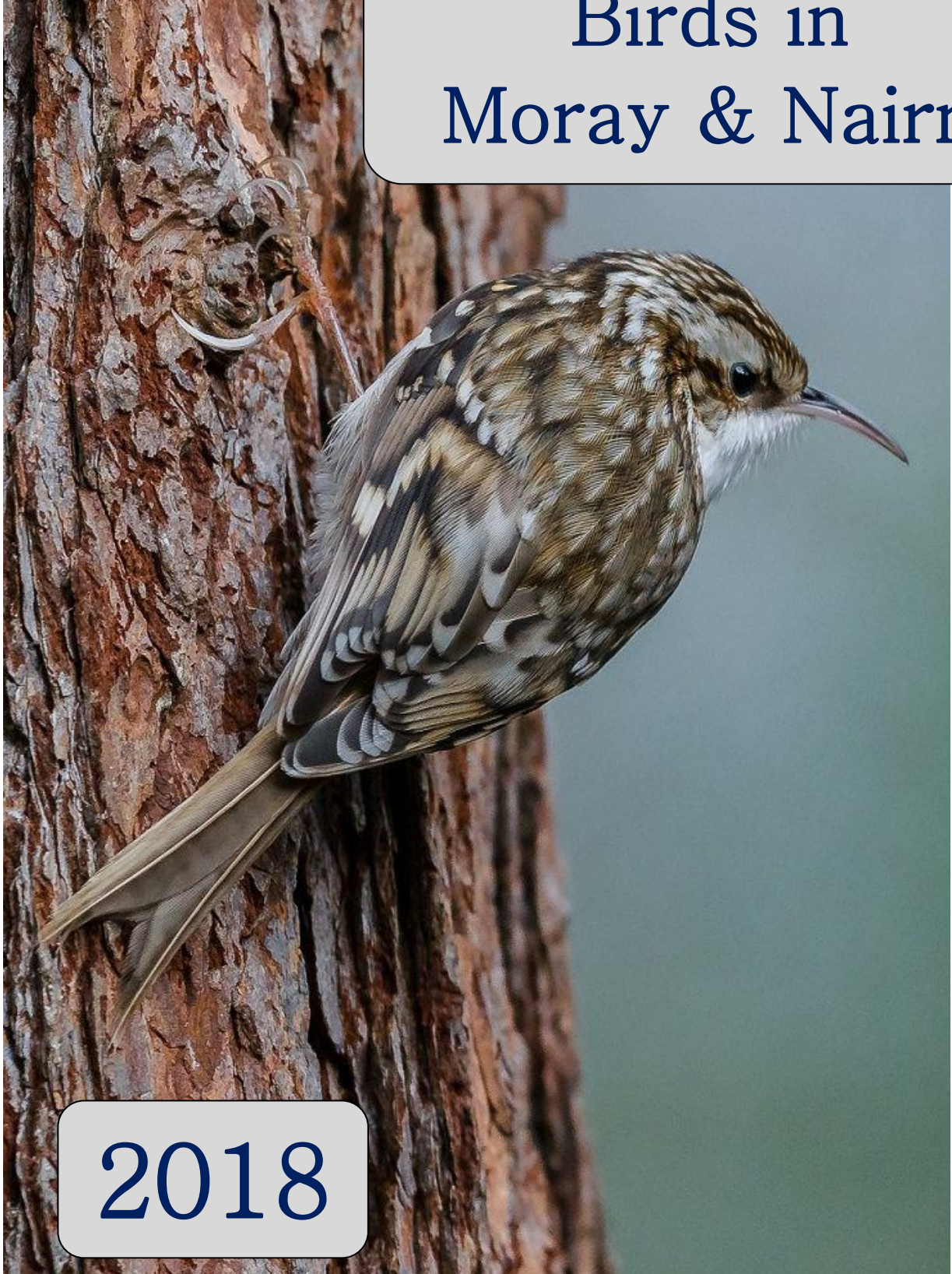


# Birds in Moray & Nairn



2018

## Birds in Moray & Nairn in 2018

MORAY & NAIRN BIRD REPORT

No.33 – 2018

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

Cover photograph: Treecreeper in Torrieston Wood, 20 February 2018 (David Main).

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This edition of Birds in Moray & Nairn, the 33rd edition of the Moray & Nairn bird report, is available only online at [www.birdsinmorayandnairn.org](http://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](http://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/](http://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](http://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](http://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/](http://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* 2018**

I Addis, G Aitken, J Allison, A Archer, C Armour (CA), B Aspinall (BA), T Backx (TB), L Bacon, I Bailey, A Baird, M C Bale, C Ballinger (CB), E Balls, K Barnes (KB), B Bates (BBa), P Bayliss, G Biggs, J H Bingley, G Birnie (GBi), B Blackhall (BBl), M Boothman, P Brady, S Broyd, A Burgess, A N M Burns, J Burnside (JB), J Cadera, N Carter, M Chandler, A Chapman, B Chappell, T Churchyard, H Clark (HC), J A Clarke (JAC), K Clarke, D Clem, A J Clunas (ACl), M Coath, M Coleman, M Collins, R Collins, M Conway, J C Cook, M J H Cook (MJHC), B Cooke, B Cosnette (BCo), J K Craib (JKC), K Craib (KCr), R Cripps, M G Crutch (MGC), K Cunningham (KCu), P Dale, R Dalziel, G Davies, R H Dennis (RHD), D G Devonport, S Donnelly (SD), M Doubleday (MD), J M Dowson, S Drake, S D'rozario, D Eatch, M Eaton, S Eaves, A Edward (AE), P Elford, L G R Evans, L Evans, B Etheridge (BE), H Farquhar (HF), D Farr, M Farrar, O Frampston, I Francis (IF), H Franklin, M Freestone, D Galloway, G Garner, C A Gervaise, D A Gibson (DAG), R Gomes, C Gordon, J D Gordon (JDG), P R Gordon (PRG), D Gorringer, I Graham, I Green, S Green (SG), T Green, P Griffin, J Griffiths, K Guthrie, S Hamilton, G Hamlett (GH), N Hammat, J Harrison (JH), R Harrison, E Harwood (EH), W Haywood, M Hazleton, E Hediger, A C Hilton, A Hogg (AHO), J Hogg (JHo), C Holter, J Homer (JHm), A Huyton, P P Hyvonen, R Ince (RI), S Inglis (SI), C James, R Johnson (RJ), C M Jones, J Jones, T Jones, R Jordan (RJd), A Joss (AJ), B Judge, L Keil, D Kelly, J D Law (JDL), A J Lawrence (AJL), V Leith, C G Leslie (CGL), D Leslie, S D Levene, A MacAskill (AMac), I Macdonald (IMc), J & H MacDonald (J&HM), A MacQueen, H E Maggs (HM), D Main (DM), J Mair (JM), M Mair, J Marchant (JMa), M Marquiss (MMq), B Marshall, K Mason, S Massie (SMa), S McArdle, S McAvoy (SMv), G McCrae (GMcC), E McCruden, J McDonald, G McMullins (GM), A McNee, S Mehta (SMe), L Miller (LMi), R Milne (RMi), H Moncrieff (HMo), P Moore (PM), R Moore, G Morgan, I Morgan, L Morrison, W M Morrison (WMM), S Murkin, M Murray, J Neal, S M Neal (SMN), I Noble, S Noble, J Officer (JO), A Palethorpe (APl), N Park, A Paterson, G Paterson, K Paterson (KP), S Pettitt, D Pierce (DP), S Pocock, N R Porter, J Pott (JP), R Potter (RPo), J Poyner (JPo), R J F Prentice, G Prest (GPr), R Proctor (RP), A Proud, D M Pullan (DMP), M Ranner (MR), R Ranner, G Rebecca (GRb), S Reed (SRe), A Reid, C Reid, G Reid, A & F Ritchie (A&FR), S Robertson, I Robson, H Rolton, S Rosser, K Rylands (KR), A Scott (ASc), R Scott, J Scrimgeour, B T R Seim, S Seright (SSe), C Sharpe (CSh), M Sharpe (MSh), C&D Shaw (DSH), B Sheldon, P Shepherd, R Shewan (RSh), J Simpson (JSi), L Simpson (LSi), A Sinclair, R Singleton, M Sitnikova, A Slade, S Smart, A Smith, C Smith, G & D Smith, M Smith, R Somers Cocks (RSC), M Souter, A Spiers, M Stanyer, L Stead, M Stone, P Stronach (PSt), N Sutherland (NS), I S Suttie, J Sutton, P Swainson, S Taylor, T Taylor, W G Taylor, A Thomas, C Thomas (CTh), J Thomason (JT), D Thomson (DT), B Thompson (BT), F Todd, C Tolworthy, R B Tozer, G&S Tsikkouris (G&ST), A E Turner (AET), M Turton (MT), R Walden, P Wallace, S Wanless (SWa), M Warren (MWa), R Webb, T J Wells (TJW), C West (CWe), E Weston (EW), M Whitton (MWh), B Whyte (BW), A Williams, K Williams, M Williams, C Williamson, S Willis, J Wilson, P Winn, A Wlodarczyk, G Woodard, P W Yendle, M Youdale (MY), A Young (AY), E 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 where flocks were recorded from Delnies eastwards to the Culbin/Nairn Bars.

Winter: Present in the Nairn area from 7 Jan-8 Apr; maximum was 65 on 13 Jan (the 10-year mean is 67).

Largest group size reported from the Nairn area 2008-2018:

2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
50	69	52	64	64	80	74	57	76	80	65

Three records away from the Nairn area included: 4 Lossie estuary 10 Jan, 11 flying west Lossiemouth 25 Mar and c.10 Burghead maltings 23 Apr.

Autumn passage period (September-October): The only autumn records occurred at Findhorn Bay (4 on 12-14 Sep & 2 on 26 Sep) and Lossie estuary (2 on 26 Sep; same as Findhorn Bay record?).

Winter: In the Nairn area, the first returning birds was a group of 5 off Nairn golf club 15 Nov. This is about a month later than 2017. Numbers were still low in late November and early December (*e.g.* 8 on 22nd & 4 on 24th Nov and 8 on 4th Dec), though quickly increased to 40 on 9 Dec and 46 on 20 Dec from Culbin Bar. Unusually, 1 Loch Flemington 15 Nov.

**Canada Goose *Branta canadensis***

*Scarce migrant in summer, rare in winter.*

Winter-spring: No records for these periods were received.

Summer (June-July): Present at Findhorn Bay 1-15 Jun; the first was a single on 1 Jun at the Mosset Burn (exactly the same date and location as 2017), with the maximum count of 59 on 12th. Also in the Findhorn area, 13 flew over Forres 3 Jun. Coastal records elsewhere involved 1 Loch Spynie 3 Jun, 5 Spey estuary 7 Jun, 33 flying east Portknockie 8 Jun and 8 Lossie estuary 24 Jun.

Autumn (August-October): 6 Loch Flemington 30 Sep was the largest count in this period. In Findhorn Bay 3 on 22 Sep and 1 on 12 & 14 Oct.

Hybrid Canada Goose x Greylag Goose; singles were recorded at Black Loch (Dava) 26 May and Spey estuary 7 Jun.

### **Barnacle Goose *Branta leucopsis***

*Scarce migrant and winter visitor.*

Winter-spring: The largest group during this period was 6 Portknockie 23 Mar. Otherwise only singles reported, and with three reports associating with Pink-footed Geese, all records possibly relate to the same individual; Carse of Delnies 17 Jan, Findhorn Bay 18 Feb, Nether Birnie 18-19 Feb, Spey estuary 18 & 22 Mar, Forres 20 Mar, Wester Lawrenceton Farm 20 Mar, Clochan 25-26 & 30 Apr and Drainie 15 Apr.

Summer: Singles recorded in Findhorn Bay 9 & 20 May and 11-12 Jun and at Portgordon (with Eiders) 23 May, could refer to the same individual.

Autumn: The first record was a single at Findhorn Bay 23 Sep. Throughout October, only recorded from Findhorn Bay where most records referred to single individuals (8 dates; 3rd-24th), though other counts involved groups of 2 (8th), 3 (6th), 4 (14th) and 5 (13th). Only two reports in November; 1 Whiteness 4th and 18 Cullen beach 11th.

### **Snow Goose *Anser caerulescens***

*Rare visitor or escape.*

A single dark/intermediate morph individual was recorded at several locations and appears to refer to the same returning bird from autumn 2017. Present in the Milnorduff, Muirhall and Wester Manbeen area 26 Jan-4 Feb (RP, DAG *et al.*), Findhorn Bay 18 & 20 Feb (RSC, BE), Dipple (Fochabers) 20 Mar (MJHC, MY) and Colfield 1-2 Apr (BirdGuides, RP). Later in the year, recorded at Findhorn Bay 3-13 Oct (RSC, GM *et al.*) and Milnorduff 4 Oct (BirdGuides).



Snow Goose, Findhorn Bay 7 October 2018 (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 two sites (one site in 2017): 600 Gilston 4 Mar and 500+ Spey Bay 9 Mar. The only other large count was 490 Findhorn Bay 3 Jan. A total of 29 other coastal sites held small flocks (same as 2017).

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

	1-100	101-200	201-300	301-400
<b>2018</b>	59	10	8	1
<b>2017</b>	49	6	5	2
<b>2016</b>	52	7	3	2
<b>2015</b>	63	8	1	3
<b>2014</b>	41	10	1	3
<b>2013</b>	51	6	8	3
<b>2012</b>	39	7	3	1

Well inland, and probably part of the breeding population, maximum counts were: 108 Little Aitnoch 16 Mar, 56 Cardhu (Knockando) 21 Mar and 4 Dunearn crossroads 26 Mar.

Summer: In the Dava breeding area maximum counts were; 6 B9007 (Ferness) 8 Apr, 4 Knockaneorn Farm 12 Apr, 8 Tomloan (Achavraat) 12 Apr, 26 Aitnoch 23 Apr, 18 Aitnoch-Dava 23 Apr, 20 Burnside-Little Aitnoch 23 Apr, 25 Little Aitnoch 27 Apr, 10 A939 (Ferness), 6 May, 12 Duthil 20 May, 25+ Dava lochans 20 May, 59 Dunearn crossroads 23 May, 5 Black Loch (Dava) 26 May, 4 Loch Allan (Dava) 26 May and 4 Loch Kirkaldy 10 Jun. However, no records of confirmed breeding were received.

In the coastal strip, one on Loch na Bo seemed territorial on 24 Mar and a possible pair on Loch Oire 7 Apr was suggestive of a territory in the area.

Non-breeding flocks were regular at Findhorn Bay between 1 Jun-29 Jul (similar to 2017 no count exceeded 100 this year; maximum 50+ on 19 Jul). Elsewhere in June-July (max. counts) were, 4 Urquhart 1 May, 2 Craigellachie 15 & 18 May, 16 Whiteness 27 May, 10 Loch Spynie 3 Jun, 20 Clarkly Hill (Burghead) 12 Jun, 21 Spey estuary 12 Jun and 27 A96 (Nairn) 30 July.

Late summer: Frequently seen around the Findhorn Bay area during August where an estimated 750-800 Milton of Grange on 15th and a roost count of 758 on 28th were the largest. A further 12 counts were over 100. Flocks were also seen in August at Auldearn (75+ on 6th), Lossie Forest pools (33 on 19th) and Carse of Delnies (c.230 on 26th).

Autumn: Difficult to assess which are local birds and which are Icelandic breeders returning in September; two large counts from Findhorn Bay (232 on 12th and 320 on 21st). The only other count away from Findhorn Bay was 10 Carse of Delnies on 17th. In October, the largest count was 210 Broadley (Clochan) on 28th.

In November, flocks exceeding 100 individuals (max. counts) were: 170 Clochan 1st, 900 Broadley (Clochan) 10th, 224 leaving Findhorn Bay roost 24th and 500+ Loch Flemington 28th.

Winter (max. counts only): No flock counts exceeded 500, the largest was 101 Muirton 9 Dec.

Hybrid Canada Goose x Greylag Goose; singles were recorded at Black Loch (Dava) 26 May and Spey estuary 7 Jun.

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

Winter (January-March): Reported at 11 sites from Nairn, with two flocks in excess of 1000: 1700 Ardersier 26 Jan and c.1000 Firhall 3 Mar. Smaller flocks (max. counts) were seen at Loch Flemington (c.45 on 26 Jan), Delnies (600+ on 4 Feb), North Kildrummie Farm (c.500 on 9 Feb), Nairn Bar (1 on 18 Feb), Lochdhu gatehouse (c.250 on 1 Mar) and Nairn Academy (c.250 on 1 Mar).

In Moray, the largest counts in this period were again from Findhorn Bay at dawn where the largest was 11,360 on 9 Jan (RSC), and 10 others in excess of 1000 individuals. Elsewhere, counts in excess of 1000 included; c.2000 Roseisle 2 Jan, c.2000 Milntown 27 Jan, 1000 Ardivot 27 Jan, 1000 Cloddach quarry 27 Jan & 22 Mar, 1000+ Loch Spynie 29 Jan, c.1500 Nether Birnie 18 Feb, 1000 Nether Bogside (Cloddach) 19 Feb, 1100 Coxtown 21 Feb, 1000+ Spey Bay 9 Mar, 1700 Fochabers 20 Mar and 2000 Dipple 20 Mar.

Spring passage (max. counts): Unlike 2017, the only sizeable flock reported from Findhorn Bay was c.5000 on 16 Apr, with only two other counts in excess of 1000; 2000 on 14 Apr and 1750 on 18 Apr. Other flocks in excess of 1000 were reported from Collieston (3000 on 1 Apr & c.2000 on 3 Apr) and near Nairn (1000+ on 8 Apr), with only two sizeable counts mid-month (c.800 Drainie & c.500 Portknockie on 15th). Still large numbers passing through in late April and May at Findhorn Bay (e.g. 910 on 28 Apr and 700 on 3 May). Most counts later in the month were small, most under 100, except 155 west Lossiemouth 21 Apr, 150+ Spey Bay on 21 Apr and c.300 Roseisle 28 Apr. During early-mid May flock sizes were relatively small, possibly suggesting an early departure, with maximum counts in excess of 100 (all from Findhorn Bay); 250 on 6th, 410 on 9th and 502 on 12th. Late in May was a single Mosset Burn 24th and then 2 Findhorn Bay (carse) 29th. Interestingly, one appeared to attach itself to domestic geese on 6 May at Tilliglen.

Summer: Present again in the Findhorn Bay area during the summer between 1-30 Jun: the maximum count was three on 11-12 & 14 Aug and still two present on 21 & 25 Aug.

Autumn: The first sighting during this period was 38 Findhorn Bay 12 Sep, with daily arrivals after this date throughout the month. Small numbers during the initial arrival period; 80 Burghead 13th, 50 Newtyle 13th, 45 Spey estuary 13th, 15 Clochan 14th, 8 Nairn 14th, c.70 Keith 14th and 40 Spey estuary 14th. Larger numbers seen from mid-month, especially at Findhorn Bay (e.g. 2550+ on 15th, 4450 on 16th and 7500 on 18th), then 15000+ on 21st, 23rd & 26th. Large numbers present in Findhorn Bay in Oct (6th-21st): maximum count 15,500 on 14th, and another five counts over 12,000. Much smaller numbers elsewhere (max. counts); 6000 Dyke 1st, 55 flying west Lossiemouth 6th, 100+ Nairn 6th, c.1000 Burghead 14th, 420+ Spynie area 14th, 100+ Hopeman 14th, 250 Spey estuary 14th, 368 Culbin Bar 14th, 7000 Nairn Bar 14th and 2000 Drybridge 15th. In November, flocks over 1000 (max. counts) were only seen at Findhorn Bay; 35,930 leaving the roost on 10th.

Winter: The largest flock recorded in December was 12,700 Findhorn Bay 4th (11,900 on 9th) leaving the roost. Maximum counts in excess of 1000 also occurred at 2000+ Grigorhill (Auldearn) 21st and 1000+ Rafford 26th.

Leucistic individuals were reported from Nether Birnie 18 Feb and Nether Bogside (Cloddach) 19 Feb (same individual) and 2 at Collieston 1 Apr.

**White-fronted Goose *Anser albifrons****Very scarce winter visitor.*Greenland race *A. a. flavirostris*:

Findhorn Bay: 1 on 9 &amp; 26 Oct (GM, API).

European race *A. a. albifrons*:

Coltfield: 1 on 1 & 3 Apr (RP, AJL).

Loch Spynie: 1 with Pink-footed Geese along the Scarffbanks Farm track 4 Mar (DAG, RP, HF).

Records of un-assigned race:

Cullen: 2 on the golf course 25 Mar (LS).

### Mute Swan *Cygnus olor*

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

Breeding: A total of 21 apparently occupied territories were recorded in 2018, with 16 pairs producing 68 young; of these, a minimum of 42 appear to have fledged. The mean total of fledged young in 2018 was 2.6.

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

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
<b>Pairs</b>	14	17	17	13	19	13	17	11	12	11	16
<b>Young fledged</b>	59	57	84	53	53	73	43	38	56	26	42
<b>Mean</b>	4.2	3.3	4.9	4.1	2.8	5.7	2.5	3.5	4.7	2.4	2.6

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
<b>L. Flemington</b>	3	6	4		Breeders				24	39	57	54
<b>Nairn harbour</b>	2	2	2		Breeders				9	9	8	8
<b>Loch Loy</b>	11	5	1	nc	1	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	3	2
<b>Loch of Blairs</b>	4	nc	3		Breeders				9	nc	nc	8
<b>Findhorn Bay</b>	6	7	13	53	87	81	5	6	36	25	2	1
<b>Lossie estuary</b>	0	1	2	1	1	0	2	1	1	0	0	0
<b>Loch Spynie</b>	74	64	47	35	nc	nc	2	nc	8	40	43	nc
<b>Cloddach</b>	7	7	5		Breeders				nc	nc	12	13
<b>Loch Oire</b>	24	18	9		Breeders				nc	9	10	11
<b>Loch na Bo</b>	2	5	nc		Breeders				nc	6	9	15
<b>Spey estuary</b>	nc	nc	3	5	3	2	nc	nc	12	nc	1	nc

nc = no count received

Coastal records (max. counts): 2 Milnord distillery 6 Jan & 18 Feb, 2 Delnies 8 Jan, 2 Burghead Bay (Roseisle) 4 Feb, 1 Grigorhill (Auldearn) 16 Feb, 4 RAF Lossiemouth 22 Feb, 1 Drainie pig Farm 24 Mar, 5 & 21 Apr, 2 Calcots (Elgin) 27 Mar and 3 Cooper Park (Elgin) 1 Apr,

Individuals in stubble fields; 1 Linksfield Farm (Elgin) 21 Apr, 1 Windyridge 3, 6 & 7 May and 2 Nether Bogside (Cloddach) 17 & 18 May.

### Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus*

*Common migrant and winter visitor.*

Winter-spring: In Nairn, reported from one site (max. count): Loch Flemington (12 on 15 Mar).

In Moray, reports were received from 16 sites. Maximum counts from each site were: 69 Loch Oire 2 Jan, 5 Wester Colfield 7 Jan, 7 Drainie 5 Feb, 7 RAF Lossiemouth 6 Feb, 20+ Hempriggs 11 Feb, 2 Birnie 14 & 22 Feb, 72 Pitgaveny 18 Feb, 2 Cloddach quarry 21 Feb, 4 Portknockie 28 Feb, 60 Spey Bay 9 Mar, 76 Loch Spynie 10 Mar, 20 Alves 21 Mar, 1 Balormie pig farm 24 Mar, 87 Calcots 27 Mar, 24 Findhorn Bay 29 Mar and 69 Balliesland Farm 29 Mar.

Spring (April-May): 13 Colfield 3 Apr, 83 Bailliesland Farm 5 Apr, 1 Balormie pig farm 6 Apr, 12 Loch Flemington 7 Apr, 23 Loch Spynie 7 Apr and 28 Findhorn Bay 22 Apr.

Summer: The individual in Findhorn Bay was seen intermittently from 8-30 Jun (GM).

Autumn: The first record for the autumn period was 6 in off the sea at Spey Bay 17 Sep (an early arrival date, but the same as 2017), followed by 5 Findhorn Bay 18 Sep. Elsewhere in September groups were seen later in the month; 12 Whiteness 23rd, 1 Spey estuary 23rd and 3 Burghead 28th.

In October, 72 reports were received with most flocks again under 50. Five counts exceeded 100 individuals, max. counts from each site were 184 Loch Spynie 11th and 200 Gilston area 23rd (both relating to the same group). In November no sites held flocks over 100; 84 Loch Oire 16th was the largest count received.

Winter (December): In Nairn, birds were recorded at three sites (max. counts): Loch Flemington 26 on 9th, 11 Loch Loy 27th and 8 Kingsteps 29th. In Moray, seen at seven sites (max. counts): 16 Findhorn Bay 1st, 36 Loch Oire 1st, 10 Loch of Blairs 4th & 26th, 3 Loch Spynie 9th, 3 Culbin Bar 9th, 5 Loch na Bo 21st and 43 Cloddach quarry 22nd.

Brood sizes reported in Oct-Dec 2014-2018:

	1	2	3	4	5	6
<b>2018</b>	1	1	4	3	1	0
<b>2017</b>	0	6	7	6	4	0
<b>2016</b>	9	17	10	9	0	0
<b>2015</b>	10	5	8	2	1	1
<b>2014</b>	3	14	16	7	6	0

The mean from the 10 broods reported was 3.2 young.

### **Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna***

*Fairly common visitor in winter and spring. Scarce breeder.*

Breeding: Records were received from Whiteness (6 chicks), Findhorn Bay (7, 8, 10 & 16 chicks), off Lossiemouth harbour (16 chicks) and Spey estuary (7 chicks) giving a mean of 10.0 chicks from those reported. Seen in potential breeding areas at Easter Delnies, Culbin Bar, Balormie pig farm, Cloddach quarry, Foresterseat and Clochan.

Best monthly counts at coastal sites were as follows:

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
<b>Nairn/Culbin Bars</b>	296	267	7	2	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	147
<b>Findhorn Bay</b>	198	85	63	76	127	144	131	14	1	61	133	157
<b>Lossie estuary</b>	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
<b>Spey estuary</b>	4	0	2	8	12	6	3	1	0	0	2	0



Other coastal sites (max. counts): 11 Whiteness 23 Feb, 3 Burghead Bay 20 Apr and 5 Carse of Delnies 16 Jul.

Inland (max. counts): 2 Silverhills 4 Feb, 2 Loch Spynie 20 Feb, 3 RAF Lossiemouth 12 Mar, 16 Cloddach quarry 22 Mar, 4 Loch Loy 28 Mar and 4 Balormie pig farm 19 Apr (pair present 4 Feb-13 May, and display noted).

At Lossiemouth during seawatches: 4 west on 9 Apr.

### **Mandarin Duck *Aix galericulata***

*Probable escape or feral origin.*

Kilravock area: Maximum count of 5 Holme Rose-Kilravock 20 Jan, otherwise 3 Kilravock 17 Jan & 14 May, 2 on 18 Mar and 1 on the River Nairn 12 Apr.

Cawdor area: 30 reported by Cawdor Castle estate staff during the winter closed season is the largest count recorded in Moray & Nairn. Breeding recorded in the same area; a brood of 9 ducklings were seen on 14 Jun (BBI), 7 (though seen in thick vegetation) on 16 Jun (JH, SD), and 3 well grown on 9 Jul (BBI). Most counts were generally small; 3 on 13-14 Jun and 8 seen on 13 Dec.

Half Davoch: A pair on a pool 30 Mar.

Elgin: Three on the River Lossie 1 Dec.

Buckie: Unusually, 2 males at Buckie harbour 2 May.

Tomintoul: Well inland, a predated male was found 28 Apr.

### **Garganey *Spatula querquedula***

*Rare in spring.*

A pair was present on the Spey estuary 13 Apr (JP, RJd) and a male at Loch Spynie 10 May (HF, RP).

### **Shoveler *Spatula clypeata***

*Occasional breeder and scarce migrant.*

Findhorn Bay: A pair 14 Apr. Regular 2 Nov-31 Dec; max count 6 on 3 & 9 Dec.

Balormie pig farm: A male on 9 & 11 Apr.

Loch Spynie: The largest count was 4 on 3 Dec. Seen intermittently from 4 Feb-15 Apr and then 26 Aug-3 Dec.

Loch Oire: A male 24 Nov.

Spey estuary: A pair on 19 Apr, 2 males on 20 Apr, 2 on 23 May and 3 on 23 Jul.

### **Gadwall *Mareca strepera***

*Scarce visitor.*

Loch Flemington: A single on 6 dates 5 Jan-10 Mar (JAC, PRG, JDG). Recorded on 9 occasions between 8 Sep-28 Nov (max. count; 4 on 17 Sep) (JAC, BW, CGL).

Nairn: A male on the river/mouth 5-8 Jan (BBI, CGL).

Kingsteps: A single present 10 & 16 Jan (PRG).

Findhorn Bay: A single in the Mosset channel 9 May (RSC).

Lossie estuary: Three females present on 3 Sep (AJL).

Loch Spynie: A male 6 Jan (RP) was the only record in the early part of the year. In summer, a pair 7 Apr (DAG) and then an eclipse male 1 & 31 Jul (RP). Regular 1 Aug-25 Dec (12 records); the largest count of the year was

10 (4 males, 6 females) 2 Sep (RP) with 9 (3 males, 6 females) still present 9 Sep (JDL).  
 Loch na Bo: Two males on 21 Dec (MJHC).  
 Loch Oire: Recorded 4 Jan-11 Apr (30 reports; majority related to a single male (EH, RP)). Two on 21 Mar and a pair 30 Mar & 2 Apr (MY, RP, JDL), and max. counts of 4 on 2 Apr and 3 males, 1 female on 7 Apr (DT, RP). Recorded later in the year from 19 Sep-1 Dec (28 reports; the majority again relating to a single male EH, MJHC, RP)), with a pair present 1 Dec (RP). Interestingly a male was again following a female Mallard on 20 Jan and 4 Mar (RP). Possibly relating to the same individual from previous years due to similar behaviour by a male at Balormie pig farm 29 Apr-9 May 2016 and Loch Oire 28 Dec 2013 (displaying to a female Mallard) & 24 Dec 2017.  
 Spey estuary: A female on 26 Jul (MJHC).

### Wigeon *Mareca penelope*

*Very common winter visitor and rare breeder.*

Breeding: Confirmed breeding occurred at Loch Kirkaldy when 10 ducklings were seen with two females on 10 Jun (MGC). The last confirmed breeding also occurred here in 2015.

Non-breeders in summer (May-July) away from main sites below were: 1 Whiteness 20 May and 2 females Loch Kirkaldy 10 Jul.

Monthly maximum counts at main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<b>Findhorn Bay</b>	760	870	532	272	3	31	0	245	1200	3164	1440	1425
<b>Lossie estuary</b>	1500	727	400	250	0	9	1	5	184	477	966	1158
<b>Loch Spynie</b>	110	339	182	101	nc	nc	3	23	11	14	nc	nc
<b>Spey estuary</b>	30	159	50	30	7	10	3	21	42	118	123	317

Winter: Monthly maximum counts at other coastal sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<b>Carse of Delnies</b>	650	nc	nc	nc	nc	35	nc	nc
<b>Nairn harbour area</b>	31	190	25	30	nc	19	300	150
<b>Nairn/Culbin Bars</b>	570	228	nc	nc	nc	150	nc	502
<b>Portgordon</b>	0	25	nc	nc	nc	53	nc	11

Other counts on the coast included (max. counts): 20 on the sea off Lossiemouth harbour 21 Jan and 50 Whiteness 25 Nov.

On freshwater:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<b>L. Flemington</b>	50	56	65	nc	nc	36	158	200	105
<b>Loch Loy</b>	nc	nc	4	nc	nc	nc	2	nc	120
<b>Loch of Blairs</b>	15	nc	12	nc	nc	4	50	nc	40
<b>Cloddach quarry</b>	300	410	408	nc	nc	nc	78	450	705
<b>Dallachy pool</b>	0	1	0	0	1	3	9	10	5

<b>Loch na Bo</b>	0	1	17	nc	nc	nc	0	0	0
<b>Loch Oire</b>	472	245	140	15	2	42	285	200	137

Other counts on freshwater included (max. counts): 31 Milntonduff distillery pond 27 Jan, 150 Balormie pig farm 3 Feb, 8 Gordon Castle (Fochabers) 14 Oct, 19+ Black Loch (Dava) 16 Nov and 6 Loch Allan 9 Dec.

Regularly seen on seawatches off Lossiemouth harbour in the autumn period: max. 60 on 24 Nov.

### **Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos***

*Common resident breeder and winter visitor.*

Breeding: The mean brood size from 9 broods was 5.1 chicks.

Breeding was confirmed at Whiteness, Nairn, Loch of Blairs, Craigellachie and Loch Spynie. Inland, also recorded in suitable habitat at: Aberlour, Auchmair (Cabrach), Dava Moor, Ferness, Loch Kirkaldy, Loch of the Cowlatt, Tomnavoulin and Upper Edingight.

Also recorded in suitable breeding habitat in the coastal strip at: Balormie pig farm, Brodie Castle pond, Cawdor, Cloddach quarry, Dallachy pool, Elgin, Findhorn Bay, Gallowhill, Grigorhill (Auldearn), Kingsteps, Knockando, Loch na Bo, Loch Oire, Lossie estuary, Milntonduff distillery pool, Mosset Pond (Forres), Myreside (Elgin), Nairn, Redwood (Rafford), River Lossie (Elgin & Calcots), Rothes, Sanquhar pond and Spey estuary.

Best monthly flocks in regularly counted areas were:

Freshwater:

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
<b>Loch Flemington</b>	81	26	23	6	nc	nc	40	60	160	23	45	49
<b>Loch Loy</b>	95	nc	nc	nc	5	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc
<b>Cooper Park, Elgin</b>	nc	nc	13	nc	nc	nc	15	17	nc	13	nc	4
<b>Loch Spynie</b>	267	30	nc	20	nc	nc	115	131	9	26	61	nc
<b>Cloddach quarry</b>	15	40	65	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	125	291	265
<b>Loch Oire</b>	81	18	120	8	nc	nc	nc	12	93	135	45	80
<b>Loch na Bo</b>	18	44	12	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	16	40	67
<b>Dallachy pool</b>	25	19	nc	nc	nc	16	62	55	157	140	99	52
<b>Gordon Castle</b>	78	nc	13	8	nc	14	40	57	nc	61	13	90

Large counts on other freshwater sites were (max. counts): 37 Milntonduff distillery pond 6 Jan, 75+ Brodie Castle pond 27 Oct, 30 River Lossie (Elgin) 2 Dec, 70 Kellas 10 Dec, 140 Hill of Maud 17 Dec and c.45 Loch of Blairs 25 Dec.

Well inland in winter were: 39 Boat o' Brig-Mains of Orton 8 Jan, 16 Marypark 19 Jan, 10 Cragganmore 19 Jan, 2 Holme Rose-Kilravock 20 Jan, 13 Carron 31 Jan, 20 Inverchor 2 Dec and 178 Craigellachie-Aberlour 30 Dec.

Coastal sites:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<b>Delnies-Nairn</b>	0	4	nc	83	9	0	14	nc
<b>Nairn harbour area</b>	1	nc	2	nc	nc	nc	nc	10
<b>Kingsteps area</b>	nc	nc	100	nc	130	100	110	85
<b>Nairn/Culbin Bars</b>	73	23	nc	nc	nc	4	nc	0
<b>Lossie estuary</b>	6	5	nc	24	31	nc	nc	nc
<b>Spey estuary</b>	10	2	5	4	48	nc	nc	25
<b>Strathlene-Portgordon</b>	123	34	nc	nc	nc	31	nc	96

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

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<b>Findhorn Bay</b>	344	176	92	1	44	105	48	189	292	115	136	169

Two coastal sites held 50 or more birds: 76 Portgordon harbour 9 Dec and 96 Portgordon-Buckpool 11 Dec.

A male on Halford's roof (Elgin) 2 May.

### **Pintail *Anas acuta***

*Fairly common winter visitor and migrant. Occasional breeder.*

Whiteness: One on 20 May (CGL).

Loch Flemington: A female 3 Aug. Later in the year 2 on 6 Nov and 1 on 15 Nov (JAC, PSt, SSe).

Loch Loy: 15 on 21 Jan (DSh), then 2 on 16 Nov and a single on 27 Dec (CGL).

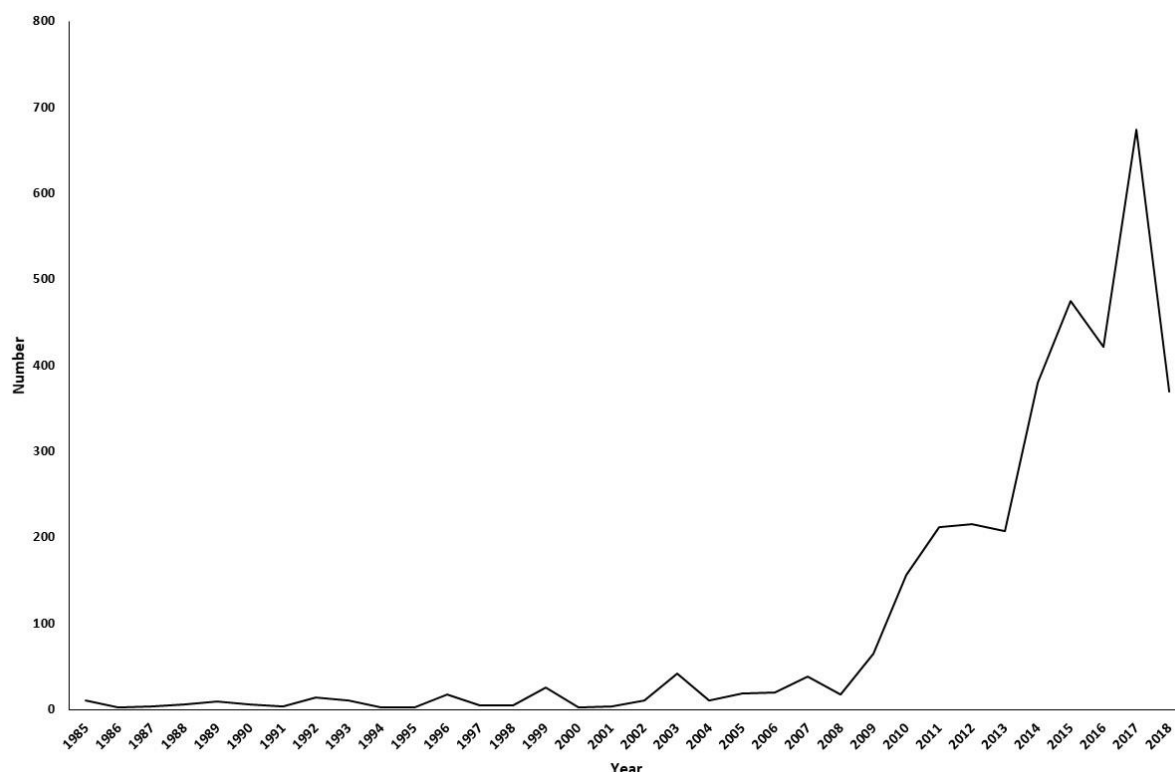
Findhorn Bay: Present from 4 Jan-21 Apr and 2 Sep-31 Dec. With continued regular visits large numbers were again recorded during both periods providing 71 records in excess of 100 individuals but slightly lower numbers than recent years, maximum count in each period was 366 on 13 Feb (GM) and 369 on 20 Nov & 6 Dec (GM, RSC).

Best monthly counts in Findhorn Bay in 2018 were:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
356	366	293	129	0	0	0	0	82	332	369	369



Annual maxima of Pintail at Findhorn Bay 1985-2018:



Hopeman: A female on 17 Nov (DMP).  
 Gilston: A pair present on 4 Mar (DAG).  
 Lossiemouth: During seawatches 3 females west on 16 Sep and a male west on 18 Oct (RP).  
 Loch Spynie: A male on 6 Jan, a pair on 20 Jan & 3-4 Mar and a male on 20 May (RP, Moray Bird Club, CGL, DAG, JDL). Later in the year a male was present on 24 Sep and 17 Nov (RD, MJHC).  
 Loch Oire: A pair 18 Jan & 11 Feb, (MJHC, HF). Unsexed individuals included 2 on 2 Feb and 1 on 13 Feb (EH, MY).  
 Loch na Bo/Oire: 4 on 22 Jan (SG).  
 Portgordon: A female on 11 Dec (MJHC).  
 Portgordon-Strathlene: One on 9 Dec (MJHC).

### Teal *Anas crecca*

*Scarce breeder and very common winter visitor.*

Breeding: Confirmed breeding occurred at Lochs of Bogmussach when a female was seen with 6 chicks on 22 May (RPo).

Potential breeding sites occupied during the breeding season included: Aitnoch, Balormie pig farm, Carse of Delnies, Craigellachie, Dallachy pool, Dufftown, Fornightly, East Mains (Gilston), Loch Flemington, Loch Kirkaldy, Loch of the Cowlatt, Millburn, Montgrew (Keith), Moss-side (Nairn), Roseisle and Sanquhar Loch.

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

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<b>Loch Flemington</b>	95	58	32	1	nc	3	28	40	5
<b>Loch Loy</b>	140	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	2	nc	60
<b>Lossie estuary</b>	682	177	34	58	9	73	101	217	601
<b>Loch Spynie</b>	70	40	nc	12	2	4	34	nc	nc
<b>Cloddach quarry</b>	24	20	20	nc	nc	nc	50	130	150
<b>Loch Oire</b>	0	11	7	7	nc	1	0	23	25
<b>Loch na Bo</b>	0	3	14	nc	nc	nc	0	10	0
<b>Dallachy pool</b>	26	2	5	13	nc	52	59	56	54
<b>Spey estuary</b>	3	nc	21	22	45	57	nc	nc	110

At the Lossie estuary numbers quickly increased in January: 136 on 2nd, 461 on 7th, 575 on 20th and 682 on 21st.

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

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
384	171	85	106	21	6	19	127	577	188	414	95

Well inland during winter were 5 River Spey (Craigellachie) 20 Mar and 10 Inverchor 2 Dec. Other large counts (max.): 100 Gilston 27 Jan, 35 Moss-side (Nairn) 12 Mar, 14 Dufftown 4 Apr, 25 Loch Kirkaldy 21 Oct and 44 Loch of Blairs 26 Dec.

Lowland and coastal records (max. counts) included: 1 Sanquhar pond 13 Jan & 19 Mar, 1 Chapeltown (Forres) 13 Jan, 1 Culbin Bar 21 Jan, 4 Lossiemouth west beach 21 Jan, 12 Whiteness 25 Jan and 12 Carse of Delnies 17 Sep.

Regular during seawatches off Lossiemouth harbour, the largest count was 15 on 1 Sep.

A male showing mixed characters of Green-winged Teal × Teal was seen at the Lossie estuary 17 & 25 Feb, 17 Mar, 2 & 8 Dec (DAG, RP). Previous records of a male showing mixed characters have also occurred on the Lossie estuary: 10 Jan 2010, 31 Dec 2015, 17 Jan 2016 and 10 & 26 Dec 2017.

### **Green-winged Teal *Anas carolinensis***

*Rare visitor.*

Loch Flemington: A male was present from 5 Jan-15 Mar (JAC *et al.*) and then again on 27 & 29 Nov (JAC).

Loch Spynie: A male 3-5 Feb (RP, PRG).

Lossie estuary: A male 17 Nov (RP, DAG).

A male showing mixed characters of Green-winged Teal × Teal was seen at the Lossie estuary 17 & 25 Feb, 17 Mar, 2 & 8 Dec (DAG, RP). Previous records of a male showing mixed characters have also occurred on the Lossie estuary: 10 Jan 2010, 31 Dec 2015, 17 Jan 2016 and 10 & 26 Dec 2017.

### **Pochard *Aythya ferina***

*Scarce winter visitor and occasional breeder.*

Recorded at five sites (a slight increase from 3 sites in 2017).

Hopeman:	A group of 4 circled an Eider flock before continuing to fly east 17 Nov (DMP).
Loch Spynie:	A male 23 Dec (DAG, HF, JSi).
Loch na Bo:	A male 27 Nov and 1 & 21 Dec (MJHC, RP).
Loch Oire:	A male 16 Dec (RP).
Dallachy pool:	A pair 17 Jul (MJHC, JM).

### Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*

*Scarce breeder and common winter visitor.*

Breeding: Broods were recorded at the lochan opposite Black Loch (Dava) (5 chicks), Loch Flemington (5 chicks), Newmill (7 chicks) and Loch Spynie (1 & 2 chicks), giving a mean of 4.0 chicks per brood.

Other potential breeding sites occupied during the summer months were; Aitnoch, Black Loch (Dava), Brodie Castle pool, Cloddach quarry, Cooper Park pond (Elgin), Dallachy pool, Delnies, Loch Flemington, Loch Loy, Loch na Bo, Loch of Blairs, Loch Oire and Sanquhar pond.

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

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
<b>Loch Flemington</b>	6	1	nc	6	4	nc	18	16	10	10	30	31
<b>Loch Loy</b>	16	nc	9	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	4	nc	35
<b>Brodie Castle pool</b>	17	10	5	1	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	3	nc	nc
<b>Loch of Blairs</b>	3	nc	3	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	3
<b>Sanquhar pond</b>	1	1	1	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc
<b>Loch Spynie</b>	50	30	27	64	24	6	50	43	71	29	4	nc
<b>Cloddach quarry</b>	65	60	45	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	17	33	20
<b>Cooper Park, Elgin</b>	15	14	11	7	2	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	5
<b>Dallachy pool</b>	10	0	4	4	0	5	19	23	17	10	14	10
<b>Loch na Bo</b>	0	0	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	113	108	134
<b>Loch Oire</b>	65	45	30	38	10	nc	16	10	12	4	4	nc

Elsewhere, 28 Broadshaw Wood (reservoir) 5 Apr, 9 Grigorhill (Auldearn) 30 Jul, 8 Gordon Castle pond 12 Aug and 16 Dava Moor 7 Nov.

Coastal records (max. counts) included: 2 Culbin 24 Feb, 2 Burghead Bay (Roseisle) 4 Mar, 2 Spey estuary 8 May & 9 Jun, 14 Hilton of Delnies 21 Sep and 1 old Findhorn channel (Findhorn Bay) 6 Nov.

A male showing mixed characters of Scaup × Tufted Duck was seen at Loch Oire 16, 20 & 25 Feb (EH, MY, RP).

### Scaup *Aythya marila*

*Scarce winter visitor.*

Nairn:	Present in October, November (18 on 3rd, 17 on 11th & 27 on 29th) and December (c.30 on 14th & 22 on 15th).
Nairn Bar:	One on 18 Feb and 2 on 14 Oct.
Burghead:	10 on 23 Mar.
Lossiemouth:	Seen during seawatches 7 males west 25 Sep, 3 males west 12 Oct, 13 west 18 Oct and 1 west 27 Oct.

Loch Spynie: Present 3-22 March (male) and then 6 Aug (2), 24 Sep (2 females) and 14 Oct (female).  
Loch Oire: A single 22, 25 & 31 Jan.

A male showing mixed characters of Scaup × Tufted Duck was seen at Loch Oire 16, 20 & 25 Feb (EH, MY, RP).

### **King Eider** *Somateria spectabilis*

*Rare visitor.*

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

This year the male was seen on 4 Aug and 4 & 18 Sep off Hilton of Delnies, 16-21 Sep west Nairn, 25-26 Sep Burghead Bay and 2-5 Oct off Burghead (DMP, AJL *et al.*).



King Eider, Burghead 2 October 2018 (Allan Lawrence)

### **Eider** *Somateria mollissima*

*Scarce breeder, common offshore.*

Breeding: One breeding record; Portgordon (6 chicks) (MJHC, A&FR).



Regular counts (max.) from coastal areas:

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
<b>Delnies area</b>	20	36	nc	12	14	32	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc
<b>Delnies-Nairn</b>	56	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	6	nc	2
<b>Nairn</b>	2	56	nc	15	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	19	nc	30
<b>Culbin/Nairn Bars</b>	23	121	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	10	nc	nc
<b>Findhorn Bay area</b>	nc	11	1	nc	1	11	nc	1	1	nc	1	1
<b>Burghead Bay</b>	7	12	12	6	6	25	4	93	6	1	4	11
<b>Burghead</b>	300	33	22	39	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	25	40	33
<b>Burghead-Hopeman</b>	30	62	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	11	nc	62
<b>Hopeman</b>	20	46	nc	15	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	500	nc	nc
<b>Lossiemouth</b>	87	65	12	nc	nc	nc	nc	2	nc	60	8	120
<b>Spey Bay</b>	54	6	8	15	3	nc	nc	7	7	50	190	70
<b>Spey estuary</b>	1	0	1	0	0	3	4	9	0	3	0	0
<b>Portgordon-Strathlene</b>	36	61	nc	30	nc	17	nc	29	nc	1	nc	14

Other counts were: 17 Findochty 10 Apr, 9 Portknockie 15 Apr, 176 Clashach 16 Oct, c.325 Cummingston 30 Oct and c.200 East Beach, Lossiemouth 18 Nov.

The only count received from within a harbour was 18 Buckie harbour 9 Dec.

### **Velvet Scoter** *Melanitta fusca*

*Fairly common winter visitor.*

Only two counts exceeded 50 individuals during 2018; 59 Nairn Bar 21 Jan and 65 Culbin Bar 22 Feb.

Maximum counts for main areas were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Oct	Nov	Dec
<b>Nairn/Culbin Bars</b>	63	79	nc	0	nc	5
<b>Burghead Bay</b>	7	21	11	4	50	34
<b>Burghead</b>	2	0	30	4	nc	3
<b>Lossiemouth (seawatches)</b>	0	2	6	6	0	15
<b>Spey Bay</b>	1	1	nc	0	3	0

Passage noted at Lossiemouth during seawatches on 6 Apr (2 males), 21 Apr (4 males), 15 Sep (female) and 23 Sep (male).

Coastal summer records (May-July) included: 10 Nairn 6 May, 2 Burghead Bay 13 May (2 on 4 Aug) and 2 males east Lossiemouth 18 Jul.

### **Common Scoter** *Melanitta nigra*

*Common winter visitor, small numbers in summer.*

Summer records (May-July), maximum counts from each site, included: 10 Nairn 6 May, 78 off Findhorn 12 Jul, 27 Burghead 27 Jul, 251 passed Lossiemouth 14 Jul and 20 off Tugnet 23 May.

Maximum monthly counts were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<b>Nairn</b>	7	nc	8	nc	nc	nc	0	4	4
<b>Nairn Bar</b>	1698	976	nc	nc	nc	nc	0	nc	50
<b>Culbin Bar</b>	8	570	nc	nc	nc	nc	4	nc	0
<b>Off Findhorn</b>	nc	3	nc	nc	19	nc	nc	368	86
<b>Burghead Bay</b>	200	230	220	34	96	470	250	500	208
<b>Burghead-Hopeman</b>	180	60	45	14	5	10	20	30	9
<b>Spey Bay (Boar's Head)</b>	4	50	nc	nc	nc	nc	200	34	nc
<b>Spey Bay (off Tugnet)</b>	0	0	8	40	0	20	13	397	200

Recorded throughout the year during seawatches off Lossiemouth (monthly totals):

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
<b>Lossiemouth seawatches</b>	13	47	189	306	126	30	693	24	386	181	62	87

Elsewhere, 11 Carse of Delnies 13 Jan, 20 Portessie 9 Mar, 17 Cullen 22 Apr and 9 Strathlene 30 Apr & 3 Sep.

Inland: 2 females Loch Flemington 6 Nov.

### Long-tailed Duck *Clangula hyemalis*

*Common winter visitor offshore.*

Coastal records in summer (June-July): 1 Burghead 22 Jun.

Maximum monthly counts were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Oct	Nov	Dec
<b>Delnies-Nairn</b>	8	38	nc	5	0	nc	6
<b>Nairn area</b>	420	38	79	15	6	2	18
<b>Nairn Bar</b>	537	321	nc	nc	32	nc	250
<b>Culbin Bar</b>	48	36	nc	nc	0	nc	7
<b>Off Findhorn</b>	148	122	20	3	45	160	44
<b>Burghead Bay</b>	420	135	200	38	30	334	68
<b>Burghead-Hopeman</b>	2	28	2	nc	0	nc	1
<b>Lossiemouth</b>	2	77	38	2	12	nc	6
<b>Lossiemouth (seawatches)</b>	63	168	512	307	122	37	136
<b>Spey Bay</b>	115	60	nc	70	nc	11	150
<b>Spey Bay (off Tugnet)</b>	100	130	0	0	0	106	9
<b>Portgordon-Strathlene</b>	2	6	26	nc	nc	2	5
<b>Cullen</b>	56	27	nc	73	55	105	nc

On estuaries (max. counts): 2 Findhorn Bay 11 Nov and 2 Spey estuary 22 Oct and also on 1, 12 & 19 Nov.

Inland: 3 Loch Spynie 27 Oct (then 1-2 recorded 29 Oct-31 Dec) and 5 Dallachy pool 29 Oct (then 4 on 1 Nov, 2 on 10 Nov and a single 16-24 Nov).

**Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula***

*Rare breeder and fairly common winter visitor.*

Breeding: No confirmed breeding was reported. Present in potential breeding habitat were 2 Loch of the Cowlatt 1 Aug and a female Loch Allan 6 Aug.

Summer records in the coastal strip included: 7 flying east Lossiemouth 14 Jul and 1 Loch Flemington 18 Jul.

Maximum counts on most frequented lochs were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<b>Loch Flemington</b>	10	7	10	2	1	nc	11	13
<b>Loch of Blairs</b>	5	nc	3	nc	nc	nc	nc	2
<b>Loch Spynie</b>	8	14	8	12	nc	2	12	4
<b>Cloddach quarry</b>	0	2	nc	nc	nc	0	5	3
<b>Loch na Bo</b>	4	9	16	nc	nc	7	4	4
<b>Loch Oire</b>	4	11	6	25	nc	nc	1	4
<b>Dallachy pool</b>	6	22	9	7	4	4	12	18

Elsewhere, 2 Miltonduff distillery pond 17 Feb, 21 Nether Dallachy 20 Feb and 1 Gordon Castle pond 9 Dec.

On the River Spey were: 7 Boat o' Brig-Mains of Orton 8 Jan, 2 males Aberlour 22 Feb (2 males & a female 26 Oct), 7 Mosstodloch 26 Feb, 2 Cragganmore 27 Feb and 1 Dalmunach 7 Mar.

Maximum counts at most frequented coastal sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Oct	Nov	Dec
<b>Delnies-Nairn</b>	1	22	nc	1	0	nc	4
<b>Nairn</b>	2	1	4	nc	3	18	3
<b>Nairn/Culbin Bars</b>	18	14	nc	nc	1	nc	4
<b>Findhorn Bay</b>	21	32	25	7	18	29	16
<b>Forres</b>	2	1	1	nc	nc	nc	nc
<b>Burghead</b>	6	5	6	nc	5	nc	10
<b>Burghead-Hopeman</b>	5	2	2	nc	0	nc	5
<b>Lossiemouth</b>	2	5	3	nc	3	3	3
<b>Lossie estuary</b>	4	1	2	1	0	nc	1
<b>Spey estuary</b>	6	19	10	15	4	14	5
<b>Spey Bay</b>	6	12	nc	11	1	19	11
<b>Portknockie-Strathlene</b>	7	2	1	nc	0	nc	0

**Smew *Mergellus albellus***

*Rare winter visitor.*

A most unusual early summer record of a pair Dallachy pool 28 May (MJHC). The first since 2014.



Smew on Dallachy pool, 28 May 2018 (Martin Cook)

**Goosander *Mergus merganser****Scarce breeder and fairly common visitor.*

Breeding: Three broods recorded; brood of 7 Roehillock pool (River Findhorn), a brood of 5 Cothall (River Findhorn) and a brood of 5 Easter Gaulrig (Glen Avon).

Seen in potential breeding areas: 1 River Nairn (Nairn) 17 Apr, 2 River Findhorn (Streens) 25 Apr, 2 pairs River Findhorn (Waterford) 1 May and a female Mosset Burn 29 May.

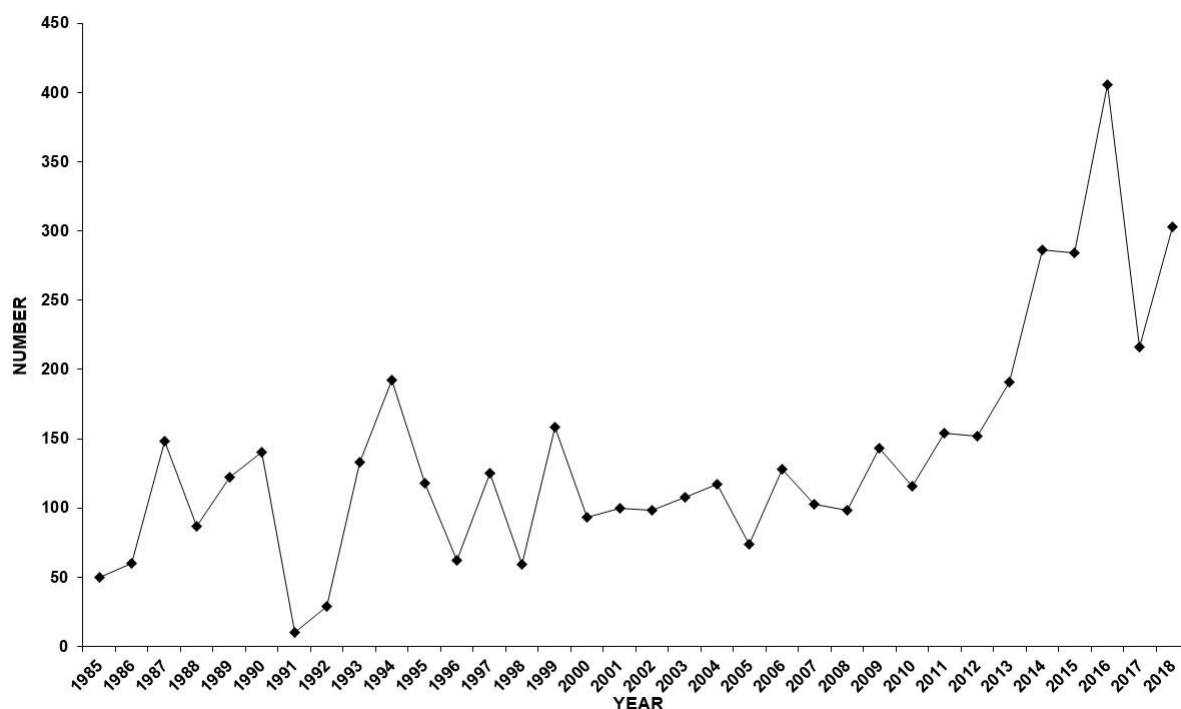
Maximum monthly counts:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Oct	Nov	Dec
<b>Forres</b>	4	1	5	nc	nc	nc	nc
<b>Burghead Bay</b>	2	nc	nc	nc	73	10	0
<b>Lossie estuary</b>	1	1	nc	6	3	nc	0
<b>Loch Oire</b>	4	13	nc	4	0	16	37
<b>Loch na Bo</b>	4	5	nc	nc	4	nc	0

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

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<b>R. Nairn</b>	1	3	2	1	nc	1	1	1	3	3	2	3
<b>Findhorn Bay</b>	2	8	6	2	22	30	24	34	60	94	17	3
<b>Speymouth</b>	1	6	3	35	75	145	186	303	103	9	1	2

Maximum counts at Speymouth 1985-2018:



Elsewhere, 66 Lossiemouth east beach 15 Jul, 80 Portgordon 24 Aug (62 on 31 Jul), 47 Burghead Bay 14 Sep (27 on 4 Jul & 42 on 21 Aug), 16 Nairn Bar 14 Oct and 2 Cullen 19 Oct.

Inland maximum counts in autumn and winter at sites were: 1 Loch Flemington 5 Jan (also 26 Jan & 12 Feb), 1 Milnorduff distillery pond 6 Jan, 2 Boat o' Brig-Mains of Orton 8 Jan, 1 Marypark 19 Jan, 1 Carron 31 Jan, 2 Loch Spynie 4 Feb, 1 Loch Allan 16 Feb, 2 Cloddach quarry 22 Feb, 1 Mosstodloch 26 Feb, 2 Easter Calcots 1 Mar, 1 Gordon Castle pond 18 Mar & 15 Apr, 3 Brodie Castle pond 22 Mar, 4 Dallachy pool 4 Apr and 2 Aberlour 30 Dec.

### Red-breasted Merganser *Mergus serrator*

*Scarce breeder, fairly common offshore.*

Breeding: Two broods were reported from Findhorn Bay; females with 3 large chicks 8 Aug and 5 young chicks 28-29 Aug. In potential breeding habitat included a female River Findhorn (Logie Steading) 15 Apr, 2 River Nairn (Howford) 17 May and 1 Antons pool (River Findhorn) 16 May. Coastal records in summer (May-July): pair Burghead Bay 15 May and 2 Spey estuary 3-8 May (2 females on 12 Jun).

Regular monthly maximum counts at Findhorn Bay, Burghead Bay and Lossiemouth:

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
<b>Findhorn Bay</b>	16	9	18	38	10	9	5	20	24	13	21	29
<b>Burghead Bay</b>	13	75	40	6	5	2	2	2	nc	34	42	22
<b>Lossiemouth</b>	3	3	6	7	2	nc	1	nc	3	4	nc	1



Maximum monthly counts at other sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<b>Delnies area</b>	0	8	nc	2	3	1	2	5
<b>Nairn</b>	6	1	2	11	nc	12	3	6
<b>Nairn/Culbin Bars</b>	15	106	nc	nc	nc	409	nc	5
<b>Burghead</b>	2	2	nc	nc	nc	0	nc	4
<b>Lossie estuary</b>	1	1	nc	nc	6	0	nc	1
<b>Spey Bay</b>	2	6	1	6	nc	nc	9	8
<b>Spey estuary</b>	1	5	2	12	0	6	5	0
<b>Portgordon-Strathlene</b>	0	1	nc	1	nc	5	nc	0

Inland in winter: 1 Firhall (Nairn) 15 Jan and 2 Howford (Nairn) 6 Feb.

### **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 seven areas (down from nine in 2017), containing a total of 14 males, two fewer than in 2017 (MD, RSPB). A female was near Dulsie Bridge on 1 Jan (RHD).

### **Black Grouse *Lyrurus tetrix***

*Scarce resident breeder.*

Recorded at Aitnoch (up to 3 males in April-May and August, 1 on 28 Oct), Aldivalloch (1 on 15 Apr), Ardlowie (1 on 12 May), Auchmair (1 on 7, 21 & 29 Jun), Easter Fodderletter (1 on 3 Jun), Elrick (3 females on 8 Apr), Glack Harnes (3 females on 20 Oct), Glen Rinnes (5 on 11 Feb), Inchnacape (3 on 7 Apr), Redford (Cabrach, 1 on 29 Apr) and Tornieshelt (1 female on 29 Apr).

### **Ptarmigan *Lagopus muta***

*Fairly common resident breeder.*

Largest monthly counts on Ben Rinnes were 8 on 3 Jan, 2 on 31 Mar, 2 on 30 May, 7 on 7 & 10 Jun, 7 on 20 Oct, 1 on 4 Nov and 4 on 4 Dec (AE, GBi, JDL *et al.*). In the Cairngorms, counts of 10 or more on the plateau were 15 on 19 May (TJW), 13 on 7 Jul (SMv) and 10 on 2 Dec (JMa). On Ben Avon on 1 Jul were 2 females, one of which had six chicks (IF).

### **Red Grouse *Lagopus lagopus***

*Very common resident breeder.*

The only counts of 10 or more were 10 Carn Mor 22 Aug, 10 Knock of Braemoray 2 Jan and 10 Suie 21 Aug. Two piles of fresh droppings were found on Black Hill (Aultmore) on 8 Apr - only 7 km from the coast (MJHC).

### **Red-legged Partridge *Alectoris rufa***

*Introduced scarce breeder. Commonly released.*

Breeding: One adult with at least eight chicks was at Little Aitnoch on 29 Jun, and an adult with two (larger) chicks was at the same location on 6 Aug - perhaps the same brood (A&FR). In a different area, four adults with about eight chicks were near Achavraat on 3

Aug (A&FR). Although in some areas large numbers are reared and released for shooting, breeding is not often confirmed in the wild.

Small numbers (up to five) were seen at Aldunie, Arthur's Bridge, Balnalon, Dava, Dulsie Bridge, Earlseat, Ferness, Fiddlerletter, Glenshiel, Golford, Kellas, Milton (Strathavon), Moyness, Pitairlie, Portknockie, Refouble, Ruthven (Tomintoul), Shempston, Upper Milton of Moyness and Westerfolds. In October, up to 15 were seen around Dulsie and eight at Refouble.



Red-legged Partridge, Little Aitnoch 6 August (Alison Ritchie)

### **Grey Partridge *Perdix perdix***

*Fairly common resident breeder.*

Breeding season (April-July): Birds were seen or heard at Croughly, East Grange, Kinloss airfield, Lossiemouth airfield, Milltown, Monaughty Farm, Portknockie, Roseisle maltings and Windyridge.

Additional sites where birds were seen at other times of year were Burghead, Coltfoot, Covesea, Cummingston, Grigor Hill, Hopeman, Inverugie, Kinnudie (Auldearn), Kintessack, Kintrae Braes, Mid Mains, Muirton, Netherton, Scarffbanks, Spey Bay and Waterford.

Reports of more than five birds together were 23 Lossiemouth airfield 17 Oct (and 12 there 19 Sept), 16 Kintessack 5 Nov (also 6 there 25 Jan, and 8 on 20 Dec), 15 Covesea 15 Oct, up to 15 Netherton 30 Oct-20 Nov, 14 Kinloss 1 Dec (and 12 there 18 Oct), 14 Netherton 29 Oct (still 14 on 20 Nov & 2 Dec), 12 Inverugie 30 Aug, 8 Coltfoot 8 Nov, 7 Burghead 18 Aug, 6 Hopeman 1 Mar and 6 Waterford 10 Oct.

### **Quail *Coturnix coturnix***

*Very scarce summer visitor and breeder, occasionally more numerous.*

By contrast with 2017 (12 singing birds) only two were heard in 2018: 1 Montgrew 7 Jul (JDL) and 1 Clochan 4 Aug (MJHC).

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

2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
8	4	4	2	9	0	0	3	3	2	12	2

### **Pheasant** *Phasianus colchicus*

*Very common resident breeder.*

Numerous across the lowlands, especially around release points. A white cock was at Grangehall (Kinloss) on 9 Apr.

### **Red-throated Diver** *Gavia stellata*

*Rare breeder. Fairly common autumn and winter visitor offshore.*

Summer: One pair occupied an upland lochan between 27 Apr-24 May. Although the pair was seen displaying, breeding was not confirmed (A&FR, MGC *et al.*). Three birds were seen in the area on 6 Aug (per MGC). One was on an upland loch in a different area on 12 Jun (IMc).

Best monthly counts at main coastal sites were:

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
<b>Nairn/Delnies</b>	3	4	2	2	nc	nc	3	5	nc	1	4	2
<b>Burghead Bay</b>	10	8	12	6	7	11	3	3	5	8	7	4
<b>Lossiemouth (flying past)</b>	10	4	11	4	3	5	3	1	8	5	8	6
<b>Lossiemouth (on sea)</b>	2	5	4	6	3	nc	nc	nc	1	1	6	nc
<b>Spey Bay</b>	10	4	2	9	6	nc	2	nc	7	63	45	6

High counts in Spey Bay (between Kingston and Lossiemouth) were 63 on 14 Oct (JDL) and 45 on 16 Nov (MJHC).

Elsewhere, a few were scattered along the coast at other sites. All counts were of five birds or fewer, except 7 flying past Strathlene 2 May.

### **Black-throated Diver** *Gavia arctica*

*Rare breeder. Scarce autumn and winter visitor offshore.*

Upland lochs: For the 10th successive year, one pair bred on the same loch. They failed to rear any young, and have done so only once, in 2013 (IF, MJHC).

Best monthly counts at main coastal sites were:

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
<b>Burghead Bay</b>	11	6	2	7	2	1	0	2	0	2	11	nc
<b>Lossiemouth</b>	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	0
<b>Spey Bay</b>	1	4	3	2	0	0	0	1	2	0	3	0

Best counts in Burghead Bay were 11 on 25 Jan and 18 Nov (RSC). Elsewhere, 2 Carse of Delnies 13 Jan (and 2 on 25 May, 3 on 31 Aug), 1 Culbin Bar 24 Feb, 1 Cullen 25 Mar and 9 Apr, 1 Hopeman 14 Nov, 1 Nairn 7 Jan (and 7 Mar, 11 Nov), 1 Nairn Bar 21 Jan (and 18 Feb) and 2 Portknockie 11 Jan (and 1 on 23 Mar and 8 Apr).

**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
<b>Burghead Bay</b>	1	1	1	6	1	1	0	0	1	1	2	1
<b>Lossiemouth (flying past)</b>	3	1	4	2	4	0	2	0	2	8	21	6
<b>Lossiemouth (on sea)</b>	1	4	0	14	2	0	1	0	0	0	1	2
<b>Spey Bay</b>	0	2	1	2	15	0	0	0	0	1	2	1

January-March: Best counts were 4 off Lossiemouth 18 Feb and 4 flying past Lossiemouth on 21 Apr. Elsewhere, in additional sites, 1 Delnies 13 Jan, 1 Hopeman 30 Mar, 1 Nairn Bar 21 Jan and 1 Portknockie 7-8 Jan.

Spring: Numerous again off east Moray where, on 9 Apr, 19 off Cullen, 48 off Portknockie and 29 off Tronach Head - a total of 96 between Buckie and Cullen (MJHC). Elsewhere, 14 on the sea off Lossiemouth 24 Apr (RP) and 15 Spey Bay 12 May (JDL *et al.*).

June-August: One was on the Lossie estuary on 9 Jul (HF). On the sea, 1 Burghead Bay 30 Jun, 4 flying past Lossiemouth in July and 1 Strathlene 17 Jul.

September-December: Offshore movement was detected again by regular seawatches off Lossiemouth - best counts were 8 on 28 Oct, 21 (in 1 hour) on 25 Nov and 6 on 9 Dec (RP).

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

One off Burghead 16-25 Apr (JAC, JPo *et al.*) and 17 May (RG). One off Lossiemouth 9 Apr-13 May (RP, MWa, CGL *et al.*). The Burghead and Lossiemouth birds were both present simultaneously on at least one date (21 Apr) so were different birds. Off Cullen, at least one bird was seen on 14 dates between 1 Apr-12 May, and two were present on 8-9 Apr and 29 Apr (MJHC, DMP).



White-billed Diver, Cullen 29 April (Dave Pullan)



**Storm Petrel *Hydrobates pelagicus***

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

There were no sightings offshore during daylight hours. However, birds were trapped and ringed at night at Portknockie, where catches were made on 12-13 Jul (11 birds), 15 Jul (2), 21 Jul (34), 24-25 Jul (5), 10-11 Aug (4) and 20-21 Aug (6) (AY). Two birds were caught at night at Burghead on 7 Aug (BBa).

**Fulmar *Fulmarus glacialis***

*Common breeder, very common offshore.*

Breeding: Fewer reports were submitted this year. Three pairs were breeding at Cummingston on 18 Apr, although aerial activity suggested there may have been more. At Covesea there were no reports early in the year although 4 pairs were seen on cliffs on 25 Dec.

Passage: From January to July, counts were low with the only totals of 15 or more past Lossiemouth in one hour being 18 on 25 Mar, 15 on 24 Apr, 15 on 11 May and 22 on 21 Jul. High counts in summer included 27 on 4 Aug, 81 on 12 Aug, 28 on 25 Aug and 41 on 8 Sep. All these sightings showed a predominantly westwards passage. Around 50 were seen nearby off Burghead on 16 Jun.

At Lossiemouth, regular sea-watches were conducted throughout 2018 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
0	10	18	15	15	4	22	81	41	0	0	7

Elsewhere, significant passage was recorded at Strathlene with 44 in 35 minutes on 26 Aug and 206 in one hour on 7 Sep (MJHC).

**Sooty Shearwater *Ardenna grisea***

*Very scarce migrant in late summer and autumn.*

Another good year for sightings, mainly off Lossiemouth with 3 on 14 Jul, single birds on 28 Jul, 2 Sep, 15 Sep & 16 Sep, 2 on 20 Sep, 3 on 21 Sep, 2 on 23 Sep and 2 on 28 Oct (RP). Elsewhere, 2 Burghead 21 Sep (RHD), 2 Strathlene 21 Sep (MJHC) and 1 Portknockie 13 Aug (LSi).

Annual totals since 2008 have been as follows:

2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
11	0	7	605	11	1	27	8	4	42	21

**Manx Shearwater *Puffinus puffinus***

*Fairly common offshore in summer and autumn.*

First sighting of the year was 2 birds off Lossiemouth on 22 Apr. Regular passage was then seen at Lossiemouth from mid June until early October with the highest one-hour counts of 27 on 8 Jul, 42 on 14 Jul, 57 on 15 Jul, 19 on 4 Aug, 20 on 1 Sep and 20 on 19 Sep.

Regular sea-watches at Lossiemouth over the summer period gave the following maximum one-hour passage counts (RP):



June 1-15	June 16-30	July 1-15	July 16-31	August 1-15	August 16-31	Sept 1-15	Sept 16-30	October 1-15
0	4	57	17	19	9	20	20	1

Other sightings were 2 Findhorn 1 May (RSC), 1 Tugnet 30 May, 7 Portgordon 21 Jun (MJHC), 60 on the sea 4 miles north of Nairn on 26 Jun (ACI), 1 Portknockie 13 Aug (LSi), a group of 30 flying west off Delnies on 31 Aug (GPr), and at Strathlene, 6 on 17 Jul and 3 on 21 Sep (MJHC).

### 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
<b>L. Flemington</b>	1	nc	1	4	1	nc	6	37	36	10	3	2
<b>Loch Spynie</b>	1	2	4	6	1	nc	52	34	14	9	1	1
<b>Loch Oire</b>	5	8	2	6	2	nc	nc	7	5	11	1	3
<b>Loch na Bo</b>	0	3	2	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	26	23	3	3

Mid-winter: Elsewhere on freshwater in January or December were 5 Cloddach quarry 18 Jan, 4 Brodie Castle lake 2-4 Feb (and 3 on 1 Jan), 1 Gordon Castle lake (Fochabers) 30 Dec and 1 on River Spey at Boat o' Brig 8 Jan.

Present in spring/summer (*italics* = proved breeding) at Black Loch (Dava), Brodie Castle lake, *Culbin Forest gravel pit lake*, Gordon Castle lake, *Nether Dallachy landfill site pool* (2 pairs), Loch Allan, *Loch Belivat*, Loch Flemington, Loch Kirkaldy, Loch Loy, Loch na Bo, *Loch of Blairs*, *Loch Oire* (3 pairs), *Loch Spynie* (5 pairs), Lochs of Bogmussach, Lower Broadshaw wood reservoir and *Newmill (Auldearn)*.

Largest post-breeding congregations in late summer/autumn were 52 Loch Spynie 31 Jul (and 34 on 7 Aug), 37 Loch Flemington 12 Aug (and 36 on 8 Sep) and 26 Loch na Bo 29 Sep (and 23 on 9 Oct). Also 13 Dallachy pool 20 Aug, 11 Loch Oire 9 Oct and 10 Cloddach quarry 18 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 16 on 3 Oct. Maximum monthly counts here were:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
12	10	4	0	0	1	1	6	14	16	12	9

Also seen irregularly on the Lossie and Spey estuaries in January-early March and November-December; usually only 1-2 but 5 Lossie estuary 7 Jan and 4 Spey estuary 1 March. One was around Nairn harbour and The Maggot in January and November-December.

### Red-necked Grebe *Podiceps grisegena*

*Very scarce migrant and winter visitor.*

One remained on Loch Spynie during 25 Nov-2 Dec (HF, DAG, RP, MJHC *et al.*).



Red-necked Grebe, Loch Spynie 2 December 2018 (Henry Farquhar)

**Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus***

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

An adult in winter plumage was on Loch Spynie during 12-21 Apr (RP, DAG, JDL *et al.*). It, or another adult, was present briefly on 2-3 Jun (DAG, RP). At the coast, a winter-plumaged bird was in Nairn harbour on 20 Oct (ACI).



Great Crested Grebe, Loch Spynie 18 April (Gordon Biggs)

**Slavonian Grebe *Podiceps auritus****Scarce offshore in winter, formerly rare breeder.*

No freshwater records.

Coastal: Another year with generally small numbers in Burghead Bay. Monthly maxima there were:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
4	2	1	3	0	0	10	3
(8th,10th)	(4th)	(4th)	(8th)			(13th)	(19th)

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

Elsewhere, 3 Delnies-Nairn 14 Oct (CGL), 1 Spey estuary 7 Sep (HC) and, at Lossiemouth, 1 on 3 Mar (HF, DAG), 1 flying west 17 Mar (RP), 2 on 4 Sep (HF), 1 flying west 22 Sep (RP) and 1 in the harbour 21 Oct (GMcC).

**Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea****Fairly common resident breeder.*

Heronries: 10 occupied nests Aberlour (AE) and 7 at Loch Spynie (RP). Other occupied heronries were at Binsness and Druim (Nairn).

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
<b>Findhorn Bay</b>	3	4	4	4	6	20	28	27	25	20	11	5
<b>Lossie estuary</b>	1	2	nc	2	nc	6	11	12	12	10	2	5
<b>Spey estuary</b>	1	nc	nc	1	nc	3	3	6	8	5	2	2

Best counts in Findhorn Bay were 28 on 21 Jul, 27 on 21 Aug and 25 on 11 Sep.

The only counts of five or more elsewhere were 8 Dallachy pool 12 Aug, 6 Gilston 17 Sep and five flying past Lossiemouth harbour on 12 Oct.

Reported from as far upcountry as Auchmair (Cabrach) and Birchfield (Glen Avon).

**Little Egret *Egretta garzetta****Rare visitor.*

Single birds were seen in four locations but it is unclear how many individuals were involved. One was seen in the Kingsteps area (east of Nairn) between 28 Jan-16 Feb and on 12 Mar (BBl, RHD, PRG *et al.*) and again during 20-31 Dec (BBl, KB *et al.*). In Findhorn Bay, one was present during 1-27 Jun and again during 16 Nov-9 Dec (GM, RSC *et al.*). There is no overlap between these dates so it is possible that the same bird was involved.

There were two other one-day records in 2018; on Burghead harbour wall on 2 Mar (MWa) and on the Lossie estuary on 1 Dec (CTh, RP, DAG).



Little Egret, Kingsteps 29 January 2018 (Beryl Blackhall)

### **Gannet *Morus bassanus***

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

In the first two months of the year there were no sightings of more than 15 birds. By the end of March larger numbers were seen offshore with one-hour counts at Lossiemouth recording 80 on 24 Mar, 181 on 21 Apr, 169 on 1 May and 280 on 20 May (RP). At Strathlene, 42 were seen passing in 30 minutes on 2 May. Highest counts occurred from July to the end of October with passage records at Lossiemouth including 275 on 14 Jul, 225 on 27 Aug, 411 on 11 Sep and 2,543 on 12 Oct.

At Lossiemouth regular sea-watches were conducted throughout 2018 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
12	4	80	181	280	13	275	225	411	2543	215	25

Elsewhere, the highest counts were also in autumn and early winter. Counts over 300 off Findhorn were 320 on 6 Oct, 430 on 12 Oct, 385 on 21 Oct, 310 on 6 Nov and 450 on 23 Nov (RSC, RHD). Other significant counts included 150 Burghead 21 Sep, about 600 off Nairn 28 Sep, 160 Culbin Bar 13 Oct, 200 Delnies-Nairn 14 Oct and 212 past Strathlene in 10 minutes on 26 Oct.

### **Shag *Phalacrocorax aristotelis***

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

Breeding: At Portknockie, numbers remained constant with 78 apparently occupied nests (AON) on 10 Jun. Numbers were up to 118 AON at Tronach Head on 11 Jun, and slightly down at Covesea to 24 AON counted on 12 Jun (MJHC).

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



	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
<b>Portknockie</b>	79	76	85	93	86	66	77	73	74	78
<b>Tronach Head</b>	26	60	58	53	86	72	80	77	65	118
<b>Covesea</b>	14	14	17	14	16	18	21	21	27	24

Away from the colonies, 24 Portgordon-Strathlene 18 Feb, 40 Lossiemouth 23 Mar, 35 Cullen 22 Apr and 57 Buckie harbour 14 Oct.

### **Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo***

*Rare breeder and fairly common winter visitor.*

Breeding: There were 11 apparently occupied nests (AON) at the small Covesea colony below the lookout tower on 9 Jun and a further 5 AON noted on the cliffs c.200 m to the west on 12 Jun (MJHC).

Coastal: Counts of 30 or more were 38 Burghead 24 Mar, 30 Nairn 12 Oct, 38 Portgordon-Strathlene 14 Oct, 40 Cummingston-Hopeman 18 Oct and 39 Burghead Bay 19 Oct.

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
<b>Loch Spynie</b>	7	2	2	3	4	0	1	1	2	4	6	4
<b>Spey estuary</b>	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	54	15	12	0
<b>Findhorn (bay mouth)</b>	26	13	9	16	0	2	0	0	19	63	53	3

Significant counts at other coastal sites included 61 Culbin Bar 14 Oct, 40 Burghead-Hopeman 14 Oct and 24 Lossiemouth 9 Dec.

Inland: As well as Loch Spynie (see table above) several other sites were noted. On the Spey at Aberlour, 1 on 1 Feb and 1 on 25 Nov, and further upstream on the Spey at Cragganmore, 1 on 10 & 25 Feb. At Loch Oire there were nine reports during January-April with a maximum of 4 on 4 Feb and a further sighting of 1 on 21 Dec. Nearby, at Loch na Bo, were 2 on 21 Mar, 1 on 29 Sep and 4 on 21 Dec. Loch Flemington had 10 reports during January-March with a maximum of 6 on 26 Jan. Other inland sightings were 1 Cooper Park (Elgin) 17 Feb, 3 Millbuies Loch 15 Apr, 2 Randolph's Leap (on the River Findhorn) 19 Jan and 1 Sanquhar Loch 18-21 Mar.

### **Osprey *Pandion haliaetus***

*Scarce summer visitor and breeder.*

First one back in the lower Findhorn valley 26 Mar, and 1 Cloddach 31 Mar. First on the estuaries were 1 Lossie estuary 1 Apr and 1 Spey estuary 7 Apr – but not noted in Findhorn Bay until 15 Apr.

Breeding: In west Moray & Nairn, nine pairs nested, the same as in 2016 and 2017, although one was at a newly discovered site which had probably been there since 2016. Eight pairs laid eggs and seven were successful raising a total of 17 young. One pair failed during incubation. The breeding productivity was 1.9 young per pair and 2.4 per brood. In east Moray, the population, which fishes mainly at the mouth of the Rivers Spey and Lossie, held eight pairs despite two of the regular nests being abandoned due to the presence of Pine Martens. All eight pairs laid eggs and all were successful. After several years of poor success due to rain, fine summer weather resulted in seven broods of three young and one brood of two - a total



of 23 young. The breeding productivity was 2.9 young per pair and 2.4 per pair/brood. (RHD).

Largest congregations, as always, were in Findhorn Bay where highest counts were 9 on 27 Aug and 8 on 21 Aug and 4 Sep. Best counts on the other estuaries were 3 Spey estuary 13 Aug and 2 Lossie estuary on several dates in late August-early September.

### **Honey-buzzard *Pernis apivorus***

*Rare breeder.*

Breeding: Present in the breeding season in two areas, a few kilometres apart. In one area, a single bird was seen on 12 May (RHD), 3 & 14 Jun (IMc), 14 & 25 Aug (MGC), 31 Aug (CR), 1 Sep (MGC) and three were circling together high overhead on 3 Aug (AHO). In the second area, both members of a pair were seen carrying small food items into woodland on 31 Jul, suggesting that they had an active nest (AHO).

In a different area, a single bird was seen on 20 Sep (CWe).

### **Golden Eagle *Aquila chrysaetos***

*Rare resident breeder.*

Breeding: Following the increase to four occupied sites in 2017, a further new site was occupied in 2018, taking the total to five. All five pairs laid eggs and raised young to fledging. There were three broods of one young, one brood of two and the fifth pair (not found until the young had fledged) probably raised one young. (EW).

### **Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus***

*Common resident breeder.*

Breeding season (April-July) records included birds/pairs at Bishopmill (Elgin), Clarkly Hill, Drainie, Elgin cemetery, Findhorn Bay, Forres, Kellas, Kinloss airfield, Loch Spynie, Lossiemouth airfield, Marypark, Mill of Grange, Moor of Tore, Rafford, River Findhorn near Forres, River Lossie east of Elgin, Spey Bay and Todholes.

In autumn/winter, a Sparrowhawk was seen hunting around the harbours at Buckie (14 Oct) and Lossiemouth (29 Dec).

### **Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis***

*Rare resident breeder.*

Breeding: 14 sites were checked in Moray and 11 were occupied - at least ten of them by pairs. At least five pairs laid and all were successful in raising large or fledged young. Brood sizes were 2, 2, 2, 1 and 1 young. (AY).

Autumn/winter: Single birds were seen at Allanreid 26 Oct (BT), Alves 31 Jan (MY), Loch Spynie 9 Mar (JPo), Pitchroy 6 Nov (NS, CA) and Waterford 3 Oct (GM).

### **Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus***

*Occasional breeder and very scarce visitor.*

At Loch Spynie, a male was seen on 17 Apr (GMcC) and a female on 5-7 May (DAG, RP *et al.*) and 20 & 23 May (JDL, GMcC). Elsewhere, a female flew west from the saltmarsh at Kingston on 13 May (SMa), one was at Findhorn Bay on 1 Jun (RMi) and a young male was seen over cereal fields at Netherton (Findhorn Bay) on 13 Aug (RHD).

**Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus***

*Rare resident breeder, very scarce migrant and winter visitor.*

Breeding: 13 sites were occupied by pairs of which 10 were successful, raising 35 young between them; 2.7 young per pair. Of the three pairs which failed, the female was thought to have been predated at one site while the young died of starvation at the other site where the female was an immature bird and this was her first breeding attempt. The failure of the third pair was for unknown reasons but was not thought to be suspicious (JKC, GRb).

In recent years, the breeding population and success of Hen Harriers in Moray & Nairn has fluctuated as follows:

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Territorial pairs	3	5	4	6	11	6	4	13
Pairs raising young	2	1	2	4	3	2	1	10

Clearly, 2018 saw a major resurgence in the fortunes of the species, not only in the number of territorial pairs (as happened in 2015) but also, for the first time in recent years, in the number of pairs that bred successfully.

Outside the breeding season, 1 Dava 1 Oct (JPo), 1 Half Davoch 1 Dec (RHD), 1 Scarffbanks 23 Feb (HC), 1 Tomintoul 18 & 20 Aug (MR, BT) and 1 Tomnamoon 28 Dec (MGC).

**Red Kite *Milvus milvus***

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

Breeding: Reported at 24 locations during March-August. Pairs were present in at least three sites but breeding was not confirmed.

Autumn/winter: Reports came from Auchmair (Oct), Brodie (Oct), Cullen (Sep), Duffus (Sep), Dyke (Jan), Elgin (Dec), Glenlivet (Dec), Kilravock (Dec), Lethen (Jan, Feb), Lochside (Jan), Newton (Sep), Refouble (Feb), Roseisle (Sep) and Tomintoul area (Oct, Dec).

**White-tailed Eagle *Haliaeetus albicilla***

*Rare visitor.*

On 24 Mar, an adult flew east over Nairn at 12:30 (MCol) and was relocated drifting east over Califer Hill (Forres) at 14:00 (JB). In late October, one was over Kinloss on 26th (API) and another (probably the same adult) flew over Loch Spynie on 29th (BA). Elsewhere, a 2CY bird at Beachans in April (MGC), 1 immature Loch Builg 6 May (IF), 1 Drynahan 16 Oct (SRE) and 1 feeding on a hare carcass at Inchnacape 18 Feb (MR).



White-tailed Eagle over Loch Spynie, 29 Oct 2018 (Brian Aspinall)



White-tailed Eagle over Califer Hill, 24 March 2018 (Jodie Burnside)

### **Buzzard *Buteo buteo***

*Common resident breeder.*

The only report of five or more together was 6 Lossiemouth airfield 4 Sep.

### **Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus***

*Scarce breeder and winter visitor.*

Heard at Loch Spynie at all seasons, and 1-2 birds seen around the hide in both winter seasons. Elsewhere, single birds were seen on the Kingston side of the Spey estuary on 19 Jul (A&FR) and at Dallachy pool on 20 & 24 Aug (MJHC). Others were heard at Cloddach quarry on 18 Oct (MJHC), Cunninghaugh marsh 1 Jun (MJHC) and Loch Flemington (CGL).

### **Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus***

*Fairly common resident breeder.*

Breeding proved (*italics*) or probable at *Brodie Castle lake*, Cawdor Castle lake, Chaplelton wetlands (Forres), Cloddach quarry, *Culbin Forest gravel pit*, Dallachy landfill site pool, *East Grange*, *Gordon Castle lake*, Loch Flemington, Loch Loy, Loch na Bo, *Loch of Blairs*, Loch Oire, *Loch Spynie*, *Lower Broadshaw reservoir*, Millburn (Earlsmill), *Mosset Burn duckpond* (Forres), Newmill (Auldearn) and a pool at *Rothies*.

Maximum counts (excluding small young) at sites holding five or more birds were 23 Loch Oire 20 Aug (and 19 on 4 Mar), 14 Loch Spynie 25 Dec, 12 Loch Flemington 17 Sep, 9 Brodie Castle lake 24 Sep, 8 Gordon Castle lake (Fochabers) 9 Dec, 7 Dallachy pool 9 Sep (and 29 Oct, 24 Nov), 6 Mosset Burn duckpond (Forres) 9 Dec, 6 Sanquhar pond (Forres) 25 Nov, 5 Cloddach quarry 18 Oct and 5 Kingsteps 24 Nov.

### **Coot *Fulica atra***

*Scarce resident breeder and winter visitor.*

Breeding proved (*italics*) or probable at *Brodie Castle lake*, Dallachy landfill site pool, *Loch Oire* and *Loch Spynie*.

Maximum monthly counts (excluding small young) on main lochs were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<b>L. Flemington</b>	0	1	1	1	nc	nc	1	nc	1	2	1	1
<b>Loch Spynie</b>	2	6	29	6	2	4	15	5	10	2	4	5
<b>Loch Oire</b>	12	14	24	9	5	nc	nc	13	13	15	4	11

Elsewhere, maximum site counts were 6 Loch Loy 24 Oct, 3 Brodie Castle lake 5 Feb, 3 Dallachy pool 20 Aug, 2 Cloddach quarry 18 Oct and 1 Gordon Castle lake (Fochabers) 18 Mar (and 17 Jun).

### **Oystercatcher** *Haematopus ostralegus*

*Very common resident breeder, winter visitor and migrant.*

First inland record was one on the very early date of 8 Jan at Dell (Strathavon). This is the earliest inland record since 2 Jan 2012. There were no other inland records during January.

During February in Elgin, 1 heard over Tesco 2nd, 2 at night at the Wards 4th, 2 Cooper Park lake 10th, 2 on the roof of the Town Hall 13th, 2 near the Mart 16th, 2 near the old sawmill site 22nd and 3 near the Community Centre 28th. Further up-country during February, 1 Aberlour 3rd, 1 near Dufftown 5th, 2 North Crannoch (Keith) 21st and 1 Balvenie 22nd.

Pre-breeding inland flocks of 20 or more during February included 33 Nether Birnie 18th and 77 at nearby Cloddach quarry 21st. At Aberlour, 21 on 20th and 62 on 27th. During March, 30 Tyock playing fields (Elgin) 4th, 20+ Montgrew (Keith) 12th, 70+ Auchbreck 13th, 60 Cloddach quarry 22nd and 30 well up-country near Delnabo (Tomintoul) 30th. On 25 Apr, 30 at Marypark.

Breeding: Numerous records were received from potential breeding sites both in the coastal fringe and further up-country. A pair were copulating at Lossie estuary 5 Mar. Two pairs were displaying at Elrick (Cabrach) 8 Apr. One adult was incubating at Sheriffston 5 May. At Balormie pig farm (Drainie) there was an adult incubating 7 May and one seen carrying food at the same location 13 May. At Lossiemouth cemetery there was an adult incubating at the same scrape as previous years on 13 May. On the eastern roundabout on the A96 at Forres, a brood noted on 17 May was still alive on 24 May despite feeding on the verge. At the car park at Cawdor Castle nesting was reported 23 May and chicks reported from Cawdor Castle Estate on 14 June and Cawdor Golf Course 8 Jun. In Elgin, there was a brood of one at The Oaks on 24 May, a pair with two well grown young at Boroughbriggs football ground 4 Jun and a brood of half-grown chicks at Dr Gray's Hospital on 15 Jul. Two adults and one juvenile were at Findochty 26 Jun. In the Findhorn valley east of Drynachan were two pairs, each with two young, on 3 Jul.

No counts of inland post-breeding flocks were received.

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

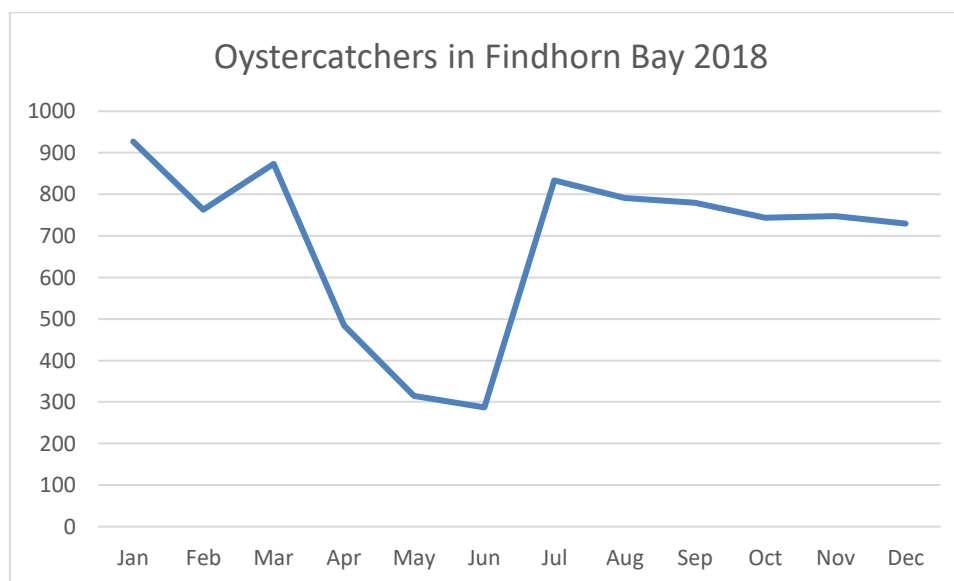
April: 27 Lossie estuary 2nd, 484 Findhorn Bay 5th, 12 Burghead 7th.  
May: 303 Findhorn Bay 3rd, 26 The Maggot (Nairn) 6th, 142 Nairn Old Bar 27th.  
June: c.35 Burghead 25th, 287 Findhorn Bay 29th, 28 Lossie estuary 30th.  
July: 100+ Carse of Delnies 16th, 60 Kingsteps 18th, 834 Findhorn Bay 22nd, 73 Lossie estuary 22nd, 71 Spey estuary 23rd.  
August: 600 Culbin "Gut" 16th, 772 Findhorn Bay 24th, 76 Lossie estuary 25th.  
September: 815 Findhorn Bay 5th, 33 Lossie estuary 8th, 22 Nairn 16th, 35 Carse of Delnies 17th.

Winter maxima at the coast were:

	Jan	Feb	Oct	Dec
<b>Nairn/Culbin Bars</b>	*1275	*821	*857	*1163
<b>Findhorn Bay</b>	927	763	744	730
<b>Burghead-Hopeman</b>	166	139	265	113
<b>Lossiemouth</b>	47	61	68	58
<b>Portgordon-Strathlene</b>	79	69	73	87

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

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



### Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*

*Very common migrant breeder, small numbers in winter.*

First up-country was 1 Glenlivet 5 Feb.

Pre-breeding flocks up-country (of 10 or more) included 50 Inchnacape 22 Feb, 12 Tomintoul 22 Feb, 24 Cragganmore 27 Feb, 15 Achavraat 16 Mar, 30+ displaying Dunearn 26 Mar, 35 Delnabo (Tomintoul) 30 Mar and 10 Elrick (Cabrach) 8 Apr.

Breeding: Numerous records were received from potential breeding sites both in the coastal fringe and further up-country. In the coastal lowlands, at Moyness, 2 displaying 11 Mar and two adults with two very young chicks there 10 Jun. On 24 Mar, 2 displaying Edinvale and one at nearby Hill of Edinvale. At Balormie pig farm (Drainie), an adult incubating 16 & 19 Apr, and small chicks 7 May - on 13 May only one remaining from the April brood but two other broods of 3+ and 3 chicks. Two juveniles were at the Mosset Burn (Findhorn Bay) 19 Jul.

Up-country, birds back in breeding territory at Tomnamoon 22 Mar. Three displaying Marypark 30 Mar and five pairs displaying Elrick (Cabrach) 8 Apr. One nesting at Dunearn crossroads 23 May and nearby at Burnside farm 27 Apr. One feisty individual was seen to chase off a Red Kite near Dulsie Bridge 20 May. In the Tomintoul area, c.12 broods around Milton and Findron farms 22 May.

The only notable up-country post-breeding flock was 50 Auchnarrow (Tomnavoulin) 23 Jul. In the lowlands, 27 Loch Flemington 8 Sep and 60+ in the Balormie/Drainie area 31 Oct.



In mid-winter (January-February and November-December), flocks over 100 included c.200 Covesea 10 Jan (and 300 there 20 Feb) and at Balormie pig farm (Drainie), 150 on 17 Feb and c.200 on 27 Nov.

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

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<b>F Bay</b>	58	3	6	0	3	2	2	0	0	86	96	16
<b>Spey</b>	31	0	3	0	0	0	c.120	0	1	42	153	64

### Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria*

*Common breeder, migrant and winter visitor.*

A flock of 15 flew over Clochan 15 Feb. First up-country in potential breeding areas, were 4 Inchnacape 22 Feb.

A pre-breeding flock of c.200 was at Cabrach 15 Apr.

Pre-breeding flocks, probably of northern birds pausing on migration, included 137 Rosefield (Cawdor) 22 Mar, 170 in fields south of Findhorn Bay 6 Apr and, in the Moyness area during April, 100+ on 22nd, 205 on 23rd and 86 on 27th.

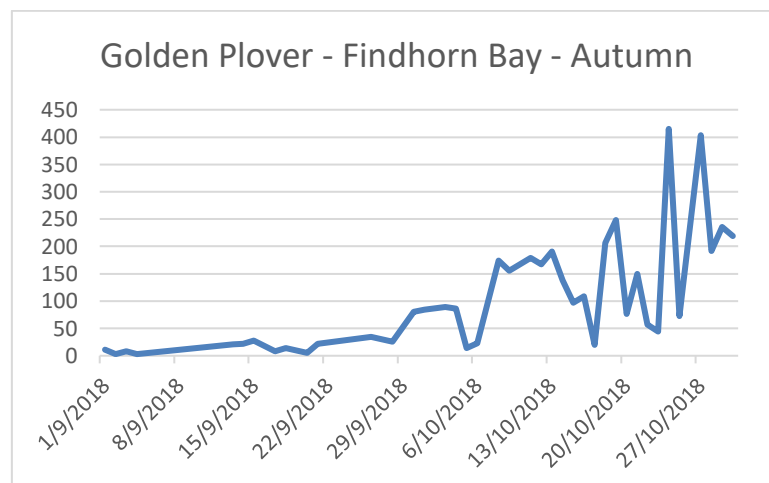
In potential breeding habitat during April, 1 Creagan a' Chaise (Hills of Cromdale) 1st, 7 Refouble 6th, 2 Burnside-Little Aitnoch 23rd, 2 Carn na Sguabaich (south of Drynahan) 24th and 10 Tomintuigle (Knockando) 26th. During May, 2 Carn nan Tri-tighearnan (near Drynahan) 5th, 18 Ruthven Farm (Tomintoul) 13th and 1 near Lochan Buidhe (Cairngorms plateau) 14th. June records consisted of 1 Dava lochans 6th, a pair on Cairn Mulgainich (Ben Rinnes) 10th and several pairs on Corryhabbie Hill 17th.

No reports of confirmed breeding were received.

First back in the coastal lowlands, returning from breeding grounds, included 7 Findhorn Bay on 10 Jul and 6 Lossie estuary 11 Jul. Still well up-country was 1 Muckle Lappach (Glenlivet) 21 Aug.

The movement of Golden Plover through Findhorn Bay during spring resulted in peaks, in March, of 74 on 4th, 41 on 11th and 66 on 27th.

The number of Golden Plover in Findhorn Bay during autumn is illustrated in the graph below with a peak of 415 on 24 Oct:



Winter monthly maxima in Findhorn Bay were:

	Jan	Feb	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<b>Findhorn Bay</b>	325	75	c.80	415	352	210



Golden Plover, Findhorn Bay 12 October 2018 (Richard Somers Cocks)

### **Pacific Golden Plover *Pluvialis fulva***

#### *Accidental*

An adult in breeding plumage was discovered and photographed in Findhorn Bay on 31 Jul (GM). It was reported on eight other days until it was last seen in the bay on 22 Aug (GM, RSC, MJHC *et al.*). This is the first record for Moray & Nairn. A full account of this record can be found on page 90 of this Report.



Pacific Golden Plover, Findhorn Bay 31 July 2018 (Gordon McMullins)

### **Grey Plover** *Pluvialis squatarola*

*Scarce autumn migrant and winter visitor.*

Highest counts were:

	Jan	Feb	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<b>Nairn/Culbin Bars</b>	5	19	0	2	3	9
<b>Findhorn Bay</b>	1	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Lossiemouth</b>	0	0	1	1	0	0

Spring: 1 Lossie estuary 29 Mar and, at the Spey estuary, 1 on 15 & 18 Apr and 1 in breeding plumage 12 May.

Summer-autumn: 1 flew past Findhorn 10 Jul, and single birds in breeding plumage were in Findhorn Bay on 4 Aug and on the Spey estuary on 13 Aug. Later, 1 juvenile Lossie estuary 27 Sep.

Highest counts at any one site since 2008 have been:

2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
20	24	11	46	27	16	16	20	17	29	19

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: Three pairs Findhorn village area 15 Jun, one pair with a chick Hopeman 15 Jun, one pair raised 1-2 chicks Lossiemouth east beach 22-28 Jul, one pair with a chick Findochty 26 Jun and one pair with 2 chicks on a shingle island in the River Spey near Garmouth viaduct 15 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
<b>F Bay</b>	24	36	36	133	849	149	14	109	46	35	23	19
<b>Lossie</b>	19	9	0	44	41	1	2	28	3	0	0	0
<b>Spey</b>	0	2	7	7	63	33	41	75	0	0	0	0

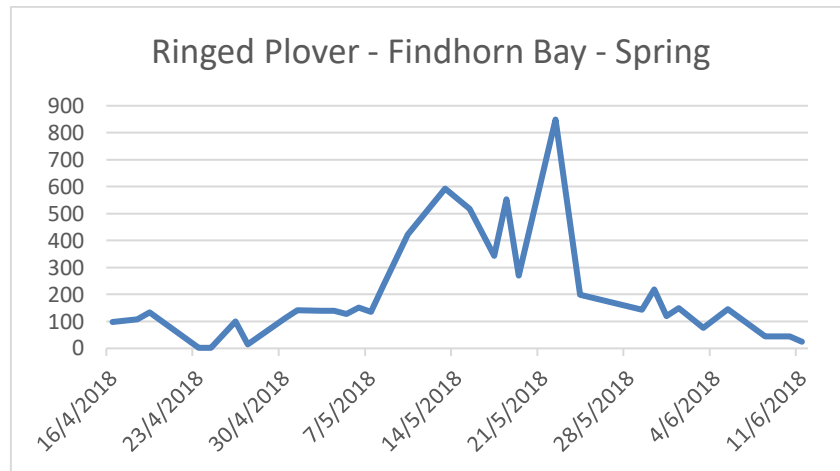
Elsewhere, 54 Nairn Bar 27 May.

Winter maxima at the coast were:

	January-February	November-December
<b>Nairn/Culbin Bars</b>	6	14
<b>Findhorn Bay</b>	36	23
<b>Kinloss</b>	0	0
<b>Burghead-Hopeman</b>	8	6
<b>Lossiemouth</b>	19	2
<b>Spey estuary</b>	2	0
<b>Portgordon-Strathlene</b>	9	16

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 849 on the 22nd (GM, RSC)



At the Spey estuary, the highest spring count was 63 on 23 May, one day later than the Findhorn Bay peak.

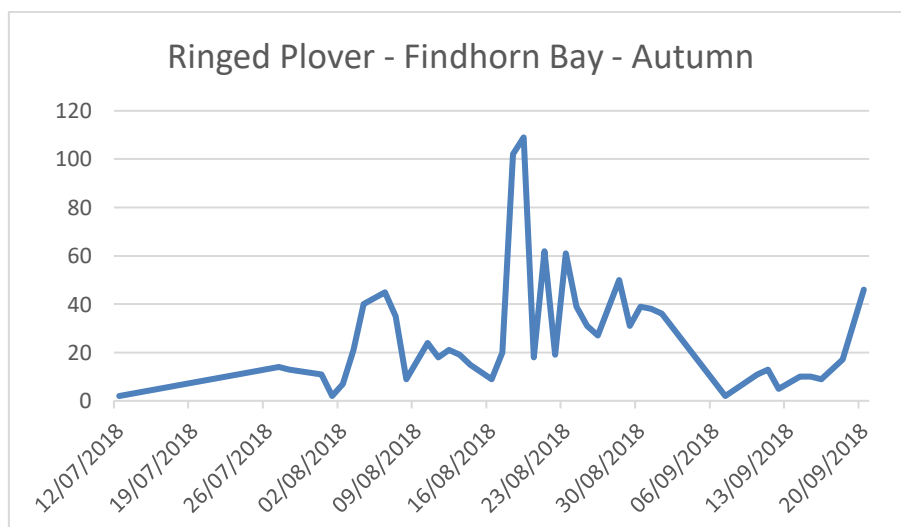
Also in spring, slightly inland, 4 Balormie pig farm (Drainie) 16 Apr.

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

2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
476	413	156	1500	1000	450	985	1200	1946	1190	849

Autumn passage (July-September):

Findhorn Bay: regular counts during this period are shown in the graph below with a peak of 109 on 19 Aug.





At the Spey estuary the highest count during this period was 86 on 7 Aug and at Lossiemouth a high of 28 on 25 Aug.

**[Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius***

*Rare summer visitor and breeder.*

No records were received during the year. This is the first blank year since 2013.]

**Dotterel *Charadrius morinellus***

*Scarce summer visitor and breeder.*

Most records from the Cairngorms plateau area and are listed below:

May: 3 on 14th, 17 on 18th and 6 on 19th, 1 on 21st, 7 on 26th and 10 (including three pairs) at four different locations 27th.  
 June: 5 on 8th, 3 on 17th, 1 on 24th, pair on 25th, 5 on 28th, 1 on 30th.  
 July: 5 on 19th.  
 August: 2 on 5th, 3 on 8th.

(RI, SMN, TJW *et al.*)

Elsewhere, 1 displaying Ben Avon 1 Jul (IF) and single juveniles Ben Rinnes 8 Aug and 8 Sep (AE).



Dotterel, Cairngorms plateau 30 May 2018 (Robert Ince)

**Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus***

*Scarce migrant.*

Spring: First of the year was 1 Findhorn Bay 17 Apr. Throughout April and May, there were 21 coastal records, from Nairn in the west to the Spey estuary in the east - 12 of which were of single birds. Ten flew over Burghead 22 Apr, 6 Nairn Bar 27 May and, at the Spey estuary, 6 on 24 Apr and 4 on 4 May. There were two June records which are unusual; a single bird at the south end of Findhorn Bay 21st and two flying west along the coast at Burghead Bay 23rd. A short distance inland, 1 flew over Balormie pig farm (Drainie) 21 Apr. Unusual up-



country records involved single birds standing in fields at Aitnoch on 5 Apr (MGC) and at Aldunie (Cabrach) 12 May (MJHC).

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

2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
27 Apr	24 Apr	22 Apr	21Apr	4 May	21 Apr	8 Apr	6 Mar	6 Apr	14 Apr

Autumn: Extreme dates of passage were singles at the Spey estuary 10 Jul and 7 Sep. Fifty-one coastal records came from Delnies in the west to Spey estuary in the east, of which thirty-four consisted of 1-3 birds. Records of ten or more included two counts of 26 & 65 at Nairn on 27 Jul and at the Spey estuary there were 11 on 31 Jul, 44 on 2 Aug and 15 on 10 Aug. Elsewhere, 12 past Cummingston 19 Aug and 11 one mile west of Kingston 30 Aug.

### Curlew *Numenius arquata*

*Common breeder. Very common migrant and winter visitor.*

Breeding: First back on potential breeding ground were 2 Tomintoul 12 Mar. Pre-breeding flocks consisted of c.35 at Dunearn crossroads 26 Mar and 50 near Delnabo 30 Mar.

Records came from many potential inland breeding sites during March-June (although no confirmed breeding records) including Aitnoch, Aldunie (Cabrach), Auchmair (Cabrach), Birnies Lane fields (Tomintoul), Blairnamarrow - Old Military Road (Tomintoul), Burnside-Little Aitnoch, Dava Moor, Dulsie Bridge, Dunearn crossroads, Elrich (Cabrach), Inverbyte (Tomnavoulin), Inverchor (Strath Avon), Kellas, Kininvie (Dufftown), Lecht Drive fields (Tomintoul), Linn of Avon (Inchrory), Shenachie (Ruthven) and The Old Kennels near Tomintoul.

The only post-breeding up-country "flock" was c.8 at Auchmair (Cabrach) 18 Jul.

In the coastal lowlands, at RAF Lossiemouth there was a pair with a brood of two 14 May and on 4 Jul one juvenile was reported.

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

	June	July	August	September
<b>Findhorn Bay</b>	152	315	338	358
<b>Lossiemouth</b>	0	15	c.60	5
<b>Spey estuary</b>	2	36	54	242

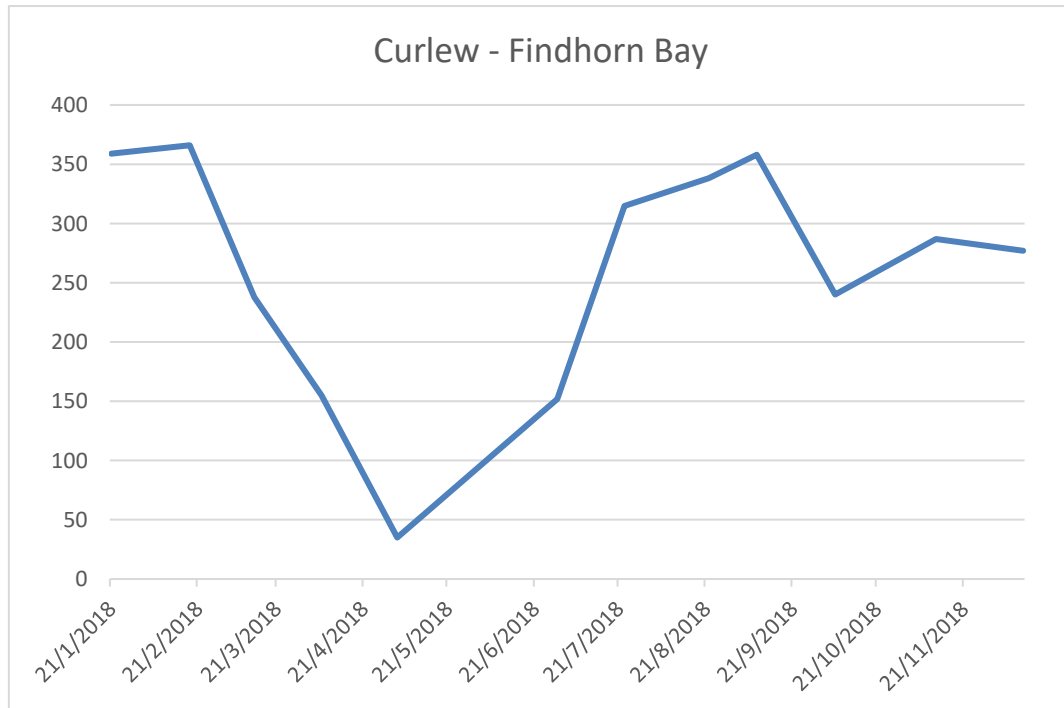
Coastal winter maxima were:

	January	February	October	December
<b>Nairn/Culbin Bars</b>	*193	*173	*194	*204
<b>Findhorn Bay</b>	359	366	240	277
<b>Burghead-Hopeman</b>	11	118	12	2
<b>Lossiemouth</b>	6	16	97	6
<b>Portgordon-Strathlene</b>	8	6	86	7

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

Inland at Cloddach quarry, 54 on 21 Feb, 118 on 18 Oct but only 4 on 22 Dec. In the Loch Spynie area, 70 on 21 Feb.

Monthly maxima in Findhorn Bay throughout the year are shown in the graph below:



### Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*

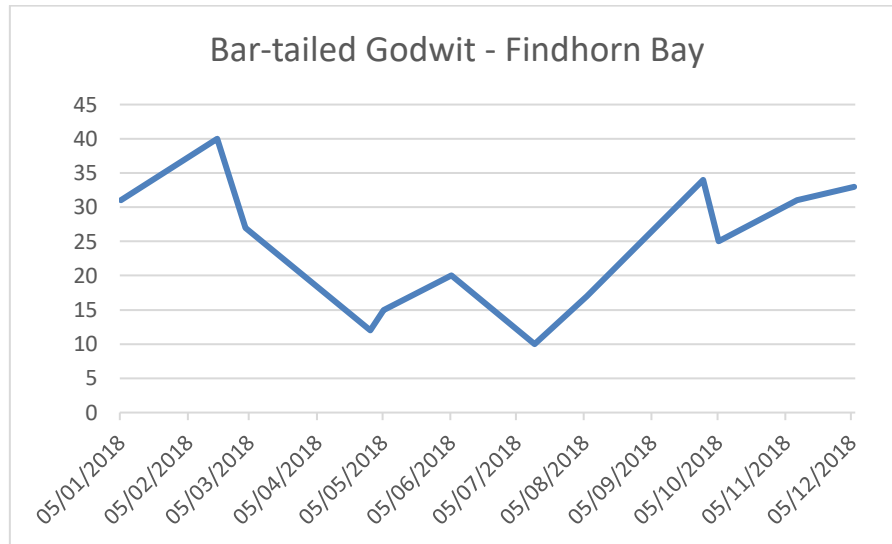
*Common winter visitor and migrant. Small numbers in summer.*

Monthly maxima at main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<b>Nairn/Culbin Bars</b>	96	*231	0	0	*83	0	*54
<b>Nairn</b>	0	17	25	0	26	0	62
<b>Findhorn Bay</b>	31	40	27	34	25	31	33
<b>Burghead</b>	0	1	c15	0	0	0	35
<b>Burghead-Hopeman</b>	20	30	0	0	9	0	17
<b>Lossiemouth</b>	5	5	3	0	1	4	3

\*Combination of Nairn & Culbin Bar counts – counting carried out concurrently.  
Elsewhere, 19 Carse of Delnies 17 Sep.

Monthly maxima in Findhorn Bay throughout the year are shown in the graph below:



Maximum annual count at any site since 2007 has been:

2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
198	75	107	204	150	90	137	145	c.300	121	231

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

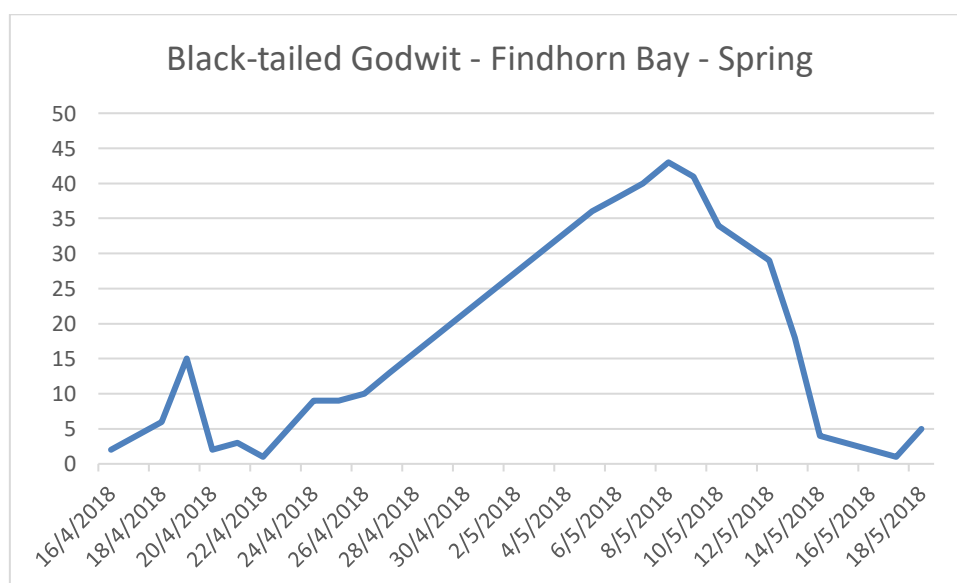
### Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*

*Scarce migrant.*

Spring: Most records from Findhorn Bay with monthly peaks of 15 on 19 Apr and 43 on 8 May. At Lossie estuary there were single birds in summer plumage on 18 & 21 Apr. Four records from the Spey estuary during May involved up to 3 birds.

No inland records were received.

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



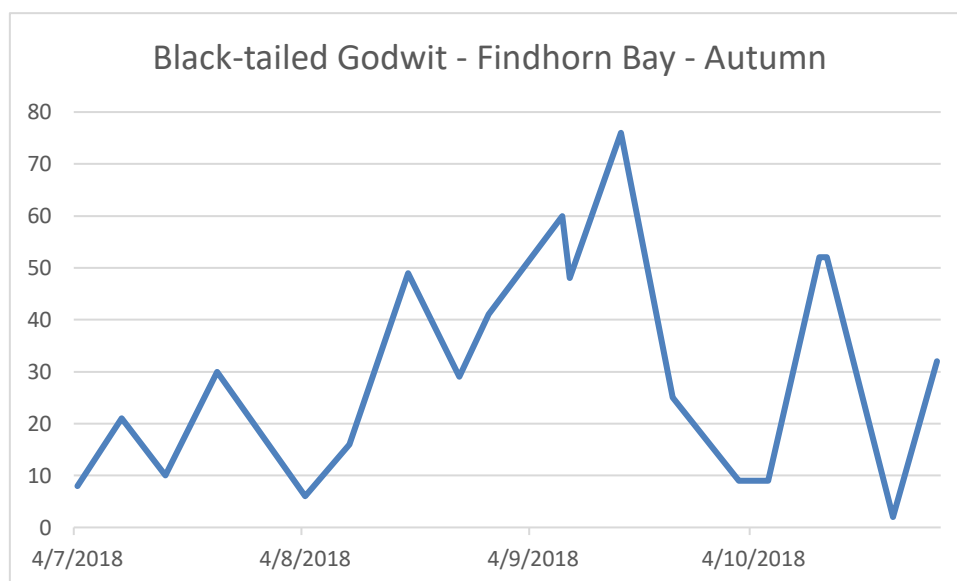
Late summer/autumn (mid June-October): First to return were 2 Findhorn Bay 28 Jun.

Monthly maxima from the main sites were:

	July	August	September	October
<b>Findhorn Bay</b>	30	49	76	52
<b>Lossie estuary</b>	0	2	2	0
<b>Spey estuary</b>	86	16	0	0

Elsewhere, 14 Carse of Delnies 16 Jul.

Regular counting in Findhorn Bay of weekly highest counts (GM, RSC *et al.*) revealed the following pattern of autumn occurrence, peaking at 76 on 16 Sep:



Late winter (November-December): In Findhorn Bay, 31 on 10 Nov, 12 on 25 Nov, 13 on 1-3 Dec, 10 on 11 Dec and still 3 on 31 Dec. At Lossie estuary, 1 on 3 Dec.

### Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

*Common winter visitor, small numbers in summer.*

Winter monthly maxima at main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Oct	Dec
<b>Delnies-Nairn</b>	3	0	10	4
<b>Nairn-Culbin Bar</b>	0	21	0	17
<b>Findhorn</b>	51	54	33	35
<b>Burghead</b>	33	17	33	3
<b>Burghead-Hopeman</b>	31	37	52	31
<b>Lossiemouth</b>	1	6	2	20
<b>Spey estuary</b>	4	6	5	4
<b>Portgordon-Strathlene</b>	30	83	103	74

During November there was a maximum of 30 in Findhorn Bay on the 25th. Elsewhere, 11 Cullen 2 Nov and an unusual record, slightly inland, of 1 Loch Flemington 18 Feb (JAC).

Spring: During April, 30 Lossiemouth 10th and 67 Spey estuary 22nd. Regular sea-watching counts off Lossiemouth during April identified a westerly movement with 50 on the 21st and 61 on the 22nd (RP). Singles also passed the same location on 24th and 26th (RP). Lastly, 1 Findhorn Bay 30 Jun.

Summer-autumn: First in July was 1 Spey estuary 17th and a monthly peak there of 27 on the 31st. During August there were maximum counts of 19 Spey estuary 10th and 27 Findhorn Bay 19th. In September, the highest count was 26 Findhorn Bay 11th.

### **Knot** *Calidris canutus*

*Very common migrant and winter visitor.*

Winter maxima were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Oct	Nov	Dec
<b>Nairn/Culbin Bars, east Nairn</b>	625	1600 (1st)	nc	2	2000 (30th)	1800 (13th)
<b>Burghead</b>	1	0	82 (27th)	0	0	1
<b>Findhorn Bay</b>	3230 (21st)	4000 (18th)	290	600	1260 (23rd)	1294 (3rd)

Spring: Highest numbers in Findhorn Bay with 107 on 5 Apr, 63 on 4 May and 33 on 12 Jun. On 12 May, 35 Burghead, some showing signs of breeding plumage. Last in spring were 7 Findhorn Bay 30 Jun.

Summer-autumn: First assumed to return from breeding grounds was 1 Findhorn Bay 4 Jul followed by another single nine days later on 13 Jul. Also another single at Spey estuary 13 Jul. The highest counts were all from Findhorn Bay with 43 on 28 Jul, 37 on 25 Aug and 93 on 18 Sep.

### **Ruff** *Calidris pugnax*

*Scarce autumn migrant, rare in spring.*

Following the exceptional year of 2017, a poor year with only a few autumn records.

First autumn arrivals were on 31 Jul when up to 13 were on the Lossie estuary (RP, HF) and also 1 Spey estuary (MJHC).

Dates for the first autumn migrants in recent years have been:

2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
11/08	30/07	04/09	07/08	03/08	28/07	12/08	08/08	06/07	07/08	21/08

During August, 3 Lossie estuary 1st (AJL), 1 Spey estuary 13th (JHo), 1 feeding on the grass with Curlews at Mains of Gollachy 18th and at nearby Portgordon the following day (HC) and 1 Spey estuary 26th (MJHC). Last of the year was a rather late individual at Findhorn Bay 2 Oct (RSC).

### **Curlew Sandpiper** *Calidris ferruginea*

*Scarce migrant.*

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

Spring: The only record was 1 Findhorn Bay 3 Jun (GM).



Autumn: First was 1 Spey estuary 18-29 Jul and 12 Aug (RSh, MJHC, JM). In Findhorn Bay, 2 on 5 Aug (AJL), 1 on 6 Aug (TJW), 2 on 7 Sep, 3 on 11 & 16 Sep and 1 on 17-18 Sep (GM, RSC, MJHC).

### Sanderling *Calidris alba*

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

Monthly maxima at the four regular sites were:

Winter-spring:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
<b>Nairn/Culbin Bars</b>	*106	191	nc	nc	9	nc
<b>Lossiemouth</b>	74	71	73	64	33	25
<b>Findhorn Bay</b>	10	5	4	0	17	2
<b>Nairn</b>	6	10	26	0	0	0

First to return from breeding grounds was 1 Spey estuary 8 Jul.

Late summer-autumn:

	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<b>Nairn/Culbin Bars</b>	nc	74	nc	*110	nc	*74
<b>Lossiemouth</b>	78	104	c.100	22	34	30
<b>Findhorn Bay</b>	0	12	0	2	2	0
<b>Nairn</b>	0	0	11	10	4	10

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

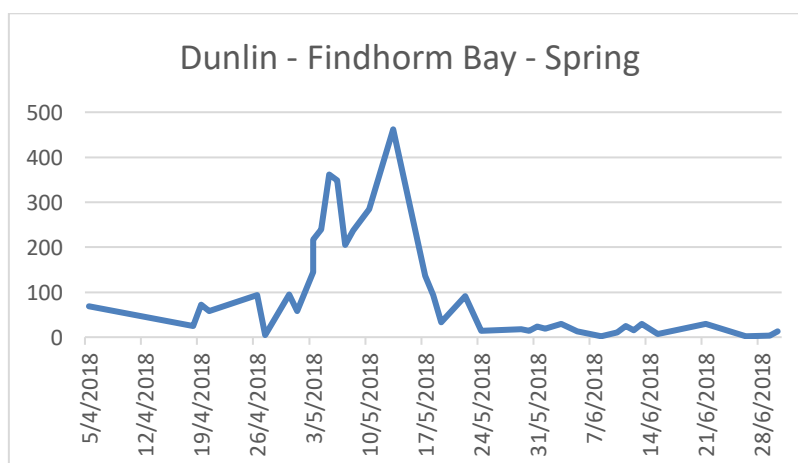
Maximum counts at other locations were 18 Spey estuary 19 Jul, 12 Spey estuary 2 Aug, c.40 Delnies 18 Sep and 15 Kingsteps 24 Nov.

### Dunlin *Calidris alpina*

*Scarce breeder, very common migrant and winter visitor.*

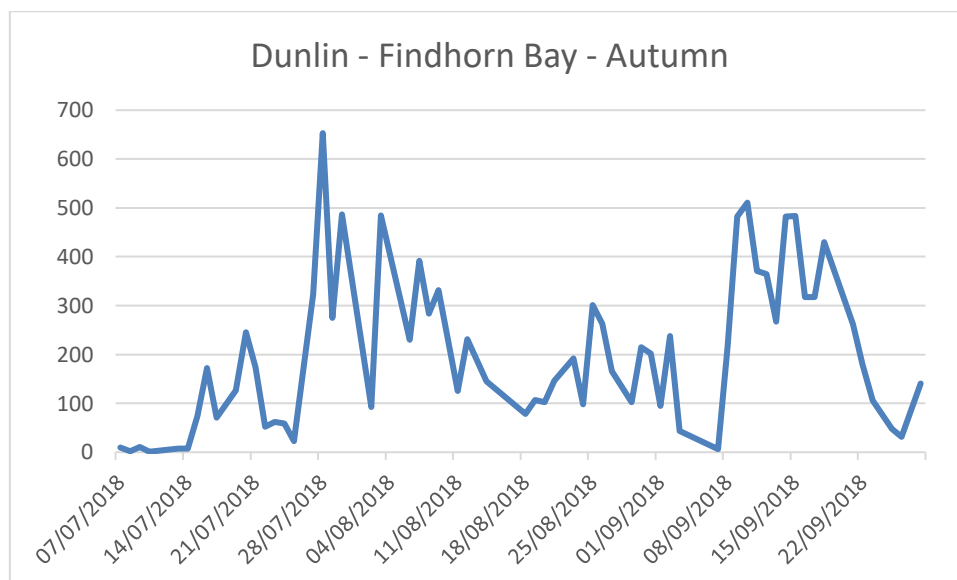
Breeding: At Carn Liath (Ladder Hills) a pair had a nest with eggs 19 May (AE), one adult was on Corryhabbie Hill 17 Jun (AE) and, in the Cairngorms, an adult showed distraction display on Cairn Lochan on 24 Jun (RI).

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

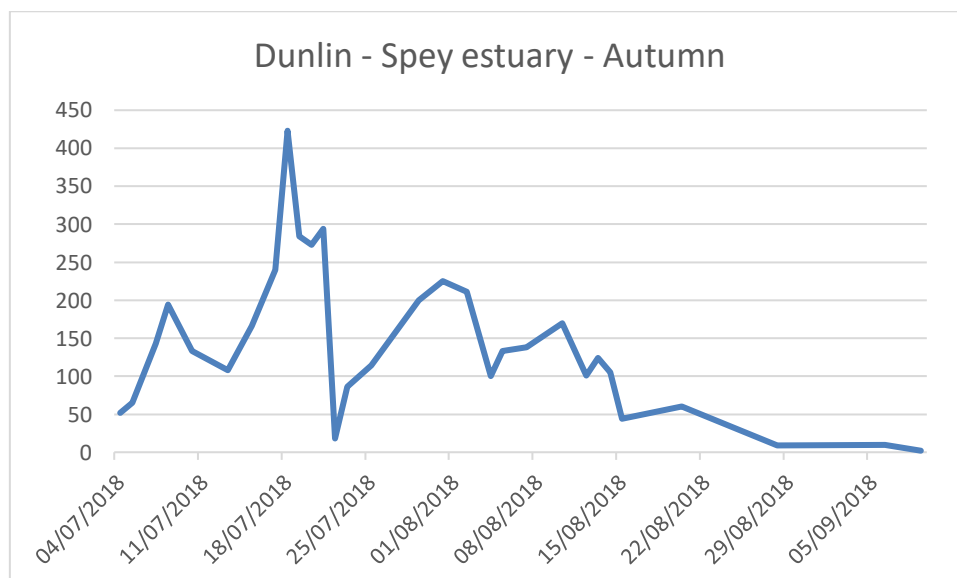


Main passage took place during May with a peak number of 462 on the 13th, the same date as 2013 & 2017. Elsewhere during May there were peaks of 26 Lossie estuary 6th, 53 Spey estuary 7th and 18 Nairn Bar 27th.

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 653 on 28 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 423 on the 18th will be of race *schinzii*, ten days before the Findhorn Bay July peak. At Lossiemouth there was a July peak of 40 on the 21st.

There were no inland records received during this period.

Winter monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	January	February	October	November	December
<b>Nairn/Culbin Bars</b>	1500	*920	43	0	*663
<b>Findhorn Bay</b>	1550	1210	891	1480	1580
<b>Lossiemouth</b>	38	**27	6	0	43
<b>Portgordon</b>	55	40	4	2	724

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

\*\* Flying offshore counted during a sea-watch.

The highest count during March was 1150 at Findhorn Bay.

### Purple Sandpiper *Calidris maritima*

*Common winter visitor.*

Main winter site maxima were:

	January-March	October-December
<b>Nairn</b>	5	6
<b>Burghead-Hopeman</b>	*11	4
<b>Lossiemouth</b>	**41	c.20
<b>Portgordon-Strathlene</b>	16	22
<b>Cullen</b>	27	27

\*Burghead only

\*\* Flying offshore counted during a sea-watch.

Outwith the above dates the largest flock of the year was 80 Lossiemouth west beach 10 Apr (SMr).

Yearly maximum flock sizes since 2006 have been:

2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2017	2018
54	73	144	100	120	100	73	45	19	60	70	80

Last in spring were 5 Lossiemouth 5 May and first to return were 2 Burghead 21 Aug.

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

2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
18/10	03/09	14/09	16/10	20/09	09/09	23/07	27/09	15/09	15/09

### Bairds Sandpiper *Calidris bairdii*

Rare vagrant.

Remarkably, two individuals were found in Findhorn Bay in autumn. A juvenile was found on 17 Sep (PRG), but despite much searching was not relocated in subsequent days. On 3 Oct a probable juvenile was found (DMP), and seen almost daily until 11 Oct (GM, RSC *et al.*). Due to the gap of two weeks between sightings, when the bay was watched on a daily basis, it is considered that two individuals were involved. These are the 4th and 5th records for Moray

& Nairn. The previous records were in Findhorn Bay in October 1982 and September 2001, and the Spey estuary in September 2017.



Baird's Sandpiper, Findhorn Bay 9 October 2018 (Richard Somers Cocks)

### **Little Stint** *Calidris minuta*

*Very scarce migrant, mostly in autumn.*

A poor year with only three records.

Spring: 1 Spey estuary 23-24 May (JM).

Autumn: 1 Spey estuary 28 Aug (RSh) and 1 Findhorn Bay 18 Sep (MJHC, GM).

### **Pectoral Sandpiper** *Calidris melanotos*

*Rare visitor.*

One Findhorn Bay on 26 Sep (PWj). This is the 16th record for Moray & Nairn.

### **Woodcock** *Scolopax rusticola*

*Common resident breeder, migrant and winter visitor.*

January-March: Records received from a variety of locations on twenty-six days, twenty of which were of single birds. Two were recorded at Todholes 3 Jan, Logie 11 Jan, Clephanton 20 Jan, Heldon Wood 16 Feb, Rafford 17 Feb, Redhill Wood (Rafford) 17 Feb and River Lossie east of Elgin 15 Mar.

Breeding: Roding birds, mostly singles, noted at Carron 9 Apr, Elgin 6 May, Whiteash Hill Wood 7 May, 2 at Littlemill 10 May, Tomnamoon 24 May, 3+ Quarrelwood (Elgin) 1 Jun and Loch Spynie 13 Jun. There was a pair with a brood of two at Kinloss airfield 25 May. In the woods near Brodie Countryfare an adult was seen in flight and thought to be carrying a chick 18 Jun (LK). Records also received from other potential breeding sites at Altyre, Elgin Oakwoods, Kellas, Tomnareave, Tomnavoulin, Torrieston woods and Whitefolds (Glenlivet). Autumn-winter: During November, 2+ Craigroy 10th, 1 Duthil 17th, 1 Cooper Park (Elgin) 17th & 18th, 2 Wood of Mulderie (Mulben) 22nd and 1 Loch Kirkaldy 24th. During December, 1 Wood of Ordiequish 5th, 1 Boroughbriggs (Elgin) 8th and 1 Auchlochan 29th. On 22 Dec, 7 were located in Mulben fields at night by using a thermal imager (AY).

### **Jack Snipe** *Lymnocyrtus minimus*

*Scarce migrant and winter visitor.*

First winter period: 1 Kingsteps 6 Jan (JM) and 21 Jan (GPr), 2 on the south side of Findhorn Bay 18 Jan (PRG) and 1 Meikle Urchany (Cawdor) 22 Jan (JHm).

Early spring: 1 Netherton (Findhorn Bay) 3 Mar (RHD) and 1 Tugnet 20 Mar (MJHC).

Autumn-winter: 1 Findhorn Bay 8-12 Oct (GB, AW, MJHC), 1 Kingsteps 14 Oct and 9 Dec (GPr) and 1 Windyridge 29 Oct (RP).

### **Snipe *Gallinago gallinago***

*Common breeder and migrant.*

Breeding: First back at Tomnamoon 25 Mar and a pair there (male drumming) 29 Mar. Displaying at Upper Edingight 25 Apr, where up to 3 present 27 Apr-12 May. First back at Tomintoul 22 Mar. In the Cabrach, a pair Auchmair 7 Apr (1 on 7 & 18 Jun) and 3 Balvalley Moss 15 Apr. Elsewhere, 1 Carn nan Tri-tighearnan 5 May, 3 Ruthven Farm (Tomintoul) 13 May and 1 Suie 28 May.

Winter-spring (January-March): Twenty-seven records in the coastal fringes from Kingsteps to Cullen mostly of 1-2 birds. Notable numbers were at Drainie where 3 on 13 Jan, 5 on 28 Jan and 8 on 8 Feb. At Findhorn Bay, 8 Mosset Burn 18 Jan and 4 at the south end of the bay 21 Jan. Also, 3 Abottshill (Brodie) 21 Jan and 10 Nairn Bar 18 Feb.

Late summer-winter: Throughout July & August regular surveys produced 11 records of 1-2 birds at the south end of Findhorn Bay. Maximum at the Spey estuary was 8 on 14 Aug. Best site counts during September-December were 5 Findhorn Bay 11 Nov, 4 Spey estuary 19 Nov, 8 Nairn Bar 9 Dec, 7 Nairn 11 Nov and 11 Kingsteps 14 Oct. Slightly inland, 1 Drainie 10 Nov & 22 Dec.

Maximum winter counts since 2009:

2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
41	60	45	6	83*	65*	13*	*18	53	*11

\* at Kingsteps.

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

### **Grey Phalarope *Phalaropus fulicarius***

*Rare visitor.*

One was watched at distances down to 2-3 m. as it fed with Black-headed Gulls at the edge of the shore at Jenny's Well (between Cullen and Portknockie) on 24 Nov (AS). This is the 8th record for Moray & Nairn, the most recent being in 2014.



Grey Phalarope, near Portknockie 24 November 2018 (Alan Smith)



**Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos****Common summer visitor and breeder.*

Arrival: First, in April, were 1 Delmore (Aberlour) 15th, 1 Spey estuary 15th, 2 Nether Dallachy 19th and 1 Cullen 22nd. Up-country, 1 Blacksboat 23rd, 1 Knockando Distillery 25th, 1 Marypark 25th and 1 Ballenlish (Strath Avon) 28th.

The first arrival dates (in April) since 2008 were:

2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
20th	9th	17th	12th	10th	15th	10th	17th	16th	14th	15th

Breeding: Few reports of breeding behaviour apart from display at Loch Builg 6 May, also 2 pairs Conglass (Tomintoul) 2 May and 1 pair Roehilloch Pool (Altyre) 11 Jun. A pair with a half-grown juvenile were upstream of the old bridge at Fochabers 4 Jun. At Aberlour, an adult with a brood of two on 28 Jul. During May and June, further up-country there were records from potential breeding sites near Conicavel (Darnaway), Foals Craig (Glen Avon), Kellas, Logie Steading and Tomnavoulin. During the same period, and in the coastal fringe, records were received from Dallachy pool, Spey estuary area, Red Craig (Dalvey Estate), Findhorn Bay south end and the River Lossie east of Elgin.

The usual post-breeding assemblage on the Spey estuary during July had 8 on 5th, 10 on 7th and a peak of 14 on 8th. At Lossie estuary the peak was 10 on 4 Aug. On the Mosset Burn to the south of Findhorn Bay there were 5 on 14 Jul.

Last of the year were 4 on the beach west of Portgordon harbour 7 Sep.

**Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus****Very scarce migrant, rare in winter.*

Winter: 1 at a small roadside pool Pittendreich (Elgin) 28 Jan was the only record (RP).

Late summer/autumn: All records from the south end of Findhorn Bay in August where 2 on 8th (MJHC), 1 on 20th (PRG) and 1 on 22nd (RSC).

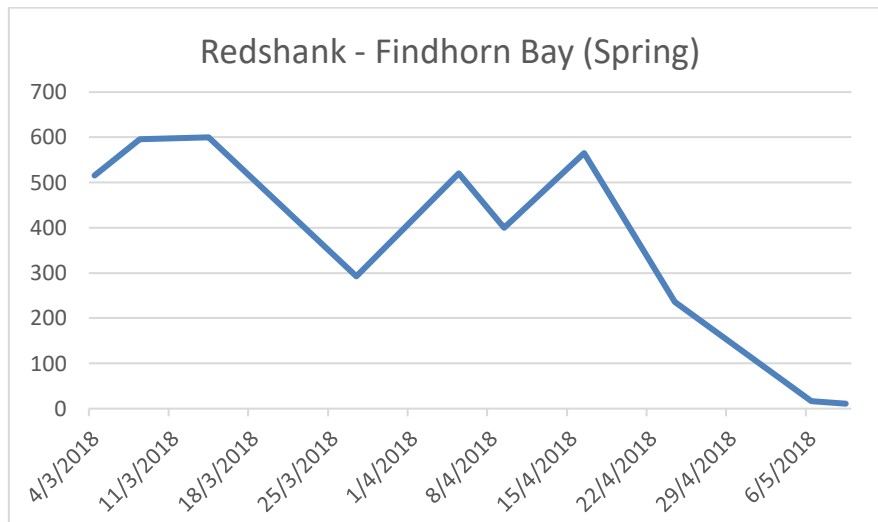
**Redshank *Tringa totanus****Scarce breeder, very common migrant and winter visitor.*

Breeding: Reported from four potential breeding sites although no records of confirmed breeding were received. In the Tomintoul area, 3 on 24 Mar, 1 near the bird hide 1 May & 23 Jun (and 2 there 25 Jun) and 1 at nearby Ruthven 13 May. Elsewhere, 1 Aldunie (Cabrach) 29 Apr & 21 Jun and 1 near Dulsie Bridge 20 May.

At the coast, no evidence of breeding although present during May and June at the southern end of Findhorn Bay, where they have previously bred.

Spring (March-May):

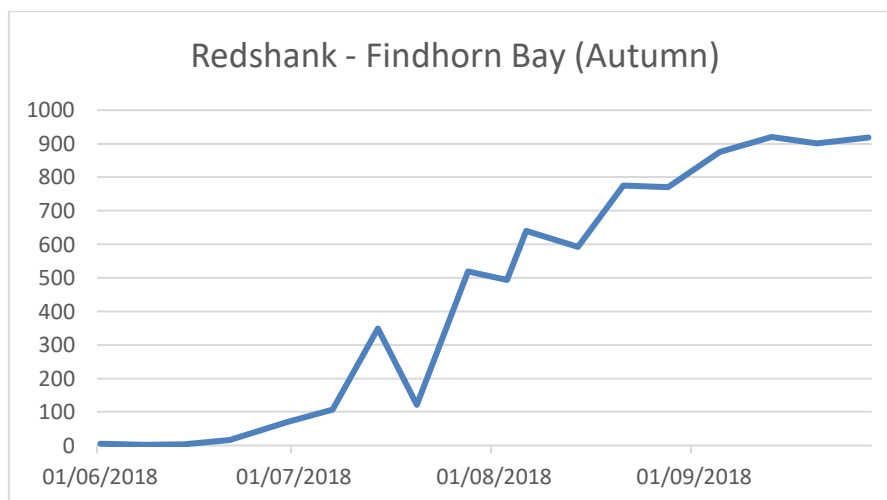
Weekly maximum counts in Findhorn Bay revealed the following pattern with a decline following 565 on 16 Apr.



Peak count was 600 on 14 Mar. Elsewhere, the maximum count was 23 Burghead 17 Mar.

Late summer-autumn (July-September):

Weekly maximum counts in Findhorn Bay (GM, RSC) revealed the following pattern with an increase from 71 on 30 Jun to 640 on 6 Aug and a peak of 920 on 13 Sep.



Highest counts (monthly maxima) elsewhere were:

	July	August	September
<b>Carse of Delnies</b>	40+	nc	83
<b>Nairn</b>	10	nc	75+
<b>Burghead</b>	1	14	nc
<b>Lossiemouth</b>	*c.100	53	6
<b>Spey estuary</b>	30	6	20
<b>Portgordon</b>	nc	53	22

\*Counted in flight heading east over the sea.

Winter: Monthly maxima at the coast were:

	January	February	October	November	December
<b>Nairn/Culbin Bars</b>	*137	*54	*76	nc	*83
<b>Carse of Delnies</b>	c.350	nc	2	nc	0
<b>Nairn</b>	3	0	c.150	212	48
<b>Findhorn Bay</b>	515	625	898	919	619
<b>Burghead-Hopeman</b>	15	26	69	30	21
<b>Lossiemouth</b>	11	16	22	7	12
<b>Portgordon-Strathlene</b>	31	51	32	36	48

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

Maximum winter counts in Findhorn Bay since 2009 have been:

2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
828	536	500	599	513	870	845	912	976	919

During winter and early spring, slightly inland at Balormie pig farm (Drainie) were single birds on 6 & 20 Jan, 17 Mar, 18 Mar (2) and 11 Apr. At Loch Loy, 1 on 28 Mar.

### Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*

*Very scarce migrant.*

Spring: 2 Balormie pig farm (Drainie) 12 May (JDL, MSh, CSh, AY).

Autumn: An exceptionally late bird remained near the bird hide at Findhorn Bay during 22-26 Nov (GM, RSC *et al.*).



Wood Sandpiper, Findhorn Bay 22 November 2018 (Richard Somers Cocks)

**Greenshank *Tringa nebularia****Scarce migrant, very scarce in winter.*

Spring (late March-June): 1 Spey estuary 7 Apr (KP), 14 Apr & 7 May (MJHC), 1 on the lower reaches of the River Findhorn 11 Apr (AJL) and 1 on the south side of Findhorn Bay 1 Jun (RSC).

Late summer-autumn (July-October): Records were received from the Findhorn Bay area on 40 days during this period from 1 Jul until 18 Oct, 32 of which were of 1-3 birds (GM, RSC *et al.*) with a highest count was 6 on the Mosset Burn 1 Aug (GM). Most records from Lossiemouth were from the upper tidal reaches of the estuary with a highest count of 7 on 14 Aug (HF, DAG) - also 1 Lossie Forest gravel pit 19 Aug (JDL). Present on Spey estuary on 13 days during 17 Jul-26 Sep; usually single birds, with the highest count being 6 on 4 Aug (RSh). Elsewhere, 1 Carse of Delnies 16 Jul (JAC), 2 Culbin Bar 16 Aug (JDL) and 1 Nairn 12 Oct (AET).

Winter (November-December): 1 Findhorn Bay during November was seen on 1st, 3rd, 6th & 15th (GM, RSC, RPo).

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

Breeding: The number of apparently occupied nests (AON) at both colonies this year was near the long term average, with 476 AON at Covesea on 12 Jun and 232 AON at Portknockie on 10 Jun, with a further 31 AON noted on the seaward facing side of Bow Fiddle Rock on 25 Jun (MJHC).

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

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
<b>Covesea</b>	468	535	540	590	425	569	627	488	700	476
<b>Portknockie</b>	332	355	360	365	233	336	260	220	319	263

In the first half of the year high counts included 75 off Cullen on 22 Apr and 64 off Findhorn on 15 May. Counts along the coast in late summer included 240 on the sea off Tugnet on 22 Aug, 110 on the sea off Portgordon on 24 Aug, 246 on Findhorn beach on 26 Aug and 380 off Nairn on 17 Sep. At Tugnet on 14 Sep, 2970 were recorded in 90 minutes passing east and on the sea (MJHC). Peak one-hour passage counts offshore from Lossiemouth included 547 on 21 Apr, 4509 on 25 Aug (6858 in 90 minutes), 2044 on 16 Sep, 3506 on 23 Sep and 1362 on 14 Oct.

At Lossiemouth regular sea-watches were conducted throughout 2018 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
3	26	92	547	269	16	152	4509	3506	1362	11	57

**Sabine's Gull *Xema sabini****Rare migrant.*

An adult was seen at Lossiemouth, off the harbour and east beach, on 26 Aug (MWa, DAG).

**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 (AON) on 3 Jun. The only other report was 2 AON near Garmouth viaduct on 27 May. Counts over 300 on Findhorn Bay included 347 on 15 Jul and 351 on 19 Aug. Elsewhere on the coast, significant counts were 84 Lossie estuary 20 Jan and 186 there on 15 Jul, 50 Spey estuary 23 Jul and 70 Nairn 14 Dec. Other counts from inland sites included 21 Gordon Castle (Fochabers) 21 Jan and 25 near Tomintoul 25 May. There were also ten records from Cooper Park pond (Elgin) with the highest counts of 24 on 4 Feb and 16 on 2 Dec.

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

First sightings of the year were single adult birds on passage past Lossiemouth on 24 & 25 Mar. Later in the year, sea-watches at Lossiemouth recorded an adult on 25 Aug, a 1CY bird on 12 Sep, five (2 adult & 3 1CY) on 22 Sep and four (2 adult & 2 1CY) on 23 Sep (RP). Elsewhere, 1 Burghead Bay 17 Apr (AJL), a 2CY Spey estuary 12 May (MJHC), 1 Nairn Bar 14 Oct and a 1CY Lossiemouth west beach 24 Oct (GH). The final sighting of the year was a 1CY bird around Spey estuary 10-12 Nov (MJHC).

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

The recent trend of increased sightings of this bird continued in 2018 with numerous reports, many of which were from the Lossiemouth area, but an increasing number of sightings from elsewhere as well. The first sighting was an adult at Balormie pig farm (Lossiemouth) on 5 Jan (DM, LSi). Four sightings of what was assessed to be the same bird were then made at Balormie and nearby Lossie estuary during 7 Jan-3 Feb, and over the summer there were nine reports of an adult in the Lossiemouth area during 28 Jul-19 Aug (RP, DAG, HF). At the same time, a different adult was reported near Findhorn Bay on 16 Aug (DMP). Elsewhere in the Nairn-Delnies area there were eight reports during 19 Aug-17 Sep involving an adult, a 2CY and three 1CY birds (DMP, PRG, CGL, JAC). Four birds were seen together on Delnies beach on 16 Sep - the most ever seen together in Moray & Nairn (CGL, JAC). At the Spey estuary, an adult was seen on 27 Aug and 16-17 Sep, and two adults on 25 Sep (MJHC). An adult was present at Loch Spynie on 23 Oct and 17 Nov (HF, DAG), and the final sighting of the year was an adult at Balormie on 30 Dec (PRG).



Three Mediterranean Gulls, Nairn 12 September 2018 (Dave Pullan)



### Common Gull *Larus canus*

*Very common resident breeder and winter visitor.*

Breeding: On 8 May, 230 were visible at the Tips of Corsemaul colony (east of Dufftown) and a further 90 were 1 km south-east at Tom Mor. At Feith Musach (Tomintoul) 25 birds and 15 apparently occupied nests (AON) were seen on 25 May (IF). Near Foal's Crag (Glen Avon), 28 birds with 16 AON were on shingles beside the River Avon on 16 May, and 21 AON were on an island by Garmouth viaduct on 27 May (MJHC). In Elgin, at least 3 sites had 1-2 AONs, and two chicks seen at Cawdor Castle on 14 Jun.

Significant flock counts away from breeding areas early in the year included 443 Balormie pig farm (Lossiemouth) 21 Jan, c.800 Moyness 8 Feb, 150+ in Burghead Bay (off Roseisle) 4 Mar and 100+ east of Forres 12 Mar. Counts later in the year included 260 Spey estuary 12 Sep and 230 Findhorn Bay 20 Oct.

### Great Black-backed Gull *Larus marinus*

*Scarce resident breeder and common visitor.*

Breeding: Up to 4 apparently occupied nests (AON) were noted at the Moycroft Estate (Elgin) on 8 May and one AON at Portknockie on 10 Jun. Two pairs were seen at Tronach Head on 11 Jun but no sign of nests.

Overall, numbers through the year were similar to those of 2017. The maximum at Spey estuary was 940 on 27 Jul followed by 780 on 6 Aug. At Lossie estuary, numbers peaked in late summer/autumn with 644 on 7 Oct and 580 on 15 Sep. 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 50 on 30 Dec.

Maximum monthly counts were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<b>Lossie estuary</b>	82	42	147	80	1	22	74	92	580	644	65	126
<b>Spey estuary</b>	nc	nc	nc	180	280	30	940	780	30	600	nc	nc
<b>Findhorn</b>	nc	17	nc	nc	22	38	41	17	36	28	23	50

The only other coastal count to exceed 25 was 35 Burghead 21 Aug. Inland, very few reported other than 10 Cloddach Quarry 22 Mar.

### Glaucous Gull *Larus hyperboreus*

*Very scarce winter visitor.*

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

Another year with a good number of sightings mainly in the area around Lossie estuary.

Findhorn Bay:	Five sightings of a 2CY bird during 11 Jul-8 Aug (GM, RSC, MJHC).
Burghead:	A 2CY Viking Gull (Glaucous x Herring Gull) was sighted on numerous occasions from 5 Sep until at least 16 Dec (many obs).
Lossie estuary:	The first sighting was a 2CY on 29 Jan, followed by eleven sightings of a similar aged bird during 22 Feb-26 Apr. In summer, a 2CY was seen on 8-9 Jun and 16 Jul, and another was reported on 16 Sep. On 2

	Nov there were two 2CY birds present and one remained until the end of the year (RP, DAG, HF <i>et al.</i> ).
Balormie pig farm:	Fourteen sightings of a 2CY were reported during 8 Mar-15 May, with two 2CY birds seen on 27-28 Apr. Due to the farm's proximity to Lossie estuary some of the sightings are likely to involve the same birds (RP <i>et al.</i> ).
Loch Spynie:	Eleven sightings of a 2CY were reported during 2 Nov-30 Dec. Again, some overlap with Lossie estuary birds is likely, although the 2CY seen on 2 Nov was different to the two seen at the estuary on the same day (DAG, MJHC, RSC <i>et al.</i> ).
Elgin area:	At Clackmarras pig farm a 2CY was present on 14 Feb and 15 Mar (MY). At Cloddach quarry, two 2CY birds were seen on 21 Feb and later in the year a 2CY on 18 Oct (MJHC).
Spey estuary:	The earliest sighting was a 2CY on 30 Jan, followed by seven sightings of a similar aged bird during 1 Mar-16 Apr. An adult was also present on 2 Mar (MJHC <i>et al.</i> ).
Strathlene (Buckie):	A 2 CY was seen 4-5 Jan (LSi, JM, DM).

### **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 numbers. It is probable that there were around 24 birds in 2018 which was a slight increase on previous years.

Loch Flemington:	A 2CY on 26 Feb (DP).
Findhorn Bay:	A 2CY on 29 Mar (PRG).
Burghead:	A 3CY on 16 May (RG).
Hopeman:	An adult on 14 Jan and 2 Mar (MWa).
Lossie estuary:	First sighting was an adult on 2 Jan with six further sightings up to 30 Mar. A 3CY bird was seen regularly during 8 Jan-5 Mar and a 2CY from 29 Mar to 17 Apr. What was probably another 3CY bird was present 18 Apr to 23 May. A sea-watch off Lossiemouth recorded a 2CY and a 3CY on 8 Apr (RP, DAG, DM <i>et al.</i> ).
Balormie pig farm:	First sighting was 3CY on 2 Jan with nine further sightings up to 25 Jan. A 2CY was present 4-11 Mar and an adult was seen on 29 Jan and 24 Apr. It is probable that some of these birds were also those seen at nearby Lossie estuary (RP, DAG <i>et al.</i> ).
Loch Spynie:	A 4CY was seen on 21 Feb and an adult was recorded on 14 Apr, 22 Dec and 31 Dec (DAG, MJHC, JO).
Elgin area:	At Clackmarras pig farm there was a 3CY on 20 Mar. At Cloddach quarry two 2CY birds and an adult were seen on 21 Feb. Later in the year a 1CY was seen here on 18 Oct (MY, MJHC, RP).
Llanbryde:	At Longhill pig farm there were two adults on 13 Feb and one of the adults together with a 2CY was present on 20 Feb. At Loch Oire there was a single bird on 12 Jan and 17 Dec (MY, EH).

Spey Bay: An adult was seen at Boar's Head on 18 Feb and a 2CY on the estuary on 8 Apr (JDL, MJHC).

### **Herring Gull *Larus argentatus***

*Very common resident breeder and winter visitor.*

Breeding: Numerous sites on roofs of industrial and commercial buildings in the area including at least 100 apparently occupied nests (AON) in Elgin, 38 AON in Forres, 17 AON in Lossiemouth and 4 AON in Nairn. Undoubtedly there were many more sites around the region where breeding took place but was not recorded.

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

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<b>Lossie</b>	886	498	453	287	14	250	540	893	313	565	147	306
<b>Spey</b>	20	32	nc	200	nc	20	1200	600	nc	nc	nc	1060
<b>Nairn</b>	80	24	65	100	46	80	100	nc	30	30	80	150

Elsewhere, significant counts included 500+ Loch Spynie 26 Jan, 211 Cooper Park pond (Elgin) 3 Mar, 800 Cloddach quarry 22 Dec, 580 on a pig farm at Llanbryde 21 Dec and 3500 on Findhorn Bay 30 Dec.

### **Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus***

*Summer visitor and scarce breeder. Very scarce in winter.*

Wintering: Recorded in both winter periods. At the start of the year, the first sighting was two adults at Balormie pig farm on 2 Jan. At nearby Lossie estuary there were several reports to mid March of 2 different adults which may have been the same birds seen at Balormie. At the end of the year, the only sightings in December were an adult at Lossie estuary on 8 Dec and 30 Dec, and at nearby Loch Spynie possibly the same adult on 30-31 Dec.

Arrival: By late March there were reports of sightings at a number of locations. Multiple counts included 3 Clochan 17 Mar, 4 Balormie 24 Mar and 6 Cooper Park pond (Elgin) 14 Apr.

Breeding: Several sites were identified around Elgin including the old sawmill site and 3 apparently occupied nests (AONs) at Moycroft. Breeding was also noted on buildings in Forres with 5 AONs seen on 24 May and 4 pairs nesting at Kinloss on 3 May.

Highest counts of the year were on Loch Oire with 34 on 29 Jul, 32 on 20 Aug and 29 on 3 Sep (which included ten adults, a 2CY and 18 juveniles). Elsewhere, 5 Spey estuary 21 May, 14 Lossie estuary 30 Jun and 5 off Nairn 10 Jul.

### **Sandwich Tern *Thalasseus sandvicensis***

*Very common summer visitor and occasional breeder.*

Arrival: First of the year was 1 off Lossiemouth 18 Mar (RP). First sightings at other locations were 4 Nairn 22 Mar and single birds at Findhorn 26 Mar, Burghead 6 Apr, Cullen 6 Apr and Kingston 8 Apr. High counts in spring included c.100 Nairn east beach 10 Apr, 82 Findhorn Bay 25 Apr, 52 Burghead 18 Apr and c.50 Spey Bay 20 Apr.

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

2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
22 Mar	25 Mar	27 Mar	18 Mar	3 Apr	25 Mar	12 Mar	21 Mar	14 Mar	18 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 and the Netherlands. Numbers observed at Findhorn beach this year were higher than 2017 with counts from July to September above 200 including 235 on 11 Aug, 266 on 30 Aug and 425 on 10 Sep (RSC). Elsewhere, counts were much lower and included 70 Burghead-Hopeman 15 Aug, 90 Nairn 17 Sep and 174 seen on a 90-minute sea-watch at Portknockie on 13 Aug.

Half-monthly maximum counts of flocks on the shore at Findhorn from early July to late September were (RSC):

	July 1-15	July 16-31	Aug 1-15	Aug 16-31	Sep 1-15	Sep 16-30
<b>Findhorn shore</b>	6	72	235	266	425	84

Passage of Sandwich Terns along the Moray coast was monitored during regular sea-watches from Lossiemouth. Best passage count in spring was 48 in one hour on 8 May. During June and July, counts were generally low with a maximum of 11 on 15 Jul. By late summer and autumn, counts had increased once more and included 265 on 11 Aug, 189 on 2 Sep, 127 on 16 Sep and the final sighting of a single bird on 2 Oct. The maximum half-monthly one-hour passage counts taken at Lossiemouth from late April through to early October were as follows (RP):

Apr 16-30	May 1-15	May 16-31	Jun 1-15	Jun 16-30	Jul 1-15	Jul 16-31	Aug 1-15	Aug 16-31	Sep 1-15	Sep 16-30	Oct 1-15
25	48	3	0	0	11	10	265	172	189	127	1

### Little Tern *Sternula albifrons*

*Very scarce summer visitor and rare breeder.*

All the sightings this year were reported from Lossiemouth where breeding took place once again on the east beach. First birds seen were 4 at the east beach colony on 28 May. By 12 Jul there were 3 birds on nests with a further 10 nearby and at least 3 chicks were observed from mid July to mid August. The highest count was on 18 Jul with 16 adults and 2 chicks. Last sighting was 2 adults and a recently fledged juvenile on 19 Aug (MSh, DAG, JDL *et al.*).

### Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*

*Summer visitor and fairly common breeder.*

Arrival: First report was 1 Burghead Bay 17 Apr, followed by 1 Burghead 19 Apr, 2 passing Lossiemouth 20 Apr and 2 on the Spey at Aberlour on 29 Apr.

Breeding: At Loch Spynie, numbers of apparently occupied nests (AONs) on the platform fell back this year in comparison to 2017 with 11 AONs seen on 3 Jun. By 8 Jul 20 adults and 10 chicks were around the platform (RP). At the Garmouth viaduct colony, 6 AONs were noted on 27 May and 20 birds were present on 2 Jul although nests were obscured by vegetation

(MJHC). Also inland, Common Terns bred on the roof of Walkers factory in Aberlour, with 7 adults and 2 juveniles seen on 28 Jun (AE).

Elsewhere, the highest count off Findhorn was 35 on 9 May. At Lossiemouth, the main passage was recorded from mid July to early August with one-hour counts of 73 on 21 Jul, 50 on 28 Jul and 80 on 5 Aug. The last sighting was 1 on 14 Oct. Maximum half-monthly one-hour passage counts taken at Lossiemouth from late April through to early October were as follows (RP):

Apr 16-30	May 1-15	May 16-31	Jun 1-15	Jun 16-30	Jul 1-15	Jul 16-31	Aug 1-15	Aug 16-31	Sep 1-15	Sep 16-30	Oct 1-15
15	23	11	3	0	21	73	80	4	5	8	1

### **Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea***

*Summer visitor and fairly common breeder.*

Arrival: First were 2 Burghead Bay 2 May followed by 3 Spey estuary 3 May and 1 off Lossiemouth on 5 May.

Breeding: At the Garmouth viaduct colony 42 AONs were noted on 27 May and 130 birds were present on 2 Jul although nests were obscured by vegetation. At the Spey estuary there were 130 including 57 juveniles on 17 Jul (MJHC).

On Findhorn beach there were only a few records post-breeding with a maximum of 3 on 28 Aug (RSC). A few passage sightings at Lossiemouth during May and then again in July and August with maxima of 22 in one hour on 8 May and 16 on 28 Jul (RP). Last sighting of the year was 1 Nairn 29 Oct (PRG).

### **Black Tern *Chlidonias niger***

*Very scarce spring and autumn migrant.*

An adult flew west past Lossiemouth on 22 Jul (RP). This was only the 9th record since 2000.

### **Great Skua *Stercorarius skua***

*Fairly common migrant in summer and autumn.*

Spring: First of the year were 2 Lossiemouth on 26 Apr followed by 2 Burghead on 28 Apr (RP, CGL). Birds were seen on eight days in May during sea-watches at Lossiemouth including 5 birds over two hours on 7 May. Elsewhere, sightings included 2 Burghead 7 May, 2 Findhorn 17 May and single birds off Cullen harbour on 29 Apr, Strathlene on 2 May and Spey Bay on 14 May (RSC, JM, MJHC).

Summer: In July-August there were fourteen dates with records from Lossiemouth mostly singles or pairs but up to 3 in one hour on 13 Jul and 11 Aug, and 6 on 25 Aug (RP, JM). Elsewhere, 1 Nairn 10 Jul, 3 off Findhorn dunes 27 Aug and 3 Cullen 27 Aug (MT, MGC, JM).

Autumn: In September-October there were ten dates with records at Lossiemouth, again mostly singles or pairs but sightings of 3 on 15 Sep, 4 on 22 Sep and 6 on 23 Sep (RP). Other sightings included 1 Portknockie 2 Sep (DT), 2 Strathlene 7 Sep (and 3 on 21 Sep) (MJHC), and 1 off Nairn harbour 22 Sep (AJ).

### **Pomarine Skua *Stercorarius pomarinus***

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

A few more sightings this year, mostly off Lossiemouth. Single birds were seen offshore on 20 Apr, 1 May, 28 Jul and 26 Oct. In addition, 3 were seen in 30 minutes on 25 Aug and 4 in



one hour on 27 Oct (RP, HF). Around the same date, 6 passed Strathlene on 26 Oct (MJHC). Elsewhere, a single bird was seen flying west at Burghead and Findhorn on 28 Sep (AMac, JPo).

### **Arctic Skua *Stercorarius parasiticus***

*Fairly common migrant in summer and autumn.*

Spring: The trend of increasing numbers of sightings in April and May continued this year. These included 1 Burghead 26 Apr (KR), 1 Cullen 29 Apr (JM), 6 sightings off Findhorn including 3 on 15 May (RSC, GM, AJL), 1 Portknockie 12 May (MJHC) and, on sea-watches at Lossiemouth, 5 days with records including 5 in one hour on 11 May (RP).

Summer: From June-August there were eleven days with sightings from Lossiemouth, mostly on sea-watches. Highest counts included 3 on 28 Jul and 12 on 25 Aug (RP, JM). Off Findhorn, 2 on 4 Aug, 1 on 20-21 Aug, 1 on 24 Aug and 2 on 27 Aug (RSC). Elsewhere, 1 off Spey estuary 8 Jul (RSh), 1 off Nairn 14 Jul (ACI), 1 off Burghead 15 Aug (SI) and 2 off Delnies 19 Aug (GPr).

Autumn: Regular sightings continued at Lossiemouth in September-October and high counts included 10 on 1 Sep, 5 on 10 Sep, 7 on 19 Sep and 4 on 12 Oct (RP). Off Findhorn, single birds were seen on 5 Sep and 1, 2, 10 & 12 Oct. At Burghead, 2 on 21 Sep and a single bird on 27 & 28 Sep. One-hour sea-watches at Strathlene recorded 3 on 7 Sep and 6 on 21 Sep (MJHC). Last of the year was a single off Lossiemouth on 22 Oct.

### **Little Auk *Alle alle***

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

In 2017 the majority of sightings had been at the end of the year and 2018 continued with all the sightings recorded in January-March. At Burghead the earliest was 1 on 17 Jan followed by 8 on 1 Mar and 2 on 4 Mar (AMac, RHD, TJW). At Lossiemouth, 4 on 4 Feb, 1 on 3 Mar and 2 on 18 Mar (RP, HF, DAG). The only other record was 2 flying west past Cullen on 25 Mar (LSi).

### **Guillemot *Uria aalge***

*Rare breeder, very common offshore.*

Breeding: The small but expanding colony at Bow Fiddle Rock (Portknockie) contained up to 49 adults on the seaward side of the Rock on 25 Jun, and 2 were on the mainland cliffs on 10 Jun (MJHC).

First sighting of the year was a single bird passing Lossiemouth on 2 Jan. Further one-hour passage counts at Lossiemouth at the start of the year included 39 on 17 Feb, 32 on 4 Mar and 51 on 24 Mar. Several were noted off Findhorn with a maximum of 4 on 29 Jan. Elsewhere, 18 Delnies-Nairn on 18 Feb and 24 Burghead 4 Mar. By spring, the highest passage count recorded at Lossiemouth was 361 on 20 May. Other offshore sightings at Findhorn included 13 on 3 Apr and 9 on 13 May. At Cullen, 70 were reported on 22 Apr and several hundred off Easter Delnies on 25 May. In summer at Lossiemouth, 150 were recorded on 2 Jun and 25 on 15 Jul. Highest count off Findhorn was 27 on 10 Jul. By autumn, passage counts at Lossiemouth had increased again and included 24 on 16 Sep, 103 on 2 Oct and 111 on 7 Oct. Other significant counts included 19 Tugnet 8 Oct, 17 Findhorn 13 Oct and 425 Culbin Bar 14 Oct. Last sightings of the year off Lossiemouth included 92 on 1 Nov, 43 on 25 Nov and finally 3 on 16 Dec.

At Lossiemouth regular sea-watches were conducted throughout 2018 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
1	39	51	24	361	144	25	7	24	111	93	5

### Razorbill *Alca torda*

*Scarce breeder, very common offshore.*

Breeding: At the Portknockie colony, there were 132 adults on the mainland cliffs on 10 Jun, and the seaward side of the Bow Fiddle Rock had another 65 adults on 25 Jun. Further west, at Tronach Head, another colony had 39 adults on cliffs by 8 Jul (MJHC).

Highest numbers offshore were recorded in spring. In one-hour counts of birds passing Lossiemouth, the peak passage records were 398 on 24 Mar, 522 on 7 Apr and 635 on 21 Apr. Elsewhere, significant counts this year included 122 Nairn Bar 18 Feb, 80 Burghead 30 Mar, 27 Findhorn 5 Apr and c.400 Easter Delnies 25 May. High counts later in the year included 40 Burghead 16 Jun, 36 Findhorn 19 Aug and 50 in the Boar's Head Rock area (Spey Bay) 1 Nov. Passage past Lossiemouth peaked at 363 on 7 Oct and 226 (heading west) on 2 Nov.

At Lossiemouth regular sea-watches were conducted throughout 2018 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
7	207	398	635	45	30	96	3	135	363	226	14

Regular counts were also taken of birds on the sea in Burghead Bay, from Findhorn, which were as follows (RSC, GM):

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
6	14	12	27	14	12	22	41	19	11	10	7

### Black Guillemot *Cephus grylle*

*Scarce breeder and scarce offshore.*

Breeding: Highest count of adults on the sea by Bow Fiddle Rock (Portknockie) was 33 on 8 Apr. At Tronach Head the high count in spring was 8 on 8 Apr, and later there were 9 on the sea on 30 Jun. The long-term traditional crevice at Tronach Head was unoccupied on 8 Jul (MJHC). Although breeding at these sites is apparent among the small number of birds present, the success rates are difficult to ascertain owing to the inaccessibility of the nests on these cliffs.

Other counts early in the year included 2 Burghead 7 Jan, 1 Hopeman 13 Jan, 19 passing Lossiemouth 25 Mar and 2 Findhorn 1 May. Away from the east Moray breeding area, the highest counts in autumn were from Lossiemouth with passage counts (almost all birds heading west) of 24 on 20 Sep, 27 on 6 Oct, 43 on 18 Oct and 36 on 2 Nov. Elsewhere, 2 Nairn 17 Sep, 2 Findhorn 14 Nov and 2 Burghead 16 Dec.

At Lossiemouth regular sea-watches were conducted throughout 2018 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
2	9	19	8	2	0	3	15	24	43	36	3

**Puffin *Fratercula arctica***

*Very scarce offshore.*

A good year for sightings mainly at Lossiemouth over the summer months with records from eleven days. These included 3 on 8 Jul, 15 on 14 Jul (during four hours), 54 on 15 Jul (during 2 hours) and the final sighting of 1 on 1 Nov (RP). Other sightings were single birds past Burghead on 29 Jun, 10 Oct and 14 Oct (MGC, TB, JPo), and 2 off Culbin Bar 14 Oct (AY). Two dead specimens (adult and immature) were found on Lossiemouth east beach on 8 Mar (MSh).

**Feral Pigeon *Columba livia***

*Very common resident breeder.*

Few reports in 2018 of this widespread and numerous bird. Flocks 50-100 were reported in Buckie, Elgin and Nairn.

**Stock Dove *Columba oenas***

*Scarce resident breeder.*

Breeding season (March-July): 2 Balormie 7 Apr and 20 May, 3 Gelford 6 Apr, 1 Kirkhill (Elgin) 19 Mar, up to 3 Loch Spynie on nine dates (song heard), 1 Lossiemouth east beach 8 & 12 Jul, 1 Mill of Tynet 3 May and 1 Kilravock Castle 12 Apr.

Autumn/winter records from additional localities were 1 Barmuckity 6 Jan, 1 Carse of Delnies 17 Sep, 1 Cragganmore 27 Feb and 8 Sweethillock 5 Feb.

**Woodpigeon *Columba palumbus***

*Very common resident breeder.*

Flocks of 100 or more (approximate counts) included 1500 Gelford 4 Mar, 1300 Berryleas 4 Feb, 800 Burnside of Enzie 1 Jan (and 600 on 18 Jan), 500 Blackpark (Nairn) 29 Jan, 300 Achneim (Cawdor) 27 Dec, 200 Kirkhill (Elgin) 15 Mar and 150 Keith 12 Mar.

**Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto***

*Very common resident breeder.*

Breeding: A pair nested on the traffic lights by the Post Office in New Elgin (MWh).

The only counts of 10 or more were 17 Kinnudie (Auldearn) 21 Dec, 14 Nether Dallachy 5 Oct and 10 Clochan 17 Dec. Smaller groups of 5-9 were reported from Bishopmill (Elgin), Forres and Milnorduff.

**Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus***

*Summer visitor and fairly common breeder.*

Arrival: First reports, in April, were at Tomintoul 25th, Upper Edingight 25th, Knockaneorn 26th and Rafford 29th.

Subsequently seen or heard in May-June at Aitnoch, Altyre, Bin Hill (Cullen), Braes of Enzie, Buinach, Carn na Dalach, Craigellachie, Delnabo, Dulsie Bridge, Easter Gaulrig, Gallowhill, Glenmullie, Inchrory, Kellas, Knauchland, Loch Kirkaldy, Millbuies Loch, North Crannoch, Rumachroy, Ruthven (Tomintoul), Seafeld (Forres), Sheals (Glass), Shenvault, Todholes and Wood of Achmatone.

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

Breeding season (March-July) reports came from Ardivot, Balgreen, Bogmoor, Braes of Enzie, Craigellachie, Darkland, Daugh of Kinermony, Duffus, Hempriggs, Knockaneorn, Marypark, Mossyards, North Crannoch, Sheals (Glass), Tomnamoon and West Mains.

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

2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
11	13	21	10	9	5	0	1	9	5	9	8	17	7	16

At other times of year, reports came from the following additional sites: Balvenie Castle, Barmuckity, Ben Rinnes distillery area, Boat o' Brig, Bridge of Derrybeg, Broom of Moy, Daugh of Carron, Dipple, Findhorn, Glen of Rothies, Hillhead (Forres), Glenmullie, Lhanbryde, Lossiemouth, Miltonduff, Mundole and Wellheads.

The total number of localities from which Barn Owls were reported (at any time of year) since 2004 is:

2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
31	27	31	21	40	20	11	13	21	12	30	47	39	21	33

**Snowy Owl *Bubo scandiacus****Very scarce visitor.*

On 30 Jan, one was seen and photographed on a grassy bank and fence posts at Gladhill Farm, Garmouth (KCr). Remarkably, another was seen and photographed in an area of mixed conifer plantation and moorland near Mannocho Hill on 14 April (JT, LMi, SMe). It was not possible to establish the age or sex of either bird due to their distance from the observers - and, despite searching, neither could be relocated on subsequent days.

**Tawny Owl *Strix aluco****Common resident breeder.*

Records were received from 17 localities, with breeding confirmed at Kinermony.

**Long-eared Owl *Asio otus****Scarce resident breeder.*

Records received from seven localities. Calling young were heard in the wood behind the golf course at Spey Bay on 12 & 17 Jun (MJHC, NS, CA), Ferness 28 May (MGC), Findrassie Wood 18 Jul (HF) and Lethen 7 Jun (JH). Other records included single birds at Ardlewie (Lower Cabrach) 12 May, Drainie 2 Jul and East Mains (Gilston) 2 Jul.

**Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus****Rare breeder and very scarce migrant.*

Very few records received. In spring/early summer, 1 Black Hill (Aultmore) 8 Apr (MJHC), 1 Hopeman 9 Apr (RJ) and 1 Findhorn 1 Jun (RMi). In autumn, 1 Littlemill 4 Oct (JHm), 1 Findhorn Bay 12 Oct (RSC) and 1 Covesea 15 Oct (DM).

**Swift *Apus apus***

*Summer visitor and common breeder.*

Arrival: A few very early birds, followed by a more widespread arrival in mid May. First were 4 Drumin Castle 1 May, 5 Loch Spynie 3 May and 1 Elgin cemetery 8 May. On 12 May, 1 Cullen, 1 Forres, 1 Lossiemouth, 5 Nairn and 1 The Wards (Elgin).

Breeding: Swifts were seen entering roof spaces in Cullen, Elgin (Victoria Road) and Garmouth.

Largest concentrations were 50+ over Darnaway Castle area 31 Jul, 50 Spey estuary 20 Jun, 50 Lossiemouth 3 Aug, 40 Bishopmill 26 Jul, 35 Loch Spynie 3 Jun, 20+ Golford 4 Jul, 20 Kinloss 23 Jul-1 Aug and 20 Nairn 6 Aug.

Late birds, in the second half of August, were 1 Findhorn 19th, several Lossiemouth 21st, 3 Keith 23rd and 2 Loch Spynie 26th.

A swift seen over Cummingston on 8 Nov (SBr) was a possible Pallid Swift (*Apus pallidus*) but Common Swift could not be totally eliminated on the views obtained.

**Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis***

*Very scarce visitor and occasional breeder.*

Breeding season (April-July): The only records received were from the lower River Spey between Garmouth viaduct and the rivermouth. One was seen on 14 Apr (MJHC) and 7 Jun (JA), and a pair on 6 Jul (PGS).

At other times, single birds were seen at Aberlour (on Lour Burn) 7 Oct, Ardivot (Spynie canal) 27 Oct, Cloddach Quarry 18 Oct, Elgin (Cooper Park and River Lossie) 12 Nov and 2-28 Dec, Forres (Mosset Burn and pond) 8 Jan-10 Mar and 17 Nov, Findhorn Bay 13 Jul, 8-11 Aug and 31 Oct, Howford Bridge area (River Nairn) 26 Sep and 6 Oct, Keith (River Isla) 29 Sep, Loch Spynie 20 Jan and 10 dates between 19 Aug-30 Dec, Lossie estuary 10 Aug, 10 Oct and two birds on 18 Oct (HFa) and Sanquhar Loch (Forres) 19 Mar.



Kingfisher, Forres 16 February 2018 (Martin Cook)



**Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major***

*Common resident breeder.*

Widespread in woodlands and visiting garden feeders. Breeding confirmed at Gallowhill, Laiken and beside the River Lossie east of Elgin. On 16 Apr, three males were drumming near Todholes (Dallas).

**[Green Woodpecker *Picus viridis***

*Very scarce visitor.*

For the second consecutive year, no records were received.]

**Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus***

*Scarce resident breeder.*

Breeding season (April-July) records (*confirmed breeding in italics*) included birds/pairs at Aldivalloch, Alves, Ardivot, Auchmair, Burghead, Carse of Delnies, Clarkly Hill, Drainie, Duffus, Elrick, Findhorn, Forres, Glen Builg, *Inverugie*, Kingston, *Kinloss airfield*, Littlemill, Lossiemouth airfield, Lossie estuary, Mossyards, Moyness, Netherton, Refouble, Roseisle, Seafield, Shempston, Todholes, Tomintoul, Upper Edingight and Whitetree.

Additional sites, with birds seen in other months, were Achavraat, Aitnoch, Banchor, Birchfield (Glen Avon), Cassieford, Covesea, Cummingston, Dava, Elgin, Glack Harnes (Ben Rinnes), Golford, Hempriggs, Hopeman, Househill (Nairn), Kilravock, Loch Flemington, Loch Loy, Milton of Grange, Salterhill, Tomcork, Waukmill and Whitemire.

**Merlin *Falco columbarius***

*Scarce resident breeder and migrant.*

Breeding: 54 sites were checked and 17 of these were found to be occupied by pairs, of which 14-15 laid clutches. Thirteen pairs were successful, and these raised 40 young between them. Mean brood size (fledged young per pair) overall was 2.4, but better in west Moray and Nairn, at 3.2, than in east Moray, at 1.1 (BCo, JKC). This represents a substantial improvement on 2017, when only 11 pairs were found, and only 12 young fledged.

Outside the breeding season, single birds were seen in the lowlands at Balormie 27 Mar and 22 Sep, Calcotts 17 Dec, Earlseat 7 Feb, Findhorn Bay (south end) 5 Jan, 5 Mar and 31 Oct-10 Dec (10 dates), Lossiemouth airfield 14-15 Sep, Portgordon 2 Mar, Roseisle maltings 5 Jan and Spey estuary 12 Oct.

**Hobby *Falco subbuteo***

*Rare visitor. Has bred.*

One was near the firing range, west of Kingston, on 31 Aug (RSh).

**Peregrine *Falco peregrinus***

*Rare resident breeder.*

Breeding: Seven sites were checked of which four were occupied by pairs and one by a single adult. Three of the pairs bred successfully, raising broods of 2-3, two and one young (AY, MJHC, AHo, JKC).

In late summer-winter, single birds were seen at Burghead (Jan), Clashach quarry (Dec), Cothall (Jan), Findhorn Bay (Jan-Mar, Aug-Dec), Hopeman (Jan), Lethen (Mar), Loch Spynie (Sep, Dec), Lossie estuary (Mar, Sep, Oct), off Lossiemouth harbour (Aug), Lower Broadshaw (Dec), Kinloss (Oct), Moyness (Sep), Nairn (Jan, Oct), Pitchroy (Oct),

Portgordon (Nov), Portknockie (Jan), Spey estuary (Jan, Mar, Aug, Sep) and West Mains (Jan).

### **Red-backed Shrike *Lanius collurio***

*Occasional breeder and rare migrant.*

A male was seen at Hopeman on 25 May (ASc). With the exception of the pair which bred in 2013, this is the 13th record for Moray & Nairn, and the first since 2008.

### **Great Grey Shrike *Lanius excubitor***

*Very scarce winter migrant.*

One was on moorland near Refouble between 20 Oct-15 Nov (HMo, JPo, MJHC *et al.*). This is the 8th record this century.



Great Grey Shrike, Refouble 20 October 2018 (Howard Moncrieff)

### **Jay *Garrulus glandarius***

*Fairly common resident breeder.*

Breeding season (April-July): Reports from Airdrie, Cawdor Woods, Elgin (Quarrywood area), Glen Lossie, Gordon Castle (Fochabers), Kinloss airfield, Kirkhill, Laiken, Little Aitnoch, Loch Loy, Loch Spynie, Lossie Forest/estuary, Manachie, Mulben and Roseisle.

At other seasons, additional sites were Aberlour (Linn Falls), Blue Hill, Brodie Castle, Burghead, Clashach, Cloddach quarry, Cloddymoss, Craighead, Dallas, Delmore, Douglasshiel Moss, Drumdivan, Fochabers, Fornightly, Gilston, Grigor Hill, Kellas, Knockando distillery, Laverockloch, Loch na Bo, Loch of Blairs, Mains of Craigmill, Maryfield, Montgrew, Pluscarden, Redhill Wood, Redwood, Rothes, Sanquhar Loch, Sluie and Westerton.

Largest congregation was 8 Loch Spynie 14 Oct.

### **Magpie *Pica pica***

*Common resident breeder.*

Widely recorded at 51 sites throughout the lowlands.

Groups of 10 or more were 16 Forres 26 Dec, 11 Clarkly Hill 18 Mar, 11 Findhorn Bay 13 Dec and 10 Rosebank (Hill of Maud) 17 Dec.

### **Jackdaw *Coloeus monedula***

*Very common resident breeder.*

Counts of 100 or more were c.750 (assembling for roost) Craigellachie 30 Jan, 270 Kingsteps 18 Jul, 150 Tomintoul 22 Oct, 140 Porttannachy 4 Mar and 120 Portessie 18 Feb.

On 28 Mar, a bird showing characters of 'Nordic' Jackdaw *C. m. monedula* was seen at Portessie (LSi).

### **Rook *Corvus frugilegus***

*Very common resident breeder.*

Colonies: 79 apparently occupied nests (AON) Knockando Parish Church 22 Mar, 21 AON West Road, Elgin 22 Mar and 8 AON The Oaks, Elgin 20 Mar.

The only large count received was of c.750 assembling for roost with a similar number of Jackdaws at Craigellachie on 30 Jan.

### **Carrion Crow *Corvus corone***

*Very common resident breeder.*

Breeding: Bred close to central Elgin, near the junction of Ashgrove Road and the A96.

Numerous on the Lossie estuary where maximum monthly counts were 20 on 25 Jan, 29 on 4 Feb, 70 on 19 Apr, 43 on 20 May and 26 on 26 Jun. Notable counts elsewhere included 88 Cloddach Quarry 22 Mar, 50 Findhorn Bay 15 Jul and 38 Carse of Delnies 17 Sep.

Carrion Crows were again recorded during seawatches off Lossiemouth harbour - during March-May. Usually only 1-2 birds but 17 flew west in 30 minutes on 25 Mar, and 9 in one hour on 7 Apr (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 Burghead, Clarkly Hill, Cloddach quarry, Cloddymoss, Craigellachie, Cummington, Easter Lawrenceton, Findhorn Bay, Gelford, Hopeman, Kingsteps, Loch Flemington, Lossie estuary, Myreside, Spey Bay, Spynie Palace and Urquhart.

Slightly more numerous in the Nairn area where 9 on east beach 12 Feb, 7 near the harbour 6 May, 5+ Carse of Delnies 16 Jul, 5 west golf course 25 Dec and 4 near the Leisure Centre 29 Jan.

### **Raven *Corvus corax***

*Scarce visitor and rare breeder.*

Breeding: Two pairs bred at the coast, at Tronach Head where two young fledged (MJHC, MMq) and at Covesea where a nest was built but the attempt was unsuccessful (MJHC). Inland, two pairs bred in south Moray, one of which raised two young to fledging and the other failed (EW). Pairs were located in two other inland Moray sites but breeding was not confirmed for either (KCu, SWa).

Elsewhere inland, 2 Allanreid 26 Oct, 3 Auchmair 30 Aug, 8 Bank Farm 7 Apr, 1 Bardon 22 Sep, 2 Ben Avon 1 Jul, 2 Ben Rinnes 18 Feb, 2 Cabrach 15 Apr, 3 Carn Liath 23 Feb, 3 Carn Mor 19 May (5 there 22 Aug), 2 Carn nan Tri-tighearnan 5 May, 2 Cothall late Jul, 5 Craig Bhuilg 16 May, 3 Croughly 22 Jul, 1 Daless 15 May, 3 Glenlivet 11 Apr, 2 Half Davoch 28 Oct, 2 Kilravock 20 Dec, 1 Knock of Braemoray 29 Jun & 29 Dec, 1 Loch Avon 7 Apr, 3 Tomnavoulin 10 Jun and 1 Whitefolds 7 Apr. On the Cairngorms plateau, 2 were seen (usually in the Cairn Lochan-Lochan Buidhe area) on 7 Jan, 18, 19 & 26 May and 8 & 24 Jun.

At, or near, the coast, 2 Binn Hill (Garmouth) 5 Mar, 1 Dallachy 3 Jan, 1 Delnies 30 Sep, 1 Forres 14 Apr, 2 Gladhill 31 Aug, 1 Kingsteps 24 Nov, 2 Nairn 22 Mar and 2 Ordiquish 4 Nov.

**Waxwing *Bombycilla garrulus***

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

Winter-spring: Following the small influx in late November-December 2017, small numbers remained into 2018. Maximum numbers at each site in each time period are given below:

1-10 Jan:	7 Elgin 2nd, 1 Forres 4th and 1 Lossiemouth 5th.
11-20 Jan:	5 Elgin 12th, 4 Forres 19th and 3 Burghead 14th.
21-31 Jan:	13 Elgin 21st-28th, 5 Rafford 28th, 2 Burghead 23rd and 2 Cloddach 29th.
1-10 Feb:	2 Hopeman 7th-10th and 1 Burghead 10th.
11-20 Feb:	7 Rafford 17th and 4 Elgin 18th.
21-28 Feb:	no records received.
1-10 Mar:	17 Elgin 5th and 4 Miltonduff 4th.
11-20 Mar:	1 Lossiemouth 18th.
21-31 Mar:	8 Nairn 26th.

A larger influx took place in late October-mid November, but few remained into December:

21-31 Oct:	30 Elgin 31st, 15 Hopeman 30th, 12 Dyke 27th and 12 Cullen 31st.
1-10 Nov:	100 Elgin 5th, 80 Cullen 1st, 25 Forres 5th, 9 Portknockie 1st, 8 Dyke 1st and 3 Lossiemouth 10th.
11-20 Nov:	200+ Elgin 13th-16th, 100 Forres 11th and 60 Cullen 11th.
21-31 Nov:	280 Fochabers 22nd, 70 Elgin 26th, 30 Cullen 25th, 22 Nairn 30th, 10 Nether Dallachy 30th.
1-10 Dec:	55 Elgin 5th.
11-20 Dec:	no records received.
21-30 Dec:	15 Forres 27th.



Waxwings, Fochabers 30 November 2018 (Nick Mellor)



**Coal Tit *Periparus ater***

*Very common resident breeder.*

First song Birnie Kirk 17 Feb.

Flock counts of 10 or more were 20+ Kinloss 19 Jan, 20 Carn Daimh 2 Dec, 17 Lossiemouth 2 Jan (18 there 10 Nov) and 10+ Burghead 11 Feb.

Productivity, as assessed by ringing at the 'Constant Effort Site' at Loch Spynie, was 5.0 juveniles per adult (RP).

**Crested Tit *Lophophanes cristatus***

*Common resident breeder.*

Breeding confirmed at Culbin and Lossie Forests, and also at Loch Kirkaldy where two broods of fledged young were seen on 10 Jun (MGC).

Away from the coastal forests, reports from other areas were 2 Archiestown 16 Dec, 2 Bogeney 29 Dec, 1 Loch na Bo 21 Dec, 1 Loch of Blairs 13 Nov, 1 Shaw Hill 23 Oct and 1 Whiteash Hill Wood 24 Feb.

Highest count was 6 Roseisle Forest 4 Feb.

**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 4.6:1, well up from 1.0:1 in 2017 (RP).

Counts exceeding ten birds were 18 (not in a single flock) Cragganmore 19 Jan, 15 Forres 1 Aug and 15 Firhall (Nairn) 8 Apr.

**Great Tit *Parus major***

*Very common resident breeder.*

Productivity, as assessed by ringing at the 'Constant Effort Site' at Loch Spynie, was 2.0 juveniles caught per adult, slightly up from 1.9 in 2017 (RP).

The only count exceeding ten birds was 23 Cragganmore 19 Jan - though not in a single flock.

**Skylark *Alauda arvensis***

*Very common breeder and migrant.*

No reports of singing birds until 2 Mosstowie 17 Feb and 3 Findhorn Bay 20 Feb.

Breeding season (April-July): Seen or heard at Aitnoch, Auchmair, Burghead, Carse of Delnies, Clarkly Hill, Cummington, Dava, Duthil, East Grange, Easter Delnies, Findhorn, Grigor Hill, Kingston, Kinnudie Farm, Lossiemouth airfield, Mosstowie, Moyness, Myreside, Nairn Bar, Portknockie, Red Craig, Suie, Todholes and Tugnet.

Some large flocks congregated in late February/early March during a period of low temperatures and snowfall. Maximum counts were 325 Portgordon maltings 3 Mar, 140 just west of Nairn 2 Mar, 56 Core 3 Mar, 50 near Roseisle distillery 1 Mar, 35 Barmuckity 4 Mar and 30+ Shempston 2 Mar.

**Sand Martin *Riparia riparia***

*Summer visitor and very common breeder.*

Arrival: A late arrival - unusually, there were no records in March. In early April, 2 Loch Flemington 5th (rising to 40+ by 10th), 5 Loch Spynie 8th and 1 Nairn 8th but most sites did not report their first birds until mid April or later.



Concentrations of birds early in the season (away from colonies) included 120+ Findhorn Bay (at Mosset Burn) 22 May and c.50 Loch Spynie 3 May.

Colony counts: Colonies were reported at Aldunie (Cabrach - 10-15 birds on 12 May), Balnught (upper River Findhorn - 12 birds on 3 July), Clashindarroch (Knockando - 7 birds at small colony on Allt Arder), Findhorn beach (10-15 birds at colony in a dune face in early May) and Mosstodloch (still a huge colony downstream at the Quarry Pool).

In mid-late summer, 80+ Kinloss airfield 4 Jul was the only count to exceed 50.

Last records of the year were 1 Spey estuary 15 Sep and 2 Loch Flemington 25 Sep.

### **Swallow *Hirundo rustica***

*Summer visitor and very common breeder.*

Arrival: First, in April, were 1 Findhorn 8th, 3 Spey Bay 9th, 2 Loch Flemington 10th and 2 Nairn 11th. Seven other observers reported 'firsts' during 15th-20th.

Late summer/early autumn flocks included 80 Lethen 24 Sep, 60+ Binsness 11 Aug, 50+ Tomnamoon 16 Aug and 40 Clochan 26 Jul.

Departure: Unusually there were no October reports. Last of the year, and very late, were 2 Lossie estuary 10 Nov and 1 Cullen 11 Nov.

### **House Martin *Delichon urbicum***

*Summer visitor and common breeder.*

Arrival: First reports, in April, were 1 Lossiemouth 18th, 2 Logie Steading 19th, 4 Burghead 20th, 2 Broom of Moy 22nd, 1 Loch Spynie 22nd, 2 Duffus 23rd and 1 Forres 25th.

Breeding: 13 nests on Bridge of Brown Tea Room 1 Jul and 2 nests Glenconglass (near Tomintoul) 22 Jul.

Late summer counts included 80-90 feeding between Conicavel and Darnaway Castle 31 Jul, 40+ Burghead 11 Aug, 30 Tomintoul 22 Jul, 30 Kinloss airfield 5 Sep, 20+ Nairn 27 Jul, 20 Inverchor 22 Jul and 20 Lossie estuary 1 Sep.

Last reports, in October, were 6 Loch Spynie 1st, 2 Findhorn 1st and 1 Bishopmill (Elgin) 6th.

### **Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus***

*Very common resident breeder.*

The proportion of juveniles caught per adult for ringing at the Loch Spynie 'Constant Effort Site' was 3.0:1, down slightly from 3.4:1 in 2017 (RP).

Largest flocks were 20 Findhorn dunes 1 Oct, 18 Lossie estuary 24 Sep and 15+ Brodie 1 Feb.

### **Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus***

*Summer visitor and very common breeder.*

Arrival: First were 1 Cloddach quarry 14 Apr and several singing Loch Spynie 15 Apr. Eleven sites reported first birds during 16-20 Apr and a further seven during 21-25 Apr.

Productivity, as measured by ringing at the 'Constant Effort Site' at Loch Spynie, was 4.4 juveniles per adult – well up from 1.3 in 2017 (RP).

Largest count was 23+ in the Rye Hill/Dunearn Burn area of Darnaway Forest.

### **Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita***

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

Winter: The only record was 1 Cloddach quarry 23 Feb (MY).

Arrival: Unusually few records in March, when first reports of singing birds were 1 Blacksboat 28th, 5 along lower River Findhorn near Findhorn Bay 29th and 1 Darnaway 30th.

Subsequently reported in spring and summer at 48 sites. One as far upcountry as Tomintoul on 18 Apr was unusual.

In autumn, single birds likely to have been late migrants were seen at Hillfolds (Drybridge) 16 Oct and Portknockie 29 Oct.

### **Wood Warbler *Phylloscopus sibilatrix***

*Summer visitor and rare breeder.*

One was singing at Ferness on 29 May (MGC).

### **Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus***

*Summer visitor and common breeder.*

Arrival: First, in April, were 1 Loch Flemington 21st, 1 Spynie canal 26th and 1 Spey Bay 30th.

Breeding: At the 'Constant Effort Ringing Site' in the north-east fen at Loch Spynie, the number of juveniles caught per adult was 2.5:1, well up on 0.7:1 in 2017 (RP). Four singing birds were in the small marsh at Tugnet (Spey Bay) in May.

### **Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella naevia***

*Summer visitor and scarce breeder.*

Recorded at nine sites: 1 Blackhillock (Dufftown) 29 Apr, 1 Easter Regaule 6 May, 1 Kininvie 29 Apr, 1 Loch Spynie (north-east fen) 19 May, 1 Mulben 12 May, 1 Ryeriggs 30 May, 1 Spynie canal 5 & 17 May, 1 Tomintoul (near wader hide) 2 May and 1 Upper Edingight 4 & 7 May (2 there 12 May).

### **Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla***

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

January-March: 1 Bishopmill 9 Jan, 1 male Forres 20 Jan-1 Mar (2 [male and female] 21 Mar), 3 (2 male, 1 female) Lhanbryde 10 Jan (and 1 female daily until 11 Mar), 1 male Lossiemouth 2-20 Mar (joined by 1 female on 13 Mar) and 1 male Tradespark (Nairn) 24 Feb and 15-31 Mar (also 1 female on 20 Mar).

Spring/summer: Singing birds reported widely across lowland areas. Notable counts were 11 along the lower River Nairn around Firhall on 6 May and 6 along the lower River Findhorn from Waterford to Findhorn Bay on 1 May.

Productivity, as measured from individuals trapped for ringing at the 'Constant Effort Site' at Loch Spynie, was 7.5 juveniles per adult, well up on 1.3 recorded in 2017 (RP).

November-December: 2 (male and female) Cullen 30 Nov, 1 male Forres 4 & 23 Nov and 2 (male and female) Lhanbryde in November-December.

### **Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin***

*Summer visitor and scarce breeder.*

Recorded in the breeding season only at Inchberry on 29 Apr (AY) and along the River Spey at Mosstodloch on 5 & 19 May (MJHC).

**Whitethroat *Sylvia communis***

*Summer visitor and very common breeder.*

Arrival: In late April, 1 Hopeman-Burghead 25th (2 there 29th) and 3 Clarkly Hill 25th. Six further sites had the first singing birds during 1-8 May.

Furthest inland was 1 Blacksboat 24 May.

**Goldcrest *Regulus regulus***

*Very common resident breeder and scarce migrant.*

The highest count was c.30 between Cragganmore-Knockando on 14 Oct. Possible coastal migrants were 13 Culbin Bar 14 Oct and 1 in coastal bushes at Station Park, Lossiemouth on 30 Oct. One visited a fat ball feeder in a Lossiemouth garden on 18 Mar.

**Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes***

*Very common resident breeder.*

Breeding: At Loch Spynie Constant Effort ringing site, the ratio of juveniles to adults was 2.7:1, up from 1.6:1 in 2017 (RP). Counts included 13 lower River Findhorn (Waterford to Findhorn Bay) on 12 Apr and 13 along the lower River Nairn near Firhall on 6 May.

**Treecreeper *Certhia familiaris***

*Very common resident breeder.*

Reported on peanut feeders in winter at Loch Spynie and in a Forres garden. On 11 Aug, one was watched for several minutes as it sought food on the harled chimney stack of a Clochan house.

**Rose-coloured Starling *Pastor roseus***

*Rare visitor.*

Two records, involving three birds. In the morning of 7 Jun, two birds flew over Tugnet and west across the Spey estuary (MJHC). In the evening of that day, one (presumably of these two) was relocated with Starlings on the west side of the Spey estuary (RP). On 8 Jun, one visited a garden peanut feeder in Forres (G&ST).

These are the 11th and 12th records for Moray & Nairn. All have been in the June-August period, except for one in October.



Rose-coloured Starling, Forres 8 June 2018 (Gavin Tsikkouris)

**Starling *Sturnus vulgaris***

*Very common resident breeder and winter visitor.*

The only flocks of 100 or more were 750+ juveniles Findhorn Bay carse 15 Jun, 400 Hempriggs 14 Feb, 250 Golford 4 Mar, 200 Dyke 27 Jan, c.200 Kinloss 27 Aug, 150+ Hopeman 4 Feb and 100+ Ferness 11 Mar.

**Ring Ouzel *Turdus torquatus***

*Summer visitor and scarce breeder.*

Breeding: In the Dalestie-Inchrory area of Glen Avon: At Dalestie, 1 female 16 May, 4 (including 1 singing male) 19 May, 1 on 22 May and 1 pair with 1 fledged juvenile 16 Jun (MJHC, JDL, HM). At Foal's Craig, 1 singing male on 16 May and 2 birds on 26 May (MJHC, BT). At Inchrory, a pair on 16 May (MJHC). Ten birds were along Glen Builg on 16 May; 6 singing males, 3 other males and 1 female (MJHC).

In early autumn, on 7 Sep, four still at Inchrory and one a little further up Glen Avon at NJ1506 (PM).

**Blackbird *Turdus merula***

*Very common resident breeder, winter visitor and migrant.*

Highest spring counts were 28 along the River Nairn near Firhall 8 Apr, and 26 there 26 May. On 12 Oct, 2 flew in off the sea at Lossiemouth.

**Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris***

*Very common migrant and winter visitor.*

Winter-spring: 15 reports of flocks of 20 or more. Apparently most numerous in early March when 33 Findhorn Bay 5th, 200+ West Mains 11th, 60 Blacksboat 11th and 120 Woodside (Darnaway) 16th. Other flocks of 50 or more were 100+ Forres Enterprise Park 4 Feb, 50 Clochan 2 Jan and 50 Wester Lawrenceton 30 Jan. Last in spring was 1 Urquhart 16 Apr.

Autumn: First was 1 Findhorn Bay 12 Oct. A large scale arrival took place in mid October when 100+ Cragganmore 16th, 72 Drybridge 16th, 25 Preshome 16th, 70+ Refouble 22nd and 40 Tomintoul 23rd.

Winter: In November-December, eight flocks of 20 or more were reported, including 86 Easter Bauds 23 Dec, 50+ Gallowhill 16 Nov, 50+ Wester Greens 17 Nov, 50 Clochan 16 Dec, 50 Forres Enterprise Park 2 Dec, 40 Westfield 7 Dec and 35 East Grange 16 Dec.

**Redwing *Turdus iliacus***

*Very common migrant and winter visitor.*

Winter-spring: Ten reports of flocks of 20 or more. Flocks of 50 or more were 60 Darkland 1 Jan, 50 Elgin cemetery 8 Jan and 50+ Firhall (Nairn) 8 Apr. Last in spring was 1 Glenlivet 11 Apr.

In October, first arrivals were 1 Gallowhill 9th and, on 11th, 28 Lossiemouth, 9 Hill of Glaschyle and 8 Findhorn Bay. A large influx took place in mid October when 200 between Cragganmore-Blacksboat on 14th had increased to 1000 by 16th. Also around this time, 40 Half Davoch 13th, 100+ Tomintoul 15th, 200 Delavorar 20th, 100 Fornightly 21st, 70 Dulsie Bridge 21st, 50 Dava 21st, 50+ Forres 22nd, 200 Rafford 26th and 100 Keith 27th.

Winter: In November-December, 12 flocks of 20 or more were recorded, including 300 Unthank (Duffus) 8-9 Nov, 60 Westfield 7 Dec, 50 Forres Enterprise Park 9-11 Nov, 34 Easter Bauds 23 Dec and 33 Netherton 16 Dec.

**Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos***

*Very common breeder and migrant. Scarce in winter.*

January-February: As usual, over-wintering birds were exclusively found, in very small numbers, in close proximity to the coast. In January (singles unless stated), Barmuckity 20th (2), Burghead 25th, Carse of Delnies 7th, Cragganmore 19th, Cullen 8th (4 along clifftop path), Findhorn Bay 11th, Easter Delnies 8th, Kingston 20th, Loch Flemington 26th, Loch Oire 25th, Miltonduff 6th, Portknockie 5th (2), Scarffbanks 20th and Tugnet 11th. In February, singing birds were returning as far inland as Tomintoul on 19th reported from 21st (1 at Clochan) but wintering coastal birds still included 12 along the Portknockie coast between Bow Fiddle Rock and the cemetery on 28th.

In March, notable records included 3 on Burghead harbour wall on 2nd, 5 Spey Bay golf course 3rd, 11 Findhorn village (mostly along the shoreline) 4th and 6 Kingston (around the estuary and car park) 19th.

Breeding: Productivity, as measured from individuals trapped for ringing at the 'Constant Effort Site' at Loch Spynie, was 0.6 juveniles per adult (RP).

December: The only record of a presumed overwintering bird was 1 Lossiemouth harbour 25 Dec.

**Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus***

*Very common resident breeder and migrant.*

Typical late summer aggregations were 14 Alves 9 Jul, 30 Carn Daimh 22 Jul, 36 Hill of Glaschyle 1 Sep, 10 Tomintoul (The Old Kennels), 11 Tomnamoon 16 Aug and 10 Glenmullie 19 Aug. Ten or more together at other times included 10 Elgin cemetery 8 Jan and 20 in fields near Tomintoul 18 Mar.

**Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata***

*Summer visitor and common breeder.*

Arrival: First of the year were single birds at Blacksboat 10 May and Black Hillock (Cabrach) 12 May.

Subsequently reported in summer from Aberlour, Cawdor, Craigellachie, Dalcharn (fledged brood on 6 Sep), Fochabers (fledged brood on 12 Aug), Gallowhill, Half Davoch, Kinloss, Knockando, Loch Kirkaldy, Logie, Pitgaveny, Rothiemay and Thief's Hill (nest in the forest on 16 Jun).

Last of the year were 2 Gallowhill 13 Sep.

**Robin *Erithacus rubecula***

*Very common resident breeder and migrant.*

Productivity at Loch Spynie, as measured by ringing at the Constant Effort Site, was 6.3 juveniles per adult - well up on 1.7 in 2017 (RP).

On 12 Apr, 11 were counted along the River Findhorn from Waterford to the bay. Other counts (time/distance unknown) included 15 Firhall (Nairn) 8 Apr, 14 Nairn 17 Nov and 10+ Rafford 7 Jan.

**Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros***

*Rare migrant.*

A very unusual record of a male in the Marleon Field housing estate in Elgin on 28 Jul (RP). This is the 22nd record for Moray & Nairn, but only the second in July.



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	2	0	0	2	1	1

### **Redstart** *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

*Summer visitor and scarce breeder. Very scarce migrant.*

Very few records received, hopefully a reflection of less activity of birders in appropriate habitat rather than the status of our (albeit quite small) Redstart population. The only reports were 1 Croughly 22 Jul (BT), 1 singing Dulsie 22 Apr (DAG) and 1 (possibly 2) pair Thief's Hill (Ordiquish) 2-19 Jun (AY, MJHC).

### **Whinchat** *Saxicola rubetra*

*Summer visitor and scarce breeder. Very scarce migrant.*

Only two records, but both in breeding habitat; 1 Inverblye (Glenlivet) 28 May (BT) and 1 Knock of Braemoray 29 Jun (PRG).

### **Stonechat** *Saxicola rubicola*

*Scarce resident breeder and migrant.*

Breeding season (*italics* = confirmed breeding): Coastal: occupied sites were Burghead-Cummingston, Clarkly Hill, Clashach Cove, Covesea, Cullen-Portknockie, Easter Delnies, Findhorn beach car park, Hopeman, Kingston, Kinloss airfield, Lossiemouth airfield, Lossie estuary, Portgordon, Portknockie, Spey Bay golf course and Strathlene. Inland: A good population with 17 occupied sites, and no doubt many others undetected: Bellandy, Clashindarroch (*Knockando*), Corroul (*Ben Rinnes*), Dava, Douglasshiel Moss, Elf House (*Glenfiddich*), Glack Harnes, Knock of Braemoray, Knock of Buchromb, Lecht mine car park, Little Aitnoch-Refouble (*at least 3 pairs with young 29 Jun*), Loch of the Cowlatt, Lynagowan, Millstone Hill (*Aultmore*), Pikey Hill, Suie (Glenlivet) and Upper Edingight.

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

Coastal: Arthur's Point (Feb), Carse of Delnies (Jan), Culbin Bar (Jan, Dec), Findhorn Bay (Netherton area) (Feb, Mar, Nov), Kinneddar (Jan), Spynie canal (Nov), Lossie Forest (Feb), Mill of Grange (Feb), Nairn Bar (Oct), Portgordon (Jan, Feb, Dec) and Tugnet (Jan).

Inland: Birnie Kirk (Feb), Cloddach quarry (Dec), Conrock (Sep), Corsekell Moss (Nov), Dulsie Bridge (Oct), Easter Bauds (Mar), Inchrory (Sep), Knockaneorn (Nov), Loch Flemington (Nov) and Redwood (NJ0854) (Jan).

### **Wheatear** *Oenanthe oenanthe*

*Summer visitor and fairly common breeder and migrant.*

Arrival: Unusually, no reports in late March. First in early April were 1 Bogmoor 7th, 1 Burghead 7th, 1 Findhorn 8th, 1 Portknockie 8th, 1 Tronach Head 8th, 1 Balgreen 9th and 3 Covesea 9th. Best counts in coastal areas later in April were 6 Balormie 19th and 6 Spey Bay 20th. A substantial arrival took place on 5-7 May: on 5<sup>th</sup>, 11 in a field opposite Drainie House and 5 Kingston (Lein); on 6<sup>th</sup>, 9 Findhorn beach and 5 Lossie estuary; on 7<sup>th</sup>, 28 opposite Drainie House, 12 Lossie airfield, 7 Balormie pig farm and 6 Kinloss airfield. Last spring sighting at the coast was 2 Lossiemouth airfield 21 May.

Breeding: No confirmation of breeding but present in suitable habitat at Aldunie (3 on 12 May, 1 on 21 Jun), Auchmair (4 on 27 Jun, 2 on 29 Jun, 4 on 18 Jul), Auchness (1 on 5 May), Ben Rinnes (1 on 6 Jun), Cabrach (2 on 15 Apr), Inchrory (1 on 26 May), Relugas (1 on 19 May), Tomintoul (3 on 5 May), Tomnamoon (1 on 22 Apr).

On the Cairngorms plateau, 7 Ben Macdui 14 May, 8 Lochan Buidhe area 19 May, singing birds near Feith Buidhe and Garbh Uisge Beag on 8 Jun and two broods, each of 2 young, on 6 Jul just south of Lochan Buidhe and on the north slope of Ben Macdui (RI).

Back at the coast, 1 Lossiemouth airfield 18 Jun, 22 Jun and 2 Jul.

Late summer-autumn: A scatter of lowland and coastal records, usually of 1-2 birds. Counts of 3 or more were 4 Kinloss airfield 17 Aug, 5 Lossiemouth airfield 23 Aug (and 3 there 29 Aug) and 5 Portgordon-Strathlene 14 Oct. Also quite late were 2 Delnies 14 Oct and, last of the year, 1 Lossiemouth airfield 17 Oct.

### Dipper *Cinclus cinclus*

*Common resident breeder.*

Breeding: Confirmed at Cothall, Forres (Mosset Burn), Kellas, Sanquhar Loch (Forres) and Roehillock Pool (River Findhorn). Elsewhere, breeding season records came from Aberlour, Blacksboat, Craigellachie, Dalvey, Holme Bridge, Keith, Logie Steading, Muckle Burn near Moy House, Nairn, Tomintoul and Tomnavoulin.

At other times of the year, additional localities holding Dippers were Allanreid, Boat o' Brig, Broom of Moy, Dalestie (4 on River Avon between here and Tomintoul on 17 Dec), Dulsie Bridge, Elgin, Firhall, Kilravock Castle and Tynet Burn mouth.

### House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

*Very common resident breeder.*

Breeding: Ten nestboxes were occupied at Clochan with the following outcome:

	1st brood	2nd brood	3rd brood
<b>Pairs laying</b>	10	10	6
<b>Mean clutch size</b>	4.0	4.5	4.5
<b>Mean brood size at fledging (all pairs)</b>	3.0 (n=10)	2.7 (n=10)	3.3 (n=6)
<b>Mean brood size at fledging (successful pairs)</b>	3.0 (n=10)	3.4 (n=8)	3.3 (n=6)

(MJHC)

Highest counts were 100+ Nairn (Maggot area) 6 May (75+ there 11 Mar, 70+ on 27 Jul and 50+ on 12 Oct), 40 Burghead 14 Oct & 28 Dec, 30+ Elgin 4 Mar, 30 Findhorn 18 Apr, 30+ Hopeman 29 Jan & 4 Feb and 30 Tomintoul 22 Oct.

### Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*

*Common resident breeder.*

Breeding: Seven nestboxes were occupied at Clochan with the following outcome:

	1st brood	2nd brood	3rd brood
<b>Pairs laying</b>	7	6	3
<b>Mean clutch size</b>	5.0	5.6	5.3
<b>Mean brood size at fledging (all pairs)</b>	3.4 (n=7)	5.2 (n=6)	5.3 (n=3)
<b>Mean brood size at fledging (successful pairs)</b>	4.8 (n=5)	5.2 (n=6)	5.3 (n=3)

One clutch of 7 eggs included two House Sparrow eggs. This mixed clutch was deserted prior to hatching. (MJHC).

Breeding was also confirmed at Bishopmill (Elgin) and at Lynn of Shenval (Glenlivet) where a fledged brood was seen in a garden on 12 Jul.

Flock counts of 10 or more were 40 South Darkland 30 Mar (30 there 6 Jan), 30+ Dyke 29 Oct, 25 Barmuckity 6 Jan, 25 West Mains Farm 2 Mar, 20+ in a Forres garden 6 Jan (and 8 Feb, 30 Dec), 17 Clochan 13 Jun, 16 Lossiemouth 8 Feb and 14 Netherton 1 Jan (12 there 18 Oct). Four at Cragganmore 21 Oct was an unusual locality.

### **Dunnock *Prunella modularis***

*Very common resident breeder.*

First song heard in Elgin cemetery 4 Jan.

Largest counts were 6 Lossiemouth 2 Jan and 6 Lossiemouth airfield 4 Sep.

### **Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava***

*Rare migrant.*

A Yellow Wagtail seen on the Spey estuary on 13 May probably belonged to the Continental race *M. f. flava* (Blue-headed Wagtail) but the bird was too distant for this to be established with certainty (JPo). This is the 17th occurrence of Yellow Wagtail in Moray & Nairn.



Yellow Wagtail, Spey estuary 13 May 2018 (John Poyner)

### **Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea***

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

Winter (January-February and December): All records were at the coast or lowland plain: 1 Buckie harbour 18 Feb and 11 Dec, 1 Burnside of Enzie 1 Jan, 1 Clochan 22 & 27 Dec, 2 Elgin 25 Feb (along River Lossie), 1 Elgin cemetery 14 Dec (and 1 flying over central Elgin 12 Jan), 1 Findhorn Bay (Mosset Burn) 27 Feb, 2 Forres (Mosset Burn) 7 Jan (and 1 on 16-17 Feb), 1 Kilravock Castle 20 Dec, 1 Kinloss airfield 5 Feb, 1 Lossiemouth (Coulardbank area) on several dates 27 Nov-22 Dec (1 Lossiemouth harbour 24-25 Nov and 26 Dec was probably the same bird), 1 Pittendreich 29 Jan and 1 Portgordon 18 Feb. First back in up-country breeding sites were 1 Tomnamoon 10 Mar, 4 Blacksboat 22 Mar and 3 Aberlour 25 Mar.

### **Pied Wagtail *Motacilla alba***

*Very common breeder and migrant.*

Winter: Unusual inland in winter so 1 Aberlour 16 Jan was notable. Highest counts in coastal areas were 10 Strathlene 18 Feb, 8 Lossiemouth (Silverhills area) 4 Feb and 5 Nairn 12 Jan.

First birds seen back in Tomintoul on 15 Mar.

Highest late summer/autumn counts were 50+ Forres railway station 29 Aug, 20 Nairn 5 Aug, 18 Lossiemouth airfield 30 Jul, 14 Burghead 19 Aug and 14 Cawdor Castle 30 Aug.

Passage: A good year for sightings of 'White Wagtails' *M.a.alba*. A substantial influx took place on 19-21 Apr when birds were recorded at Balormie pig farm (4 on 19th, increasing to 12 on 21st but only singles for the rest of the month), Burghead (2 on 20-21st), Lossie estuary (28 on 19th) and Spey estuary (c.10 on 21st, 4 on 22nd). A second, smaller, arrival was noted in early May when 7 Balormie pig farm 7th (down to 3 on 8th) and 3 Spey estuary 3rd-4th (rising to 7 on 7th). Elsewhere, 1 Portgordon 9 Apr, 1 Tugnet 11 Apr (and 1 there 12 May). In late summer/autumn 'White Wagtail' records were 1 Lossiemouth harbour 25 Aug (and 2 in Station Park on 30 Oct) and 1 Spey estuary 15 Aug, where a larger influx took place in early September with 14 counted on 3rd.

### **Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis***

*Very common breeder and migrant.*

January-February: The largest counts during this period were 10 Lossiemouth airfield 17 Jan, rising steadily to 34 on 20 Feb, and c.50 in a stubble field at Tradespark (Nairn) 28 Feb. Otherwise only small numbers (up to 5) were reported, and all were in coastal localities with the exception of 2 Knock of Braemoray 17 Feb.

March-May: Counts of 10 or more in coastal areas included 49 Lossie estuary 19 Apr, 30 Cloddach Quarry 14 Apr, 27 Nairn 28 Apr, 27 Scarffbanks 27 Apr, 26 Easter Delnies 25 May, 25+ Findhorn Bay 4 Mar and 15 Nairn Bar 27 May. On moorlands, many singing Cabrach 7 Apr and 50 Black Hill (Aultmore) 8 Apr. Four back on the Cairngorms plateau 7 Apr and 16 there (at Lochan Buidhe) 19 May.

Seen on spring passage during seawatches off Lossiemouth harbour (all flying west) on 24 Mar (8), 25 Mar (9), 1 Apr (1), 7 Apr (22), 8 Apr (4), 21 Apr (4) and 26 Apr (1).

June-July: 30+ Lochan Buidhe (Cairngorms) 24 Jun.

Autumn: In late August, 30 Auchmair (Cabrach) 30th was the largest count. In September-October, in coastal areas, 34 Lossie airfield 5 Sep, 20 Loch Flemington 17 Sep, 20 Nairn 24 Sep, 40 Balormie pig farm 6 Oct and 62 Culbin Bar 14 Oct.

November-December: Highest count near the coast was 16 Culbin Bar 9 Dec. Upcountry, 1 Dulsie Bridge 15 Nov was the only record.

### **Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis***

*Summer visitor and common breeder.*

Arrival: Firsts reports, in April, were 3 Dulsie Bridge 22nd, 1 Cragganmore 23rd, 2 Burn of the Cowlatt 25th and 1 Heldon Wood 29th.

Subsequently, 1-3 birds were found in breeding habitat at Altyre woods, Ben Aigan, Black Hillock (Cabrach), Blacksboat, Craigellachie, Easter Gaulrig, Thief's Hill (Ordiquish – confirmed breeding) and Tomnamoon.

Last of the year was one flying south-east over Bishopmill (Elgin) on 15 Oct.

### **Rock Pipit *Anthus petrosus***

*Scarce breeder, fairly common in winter.*

Breeding season: Reported during April-June at Burghead, Clashach cove, Cullen, Cummingston, Lossiemouth, Nairn, Portgordon and Portknockie – but no confirmation of breeding.

Numerous in winter along the Portgordon-Strathlene rocky shore where 38 on 18 Feb, 38 (again) on 14 Oct and 29 on 9 Dec. Other autumn/winter counts of five or more were 7 Covesea 8 Mar, 6 Findhorn Bay 23 Nov and 13 around Jenny's Well (between Portknockie and Cullen) 25 Nov.

**Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs***

*Very common resident breeder, migrant and winter visitor.*

First song noted on 16 Feb, at Dallachy and Burnside of Enzie.

Flocks of 100 or more were 300+ Kronyhillock 24 Mar (200+ there 19 August), 400+ in a weedy field at Rosebank, near Hill of Maud 17 Dec, 150 Refouble 22 Nov and 135+ Easter Bauds 23 Dec.

Other sizeable flocks of 30 or more included 80 at Easter Bauds 2 Mar, 75+ Achneim, Cawdor 27 Dec, 55+ on feeders at Moor of Tore 28 Feb, 50 West Mains 2 Mar, 40 Tomintoul 19 Aug (50 there 29 Nov), 30+ Rafford 7 Jan, 30+ in a garden in Forres 31 Jan (40+ there 28 Feb), 30 Burnside of Enzie 2 Mar and 30 Glenmullie Forest 17 Sep.

**Brambling *Fringilla montifringilla***

*Fairly common winter visitor and migrant.*

January-April: More reports, and of larger numbers than usual, especially during very cold and snowy weather in late February-early March. Early March reports were 70+ Burnside of Enzie 1st (rising to 105 on 4th ) (MJHC), 40+ Maggie Knockater 5th (RI), 19 Barmuckity 4th (RP), 16 Inchberry 3rd (AY), 10 Auchnarrow 2nd (CB), 7 Myreside 4th (RP), 5 Cragganmore 5th, 4 Easter Bauds 2nd, 2 Auchbreck 2nd, 2 Gelford 4th, 2 Longmorn 2nd, 2 Portgordon 2nd, 2 Spynie Palace 4th, 1 Darkland 9th, 1 Forres garden 3rd-4th, 1 Moor of Tore 1st and 1 Wellheads 1st. Other early winter reports were 62+ in a Beech wood at Kilravock Castle 17 Jan (and c.50 there 31 Mar) (JAC), c.40 Keith 17 Jan (WMM), 12 Woodside (Darnaway) 16 Mar, 5 Berryleys 4 Feb, 5 Burnside of Enzie 1 Jan, 4+ Holme Rose 20 Jan, 4 Orton 8 Jan, 4 Hill of Ardrone 20 Jan, 2 Dallas Dhu 26 Feb, 2 North Crannoch 10 Jan, 2 Portknockie 11 Jan, 1 Clochan 13 Jan, 1 Darkland 30 Mar, 1 Dyke 21 Jan, 1 Gallowhill 11 Jan (2 on 19 Mar) and 1 Glenlivet distillery 28 Feb.

Last spring records, in April, were 1 Clochan 3rd, 2 Kilravock 12th and 1 Auchindoun 16th.

October-December: First of autumn were 2 Loch Spynie 11 Oct, 1 Tugnet 12 Oct and 11 flying in off the sea from the north-east at Lossiemouth on 12 Oct (RP). Subsequently, 50+ feeding below the Beech trees near Elgin Leisure Centre 29 Nov (DM), 50+ in a weedy neep field at Rosebank (near Hill of Maud) (MJHC), 50+ Achneim (Cawdor) 27 Dec (JAC), 10 Refouble 22 Nov (PRG), up to 3 Forres 2-5 Dec, 2 Kronyhillock 9 Dec, 1 Cragganmore 29 Oct, 1 Craigroy 1 Nov, 1 Easter Bauds 23 Dec, 1 Gallowhill 16 Nov, 1 Mulben 25 Dec and 1 Netherton 23 Nov.

**Hawfinch *Coccothraustes coccothraustes***

*Rare visitor.*

Exceptionally, there were three records in 2018, all in gardens: 1 Knockaneorn 8 Apr (at feeder) (DC), 1 Longmorn 19 Apr (at sunflower feeder) (J&HM) and 1 Tomintoul 23 Apr (MR *et al.*).

These are the 11th-13th records for Moray & Nairn. Nine have been in April, one in July, two in October and one in December.





Hawfinch, Knockaneorn 8 April 2018 (David Clem)

### **Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula***

*Very common resident breeder.*

Counts of 10 or more included 11 Craigroy 1 Nov, 20 Glen Mullie (near Tomintoul) 3 Dec, 10 Old Military Road (Tomintoul) 3 Dec and 12 feeding on birch seed Califer Hill 23 Dec. The Constant Effort ringing site at Loch Spynie showed a decrease in productivity over 2017, with an index of breeding success at 0.2 juveniles per adult, compared with 0.5 in 2017 (RP).

### **Greenfinch *Chloris chloris***

*Very common resident breeder.*

Only 13 records received.

First song on 16 Feb at Dallachy pool and 20 Feb at Elgin Cemetery.

In 2017, no flock of 10 or more was reported. There appears to be a slight improvement in 2018, which saw 3 flocks of 10+ Elgin 3 Mar, 21 Clarkly Hill 12 Jun and 30 Lossiemouth harbour 9 Oct.

### **Twite *Linaria flavirostris***

*Scarce resident breeder and winter visitor.*

Sightings of Twite again came predominantly from the favoured areas of saltmarsh around the southern end Findhorn Bay and behind the Nairn & Culbin Bars.

The flock around Netherton (south Findhorn Bay) remained throughout January, with 23 on 1 Jan, increasing to 38 on 11 Jan and a peak of 46 on 15 Jan (GM, RSC *et al.*). Fewer in February, with 7 on 9th and only 1 on 14th (MGC, PRG). Towards the end of the year, 6 were here on 15 Nov (GM) and 30 on 23 Nov (RHD).

Around the Nairn and Culbin Bars, 21 on 21 Jan (AY), 2 on 29 Mar (PRG) and 27 on 14 Oct (AY, GP).

Elsewhere, 80 Carse of Delnies 7 Jan (AMc), 15+ Easter Bauds 2 Mar (AY) and 2 Clephanton 20 Jan (JDG).

### **Linnet *Linaria cannabina***

*Very common resident breeder.*

Breeding: Nest material being gathered at Cummington 29 Apr.

Flocks of 100 or more were 1000+ Chapelford 26 Aug, 550 Easter Bauds 2 Mar, 500 Burnside of Enzie 18 Jan, 500 Forres 3 Mar, 450 Portgordon 3 Mar, 400 Balormie pig farm 2

Mar (250 there 20 Jan and 150 on 6 Oct), 400 Tugnet 15 Aug (150 there 10 Jul), 300 Linkwood Distillery (Elgin) 17 Jan, 300 North Kildrummie 9 Feb, 300 Drainie 1 Oct, 300 Covesea beach 13 Oct and 140+ Millburn 6 Apr.

### **Common (Mealy) Redpoll *Acanthis flammea***

*Rare winter visitor and migrant.*

Three records of single birds, at Burnside of Enzie 1 Jan (MJHC), Barmuckity 20 Jan (RP) and Clochan 3-5 Apr (MJHC).



Common (Mealy) Redpoll, Clochan 3 April 2018 (Martin Cook)

### **Lesser Redpoll *Acanthis cabaret***

*Common resident breeder and migrant.*

Breeding season (April-July) records came from Clochan, Grigorhill, Kingsteps, Knockando, Moor of Tore, Nairn, Newlands of Fleenas, Spey Bay and Tomintoul.

Flocks of 20 or more included 80 Cloddach Quarry 22 Dec, 62 Clochan 1 Jan, 60 Ordiequish 25 Mar, 60 near Dulsie Bridge 15 Nov, 36 Kingsteps 29 Dec and 20 Califer Hill (25 Dec).

### **Arctic Redpoll *Acanthis hornemanni***

*Rare visitor.*

One (of race *A. h. exilipes* Coues's Arctic Redpoll) was trapped and ringed (from among a flock of Lesser Redpolls) at Ordiequish on 25 Mar (AY).

This is the third record in Moray & Nairn, following 5-6 at Loch Spynie December 1995-January 1996, and 1 there 18 February 1996.



Coues's Arctic Redpoll, Ordiquish 25 March 2018 (Alastair Young)

### **Scottish Crossbill *Loxia scotica***

*Probable common resident breeder.*

### **Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra***

*Common resident and irruptive migrant 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: c.40 Ordiequish 19 Jun, c.35 (in 3 flocks) Hill of Glaschyle (11 Oct, c.30 Ordiequish 2 Apr, 29 Newtyle Forest (in larch) 30 Dec, 26 Phorp Wood (feeding on birch seed) 17 Dec, c.25 Loch Spynie 25 Dec, 22 Romach Hill 30 Jun, 20 Ben Aigan 25 Feb, 20 Little Conval (in spruce) 25 Nov, 19 Clashach 16 Oct, 15 Loch Spynie (27 Dec, 17 Dallachy 14 Oct, 16 Darkland (flew over) 6 Jun, 16 Tomnamoon 23 Nov, 14 Loch Spynie 27 Dec, 13 Dallachy 24 Nov, 12+ Newtyle 13 Sep, 11 Loch Spynie (in total, in 3 groups) 7 Jul, c.10 Findhorn Foundation (in pines) 15 Jun and 6-10 Sluie area 2 Aug. Elsewhere, smaller numbers were seen at Dava, Bogeney, Lossie Forest, Clashindarroch, Culbin Forest, Knockando, Glen Lossie, Ben Rinnes, Loch Kirkaldy, Rumachroy, Altyre Woods, Quarrelwood (Elgin), Glenmullie Forest, Heldon Wood west and Cragganmore.

### **Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis***

*Very common resident breeder.*

Flocks of 10 or more were 200 Lossiemouth airfield 17 Sep, 52 Lossiemouth garden 5 Jan, 50+ Rosebank 17 Dec, 45 Easter Bauds 23 Dec, 34 Tomnamoon 16 Aug, c.30 Findhorn Bay 11 Feb (27 on 2 Jan, 25 on 21 Jan), 24 Clarkly Hill 29 Jun (12 on 9 Feb & 18 Mar), 20+ Nairn (The Maggot) 12 Oct (and 11 there 27 Jul), 20 Red Craig 23 Feb, 12+ Loch Spynie 14 Oct, 10 Findhorn 4 Feb, 10 Bogeney 17 Feb and 10 Dyke 1 Nov.



**Siskin *Spinus spinus***

*Very common resident breeder and migrant.*

Flocks of 20 or more were c.325 Ordiequish 25 Mar, 100 Bogeney 17 Feb, 60 near Nairn 14 Jan, 50+ Glen Avon/Tomintoul 17 Dec, 33+ Tomnamoon 9 Sep, 31 Half Davoch 23 Nov, 20+ Loch Spynie 14 Oct, 20 New Elgin 28 Feb and 20 Ben Rinnes 27 May.

**Corn Bunting *Emberiza calandra***

*Scarce resident breeder.*

January-March: Several good-sized flocks included 33 Corbiewell 4 Feb, 29 Auchintae 12 Jan, 17 Muirton 21 Jan, 15 Spey Bay 25 Jan and 12 Easter Bauds 2 Mar.

Breeding season: Seen and/or heard at Balormie (1 singing 1 Apr, 2 singing 19 & 21 Apr, 1 singing 30 Apr, 1 on 4 Aug), Buckie (3 on 3 June), Coltfeld (1 on 8 May), Easter Bauds farm (9 singing males in June), Foresterseat (1 on 12 May), Garmouth (1 on 15 Jul), Hempriggs (2 on 29 May), Linksfield Farm (12 on 16 Apr, 1 singing 6 Jun), Longmorn (1 singing 24 Apr), Portgordon (1 on 27 Apr), Portknockie (1 on 15 Apr), Roseisle (1 singing 1 & 6 May) and Spey Bay (1 on 6 & 12 May, 4 on 10 Jun).

In autumn, 4 Muirton 28 Oct, 2 Scarffbanks 9 & 23 Dec and 17 Easter Bauds farm 23 Dec.

**Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella***

*Very common resident breeder.*

First song Balormie 3 Feb and Dallachy pool 16 Feb.

Flocks of 20 or more were 120 West Mains 2 Mar, 100+ Moss of Barmuckity 21 Jan, 100+ Achneim 27 Dec, 70+ Findhorn Bay 5 & 6 Dec, 60 Forres 19 Dec, 60 Burghead 1 Mar, 40+ Burghead maltings 22 Jan, 36 Easter Bauds 2 Mar, 24 Pitgaveny 14 Oct, 20+ Delnies Wood 8 Mar and 20+ Meikle Kildrummie 8 Mar.

**Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus***

*Very common resident breeder.*

January-March: Largest groups were 30+ Dyke 21 Jan, 10 West Mains 2 Mar and 10 Meikle Kildrummie 8 Mar.

Breeding season: reported from Dallas Dhu, Easter Delnies, Findhorn, Findhorn Bay, Findhorn bridge, Gallowhill, Hilton, Kinloss airfield, Loch Flemington, Loch Kirkaldy, Loch Loy, Loch Spynie, Lossiemouth airfield, Lower Muckle Burn, Mill of Grange, Ministers Pool (Kingsteps), Moyness, Myreside, River Lossie (E of Elgin), Spey Bay, Tomintoul and Upper Edingight.

The proportion of juveniles/adults trapped at the Loch Spynie Constant Effort ringing site was 1.3, up from the 2017 figure of 0.1 (RP).

October-December: the only count to exceed 10 was 14 Culbin Bar 9 Dec.

**Snow Bunting *Plectrophenax nivalis***

*Common winter visitor and rare breeder.*

Inland records:

Prior to the breeding season, 3 Ben Rinnes 14 Jan, 17 Ben Aigan 20 Jan (and 1 on 25 Feb), 1 Lossiemouth airfield 24 Jan, 15 Dava 28 Feb, 7 Easter Bauds 2 Mar and 1 Barmuckity 4 Mar.

Breeding season: Seen at various sites on the Cairngorms plateau where 5 on 14 May, 2 on 18 May, 11 on 19 May, 2 on 24 May, 10 on 26 May, 2 on 27 May, 6 on 8 Jun, 2 on 17 Jun, 14 on 24 Jun, 2 on 27 Jun, 4 on 28 Jun, 19 on 6 Jul (including 10 juveniles), 3 on 7 Jul and 11 on 25 Jul (RI *et al.*). Elsewhere, 1 Ben Avon 1 Jul (IF).

Post breeding season, 2 Little Conval 25 Nov.

Coastal records:

Last in spring were 2 Lossiemouth 24 Mar and, very late, 1 Spey estuary 7 May (MJHC).

First back in autumn was 1 Findhorn 25 Sep.

At three coastal sites, monthly maximum counts were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Oct	Nov	Dec
Nairn/Culbin Bars (and east Nairn)	59 (21st)	32 (9th)	3 (10th)	0	4 (8th)	30 (9th)
Findhorn Bay area	0	0	0	0	3 (8th)	0
Lossie estuary & east beach	0	1 (4th)	8 (17th)	0	0	1 (9th)

Elsewhere at the coast, 15 Burghead 10 Dec (1 on 15 Nov), 35 Carse of Delnies 13 Jan, 1 Covesea 13 Oct, 3 Hopeman 27 Oct, 1 Portknockie 28 Feb and 3 Spey Bay 2 Nov.



Snow Bunting, Spey estuary 7 May 2018 (Martin Cook)

### PACIFIC GOLDEN PLOVER IN FINDHORN BAY – NEW TO MORAY & NAIRN

*GORDON McMULLINS*

I am a recreational birdwatcher and occasional taker of photographs who has the good fortune to live in the coastal town of Findhorn, Moray & Nairn. I usually go out each day into or around Findhorn Bay to observe the beautiful scenery and wildlife which includes bird counts. The bay and its surroundings cover a huge area, so this makes birdwatching a real challenge and luck plays a large part in any sightings.

Previous to my first sighting I had been contacted by Martin Cook (our local recorder) about what appeared to be an unusual ‘plover’ at Spey Bay – but his views were brief, and the bird had disappeared. Only having previous knowledge of Golden and Grey Plovers I thought a look at my Collins Guide would be useful in case it passed my way. The guide showed that the Pacific and American Golden Plovers were very different in structure and markings and I thought no more about it.



The morning of 31 July was reasonable, not too windy or raining, to which I am very used. I went to the bird hide off the B9011. I got my wellies and coats on and armed with binoculars and telescope wandered off onto the flats as normal. Why I chose to go toward Minton Point (NJ0463) I have no idea but after about 400 m I came across some 'little men', in this case Ringed Plovers, scuttling about so I stopped to investigate. On closer view, standing very still amongst them, was a plover with black breast and underparts and white shawl. However, what was most noticeable was the coarsely marked, in black and white, rump and tertials.

My thoughts went back to Martin's bird and I was pretty sure this may be what he was looking for! It was then that I remembered my camera was back in the car. Having collected my camera I returned to find the bird missing; so OK I thought to myself, that was one that got away. About 20 minutes later I re-located the Ringed Plovers and as luck would have it the interesting plover was still with them.

My limited experience of vagrants has shown that these are much more tolerant of people and therefore I was able to get within 10 m to take some pictures. So tolerant was this bird that I had to walk around it to get a rear view and photograph.

I e-mailed Martin a photograph asking "is this your bird" and it was soon confirmed by an excited phone call. Then came much debate amongst the birding fraternity over which bird we had, even a suggestion that it was an oddly marked Golden Plover. The lack of 'bulge' in the shawl and long tertials with quite short primary projection told us we had a Pacific Golden Plover. This is the first recorded sighting in Moray & Nairn.

My last sighting was on the 22 August when by good fortune I was looking for the cause of the commotion when a Peregrine flew past and corralled all the Oystercatchers together with the exception of one bird that just 'ducked' down. This time the camera was to hand and I was able to get photographs albeit a little more distant but showing the bird nearly through its moult.



Pacific Golden Plover at roost in Findhorn dunes, 14 August 2018 (Richard Somers Cocks)

**SEABIRD MOVEMENTS OFF LOSSIEMOUTH 2018 & A 5-YEAR SUMMARY  
2014-2018****BOB PROCTOR****Introduction**

This year saw the completion of five seasons of regular seawatching throughout a year off Lossiemouth harbour. A total of 641 hours have been spent seawatching over the five-year period; 150 in 2014, 77 in 2015, 136 in 2016, 118 in 2017 and 160 in 2018. A grand total of 90 species have been seen during these seawatches, resulting in a minimum of 317,598 individuals of 37 seabird species. In 2018, a total of 72 species were seen with a total of 29 seabirds and a minimum of 89,772 individuals.

After five years of seawatching, several species are now showing annual trends. These are summarized in the graphs within the species accounts. For less common species a summary table is given and for unusual species encountered during seawatches full details are provided.

**Location**

*Location of Lossiemouth nationally and on coastal Moray.*

**Methods**

The methodology adopted in 2014 was repeated for the five years. Seawatches were completed at various times throughout the day and in different weather conditions. In previous years some seawatches were only able to be of 30 minutes duration. All seawatches were therefore split into 30-minute periods. Seawatches were undertaken from a car as this offered protection during inclement weather and strong winds. The car was parked at the western end of Lossiemouth harbour. The sea off the harbour area was scanned, alternating between a pair of binoculars and a telescope. The same optical equipment was used in all five years.

Counts concentrated on recording 'seabird' species (*i.e.* sea-ducks, divers, shearwaters, Fulmar, Gannet, grebes, skuas, terns, Kittiwake, some gulls and auks). Species not counted

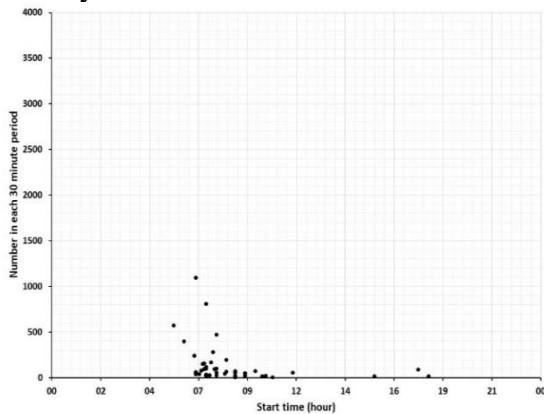
included Black-headed, Common, Herring, Lesser Black-backed and Great Black-backed Gulls as on the majority of counts, when present, individuals were not considered 'on passage' but appeared to be involved in localised movements - from Lossiemouth to off-shore feeding areas, or moving close in-shore between Lossiemouth and other in-shore areas. Similarly, species frequently seen flying close in-shore such as Eider, Red-breasted Merganser, Cormorant and Shag were not included in the regular passage counts as these were also deemed to be moving to or from roost sites or feeding areas.

### Seawatch results 2018

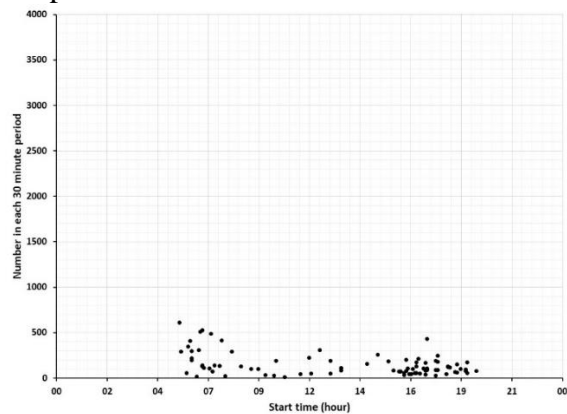
A total of 160 hours were spent seawatching in 2018. During the year, 72 species were recorded on seawatches, of which 29 were from the list of 'seabird' species. The total count of seabird species in 2018 involved a minimum of 89,772 individuals.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<b>No. 30 min. counts</b>	8	12	24	48	32	4	42	40	52	33	8	16
<b>Number of birds</b>	187	1106	4740	6870	5383	248	6598	16440	29947	16463	1097	694
<b>Mean per 30 mins.</b>	23	92	198	143	168	62	157	411	576	484	137	43

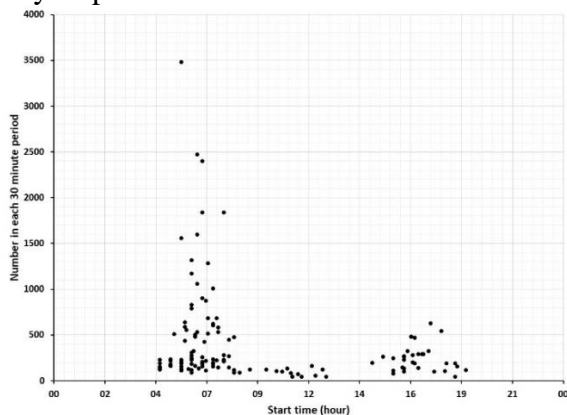
January-March 2018



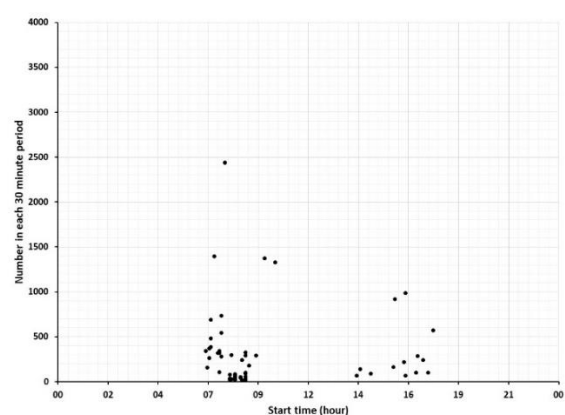
April-June 2018



July-September 2018



October-December 2018



### Seawatch summary 2014-2018

The wind during the five years was predominantly from a westerly direction. In 2018, the wind direction on the vast majority of seawatches was from the south-west (Fig. 1).

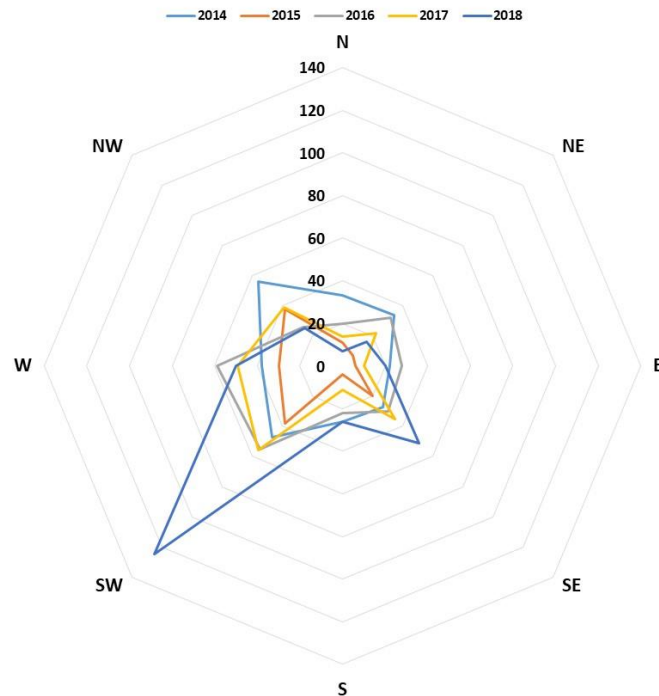


Figure 1: Wind direction during seawatches at Lossiemouth 2014-2018.

In all five years the maximum wind force only exceeded force 8 on the Beaufort scale on four occasions (Fig. 2).

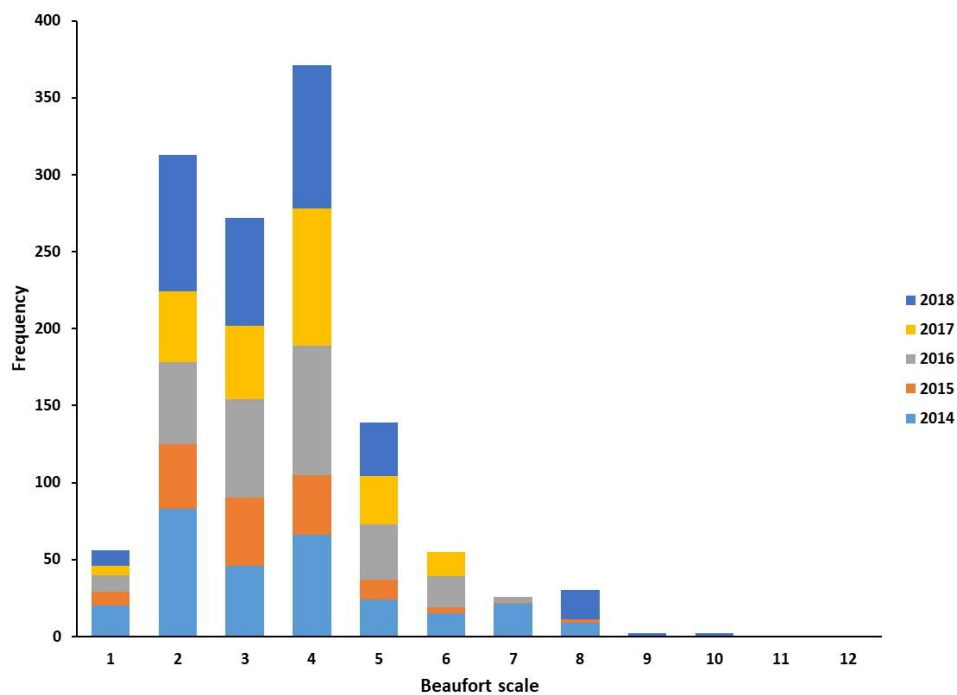


Figure 2: Wind strength during seawatches at Lossiemouth 2014-2018.

During the five years, 641 hours were spent seawatching (Fig. 3). A total of 90 species were recorded during seawatches, of which 37 were from the list of ‘seabird’ species.

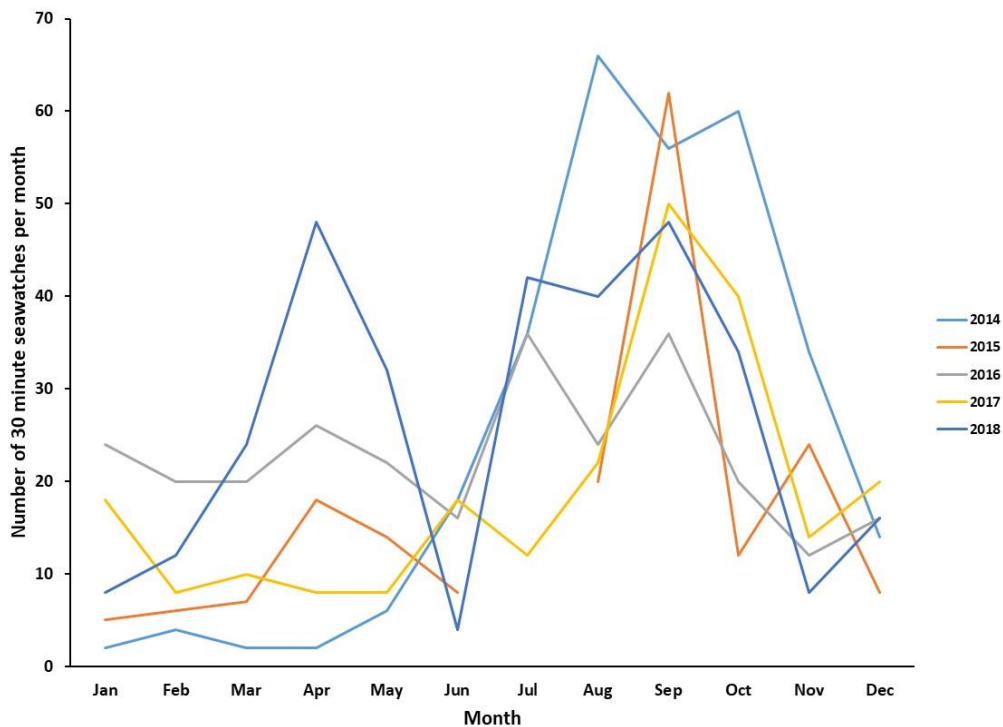


Figure 3: Number of 30 minute seawatches per month at Lossiemouth 2014-2018.

The total number of individuals recorded and start time of seawatches (Fig. 4) indicate that the largest movements usually occur in the early morning, however, large movements also occurred during mid-afternoon seawatches, though these were less frequent. The vast majority of 30-minute counts were of fewer than 500 individuals.

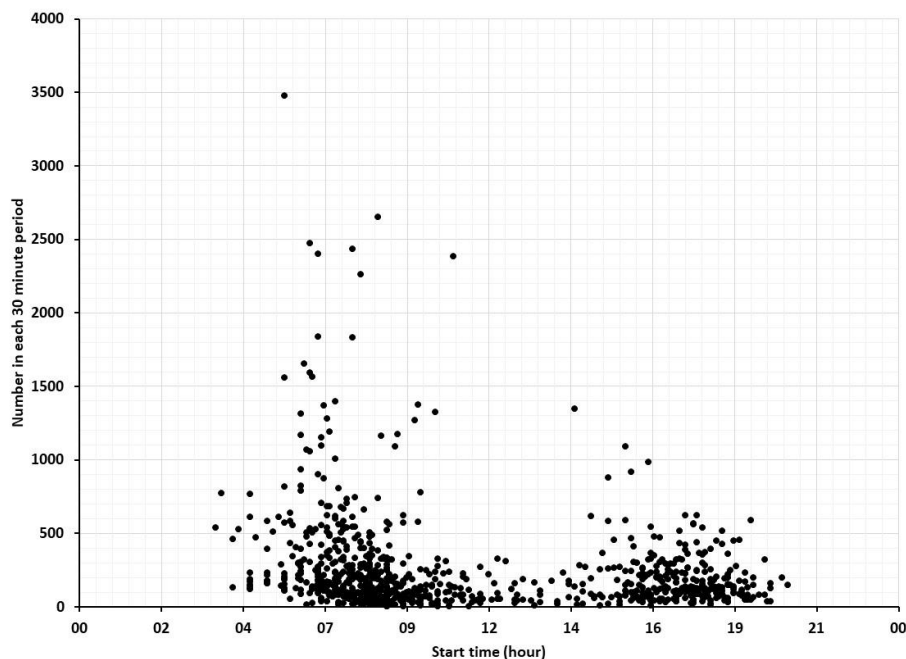
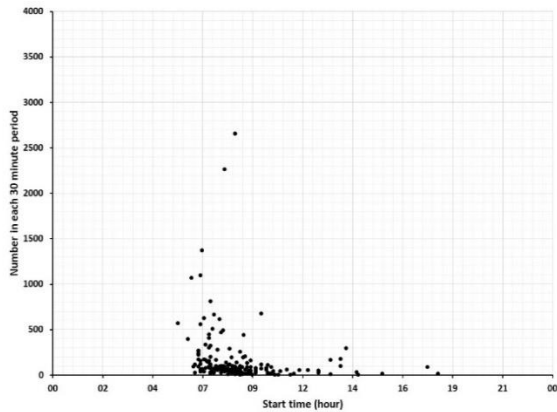


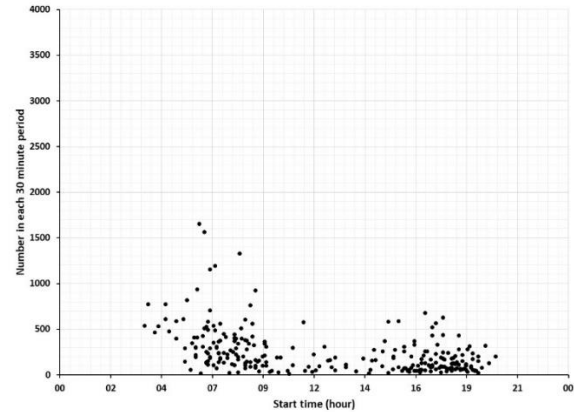


Figure 4: Total number of individuals and start time in each 30-minute period for seawatches 2014-2018.

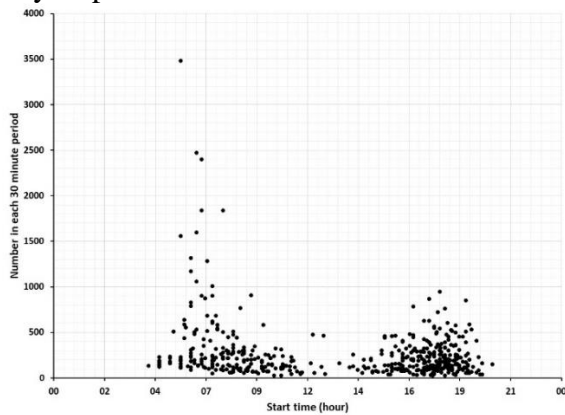
#### January-March 2014-2018



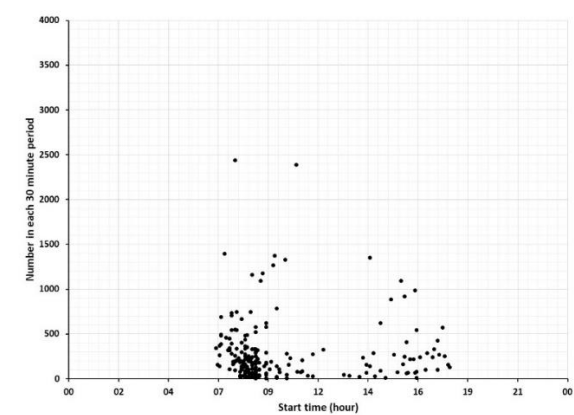
#### April-June 2014-2018



#### July-September 2014-2018

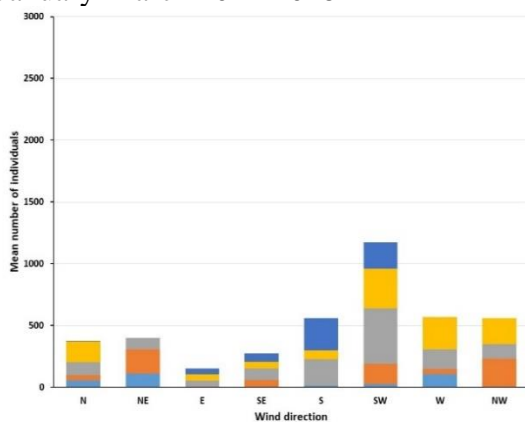


#### October-December 2014-2018

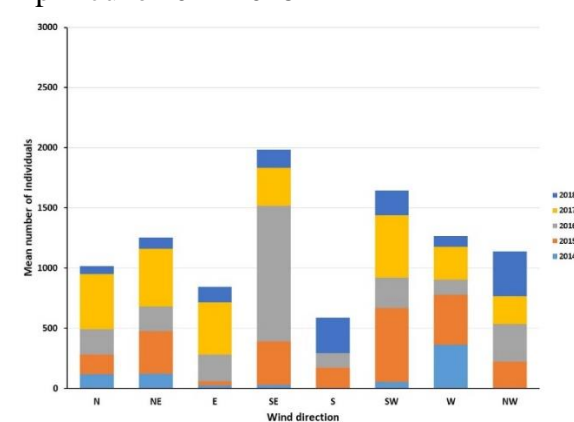


Mean counts of individuals for each quarter in different wind directions show some interesting results, for example, that good counts of seabirds can occur during offshore winds rather than the expected onshore winds. Unsurprisingly, larger numbers of individuals are seen in the periods covering spring and autumn migration.

#### January-March 2014-2018

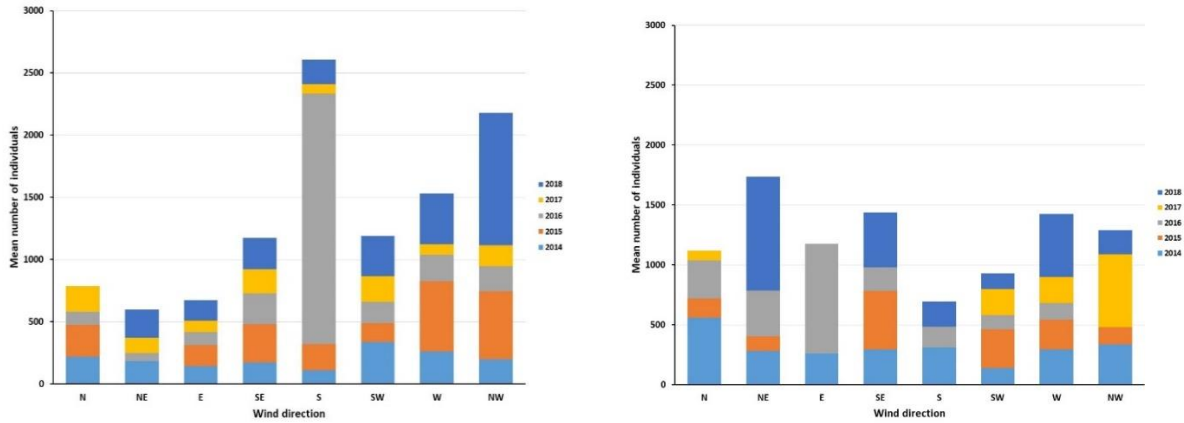


#### April-June 2014-2018



#### July-September 2014-2018

#### October-December 2014-2018



The mean monthly counts (Fig. 5) illustrates the expected peaks in seabird passage off Lossiemouth occurring in spring during March-April and in the autumn during September-October. A second peak occurred in May 2018 and November 2015 after the main passage periods.

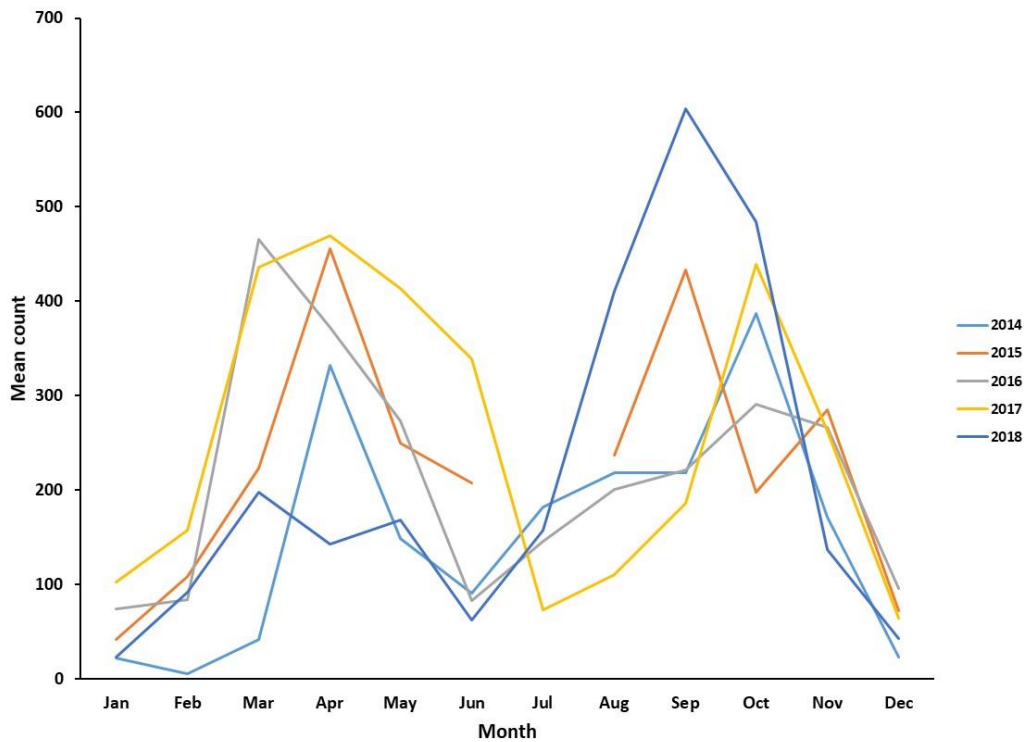


Figure 5: Mean monthly counts at Lossiemouth 2014-2018.

In 2014, an arbitrary total of ten species or more, or a count of over 500 individuals, in 30 minutes was considered a very good passage. The frequency of counts with ten or more species show no real pattern of occurrence (Fig. 6), however, counts of 500 or more do show increasing frequency of larger counts around the expected migration periods and no counts over 500 in the mid-winter periods (Fig. 7).

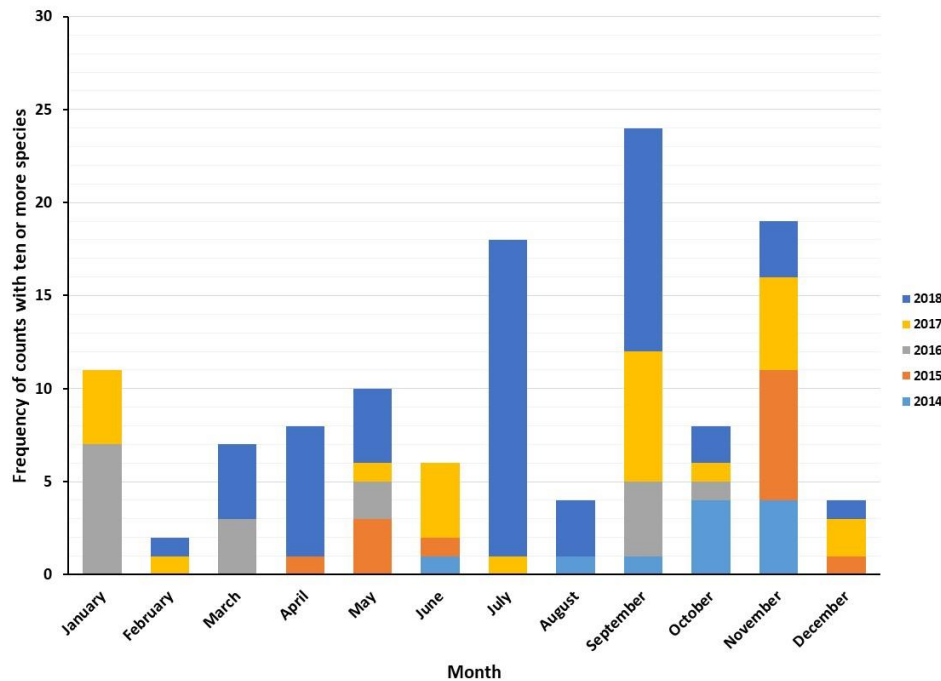


Figure 6: Frequency of counts with 10 or more species at Lossiemouth 2014-2018.

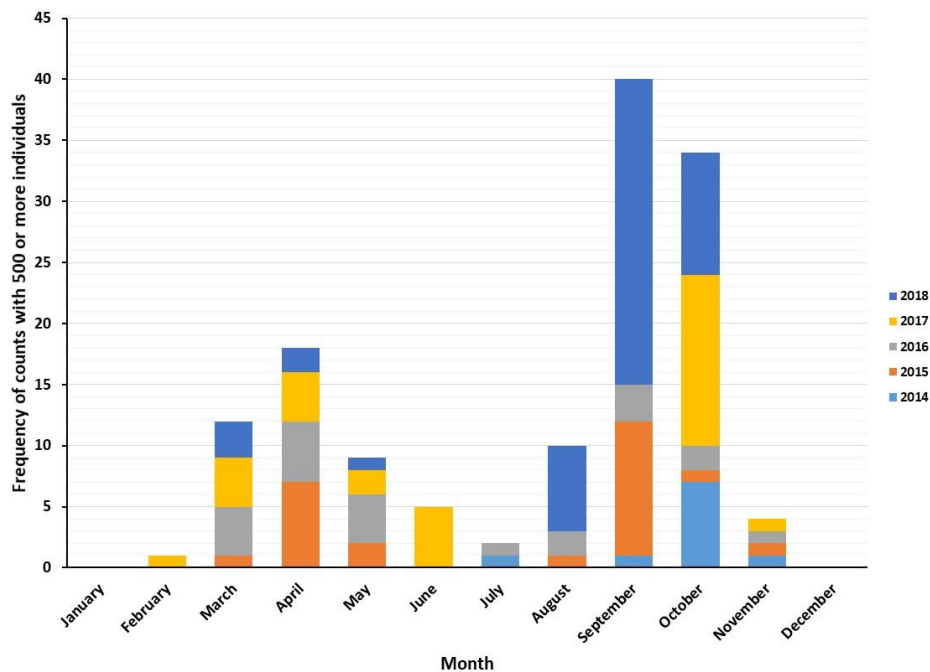


Figure 7: Frequency of counts with 500 or more individuals at Lossiemouth 2014-2018.

Generally, 6-7 species of seabird can be expected during a 30-minute seawatch off Lossiemouth (Fig. 8), though this will be dependent on wind conditions and time of year.

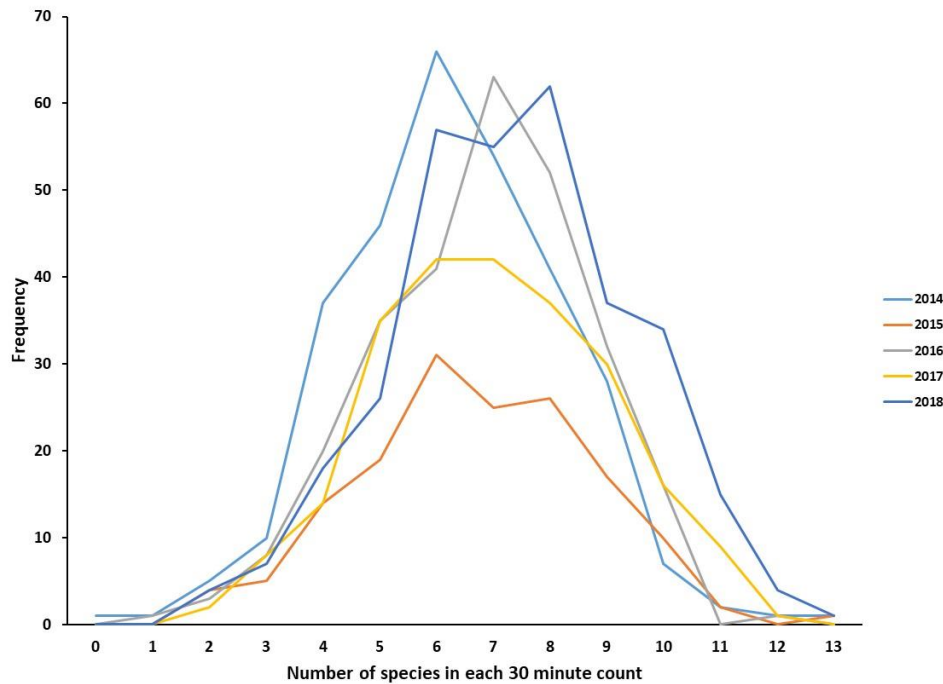


Figure 8: Frequency of seabird species during seawatches off Lossiemouth 2014-2018.

### Species summaries

As an indication of a species status within Moray & Nairn as a whole, the status information relating to non-breeding data from the Species Accounts in the main section of the bird report are given in *italics*.

A grand total of 37 ‘seabird’ species were recorded over the five years, with an additional 53 other species.

Summary of annual totals 2014-2018:

Year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
<b>Seabird species</b>	28	24	26	29	29
<b>Other species</b>	39	34	42	35	43
<b>Total</b>	67	58	68	64	72

### Scaup *Aythya marila*

*Scarce winter visitor.*

A group of seven males west on 25 Sep, three males west on 12 Oct, 13 west on 18 Oct and a single west on 27 Oct 2018. In previous years, seen in September & October 2014 and January 2017.

Summary of annual totals 2014-2018:

Year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
<b>Total</b>	60	0	0	2	24
<b>Hours</b>	150	77	136	118	160
<b>Mean</b>	0.4	0.0	0.0	<0.1	0.2

### Velvet Scoter *Melanitta fusca*

*Fairly common winter visitor.*

A total of 39 were recorded in 2018; Feb (2), Mar (6), Apr (6), Jul (2), Sep (2), Oct (6) and Dec (15).

Summary of annual totals 2014-2018:

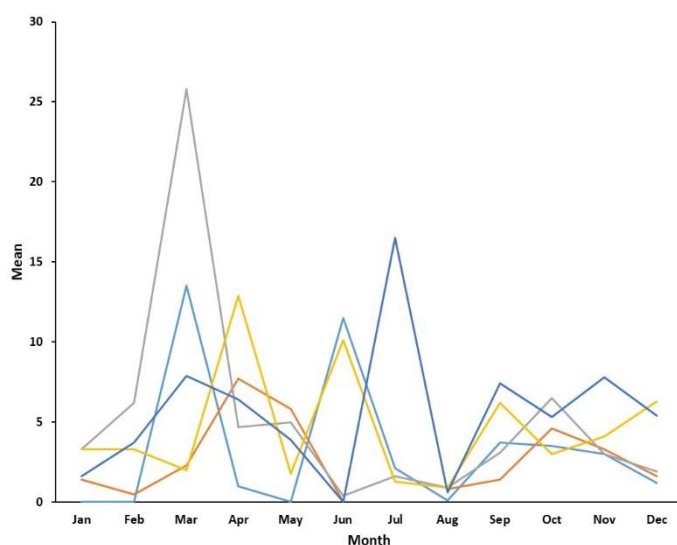
Year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
<b>Total</b>	54	16	23	21	39
<b>Hours</b>	150	77	136	118	160
<b>Mean</b>	0.4	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2

### Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra*

*Common winter visitor, small numbers in summer.*

A total of 2111 individuals were seen in 2018.

2018	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<b>Mean count/30 mins</b>	1.6	3.7	7.9	6.4	3.9	0.0	6.5	0.6	7.4	5.3	7.8	5.4
<b>Monthly total</b>	13	44	189	306	126	0	693	24	386	181	62	87
<b>Highest 30 min. count</b>	7	9	37	36	23	0	133	8	42	20	27	18



Can be seen passing Lossiemouth in all months. Summering groups can make assessment of any passage periods difficult. Spring peaks recorded in March or April, but another peak observed in June 2014 & 2017. Smaller peaks during passage in September-October. Largest movements were 142 in 30 minutes on 28 Jun 2014 and 133 in 30 minutes on 14 Jul 2018.

Summary of annual totals 2014-2018:

Year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
<b>Total</b>	850	453	1344	1156	2111
<b>Hours</b>	150	77	136	118	160
<b>Mean</b>	5.7	5.9	9.9	9.8	13.2

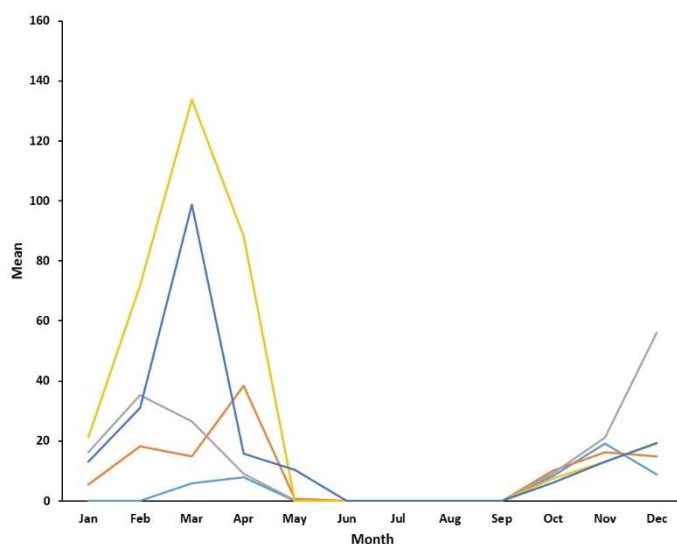


## Long-tailed Duck *Clangula hyemalis*

*Common winter visitor offshore.*

A total of 4579 individuals were seen in 2018.

2018	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Mean count/30 mins	13.0	31.1	98.8	15.8	10.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	6.2	13.0	19.4
Monthly total	104	373	2370	759	336	0	0	0	12	211	104	310
Highest 30 min. count	34	98	828	126	280	0	0	0	12	51	21	72



Absent from mid May-early September. Small numbers recorded in early May (*e.g.* 10 in 2015, 9 in 2016 & 1 in 2017), though a later passage occurred in May 2018 when much larger numbers were still being recorded (336 seen). A large movement occurred on 25 Mar 2018 when 1804 passed in 2 hours (only 2 flew east); 30-minute counts were 828, 604, 256 & 116. Small numbers (<10) of returning birds have been recorded in early September, with the main arrival occurring from October onwards.

Summary of annual totals 2014-2018:

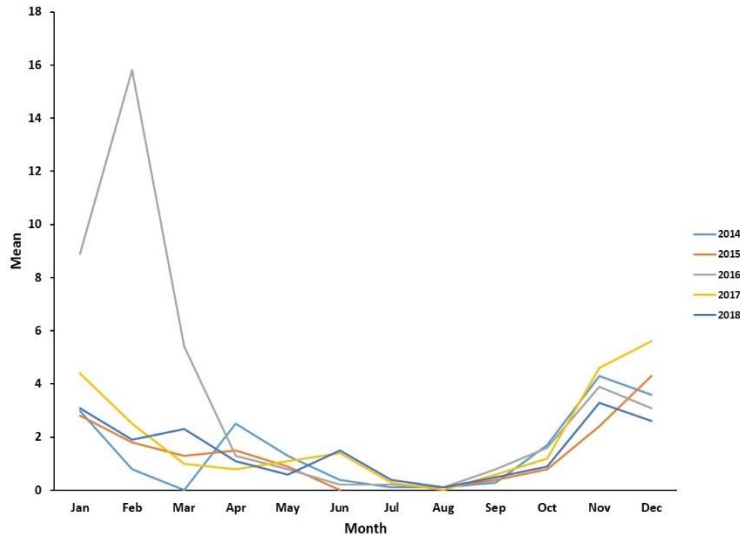
Year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Total	1300	1574	3205	4575	4579
Hours	150	77	136	118	160
Mean	8.7	20.4	23.6	38.8	28.6

## Red-throated Diver *Gavia stellata*

*Fairly common autumn and winter visitor offshore.*

Recorded throughout the year again. A total of 329 individuals were seen in 2018.

2018	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Mean count/30 mins	3.1	1.9	2.3	1.1	0.6	1.5	0.4	0.1	0.5	0.9	3.3	2.6
Monthly total	25	23	56	55	18	6	17	2	28	32	26	41
Highest 30 min. count	10	4	11	4	3	5	3	1	8	5	8	6



Two large movements in February 2016 involved 53 in one hour on 17th (30-minute counts of 37 & 16) and 59 in one hour on 25th (30-minute counts of 56 & 3).

Summary of annual totals 2014-2018:

Year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
<b>Total</b>	353	190	855	418	329
<b>Hours</b>	150	77	136	118	160
<b>Mean</b>	2.4	2.5	6.3	3.5	2.1

### Black-throated Diver *Gavia arctica*

*Scarce autumn and winter visitor offshore.*

Singles seen in 2018 on 7 Jan, 2 May, 20 & 22 Sep, 14 Oct, 18 Oct and 1 & 2 Nov.

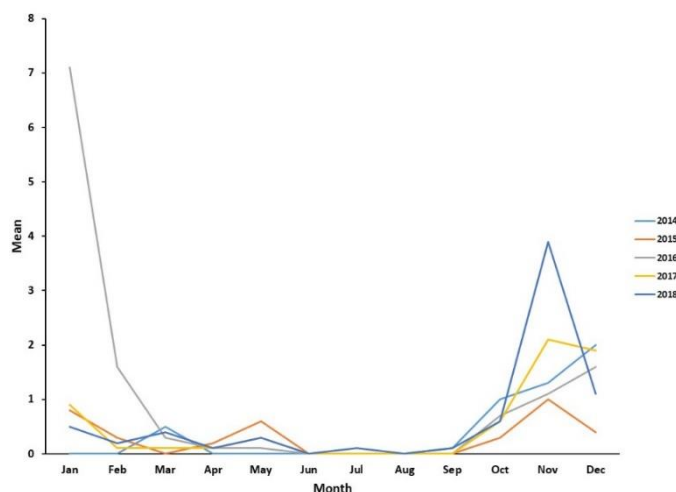
Summary of annual totals 2014-2018:

Year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
<b>Total</b>	16	13	6	11	8
<b>Hours</b>	150	77	136	118	160
<b>Mean</b>	0.1	0.2	<0.1	<0.1	<0.1

### Great Northern Diver *Gavia immer*

*Scarce visitor offshore.*

A total of 112 individuals were seen in 2018. First of the autumn was two on 14 Sep.



Absent from June-September, except in 2018 when three were recorded in Jul. A two-hour count on 9 Jan 2016 produced a total of 110 individuals (30-minute totals were: 28, 27, 39 & 16).

Summary of annual totals 2014-2018:

Year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
<b>Total</b>	134	47	266	113	112
<b>Hours</b>	150	77	136	118	160
<b>Mean</b>	0.9	0.6	2.0	1.0	0.7

### White-billed Diver *Gavia adamsii*

*Rare visitor.*

Presumably the same adult was recorded on 21 Apr (west) and 6 May (east) 2018. Another record of an adult flying west on 16 May 2017 is also likely to relate to the same individual which was regularly seen on the sea in both years off Lossiemouth harbour.

### Storm Petrel *Hydrobates pelagicus*

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

One seen flying west on 8 Aug 2016.

### Leach's Petrel *Oceanodroma leucorhoa*

*Rare visitor.*

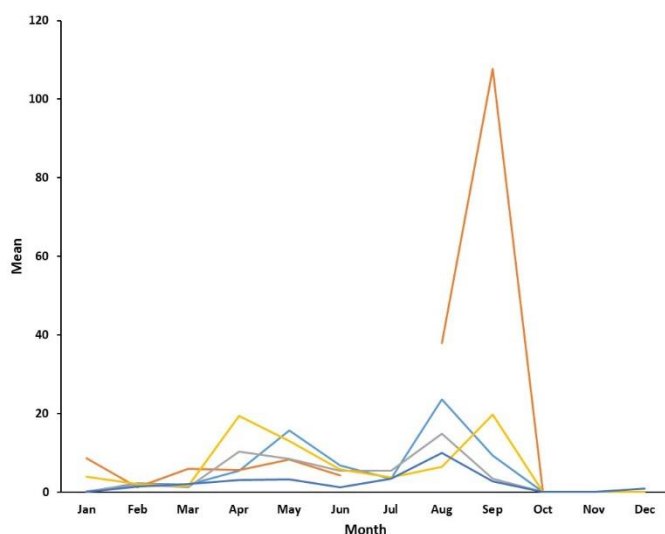
One was seen flying west on 29 Oct 2017.

### Fulmar *Fulmarus glacialis*

*Very common offshore.*

A total of 1020 individuals were seen in 2018. Less frequent offshore from 8 Sep and last seen on 17 Sep, before two were seen on 8 Dec. More individuals than usual seen in late Dec; 9th, 15th (2), 16th (7), 25th and 26th.

2018	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<b>Mean count/30 mins</b>	0.0	1.4	2.1	3.0	3.2	1.3	3.4	10.0	2.8	0.0	0.0	0.9
<b>Monthly total</b>	0	17	51	145	101	5	144	398	145	0	0	14
<b>Highest 30 min. count</b>	0	8	10	8	10	3	13	43	26	0	0	6



Small numbers present from January-March, increasing from April. No major passage noted except September 2015 when 2202 passed in three hours (30-minute totals were: 601, 703, 334, 293, 133 & 138), though only 32 in one hour the following day. Usually absent from late September, exceptions being 1 on 5 Oct 2016, 2 on 26 Dec 2017, and more frequent in late 2018 when 14 were recorded. A 'Blue' Fulmar was recorded on 7 Sep 2014.

Summary of annual totals 2014-2018:

Year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
<b>Total</b>	2444	4551	1285	1795	1020
<b>Hours</b>	150	77	136	118	160
<b>Mean</b>	16.3	59.1	9.5	15.2	6.4

### **Cory's Shearwater** *Calonectris borealis*

*Rare visitor.*

Singles were seen flying west on 29 Jul & 14 Aug 2014 and possibly related to the same individual given the fairly short period of time between sightings. This is the second record for Moray & Nairn following a single off Lossiemouth on 9 Jul 2000.

### **Sooty Shearwater** *Ardenna grisea*

*Very scarce migrant in late summer and autumn.*

A total of 16 individuals were recorded in 2018. A group of four was seen in July, otherwise only singles or two's recorded in September (10) and October (2).

Summary of annual totals 2014-2018:

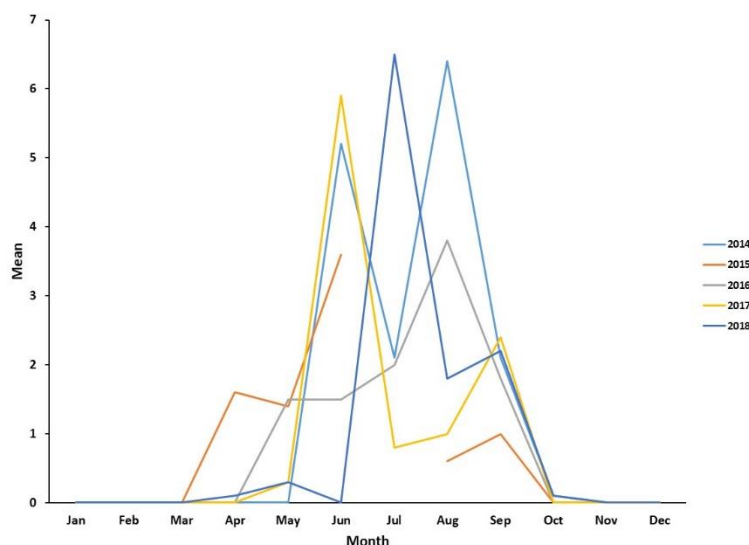
Year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
<b>Total</b>	23	4	4	39	16
<b>Hours</b>	150	77	136	118	160
<b>Mean</b>	0.2	<0.1	<0.1	0.3	0.1

### **Manx Shearwater** *Puffinus puffinus*

*Fairly common offshore in summer and autumn.*

A total of 477 individuals were seen 2018.

2018	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<b>Mean count/30 mins</b>	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.3	0.0	6.5	1.8	2.2	0.1	0.0	0.0
<b>Monthly total</b>	0	0	0	6	8	0	272	73	115	3	0	0
<b>Highest 30 min. count</b>	0	0	0	4	5	0	48	14	16	1	0	0



Peaks in June-September. The largest 30-minute movements were recorded in 2014; 59 on 17 Aug and 60 on 21 Aug. An unprecedented mid-winter record of a single flying west on 9 Jan 2016.

Summary of annual totals 2014-2018:

Year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
<b>Total</b>	719	119	288	258	477
<b>Hours</b>	150	77	136	118	160
<b>Mean</b>	4.8	1.6	2.1	2.2	3.0

### Balearic Shearwater *Puffinus mauretanicus*

*Rare visitor.*

One was seen flying west on 21 Oct 2017. This is the fifth record for Moray & Nairn following individuals in 2000 (3) and 2005.

### Slavonian Grebe *Podiceps auritus*

*Scarce offshore in winter.*

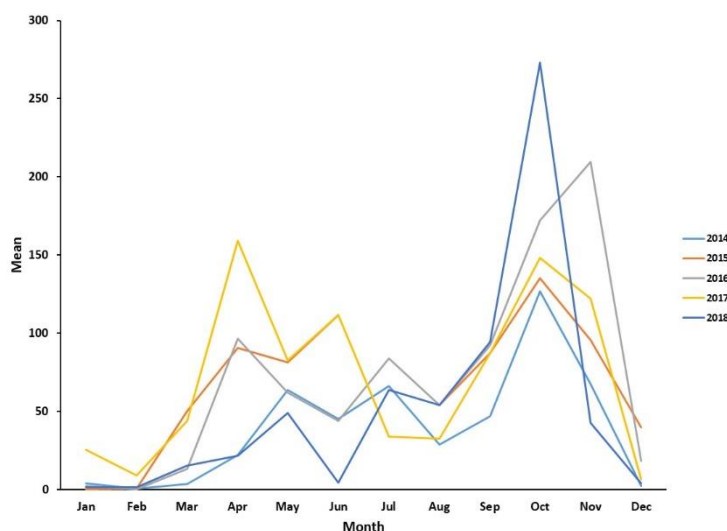
In 2018, a single was recorded on 17 Mar flying west and probably related to an individual seen on the sea off the harbour earlier in the month, and another west on 22 Sep. Single records on 22 & 24 Oct 2014 and another on 28 Oct 2017.

### Gannet *Morus bassanus*

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

A total of 22,426 individuals were seen in 2018.

2018	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<b>Mean count/30 mins</b>	1.6	1.3	15.3	21.5	49.0	4.3	63.5	53.8	94.2	273.3	42.8	3.9
<b>Monthly total</b>	13	15	368	1031	1569	17	2667	2150	4898	9293	342	63
<b>Highest 30 min. count</b>	8	7	40	101	198	7	151	157	280	1583	174	15



Usually reduced numbers in January-March before spring passage. Main spring passage generally in April-May. Autumn passage in October-November with an obvious drop in numbers in December. Largest 30-minute count was 719 on 22 Oct 2016, until large numbers occurred in Oct 2018: 30-minute counts of 1319 & 1224 on 12th and 1583 on 14th.

Summary of annual totals 2014-2018:

Year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
<b>Total</b>	18102	12128	18732	19441	22426
<b>Hours</b>	150	77	136	118	160
<b>Mean</b>	120.7	157.5	112.8	164.7	140.2

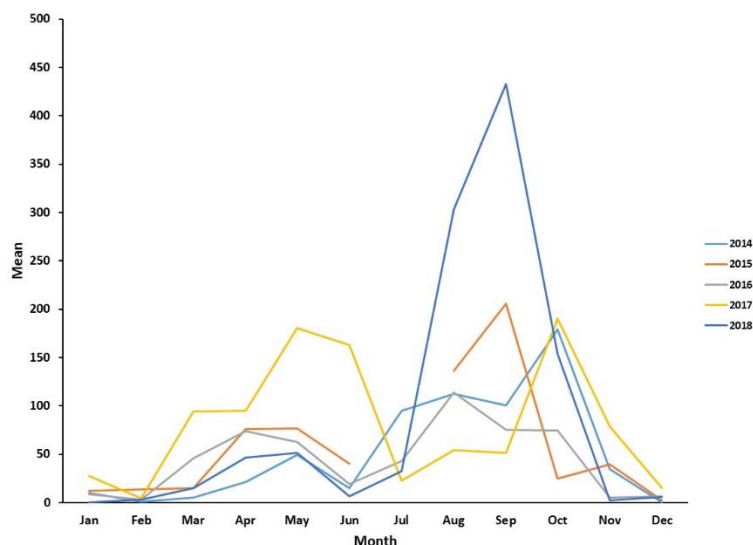


## Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla*

*Very common migrant.*

A total of 45,659 individuals were seen in 2018. This was the commonest species recorded. A three-hour seawatch on 25 Aug produced a total of 8332; more than all the previous counts in 2018 combined. Numbers increased rapidly in September.

2018	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Mean count/30 mins	0.4	3.2	14.7	46.8	51.8	6.8	32.8	303.0	432.7	153.7	2.5	6.0
Monthly total	3	38	352	2245	1657	27	1376	12118	22500	5227	20	96
Highest 30 min. count	2	18	71	320	158	12	89	3418	2366	746	11	50



Spring peaks in April or May and then autumn peaks in August, September or October. Exceptional numbers were regular off Lossiemouth in autumn 2018, with an unprecedented 3418 recorded in 30 minutes on 25 Aug.

Summary of annual totals 2014-2018:

Year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Total	29031	13601	13440	20435	45659
Hours	150	77	136	118	160
Mean	193.5	176.6	98.8	173.2	285.4

## Sabine's Gull *Xema sabini*

*Rare migrant.*

A juvenile was seen on 2 Oct 2014. This probably relates to an individual seen at the Spey estuary 21-22 Sep and Lossie estuary 28 Sep.

## Little Gull *Hydrocoloeus minutus*

*Very scarce visitor.*

Seventeen records, though only five before 2018. In 2014, singles were seen on 26 Jan (adult), 14 Jul (2CY) and on 13 & 15 Oct (1CY) and in 2016 an adult flew west on 25 Apr. In 2018, an adult flew west on 24 & 25 Mar, a 1CY flew east on 25 Aug and another west 12 Sep and then five (2 adults, 3 1CY) west on 22 Sep and four (2 adults, 2 1CY) west the following day.

### Mediterranean Gull *Ichthyæetus melanocephalus*

*Very scarce visitor.*

One record. An adult flew east on 7 Aug 2018.

### Glaucous Gull *Larus hyperboreus*

*Very scarce winter visitor.*

Three records. One 2CY flew west on 10 Jan 2015. A 2CY flew east on 11 Apr and another flew west on 5 May 2018.

### Iceland Gull *Larus glaucoïdes*

*Very scarce winter visitor.*

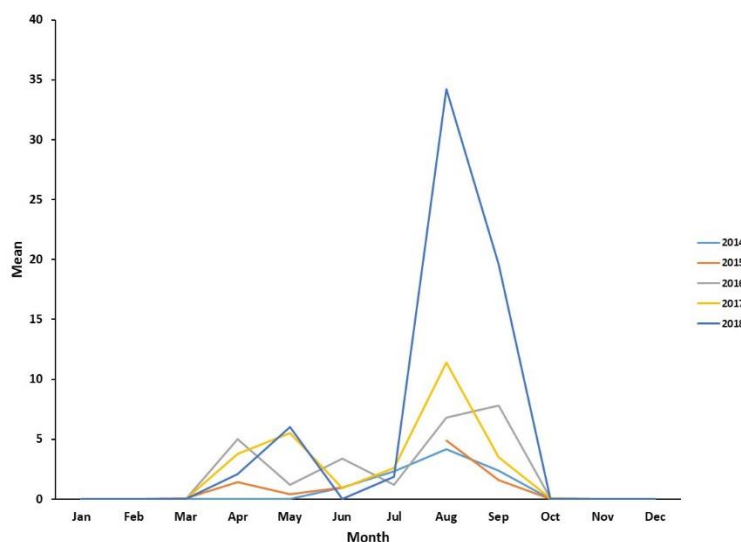
Five records. In 2015, a single 3CY flew east on 11 Apr and a 1CY west on 19 Nov, while in 2016, a 3CY west on 25 Feb and 12 Mar. Two flew west on 8 Apr 2018 (2CY & 3CY).

### Sandwich Tern *Thalasseus sandvicensis*

*Very common summer visitor.*

A total of 2798 individuals were seen in 2018; more than the previous years combined. Last seen on 2 Oct; in previous years, last records were on 1 Oct 2017, 17 Oct 2016, 26 Sep 2015 and 8 Oct 2014.

2018	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Mean count/30 mins	0.0	0.0	<0.1	2.9	6.0	0.0	1.9	34.2	19.6	<0.1	0.0	0.0
Monthly total	0	0	1	149	191	0	78	1368	1018	1	0	0
Highest 30 min. count	0	0	1	21	36	0	7	185	115	1	0	0



Spring passage peaks occur in April or May with the main autumn passage usually occurring in August. In 2018, a 30-minute total of 185 was recorded on 11 Aug.

Summary of annual totals 2014-2018:

Year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Total	512	188	703	580	2798
Hours	150	77	136	118	160
Mean	4.3	2.4	5.2	4.9	17.5

**Little Tern *Sternula albifrons****Very scarce summer visitor.*

Two adults flew west on 3 Jul 2016. In 2018, adults were seen on 15 Jul (east), 21 Jul (two west), 28 Jul (east) and 18 Aug (west).

**Common Tern *Sterna hirundo****Summer visitor.*

A total of 713 individuals were seen in 2018. The last was a late individual on 14 Oct and was the latest in this study.

2018	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Mean count/30 mins	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.5	2.1	1.3	11.3	3.0	0.4	<0.1	0.0	0.0
Monthly total	0	0	0	25	68	5	476	119	19	1	0	0
Highest 30 min. count	0	0	0	12	12	2	38	65	8	1	0	0

Summary of annual totals 2014-2018:

Year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Total	3002	110	263	134	713
Hour	150	77	136	118	160
Mean	25.0	1.4	1.9	1.1	4.5

**Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea****Summer visitor.*

A total of 85 individuals were recorded in 2018.

Summary of annual totals 2014-2018:

Year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Total	27	39	91	12	85
Hours	150	77	136	118	160
Mean	0.2	0.5	0.7	0.1	0.5

**Black Tern *Chlidonias niger****Very scarce visitor in summer and autumn.*

An adult was seen flying east on 18 Sep 2017.

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

A total of 77 individuals were seen in 2018.

2018	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Mean count/30 mins	0.0	0.0	0.0	<0.1	0.4	0.0	0.2	0.5	0.6	0.1	0.0	0.0
Monthly total	0	0	0	2	13	0	9	19	32	2	0	0
Highest 30 min. count	0	0	0	1	2	0	2	2	4	1	0	0

Summary of annual totals 2014-2018:

Year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
<b>Total</b>	86	30	22	60	77
<b>Hours</b>	150	77	136	118	160
<b>Mean</b>	0.6	0.4	0.2	0.5	0.5

### **Pomarine Skua *Stercorarius pomarinus***

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

Singles were seen in 2018 on 20 Apr, 1 May, 25 Aug (3) and 27 Oct (4).

Summary of annual totals 2014-2018:

Year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
<b>Total</b>	61	5	7	4	9
<b>Hours</b>	150	77	136	118	160
<b>Mean</b>	0.4	0.1	<0.1	<0.1	<0.1

### **Arctic Skua *Stercorarius parasiticus***

*Fairly common migrant in summer and autumn.*

A total of 86 individuals were seen in 2018.

2018	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<b>Mean count/30 mins</b>	0.0	0.0	0.0	<0.1	0.3	0.3	0.1	0.5	0.8	0.2	0.0	0.0
<b>Monthly total</b>	0	0	0	2	10	1	5	18	43	7	0	0
<b>Highest 30 min. count</b>	0	0	0	1	3	1	2	5	8	2	0	0

Summary of annual totals 2014-2018:

Year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
<b>Total</b>	180	48	52	41	86
<b>Hours</b>	150	77	136	118	160
<b>Mean</b>	1.2	0.6	0.4	0.4	0.5

### **Long-tailed Skua *Stercorarius longicaudus***

*Rare visitor.*

Summary of annual totals 2014-2018:

Year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
<b>Total</b>	3	0	0	2	0
<b>Hours</b>	150	77	136	118	160
<b>Mean</b>	<0.1	0.0	0.0	<0.1	0.0

### **Little Auk *Alle alle***

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

Singles or small groups seen in 2018; February (3) and March (1).

Summary of annual totals 2014-2018:

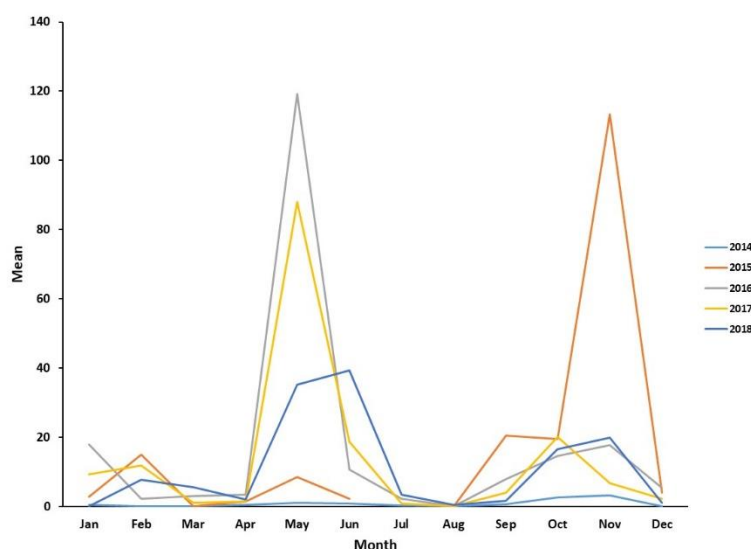
Year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
<b>Total</b>	21	18	40	54	4
<b>Hours</b>	150	77	136	118	160
<b>Mean</b>	0.1	0.2	0.3	0.5	<0.1

### Guillemot *Uria aalge*

*Very common offshore.*

A total of 2592 individuals were seen in 2018.

2018	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<b>Mean count/30 mins</b>	0.1	7.8	5.6	2.1	35.2	39.3	3.4	0.4	1.6	16.5	19.9	1.0
<b>Monthly total</b>	1	94	134	102	1126	157	144	15	84	560	159	16
<b>Highest 30 min. count</b>	1	26	50	16	223	131	14	6	13	71	71	3



Summary of annual totals 2014-2018:

Year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
<b>Total</b>	348	3912	4375	2494	2592
<b>Hours</b>	150	77	136	118	160
<b>Mean</b>	2.3	50.8	32.2	21.1	16.2

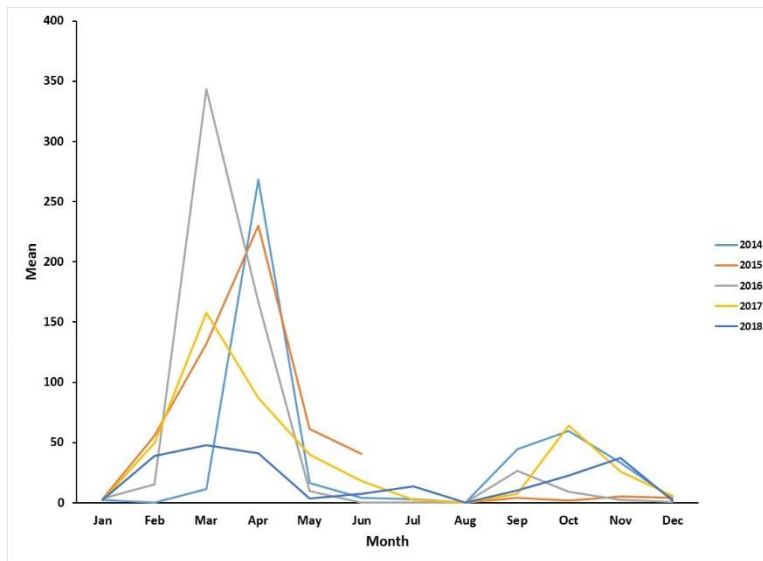
### Razorbill *Alca torda*

*Very common offshore.*

A total of 5975 individuals were seen in 2018.

2018	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<b>Mean count/30 mins</b>	2.3	38.8	48.0	41.2	3.6	7.5	13.6	0.3	10.6	22.4	37.4	1.8
<b>Monthly count</b>	18	465	1151	1978	114	30	570	11	549	761	299	29
<b>Highest 30 min. count</b>	7	146	207	482	39	29	50	3	89	214	181	8





Spring passage peaks in March-April and a smaller autumn passage in September-October. The largest movement occurred in 2016 when 4125 passed in one hour on 27 Mar (1963 & 2162 in each 30-minute count).

Summary of annual totals 2014-2018:

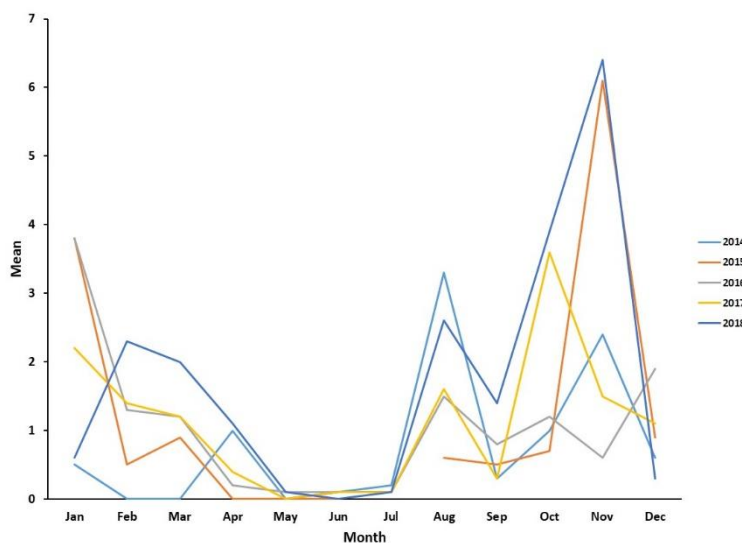
Year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
<b>Total</b>	8098	6920	13001	7501	5979
<b>Hours</b>	150	77	136	118	160
<b>Mean</b>	54.0	89.9	95.6	63.6	37.3

## Black Guillemot *Cepphus grylle*

*Scarce offshore.*

A total of 511 individuals were seen in 2018. The largest monthly total was 133 in October.

2018	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<b>Mean count/30 mins</b>	0.6	2.3	2.0	1.1	0.1	0.0	0.1	2.6	1.4	3.9	6.4	0.3
<b>Monthly total</b>	5	28	49	53	3	0	5	104	75	133	51	5
<b>Highest 30 min. count</b>	2	8	11	6	2	0	2	10	21	31	21	2



The August peaks all involved adults in breeding plumage. The dip in numbers in September coincides with the adult flightless moult period. The largest count was 40 on 17 Nov 2015 in 30 minutes.

Summary of annual totals 2014-2018:

Year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
<b>Total</b>	394	218	278	313	511
<b>Hours</b>	150	77	136	118	160
<b>Mean</b>	2.6	2.8	2.0	2.7	3.2

### **Puffin *Fratercula arctica***

*Very scarce offshore.*

A four-hour seawatch on 15 Jul 2018 produced an unprecedented total of 58; one more than all the previous years seawatching totals combined.

2018	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<b>Mean count/30 mins</b>	0.0	0.2	0.0	<0.1	0.0	0.0	2.0	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.0
<b>Monthly total</b>	0	2	0	2	0	0	85	2	4	0	1	0
<b>Highest 30 min. count</b>	0	2	0	2	0	0	21	1	1	0	1	0

Summary of annual totals 2014-2018:

Year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
<b>Total</b>	9	4	36	8	96
<b>Hours</b>	150	77	136	118	160
<b>Mean</b>	0.1	<0.1	0.3	0.1	0.6

# RINGING REPORT 2018

**BOB PROCTOR**

Numbers of birds ringed in Moray & Nairn during 2018:

	FG*	Pullus	Total		FG*	Pullus	Total
Storm Petrel	61		61	Fieldfare	3		3
Golden Eagle		5	5	Redwing	119		119
Sparrowhawk	1		1	Song Thrush	18		18
Goshawk		5	5	Spotted Flycatcher	6		6
Hen Harrier		25	25	Robin	111		111
Water Rail	1		1	Dipper	9		9
Oystercatcher		2	2	House Sparrow	265	71	336
Lapwing		20	20	Tree Sparrow	7	77	84
Turnstone	6		6	Dunnock	76		76
Common Sandpiper	1		1	Pied Wagtail	113	3	116
Herring Gull		2	2	Meadow Pipit	15		15
Little Tern		1	1	Tree Pipit	12		12
Common Tern		3	3	Chaffinch	209		209
Arctic Tern		7	7	Brambling	43		43
Woodpigeon	4		4	Bullfinch	23		23
Collared Dove	7		7	Greenfinch	39		39
Great Sp. Woodpecker	21		21	Linnet	10		10
Merlin		9	9	Redpoll sp.	2		2
Jay	2		2	Common Redpoll	1		1
Magpie	1		1	Lesser Redpoll	156		156
Jackdaw	1		1	Arctic Redpoll	1		1
Coal Tit	457	144	601	Goldfinch	122		122
Crested Tit	30	6	36	Siskin	522		522
Blue Tit	388	261	649	Yellowhammer	2		2
Great Tit	211	282	493	Reed Bunting	92	2	91
Sand Martin	198		198				
Swallow	92	69	161				
House Martin	1		1				
Long-tailed Tit	105		105				
Willow Warbler	91		91				
Chiffchaff	29		29				
Sedge Warbler	112	2	114				
Blackcap	32		32				
Whitethroat	7		7				
Goldcrest	235		235				
Wren	53		53				
Treecreeper	36		36				
Starling	37		37				
Blackbird	109	3	112	<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>4308</b>	<b>999</b>	<b>5307</b>

\*FG=full grown

From: Robinson, R.A., Leech, D.I. & Clark, J.A. (2019) The Online Demography Report: Bird ringing and nest recording in Britain & Ireland in 2014. BTO, Thetford (<http://www.bto.org/ringing-report>, created on 26 Jul 2019).

Recoveries in 2018:

All ringing recoveries reported for 2018 are included in this section with the more interesting ones given in full. Anyone finding a ringed bird in Moray or Nairn is asked to pass the details to Martin Cook.

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

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

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

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

### CAPERCAILLIE

5263680	6m	100217	Elchies Forest	
	XF	100418	near Aberlour	7 km

### STORM PETREL

2687196	4	210718	Portknockie	
	V	270818	Fair Isle	216 km
2731351	4	250717	Fair Isle	
	V	210718	Portknockie	216 km
2736527	4	100718	Fair Isle	
	V	210718	Portknockie	216 km
	V	190818	Isle of May	377 km

2732832	4	310718	Fair Isle	
	V	250718	Portknockie	216 km

### SHAG

Other than the expected Isle of May movements, two others reported:

1490156	1	080616	Fidra, East Lothian	
	XF	110318	Clashach Cove, near Hopeman	186 km

Blue JHE	1	060718	Fidra, East Lothian	
	VV	061018	Peterhead	
	VV	041118	Burghead	
	VV	211118	Findhorn	

And an older individual from the Isle of May (though the UK longevity record is nearly 30 years):

1388740	1	150702	Isle of May	
	VV	130606	Isle of May	
	XF	050418	Lossiemouth	176 km

### CORMORANT

5185576	1	030610	North Sutor	
	X	010618	Buckie	60 km

### SPARROWHAWK

DE00545	5m	160417	Inchberry	
	X	070518	Mosstodloch	5 km

### BUZZARD

GV29751	1	120617	Culbin Forest	
	XL	040418	Cothill, Nairn	5 km

### OYSTERCATCHER

FH75122	?	291116	Bull Island, Dublin, EIRE	
(yellow 7D)	VV	210318	Kinloss barracks	

FJ11450	8	301216	Alness	
	XL	100418	Waterford Farm, Forres	41 km

### BAR-TAILED GODWIT

K04703	3	110916	Klepp, Rogaland, NORWAY	
(Yellow NAA)	VV	011016	Burghead	
	VV	061016	Hopeman	534 km
	VV	180218	Burghead	
	VV	210818	Balcomie Bay, Fife	
	VV	031018	Burghead	
	VV	211218	Burghead	538 km



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	
	VV	090318	Findhorn Bay	
	VV	270518	Porsanger, Finnmark, NORWAY	
	VV	01-020918	Cata Sand, Sanday, Orkney	

K04703 re-orientated back to Burghead in autumn 2018 after initially being seen in Fife.

## KNOT

A series of legged-flagged individuals were seen at Findhorn Bay:

YCP	?	240511	Neslon, Nordur Pingeyjarsysla, ICELAND
	VV	290117	Findhorn Bay
	VV	230517	Gegnisevik, ICELAND
	VV	180118	Findhorn Bay
YHX	?	240511	Neslon, Nordur Pingeyjarsysla, ICELAND
	VV	18-190118	Findhorn Bay
UNM	?	240514	Reykjafjordur, ICELAND
	VV	070118	Findhorn Bay
15K	?	220517	Straumfjordur, ICELAND
	VV	260617	Formby Point, Merseyside
	VV	180717	Formby Point, Merseyside
	VV	08 & 180118	Findhorn Bay
99K	?	220517	Straumfjordur, ICELAND
	VV	080118	Findhorn Bay
	VV	190118	Findhorn Bay
86N	?	240517	Skogarnes, ICELAND
	VV	070118	Findhorn Bay
PLU	?	260517	Brenna, Porsanger, NORWAY
	VV	180118	Findhorn Bay
1M	?	220917	Altcar, Merseyside
	VV	18-190118	Findhorn Bay
	VV	220218	Findhorn Bay
8X	?	220917	Altcar, Merseyside
	VV	221217	Thurstaton, Wirral
	VV	220218	Findhorn Bay

JX	?	220917	Altcar, Merseyside	
	VV	180518	Findhorn Bay	
	VV	210518	Cuinabunag, Benbecula, Outer Hebrides	
N6RRYY	?	071013	Griend, THE NETHERLANDS	
	VV	230516	Lebesby, Finnmark, NORWAY	
	VV	230218	Findhorn Bay	
SR77068	4	220917	Altcar, Merseyside	
	VV	300917	Crosby Beach, Merseyside	
	VV	011217	Caldy, Merseyside	
	VV	220218	Findhorn Bay	459 km
	VV	010518	Bride's Ness, North Ronaldsay	
	VV	040918	Crosby Beach, Merseyside	
	VV	210918	Caldy, Merseyside	
	VV	301118	Caldy, Merseyside	
<b>SANDERLING</b>				
NB00725	3	210516	Ebb of the Riv, Orkney	
	VV	261016-200317	West beach, Lossiemouth	
	VV	280118	West beach, Lossiemouth	
	VV	200318	West beach, Lossiemouth	
	VV	111018	West beach, Lossiemouth	182 km
<b>BLACK-HEADED GULL</b>				
K00091 (J2CR)	?	150712	Mosvangen Camping, Stavanger, NORWAY	
	VV	230912	Cullen	
	VV	100413	Mosvangen Camping, Stavanger, NORWAY	
	VV	070513	Mosvatnet østsiden, Stavanger, NORWAY	
	VV	110613	Mosvatnet østsiden, Stavanger, NORWAY	
	VV	150613	Mosvangen, Stavanger, NORWAY	
	VV	210814	Cullen	
	VV	091114	Lancaster Canal, Lancaster	
	VV	090115	Lancaster Canal, Lancaster	
	VV	290817	Cullen	
	VV	180818	Cullen	518 km
EZ05659 (yellow 2AC1)	1	080615	Ythan estuary	
	VV	070817	Seton Burn, Lothian	
	VV	210218	Seton Burn, Lothian	
	VV	040318	Loch Spynie	193 km
EY94500 (yellow 2CN5)	3	260816	Ythan estuary	
	VV	290618	Ythan estuary mouth	
	VV	201018	Lossie estuary	90 km
ER11194 (yellow 2EY1)	6	120817	Ythan estuary	
	VV	170218	Lossie estuary	90 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	
	VV	070118	Cooper Park pond, Elgin	Local

### GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL

Only movements over 100 km are given in full below:

HT97803	1	170606	Rothiesholm Head, Stronsay, Orkney	
	XF	021018	Dipple, Fochabers	165 km
MA30205 (orange L5ST)	10	170118	Pitsea landfill site, Essex	
	VV	150918	Lossie estuary	
	VV	08-091218	Lossie estuary	
	VV	251218	Lossie estuary	728 km
MA39248 (yellow 0W6B)	1	080715	Garbh Eilean, Western Isles	
	VV	050915	Lossie estuary	
	VV	110617	Fraserburgh Harbour	
	VV	230418	Lossie estuary	184 km
Yellow 3K5B	Ad.	090718	Sule Skerry, Orkney	
	VV	031018	Lossie estuary	
	VV	141018	Lossie estuary	
MA32976 (yellow X:107)	1	130617	Isle of May	
	VV	121017	Lossie estuary	
	VV	121117	Peterhead harbour	
	VV	090318	Lossie estuary	176 km

A total of 12 colour-ringed individuals from various Caithness colonies were reported, mainly from the Lossie estuary.

### HERRING GULL

Only movements over 100 km are given in full below:

GV31815 (yellow Y:144)	5	260216	Harwood Whin landfill site, York	
	VV	150716	Lossie estuary	
	VV	03&100916	Lossie estuary	
	VV	271116	Lossie estuary	
	VV	120617	Lossie estuary	
	VV	09&110717	Lossie estuary	
	VV	26&300717	Lossie estuary	
	VV	111017	Lossie estuary	
	VV	010118	Lossie estuary	
	VV	290418	Lossie estuary	

	VV	070918	Lossie estuary	
	VV	061018	Lossie estuary	
	VV	091218	Lossie estuary	
	VV	251218	Lossie estuary	437 km
GV54724	7	170217	Harwood Whin landfill site, York	
(yellow Y:B56)	VV	110218	Lossie estuary	437 km

### ICELAND GULL

A 1CY individual (T:001) was seen at the Lossie estuary on 28 Apr, however, despite requests no information was forthcoming. It is assumed that this individual originated from one of the east coast harbours.

### ARCTIC TERN

XR25315	1	160787	RAF Kinloss	
	X	260618	North Ronaldsay, Orkney	204 km
SX91568	1	130799	RAF Kinloss	
	X	080618	Invergordon	36 km

At 30 years, 11 months old XR25315 was just short of the longevity record of 31 years and 18 days.

### GUILLEMOT

R86996	1	140615	North Sutor	
	X	260618	Portknockie	67 km
R99004	1	140615	North Sutor	
	X	250618	off Culbin Forest	18 km

### WOODPIGEON

FP40880	6	110614	Bishopmill, Elgin	
	VV	050318	Bishopmill, Elgin	Local

### BARN OWL

GC86106	1	160617	Hillock, Brechin	
	XF	220918	Berryley, Forres	95 km

### GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER

RP64784	5m	070515	Inchberry, near Fochabers	
	V	020918	Inchberry, near Fochabers	Local

### JACKDAW

EL39251	1	090617	Boat o' Brig	
	XF	060418	Gordon Castle	7 km

### COAL TIT

Z495503		030115	Ordiequish Forest	
	V	160318	Lacock, Wiltshire	687 km

An unprecedented movement.

### BLUE TIT

Y875669	3	190712	Keith	
	V	100418	Keith	Local
AJD7294	1	300518	Caysbriggs	
	V	190818	Loch Spynie CES	4 km

### GREAT TIT

Y795023	6m	190512	Invererne, Forre	
	V	170618	Invererne, Forres	Local
Z220581	6f	090515	Invererne, Forres	
	V	170618	Invererne, Forres	Local

### SAND MARTIN

AFB3583	3	290718	Loch Spynie CES	
	V	040918	Chenal, Chenac-Saint-Seurin-D'uzet, FRANCE	1352 km

### SWALLOW

ABA1191	3	230817	Kingston	
	V	240618	Isle of May	
	V	040718	Isle of May	169 km

### LONG-TAILED TIT

BCA985	2	291213	Inchberry, near Fochabers	
	V	060118	Inchberry, near Fochabers	Local

### WILLOW WARBLER

HCV651	3f	020815	Loch Spynie CES	
	V	070818	Loch Spynie CES	Local
HCV678	4f	080815	Loch Spynie CES	
	V	070818	Loch Spynie CES	Local

### CHIFFCHAFF

HCV692	3J	080815	Loch Spynie CES	
	V	240318	South Landing, Flamborough, Yorkshire	441 km



### SEDGE WARBLER

AFB3402	3	210718	Kingston	
	V	140918	Hondarribia, Guipuzcoa, SPAIN	1595 km
AFB3920	3	290818	Kingston	
	V	030818	Mars-Ouest, Loire-Atlantique, FRANCE	1177 km
AFB3802	3	080818	Kingston	
	V	090918	Ria de Villaviciosa, Villaviciosa, Ovied, SPAIN	1581 km

### BLACKBIRD

LJ51724	3f	031015	Clochan, Buckie	
	VV	010618	Southill, Bedfordshire	640 km
CW21785	4f	291017	Teindland Forest	
	VV	290318	Gjesdal, Rogaland, NORWAY	544 km

### DIPPER

RL18812	5f	020513	Cellar Gallery, Walterstone, Herefordshire	
	V	151118	Forres	634 km

An unprecedented movement for a largely sedentary species.

### HOUSE SPARROW

TV66666	3f	140814	Keith	
	V	150718	Keith	Local

### DUNNOCK

D659703	3	081113	Buckie	
	V	170518	Buckie	Local
D659775	3	061213	Buckie	
	V	200318	Buckie	1 km
TV79014	4m	090515	Invererne	
	V	170618	Invererne	Local

### CHAFFINCH

X877950	6m	090412	Inchberry, near Fochabers	
	V	010118	Inchberry, near Fochabers	Local

# **LESSER REDPOLL**

D611398	3	301114	Teindland Forest, Carraburn, near Rothes	
	V	221017	Queenamidda, Rendall, Orkney	
	V	080418	Quina, Orkney	
	V	240518	Queenamidda, Rendall, Orkney	165 km
D611488	4	031214	Teindland Forest, Carraburn, near Rothes	
	V	250118	Hollow Farm, Worplesdon, Surrey	722 km
Z495563	6m	030115	Thief's Hill, Ordiquish Forest	
	V	120118	Alnwick, Northumberland	255 km
Z903548	3f	131215	near Hollesley Heath, Suffolk	
	XF	260118	Rothiemay Crossroads	665 km
S463367	4f	261016	Whixall & Fenn's Mosses, Wrexham	
	V	061018	Teindland Forrest, Carraburn, near Rothes	518 km

# **SISKIN**

AFA4241	5m	130318	Clochan, Buckie	
	V	150518	Strath tongue, Sutherland	127 km
AFA4297	4m	130418	Clochan, Buckie	
	V	100618	Wardend, Durriss, Aberdeen	75 km
D224859	3m	100416	Thetford Lodge Farm, Suffolk	
	XF	090718	Cothill, Nairn	639 km
S325560	3J	270716	Benrines Distillery, Moray	
	V	210/18	Deer Park Croft, Avoch	54 km
S526749	5m	240217	Clochan, Buckie	
	V	100418	Strath tongue, Sutherland	127 km
S551666	6m	310117	Inchberry, near Fochabers	
	V	110318	Hazeley, Hampshire	713 km
S886972	3J	250717	Inchberry, near Fochabers	
	V	300318	West Tofts, Norfolk	616 km
S803302	3m	130417	Inchberry, near Fochabers	
	V	220418	Inchberry, near Fochabers	
	V	300318	West Tofts, Norfolk	616 km
Y993842	5m	260414	Inchberry, Fochabers	
	VV	100318	Corpusty, Norfolk	595 km

S526882	3J	220517	Clochan, Buckie	
	V	080418	Fort Augustus, Highland	116 km

S526980	3J	140717	Clochan, Buckie	
	V	140418	Lake Vyrnwy, Powys	542 km

# REED BUNTING

Y978793	3f	250813	Loch Spynie CES	
	V	080516	Loch Spynie CES	
	V	140618	Loch Spynie CES	Local

D634290	4m	100515	Loch Spynie CES	
	V	050518	Loch Spynie CES	
	V	310718	Loch Spynie CES	Local

D634292	4m	100515	Loch Spynie CES	
	V	050518	Loch Spynie CES	
	V	310718	Loch Spynie CES	Local

D634295	4f	100515	Loch Spynie CES	
	V	050915	Loch Spynie CES	
	V	200517	Loch Spynie CES	
	V	030618	Loch Spynie CES	Local

**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	Beatslach	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	NH8954

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
Drumfurich	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	Lagganauuld	NJ2026
Hills of Cromdale	NJ1226	Lagganvoulin	NJ1817
Hilton of Delnies	NH8456	Laikenbuie	NH9052
Holme Rose	NH8048	Lecht	NJ2413
Hopeman	NJ1469	Leids Hill	NJ4126
Househill	NH8855	Lein	NJ3365
Howford	NH8753	Lethen Bar	NH9351
Humbrack	NJ2556	Lethenhill	NJ1058
Hunt Hill	NJ2346	Lhanbryde	NJ2761
		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	Muir of Holmie	NJ4161
Logieburn	NJ2656	Muir of Linksfield	NJ2264
Longmorn	NJ2358	Muir of Milnorduff	NJ1859
Lossie estuary	NJ2469	Muir of the Clans	NH8352
Lossiemouth	NJ2370	Muirhead	NJ0863
Lower Auchenreath	NJ3763	Muirton	NJ2268
Lower Blairnain	NJ2738	Muiry Wood	NJ0558
Lower Bogrotten	NJ4861	Mulben	NJ3550
Lower Dallachy	NJ4861	Mulderie Mains	NJ3950
Lower Hempriggs	NJ1064	Mundole	NJ0156
Lyne of Knockando	NJ1745	Myreside	NJ2164
Lynemore	NJ1438		
Macbeth's Hillock	NH9656	Nairn	NH8856
Machattie's Cairn	NJ3547	Nairn Bar	NH9260
Mains of Kirdells	NJ1739	Nether Bellandy	NJ2833
Mains of Balnagowan	NH8154	Nether Birnie	NJ2059
Mains of Moyness	NH9553	Nether Dallachy	NJ3663
Manachie Farm	NJ0356	Nether Meft	NJ2764
Manbeen	NJ1959	Netherbyre	NJ1557
Maryfield	NJ2364	Netherton	NJ0361
Marypark	NJ1938	Newbold Wood	NJ0558
Maviston	NH9458	Newforres Wood	NJ0657
Meikle Balloch Hill	NJ3534	Newton nursery	NJ1663
Meikle Coire Riabhach	NJ2513	Newton of Darnaway	NH9853
Meikle Conval	NJ2937	Newton of Innes	NJ2866
Meikle Kildrummy	NH8553	North Darkland	NJ2662
Mid Mains	NJ1966		
Middlefield	NJ0360	Oldtown	NJ1367
Midwood	NJ4261	Ordiquish	NJ3357
Mill of Grange	NJ0460	Ordbreck	NH8747
Millhill	NJ3158	Orton	NJ3153
Milltown	NJ2758	Overton	NJ2745
Milltown of Laggan	NJ2834		
Milton Brodie	NJ0962	Paddockhaugh	NJ2058
Milnorduff	NJ1860	Parks of Innes	NJ2763
Milnordhill	NJ0963	Paul's Hill	NJ1140
Monadh an t-Sluich Leith	NJ2617	Penick	NH9356
Monahoudie Moss	NJ2243	Philaxdale	NJ1667
Monaughty	NJ1260	Pitairlie	NJ2465
Moniemouies	NJ2756	Pitchroy	NJ1738
Montgrew	NJ4551	Pitgaveny	NJ2465
Moor of Tore	NJ1054	Pittendreich	NJ1961
Morinsh Forest	NJ2330	Pluscarden	NJ1456
Moss of Barmuckity	NJ2461	Portgordon	NJ3964
Moss of Birnie	NJ2051	Portknockie	NJ4868
Mosstodloch	NJ3360	Porttannachy	NJ3864
Mossyards	NJ1566		
Moycroft	NJ2362	Quarrywood	NJ1864
Moyness	NH9553	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		

