**BIRDS AT THE SPEY ESTUARY – OCTOBER 2012 (1)**

**MUTE SWAN** Regularly 8-12 until mid month but only three thereafter.

**WHOOPER SWAN** On the estuary, four on 9th and five on 23rd. On 19th, 18 flew over.

**PINK-FOOTED GOOSE** Flocks flying over on many dates but, on the estuary, 81 on 10th and one on 23rd were the only records.

**GREYLAG GOOSE** The regular flock increased from 38 on 4th to 57 on 10th and 103 on 20th. Still 101 on 28th. Fewer on other days when some or all of the flock leaves to feed in nearby fields.

**BARNACLE GOOSE** A one-day visit by a flock of 12 on 14th.

**WIGEON** A continued increase until mid month when 165 on 20th was the peak count. No subsequent count exceeded 50.

**TEAL** Highest count was 147 on 20th.

**MALLARD** Regularly 50-60 around the estuary.

**SHOVELER** Two males on 23rd. An unusual species at Speymouth.

**TUFTED DUCK** A small group of five on 16th, seven on 20th and ten on 30th. Mostly seen on the lagoon on the Kingston side.

**SCAUP** One female on the Kingston lagoon on 20th.

**EIDER** Small, but variable, numbers offshore – 14 on 4th and 16 on 10th were the only counts to exceed ten.

**LONG-TAILED DUCK** Small numbers offshore, max. six on 20th and 23rd.

**COMMON SCOTER** One offshore on 15th.

**GOLDENEYE** A steady build-up during the month: five on 9th, ten on 13th, 12 on 19th, 17 on 28th and 19 on 30th.

**RED-BREASTED MERGANSER** Five or six all month, and nine on 10th.

**GOOSANDER** Thirteen on 19th but otherwise no more than six. Only one after 20th.

**RED-THROATED DIVER** Ten offshore on 20th and 19 on 23rd, when the sea was calm enough to allow accurate counting of birds far out to sea. In the frequently choppy sea conditions, only 3-4 were usually countable.

**LITTLE GREBE** Two on 9th, one on 16th and three on 20th.

**GREY HERON** One or two on many dates, four on 28th.

**GANNET** Up to five often visible offshore.

**CORMORANT** Numerous early in the month, when 19 on 4th, but up to five more usual thereafter. Nine on 20th.

**OYSTERCATCHER** Usually 10-15 on the shore, maximum 17 on 20th.

**BIRDS AT THE SPEY ESTUARY – OCTOBER 2012 (2)**

**LAPWING** Very variable numbers but 80 on 4th and an exceptional flock of 245 on 20th. Often absent, presumably feeding in nearby fields.

**DUNLIN** Nine on 4th, six on 9th, five on 19th-20th and, last of the month, two on 23rd.

**SNIPE**  Always a few in the marsh on the west side of the river, maximum nine on 9th.

**CURLEW** Still 211 on 4th, 183 on 9th and 101 on 20th.

**REDSHANK** Usually only 2-3 but eight on 28th.

**TURNSTONE** Three on 9th, five on 12th and 6-7 for the rest of the month, with a brief influx of 21 on 20th.

**BLACK-HEADED GULL** Highest count was 63 on 23rd.

**COMMON GULL** Highest counts were 120 on 8th and 155 on 23rd.

**HERRING GULL** Highest count was 120 on 30th.

**GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL** Very large numbers in the first half of the month e.g. 330 on 8th and 560 on 12th. Usually less than 100 later in the month.

**GUILLEMOT** One offshore on 7th.

**RAZORBILL** Two offshore on 7th, four on 10th and one on 19th.

**PIED WAGTAIL** Only a very few remaining on the estuary by the end of the month.

**SISKIN** Four flew over the WDCS centre on 19th.

**SNOW BUNTING** One on 27th.