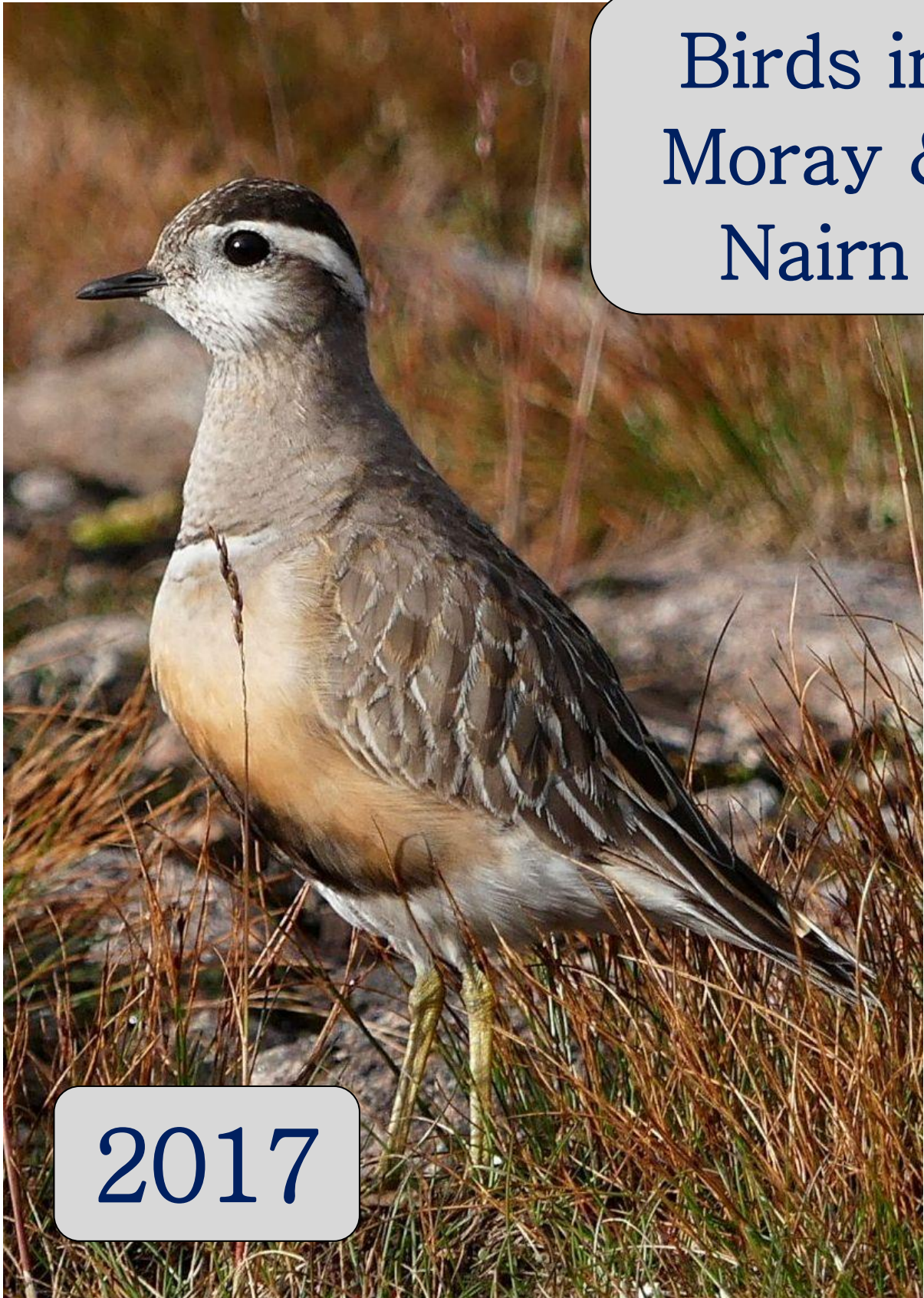


Birds in Moray & Nairn



2017

Birds in Moray & Nairn in 2017

MORAY & NAIRN BIRD REPORT
No.32 – 2017

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CONTENTS

	Page
How to submit records	3
Assessment of rarity records	4
Observers contributing to Birds in Moray & Nairn 2017	6
Species accounts	7
Ringling Report 2017 <i>Bob Proctor</i>	94
Grid references of localities mentioned in the species accounts	102

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

Cover photograph: Dotterel on the Cairngorms plateau, 13 August 2017 (Robert Ince).

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

This edition of Birds in Moray & Nairn, the 32nd edition of the Moray & Nairn bird report, is available only online at www.birdsinmorayandnairn.org. For those who wish a hard copy, this can be printed from the website.

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

HOW TO SUBMIT RECORDS

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

1. To Birdtrack

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

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

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

like to know much more about their populations. The SOC hopes that most birdwatchers in Scotland will soon adopt BirdTrack as their main bird recording and information sharing tool.

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

2. To the Moray and Nairn Recorder

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

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

ASSESSMENT OF RARITY RECORDS

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

A three-tier system of record assessment exists:

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

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

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

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

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

The following species are currently on the MNRC list:

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

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

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

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

OBSERVERS CONTRIBUTING TO *BIRDS IN MORAY & NAIRN 2017*

W Aaron, H Addlesee, G Aitken (GA), T Allen, J Allison (JA), F Antley, A Archer, R Archer (RA), C Armour (CA), L Atkinson, P J Aylward, S Aylward, T Backx, I Bailey (IB), G Bain, C A Bainbridge, J Baird (JB), M C Bale, S Ball (SBa), B Bates, S Bayne, M Beaton (MB), K Bell, S Benn, J Berry, A J Bevan, G Biggs (GB), S Biggs (SBi), J H Bingley, M E Bird (MEB), B Blackhall, K Blackmore, J Blasco, A Bowie, J Bray (JBr), I Broadbent, S Broyd (SBr), L Bruce (LBr), N Burgum, A N M Burns (ANMB), S Carey, N Carter (NC), H Cartright, D W Chambers (DWC), J Chandler, A C Chapman (AC), B Chappell (BC), H Clark (HC), J A Clarke (JAC), A J Clunas (AJC), M Coath (MCo), M Collins, L Collis (LC), M J H Cook (MJHC), B Cosnette (BCo), J Coyle, J K Craib (JKC), G Cross, M G Crutch (MGC), M J Cuff, T Cummins (TC), K Cunningham (KC), R Dalziel, J A Darroch, R H Dennis (RHD), D G Devonport (DGD), M Doubleday (MD), J M Dowson, L A du Feu, C Dudgeon, N Duggan, A Edward (AE), S Edwards, P Elford, B Etheridge (BE), H Farquhar (HF), S J Foster, I Francis (IF), M Freestone, D Galletly, C A Gervaise, D A Gibson (DAG), A Gordon, J D Gordon (JDG), P R Gordon (PRG), A Grady, P Grant, I Green, T Green (TG), C Greenfield, P Griffin, A Grove, K Guthrie, R Halsey (RH), S A Halsey, S Hamilton, M Hannan, J Harrison (JH), E Harwood (EH), A Hashmi, M C Hay (MCH), A C Hilton (ACH), J Hogg, J Homer (JHom), L Hughes, P P Hyvonen, R Ince (RI), H Insley, P Insole (PI), R J Irvine, V Irving (VI), V Jack, C James (CJ), E Jensen (EJ), R Johnson (RJ), C M Jones (CMJ), T Jones, A G Kennedy, J Kerbyson, A Knox, T Laidler, J D Law (JDL), A J Lawrence (AJL), P Lee, C G Leslie (CGL), S D Levene (SDL), R Leverton, S Lister, A MacAskill (AMac), J & H MacDonald, P Macdonald, R Macdonald (RM), S Macgillivray, G MacGregor, M Mackay (MMA), A MacQueen, H E Maggs, D Main (DM), E Main, , J Mair (JM), M Mair (MMi), M Maloy (MM), S Manning, B Marshall, S Massie, S Mawson, P Mayhew, S McArdle, J McClelland, J M McDonald, S McGillivray (SM), A Mckenzie (AMK), G McMullins (GM), A McNee, C McNulty, G McRae, N Mellor (NM), P Message, A Millar, S P Milligan (SPM), P Miners, P Moore (PM), N J Moran, I Morgan, L Morrison (LM), M Morrison, W M Morrison (WMM), S D Morton, S Murkin, M Murray, S M Neal (SMN), I Noble, P Norgate, J O'Hanlon (JO), D C Orr-Ewing (DCO), D Pakes (DPa), J Parker, K Paterson, G Paul (GPa), C Phelps, S Pick, J Picton, D Pierce (DP), S Piotrowski, I Plumtree, J Pott (JPo), R Potter, A Powell, J Poyner (JP), E Pratt, R J F Prentice, G Prest (GP), A Price, R Proctor (RP), D M Pullan (DMP), D Puplett, G Rankin, M Ranner, R Ranner, S Ray, S Reed (SR), G S Reid, W Richardson, A Rigg, A & F Ritchie (A&FR), I Rollo, D W Rothwell, G E Scales, J Scrimgeour (JS), E Seal, B T R Seim, O Selly, S Seright (SS), Y Sharp, M Sharpe (MS), C&D Shaw, V Sheach Leith (VSL), R Sheldon, R A Shewan (RAS), A Shields, S Sim, A Sime, S Simey (SSi), J Simpson (JSi), K Simpson, L Simpson (LSi), R Simpson, D Slater (DSI), A Smith, C Smith, G & D Smith (G&DS), R Somers Cocks (RSC), J Sowden, M Spriggs, G Stacey (GS), E Steel, I Stephen, L Stewart (LSt), J Strickland, P Stronach (PSt), N Sutherland (NS), I S Suttie (ISS), P Swainson (PSw), A Taylor, C Taylor, G Taylor, S Taylor, W G Taylor, C Thomas, B J Thompson (BJT), D J Thomson, C Tolworthy, R B Tozer, P Treen (PT), A E Turner, M Turton, S Walker, S Ward, M Warren (MW), O Webb (OW), K Wells, T J Wells (TJW), C West (CW), E Weston (EW), D Wheeler (DW), M Whitton (MWh), B Whyte, A Williams, K Williams, R Williams, C S Williamson (CSW), J L Wilson, L Windall (LW), R E Wolstenholme, P Wrigley, M Youdale (MY), A Young (AY), M Young.

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

Brent Goose *Branta bernicla*

Scarce migrant and winter visitor.

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

Winter: Present in the Nairn area from 2 Jan-9 Apr; maximum was c.80 on 11 & 31 Mar. The flock was regularly observed in Nairn feeding around the football pitch, cricket pitch and golf course.

Largest group size reported from the Nairn area 2007-2017:

2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
22	50	69	52	64	64	80	74	57	76	80

Two records away from the Nairn area included: 6 Findhorn 21 Jan and a single on the sea off Lossiemouth harbour 15 Apr.

Autumn passage period (September-October): The first returning birds to the Nairn area was a group of 6 Nairn 5 Oct. These were followed by records of 10 on 15 Oct and 3 on 26 Oct. Elsewhere, in the early part of the period, the only record was 4 Burghead 2 Oct. Later during this period, a small movement off Lossiemouth occurred on 14 Oct; two groups were seen off the harbour consisting of 18 and 9 individuals, and a further 2+ heard over the Lossie estuary. A group of 8, possibly part of these earlier groups, was seen on the 15th at the Lossie estuary. A further individual was seen at the Spey estuary on 20 Oct and probably the same individual passed Lossiemouth harbour during a seawatch the following day. In Findhorn Bay a single was present from 19-24 Oct, and two were recorded on 23 Oct.

Winter: In the Nairn area, only four reports in November, with a maximum of 26 on 15 Nov. Only three reports in December (10 records in 2016) with a maximum count of 60 on 19 Dec.

Red-breasted Goose *Branta ruficollis*

Rare visitor.

An individual was seen with a flock of Pink-footed Geese at Mid Mains (Gilston) on 6 Dec (MY). This is the third record for Moray following sightings in the Miltonhill area 21-30 Oct 2000 and 17-19 Apr 2001.

Canada Goose *Branta canadensis*

Scarce migrant in summer, rare in winter.

Winter records: A group of 9 Nairn-Delnies 15 Jan, a single in the Portknockie area 19-23 Jan, recorded Findhorn Bay 21 Feb and 2 Nairn Beach 9 Mar.

Spring (April-May): The only record during this period was 5 Portgordon 27 May, flying east.

Summer (June-July): Present at Findhorn Bay 1 Jun-31 Jul; a single on 1 Jun at the Mosset Burn was the only record in early June before daily occurrences from 8-15 Jun (max. count 59 in two groups on 12th), and then smaller numbers for the remainder of the month; max. count 16 on 19th. In July, 6 on 2nd and 2 on 31st were the only records from Findhorn Bay. Coastal records elsewhere involved 4 Loch Spynie 1 Jun (and 1 on 10 Jun), 17 Lossie estuary 11 Jun, 32 Burghead 13 Jun and 12 Spey estuary 16 Jun. Inland records included; 5 Garlinemore (Knockando) 7 Jun and 7 Aitnoch 11 Jun.

Autumn (August-October): Initially only two were seen in Findhorn Bay 1-8 Aug, with flocks arriving from mid-August. Most counts around Findhorn Bay were less than 30 except 35 on 17 Aug, 42 on 3 Sep and 77 on 6 Sep.

Barnacle Goose *Branta leucopsis*

Scarce migrant and winter visitor.

Winter-spring: The largest group during this period was 27 flying south-west over Portknockie 29 Jan. Otherwise only singles or very small groups were recorded at a further four sites; Loch Flemington (1 on 27 Mar), Findhorn Bay (1 on 27 Mar, 3 on 10 Apr, 5 on 11-12 Apr and 4 on 16 Apr), Drainie area (1 on 4-5 Feb) and Nether Birnie (1 on 22 Jan).

Summer: In Findhorn Bay, 2 on 9 May and a single on the following day, then no reports until a month later when a single on 11-12 Jun (GM, RSC). Presumably as a result of the expanding feral population; a family group of six was reported 15-17 & 20 Aug (GM). Two were also present on the River Spey at Garmouth golf course 19-20 May (MJHC).

Autumn: The arrival date of genuine migrants is getting difficult to assess accurately as the first group was 6 Findhorn Bay 12 Sep, then reports of 5 on 18 Sep & 3 Oct; these were presumably the group present in Findhorn Bay in mid August. A single at Burghead 2 Oct and Bishopmill, Elgin 4 Oct may potentially also be part of this group. At Findhorn Bay, 3 on 8 Oct could have been either part of the earlier group or an arrival, as an obvious passage occurred on 8 Oct at Lossiemouth when 14 flew west passed the harbour and 7 west at the estuary. Later at Findhorn Bay, present from 17-23 Oct with numbers increasing to a maximum of 19 on the 21st. Elsewhere, 3 Alves 11 Oct and 2 Balliesland 18 Oct (increasing to 7 on 21 Oct). Only two reports in November; 1 Findhorn Bay on 3rd and 5 Lossie estuary on 9th. Similarly low numbers in December; 1 Mid Mains (Gilston) 6th and 1 Findhorn Bay 12th & 14th.

Snow Goose *Anser caerulescens**Rare visitor or escape.*

At Findhorn Bay, two dark/intermediate morph individuals on 27 Mar (RSC, GM, AJL, MGC) and later in the year a single dark morph was seen on 10 & 30 Oct, and two present 11-12 Oct (GM, RSC, AJL).



Snow Geese, Findhorn Bay 12 October 2017 (Richard Somers Cocks)

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 (three sites in 2016): 500 Maverston golf course entrance 11 Jan. A total of 29 other coastal sites held small flocks (19 in 2016).

Range of all flock sizes reported containing less than 400 individuals Jan-Apr:

	1-100	101-200	201-300	301-400
2017	49	6	5	2
2016	52	7	3	2
2015	63	8	1	3
2014	41	10	1	3
2013	51	6	8	3
2012	39	7	3	1

Well inland, and probably part of the breeding population, maximum counts were: 6 Black Loch (Dava) 10 Feb, 2 Littlemill 26 Feb, 6 Dunearn Lodge 16 Mar, 2 Levrattich 17 Mar, 6

near Black Loch 26 Feb, c.25 Achavraat 3 Mar, 2 near Black Loch 17 & 26 Mar, 36 Aitnoch 26 Mar, 12 Auldich 29 Mar, 12 Dunearn 21-26 Mar, 8 Ferness area 23 Mar and 45+ Little Aitnoch 31 Mar.

Summer: In the Dava breeding area, maximum counts were 70 Dava 1 Apr, 3 Bogeney 18 Apr, 40 Ferness 20 Apr, 15 Burnside 22 Apr, 2 Inchnacape 23 Apr, 4 Loch Kirkaldy 2 May, 16 Dulsie Bridge 25 May, 50+ Refouble 26 May, 10 Black Loch (Dava) 3 Jun, 6 near Black Loch 3 Jun, c.50 Dunearn 11 Jun, 26 Little Aitnoch 11 Jun and 20 Aitnoch 16 Jun. Also inland but in a different locality were 6 Achdregnie-Suie (Glenlivet) 16 Apr (4 still there on 26 Apr) and 13 Tomintoul 13 Jun.

Breeding confirmed up country (goslings counted): Burnside-Little Aitnoch (4) 2 May (MCo) and Aitnoch (9) 26 May (A&FR).

In the coastal strip, 1 Newmill pond (Auldearn) 2 May, 4 Gilston 6 May, regular in early-mid May at Loch Spynie (max. 11 on 3rd) and 1 Lossie estuary 11 Jun. The only confirmation of breeding here was a brood of one at Lossie Forest gravel pit on 6 & 20 May (MJHC).

Non-breeding flocks were regular in Findhorn Bay between 1 Jun-31 Jul (no count exceeded 100 this year; maximum 84 on 29 Jul). Elsewhere in July were 2 Loch of Blairs 16th, 40 Auldearn 20th, 6 Loch Flemington 21st, 7 Forres 22nd, 7 Balnakeith (Nairn) 22nd, c.30 Loch Spynie 26th, 16 in off the sea Nairn 29th and 30 Scarffbanks Farm 30th.

Late summer: Frequently seen around the Findhorn Bay area during August where counts over 100 were 146 on 2nd, 170 on 3rd, 375+ on 8th, 239 on 12th, 282 on 16th, 315 on 17th, 438 on 21st, 134 on 22nd, 515+ on 24th, 334 on 26th, 485 on 27th, 254 on 30th and 572 on 31st. Also frequent throughout the month at Loch Spynie (3-28 Aug) where the largest count was 35 on 13th.

Autumn: Difficult to assess which are local birds and which are Icelandic breeders returning in September; seven large counts from Findhorn Bay (largest was 412 on 13th), with lower numbers elsewhere at Delnies (120 on 11th) and Lossie Forest (33 on 19th). In October, the largest count was 200 Loch Spynie 22nd.

In November, flocks exceeding 100 individuals (max. counts) were 106 Findhorn Bay 4th, 600 Mid Mains (Gilston) 9th, 700 Ardivot 12th, 1500 Loch Spynie 19th and 475 Duffus 19th. Winter (max. counts only): Flocks exceeding 500 were 600 Burnside of Enzie 16 Dec, 1300 Westerton 10 Dec and 2400 to roost Findhorn Bay 18 Dec.

Pink-footed Goose *Anser brachyrhynchus*

Very common migrant and winter visitor.

Winter (January-March): Reported at 15 sites from the Nairn area, with four flocks in excess of 1000; 1000 Nairn 26 Mar, 1100 Loch Flemington 8 Feb and 2500+ Moyness 8 Feb (still 2400+ present on 12 Mar). Smaller flocks (max. counts) were seen at Aitnoch (77 on 17 Feb), Crook (Nairn) (c.40 on 24 Feb), Achavraat (c.100 on 3 Mar), Nairn harbour (100 on 12 Mar), Househill (Nairn) (200+ on 21 Mar), Moss-side (193 on 23 Mar), Blervie Castle (5 on 27 Mar), Balnaspirach (Nairn) (c.200 on 27 Mar), Loch Flemington (210 on 27 Mar), Moyness-Auldearn (300+ on 30 Mar), Kingsteps (c.35 on 31 Mar) and Little Aitnoch (460+ on 31 Mar).

By far the largest counts in this period were from Findhorn Bay at dawn where 13,800 on 26 Jan and 15,500 on 2 Feb (RSC) were counted before they headed out from the roost. there were 14 other counts in excess of 1000 individuals from here and the fields south of Forres. Elsewhere, counts included c.1200 Sherrifston 16 Jan, 1658 Muirton 5 Feb (c.1000 on 4 Feb) and 1120 Loch Spynie 10 Feb.

Ranges of other flocks (less than 1000) were:

	1- 100	101- 200	201- 300	301- 400	401- 500	501- 600	601- 700	701- 800	801- 900	901- 1000
2017	13	9	5	0	4	1	2	7	1	3
2016	20	16	7	3	3	2	3	4	1	0
2015	17	4	3	0	2	3	4	3	1	2
2014	30	7	1	2	6	3	2	3	0	3

Spring passage (max. counts): Typically the largest flocks seen during this period were from the Findhorn Bay area; 4000 Netherton 25 Apr (with a further 15 counts in excess of 1000 individuals). Other flocks in excess of 1000 were reported from Montgrew pool (1050 on 3 Apr) and Carse of Delnies (2000+ on 8 Apr). Still large numbers passing through in late April and May at Findhorn Bay (e.g. 910 on 28 Apr and 700 on 3 May). Elsewhere in April, 100 west Dallachy pool 28th, 80 west Spey estuary 28th, 90 west Paul's Hill 29th and 150 Loch Spynie 30th. Numbers declined rapidly elsewhere in May with only two reports; 9 on the Spey estuary 1st and a single still present on 8th.

Summer: A single on the Spey estuary 19 Jun. Present again in the Findhorn Bay area during the summer between 1 Jun-1 Sep: the maximum count was four on 27, 29 & 30 Aug.

Autumn: The first sighting during this period was 5 in from the north-west over Netherton (Findhorn Bay) 7 Sep; this constitutes the second earliest arrival date. Five groups at Findhorn Bay on 12 Sep (largest 103). Daily arrivals from 13-21 Sep, the vast majority were recorded at Findhorn Bay (max. count 4600 on 20th). Small numbers elsewhere; 23 Beachans 14th, 29 Spey estuary 14th, 23 Tomcork 14th, 50 Howford Bridge (Nairn) 15th, c.100 Lethen 15th (and 17th) and 90 Kingsteps (Nairn) 24th. Large numbers present in Findhorn Bay in October (3rd-23rd) where the maximum count was of 16,130 leaving the roost on 21st, and another nine counts over 12,000. Away from Findhorn Bay, though involving the birds that roost there, was an estimated 10,750 at Alves 11th. Much smaller numbers elsewhere (max. counts): 104 passed Lossiemouth harbour 2nd (46 on 8th), 4 Tomnamoon 3rd, 80 Auchlochan 4th, 450 Burghead 4th, 3 Tugnet 18th, 4000 Bailliesland 21st, 1700 Cloddach quarry 22nd and 10 Mid Mains (Gilston) 24th. In Nairn, large counts were 2000 Nairn 4th and 106 Delnies 15th.

In November, flocks over 1000 (max. counts) were seen at Lochhills (3000 on 4th), Findhorn Bay (6750 on 21st; eight additional counts over 1000), Earlseat (c.3000 on 26th), Barmuckity (c.2500 on 27th) and Clochan (2000 on 30th). Unusually at this time of year, well inland were 43 Knock of Braemoray 2nd.

Winter: The largest count in December was 4240 at the Findhorn Bay roost on 13th (4000 on 18th). Maximum flocks in excess of 1000 also occurred at Barmuckity (c.4000 on 2nd), Moyness (3000 on 2nd; a large count for Nairn), Nairn Bar (4000 on 3rd; same flock as Moyness?), Dipple (c.1500 on 10th) and Clochan (3000 on 12th).

A leucistic individual was reported from Findhorn Bay 24 Oct.

Tundra Bean Goose *Anser serrirostris*

Rare winter visitor.

Two with Pink-footed Geese at Findhorn Bay 8 Feb and nearby at Seafeld 27 Feb (JDG, GM). After the unprecented influx over the winter of 2011-2012 the last record occurred in 2014 at Portknockie 22-23 Jan.

White-fronted Goose *Anser albifrons*

Very scarce winter visitor.

Greenland White-fronted Goose *A.a.flavirostris*:

Findhorn Bay: 1 on 20 & 25 Apr (RHD).

European White-fronted Goose *A.a.albifrons*:

Findhorn Bay: 1 on 5 Mar (RSC).

Drainie area: 1 on 30 Jan (RHD) followed by 3 Muirton 5 Feb (DAG, MJHC, RP).



European White-fronted Goose, Findhorn Bay 5 March 2017 (Richard Somers Cocks)

Mute Swan *Cygnus olor*

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

Breeding: A total of 18 apparently occupied territories was recorded in 2017, with 11 pairs producing 46 young; of these, a minimum of 26 appear to have fledged. The mean total of fledged young in 2017.

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

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Pairs	10	14	17	17	13	19	13	17	11	12	11
Young	51	59	57	84	53	53	73	43	38	56	26
fledged											
Mean	5.1	4.2	3.3	4.9	4.1	2.8	5.7	2.5	3.5	4.7	2.4

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	16	15	9	11	4	2	4	nc	nc	16	8	4	
Nairn harbour	6	2	1	2	2	nc	2	nc	2	2	nc	nc	
Loch Loy	7	2	5	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	5	nc	4	
Loch of Blairs	2	2	1		Breeder's					nc	4	nc	4
Findhorn Bay	12	9	6	43	54	53	2	4	28	36	5	8	
Lossie estuary	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Loch Spynie	63	63	21	20	20	13	3	5	22	31	61	77	
Cloddach	12	4	nc		Breeder's					9	32	5	3
Loch Oire	2	2	2		Breeder's					12	12	12	20
Loch na Bo	7	8	2		Breeder's					nc	4	6	6
Spey estuary	nc	3	2	6	5	6	4	nc	nc	nc	1	nc	

nc = no count received

Coastal records (max. counts): 3 west Hilton of Delnies 8 Jan, 2 Carse of Delnies 30 Jan, 2 Nairn Bar 12 Feb, 3 Burghead 13 Sep, 1 west Strathlene 27 Sep, 17 Nairn 4 Oct and 2 Buckie harbour 3 Dec.

Well inland: 2 Burnside (Teindland) 9 Apr may have been from the nearby Strypes breeding site.

No records of birds in stubble fields this year.

Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus*

Common migrant and winter visitor.

Winter-spring: In the Nairn area, reported from five sites (max. counts): Whiteness Head (4 on 6 Jan), Loch Flemington (9 on 10 & 15 Jan), Loch Loy (12 on 8 Jan), Nairn (2 on 7 Mar) and Culbin Bar (25 on 24 Mar).

In Moray, reports were received from 16 sites. Maximum counts from each were 7 Loch Oire (2 & 22 Jan), 55 Maverston golf course junction 6 Jan, 3 Spey Bay (flew past Boar's Head Rock) 16 Jan, 2 Loch na Bo 17 Jan, 3 Duffus (26 Jan & 7 Feb), 7 Burghead 8 Feb, 23 Calcots 18 Feb, 50 Scarffbanks 5 Mar, 9 Foresterseat 7 Mar, 37 Pitgaveny 9 Mar, 45 Gordonsward 11 Mar, 17 Findhorn Bay 13 Mar, 48 Sherrifston 18 Mar and 44 Loch Spynie 23 Mar.

Spring (April-May): At Findhorn Bay a single bird was seen most days during both months, with the only groups being seen on 9 Apr (9), 10-12 Apr (10) and 13 Apr (8). At other sites, maximum counts were 2 Nairn east beach 3 Apr, 46 Loch Spynie area 10 Apr, 2 Montgrew pool 12 Apr and 5 west Lossiemouth 23 Apr.

Summer: The individual in Findhorn Bay was seen intermittently from 8 Jun-3 Aug (GM, DAG), on 8 Aug it was seen 1km north of Loch Spynie (MJHC).

Autumn: The first record for the autumn period was 8 Findhorn Bay 17 Sep (an early arrival date), followed by 6 Loch Spynie 18 Sep. Then 8 flying east Kinloss 26 Sep and 6 Muirton 29 Sep which were possibly the respective groups from Findhorn Bay and Loch Spynie.

In October, 67 flock counts were made with most again under 50. Eleven counts exceeded 100, mostly concerning all or part of the large flock which frequented the Loch Spynie/Drainie/Mid Mains area where maximum counts were 273 Loch Spynie 15th, 350+ Loch Spynie 22nd, c.200 Duffus Castle 25th, 520 Mid Mains (Gilston) 25th, 108 Drainie 30th and c.250 Salterhill 30th.

In November, eight sites held flocks over 100, six of these were in the same Loch Spynie/Drainie area where large numbers remained from October. Highest counts here were 374 Silverhills-Westerfolds 2nd, 205 Mid Mains (Gilston) 9th, 351 Ardivot 12th, 200 Loch Spynie 19th and 344 Duffus Castle 19th. The other two counts, away from Gilston-Loch Spynie, were 105 Inchberry 17th and 119 Orton 19th.

Winter (December): In Nairn, birds were recorded at only one site: Loch Flemington 4 on 18th and 6 on 3rd & 19th. In Moray, seen at eight sites: 6 flying west Culbin point 3rd, 12 Mid Mains (Gilston) 6th, 1 Gilston 6th, 7 Loch Spynie 10th, 7 Clochan 12th, 25 Wester Moy 13th, 6 RAF Lossiemouth 15th, 32 Findhorn Bay 16th, 12 Shempston 21st, 5 Ardivot 26th, 5 Corskie (Garmouth) 27th and 74 Loch Oire 30th.

Unusual for the Lossie estuary was a lone juvenile on 28 Oct.

Frequency of brood sizes reported in Oct-Dec 2014-17:

	1	2	3	4	5	6
2017	0	6	7	6	4	0
2016	9	17	10	9	0	0
2015	10	5	8	2	1	1
2014	3	14	16	7	6	0

The mean from the 23 broods reported was 3.2 young.

Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*

Fairly common visitor in winter and spring. Scarce breeder.

Breeding: First ducklings were seen in Findhorn Bay on 25 May and the maximum count, in early July, was of 24 ducklings, apparently in three broods of 7, 8 and 9. Elsewhere, a pair with 4 ducklings was at Corskie (Garmouth) on 17 Jun. Seen in potential breeding areas at Kinloss, Gilston, Birnie pool, Cloddach quarry, Kellas and Spey 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	248	261	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	3	nc	97
Findhorn Bay	234	155	101	106	151	144	179	82	12	43	185	197
Lossie estuary	0	1	0	2	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0
Spey estuary	0	1	20	5	16	6	11	2	0	0	0	0

Other coastal sites with large counts: 38 Carse of Delnies 28 Feb and 15 Middlefield 4 & 5 May (though these were probably Findhorn Bay birds).

Inland on freshwater: 2 Loch Spynie 5 Mar, 4 Cloddach quarry 12 Mar, 8 Loch Flemington 27 Mar, 2 Gilston 24 Apr, 2 Kellas 23 May and a juvenile Balormie pig farm 17-28 Sep.

At Lossiemouth during seawatches: 1 east on 11 Mar, 6 east on 1 May, 3 west on 2 Nov and 1 west on 18 Nov.

Mandarin Duck *Aix galericulata*

Probable escape or feral origin.

Cawdor/Croy area: On the River Nairn, 3 Cawdor 8 Apr (CW), a male at the Cantray bridge 16 May (JAC), 6 Kilravock Castle and c.20 at nearby Holme Rose 4 Nov (JAC), 3 Holme Rose-Kilravock 22 Nov (JDG) and 2

	Cantray bridge 10 Dec (PSt). The 4 Nov Holme Rose group is undoubtedly the largest recorded in Moray & Nairn.
Littlemill:	2 on 12 Apr (CGL).
Elgin:	2 on the River Lossie near Elgin Academy 28 Jan (LSt), a male on the River Lossie 30 May (LM), then a male on the Cooper Park pond 10 Sep (LM) and 4 Oct (HC).
Aultmore:	A new site in east Moray; a male present for about two weeks on a small pond at East Balnamoon (MYo).

Shoveler *Spatula clypeata*

Occasional breeder and scarce migrant.

In Nairn:

Carse of Delnies: A pair seen on 16 Feb.

Loch Flemington: 1 on 9 Jan.

In Moray:

Brodie Castle: A male on the pond 12 Feb.

Cloddach quarry: A female and eclipse/juvenile male 30 Sep.

Loch Spynie: Largest count was 4 on 10 Apr, otherwise a single female on 8 Mar, 28 Apr, 21 Jul, 11 & 18 Oct, 3 Nov and 2 Dec.

Loch na Bo: A male on 4 Dec.

Loch Oire: A male on 11-18 Jan and 12 Oct-16 Nov. Briefly, there were 6 on 13 Oct and 2 on 9 Nov.

Spey estuary: 1 on 30 Sep.

Montgrew: 2 males and a female 23 May.

Gadwall *Mareca strepera*

Scarce visitor.

Loch Flemington: 2 on 8 Jan & 27 Mar (GA, JAC) and 1 on 2 Apr, 15 Sep (male) & 18 Dec (TJW, JAC).

Findhorn Bay: 4 in the bay on 10 Apr (PRG). In the Mosset Burn, a pair on 2 & 8 May, increasing to two pairs on 3-7 May (GM, AJL, MGC).

Cloddach quarry: 2 males and 4 females on 30 Sep (MJHC).

Loch Spynie: Present 3 Jan-4 May and again from 14 Aug-29 Dec. Maximum counts in both these periods were: two pairs on 15 Jan, 10 (7 males, 3 females) on 25 Apr, 2 on 4 May, 2 on 14 Aug, two pairs 23 & 24 Sep, seven (3 males, 4 females) 22 Oct and a male 28-29 Dec.

Lossie forest: 1 on the gravel pit 6 May (MJHC).

Loch na Bo: 1 on 13 Oct (MY).

Loch Oire: 2 on 2 Jan, then a male 6-20 Jan. One male from 14 Sep-28 Dec, with two birds seen on 12 & 30 Oct, 9-10 & 19 Nov. The male was following a female Mallard on 24 Dec (RP) - behaviour previously noted at Balormie pig farm 29 Apr-9 May 2016 and Loch Oire 28 Dec 2013.

Spey estuary: A male on 28 Jul (MJHC).

Wigeon *Mareca penelope*

Very common winter visitor and rare breeder.

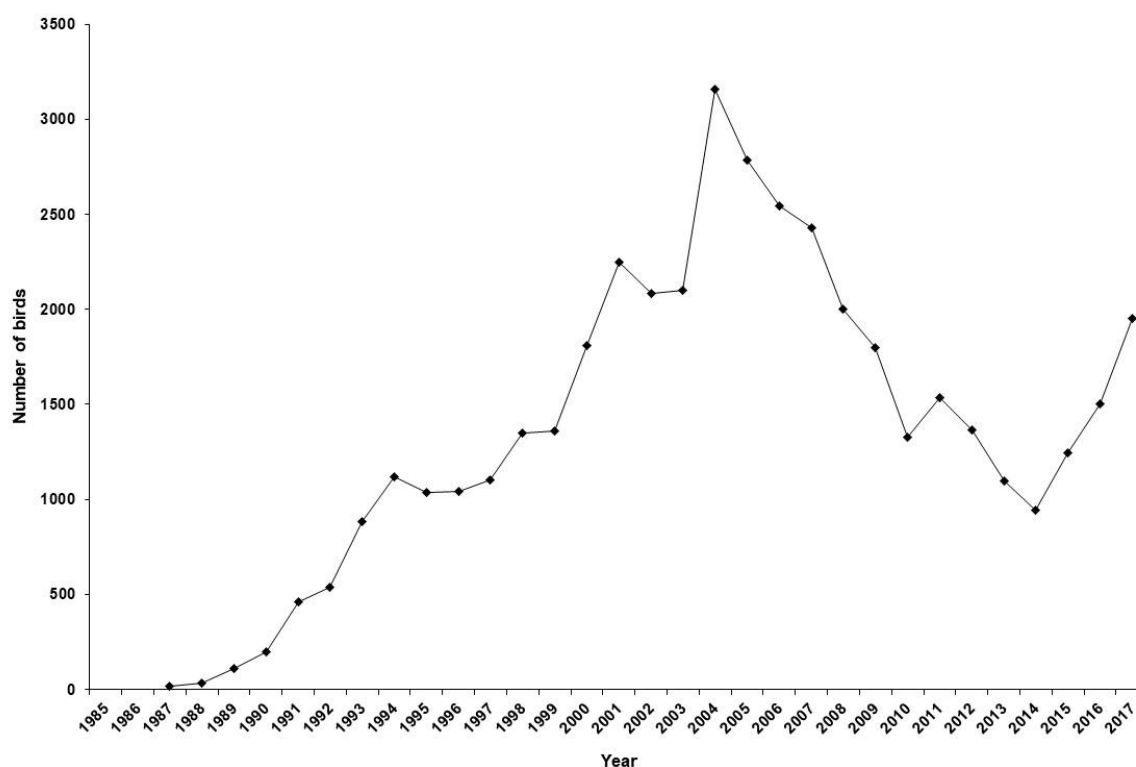
Breeding: No breeding reports were received.

Non-breeders in summer (May-July) away from main sites below were 1 Cloddach quarry 9 Jul.

Monthly maximum counts at main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Findhorn Bay	783	865	831	232	34	31	23	204	3200	4100	2250	618
Lossie estuary	2000	866	1120	8	12	1	0	15	205	563	950	1217
Loch Spynie	200	150	82	45	40	3	6	8	51	50	200	150
Spey estuary	150	79	150	50	5	2	1	11	85	nc	80	225

Annual maxima at the Lossie estuary since 1985:



Following the steady decline recorded at Lossie estuary from 2004-2014 there have been three consecutive years with increases.

Winter: Monthly maximum counts at other coastal sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Carse of Delnie	nc	nc	50	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc
Nairn harbour area	80	120	25	6	nc	4	nc	74
Nairn/Culbin Bars	446	449	nc	nc	nc	41	nc	426
Portgordon	0	128	nc	nc	nc	0	nc	0

On freshwater:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Loch Flemington	29	206	5	nc	nc	nc	2	nc	68
Loch Loy	180	28	78	nc	nc	nc	68	nc	8
Cran Loch	1	nc	12	nc	nc	nc	nc	2	3
Loch of Blairs	35	33	3	2	nc	7	28	30	20
Cloddach quarry	690	620	760	nc	nc	76	125	159	720
Dallachy pool	15	4	3	nc	nc	nc	2	8	nc
Loch na Bo	28	22	1	nc	nc	0	0	2	87
Loch Oire	147	26	28	3	nc	20	80	245	400

Other counts on freshwater included (max. counts): 54 Easter Bauds 14 Jan, 37 Miltonduff pool 28 Jan, 120 Mayne (Elgin) 29 Nov. Well inland were 2 males near Levrattich 23 Apr, 70+ Loch Kirkaldy 3 Dec and 19 Inverchor lochan (Strath Avon) 29 Oct.

Regularly seen on seawatches off Lossiemouth harbour in autumn; max. 31 on 17 Sep.

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*

Common resident breeder and winter visitor.

Breeding: The mean brood size from 14 broods was 7.5 chicks.

Breeding was confirmed at Loch Flemington, Nairn, Nairn harbour, Sanquhar pond, Mosset Burn (Forres), Middlefield, Findhorn Bay, River Spey (Blacksboat), Cloddach quarry, Loch Spynie, Spey estuary and Dipple.

A Grey Heron was seen eating ducklings at Middlefield (Findhorn Bay).

Inland, also recorded in suitable breeding habitat at: Aberlour, Achdregnie Farm (Glenlivet), Achdregnie-Suie (Glenlivet), Auchmair (Cabrach), Carn Tullich (Glenlivet), Carron, Chapeltown of Glenlivet distillery, Craigellachie, Daluaine, Dava Moor, Dulsie Bridge, Edingight, Ferness, Glenlivet, Kellas, Little Balloch Hill, Loch Kirkaldy, Logie Steading, Strath Avon (Balneden Steading), Strath Avon (Dalvrecht) and Tombreckachie (Glenlivet).

Also recorded in suitable breeding habitat in the coastal strip at: Brodie Castle pond, Cawdor (River Nairn), Cloddach quarry, Croy, Dallachy pool, Dipple, Earnhill, Easter Bauds, Elgin, Foresterseat, Gallowhill, Gilson, Hopeman, Kingsteps, Loch na Bo, Loch Oire, Lossie estuary and Newton of Dalvey.

Best monthly flocks in regularly counted areas were:

Freshwater:

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Loch Flemington	48	30	11	5	10	30	123	nc	nc	36	40	65
Loch Loy	130	7	44	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	93	nc	110
Cran Loch	2	nc	8	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	7	10	38
Loch of Blairs	nc	77	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	90	90	nc	70
Brodie Castle pond	66	25	nc	nc	8	nc	50	nc	nc	nc	nc	155
Cooper Park, Elgin	15	nc	nc	10	nc	nc	18	11	6	nc	nc	6
Loch Spynie	89	70	5	7	15	64	120	105	113	113	117	155
Cloddach quarry	126	40	27	nc	nc	10	nc	28	89	72	nc	92
Loch Oire	45	13	16	6	nc	nc	103	nc	nc	5	27	36
Loch na Bo	66	14	9	nc	3	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	39	100
Dallachy pool	13	15	19	2	nc	nc	24	4	nc	17	25	nc

No other freshwater site held more than 50 birds, largest count was 46 Easter Bauds 14 Jan. Well inland in winter were: 3 Loch Kirkaldy 22 Mar, 1 Cragganmore 11 Dec, 14 Marypark 11 Dec and 10 Aberlour 21 Dec.

Coastal sites:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Delnies-Nairn	13	27	nc	nc	nc	0	nc	0
Nairn harbour area	147	145	80	2	116	100	nc	nc
Kingsteps area	0	0	nc	90	80	80	nc	6
Nairn/Culbin Bars	20	2	nc	nc	40	0	nc	nc
Lossie estuary	2	2	nc	49	10	2	nc	4
Spey estuary	15	nc	11	75	43	36	30	7
Strathlene-Portgordon	89	86	nc	nc	nc	19	nc	68

Maximum monthly counts throughout the year in Findhorn Bay:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Findhorn Bay	246	250	96	22	68	99	96	200	171	84	86	174

Pintail *Anas acuta*

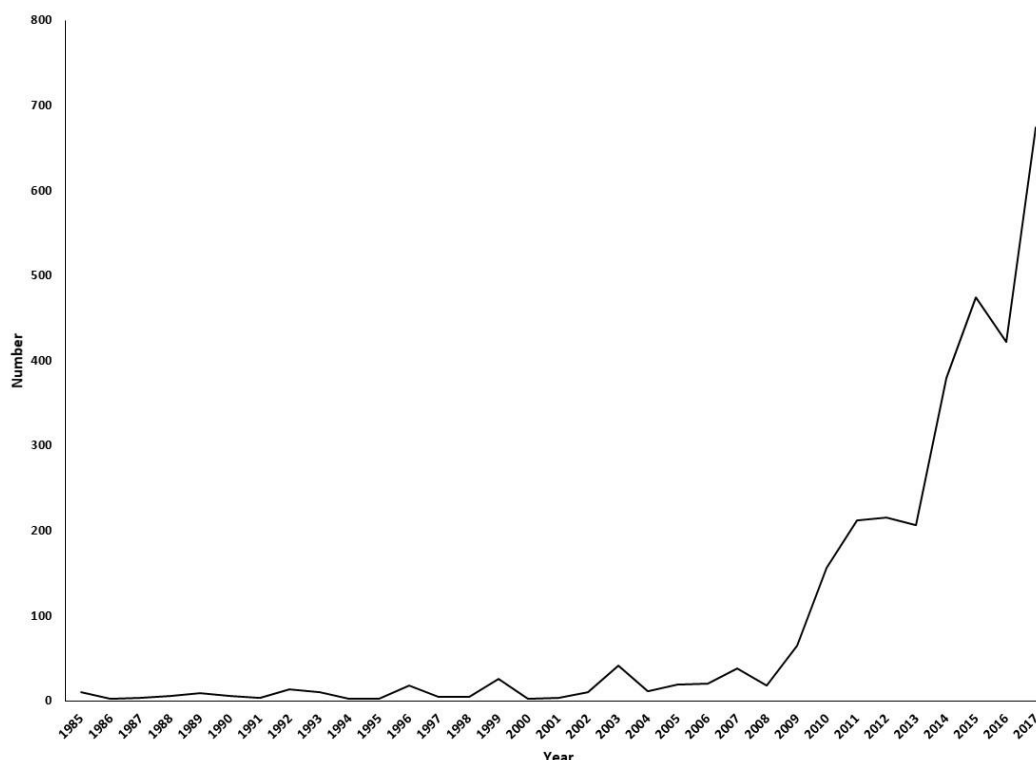
Fairly common winter visitor and migrant. Occasional breeder.

- Loch Loy: Two on 8 Jan & 24 Mar (SM, JS) and eight on 8 Oct & 13 Dec (SM).
- Elgin: Unusually a male was seen on the River Lossie, at Morriston playing fields, on 19 & 29 Apr (LM, MS).
- Balormie pig farm: A female was present on 29 Sep (RP).
- Loch Spynie: A male on 10 May (DAG) was the only record in the early part of the year. In the autumn-winter period; a female on 18 Oct, 2 birds on 19 Oct, two females on 22 Oct, a male & two females on 12 Nov, a female 15 Nov and three birds on 10 Dec (MJHC, SS, JDL, RP).
- Loch na Bo: A female on 4 Dec (MJHC).
- Loch Oire: A female on 1, 9 & 23 Jan (JDL, EH, MJHC) and a male on 30 Dec (MJHC).
- Spey estuary: One on 30 Sep (PRG).
- Findhorn Bay: Absent only in June & July. Present from 1 Jan-11 May and 12 Aug-26 Dec. Maximum counts in each winter period were 674 on 14 Jan (RHD) and 454 on 10 Dec (GM). The count of 674 is the highest recorded in Moray & Nairn.

Best monthly counts in the bay in 2017 were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Maximum counts	674	654	646	176	6	0	0	6	93	285	436	454

Annual maxima of Pintail at Findhorn Bay 1985-2017:



Teal *Anas crecca*

Scarce breeder and very common winter visitor.

Breeding: There were no records of confirmed breeding this year.

Potential breeding sites occupied during the breeding season included: Achdregnie-Suie (Glenlivet), Aitnoch, Black Loch (Dava), College of Scalan, Dunearn, Earnhill, Loch Kirkaldy and Levrattich. In the coastal strip in summer, seen at: Dallachy pool, Findhorn Bay, Gilston, Loch Spynie, Lossie estuary and Spey estuary.

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

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Loch Flemington	106	12	45	nc	nc	nc	nc	10	92
Carse of Delnies	12	nc	20	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc
Loch Loy	12	90	8	nc	nc	nc	140	70	nc
Cran Loch	210	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	70	100	190
Lossie estuary	117	55	45	20	3	20	78	117	197
Loch Spynie	400	70	15	12	40	41	50	450	73
Spynie Canal	300	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	60
Cloddach quarry	4	nc	2	nc	10	55	12	84	4
Loch Oire	60	12	nc	11	nc	5	8	20	6
Loch na Bo	28	2	16	nc	nc	nc	0	0	0
Dallachy pool	31	65	31	3	nc	nc	nc	7	nc
Spey estuary	116	nc	43	27	29	126	nc	30	nc

Maximum monthly counts throughout the year in Findhorn Bay:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Findhorn Bay	169	264	220	236	45	6	7	134	122	105	46	181

Well inland during winter were 30 Loch Kirkaldy 2 Jan, 2 near Black Loch (Dava) 17 Feb and 8 Loch Belivat 3 Mar (6 on 21 Mar).

Other large counts (max.): 257 Easter Bauds 14 Jan and 258 Montgrew 4 Oct.

Coastal records included 1 Nairn Bar 3 Dec.

Seawatches off Lossiemouth harbour: 1 west on 19 Feb, 6 east on 26 Jun, 1 west on 27 Jul, 1 east on 23 Jul, more regular in Sep (63; largest count 34 passing on 23rd) and then 1 west and 1 east on 21 Oct.

A male showing mixed characters of Green-winged Teal × Teal was seen at the Lossie estuary on 10 & 26 Dec (RP). There have been previous records of a male showing mixed characters on the Lossie estuary; on 17 Jan 2016, 31 Dec 2015 and 10 Jan 2010.

Green-winged Teal *Anas carolinensis*

Rare visitor.

Loch Flemington: A male was present from 7 Jan-8 Mar (PSt, PRG *et al.*) and then again on 28 Nov-18 Dec (JAC, CGL).

Loch Spynie: A male 29 Dec (JDL).

Lossie estuary: A male 12 & 18 Nov (RP, MJHC).

A male showing mixed characters of Green-winged Teal × Teal was seen at the Lossie estuary on 10 & 26 Dec (RP). There have been previous records of a male showing mixed characters on the Lossie estuary; on 17 Jan 2016, 31 Dec 2015 and 10 Jan 2010.



Green-winged Teal x Teal hybrid, Lossie estuary 26 December 2017 (Bob Proctor)

Pochard *Aythya ferina*

Scarce winter visitor and occasional breeder.

Recorded at three sites

Loch Flemington: 1 male from 19 Jun-2 Jul (JAC, TJW), then 2 males on 7 Jul (PSt).

Cloddach quarry: 1 on 11 Oct (MY).

Loch Spynie: Recorded from July when 1 female on 21 Jul, 2 birds on 22 Jul, 1 on 25 Jul (MJHC, DAG), 1 male 25-28 Aug (CAG, DAG, JDL), 1 female 22 Oct (DAG, JDL) and a pair on 20 Nov (NM).

Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligala*

Scarce breeder and common winter visitor.

Breeding: Broods were recorded at Cloddach quarry (3, 4 & 5 chicks) and Loch Spynie (5 & 8 chicks), giving a mean of 5.0 chicks per brood.

Other potential breeding sites occupied during the summer months were Black Loch (Dava), Croy, Dallachy pool, Loch Flemington, Loch Belivat, Loch of Blairs, Loch Oire, Lossie Forest gravel pit and Moyness (reservoir).

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

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Loch Flemington	9	8	11	15	7	23	30	nc	nc	6	nc	8
Loch Loy	8	2	14	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	5	nc	27
Moyness pool	28	17	14	nc	4	nc	nc	nc	5	10	nc	nc
Brodie Castle pool	15	10	15	16	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	6
Loch of Blairs	6	nc	2	9	nc	nc	1	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc
Sanquhar pond	1	1	1	2	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc
Loch Spynie	47	39	38	135	36	19	37	54	77	25	50	16
Cloddach quarry	19	43	45	nc	nc	nc	9	12	22	45	40	8
Cooper Park, Elgin	25	22	13	4	nc	nc	nc	nc	2	15	nc	21
Dallachy pool	8	8	2	2	5	7	11	27	nc	8	2	nc
Loch na Bo	116	32	44	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	30	118	99
Loch Oire	20	19	32	53	nc	nc	10	17	14	8	19	40

Elsewhere, 3 Easter Bards 14 Jan and 2 Nairn golf course pond 23 Mar.

Coastal records (max. counts) included 5 Hilton of Delnies 11 Mar and 9 Spey estuary 18 Oct.

Scaup *Aythya marila*

Scarce winter visitor.

Loch Flemington: A female on 3-10 Jan, then an exceptional 8 males 1-2 Jul (JAC, TJW) (dropping to 5 on 4 Jul and 4 on 6 Jul) and 1 on 8 Oct.

Loch Loy: 2 females 26 Feb and a single 24 Mar.

Nairn: 1 on 24 Mar and female off the harbour mouth 29 Apr.

Nairn Bar: 1 on 3 Dec.

Findhorn Bay: 2 on 1 Jan and a female 3 Mar.

Burghead Bay: A male with Goldeneye on 29 Jan.

Burghead: 11 on 4 Oct.

Lossiemouth: 2 flew west on 7 Jan.

Loch Spynie:	Present in the early part of the year from 1 Jan-3 May. Maximum count was 4 males and 8 females on 6 Jan (MJHC). Monthly maxima were: 12 in January, 6 in February, 2 in March, 1 in April (female on 14th-25th) and 1 in May (female on 3rd).
Loch Oire:	A female on 6 Dec, then one on 19 & 21 Dec.
Spey Bay:	A male off Tugnet 25 Jan.
Spey estuary:	A male 21 Apr, a female 24-25 Sep and a pair 28-29 Sep.

King Eider *Somateria spectabilis*

Rare visitor.

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

The only report this year was a male flying west off Lossiemouth harbour 19 Apr (GB).



King Eider passing Lossiemouth, 19 April 2017 (Gordon Biggs)

Eider *Somateria mollissima*

Scarce breeder, common offshore.

Breeding: Three breeding records were received; Portgordon (crèche of 14 chicks), Findochty (3 chicks) and Tugnet (4 chicks) (MJHC, A&FR).

Maximum monthly counts:

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Delnies-Nairn	12	18	nc	4	10	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc
Nairn	10	15	6	nc	nc	nc	5	5	nc	20	nc	9
Culbin/Nairn Bars	3	2	nc	nc	4	nc	nc	nc	25	3	nc	107
Findhorn Bay area	19	25	45	5	3	2	9	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc
Burghead Bay	40	12	171	nc	2	14	44	84	80	18	2	7
Burghead	208	190	150	75	60	1	1	2	1	90	nc	nc
Burghead-Hopeman	101	104	90	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	120	nc	36
Hopeman	45	20	2	3	nc	nc	nc	nc	1	40	80	nc
Lossiemouth	150	430	nc	17	5	1	nc	1	1	200	nc	250
Spey Bay	500	16	3	20	4	nc	6	61	35	8	400	50
Portgordon-Strathlene	24	44	nc	nc	75	21	nc	nc	nc	5	nc	4

Elsewhere, 14 Cullen 27 Apr.

In harbours (max. counts): 20 Burghead 10 & 14 Jan, 1 Lossiemouth 9 Dec and 18 Buckie 1 Jan.

Velvet Scoter *Melanitta fusca*

Fairly common winter visitor.

Only two counts exceeded 50 individuals during 2017, both off Nairn Bar where 96 on 15 Jan and 86 on 12 Feb.

Maximum counts for main areas were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Oct	Nov	Dec
Nairn/Culbin Bars	99	86	nc	19	nc	33
Burghead Bay	17	29	29	13	11	10
Burghead	nc	2	1	nc	nc	nc
Lossiemouth (seawatches)	2	0	0	4	nc	3
Spey Bay	27	2	20	0	0	1

In spring: a male off Findhorn beach 8 Apr and 7 Burghead Bay 18 Apr.

Passage noted at Lossiemouth during seawatches 16-18 Sep: 6 males west on 16th, 1 male west on 17th and 4 males west on 18th.

Coastal summer records (May-July) included: 1 Burghead Bay 10 May and a male east Lossiemouth 13 May.

Unusual was a male on the Lossie estuary 26 Nov (DAG); this is the first record for the estuary.

Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra*

Common winter visitor, small numbers in summer.

Summer records (May-July), maximum counts from each site, included: 100+ off Boar's Head Rock (Spey Bay) 6 May, 30 off Findhorn 20 May, 122 east off Lossiemouth 10 Jun and 35 Burghead 27 Jun.

Maximum monthly counts were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Nairn	2	nc	4	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc
Nairn Bar	244	103	nc	nc	nc	nc	31	nc	490
Culbin Bar	226	143	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	2
Burghead Bay	200	188	202	21	34	134	118	200	15
Burghead-Hopeman	60	90	184	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc
Lossiemouth (seawatches)	22	9	15	167	14	139	39	28	30
Spey Bay (Boar's Head)	500	nc	100	nc	nc	60	nc	170	300
Spey Bay (off Tugnet)	0	110	0	2	0	13	1	0	0

Elsewhere, 17 Bow Fiddle Rock 3 Jan.

Long-tailed Duck *Clangula hyemalis*

Common winter visitor offshore.

Coastal records in summer (June-July): None were reported this year.

Maximum monthly counts were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Oct	Nov	Dec
Delnies-Nairn	15	60	nc	nc	0	nc	nc
Nairn area	23	13	26	100	nc	7	2
Nairn Bar	105	83	nc	nc	0	nc	176
Culbin Bar	86	61	nc	nc	0	nc	6
Burghead Bay	117	236	319	2000	510	120	159
Burghead-Hopeman	57	42	nc	nc	9	nc	0
Lossiemouth (seawatches)	67	512	698	1138	111	91	136
Spey Bay	500	190	280	25	nc	60	100
Portgordon-Strathlene	5	7	nc	nc	nc	nc	1

On estuaries (max. counts): A single Lossie estuary 18 Jan, 4 Findhorn Bay 14 Nov and singles Spey estuary 16 & 17 Jan, 21 Apr and 2-11 May (2 on 6 May).

Inland: 1 Sanquhar Mains 18 Apr (PRG) and 1 Dallachy landfill site pool 18 Oct (MJHC).

Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*

Rare breeder and fairly common winter visitor.

Breeding: No confirmed breeding was reported. A pair Black Loch (Dava) 11 Apr, also a single there 9 Jul, and a single on the lochan opposite the Black Loch 23 Apr (A&FR).

Records early in the season at potential breeding sites included a pair Loch Kirkaldy 2 Jan & 22 Mar (MJHC) and a single on the lochan opposite the Black Loch 12 & 17 Mar (A&FR).

Summer records in the coastal strip included: a single 27 Jun-7 Jul Findhorn Bay and 3 Spey estuary 25-31 Jul.

Maximum counts on most frequented lochs were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Loch Flemington	18	20	9	5	nc	4	4	6
Loch Belivat	1	nc	3	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc
Loch of Blairs	1	4	nc	nc	nc	nc	2	6
Loch Spynie	23	11	13	22	2	14	14	6
Cloddach quarry	0	2	1	nc	nc	1	5	8
Loch na Bo	9	23	21	0	0	0	4	3
Loch Oire	5	9	10	2	0	0	3	10
Dallachy pool	10	11	21	18	0	3	6	0

Elsewhere, 4 Easter Bauds 14 Jan, a single Cran Loch 18 Jan & 19 Nov, 2 Lossie Forest gravel pit 23 Mar and 4 Loch Loy 24 Mar.

On the River Spey were 2 Dipple 2 Jan (1 on 18 Jan), 1 Marypark 9 Feb, 6 Aberlour 2 Mar, 7 Blacksboat 7 Mar, 10 Quarry Pool 23 Mar and 1 Craigellachie 21 Dec.

On the River Lossie, a pair Sheriffmill 2 Feb.

Maximum counts at most frequented coastal sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Oct	Nov	Dec
Delnies-Nairn	3	2	6	nc	0	nc	0
Nairn	2	2	1	nc	0	nc	6
Nairn/Culbin Bars	6	10	nc	nc	0	nc	13
Burghead	7	6	nc	nc	0	nc	0
Burghead-Hopeman	7	11	3	nc	0	nc	6
Lossiemouth	2	1	nc	nc	6	5	2
Lossie estuary	5	5	1	nc	nc	1	2
Spey estuary	36	39	31	28	1	15	13
Spey Bay	2	4	nc	nc	nc	nc	3
Portknockie-Strathlene	0	5	nc	nc	0	nc	0

Maximum monthly counts in Findhorn Bay:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Findhorn Bay	36	40	42	19	5	1	1	1	1	12	27	23

Goosander *Mergus merganser*

Scarce breeder and fairly common visitor.

Breeding: No confirmed breeding reported this year.

Seen in potential breeding areas: 3 River Findhorn (Logie) 18 Mar (2 present 13 Apr), a pair copulating on the River Spey (Aberlour) 31 Mar (a pair still present 8 May), 4 Daluaine 3 Apr, pair River Nairn (Nairn) 9 Apr, 5 Newton of Dalvey 14 & 20 Apr, female Achdregnie-Suie 16 Apr, 8 River Findhorn (Seafeld) 18 Apr, 3 Dulvrecht (Strath Avon) 25 Apr, present Dulsie Bridge 6 May and 1 Craigellachie 7 May.

Maximum monthly counts:

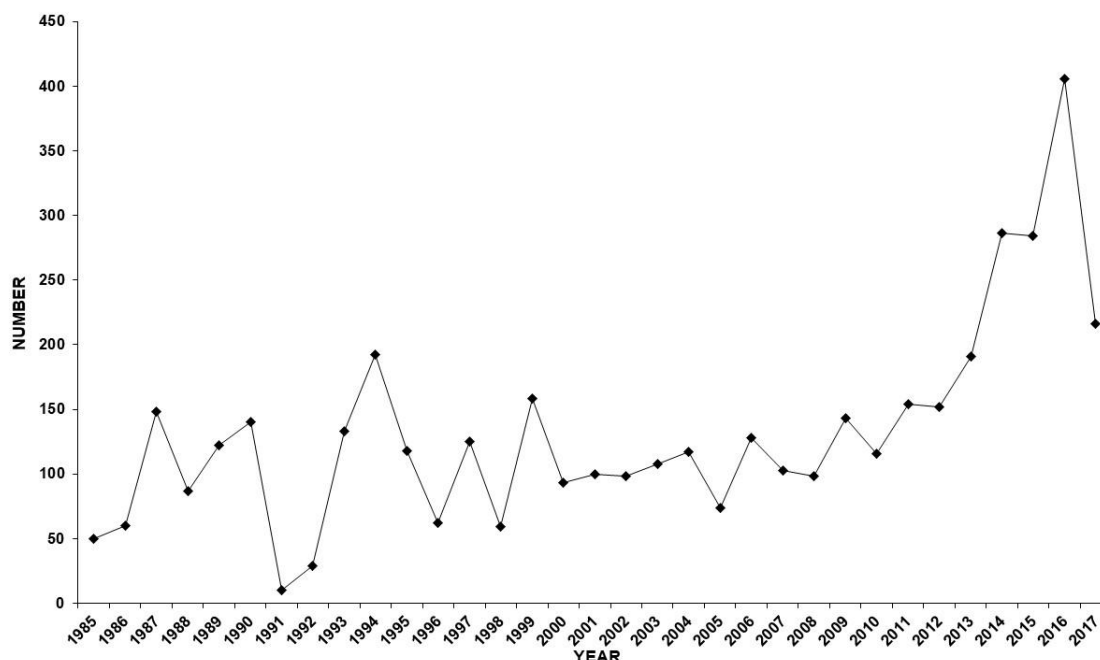
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Oct	Nov	Dec
Nairn	1	1	1	2	4	nc	2
Nairn/Culbin Bars	0	0	nc	nc	46	nc	0
Burghead Bay	0	0	7	nc	48	nc	0
Cloddach quarry	0	0	1	nc	0	1	0
Loch Spynie	0	2	2	1	0	5	1
Lossie estuary	0	1	0	0	13	0	0
Loch Oire	8	0	0	0	3	3	2
Loch na Bo	8	11	2	0	0	5	4

A large count of 63 Lossie estuary 18 Aug (HF) is noteworthy as this has only been exceeded once before when 116 were present in September 2016.

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

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Findhorn Bay	5	4	5	15	40	26	15	43	12	46	12	1
Speymouth	2	2	6	12	91	118	146	216	199	5	1	0

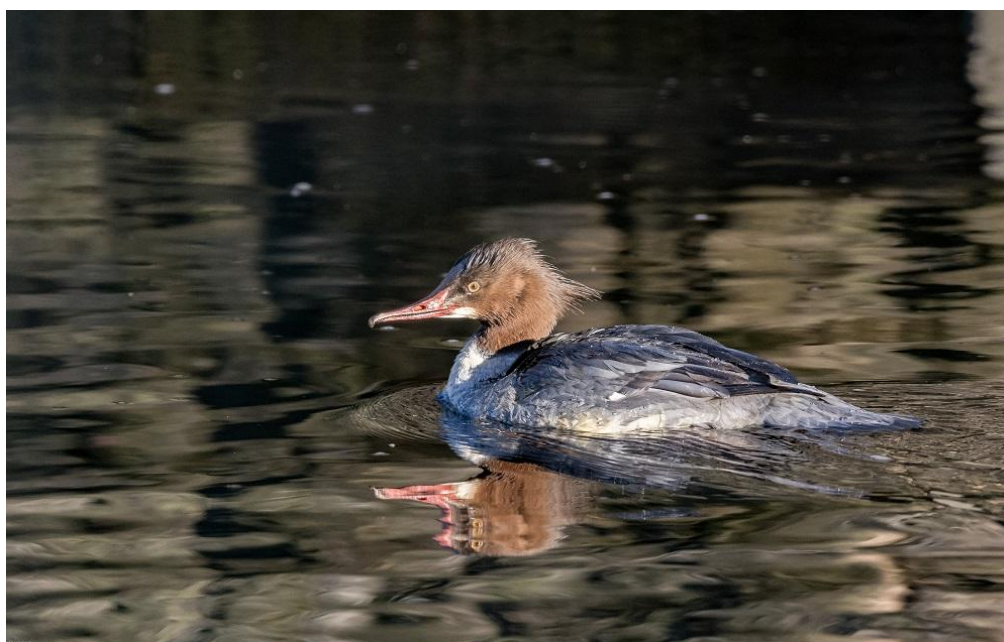
Maximum counts at Speymouth 1985-2017:



Elsewhere, 2 Covesea 17 Jan, 4 Buckie harbour 18 Sep, 1 Findochty 29 May, 25 Essil 30 May, 18 Portessie 26 Jul, 21 Spey Bay (Boar's Head) 13 Aug, 11 Portgordon 16 Aug, 1 Burghead-Hopeman 18 Oct and 2 Hopeman 19 Oct.

Inland maximum site counts in autumn and winter were: 1 River Findhorn (Forres) 9 Jan, 1 Kinermony (River Spey) 9 Feb, 8 Cooper Park pond (Elgin) 14 Jan, 3 Dipple 14 Jan, 2 Loch Flemington 15 & 22 Jan, 2 Dallachy landfill site pool 27 Jan, 1 Knockando distillery 9 Feb, female Loch Allan 17 Feb, pair River Findhorn (Daltulich Bridge) 19 Feb, 2 pairs Sanquhar

pond 1 Mar, pair Mosset Burn (Forres) 1 & 14 Mar, 2 River Lossie (Elgin) 7 Mar, female River Nairn (Firhall) 21 Mar, 3 River Spey (Marypark)n 28 Sep, 1 Loch of Blairs 29 Sep, 1 Holme Rose-Kilravock 18 Oct, 2 River Spey (Cragganmore) 11 Dec and 2 Morriston Park (Elgin) 27 & 30 Dec.



Goosander, Elgin 30 January 2017 (David Main)

Red-breasted Merganser *Mergus serrator*

Scarce breeder, fairly common offshore.

Breeding: Three broods were reported, from Beachans (brood of 5), Muckle Burn (brood of 3) and Findhorn Bay (brood of 4) (MGC, GM). In potential breeding habitat were 2 Earnhill 6 May, 36 Seafield (River Findhorn) 8 May and a pair in the old Findhorn channel of Findhorn Bay 11-12 Jun.

Coastal records in summer (May-July): 'present' Cullen 1 May, 5 Spey estuary 4 May, 1 Nairn 7 May, 4 females west Lossiemouth 10-29 Jun and 'present' Portgordon 27 Jul.

Regular monthly maximum counts at Findhorn Bay and Burghead Bay:

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Findhorn Bay	21	13	15	25	28	9	29	8	9	8	12	13
Burghead Bay	24	36	30	2	25	1	5	nc	21	8	38	10

Maximum monthly counts at other sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Delnies area	10	3	nc	nc	nc	0	nc	0
Nairn	4	7	2	37	2	4	1	4
Nairn/Culbin Bars	7	10	nc	nc	1	149	nc	5
Burghead	1	2	nc	nc	nc	2	nc	0
Lossiemouth	1	1	1	2	1	13	nc	2
Spey Bay	2	2	2	3	nc	nc	nc	1
Spey estuary	2	3	5	8	10	4	5	14

Other counts included 15 Burghead-Hopeman 15 Jan and 7 Seafield (River Findhorn) 10 Apr.
In harbours: 1 Nairn 18 Jan.

On estuaries in winter: present on the Lossie estuary 2 Jan, then later in the year a male 12 & 29 Nov increasing to 2 males on 18 Dec.

Inland: 2 Loch Flemington 19 Feb (1 on 12 Feb) and 1 Firhall (Nairn) 23 Mar.

Capercaillie *Tetrao urogallus*

Scarce resident breeder.

Breeding: Birds persist at very low densities in Moray & Nairn, spread across a number of fragmented forests. Leks or single cocks were located in nine areas, containing a total of 16 males, two more than in 2016 (MD, RSPB).

Black Grouse *Tetrao tetrix*

Scarce resident breeder.

Recorded at Achdregnie (5 on 16 Apr), Aitnoh (1 on 21 Feb, up to 5 in March-April), Aldunie (4 on 7 Mar), Auchmair (up to 6 in April-May, 1 on 14 Jun, 3 on 10 Jul), Berryburn (3 on 9 Apr, 1 on 4 May, 1 on 14 Nov), Corglass Farm (6 May), Dallas area (3 on 19 Oct), Drynachan (1 on 27 May), Feith Musach (1 on 20 Oct), Glen Brown (23 Apr, 3 on 26 Aug), Glen Rinnes (5 on 20 May), Glenferness (1 on 30 Mar), Inchnacape (3 on 23 Apr), Knock of Braemoray (up to 5 in Jan and October-November), Loch Kirkaldy (1 on 27 Sep), Roy's Hill (3 on 29 Apr), Shearleat (1 on 23 May) and Tomintoul area (6 on 13 Jun).

Ptarmigan *Lagopus muta*

Fairly common resident breeder.

The largest counts on Ben Rinnes were 5 on 3 Jan, 4 on 18 Feb, 7 on 9 Mar, 6 on 24 Sep and 10 on 15 Nov (AE, DM). On 12 May, single males were on four different parts of the hill (AE) - perhaps suggesting a breeding population of four pairs.

In the Cairngorms, counts of 10 or more were 10 Lochan Buidhe 7 May (TJW), 11 Cairn Gorm 9 May (RH) and 14 Cairn Lochan 28 Jul (RI).



Ptarmigan, Ben Rinnes 27 February 2017 (David Law)

Red Grouse *Lagopus lagopus*

Very common resident breeder.

The only counts of 15 or more were 50 Little Geal Charn 23 Sep and 17 Knock of Braemoray 12 Nov.

Red-legged Partridge *Alectoris rufa*

Introduced scarce breeder. Commonly released.

No reports of breeding. Small numbers (up to five) were seen at Aberlour, Aitnoh, Balnught, Black Loch (Dava), Bridge of Brown, Bridge of Rumachroy, Burnside (Dunearn), Cairn Eney, Cullen, Dallas, Dalvrecht (Strath Avon), Drainie, Dulsie Bridge, Dunearn, Ferness, Fornightly, Lynemore (Glen Rinnes), Glenmullie, Knock (Bridge of Avon), Knock of Braemoray, Kronyhilllock, Levrattich, Little Aitnoh, Moyness, Nether Bellandy, North Crannoch, Ordbreck, Refouble, Scarffbanks, Shempston, Strath Avon (at Balneden, Dalvrecht, Kirkmichael House and Strathavon House), Tomchluich, Tomintoul and Urquhart. Records of slightly greater numbers were 7 Dava 16 Dec, 8 Dulsie 17 Nov, 6 Dunearn 15 Jan and up to 8 Little Aitnoh in January, August and September.

Grey Partridge *Perdix perdix*

Fairly common resident breeder.

Breeding season (April-July): Birds were seen or heard at Boath, College of Roseisle, Darkland, Earlseat, Easter Delnies, Hempriggs, Keith, Kinloss, Rafford, Roseisle maltings, Scarffbanks and Wester Golford.

Additional sites where birds were seen at other times of year were Alves, Easter Coltfoot, Hopeman, Lochhill, Mill of Grange, Netherton, Shempston, Westerton and Westfield.

The only reports of more than five birds together were 18 Shempston 16 Dec, 13 Hopeman 11 Dec, 8 Kinloss 6 Oct, 7 Westerton 10 Dec, 6+ Westfield 30 Aug and 6 Alves 11 Oct.

Quail *Coturnix coturnix*

Very scarce summer visitor and breeder, occasionally more numerous.

A good year by recent standards with 12 singing birds located, and one seen.

Singing birds: 1 Auchenthalrig 24 Jun (KP), 1 Bailliesland 21 Jun (MJHC), 1 Bridgend (Roseisle) 21 Jun (MJHC), 1 Darkland 4 & 10 Jun and 12, 14 & 21 Aug (JDL), 2 Netherton (Findhorn Bay) 30-31 Jul and 22 Aug (RSC, GM), 1 Golford 26 May, 5 Jun and 5 Jul (JH), 1 Kinloss 14-19 Jun (seen on 15 & 19 Jun) (AJL), 1 Lachlanwells 24 Aug (IG), 2 Mains of Paithwick 7 Jun (MW) and 1 Montgrew 4 Jul (MW).

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

2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
8	8	4	4	2	9	0	0	3	3	2	12



Quail, Kinloss 15 June 2017 (Allan Lawrence)

Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus*

Very common resident breeder.

Numerous across the lowlands, especially around release points.

[Reeves's Pheasant *Syrmaticus reevesii*

Escape.

One was at Shenval, on the edge of Morinish Forest, on 23 Feb (SR). Not far away, a male was seen in two close localities in Glenlivet on 26 Apr - at Doune of Dalmore (SPM) and nearby along the B9008 road (CA, NS). Possibly the same bird was involved in both sightings.]

Red-throated Diver *Gavia stellata*

Rare breeder. Fairly common autumn and winter visitor offshore.

Summer: One pair bred and hatched a chick but it failed to survive, possibly taken by an Otter (per KC). In a different area, one was seen on a lochan on 27 Apr but there was no subsequent evidence of breeding (A&FR).

Best monthly counts at main coastal sites were:

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Nairn/Delnies	3	1	3	1	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	1	nc	0
Burghead Bay	4	8	12	3	1	4	0	0	1	4	2	1
Lossiemouth (flying past)	15	8	3	3	3	6	3	1	4	8	11	15
Lossiemouth (on sea)	6	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	18	4	4
Spey Bay	10	24	15	6	14	3	2	nc	36	nc	70	nc

Highest count was 70 Spey Bay (between Kingston and Lossiemouth) 4 Nov (JDL).

Elsewhere, a few were scattered along the coast at other sites. All counts were of five birds or fewer, except 6 Covesea 19 Apr, 8 Cullen 19 Apr, 7 Portknockie 21 Jan and 7 Strathlene 19 Apr.

Black-throated Diver *Gavia arctica*

Rare breeder. Scarce autumn and winter visitor offshore.

Upland lochs: One pair bred but failed to rear any young (IF, MJHC). A pair has bred on this loch annually since 2007 but has only been successful once, in 2013 when one chick was reared.

Best monthly counts at main coastal sites were:

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Burghead Bay	7	14	13	4	3	1	0	0	1	1	0	2
Lossiemouth (flying past)	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1
Spey Bay (off Tugnet)	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0

The usual spring peak in Burghead Bay was earlier than usual - best counts were 14 on 17 Feb and 13 on 27 Mar (RSC). Unusually scarce there in autumn.

Very few elsewhere; 1 off Nairn 5 Oct and 15 Nov and 2 Portknockie 17 Jan.

Great Northern Diver *Gavia immer*

Scarce visitor offshore.

Best monthly counts at main coastal sites were:

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Nairn/Delnies	3	1	1	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	0	nc	0
Burghead Bay	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	2	0
Lossiemouth (flying past)	4	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	2	6	10	13
Lossiemouth (on sea)	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Spey Bay	0	0	0	1	10	2	0	0	0	0	0	0

January-March: No repeat of the large numbers detected in January 2016.

Spring: A count off east Moray in ideal conditions on 19 Apr revealed remarkable numbers. Birds were counted off Strathlene (18), Tronach Head (94), Portknockie (61) and Cullen (14) - a total between Buckie and Cullen of 187 (MJHC).

June-August: 2 Spey Bay (off Kingston) 17 Jun was the only report.

September-December: Offshore movement was detected again by regular seawatches off Lossiemouth - best days were 8 Oct (6 in 1 hour), 25 Nov (10 in 1 hour) and 2 Dec (13 in 1 hour) (RP). Elsewhere, 7 Burghead Bay 31 Oct and 3 Boar's Head Rock area 20 Oct.

White-billed Diver *Gavia adamsii*

Rare visitor.

1 off Burghead 27 Mar-5 Apr (PRG, JDG *et al.*), 1 off Cullen 23 & 30 Mar, 9 & 28 Apr and 6 May (DMP, JM, JDL *et al.*), and 1 off Lossiemouth 22 Apr-16 May (RP, CMJ *et al.*). The Burghead and Lossiemouth records may refer to the same bird as there was no overlap in dates.

Storm Petrel *Hydrobates pelagicus*

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

None were seen offshore during daylight hours, but large numbers are clearly passing at night. At Portknockie, 74 were caught for ringing between 12 Jul-27 Aug (AY). Best nights

were 12 Jul (13 birds caught) and 15 Jul (22). A bird trapped on 31 Jul had been ringed on Auskerry (Orkney) on 14 Jul 1979 and, at 38 years 17 days, currently holds the longevity record for a British ringed Storm Petrel. At Burghead, one was trapped on the night of 14 Jul, and four on 29 Jul (BB).

Leach's Petrel *Oceanodroma leucorhoa*

Rare migrant in late summer and autumn.

A single bird was seen flying west past Lossiemouth on 29 Oct (RP). There have been only four previous records in Moray & Nairn, with the last some 20 years ago in September 1997. The others were found dead in 1897 (2) and 1952.

Fulmar *Fulmarus glacialis*

Common breeder, very common offshore.

Breeding: Return indicated by 18 back on cliffs at Cummingston on 15 Jan rising to 20+ by 10 Feb. At Covesea there were 221 apparently occupied sites (AOS) on 31 May (MJHC). Further east at Findochty 26 AOS were counted on 27 Jun and nearby on Bow Fiddle Rock (Portknockie) 18 AOS on 18 Jun (MJHC).

Passage: From January to July, counts were relatively low with the only totals over 20 past Lossiemouth in 1 hour being 58 on 1 Jan, 71 on 15 Apr, 57 on 16 Apr, 145 on 25 Apr, 46 on 13 May, 31 on 28 May and 30 on 29 Jun. Late summer then saw further high counts including 36 on 26 Aug, 73 on 2 Sep, 262 on 9 Sep and 212 on 16 Sep. Apart from the sighting in early Sep where the passage was largely eastwards, all other sightings showed a predominantly westwards passage. Elsewhere, 162 passed Burghead on 25 Apr.

At Lossiemouth regular sea-watches were conducted throughout 2017 and the maximum passage recorded over a one hour period was as follows (RP):

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
58	9	8	145	46	30	13	36	262	0	0	2

Sooty Shearwater *Ardenna grisea*

Very scarce migrant in late summer and autumn.

A good year for sightings, mainly off Lossiemouth, with 1 on 26 Jun, 2 on 4 Sep, 8 on 11 Sep, 3 on 15 Sep and 25 on 16 Sep (RP). Elsewhere, 2 were seen off Burghead on 2 Aug (JDG) and 1 off Strathlene on 11 Sep (MJHC).

Annual totals since 2007 have been as follows:

2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
38	11	0	7	605	11	1	27	8	4	42

Manx Shearwater *Puffinus puffinus*

Fairly common offshore in summer and autumn.

First sighting of the year was 2 birds off Lossiemouth on 28 May. Regular passage was then seen at Lossiemouth through Jun until the end of Sep with the highest one hour counts of 21 on 12 Jun, 40 on 26 Jun, 24 on 29 Jun, 6 on 22 Jul, 9 on 30 Aug, 40 on 11 Sep, and 39 on 16 Sep (RP). Other sightings were 1 off Burghead on 27 Jun (RHD), 41 off Strathlene on 29 Jun (MJHC), 20+ off Delnies (Nairn) on 31 Aug (DMP) and (last record of the year) 1 off Lossiemouth on 5 Oct (DAG).

Balearic Shearwater *Puffinus mauretanicus*

Rare migrant in late summer and autumn.

A single bird was seen heading west during a sea-watch at Lossiemouth on 21 Oct (RP). This was only the 5th record for Moray & Nairn, the others being in September 2000 (3) and August 2005.

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

Scarce breeder, scarce on the estuaries in winter.

Monthly maximum counts on main freshwater sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
L. Flemington	4	2	9	3	4	2	8	nc	9	17	1	4
Loch of Blairs	nc	nc	6	6	6	12	5	8	3	nc	nc	nc
Loch Spynie	1	1	3	7	5	4	13	36	44	30	2	5
Loch Oire	1	2	7	2	nc	2	5	9	16	19	9	4
Loch na Bo	1	1	2	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	17	3	5
Cloddach quarry	0	0	2	nc	nc	nc	6	17	13	18	1	1

Mid-winter: Elsewhere on freshwater in January or December were 4 Brodie Castle lake 2 Jan and 13 Dec.

Present in spring/summer (*italics* = proved breeding) at Auldearn (Newmill ponds), Black Loch (Dava), Brodie Castle lake (2 pairs), Cloddach quarry (2 pairs), Nether Dallachy landfill site pool, Gordonstoun pond, Loch Allan, Loch Belivet, Loch Flemington, Loch Loy, Loch na Bo, Loch of Blairs (2 pairs), Loch Oire (2+ pairs), Loch Spynie (2 pairs), Lossie Forest gravel pit (2 pairs), Nairn golf course and Lower Broadshaw wood reservoir.

Largest post-breeding congregations in late summer/autumn were 44 Loch Spynie 28 Sep, 19 Loch Oire 6 Oct, 18 Cloddach gravel pit 11 Oct and 17 Loch Flemington 8 Oct.

Coastal in autumn-winter: Regular in Findhorn Bay (mostly in the old River Findhorn channel, the Mosset Burn and around other creeks of the south and west sides) where the highest count was 15 on 31 Oct. Maximum monthly counts here were:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
8	9	2	0	0	1	1	6	11	15	14	8

Also seen irregularly on the Lossie estuary (1 in January and 1-2 in November-December) and Spey estuary (up to 3 in Jan-Feb and 1 in late July-December, increasing briefly to 4 on 10 Dec).

Red-necked Grebe *Podiceps auritus*

Very scarce migrant and winter visitor.

One was seen in Burghead Bay on 6 Mar (PRG).

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*

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

The only record was 1 Loch Flemington 5 Feb (PT).

Slavonian Grebe *Podiceps auritus*

Scarce offshore in winter, formerly rare breeder.

No freshwater records.

Coastal: Very scarce in Burghead Bay in comparison with recent years. Monthly maxima there were:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
5	3	4	3	3	nc	2
(26th)	(8th, 17th)	(18th)	(28th)	(21st)		(3rd)

(GM, RSC, AJL *et al.*)

Elsewhere, 1 Hopeman 19 Oct (SS), 1 off Lossiemouth 14 Feb (GB), 1 Lossie estuary 17-23 Oct (DM), 1 flew west past Lossiemouth 28 Oct (RP), 1 Nairn 7 Oct (AC) and 2 off Nairn Bar 12 Feb (GP).



Slavonian Grebe off Lossiemouth, 14 February 2017 (Gordon Biggs)

Bittern *Botaurus stellaris*

Rare visitor.

For the second successive winter, a Bittern was found at Loch Spynie. First seen on 2 Nov, it was seen again on eight further dates until 19 Nov (MM, JSi, JM, RP *et al.*) and reappeared on 28 Dec (GT).

This is the 7th record since 1900 - the last two were also at Loch Spynie, in January-March 2013 and January-March 2016.



Bittern, Loch Spynie 14 November 2017 (John Kerbyson)

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

Fairly common resident breeder.

Heronries: At least 8 occupied nests Aberlour (AE), 10 at Loch Spynie (RP) and 4+ at Binsness (RSC).

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

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Findhorn Bay	4	15	11	19	28	20	13	17	10	10	6	2
Lossie estuary	3	1	1	2	1	3	14	12	12	5	1	1
Spey estuary	nc	nc	nc	1	3	2	3	3	2	2	3	nc

Best counts were 28 Findhorn Bay 3 May and 14 Lossie estuary 31 Jul.

The only counts of five or more elsewhere were 6 Loch Flemington 11 May & 21 Jul, 5 Loch Spynie 6 May and 5 Cloddach quarry 22 Jan.

Widely reported elsewhere, including as far upcountry as Tomintoul and Cabrach, and on rocky shores such as those between Burghead-Hopeman, at Lossiemouth harbour and west beach, and at Buckie, Findochty and Portknockie.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

Rare visitor.

It is likely that at least two birds were present in Moray & Nairn in 2017. In the west, one was seen regularly in the Kingsteps area (east of Nairn) between 1 Jan-24 Mar (JS, CJ, GP, RHD *et al.*). What was presumably the same bird appeared in Findhorn Bay between 29 Mar-1 Jul (AJL, RSC, GM *et al.*). It (or another) was also seen there on 20-24 Aug (RSC, GM) and 18 Nov (RHD, SR).

The second bird visited more easterly sites including Loch Spynie, Lossie estuary and Muirton between 3 Jan-5 Feb (DM, DAG, RP). It was also seen at Bogmoor and Gilston on 24-25 Mar (AM, EJ).

Other records, presumably attributable to one or other of these birds, were at Cloves 19 Apr (LBr), Loch Spynie 4 Jul (SBI) and the Lossie estuary 26 Aug (RP, DAG, GB *et al.*).



Little Egret, Scarffbanks 4 January 2017 (David Main)

Gannet *Morus bassanus*

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

In the first 2 months of the year most sightings along the coast were of fewer than 20 birds, with the exception being one hour sea-watches at Lossiemouth where there were 110 on 1 Jan and 124 on 7 Jan (RP). By the end of March larger numbers were seen offshore with 150 off Nairn on 28 Mar, 179 off Lossiemouth in a one hour count on 25 Mar and again 524 on 29 Apr, 568 off Burghead on 25 Apr and 145 off Findhorn on 1 May. At Strathlene, 229 passed in 20 minutes on 29 Jun.

At Lossiemouth regular sea-watches were conducted throughout 2017 and the maximum passage recorded over a one hour period was as follows (RP):

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
124	23	179	524	233	730	106	129	416	1146	807	58

Elsewhere, the largest counts were also in autumn and early winter. Counts of 200 or more included 1000+ near trawlers off Burghead on 28 Sep, 200 also at Burghead on 4 Oct and 323 off Findhorn on 22 Oct.

Shag *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

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

Breeding: At Portknockie (Bow Fiddle Rock and nearby islands and mainland cliffs) numbers remained constant with 74 apparently occupied nests (AON) on 18 Jun (MJHC). Numbers were down to 65 AON at Tronach Head on 27 Jun, whereas there was a slight rise at Covesea to 27 AON counted on 31 May (MJHC).

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

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Portknockie	79	79	76	85	93	86	66	77	73	74
Tronach Head	23	26	60	58	53	86	72	80	77	65
Covesea	11	14	14	17	14	16	18	21	21	27

Away from colonies, counts included 89 Buckie 3 Dec and 54 Lossiemouth, also on 3 Dec.

Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

Rare breeder and fairly common winter visitor.

Breeding: There were 14 occupied nests at the small Covesea colony on 31 May (MJHC).

The number of occupied nests since the colony was started in 2011 have been:

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Occupied nests	1	2	2	4	7	11	14

Coastal: Counts of 25 or more were 28 Nairn 18 Aug, 47 Kingston 29 Sep, 33 Culbin Bar 8 Oct, 57 Lossiemouth 8 Oct, 28 Burghead 19 Oct, 34 Portgordon-Strathlene 2 Dec and 47 Lossiemouth 3 Dec.

In addition, 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	7	4	0	3	1	2	2	3	2	7	5
Spey estuary	17	6	6	3	0	1	3	29	61	43	26	1
Findhorn (bay mouth)	16	7	20	7	12	2	2	18	8	43	58	21

Inland: Mostly at Loch Spynie - see table above. Elsewhere, 1 Loch Oire 17 Jan, 1 Cloddach quarry 22 Jan and 1 Lower Bradshaw Wood reservoir (8 km SE of Nairn) on 27 Feb. There were two reports on the River Spey at Dipple (Fochabers), with a maximum of 3 on 14 Jan, and 10 reports from Loch Flemington - mostly in the early part of the year, with a maximum of 4 on 2 Apr. The only other inland site with records was Loch na Bo with seven sightings including 3 on 17 Jan, 3 on 18 Mar and 2 on 4 Dec.

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*

Scarce summer visitor and breeder.

First back at a nest was on 31 Mar. First on the estuaries was 1 Findhorn Bay 28 Mar. Not seen at the Lossie estuary until 12 Apr, and the Spey estuary on 14 Apr. Breeding: In west Moray & Nairn, nine pairs nested, the same as in 2016, although one was a late non-breeding pair. Eight pairs laid eggs and all were successful with a total of 17 young - two fewer than in 2016. One nest was very late due to delayed arrivals in spring; Morven moved to nest B17 because her mate was late returning; while the B17 female, which was also late, moved to B02 and bred with Morven's usual mate at B02. A male built a nest in a new area but did not attract a mate, while at a man-made nest several young males (and a female on one occasion) were attracted, and added a few sticks but did not settle. Six young were collected, under SNH licence, for translocation projects. The breeding productivity was 1.8 young per pair and 2.12 per brood. In east Moray, the population which fishes mainly at the mouth of the Rivers Spey and Lossie also held nine pairs this year, the same as in 2016. Another nest was located, which had clearly been in use for several years, but a new pair/nest found in 2016 did not return. Heavy rain in June caused the failure of just two broods compared to four in 2016. One nest which had so far been unsuccessful reared two very late young. All nine pairs laid eggs and all successfully hatched young; 7 pairs were successful and raised a total of 12+ young. Five young were collected, under SNH licence, for translocation projects. (RHD).

Largest congregations, as always, were in Findhorn Bay where highest counts were 8 on 10 Aug and 1 & 6 Sep, and 7 on 6 Aug and 4 Sep. There was no report of more than two

together at the Lossie or Spey estuaries. Last of the year was 1 Findhorn Bay 29 Sep (RHD) - there has still been no October record in Findhorn Bay.

Honey-buzzard *Pernis apivorus*

Rare breeder.

The only records, close to the most recent breeding area, were of single birds on 6 & 31 Jul (AJL, MGC).

Golden Eagle *Aquila chrysaetos*

Rare resident breeder.

Breeding: For the first time for very many years, four sites were occupied. Eggs were laid in two of the sites. One young fledged from one of the established sites and one (probably two) young were found after fledging in a new site. (EW).

Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*

Common resident breeder.

Breeding season (April-July) records included birds/pairs at Alves cemetery, Craigellachie, Dulsie Bridge, Findhorn Bay, Forres, Gilston, Glenlivet, Kinermony, Kinloss, Loch Spynie, Lossiemouth, Lower Broadshaw, Roseisle Forest, Seafield and Tomintoul.

A notable record concerned a Sparrowhawk hunting Snow Buntings on the north slopes of Ben Macdui on 5 Jul (RI).

Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis*

Rare resident breeder.

Breeding: 13 sites were checked in Moray and 12 were occupied - at least ten of them by pairs. At least eight pairs laid and seven, perhaps eight, were successful in raising young to fledging. Where known, brood sizes were 3, 2, 2 and 1 young. (AY).

Autumn/winter: Single birds were seen at Findhorn Bay 28 Mar (AJL), Tomintoul 22 Sep (PI) and Clune 10 Dec (PM).

Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*

Occasional breeder and very scarce visitor.

At Loch Spynie, a female was seen on 14-15 Apr, 30 Apr, 1 May, 15 & 19 May and 13 & 19 Jun but there were no sightings of a male and no evidence of a breeding attempt (DAG, PRG, KC *et al.*).

Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus*

Rare resident breeder, very scarce migrant and winter visitor.

Breeding: In west Moray and Nairn, 17 former sites were checked and three of these were occupied by pairs. All three pairs laid eggs, but only one pair was successful, fledging four young. At the other two sites, one pair lost large young due to predation by a fox and the other pair failed at the egg stage, possibly due to predation. (JKC). In east Moray, one bird, and sometimes a pair, was seen on six occasions between 30 Apr-29 Jul, but breeding was not confirmed (VSL, IF).

Outside the breeding season, 1 Easter Clune (Darnaway) 13 Sep (CW) and 1 'ringtail' Moor of Tore 27 Oct (G&DS).

Red Kite *Milvus milvus*

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

Breeding: No confirmation of breeding in the Findhorn valley in 2017 but it very probably took place. Numerous sight records were received from that area (and nearby) at all seasons. Elsewhere, in autumn/winter, 2 Achavraat 25 Oct (A&FR), 1 Cawdor 13 Feb (and 2 on 27 Oct) (PSw, JAC), 2 Craighead 20 Feb (A&FR), 1 Lethen 14-15 Feb (and 2 on 5 Sep) (JH), 1 near Dulsie Bridge 8 Jan (PM), 1 Marypark (Keith) 23 Feb (JB), 1 Milton of Grange 29 Sep (GM), 1 Moor of Tore 6 Jan (G&DS), 2 Moyness 17 Feb (A&FR), 2 Refouble 27 Sep (A&FR) and 1 over the Spey estuary 31 Mar (SH).

White-tailed Eagle *Haliaeetus albicilla*

Rare visitor.

A 2CY satellite-tagged bird toured the area for two days in early April. On 9 Apr, it moved from Drynachan to Culbin Forest, where it spent the night. On 10 Apr, it moved from Culbin to Carn Kitty and Delnabo (OS). Later in the year, an adult was on the Spey estuary between 10-19 Dec (MJHC) and was also seen up the River Spey at Essil cemetery on 21 Dec (RP). Other reports were of single birds in the Urchany/Cawdor area on 27 Jan (JHom) and in Glenlivet on 20 Jul (ND).



White-tailed Eagle, Spey estuary 10 December 2017 (Martin Cook)

Buzzard *Buteo buteo*

Common resident breeder.

Groups of five or more were 10 Loch Spynie area 3 May, 6 Shempston 1 Nov, 5 Tomintoul 23 Apr and 5 Fornightly 2 Jul.

Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus*

Scarce breeder and winter visitor.

Recorded at Loch Spynie at all seasons - usually only 1-2 birds calling but 4 on 25 Mar and 19 Nov. Elsewhere, 1 The Wards (Elgin) 5 Mar (DM), 1 Sanquhar Loch (Forres) 8 Jan (MMi) and 1 Househill (Nairn) 1 Jan (BC).

Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

Fairly common resident breeder.

Breeding proved (*italics*) or probable at Auldearn (Newmill ponds), *Brodie Castle lake*, *Cloddach quarry*, *Dallachy landfill site pool*, *Loch Flemington*, *Loch na Bo*, *Loch of Blairs*, *Loch Oire*, *Loch Spynie*, *Lower Broadshaw reservoir* and a pool at *Roths*.

Largest counts were 13 Cloddach quarry 19 Nov and 13 Loch Oire 30 Dec.

Elsewhere, five or more full-grown birds were seen only at Brodie Castle lake (7 on 12 Nov), Loch Flemington (6 on 12 Feb and 5 Mar) and Loch Loy (5 on 8 Oct).

Coot *Fulica atra*

Scarce resident breeder and winter visitor.

Breeding proved (*italics*) or probable at Cloddach quarry, *Dallachy landfill site pool*, *Loch Flemington*, *Loch of Blairs*, *Loch Oire* and *Loch Spynie*.

Maximum monthly counts on main lochs were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
L. Flemington	8	2	1	0	1	nc	nc	nc	nc	4	2	2
Loch Spynie	23	32	37	27	15	3	5	8	6	1	6	3
Loch Oire	2	4	6	4	9	2	11	14	13	7	14	11
Cloddach quarry	0	0	nc	2	2	nc	2	3	7	12	0	0

Elsewhere, 3 Easter Bauds 14 Jan, 4 Loch Loy 8 Oct and 3 Loch na Bo 23 Jan.

Crane *Grus grus*

Rare visitor.

One in fields at Gilston 24-30 Apr (RP, MJHC, AJL *et al.*).



Crane, Gilston 30 April 2017 (Bob Proctor)

Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*

Very common resident breeder, winter visitor and migrant.

First inland record was one calling over Bishopmill (Elgin) at night 16 Jan. The next was a single at Cloddach quarry 22 Jan. In Elgin, birds returning in the vicinity of previous breeding sites included 1 Moycroft 9 Feb, 1 near the Sheriff Court 16 Feb, 2 Moray College 16 Feb, 2 at The Oaks 26 Feb, 2 near the Town Hall 26 Feb, 2 at Cooper park 1 Mar and another 2 at the cemetery 3 Mar. On the 12 Mar, a possible pair at Lidl and 2 on the roof of Halfords. Elsewhere, 2 beside the A96 at Forres 18 Feb, 2 Rafford 24 Feb, 2 Mundole 26 Feb and 2 Lower Broadshaw Wood (Nairn) 27 Feb. A pair was noted at Kinloss 1 Mar. Two were on the nesting platform at Loch Spynie 11 & 12 Mar.

First up-country were during February with a pair Ferness-Dava 6th, 1 Cragganmore 8th and 1 Aberlour 12th.

Pre-breeding inland flocks of 20 or more included 31 Aberlour 19 Feb, 60 Cloddach quarry 26 Feb, with 27 there 12 Mar. Elsewhere, 50 Marypark 16 Mar, 30 Lower Broadshaw Wood (Nairn) 19 Mar, 61 on the river shingle at Blacksboat 24 Mar and 24 Wester Milton 1 Apr. Still 50 in a flock at Delnabo 24 May.

Breeding: Numerous records were received from potential breeding sites both in the coastal fringe and further up-country. A pair was noted at a known breeding site at North Crannoch (Keith) 18 Feb and 3 Mar. Proved breeding records included a pair with a clutch of three at Scalan (Braes of Glenlivet) 13 May, two chicks Househill (Nairn) 15 May. At The Oaks (Elgin), an adult incubating 20 May and two downy chicks there 27 May. At Lossiemouth cemetery, an adult incubating on the same scrape for the 4th season on 28 May with the adult still sitting tight 1 Jun. In the old part of the cemetery were three downy chicks also on 1 Jun. At Dallachy pool, a pair had a nest on the island 29 May. At Kinloss a pair had a brood of two 8 Jun. An anxious pair were observed at Portknockie 18 Jun.

Post-breeding flocks included 45 Tomintoul 13 Jun, 33 Cloddach quarry 9 Jul, 55 Tomintoul quarry 21 Jul and 37 Delnabo 28 Jul.

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

April: 41 Nairn 6th, 453 Findhorn Bay 15th, 31 Lossie estuary 15th and 40 Burghead 25th.
 May: 512 Findhorn Bay 5th and 25 Carse of Delnies 11th.
 June: 10 Burghead 3rd, 11 Lossie estuary 10th and 266 Findhorn Bay 30th.
 July: 35 Kingsteps 21st, 85 Spey estuary 23rd, 125 Carse of Delnies 25th, 400 Culbin Bar 29th and 385 Lossie estuary 30th.
 August: 200 Lossiemouth East Beach 4th, 306 Spey estuary 4th, 37 Burghead 12th, 18 Nairn 15th and 785 Findhorn Bay 28th.
 September: 682 Findhorn Bay 3rd, 188 Lossie estuary 10th and 90 Burghead 30th.

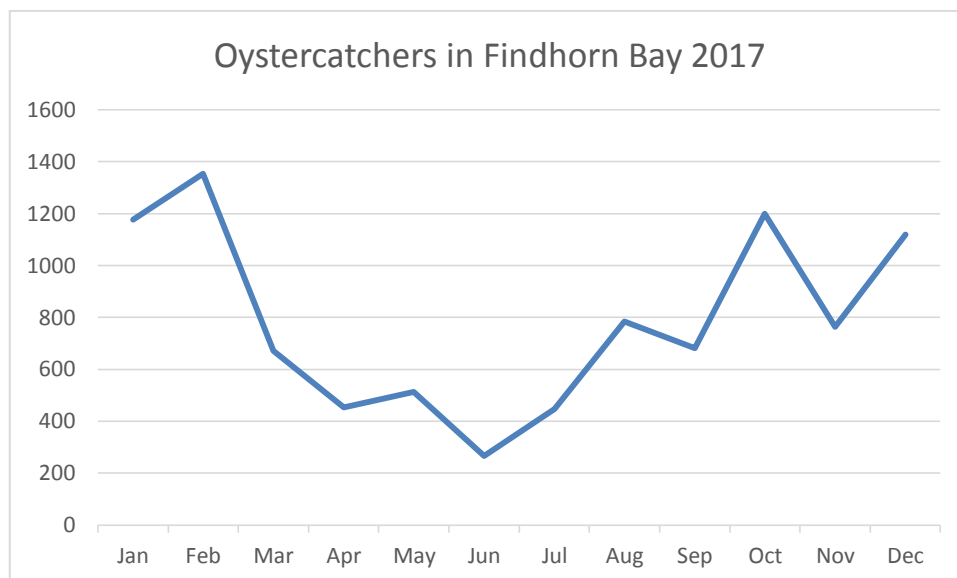
The count of 306 at Spey estuary 4th Aug is the highest ever count for the location.

Winter maxima at the coast were:

	Jan	Feb	Oct	Dec
Nairn/Culbin Bars	*1416	*995	*c.870	*1108
Findhorn Bay	1177	1354	1200	1118
Burghead-Hopeman	214	256	137	139
Lossiemouth	134	59	67	58
Portgordon-Strathlene	44	55	111	94

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

In Findhorn Bay, maximum daily counts in each month were as shown below:



Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*

Very common migrant breeder, small numbers in winter.

First up-country was a very early individual at Dunearn 7 Jan.

Pre-breeding flocks up-country of ten or more included 20 Knockando Burn 28 Feb, 10 Boldow (Scoot More) 5 Mar, 30 Cabrach-Aldunie 7 Mar, 15 Birnies Lane fields (Tomintoul) 12 Mar and 11 Achdregnie-Suie (Glenlivet) 26 Apr.

Breeding: In the coastal lowlands, very little in the way of breeding reported. However, breeding indicated by three territorial pairs at Moyness 8 Apr and an agitated adult with two flightless young running along the roadside at Todholes 21 Jul. A juvenile was at Mosset Burn (south Findhorn Bay) 1 Aug.

Up-country, in the Dunearn Lodge/Burnside farm area, a pair nesting 14 Apr, three assumed pairs 29 Apr and an adult with two chicks 12 May. Three adults and two chicks were at Refouble 26 May and anxious behaviour recorded at Inchrory 3 Jun.

There were no notable post breeding flocks recorded from up-country.

In the lowlands, post-breeding flocks of 100 or more during August were 180 Cloddach quarry 27th and 126 Lossiemouth airfield 28th. During September, 215 Lossiemouth airfield 6th and nearby in the Balormie/Muirton area there was a maxima of 275 at the pig farm on the 27th. October records were 120 Spey Bay 6th and 175 Balormie pig farm 21st.

In mid-winter (January-February and November-December), inland at Cloddach quarry were 180 on 22 Feb, 102 on 19 Nov and 110 on 17 Dec. In the Drainie/Balormie area there were monthly maxima of 470 on 22 Jan, 630 on 26 Feb and 226 on 26 Dec. Records from Lossiemouth airfield (possibly the same flock as Drainie/Balormie) had monthly highs of 300+ on 22 Nov and c.280 on 13 Dec. At Spey Bay, 119 on 22 Nov.

Maximum monthly counts at Findhorn Bay and the Spey estuary were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
F Bay	0	60	29	6	7	12	0	32	0	84	73	57
Spey	0	15	3	0	1	0	1	24	20	120	119	8

Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria*

Common breeder, migrant and winter visitor.

First up-country in potential breeding territory, unusually early, were c.40 Leakin Farm (Knockando) 29 Jan (AE). A pre-breeding flock of 200 was at Cabrach-Aldunie 7 Mar.

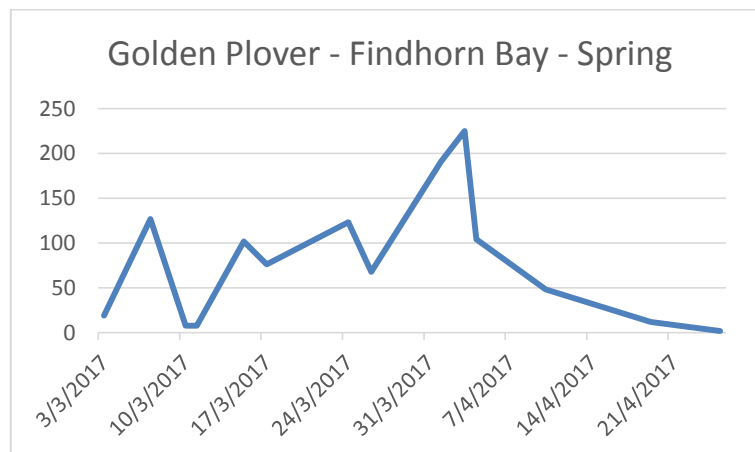
A pre-breeding flock, probably of northern birds prior to moving on, was in the Moyness area south of Nairn. More than 200 birds were counted in the same ploughed fields on nine occasions during 6-25 Apr, with a maxima of 372 on 9 Apr. A similar flock was in ploughed fields just south of Findhorn Bay during 24 Mar-10 Apr, peaking at 191 on 1 Apr.

In potential breeding habitat, were 2 on Baby's Hill (Ben Rinnes) 9 Mar and, at Dunearn, 1 on 12 Mar and 8-9 on 24 Mar. Also, 2 Lecht Mine 13 Mar, 1 Carn Eachie 9 Apr and 1 Cairnacay (Glenlivet) 12 Apr. Ten were at Achdregnie Farm (Glenlivet) 26 Apr, 2 Burnside-Little Aitnoch 2 May, 30 Berryburn 3 May and 2 Corglass Farm 26 May.

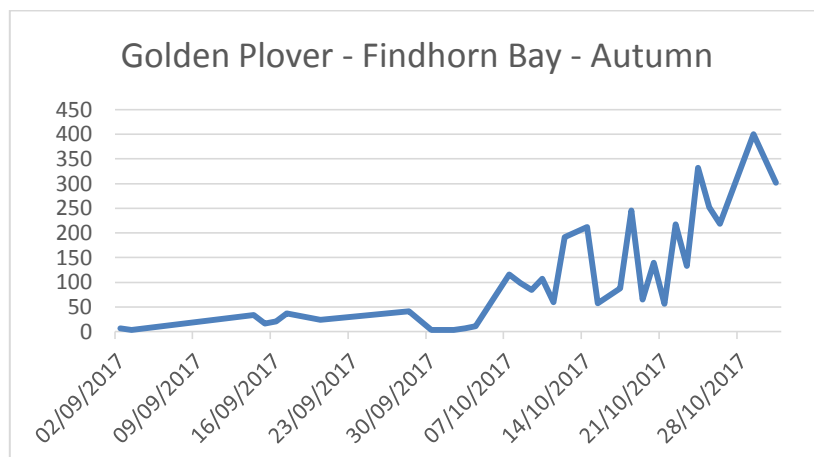
First back in to the coastal lowlands, returning from breeding grounds, was a juvenile at Carse of Delnies 25 Jul.

In autumn, a flock of 15 was on Ben Rinnes 24 Sep. During winter, 9 Ben Aigan 3 Dec.

The movement of Golden Plover through Findhorn Bay during spring (with a peak of 225 on 3 Apr):



The number of Golden Plover in Findhorn Bay during autumn:



Winter coastal maxima at Findhorn Bay were:

	Jan	Feb	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Findhorn Bay	167	91	41	400	481	296

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*

Scarce autumn migrant and winter visitor.

Highest counts were:

	Jan	Feb	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Nairn/Culbin Bars	*19	*29 (12th)	0	6	nc	*23 (3rd)
Findhorn Bay	0	0	1	2	0	0
Lossiemouth	0	0	1	3	1	0

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

Elsewhere, 12 Carse of Delnies 27 Feb.

Later, 10 Carse of Delnies 27 Mar and 4 Findhorn Bay on the 10-11 Apr.

The last record prior to departure to breeding grounds was 5 Findhorn Bay 20 May and the first to return was 1 Findhorn Bay 3 Sep.

2017 was an improvement on the previous five years. Highest counts since 2007 have been:

2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
17	20	24	11	46	27	16	16	20	17	29

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

Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*

Scarce resident breeder and very common migrant.

Breeding: One pair on the point at Findhorn beach 24 Jun and an anxious pair on the shingle near the mouth of the Spey 23 Jul. The pattern of occurrence over the year at Findhorn Bay and at the Lossie and Spey estuaries (maximum monthly counts) was:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
F Bay	33	40	25	376	1190	145	6	138	49	32	33	28
Lossie	0	16	6	31	50	17	5	100	52	37	0	0
Spey	0	6	1	20	41	11	35	74	40	0	0	0

Close to Findhorn Bay, 185 Kinloss 11 Sep.

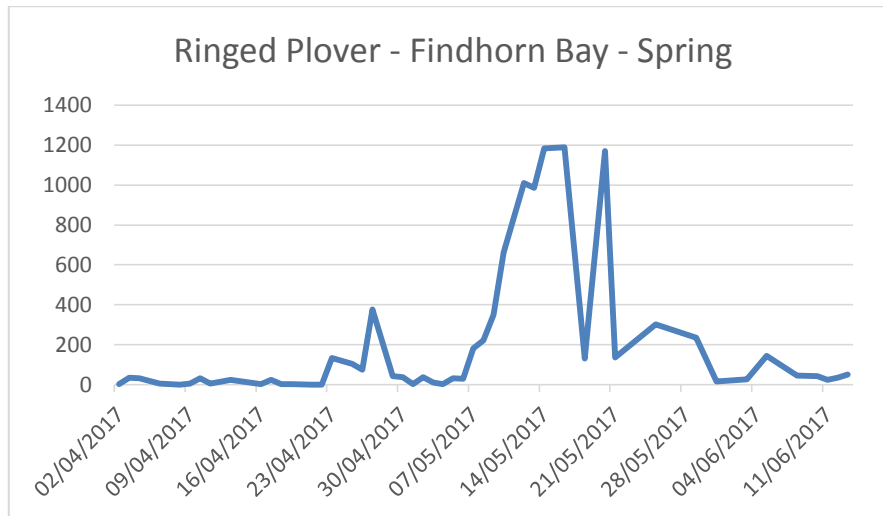
Winter maxima at the coast were:

	January-February	November-December
Nairn/Culbin Bars	11	0
Findhorn Bay	40	33
Kinloss	0	0
Burghead-Hopeman	18	7
Lossiemouth	16	0
Portgordon-Strathlene	16	18

Elsewhere, 13 Carse of Delnies 13 Jan.

Spring passage (April-early June):

Findhorn Bay: regular counts during this period are shown in the graph below with a strong movement during May with a peak of 1190 on the 16th (GM, RSC).



At the Spey estuary, the highest spring count was 41 on 18 May, almost coinciding with the Findhorn Bay peak.

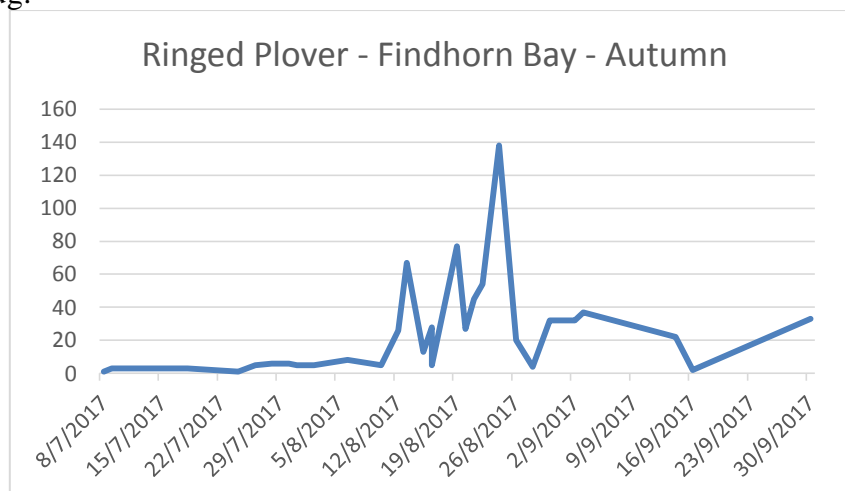
Also in spring, slightly inland, were 8 Loch Spynie 6 May and singles at Dallachy pool 25 and 29 May.

The highest spring migration counts in Findhorn Bay are illustrated in the table below:

2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
196	476	413	156	1500	1000	450	985	1200	1946	1190

Autumn passage (July-September):

Findhorn Bay: regular counts during this period are shown in the graph below with a peak of 138 on 24 Aug:



At the Spey estuary, the highest count during this period was 74 on 26 Aug and at Lossiemouth a high of 100 on 18 Aug. At Kinloss there was a maxima count of 185 on 11 Sep.

A few were at Balormie pig farm on ten dates during 28 Aug-3 Oct with a maximum of 4 on 30 Sep and 2 Oct.

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*

Rare summer visitor and breeder.

A single bird was on the Spey estuary 28 Apr (SL). A pair was mating at the Dallachy landfill site pool 25 May (KP) and a pair had a nest on the island at the same pool 29 May (MJHC). The breeding attempt was unsuccessful.

Dotterel *Charadrius morinellus*

Scarce summer visitor and breeder.

All records from the Cairngorms plateau area:

May: 5 on 6th, 2 on 7th, 4 on 9th, 5 on 17th (RI), 10 Cairn Lochan on 19th (PRG), one pair and 2 males 25th.
 June: 2 on 4th.
 July: 5 on 8th, 4 on 18th, 2 juveniles 28th.
 August: an agitated male on 2nd, 8 on 6th, 14 Ben Macdui 8th (PM) and an adult with a chick on 13th.



Dotterel on the Cairngorms plateau, 17 May 2017 (Robert Ince)

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*

Scarce migrant.

Spring: First of the year were 2 Findhorn Bay 14 Apr.

Throughout April and May, there were 39 coastal records, from Findhorn Bay in the west to Cullen in the east - 28 of which were of one or two birds. Flocks in double figures included 15 Findhorn Bay 28 Apr and at Spey estuary there were 19 on 30 Apr and 14 on 4 May. During the same period, lowland records close to the coast included 1 Spynie canal 2 May, 1 over Elgin cemetery 12 May and four over Lossie forest 21 May. Furthest inland was 1 Berryburn 9 May. The last May record was one flying west over Lossiemouth west beach on the 30th.

Unusually, 1 Findhorn Bay 13 & 18 Jun - probably the same bird (GM).

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

2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
22 Apr	27 Apr	24 Apr	22 Apr	21 Apr	4 May	21 Apr	8 Apr	6 Mar	6 Apr

Autumn: Extreme dates of passage were two on 8 Jul and two on 9 Sep, both from Spey estuary. Forty-seven coastal records came from Findhorn Bay in the west to Strathlene in the east, of which thirty-one consisted of 1-3 birds. Records of ten or more at Lossiemouth included 10 flying west offshore 23 Jul, 17 together on the estuary 28 Jul and 11 heading east offshore on 8 Aug. At Spey estuary double-figure records consisted of 51 on 25 Jul (MCo), 28 on 26 Jul and 53 on the seaward side of the shingle at low tide 30 Jul (RAS). Also at Spey estuary, 34 on 3 Aug (DAG).

Curlew *Numenius arquata*

Common breeder. Very common migrant and winter visitor.

Breeding: Pre-breeding flocks consisted of c.20 Refoules 24 Mar and 16 Auchmair (Cabrach) 1 Apr.

Records came from many potential inland breeding sites during March-June (although little in the way of confirmed breeding reports) including Achmatone, Auldich, Balmore, Berryburn, Cabrach, Carn Eachie, Cnoc na Sealg, Conglass, Daluaine, Dulsie, Ferness, Glenlivet, Inchrory, Loch Kirkaldy, Milton Steading Quarry, Redburn, Strath Avon, Tomintoul, Tom na Bat and Tomnamoon. A pair was displaying at Auchmair (Cabrach) 14 Apr. In the Refoules/Dunearn Lodge/Little Aitnoh area, there were 8 on 13 Mar, and nine other records of single figures during March, April and May, including one chick on 26 May (A&FR).

The only post-breeding up-country flock was 30 Tomintoul 27 Jun.

In the coastal lowlands, at Kinloss three chicks were noted on 19 Jun and two on 27 Jun (AJL).

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

	June	July	August	September
Findhorn Bay	103	309	347	494
Lossiemouth	7	51	23	22
Spey estuary	10	100	280	213

Inland at Cloddach quarry there were 141 on 27 Aug and 156 on 30 Sep.

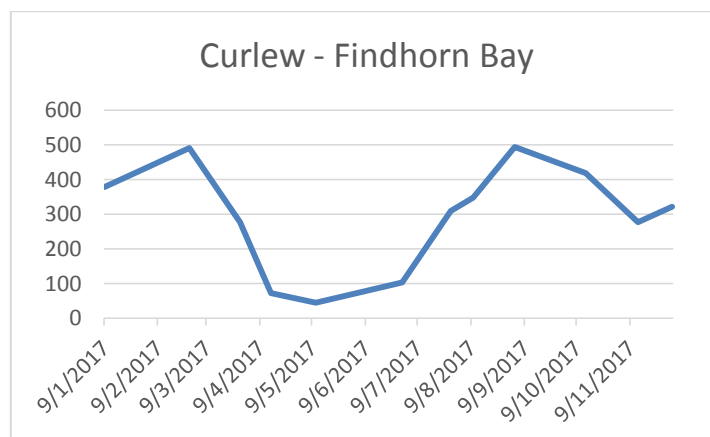
Coastal winter maxima were:

	January	February	October	December
Nairn/Culbin Bars	*234	*189	*93	*230
Findhorn Bay	376	491	419	259
Burghead-Hopeman	27	38	5	3
Lossiemouth	208	15	61	4
Portgordon-Strathlene	8	6	26	7

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

Inland at Cloddach quarry there were 169 on 26 Jan, 376 on 26 Feb, 170 on 22 Oct and 120 on 17 Dec. In the Loch Spynie area, 120+ on 20 Jan, 213 on 10 Feb and 180 on 14 Dec. In November, max. 277 Findhorn Bay 13th and, inland, 80 Cloddach quarry 19th.

Monthly maxima in Findhorn Bay throughout the year:



Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*

Common winter visitor and migrant. Small numbers in summer.

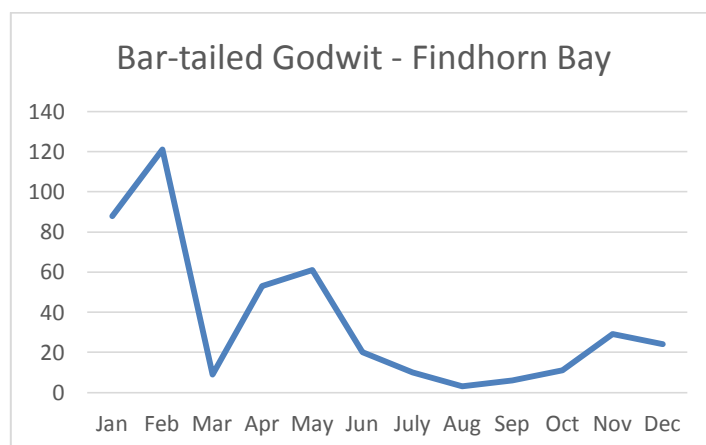
Monthly maxima at main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Nairn/Culbin Bars	63	70	0	0	*51	0	2
Nairn	5	8	26	12	0	0	0
Findhorn Bay	88	121	9	6	11	29	24
Burghead-Hopeman	41	17	23	0	12	17	16
Lossiemouth	3	4	4	5	4	2	2

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

Elsewhere, at Carse of Delnies, 12 on 17 Jan, 16 on 8 Feb and 10 on 17 Mar.

Monthly maxima in Findhorn Bay throughout the year:



Maximum annual count at any site since 2007 has been:

2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
436	198	75	107	204	150	90	137	145	c.300	121

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

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*

Scarce migrant.

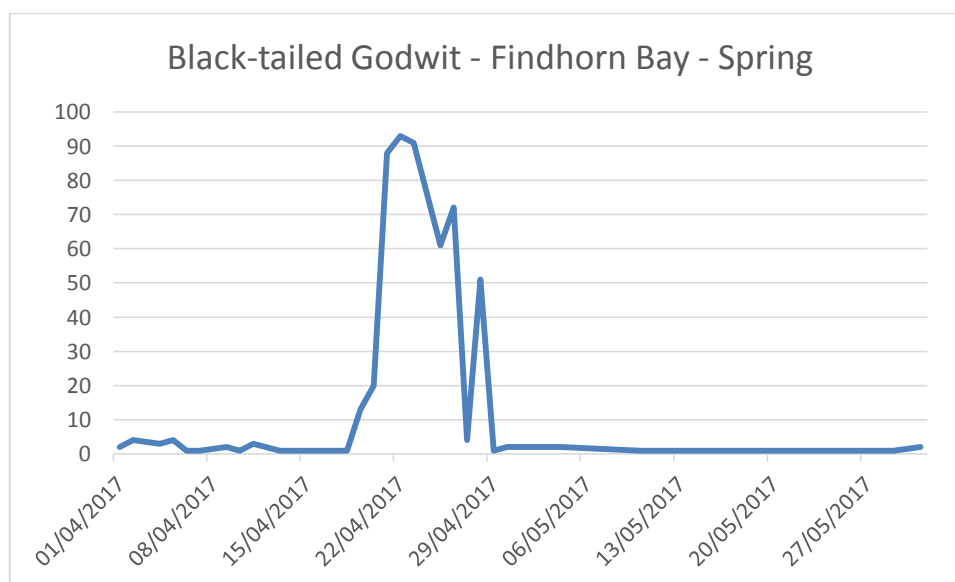
Early winter (January-March): Following on from the December 2016 records, 2 were in Findhorn Bay (at the mouth of the Mosset Burn) on 3 Jan. Up to 3 were then seen in Findhorn Bay on thirty-one days during January & February, and there were 4 on 14-16 Jan and 5 on 29 Jan. During March, 1-3 Findhorn Bay on twelve days and 4 on the 23rd-29th.

Elsewhere, 2 Burghead Bay beach 26 Jan and 1 Nairn east beach 21 Mar.

Spring: Records were only received from Findhorn Bay with a maximum of 93 on 22 Apr (GM) and only ones and twos recorded during May.

No inland records were received.

Regular counting in Findhorn Bay (GM, RSC *et al.*) revealed the following pattern of spring occurrence:



Autumn (mid June-October): First to return were 13 Spey estuary 19 Jun (JP), followed by 32 Findhorn Bay 27 Jun (RHD).

Monthly maxima from the main sites were:

	July	August	September	October
Findhorn Bay	11	84	81	60
Lossie estuary	1	32	0	1
Spey estuary	c.20	3	2	1

Elsewhere, 9 Kinloss 13 Sep and 1 Nairn 5 Oct. Inland at Montgrew (Keith) there were 16 on 20 Aug, 15 on 21 Aug and 6 on 23 Aug (WMM, MJHC).

Late winter (November-December): Records were only received from Findhorn Bay with a maximum of 46 on 2 Nov, declining to 27 on 4 Nov, 19 on 15 Nov and (last record of the year) 9 on 6 Dec (GM, RSC).

Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

Common winter visitor, small numbers in summer.

Winter monthly maxima at main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Oct	Dec
Delnies-Nairn	14	12	21	5
Nairn-Culbin Bar	0	34	1	18
Findhorn	48	55	52	51
Burghead	39	48	2	15
Burghead-Hopeman	56	25	47	22
Lossiemouth	57	22	3	1
Spey estuary	10	75	0	0
Portgordon-Strathlene	77	58	40	83

During November there was a maximum of 44 in Findhorn Bay on the 4th. Elsewhere, 19 Cullen 14 Dec.

Spring: Highest counts in spring months included 100+ Lossiemouth north pier 25 Mar. An exceptional flock (for both date and site) was 124 Spey estuary 27 Apr (TJW), still 108 there on 28 Apr (MJHC) but reduced to 12 by 30 Apr. Still 1 Findhorn Bay 30 Jun.

Summer-autumn: First in July were 5 Burghead 20th, increasing to 14 on 23rd. The Spey estuary had the highest counts during August and September with 37 on 29 Aug and 34 on 10 Sep.

Knot *Calidris canutus*

Very common migrant and winter visitor.

Winter maxima were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Oct	Nov	Dec
Nairn/Culbin Bars	2100	1400	0	0	0	*1641
Burghead	3000	0	1	0	0	0
Findhorn Bay	2800	2500	650	60	1175	2350

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

Spring: During April there were maxima of 375 Findhorn Bay 10th and c.130 at Burghead on 17th. In May there were 272 Findhorn Bay on 10th and c.50, some in breeding plumage, at Burghead on 20th. The last spring record was 7 Findhorn Bay 30 Jun.

Summer-autumn: First to return were 2 Findhorn Bay 10 Jul. Other returning birds were 4 Lossie estuary 27 Jul and 4 Burghead 19 Aug. One adult and one juvenile were at Lossie estuary 26 Aug and 3 juveniles were there on 27 Aug. The highest count during September was 46 Findhorn Bay on 3rd.

Ruff *Calidris pugnax*

Scarce autumn migrant, rare in spring.

An exceptional year with c.100 records submitted.

Two spring records; a male on the Mosset Burn (Findhorn Bay) on 16 May (RHD) and a male in breeding plumage there on 27 May (GM). The last spring record was in 2010.

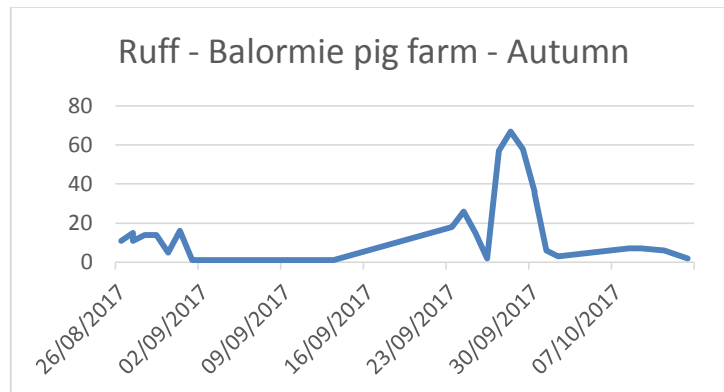
First autumn arrivals were 2 Spey estuary 21 Aug. Dates for the first autumn migrants in recent years have been:

2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
18/08	11/08	30/07	04/09	07/08	03/08	28/07	12/08	08/08	06/07	07/08

Still 2 Spey estuary 22 Aug, and subsequent records there included 4 on 24 Aug, 3 on 25 Aug, 1 on 13 Sep, 18 on 24 Sep and 7 on 26 Sep. At Lossie estuary, recorded on 10 days from 24 Aug until 21 Oct, mostly single birds but 10 on 14 Oct. Seven flew west past Lossiemouth on 14 Oct. During late September in Findhorn Bay there were 30 on 28th and 51 on 29th. Four flew around Loch Spynie but didn't land on 13 Sep. There were 13 in a flooded field near Spynie canal on 23 Sep.

Most records were received from the flooded muddy pig farm at Balormie. Fifty-nine records were received between 26 Aug-13 Oct. The high numbers counted are unprecedented in Moray & Nairn.

The daily maxima are illustrated below:



The initial movement of birds in late August with a maximum of 16 on the 31st. No records received from the 2nd to the 12th of September. Numbers then increasing with a maximum of 67 on 28 Sep (JDL, DAG). This is the by far the largest number recorded since a flock of 21 was recorded at Lhanbryde pig farm in September 1998.

Well inland at Montgrew, 1 on 7 Sep (JA).



Ruff, Balormie 27 August 2017 (David Main)

Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea**Scarce migrant.*

Another year with only small numbers. There have been no flocks exceeding ten since 2008.

Spring: 1 Findhorn Bay 3-4 Jun (GM, JM).

Autumn: First were 2 Lossie estuary 24 Sep (DAG) with one on the following day (RP). At Findhorn Bay, 2 on 13 Sep (MW), 1 on 25 Sep (TG), 2 on 29 Sep (RHD) and 2 on 12-14 Oct (GM). At the Spey estuary, 1 on 24-26 Sep (MJHC). Elsewhere, 1 Nairn 2 Oct, 1 Balormie pig farm (Drainie) 27 Sep-3 Oct (DAG, DM *et al.*) and 2 there 29 Sep (DPi, RM).

Sanderling *Calidris alba**Scarce migrant and fairly common but very localised winter visitor.*

Monthly maxima at the four best sites were:

Winter-spring:

	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June
Nairn/Culbin Bars	58	91	0	0	0	0
Lossiemouth	17	58	28	63	36	5
Findhorn Bay	16	11	15	0	8	0
Nairn	88	40	14	28	0	0

Late summer-autumn:

	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Nairn/Culbin Bars	77	0	0	*c.170	0	420
Lossiemouth	**40	2	1	**80	0	0
Findhorn Bay	5	10	10	2	1	0
Nairn	0	0	1	42	0	6

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

**Counted in flight heading east during a sea watch.

The wintering flock 420 Culbin Bar on 26 Dec (RHD) is the highest number since a flock of 440 on autumn passage were counted at Nairn/Culbin Bars on 21 Aug 2003.

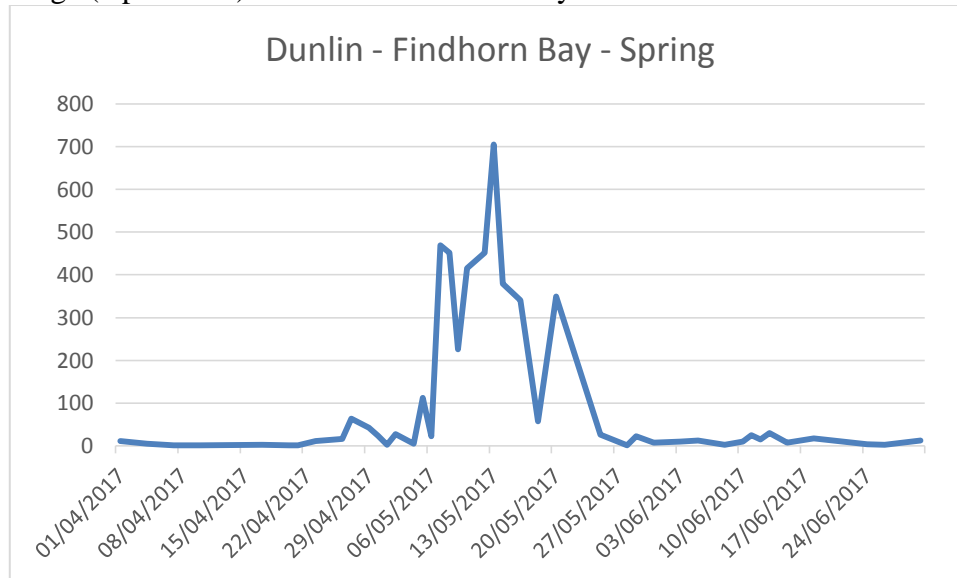
At Lossiemouth, still 36 on 23 May, 5 on 15 Jun and 1 on 27 Jun. First back were 15 there on 15 Jul.

Maximum counts at other locations included 17 Hopeman 24 Jan and 17 Carse of Delnies 8 Feb.

Dunlin *Calidris alpina**Scarce breeder, very common migrant and winter visitor.*

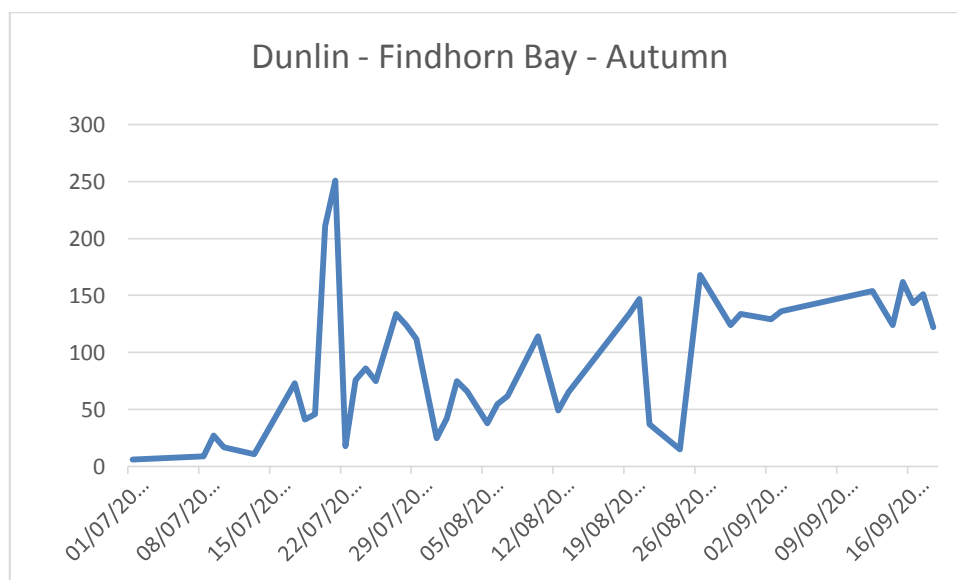
Breeding: the only record from potential breeding grounds was of one at Lochan Buidhe (Cairngorms plateau) on 24 May (JPot).

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

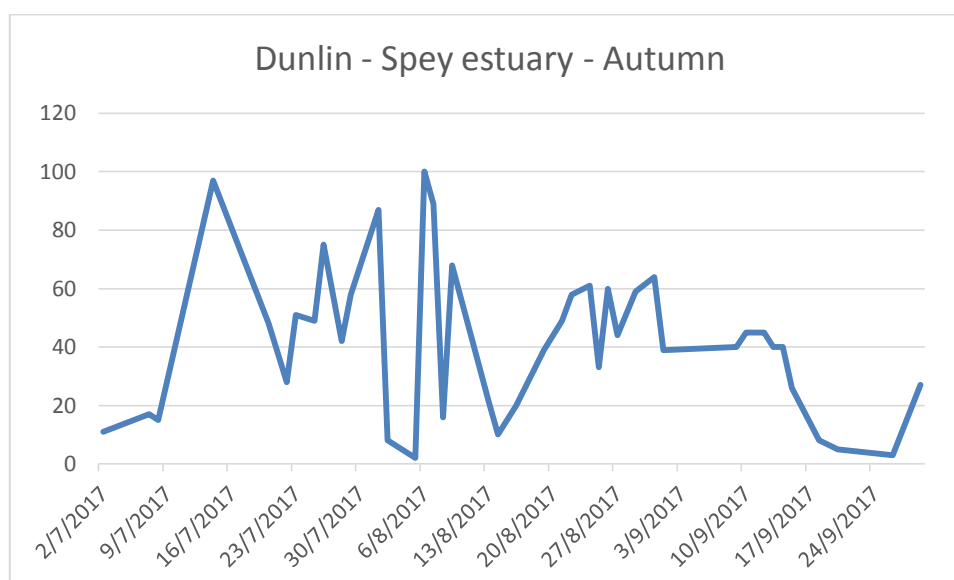


Main passage took place during May with a peak number of 705 on the 13th, the same date as 2013. Elsewhere, at Spey estuary there were monthly maxima of 23 on 27 Apr, 60 on 11 May and 10 on 30 Jun. At Loch Spynie nine were recorded, assumed flying over, on the 6th May

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



Fluctuating numbers during this period. However the initial July movement, with a maximum of 251 on 21 Jul, is likely to consist mainly of birds of race *schinzii* which are on migration and will leave Scotland in winter. The later August and September build-up will be of race *alpina* which will over-winter here.



Fluctuating numbers throughout this period. The July peak of 97 on the 14th will be of race *schinzii*, a week before the Findhorn Bay July peak.

Inland at Loch Spynie, five were counted circling and flying over the loch on 28 Jul.

A short distance inland at Balormie pig farm (Drainie), records were received from 27 Aug until 3 Oct mainly ones and twos but 4 on 27 Aug, 3 on 1 Sep and 7 on 30 Sep.

Winter monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	January	February	October	November	December
Nairn/Culbin Bars	*579	*643	67	0	*1884
Findhorn Bay	1540	1550	424	945	1520
Lossiemouth	c40	24	8	11	24

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

The highest count during March was 200 Carse of Delnies on 27th.

Purple Sandpiper *Calidris maritima*

Common winter visitor.

Main winter site maxima were:

	January-March	October-December
Nairn	9	6
Burghead-Hopeman	*15	*2
Lossiemouth	60	c.60
Portgordon-Strathlene	**10	7

*Hopeman only

**Buckpool only

Outwith the above dates, largest flock of the year was 70 Lossiemouth north pier 9 Apr (HF).

Yearly maximum flock sizes since 2005 have been:

2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2017
95	54	73	144	100	120	100	73	45	19	60	70

Last in spring were 6 Covesea (Lossiemouth) 13 May and the first to return was 1 Hopeman harbour 15 Sep.

The variability of arrival dates from breeding grounds for the previous ten years is indicated below:

2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
14/07	18/10	03/09	14/09	16/10	20/09	09/09	23/07	27/09	15/09

Bairds Sandpiper *Calidris bairdii*

Rare vagrant.

A juvenile was found on the shingle at the Spey estuary 13 Sep (MW). This individual remained for a few days and was last recorded on 16 Sep (MJHC, RP *et al.*). This record has still to be accepted by British Birds Rarities Committee. This is only the third record for Moray & Nairn. The previous records were from Findhorn Bay during September 2001 and October 1982.



Baird's Sandpiper, Spey estuary 14 September 2017 (Dave Pullan)

Little Stint *Calidris minuta*

Very scarce migrant, mostly in autumn.

An excellent year with spring records and good numbers during autumn.

Spring: 1 Findhorn Bay 7 May (RSC) and 1 Spey estuary 29 May (MJHC).

Autumn: On 20 Jul, one feeding among Turnstones on the headland at Burghead (RJ). One individual was at Findhorn Bay 24 Sep (JCo, MW). At Lossie estuary, 2 on 28 Sep (DAG, DM) and 3 on 29 Sep (DPi). Also, 1 Lossiemouth west beach 3 Oct (MS) and 2 Nairn 2 Oct (AC).

All other records were from slightly inland at the muddy pools at Balormie pig farm (Drainie). Recorded there on 17 days during 17 Sep-10 Oct. First were 1 on 17 Sep and 2 on 24 Sep. Numbers then increased with 10 on 28 Sep and 12 on 29 Sep-1 Oct. Still 10 on 2 Oct and finally a single bird on 10 Oct (RP, DAG, DM, MJHC *et al.*). This year's double-figure counts are the first since 1998, where there was an exceptional flock of 103 in Findhorn Bay. The highest number recorded in Moray & Nairn was 106 Findhorn Bay 18 Sep 1960.

Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola*

Common resident breeder, migrant and winter visitor.

January-March: 1 Loch Oire 12 Jan and 13 Mar, 2 Loch Spynie woods 17 Jan (1 on 11 Mar), 1 near the mouth of the River Findhorn 24 Jan, 2 Shempston 30 Jan, 1 on the verge of the A96 near Fochabers 3 Mar and, further inland at Altyre woods, 1 on 14 Jan, 2 on 20 Feb and 3 on 8 Mar.

Breeding: Roding birds noted at Wester Elchies 19 Mar, Crooked Wood (Lhanbryde) 30 Mar, Carron 7 Apr, Waterford 13 Apr, Aberlour House (Aberlour) 19 Apr and Tomnamoon 5 Jul. Eight other records of birds in potential breeding habitat included 1 near Dulsie Bridge 1 Apr, 2 in juniper scrub Ailnack Gorge (Tomintoul) 2 Apr, 1 at Brodie Castle pond and Raff Park Wood 25 Apr, 1 Strathavon House (Strath Avon) 26 Apr, 2 Auldich 28 Apr, 1 Kellas oakwood 19 May and 1 Little Aitnoch 11 Jun.

Autumn-winter: Fifteen records between 20 Oct-30 Dec, eleven of which were of single birds, sites ranging from the coastal fringe to up-country. Records of more than one bird were 2 Altyre woods 18-19 Nov and 6 Shempston 20 Nov, with 4 there 9 Dec.

Jack Snipe *Lymnocryptes minimus*

Scarce migrant and winter visitor.

First winter period: At Kingsteps, 1 on 15 & 23 Jan (GP, MJHC) and 2 on 12 Feb (GP). Also 1 Findhorn Bay 7 Feb (MGC).

Early spring: 1 Kingston 2 Mar (RHD) and 1 Netherton (Findhorn Bay) 3 Apr (MGC).

Autumn-winter: 2 Findhorn Bay 17 Oct (GM), and at Kingsteps, 2 on 3 Dec (GP) and 1 on 13 Dec (PRG).

Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*

Common breeder and migrant.

Breeding: Drumming first reported from Tomnamoon 30 Mar and also later in the year on 7 Jul. Also, 1 Dunearn Lodge 29 Apr and 3 Berryburn 4 May. Numerous other records received from potential breeding sites with notable numbers of 6 Achdregnie-Suie (Glenlivet) 26 Apr, 4 Auldich 25 May and 6 Tomintoul 13 Jun.

Winter-spring (January-March): Twenty-one records received in the coastal fringes from Kingsteps to Loch Spynie mostly of 1-2 birds. Notable numbers were 6 Kingsteps 15 Jan, 7 Findhorn Bay (near Netherton Farm) 23 Jan, 5 Nairn Bar 12 Feb and 11 Drainie 25 Feb. Inland, 1 North Crannoch 6 Feb. Up-country, 1 Cabrach-Aldunie 7 Mar and 1 Auldich 27 & 29 Mar.

Late summer-winter: Present on the Spey estuary from 25 Jul until the end of the year. Records of five or more included 5 on 9 Aug, 7 on 27 Aug, 5 on 9 Sep, 7 on 24 Sep, 13 on 18 Oct and 16 on 26 Oct. Nearby, 53 were on flooded ground at the Lein Kingston) on 2 Dec (MJHC). Also at the coast, 2 Lossie estuary 27 Jul, and at Kingsteps there were 7 on 8 Oct, 5 on 3 Dec and 2 on 13 Dec. Nearby, 2 Nairn Bar 8 Oct and 5 there 3 Dec. Only single birds reported from Findhorn Bay - on eight occasions.

Inland, at Montgrew there were 5 on 28 Aug, 16 on 23 Aug, 3 on 26 Aug and 15 on 4 Sep. Single birds recorded at Balormie pig farm (Drainie) 28 Sep and on three occasions at Cloddach during September. Five flew over Clochan 16 Oct. At Loch Spynie, 4 on 13 Sep, 12 on 31 Oct and 5 on 18 Nov. Also 1 Altyre Woods 29 Dec.

A few records from up-country included 1 at Cnap Chaochan (Glen Loin) 20 Oct, 2 at Auchmair (Cabrach) 26 Oct and 1 at Tomnamoon 3 Nov.

Maximum winter counts since 2008:

2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
55	41	60	45	6	83*	65*	13*	*18	53

* at Kingsteps.

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

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*

Common summer visitor and breeder.

Arrival: First were 1 Ballindalloch 14 Apr and 1 River Findhorn near Forres 15 Apr. Ten records received from the River Spey and its tributaries during April; Spey estuary, Aberlour, Carron, Scootmore, Knockando distillery, Blacksboat and Tombae (Glenlivet). The Blacksboat-Carron stretch held 3 on 19 Apr. On the River Findhorn, 1 Newton of Dalvey (Mundole) 18 Apr (and 1-2 there 20-22 Apr) and, further up-country, 2 Drynahan valley 29 Apr. Elsewhere, 1 Loch Spynie 30 Apr.

The first arrival dates (in April) since 2007 were:

2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
15th	20th	9th	17th	12th	10th	15th	10th	17th	16th	14th

Breeding: Few reports of breeding behaviour apart from a pair displaying at the Spey estuary 6 May and one there on 17 Jun mobbing a Grey Heron. Also an anxious pair at Cloddach quarry on 18 Jun. Recorded elsewhere during May in potential breeding habitat at Aberlour Auldich, Carron, Dallachy landfill site pool, Dipple, Dulsie Bridge, Foresterseat (River Lossie), Glenlivet, Lossie Forest gravel pit and Kellas. The highest numbers, on 23 May, were 6 Dulsie Bridge and 6 Carron. During June, 2 Inchrory 3rd.

From the coastal fringe during May and June, most reports were from the Spey estuary with 15 records - maximum 5 birds on 6 May. Around Findhorn Bay/lower River Findhorn in May, 1 on 1st, 4 on 3rd and 1 on 4th-5th. A single bird was at Loch Spynie on 12 May and 19 Jun.

The usual post-breeding assemblage on the Spey estuary peaked during July with 16 on 20th, 15 on 22nd and 10 on the 23rd & 26th. Last of the year was one at the Spey estuary 10 Sep.

Dates for 'last departing migrant of the year' have fluctuated greatly:

2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
21 Sep	4 Sep	31 Jul	28 Sep	19Aug	28 Aug	19 Sep	8 Sep	27Aug	10 Sep

But first arrivals are more regularly and reliably reported than last departures.

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*

Very scarce migrant, rare in winter.

January-March: 1 Findhorn Bay (Netherton area) 10 Feb (MW). The last record from 2016 was in the same locality on 18 Nov, but there is no evidence that it over-wintered there.

Spring: 1 Loch Spynie 3 May (DCO).

Late summer/autumn: 1 Findhorn Bay (on the Mosset Burn) 25 Jul (GM).

Redshank *Tringa totanus*

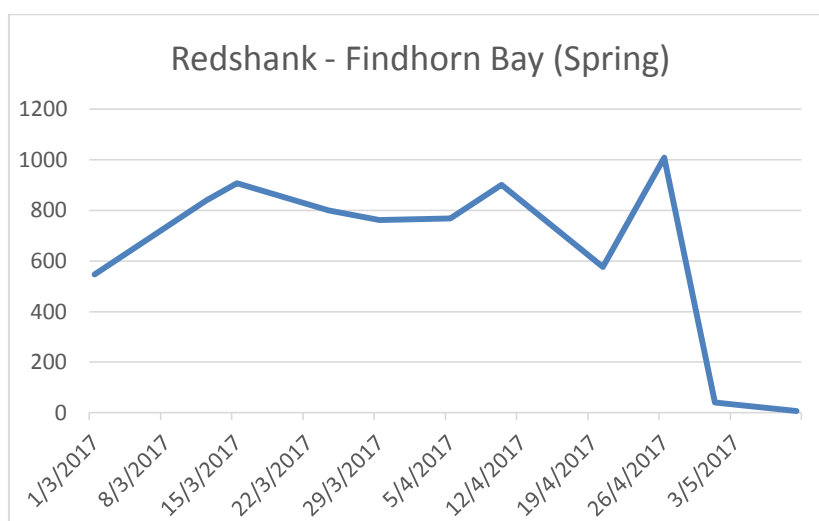
Scarce breeder, very common migrant and winter visitor.

Breeding: Up-country, pairs were near Achregnie (Glenlivet) 16 Apr and in the Tomintoul area 23 Apr. Also, 1 Carn Tullich (Glenlivet) 26 Apr.

At the coast, there was no evidence of breeding but a few birds remained throughout May and June in the southern end of Findhorn Bay, where they have previously bred.

Spring (March-May):

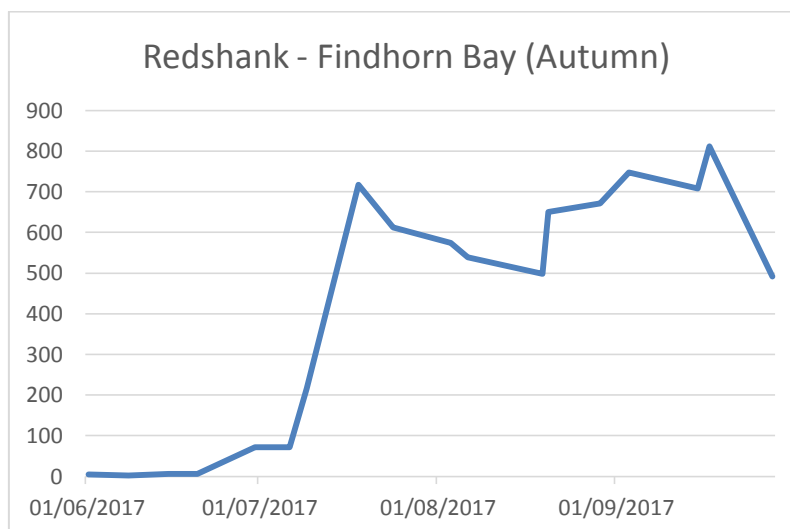
Weekly maximum counts in Findhorn Bay (GM, RSC) revealed the following pattern with a massive decline following the peak of 1008 towards the end of April:



Peak counts were 907 on 15 Mar, 902 on 10 Apr and 1008 on 26 Apr. Elsewhere, there were 200 Carse of Delnies 27 Mar, 74 Nairn harbour 6 Apr and 26 Lossie estuary 22 Apr. The count of 1008 is the highest in spring since c.1000 in Findhorn Bay in April 2011.

Late summer-autumn (July-September):

Weekly maximum counts in Findhorn Bay (GM, RSC) revealed the following pattern with a large increase through July (from 38 on 1st to 718 on 18th), picking up again in mid August through to mid September:



The peak count during this period was 812 on 17 Sep.

Highest counts (monthly maxima) elsewhere were:

	July	August	September
Carse of Delnies	43	nc	nc
Nairn	8	7	*30
Burghead	2	4	39
Lossiemouth	81	32	28
Spey estuary	9	7	2

*Between Nairn and Culbin

Winter: Monthly maxima at the coast were:

	January	February	October	December
Nairn/Culbin Bars	*64	9	25	64
Carse of Delnies	72	150	0	0
Nairn	121	74	123	68
Findhorn Bay	874	819	975	726
Burghead-Hopeman	55	19	58	12
Lossiemouth	30	11	30	19
Portgordon-Strathlene	72	64	77	63

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

Also, in Findhorn Bay, the November maximum was 976.

Maximum winter counts in Findhorn Bay since 2008 have been:

2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
1080	828	536	500	599	513	870	845	912	976

Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

Scarce migrant, very scarce in winter.

Winter: 1 Findhorn Bay 12 Feb (RSC, GM, BE).

Spring (late March-June): Around the southern end of Findhorn Bay, 1 on 31 Mar and 16 & 28 Apr. During May, 4 on 1st (JDG), 1 on 3rd, 3 on 4th, 2 on 8th, 1 on 9th and 1 on 17th. Lastly, 1 on 15 Jun. On the Spey estuary, one was recorded on seven dates between 9 Apr-19 May. On the Lossie estuary, 1 on 15 Apr.

Late summer-autumn (July-October): From the Findhorn Bay area (mostly between the Mosset Burn and Binsness) came 52 records, with extreme dates of 9 Jul until 9 Oct (GM, RSC *et al.*). Most records were of 1-3 birds, but in mid/late August there were 4 on 15th, 8 on 23rd and 5 on 24th & 27th. At Lossie estuary, 1 on 24 Jul, 4 on 26-27 Jul, 5 on 30 Jul, and single birds on 18 Aug, 3-4 Sep and 26 Sep. On the Spey estuary, eight records of single birds between 23 Jul-29 Aug, and 2 on 7 Aug. Elsewhere, 1 Nairn 4 Oct.

Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla*

Very common breeder and migrant.

Breeding: An increase in apparently occupied nests (AON) at both colonies this year, with 700 AON at Cove sea on 31 May and 319 AON at Portknockie on 18 Jun (MJHC).

Numbers of AON in the past 10 years at these colonies are as follows:

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Covesea	420	468	535	540	590	425	569	627	488	700
Portknockie	263	332	355	360	365	233	336	260	264	319

In the first half of the year high counts included 150 Nairn harbour 28 Mar, 619 Burghead 25 Apr and 250 Cullen 27 Apr. High counts elsewhere along the coast in late summer included 69 on Findhorn beach 26 Aug, around 2,500 at Lossiemouth pier and east beach on 26 Sep (DAG) and 500 off Burghead on 28 Sep. Peak one hour passage counts offshore this year recorded from Lossiemouth included 457 on 17 Apr, 731 on 13 May, 830 on 11 Jun and then in late summer/autumn 513 on 28 Aug, 610 on 22 Sep and 1853 on 29 Oct.

At Lossiemouth regular sea-watches were conducted throughout 2017 and the maximum passage recorded over a one hour period was as follows (RP):

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
150	25	455	457	731	830	126	513	610	1853	419	164

Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

Fairly common resident breeder and very common winter visitor

Breeding: Numbers at Loch Spynie were similar to last year with 18 apparently occupied nests on 7 May (RP). No other breeding or nests noted elsewhere, although gulls were seen widely through the area.

Counts over 300 on Findhorn Bay included 344 on 28 Feb, 344 on 23 Jul and 420 on 3 Oct. Elsewhere on the coast, significant counts at Nairn included 200 on 26 Mar and 420 on 4 Oct; at Lossie estuary 250 on 10 Aug; at Spey estuary 70 on 5 Aug; and Portgordon-Strathlene 160 on 12 Feb. Highest counts of the year were seen inland at Balormie pig farm (RAF Lossiemouth) with 1888 on 2 Dec and 1536 on 26 Dec (RP). Other notable counts from inland sites included 220 Loch na Bo 23 Mar and 60 Loch Flemington 2 Apr. There were also 328 at Loch Spynie on 22 Jan and 230 on 12 Dec. Loch Spynie and Balormie pig farm are relatively close (3 km) so some of these counts may involve the same birds.

Little Gull *Hydrocoloeus minutus*

Very scarce visitor.

First sighting of the year was one at Burghead on 13 Apr (ANMB) followed by one at Nairn on 16 Apr. An adult was then seen at Loch Spynie on 11 May (SBr). A week later one was seen at Spey estuary on 18 May and at Lossiemouth east beach on 19 May (PN). The final sighting of the year was one flying west off Burghead on 12 Sep (DW).

Mediterranean Gull *Ichthyaeetus melanocephalus*

Very scarce visitor.

The recent trend of increased sightings of this bird continued in 2017 with numerous reports, nearly all of which were from the Lossiemouth area. The first sighting was an adult at Lossie estuary on 2 Jan. An adult was also at Loch Spynie 22-24 Jan and a little later there was a different adult seen at the same location on 11 Feb (DAG). A single adult seen at Balormie pig farm (Lossiemouth) on 31 Jan and a single adult at Lossie estuary on 18 Feb may have been one of the birds seen at Loch Spynie which is nearby to these other sites. The next sighting was an adult at Lossie estuary which was seen on 12 occasions 9-25 Jul (DAG, RP). On 26 Jul a different adult appeared at Lossie estuary which was recorded 36 times through

till the end of the year (DAG, RP, DM *et al*). At nearby Balormie pig farm an adult seen six times 10-30 Sep was assessed to be the same bird as the one recorded at Lossie estuary (RP). The only sighting away from the Lossiemouth area was an adult at Nairn on 22 Sep (AJC).



Mediterranean Gull, Lossie estuary 18 August 2017 (David Main)

Common Gull *Larus canus*

Very common resident breeder and winter visitor.

Breeding: At the Beinn a' Chruinnich (Lecht ski centre) colony there were 30 birds seen on 14 Apr. At the Tips of Corsemaul site (east of Dufftown) around 210 were visible on 4 Jun (IF). In Elgin a number of sites identified which included at least 25 at the old sawmill on 12 Mar and 4 adults at the cemetery on 20 Mar (RP). Elsewhere, 3 chicks were seen at Lossiemouth cemetery on 13 Jun and another pair nested on a roof in Fochabers. One pair bred at Aberlour sewage treatment works (AE). In Glen Avon, on river shingles between Foal's Craig and Inchrory, there were 48 adults on 3 Jun, and 33 adults with several nests on 26 Jun (IF, MJHC).

Flocks away from breeding areas early in the year included 41 Loch Spynie 22 Jan, 170 Loch Flemington 4 Feb and 150 Nairn 26 Mar. High counts later in the year included 710 Spey estuary 19 Aug (and 1020 there on 9 Dec), 1000+ in fields at Lethen (Nairn) on 15 Aug and 230 Findhorn Bay 3 Oct.

Great Black-backed Gull *Larus marinus*

Scarce resident breeder and common visitor.

Breeding: No reports of confirmed breeding this year. Two adults (probably a pair) were in the old sawmill site in Elgin on 18 Mar and a pair was between Findochty-Tronach Head on 27 Jun.

Overall, numbers through the year were considerably higher than 2016, with the maximum at Lossie estuary of 887 on 22 Aug (RP). At Spey estuary in late summer/autumn numbers peaked at 760 on 16 Aug (MJHC). These estuaries are only about 10 km apart and the extent of interchange between these two flocks is uncertain. Lesser numbers were also present at Findhorn which peaked at 68 on 16 Aug (RSC).

Maximum monthly counts were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Lossie estuary	14	31	19	55	68	30	185	887	260	416	337	166
Spey estuary	27	nc	5	50	90	63	480	760	630	nc	50	nc
Findhorn	20	9	32	8	47	24	56	68	nc	10	11	nc

The only other coastal counts to exceed 25 were at Burghead, with 50 on 25 Jul and 30 on 15 Oct, and at Nairn with 30 on 26 Mar. Elsewhere inland there were high counts at Scarffbanks

pig farm (near Loch Spynie) of 129 on 14 May and 130 on 2 Nov, while on Loch Spynie itself the maximum was 65 on 30 Dec.

Glaucous Gull *Larus hyperboreus*

Very scarce winter visitor.

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

Another year with a good number of sightings mainly at the Spey and Lossie estuaries.

Findhorn Bay:	A 2CY on 7 Feb (MW) and possibly the same bird on 17 Feb (MJHC). Later in the year, 1 on 16 May (AJL).
Burghead:	A 2CY (or possibly 3CY) bird on 6 May (RHD).
Cummingston:	1 on 20 May (AJL).
Hopeman:	1 on 20 May (PRG). Given their proximity to each other the Burghead, Cummingston and Hopman sightings could be the same bird.
Lossie estuary:	First was a 2CY on 12 Jan, followed by sightings of a similar aged bird on 21 Feb, 11 Mar, 16 Apr, 10-16 May, 28 Jun and 10 Jul (RP, DAG <i>et al</i>).
Lossie forest:	A 2CY was seen at the gravel pit on 6 May which may have been the same bird seen at the Lossie estuary around that time (MJHC).
Loch Spynie:	The first sighting was a 2CY on 25 Mar (MJHC) followed by another on 16 Apr (DP).
Spey estuary:	The earliest sighting was a 2CY on 2 Jan, followed by sightings of a similar aged bird on 25 Jan, 23 Feb, 20 Apr, 29 Apr and 5 May (RA, MW <i>et al.</i>). At the end of the year a 1CY was seen on 20 & 22 Dec (MJHC, DM).
Portknockie:	A single sighting of an immature flying west on 19 Apr (MJHC).

Iceland Gull *Larus glaucooides*

Very scarce winter visitor.

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

Another good year, but once again difficult to ascertain the exact number of birds. It is probable that like previous years there were around 20 birds in 2017.

Nairn:	A 3CY was seen in the harbour on 28 Apr (AJC).
Findhorn Bay:	A probable 2CY seen on 3 May (MJHC).
Hopeman:	1 on 28 Apr (SL).
Balormie pig farm:	2 (adult and 2CY) on 2 Jan, and 1 adult on 25 Apr. At the end of the year, 1 adult on 2 & 16 Dec and a 2CY on 26 Dec (RP, MJHC).
Lossie estuary:	First sighting was on 7 Jan followed by two 3CY on 15 Jan and another on 29 Jan. From February to April there were 35 sightings with a remarkable maximum of six different birds on 26 Feb - an adult, three 2CY and two 3CY (RP, DAG). These birds are likely to have

	accounted for many of the sightings over this period. A 2CY was then seen on 7 & 16 May followed by a 2CY on 1 & 3 Jun. At the end of the year an adult seen on 3 Dec was assessed to be the same as the Balormie adult seen around the same time. Two different adults were then seen on 9 & 17 Dec (RP, DAG, DM <i>et al.</i>).
Loch Spynie:	2 adults on 8 Jan and 1 adult on 22 Jan. On 8-9 Apr, a 2CY was present followed by an adult on 14 Apr. Last sighting was a 2 CY on 1 May. (DAG, DM <i>et al.</i>)
Loch Oire:	1 adult on 20 & 22 Jan (JDL, MJHC, RP).
Urquhart:	One on 19 Jan (MW).
Spey estuary:	First sighting was a 3CY on 2 Jan followed by an adult, a 4CY and a 2CY on 25 Jan. A 4CY was also seen on 7 Feb and the last sighting was a 2CY on 21 Apr (RA, MJHC, MW).
Clochan:	1 (probable 2CY) on 9 Apr (MJHC).

Herring Gull *Larus argentatus*

Very common resident breeder and winter visitor.

Breeding: Numerous sites around Elgin with 7 apparently occupied nest sites (AOS) on 4 roofs and 10+ adults at the old sawmill site. Undoubtedly there were many more sites around the town. Elsewhere, roof nesting noted at Forres and, further inland, at Aberlour. On the coast, 67 AOS Covesea and 230 AOS Portknockie (of which 178 were on Bow Fiddle Rock). Monthly maximum counts on the Lossie estuary, the Spey estuary, at Loch Spynie and at Nairn were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Lossie	371	845	73	90	438	57	1800	7173	502	771	180	4000
Spey	200	nc	10	80	400	15	1000	1050	170	nc	200	25
Spynie	2100	11	nc	270	10	nc	450	300	nc	550	nc	1500
Nairn	130	110	210	43	50	2	50	300	60	55	nc	18

Elsewhere, counts over 400 included 1810 Balormie pig farm (near RAF Lossiemouth) 26 Nov (increasing to 3500 there on 2 Dec and 4600 on 26 Dec) and 1000 Findhorn 21 Jul (and 1760 on the beach there on 5 Sep). At Cloddach quarry, and the nearby pig farm, there were 1530 on 22 Jan.

Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus*

Summer visitor and scarce breeder. Very scarce in winter.

Wintering: Recorded in both winter periods. At the start of the year, 2 Balormie pig farm 2-3 Jan followed by adults on 4 Feb and 5 Mar. At nearby Lossie estuary there were 10 reports to mid Mar of up to 3 different adults which may have been the same birds seen at Balormie. Also 1 adult Spey estuary 13 Feb and Findhorn Bay 21 Feb. At the end of the year the only sightings in Dec were four reports from Balormie pig farm with a maximum of 2 adults on 9 Dec, and a single bird at Milnorduff (Elgin) on 8 Dec.

Arrival: By late March, birds were seen at a number of locations. Highest counts included 3 adults Elgin (old sawmill site) 20th, 5 Moycroft (Elgin) 18th, 7 Lhanbryde pig farm 23rd and 4 Loch Oire 23rd.

Breeding: Several sites were identified around Elgin. Two broods were seen at the old sawmill site on 31 May and there were 5 apparently occupied nests (AONs) on Halfords roof on 14 Jun.

High counts of the year included 34 Elgin (on Matalan's roof) 10 Aug, 13 Spey estuary 19 Aug, 31 Cloddach quarry 27 Aug and 13 Cooper Park (Elgin) 1 Sep.

Sandwich Tern *Thalasseus sandvicensis*

Very common summer visitor and occasional breeder.

Arrival: First of the year was 1 Burghead 14 Mar (RHD). First sightings at other locations were 1 Findhorn Bay 28 Mar, 11 Nairn 31 Mar, 2 Spey Bay 6 Apr and 2 Lossiemouth 9 Apr. High counts in spring included 70 Nairn east beach 3 Apr, 110 Findhorn Bay 10 Apr and 110 at Burghead on 18 Apr.

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

2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
3 Apr	22 Mar	25 Mar	27 Mar	18 Mar	3 Apr	25 Mar	12 Mar	21 Mar	14 Mar

Breeding: No breeding has been confirmed in Moray & Nairn since 2005.

First juveniles with adults from colonies outwith Moray & Nairn were noted from mid July. From the colour ringed birds observed at Findhorn most of the juveniles had come from the Forvie NNR on the Ythan Estuary. Some had also arrived from breeding sites on the Northumbrian coast. Numbers observed at Findhorn beach this year were relatively low with only two counts over 100 during July-September - 120 on 25 Aug and 140 on 27 Aug (RSC). Elsewhere, highest counts were also well down, including 45 Strathlene 26 Jul, 16 Lossiemouth 27 Jul, 10 Nairn 18 Aug and 17 Burghead 25 Aug.

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	8	14	68	140	51	2
Lossie estuary	0	16	nc	7	4	5
Spey estuary	0	11	3	11	4	3

Passage of Sandwich Tern along the Moray coast was monitored during regular sea watches from Lossiemouth. Best passage count in spring was 42 in 1 hour on 1 May. During June and July, counts were generally low with a maximum of 14 on 26 Jul. By late summer and autumn counts had increased once more and included 94 on 26 Aug, 20 on 18 Sep and the final sighting of 5 on 1 Oct. The maximum half monthly one hour passage counts taken at Lossiemouth from late April through to early October were as follows (RP):

late Apr	early May	late May	early Jun	late Jun	early Jul	late Jul	early Aug	late Aug	early Sep	late Sep	early Oct
20	42	2	3	4	0	14	6	94	20	20	5

Little Tern *Sternula albifrons*

Very scarce summer visitor and rare breeder.

First of the year was 1 Spey estuary 28 Apr (SL). During May there were a further 9 sightings at Spey estuary with a high count of 5 on 4 May (MJHC, NC). At Lossiemouth east beach, 2 on 12 May was the only breeding season record. There were 15 reports this year from Findhorn in July and August with the majority coming from the beach at low water. Many of

these sightings also included juveniles as well as adults. Sightings included 14 (12 adults & 2 juveniles) on 27 Jul, 14 (10 adults & 4 juveniles) on 2 Aug, 15 (9 adults & 6 juveniles) on 6 Aug and 14 (four adults & ten juveniles) on 9 Aug (RSC). As there was no breeding reported during 2017 in Moray & Nairn, the juveniles presumably originated from a colony elsewhere.

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*

Summer visitor and fairly common breeder.

Arrival: First was 1 Aberlour 23 Apr followed by sightings of 3 Loch Spynie 28 Apr, 1 off Lossiemouth 29 Apr and 2 Findhorn Bay 1 May.

Breeding: At Loch Spynie, numbers of apparently occupied nests (AONs) on the platform were back up again this year after a fall in 2016. On 20 Jun there were 28 adults and 15-20 AONs and on 12 Jul there were 45 birds with 17 AONs (MJHC). At the Spey estuary no breeding was confirmed although 29 were seen on 8 May and 25 on 26 Jul. Inland near the River Spey at Aberlour, at least 3 pairs bred on the roof of Walkers Shortbread factory with 6 adults and 3 juveniles seen on 30 Jun - 12 birds were there on 7 Jul (AE).

High counts on Findhorn beach occurred in late July with a maximum of 348 on 31 Jul. Numbers then dropped before peaking at 87 on 4 Sep with the last sighting of 31 on 7 Sep (RSC). One hour passage counts at Lossiemouth included 7 on 13 May, 7 on 16 Jun, 21 on 29 Jul, 6 on 15 Aug and a final sighting of 1 on 28 Sep (RP).

Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea*

Summer visitor and fairly common breeder.

Arrival: First were 1 Spey estuary 20 Apr and 1 off Lossiemouth 22 Apr.

Breeding: c.10 apparently occupied nests on shingle at the mouth of the Spey on 19 Jun, when 49 adults were counted. Highest count in this period on the Spey estuary was 94 on 8 Jul (MJHC).

On Findhorn beach high counts included 86, 137 & 146 on 29-31 Jul (RSC). A few passage sightings at Lossiemouth during June with a maximum of 5 in one hour on 10 Jun (RP). Last sighting of the season was 1 on 7 Sep on Findhorn beach.

Black Tern *Chlidonias niger*

Very scarce spring and autumn migrant.

An adult flew east past Lossiemouth on 18 Sep (RP). This was the first sighting since 2012 and only the 8th record since 2000.

Great Skua *Stercorarius skua*

Fairly common migrant in summer and autumn.

Winter: Some very unusual mid winter records in early January; 5 flew west past Lossiemouth on 1 Jan (RP) and another was seen at the Spey estuary on 2 Jan (RA).

Spring: Four sightings at Lossiemouth with 1 on 21 May, 2 on 25 May, 3 on 10 Jun and 5 on 29 Jun (RP). Elsewhere, 1 Cullen 16 Apr, 1 Strathlene 30 Jun and, at Burghead, 3 on 25 Apr and 1 on 10 Jun.

Summer: In July-August, seen off Lossiemouth on nine dates, mostly single birds except 4 on 22 Jul, 2 on 4 Aug, 2 on 5 Aug and 2 on 20 Aug (DAG, RP). The only records elsewhere were 1 Burghead 23 Jul and 2 Nairn 29 Jul.

Autumn: In September-October, recorded off Lossiemouth on eight dates, again mostly single birds except 3 on 9 & 10 Sep, 2 on 11 Sep, 12 in 90 minutes on 16 Sep and 3 on 29 Oct which was also the last sighting of the year (RP). The only other sightings were 1 Strathlene 11 Sep, 1 Spey estuary 20 Sep and 1 Burghead 15 Oct.

Pomarine Skua *Stercorarius pomarinus*

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

Four autumn sightings of single birds off Lossiemouth, on 28 Sep, and 14, 15 & 29 Oct (RP).

Arctic Skua *Stercorarius parasiticus*

Fairly common migrant in summer and autumn.

Spring: More early sightings this year than usual. These included 1 on 15 Apr and 2 on 22 Apr at Lossiemouth, 2 on 25 Apr and 2 on 6 May at Burghead and 3 on 6 May at Spey Bay.

Summer: From June-August, numerous sightings at Lossiemouth and Findhorn, though numbers were generally small. Best counts at Lossiemouth were 2 on 29 Jun, 3 on 23 Jul and 4 on 30 Aug (RP, DM). Off Findhorn, 3 on 18 Aug, 6 on 20 Aug, 4 on 22 Aug and 5 on 24 Aug (RSC, AMac). Elsewhere 3 Strathlene 29 Jun, 2 Burghead 23 Jul (and 3 on 18 Aug) and 2 Nairn 15 Aug.

Autumn: Regular sightings continued at Lossiemouth in September-October including 3 on 16 Sep, 3 on 18 Sep and 3 on 2 Oct (RP). At Findhorn there were fewer records with 2 seen on 4 & 7 Sep. Elsewhere, 1 Burghead 17 Sep.

Winter: Last sighting of the year was a late bird off Lossiemouth on 2 Nov (RP).



Arctic Skuas, Findhorn beach 16 August 2017 (Richard Somers Cocks)

Long-tailed Skua *Stercorarius longicaudus*

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

Two juveniles (one intermediate and one pale) were seen off Lossiemouth on 16 Sep (RP).

Little Auk *Alle alle*

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

A reasonable year for sightings with the majority seen at the end of the year.

Early winter period: On 1 Jan, 10 Strathlene (MJHC) and 9 Lossiemouth (RP) and on 2 Jan, 3 off Lossiemouth (RP). Elsewhere, 2 Portknockie 3 Jan (LSi) and, at Burghead, 1 on 12 Jan (DM) and 1 on 8 Feb (JDG).

Late winter period: Off Lossiemouth, 1 on 1 Nov, 11 on 2 Nov, 2 on 13 Nov, 8 on 18 Nov, 3 on 25 Nov, 2 on 26 Nov, 5 on 10 Dec, 2 on 16 Dec and 4 on 26 Dec (RP). Elsewhere, 1 off Burghead on 16 Nov (RSC).

Guillemot *Uria aalge*

Rare breeder, very common offshore.

Breeding: A small but expanding colony on the seaward side of the Bow Fiddle Rock at Portknockie contained up to 22 adults on 6 May (JDL, DGD).

First count of the year was at Lossiemouth where 85 were recorded in one hour on a westerly passage on 1 Jan, with another significant passage of 77 on 19 Feb (RP). A sea-watch at Burghead recorded 12 in one hour on 8 Feb. Elsewhere, there were 20 on 12 Feb and 50 on 28 Mar off Nairn and 7 off Findhorn on 17 Feb. By spring the highest passage count recorded at Lossiemouth was 689 heading west on 28 May. Other offshore sightings included 12 on 18 Apr at Findhorn and 16 on 27 Apr at Cullen. In summer at Lossiemouth 40 were recorded on the sea on 13 Jun and 116 were seen on passage on 29 Jun. Highest count was off Burghead with 200 on 26 Jun (CSW). By autumn, passage counts at Lossiemouth had increased again and included 37 on 22 Sep, 182 on 14 Oct and 147 on 28 Oct. The only other counts more than 10 were at Burghead with 170 on 15 Oct and 16 on 19 Oct (TJW, JO). Last sightings of the year off Lossiemouth included 22 on 2 Nov, 16 on 3 Dec and finally 1 on 30 Dec.

At Lossiemouth regular sea-watches were conducted throughout 2017 and the maximum passage recorded over a one hour period was as follows (RP):

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
85	77	3	6	689	116	5	5	37	182	22	16

Razorbill *Alca torda*

Scarce breeder, very common offshore.

Breeding: At the Portknockie colony, 87 adults were on cliff ledges on 18 Jun. About 2 km west between Findochty and Tronach Head another colony had 28 adults on cliffs on 27 Jun (MJHC).

Highest numbers offshore were recorded in spring and included a high count at Burghead of 393 on 4 Apr. In one hour counts at Lossiemouth the peak passage recorded was 1522 on 25 Mar and 955 on 16 Apr. Elsewhere, significant counts this year included 158 in Burghead Bay from Roseisle forest on 10 Mar, 184 off Findhorn on 13 Mar, 120 at Cullen on 24 Mar and 200 off Nairn on 28 Mar. High counts later in the year included 36 off Findhorn on 21 Jun, 120 off Burghead on 15 Oct and 945 passing Lossiemouth in one hour on 14 Oct.

At Lossiemouth regular sea-watches were conducted throughout 2017 and the maximum passage recorded over a one hour period was as follows (RP):

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
19	328	1522	955	162	220	21	0	125	945	83	62

Black Guillemot *Cepphus grylle*

Scarce breeder and scarce offshore.

Breeding: Highest count of adults on the sea around Bow Fiddle Rock (Portknockie) was 21 on 9 Apr and later there were 2 on the cliff and 9 on the sea on 18 Jun (MJHC). At Tronach Head the early spring count was only 9 on 9 Apr but there were 23 (20 on sea, 3 on cliffs) on 27 Jun (MJHC). The long-term traditional crevice at Tronach contained a clutch of 2 eggs on 5 Jul but subsequently failed. Although breeding at these sites is apparent among the small number of birds present, the success rates are difficult to ascertain owing to the inaccessibility of the nests on these cliffs.

Counts early in the year included 22 passing Lossiemouth 8 Jan, 3 Covesea 12 Feb, 1 Nairn 7 Mar and 4 Burghead 1 Apr. Away from the east Moray breeding area, the highest counts in autumn were off Lossiemouth with passage counts of 46 on 14 Oct and 45 on 29 Oct. At Delnies (Nairn) there were 16 on the sea on 31 Aug (DMP).

At Lossiemouth regular sea-watches were conducted throughout 2017 and the maximum passage recorded over a one hour period was as follows (RP):

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
22	5	4	7	0	2	1	12	8	46	12	12

Puffin *Fratercula arctica*

Very scarce offshore.

Recorded off Lossiemouth on six days: 2 on 19 Feb, 2 on 11 Jun, 1 on 12 Jun, 2 on 13 Jun, 1 on 22 Jul and 1 on 8 Oct (RP). Other sightings were a single bird past Burghead on 27 Jun (RHD), 3 past Strathlene in one hour on 29 Jun (MJHC) and a dead specimen found on Findhorn beach on 9 May (GPa).

Feral Pigeon *Columba livia*

Very common resident breeder.

The only report of a flock exceeding 100 was 440 Buckie harbour 15 Jan (and 345 there 3 Dec). Flocks of 50-100 were seen at Lossiemouth harbour, Nairn harbour and in central Elgin.

Stock Dove *Columba oenas*

Scarce resident breeder.

Breeding season (March-July): 4 Balormie 23 Jun, 1 Blacksboat 1 Apr, 1 Boath 21 May, 3 Calcots 30 Apr, 3 singing Cawdor oakwood 23 May, 4 Cloddach 12 Mar, 1 Corglass 6 May, 2 Darkland 1 Apr (singing there 20 May), 1 Fornighty 2 Jul, 1 singing Loch Spynie/Scarffbanks several dates and 1 Nether Birnie 19 May.

Autumn/winter records from additional localities were 1 Caysbriggs 8 Feb, 1 Findhorn Bay 18 Feb and 1 Lossie estuary 6 & 18 Sep.

Woodpigeon *Columba palumbus*

Very common resident breeder.

In the early part of the year, an exceptional flock of c.4200 built up at Easter Bauds by 14 Jan (AY). Flocks of 100 or more elsewhere included 150 Achamore 3 Jan, 100 Dipple 14 Jan, 100 Findhorn Bay 8 Feb, 140 Firhall 23 Mar, 110 Nairn 18 Feb, 120 Newton of Dalvey 20 Apr and 124 Tomnamoon 16 Mar.

On 6 Aug, a regular northward movement of small groups (usually 5-10 birds) was noted over Conicavel - a total of 591 birds in 2 hours during 11:00-13:00 (MJHC).

In autumn-winter, 1000 Clochan 12 Dec, 250 Foresterseat 16 Nov, 400 Knockando 28 Sep and 300 Moyness 2 Dec.

Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*

Very common resident breeder.

Counts of 10 or more included 26 Coltfoot 14 Oct, 20 Cawdor 29 Oct, 17 Elgin 4 Sep, 12 Dunphail 24 Sep and 12 Tomintoul 26 Apr (10 there 26 Aug). Smaller groups of 5-9 were reported from Cummingston, Drainie, Garmouth, Monaughty Farm (Alves), Nairn, Portgordon, Surradale and Urquhart.

Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus*

Summer visitor and fairly common breeder.

Arrival: First reports, in April, were from Dulsie Farm 22nd, Drumlochan 28th, Glenferness 28th, Burnside (Dunearn) 29th and Tomnamoon 30th. The first four sites are in close proximity.

Subsequently seen or heard in May-June at Ailnack gorge, Aoitnoch, Allanreid, Altyre, Auldich, Aultahuish, Aultmore, Balloch Hill, Balnught, Braes of Glenlivet, Burgiehill, Coldburn, Corglass, Craig Builg, Craigellachie, Craighead, Dallas, Dallasbraughty, Dava, Gallowhill, Glenlivet, Grange, Inchrory, Knockaneorn, Little Balloch Hill, Logie Steading, Ordiquish, Phorp, Seafield, Shaw Hill, Sheals, Spynie Palace, Towie Hill and Woodend.

Only Seafield (near Findhorn Bay) and Spynie Palace are in the coastal plain - but probably only passing birds were heard here.



Cuckoo, Knockaneorn 26 May 2017 (Alison Ritchie)

Barn Owl *Tyto alba*

Scarce resident breeder.

Breeding: Extremely early at Allarburn Farm (Elgin), where a downy chick fell from a nest in a farm building on 10 Feb. Two other juveniles were found in the same building on 23 Feb (GBa, ABo).

Other breeding season reports (March-July) were received from: Auldich (Ballindalloch), Craigellachie, Darkland, Loch Spynie, Sheals (Glass) and Tomintoul.

The number of breeding season localities reported in the last 15 years:

2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
15	11	13	21	10	9	5	0	1	9	5	9	8	17	7

At other times of year, reports came from the following additional sites: Archiestown, Auchmair, Ben Rinnes distillery, Boath, Kinloss, Foresterseat, Forres, Lachlanwells, Lynemore (Dulsie), Macallan distillery (Easter Elchies), Moyness, Mundole, Nairn and Shenvault.

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

2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
33	31	27	31	21	40	20	11	13	21	12	30	47	39	21

This shows a disappointing decline in reports, at all seasons. Hopefully it is a reflection of a variable reporting rate rather than a genuine population reduction.

Tawny Owl *Strix aluco*

Common resident breeder.

Records received from 8 localities.

Long-eared Owl *Asio otus*

Scarce resident breeder.

Calling young were heard near Lossiemouth cemetery on 21 Jun (MJHC). The only other record was of a bird beside the A96 just east of Brodie on 10 Dec (MGC).

Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus*

Rare breeder and very scarce migrant.

Breeding: Present in summer in moorland breeding habitat were 1 Ballindalloch 25 May (PI), 1 Dava 25 Jun (JPot), 1 Dunearn 6 May (CMJ) and 1 Blairnamarrow 28 Jun (GB).

The only lowland record was 1 Covesea dunes (near the lighthouse) 7 Feb (MS).

Swift *Apus apus*

Summer visitor and common breeder.

Arrival: First to appear, in early May, were 1 Aberlour 6th (12 there on 7th), 10 Loch Spynie 7th, 1 Burghead 7th, 1 Nairn 7th (4 on 11th), 7 Lossiemouth 11th, 3 Elgin 11th, 1 Garmouth 11th and 4 Forres 12th.

Breeding: Swifts were seen entering roof spaces in Elgin (Reid St. and Roseisle Drive) and Burghead (Fraser Rd.).

Largest concentrations, in early-mid summer, were c.150 Spynie canal 10 Jun (100+ at the loch 19 Jun), c.50 over Cullen 6 Jul, c.40 Lower Broadshaw reservoir 2 Jul and 30 Tomintoul square 28 Jul.

In August, 30 over Elgin 8th but only small numbers thereafter; 6 Loch Spynie 18th, 1 Lossiemouth 19th and 2 Bishopmill (Elgin) 21st were the last of the year.

Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*

Very scarce visitor and occasional breeder.

Breeding season records (April-July): A pair probably bred on the River Spey between Cragganmore and Blacksboat. One bird was seen there on 11 Mar and then regular sightings followed throughout April with a pair seen on two occasions (NS, CA). There were no subsequent sightings and it is thought that rising water levels after heavy rain may have flooded the nest. Elsewhere, a pair was at Carron on 5 May, and one bird was there on 23 May (PI). There were 3 sightings of a single bird on the River Lossie in Elgin between 12-30 Apr (MMA, SPM, LM) and one was a short distance downstream at Foresterseat on 1 Jun (MWh). July records were 1 Mains of Balvenie (Dufftown) 13th (DW), 1 Findhorn Bay 8th (RSC), 1 Loch Spynie 13th & 27th (and 26 Jun) and 1 Longmorn distillery pond 11th (MB). At other times: 1 Aberlour 30-31 Oct and 18 & 24 Nov (AE), 1 Cloddach quarry 27 Aug, 30 Sep & 22 Oct (MJHC), 1 Elgin (River Lossie) 18 Aug (AMK), 1 Findhorn Bay 22 & 30 Aug, 1, 13 & 19 Sep and 9 & 23 Oct (RSC, GM *et al.*), 1 Chapelton (Forres) 15 Dec (ISS), 1 Kingsteps 3 Dec (GP), 1 Loch of Blairs 19 Aug (MGC), 1 Loch Oire 16 & 23 Jan, 13 Aug and 12 & 30 Oct (EH, MJHC, LSi), 1 Loch Spynie 1 Aug, then on 22 dates between 9 Sep-9 Dec (with 2 birds on 20 & 22 Oct) and 1 Spey estuary 7 & 31 Aug (RAS, LW).

Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major*

Common resident breeder.

Widespread in woodlands and visiting garden feeders.

[Green Woodpecker *Picus viridis*

Very scarce visitor.

No records from the woodlands beside the River Spey in the Cragganmore/Delnapot/Inveravon area. This was the last regular site in Moray & Nairn, still occupied in 2016.]

Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*

Scarce resident breeder.

Breeding season (April-July) records (*confirmed breeding in italics*) included birds/pairs at Ailnack gorge (*Delnabo*), Auldich, Carse of Delnies, Cawdor, Cnoc na Sealg (Ballindalloch area), Corglass Farm, Craighead, *Craigroy*, Dalvrecht (Strath Avon), Dunearn, Easter Coltfeld, Findhorn Bay, Forres, Hopeman, Inchroty and Craig Builg, Kellas, Kinloss, Knock of Braemoray, Knockaneorn, Loch Flemington, Loch Spynie, Lossiemouth, Lower Broadshaw, Milton of Grange, Muirton, Plewlands, Rumachroy, Tom-na-Craggan (Strath Avon) and Tomintoul.

A notable record was of one on the Cairngorms plateau, near Lochan Buidhe, on 8 Jul (TJW). Additional sites, with birds seen in other months, were Achavraat, Aldunie, Auchmair, Brodie, Burghead, Califer Hill, Clune, Covesea, Cragganmore, Culbin Bar, Cummingston, Dava, Drainie, Dunphail, Ferness, Findhorn village, Garmouth, Lethen-Moyness, Mill of Grange, Moidach Mor, Morinsh Forest, Moyness, Refouble, Roseisle, Shempston and Westerfolds.

Merlin *Falco columbarius*

Scarce resident breeder and migrant.

Breeding: 50 sites were checked and 11 of these were found to be occupied by pairs, at least seven (and possibly nine) of which laid clutches. Four pairs were successful, and these raised

12 young between them. Mean brood size (fledged young per pair) overall was 1.1, but better in Nairn, at 2.3, than in Moray, at 0.4 (BCo, JKC).

Occupation and breeding success in west Moray remained very low, with only three sites occupied by pairs, none of which produced any fledged young. One pair failed because the immature male, which was ringed at a site in Nairnshire the previous year, was killed on the nest by a fox. Another pair had their eggs predated and the third pair failed for unknown reasons prior to, or during, egg-laying. (JKC). Three of the four Nairn area nests were successful - the fourth failed before, or during, egg-laying, possibly due to a scarcity of suitable prey in the area (JKC). In that part of Moray east of the Spey, it appears that poor weather resulted in low prey densities and Merlin pairs abandoned their breeding attempts. Site occupation (4 out of 22 checked) and breeding success (one successful pair) were the worst ever recorded. (BCo).

Outside the breeding season, single birds were seen in the lowlands at Clochan 8 Jan, Findhorn Bay 14 Jan-10 Mar (9 dates) and 21 Aug, Hempriggs 9 Jan, Kinloss 23 Jan, Kirkton 10 Jan and Portknockie 17 Feb.

Remaining in the uplands in winter was 1 Carn Shalag 10 Dec.

Hobby *Falco subbuteo*

Rare visitor. Has bred.

Two records, of single birds flying over the Spey estuary on 19 & 30 May (MJHC). The 2016 breeding site was unoccupied.

Peregrine *Falco peregrinus*

Rare resident breeder.

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

In late summer-winter, single birds were reported from Alves (Sep), Bailliesland (Oct), Balormie (Oct), Bogeney (Jan), Burghead (Oct, Nov), Cloddach quarry (Feb), Craighead (Jan, Feb), Culbin (Jan, Dec), Darkland (Aug), Elgin (Jan, Jul), Findhorn Bay (Jan-Apr, Aug-Dec), Kinloss (Jan, Mar), Loch Spynie (Aug), Lossie estuary (Nov), Lower Broadshaw (Feb, Mar), Moor of Tore (Oct), Moss of Dunphail (Jan), Nairn Bar (Jan), Nairn harbour (Aug), Portknockie (Jan), Scarffbanks (Oct), Shempston (Nov), Spey estuary (Sep, Dec) and Wellheads (Jan).

Jay *Garrulus glandarius*

Fairly common resident breeder.

Breeding season (April-July): Reports from Auchenhalrig, Ballindalloch, Binsness, Burnside (Teindland), Chapelton (Forres), Dufftown, Dunearn, Findrassie, Gilston, Glenfiddich, Loch Spynie, Oakwood (Elgin), Ordiquish, Pitgaveny, Seafield, Scarffbanks, Torrieston (family party on 10 Jul) and Wester Milton.

At other seasons, additional sites were Mosstodloch, Balormie, Beachans, Bishopmill, Cloddach quarry, Clune, College of Roseisle, Cragganmore, Craighead, Culbin Forest, Dallas Dhu distillery, Dalmunach, Delfur (Boat o' Brig), Delnies, Easter Regaule, Foresterseat, Forres, Holme Rose, Inchberry, Kinloss, Kintessack, Knockando, Kronyhillock, Little Aitnoch, Loanhead, Loch na Bo, Loch of Blairs, Loch Oire, Lossie Forest, Lower Broadshaw, Marypark, Nairn, Rafford, Roseisle, Sanquhar Woods, Spynie canal (at Ardivot), Spynie hospital, Strondow and Troves.

Largest congregations were at Loch Spynie in August; 15 on 6th, 17 on 13th and 15 on 27th (RP).

Magpie *Pica pica*

Common resident breeder.

Recorded at Aberlour, Achavraat, Balormie pig farm, Barmuckity, Birnie Kirk, Blervie Castle, Broadley, Burghead, Clochan, Clovenside cemetery (Forres), College of Roseisle, Coltfeld, Corskie, Craigellachie, Craighead, Cummington, Dipple, Drainie, Dulsie Bridge, Earlseat, Easter Lawrenceton, Easter Milton (Nairn), Findhorn (bay, village & dunes), Forres, Gallowhill, Garmouth, Glaschyle, Glen Burgie, Glenshiel, Hopeman, Keith, Kellas, Kingsteps, Kinloss, Kirkton, Little Forgie, Loch Spynie, Lossie estuary, Lossiemouth, Lower Broadshaw, Mill of Grange, Mill of Tynet, Moyness, Mulben, Nairn, New Forres, Newton of Dalvey, North Crannoch, Ordiquish, Portgordon, Rafford, Roseisle, Ryeriggs, Shempston, Silverhills, Spey Bay and Urquhart.

Frequency of group sizes reported:

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
2017	113	49	11	10	4	3	0	0	9	0	1	1
2016	91	22	12	4	4	2	2	0	0	0	0	0
2015	58	48	9	1	1	2	2	0	0	0	0	0

Largest groups were 12 Findhorn dunes 17 Feb, 11 Ryeriggs 29 Dec and 9 Lossiemouth golf course 17 Jun.

Jackdaw *Corvus monedula*

Very common resident breeder.

Counts of 50 or more were 530 Marypark 16 Mar, 240 Tomintoul quarry 21 Jul, 150 Cragganmore 11 Dec (120 there 8 Jan), 80 Spey estuary 25 Sep, 75 Auchbreck 25 Jul, 75 Dipple 2 Jan, 60 Knockando distillery 28 Sep, 56 Lossie estuary 26 Aug (feeding among the algae), 50 Foresterseat 28 Dec and 50 Glenconglass 29 Oct.

Rook *Corvus frugilegus*

Very common resident breeder.

One colony count received: 57 apparently occupied nests Knockando Parish Church 9 May. Highest counts were 600 Lossiemouth airfield 27 Nov, 500 Marypark 16 Mar and 100 Dipple 23 Jul.

Carrion Crow *Corvus corone*

Very common resident breeder.

Breeding: Pairs bred close to central Elgin with incubating adults noted on 29 Apr at Bishopmill and 17 May near the junction of Ashgrove Road and the A96. Recently fledged young at Elgin Cemetery on 14 Jun.

Most numerous on the Lossie estuary where maximum monthly counts were 40 on 19 Feb, 74 on 30 Jul, 96 on 10 Aug, 72 on 6 Sep and 61 on 3 Dec.

Elsewhere, groups of 10 or more (maximum site counts) included 60 Cloddach quarry 27 Aug, 40 Corskie (Garmouth) 31 Dec, 27 Nairn 27 Oct, 20 Silverhills 8 Oct, 20 Spey estuary 6 Nov, 15 Balormie pig farm 2 Dec, 15 Little Aitnoh 18 Jul, 13 Foresterseat 16 Aug, 10 Burghead 13 Apr and 10 Delnies 15 Oct.

Carrion Crows were again recorded during seawatches off Lossiemouth harbour - on 4 dates in April, notably 23 Apr when 9 flew in off the sea from the north. On both 8 Oct and 15 Oct, 8 birds flew off high to the north or north-west, and 1 flew west on 1 Nov (RP).

Hooded Crow *Corvus cornix*

Scarce visitor and rare breeder.

Hooded Crows (or Carrion x Hooded hybrids very closely resembling Hooded) were reported in small numbers (up to 3) at Aberlour, Burghead, Delnies, Cloddach quarry, Croy, Culbin Bar, Dufftown, Findhorn Bay, Firhall, Glen Rinnes, Lethen, Loch Flemington, Loch Oire, Loch Spynie, Lossie estuary, Middlefield, Moss-side, Moyness, Nairn Bar, Oakenhead and Seafield.

Slightly more numerous in the Nairn area where 4 Kingsteps 3 Jan, and regularly up to 7 around Nairn beach in August-December with a peak of 14 on 4 & 5 Oct.

Hybrids: Birds of clear hybrid origin were under-reported, best counts being 4 Cloddach quarry 27 Aug and 4 Lossie estuary 10 Aug. Elsewhere, 1-2 were seen at Burghead, Culbin Bar, Elgin, Findhorn Bay, Holme Rose-Kilravock, Loch Flemington and Nairn.

Raven *Corvus corax*

Scarce visitor and rare breeder.

Breeding: Two pairs bred at the coast, at Tronach Head where at least two young fledged (MJHC), and at Covesea where the attempt was probably unsuccessful (EJ, MJHC).

Reported with increasing frequency inland (although no breeding detected): 1 Achdregnie 16 Apr, 2 Ailnack gorge 18 Jul, 8 Auchmair 22 Jan, 2 Auldich 8 May, 1 Ballindalloch 17 Jul, 1 Ben Rinnes summit 5 Jan (and 2 there 18 Feb), 1 Carn Daimh 29 Oct, 1 Crofts of Scalan 20 May, 3 Delnabo 23 Apr, 1 Dulsie 3 May, 1 Dunearn 29 Jan, 1 Glenferness 30 Mar, 3 Inchrory 3 Jun, 1 Kellas 20 May, 3 Logie 22 Oct, 1 Shaw Hill 2 Jul, 1 Strath Avon 25 Apr and 3 Tomintoul 23 Apr. On the Cairngorms plateau, 3 Cairn Gorm 9 May, 1 Cairn Lochan 20 Jun and 3 Cairn Lochan and Lochan Buidhe 8 Jul.

Nearer to the coast, 1 Califer Hill 13 Dec, 1 Findhorn Bay 21 Feb, 2 Lossie Forest coast 17 Jan (and 4 there 29 Dec), 1 Moss of Barmuckity 3 Nov and 1 Nairn 18 Aug.



Raven, Cairngorms plateau 18 July 2017 (Robert Ince)

Waxwing *Bombycilla garrulus*

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

Winter-spring: Following the substantial influx in autumn/winter 2016, good numbers remained into 2017:

- 1-7 Jan: In Elgin, 19 on 2nd and 22 on 4th. In Forres, 48 on 1st, 23 on 6th and 70 on 7th. In Nairn, 3 on 3rd and 20 on 5th. Elsewhere, 18 Hill of Glaschyle 7th.
- 8-14 Jan: 36 Elgin 9th, 13 Burghead 10th, 2 Lhanbryde 10th and 18 Lossiemouth 12th.
- 15-21 Jan: 1 Forres 16th, 11 Elgin 17th (22 on 21st) and 8 Hopeman 18th.
- 22-28 Jan: 7 Dyke 22nd, 3 Forres 22nd, 4 Portknockie 22nd, 6 Glenburgie 24th, 3 Nairn 26th, 27 Easter Regaule 27th, 17 Kintessack 27th and 15 Elgin 27th.
- 29 Jan-4 Feb: In Elgin, 46 on 30th-31st, 38 on 1st and 35 on 4th. Elsewhere, 15 Burgie Mains 30th, 17 Nairn 1st and 1 Loch Spynie 3rd.
- 5-11 Feb: 13 Elgin 7th (24 on 8th), 5 Pitairlie 7th (4 on 10th), 4 Easter Coltfeld 10th, 3 Lossiemouth 10th and 1 Nairn 11th.
- 12-18 Feb: 33 Elgin 16th (16 on 17th, 30 on 18th), 5 Coral Cottage (Lossiemouth) 12th and 8 Pitairlie 16th.
- 19-25 Feb: More numerous in Elgin where 41 on 19th, 34 on 21st and 68 on 23rd. Further inland, 40 Drumin 19th and 10 Dales 21st. Also 3 Waterford (Forres) 21st and 8 Nairn 24th.
- 26 Feb-4 Mar: The only reports were 12 Burghead 2nd (1 on 3rd) and 5 Elgin 4th.
- 5-11 Mar: Peak counts in Elgin were 41 on 6th, 48 on 8th and 41 on 10th. Elsewhere, 15 Burghead 6th, 8 Forres 8th (20 on 11th), 1 Findhorn 10th and 7 Nairn 11th.
- 12-18 Mar: Increasing numbers in Elgin where 25 on 13th, 38 on 15th and 52 on 16th. Also, 15 Mosstodloch 12th, 4 Nairn 13th, 8 Forres 14th and 13 Hopeman 17th.
- 19-25 Mar: In Elgin, 28 on 19th, 36 on 21st, 55 on 22nd and 38 on 24th. Elsewhere, 13 Burghead 19th and 14 Waterford (Forres) 22nd.
- 26 Mar-1 Apr: In Elgin, 30 on 27th, 36 on 30th and 27 on 1st. Elsewhere, 4 Inchberry 26th, 6 Forres 30th and 18 Burghead 31st.
- 2-8 Apr: Still good numbers in Elgin where 19 on 3rd, 57 on 5th and 7 on 8th. In Nairn, 15 on 4th and 10 on 7th.
- 9-15 Apr: Much reduced numbers in Elgin where 8 on 9th, 14 on 13th and 17 on 15th. Also, 2 Lossiemouth 15th.
- 16-22 Apr: In Elgin, 4 on 16th but increased numbers later in the period when 15 on 20th and 22 on 21st. Also, 1 Lossiemouth 16th.
- 23-29 Apr: Last of the winter was a late flock of 20 Elgin 29th.

A much smaller arrival took place in autumn:

- November: First was 1 Elgin 12th, increasing to 8 on 25th-26th and 16 on 30th. In Lossiemouth there were 4 on 14th, 3 on 15th, 5 on 16th and 6 on 28th.
- December: Seen only in Elgin where 19 on 11th, 7 on 22nd and 6 on 31st.

Coal Tit *Periparus ater*

Very common resident breeder.

First song Elgin 9 Jan.

Counts of 10 or more were 30 Shaw Hill 2 Jul, 25 Culbin Forest 4 Nov (20 on 5 Nov), 20 Knockando woods 30 Mar, 14 Knockando distillery 9 Feb, 13 Dava 16 Dec, 10 Cragganmore 8 Jan, 10 Dulsie Wood 29 Mar and 10 Foresterseat 14 Dec.

Crested Tit *Lophophanes cristatus*

Common resident breeder.

Nest boxes:

	Pairs	Mean clutch	Mean fledged brood (all pairs)	Mean fledged brood (successful pairs only)	
Lossie Forest	6	5.3	5.0	5.0	(MJHC)

Away from the coastal forests, reports from other areas were 1 Bantrach 28 Aug, 1 Bogeney 4 Oct, 1 Clune 10 Dec, 2 Dava 8 Jan & 28 Dec, 2 Douglassheil Moss 17 Sep, 2 Dulsie Wood 29 Mar, 1 Glenferness 28 Mar, 2 Loch Kirkaldy 22 Mar (1 on 27 Sep & 21 Oct), 2 Loch of Blairs 10 Dec, 7 Phorp 9 Oct, 1 Rochuln 14 Dec and 5 Shaw Hill 2 Jul.

Highest counts were 11 Culbin Forest 26 Nov, and 10 there on 22 Jan.

Blue Tit *Cyanistes caeruleus*

Very common resident breeder.

The proportion of juveniles caught per adult for ringing at the Loch Spynie 'Constant Effort Site' was 1.0:1, down from 1.7:1 in 2016 (RP).

Counts exceeding ten birds were 25 Sunnyhillock 13 Dec, 17 Firhill (Nairn) 23 Mar, 15 Foresterseat 14 Dec, 13 Cragganmore 11 Dec and 12 Knockando Distillery 9 Feb.

Great Tit *Parus major*

Very common resident breeder.

First reports of song were at Lhanbryd Church on 16 Jan and Kingsteps on 1 Feb.

Productivity, as assessed by ringing at the 'Constant Effort Site' at Loch Spynie, was 1.9 juveniles caught per adult, well down from 3.8 in 2016 (RP).

The only count exceeding ten birds was 15 Foresterseat 14 Dec.

Skylark *Alauda arvensis*

Very common breeder and migrant.

First song Grange 20 Jan, Balormie pig farm 21 Jan and Waterford 9 Feb. Six singing over the Findhorn Bay marsh off Kinloss village 21 Feb.

Breeding season (April-July): Seen or heard at Aberlour, Achdrgnie, Auchmair, Balneden, Bogeney, Burnside (Teindland), Carse of Delnies, Chapelton of Glenlivet, Clune, Cnoc na Sealg, Corglass, Dava, Dipple, Dulsie Bridge, Earnhill, Edingight, Findhorn dunes and Bay, Foresterseat, Forres (Enterprise Park), Gallowhill, Gilston, Glenfarclas, Hopeman, Inverblye, Kellas, Loch Flemington, Loch Spynie, Lossiemouth airfield, Middlefield, Moyness, Nairn, Netherton, Newton of Dalvey, Portgordon, Portknockie, Seafield, Scalan, Tomintoul, Tugnet and Urquhart.

Counts of 10 or more included 32 Netherton Farm 18 Feb (14 on 28 Feb, 11 on 23 Mar, 10+ on 3 May), 30 Lochyhill 1 Mar, 25 Silverhills 8 Oct, 12 Tomintoul 26 Apr and 11 Balormie pig farm 28 Sep.

Shore Lark *Eremophila alpestris*

Rare migrant and winter visitor.

One was on the headland at Burghead on 14 Nov (DSI *et al.*). This is the 9th record for coastal areas in Moray & Nairn, and the first since 1999. Of the nine records, three have been in spring, three in autumn and three in winter.

Sand Martin *Riparia riparia*

Summer visitor and very common breeder.

Arrival: 2 on the River Spey downstream from Mosstodloch on 23 & 25 Mar were the only March reports. In early April, 6 Loch Flemington 1st, 1 Loch Spynie 1st, 1 Portgordon 1st, 5 Clashindarroch (Knockando) 2nd, 2 Findhorn Bay 2nd, 1 Kinloss 3rd and 10 Cragganmore-Blacksboat 4th. Concentrations of birds early in the season (away from colonies) included 200+ Loch Spynie 25 Apr & 7 May and 85 Findhorn Bay 3 May (115+ there 27 Jun).

Colony counts: Colonies were located at Balnught (upper River Findhorn) (c.200 birds on 29 Apr, 50+ birds on 27 Jul), Cummingston (2 active burrows 17 Jun), Dipple (200 birds on 18 Jun), Hopeman east beach (2 active burrows in dune face 20 Jun), Kellas (10-12 active burrows in the bank of the River Lossie 24 May), Findhorn dunes (c.100 birds around the diune face on 1 May), Lossiemouth west beach (small colony in the dunes), Lynemore sand quarry (c.200 burrows on 18 May) and Mosstodloch (still a huge colony downstream at the Quarry Pool).

In late summer, 80 Spey estuary 7 Aug and 100+ Kinloss 24 Aug. Last records of the year were 5 Loch Flemington 14 Sep and 10+ Fornightly 15 Sep.

Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

Summer visitor and very common breeder.

Arrival: First were single birds at Covesea, Lossie estuary and Spey estuary on Apr 9, followed by singles at Aberlour and Clephanton on Apr 10. Of 20 other sites reporting 'first Swallows', only five were before Apr 20, and seven were not until the last four days of the month.

Breeding: At least 10 pairs nested in a long attic space at the WDC centre at Spey Bay, gaining access through an open window (MJHC).

Late summer/early autumn flocks included 56 Tilliglens 6 Sep, 50 Loch Spynie 28 Aug, 40 Clochan 23 Sep, 30 Foresterseat 13 & 24 Aug, 30 Spey estuary 7 & 21 Aug, 30 Lossie estuary 26 Aug and 30 Tomintoul 13 Jun.

House Martin *Delichon urbicum*

Summer visitor and common breeder.

Arrival: Very late, with none reported until 6 Aberlour 22 Apr, 1 Gilston 24 Apr and 6 Tombreckachie (Glenlivet) 26 Apr. Not reported at most sites until early May.

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

2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
14th	5th	11th	9th	6th	17th	9th	13th	6th	22nd

Breeding: The only colony count received was of 5 occupied nests at Buckie High School on 6 Aug.

Late summer counts included 60 Clochan 13 Aug, 56 Kinloss 21 Aug, 50 Dipple 23 Jul, 50+ Lossiemouth north pier 28 Aug, 40 Delavorar 27 Aug, 40 Foresterseat 13 Aug and 30 Delnabo 27 Aug.

Last reports, in October, were 2 Duffus 2nd, 3 Netherton Farm 2nd, 3 Urquhart 3rd and 6 Nairn 5th.

Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus*

Very common resident breeder.

The largest flocks reported, all estimated at around 20 birds, were at Beachans 14 Sep, Loch Flemington 29 Oct and Loch Spynie 27 Jan.

The proportion of juveniles caught per adult for ringing at the Loch Spynie 'Constant Effort Site' was 3.4:1, up from 3.2:1 in 2016 (RP).

Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus*

Summer visitor and very common breeder.

Arrival: An early arrival with three on the lower River Findhorn, Forres 9 Apr, then singles on 12th at Delnies Wood and 14th at Aberlour and Newton of Dalvey. Daily arrivals from 17-20 Apr with 21 sites reporting birds, mostly singles but 8 River Findhorn (Seafield) 17 Apr and 10 Blacksboat-Carron 19 Apr. Widespread after 22 Apr. A pair with a brood of three was seen at Kinloss 2 Aug. Productivity, as measured by ringing at the 'Constant Effort Site' at Loch Spynie, was 1.3 juveniles caught per adult – up slightly from 1.1 in 2016 (RP). Counts included 15 Burnside-Little Aitnoh 2 May and 15 Loch Spynie 3 May.

Last record was 1 Kinloss 28 Sep.

Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*

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

Winter: The only record was a single in Forres 8-9 Feb (LC, PRG).

Arrival: First arrival dates in March were similar to last year; Cloddach quarry 19th, Spey Bay 19th, 2 Tradespark Wood (Nairn) 20th, Scarffbanks 22nd, Loch Spynie 23rd, Inchberry 23rd, 2 Lossie Forest 23rd, 2 Mosstodloch 23rd, Elgin Academy 24th, Teinland 25th, Brodie Castle 26th, Mundole 27th, 2 Dallas Dhu 27th, Hillhead 27th, Kinloss 27th, Loch Flemington 27th, Urquhart 27th, Wardend (Rafford) 27th, Blervie Castle 28th, Easter Lawrenceton 28th, 2 Corskellie (Rothiemay) 29th, Hillhead 29th, Rafford 29th, 4 Brodie Castle 30th, Forres 31st and 3 Kingsteps (Nairn) 30th.

In April, recorded at 28 sites compared to 46 in 2016. Largest counts were 14 Seafield (Forres) 10th and 14 Logie (Forres) 18th.

Recorded elsewhere through the summer, mostly singles, at 25 sites (46 in 2016), including: Aberlour, Brodie Castle, Carse of Delnies, Corglass Farm, Croy, Culbin Forest, Culbin Sands, Dipple, Earnhill, Findhorn Bay, Findrassie, Foresterseat, Fornightly, Gallowhill, Hopeman, Kelleas, Kingsteps (Nairn), Little Balloch Hill, Loch Flemington, Loch Spynie, Newton of Dalvey, Seafield (Forres), Spey estuary, Tombae and Woodend (Glenlivet).

Autumn records in September-October from: Altyre Woods, Alves, Clashach quarry, Dipple, Elgin-Lossiemouth (old railway), Foresterseat, Forres, Half Davoch, Hopeman, Loch Spynie, More of Tore, Moycroft (Elgin), Portgordon-Portknockie, Portknockie, Spey estuary and Urquhart.

Wood Warbler *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*

Summer visitor and rare breeder.

Singles were recorded at Cawdor Castle wood 8 May (JAC), Balnught (River Findhorn) (GA) and Roseisle 23 Aug (MGC). Given the major decline over recent years to annual records of a single individual or no sightings, three records in one year is a substantial increase.

Yellow-browed Warbler *Phylloscopus inornatus*

Rare migrant.

One in trees along the path from Hopeman golf course to the beach 26-28 Sep (SBr, JP, AMac). This is the 12th record in Moray and Nairn. Previous records, all of singles, have occurred at Lossiemouth (Oct 1998 & Oct 2014), Loch Spynie (Sep 2001 & Oct 2015), Portknockie (Oct 2005, Oct 2015 & Oct 2016), Strathlene (Oct 2006), Covesea (Oct 2014), Clochan (Oct 2016) and Roseisle Forest (Oct 2016).

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

Arrival: The first was one singing at Cloddach quarry 30 Apr, a week later than the 2016 record from Spynie Palace, but exactly the same arrival date for this site. A total of 18 sites recorded arrivals by mid-May, all were in the coastal strip except one well inland at Scalan (Glenlivet).

Breeding: At the 'Constant Effort Ringing Site' in the north-east fen at Loch Spynie, the number of juveniles caught per adult was 0.7:1, down very slightly from 1.0:1 in 2016 (RP). A pair was feeding young in the nest at Tugnet on 6 Jul. Last record was 1 Kingston 17 Sep.

Icterine Warbler *Hippolais icterina**Rare visitor.*

One was seen singing at Tomchluich (east of Cawdor Wood) 25 May (SSi). This is the second record for Moray & Nairn following a single at Strathlene 20-21 Sep 2000.

Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella naevia**Summer visitor and scarce breeder.*

Following two poor years in 2015 (7 sites) and 2016 (6 sites), 2017 saw an increase to 12 sites. Two areas with multiple singers: 3 Spynie canal 6 May and 2 Loch Flemington 8 May. Singles were heard 'reeling' at Loch Flemington 2 & 11 May, Loch Spynie 3 May, Kinloss 4-8 May, Spey estuary 4, 9 & 11 May, Earnhill 6-7 May, Tugnet 10 May & 11 Jul, Glentauchers distillery (Mulben) 20 May, Croy 21 Jun, Edingight 24 Jun, River Findhorn (Forres) 25 Jun and Torrieston 17 Jul.



Grasshopper Warbler, Kinloss 8 May 2017 (Martin Cook)

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla**Summer visitor and common breeder. Scarce migrant and winter visitor.*

January-March: More than usual noted in gardens and at feeders. Recorded at Achareidh (Nairn) (female 5 Jan), Moss-side (Nairn) (2 on 27 Jan, then 1 on 21-22 Mar), Tradespark

(Nairn) (male 26 Jan & 21 Feb, male & female 1 & 23 Feb), Knockomie (Forres) (female 13 Jan), Forres (21 Jan-28 Mar; male regular, female 28 Mar), West End (Elgin) (regular 5 Jan-10 Mar; max. 2 males, 1 female 12 Jan), Bishopmill (Elgin) (female 5 Jan & male 8 Jan), Lossiemouth (male 6 & 28 Jan), Scarffbanks Farm (male 21 Jan), Lhanbryde (female 5 Feb) and Garmouth (female 16 & 18 Jan).

Spring/summer: First recorded on 9-10 Apr along River Findhorn near Seafeld. Other mid-late April records included (singles unless otherwise noted); 2 Elgin (Old Mills) 13th, 2 Elgin (Decora) 14th, Elgin (Bishopmill) 15th, 2 Loch na Bo 15th, Bellie cemetery 18th, 4 Blacksboat-Carron 19th, Dalmunach 19th, 2 Knockando distillery 19th, Knockando House 19th, Pluscarden Abbey 19th, Daluaine 22nd, 7 Elgin (Borough Briggs-Cooper Park) 27th, Elgin Cathedral 27th, 10 River Findhorn (Waterford-estuary) 28th, Blacksboat-Cragganmore 29th and Clochan 29th.

Widespread across Moray & Nairn throughout May-July.

Productivity, as measured from individuals trapped for ringing at the 'Constant Effort Site' at Loch Spynie, was 1.3 juveniles per adult, down from the 2.0 recorded in 2016 (RP).

Autumn: No Sep or Oct records were received.

November-December: Single birds at Lhanbryde 30 Nov, Forres 7-8 & 29 Dec (male), Inchberry 10 Dec (male) and Aberlour 28 Dec.

Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin*

Summer visitor and scarce breeder.

Recorded in the breeding season at six locations. Four sites were from along the River Spey; 1 Mosstodloch 11 May (MJHC), 1 Garmouth viaduct 16 May (RJ), 1 Maryhill (Inchberry) 20 May (MS) and 2 Carron 23 May (PI). Elsewhere, 1 River Findhorn at Balnught (GA) and 1 Loch Spynie 18 Jun (CW).

Barred Warbler *Sylvia nisoria*

Rare migrant.

One was seen and photographed in a garden in Portknockie on 13 Sep (LSi). This is first record for Moray & Nairn.



Barred Warbler, Portknockie 13 September 2017 (Lenny Simpson)

Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca*

Rare visitor and occasional breeder.

A male was singing at Blackhillock, Keith on 6 Jun (PSt). The small number of previous records of singing birds have all been near the coast, mostly in the Garmouth and Spey Bay areas.

Whitethroat *Sylvia communis*

Summer visitor and very common breeder.

Arrival: One was singing beside the River Lossie at Cloddach on 18 Apr. Main arrival appeared to be in early May and similar to 2016; 4 Cullen 3rd, 2 Kinloss 4th, Earnhill 6th, 2 Hopeman 6th, 2 Lossie Forest 6th, Miltonhill 6th, More of Tore 6th, Findhorn Bay 8th, Altyre Woods 9th, Findhorn dunes 10th, 2 Nairn 11th and 3 Kingsteps (Nairn) 11th. More widespread from late May in the coastal strip. Only one record well inland involved 2 Blacksboat 20 May. Four Dipple 23 Jul was the last report received.

Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*

Very common resident breeder and scarce migrant.

Recorded widely in forests from Tomintoul to the coast. The only count to exceed ten was 20 Culbin Forest 4 Nov. One was observed feeding on peanuts and fatballs in an Aberlour garden on 9 & 14 Jan.

Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*

Very common resident breeder.

Breeding: At Loch Spynie Constant Effort ringing site, the ratio of juveniles to adults was 1.6:1, down from 2.4:1 in 2016 (RP). Best counts were in Apr; 10 Bogeney 18th, 10 Woodside 18th, 10 Elgin 27th and 13 Knockando distillery 19th. Inland on moors in winter: Cairn Eley 6 Mar, Knock of Braemoray 12 Nov, Carn Shalag 10 Dec, Loch of the Cowlatt 10 Dec, Moidach More 28 Dec and Dava Moor 28 Dec.

Treecreeper *Certhia familiaris*

Very common resident breeder.

Notable records included counts of 5 Firhall (Nairn) 12 Mar, 5 Knockando distillery 19 Apr and 4 Shaw Hill 2 Jul. One regular in a Forres garden, on 19 Jan, 16-28 Feb, 19 Mar and 31 Aug.

Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*

Very common resident breeder and winter visitor.

A recently hatched egg was found in Bishopmill, Elgin on 19 Apr. Following the breeding season, a flock of up to 2000 built up on the Findhorn Bay saltmarsh in mid June. Large feeding flocks at pig farms included c.1000 Drainie 1 Jan and c.1020 near Roseisle 30 Oct. Large pre-roost flights included an estimated 2000 Loch Spynie 4 Nov (JDL). Inland, c.250 Dunearn 8 Jan and 230 still there 12 Mar.

Ring Ouzel *Turdus torquatus*

Summer visitor and scarce breeder.

Breeding: In the Foal's Craig-Inchrory area of Glen Avon: 3 singing 3 Jun (IF), 2 males (1 singing) Allt Rurach, 1 ad with fledged young Foal's Craig and 2 singing males and a brood of fledged young Inchrory 18 Jun (JDL) and 1 pair and a female with a brood of 3 juveniles

Foal's Craig and 1 male Inchroary 26 Jun (MJHC). In the Ailnack gorge (Tomintoul), 1 male 2 Apr, a pair 9 May and a single 18 Jul (JDL, MJHC). In the Cairngorms, 1 Garbh Uisge Beag 6 Apr (MEB), 2 males Cairn Lochan 19 May (and two birds 20 Jun with singles 21 Jun & 8 Jul (PRG, SBa, JB), 3 Cairn Gorm 9 May (RH) and present Ben Macdui area 20 Jun (DWC). Unusual on the coast were 2 migrants at Portgordon on 20 Oct (DGD).

Blackbird *Turdus merula*

Very common resident breeder, winter visitor and migrant.

Breeding: Males singing Linkwood (Elgin) 6 & 8 Jan, seen nest building at Tradespark Wood (Nairn) 20 Mar and a female carrying food at Foresterseat 24 Aug.

Counts of 10 or more included 22 Forres (garden) 12 Jan, 15 Borough Briggs (Elgin) 27 Apr, 15 Myreside 20 Oct, 14 Firhall (Nairn) 23 Mar, 11 Dufftown 7 May and 10 Logie Estate 17 Dec. A total of 80 migrants flew in off the sea at 80 Burghead on 19 Oct.

A leucistic individual, with a white head and neck, was seen in a Forres garden 5 Jun, presumably the same individual from 7 Nov 2016.



Blackbird, Forres 5 June 2017 (Alison Ritchie)

Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris*

Very common migrant and winter visitor.

Winter-spring: A total of 27 reports of flocks of 20 or more were received from 24 sites, largest counts were: 150 Rafford 12 Feb, 143 Tomnamoon 2 Jan, 100 Milton of Grange 6 Jan and c.100 Refouble 8 Jan.

Last in spring: 1 Elgin-Duffus road 12 May.

Autumn: Present at Loch Spynie 19 Oct but then no reports until later in the month when 5 south Findhorn Bay 29th, 1 Tomintoul 29th and 10 Tomnamoon 31st.

Winter: A total of five reports were received of flocks containing 20 or more birds, c.200-300 Dounduff 26 Nov, 58 Tomnamoon 19 Dec, c.30 Daltullich Bridge 12 Nov, c.30 Earnhill 17 Nov and 20 Holme Rose-Kilravock 22 Nov.

Redwing *Turdus iliacus*

Very common migrant and winter visitor.

Winter-spring: Reports of flocks of 20 or more were received from 15 sites, largest counts from each site were 150 Findhorn Bay 14 Jan, 100+ Kilravock Castle 18 Feb, 70 Darkland 12

Mar, 65 Kinloss 24 Jan, 64 Morriston playing fields (Elgin) 2 Feb, 60 Kingsteps (Nairn) 15 Jan, 50+ Mayne Farm 11 Jan, 50 Howford Bridge (Nairn) 6 Feb, 40 Tradespark (Nairn) 26 Feb, 35 Dipple 18 Jan, 30+ Darnaway 30 Jan, c.30 Little Aitnoch 20 Jan, 25 Loch Spynie 11 Mar, 24 Nairn 18 Jan and c.20 Glenshiel Farm 20 Jan.

Last in spring were 5 Tomnamoon 19 Apr.

Breeding: No records of breeding, or singing birds, were received.

In October, first were singles at Auchmair (Cabrach) and Gallowhill on 8th, followed by 4 Ferryhill (Forres) on 13th. An obvious arrival occurred mid-month when small groups were seen over Elgin cemetery (52 on 16th and 100 on 17th), Duffus (1 on 16th) and Clochan (10 on 17th). Another larger influx occurred on 19th: 95 in off the sea Burghead, 100+ west over Alves, '100s' over West End (Elgin) and c.130 over RAF Lossiemouth. Several thousand noted flying south between Tomintoul and Inchrory on 20th.

Autumn-winter: Flocks of 20 or more were recorded at Clochan (27 on 6 Nov), Loch Spynie (20+ on 12 Nov), Shempston (c.200 on 20 Nov), Knockando (30 on 10 Dec), Waterton (51 on 10 Dec) and Forres (c.30 on 19 Dec).

Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos*

Very common breeder and migrant. Scarce in winter.

Mid winter: As usual, over-wintering birds were exclusively found, in very small numbers, in close proximity to the coast. In January (singles unless stated), Darkland 1st, Nairn coast 2nd, Findhorn 2nd, Nairn 5th, Buckpool 15th, Bishopmill (Elgin) 22nd, Covesea 29th and The Wards (Elgin) 30th. In February, Lossie estuary 7th, Kinloss 15th, Gallowhill 16th, 4 Bow Fiddle Rock area 17th, 2 Firhall (Nairn) 18th, Spey Bay golf course 18th, Clochan 20th, Drumduan (Forres) 21st, Lethen 23rd and Loch Flemington 25th. By March, established in coastal areas, and beginning to move inland with upcountry records comprising singles at Bogeney 6th, Glenlivet Estate office (Tomintoul) 12th, Cragganmore 16th, Marypark 16th and 2 Logie Estate 25th. Well inland was a single at Balneden Steading (Strath Avon) 25 Apr.

Largest number was 6 Roseisle 10 Mar.

Breeding: First song recorded at Lossie estuary 7 Feb, then Clochan 20 Feb and Lethen 23 Feb.

A single recorded inland at Daluaine 12 Sep. In November, singles at Nairn 2nd and Loch Flemington 8th. In December, 'present' Urquhart 5th, 'present' Lossie Forest 13th, Corskie (Garmouth) 27th and Morriston playing fields (Elgin) 27th (2 there on 30th).

Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus*

Very common resident breeder and migrant.

Breeding confirmed at Beachans (2 juveniles) and Tilliglens (3 juveniles). Song recorded at Blacksboat Farm, Elgin cemetery, Glaschyle, Newtyle and Rosarie Forest (Mulben). Flocks of 10 or more (maximum counts at each site) were 63 Tomnamoon 18 Aug, 47 Allachrow 8 Aug, c.30 Upper Milton of Moyness 20 Aug, 25 Kinloss 9 Jan, 22 Dunphail 24 Sep, 20 Myreside 11 Aug, 15 Logie Steading 22 Jan, 15 Sound Moor 22 Jul and 14 Roseisle 10 Mar.

Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata*

Summer visitor and common breeder.

Arrival: First of the year were two under the River Spey bridge at Baxters 13 May (MS).

A pair Tomnamoon 1 Jun and later one juvenile seen on 1 Aug. Elsewhere, juveniles were seen at Tomcork 14 Jul, Tilliglens 27 Jul, The Carse (Findhorn Bay) 1 Aug and Bantrach 28 Aug.

Summer reports elsewhere came from Carron, Craigellachie (2), Culbin Forest, Cullerne Gardens (Findhorn), Drumin (Glenlivet), Foresterseat (2), Gallowhill (2), Kellas Wood, Kinloss, Lethen, Little Banchor, Loch of Blairs and Wellhill.
Only one report in Sep; 1 Glaschyle wind farm on 4th.

Robin *Erithacus rubecula*

Very common resident breeder and migrant.

Winter-spring: Largest count was 15 Knockando distillery area 19 Apr.

Productivity at Loch Spynie, as measured by ringing at the Constant Effort Site, was 1.7 juveniles per adult - down from 3.8 in 2016 (RP).

Autumn: 9 Nairn 4 & 7 Oct was the largest count.

Winter: Largest count in this period was 10 Culbin Forest 4 Nov.

Pied Flycatcher *Ficedula hypoleuca*

Very scarce migrant, occasional breeder.

A female was inspecting a nestbox at Craigellachie 6 May (SDL). An autumn migrant was seen at Hopeman 26 Sep (SBr).

Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*

Rare migrant.

Two records in a year, both arriving in February, is most unusual. A female/immature male remained at Spey Bay golf course during 13 Feb-16 Mar (MW *et al.*) and another female/immature male was at Kinloss on 17 Feb (AJL). These are the 20th-21st records for Moray & Nairn.

The monthly distribution of records is as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
0	2	4	7	3	0	1	0	0	2	1	1



Black Redstart, Spey Bay 13 February 2017 (Mark Warren)



Black Redstart, Kinloss 17 February 2017 (Allan Lawrence)

Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

Summer visitor and scarce breeder. Very scarce migrant.

Nine records were received (6 in 2016): 1 Glenferness Estate 24 Apr (JBI), 2 males Drynachan 29 Apr (DAG), 1 Loch Kirkaldy 2 May (MCo), 'present' Corglass Farm 6 May (GR), 1 Dulsie Bridge 14 May (GA), male Kellas oakwood 19 May (MJHC), female at nest hole Cawdor oakwood 23 May (MJHC), female Woodside 31 May (MGC) and 2 Shaw Hill 2 Jul (TJW).

Stonechat *Saxicola rubicola*

Scarce resident breeder and migrant.

Breeding season: Coastal: Breeding confirmed at 8 sites compared to 4 in 2016. Occupied sites (*italics* = confirmed breeding) *Burghead-Cummingston* (2 pairs), Carse of Delnies, *Clashach quarry*, Covesea, *Cullen*, *Findhorn dunes*, *Findhorn Bay (Mosset Burn)*, *Findochty*, Garmouth, *Hopeman*, *Kinloss*, Lossiemouth (West Beach), Portknockie, Portknockie (Bow Fiddle) and Spey estuary.

Inland: A very slight decrease in reports of confirmed breeding from 6 in 2016 to 5 in 2017: Bogeney, Cnoc na Sealg, *Darkland*, *Dava*, *Dulsie*, *Dunearn*, *Glaschyle*, Glenrinnies, Knock of Braemoray, Knockaneorn, *Little Aitnoch*, Loch Kirkaldy, Newlands of Fleenas and Three Burnshead Howe (Cabrach).

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

Coastal: Balormie pig farm (Dec), Bow Fiddle Rock area (Jan, Feb), Burghead (Feb, Mar, Oct, Nov), Burghead-Hopeman (Aug, Oct, Nov, Dec), Carse of Delnies (Feb), Culbin Bar (Dec), Cullen (Sep, Nov, Dec), Cummingston (Oct, Nov, Dec), Delnies (Feb), Findhorn Bay area (Jan, Feb, Mar, Aug, Sep, Oct, Nov, Dec), Hopeman (Jan, Sep, Oct, Nov), Kingston (Sep), Kinloss (Feb, Mar, Aug, Sep, Oct, Nov, Dec), Lossie estuary (Jan, Sep, Dec), Lossie Forest (Jan, Nov), RAF Lossiemouth (Nov), Nairn Bar (Feb), Portgordon-Portknockie (Jan, Feb, Sep), Spey Bay (Oct), Spey estuary (Nov) and Tomhommie (Dec).

Inland: Auchloch (Nov), Auchmair (Cabrach) (Oct), Auldich (Mar), Berryburn (Nov), Bogeney (Mar), Burntrack (Oct), Califer Hill (Nov), Carn nan Clach Garbha (Jan), Carn Shalag (Nov), Darkland (Jan, Aug), Dava (Jan, Dec), Dunearn (Jan, Sep, Nov), Feakirk (Dec), Glack Harnes (Ben Rinnies) (Jan, Mar), Glaschyle (Mar), Knock of Braemoray (Nov), Little Aitnoch (Aug, Sep, Nov), Loch Kirkaldy (Oct, Nov), Loch of the Cowlatt (Dec), Lubliester (Nov), Newlands of Fleenas (Sep), North Crannoch (Jan), Shenvault (Dec), Strondow (Dec), Tearie Moss (Dec) and Urquhart (Sep).

Largest count was 8 (3 males, 2 females & 3 juveniles) along the coastal path from Burghead-Cummingston 26 May.

Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe*

Summer visitor and fairly common breeder and migrant.

Arrival: First was a female at Kinloss 24 Mar, followed by 1 Burghead 29 Mar. Very little movement in the coastal strip in early-mid April: 1 Findhorn Bay 2nd (and 10th), 2 Lossie estuary 7th, 1 Lossiemouth (west beach) 15th (2 there on 16th) and a female Balormie pig farm 15th. Inland during this period was 1 Achdregnie-Suie on 16th. A small arrival 19-21 Apr when 10 individuals were recorded at 7 sites, but still only small numbers recorded for the remainder of April, though singles well inland at Creag Chalcaidh quarry (Tomintoul) 26th, male Ben Rinnes 29th and Auchmair (Cabrach) 30th. Also during this period were 5 Greenland individuals (*leucorhoa* ssp.) on the south side of Findhorn Bay at Netherton 25th (RHD). Slightly more widespread in May with an arrival in coastal areas on 1st: 11 Netherton Farm, 3+ Findhorn Bay, 1 The Carse (Findhorn Bay), 3 Kinloss (6 on 2nd), singles Cummingston and Garmouth and 'present' Cullen.

Breeding: Records on the Cairngorms plateau were 5 Cairn Gorm 9 May, 1 Cairn Lochan 19 May, 'present' Ben Macdui 25 May and 12 Lochan Buidhe 8 Jul.

Breeding confirmed at Auchmair 14 Jun (nest with eggs), Relugas 25 Jun (juvenile), Foal's Craig-Inchrory (Strath Avon) 26 Jun (lots of juveniles, including a brood of 3), Berryburn 14 Jul (3 juveniles) and possibly in the coastal strip at Kinloss 7 Jul (juvenile). Also present in the breeding season at Aldunie (Cabrach) 20 May.

In August and September, records usually consisted of 1-2 birds except (max. counts): 3 Cairngorms plateau 8 & 13 Aug, 8 Kinloss 10 Aug, 4 Burghead 27 Aug, 2 Lossiemouth harbour 27 Aug, 2 RAF Lossiemouth 1-8 Sep, 2 Netherton 8 Sep and 2 Portgordon harbour 10 Sep.

In October, seen at Covesea 1st (3), Kinloss 1st & 16th, Netherton 2nd, Findhorn 4th-5th (2 on 5th), Lossie estuary five dates 5th-21st, Burghead-Hopeman 8th, Buckpool 8th and Burghead 13th-14th.

Dipper *Cinclus cinclus*

Common resident breeder.

Breeding: Nest building seen on the River Lossie (Elgin) 8 Feb & 1 Mar, with fledged young there on 19 May.

Elsewhere in the breeding season records received from: Achdregnie-Suie (Glenlivet), Auchmair (Cabrach), Beachans, Coire an Lochain (910m asl), Carron, Craigellachie, Daluaine, Dipple, Drumin Castle (Glenlivet), Dufftown, Logie Steading, Mosset Burn (Forres), Newton of Dalvey, River Lossie (Cloddach quarry, Foresterseat & Kellas), River Nairn (Kilravock Castle), River Spey (Rothies), Sanquhar pond, Tombae Church and Tomintoul.

At other times of the year localities holding Dippers were: Bridgend of Glenlivet, Buckie, Craighead, Gallowhill, Hill of Slackmore, Muckle Burn (Rumachroy), River Findhorn (Forres) and River Nairn (Cantray, Howford Bridge, Firhall & Nairn).

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

Very common resident breeder.

Two counts of 50 or over were received; 75 Nairn harbour 22 Jan and 50 Findhorn 11 May.

Upcountry, maximum counts were 1 Dalmunach (Carron) 9 Feb, 5 Knockando distillery 9 Feb & 19 Apr, 20 Tomintoul 12 Mar, 'present' Daluaine 26 Mar, 2 Tombreckachie

(Glenlivet) 26 Apr, 6 Tomnavoulin 26 Apr, 6 Achdregnie Farm 26 Apr, 2 Glenlivet distillery 27 Apr, 10 Dufftown 27 Apr, 3 Little Balloch Hill 21 May, 10 Auldich 25 May & 22 Jun and 4 Cragganmore 11 Dec.

Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*

Common resident breeder.

Breeding: Confirmed at Forres (6 juveniles in garden) 24 Jun, Netherton (3 juveniles) 2 Jun and Clochan (3 occupied nestboxes).

Elsewhere, maximum counts at each site in the breeding season: 'present' Urquhart 6 Apr, 22 Darkland 11 Apr, 2 Easter Bauds 12 Apr, 1 Mayne Farm 16 Apr, 3 Dalvey Estate Farm 18 Apr, 1 Middlefield 28 Apr, 4 Loch Spynie 3 May, 3 Gilston 6 May, 2 Spey Bay 6 May, 2 Elgin 19 May, colony Troves 19 May, heard Tomchluich 26 May, 1 Gallowhill 27 May, 'present' Myreside 28 May, 5 Netherton Farm 1-8 Jun, 1 Foresterseat 2 Jun, 1 Kingston 17 Jun, 5 Croy 21 Jun and 12 Forres 24 Jun.

At other times, maximum counts at sites included: 120 Orton 25 Nov, 21 Dyke 22 Jan, 20+ Forres (garden) 25 & 29 Dec, 18 North Crannoch 6 Feb, 16 Mayne Farm 11 Jan, 15 Netherton 1 Feb, 10 Foresterseat 28 Dec, 8 Scarffbanks Farm 7 Jan, 7 Spey Bay 26 Jul, 6 Moss-side (Nairn) 20 Jan, 6 Hopeman 2 Jan, 5 near Whiteness 14 Nov, 5 Tradespark (Nairn) 11 Feb, 5 Balormie pig farm 26 Dec, 5 Myreside 20 Oct, 4 Knockando 10 Dec, 2 The Haugh (Aberlour) 19 Oct-30 Nov, 2 Lower Broadshaw 1 Mar and 2 Moyness 2 Dec.

Dunnock *Prunella modularis*

Very common resident breeder.

First song, in February, at Lossie estuary 7th and Elgin cemetery 14th.

Recorded well inland: 2 Auchmair (Cabrach) 26 Dec, 1 Auldich 30 Jul, 4 Bogeney 15 Jan, 2 Burnside-Little Aitnoh 2 May, 1 Carron 9 Feb, 1 Cragganmore 8 Jan & 11 Dec, 1 Daluaine 26 Mar & 12 Sep, 3 Dufftown 27 Apr, 1 Dulsie 1 Apr, 1 Glenlivet 17 Jun, 1 Knock of Braemoray 18 Sep, 1 Knockando 9 Feb, 'present' Knockhourn 10 Dec, 2 Little Balloch Hill 29 May, 2 Tomintoul 3 Jul & 26 Aug and 1 Tomnavoulin 26 Apr.

Largest count was 8 Culbin Bar 12 Feb.

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*

Summer visitor and common breeder. Very scarce in winter.

Winter: Inland during this period was one on the Burn of Aberlour (Aberlour) 8 Jan. In the coastal strip, 2 Corskie Farm (Garmouth) 22 Dec, otherwise only singles recorded; Spey estuary 6 Jan, Lossiemouth harbour 8 Jan, Dipple 14 Jan & 10 Dec, Nairn harbour area 16-25 Jan & 1 Feb, Lossie estuary 23 Jan & 7 Feb, Fochabers 4 Feb, Cloddach 22 Jan, Buckie harbour 12 Feb, Elgin 13 Feb, Gallowhill 16 & 20 Feb, Portknockie harbour 17 Feb, Kinloss 3 Nov, Buckie 3 Nov, Loch Spynie 7 Nov, Fornightly 24 Nov, Spynie cemetery 11 Dec and Shempston 13 Dec.

Breeding: Pairs were noted in suitable habitat at Burn of Aberlour, Bridge of Rumachroy (copulating), Sanquhar pond, lower River Findhorn and Newton of Dalvey. Later in the breeding season juveniles were noted at Loch Spynie in June & July, with three trapped in August. Potentially occupied sites were Auchbreck, Balneden Steading (Strath Avon), Balnught, Lochan Buidhe, Carron, Clashdhu, Craigellachie, Dalmunach, Daltullich Bridge, Delnabo, Dipple, Dorback Burn, Drumin Castle (Glenlivet), Dulsie Bridge, Edingight, Fornightly, Gallowhill, Kellas, Kilravock Castle, Loch Belivat, Logie Steading, Milton Steading, Mosset duck pond (Forres), Moyness, Newton of Dalvey, Packhorse Bridge

(Glenlivet), River Findhorn (Seafield), River Lossie (Borough Briggs), River Nairn, Scalan, Tomintoul, Tomnamoon and Torrieston.

The largest count was 9-10 on a dung heap at Fornightly 9 Jul, elsewhere smaller numbers recorded (max. counts): 1 Knockando 1 & 11 Mar, 1 Spey estuary 7 Mar, 1 Lossiemouth harbour 11 Mar, 2 Gallowhill 15 & 26 Mar, 1 Cragganmore 16 Mar, 1 Marypark 16 Mar, 2 Linkwood (Elgin) 20 Mar, 2 Firhall (River Nairn) 21 & 23 Mar, 1 Kirkmichael Church 24 Mar, 1 Logie Estate 25 Mar, 1 Daluaine 26 Mar, 2 Sanquhar pond 30 Mar, 1 Burghead 23 May & 15 Oct, 2 Little Aitnoch 3 Aug, 2 Lecht Mine 7 Aug, 1 Kinloss 3 Aug, 3 Nairn 15 Aug, 2 Achavraat 20 Aug, 2 Georgetown 23 Aug, 2 Loch Spynie 5 Sep, 4 Knockaneorn 8 Sep, 1 Cullen 18 Sep, 'present' Findhorn Bay 21 Sep, 1 Birnie Kirk 22 Sep, 1 Loch of Blairs 29 Sep and 1 Balormie pig farm 28 Oct.

Pied Wagtail *Motacilla alba*

Very common breeder and migrant.

One large count of Pied Wagtails *M.a.yarellii* from the Kingston reedbed involved 260 on 17 Sep (AY). No other count exceeded 50 individuals, those exceeding 20 individuals were 35 Spey estuary 17 Jan (20 on 7 Aug), 30 (roost) Loch Synie 2 Nov, 23 Nairn harbour 15 Sep (20 on 1 Feb) and 23 Balormie pig farm 28 Aug (22 on 24 & 29 Sep). A further 12 counts were in excess of 10 individuals (the same as 2016).

Breeding: Courtship noted at Blacksboat. Broods recorded at Balmakeith (Nairn) and a family group on The Carse (Findhorn Bay). Recorded well inland at Aberlour, Achdregnie Farm (Glenlivet), Auchmair (Cabrach), Auldich, Ben Macdui area, Burnside-Little Aitnoch, Cairn Gorm, Cairngorm plateau, Carn Tullich (Glenlivet), Carron, Cragganmore, Daluaine, lochans on Dava Moor, Delavorar, Dulsie Bridge, Ferness, Knockando distillery, Knockando House, Knockhourn, Little Balloch Hill, Loch Kirkaldy, Marypark, Balnught, Scalan, Scootmore and Tomintoul.

Passage: A good year for sightings of 'White Wagtails' *M.a.alba*. In spring, first recorded at Gilston (1 on 25 Apr). An influx over 27-30 Apr when daily records at each site were; Spey estuary (3 on 24th, 18 on 28th and 31 on 30th), Findhorn Bay (6 on 28th), Seafield (Forres) (1 on 28th) and Nairn golf course (3 on 29th). A smaller arrival in early May at the Spey estuary; 4 on 2nd, 1 on 4th & 9th and 2 on 14th. A smaller passage in late summer/autumn (max. counts); 9 Spey estuary 29 Aug, 7 Balormie pig farm 8 Sep and 1 Silverhills 8 Oct.

Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis*

Very common breeder and migrant.

Winter: The largest counts during this period were at coastal sites: 38 Bow Fiddle Rock area 17 Feb, 30 Loch Spynie 15 Jan and 30 Nairn Bar 12 Feb. No other spring count exceeded 10 individuals. No inland records were reported during this period.

Spring: In the coastal area the largest count received was 6 Findhorn Bay 10 Mar. More birds moving inland in early spring included 10 Auldich 29 Mar, 6 Cabrach-Aldunie 7 Mar, 6 North Crannoch 21 Mar, 5 Glaschyle 25 Mar, 3 Dunearn 31 Mar, otherwise singles or 'present' at Corskellie (Rothiemay), Gallowhill, Glenferness, and Knock of Braemoray.

On spring passage during seawatches off Lossiemouth harbour (all flying west): 4 on 25 Mar, 5 on 16 Apr, 1 on 17 Apr and 29 on 23 Apr.

Counts of 20 or more were: c.50 Blacksboat 16 Apr (28 on 4 Apr), 25 Tronach Head 9 Apr and 24 lower River Findhorn 9 Apr.

Summer: Largest counts were 40 Auldich 13 Jun, 27 Lochan Buidhe 8 Jul and 20 Marypark 12 Jun. Recorded from 33 other sites (14 in 2016) in the summer from sea-level to the Cairngorms plateau.

Autumn: In late August, flocks inland beginning to build up in numbers; 40+ Dunearn crossroads 20th and 17 near Little Aitnoch 20th. Smaller numbers on the coast where 15 Kinloss 11 Aug, 10 Spey estuary 27 Aug and singles Lossie estuary 26 Aug and Balormie pig farm 31 Aug. In September & October on the coast, maximum counts at each site were 15 Spey estuary 10 Sep, 10 The Lein (Kingston) 19 Sep, 10 Silverhills 8 Oct, 9 Covesea lighthouse 27 Sep, 8 Kinloss 15 Sep, 7 Balormie pig farm 8 & 28 Sep, 6 RAF Lossiemouth 25 Oct, 3 Nairn 7 Oct, 2 Findhorn 25 Oct, 1 Birnie Kirk 22 Sep and 1 Tomhommie 22 Oct. Still inland were 6 Knock of Braemora 14 Sep & 9 Oct, 1 Lochan Buidhe 19 Sep, 2 Ben Macdui summit 19 Sep, 21 near Little Aitnoch 22 Sep, 11 Meikle Geal Charn 23 Sep, 2 Dunphail 24 Sep, 6 Cairn Gorm 30 Sep, 2 Bogeney 4 Oct, 4 Cairn Eney 4 Oct, 8 Ferness 21 Oct, c.10 Dunearn 25 Oct and 'present' Auchmair (Cabrach) 26 Oct.

Winter: In the later winter period still inland were 5 Bogeney 2 Nov and singles or 'present' at Auchlochan, Dava, Feakirk, Knock of Braemora and Loch of the Cowlatt. In the coastal area, the largest count was 67 Dipple 10 Dec, with much smaller numbers elsewhere; 7 Culbin Bar 3 Dec, 2 Spey estuary 6 Nov, 2 Burnside of Enzie 16 Dec and 1 Balormie pig farm 10, 25 & 26 Dec.

Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis*

Summer visitor and common breeder.

Arrival: First reports, in April, were individuals at Cothall 26th, Phorp 28th, Drynahan junction 29th and Cragganmore-Blacksboat. A single at Loch Spynie 3 May was probably still on passage.

Subsequent reports (max. counts) in breeding habitat were 3 Sleepieshill Wood 20 Jun, 2 Ordiquish 17 May, 2 Tilliglens 27 Jul, singles Loch Kirkaldy 2 May, Dulsie 3 May, Darnaway 7 May, Whiteash Hill Wood 3 & 13 May, Kellas oakwood 19 May, Blacksboat 20 May, Inchroary Lodge 3 Jun, Scootmore 3 Jun and 'present' Corglass Farm 6 May.

Last of the year was a single at Torrieston 18 Sep.

Rock Pipit *Anthus petrosus*

Scarce breeder, fairly common in winter.

Breeding season: First song and display flight noted at Lossiemouth harbour 19 Feb. Later at Covesea 'anxious behaviour' indicated breeding at three locations along the coast 31 May. Still singing at Portknockie 18 Jun.

Counts of five or more were (max. counts): 28 Portgordon-Strathlene 15 Jan, 22 Covesea lighthouse 5 Feb, 12 Burghead 19 Oct, 7 Cummington 17 Oct and 5 Lossiemouth harbour 19 Jan.

Along the Portgordon-Strathlene section, the most favoured sites were the fish factory at Buckie (12 on 15 Jan and 11 on 12 Feb) and Buckpool harbour (7 on 15 Jan and 4 on 3 Nov). Away from these sites, records did not exceed four individuals, counts generally involved only 1-2 birds, recorded at Cullen, Findhorn Bay, Nairn, Portknockie and Spey estuary.

Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*

Very common resident breeder, migrant and winter visitor.

First song heard at Waterford 9 Feb.

Flocks of 100 or more were 500 Fornightly 2 Feb, 300 Moyness 16 Mar (100+ there 20 Jan), 200+ Kronyhillock 8 Jan (and 100 there 17 Sep). A further six counts of 30 or more included 34 on garden feeders at Moor of Tore on 24 Apr.

Brambling *Fringilla montifringilla**Fairly common winter visitor and migrant*

Flocks of 50 or more were 100 Glenmarkie 14 Jan (in a big mixed flock with Chaffinch and Goldfinch) (MCH), 50+ Pitgaveny (under beech trees) 23 Feb (MW), 60+ Roseisle Forest 12 Apr (LSt) (and 20 there 10 Apr) and, in the second winter period, 50 Holme Rose/Kilravock 22 Nov (JDG).

In the first winter period (January-February): 8 Pitgaveny 1 Jan (and 3 on 3 Jan, 20 on 4 Mar), 4 Pitairlie 3 Jan, 8 Elgin (River Lossie near the Leisure Centre) 6 Jan (and 22 on 28 Jan, 10+ on 1 Feb, 4 on 8 Feb and 14 on 11 Feb), 1 Wellheads 7 Jan, 1 Altyre 12 Jan, 1 Forres 13 Jan, 1 Easter Bauds Farm 14 Jan, up to 3 Tradespark (Nairn) on several dates 21 Jan-23 Mar, 2 Cruats Farm 29 Jan, 1 Tomnamoon 29 Jan, 1 Loch of Blairs 13 Feb, 1 Moyness 17 & 21 Mar and 1 Forres 30 Mar.

In April and May: 1 Invernairn 14 Apr, 1 Darkland 28-29 Apr and 2 there 2-3 May (still 1 on 4 May).

In the second winter period (October-December): 6 Elgin (west end) 19 Oct, 1 Forres 19 Oct, 1 Myreside 20 Oct, 3 Kilravock Castle (River Nairn) 4 Nov, 1 Gallowhill 15 Nov, Moor of Tore 25 Nov, 2 Greenbog 26 Nov, 1 Maggiecknockater 28 Nov, 1 Lossiemouth 29 Nov, c.25 West Mains 9 Dec, 1 Clochan 9 & 11 Dec, 15 Gilston 10 Dec, 2 Upper Knockando 10 Dec, 30 Burnside of Enzie 16 Dec and 1+ Urquhart area 15 & 18 Dec.



Brambling, Forres 13 January 2017 (Alison Ritchie)

Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula**Very common resident breeder*

Counts of 10 or more included 10 Glaschyle 5 Jan, 12 Culbin Forest 22 Jan, 35 (in two flocks, of 20 and 15) Teindland Forest 22 Jan and 28 on moorland at Glenmullie 17 Nov. The Constant Effort ringing site at Loch Spynie showed productivity of 0.5 juveniles/adults (RP). Previous years have had much better results, including 2.0 juveniles/adult in 2013 and 2.5 in 2014.

Greenfinch *Chloris chloris**Very common resident breeder*

First singing birds were recorded at Elgin Cemetery on 15 Feb and Archiestown on 19 Feb. The decline in Greenfinches locally was illustrated by the fact that no flock of 10 or more was reported in 2017 - the best was only 6 Netherton 10 Jun.

Twite *Linaria flavirostris**Scarce resident breeder and winter visitor*

The principal location for winter sightings was again on the saltmarshes around Findhorn Bay and the Nairn/Culbin Bars.

Counts in this area in the early winter period included 20 Culbin 5 Jan (RA, VI), 48 Findhorn Bay 10 Jan (GM) (and 42 there 14 Jan [RHD], 22 on 23 Jan [GM], 5 on 17 Feb [GM], 20 on 28 Feb [GM, PRG]), 62 Netherton Farm 23 Jan (GM), 12 Findhorn beach 28 Jan (and 3 there 13 Feb) (MGC), 50 Nairn Bar 12 Feb (GP), 18 Netherton 17 Feb (MJHC) (and 4 there 18 Feb [DP], 37 on 26 Mar [GM]). On farmland nearby were c.100 Broom of Moy 20 Jan (IB). Last in spring were 1 Netherton/Findhorn Bay 10 Apr (GM) and 1 May (JDG). In the late winter period, 10 Netherton 7 Nov (MJHC), 30 Findhorn Bay 6 Dec (MY) (and 6 there 12 Dec [GM]) and 66 Netherton saltmarsh 18 Dec (GM, RSC).

Elsewhere, 1 Porttannachy 14 Jan (MJHC) and 2 near Portknockie 22 Jan (LSi). In autumn, 5 Spey Estuary 20 Sep (OW) (and 4 there 6 Nov [DPa]).

Linnet *Linaria cannabina**Very common resident breeder*

Breeding: Two collecting nesting material at Cummington on 3 Apr, and a male feeding a juvenile at Myreside on 28 Jul.

Winter-spring: Counts of 100 or more were 300 Garmouth 5 Jan (and 200 there 16 Jan), 250 Spynie Palace 11 Feb, 165 Clochan 22 Jan, 110 Easter Bauds Farm 22 Jan, 100 Loch Spynie 11 Mar and 100 Kinloss 10 Apr.

Summer: 130 Spey Estuary on 7 Aug.

Autumn-winter: 350 Findhorn Bay 21 Sep, 220 Clochan 16 Oct, 150 Balormie pig farm 29 Sep (and on 25-26 Dec), 150 Lossiemouth airfield 19 Oct and 130 Easter Bauds Farm 25 Nov.

Common (Mealy) Redpoll *Acanthis flammea**Rare winter visitor and migrant*

Three records: 2 Easter Bauds Farm 3 Jan (AY), 4 Teindland 26 Mar (AY) and 1 Ordiquish Forest 17 May (ACH).

Lesser Redpoll *Acanthis cabaret**Common resident breeder and migrant*

Breeding season records came from Auchmair, Auldich, Bogeney, Burnside-Little Aitnoh, Carron, Carse of Delnies, Cnoc na Sealg, Forres, Invernairn, Kingsteps, Knockando, Loch Flemington, Loch Kirkaldy, Loch Spynie, Lossiemouth, Moor of Tore, Newlands of Fleenas, Shaw Hill, Tomintoul, Tugnet, Urquhart, and Woodside.

Flocks of 20 or more included 36 Cragganmore 8 Jan, 25 Aitnoh birchwoods 10 Feb, 20 Tilliglens 7 Mar, 75 between Blacksboat-Knockando 11 Mar and 20 Dulsie Wood 29 Mar.

Common Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra**Common resident and irruptive migrant breeder***Scottish Crossbill *Loxia scotica****Probable common resident breeder*

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

Flocks of 10 or more were c.25 Morinsh Forest 25 Feb, 14 Tilliglens 21 Jan, 12 Darnaway 27 Jan, 12 Dunearn 7 Jan, 11 Ordiquish Forest 22 Apr, 10 Whiteash Hill Wood 4 Feb, 10 Cragganmore 1 Mar and 10 Cairn Eney 6 Mar.

Other locations with smaller groups: Allachrow, Auldich, Banchor, Bogeney, Burnside (Teindland), Clashdhu, Cnoc na Sealg, Cragganmore, Culbin Forest, Dava Station, Dulsie (including 1 singing on 3 May), Gallowhill (Grange), Glaschyle, Glenferness, Highland Boath/Dulsie, Holme Rose/Kilravock, Kinloss, Knockando (Distillery and Woods), Loch Belivat, Loch Kirkaldy, Lossie Forest, Lossiemouth, Newton of Dalvey, Phorp, Roseisle, Roseisle Forest, Torrieston and Urquhart.

Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis**Very common resident breeder*

Flocks of 10 or more were: 125 Easter Bauds Farm 14 Jan, 110 Lossiemouth Airfield 7 Sep, c.100 Darkland 21 Aug, 92 Kingsteps 15 Jan, c.60 Parks of Innes 13 Aug, 55 Spey Estuary 29 Aug, 50 Hopeman 2 Jan, 40 Forres 27 Nov, 38 Lossiemouth 25 Dec, 36 Mill of Grange 23 Oct, 35 Nairn Bar 12 Feb, 34 The Wards, Elgin 30 Jan, 30 Cloddach quarry 9 Oct, 28 Balormie pig farm 24 Sep, 27 Findhorn 24 Dec, 25 Tradespark (Nairn) 23 Feb, 25 Kinloss 22 Aug, 25 Nairn harbour 15 Sep, 20 Myreside 20 Oct, 19 Inchberry 3 Jan, 15 Silverhills 8 Oct, 14 Moor of Tore 24 Apr and 10 Tomintoul 27 Aug.

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

Flocks of 20 or more individuals included (maximum counts at each site): 250 Marypark 11 Dec, 76 Easter Bauds Farm 22 Jan, 75 Dipple 2 Jan, 50+ Tradespark (Nairn) 22 Mar, 40 Firhall 23 Mar, 35 Auchbreck 25 Jul, 34 Clochan 4 Mar, 33 Lossiemouth 25 Apr, 30 Forres 13 Jan, 28 Inchberry 3 Jan, 20 Knockomie 10 Mar, 20 Strathavon 25 Apr and 20 Invernairn 7 May.

Corn Bunting *Emberiza calandra**Scarce resident breeder*

January -March: 34 (2 of which were singing) Easter Bauds Farm 3 Jan, with 14 there again on 14 Jan (AY), 1 Ardivot 21 Jan, 25 Porttannachy 17 Feb (JA) (and 10 at nearby Portgordon maltings 27 Mar [TJ]), 1 in song at Drainie on 26 Feb and 1 Burghead-Hopeman 3 Mar. Breeding season: Seen and/or heard in the coastal lowlands at Binns area (3 singing 4 Jun, and a single 21 Jun), Garmouth (1 singing 28 Apr, 1 on 1 May, 2 on 20 May, 2 singing 20 June), Loanhead (1 on 19 Jun), Longmorn (1 singing 22 May), Portgordon (1 singing 20 & 27 May, also 1 at A98 junction for Portgordon on 22 May), Rathven (2 singing males on 5 May), Spey Bay (1 singing 4, 13 & 20 May), Stynie Glebe (3 singing 21 Jun) and Troves (2 on 19 May, 1 singing 28 Jun).

In autumn, 1 Tugnet 18 Oct.

Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella*

Very common resident breeder

No song reported until 3 birds at Kingsteps on 31 Mar.

Flocks of 20 or more: 70+ Moss-side (Nairn) 23 Feb, 58 Netherton 25 Apr, 50+ Delnies Wood 1 Feb, 50 Garmouth 5 Jan (and 40 on 16 Jan), 48 between Burghead-Hopeman 3 Mar, 42 Mayne Farm 11 Jan, 28 Tugnet 18 Oct, 24 Lossiemouth airfield 9 Nov, 20+ Moyness 19 Mar, 20+ Newton of Delnies 5 Apr, 20 Porttannachy 14 Jan and 20 Tradespark (Nairn) 21 Jan.

Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus*

Very common resident breeder

January-March: Only one large flock, of 114 Easter Bauds Farm 22 Jan (AY). Well up-country were 1 Knock of Braemora 15 Jan and 1 Aldunie (Cabrach) 7 Mar.

Breeding season: Largest count was 20 Loch Spynie 3 May. At inland/up-country sites were 4 Knock of Braemora 18 Apr, 3 Loch Kirkaldy 18 Jul and 2 Auchmair (Cabrach) 4 Jun.

The proportion of juveniles/adults trapped at the Loch Spynie Constant Effort site was 0.1, down from last year's figure of 0.3 (RP).

Other sites holding Reed Buntings in the breeding season included Croy, Dunphail, Earnhill (Lower Muckle Burn), Edingight, Findhorn Bay, Foresterseat, Fornightly, Hilton of Delnies, Kingsteps, Kinloss, , Loch of Blairs, Middlefield, Mill of Grange, Montgrew, Mosset Burn, Netherton, Seafeld (River Findhorn), Spey estuary and Tomnamoon.

Only a few small counts in October including 9 Nairn Bar 8th, 6 Tugnet 18th and 8 Netherton 31st.

Snow Bunting *Plectrophenax nivalis*

Common winter visitor and rare breeder

Upland records:

In the early winter period: 40 Ben Rinnes 5 Jan (MJHC).

Breeding: Seen at four sites on the Cairngorms plateau: a) 9 on 25 May (SMN), 2 singing males and 2 juveniles 4 Jul (MJHC), 1 female and 2 juveniles 13 Aug (RI) b) 2 on 9 May (RH) and 4 Jun (TC) c) 3 on 20 Jun (SBa), 5 singing males, 3 females and 1 juvenile 8 Jul (JBr) and d) 15 on 8 Jul (TJW).

In late autumn and winter: 1 Ben Rinnes 24 Sep (AE), 8 Cairn Gorm 30 Sep (GS), c.40 Ben Aigan 3 Dec (AE), 1 Cairn Lochan 10 Dec (PRG).

Lowlands in winter: First back at the coast was 1 Lossiemouth east beach 1 Sep.

At three coastal sites, monthly maximum counts were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Oct	Nov	Dec
Nairn/Culbin Bars (and east Nairn)	30	50				
Findhorn Bay area					1	
Lossie estuary & east beach	2		1	1		3

Elsewhere, coastal reports (max. counts) included 4 Delnies 6 Jan, 2 Spey Bay 29-30 Oct, 2 Burghead 31 Oct, 1 Hopeman 4 Nov and 5 Spey estuary 6 Nov.

RINGING REPORT 2017

BOB PROCTOR

Numbers of birds ringed in Moray & Nairn during 2017:

	FG*	Pullus	Total		FG*	Pullus	Total
Storm Petrel	76		76	Whitethroat	6		6
Sparrowhawk	2		2	Goldcrest	182		182
Buzzard		2	2	Wren	37		37
Oystercatcher		5	5	Treecreeper	15		15
Curlew	2		2	Starling	76		76
Knot	26		26	Blackbird	128	6	134
Dunlin	12		12	Redwing	41		41
Common Sandpiper	2		2	Song Thrush	14		14
Redshank	5		5	Mistle Thrush	1		1
Common Gull		4	4	Robin	125		125
Herring Gull		2	2	Redstart	1		1
Woodpigeon	5		5	Dipper	3		3
Collared Dove	28		28	House Sparrow	307	20	327
Great Sp. Woodpecker	29		29	Tree Sparrow	3	18	21
Magpie	2		2	Dunnock	111		111
Jackdaw	4	1	5	Grey Wagtail	3		3
Carrion Crow		5	5	Pied Wagtail	158	13	171
Waxwing	68		68	Meadow Pipit	10	5	15
Coal Tit	270	30	300	Tree Pipit	2		2
Crested Tit	29	30	59	Chaffinch	237		237
Blue Tit	292	234	526	Brambling	8		8
Great Tit	195	122	317	Bullfinch	11		11
Sand Martin	442		442	Greenfinch	161		161
Swallow	142	103	245	Linnet	59		59
Long-tailed Tit	152		152	Lesser Redpoll	140		140
Willow Warbler	54		54	Goldfinch	271		271
Chiffchaff	19		19	Siskin	1690		1690
Sedge Warbler	59		59	Yellowhammer	20		20
Blackcap	23	1	24	Reed Bunting	41		41
				TOTALS	5799	601	6400

*FG=full grown

From: Robinson, R.A., Leech, D.I. & Clark, J.A. (2018) The Online Demography Report: Bird ringing and nest recording in Britain & Ireland in 2017. BTO, Thetford (<http://www.bto.org/ringing-report>, created on 7 September 2018).

Recoveries in 2017:

All ringing recoveries reported for 2017 are included in this section with the more interesting ones given in full. Anyone finding a ringed bird in Moray or Nairn is asked to pass the details to Bob Proctor or Martin Cook.

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

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 | Nestling or chick |
| 2 | Fully grown, year of hatching unknown |
| 3 | Hatched during year of ringing |
| 4 | Hatched before year of ringing, exact year unknown |
| 5 | Hatched in the previous year |
| 6 | Hatched before the previous year, exact year unknown |

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

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

WHOOPEE SWAN

A10039	230815	Fljotsheidi, ICELAND
(orange ZUA)	VV 291017	Findhorn Bay

PINK-FOOTED GOOSE

Two neck-collared individuals (orange VXD & VVS), ringed at Jokuldalsheidi, ICELAND on 24 Jul 2017, were both seen at Clochan on 12 Dec 2017.

GREYLAG GOOSE

Two collared individuals (orange LZZ & NAL) were both ringed at Bondous, Iceland on 21 Jul 2017 and seen at Loch Spynie on 11 Nov 2017.

STORM PETREL

2698744	4	300716	Boars Head Rock, Spey Bay
	V	250717	Farsund, Vest-Agder, NORWAY 581 km
2720407	4	290716	Burghead
	V	010717	Lunga, Treshnish Isles, Argyll & Bute 222 km

OSPREY

AA	1m	040707	Moray
	VV	300509	Rutland Water
	VV	03-050413	Somerset
	VV	May 2013	Lossie estuary
	VV	120514	Lossie estuary
	VV	180417	Lossie estuary

OYSTERCATCHER

FP40873	1	230514	Lossiemouth cemetery	
	VV=B	110617	Lossiemouth cemetery	Local

BLACK-TAILED GODWIT

EY70191		101015	Iken, River Alde, Suffolk
	VV	300416	Stekkakelda, A-Skaftafellssysla, ICELAND
	VV	210417	Findhorn Bay

BAR-TAILED GODWIT

K05510		080916	Kragero, Telemark, NORWAY	
(Yellow NNA)	VV	270916	Lossie estuary	762 km
	VV	140217	Findhorn Bay	783 km
	VV	220417	Burghead	
	VV	100517	Findhorn Bay	
FS100693		011116	Les Portes-en-Re, Charante Maritime, FRANCE	
	VV	140517	Findhorn Bay	

KNOT

779027		080916	Neslon, Nordur Pingeyjarsysla, ICELAND
(Yellow YCP)	VV	290117	Findhorn Bay
(N3RYGG)		230912	De Richel, Waddensea, THE NETHERLANDS
	VV	290117	Findhorn Bay

SANDERLING

897155		190511	Gullbringu, ICELAND
	VV	130112	Faro, PORTUGAL
	VV	280412	Zamora, SPAIN
	VV	030512	Calvados, FRANCE
	VV	100113-130414	Faro, PORTUGAL
	VV	031014-040215	Faro, PORTUGAL
	VV	230915	Faro, PORTUGAL
	VV	080516	Sanday, Orkney
	VV	090517	Redcar, North Yorkshire
	VV	150717	East beach, Lossiemouth

GREENSHANK

A colour-ringed individual ringed on 8 Sep 2013 at Chichester harbour, Sussex, and seen annually in Sussex or Hampshire each subsequent winter, was resighted at Findhorn Bay on 31 Mar 2017. Interestingly, it was seen at Chichester harbour at 16:00 on 30 Mar 2017 and seen at Findhorn Bay at 15:05 on the following day.

HERRING GULL

Only movements over 100 km are given in full below:

7J7B		210815	Harewood Whin landfill site, Yorkshire	
		160816	Ythan estuary	
		080517	Lossie estuary	
GV31815 (Yellow Y:144)	5	260216	Harewood Whin landfill site, Yorkshire	
	VV	150716	Lossie estuary	
	VV	030916	Lossie estuary	
	VV	100916	Lossie estuary	
	VV	271116	Lossie estuary	
	VV	120617	Lossie estuary	
	VV	090717	Lossie estuary	
	VV	110717	Lossie estuary	
	VV	260717	Lossie estuary	
	VV	300717	Lossie estuary	
	VV	111017	Lossie estuary	
GV31821 (Yellow Y:152)		260216	Harewood Whin landfill site, Yorkshire	
	VV	281016	Ugie estuary	
	VV	130517	Lossie estuary	
	VV	110717	Lossie estuary	
GV47314 (Orange R3XT)	3	191116	Pitsea landfill site, Essex	728 km
	VV	010917	Lossie estuary	
	VV	020917	Lossie estuary	
GV54637 (Yellow A70)		170217	Harewood Whin landfill site, Yorkshire	
	V	080517	Lossie estuary	
GV55161 (Orange VA4Z)	7	110317	Pitsea landfill site, Essex	
	VV	110617	Lossie estuary	728 km

Chicks T:01R (Aberdeen) and T:56R (Whinnyfold) were seen at Lossie estuary in June.

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL

Yellow 3J5B	Ad.	200715	Sule Skerry, Orkney
	VV	011017	Lossie estuary

A total of 22 colour-ringed individuals from various Caithness colonies were reported, mainly from the Lossie estuary.

BLACK-HEADED GULL

K00091	6	150712	Mosvangen Camping, Stavanger, NORWAY	
(White J2CR)	VV	230912	Cullen	518 km
	VV	100413	Mosvangen Camping, Stavanger, NORWAY	
	VV	070513	Mosvatnet østsiden, Stavanger, NORWAY	1 km
	VV	110613	Mosvatnet østsiden, Stavanger, NORWAY	1 km
	VV	150613	Mosvangen, Stavanger, NORWAY	
	VV	210814	Cullen	518 km
	VV	290817	Cullen	518 km
ET72089	6	020113	Ruthrieston Bothy, River Dee, Aberdeen	
(Yellow 2XIJ)	6	091113	Ruthrieston Bothy, River Dee, Aberdeen	
	VV	161217	Lossie estuary	
Yellow 2BL8	1	300516	Ythan estuary (Forvie colony)	
	VV	220117	Loch Spynie	88 km
Yellow 2BV8	6	260816	Ythan estuary (Inchgeck)	
	VV	180916	Ythan estuary (The Snub)	1 km
	VV	061016	Ythan estuary (Foveran burn)	3 km
	VV	220117	Loch Spynie	87 km
EY94497	3	260816	Ythan estuary (Inchgeck)	
(Yellow 2CN2)	VV	200916	Ythan estuary (The Snub)	1 km
	VV	260217	Balormie pig farm	89 km
	VV	281017	Balormie pig farm	89 km
EZ29145	1	190617	Ythan estuary (Forvie colony)	
(Yellow 2CX3)	VV	031017	Lossie estuary	104 km
EX51439	4	251013	Cooper Park pond, Elgin	
	VV	161114	Cooper Park pond, Elgin	
	VV	010115	Cooper Park pond, Elgin	
	VV	011115	Cooper Park pond, Elgin	
	VV	270216	Cooper Park pond, Elgin	
	VV	210117	Cooper Park pond, Elgin	Local

KITTIWAKE

FX27987	1	050717	Point du Raz, Brittany, FRANCE	
	VV	310817	Burghead	

SANDWICH TERN

DD92439	1	170713	Inner Farne, Northumberland	
	VV	250817	Findhorn	
DE02039	1	160615	Lady's Island Lake, Wexford (IRELAND)	
	VV	240817	Findhorn	

Another nine birds showed movemnets between Sands of Forvie (Aberdeenshire) and the Moray coast.

TAWNY OWL

GF25604	1	050596	Findrassie	
	X	120417	Elgin	3 km

At 20 years 11 months, this bird was approaching the UK longevity record for a ringed Tawny Owl of 23 years 5 months.

BLUE TIT

Z789124	5	270216	Cairnfield, Buckie	
	V	091217	Inchberry	12 km

CHIFFCHAFF

JNV047	3J	270816	Loch Spynie	
	XF	020417	Dunbar, East Lothian	193 km

KAR038		300917	Douglasheil Moss, Ordiquish	
	V	231017	Icklesham	779 km

SEDGE WARBLER

Z549111	4f	260616	Loch Spynie CES	
	V	100517	Litteton Brick Pits, Gloucestershire	676 km

WAXWING

NW72890		271116	Inverurie	
	V	270117	Elgin	

(WGG)		140117	Aboyne	
	VV	270117	Elgin	

(WYR)		140117	Aboyne	
	VV	270117	Elgin	

REDWING

8102767	3	021016	Akureyri, ICELAND	
	XF	241017	Aberlour	1199 km

WHITE WAGTAIL

S367009	3	230916	Kingston	
	V	100317	St Helier Marina, Jersey	947 km

GREENFINCH

TZ10809	3JM	080817	Clochan	
	X	031117	Forgue, Huntly	26 km

COMMON REDPOLL

S803223	6M	260317	Teindland Forest	
	V	121117	Jakarla Haaganmaki, Turku-Pori, FINLAND	1496 km

LESSER REDPOLL

S367416		301016	Carraburn, Teindland Forest	
	V	041017	Reddingbootpad, Vlieland, NETHERLANDS	702 km

D611398		301114	Carraburn, Teindland Forest	
	V	221017	Queenamidda, Rendall, Orkney	167 km

Z230349	2	231214	Ordiquish Forest	
	V	301017	Beachy Head, East Sussex	790 km

D802154	5	160316	Edwinstowe, Nottinghamshire	
	V	140217	Clochan	508 km

S245104	3	111016	Marchburn, Glen Clova, Angus	
	V	070117	Carraburn, Teindland Forest	82 km

D611398	3F	301114	Carraburn, Teindland Forest	
	V	221017	Queenamidda, Rendall, Orkney	167 km

GOLDFINCH

S526583	3F	131016	Clochan	
	V	210317	Torphins, Aberdeenshire	64 km

SISKIN

S526724	5M	110217	Clochan	
	V	170217	Drummond, Inverness	76 km

S414215	3J	170716	Clochan	
	V	040217	Llangynidr, Powys	639 km

Y769873	4M	020512	Clochan	
	V	180217	Great Livermere, Suffolk	638 km

S414398	3J	110816	Clochan	
	V	040217	Drummond, Inverness	76 km

Z428169	5M	080416	Clochan	
	V	080317	Drummond, Inverness	76 km

S414464	3F	040916	Clochan	
	V	260317	Millhousebridge, Dumfries & Galloway	276 km

Z428237	4M V	170416 210317	Clochan Kildary, Highland	66 km
S414383	3J V	100816 140517	Clochan Wardend, Durris, Aberdeenshire	76 km
Z428327	5F V	150516 230417	Clochan Wardend, Durris, Aberdeenshire	76 km
S414147	3J V	110716 140617	Clochan Cnoc, Argyll & Bute	189 km
Z428289	4M V	290416 260617	Clochan Berriedale, Highland	69 km
S054941	3J VV	030617 180217	Inchberry Dinnet, Aberdeenshire	60 km
D506287	5M V	310314 240217	Golspie, Highland Keith	78 km
S811376	6F X	280417 110717	Keith Connel, Argyll & Bute	191 km
S153801	3J V	100816 290417	Inchberry Strath tongue, Highland	124 km
Z724906	6F V	050416 250417	Stocksfield, Northumberland Buckie	311 km
S195651	6M V	050317 250417	Peebles, Borders Buckie	225 km

GRID REFERENCES OF LOCALITIES MENTIONED IN THE SPECIES ACCOUNTS

Aberlour	NJ2642	Balnaspirach (Nairn)	NH8654
Achagour	NH9346	Balnugh	NH8840
Achareidh	NH8656	Balormie	NJ2167
Achavelgin	NH9150	Balvalley Moss	NJ3725
Achavraat	NH9148	Balvenie	NJ3242
Achdregnie	NJ2424	Banchor	NH9140
Achnatone	NH9149	Bank Farm	NJ3929
Achmore	NJ2631	Bankhead	NH9658
Ailnack	NJ1414	Bardonside	NJ2154
Aitnoch	NH9839	Barmuckity	NJ2461
Allaburn	NJ1961	Barns of Bynack	NJ0405
Aldivalloch	NJ3626	Bauds of Cullen	NJ4766
Aldroughty	NJ1862	Beatshach	NJ2737
Aldunie	NJ3626	Beinn a' Chaorainn	NJ0401
Alltachbeg	NJ3626	Burnside of Geddes	NH8851
Altnaglander	NJ1628	Beinn a' Chruinnich	NJ2313
Altyre Woods	NJ0253	Beinn Mheadhoin	NJ0201
Alves	NJ1362	Bellandy	NJ2832
Archiestown	NJ2344	Bellie cemetery	NJ3561
Ardclach	NH9545	Ben Aigan	NJ3048
Ardgye	NJ1563	Ben Avon	NJ1302
Ardivot	NJ2267	Ben Macdui	NN9999
Arndilly	NJ2848	Ben Main	NJ3535
Arthur's Bridge	NJ2567	Ben Rinnes	NJ2435
Auchbreck	NJ2028	Berryburn	NJ0545
Auchenhalrig	NJ3761	Bin of Cullen	NJ4764
Auchindoun Castle	NJ3437	Binn Hill	NJ3065
Auchinhandoch	NJ3338	Binns	NJ3164
Auchlochan	NJ0241	Binsness	NJ0362
Auchmair	NJ3828	Birchfield	NJ1614
Auchnarrow	NJ2123	Birkenhill	NJ2260
Auchroisk	NJ3351	Bishopmill	NJ2163
Auchtertyre	NJ1858	Black Loch	NJ2163
Auldearn	NH9155	Blackhillock	NJ2044
		Blacksboat	NJ1838
Backlands	NJ1469	Blackwater Lodge	NJ3328
Badcheer	NJ3532	Blairnafade	NH8451
Badentinan	NJ2957	Blinkbonnie	NJ3365
Badnafrave	NJ2015	Boar's Head Rock	NJ2867
Bailliesland	NJ2565	Boat o' Brig	NJ3251
Balblair	NH8051	Boath	NH8845
Ballcorach	NJ1526	Bogeney	NJ0243
Ballindalloch Castle	NJ1736	Bogheads	NH9155
Ballnellan Burn	NJ1326	Boghole	NJ9655
Ballochford	NJ3633	Bogmoor	NJ3562
Balnacoul	NJ3146	Bognafuaran	NJ3561NH8954

Boldow	NJ1740	Carse of Delnies	NH8356
Bow Fiddle Rock	NJ4968	Catherinebraes	NJ2544
Braes of Enzie	NJ3959	Cawdor	NH8449
Braidbog	NJ4963	Caysbriggs	NJ2466
Brandston	NJ2865	Charlestown of Aberlour	NJ2642
Bridge of Avon	NJ1835	Clackmarras	NJ2458
Bridge of Brown	NJ1220	Clarkly Hill	NJ1368
Bridgend	NJ3731	Clashach	NJ1570
Broadley	NJ3961	Clochan	NJ4060
Brodie Castle	NH9757	Clockeasy	NJ2962
Brodieshill	NJ1059	Cloddach	NJ1958
Brokentore	NJ1854	Cloddymoss	NH9860
Broom Knowe	NJ1059	Clovenside	NJ0459
Broom of Moy	NJ0159	Clunas Reservoir	NH8646
Broombank	NH9255	Cluny Hill	NJ0458
Broomton	NH9654	Cnoc Lochy	NJ1621
Brown Muir	NJ2555	Coire Raibeirt	NJ0003
Bruntland	NJ1264	Coldburn	NJ1449
Buckie	NJ4165	Coldhome	NJ3639
Buckpool	NJ4165	Coleburn	NJ2455
Budgate	NH8349	College of Roseisle	NJ1366
Burghead	NJ1169	Coltfield	NJ1163
Burghead Bay	NJ0867	Conglass Water	NJ1916
Burgie Wood	NJ0958	Conicavel	NH9953
Burnside	NH9440	Cook's Cairn	NJ3027
Burnside of Birnie	NJ2259	Corbiewell	NJ3165
Burnside of Dipple	NJ3256	Corryhabbie Hill	NJ2829
Burnside of Enzie	NJ3960	Cotts of Innes	NJ2766
Burnside of Geddes	NH8851	Coulmony	NH9747
Byres	NJ3562	Covesea	NJ1870
		Covesea Skerries	NJ1971
Cabrach	NJ3827	Coxton	NJ2660
Cairn Ballantruan	NJ1524	Coxtontower	NJ2660
Cairn Gorm	NJ0003	Crachies	NH9453
Cairn Lochan	NH9802	Craigellachie	NJ2844
Cairn Uish	NJ1750	Craigmill Lodge	NJ1052
Cairneyhillock	NJ2658	Craigroy	NJ1250
Cairnfield	NJ4162	Cragganmore	NJ1636
Calcots	NJ2563	Cran Loch	NH9459
Cantsford	NJ0754	Croftglass	NJ2530
Cardhu	NJ1843	Crofts of Buinach	NJ1855
Cardnach Farm	NJ1942	Crofts of Dipple	NJ3259
Carn a' Chrasgie	NJ1942	Cromdale Hills	NJ1226
Carn a' Gharbh-ghlaic	NH8935	Crook	NH8854
Carn Allt a' Chlaiginn	NJ3230	Crooked Wood	NJ2762
Carn Daimh	NJ1824	Croy	NJ1657
Carn Liath	NJ2515	Cruats Farm	NJ4968
Carn Mor	NJ2618	Culbin Bar	NH9662
Carn na Sguabaich	NH8736	Culbin Forest	NH9862
Carron	NJ2241	Cullen	NJ5167

Cummingston	NJ1368	Easterton	NJ2156
Cunninghaugh	NJ3564	Edinkillie	NJ0246
		Elchies	NJ2245
Dallas	NJ1252	Elgin	NJ2162
Dallas Dhu	NJ0356	Elginshill	NJ2663
Dallas Lodge	NJ1052		
Dallasbraughty	NJ0346	Feakirk	NJ0344
Darkland	NJ2662	Fèith Buidhe	NJ0909
Darnaway Castle	NH9955	Ferness	NH9644
Daugh of Kinermony	NJ2441	Ferniefield	NJ3064
Dava	NJ0038	Findhorn Bay	NJ0462
Delmore	NJ2442	Findochty	NJ4668
Delnabo	NJ1617	Findrassie	NJ1965
Delnapot	NJ1737	Fochabers	NJ3458
Delnashaugh	NJ1835	Fodderletter	NJ3458
Delnies	NH8356	Fogwatt	NJ2357
Deskford	NJ5061	Fords of Avon	NJ0403
Dounduff	NH9949	Foresterseat	NJ2562
Drainie	NJ2168	Fornightly	NH9350
Drumdivan	NH8454	Forres	NJ0358
Drumduan Mill	NH9156	Foynesfield	NJ0358
Drumfurrich	NJ2944		
Drumin	NJ1830	Garbh Uisge Beag	NH9900
Drummuir	NJ3844	Garbh Uisge Mòr	NH9900
Drybridge	NJ4362	Garlinebeg	NJ1741
Drynachan	NH8639	Galcantray	NH8148
Dufftown	NJ3239	Garmouth	NJ3364
Duffus	NJ1668	Garmouth viaduct	NJ3464
Duffus Castle	NJ1867	Gateside	NJ3647
Dulsie	NH9341	Geddes	NH8852
Dulsie Bridge	NH9341	Gervally	NH9948
Dunearn	NH9341	Gilston	NJ2066
Dundurcas	NJ2950	Glack Harnes	NJ2836
Dunnyduff Wood	NJ4449	Glacks of Balloch	NJ3534
Dunphail	NJ0047	Glass	NJ4239
Dyke	NH9858	Glen Avon	NJ1006
Dykeside	NJ1159	Glen Gheallaidh	NJ1338
		Glen Latterach	NJ1951
Earnhill	NJ0160	Glen Lossie	NJ1347
Earnside	NJ1062	Glen Rinnes	NJ2834
East Mains	NJ2066	Glenallachie	NJ2741
East Meur Gorm Craig	NJ1504	Glenfarclas Distillery	NJ2138
Easter Allanaha	NJ1062	Glenferness	NH9443
Easter Calcots	NJ2563	Glenlatterach Reservoir	NJ1952
Easter Cloves	NJ1461	Glenmarkie	NJ3837
Easter Galcantray	NH8148	Glenmullie	NJ1916
Easter Gaulrig	NJ1514	Gollachy Burn	NJ4064
Easter Greens	NJ0449	Gordonstoun	NJ1869
Easter Lawrenceton	NJ0858	Gordonsward	NJ2564
Easter Newforres	NJ0658	Gow Moss	NJ3853

Gownie	NJ2842	Kintessack	NJ2269
Greenside	NJ2656	Kirdellbeg	NJ1741
		Kirkhill	NJ2462
Half Davoch	NJ0451	Kirkmichael Church	NJ1423
Hardmuir	NH9556	Kirkton	NJ2462
Heathfield	NH8050	Knauchland	NJ5651
Heldon Wood	NJ1257	Knock of Braemoray	NJ0141
Hempriggs	NJ1063	Knock of Gownie	NJ2942
Herricks	NJ4549	Knockanbeg	NJ2632
Highland Boath	NH8844	Kronyhillock Wood	NH8349
Hill of Glenroads	NJ3031	Kylnadrochit Lodge	NJ1419
Hill of Mackalea	NJ3638		
Hill of Maud	NJ4662	Ladder Hills	NJ2719
Hillhead	NJ2058	Ladycroft	NJ2444
Hill of Mulundy	NJ1053	Laggan	NJ3436
Hillpark	NJ4360	Lagganauld	NJ2026
Hills of Cromdale	NJ1226	Lagganvoulain	NJ1817
Hilton of Delnies	NH8456	Laikenbuie	NH9052
Holme Rose	NH8048	Lecht	NJ2413
Hopeman	NJ1469	Leids Hill	NJ4126
Househill	NH8855	Lein	NJ3365
Howford	NH8753	Lethen Bar	NH9351
Humbrack	NJ2556	Lethenhill	NJ1058
Hunt Hill	NJ2346	Lhanbryde	NJ2761
		Lintmill	NJ5165
Inchberry	NJ3155	Little Aitnoch	NH9640
Inchbroom	NJ2566	Little Pitlurg	NJ4245
Inchnacape	NJ2020	Little Urchany	NH8748
Inchrory	NJ1708	Loch Allan	NH9939
Innes House	NJ2764	Loch Belivat	NH9547
Innesmill	NJ2863	Loch Dallas	NJ0947
Inshoch Wood	NH9558	Loch Flemington	NH8152
Inveravon	NJ1837	Loch Kirkaldy	NH9641
Invererne	NJ0360	Loch Loy	NH9358
Inverharroch Farm	NJ3831	Loch Noir	NJ0945
Inverlochy	NJ1324	Loch of Blairs	NJ0255
		Loch of Boath	NJ0255
Johnstripe	NJ0447	Loch of the Clans	NH8353
		Loch Oire	NJ2860
Keith	NJ4250	Loch Park	NJ3543
Kellas	NJ1754	Loch Romach	NJ0652
Kerrow	NH9941	Loch Spynie	NJ2366
Kilravock	NH8149	Loch Trevie	NJ0944
Kilravock Castle	NH8149	Lochan Buidhe	NJ2366
Kinermory	NJ2541	Lochan Tùtach	NH9840
Kingsteps	NH9057	Lochanan a' Ghubhais	NH9840
Kingston	NJ3365	Lochbuie	NJ2153
Kinloss	NJ0661	Lochindorb	NH9736
Kinneddar	NJ2269	Lochs of Bogmussach	NJ1347
Kinnudie	NH9055	Lochyhill	NJ0559

Logie	NJ0150
Logieburn	NJ2656
Longmorn	NJ2358
Lossie estuary	NJ2469
Lossiemouth	NJ2370
Lower Auchenreath	NJ3763
Lower Blairnain	NJ2738
Lower Bogrotten	NJ4861
Lower Dallachy	NJ4861
Lower Hempriggs	NJ1064
Lyne of Knockando	NJ1745
Lynemore	NJ1438
Macbeth's Hillock	NH9656
Machattie's Cairn	NJ3547
Mains of Kirdells	NJ1739
Mains of Balnagowan	NH8154
Mains of Moyness	NH9553
Manachie Farm	NJ0356
Manbeen	NJ1959
Maryfield	NJ2364
Marypark	NJ1938
Maviston	NH9458
Meikle Balloch Hill	NJ3534
Meikle Coire Riabhach	NJ2513
Meikle Conval	NJ2937
Meikle Kildrummy	NH8553
Mid Mains	NJ1966
Middlefield	NJ0360
Midwood	NJ4261
Mill of Grange	NJ0460
Millhill	NJ3158
Milltown	NJ2758
Milltown of Laggan	NJ2834
Milton Brodie	NJ0962
Milntonduff	NJ1860
Milntonhill	NJ0963
Monadh an t-Sluich Leith	NJ2617
Monahoudie Moss	NJ2243
Monaughty	NJ1260
Moniemouies	NJ2756
Montgrew	NJ4551
Moor of Tore	NJ1054
Morinsh Forest	NJ2330
Moss of Barmuckity	NJ2461
Moss of Birnie	NJ2051
Mosstodloch	NJ3360
Mossyards	NJ1566
Moycroft	NJ2362
Moyness	NH9553

Muir of Holmie	NJ4161
Muir of Linksfield	NJ2264
Muir of Milntonduff	NJ1859
Muir of the Clans	NH8352
Muirhead	NJ0863
Muirton	NJ2268
Muiry Wood	NJ0558
Mulben	NJ3550
Mulderie Mains	NJ3950
Mundole	NJ0156
Myreside	NJ2164
Nairn	NH8856
Nairn Bar	NH9260
Nether Bellandy	NJ2833
Nether Birnie	NJ2059
Nether Dallachy	NJ3663
Nether Meft	NJ2764
Netherbyre	NJ1557
Netherton	NJ0361
Newbold Wood	NJ0558
Newforres Wood	NJ0657
Newton nursery	NJ1663
Newton of Darnaway	NH9853
Newton of Innes	NJ2866
North Darkland	NJ2662
Oldtown	NJ1367
Ordiquish	NJ3357
Ordbreck	NH8747
Orton	NJ3153
Overton	NJ2745
Paddockhaugh	NJ2058
Parks of Innes	NJ2763
Paul's Hill	NJ1140
Penick	NH9356
Philaxdale	NJ1667
Pitairlie	NJ2465
Pitchroy	NJ1738
Pitgaveny	NJ2465
Pittendreich	NJ1961
Pluscarden	NJ1456
Portgordon	NJ3964
Portknockie	NJ4868
Porttannachy	NJ3864
Quarrywood	NJ1864
Rafford	NJ0656

Recletch	NJ2834	The Scalp	NJ3636
Redhill	NJ1661	Thief's Hill	NJ3654
Reekimlane	NJ3625	Thomshill	NJ2157
Refouble	NH9540	Tips of Corsemaul	NJ3939
Relugas	NH9948	Todholes	NJ1054
Rhinturk	NJ3632	Tom nan Clach	NH8634
Rinour	NJ1740	Tomachar	NJ2432
Rosarie	NJ3849	Tomachlaggan	NJ1522
Roseisle Forest	NJ1166	Tombreck	NJ1218
		Tomcork	NJ1349
Salterhill	NJ2067	Tomintoul	NJ1618
Sanquhar Loch	NJ0458	Tomnamoon	NJ0450
Scabbed Hill	NJ4160	Tomnavoulin	NJ2126
Scalan	NJ2419	Tormore Distillery	NJ1534
Scarffbanks	NJ2366	Torrieston	NJ1658
Scaut Hill	NJ3331	Tronach Head	NJ4768
Scotsburn	NJ2760	Troves	NJ2459
Scotstonhill	NJ2662	Tugnet	NJ3465
Seafield	NJ0261	Tynet	NJ3861
Shaw Hill	NH9748		
Sheanspark	NJ3645	Upper Bruntlands	NJ1943
Shearleat	NH8641	Upper Dallachy	NJ3662
Shelter Stone	NJ0001	Upper Knockando	NJ1843
Sherriffmill	NJ2062	Upper Mulben	NJ3652
Sheriffston	NJ2561	Urchany	NH8748
Sluie	NJ0052	Urquhart	NJ2862
South Darkland	NJ2661		
Spey Bay	NJ3767	Wallfield	NJ2965
Spey estuary	NJ3564	Waterford Fm	NJ0259
Speymouth	NJ3564	Waukmill	NJ2362
Speyslaw	NJ3465	Well of The Lecht	NJ2315
Spynie canal	NJ2366	Wellheads	NJ3860
Spynie Palace	NJ2365	Wellhill	NJ0061
St. John's Meads	NJ0155	Wester Calcots	NJ2463
Stob Bac an Fhurain	NJ1303	Wester Delnies	NH8355
Stoneyford pond	NJ0455	Wester Elchies	NJ2542
Strath Avon	NJ1425	Wester Gaulrig	NJ1513
Strathlene	NJ4467	Wester Manbeen	NJ1960
Stronachavie	NJ1318	Wester Newforres	NJ0657
Strondow	NJ1644	Westerfolds	NJ1967
Strypes	NJ2758	Westertown	NJ1925
Succoth	NJ2935	Whiteash Hill	NJ3857
Suie	NJ2724	Whitefolds	NJ2425
Surradale	NJ1665	Whitetree	NJ1156
		Whitewreath	NJ2357
Tanzie	NJ3146	Windyridge	NJ2367
Tapp	NJ1447	Wood of Mulderie	NJ3751
Tarras	NJ0659		
Teindland	NJ2655	Yellowbog	NJ1448
Tervieside	NJ2330		

