GMcM), 31 Oct (AJL) and 1 Nov (GMcM).

Also present in late summer at the Spey estuary where a single bird was seen on 5-8 Aug (P&IB), 15-16 Aug (MJHC) and 25 Aug (DGD).

Swift *Apus apus*

Summer visitor and common breeder.

Arrival: No April records. First reports, in May, were 1 Archiestown 3rd, 2 Clochan 5th, 2 Loch Spynie 8th and 2 Portknockie 10th.

In cold, overcast conditions, large numbers were seeking food over the reedbeds and woodland around, and to the west of, Spynie Palace in mid June. About 200 were estimated on 10th and 250 on 17th. Other counts received were 40 Loch Spynie 18 May (50 there 3 Jun), 13 Lossiemouth harbour 21 May, 30 over Bishopmill (Elgin) 7 Jun, 25 over Elgin cemetery 7 Jun, 15 Forres (over River Findhorn) 1 Jul, 10 Mill of Grange 11 Jul and 18 Portknockie 28 Jul.

Last of the year were 7 high over Clochan 17 Aug, 2 Burghead 20 Aug and 1 Lossie estuary 1 Sep.

Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*

Very scarce visitor and occasional breeder.

A very poor year with only one report, of a single bird at Tugnet on 29 Jun (KP).

Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major*

Common resident breeder.

Records received from 20 localities with numerous reports of birds visiting garden feeders. Nine birds attracted in this way were ringed at Cairnfield during the year (HC) and a further seven at Clochan (MJHC). Although the two sites are only around 2 km apart there was no interchange of birds revealed by this ringing. Early drumming at Scarffbanks on 11 Feb.

Magpie *Pica pica*

Common resident breeder.

Recorded at Auchindoun Castle, Auchroisk, Bishopmill (Elgin), Broadley (near Clochan), Buckie, Burghead, Clochan, Coltfoot, Covelea, Cummingston, Drainie, Dufftown, Hopeman, Kingsteps (Nairn), Kingston, Kinloss, Lhanbryde, Lossiemouth west beach, Mains of Allanbuie (Keith), Milton Brodie, Moss of Barmuckity, Plewlands and Roseisle maltings.

Largest groups were 9 near Burghead 30 Dec and 8 Kinloss 2 Mar and 7 Oct.

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

Breeding season: April-August reports came from Binn Hill (Garmouth), Cloddach quarry, Kirkside (Nether Birnie), Loch Spynie, Lossie Forest, Pitgaveny, Relugas, Sanquhar (Forres), Torwinny, Yellowbog and Whiteash Hill Wood.

At other seasons, Jays were seen at Alves (Nov), Braidbog (Jan), Burghead (Nov), Cairnfield [Buckie] (Feb), Culbin Forest (Jan), Dallas Dhu [Forres] (Oct), Stoneyford (Nov), Fochabers [Deer Park] (Oct), Gownie [Aberlour] Feb, Hillhead of Rannas (Jan), Kinloss (Jan, Feb, Oct), Loch na Bo (Oct), Roseisle Forest (Sep, Oct), Scabbed Hill [Clochan] (Nov) and Stynie (Nov, Dec).

Largest groups were 9 Loch Spynie 19 Sep, 6 Fochabers (Deer Park) 20 Oct, 6 Loch Spynie 27 Jan, 5 Sanquhar (Forres) 25 Apr and 5 Scarffbanks 9 Feb.

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

On 14 Jan, 890 flew west over Porttannachy in the late afternoon, presumably heading for the Mosstodloch roost (MJHC). Subsequent observations indicated that this was likely to be the entire coastal population from Buckie and at least as far east as Findochty. On 17 Nov, 230 were in a pre-roost flock at Lower Auchenreath and on 26 Dec there were hundreds in a pre-roost gathering near Garmouth viaduct. On 23 Jan, 75 flew east over Linkwood (Elgin) – also apparently heading for the Mossstodloch roost. Otherwise, 45 Clochan 9 Mar and 35 Tugnet 7 Nov were the highest counts received.

First nest building observed at Clochan on 23 Feb. A group of 18 was feeding among seaweed on the Lossie estuary on 28 Sep.

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

Breeding: Nest building noted near Garmouth on 26 Feb.

On 9 Jul, c.800 were feeding in a newly-cut silage field. A flock of c.500 corvids near Nairn golf club car park on 30 Nov was probably composed mostly of Rooks, and 400 flew east over Linkwood (Elgin) on 23 Jan, probably heading to the Mosstodloch roost. On 20 Oct, 16 were feeding on algae-covered tidal shingle at Kingston.

Carrion Crow *Corvus corone**Very common resident breeder.*

One was already incubating in a nest at Linkwood (Elgin) on 7 Apr.

Good numbers all year at the Lossie estuary where maximum monthly counts were:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
nc	nc	nc	10	45	46	17	53	63	nc	nc	28

Elsewhere, counts exceeding 20 were 50 Findhorn Bay 15 Oct and, on the Spey estuary, 24 on 15 Mar, 23 on 28 Apr and 26 on 9 Sep.

Hooded Crow *Corvus cornix**Scarce visitor and rare breeder.*

Pure Hooded Crows (or Carrion x Hooded hybrids very closely resembling Hooded) included 2 Archiestown 14 Mar (and 1 on 30 Apr), 3 Binsness 30 Aug, 1 Bishopmill (Elgin) 28 Jan, 1 Cloddach quarry 21 Oct, 1 Culbin Bar 20 Apr, 1 Elgin 31 Aug (and 1 on 28 Sep), 1 Linkwood (Elgin) 5 Dec, 1 Muirton 28 Jan, 4 Nairn

harbour 1 Oct (and 2 on 8 Oct) and 1 Roseisle 28 Jan. On the Lossie estuary, a single bird was present on 13 Feb, 21 May, 16 Jul, 31 Aug and 5 Sep – and there were 2 on 18 Jun and 22 Aug.

Hybrids were often seen in the crow flock on the Lossie estuary. Monthly maxima here were:

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

The only other report was 1 Tugnet 9 Sep.

Raven *Corvus corax*

Scarce visitor and rare breeder.

Breeding: At the coast, one pair nested again at Tronach Head and fledged five young (MJHC, LSi, RMu). Despite breeding taking place at this site for about seven years there is still no evidence of breeding anywhere else in Moray & Nairn.

Ravens are however becoming an increasingly frequent sight and sound over the uplands at all seasons. The few records received for 2012 greatly understate the situation: 1 Ladder Hills 24 Mar, 2 Glen Brown 29 Apr, 1 Ben Rinnes 13 Jun, 3 Archiestown 7 Oct (2 there 20 Oct and 7 Nov), 2 Creag an Tarmachain (Cromdales) 19 Aug, 2 Ben Main 18 Nov and 2 Dava 11 Dec.



Raven, Ben Main November 2012 (Photo: Fiona McHugh)

Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*

Very common resident breeder and scarce migrant.

Two along the old railway line footpath at Portknockie on 17 Oct – possibly migrants.

Blue Tit *Cyanistes caeruleus**Very common resident breeder.*

Early nest building at Alves on 19 Mar

Nest boxes:

	Pairs	Mean clutch	Mean fledged brood (all pairs)	Mean fledged brood (successful pairs only)
Loch Spynie	34	7.9	6.4	7.2 (n=30)

(RP, CAG)

An average year at Loch Spynie for clutch size and fledging success though down a little by comparison with 2011. There were five occupied nest boxes in c.100m at the south end of the loch. The proportion of juveniles caught per adult for ringing at the 'Constant Effort Site' was only 1.9:1, well down from 6.3 in 2011 and suggesting poor post-fledging chick survival (RP).

In a mixed conifer/birch wood at Birkenhill (near Elgin), 7 pairs laid a mean clutch of 7.4 eggs, and six pairs were successful in raising well-grown chicks at a mean of 6.8 chicks per successful pair (RP).

Great Tit *Parus major**Very common resident breeder.*

First song Clochan 11 Jan.

Nest boxes:

	Pairs	Mean clutch	Mean fledged brood (all pairs)	Mean fledged brood (successful pairs only)
Loch Spynie	13	7.0	6.5	6.5 (n=13)

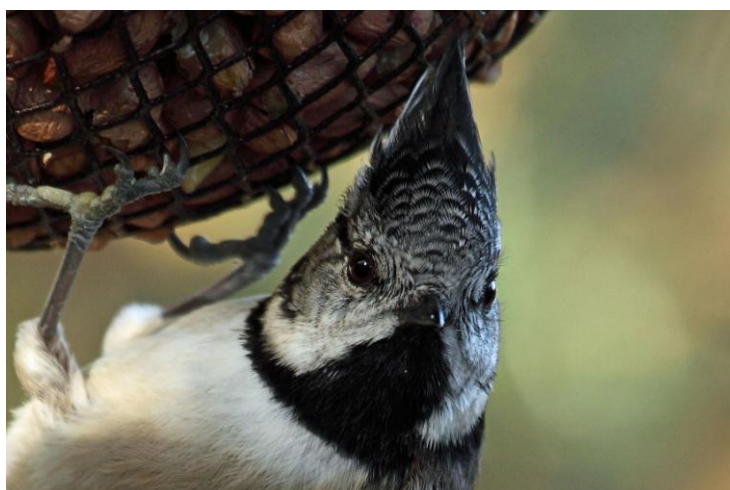
(RP, CAG)

Fledging success was down from 7.2 per successful pair in 2011. Productivity, as assessed by ringing at the 'Constant Effort Site', revealed 0.5 juveniles caught per adult, down from 1.7 in 2011 (RP).

Crested Tit *Lophophanes cristatus**Common resident breeder.*

Breeding: Two nest boxes were occupied in Lossie Forest. One brood of 5 young fledged successfully but the 6 chicks in the other brood died in the nest for unknown reasons (MJHC).

Two were at Kinloss on 21 May (AJL). On the fringes of the range were 3 near Loch Allan (Dava) 30 Jun (MJHC) and 1 Loch na Bo 7 Oct (MJHC).



Crested Tit in Lossie Forest, October 2012 (Photo: Gordon Biggs)

Coal Tit *Periparus ater*

Very common resident breeder.

Two beside Allt a'Choileachain (below Ben Main) 21 Nov were a long way from any conifers. On the same day, 16 were beside the River Fiddich below Auchindoun Castle.

Skylark *Alauda arvensis*

Very common breeder and migrant.

First song Kingston 12 Feb and Portknockie 19 Feb.

Only small groups reported of which the largest were 10 Spey estuary 7 Feb and 10 flying south over Broadley (Clochan) 19 Oct.

Sand Martin *Riparia riparia*

Summer visitor and very common breeder.

Arrival: Three very early at Portknockie on 20 Mar (LSi) but no other reports until c30 Loch na Bo 30 Mar, a few at Loch Spynie on 31 Mar and 6 Cloddach quarry 1 Apr.

In poor weather in May, large numbers were 'hawking' for insects low over the water at Loch Spynie – estimates were 300+ on 10th, 400 on 18th and 150 on 28th. In similar conditions in late summer there were c90 at the mouth of the River Spey.

Colonies: Counts of apparently occupied burrows included 5 Clashach Quarry (Hopeman), c40 above the Spey at Ordiquish, 7 Nairn (by Merryton Bridge over river) and c10 Tronach Head.

Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

Summer visitor and very common breeder.

Arrival: Up to two weeks later than in recent years. First, in April, were 2 Loch Spynie 15th, 1 Kinloss 16th, 1 Dufftown 17th, 1 Kinermony 18th, 1 Middlefield (Forres) 18th and 1 Tugnet 19th. Passage was noted at Burghead on 3 & 14 May (ABa) and on 6 May, 138 flew west past Tronach Head in strong winds in one hour (LSi).

Breeding: In the Lhanbryde barn, mean clutch size of five nesting attempts was 4.2 eggs. All five nests were successful, producing a total of 18 fledged young. The mean of 3.6 young per nest was considerably better than 1.7 in 2011. (RP).

In poor weather in mid May, huge numbers were seeking food low over Loch Spynie – c.800 on 10th (RHD) and c.200 on 18th.

Post-breeding congregations were 26 Netherton 5 Sep, 90 Chapelton (Forres) 19 Sep and 20 Kingston 24 Sep.

Last records: In October, 2 Buckie harbour 16th, 1 Barmuckity 18th, 2 Lossiemouth west beach 18th and 1 Portknockie 26th. Very late were 1 Lossie estuary 4 Nov (DAG) and 2 Nairn 5-6 Nov (JWo).

House Martin *Delichon urbicum*

Summer visitor and common breeder.

Arrival: With the exception of 2 Portknockie 6 Apr (LSi) arrival was quite late e.g. 1 Cloddach 21 Apr, 1 Loch Spynie 24 Apr, 2 Elgin 25 Apr and 1 Clochan 28 Apr.

Breeding: Counts of occupied nests included 3 Buckie High School 11 Jul, 9 Delnabo Lodge (Tomintoul) 25 Jul, 1 Inchrory Lodge (Glen Avon) 25 Jul and 1 Portknockie seacliffs 3 Jul.

Late summer counts included c.200 Kinloss 15 Aug and 80 Gilston 18 Aug. Last of the year was 1 Clochan 14 Oct.



House Martin gathering mud for nest building, Kingston June 2012 (Photo: Martin Cook)

Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus*

Very common resident breeder.

The only reports of 10 or more together were 18 Cairnfield (Buckie) 27 Jan, 16 Keith 20 Jan and 12 Buckie 4 Dec.

Wood Warbler *Phylloscopus collybita*

Summer visitor and rare breeder.

No reports of Wood Warblers in 2012, following one in 2011 and none in 2010. As a regular breeder, at least, the species has been lost in Moray & Nairn.

Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*

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

Arrival: In March, singing birds were 2 Loch na Bo 23rd, 2 Loch of Blairs 23rd, 1 Loch Oire 23rd, 2 Kingston 24th, 1 Inchberry 24th, 2 Manachie (Forres) 25th, 1 Torrieston 26th, 1 Loch Spynie 26th, 1 Hopeman 26th and 1 Mulben 28th.

Subsequently, singers were found at Boat o' Brig-St Mary's along the Spey (7), Cloddach, Kingsteps (3), Cunninghaugh, Nether Dallachy, Dipple (4), Dunphail, Essil, Hopeman, Inchberry (2), Loch na Bo (2), Loch of Blairs (2), Loch Oire, Loch Spynie (3), Lossie Forest (2), Mannachie (2), Millbuies, Miltonduff, Muiry Wood (Forres), Mulben, Ordiquish earth pillars (3), Spynie Palace, Forres (River Findhorn) and Delnies.

Autumn: 1 Clochan 4-8 Nov and 1 Broadley (at crematorium) 16 Nov whose calls suggested Siberian Chiffchaff (RP).

Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus*

Summer visitor and very common breeder.

Arrival: Rather late with no records before 16 Apr when 1 Elgin (The Wards), 1 Kinermony and 1 Urquhart. Not widespread until 21st – about one week later than in 2011.

Along the 5.5km stretch of old railway line between Dufftown-Craigellachie, there were 31 singing birds on 27 May (MJHC). This is many fewer than in 2011 when 58 were counted, but on an earlier date in May.

Productivity, as measured by ringing at the 'Constant Effort Site' at Loch Spynie, was 0.6 juveniles caught per adult – a substantial reduction from 2.2 in 2011 (RP).

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*

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

January-March: In an Elgin garden, 1 female on 14-27 Feb, 2 females on 1 & 14 Jan and 29 Feb, and 3 females on 2 & 8 Jan, 17 Jan and 3 & 7 Mar (CAG). In a Buckie garden, 1 male 12 & 15 Jan, 1 male 28 Feb-2 Apr and 1 female 30 Jan-8 Mar (HC). Also, 1 Forres almost daily in Jan (KLG), and up to 4 at a bird table elsewhere in Forres in March (per ISS). One was singing from Blackthorn bushes at Lossiemouth west beach on 11 Mar (DAG).

Spring/summer: High densities of singing birds included 26 along the Dufftown-Craigellachie old railway line on 27 May (MJHC) and 11 Loch Spynie/Scarffbanks 19 & 25 May (RP). In riverside woodlands along the River Spey were 19 in 3km between Boat o' Brig and St. Mary's on 22 May, 5 between Dipple and Fochabers on 12 May and 4 at Essil on 12 May (MJHC). Other singers (singles unless stated) were found at Aberlour (2), Alves (2), Kinloss, Bishopmill (Elgin), Brodie Castle, Clochan, Clovenside cemetery (Forres), Cluny Hill (Forres), Nether Dallachy, Fochabers, Garmouth golf course (3), Kinermony, Kingsmills (Elgin), Linkwood (Elgin), Loch na Bo, Maryfield (3), Nairn (4), Old Mills (Elgin), Portknockie, Sanquhar, Tarras (4), The Grove Nursing Home (Elgin), Kingston (The Lein), The Wards (Elgin) and along the lower River Findhorn near Forres (5).

Breeding confirmed at Dufftown (WRPB).

Autumn: 1 Clochan 2 Oct.

Late November/December: 1 in an Elgin garden 26-30 Nov and 23-28 Dec (CAG) and 1 Kingston (The Lein) 25 Nov (PGS).

Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin*

Summer visitor and scarce breeder.

On 22 May, two singing birds and a pair were found along 3km of the River Spey between Boat o' Brig and St. Mary's (MJHC). Elsewhere, 1 singing Dipple 12 May (MJHC), 1 singing Urquhart 12 Jun (EH) and 1 Forres (along the River Findhorn) 3 & 5 Jun (AJL).

In autumn, 2 migrants Portknockie 23 Sep (RP).

Whitethroat *Sylvia communis*

Summer visitor and very common breeder.

Arrival: The first arrivals were two weeks later than in 2011. First, in May, were 1 Tugnet 6th, 1 Kingston 9th, 1 Dallas Dhu (Forres) 9th, 1 Kinloss 9th, 1 Findhorn 12th and several Cloddach quarry 12th.

On 26 May, 4 males were singing between Salterhill and Gilston.

Two at Portknockie on 23 Sep were probable migrants.

Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella naevia*

Summer visitor and scarce breeder.

Singing birds included 2 Dallas Dhu (Forres) 29 Apr-9 May (AJL, ABa et al.), 2 Inchberry (AY) and 4 Muldearie (Keith) (AY, WMM). Adults were feeding young at Balnacoul in June (AY).

Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus**Summer visitor and common breeder.*

Arrival: Late by comparison with recent years, with no April records. First singing birds were at Tugnet 6 May, Kinloss 7 May and Loch Spynie 10 May. Three other sites held singing birds on 12 May.

At the 'Constant Effort Site' in the north-east fen at Loch Spynie the number of juveniles caught per adult was 0.6:1, down from 1.3:1 in 2011 and 1.9:1 in 2010 (RP). One was singing in Oil-seed Rape at Troves on 21 May.

Waxwing *Bombycilla garrulus**Irruptive winter visitor, scarce in most years but occasionally common.*

Winter-spring: No reports.

Autumn-winter: An excellent year with birds reported from 31 localities. First arrivals were in early November and the subsequent pattern, in weekly intervals, was as follows:

3-9 Nov: 20 South Darkland 4th, 6 Nether Dallach 5th, 7 Duffus 6th, 30 Forres 7th, 24 Mosstodloch 8th, 12 Cummingston 9th.

10-16 Nov: 12 Milnorduff 10th-11th, 140 Glenernie 14th (and 122 on 16th), 50+ Elgin 11th (and 30 on 14th), 23 Findhorn 16th.

17-23 Nov: 17 Glenernie 18th, 7 Ben Main (Dufftown) 18th, 4 Ben Rinnes distillery 18th, 22 Loch Oire 18th, 9 Loch na Bo 18th, 47 Forres 18th (and 60+ on 19th, 10 on 20th, 12 on 21st), 27 Mosstodloch 20th, 7 Hopeman 20th.

24-30 Nov: 33 Elgin 24th, 30 Garmouth 24th, 15 Nairn 26th, 17 Barmuckity 28th.

1-7 Dec: 4 Scarffbanks 2nd, 90 Delmore (Aberlour) 4th, 2 Elgin 4th.

8-14 Dec: 20 Hopeman 8th, 15 Windyridge 8th, 3 Auchinhandoch (Dufftown) 11th, 15 Dava school 11th.

15-21 Dec: c.100 Elgin 15th-16th (and 80 on 21st), 2 Auchinhandoch (Dufftown) 15th-16th, 5 Findhorn 17th, 25 Duffus 17th, 78 Elgin 20th, 31 Nairn 20th, 1 Buckie 23rd.

22-28 Dec (and 29-30 Dec): 12 Kinermory 23rd, 25 Forres 26th (and 6 on 31st), 2 Lossiemouth 26th, 29 Duffus 28th, 24 Elgin 28th (and 9 on 27th, 20 on 29th, 17 on 30th, 12 on 31st), 20 Hopeman 28th (and 9 on 30th).



Waxwing, Forres November 2012 (Photo: Richard Somers Cocks)

Treecreeper *Certhia familiaris*

Very common resident breeder.

Three together on the same tree at Nairn on 22 Oct was notable. One on a nut feeder in an Alves garden on 21 Feb.

Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*

Very common resident breeder.

First song Lein (Kingston) 2 Mar.

On 27 May, 31 birds were singing along the 5.5km section of the old railway line between Craigellachie and Dufftown – back to 2009-09 levels, following two severe winters (MJHC). Outwith the breeding season, 4 Sanquhar (Forres) 19 Feb were the most reported together.

Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*

Very common resident breeder and winter visitor.

Nestboxes: Three pairs occupied nest boxes at Clochan. All were successful and mean brood size at fledging was 4.0 (MJHC).

Night roosts: c1000 under the quay at Buckie harbour 27 Jan, several hundred in ornamental shrubs in Ashgrove Road, Elgin 29 Dec and 68 in a large spruce tree at Clochan 26 Nov.

Dipper *Cinclus cinclus*

Common resident breeder.

Early song (for the 2013 breeding season) heard on River Fiddich at Auchindoun Castle on 21 Nov and on the Mosset Burn in Forres on 28 Nov.

Breeding confirmed at Boat o' Brig, Drumin, Glenlivet, Mosset Burn/Sanquhar (Forres) and Nairn. Also present in spring/summer at Ballintomb Burn (Archiestown), Cloddach (River Lossie), Dipple and Garmouth viaduct. Very close to the sea were 2 Cullen Burn 19 Mar and, especially, one on shingle at the mouth of the River Spey on 17 May.

Ring Ouzel *Turdus torquatus*

Summer visitor and scarce breeder.

One pair bred on the south side of Ben Rinnes (per FMc) and this presumably accounted for the female with at least 2 juveniles near the summit of Ben Rinnes on 3 Aug (AE). The only other records were 1 singing Ailnack Gorge 29 Apr (MJHC) and 1 male in Glen Builg 25 Jul (MJHC).

Blackbird *Turdus merula*

Very common resident breeder, winter visitor and migrant.

Breeding: First song Cullen 13 Jan. Gathering nest material in Elgin on 3 Mar. An increase to 15 singing males along a 5.5km section of the old railway line between Dufftown and Craigellachie on 27 May - from 10 in 2011 and 2010 (MJHC).

Best autumn count was 18 together in Elgin Cemetery on 13 Oct.

Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris*

Very common migrant and winter visitor.

Winter-spring: Flocks of 20 or more were 40 Clochan 9 Jan, 123 Tomhommie 9 Feb, 60 Dunphail 24 Mar and 150 Archiestown 3 Apr. Last in spring were 4 Scarffbanks 8 May and 1 Garmouth golf course 12 May.

Arrival: First were 11 Clochan 12 Oct, 1 Kinloss 12 Oct and 1 Elgin Cemetery 16 Oct. Main arrival from mid November.

Autumn-winter: Flocks of 20 or more were 28 Forres 18 Nov (and 32 on 20th), 36 Ben Main 21 Nov, 20 Urquhart 29 Nov, 400+ Delmore (Aberlour) 4 Dec, 21 Clochan 7 Dec, 30 Auchinhandoch 13 Dec and 48 Wellheads (Clochan) 31 Dec.

Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos*

Very common breeder and migrant. Scarce in winter.

Mid winter: In January, 1 Clochan 13th (singing) and 1 Nether Birnie 29th. No December reports.

First song of the year (apart from the one-day Clochan bird reported above) was in February, at Linkwood (Elgin) on 23rd at Cloddach and Nairn on 26th, and at Forres on 29th. Four Dunphail 16 Mar.

Three singing birds along a 5.5km section of the old railway line between Dufftown and Craigellachie on 27 May – the same as in 2011 (MJHC).

Redwing *Turdus iliacus*

Very common migrant and winter visitor.

Winter-spring: As is often the case, Redwings were very scarce early in the year. The only reports of 10 or more were 12 Dallas Dhu area (Forres) 22 Jan and 15 Forres (River Findhorn) 29 Jan.

Arrival: First, on 12 Oct were 40 Clochan, 25 Alves and 10 Strathlene.

Up country, 25 Dunphail 19 Oct and 60 Half Davoch 8 Nov. No reports of large autumn flocks.

Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus*

Very common resident breeder and migrant.

Flocks of ten or more were 38 Half Davoch 25 Aug, 12 Colfield 28 Jan, and 10 Kinloss 23 Jan and 5 Mar.

Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata*

Summer visitor and common breeder.

Arrival: First was 1 Allanreid (Glenlivet) on the early date of 6 May.

Breeding was proved at Archiestown, Aultahurn, Delmore (Aberlour), Drynahan and Dulsie Bridge. Also seen at Aldunie (Cabrach), Delavorar and Inchrory (Glen Avon), Roseisle Forest and Sanquhar (Forres).

Robin *Erithacus rubecula*

Very common resident breeder and migrant.

Breeding: Full song at Bishopmill and Linkwood (both Elgin) on 10 Jan, but not at Lein (Kingston) until 11 Feb. Thirty were singing along a 5.5km section of the old railway line between Craigellachie and Dufftown on 27 May (MJHC). The proportion of juveniles to adults trapped at Loch Spynie 'Constant Effort Site' was 0.8:1 – a continued decline from 3.0:1 in 2011 and 5.7:1 in 2010 (RP).

Counts included 12 Portknockie 23 Sep, 10 Elgin cemetery 29 Sep and 6 Forres (along the River Findhorn) 29 Jan. Four together below a Clochan bird table on 28 Feb was unusual, particularly as the weather was relatively mild.

First 'autumn' song Clochan 17 Aug.

Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*

Rare migrant.

One was watched in a garden at Dallas for 10 minutes on 18 Apr (JMa). This was the 17th record for Moray & Nairn, of which 12 have been in the March-May spring period.

Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

Summer visitor and scarce breeder. Very scarce migrant.

Breeding season: On 20 May, at least 3 were singing at Dulsie (near the Drynachan road junction), but none was heard between here and Drynachan Lodge (DAG). Elsewhere, 1 male Archiestown 4 May and 2-9 Jun (NL), 1 Loch Allan (Dava) 30 Jun (MJHC) and 1 singing Delnabo 29 Apr (MJHC).

[Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra*

Summer visitor and scarce breeder. Very scarce migrant.

No records received of this increasingly uncommon species.]

Stonechat *Saxicola rubicola*

Scarce resident breeder and migrant.

The population continues to be at a very low level following the two cold winters between 2009 and 2011.

Breeding season: In coastal areas, birds were seen at five sites, with seven pairs the most optimistic estimate. At least two broods were raised at Covesea golf course where juveniles were seen in late June (CAG) and early September (ABa). The presence of two males here on 22 Jun (ABa) suggests that two pairs may have bred. A male was seen in the Kinloss dunes (NJ0764) on 2 Jun (GMcM), a female was at the Lossie estuary on 23 Mar (MSh) and a female was at Portknockie on 19 Mar (LSi). Two or three pairs were between the Lein and the rifle range at Kingston in both winter periods (AY, PGS) and the presence of fledged young on 14 Jul (PGS) confirms that at least one pair bred. Inland the only record relevant to the breeding season was 1 male Beatshach (Ben Rinnes) 21 March (MJHC).

At other times of year, two pairs between Hopeman-Lossiemouth 16 Jan (SMu), 1 Kinloss 12 Sep (AJL), 2 Leuchars (near Milltown airfield) 11 Jan (HC), 1 male Broadley Crematorium 16 Sep (RP) and 1 Urquhart 10 Oct (EH). The only inland report was 2 along Allt a'Choileachain (Ben Main) 18 Nov (FMc).

Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe*

Summer visitor and fairly common breeder and migrant.

Arrival: Apparently quite late with no March or early April records. First in April were 1 Lossiemouth 12th, 1 Lein (Kingston) 14th, 1 Keith 16th and 1 Kinloss 17th. Best counts of spring passage birds at the coast were 6 Lossiemouth on 11, 13 & 16 May. Showing the features of Greenland race birds (*O.o.leucorhoa*) were 2 Findhorn Bay 12 & 14 May (RHD). Last spring migrants at the coast were 2 Kingston 23 May.

Breeding: The only information received concerned adults with young on Ben Rinnes on 3 Aug (AE).

First seen back in coastal areas were 1 Kinloss 31 Jul and 1 Clochan 5 Aug. Largest group was 4 Lossie estuary 26 Sep. Last in autumn was 1 Lossiemouth 13 Oct.



Wheatear, Barmuckity September 2012 (Photo: David Devonport)

Dunnock *Prunella modularis**Very common resident breeder.*

First song at Linkwood (Elgin) on 21 Feb but not until 23 Mar at Kingston.

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus**Very common resident breeder.*

Largest flocks reported were 40-45 Clochan throughout the year and c.45 Kinloss 29 Aug.

An isolated upland colony persists at Aldunie (Cabrach) where fledglings were being fed on 24 Jun (FMc).

Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus**Common resident breeder.*

Breeding: At Clochan, ten nestboxes were occupied:

	Pairs	Mean clutch	Mean fledged brood (all pairs)	Mean fledged brood (successful pairs only)
First broods	10	4.9	2.7	3.0 (n=9)
Second broods	10	4.5	3.1	3.1 (n=10)
Third broods	2	4.5	4.0	4.0 (n=2)

(MJHC)

At Longmorn, 11 nest boxes were used, producing 17 broods (J&HMacD). In Bishopmill (Elgin), a nest box camera revealed the fledging of 18-20 young from four broods in one box (DMai). Elsewhere in the breeding season, 4 Bishopmill (Elgin) 2 May, 1 Forres 11 Jun, 2 Inchberry 22 May, 5 Portknockie 29 Jun, 2 pairs using nest boxes Rafford 24 May, a colony at Troves 21 May and fledged young at Urquhart 12 Jun.

At other times, 58 Dipple 2 Jan, 20 Lochhill 28 Jan, 20 Nether Meft 29 Jan, 20 Porttannachy 24 Dec, 20 South Darkland 1 Jan, 10 Alves 7 Jan (and 11 on 15 Dec), 10 Corbiewell 29 Nov, 9 Scarffbanks 11 Jan, 5 Loch Oire 26 Feb, 4 Moray Crematorium (Broadley) 16 Nov, 2 Little Pitlurg (Drummuir) 11 Feb, 2 at garden feeders Kingston in March and October-December, 1 Archiestown 14 Dec and noted at feeders in a Dufftown garden in both winter periods.

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea**Summer visitor and common breeder. Very scarce in winter.*

Breeding: A pair nest building in Glenlivet as early as 22 Mar, a pair with fledged young on the Spey at Aberlour 31 May and 2 at Portknockie harbour 19 Jun. Only one bird was seen during a search along 3km of the River Spey between Boat o' Brig and St. Mary's on 22 May.

Winter records included 1 on the Spey at Aberlour 5 Jan, 1 Burn of Aberlour 13 Jan, 1 Glenallachie Distillery (Aberlour) 6 Feb and, curiously, 1 in South St. (Elgin) 11 Dec.

Pied Wagtail *Motacilla alba**Very common breeder and migrant.*

Spring passage: Strong passage of 'White Wagtails' *M.a.alba* on the Spey estuary where birds were recorded almost daily between 16 Apr (4) and 19 May (1), peaking on 16 May when an exceptional 43 were present (MJHC). At Lossiemouth, 2 on 17 & 21 Apr, and 2 on 16 May (DAG, RP) and at Findhorn Bay, 1 on 14 May.

Autumn passage: Following early records of 2 Lossie estuary 14 & 16 Jul (DAG) and 2 Kingston 24 Jul (MJHC), autumn passage of 'White Wagtails' *M.a.alba* was noted between 20 Aug and 28 Sep. Unusually numerous on the Spey estuary throughout September with peak counts of 11 on 3rd, 19 on 9th, 43 on 16th (coincidentally identical to the spring maximum) and 8 on 22nd (RP, ABa). Elsewhere, up to 3 Lossiemouth 20-30 Aug (RP, CAG) and 1 Portknockie 23 Sep (RP).

Breeding (Pied Wagtail *M.a.yarrellii*): 3 pairs on the River Spey at Dipple on 12 May and a further 8 pairs along 3km of the river between Boat o' Brig and St Mary's on 22 May (MJHC). A brood of two young at Glenlatterach reservoir on 23 Jun (RP).

Counts of 10 or more (Pied) were 35+ Kingston 14 Jul, 24 Lossie estuary 21 Aug, 20 Portknockie 23 Sep, 19 Spey estuary 5 Sep (and 18 there 16 Sep), 11 Netherton 28 Aug (and 10 there 1 Sep) and 10 Findhorn 22 Aug.

Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis*

Summer visitor and common breeder.

Arrival: First reports of singing birds were 1 Lossie Forest 23 Apr, 2 Lethen Bar 28 Apr and, on 29 Apr, 2 Delnabo, 3 Drynahan and 2 Dulsie.

Breeding: In addition to the above, birds were reported in breeding habitat in spring and early summer at Aberlour, Archiestown, Dava, Glenlatterach, Hill of Mulundy and Muldearie.

Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis*

Very common breeder and migrant.

Inland: Unexpectedly numerous upcountry as late as 21 Nov, when 27 were counted along Allt a'Choileachain (Ben Main) (MJHC). Back in good numbers on the Glenlivet moors at Ladderfoot on 24 Mar.

Coastal: Migration evident at the coast in spring and autumn. In spring, 37 Kinloss 23 Apr and 47 there on 25 Apr. On 27 Apr, ten were on a shingle bar in the Spey at Tugnet. In autumn, 23 Findhorn 7 Sep, 15 Kinloss 17 Sep and 11 Tugnet 16 Sep.

Rock Pipit *Anthus petrosus*

Scarce breeder, fairly common in winter.

Breeding: Present in the breeding season at Burghead, Lossiemouth west beach and Portknockie.

In autumn/winter, 17 along the rocky coast between Portgordon and Strathlene on 14 Oct and 26 there on 16 Dec. Elsewhere, 4 Hopeman 8 Jan, 4 Burghead 30 Dec, 2 Burghead Bay 16 Dec, 2 Nairn harbour 1 Oct and 1 on the Spey estuary 17 Dec.

Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*

Very common resident breeder, migrant and winter visitor.

First song Kingston 1 Feb, Linkwood (Elgin) 15 Feb and Tugnet 5 Mar.

On 27 May, 49 singing males were counted along c.5 km of the route of the old Dufftown-Craigellachie railway line (MJHC).

Counts of 50 or more were 376 Dipple 2 Jan, 200 Auchindoun Castle 21 Nov, 200 Essil 31 Dec, 165 Lochhill 18 Dec, 100 Wellheads (Clochan) 31 Dec, 80 Tomhommie 22 Feb and 50 Nether Meft 29 Jan.

Brambling *Fringilla montifringilla*

Fairly common winter visitor and migrant.

Flocks were 35 Arndilly 23 Jan, c20 near Alves 11 Dec and 12 Auchindoun Castle 21 Nov. Smaller numbers elsewhere included 1 Craigellachie 23 Jan, 1 Urquhart 8 Mar, 1 Buckie 27 Apr, 1 Clochan 27 Apr 1 Dipple 5 Mar, 2 Duffus 22 Oct and 3 Lochhill 18 Dec. Regular at food in an Archiestown garden in January (max. 2), March (max. 2), October (max. 3) and November–December (max. 6). Last in spring was 1 Tullochallum (Dufftown) 12 May.

Greenfinch *Chloris chloris*

Very common resident breeder.

First song Kingston 15 Mar. Female collecting nest material Linkwood (Elgin) 25 Mar.

Highest flock count was 70 Burnside of Birnie 1 Apr. Otherwise, 20 Porttannachy 14 Jan, 13 Findhorn 20 Dec and 10 at feeders Alves 19 Mar.

Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*

Very common resident breeder.

Flocks of 10 or more were 100+ Cummingston 1 Sep, 50 Kingston 16 Sep, 40 Tugnet 1 Sep, 40 Hillhead (Forres) 14 Sep, 30 Findhorn 23 Dec (12 there 7 Sep and 10 on 5 Oct), 15 Archiestown 12 Jan, 13 Netherton 5 Sep (10 there 26 Oct), 12 Elgin 17 Feb (and 3 Mar) and 11 Clochan 29 Jan.

Siskin *Carduelis spinus*

Very common resident breeder and migrant.

Flocks of 20 or more were 32 Cruats Farm (Portknockie) 9 May, 30 Clochan 6 Apr and 20 Kinloss 11 Dec.

Linnet *Carduelis cannabina*

Very common resident breeder.

Flock counts of 50 or more were 300 Darkland 1 Jan, 260 Cruats Farm (Portknockie) 28 Oct, 200 Bogmoor 30 Oct, 150 Mains of Gollachy 14 Nov, 100 Porttannachy 14 Jan, 100 Scarffbanks 18 Nov and 90 Tugnet 1 Sep.

Twite *Carduelis flavirostris*

Scarce resident breeder and winter visitor.

Winter: Present as usual on the saltmarsh around the Nairn/Culbin Bars (where 12 on 15 Jan [DCJ]) and Findhorn Bay (where 14 on 29 Jan [DAG] and 60 on 26 Dec [RHD]). More records than usual away from these sites, including 50 Bogmoor 7 Jan (RHD), 2 Burghead 1 Nov (RSC,ABa), 2 Cruats Farm (Portknockie) 7 Jan and 28 Oct (LSi), 2 Dipple 2 Jan (AY) and 30 Cloddach 20 Mar (ABa).



Twite, Burghead November 2012 (Photo: Richard Somers Cocks)

Lesser Redpoll *Carduelis cabaret**Common resident breeder and migrant.*

Breeding season records from Clochan (1 on 23 Jun), Dava (3+ on 30 Jun), Delnabo (several on 29 Apr), Essil (1 on 12 May), Birchfield (Glen Avon) (small group on 25 Jul), Inchrory (Glen Avon) (several on 25 Jul), Glenlatterach Reservoir (2 on 23 Jun) and Hill of Mulundy (2 on 2 May). Still in flocks at this time were 25+ (with Siskins) Loch Oire 26 Apr and 12 Tugnet 3 May.

At other times, 1 Archiestown 28 Mar and 31 Oct, 3 Cloddach 8 Jan, 4 Dallas Dhu area (Forres) 4 Nov, 3 Loch Spynie 3 Mar, 3 near Nairn 25 Jan and 1 Strathlene 12 Oct.

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 five or more consisted of 40+ Archiestown 14 Jun, 30 Roseisle 8 Mar, 23 over Forres 4 Dec, 13 Half Davoch 15 Nov, 10 Scabbed Hill (Clochan) 23 Oct, 8 Cloddach 11 Nov and 6 Nether Dallachy 14 Jan. Smaller numbers were encountered at Broadley, Clochan, Kinloss, Linkwood (Elgin) and Loch Spynie.

Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula**Very common resident breeder.*

The only reports of 5 or more together were 10 River Findhorn at Forres 11 Mar, 8 Forres 12 Feb and 6 Sanquhar wood (Forres) 4 Mar.

The proportion of juveniles to adults trapped at Loch Spynie 'Constant Effort Site' was 1.0:1, down from 4.0:1 in 2011 (RP).

Hawfinch *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*

Rare visitor.

One visited a garden in Kingston on 11 Dec (GN). This is the 9th record for Moray & Nairn.

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

Summer: No reports received from breeding areas.

First coastal records in autumn were 1 Tugnet 22 Sep, 1 Lossiemouth west beach 25 Sep and 2 Burghead 28 Sep.

Winter: Only one large flock was reported from the main coastal sites – otherwise very scarce:

	Jan	Feb	Oct	Nov	Dec
Nairn/Culbin Bars (& E.Nairn)	9 (15 th)	0	0	nc	161 (16 th) [GP]
Lossiemouth east beach	4 (22 nd)	12 (25 th)	8 (31 st)	nc	8 (28 th)

Elsewhere near the coast, 3 Findhorn 1 Nov, 1 Spey estuary 5 Nov and 2 Lein (Kingston) 29 Sep and 14 Oct.

The only inland reports were from Ben Rinnes where 3 on 29 Feb and 1 on 11 Nov.



Snow Bunting, Lossiemouth east beach November 2012 (Photo: Richard Somers Cocks)

Lapland Bunting *Calcarius lapponicus*

Rare visitor.

A female was photographed on moorland in west Moray on 31 May (DGD), but was not found on a subsequent visit.



Lapland Bunting in west Moray in May 2012 (Photo: David Devonport)

Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella*

Very common resident breeder.

First song heard at Kingston on 21 Feb.

Flocks of 10 or more were 125 Dipple 2 Jan, 92 Portknockie 19 Feb, 40 Porttannachy 14 Jan, 30 Scarffbanks 16 Jan, 14 Kinloss 13 Feb and 12 Findhorn Bay 24 Oct.

Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus*

Very common resident breeder.

Present in the breeding season at Burnside of Birnie, Coltfeld, Delnies, Findhorn Bay, Glenlatterach Reservoir, Kinloss, Loch Flemington, Loch Spynie, Moss of Barmuckity, Forres (River Findhorn), Kingston (The Lein) and Tugnet (where a male sang regularly near the centre of an Oil-seed Rape field).

The proportion of juveniles to adults trapped at Loch Spynie 'Constant Effort Site' was 0.7:1, down from 1.4 in 2011 (RP).

Largest autumn/winter flock was 47 Dipple 2 Jan (AY). Elsewhere, no reports exceeded five.



Reed Bunting, Birnie June 2012 (Photo: Martin Cook)

Corn Bunting *Emberiza calandra*

Scarce resident breeder.

A good population remains around Porttannachy (west of Buckie) where eight were singing on 26 Mar (HC). Singing birds were also heard at Buckpool golf course and Corbiewell (Garmouth).

A spring flock of 27 was at Clochan on 6 Apr (MJHC). A flock is often in this area in early spring, prior to the start of the breeding season.

MUTE SWAN SURVEY 2012

BOB PROCTOR

Summary

A survey of as many as possible of the known Mute Swan breeding sites in Moray & Nairn was undertaken in 2012. The last national survey was in 2002. Some sites which were not occupied in 2002 were also checked but most of these did not have pairs and the sites were found to be unsuitable due to habitat changes. A total of 25 apparently occupied territories were found: 24 territorial pairs and a single territorial adult. A total of 19 pairs bred. The breeding pairs produced 74 young of which 53 probably fledged. Five pairs were known to have failed at the egg stage. The majority of early failures and chick deaths were probably weather related as the 2012 breeding season was cold and wet throughout.

Results

Numbers of breeding birds remained unchanged from the 2002 survey at 38 breeding birds (15 pairs in Moray and 4 pairs in the former Nairn District) (Table 1, Fig. 1). Of the 'territorial-only' birds, six (three pairs) were present in Moray and five (two pairs and a single adult) were found in Nairn District. All of these 'territorial-only' pairs have bred in previous years. In Figure 1 the data for 1955/56 and 1978 did not distinguish between breeding and territorial only pairs.

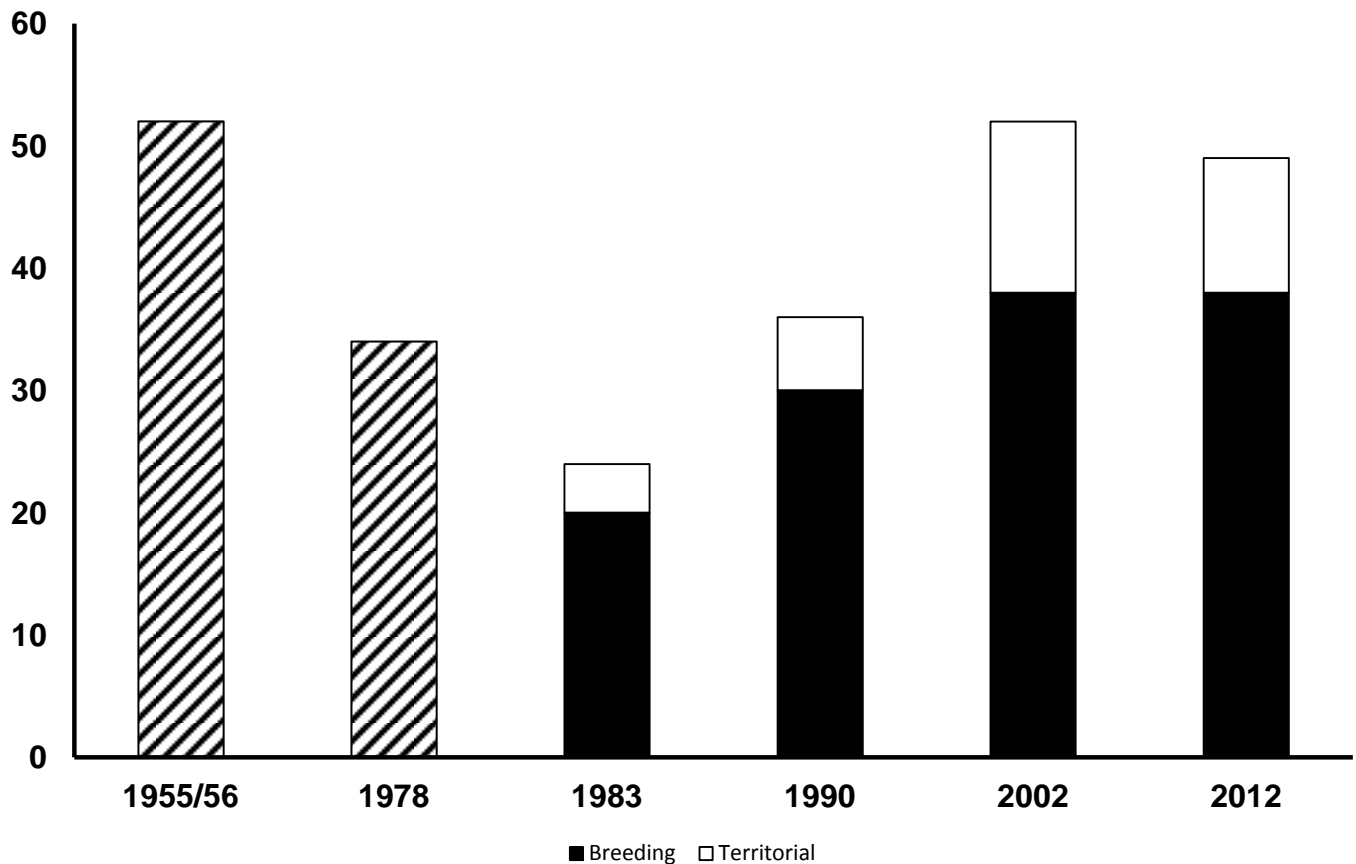
Table 1: Census results for Moray & Nairn Mute Swan surveys in 2002 and 2012.

	2002			2012		
	Breeding birds	Territorial birds	TOTAL	Breeding birds	Territorial birds	TOTAL
Nairn	8	2	10	8	5	13
Moray	30	12	42	30	6	36



Mute Swan brood on Loch Oire, June 2012 (Photo: Martin Cook)

Figure 1: Breeding and Territorial Mute Swans in Moray & Nairn.



From previous surveys and submissions to MNBR, 41 sites are known to have been occupied in Moray & Nairn (Table 2); 33 of these sites were checked during 2012. Eight sites that were not checked in 2012 included five that were not occupied in the 2002 survey: Achavraat, Loch Park, River Isla, River Devron and Loch of the Clans.

A further 12 sites were checked but not occupied (Findhorn Bay, Mosset Park, Kellas House, Milnorduff distillery, Strypes, Spynie Canal, Spey Bay, Brodie, Lower Spynie Pond, Newton of Dalvey, Stoneyford pond (Rafford) and Maryfield (Spynie)). Of the unoccupied sites, Kellas House, Lower Spynie Pond, Newton of Dalvey and Maryfield are now unsuitable for breeding due to encroachment of trees around the site or drying out.

Table 2: Summary of all known breeding sites in Moray & Nairn, including previously occupied sites.

Site ¹	Site Name	Details	Brood ²	Fledged ³
1.	Achavraat	Not occupied in 2002. Not checked in 2012.		
2 a.	Loch Flemington (West)	PAIR present. Incubating 17 April & 20 May.	6	6
2 b.	Loch Flemington (Island)	New in 2012. PAIR present. Incubating 20 May.	2	2
3.	Loch Loy	PAIR present. Downy cygnets still present on 9 Sept.	4	4
4.	Cran Loy	PAIR present. No evidence of breeding recorded. Seen on 11 March and 13 April.	T	T

5.	Loch of Blairs	PAIR present in March/early April. Left site in April and probably moved to a wet field at Chapelton in May and June.	T	T
6.	Findhorn Bay	No breeding birds found in 2002. No breeding birds found in 2012.		
7.	Sanquhar Loch	PAIR present. Incubating 13 April.	9	3
8.	Mosset Park	Not occupied in 2002. Not occupied in 2012 (checked in April).		
9.	Kellas House	Not occupied in 2002. Not occupied in 2012 (checked in March and April). Appears unsuitable as a breeding site due to growth of trees surrounding pool.		
10.	Milnorduff Distillery	Not occupied in 2002. Not occupied in 2012 (checked in April).		
11.	Strypes	Not occupied in 2002. Not occupied in 2012 (checked in April).		
12.	Loch na Bo	PAIR present. Incubating 25 April.	0	0
13.	Loch Oire	PAIR present. W07441 ringed 1 April.	9	7
14.	Fochabers Lake	PAIR present. Incubating 3 May. No chicks seen on 11 July.	0	0
15.	Loch Park	Not occupied in 2002. Not checked in 2012.		
16.	River Isla	Not occupied in 2002. Not checked in 2012.		
17.	River Devron	Not occupied in 2002. Not checked in 2012.		
18.	Cooper Park, Elgin	PAIR present. Incubating 12 April. Two adults present throughout remainder of season without brood.	0	0
19.	Gilston	Single bird present: incubating 26 May.	0	0
20.	Spynie Canal	No breeding attempt in 2012.		
21 a.	Loch Spynie	PAIR present at nest 3 & 20 May (Sluice).	6	4
21 b.	Loch Spynie	PAIR present with brood 12 May.	6	1
21 c.	Loch Spynie	PAIR present with brood ($\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{3}{4}$ larger than other broods seen on 3 June).	2	1
21 d.	Loch Spynie	New in 2009. PAIR present with one chick, similarly sized dead chick nearby on edge of reeds.	2	0
22 a.	Spey Bay	No breeding attempt in 2012.		
22 b.	Spey Bay	No breeding attempt in 2012.		
22 c.	Spey Bay	No breeding attempt in 2012.		
23.	Lossie Forest	No breeding attempt in 2012.		
24 a.	Cloddach Quarry	PAIR present. Incubating 21 April.	6	6
24 b.	Cloddach Quarry	PAIR present.	5	5
25.	Brodie	No adults present (3 1 st -y present 13 April & 20 May).		
26.	Loch of the Clans	Not occupied in 2002. Not checked in 2012.		
27.	Lower Spynie Pond	No suitable habitat: pond dry and encroaching trees.		
28.	Boath House, Auldearn	PAIR present.	T	T
29.	Nairn harbour/river	PAIR with brood 20 May.	7	7
30.	Windyridge	PAIR present. Incubating 8 April.	0	0
31.	Inchstelly	PAIR present. Incubating 13 April.	5	5
32.	Nether Dallachy	Not checked in 2012.		
33.	Nether Unthank	Not checked in 2012.		
34.	Newton of Dalvey	No adults present (checked in early May). Appears unsuitable for breeding due to size of pond and growth of trees surrounding pool.		

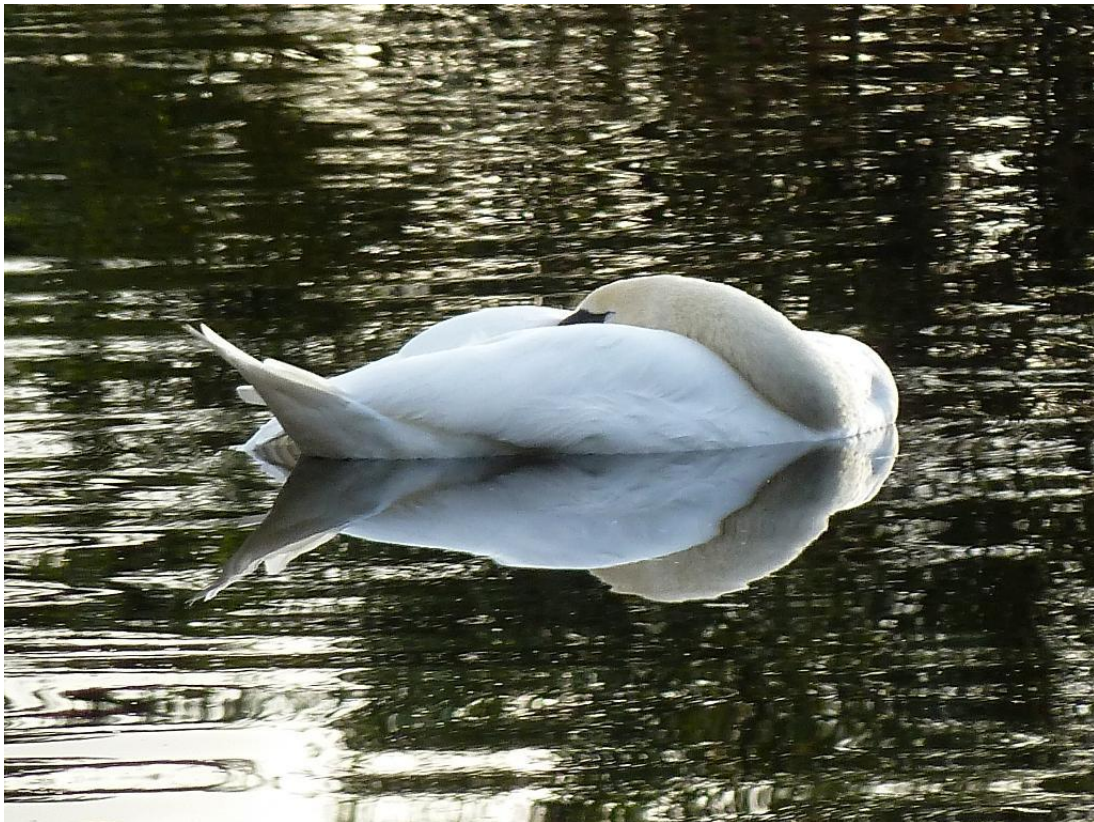
35.	Newmill, Auldearn	New in 2003. ADULT present 12 May. No birds present in July or late August.	T	T
36.	Stoneyford Pond, Rafford	New in 2005. No adults present in 2012: checked in April & May.		
37.	Maryfield, Spynie	New in 2005. No adults present in 2012: checked in May. Appears unsuitable as a breeding site due to growth of trees surrounding pool.		
38.	Myreside pond	New in 2008. PAIR present.	T	T
39.	Dallachy tip	New in 2010. PAIR present (plus 2011 youngster), incubating in April.	5	2
40.	Balnacoul	New in 2011 (Fochabers lake pair during by-pass construction?). Not occupied in 2012.		
41.	Altyre House	PAIR present and nest built but no incubating observed.	T	T

Notes:

¹Site numbers relate to previous summaries given in *Birds in Moray & Nairn* 1992, 1993 and 2002.²Maximum brood size observed after hatching.³Number of young surviving to fledging.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Tony Backx, Martin Cook, Andrew Dowse, Charlie Gervaise, Sir A. Gordon-Cumming, Karen Guthrie, Allan Lawrence, Ian Suttie, Iain Topp and Alastair Young for helping with this survey and providing information on breeding swans.



Mute Swan, Cooper Park (Elgin) October 2012 (Photo: Bob Proctor)

RINGING REPORT 2012

BOB PROCTOR

Numbers of birds ringed in Moray & Nairn during 2012:

	FG*	Pullus	Total		FG*	Pullus	Total
Mute Swan	1		1	Blackcap	13		13
Brent Goose	10		10	Whitethroat	1		1
Manx Shearwater	1		1	Sedge Warbler	35		35
Marsh Harrier		2	2	Treecreeper	11		11
Goshawk		3	3	Wren	29		29
Peregrine		2	2	Starling	40	12	52
Oystercatcher	30		30	Blackbird	76	9	85
Lapwing		4	4	Song Thrush	10		10
Dunlin	1		1	Robin	82	5	87
Purple Sandpiper	47		47	Dunnock	71		71
Black Guillemot		2	2	House Sparrow	271	12	283
Common Gull		4	4	Tree Sparrow	31	73	104
Woodpigeon	4		4	Pied Wagtail		2	2
Collared Dove	1		1	Chaffinch	444		444
Tawny Owl		3	3	Brambling	2		2
Great Sp. Woodpecker	27		27	Greenfinch	413		413
Magpie	1		1	Goldfinch	227	3	230
Goldcrest	33		33	Siskin	1121		1121
Blue Tit	509	349	858	Linnet	1		1
Great Tit	249	129	378	Bullfinch	8		8
Crested Tit	11	5	16	Yellowhammer	14		14
Coal Tit	249		249	Reed Bunting	19		19
Swallow	1	40	41				
Long-tailed Tit	53		53				
Chiffchaff	3		3				
Willow Warbler	31		31	TOTALS	4181	664	4845

*FG=full grown

Recoveries in 2012:

All ringing recoveries reported for 2012 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 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

MUTE SWAN

Z46544	1	280881	Urquhart Bay, Loch Ness	
	VV	120102	Findhorn Bay	60 km

WHOOPE SWAN

3J34 was caught in 1994 at Geldingavatn, N-Mul, Iceland. Previously the main wintering area was around Lough Foyle and Lough Beg. From 2008 it has been seen annually around Loch Spynie, Easter Calcots and Loch na Bo indicating that it has changed its wintering area to Moray. In 2012 it was seen at Loch Spynie.

PINK-FOOTED GOOSE

N71 was originally ringed in Friesland, Netherlands. The colour-ring was added on 29 March 2011 at Vest Stadil Fjord, Denmark. It was also seen on 10 April at Thorsminde, Denmark and 4 May 2011 at Lund, Steinkjer, Norway. On its southward migration it was seen in Levanger, Norway on 17 & 22 October 2011 before crossing the North Sea to Cullivoe, Shetland where it remained from 21 November to 7 December 2011. On 8 January 2012 it was seen at Parks of Innes, Moray. It appears to have returned to its normal wintering area in 2012 with sightings from The Netherlands and Belgium from 13 October to 3 December 2012.

Previous sightings of Svalbard Pink-footed Geese in Moray have included Y52 and N29, both seen in April 2010.

GREYLAG GOOSE

An interesting movement of a colour-ringed individual from Orkney: HNV was ringed as a juvenile at Loch of Hundland, Birsay on 10 July 2010, and was resighted there on 22 July, before moving to Redhill (Newton) on 21 February 2011. This appears to be a cold-weather movement.

A further individual, ringed as an adult female at Loch Eye in 14 October 1999, was shot at Wester Manbeen farm, Elgin on 15 January 2012.

PALE-BELLIED BRENT GOOSE

GF78576	4f	130112	Nairn
	VV	210512	Boddum Enge, Thy, DENMARK

Following a successful catch to colour-ring part of the wintering flock at Nairn, this individual was resighted in Denmark. This follows a similar sighting of a juvenile male from the Svalbard/northeast Greenland population ringed at Hornsgard Ron, Nibe Bredning, Limfjorden, Denmark on 24 April 2001 which was subsequently seen at Nairn in October 2002 and January-February 2003.

CORMORANT

5252488	1	120611	Inverbervie	
	X	210512	Kingston	106 km

SHAG

The majority of reports concerning colour-ringed individuals originated from the Isle of May; the following originated from other sites:

1407268	1	200710	Brownsman, Farne Islands	
	XF	230612	near Lossiemouth	252 km
1459032	1	300611	Inchmickery	
	XF	140312	Lossiemouth	191 km
1459074	1	190611	Inchmickery	
	XF	241212	Findochty	191 km

BUZZARD

GF81935	1	200610	Hill of Fearn	
	X	240911	Lossiemouth	40 km

PEREGRINE

An individual ringed in 2002 was controlled 40 km away in 2010 and 2012.

OYSTERCATCHER

FS01843	1	130670	Findhorn Bay	
	V	170886	Findhorn Bay	Local

KNOT

CE50610	3	220987	Findhorn Bay	
	V	020996	Admiralty Point, Terrington, Norfolk	593 km

SANDERLING

B03969	3	241009	Asenko village, Western Region, GHANA	
	VV	210511	Holy Island, Northumberland	
	VV	180812	Lossie estuary	

Another colour-ringed Sanderling sighting from Lossiemouth and the second originating from Asenko village.

BLACK-TAILED GODWIT

A chick colour-ringed on 10 July 2012 at Langhus, Fljot, north Iceland was resighted at Montgrew, Keith on 16-17 September 2012.

COMMON GULL

5168401	8	090709	Prestvannet, Tromsø, NORWAY	
(J5E5)	VV	200411	Prestvannet, Tromsø, NORWAY	
	VV	050212	Cooper Park pond, Elgin	1709 km

HERRING GULL

ES006630 (K811)	1 VV	090798 160112	Kandalakshskiy, Murmansk, RUSSIA Loch Spynie	2082 km
NS002829 (KX02)	1 VV	090706 150112	Kandalakshskiy, Murmansk, RUSSIA Loch Spynie	2073 km
T:640	10 VV	080512 281212	Pittodrie, Aberdeen Lossie estuary	

Both Russian individuals were seen again in 2012.

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL

3024378 (J2LG)	1 VV	260510 270911- 151011	Hornøya, Finnmark, NORWAY Hirtshals Havn, Notkajen, Nordjylland, DENMARK	1740 km
	VV	120412	Lossie estuary	2140 km

A total of 20 colour-ringed individuals from various Caithness colonies were reported, mainly from the Lossie estuary. A further colour-ringed individual (T:011), ringed in Fraserburgh, was also seen at Lossie estuary.

BLACK-HEADED GULL

6215032 (JHZ3)	6 VV VV	250311 310311 230511- 180611	Breiavnet, Stavanger, NORWAY Breiavnet, Stavanger, NORWAY Ulsrudvann, Oslo, NORWAY	308 km
	VV	190811- 270212	Lossie estuary	544 km
	VV	210312	Breiavatnet, Klepp, NORWAY	
	VV	070512	Hovindammen, Oslo, NORWAY	306 km
	VV	300912- 061012	Lossie estuary	544 km
	VV	291212	Cooper Park pond, Elgin	548 km
K00091 (J2CR)	? VV	150712 230912	Mosvatnet, Stavanger, NORWAY Cullen	518 km

SANDWICH TERN

DD44591 (ETH)	1 VV VV VV VV VV	100910 221110 140612 290712 031112 101112	Forvie NNR, Ythan estuary Ile Tristan, Douarnenez, Brittany, FRANCE Forvie NNR, Ythan estuary Burghead Saint Nic, Brittany, FRANCE Plonevez Porzay, Brittany, FRANCE	1036 km 100 km 1027 km 1035 km
DD25414 (ENV)	1 VV	080606 290712	Forvie NNR, Ythan estuary Burghead	100 km

DE10167	1	120608	Forvie NNR, Ythan estuary	
	VV	090812	Lossie estuary	89 km

SEDGE WARBLER

6471099	3	030811	Mont-Manet, Genets, Manche, FRANCE	
	V	200512	Loch Spynie CES	1007 km

X953992	4	290611	Loch Spynie CES	
	V	080512	Cardiff Wetland Reserve, Cardiff, Wales	691 km

6471099 is the seventh Sedge Warbler movement involving France and Loch Spynie since CES ringing started in 2000.

BLACKBIRD

LE03498	3f	130712	Buckie	
	XF cat	090812	Buckie	Local

ROBIN

T863473	3	241208	Mundole	
	XF cat	270312	Mundole	Local

HOUSE SPARROW

TT17280	4m	120612	Keith	
	XF cat	170612	Keith	Local

CHAFFINCH

X804796	3f	240809	Keith	
	X	040512	Torry, Huntly, Aberdeenshire	10 km

GREENFINCH

TR75002	5f	270112	Clochan, near Buckie	
	XF cat	250712	Elgin	18 km

TS18215	5m	010411	Keith	
	X	240812	Mains of Mulben, near Keith	7 km

GOLDFINCH

X463252	3	241209	Church Close, Pool, North Yorkshire	
	V	200412	Clochan, near Buckie	422 km

Y177836	6m	260212	Roundyhill, Angus	
	XF	050412	Roths Glen Hotel, near Roth's	103 km

Y490968	5f	040312	Brackley, Loch Flemington	
	X	300612	Nairn	8 km

SISKIN

12574736	5m	010312	Spixhe, BELGIUM	
	V	080512	Clochan, near Buckie	975 km

H564522	4m V	040410 241212	Clochan, near Buckie Breakachy, near Beaully	96 km
L092376	5m V	060510 290510	Inverness Clochan, near Buckie	76 km
L473313	4m V	150911 130212	Clochan, near Buckie Burghfield Common	702 km
L533925	5f V	140311 020412	Beechamwell, Swaffham, Norfolk Clochan, near Buckie	601 km
L537996	5m V	010111 020712	Inverarnie, Strathnairn Buckie	81 km
L698875	5m V	140212 180512	Lakenheath Fen RSPB Reserve, Suffolk Clochan, near Buckie	617 km
L946381	3f V	121111 200412	Thetford Clochan, near Buckie	626 km
R399401	4 V	151005 230308	Cape Clear, Cork, EIRE Mundole, near Forres	781 km
Y893005	5m V	120512 130712	Inverarnie Forres	43 km
Y174451	3J V	160811 170512	Vayne Farm, Fern, Angus Clochan, near Buckie	99 km
X804867	3J V	110609 180412	Keith Clochan, near Buckie	10 km
X680342	6m V	190709 050510	Inverurie, Aberdeenshire Clochan, near Buckie	53 km
L987997	6m V	140112 200412	Heck Dale, Dalby Forest, North Yorkshie Clochan, near Buckie	401 km
L988706	6f V	180212 230412	Heck Dale, Dalby Forest, North Yorkshire Cairnfield, Buckie	403 km
L619129	5f V	030111 280512	near New Marskie, Redcar & Cleveland Clochan, near Buckie	360 km
Y177987	6m V	040312 080612	Roundyhill, Angus Buckie	115 km

GRID REFERENCES OF LOCALITIES MENTIONED IN THE SPECIES ACCOUNTS

Aberlour	NJ2642	Bellie cemetery	NJ3561
Achnatone	NH9149	Ben Aigan	NJ3048
Achmore	NJ2631	Ben Macdui	NN9999
Ailnack	NJ1414	Ben Main	NJ3535
Aitnoch	NH9839	Ben Rinnes	NJ2435
Allaburn	NJ1961	Berryburn	NJ0545
Aldivalloch	NJ3626	Bin of Cullen	NJ4764
Aldunie	NJ3626	Binn Hill	NJ3065
Altnaglander	NJ1628	Binns	NJ3164
Altyre Woods	NJ0253	Binsness	NJ0362
Alves	NJ1362	Birchfield	NJ1614
Archiestown	NJ2344	Bishopmill	NJ2163
Ardclach	NH9545	Blackhillock	NJ2044
Ardgye	NJ1563	Blacksboat	NJ1838
Ardivot	NJ2267	Blackwater Lodge	NJ3328
Arndilly	NJ2848	Blinkbonnie	NJ3365
Arthur's Bridge	NJ2567	Boar's Head Rock	NJ2867
Auchenhalrig	NJ3761	Boat o' Brig	NJ3251
Auchindoun Castle	NJ3437	Boath	NH9155
Auchinhandoch	NJ3338	Boghole	NJ9655
Auchlochan	NJ0241	Bogmoor	NJ3562
Auchmair	NJ3828	Boldow	NJ1740
Auchnarrow	NJ2123	Bow Fiddle Rock	NJ4968
Auchroisk	NJ3351	Braes of Enzie	NJ3959
Auchtertyre	NJ1858	Braidbog	NJ4963
Auldearn	NH9155	Brandston	NJ2865
		Bridge of Avon	NJ1835
Badcheear	NJ3532	Bridge of Brown	NJ1220
Badentinan	NJ2957	Bridgend	NJ3731
Bailliesland	NJ2565	Broadley	NJ3961
Ballindalloch Castle	NJ1736	Brodie Castle	NH9757
Ballnellan Burn	NJ1326	Brodieshill	NJ1059
Ballochford	NJ3633	Broom of Moy	NJ0159
Balnacoul	NJ3146	Broombank	NH9255
Balormie	NJ2167	Broomton	NH9654
Balvalley Moss	NJ3725	Brown Muir	NJ2555
Balvenie	NJ3242	Buckie	NJ4165
Banchor	NH9140	Buckpool	NJ4165
Bank Farm	NJ3929	Burghead	NJ1169
Bankhead	NH9658	Burghead Bay	NJ0867
Bardonside	NJ2154	Burgie Wood	NJ0958
Barmuckity	NJ2461	Burnside of Birnie	NJ2259
Bauds of Cullen	NJ4766	Burnside of Dipple	NJ3256
Beatshach	NJ2737	Burnside of Enzie	NJ3960
Beinn a' Chaorainn	NJ0401	Burnside of Geddes	NH8851
Beinn a' Chruinnich	NJ2313	Byres	NJ3562
Beinn Mheadhoin	NJ0201		
Bellandy	NJ2832	Cabrach	NJ3827

Cairn Ballantruan	NJ1524		
Cairn Gorm	NJ0003	Dallas	NJ1252
Cairn Lochan	NH9802	Dallas Dhu	NJ0356
Cairn Uish	NJ1750	Dallas Lodge	NJ1052
Cairneyhillock	NJ2658	Dallasbraughty	NJ0346
Calcots	NJ2563	Darnaway Castle	NH9955
Cantsford	NJ0754	Dava	NJ0038
Cardhu	NJ1843	Delmore	NJ2442
Cardnach Fm	NJ1942	Delnabo	NJ1617
Carn Allt a' Chlaiginn	NJ3230	Delnies	NH8356
Carn Daimh	NJ1824	Deskford	NJ5061
Carn Liath	NJ2515	Drainie	NJ2168
Carron	NJ2241	Drumdivan	NH8454
Catherinebraes	NJ2544	Drumfurrich	NJ2944
Caysbriggs	NJ2466	Drumin	NJ1830
Charlestown of Aberlour	NJ2642	Drummuir	NJ3844
Clackmarras	NJ2458	Drybridge	NJ4362
Clashach Cove	NJ1570	Drynachan	NH8639
Clochan	NJ4060	Dufftown	NJ3239
Clockeasy	NJ2962	Duffus	NJ1668
Cloddach	NJ1958	Duffus Castle	NJ1867
Cloddymoss	NH9860	Dulsie	NH9341
Clovenside	NJ0459	Dulsie Bridge	NH9341
Cluny Hill	NJ0458	Dunearn	NH9341
Cnoc Lochy	NJ1621	Dunphail Ho	NJ0047
Coire Raibeirt	NJ0003	Dykeside	NJ1159
Coldburn	NJ1449		
Coldhome	NJ3639	Earnhill Fm	NJ0160
Coleburn	NJ2455	Earnside	NJ1062
College of Roseisle	NJ1366	Easter Calcots	NJ2563
Coltfield	NJ1163	Easter Cloves	NJ1461
Conicavel	NH9953	Easter Gaulrig	NJ1514
Cook's Cairn	NJ3027	Easter Lawrenceton	NJ0858
Corbiewell	NJ3165	Easter Newforres	NJ0658
Covesea	NJ1870	Easterton	NJ2156
Covesea Skerries	NJ1971	Edinkillie	NJ0246
Coxton	NJ2660	Elgin	NJ2162
Coxtontower	NJ2660	Elginshill	NJ2663
Craigellachie	NJ2844		
Craigmill Lodge	NJ1052	Feakirk	NJ0344
Craigroy	NJ1250	Fèith Buidhe	NJ0909
Cran Loch	NH9459	Ferniefield	NJ3064
Croftglass	NJ2530	Findhorn Bay	NJ0462
Crofts of Dipple	NJ3259	Findochty	NJ4668
Cromdale Hills	NJ1226	Findrassie	NJ1965
Crooked Wood	NJ2762	Fochabers	NJ3458
Culbin Bar	NH9662	Fogwatt	NJ2357
Culbin Forest	NH9862	Foresterseat	NJ2562
Cullen	NJ5167	Forres	NJ0358
Cunninghamston	NJ1368		
Cunninghaugh	NJ3564	Garbh Uisge Mòr	NH9900

Garlinebeg	NJ1741	Kinermory	NJ2541
Garmouth	NJ3364	Kingsteps	NH9057
Garmouth viaduct	NJ3464	Kingston	NJ3365
Gateside	NJ3647	Kinloss	NJ0661
Gervally	NH9948	Kinneddar	NJ2269
Gilston	NJ2066	Kirdellbeg	NJ1741
Glack Harnes	NJ2836	Kirkhill	NJ2462
Glacks of Balloch	NJ3534	Knock of Braemoray	NJ0141
Glass	NJ4239	Knock of Gownie	NJ2942
Glen Avon	NJ1006	Kylnadrochit Lodge	NJ1419
Glen Gheallaidh	NJ1338		
Glen Latterach	NJ1951	Ladder Hills	NJ2719
Glen Lossie	NJ1347	Ladycroft	NJ2444
Glen Rinnes	NJ2834	Laggan	NJ2026
Glenallachie	NJ2741	Lecht Road	NJ2413
Glenfarclas Distillery	NJ2138	Leids Hill	NJ4126
Glenferness	NH9443	Lein	NJ3365
Glenlatterach Reservoir	NJ1952	Lethen	NH9351
Glenmullie	NJ1916	Lethenhill	NJ1058
Gollachy Burn	NJ4064	Lhanbryde	NJ2761
Gordonsward	NJ2564	Little Aitnoch	NH9640
Gownie	NJ2842	Little Pitlurg	NJ4245
		Loch Allan	NH9939
Half Davoch	NJ0451	Loch Belivat	NH9547
Hardmuir	NH9556	Loch Flemington	NH8152
Heldon Wood	NJ1257	Loch Kirkaldy	NH9641
Hill of Mackalea	NJ3638	Loch Loy	NH9358
Hill of Maud	NJ4662	Loch of Blairs	NJ0255
Hill of Mulundy	NJ1053	Loch Oire	NJ2860
Hillhead	NJ2058	Loch Park	NJ3543
Hillpark	NJ4360	Loch Spynie	NJ2366
Hills of Cromdale	NJ1226	Lochan Tùtach	NH9840
Hopeman	NJ1469	Lochbuie	NJ2153
Howford bridge	NH8753	Lochindorb	NH9736
Humbrack	NJ2556	Lochs of Bogmussach	NJ1347
Hunt Hill	NJ2346	Lochyhill	NJ0559
		Logie	NJ0150
Inchberry	NJ3155	Logieburn	NJ2656
Inchnacape	NJ2020	Longmorn	NJ2358
Innes House	NJ2764	Lossie estuary	NJ2469
Innesmill	NJ2863	Lossiemouth	NJ2370
Inveravon	NJ1837	Lower Auchenreath	NJ3763
Invererne	NJ0360	Lower Blairnain	NJ2738
Inverharroch Fm	NJ3831	Lower Bogrotten	NJ4861
		Lower Hempriggs	NJ1064
Johnstripe	NJ0447	Lyne of Knockando	NJ1745
		Lynemore	NJ1438
Keith	NJ4250		
Kellas	NJ1754	Macbeth's Hillock	NH9656
Kerrow	NH9941	Machattie's Cairn	NJ3547
Kilravock	NH8149	Mains of Kirdells	NJ1739

Mains of Moyness	NH9553	Ordiquish	NJ3357
Manachie Fm	NJ0356	Orton	NJ3153
Manbeen	NJ1959	Overton	NJ2745
Marypark	NJ1938		
Maviston	NH9458	Paddockhaugh	NJ2058
Meikle Balloch Hill	NJ3534	Parks of Innes	NJ2763
Meikle Coire Riabhach	NJ2513	Paul's Hill	NJ1140
Mid Mains	NJ1966	Penick	NH9356
Midwood	NJ4261	Philaxdale	NJ1667
Mill of Grange	NJ0460	Pitairlie	NJ2465
Millhill	NJ3158	Pitgaveny Ho	NJ2465
Milltown	NJ2758	Pittendreich	NJ1961
Milltown of Laggan	NJ2834	Pluscarden	NJ1456
Miltonduff	NJ1860	Portgordon	NJ3964
Miltonhill	NJ0963	Portknockie	NJ4868
Monadh an t-Sluich Leith	NJ2617		
Monahoudie Moss	NJ2243	Quarrywood	NJ1864
Monaughty	NJ1260		
Moniemouies	NJ2756	Rafford	NJ0656
Montgrew	NJ4551	Recletich	NJ2834
Moor of Tore	NJ1054	Redhill	NJ1661
Moss of Barmuckity	NJ2461	Refouble	NH9540
Moss of Birnie	NJ2051	Relugas	NH9948
Mosstodloch	NJ3360	Rhinturk	NJ3632
Moycroft	NJ2362	Rinour	NJ1740
Muir of Holmie	NJ4161	Rosarie	NJ3849
Muir of Miltonduff	NJ1859	Roseisle Forest	NJ1166
Muir of the Clans	NH8352		
Muirhead	NJ0863	Salterhill	NJ2067
Muirton	NJ2268	Sanquhar Loch	NJ0458
Muiry Wood	NJ0558	Scabbed Hill	NJ4160
Mulben	NJ3550	Scarffbanks	NJ2366
Muldearie Mains	NJ3950	Scaut Hill	NJ3331
Mundole	NJ0156	Scotstonhill	NJ2662
Myreside	NJ2164	Shaw Hill	NH9748
		Sheanspark	NJ3645
Nairn	NH8856	Shearleat	NH8641
Nairn Bar	NH9260	Shelter Stone	NJ0001
Nether Bellandy	NJ2833	Sherriffmill	NJ2062
Nether Birnie	NJ2059	Sheriffston	NJ2561
Nether Dallachy	NJ3663	Sluie	NJ0052
Nether Meft	NJ2764	South Darkland	NJ2661
Netherbyre	NJ1557	Spey Bay	NJ3564
Netherton	NJ0361	Speymouth	NJ3465
Newbold Wood	NJ0558	Spynie canal	NJ2366
Newforres Wood	NJ0657	Spynie Palace	NJ2365
Newton nursery	NJ1663	St. John's Meads	NJ0155
Newton of Darnaway	NH9853	Stoneyford pond	NJ0455
Newton of Innes	NJ2866	Strath Avon	NJ1425
North Darkland	NJ2662	Strathlene	NJ4467
		Stronachavie	NJ1318

Strondow	NJ1644
Strypes	NJ2758
Succoth	NJ2935
Surradale	NJ1665
Tanzie	NJ3146
Tapp	NJ1447
Tarras	NJ0659
Teindland	NJ2655
Tervieside	NJ2330
Tips of Corsemaul	NJ3939
Todholes	NJ1054
Tomachar	NJ2432
Tombreck	NJ1218
Tomcork	NJ1349
Tomintoul	NJ1618
Tomnavoulin	NJ2126
Tormore Distillery	NJ1534
Torrieston	NJ1658
Tronach Head	NJ4768
Troves	NJ2459
Tugnet	NJ3465
Tynet	NJ3861
Upper Bruntlands	NJ1943
Upper Dallachy	NJ3662
Upper Knockando	NJ1843
Upper Mulben	NJ3652
Urquhart	NJ2862
Waterford Fm	NJ0259
Wellheads	NJ3860
Wellhill	NJ0061
Wester Calcots	NJ2463
Wester Elchies	NJ2542
Wester Gaulrig	NJ1513
Wester Manbeen	NJ1960
Westerfolds	NJ1967
Westertown	NJ1925
Whiteash Hill	NJ3857
Whitefolds	NJ2425
Whitetree	NJ1156
Whitewreath	NJ2357
Yellowbog	NJ1448