



Birds in Moray & Nairn

2020

Birds in Moray & Nairn in 2020

MORAY & NAIRN BIRD REPORT
No.35 – 2020

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

Cover photograph: Snow Bunting at the Spey estuary, 4 November 2020 (Martin Cook).

Species account authors:

Bob Proctor	wildfowl
Duncan Gibson	waders
Richard Somers Cocks	seabirds
Martin Cook	all other species

This edition of *Birds in Moray & Nairn*, the 35th edition of the Moray & Nairn bird report, is available only online at www.birdsinmorayandnairn.org. For those who wish a hard copy, this can be printed from the website.

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

EDITORIAL

The publication of this annual edition of *Birds in Moray & Nairn*, marks a small milestone as it is the 35th and last to be produced by the current editor Martin Cook. The first edition, then called *Moray and Nairn Bird Report*, covered 1985 and contained records submitted by 23 observers. The current edition contains contributions from 323 observers. The volume of records received has also increased dramatically from a few hundred in 1985 to over 35,000 used in the compilation of this report. While this is, of course, a very welcome increase, it does impose a much greater workload on those involved with the production of the report. It will be necessary to recruit more species account authors in the near future although in a small, sparsely populated area such as Moray & Nairn this is not as straightforward as may be the case in larger recording areas.

The 1985 report was a 25-page typed document, reproduced on a Gestetner duplicating machine. Albeit with slightly enhanced duplicating technology the report continued to be privately copied and assembled until the 1998 report became the first to be professionally produced. The first black-and-white photographs were included in the 2003 report, with colour following in 2005. However, by the end of the decade, the ever-expanding size of the report, increasing printing costs and the inclusion of more photographs had raised the unit cost to an unsustainable level and the decision was taken to produce a digital-only report, starting with the 2010 edition. Since that time, the annual reports have been published online on the Birds in Moray and Nairn website www.birdsinmorayandnairn.org. This means that the reports are readily available, free of charge to anyone with access to the internet.

This report, for 2020, covers the time when the problems associated with the COVID-19 pandemic were at their peak. Travel restrictions limited the visits to many sites, although the permitted daily exercise walks provided opportunities for study of areas 'close to home'. Although many data tables in this report do contain counts, any apparent declines in numbers should therefore be viewed with caution. This problem was particularly acute for accurate monitoring of moorland raptor populations where lock-down prevented early spring visits to many sites.

I should like to record my thanks to all those who have contributed to the production of these Bird Reports over the years, especially those who have shouldered the work of writing the species accounts, notably Duncan Gibson, Bob Proctor, Richard Somers Cocks and Chris Thomas. Bob has also been responsible for the production of the annual Ringing Report. Many photographers have generously permitted the use of their pictures over the years, and consequently greatly enhanced the appearance of the report. No report of this type can of course exist without the input from the many people who take the time and trouble to submit their records, either directly to the SOC Local Recorder or via the BTO BirdTrack programme. Thank you for your contributions – and please keep them coming!

Martin Cook (Editor)

HOW TO SUBMIT RECORDS

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

1. To Birdtrack

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

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

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

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

2. To the Moray and Nairn Recorder

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

location (if possible with a 6-figure map reference, although a 4-figure map reference is often adequate).

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

ASSESSMENT OF RARITY RECORDS

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

A three-tier system of record assessment exists:

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

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

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

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

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

The following species are currently on the MNRC list:

Bewick's Swan	Bean Goose	American Wigeon
Green-winged Teal	Garganey (except adult male)	Ring-necked Duck
Ruddy Duck (except adult male)	Surf Scoter (except adult male)	Balearic Shearwater
Leach's Petrel	Red-necked Grebe	Black-necked Grebe
White Stork	Spoonbill	Bittern
Little Egret	Great White Egret	Honey-buzzard
Rough-legged Buzzard	Hobby	Spotted Crane
Corncrake	Crane	Avocet

Little Ringed Plover (except lower River Spey)	American Golden Plover	Temminck's Stint
Pectoral Sandpiper	Buff-breasted Sandpiper	Red-necked Phalarope
Grey Phalarope	Long-tailed Skua	Sabine's Gull
Ring-billed Gull	Black Tern	Roseate Tern
Turtle Dove	Nightjar	Hoopoe
Wryneck	Green Woodpecker	Red-backed Shrike
Great Grey Shrike	Golden Oriole	Chough
Bearded Tit	Shore Lark	Yellow-browed Warbler
Reed Warbler	Icterine Warbler	Lesser Whitethroat
Firecrest	Nuthatch	Rose-coloured Starling
Bluethroat	Red-breasted Flycatcher	Black Redstart
Yellow Wagtail	Richard's Pipit	Water Pipit
Common Rosefinch	Hawfinch	Lapland Bunting

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

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

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

OBSERVERS CONTRIBUTING TO *BIRDS IN MORAY & NAIRN* 2020

I Addis, H Addlesee (HA), P Anderson, F Antley (FA), C Armour (CA), B Aspinall (BA), T Austin, I Bailey (IB), J Banks, D Barnett (DB), M Bauermeister, C Beattie, T Beckett, T Bennison (TB), P Bessa (PB), B Betts, G Biggs, C Bingham, J H Bingley, G Birnie (GBir), B Blackhall, R Booton, J Brain, M & S Brennan, S Brodie, S Broyd (StB), J Byatt, A Cage, N Calbrade, R Carberry, J Carroll, P Carter, M Chappell (MCh), I Cheshire, J Chiappa, H Clark (HC), J A Clarke (JAC), K Clarke, A J Clunas (ACl), M Coleman (MCl), M Collins, J C Cook, M J H Cook (MJHC), I Cooper (NC), S Cooper, J Cormack (JCo), B Cosnette (BC), A Cowl, J K Craib (JKC), M G Crutch (MGC), S-L Cull (S-LC), L Curson, P Dale (PDal), E Dalgleish, H Darnell, J Davies (JD), P Davies, J Dawson (JDa), A Dean (AD), R Debenham, R H Dennis (RHD), T Dewick, K Dixon, C Donald, S Donnelly, M Doubleday (MD), J M Dowson (JMD), C Dudgeon, N Duggan, K Duncan (KtD), K Duncan, P Duncan, H Eagles, A&A Edward (AE), P Elford (PE), L Evans-Hill, B Etheridge, H Farquhar (HFa), C Farrell-Morris, A W Featherstone (AWF), M Findlay (MF), J Ford, S Foster, I Francis (IF), H Franklin, M Galloway, M Garden (MGar), J Gate, G George (GG), D A Gibson (DAG), L Gibson, R Gibson, A Gilbert, A Gill, N Godden, J D Gordon, P R Gordon (PRG), A Grady, J Graham, J Graham, L Graham, P Graham, M Greaves (MGr), H Green (HG), T Green (TG), J Griffiths, S Grigor, K Guthrie, S Guyet, S Halder (SHI), G Hamlett (GH), S Harcombe, J Harrison (JHa), R Harrison, M Harvey, E Harwood (EH), P Hay (PHa), P Hibberd (PHi), I Hill (IH), A C Hilton, J Hogg, J Homer, P P Hyvonen, R Ince, H Insley, P Insole (PI), K Iveson, H Jackson, E Jensen, M Johnston (MJ), C Johnstone, C Jones, J Jones, A Joss, K Keenan, S Keenan, M Keighley, J Kerbyson, T Kirkpatrick, G&S Larrington (G&SL), J D Law (JDL), A J Lawrence (AJL), A Lawson (AL), P Lee, D Leith, V Leith, C G Leslie (CGL), R Leslie, H Loates (HL), S Loving, A Macaskill (AMA), D MacAskill (DMA), I MacDonald (IMD), A Macgarvey (AMg), M MacGarvin, C Mackay (CM), G MacLennan, K MacLeod, L Maclure (LaM), A MacQueen, H E Maggs (HM), J Maher, D Main (DMa), J Mair (JMa), J Marchant, B Marshall (BM), S Massie, R Mavor, S Mawson, S McArdle, K McArdle (KMc), K McCafferty, G McCrae, D Mchardy, F McHugh, P MacKenzie-Lloyd, K McLennan (KMCL), G McMullins (GM), A McNee (AMcN), D McNee (DMcN), J Mercer, P Message, T Middlemist, A Millar, S Milligan, P Moore, I Morgan, L Morris, L Morrison (LeM), W M Morrison (WMM), R Morsley, S Morton, S Murdoch (SMud), S Murphy, E Murray (EM), A Musgrove, J Neal, S Noble, J O'Hanlon, D Page, A Palethorpe, K Paterson, K Paterson, H Paul, S Pawsey (SP), A Perkins, P Phillips, D Pierce (DPi), T Plant, R Potter (RPo), D Powell, J Poyner (JPo), G Prest (GP), R Proctor (RP), J Protheroe, D M Pullan (DMP), A Pulli, D Puplett (DPu), P Purbrick, M Ranner (MRan), M Rayner (MRay), G Rebecca (GRb), S Reed, A Reid, C Reid, G Reid (CRei), G Reid, C Reynolds, A Rhodes, R Richardson, M Ridley, A & F Ritchie, M Roberts, D Robertson, L Robson (LR), I Rollo (IR), R Routledge, T Salway, W Samuel (WS), J Scrimgeour, A Scriven, S Seright, S Seton, T & J Shallcross, J Shannon, M Sharpe (MSh), C&D Shaw, D Shaw, P Sheils, P Shelbourne, B Sheldon, R Sheldon, P Shepherd, R A Shewan (RAS), A Shields, A Sime, J Simpson (JSi), L Simpson (LS), A Sinclair (ASin), D Slater, G & D Smith, C Smith, M Smith, M Smith, P G Smith, C Smout, R Somers Cocks (RSC), J Spencer, M Spriggs, J Stalker, M Stanyer, N Stewart, R Stewart, T Stowe (TSt), M Sullivan, D Sulway, N Sutherland (NSu), J Sutton, P Swainson, S Sykes, D Tanner, D Tattersley, A Taylor, C Taylor, D Taylor, W G Taylor (WGT), G Taylor Shaw, C Thomas, P Thomas, B Thompson (BT), D Thomson, D Thorne, D Tompkins, I Tooley, A Tough, G Troon, S Truluck, J Trythall, A E Turner, B Walker, M Warren (MWa), S Welch, T J Wells, C West (CW), E Weston (EW), A Wheatcroft (AWe), A Whitehouse, M Whitton, A Whyte, B Whyte (BWh), K Williams, S Williams, R Wilson, M Winkworth, P Winn, A Young (AY).

THE RECORDING AREA

The Moray & Nairn recording area comprises the local authority area of Moray together with the former county of Nairn, which is now part of Highland Council area. The two parts of the recording area are shown by grey lines in the map below. The boundary can be seen in greater detail on the SOC website at <https://www.the-soc.org.uk/bird-recording/grid-reference-finder>



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.

The majority of records related to Pale-bellied Brent Goose *B. b. hrota* particularly the regular flock in the Nairn area where groups were recorded from Delnies eastwards to the Nairn/Culbin Bars. The flock off Nairn golf course also held the Dark-bellied Brent Goose *B. b. bernicla* and the two Grey-bellied Brants *Branta sp.* which all remained from December 2019.

Winter: Present in the Nairn area from 1 Jan-11 Apr; the maximum count during this period was 93 on 7 Feb.

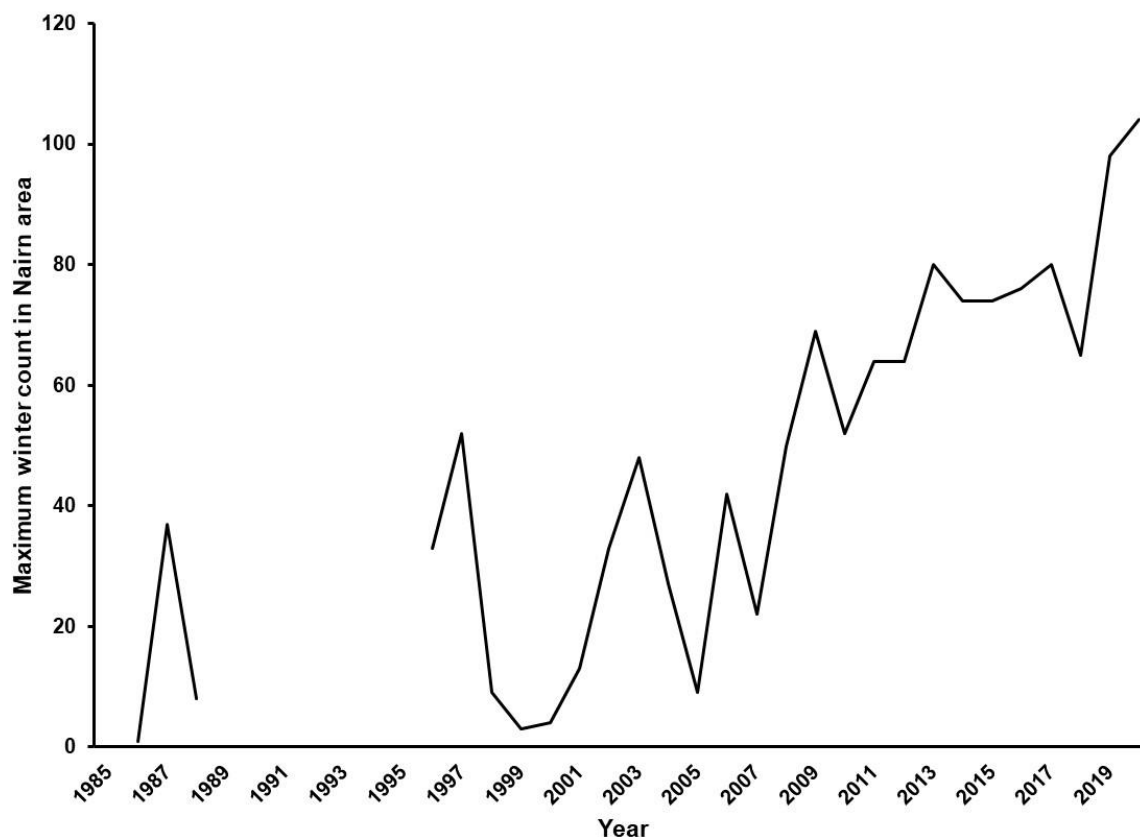
Largest annual group size reported from the Nairn area 2010-2020:

2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
52	64	64	80	74	57	76	80	65	98	104



Brent Geese, Nairn 16 January 2020 (Jack Harrison)

Maximum winter counts from the Nairn area per year (1985-2020):



One record away from the regular Nairn wintering area was at Roseisle on 15 Mar where recorded as 'present'.

Early autumn (August): A single flew west past the Spey estuary on 5 Aug and was later seen on the Lossie estuary 5-6 Aug. Later in the month a single was present on the Spey estuary 26th & 28th, and then 2 Lossie estuary on 29th (1 remaining on 30th).

Autumn passage period (September-October): In the Nairn wintering area the first 2 individuals had returned 5-6 Sep, then 3 on 8 Sep, increasing to 16 on 27 Sep but only 3 on 18 Oct. Elsewhere, 1 flew west during a seawatch off Lossiemouth harbour on 4 Sep, 25 resting and feeding on Findhorn beach 8 Sep and then daily in the Findhorn area 23-30 Sep (increasing to a maximum of 50 on 22 Sep), 22 Spey Bay 22 Sep (otherwise a single Spey Bay & Spey estuary 11-15 Sep), 5 Portgordon 23 Sep, 10 west Lossiemouth 23 Sep and 4 Lossie estuary 29 Sep. A small number of records elsewhere in October with 13 Findhorn Bay on 1st, increasing to 19 on 2nd, 5 Lossie estuary on 2nd and 1 west Lossiemouth harbour 9th.

Winter: In the Nairn area, the maximum count in November was c.60 on 29th. A single was present on the Spey estuary 6 & 21 Nov. Unlike last year, good numbers were present in early December (*e.g.* 82 on 1st), increasing to 94 on 14th and then 104 on 17th (this now becomes the largest count from Nairn for the wintering flock). A single was seen flying west past Lossiemouth and Burghead on 15th.

Dark-bellied Brent Goose: A single along the foreshore at Nairn on 1 & 4 Jan (DMP, PRG), then following a break in sightings, recorded on 1, 15-16 & 20-21 Mar (HA, CGL, RSC, DMP). Away from Nairn, a single was recorded on 10 Sep at Spey estuary (MJHC) and 22 Sep at Findhorn beach (RSC).

Grey-bellied Brant: The two adults from December 2019 remained on the foreshore at Nairn golf course 1 & 9 Jan (DMP) and a possible single adult on 1 Mar (HA). Later in the year a sighting of 1 on 22 Sep (RSC) on Findhorn beach and then a single at Nairn west beach on 15 Nov (DMP) was followed by 2 on 6 Dec (per BirdGuides).



[from left] Dark-bellied Brent, Pale-bellied Brent and Grey-bellied Brant, Findhorn beach 22 September 2020 (Richard Somers Cocks)

Canada Goose *Branta canadensis*

Scarce migrant in summer, rare in winter.

Winter & Spring records: No winter records were received. In late May, present in Findhorn Bay 21st-31st with a maximum count of 18 on 28th. Elsewhere during this period was 1 Loch Spynie 3 May, unusually 9 between Keith-Fochabers 28 May and a large count of 95 Whiteness Head 30 May.

Summer (June-July): Seen almost daily at Findhorn Bay 1 Jun-30 Jul with the largest count of 64 occurring on 12 Jun. Elsewhere, records from inland areas away from estuaries included 9 north Clunas Reservoir 3 Jun, 40 over Elgin cemetery 9 Jun and 14 west Upper Dallachy 9 Jun. Autumn (August-October): Present in the Findhorn Bay area from 1 Aug-5 Oct (largest count was 192 on 28 Aug). Elsewhere, typically much smaller numbers recorded compared to Findhorn Bay; 14 Loch Loy 16 Aug, 18 Windyridge 22-23 Aug, 16 Lossie estuary 26 Aug, 19 Spey estuary 3 Sep and 1 Burghead Bay 6 Oct.

Winter: The only records from the second winter period were from Findhorn Bay in November; 17 on 3rd and 13 on 6th.

The flock of 18 at Windyridge on 22-23 Aug included a family group (consisting of an adult and three juveniles) showing the characters of Todd's Canada Goose (*B.c.interior*) (RP). A possible Todd's Canada Goose was also present in Findhorn Bay 1 & 30 Sep (AJL, per BirdGuides).

Hybrid Canada Goose × Greylag Goose: 1 Findhorn Bay 21-22 Sep.

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

Winter-spring (January-April): Regular in the Findhorn Bay area with 16 reports from 2 Jan-19 Apr. The largest group during the period was 17 on 19 Apr, and a further eight counts of 10 or more; 10 on 19 Jan, 11 on 12 & 24-26 Jan and 13 on 16 & 18-19 Apr. Also during the winter period were 8 Moyness 7 Jan, 2 Auldearn 5 Feb and 3 Meikle Kildrummie 23 Mar.

Summer: All records are likely to refer to individuals from the feral population in Strathspey; recorded at Findhorn Bay (3 on 28 May and 1 Jun), River Spey at Aberlour (2 on 1 Aug) and the Spey estuary (1 on 2-31 Aug, occasionally on the sea).

Autumn: Small numbers recorded at three sites (Findhorn Bay, Kinloss and Nairn Bar) with most reports under 10 individuals before a big arrival occurred from 4-6 Oct; 4th (200+ east Cullen, 82 east Lossie estuary and 9 east Lossiemouth harbour), 5th (421 Findhorn Bay, 280 west Spey Bay, c.200 east Burghead, 111 Spey estuary, 100 Tugnet, 82 Portknockie, 70 east Lossiemouth, c.60 Burghead Bay, 38 Lossie estuary and 13 east Lossiemouth harbour) and 6th (26 east Lossiemouth harbour).

Winter (November-December): Only small numbers recorded during this period; 2 Findhorn Bay 13 Dec (1 on 3, 7 & 28 Nov), 1 Loch Spynie 7, 22 & 26 Nov and 1 Broadley, Clochan 11 Dec.

[Bar-headed Goose *Anser indicus**Escape.*

A single was present in Findhorn Bay from 22 Jun-1 Jul (GM, RSC, RP, AJL). Recorded on three previous occasions: 1 Kingston 28 Aug 1977, 2 Loch Spynie, then Lossie estuary, 6 Jun 1991 and 7 Spey estuary 2 Jul 2014.]



Bar-headed Goose, Findhorn Bay 23 June 2020 (Gordon McMullins)

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

Only a single intermediate morph individual was recorded, and appears to refer to the same returning bird from autumn 2017. Present at Moyness 4 Jan (RHD) and Tomhommie 7 Jan (AWe) in the early winter period and then at Findhorn Bay 5-7 & 21 Oct (GM, RSC, AJL, TSt).



Snow Goose, Findhorn Bay 5 October 2020 (Richard Somers Cocks)

Greylag Goose *Anser anser**Rare breeder and very common winter visitor.*

Winter-spring (January-April): Nine submissions, from three sites, recorded counts over 500; 1,178 Findhorn Bay 23 Jan was the largest count. Other large counts from Findhorn Bay were 860 on 9 Feb, 840 on 24 Jan, 742 on 5 Feb, 646 on 14 Mar and 565 on 4 Feb. Elsewhere, an estimated 900 Ardivot 31 Mar & 1 Apr and 772 Drainie 21 Mar.

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

	1-100	101-200	201-300	301-400
2020	41	7	3	4
2019	43	2	3	0
2018	59	10	8	1
2017	49	6	5	2
2016	52	7	3	2
2015	63	8	1	3
2014	41	10	1	3
2013	51	6	8	3
2012	39	7	3	1

Very small numbers from six sites well inland. All submissions were less than 10 except: 10 Ferness 29 Apr.

Summer: Two large estimates from Lochindorb were 900+ on 13 Jun and c.800 on 1 Jul, otherwise 32 Loch Kirkaldy 27 May was the only other substantial count.

Confirmed breeding: At Clunas Reservoir 3 recently hatched young 5 May, 20 juveniles (broods; 3, 4, 4, 4 & 5) on 23 May and 23 juveniles on 23 Jun & 9 Jul (JAC, JHa), while at Lochindorb 50+ juveniles were in fields 13 Jun (CGL).

Non-breeding flocks were regular at Findhorn Bay 6 May-30 Jul and included six counts over 100 individuals from 21-30 Jul (max. count 405 on 30 Jul). Elsewhere, much smaller numbers recorded; 48 Kirkhill 11 Jun, 32 Loch Kirkaldy 27 May, 12 Loch Flemington 30 May, 3 Nairn 25 Jul and 'present' Whiteness Head 23 Jul.

Late summer: Frequently recorded around Findhorn Bay during August where 14 counts exceeded 100. The three largest counts were; 1,150+ on 7th, 1,100+ on 23rd and 1,025+ 31st. Counts were also received from Glen Brown (12 on 5th), Inchnacape (21 on 6th) and Nairn (6 on 15th).

Autumn: At Findhorn Bay counts over 100 in September involved 520 on 10th, 281 on 19th and 187 on 22nd.

Elsewhere, 73 Loch Spynie 7th and 54 Nairn 26th. In October, the largest counts were 318 Sunbank, Lossiemouth 17th and 280 Findhorn Bay 2nd.

In November, flocks exceeding 100 individuals (max. counts) were: 3,610 (arriving to roost at dusk) Loch Spynie 26th, 1,500 (to roost) Lower Bogrotten 28th, 540 Findhorn Bay 22nd, 300+ Loch Flemington 26th and 120 Lossie Forest gravel pit 6th.

Winter (max. counts only): 1,100 Broadley, Clochan 10 Dec, 370 Loch Spynie 7 Dec and 355 Findhorn Bay 31 Dec.

Pink-footed Goose *Anser brachyrhynchus*

Very common migrant and winter visitor.

Winter (January-March): In Nairn, reported at 14 sites with three counts exceeding 500; 5,000+ Auldearn 5 Feb, 3,000 Tomhommie 7 Jan and c.1,000 Druim Farm, Auldearn 6 Feb. Maximum counts from other sites were: 30+ Ardersier 24 Jan, 4 Delnies Wood 23 Feb, c.300 Househill-Crook Cottage 20 Feb, 20 Kilravock 28 Mar, c.120 Little Aitnoch 16 Mar, 50 Loch Flemington 6 Jan, 240+ Lochdhu 12 Mar, 62 Lochindorb 18 Mar, 300+ Meikle Kildrummie 23 Mar, c.250 Nairn Academy 12 Mar and 2 River Nairn (Howford) 22 Jan.

In Moray, the largest counts were again from Findhorn Bay: 13,400 on 24 Jan and 12,000 on 1 Jan. Eight other counts from Findhorn Bay exceeded 1,000 individuals. Elsewhere, counts in excess of 1,000 included 7,000 Moyness 4 Jan, c.3,000 Greens of Blairrock 22 Mar and 2,000+ Milnorduff 24 Mar.

Spring passage (max. counts): Unlike recent years there was no obvious large passage. Largest count in April was only 3,815 from Findhorn Bay 3 Apr, with a further six counts from the bay in excess of 1,000. Maximum counts over 500 from other sites were: 800 west Portgordon 16 Apr and 573 west Lossiemouth harbour 4 Apr. Unusual for Lossie estuary was 1 on the mud 18 Apr. In May, the largest flock at Findhorn Bay was 2,375 on 1st, with just two other counts in excess of 1,000. The only other count from elsewhere was 60 west Lossiemouth harbour 17th.

Summer: Present only in Findhorn Bay 1 Jun-30 Aug with the monthly maximum counts being 16 on 23 Jun, 17 on 4 Jul and 5 on 7 Aug. A further six counts were submitted involving over 10 individuals.

Autumn: As there was only one individual recorded in Findhorn Bay after 8 Aug, the 5 in the bay on 1 Sep were likely to be arrivals. From 5-10 Sep a total of 14 flocks were recorded; the

largest was 10,880 Findhorn Bay on 10th. Numbers increased at Findhorn Bay during the rest of the month; 17,700+ on 23rd, 30,600 (dawn count) on 24th and 20,000+ on 27th. Elsewhere, the largest count from 10 submissions was 120 Nairn 29 Sep, but also included a well inland record of 52 over Cairn Gorm 18 Sep. In October, large counts from Findhorn Bay were similar to last year; 25,200 (dawn count) on 2nd, 20,000+ on 5th, 20,000+ on 21st and 19,100 on 23rd. Smaller numbers elsewhere (max. counts): 186 Nairn 3rd, 15 Tugnet 5th, 50 west Lossiemouth harbour 6th, 1,000+ Delnies 10th, c.400 Spey Bay 15th, 1,376 (dawn count) Nairn Bar 17th, 400 Loch Flemington 23rd and 1,000 Bailliesland 26th. In November, flocks over 1,000 (max. counts) were seen at Findhorn Bay (21,100 on 15th), Nairn Bar (5,620 on 21st) and Moyness (1,200 on 25th).

Winter: Counts exceeding 1,000 were received from four sites; 29,500 Findhorn Bay 16 Dec (16,100 on 7 Dec and 21,150 on 13 Dec), 16,110 Broadley, Clochan 11 Dec, 2,000 Nairn 19 Dec and c.1,500 west Altyre 8 Dec.

White-fronted Goose *Anser albifrons*

Very scarce winter visitor.

Two records were received relating to the Greenland race *A. a. flavirostris*:

Tomhommie: An immature on 7 & 9 Jan (AWe, JPo).

Scarffbanks: 5 on 12 Dec (NSu, CA).

Also one record of European White-fronted Goose *A. a. albifrons*:

Findhorn Bay: 1 on 21 Dec (SP).

Records of un-assigned race:

Findhorn Bay: A single on 2 Dec (PRG).

Mute Swan *Cygnus olor*

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

Breeding: A total of 19 apparently occupied territories were recorded in 2020, with 13 pairs producing 94 young; of these, a minimum of 47 appear to have fledged. The mean total of fledged young in 2020 was 3.6.

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

Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Pairs	17	13	19	13	17	11	12	11	16	14	13
Young fledged	84	53	53	73	43	38	56	26	42	40	47
Mean	4.9	4.1	2.8	5.7	2.5	3.5	4.7	2.4	2.6	2.9	3.6

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
Loch Flemington	8	8	7			Breeders			10	92	75	33
Nairn harbour	4	2	2			Breeders			6	5	6	5
Kingsteps	3	4	2	nc	nc	2	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	5
Loch Loy	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	1	nc	nc	nc	nc	2	nc
Loch of Blairs	3	5	3			Breeders			nc	nc	3	nc
Brodie Castle pond	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	2	2	nc	2	nc	2
Findhorn Bay	6	7	31	60	82	79	12	2	4	24	14	9
Lossie estuary	2	2	nc	2	4	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc
Loch Spynie	64	72	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	11	16	66	70
Cooper Park, Elgin	2	3	2	1	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	2
Cloddach	7	nc	nc			Breeders			nc	13	14	10
Loch Oire	24	22	23			Breeders			nc	nc	33	58
Loch na Bo	nc	5	4			Breeders			nc	17	10	8
Dallachy	3	2	2			Breeders			nc	nc	nc	nc
Spey estuary	2	1	nc	nc	nc	14	11	7	9	4	5	nc

nc = no count received

Other records from the coastal strip (max. counts): 2 Auldearn Reservoir 20 Dec, 5 Balormie pig farm 4 Mar, 1 flying over Bishopmill, Elgin 10 Apr, 1 Gordon Castle (Fochabers) 8 Mar, 2 Grigorhill, Auldearn 7 May & 19 Sep and 2 Eastern Delnies 17 Dec.

Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus*

Common migrant and winter visitor.

Winter-spring: In Nairn, reported from three sites (5 in 2019) (max. count): 27 Loch Flemington 1 Jan, 2 Achavraat 16 Jan and 9 Nairn 25 Feb. In Moray, reports were received from 17 sites. Maximum counts from each site were: 60 Gilston 11 Jan, 64 Loch Spynie 11 Jan, 8 Loch Oire 12 Jan, 25 Easter Marchhead 15 Jan, 10 Kinloss 21 Jan, c.40 Crosslots, Duffus 24 Jan, 68 Shempston 27 Jan, 3 Kirkhill 6 Feb, 5 Loch of Blairs 9 Feb (also 4 & 8 Mar), 13 Pitgaveny 13 Feb, 24 Calcots 13 Feb, 43 Scarffbanks Farm 18 Feb, 11 west Lossiemouth harbour 8 Mar, 29 Findhorn Bay 9 Mar, 46 Balormie pig farm 15 Mar, 27 Kingston 17 Mar and 25 Cloddach quarry 27 Mar.

Spring (April-May): Typically small numbers present during this period; 7 Mill of Grange 1 & 6 Apr, 16 Balormie pig farm 2 Apr, 19 Cloddach quarry 5 Apr, 2 west Lossiemouth harbour 5 Apr, 12 west Findhorn Bay 9 Apr, 7 Kirkhill 9 Apr and 18 Gilston 14 Apr.

Summer: Recorded from four sites during Jun-Aug; two were regularly seen at the Spey estuary 23 Jun-30 Aug (and included a colour-ringed individual from Caerlaverock), increased to 5 on 15 Aug. At the other sites one individual was seen and could account for all the records; Loch Flemington 3, 14 & 17 Jun, Cloddach quarry 6, 20 Jun, 1 & 20 Jul and Findhorn Bay 25 Jul.

Autumn: The two individuals remained on the Spey estuary 3-26 Sep, and 3 recorded flying east on 17 Sep which are likely to have been the 3 Loch Spynie the previous day. A small arrival occurred 23-28 Sep with 8 flocks recorded, maximum counts from each site, were 12 Sunbank, Lossiemouth on 24th, 35 Findhorn Bay 25th, 5 Elgin cemetery 27th and 10 Loch Spynie 28th.

In October, 50 reports were received with the majority being under 50 individuals. Seven sites exceeded 100 individuals, maximum counts from these sites were; 684 East Mains, Gilston 25th, 220 Sunbank, Lossiemouth 13th and 200+ Waterton 26th.

In November only four sites held large flocks; 511 Loch Spynie 1st (130 on 22nd), 109 Findhorn Bay 8th, 213 Duffus Castle 12th and 300 West Mains, near Gilston 13th.

Winter (December): In Nairn, birds were recorded at six sites (max. counts); 12 Lethen 2nd, 71 Muir of the Clans, Croy 8th, c.25 Grigorhill, Auldearn 15th, 2 Achavraat 15th, 4 Culbin 16th and 13 Loch Flemington 22nd.

In Moray, seen at eight sites (max. counts): 4 Loch of Blairs 2nd, 2 Loch Spynie 7th & 15th, 68 Broadley, Clochan 10th, 11 Milnorduff 11th, 3 Burghead 14th, 6 Findhorn Bay 18th & 28th, 67 West Mains, near Gilston 20th and 6 Cloddach quarry 20th.

Brood sizes reported in Oct-Dec 2014-2020:

Frequency	1	2	3	4	5	6
2020	1	5	2	2	0	1
2019	0	0	3	2	0	0
2018	1	1	4	3	1	0
2017	0	6	7	6	4	0
2016	9	17	10	9	0	0
2015	10	5	8	2	1	1
2014	3	14	16	7	6	0

The mean from the 11 broods reported was 2.4 young.

Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*

Fairly common visitor in winter and spring. Scarce breeder.

Breeding: Confirmed breeding was recorded at Findhorn Bay, Cloddach quarry and Spey estuary but difficult to reduce duplication. A pair at Balormie pig farm 9 Feb-21 Mar and then only the male from 18 Apr-10 May suggests that breeding may have occurred nearby.

Seen in potential breeding areas at Balormie pig farm, Loch Flemington, Loch Spynie, Lossie estuary, Nairn and Westerfold Cottages (Drainie).

Best monthly counts at coastal sites were as follows:

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Nairn/Culbin Bars	142	139	1	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	28	22	186
Findhorn Bay	81	75	86	71	89	179	174	17	12	47	184	124
Spey estuary	nc	nc	2	2	nc	2	7	5	nc	nc	5	nc

Other coastal sites (max. counts): 10 Nairn 3 Jan, 70 Carse of Delnies 26 Jan, 2 Lossie estuary 19 Apr, 5 Portgordon 14 Aug and 1 Burghead 1 Nov.

Inland (max. counts): 14 Cloddach quarry 26 Feb and 2 Loch Flemington 17 Jun.

At Lossiemouth harbour during seawatches: 2 west on 3 Apr and 5 east 3 May. A juvenile present amongst rocks off Lossiemouth harbour 9 Aug was likely the same present on the Lossie estuary 10-24 Aug.

Mandarin Duck *Aix galericulata*

Probable escape or feral origin.

Cawdor area: No breeding reports received from the Cawdor/Clephanton/River Nairn area this year although a single was seen in Cawdor Wood 30 Apr. Singles were also reported on 8 Jan and 1 Jul.

Kilravock area:	10 Kilravock 28 Mar was the largest count. Regularly seen in Apr-May around the Kilravock area (max. count: 5 on 1 & 18 Apr). On 6 Jun a pair was on the road at Galcantray. At Croy 9 were present on 9 Apr.
Howford Bridge:	2 males on the River Nairn 24 Apr.
Newmill, Auldearn:	A pair present on fishing pools 10 Feb.
Elgin:	A pair on the River Lossie 26 Mar & 7 Apr, followed by 14 on the River Lossie near the Bow Brig on 18 November.
Pitchroy:	A male present 22 Apr.

Garganey *Anas querquedula*

Rare in spring.

Only one site held birds this year.

Findhorn Bay: A pair present at the mouth of the Mosset Burn 7 May (AJL).

Shoveler *Spatula clypeata*

Occasional breeder and scarce migrant.

In Nairn: the only record was a single on Loch Flemington 30 May.

In Moray:

Findhorn Bay: A female 6 Feb, 1 on 26 Sep increased to 2 on 27 Sep and then two females on 8 & Oct.

Balormie pig farm: A pair 10 & 25 Apr.

Cloddach quarry: A pair 15 Apr, then 5 on 11 Oct dropping to a female on 29 Oct.

Loch Spynie: Two males on 3 May. Present from 10-24 Oct (max. count; 6 on 16 Oct, though 3 males 14 Oct and 4 females 18 Oct).

Gadwall *Mareca strepera*

Scarce visitor.

Whiteness Head: A single on 23 Jul.

Loch Flemington: A single 14-15 Mar and 3 May. Later in the year present from 31 Aug-1 Dec (recorded on 12 dates). Maximum count was 3 on 14 & 16 Sep.

Findhorn Bay: 11 on 7 & 8 Sep (PRG) was the largest count of the year. A male at the Mosset Burn 19 Jun was the only other record.

Cloddach quarry: A female and brood of 6 chicks on 1 Jul was the second breeding record for Moray & Nairn (MJHC), following the first recorded breeding at Loch Spynie on 7 Jun 2019. Recorded on five occasions 15 Apr-29 Oct, maximum count of 4 males, 1 female on 11 Oct.

Lossie Forest gravel pit: A male on 16 Oct.

Loch Spynie: Two males on 10 May, a single on 17 Sep and a pair on 14 Oct were the only records received this year from a frequently occupied and visited site.

Loch Oire: 'Present' on 14, 20 & 30 Jan, 4 Feb and 7 Nov.

Loch na Bo: A single on 30 Nov.

Dallachy pool: A female on 23 Jun.

Spey estuary: A single on 11 Aug.



Gadwall brood, Cloddach quarry 1 July 2020 (Martin Cook)

Wigeon *Mareca penelope*

Very common winter visitor and rare breeder.

Breeding: Recorded inland on a small pool in the Lochindorb area on 13 Jun when a female and 2 small chicks were seen (CGL). This is the first confirmed breeding since 2018 when confirmed breeding occurred at Loch Kirkaldy.

Non-breeders in summer (May-July), away from main sites below, involved 3 pairs Balormie pig farm 3 May, 8 Loch Kirkaldy 8 May ('present' 11-19 May) and 5 Loch Flemington 29 Jul.

Monthly maximum counts at main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Findhorn Bay	695	1014	142	292	102	33	20	181	1286	1242	886	1127
Lossie estuary	1171	1654	277	22	nc	4	nc	34	200	1027	1071	2031
Spey estuary	200	33	14	16	nc	4	9	5	30	99	47	214

Winter: Monthly maximum counts at other coastal sites were;

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Nairn area	167	500	30	nc	6	36	52	276
Nairn Bar	90	168	10	nc	nc	226	487	500
Culbin Bar	240	143	nc	nc	1	489	nc	nc
Lossie seawatches	nc	nc	nc	10	91	75	4	8
Portgordon	5	11	nc	nc	nc	17	nc	nc

Other counts at coastal sites included (max. counts): 28 Burghead 9 Nov.

On freshwater:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
L. Flemington	48	65	12	nc	nc	45	586	204	524
Loch of Blairs	93	120	7	nc	nc	nc	16	3	5
Cloddach quarry	nc	nc	nc	1	7	4	200	270	180
Loch Spynie	200	nc	nc	nc	nc	4	2	23	550
Dallachy pool	1	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	5	nc	2
Loch na Bo	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	12	6	5
Loch Oire	nc	23	13	nc	nc	nc	nc	136	168

Other counts on freshwater included (max. counts): 11 Loch Loy 8 Jan, c.30 Achavraat 16 Jan, 23 Miltonduff pool 1 Feb, 23 Drainie 11 Mar, 11 Balormie pig farm 25-26 Apr, 120 Loch Kirkaldy 12 Nov, 38 Easter Bauds 13 Nov, 190 Glenlatterach Reservoir 25 Nov and 25 Lossie Forest gravel pit 15 Dec.

A male on the River Spey at Aberlour on 26 Feb was unusual.

American Wigeon *Anas americana*

Rare visitor.

A male on Loch Oire 28 Nov (MJHC, RP) was the first since males were present at the Spey estuary and Cloddach quarry in 2014. This is about the 12th record for Moray & Nairn (excluding known returning individuals).



American Wigeon, Loch Oire 28 November 2020 (Martin Cook)

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

Breeding: The mean brood size from 8 broods was 8.8 chicks. Breeding was confirmed at Dallachy pool, Dyke, Findhorn Bay, Kingsteps (Nairn), Kirkhill (Elgin), Mosset Burn and Spey estuary.

Also recorded in suitable breeding habitat in the coastal strip at: Brodie Castle, Balormie pig farm, Clochan, Cloddach quarry, Cooper Park pond (Elgin), Delnies, Deveron, Dipple, Easter Bauds, Grigorhill, Househill (Nairn), Inchberry, Loch Flemington, Loch of Blairs, Loch Spynie, Loch Oire, Nairn Academy, Sanquhar pond and Upper Bogside.

Inland, also recorded in suitable habitat at Achavraat, Achneim Wood (Cawdor), Carron, Cawdor, Clunas reservoir, Cragganmore, Delavorar, Delnabo, Dorenell wind farm, Drumin Castle, Duthil, Ferness, Inverchor, Loch Kirkaldy and Lower Cabrach.

Best monthly flocks in regularly counted areas were:

Freshwater:

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Loch Flemington	11	25	9	nc	nc	10	54	50	29	42	30	39
Loch of Blairs	16	18	nc	nc	nc	nc	20	19	nc	nc	8	nc
Mosset pond	26	23	24	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	12	nc	nc	26
Cooper Park, Elgin	22	21	nc	10	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	49	43
Balormie pig farm	nc	3	4	8	12	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc
Lossie Forest	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	105	42	18
Loch Spynie	38	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	180	nc	13	30	83	74
Cloddach quarry	nc	58	nc	27	3	nc	200	120	nc	60	100	50
Loch Oire	nc	106	nc	nc	nc	nc	26	8	nc	nc	17	14
Loch na Bo	nc	52	nc	32	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	25	56	94
Dallachy pool	19	5	32	nc	1	21	35	40	9	40	19	35
Gordon Castle	80	92	37	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc

Large counts on other freshwater sites were (max. counts): 12 Holme Rose-Kilravock 12 Jan, 10 Sanquhar 7 Mar, 83 Montgrew pool 7 Aug, 88 Brodie Castle 10 Aug, 64 Easter Bauds 13 Nov and 13 Auldearn reservoir 13 Dec

Well inland in winter were: c.10 Achavraat 16 Jan, 7 Aberlour 31 Jan, 6 Marypark 6 Mar and 8 Duthil 4 Nov.

Possibly relating to released birds were reports from Glenfiddach Lodge pond (47 on 27 Sep) and Lower Bogrotten (340 on 28 Nov).

Coastal sites:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Delnies-Nairn	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	4	nc	5
Kingsteps area	6	2	2	15	nc	nc	13	150
Nairn/Culbin Bars	114	8	85	nc	nc	100	nc	25
Spey estuary	7	4	8	15	9	4	23	nc
Strathlene-Portgordon	46	38	nc	nc	nc	9	nc	5

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

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Nairn	195	180	92	nc	4	50	71	56	161	175	230	123
Findhorn Bay	221	143	20	21	34	115	43	151	365	137	145	181
Lossie estuary	nc	4	7	3	3	8	4	28	6	nc	3	2

Similar to 2019, a group of four males were observed on Halford's roof (Elgin) 12 Apr, but on this occasion appeared to be eating gull droppings. Also an unusual record of 2 Buckie town centre 22 Jan.

Pintail *Anas acuta*

Fairly common winter visitor and migrant. Occasional breeder.

Nairn: 2 on 25 Jan and 4 on 14 Nov (CGL).

Nairn Bar: 5 on 12 Jan and 3 on 13 Dec (GP).

Culbin Bar: Present 12 Jan (MF).

Findhorn Bay: Present from 3 Jan-23 Apr and 1 Sep-30 Dec. With continued regular visits large numbers were again recorded during both periods providing 88 records in excess of 100 individuals but slightly lower numbers than recent years, maximum count in each period was 494 on 30 Jan (GM) and 601 on 31 Oct (GM).

Highest monthly counts in Findhorn Bay in 2020 were:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
494	461	324	92	3	75	601	566	552

Lossiemouth: During seawatches from the harbour, 21 west on 5 Sep and 9 west on 6 Oct (RP).

Loch Spynie: A male recorded 9-18 Jan (BWh, PRG, JSi, DAG) and a maximum count of 4 on 10 Oct (JDL), with other counts being a female on 14 Oct, 3 on 16 Oct, 3 females on 24 Oct and 1 on 29 Nov (IF, MJHC, DAG, HFa).

Spey estuary: 4 on 3 Nov (JMD).

Teal *Anas crecca*

Scarce breeder and very common winter visitor.

Breeding: No confirmed breeding reports were received this year.

Potential breeding sites occupied during the breeding season included: Achavraat, Balormie pig farm, Cloddach quarry, Cragganmore, Drainie, Duthil, Findhorn Bay, Kirkill, Loch Flemington, Loch Kirkaldy, Lossie estuary, Montgrew, Mosset Burn, Mount of Haddoch (Clashindarroch) and Spey estuary.

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

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
L. Flemington	13	8	8	nc	nc	nc	12	10	54
Nairn area	12	6	6	nc	1	10	5	158	20
Kingsteps	11	7	5	nc	nc	nc	4	4	12
Findhorn Bay	324	105	121	266	238	220	22	123	20
Lossie estuary	382	622	24	78	31	68	181	500	427
Lossiemouth*	nc	nc	1	nc	8	10	174	4	1
Loch Spynie	7	50	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	3	93
Cloddach quarry	nc	17	nc	nc	30	60	100	nc	4
Loch na Bo	nc	2	3	nc	nc	nc	nc	2	4
Dallachy pool	29	17	18	nc	nc	5	5	nc	nc
Spey estuary	8	2	12	nc	3	108	81	31	5

* Teal flying past during seawatches

Other large counts (max.): 12 Mains of Findochty 22 Jan, 90 Carse of Delnies 7 Feb, 21 Drainie 27 Mar, 31 Balormie pig farm 4 Apr, 16 Montgrew pool 7 Aug, 12 Burghead 29 Sep, 100+ Lossie Forest gravel pit 16 Oct, 18 Millburn, Darnaway 3 Nov, 74 Loch Kirkaldy 5 Nov and 104 Easter Bauds 13 Nov.

Pochard *Aythya ferina*

Scarce winter visitor and occasional breeder.

Recorded at only one site (2 sites in 2019 and 5 sites in 2018).

Loch Spynie: A male was present 18 Nov-23 Dec (8 dates) (MJHC *et al.*).

Ring-necked Duck *Aythya collaris*

Vagrant.

A male was present at Loch na Bo 28 Nov-4 Dec (MJHC *et al.*) and constitutes the fourth record for Moray & Nairn following records of a male on the Dava lochans 5-6 Jun 1999, a female on Loch Oire 16-20 Nov (then Loch na Bo 21-23 Nov) 2003 and a female on Loch Spynie from 4-25 Apr 2004.



Ring-necked Duck, Loch na Bo 4 December 2020 (Henry Farquhar)

Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligala**Scarce breeder and common winter visitor.*

Breeding: Confirmed at Cloddach quarry (brood of 8 on 20 Jul and 5 on 19 Aug) and Loch Oire (brood of 5 on 7 Aug).

Other potential breeding sites occupied during the summer months were; Achavraat, Cloddach quarry, Black Loch, Dallachy pool, Dava lochans, Delnies, Grigorhill, Loch Allan, Loch Belivat, Loch Flemington and Loch Kirkaldy.

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

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Loch Flemington	24	17	5	13	nc	20	15	12	10	19	14	57
Loch of Blairs	1	8	11	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	3	4	5
Loch Spynie	24	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	28	26	50	26
Cloddach quarry	nc	43	nc	38	nc	nc	25	1	100	nc	4	16
Cooper Park, Elgin	10	nc	nc	1	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	6	13
Dallachy pool	nc	5	3	nc	6	3	11	17	10	5	12	13
Loch na Bo	nc	27	34	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	85	90	37
Loch Oire	nc	8	nc	23	nc	nc	9	10	nc	nc	7	19
Gordon Castle	10	2	5	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc

Elsewhere, large counts included 17 Nairn 14 Nov and 17 Spey estuary 3 Nov, otherwise only very small numbers recorded; 2 Loch Loy 8 Jan, 7 Brodie Castle pond 29 Jan, 6 Delnies 20 May, 5 Grigorhill 26 Jul and 3 Lossie Forest gravel pit 15 Dec.

A female was on the River Spey at Aberlour on 26 Feb, 30 Apr and 24 Sep.

Scaup *Aythya marila**Scarce winter visitor.*

Loch Flemington: 1 on 23 Oct.

Nairn: Regular in the winter periods around Nairn, with large counts off Nairn harbour in the early winter period.

Maximum counts from the Nairn area (usually between the harbour and Nairn Bar) were:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Oct	Nov	Dec
175	120	23	3	40	70

Burghead: 2 on 1 Nov.

Lossiemouth: Recorded during seawatches on 19 Apr (2), 3 May (2), 9 Nov (3), 10 Nov (4) and 20 Dec (9).

King Eider *Somateria spectabilis**Rare visitor.*

A male King Eider has been a regular winter visitor to the coast of Moray & Nairn since November 2009, with most records in the vicinity of Nairn or Burghead. Over the same period, a King Eider has been present in summer on the Ythan estuary in Aberdeenshire. Close examination of the dates of stay at these two locations shows no overlap and it is now considered that the same long-staying bird accounts for all records of King Eider since 2009. This position has been agreed by the SOC Recorders of Moray & Nairn and Aberdeenshire,

and by Nigel Hudson, Secretary of British Birds Rarities Committee - and is set out in the Report on rare birds in Great Britain in 2014 (*British Birds* 108:565-633).

In the early part of the year a male was present off Nairn 9 Jan-29 Mar (DMP *et al.*). In the summer it was recorded from Burghead Bay 8 May-17 Jul (RSC *et al.*). During 4 Sep-22 Oct, in eclipse plumage, it was initially seen off Nairn on 4-5 Sep before relocating to Burghead Bay for the remainder of the period (DMP *et al.*). It was last seen in Burghead Bay on 10 Nov (RSC) before the final record of the year on 5 Dec flying passed Nairn (IMD).



King Eider, Burghead Bay 24 June 2020 (Richard Somers Cocks)

Eider *Somateria mollissima*

Scarce breeder, common offshore.

Breeding: Confirmed breeding at Portgordon with two broods present in the harbour; brood of four 4 Jun and a brood of two tiny chicks on 2 Jul (MJHC).

Regular counts (max.) from coastal areas:

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Nairn area	100	150	120	nc	nc	nc	22	nc	20	38	57	9
Culbin/Nairn	809	600	40	nc	nc	nc	10	nc	nc	70	nc	70
Bars												
Findhorn	40	15	1	2	4	1	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc
Bay area												
Burghead	75	417	553	130	nc	315	190	210	650	1400	1520	960
Bay												
Burghead	32	30	21	nc	nc	nc	nc	1	15	192	279	44
Burghead-	42	9	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	39	nc	26
Hopeman												
Lossiemouth	51	112	76	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	18	11	26	1
Spey Bay	5	15	nc	nc	nc	16	27	6	33	80	93	42
Portgordon-	46	17	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	15	nc	nc	nc	22
Strathlene												

Other counts were: 6 Hopeman 6 Jan, 15 West Beach, Lossiemouth 12 Jan & 9 Feb, 13 Strathlene 19 Jan, 24 Mains of Findochty 22 Jan and 18 Spey estuary 3 Jul.

In harbours (max. count): 3 Buckie 20 Jun and 14 Burghead 31 Dec.

Velvet Scoter *Melanitta fusca*

Fairly common winter visitor.

No counts exceeded 50 individuals during 2020, the largest count was 45 Nairn Bar 12 Jan.

Maximum counts for main areas were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Oct	Nov	Dec
Nairn/Culbin Bars	45	3	nc	nc	1	1
Burghead Bay	20	14	20	11	13	15
Lossiemouth (seawatches)	nc	2	9	3	1	nc

Coastal summer records (May-July) included: 4 Burghead Bay 13 Apr & 7 Jul and 6 records during seawatches off Lossiemouth harbour with the maximum count being 7 on 17 May.

Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra*

Common winter visitor, small numbers in summer.

Summer records (May-July), maximum counts from each site, included: 138 Lossiemouth (2-hour seawatch) 17 May, 30 Tugnet, Spey Bay 23 Jun, 12 Burghead 22 Jun, 120 off Findhorn 3 Jul, 520 Burghead Bay 17 Jul and 10 Nairn 18 Jul.

Maximum monthly counts were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Delnies-Nairn	8	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	4
Nairn	60	60	70	nc	nc	10	15	250	4
Nairn Bar	1273	1380	nc	nc	nc	nc	14	34	83
Culbin Bar	600	646	nc	nc	nc	nc	2	nc	nc
Off Findhorn	20	nc	nc	nc	nc	15	29	nc	65
Burghead Bay	450	578	500	22	500	475	450	359	242
Burghead	10	8	nc	nc	nc	30	12	23	1
Lossiemouth (seawatches)	24	53	246	121	24	21	38	16	55
Spey Bay (off Boar's Head)	nc	nc	230	nc	nc	nc	259	217	296
Spey Bay (off Kingston/Tugnet)	5	nc	40	nc	20	59	16	117	nc

Elsewhere; 8 Burghead-Hopeman 12 Jan, 11 Whiteness Head 5 Sep, 22 Kingsteps and Nairn 12 Nov.

Long-tailed Duck *Clangula hyemalis*

Common winter visitor offshore.

Coastal records in summer (June-July): No coastal records for this period were reported in 2020.

Maximum monthly counts were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Oct	Nov	Dec
Delnies-Nairn	58	52	nc	nc	6	4	9
Nairn area	200	120	290	200	100	37	63
Nairn Bar	1519	620	nc	nc	149	220	153
Culbin Bar	872	1583	nc	nc	4	nc	nc
Off Findhorn	700	150	nc	nc	400	420	620
Burghead Bay	681	282	210	315	250	640	485
Burghead	20	8	3	nc	20	30	30
Burghead-Hopeman	15	6	nc	nc	1	nc	7
Lossiemouth	1	1	nn	nc	35	nc	nc
Lossiemouth (seawatches)	26	48	42	20	55	93	58
Spey Bay (off Boar's Head)	nc	nc	15	nc	20	5	nc
Spey Bay (off Kingston/Tugnet)	90	nc	350	nc	327	540	36
Portgordon-Strathlene	1	nc	nc	nc	2	nc	5

Elsewhere, 28 Tugnet-Portgordon 26 Oct and 85 Hopeman-Cove sea 19 Dec.

On estuaries (max. counts): 2 Findhorn Bay 9 Feb & 13 Dec, 1 Lossie estuary 20 Oct and 1 Spey estuary 23 Oct & 4 Nov.

In harbours (max. count): 2 Burghead 18 Jan & 27 Dec and 4 Lossiemouth 17 Feb.

Inland: 'present' Loch Spynie 16 Mar and 1 Dallachy pool 4 Nov.

Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*

Rare breeder and fairly common winter visitor.

Breeding: Confirmed breeding from Cragganmore 13 May where a female and a brood of 4 were seen (NSu, CA). This is the first confirmed breeding since 2015 at Black Loch.

Summer records in the coastal strip included: female Findhorn Bay 1 May, four records Dallachy pool 5 May-23 Jun (max. count 6 on 5 May), female Loch Flemington 11 Jun and 'present' Forres area 9 Jul.

Maximum counts on most frequented lochs were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Loch Flemington	8	6	7	nc	nc	4	4	3
Loch of Blairs	1	2	2	nc	nc	nc	7	5
Loch Spynie	7	4	nc	nc	nc	9	10	11
Cloddach quarry	nc	3	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	2
Loch na Bo	nc	5	2	nc	nc	1	2	7
Loch Oire	nc	14	8	5	nc	nc	nc	1
Dallachy pool	10	11	24	3	nc	nc	5	4

Elsewhere, 2 Milnorduff 1 Feb, female Brodie Castle pond 10 Aug, 7 Easter Bards 13 Nov, 1 Loch Loy 14 Nov, present Loch Belivat 22 Nov and 1 Clunas Reservoir 20 Dec.

On the River Spey: 1 Marypark 6 Mar and, at Aberlour, 4 on 31 Jan and 1 on 30 Dec.

Maximum counts at most frequented coastal sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Oct	Nov	Dec
Delnies-Nairn	5	3	nc	nc	nc	nc	2
Nairn area	6	4	nc	nc	nc	2	3
Nairn/Culbin Bars	21	3	2	nc	8	4	13
Findhorn Bay	13	32	33	22	9	19	15
Burghead Bay	5	2	3	nc	5	16	nc
Burghead	6	2	2	nc	4	1	6
Burghead-Hopeman	10	3	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc
Lossiemouth	2	2	1	nc	2	4	1
Lossie estuary	1	1	2	nc	2	nc	3
Spey estuary	11	30	21	nc	10	9	18
Spey Bay	2	nc	nc	nc	4	49	4

Elsewhere, on the coast; 6 Cullen 19 Jan and 2 Portgordon 25 Jan & 1 Sep.

Goosander *Mergus merganser*

Scarce breeder and fairly common visitor.

Breeding: Broods were seen at Nairn harbour (brood of 2), River Findhorn (brood of 8) and around the Findhorn Bay area, where based on dates, it is likely only two broods present (brood of 10 & 3).

Seen in potential breeding areas: 5 River Livet, Drumin 2 Apr, present Craigellachie 3 Apr, 2 Kilravock 18 Apr (also seen in mid-late May), 2 Forres 3 May, 1 River Nairn, Firhall 19 May, 1 Kirkhill, Elgin 11 Jun and 9 Nairn harbour 5 Jul.

Regular records received (max. counts) from the Nairn area, Findhorn Bay, Lossie estuary and Speymouth:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Nairn area	2	2	3	3	5	4	9	nc	3	7	1	2
Findhorn Bay	2	1	4	11	50	35	54	72	166	94	3	1
Lossie estuary	nc	1	2	5	nc	16	nc	31	14	9	nc	nc
Speymouth	3	4	nc	nc	nc	65	188	225	75	15	2	nc

Elsewhere on the coast (max. counts); 1 Nairn-Delnies 9 Feb, 18 Oct & 13 Dec, 7 Portgordon 3 Aug, 22 Findhorn beach 3 Sep, 19 west Lossiemouth harbour 4 Sep, 1 Hopeman 8 Sep, 62 Burghead 15 Sep and 3 Burghead Bay 6-29 Oct & 9 Nov.

Inland maximum counts in autumn and winter were: 1 Newmill, Auldearn 19 Feb, 1 Loch na Bo 26 Feb, 2 Sanquhar pond 7 Mar, 2 River Spey, Mosstodloch 19 Apr, 2 Cloddach quarry 19 Aug, 3 River Nairn, Nairn 9 Sep, 8 Loch Oire 18 Nov & 7 Dec, 16 Glenlatterach Reservoir 25 Nov, 2 Holme Rose-Kilravock 28 Nov, 1 River Spey, Dipple 15 Dec, 32 Loch Spynie 20 Dec and 1 Mosset Burn 26 & 28 Dec.

Well inland: 1 Tomintoul 31 Jan and 15 Clunas Reservoir 4 Feb.

Red-breasted Merganser *Mergus serrator*

Scarce breeder, fairly common offshore.

Breeding: Recorded on the lower River Findhorn and Findhorn Bay with dates and brood sizes suggesting three broods were present (31 May-4 Aug) and involved 1, 3 and 9 chicks. Also in

potential breeding habitat during summer at Househill (Nairn), and seen Kingsteps (Nairn) and in Nairn harbour.

Regular monthly maximum counts in the Nairn area, Findhorn Bay and Burghead Bay:

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Nairn area	8	2	8	19	2	nc	2	nc	6	8	20	9
Findhorn Bay	23	14	21	50	22	9	10	9	140	16	18	21
Burghead Bay	9	14	11	36	nc	14	7	59	nc	30	15	7
Lossiemouth (seawatches)	1	2	4	6	10	5	nc	1	1	2	3	1

Maximum monthly counts at other sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Delnies area	4	3	nc	nc	nc	4	nc	2
Nairn/Culbin Bars	6	29	2	nc	nc	74	24	4
Burghead	7	6	1	nc	2	1	16	8
Burghead-Hopeman	4	5	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	9
Lossie estuary	1	1	2	nc	nc	nc	nc	3
Spey Bay	6	nc	10	nc	3	9	9	8
Spey estuary	2	6	5	nc	nc	7	15	nc

Elsewhere, maximum counts included: 2 Portgordon 25 Jan, 2 Hopeman 1 Feb, 4 Portgordon-Strathlene 9 Feb, male in Lossiemouth harbour 16 Feb and 10 Clashach 28 Feb.

Red Grouse *Lagopus lagopus*

Very common resident breeder.

The only counts of 10 or more were 15 Carn Meadhonach 21 Jan and 10+ Clunas Reservoir 3 Jun.

Ptarmigan *Lagopus muta*

Fairly common resident breeder.

The small outlying population persists on Ben Rinnes where 1 on 1 Jan, 2 pairs on 12 Jan (AE), 4 on 5 Jan (CRei), 4 on 25 Oct (AE) and 6 on 26 Nov (MWa).

Still very low numbers on the Cairngorms plateau where 1 Coire Raibeirt 31 Aug – but some observers reported spending a whole day without seeing a single Ptarmigan. Elsewhere in the Cairngorms, 1 Ben Avon 6 Aug, 1 Creag Mhor 7 Nov and 1 East Meur Gorm Craig 6 Nov.

Capercaillie *Tetrao urogallus*

Scarce resident breeder.

Breeding: The population decline in Moray & Nairn has apparently accelerated in recent years and in 2020, only 5 single cocks were located, each in a separate locality (MD, RSPB). The number of leks and cocks in the last 10 years has declined as follows:

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Leks	10	10	9	8	9	9	9	7	5	5
Cocks	20	16-17	15-18	17	16	14	16	14	7	5

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

Recorded at Aitnoh, Auchmair, Blairfindy, Clunas Reservoir, Craig an Tarmachan, Dalcharn, Dava, Delachule, Lower Cabrach and Ruallan.

Grey Partridge *Perdix perdix**Fairly common resident breeder.*

Breeding season (April-Aug): Birds were seen or heard at Burgie, Easter Coltfoot, Grigor Hill, Howford Bridge, Inverugie, Kinloss, Kintessack, Mid Bank (Roseisle), Middlefield and Mill of Grange. Breeding confirmed only at Kintessack where 3 juveniles on 17 Jul.

Additional sites where birds were seen at other times of year were Burghead, Cloddach quarry, Covesea, Darkland, Easter Newforres, Findhorn Bay, Hopeman, Levrattich, Littlemill, Longhill, Lossiemouth, Milton of Brodie, Netherton, Roseisle and Scarffbanks.

Reports of five or more together were 12 Roseisle 10 Dec, 11 Hopeman 10 Sep, 10 Easter Newforres 30 Oct, 10 Milton of Brodie 13 Oct, 8 Levrattich 23 Nov, 8 Lossiemouth 9 Jan and 10 Dec, 7 Kinloss 24 Sep and 6 Oct, 6 Findhorn Bay 27 Sep, 6 Scarffbanks and 5 Coltfoot 7 Jan

Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus**Very common resident breeder.*

Widely reported including on the Lossie (9 & 24 Oct) and Spey (6 Oct) estuaries.

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

Singing birds were heard at Arradoul 8 Aug (LS), Clackmarras 31 May (EH), Clochan 28 May (MJHC), Findochty-Portknockie 12-14 Jul (LS), Hillpark 7 Jul (FM) and Mundole 25 Jun (WGT). In addition, one was flushed from a barley field at Cragganmore on 16 Aug (NSu, CA).

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

2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
4	2	9	0	0	3	3	2	12	2	1	6

Red-legged Partridge *Alectoris rufa**Introduced scarce breeder. Commonly released.*

Breeding: No confirmation of breeding in 2020.

Large numbers around Drynahan where birds are released for shooting.

Counts of five or more elsewhere included 12 Refoules 6 Jan, 8 Foynesfield 12 Nov, 7 Clunas reservoir 1 Nov, 7 Forres 10 Nov and 6+ Achneim 30 Oct. Smaller numbers noted at Auchlochan, Blacksboat, Carn na Sguabach, Cloddach, Corniehaugh, Dava, Delavorar, Delnashaugh, East Mains, Ferness, Fornightly, Glengeoullie, Inchnacape, Kirkhill, Knock of Braemoray, Lossiemouth airfield, Pluscarden, Shaw Hill, Tomintoul and Upper Bogside.

Swift *Apus apus**Summer visitor and common breeder.*

Arrival: First, in May, were 1 Bishopmill (Elgin) and 2 Kinloss 6th, 1 Cragganmore 7th, 1 Nairn 9th and 3+ Gilston and Spynie canal 10th.

Breeding: Towns and villages where Swifts were seen and likely to have been breeding were Alves, Buckie, Burghead, Cullen, Elgin, Fochabers, Forres, Lossiemouth, Nairn and Tomintoul.

Largest concentrations (estimates of 50 or more) were 200+ Delnies 11 Jul, 100 Alves-Ardgye area 25 Jul and 100 Spynie canal at Ardivot 6 Jun (60 there 13 Jun).

Last reports, in September, included 8 Cullen 6th, 3 Elgin 8th, 1 Forres 12th and 1 Covesea 15th.

Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus*

Summer visitor and fairly common breeder.

Arrival: First reports, in April, were at Clunas Reservoir 19th, Tips of Corsemaul 21st, Loch Kirkcaldy 23rd, Tomnavoulin 24th, Tomintoul 25th and Knock of Buchromb 25th.

Subsequently seen or heard in May-June at Achneim, Auchmair (juvenile being fed by Meadow Pipit parents on 29 Jul), Cabrach (Grouse Inn), Carron, Craibstone, Culbin Forest, Dava, Dorenell, Drumin Castle, Drynachan, Ferness, Findhorn, Fornightly, Fourman Hill, Knock Wood (2), Kronyhillock, Moor of Tore, Parkhill, Refouble and Sheals area (3).

Feral Pigeon *Columba livia*

Very common resident breeder.

Flocks of 50 or more were 230 Portknockie (on Bow Fiddle Rock) 15 Dec, c.200 Elgin High Street 14 Feb, 125 Buckie harbour 12 Jan and 116 Nairn marina area (68 there 14 Mar).

Stock Dove *Columba oenas*

Scarce resident breeder.

Breeding season (March-July): 1 Balormie 26 Jul, 1 singing Croy 9 Apr, 1 Cullen 25 Mar, up to 3 Kilravock on 8 dates in April-May, 1 Kirkhill on 4 dates in April-July and 1 Lossiemouth 21 Mar.

In autumn/winter, 1 Loch Spynie 9 & 31 Jan.

Woodpigeon *Columba palumbus*

Very common resident breeder.

Carrying nest material in Linkwood 10 Mar. Early autumn breeding noted in Elgin: an incubating adult in the cemetery on 1 Sep and a brood of 2 in the nest at Bishopmill on 12 Sep. Largest flocks were 3,000 Mains of Moyness 31 Dec and 640 Dipple 23 Oct.

Westward passage was noted on 29 Nov when 1,870 flew over Clochan during 08:40-09:40 (MJHC) and 400+ were counted passing Nairn (DMcN).

Turtle Dove *Streptopelia turtur*

Very scarce passage migrant.

One was photographed at Findrassie on 12 June (TBn), and another was in a garden at Portgordon on 1 Jul (JCo). In total, there have been 23 records in Moray & Nairn, but only six since 1989.



Turtle Dove, Findrassie 12 June 2020 (Theodore Bennison)

Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*

Very common resident breeder.

The only counts of 10 or more were 18 Loch Flemington 20 Jan and 11 Kinloss 18 Jan. Smaller groups of 4-9 were reported from Burghead, Clochan, Druim, Kilravock and Nairn.

Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus*

Scarce breeder and winter visitor.

Recorded at Kingsteps (Nov, Dec), Loch Flemington (Jun, Jul), Loch Spynie (Jan, Nov) and the Spey estuary (Jul, Aug, Sep). Always single birds except 2 Spey estuary 22 Jul. A greatly under-recorded species due to its secretive nature.

Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

Fairly common resident breeder.

Breeding proved (*italics*) or probable at Brodie Castle lake, *Clochan*, *Cloddach quarry*, Dallachy landfill site, Dipple, East Grange, Easter Bauds, Forres (Mosset pond), Gordon Castle lake, Inchberry, Loch Flemington, *Loch Oire*, *Montgrew*, *Nairn*, Newmill (Auldearn), Rothes and *Sanquhar Loch*.

Maximum counts (excluding small young) at sites holding five or more birds were 29 Loch Flemington 18 Oct, 18 Cloddach quarry 1 Sep, 7 Loch Oire 19 Aug, 6 Brodie Castle 10 Aug, 6 Mosset pond 17 May and 5 Wellhill (Culbin) 5 Sep.

Coot *Fulica atra*

Scarce resident breeder and winter visitor.

Breeding proved (*italics*) or probable at *Cloddach quarry*, *Loch Flemington* and Loch Loy.

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

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
L. Flemington	1	4	6	1	13	14	15	40	30	59	52	74
Loch Spynie	12	30	10	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	9	3	12	13
Loch Oire	1	0	1	1	1	3	1	1	nc	0	0	2

Elsewhere, maximum site counts were 10 Cloddach quarry 19 Aug, 6 Nairn 25 Jul, 1 Dallachy pool 26 Oct-14 Nov, 1 Gordon Castle lake 9 Feb and 1 Loch Loy 17 Jul.

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

Scarce breeder, scarce on the estuaries in winter.

Monthly maximum counts on main freshwater sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
L. Flemington	0	0	nc	1	3	9	9	11	13	19	nc	0
Loch Spynie	1	nc	4	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	2	1	8	2
Loch Oire	1	1	4	nc	nc	nc	2	5	nc	0	1	2
Loch na Bo	0	3	2	nc	nc	nc	9	10	nc	12	4	6
Dallachy pool	0	0	0	1	2	2	7	5	0	0	0	0

Mid-winter: Elsewhere on freshwater in January or December were 2 Newmill (Auldearn) 20 Dec, 2 Gordon Castle pond (Fochabers) 12 Jan, 1 Brodie Castle lake 23 Dec and 1 Loch of Blairs 13 Dec.

Present in spring/summer (*italics* = proved breeding) at Achavraat, Brodie Castle lake, Clochan, Cloddach Quarry, Cloddymoss, Easter Bauds, Gordon Castle lake, Hilton of Delnies pond, Loch Belivat, Loch Flemington, Loch Kirkcaldy, Loch na Bo, Loch of Blairs, Loch Oire, Loch Spynie, Nether Dallachy pool and Newmill (Auldearn).

Largest post-breeding congregations in late summer/autumn were 19 Loch Flemington 23 Oct, 15 Cloddach Quarry 19 Aug and 12 Loch na Bo 17 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 14 on 12 Jan and 29 Sep. Maximum monthly counts here were:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
14	11	7	0	0	0	0	2	14	12	10	11

Also present on the Lossie and Spey estuaries, where 1-2 in Jan-Feb. First in autumn were 2 Lossie 6 Oct then 1-2 regularly at both estuaries in November-December, and 3 Spey 10-11 Sep. Elsewhere, 2-3 Kingsteps Oct-Dec, peaking at 4 on 17 Dec.

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*

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

1 Burghead Bay 1 Dec (AJL) was the only report.

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

Freshwater lochs: 1 Loch Oire 20 Apr (EH) and 1 Loch na Bo 16 Jul (PHa) were the only records.

Coastal: Maximum monthly counts in Burghead Bay were:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
6	1	1	0	0	7	1	2

Highest counts were 6 on 9 Jan (RSC) and 7 on 18 Oct (AMA, DB).

Elsewhere, 1 Cullen Bay 31 Aug (JMa) and 1 off Lossiemouth harbour 18 Jan (HFa).

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

First inland were 2 on the roof of Elgin Town Hall 2 Feb and possibly the same pair there 15 Feb. Elsewhere, 10 Aberlour 8 Feb, 1 North Crannoch 24 Feb, 4 Pluscarden Abbey 26 Feb, 2 at The Oaks (Elgin - a previous breeding site) 27 Feb, 1 Birnie Kirk pig farm 1 Mar and 1 at the previous breeding site within Elgin cemetery on 5 Mar.

Pre-breeding flocks consisted of 66 Cloddach quarry 26 Feb, 27 in flight two miles north of Cabrach 4 Mar, 78 Aberlour 8 Mar, 50 Blacksboat 20 Mar, 100 Cults (Tomintoul) 22 Mar and 20 in flight at Cloddach quarry 15 Apr.

Breeding: Numerous records from potential breeding sites, mostly from up-country (from where no confirmed breeding records were received) but some also from the coastal fringe. In the Tomintoul area, 4 on 7 Mar, 2 at the Lecht Drive Fields 8 Mar and 2 on 4 Jul. At Clunas Reservoir, 2 on 6 Mar, 5 on 31 Mar, 2 on 3 Apr, 6 on 13 Apr, and 1-2 on four dates in May-July. On 6 Mar, 4 Cragganmore and 3 near Craigellachie distillery. Upcountry, 2 lower Cabrach 6 Apr, 1 Elrick (Cabrach) 8 May, 2 near Ferness 29 Apr and an alarmed pair at Feith Musach (Tomintoul) on 23 Jun. At Kilravock, 1 on 10 & 24 May and 1-2 Upper Bogside 15 May & 3 Jun. In the coastal fringe, 1 Kirkhill 28 Mar, 9 Apr & 15 May. Upcountry records during July and August included 5 Glen Avon 14 Jul, 3 Birchfield 31 Jul, 2 Tomintoul 26 Jul, 4 Auchmair 29 Jul, 2 Aldunie 3 Aug and 3 Delnabo 6 Aug. Very late upcountry was 1 Cabrach 1 Nov.

In the lowlands, at Lossiemouth harbour west basin, a pair nested on an area of the pier which is partly used for the storage of creels. An adult was incubating three eggs during 5-31 May, despite disturbance from fishermen and dog walkers. Two adults were seen with one chick on 15-24 Jun. Within RAF Lossiemouth, a pair with three young 27 May, a well-grown chick at Elgin Town Hall 15 Jun and an adult with a fledgling at Lossie estuary 12 July (breeding location not known).

Post breeding flocks of ten or more consisted of 14 Blacksboat Farm 1 Jul, 38 Cloddach quarry 1 Jul and 24 at Balnalon 11 Jul.

Spring, summer, and early autumn peak counts of 10 or more at coastal localities:

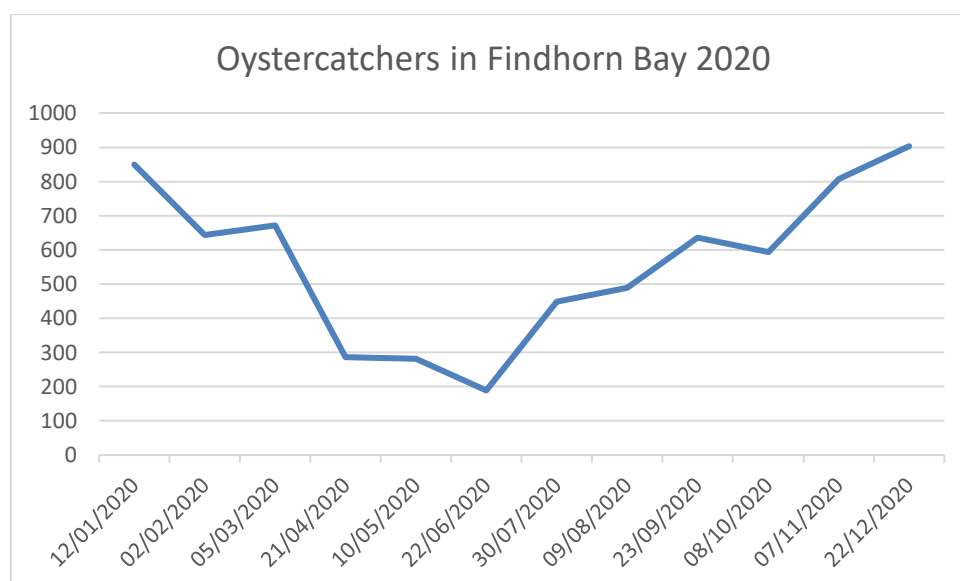
April: 286 Findhorn Bay 21st
 May: 282 Findhorn Bay 10th, 25 Lossie estuary 10th
 June: 27 Spey estuary 19th, 189 Findhorn Bay 22nd
 July: 62 Lossie estuary 6th, 76 Culbin Bar 13th, 122 Nairn 18th, 39 Spey estuary 20th, 448 Findhorn Bay 30th
 August: 561 Findhorn Bay 14th, 102 Nairn 21st, 107 Lossie estuary 22nd
 September: 110 Lossie estuary 3rd, 11 Burghead 11th, c200 Culbin Sands 14th, 635 Findhorn Bay 23rd, 65 Nairn 27th

Winter maxima at the coast were:

	Jan	Feb	Oct	Dec
Nairn/Culbin Bars	1060*	741*	1434*	1088*
Findhorn Bay	850	644	594	903
Burghead-Hopeman	100	112	131	111
Lossiemouth	101	50	112	103
Portgordon-Strathlene	80	72	59	95

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

Monthly maxima in Findhorn Bay throughout the year:



Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*

Very common migrant breeder, small numbers in winter.

First up-country were pairs (number not stated) at Tomintoul 4 Mar.

Pre-breeding flocks (of 10 or more) away from the coastal fringe were 10 Gallowhill (Keith) 5 Mar, 14+ Kirdellbeg (Knockando) 9 Mar, 50 Tomintoul 9 Mar and a large flock of 80 Inchnacape (Tomintoul) 22 Mar.

Breeding: Numerous records were received from potential breeding sites both in the coastal fringe and further up-country, but very little confirmed breeding reported (none in the coastal lowlands).

Up-country, courtship and display was noted at Tomintoul 6 Mar, Moss of Mayen 10 May and Torniechelt (Cabrach) 17 May. At Shielwood Pastures (Knock) 17 were counted, with one displaying, 18 May.

Up-country, post-breeding flocks consisted of 51 Tomintoul 7 Jul, 120+ (mostly juveniles) Aldunie 3 Aug and 100 Alltachbeg Farm (Tomintoul) 29 Aug.

Lowland post-breeding flocks of 100 or more during August consisted of 140 Spey estuary 4th and 126 there on the 10th. During September, 110 Cloddach quarry 1st, c.200 Balormie pig farm 13th and c.130 over Loch Spynie on the 17th. During October, a large flock at Balormie pig farm contained 418 on 5th, 320 on 14th and 114 on 19th. At Covesea, 115 on the 14 Oct.

In mid-winter (January-February and November-December), flocks over 100 consisted of 121 Findhorn Bay 12 Jan (110 there 13 Dec) and at Balormie pig farm, 250+ on 6 Nov, 338 on 13 Nov and 350 on 27 Dec. Nearby, 146 RAF Lossiemouth airfield 14 Dec.

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

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
F Bay	121	56	17	0	0	0	28	33	0	95	44	110
Spey	0	9	0	nc	nc	1	90	140	72	0	0	0

Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria*

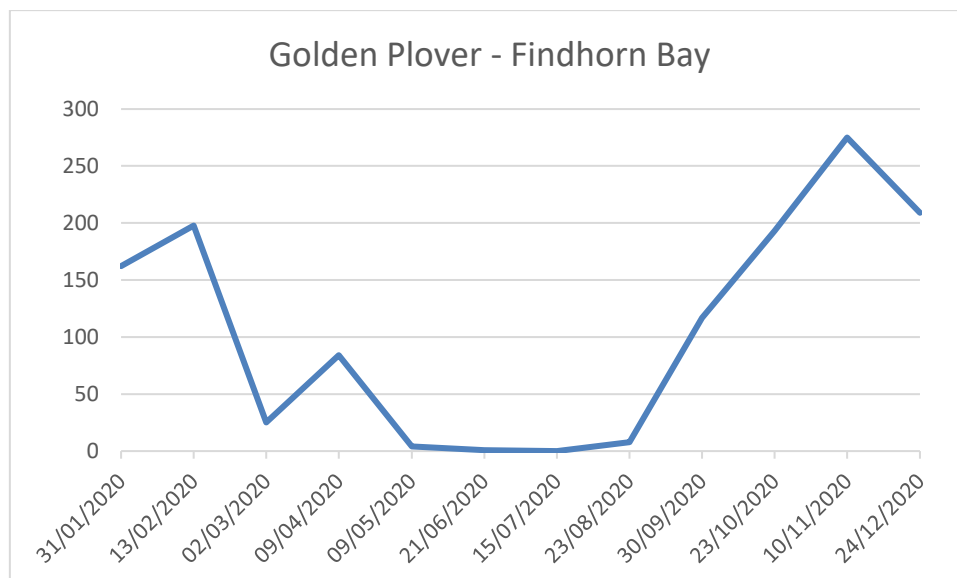
Common breeder, migrant and winter visitor.

First up-country was a pre-breeding flock of 40 lower Cabrach 18 Apr. A small flock of 10+ Moyness 27 Apr were probably pausing before onward northerly migration.

Very few records received from potential breeding grounds: 2 Dorenell Wind Farm 2 Jun. In the Cromdale Hills, 2 An Sgoran 11 Jul, and on 26 Jul a single at one location and six at another. First back at the coast were 2 Lossiemouth west beach 16 Jul.

Still in the higher country in autumn were 2 Carn nan Tri-tighearnan 6 Sep, 27 Ben Aigan 27 Oct, 16 Ben Rinnes 7 Nov and still 15 Ben Rinnes 26 Nov.

Maximum counts of Golden Plover in Findhorn Bay throughout the year:



Winter monthly maxima in Findhorn Bay were:

	Jan	Feb	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Findhorn Bay	162	198	117	193	275	209

Pacific Golden Plover *Pluvialis fulva**Rare visitor.*

This migratory wader breeds in Alaska and Siberia, wintering mainly in south-east Asia and Australia.

A 1CY bird was found in Findhorn Bay on 10 Oct. It associated with the Golder Plover flock on the bay and over-wintered, being last seen on 3 Feb 2021 (GM, RSC *et al.*). This is the 2nd record for Moray & Nairn following one, also in Findhorn Bay, during 31 Jul-22 Aug 2018.



Pacific Golden Plover [left, with Golden Plover], Findhorn Bay 27 October 2020
(Richard Somers Cocks)

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

Highest counts were:

	Jan	Feb	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Nairn/Culbin Bars	21*	14*	0	51	17	31*
Findhorn Bay	0	2	4	21	10	0
Lossiemouth	0	1	3	3	0	0

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

Last before leaving for the breeding grounds was 1 Lossie west beach 24 May and the first returning birds were 2 Lossie estuary 20 Sep.

Highest counts at any one site since 2010 have been:

2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
11	46	27	16	16	20	17	29	19	21	51

51 Nairn Bar 17 Oct is the highest count in Moray & Nairn since 60 in 2000.

Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*

Scarce resident breeder and very common migrant.

Breeding: At Findhorn dunes, two pairs on 19 Mar and 24 Apr and four pairs on 19 May (RSC). On the shingle at the mouth of Findhorn Bay were eight birds on 28 Apr and four adults and four chicks on 13 Jun.

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

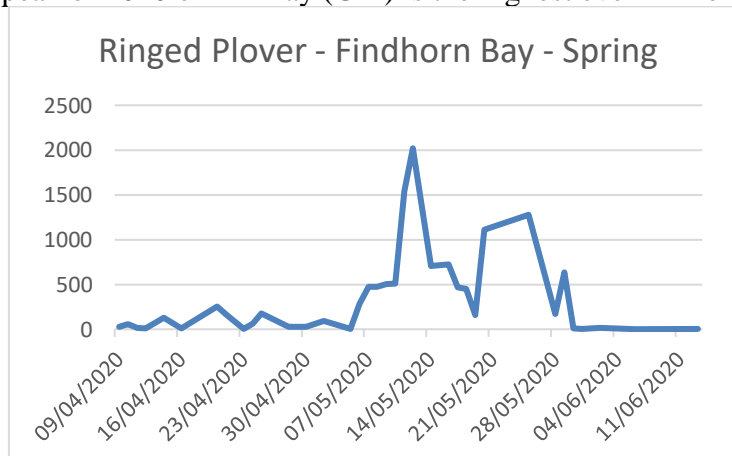
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
F Bay	18	29	27	254	2020	17	6	66	34	31	19	19
Lossie	0	7	0	21	c.50	2	10	27	11	1	0	12
Spey	0	0	2	0	0	12	26	99	3	0	0	0

Winter maxima at the coast were:

	January-February	November-December
Nairn/Culbin Bars	5	0
Findhorn Bay	29	19
Kinloss	16	0
Burghead-Hopeman	18	20
Lossiemouth	7	12
Spey estuary	0	0
Portgordon-Strathlene	0	0

Spring passage (April-early June):

Findhorn Bay: counts during this period are shown in the graph below with a strong movement during May. The peak of 2020 on 12 May (GM) is the highest ever in Moray & Nairn.



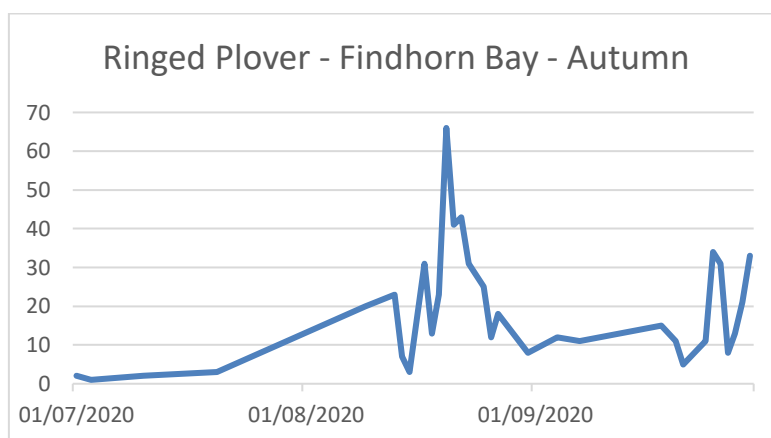
Elsewhere there were highest spring counts of *c.*50 at Burghead on 21 May and at Lossiemouth on 23 May.

The highest spring migration counts in Findhorn Bay in recent years have been:

2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
156	1500	1000	450	985	1200	1946	1190	849	705	2020

Autumn passage (July-September):

Findhorn Bay: regular counts during this period show a peak of 66 on 20 Aug.



At the Spey estuary the highest count during this period was 99 on 10 Aug and at the Lossie estuary a high of 27 on 24 Aug. At Culbin Sands were *c.*100 on 14 Sep.

Dotterel *Charadrius morinellus*

Scarce summer visitor and breeder.

Spring: three birds on migration were on farmland between the village of Portknockie and the cemetery 4 May (LS). This is only the 2nd lowland spring record, following 1 near Buckie on 9 May 1903.



Dotterel, Portknockie 4 May 2020 (Lenny Simpson)

Breeding: On the Cairngorms plateau on 26 Jun, a male with two young Ben Macdui and three adults Cairn Lochan (DMP). Single birds were at Coire an t-Sneachda and Lochan Buidhe 9 Jul (PRG). Later, 15 (including three fledged juveniles) Cairn Lochan 6 Aug (DMP). On Ben Avon (on or near Big Brae) were four adults and three chicks 11 Jul (MGar) and one adult and one chick on 12 Jul (IF).

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*

Scarce migrant.

Spring: First of the year (and the only inland record) was one over Clochan 24 Apr.

Late April-early June: 36 records, 28 of which were from Findhorn Bay. All records were in single figures except 12 Findhorn Bay 1 May. Records from other locations were all single birds apart from 2 Lossiemouth west beach 25 May. Last in spring was 1 Findhorn Bay 2 Jun.

Earliest spring arrival dates since 2011 have been:

2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
21 Apr	4 May	21 Apr	8 Apr	6 Mar	6 Apr	14 Apr	17 Apr	9 Apr	24 Apr

Autumn: Extreme dates of passage were singles at Findhorn Bay 1 Jul and Burghead 29 Sep. Thirty-five records received during this period, from Nairn to Spey estuary, thirty of which were of 1-2 birds. Lossie estuary held a flock of 9 on 24 Jul and the only large flock reported was c.50 at Spey estuary 1 Aug (HL).

Curlew *Numenius arquata*

Common breeder. Very common migrant and winter visitor.

Breeding: First observed back in potential breeding ground was 1 North Crannoch 5 Mar. Further upcountry, first back at Tomintoul on 6 Mar. Display was observed at Bakebare 11 Apr, and Torniechelt (Cabrach) 17 May. At RAF Lossiemouth there was a pair with two young 27 May. Five birds were alarming at Shiels (Glass) 6 Jun, three pairs alarming Feith Musach 23 Jun and alarming birds also noted Beinn a' Chruinnich (Lecht) 26 Jun and Inchrory 12 Jul. One was mobbing a Raven at The Lecht Ski Centre 26 Jun.

Largest post-breeding flocks in early summer/autumn at most popular coastal locations were:

	June	July	August	September
Findhorn Bay	176	406	530	462
Lossiemouth	1	11	122	77
Spey estuary	0	18	135	270

Inland, 110 Cloddach quarry 1 Sep.

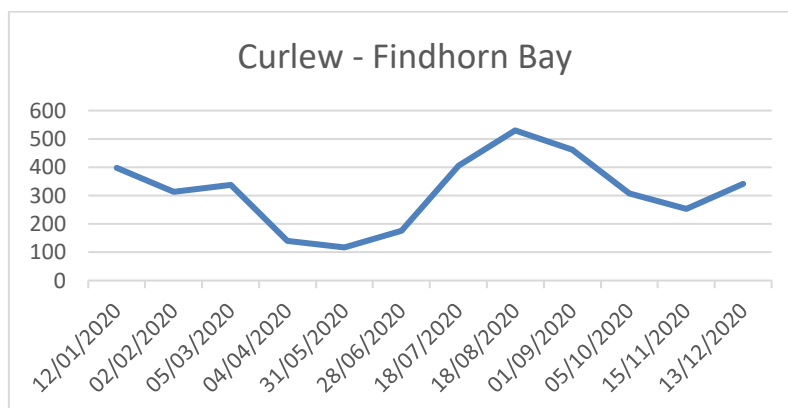
Coastal winter maxima were:

	January	February	October	December
Nairn/Culbin Bars	285*	194*	190*	192*
Findhorn Bay	397	313	308	342
Burghead-Hopeman	7	0	3	3
Lossiemouth	5	5	41	214
Portgordon-Strathlene	5	5	94	38

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

During November, there was a maximum of 253 in Findhorn Bay and, inland, 45 Cloddach quarry 15 Nov.

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



The highest count was 530 on 18 Aug.

Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*

Common winter visitor and migrant. Small numbers in summer.

Monthly maxima at main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Nairn/Culbin Bars	84*	53*	0	0	152*	250**	28**
Nairn	c.40	11	31	90	1	3	45
Findhorn Bay	105	101	92	45	49	51	69
Burghead	6	0	1	2	0	2	0
Burghead-Hopeman	1	25	0	0	0	0	14
Lossiemouth	6	7	5	8	7	4	8

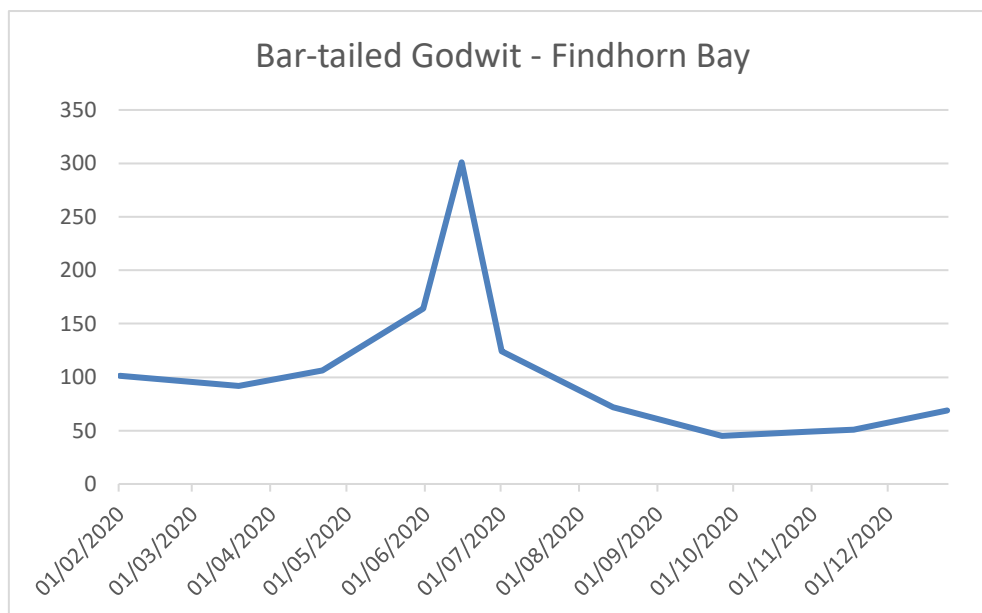
*Combination of Nairn & Culbin Bar counts – counting carried out concurrently.

**Nairn Bar only.



Bar-tailed Godwits, Findhorn Bay 14 July 2020 (Richard Somers Cocks)

Monthly maxima in Findhorn Bay throughout the year were:



The highest count was 301 on 15 Jun.

Maximum annual count at any site since 2011 has been:

2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2019	2020
107	204	150	90	137	145	c.300	121	231	c.400	301

No count has exceeded 1,000 since the winter of 1996-97.

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*

Scarce migrant.

Early winter (January-March): 4 Carse of Delnies 25 Jan was the only report.

Spring: Almost all records were from Findhorn Bay, most of which were in single figures. During April, the largest flock was 21 on the 9th, during May there were 14 on 2nd and in June the highest daily count was 11 on 14th. Elsewhere, 2 Lossie estuary 23 Apr.

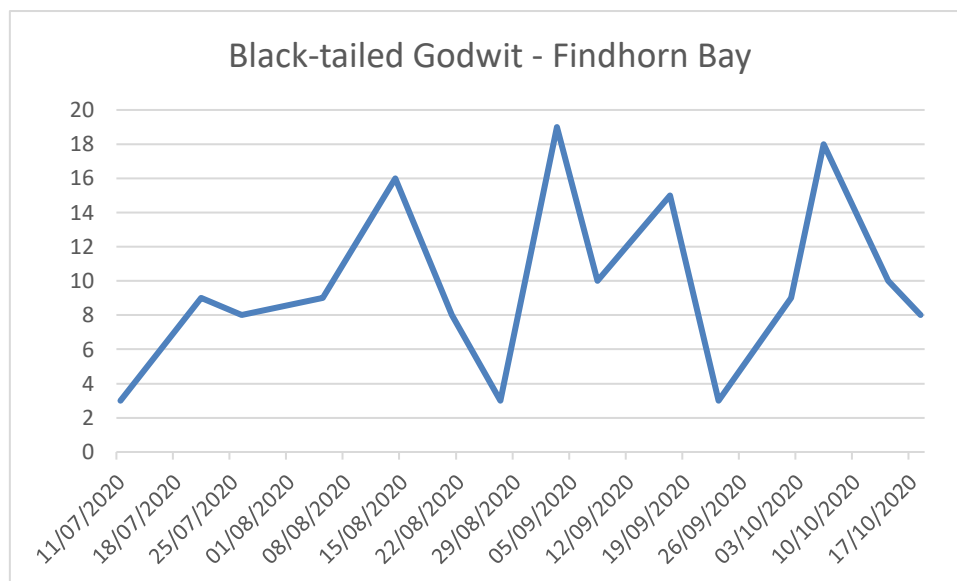
Late summer/autumn (July-October), Monthly maxima from the main sites were:

	July	August	September	October
Findhorn Bay	9	16	19	18
Lossie estuary	17	20	7	1
Spey estuary	13	9	8	0

Elsewhere, 2 Kingsteps 28 Oct.

No inland records were received.

Regular counting in Findhorn Bay (GM, RSC *et al.*) revealed the following pattern of autumn occurrence, using the highest weekly counts, peaking at 19 on 3 Sep:



Late winter (November-December): Eleven records, all from Findhorn Bay; highest count was 4 on 9 & 23 Nov and 30 Dec.

Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

Common winter visitor, small numbers in summer.

Winter monthly maxima at main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Oct	Dec
Delnies-Nairn	10	55	18	19
Nairn & Culbin Bars	33*	0	0	5
Findhorn	18	25	43	44
Burghead	29	20	8	22
Burghead-Hopeman	33	37	61	62
Lossiemouth	7	7	1	37
Spey estuary	12	0	35	14
Portgordon-Strathlene	76	43	61	41

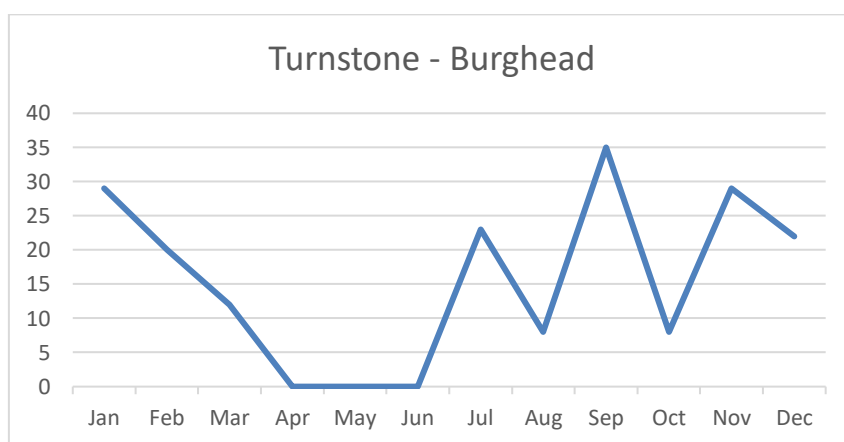
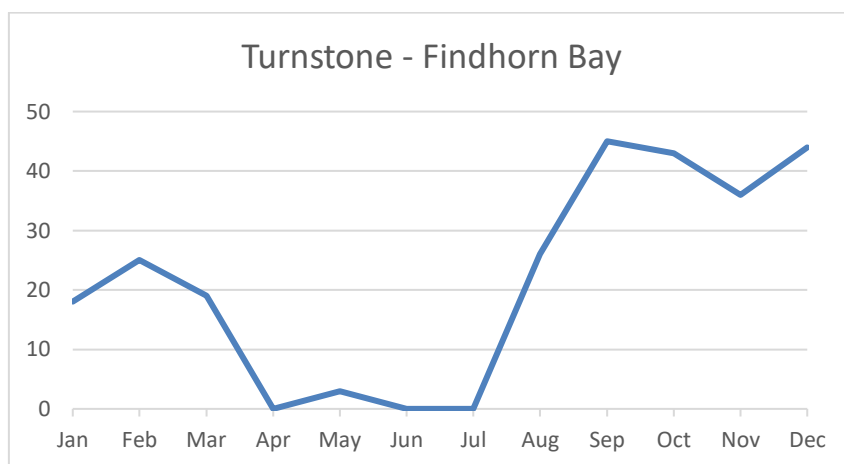
*Combination of Nairn & Culbin Bar counts – counting carried out concurrently. Outwith the above locations, 50 between Hopeman and Covesea on 19 Dec.

During November, the highest count was of a flock of 62 flying east past Lossiemouth on the 14th.

Spring: During March, highest count was 19 Findhorn Bay 13th. Highest count during April was 14 Nairn 14th and during May the peak was 28 on the rocks at Lossiemouth north pier 9th. Last June record was 2 Nairn harbour 26th.

Summer-autumn: First in July was 1 Lossiemouth 1st. During July and August, the highest counts were from the Spey estuary with 36 on 23 Jul and 35 on 7 Aug. On 5 Sep there were c.50 on the rocks off Lossiemouth north pier.

Numerous records from Findhorn Bay and the Burghead area revealed the following pattern throughout the year (maximum monthly counts):



Both sites held peak numbers during September, with 45 Findhorn 19th and 35 Burghead 27th.

Knot *Calidris canutus*

Very common migrant and winter visitor.

Winter maxima were at the two main sites:

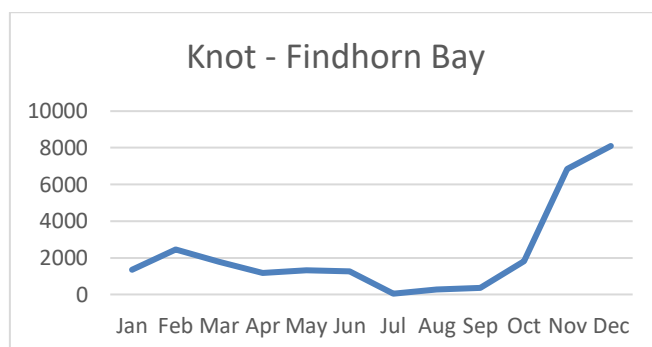
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Oct	Nov	Dec
Nairn/Culbin Bars, east Nairn	c.5000	5080*	15	400*	3000	1200*
Findhorn Bay	1350	2460	1775	1825	6850	c.8100

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

Spring: April maxima were c.1,160 Findhorn Bay 1st and 200 Burghead 9th. In May, 1,310 Findhorn Bay 11th and 235 Burghead 27th. During June, maxima were 1,265 Findhorn Bay 14th and 200+ Burghead 27th.

Summer-autumn: During July, 380 Burghead 21st and 106 Nairn 12th & 13th. During August, 450 flew over Burghead harbour on 5th and elsewhere, 142 Nairn 15th and 278 Findhorn Bay 27th. Highest count during September was 364 Findhorn Bay 25th.

Monthly maxima in Findhorn Bay throughout the year were:



The peak of 8,100 on 1 Dec was an average of an estimated flock of 7,700-8,500.

Ruff *Calidris pugnax*

Scarce autumn migrant, rare in spring.

Spring: no records received.

First autumn arrival was 1 Spey estuary 3 Aug. At Findhorn Bay, the first arrivals were 2 (juvenile males) 12 Aug and 3 birds 13 Aug.

During September, 1 Findhorn Bay 1st-5th, 17th, 19th & 28th, 1 Spey estuary 17th, and 1 Lossie estuary 17th, 25th & 27th, with 5 there on 19th.

All October records were from the Lossiemouth area: 1 Lossie estuary on eight days during 1st -15th and 2 RAF Lossiemouth airfield 16th & 20th.

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

2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
07/08	03/08	28/07	12/08	08/08	06/07	07/08	21/08	31/07	26/07	3/8

Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*

Scarce migrant.

Another poor year with very small numbers. No flock has exceeded 10 since 2008.

Spring: 1 Findhorn Bay 12 May and 25-27 May (GM, RSC).

Autumn: In Findhorn Bay, 1 on 15 & 17 Jul (GM), 1 juvenile 2 Sep (GM), 2 juveniles 4 Sep (DMP) and single juveniles 5 & 23 Sep (GM). Elsewhere, 1 Lossie estuary 23 Aug (PDal).

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
Nairn/Culbin Bars	83	4*	1	0	0	0
Lossiemouth	10	10	0	8	65	0
Findhorn Bay	0	3	1	3	28	0
Nairn	179	19	2	0	0	0

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

First to return from breeding grounds were 2 Spey estuary 10 Jul.

Late summer-autumn:

	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Nairn/Culbin Bars	0	0	1	211*	65	155*
Lossiemouth	35	52	20	0	60	70
Findhorn Bay	4	6	3	3	4	1
Nairn	36	1	0	0	30	4

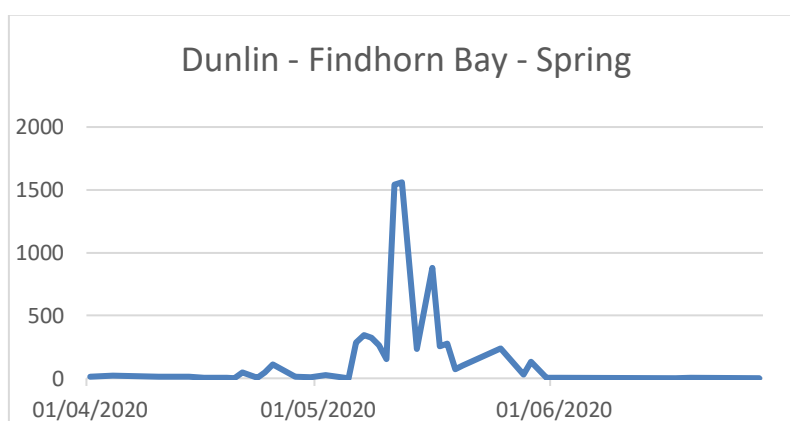
* Combination of Nairn & Culbin Bar counts – counting carried out concurrently
Elsewhere the only count of 10 or more was 10 Carse of Delnies 23 Aug.

Dunlin *Calidris alpina*

Scarce breeder, very common migrant and winter visitor.

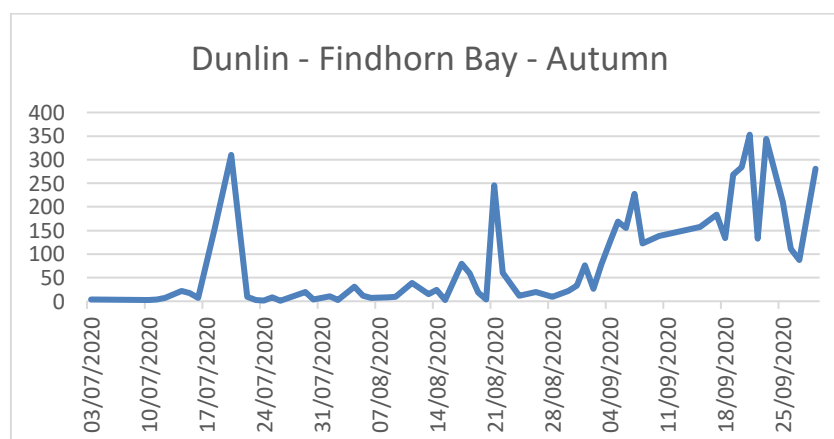
Breeding: At, or close to, potential breeding grounds were 1 Dorenell wind farm 5 May (MJ), 1 near Tomintoul 8 Jul and 1 An Sgoran (Hills of Cromdale) 11 Jul (BT).

Spring passage (April-June): Counts in Findhorn Bay were:

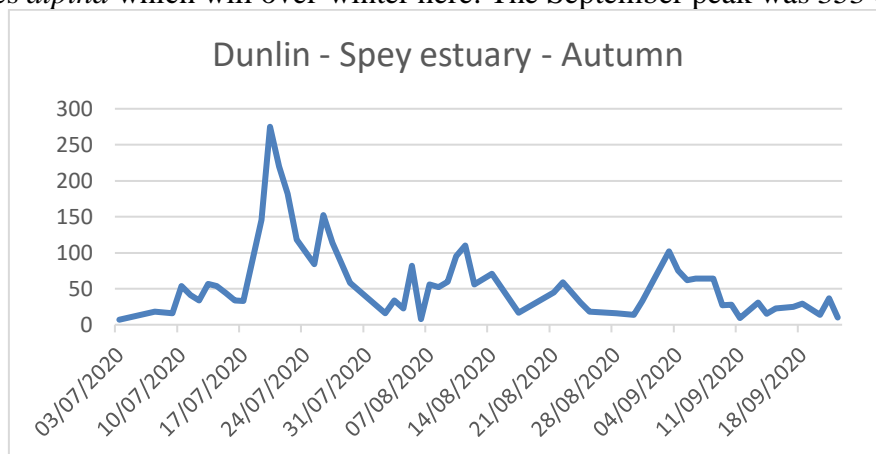


Main passage took place during May with peaks of 1,540 on 11th and 1,560 on 12th. Elsewhere during May, a peak of 106 at Lossie estuary on the 10th.

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 310 on 20 Jul, is likely to consist mainly of birds of subspecies *schinzii* which are on migration and will leave Scotland in winter. The later August and September build-up will be of subspecies *alpina* which will over-winter here. The September peak was 353 on the 21st.



Fluctuating numbers throughout this period. At the Spey estuary, the July peak of 275 (probable *schinzii*) on 20th coincided with the Findhorn Bay July peak of 310 on the same date. The August peak of 110 on 11th is 10 days before the Findhorn Bay August peak of 246 on 21st. At Lossiemouth there were monthly peaks of 32 on Jul 19th, 25 on 25th Aug and 66 on 3rd Sep.

The only inland record during this period was 2 adults Montgrew pool 20 Jul.

Winter monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	January	February	October	November	December
Nairn/Culbin Bars	1576	1280*	220*	200	345*
Findhorn Bay	1850	1480	812	1660	1910
Lossiemouth	4	19	15	3	0
Portgordon-Strathlene	26	23	0	0	45

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

Highest count during March was 1,850 Findhorn Bay 5th.

Purple Sandpiper *Calidris maritima*

Common winter visitor.

Main winter site maxima were:

	January-March	October-December
Nairn	9	1
Burghead-Hopeman	16	7
Lossiemouth	20	48
Portgordon-Strathlene	28	18
Cullen	0	20

During April, 26 Cullen 7th and c.30 (some in breeding plumage) Lossiemouth north pier 26th. Annual maximum flock sizes since 2008 have been:

2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2017	2018	2019	2020
144	100	120	100	73	45	19	60	70	80	44	48

Last in spring were 7 Lossiemouth north pier 9 May and first to return were five at the same site 5 Sep.

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

2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
14/09	16/10	20/09	09/09	23/07	27/09	15/09	15/09	21/08	27/08

Little Stint *Calidris minuta*

Very scarce migrant, mostly in Autumn

Spring: the only record was 1 Findhorn Bay 24 May (RSC).

Autumn: during September, 1 Findhorn Bay 17th (RHD) and 24th (per Birdguides). In October, 1 juvenile on a pool behind the Dolphin Centre at Spey Bay 5th (SP), 1 adult Spey estuary 21st-22nd (SP, MJHC) and 1 juvenile Lossie estuary 24th (RP, DAG).

Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola*

Common resident breeder, migrant and winter visitor.

January-March: Single birds were at Giant's Cradle walk (Dufftown) 3 Jan, Clephanton 21 Jan, the lower Findhorn 1 Feb and Todholes 8 Feb. Six were at Brightmony 12 Feb and another six flushed from the road between Craigroy and Altyre 26 Feb. During March, 1 lower Findhorn 6th, 1 Torrieston 6th and 1 Kinloss Barracks 20th.

Breeding: Unusually, no roding was reported and only a few breeding season records were received. Singles birds were at lower Cabrach 6 Apr, Cawdor Castle woods 30 Apr and the lower Findhorn 13 Jun. Three birds were flying and calling together at Newlands of Inchnacaorach (Cawdor) 18 Jul.

Autumn-winter: During October, 1 Craigroy 10th and 1 Birkenhill Wood (Elgin) 19th. During November, 2 Auchlochan and 2 Dava-Bogeney 12th, 1 Dava 20th, 1 Hill of Maud 28th, two Knock of Braemoray 28th, 1 Assich 28th and 1 Roseisle Forest 30th. In December, 5 Inchberry 9th and single birds at Moor of Tore 3rd and near Logie 27th.

Jack Snipe *Lymnocyrtus minimus*

Scarce migrant and winter visitor.

January-February: 2 Nairn 15 Feb (CGL) and 1 Netherton Farm (Findhorn Bay) 19 Feb (GM).

Spring: 1 Little Conval 8 Apr (AE).

Autumn-winter: At Kingsteps, 4 on 18 Oct (GP), 1 on 11 Nov (DMcN), 1 on 12 Nov (AMcN), 2 on 27 Nov (DMcN), 5 on 13 Dec (GP), 2 on 14 Dec (DPi) and 3 on 28 Dec (PRG). Elsewhere, 1 Findhorn Bay 18 Oct (KtD) and 25 Oct (PRG) and 1 Culbin Bar 18 Oct (AY).

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

Breeding: First heard up-country at Tomintoul on 4 Mar. Drumming at Tomnamoon 26 Mar, Shielwood Pastures SSSI (Knock) 18 Jun and Lecht Ski Centre 26 Jun. Other records from breeding habitat of single birds at lower Cabrach 12 & 29 Apr, Clunas Reservoir 19 Apr, Elrick (Cabrach) 8 Jun and Dava Way 14 Jun.

Winter-spring (January-April): 2 Kingsteps 4 Jan (1 there 12 Jan), 8 Nairn Bar 12 Jan, 1 Tradespark wet field (Nairn) 16 Jan and 2 Netherton Farm 26 Jan. During February, 3 Kinloss 4th, 1 Nairn 15th and 8 Nether Dallachy 25th. In March, 1 Nether Dallachy pool 8th and 2 Nairn 15th.

Late summer-winter: At the Spey estuary, 19 records during 17 Jul-17 Oct, mostly 1-3 birds with highest count of 6 on 17 Oct. Seven records from Kingsteps during 13 Aug-28 Dec with the highest count of 23 on 13 Dec. At Findhorn Bay, 1 on 20 Aug, 3 on 30 Aug, 7 on 2 Oct and 1 on 15 Nov. Three records from Nairn: 1 on 6 Sep, 11 on 8 Nov and 1 on 19 Dec. On Nairn Bar, 6 on 18 Oct, 3 on 15 Nov and 1 on 13 Dec. Inland, 2 Cloddach quarry 19 Aug (1 there 20 Aug and 2 on 1 Sep), 1 Clochan 14 Oct, 7 Nether Dallachy pool 17 Nov and 1 Loch Flemington 31 Dec. Well up-country, 2 Inchnacape 18 Oct and 1 Bogeney 12 Nov.

Maximum winter counts since 2010:

2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
45	6	83*	65*	13*	18*	53	11*	11	23*

*at Kingsteps.

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

Grey Phalarope *Phalaropus fulicarius**Rare visitor*

On 27 Dec an adult was feeding in Burghead harbour (IR *et al.*). This is the 9th record for Moray & Nairn, the most recent being 2018.



Grey Phalarope, Burghead harbour 27 December 2023 (David Main)

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

Arrival: First were 1 Cragganmore 10 Apr then 1 Blacksboat 13 Apr. Other mid-April records included 2 Dorenell 17th, 2 Nether Dallachy pool 18th, 2 Delmore 19 Apr and 1 Kirkhill 23rd.

The first arrival dates (in April) since 2010 were:

2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
17th	12th	10th	15th	10th	17th	16th	14th	15th	14th	10th

Breeding: A nest (clutch of four eggs) Pitchroy 9 Jun, an adult with a juvenile Nether Dallachy pool 23 Jun. Also on 23 Jun, single birds displaying Dell Farm (Glenlivet) and Strathavon Lodge (Tomintoul), and 3 displaying Ballcorach (Fodderletter). One adult behaving anxiously Spey estuary 23 Jun. Up-country there were records received from potential breeding sites at Blacksboat, Carron, Clunas Reservoir, Dorenell and Drynachan. In the coastal lowlands, there were records from other potential breeding sites at Cloddach quarry, the lower River Findhorn, Kilravock and Upper Bogside.

The usual post-breeding assemblage on the Spey estuary produced records on 28 dates during 3 Jul-23 Aug. The only counts of 10 or more were in July with 11 on 11th, 10 on 13th & 15th and 12 on 17th. Elsewhere, 7 Lossie estuary 22 Jul. Up-country, still 4 Delavorar (Glen Avon) 14 Jul, 1 Builg Burn 31 Jul and 1 Geal Charn Beag 8 Aug.

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

2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
28 Sep	19 Aug	28 Aug	19 Sep	8 Sep	27 Aug	10 Sep	7 Sep	23 Sep	23 Aug

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

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

Winter: 1 Loch Oire 6 Feb (EH).

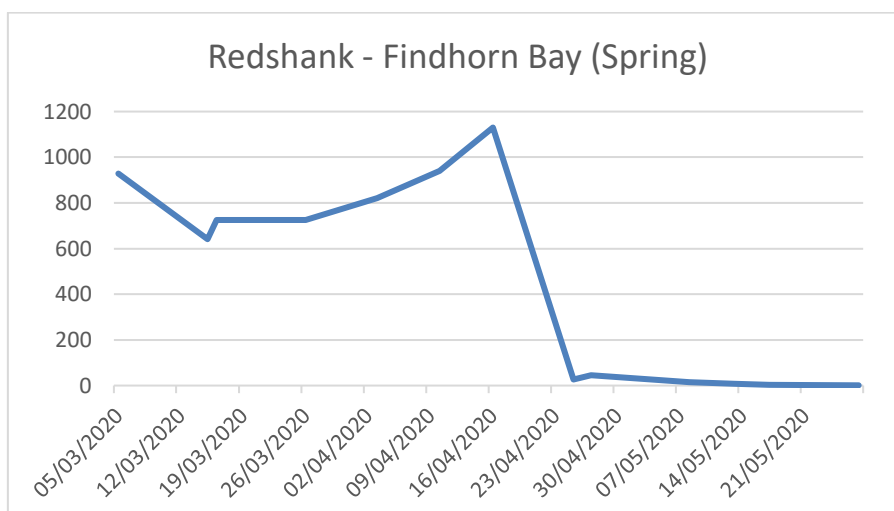
Spring: 1 Loch Oire 13-16 Apr (EH).

Summer/autumn: 1 Cloddach quarry 1 Jul (MJHC), 2 Spey estuary 11 Aug (MJHC) and 1 Cloddach quarry 19 Aug (MJHC). Later, 1 Loch Oire 30 Oct (EH).

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

Breeding: At Tomintoul in the breeding season were 6 on 4 Apr, 1+ on 24 May and 2 on 8 Jul.

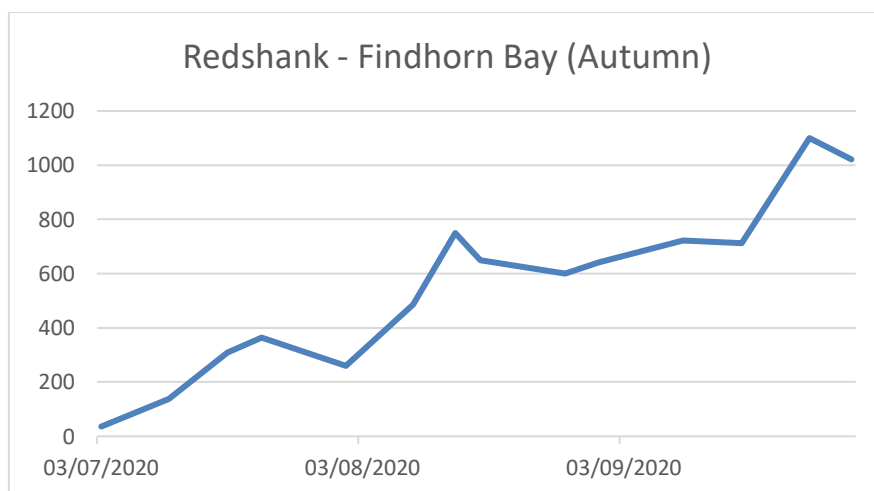
Spring (March-May): Weekly maximum counts in Findhorn Bay (GM, RSC) revealed the following pattern with a decline following the peak of 1,130 on 16 April:



The peak of 1,130 is the highest spring count ever recorded in Moray & Nairn. Elsewhere, the maximum count was 150 at Nairn on 8 Mar.

Late summer-autumn (July-September):

Weekly maximum counts in Findhorn Bay (GM, RSC) revealed the following pattern with a fairly regular increase over the three months.



Highest counts (monthly maxima) elsewhere were:

	July	August	September
Carse of Delnies	0	0	0
Nairn	18	58	54
Burghead	10	6	40
Lossiemouth	c.50	15	37
Spey estuary	13	37	10
Portgordon	0	35	38

Slightly inland, 2 Loch Loy 16 Aug and 2 Cloddach Quarry 20 Aug.

Winter: Monthly maxima at the coast were:

	January	February	October	November	December
Nairn/Culbin Bars	159*	76*	20*	50	152*
Carse of Delnies	140	100+	0	0	0
Nairn	c.100	122	70+	170	209
Findhorn Bay	634	622	975	757	422
Burghead-Hopeman	46	22	26	23	20
Lossiemouth	21	13	18	12	13
Portgordon-Strathlene	77	72	69	0	36

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

Maximum winter counts in Findhorn Bay since 2011 have been:

2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
500	599	513	870	845	912	976	919	1021	975

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*

Very scarce migrant.

No spring records received.

On autumn passage, 1 Spey estuary 10-16 Jul (RAS, MJHC) and 1 Lossie estuary 21 Jul (HFa).

Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus*

Very scarce migrant.

One was at Balormie pig farm on 18-19 Apr (RP).

Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

Scarce migrant, very scarce in winter.

Spring (late March-June): an unusual up-country record concerned a single bird on the River Spey at Pitchroy 15 Apr (NSu & CA). Recorded on twelve dates in Findhorn Bay between 16 Apr-29 Jun, all singles apart from 3 on 16 Apr and 4 on 29 Jun. Also 1 Lossie estuary 9 Jun.

Late summer-autumn (July-October): First returning birds from breeding grounds were 5 Findhorn Bay 3 Jul. Records from the Findhorn Bay area were received on 47 days from 3 Jul until 5 Oct. The highest number of birds in the Findhorn Bay area recorded on each of the 47 days can be broken down as follows:

One – 11 days	Four – 6 days	Seven – 2 days
Two – 6 days	Five – 4 days	Eight – 1 day
Three – 12 days	Six – 3 days	Nine – 2 days

The highest counts of nine were on 19 & 25 Jul (RSC). At the Spey estuary, twelve records received from 17 Jul until 18 Aug, mostly single birds, but 2 on 2 Aug, 3 on 9 Aug and 4 on 8 Aug. Lossiemouth had ten records between 2 Aug-13 Sep, mostly 1-2 birds with a highest count of 5 on 2 Sep. Elsewhere, 1 Findochty 20 Sep and (last record of the year) 1 over Kintessack 20 Oct.

Winter (November-December): no records received.

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

Breeding: The number of apparently occupied nests (AON) at both colonies showed some of the highest counts of recent years, with 707 AON at Covesea on 15 Jun and 330 AON at Portknockie on 18 Jun (MJHC).

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

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Covesea	540	590	425	569	627	488	700	476	560	707
Portknockie	360	365	233	336	260	220	319	263	300	330

In the first half of the year a high count of 38 was recorded in Burghead Bay on 27 Apr, but elsewhere although there were a few sightings numbers were low. Counts along the coast in late summer included 52 off Nairn 21 Aug, 255 on Findhorn beach 21 Aug and 800 off Delnies (Nairn) 23 Aug. Peak one hour passage counts offshore from Lossiemouth included 233 on 1 Apr, 322 on 25 Jul, 348 on 29 Aug and 567 on 27 Sep.

At Lossiemouth, regular sea-watches were conducted throughout 2019 and the maximum passage recorded over a one-hour period was as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
1	91	178	233	123	141	322	348	567	254	110	7

(RP)

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

A 1CY bird flew east off Nairn on 20 Sep (GH).

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

Breeding: At Loch Spynie 15+ large chicks were on the platform on 11 Jun and at Aldunie (Cabrach) 3 juveniles were present on 3 Aug. No other breeding sites were confirmed, but the presence of juveniles on Findhorn Bay in the summer would seem to indicate that breeding was probable at Forres north of the A96.

Highest count of the year was 1,891 at Balormie pig farm on 28 Dec. Counts at the start of the year at Balormie included 1,304 on 2 Jan and 1,607 on 1 Mar. At other sites there were around 280 Nairn east beach 6 Feb and 40 Kingston 13 Mar. During summer, high counts at Findhorn Bay included 228 on 30 Jun, 245 on 25 Jul and 371 on 13 Aug. Elsewhere on the coast, 127 Nairn 18 Jul, 126 Portgordon 2 Aug and 153 Lossie estuary 23 Aug. Inland, 120 Chapelton (Glenlivet) 29 Jul. At the end of the year, significant counts included 71 Lossie estuary 13 Dec, 55 Brodie Castle 23 Dec and 300 Clochan on 26 Dec.

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

First sighting of the year was one flying east off Lossiemouth during a sea-watch on 13 Mar (RP). Two adults were seen at Lossiemouth on 31 Aug and multiple sightings of a single adult at Lossie estuary during 28 Aug-5 Dec. The only other sighting was a 1CY bird at Loch Flemington on 14 Sep (CGL, JAC).



Little Gull, Lossie estuary 28 September 2020 (David Main)

Mediterranean Gull *Ichthyaetus melanocephalus*

Very scarce visitor.

First was an adult at Spey estuary on 28 Jun (MJHC) followed by an adult at Burghead on 20 Jul (MJHC). All subsequent sightings were in the Lossiemouth area with an adult at Lossie estuary 19-24 Jul (HFa, JSi, DAG, AJL) and possibly the same adult nearby at Balormie pig farm 24-28 Jul (DAG).

Common Gull *Larus canus*

Very common resident breeder and winter visitor.

Breeding: At the Tips of Corsemaul colony (east of Dufftown) 121 were visible on 6 May and 1 km southeast at Tom Mor a further 10 were recorded the same day. A small colony with 10 birds present was at Fèith Musach (Tomintoul) on 23 Jun, and on 26 Jun there were around 800 in a large colony at Beinn a' Chruinnich (Lecht) and around 100 at Meikle Coire Riabhach (Lecht) (IF). In Elgin there were 8 on a breeding site at the cemetery on 5 Mar and single apparently occupied nests were seen at Moray Street on 16 May and at Edgar Road on 7 Jun. At Lossiemouth cemetery, a nest held a clutch of one on 16 May (RP). Breeding was also observed at the colony north of the A96 at Forres, but no count was taken although 165 were seen nearby on Findhorn Bay on 22 Jun.

Significant flock counts away from breeding areas early in the year included 200 Findhorn Bay 8 Jan, up to 2,000 Feddan (Brodie) 14 Jan, 55 Balormie pig farm 16 Feb and 560 Milton of Grange (Findhorn Bay) 4 Mar. High counts reported again later in the year included 960 Spey estuary 8 Sep, 140 Lossiemouth 31 Oct, 450 Kingsteps (Nairn) 12 Nov and 1,500 Clochan 26 Dec.

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

Breeding: At Portknockie, one apparently occupied nest 18 Jun on White Craig and nearby on Bow Fiddle Rock an adult with 2 juveniles on 7 Jul (MJHC).

Overall, numbers through the year were slightly up at the Lossie estuary particularly in the spring period. Maxima were 1,019 on 29 Aug and 1,131 on 26 Sep. (RP). At Spey estuary, where most of the counts come from the autumn, numbers were down on the 2019 figures with the highest being 280 on 26 Sep (MJHC). On Findhorn Bay, where birds are present year round in lesser numbers, the counts were broadly similar (RSC).

Maximum monthly counts were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Lossie estuary	345	32	360	370	32	15	7	1019	1131	550	218	322
Spey estuary	25	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	145	280	nc	nc	nc
Findhorn	19	28	nc	18	26	31	38	28	24	27	18	14

The only other coastal counts of note were 16 Nairn 15 Aug, 17 Burghead 1 Nov and 16 Kingsteps (Nairn) 11 Dec. Inland, 30+ were reported on fields near Loch Spynie but these were likely to be associated with the high counts at Lossie estuary which is 4 km away. Elsewhere, 16 Fochabers 17 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.

All sightings in 2020 were from the area around Lossiemouth and given that Lossie estuary, Loch Spynie and Balormie pig farm are all within 3km of each other, some sightings may involve the same birds. It is possible that no more than 10 birds were involved in these sightings.

Lossie estuary:	The first report was a single bird on 19 Jan followed by an adult during a sea-watch off Lossiemouth on 9 Feb. Five sightings of a 4CY were recorded on the estuary 15 Feb-4 Apr, and three sightings of a 2CY between 7 Mar-4 Apr. An adult was reported on 21 Mar. Later in the year there were six sightings of a 2CY on the estuary from 8 Jul-2 Sep and a 3CY on a seawatch on 18 Jul. Last sightings were of a probable 1CY on 5-6 Dec. (RP, DAG, HFa <i>et al.</i>).
Loch Spynie:	Seven sightings of a 4CY were reported 1 Jan-16 Mar and a 3CY on 5 Feb. (RSC, DAG, PRG, JHa).
Balormie pig farm:	Five sightings of a 4CY were reported 2 Jan-16 Feb. An adult and a different 4CY were seen on 21 Mar followed by a 4CY sighting on 12 Apr (RP, PRG).

Iceland Gull *Larus glaucooides**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.

Although difficult to ascertain the exact numbers, there were more sightings in 2020 probably involving around 17 birds.

Delnies (Nairn):	One 1CY on 24 Dec (GP).
Auldearn:	At Mains of Moyness, a 1CY on 7 Dec (DMcN).
Cloddach (Elgin):	At Birnie Kirk pig farm an adult was present 26 Feb, 1 Mar & 8 Mar and 2 adults on 14 Mar. A 2CY was also present with the adult on 8 Mar (RP, MJHC). Later in the year, a 1CY at the quarry on 18 Nov (per Birdguides).
Gilston (Elgin):	An adult on 18 Feb.
Balormie pig farm:	First was an adult on 2 Jan followed by singles on 9 Jan, 9 Feb and 15 Mar. At the end of the year, a 1CY on 26 Dec followed by an adult on 27-28 Dec (RP, AWe, ASin).
Lossie estuary:	First was an adult on 8 Jan. There were six sightings of a 2CY between 11 Jan-17 May. A 4CY was present 15 Feb & 7 Mar, and an adult was seen again on 9 Mar. Later, there were seven sightings of an adult between 27 Aug-14 Nov. A 1CY was also seen on 11 & 21 Nov and 6 Dec. (PRG, DAG, RP <i>et al.</i>).
Loch Spynie:	Three sightings of an adult on 2, 4 & 18 Jan, followed by a 2CY on 5 & 8 Feb. Timings of these sightings coincide with those of similar aged birds at Lossie estuary nearby. (PI, PRG, RSC, DAG).
Loch Oire:	One on 5 May (EH).
Llanbryde:	One on 1 Feb (AMg).
Dallachy pool:	An immature bird on 19 May (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 in Elgin, Lossiemouth, Buckie, Fochabers and Forres. Undoubtedly there were many more sites around the region where breeding took place but were not recorded.

Monthly maximum counts on the Lossie estuary are shown below and were consistently well above the figures recorded in 2019. Some counts were also taken on the Spey estuary and at Nairn:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Lossie	671	111	620	464	621	136	103	2260	660	1064	911	1170
Spey	300	25	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	980	1240	14	nc	nc
Nairn	140	60	90	nc	nc	15	19	53	nc	100	nc	64

Elsewhere, significant counts included 450 Craigellachie 3 Jan, 1,100 Loch Oire 2 Feb, 2,760 Findhorn 3 Sep, 500 Clochan 26 Dec and 4,113 Balormie pig farm 26 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, first sightings were 4 Burghead 2 Jan and 3 adults Balormie pig farm (Lossiemouth) also on 2 Jan. At nearby Lossie estuary there were reports to mid-March of up to 2 adults, which may have been the same birds seen at Balormie. At the end of the year the last sightings were at Balormie pig farm with 4 adults and a 1CY on 26 Dec and 3 adults on 28 Dec.

Arrival: By March there were reports of sightings at a number of locations. High counts included 6 adults at Birnie Kirk pig farm, Cloddach 8 Mar, 4 adults Cooper Park (Elgin) 21 Mar and 2 adults Findhorn Bay 14 Apr.

Breeding: No apparently occupied nests were recorded this year, but from the sightings it is likely that breeding took place at previously recorded sites such as industrial estates in Elgin, Buckie and Forres. A pair were also seen in the Common Gull colony at Clunas Reservoir on 18 Apr, and 2 adults with 2 juveniles were observed on Findhorn Bay on 30 Jun.

Other significant counts from elsewhere included 6 Lossiemouth 6 Sep, 4 Spey estuary 10 Sep and 4 Lossie estuary 10 Oct. A hybrid Herring x Lesser Black-backed Gull was at Nairn on 11 Sep (DMP).

Sandwich Tern *Thalasseus sandvicensis*

Very common summer visitor and occasional breeder.

Arrival: First of the year was 1 off Nairn 15 Mar. First sightings at other locations were 1 Cullen 20 Mar, 3 Findhorn Bay 25 Mar and 1 off Lossiemouth harbour 9 Apr. High counts in spring included 44 Nairn harbour 10 Apr and 56 Findhorn Bay 20 Apr.

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

2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
27	18	3	25	12	21	14	18	26	15
Mar	Mar	Apr	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar

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

First juveniles with adults from colonies outwith Moray & Nairn were noted from late 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 2019 with counts in August and September above 300 including 315 on 8 Aug, 820 on 21 Aug, 510 on 2 Sep and 338 on 18 Sep (RSC). Elsewhere, high counts were generally lower but included 750 off Delnies (Nairn) 23 Aug and 102 Nairn 27 Sep.

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

	Jul 1-15	Jul 16-31	Aug 1-15	Aug 16-31	Sep 1-15	Sep 16-30
Findhorn shore	21	66	315	820	510	338

(RSC)

Passage of Sandwich Tern along the Moray coast was monitored during regular sea-watches from Lossiemouth. Passage counts up to July were generally low with a maximum of 49 in one

hour on 3 May. By late summer and autumn counts had increased and included 20 on 16 Aug, 55 on 30 Aug and 86 on 20 Sep. The final sighting was a very late single bird on 15 Nov. The maximum half-monthly one-hour passage counts taken at Lossiemouth from late April through to early October were as follows:

Apr 1-15	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
21	3	49	10	3	4	1	10	0	55	41	86	1

(RP)

Little Tern *Sternula albifrons*

Very scarce summer visitor and rare breeder.

Breeding: Took place again on Lossiemouth east beach. First back were 2 on the estuary on 8 May (RPO), and on 7 Jun there were three nests on the east beach (MSh).

Five flew east past Lossiemouth 11 Jul (RP). Elsewhere, present on the Spey estuary during 17 Jul-23 Aug with highest counts of 9 on 20 Jul and 14 on 21 Jul (MJHC). The only other record was a single bird at Strathlene on 26 Aug (MJHC).

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*

Summer visitor and fairly common breeder.

Arrival: First were 2 on River Spey at Aberlour 11 Apr, 1 Spey Bay 20 Apr and 1 past Lossiemouth 25 Apr.

Breeding: At Loch Spynie, only a limited number of observations made but 5 apparently occupied nests (AON) were seen early in the season on 15 Jun, but many Black-headed Gulls were still at the site. By 21 Jul over 70 birds were seen in the vicinity of the loch (DAG, IF). At Lossiemouth harbour, 13 AONs were recorded on 27 Jun (RP). One AON was close to Garmouth viaduct on 2 Jun (MJHC).

Inland at Aberlour, where Common Terns breed on the roof of Walkers factory, 12 were flying over the factory on 4 Jun and there were 9 adults and 3 juveniles on 16 Jun (AE).

Elsewhere, the highest count at Spey estuary was 90 on 9 Jul, and 25 were off Findhorn on 11 Aug. At Lossiemouth the main passage was in late July with a one-hour count of 88 on 28 Jul. Last sightings were 3 Findhorn 19 Sep, 3 past Lossiemouth 24 Sep and 3 Burghead 2 Oct.

The maximum half-monthly one-hour passage counts off Lossiemouth from late April through to early October were as follows:

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
1	7	14	16	20	7	88	12	71	4	5	0

(RP)

Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea*

Summer visitor and fairly common breeder.

Arrival: First were 5 Burghead Bay 13 May.

Breeding: A small colony on the Kingston shingle at the mouth of the Spey held at least 6 apparently occupied nests (with 25 adults) on 7 Jun (MJHC). At RAF Lossiemouth there were 34 adults with chicks present on 6 July. Adults were also at Kinloss Barracks during July with a peak count of 8 on 13 & 22 Jul (AJL).

On Findhorn beach they were seen regularly post-breeding but only in small numbers with a maximum of 10 on 8 Aug (RSC). A few passage sightings at Lossiemouth in July and August but once again low numbers with a maximum of 2 on 22 Aug (RP). A high count at Delnies

(Nairn) was 30 on 23 Aug (AMcN). Last sighting of the year was 2 at Findhorn on 19 Sep (RSh).

Black Tern *Chlidonias niger*

Very scarce spring and autumn migrant.

An adult at Lossiemouth, on the rocks behind the north pier, on 15 Jun (AJL, DAG, RP). This was the 11th record since 2000.



Black Tern, Lossiemouth 15 June 2020 (Duncan Gibson)

Great Skua *Stercorarius skua*

Fairly common migrant in summer and autumn.

Spring: First of the year was one flying west past Lossiemouth on 13 Mar. In April-June, birds were seen on 10 days off Lossiemouth with 2 on 10 May and 28 Jun (RP). Elsewhere, 1 Burghead Bay 29 Jun (RSC).

Summer: In July-August, seen off Lossiemouth on four dates, which included 7 birds in a 90 minute sea-watch on 29 Aug (RP). Also 1 Spey Bay 23 Aug (PDal).

Autumn: From September onwards, most sightings were from sea-watches at Lossiemouth with records on eight dates. High counts included 10 on 24 Sep and 8 on 26 Sep (RP). Elsewhere, 1 Burghead Bay 20 Sep, 3 passing Strathlene in 30 minutes on 25 Sep and, final sighting of the year, 1 off Burghead 1 Nov (RSC, MJHC, JDa).

Pomarine Skua *Stercorarius pomarinus*

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

First was 1 off Delnies 5 Sep (AMcN). Off Findhorn dunes, 2 juveniles flew east into Burghead Bay on 4 Oct (MCI) and 2 were also seen flying east at the same location on 21 Oct (SP). The only other sighting was 1 off Nairn harbour on 20 Oct (PRG).

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

Spring: Relatively few sightings this year in the April-May period. First was 1 off Cullen 25 Apr (JMa). This was followed by 2 on 10 May, 3 on 17 May and 1 on 23 May during sea-watches at Lossiemouth (RP).

Summer: From June-August there were seven days with reports from sea-watches at Lossiemouth. These included 4 in one hour on 23 Aug and 18 over a period of three hours on 29 Aug (RP). Elsewhere, 1 off Delnies 12 Jun followed by 3 on 23 Aug at the same location (AMcN). Also reported as present at Spey Bay on 23 Aug.

Autumn: The September-October period saw the largest number of sightings of the year. There were five days with sightings at Lossiemouth with a maximum of 5 in one hour on 24 Sep. At Nairn there were single birds on 15 & 29 Sep (ASin, CTa). Off Findhorn there were single sightings on 14, 20 & 23 Sep (MCh, RSC), and the last sighting of the year was at Burghead on 7 Oct (AMu).

Long-tailed Skua *Stercorarius longicaudus**Very scarce passage migrant.*

Two adults flew west past Lossiemouth on 29 Aug (RP).

Little Auk *Alle alle**Very scarce visitor in autumn and winter. Occasionally more numerous.*

First sighting was 4 flying west at Lossiemouth on 1 Feb (RP). All other sightings were in the October-November period with reports from six days at Lossiemouth with singles on 15 Oct, 1 & 28 Nov, and 2 on 17 Oct, 8 & 14 Nov (RP). Elsewhere, single birds were seen at Spey Bay on 16 Oct (MJHC), Hopeman on 17 Oct (PG) and Burghead on 21 Oct (MGC).

Guillemot *Uria aalge**Rare breeder, very common offshore.*

Breeding: No complete count was possible for the colony on the seaward side of Bow Fiddle Rock, Portknockie this year, but at least 59 adults were on mainland ledges and visible parts of the Bow Fiddle on 18 Jun (MJHC).

First sightings of the year included 3 off Lossiemouth 2 Jan, 1 Burghead Bay 9 Jan and 4 off Nairn harbour 10 Jan. One-hour passage counts in the first few months of the year at Lossiemouth included 21 on 22 Feb, 42 on 7 Mar and 53 on 25 Apr. Elsewhere, 12 Burghead Bay 7 Feb and 16 there 20 Apr. In spring, highest passage counts off Lossiemouth were 165 on 10 May and 235 on 16 May. At least 250 were also recorded on the sea off Lossiemouth harbour on 9 May. In summer off Lossiemouth, 379 on 7 Jun, but numbers fell away later with high counts of 42 on 21 Jun and 24 on 12 Jul. A high count on the sea in Burghead Bay was 155 on 26 Jun. In autumn, passage counts off Lossiemouth remained low with 3 on 29 Aug, 11 on 26 Sep and 23 on 9 Oct. Elsewhere, counts above 10 included 12 Burghead Bay 31 Aug, 12 in Burghead harbour 17 Sep, 50 off Delnies 20 Sep and 17 off Nairn 18 Oct. Last sightings of the year were 1 off Burghead 26 Dec and 3 past Lossiemouth on 26 Dec.

At Lossiemouth, regular sea-watches were conducted throughout 2020 and the maximum monthly passage recorded over a one-hour period was as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
3	21	42	53	235	379	24	3	11	23	20	14
(RP)											

Razorbill *Alca torda**Scarce breeder, very common offshore.*

Breeding: At Portknockie, the Bow Fiddle Rock colony held 169 adults on ledges on 18 Jun. Further west at Tronach Head there were 23 adults on the cliffs on 16 Jun (MJHC).

In the first half of the year the only counts exceeding 10 away from Lossiemouth came from Burghead Bay where there were 12 on 23 Mar, 21 on 8 Apr, 74 on 20 Apr and 27 on 8 May. In one hour counts at Lossiemouth the peak passage records were 834 on 7 Mar and 796 on 22 Mar. There was also a count of 1,200 auk sp. on 19 Apr passing Lossiemouth, most of which were likely to have been Razorbills. High counts later in the year included 76 on 13 Sep and 58 on 6 Oct both in Burghead Bay, 250 off Delnies 20 Sep, 17 in Burghead harbour 27 Sep and 50 off Kingships (Nairn) 28 Oct. In Spey Bay on 21 Sep were 83 off Tugnet and 69 in Boar's Head Rock area, and on 6 Nov there was a total of 131 at three locations on the Bay.

At Lossiemouth, regular sea-watches were conducted throughout 2020 and the maximum monthly passage recorded over a one-hour period was as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
7	100	834	219	43	21	27	15	71	439	243	74

(RP)

Regular counts of birds on the sea in Burghead Bay, as seen from Findhorn, were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
6	2	12	74	27	4	0	12	76	58	74	3

(RSC)

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

Breeding: Highest count of adults on the sea by Tronach Head was 17 on 14 Jul (MJHC). Although breeding at this site and at Bow Fiddle Rock nearby is apparent among the small number of birds present, the success rates are difficult to ascertain owing to the inaccessibility of the nests on these cliffs.

Counts early in the year included 3 off Nairn 16 Jan, and 14 on 16 Feb & 9 on 1 Mar during one hour sea-watches at Lossiemouth. There were also several counts of 1-2 birds in Burghead Bay from both Findhorn and Burghead during January-February. Away from the east Moray breeding area, highest counts late in the year were from Lossiemouth with mainly westerly passage counts of 24 on 26 Oct, 31 on 1 Nov, 41 on 9 Nov and 112 on 21 Nov. Elsewhere, a few sightings of single birds in Burghead Bay and off Nairn in November-December.

At Lossiemouth, regular sea-watches were conducted throughout 2020 and the maximum monthly passage recorded over a one-hour period was as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2	14	9	7	3	1	3	12	1	24	112	22

(RP)

Puffin *Fratercula arctica**Very scarce offshore.*

Nearly all sightings were from Lossiemouth, mainly over the summer months, where one hour sea-watch counts included 6 on 14 Jun, 28 on 25 Jul, 8 on 29 Aug, 4 on 17 Oct and the last

sighting of 1 on 14 Nov (RP). The only other records were from Burghead with 3 on 26 Jun and 2 on 3 Jul (AL, StB).

Red-throated Diver *Gavia stellata*

Rare breeder. Fairly common autumn and winter visitor offshore.

Summer: One pair was seen on an upland loch on several dates between 26 Mar-30 Jun but breeding was not confirmed. A pair was present on a loch in a different area during 19 Apr-25 May but, here also, no evidence of breeding was obtained.

Best monthly counts at main coastal sites were:

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Nairn/Delnies	2	2	3	1	nc	nc	2	nc	4	2	2	5
Burghead Bay	10	5	2	15	3	4	4	4	3	4	7	4
Lossiemouth (flying past)	5	47	12	24	7	10	2	6	11	10	8	10
Lossiemouth (on sea)	1	3	4	2	3	1	0	1	0	2	3	3
Spey Bay	3	nc	3	nc	nc	1	nc	2	15	59	73	5

Highest counts: 47 past Lossiemouth in 1 hour on 22 Feb (RP) and 73 Spey Bay 6 Nov (MJHC). Elsewhere, the only count to exceed five birds was 9 Cullen 9 Apr.

Black-throated Diver *Gavia arctica*

Rare breeder. Scarce autumn and winter visitor offshore.

Upland lochs: For the 12th successive year, one pair bred on the same loch. They failed to rear any young, and have done so only once - in 2013 (IH, MGar).

Best monthly counts at main coastal sites were:

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Burghead Bay	3	1	2	9	5	0	0	0	0	1	15	0
Lossiemouth	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0
Spey Bay	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1

Best counts in Burghead Bay were 9 on 17 Apr and 15 on 9 Nov (still 11 there 28 Nov) (RSC). Elsewhere, 1 Easter Delnies 17 Dec, 1 Hopeman 19 Dec and off Nairn, single birds on 16 Jan, 21 Aug, 15 Sep and 18 Oct.

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
Burghead Bay	4	2	2	1	5	1	1	0	0	1	1	1
Lossiemouth (flying past)	0	4	2	2	9	2	1	1	3	6	8	9
Lossiemouth (on sea)	2	0	5	2	16	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Spey Bay	1	nc	3	nc	nc	nc	0	0	0	0	2	1

Elsewhere, 10 Cullen 9 Apr (5 on 22 Mar), 1 Portknockie 19 Jan, 1 Delnies 7 Feb, 1 Hopeman 13 Feb and 1 off Nairn Bar 13 Dec.

White-billed Diver *Gavia adamsii*

Rare visitor.

Recorded, as usual in recent years, at Cullen, Burghead and Lossiemouth.

Cullen: Present 22 Mar-22 Apr. Highest counts were 4 on 22 Mar (DMP) and 4 on 22 Apr (per Birdguides).

Burghead: 1 on 23 Apr (MGr).

Lossiemouth: On the sea, 1 on 4 Apr (RP), 1 on 3 May (RP) and 1 on 9 May (RP, DAG, HFa). Also, 1 flew west 2 May (RP) and 1 flew east 3 May (RP).

Storm Petrel *Hydrobates pelagicus*

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

All records were of birds trapped and ringed at Portknockie, where catches were made on 28-29 Jun (10), 4-5 Jul (1), 9-10 Jul (1), 10-11 Jul (9), 14-15 Jul (1), 15-16 Jul (18), 16-17 Jul (4), 22-23 Jul (1), 24-25 Jul (4), 25-26 Jul (23), 26-27 Jul (4), 31 Jul - 1 Aug (4), 1-2 Aug (11), 2-3 Aug (2), 3-4 Aug (7), 5-6 Aug (2), 11-12 Aug (4), 12-13 Aug (4), and 16-17 Aug (2) – a total of 112 (AY).

Fulmar *Fulmarus glacialis*

Common breeder, very common offshore.

Breeding: The only information received concerned an early return of 4 at Cove sea on 6 Jan and 8 on cliffs from Cummingston to Hopeman on 31 Jan.

Passage: From January to June, counts were low with the only totals of 20 or more past Lossiemouth in one hour being 22 on 1 Apr, 28 on 25 Apr and 56 on 7 Jun. High counts over summer included 26 on 25 Jul, 47 on 16 Aug and 193 on 25 Aug. Highest counts though occurred on 29 Aug where 867 were recorded in one hour and 1,942 over four hours with over 90% of these on westwards passage (RP).

At Lossiemouth regular sea-watches were conducted throughout 2020 and the maximum monthly passage recorded over a one-hour period was as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
1	18	19	22	17	56	26	867	218	0	0	11

(RP)

Elsewhere, 48 passed Strathlene in 30 minutes on 26 Aug.

Sooty Shearwater *Ardenna grisea*

Very scarce migrant in late summer and autumn.

Recorded on four days. During sea-watches at Lossiemouth, 4 were seen on 29 Aug, 3 on 27 Sep and 1 on 4 Oct (RP). Also 1 off Burghead 25 Sep (GH).

Annual totals since 2010 have been as follows:

2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
7	605	11	1	27	8	4	42	21	7	9

Manx Shearwater *Puffinus puffinus*

Fairly common offshore in summer and autumn.

First of the year were 3 off Lossiemouth on 13 Apr. Passage was then seen off Lossiemouth until late September with one-hour counts including 5 on 30 May, 9 on 28 Jun, 6 on 16 Aug, 48 on 8 Sep (by far the strongest passage of the year) and the last sighting of 1 on 26 Sep (RP). Elsewhere, off Burghead there were sightings of 2 on 25 Aug, 8 on 2 Sep, 2 on 15 Sep and 1 on 25 Sep. The only other record was 2 off Delnies 7 Jun.

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 five birds. By the end of March larger numbers were seen offshore with one-hour counts at Lossiemouth recording 81 on 22 Mar, 89 on 19 Apr and 311 on 10 May. Other sightings during this period from Burghead Bay included 125 on 8 May and 32 on 14 May. Highest counts occurred from July to the end of October with passage records at Lossiemouth including 261 on 26 Jul, 324 on 29 Aug, 430 on 26 Sep and 465 on 9 Oct.

At Lossiemouth regular sea-watches were conducted throughout 2020 and the maximum monthly passage recorded over a one-hour period was as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
4	5	81	89	311	94	261	324	430	465	105	17

(RP)

Elsewhere, Gannets were also most numerous in autumn and early winter. Counts off Findhorn included 360 on 6 Sep and 260 on 22 Sep. At Burghead there were counts of 198 on 25 Sep and 49 on 17 Oct. Off Delnies there were 200 on 20 Sep and 52 on 10 Oct. Ten-minute passage counts at Strathlene included 136 on 25 Sep and 118 on 26 Sep.



An unusual inland record was of a juvenile Gannet resting in a grass field at South Polduie (Edinvillie) c.30 km from the coast (LR). It flew off, apparently uninjured.

Gannet, near Edinvillie 26 September 2020 (Liz Robson).

Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

Rare breeder and fairly common winter visitor.

Breeding: There were 16 apparently occupied nests at the Covesea colony on 15 Jun (MJHC). Coastal: Counts of 20 or more were 24 Burghead Bay 9 Jan, 35 Nairn 6 Feb, 103 Culbin Bar 18 Oct, 59 on Halliman Skerries (Lossiemouth) 18 Oct, 31 Portgordon-Strathlene 18 Oct, 25 Nairn east beach 4 Nov, 29 Burghead 6 Nov and 20 Hopeman-Covesea 19 Dec.

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

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Loch Spynie	10	5	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	6	10	11
Tugnet	1	nc	nc	nc	0	0	0	7	12	61	35	nc
(Speymouth)												
Findhorn Bay	28	28	15	15	11	8	9	21	36	98	64	12
mouth												

Inland: In addition to Loch Spynie (see table above) other freshwater sites holding Cormorants included Newmill (Auldearn) 2 on 20 Dec, Black Loch (Dava) 1 on 24 Jan, Cooper Park (Elgin) 1 on 24 Jan, Loch na Bo 1 on 26 Feb & 3 Dec with 2 on 15 Dec and Loch Oire 1 on 26 Feb, 21 Mar and 5 & 15 Dec. On the River Spey at Aberlour, single birds were seen on 18 Jan, 4 Feb and 15 Dec.

Shag *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

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

Breeding: At Bow Fiddle Rock (Portknockie) numbers increased to 139 apparently occupied nests (AON) on 18 Jun. At Tronach Head there were 88 AON on 16 Jun, slightly above the long-term average. At Covesea numbers remained constant with 22 AON on 15 Jun. (MJHC). Over the last ten years the occupancy of the three colonies (AON) has been as follows:

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Portknockie	85	93	86	66	77	73	74	78	83	139
Tronach Head	58	53	86	72	80	77	65	118	69	88
Covesea	17	14	16	18	21	21	27	24	23	22

(MJHC)

On 19 Jan c.300 roosted on Bow Fiddle Rock. Other autumn/winter counts included 117 Portgordon-Strathlene 18 Oct, 20 Burghead 17 Nov, 250 flying east off Lossiemouth 6 Dec and 37 Hopeman-Covesea 19 Dec.

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

Fairly common resident breeder.

Heronries: 13 occupied nests Nether Dallachy (WMM) and 12 occupied nests at Aberlour (AE). Other occupied heronries were at Binsness, Druim and Loch Spynie.

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

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Findhorn Bay	3	7	12	9	8	31	22	24	25	11	7	9
Lossie estuary	1	1	nc	1	1	2	6	9	4	6	3	5
Spey estuary	nc	2	nc	nc	nc	nc	5	4	3	4	nc	nc

Best counts in Findhorn Bay were 31 on 16 Jun, 24 on 15 Aug and 25 on 16 Sep.

The only counts of five or more elsewhere were 5 Dallachy pool 13 Jul and 7 flying south over Aberlour 17 Sep.

In the open uplands, 1 Loch Builg 31 Jul.

Great White Egret *Ardea alba*

Rare visitor.

One was seen and photographed on the Spey estuary on 3 Jul (PHa). Assuming that a series of records at Tugnet and Bogmoor in 2010-11 all relate to the same individual, then the 2020 bird is the 4th to be seen in Moray & Nairn.



Great White Egret (with Whooper Swan), Spey estuary 3 July 2020 (Pamela Hay)

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

Rare visitor.

A poor showing compared to recent years, with only two brief records: 1 Findhorn Bay 5-8 Jan (RSC, PRG) and 1 Spey estuary 17 Sep (RAS, MJHC).

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*

Scarce summer visitor and breeder.

Arrival: First back were 1 Tomintoul 27 Mar and 1 Findhorn Bay 31 Mar.

Breeding: 17 nests were occupied by pairs, with single adults at three other nests – probably reflecting early migration problems in Iberia. Eggs were laid by 16 pairs and of these 12 were successful, raising a total of 25+ young (RHD).

Largest congregations in Findhorn Bay in late summer were 12 on 31 Aug, 11 on 8 Sep and 10 on 1 & 2 Sep. Best counts on the other estuaries were 4 Spey estuary 23 Aug and 4 Lossie estuary 8 Jun. Last of the year were 4 Findhorn Bay 24 Sep.

Honey-buzzard *Pernis apivorus**Very rare migrant breeder. Passage migrant.*

Present in the breeding season in three localities. Two of these have held breeding pairs in the recent past; the third, where a bird was seen on 23 Jul only, has no previous record of occupancy.

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

Breeding: As in 2019, four sites were occupied by breeding pairs, of which two were successful, raising three young between them (EW).

Wandering birds were reported at seven other upland sites (away from known breeding areas). A tagged 2CY bird was close to Ben Rinnes on 1 Mar before moving further north and roosting overnight on 2-3 Mar in a forest close to Dallas (DPi). This was only c.10 km from the coast and indicates that lowland sightings of Golden Eagle are not impossible.

Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus**Common resident breeder.*

Breeding season (April-July) records included birds/pairs at Burghead, Burgie, Cloddach, Clunas reservoir, Culcharry, Dalvey, Delavorar, Drainie, Dyke, Edinkillie, Elgin, Findhorn, Inchberry, Kinloss, Kirkhill, Milton of Grange, Pluscarden and Urquhart.

Records received from a further 30 localities at other seasons.

Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis**Rare resident breeder.*

Breeding: Due to COVID-19 travel restrictions, visits to several potential sites during the breeding season were impossible. Breeding was, however, confirmed at six sites with a total of at least six young was reared to fledging.

Autumn/winter: Reports came from Altyre, Glen Brown, Glenconglass, Glenfiddich Lodge, Longmorn, Newlands of Fleenas and Tomintoul.

Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus**Occasional breeder and very scarce visitor.*

Only two records: 1 Loch Spynie 8 May (LeM) and 1 Lossie estuary 6 Aug (FA).

Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus**Rare resident breeder, very scarce migrant and winter visitor.*

Breeding: Due to COVID-19 travel restrictions, visits to many potential sites during the breeding season were impossible. Pairs were however found at three sites in west Moray, two of them successfully fledging a total of six young.

Outside the breeding season, 1 Black Loch (Dava) 31 Dec, 1 Brown Muir 28 Oct, 1 Delnies 24 Dec, 1 Glenlivet 2 Nov and 1 Loch Kirkcaldy 5 Nov.

Red Kite *Milvus milvus**Occasional breeder, reintroduced in Highland and North-east Scotland.*

Breeding: Reported at 16 locations during March-August but breeding confirmed at only two sites.

Autumn/winter: Reports from other localities came from Achavelgin (Dec), Achavraat (Jan), Auldearn (Jan), Cairn Cattoch (Oct), Coire Raibeirt (Nov), Dunearn (Jan, Dec), Findhorn Bay

(Sep), Fogwatt (Dec), Glenernerney (Dec), Inveravon (Oct), Redburn (Nov), Refouble (Sep, Nov), Regaule (Oct), Relugas (Jan), Tomintoul (Dec), Tomnamoon (Jan) and Wester Buthill (Feb).

White-tailed Eagle *Haliaeetus albicilla*

Rare visitor.

Four records, all of single birds, came from Cragganmore 3 Apr (NSu, CA), Findhorn Bay 28 Apr (GM), Forres 3 Apr (IB) and Glen Brown 29 Nov (KtD).

Rough-legged Buzzard *Buteo lagopus*

Rare winter visitor. Passage migrant.

One remained in the Cabrach area in November-December. It was first seen on Little Balloch Hill on 3 Nov and subsequently there on 27 Nov and 8 Dec (MJ). The last sighting was at Scaut Hill on 23 Dec (MJ). This is the 11th record since 1980 and the 3rd this century.



Rough-legged Buzzard, Little Balloch Hill 27 November 2020 (Mark Johnston)

Buzzard *Buteo buteo*

Common resident breeder.

The only reports of five or more together were 5 Clunas reservoir 13 Apr and 5 Logie Steading 19 Mar.

Barn Owl *Tyto alba*

Scarce resident breeder.

Breeding season (March-July) reports came from Bridge of Derrybeg, Brodie, Burnside of Enzie, Drumin Castle, Findrassie, Gilston, Inverugie, Oakwood (Elgin), Peterfair (Ballindalloch), Unthank (Duffus) and Tarras. Six territories were found in the Spey valley between Rothes and Orton.

The number of breeding season localities reported in the last 15 years (2006-2020):

06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	10	9	5	0	1	9	5	9	8	17	7	16	12	11

At other times of year, reports came from the following additional sites: Calternach (Mulben), Cawdor, Drum of Carron, Edinvillie, Ferness, Fodderletter, Forres, Glenfiddich Lodge area, Kennieshillock, Maggieknockater, Newton of Dalvey, Slackhead (Buckie) and Spynie Canal.

The total number of localities from which Barn Owls were reported (at any time of year) since 2006 is:

06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
31	21	40	20	11	13	21	12	30	47	39	21	33	30	23

Long-eared Owl *Asio otus*

Scarce resident breeder.

Breeding was confirmed at Clarkly Hill (calling young on 30 May [LaM]), Mid Urchany (young heard 24 Jun [JHom]), Peterfair 9 May (pair with 2 fledged juveniles [SMud] and Rafford (newly fledged juvenile 16 May [BM]).

At other times of year, 1 Meikle Kildrummie 2 Jan (JAC) and 1 Inchberry 12 Dec (AY).

Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus*

Rare breeder and very scarce migrant.

Three were at Glenmullie (Tomintoul) on 20 Jul (AE). All other records concerned single birds, at Berry Burn 23 Apr (MGC), Inchnacape 6 Sep & 18 Oct (KtD), Lossiemouth 7 May (BA), Lossie estuary 12 Aug (DMa) and Spey estuary 9 Sep (RAS).

Tawny Owl *Strix aluco*

Common resident breeder.

Records received from Bognafuaran, Brodie, Cawdor, Kilravock, Loch Spynie, Newmill (Auldearn), Rumachroy, Upper Bogside, Urquhart and Well of the Lecht.

Hoopoe *Upupa epops*

Rare visitor.

One found on the north side of Elgin on 22 Oct (HG) remained there on 23-24 Oct before relocating to Mid Mains on 25 Oct (RP *et al.*).

This is the 22nd record for Moray & Nairn.

Month of discovery for the 22 individuals:

Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov
4	6	1	0	1	2	6	2



Hoopoe, Elgin 24 October 2020 (David Main)

Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*

Very scarce visitor and occasional breeder.

Breeding season (April-July): Breeding was confirmed at two sites on the River Spey, at Cragganmore (NSu, CA) and at Fochabers (CRei). Elsewhere, single birds were at Elgin (River Lossie) 6 Apr, Kirkhill 11 Jun, Boat o' Brig 12 Jun, Nairn 25 Jul and Kingston 27 Jul.

At other times, single birds were seen at Aberlour 16 & 29 Dec, Blacksboat 17 Jan, Cloddach Quarry 29 Oct, Cullerne Gardens 19 Sep, Elgin (River Lossie) several records during 26 Sep-26 Nov, Findhorn Bay 5 Jan & 13 Feb, Glenlivet 20 Aug, Kingston 20 Dec, Lossiemouth (on rocks behind north pier) 15 Aug, Lossiemouth harbour 10 Nov, Lossie estuary 13 Oct and Tugnet 14 Aug.

Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major*

Common resident breeder.

Widespread in woodlands and visiting garden feeders. Records were received from 51 sites. One in small trees along the old railway line at Portknockie was possibly a migrant.

Green Woodpecker *Picus viridis*

Very scarce visitor.

A juvenile was seen and photographed at Phorp Wood (near Altyre) on 2 Aug (GBir). This is the first record since 2016 and suggests that a very small breeding population may persist in Moray & Nairn.



Green Woodpecker, Phorp Wood 2 August 2020 (Gordon Birnie)

Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus**Scarce resident breeder.*

Breeding season (April-July) records (*confirmed breeding in italics*) included birds/pairs at Achneim Wood, Auchmair, *Clunas Reservoir*, *Covesea*, Creagan a' Chaise, Dorenell, Drainie, Elchies Forest, Findhorn, Inchrory, Kilravock, *Kinloss*, Kirkhill, *Knock Wood*, Lossiemouth airfield, Nairn, *Portknockie*, Roseisle and Whitefolds.

Additional sites, with birds seen in other months, were Achavraat, Balormie, Buckie, Burghead, Cabrach House, Cairn Uish, Carse of Delnies, Clochan, Craig an Iarunn, Cummingston, Dava, Drynachan, East Mains, Glen Brown, Glenmullie, Hopeman, Inchnacape, Leids Hill, Little Balloch Hill, Loch Flemington, Loch Spynie, Lossie estuary, Lower Hempriggs, Moyness, Netherton, Shempston, Spey Bay, Tom Mor, Tombae, Tomintoul, Unthank, Urquhart and Well of the Lecht.

Red-footed Falcon *Falco vespertinus**Rare visitor.*

A female was present for one day in the Dorenell wind farm, just north of Blackwater Lodge, on 4 June (MJ). This is the second Moray & Nairn record, the first being a male at Loch Flemington on 15-16 May 1992.



Red-footed Falcon, Dorenell 4 June 2020 (Mark Johnston)

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

Breeding: Due to COVID-19 travel restrictions, visits to many potential sites during the breeding season were impossible. Pairs were however found at five sites in west Moray and Nairn. All were successful, raising a total of 12 young between them.

Outside the breeding season, single birds were seen in the lowlands at Ardivot 7 Oct, near Craigellachie 4 Nov, Drainie 10 Jan, East Mains 16 Dec, Findhorn Bay 8 Oct, Hopeman 8 Sep, Kinloss 26 Aug and Lossie estuary 27 Sep & 3 Oct. Still upcountry in winter, was 1 Duneart 1 Jan, while autumn records included 1 Dava 6 Sep, 1 Glenlivet 2 Nov and 1 Refouble 20 Sep.

Hobby *Falco subbuteo*

Rare visitor. Has bred.

One pair bred near Tynet, raising two young to fledging (AY, MJHC). This is the third occurrence of breeding in Moray & Nairn, following other successful attempts in 2016 and 2019. Several sightings along the River Spey in the Bogmoor-Garmouth area are considered to relate to this pair.

Elsewhere, single birds were seen over Nairn on 14 Aug (PHi) and near Cawdor on 15 Aug (JAC).

Peregrine *Falco peregrinus*

Rare resident breeder.

Breeding: Due to COVID-19 travel restrictions, visits to some potential sites during the breeding season were impossible. However, four pairs were located. Three of these raised young while the outcome of the fourth pair is uncertain.

In late summer-winter, single birds were seen at Achneim (Sep), Altyre (Dec), Bishopmill (Sep), Clochan (Oct), Dava (Oct), Findhorn Bay (Jan-Mar, Aug-Dec), Glenconglass (Jan), Glenfiddich Lodge (Sep), Keith (Dec), Lossie estuary (Aug-Oct), Nairn (Mar), Nairn Bar (Nov), Newmill (Auldearn) (Dec), Refouble (Nov) and Spey estuary (Aug, Dec).

Great Grey Shrike *Lanius excubitor*

Very scarce winter migrant.

One was seen and photographed at Meikleburn (Knockaneorn) on 17 Nov (WS).

Jay *Garrulus glandarius*

Fairly common resident breeder.

Breeding season (April-July): Reports from Achneim Wood, Assich Forest, Bridge of Brown, Burghead, Carron, Cawdor, Dorenell, Easter Clune, Glengeoullie, Grangehall, Kilravock, Kinloss, Kirkhill, Loch of Blairs, Loch Kirkcaldy, Logie, Nairn, Pluscarden, Rafford, Stoneyford, Torrieston, Urquhart and Whiteash Hill Wood.

At other seasons, additional sites were Alves, Ardclach, Ardivot, Binsness, Bishopmill, Brodie, Creag an Laruinn, Glenferness, Holme Rose, Lhanbryde, Lossie Forest, Machattie's Cairn, Mains of Moyness, Newforres woods, Quarrelwood, Roseisle, Salterhill, Sanquhar woods and Tarras.

Counts of five or more were 8 Binsness 15 Oct and 5 Stoneyford 9 Aug.

Magpie *Pica pica*

Common resident breeder.

Widely recorded in the lowlands and as far upcountry as Aberlour and Achavraat. Largest groups reported were 8 Coltfoot 13 Jan, 7 Kingsteps 24 Feb, 7 Lossiemouth golf course 9 Jan, 7 Nairn 24 Feb and 6 Bruntland 13 Jan.

Jackdaw *Coloeus monedula*

Very common resident breeder.

The only counts of 100 or more were 400 Tomintoul 25 Jul (200 there 24 Aug), 220 Glenlivet Distillery 24 Aug, 150 Portgordon 25 Jan, 100+ Glenconglass 18 Oct and 100 Whitefolds (Glenlivet).

Rook *Corvus frugilegus*

Very common resident breeder.

Rookery counts (apparently occupied nests) were c.38 Aberlour (30 at Walkers factory, 8 at Macphersons depot) 25 Mar, 8 Elgin (Sheriffmill) 10 Mar, and c.50 Fochabers (Murrayfield) 25 Mar.

Carrion Crow *Corvus corone*

Very common resident breeder.

Largest groups (of 20 or more) were 75 Mains of Moyness 31 Dec, 56 Lossie estuary 11 Nov (also 45 on 18 Oct, 40 on 13 Jun, 23 on 21 Mar, 20 on 22 Aug), 48 Spey estuary 2 Oct (also 28 there 19 Jun), 44 Nairn 16 Dec, 34 Kingsteps 22 Jan, 34 Clochan 20 Oct, 30 Portgordon 25 Jan, 22 Bishopmill 15 Sep, 24 Nairn 8 Nov and c.20 Buckpool 25 Jan.

Carrion Crows were again recorded during seawatches off Lossiemouth harbour during March-May. Counts of 10 or more were 13 on 8 Mar, 25 on 1 Apr, 11 on 3 Apr, 10 on 5 Apr and 29 on 12 Apr. Most were passing in a west or north-west direction (RP).

Hooded Crow *Corvus cornix*

Scarce visitor and rare breeder.

As usual, most reports of Hooded Crows (or Carrion x Hooded hybrids very closely resembling Hooded) came from areas to the west of our region although there were a few more easterly records than usual. Records came from Aberlour, Burghead, Cloddach, Cummingston, Dallas, Delnies, Druim, Findhorn Bay, Gordonstoun, Holme Rose, Hopeman, Kingsteps, Loch Flemington, Loch Loy, Lossie estuary, Middlefield, Myreside, Nairn, Roseisle, Sanquhar, Seafield, Spey estuary, Urquhart, Wellhill and Wester Golford.

Most together were 7 Nairn 8 Jan (also 6 there 5 Dec and 5 on 20 Dec) and 5 Findhorn Bay 25 Feb.

Obvious hybrids were seen at 10 localities.

Raven *Corvus corax*

Scarce visitor and rare breeder.

Breeding: At the coast, one pair fledged three young at Tronach Head and a second pair built a nest at Covesea but the outcome was unknown. Due to travel restrictions, possible inland breeding sites were not visited.

Reports from lowland Moray included 1 Aultmore 19 Sep, 1 over Clochan 18 Aug (and another on 20 Sep), 1 Inchberry 12 Jul, 3 Little Balloch Hill 17 Dec, 1 over Lossie Forest 14 Sep, 2 Quarrelwood 11 Apr and 1 Nairn 25 Jan.

Further upcountry, small numbers now occur quite widely over moors and sheepwalks and the reports received do not fully reflect the frequency with which Ravens are now seen in these areas. Reports came from Allanreid, Auchmair, Blairfindy, Cabrach, Cairn Uish, Clunas Reservoir, Delnabo, Dorenell, Fords of Avon, Glen Brown, Glenfiddich Lodge, Glenlivet, Lecht ski area, Lochbuie, Logie, Moor of Tore, Todholes and Tomintoul. The largest group was 11 in Glenlivet 2 Nov.

Waxwing *Bombycilla garrulous*

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

Winter-spring: Following the influx in late 2019, Waxwings continued to be seen in a few areas in January-March 2020. Maximum numbers at each site in each time period are given below:

1-10 Jan: 20 Blairfindy 1st.
 11-20 Jan:
 21-31 Jan: 9 Nairn 30th.
 1-10 Feb:
 11-20 Feb: 55 Nairn 20th.
 21-28 Feb:
 1-10 Mar: 9 Elgin 1st.
 11-20 Mar: 12 Elgin 14th, 18 Forres 15th.
 21-31 Mar: 12 Elgin 21st-22nd.



Waxwing,
Elgin
31 December
2020
(David Main)

Last in spring was 1 Duffus 20-22 Apr.

Autumn-winter:

Following early records of 1 Roseisle 5 Nov and 7 Lossiemouth 10 Nov, a small influx took place in December. Maximum numbers at each site in each time period were:

1-10 Dec: 13 Elgin 10th, 2 Kingsteps 3rd-6th.
 11-20 Dec: 15 Elgin 19th, 20 flying over Mundole 13th.
 21-31 Dec: 11 Elgin 21st-25th, 5 Nairn 28th-29th.

Coal Tit *Periparus ater*

Very common resident breeder.

First song at Elgin cemetery 10 Jan.

Counts of 10 or more included 18 Lossie Forest 20 Oct, 17 Findhorn dunes 14 Dec, 14 Cragganmore 6 Mar and 12 Kinloss 1 Dec.

Crested Tit *Lophophanes cristatus*

Common resident breeder.

Away from the coastal forests, territories were located in Teindland Forest (four, two with young), Ordiquish Forest (seven, two with young), Ben Aigan (two) and Newtyle Forest (one). Reports from other areas included 1 Assich Forest 28 Nov, 1 Aultmore (west end) 18 May, 1 Buinach 13 Feb, 2 Clunas Reservoir 9 Jul, 1 Loch Belivat 22 Nov and 1 Loch Kirkcaldy 13 May (5 there 5 Nov).

Minimum of 12 were counted along the 'black trail' in Culbin Forest 24 Aug.

Blue Tit *Cyanistes caeruleus*

Very common resident breeder.

The only count in excess of 10 birds was 14 in Findhorn dunes on 14 Dec.

Great Tit *Parus major*

Very common resident breeder.

First song in Elgin on 18 Jan.

Counts exceeding 10 were of 14 Cawdor Castle woods 30 Apr and 13 Sanquhar Woods (Forres) 10 Dec.

Skylark *Alauda arvensis*

Very common breeder and migrant.

First song Clochan 18 Feb and Cloddach 26 Feb.

Only small flocks were reported; the largest were 14 Netherton 18 Oct and 12 Kinloss 8 Oct.

Birds overhead, apparently on passage, included 15 Duffus 15 Oct and 11 Elgin cemetery 14 Oct. Twenty flew west over the Spey estuary on 18 Sept.

Unusually, one was in full song at Portknockie on 5 Oct.

Sand Martin *Riparia riparia*

Summer visitor and very common breeder.

Arrival: The only March record was 1 Loch na Bo on 21st. Birds were at six sites in the first week of April.

Colony counts: At the huge Mosstodloch colony, 1,984 burrows were counted on 14 Jun (AY) – but the exact number of pairs involved is impossible to say. Elsewhere, Clashach Quarry (c.20 apparently occupied burrows 15 Jun), Covesea lighthouse (2 birds near burrows in the dunes), Cragganmore (River Spey bank, c.20 pairs in early Jun), Findhorn dunes (at the beach, maximum 110 birds in 3 colonies in the coastal dunes on 16 May), Kirkhill (36 burrows in bank of River Lossie) and Tronach Head (a few birds round a very small colony on the cliffs). Away from colonies, highest counts were 86 Mill of Grange 10 Aug and 67 Findhorn Bay 20 Jul.

The Kingston reedbed roost peaked at 800 on 27 Jul.

On 12 Sep, 3 flew in off the sea at Lossiemouth. Last of the year was 1 Findhorn 19 Sep.

Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

Summer visitor and very common breeder.

Arrival: First of the year, on 6 Apr, were 1 Cullen, 1 Kirkhill and 2 Lossiemouth. Next were 1 Clochan on 7 Apr and 1 Cragganmore 9 Apr.

An unusual breeding site was a very late nest in a boat in Nairn harbour, from which four young fledged in late October. Up to five Swallows were seen almost daily around the harbour area throughout November, with the last two reported on 6 Dec. Also in November were 1 Spey Bay 4th, 1 Kingston 6th and 2 Culbin Sands 22nd.

The Kingston reedbed roost peaked at 1,100 on 16 Aug.

House Martin *Delichon urbicum*

Summer visitor and common breeder.

Arrival: First reports were of single birds at Clochan and Nairn on 11 Apr. One was up the River Spey near Cragganmore on 13 Apr.

Breeding: At least four occupied nests on the building at Clunas Reservoir. A nest at Logie Steading still held young on 4 Sep.

Highest counts of the year were modest: 25 Lossie estuary 20 Jul, 20 Chapelton 29 Jul, 20 Altyre 30 Aug and 20 Loch Flemington 3 Jun. Last report was a late bird at Kingston on 6 Nov.

Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus*

Very common resident breeder.

The largest single-flock counts reported were 21 Spey Bay 14 Sep, 18 Covesea 27 Oct, 17 Allanreid 25 Oct and 16 Rafford 6 Jan. More than one flock contributed to the 47 counted near Findochty on 26 Nov.

Yellow-browed Warbler *Phylloscopus inornatus**Rare migrant.*

An exceptional year with five records: 1 Portknockie old railway line 29 Sep (MJHC), 2 Hopeman 29 Sep (AMA), 1 Covesea 2 Oct (TG), 1 Tugnet 2-6 Oct (MJHC, SP) and 1 Kinloss (AJL).

These constitute the 16th-20th records for Moray & Nairn.



Yellow-browed Warbler, Tugnet 2 October 2020 (Martin Cook)

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

Arrival: First were 2 Blacksboat and 1 Lossiemouth 9 Apr. Five other sites recorded first singing birds during 11-13 Apr but not widespread until after 15 Apr.

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

Arrival: First singing birds were 2 Loch Oire 16 Mar, followed by 4 Mosstodloch and 1 Lossiemouth 19 Mar. A further 13 sites recorded first birds by the end of March – mostly single birds but 6 Achneim Wood (Cawdor) 27 Mar.

Last in autumn were 1 Nairn 1 Oct, 2 Birkenhill Woods and 1 Half Davoch 2 Oct, 1 Edingight 3 Oct, 1 Inchberry and 1 Tugnet 5 Oct and 2 Kinloss 13 Oct.

One likely to have been overwintering was at Newmill (Auldearn) on 20 Dec (PB).

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

Arrival: An apparent late arrival is likely to have been influenced by restricted visits by birders to many sites. First reports, in May, were 1 Tomintoul 6th and 2 Lossiemouth 13th.

On 20 May, at Clochan, 10 were singing around the 1.5 km perimeter of an Oil-seed Rape field, bordered on two sides by a small burn (MJHC). At Tomintoul during May, 7 singing birds were found around the edge of the town (MRan).

Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella naevia*

Summer visitor and scarce breeder.

Single singing birds were found at Broom of Moy 24 Apr, Easter Regaule 17 & 23 Apr, Ferness 21 Jun, Findhorn Bay 10 Jul, Hillpark 15 Jun, Littlemill 24 Jun, Parkhill 15 Jun, Portknockie 20 Apr, Tomintoul 3-21 May, Tomnamoon 21 Jul and Wester Greens 13 Aug.

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*

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

January-March: 1 male Forres 1-21 Jan, 1 female Forres 15 Feb-21 Mar, 1 female Lossiemouth 3 & 9 Jan, 1 male Tradespark (Nairn) 3 & 30 Jan, 1 Fochabers 5 Jan, 1 Nairn (Maggot area) 24 Jan and 1 Burghead 9 Mar.

Spring/summer: Upcountry as far as Tomintoul where several singing birds were present (MRan). First song at Aberlour 11 Apr.

Autumn: Likely migrants were 1 Nairn 27 Sep, 1 Hopeman 29 Sep, 2 Nairn 1 Oct, 2 Kingsteps 2 Oct, 1 Portgordon 2 Oct, 1 Lossie estuary 5 Oct and 1 Tugnet 5 Oct.

November-December: 1 female Bishopmill (Elgin) 14 Nov, 1 male Findhorn 15 Nov, 1 female Forres 4 Nov-2 Dec (and 1 male 10 Nov), 1 male Loch Spynie 7 & 15 Nov and 1 female Portknockie 1 Dec.

Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin*

Summer visitor and scarce breeder.

Single singing birds near the Spey at Bogmoor 3 Jun and at Half Davoch 29 May.

Whitethroat *Curruca communis*

Summer visitor and very common breeder.

Arrival: 1 Lossie estuary 23 Apr was well ahead of the main arrival. In early May, single birds were at Clochan 3rd, Cloddach, Findhorn Bay and Urquhart 5th, Nairn and Parkhill 6th, Kinloss and Myreside 7th and Rafford 8th.

Furthest upcountry were 1 Clunas Reservoir 25 May and 1 Well of the Lecht 1 Aug.

Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*

Very common resident breeder and scarce migrant.

A notable count of 32 around the Findhorn dunes area 14 Dec.

Possible coastal migrants were three in riverside trees at Tugnet 5 Oct.

Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*

Very common resident breeder.

Counts included 22 around the Findhorn dunes area 14 Dec, 11 around Bogmoor 25 Jan, 8 Drumin Castle 4 Aug, 7 Kilravock 25 Apr, 7 Nairn 4 Mar, 7 Sanquhar Woods 10 Dec, 6 Culbin 24 Aug and 6 Auldearn reservoir 20 Dec.

Nuthatch *Sitta europaea**Rare visitor.*

Single birds in Tomintoul on 19 Apr (MRan) and at Cragganmore on 13 May (MRay) are the 2nd and 3rd Moray & Nairn records. The 1st was in Mosstodloch in early January 2003. In view of the northwards range expansion of Nuthatch in Scotland in recent years it seems likely that there will be further records – and that a breeding population will become established.



Nuthatch, Cragganmore 13 May 2020
(Martyn Rayner)



Nuthatch, Tomintoul 19 April 2020
(Mark Ranner)

Treecreeper *Certhia familiaris**Very common resident breeder.*

Six in Sanquhar Woods (Forres) 10 Dec was the largest count received.

Rose-coloured Starling *Pastor roseus**Rare visitor.*

Three records, involving single adults in Elgin 2-6 Jun (RP, KMCL, AD), Nairn 22-23 Jun (EM, KMc) and Lossiemouth 22-25 Jun (S-LC). These are the 15th-17th records for Moray & Nairn.



Rose-coloured Starling, Lossiemouth 22 June (Sarah-Louise Cull)

Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*

Very common resident breeder and winter visitor.

Flocks of 100 (max. counts) or more included 300+ Findhorn Bay 24 Jun, 300 Moyness 3 Nov, 120 juveniles Aldunie 3 Aug, 105 Covesea farm 31 Jan, 102 Nairn 9 Sep and 100 Tomintoul 25 Jul.

Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos*

Very common breeder and migrant. Scarce in winter.

January-February: 1 Nairn 4 Jan (and 12th), 1 Lossiemouth 10 Jan, 1 Calcots 2 Feb, 1 Kirkhill 6 Feb (and 20th, 27th & 29th) and 1 Nairn 7 Feb were likely to have been over-wintering birds. Singing individuals at Elgin 25 Feb and Clochan 28 Feb were possibly early returners from wintering areas elsewhere.

Song heard Tomintoul 4 Mar.

December: 1 Kingston 14th, 1 Dipple 15th and 1 Kingsteps 28th were the only reports.

Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus*

Very common resident breeder and migrant.

Upcountry breeding noted at Auchmair (Cabrach) where a pair were carrying food on 8 May. Late summer congregations were 12 Alltachbeg (Tomintoul) 29 Aug and 40+ Findrassie 8 Sep. Later in the year, 18 Nairn 18 Oct and 34 near Findochty 26 Nov.

Redwing *Turdus iliacus*

Very common migrant and winter visitor.

Winter-spring: Flocks of 20 or more were 54 near Forres 21 Mar, 50 Elgin 28 Feb, 30 Gallowhill 2 Mar and 20 Kirkhill 4 Apr. Last in spring were 4 Kilravock 18 Apr, 3 Kirkhill 19 Apr, 1 Kinloss 21 Apr and 1 Newlands of Inchnacaorach 20-24 Apr.

Summer: No reports during May-September.

Autumn: 15 Refoules 20 Sep were very early. First arrivals in October were 3 Moor of Tore 4th, 12 Tugnet 5th, 2 Lossie estuary 5th, 10 Clochan 8th and 4 Nairn 10th. A substantial arrival in mid-October saw approximate counts of 160 Longmorn 17th, 500 Garmouth 18th, 200 Clochan 18th, 200 Darkland 18th, 107 Nairn 18th, 200 Linkwood (Elgin) 19th and 650 Kinloss 23rd. Six other flocks containing 20-75 Redwings were recorded during this period.

Winter: In November-December, flocks of 20 or more were 200 Duffus Castle 2 Nov, 100+ Inverurie 6 Dec (120 there on 15 Dec and 50+ on 28 Dec), 48 Brodie Castle 19 Nov and 35 Nairn 24 Dec.

Blackbird *Turdus merula*

Very common resident breeder, winter visitor and migrant.

The only count of 20 or more was 26 Nairn 18 Oct.

Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris*

Very common migrant and winter visitor.

Winter-spring: Flocks of 20 or more were 100 Kirkhill 19 Feb (other counts there of 50 on 10 Feb, 75 on 21 Feb, 50 Tomintoul 22 Apr, 100 Torrieston 12 Mar, 25 on 31 Mar and 32 on 9 Apr), 60+ Glenshiel 5 Feb, 38 Loch Flemington 6 Jan, 24 Roseisle 16 Mar and 20 Cragganmore 14 Apr. Last in spring were 12 Kirkhill 19 Apr and 50 Tomintoul 22 Apr. Summer: No reports during May-September.

Autumn: A very early flock of 120 was at Refoules on 20 Sep. Next arrivals were 4 Benromach Distillery 13 Oct. Some larger October flocks from mid-month onwards included 100+ Haughs (Keith) 20th, 100 Gelford 27th, 100 Refoules 27th, 70 Loch Flemington 23rd, 50+ Clochan 19th, 50+ Birkenhill Wood (Elgin) 19th, 50 Forres Enterprise Park 21st, 40 Inverchor 18th and 31 Nairn 24th.

Winter: In November-December, flocks of 100 or more included 220 Crosslots 16 Nov (100+ there 28 Dec), 200+ Dava-Bogeney 12 Nov, 200+ Moyness 6 Dec, 200 Auchlochan 12 Nov, 200 Ben Rinnes 26 Nov and 100 Clochan 29 Nov.

Ring Ouzel *Turdus torquatus*

Summer visitor and scarce breeder.

Records received from six upland areas: 1 Clunas Reservoir 19 Apr, 1 Lecht 23 Jun, 1 Inchroary 6 Aug, 3 Beinn Mheadhoin 31 Aug, 1 Ailnack gorge 5 Sep and 1 Loch Avon (at Shelter Stone) 18 Sep.

Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata*

Summer visitor and common breeder.

Arrival: First reports, of single birds in May, came from Aberlour 8th, Tomintoul 8th, Broom of Moy 10th, Airdrie Plantation 16th, Kilravock 16th, Achavraat 17th and Lower Cabrach 18th. Records on or before 10 May are unusual.

Subsequently reported from 34 sites – none later than 2 Sluie 19 Aug.

Robin *Erithacus rubecula*

Very common resident breeder and migrant.

Numerous in Sanquhar woodlands where 19 were counted on 10 Dec. Eleven were along Quarry Road in Lossiemouth on 4 Oct.

Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*

Very scarce passage migrant and winter visitor.

A male was at Nether Ardwell (Lower Cabrach) on 16 May (MJ).



Black Redstart, Nether Ardwell 16 May 2020 (Mark Johnston)

Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

Summer visitor and scarce breeder. Very scarce migrant.

Breeding: One pair nested in Warren Wood (Bogmoor) (AY). Elsewhere in breeding habitat in summer were 1 Airdrie Plantations 22 May (PE), 2 Dulsie 9 Jun (CW), 1 singing Glenernerney Wood 24 May (MGC), 1 Glenferness 25 Jun (CGL), 1 Ferness 17 May (PE) and 1 Loch Kirkcaldy 12 May (PE). The only lowland migrant, in spring, was 1 female Midwood (near Clochan) 23 Apr (MJHC).

Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra*

Rare breeder. Very scarce migrant.

The only report was 1 Tombae (near Tomnavoulin) 15 Aug (SHI).

Stonechat *Saxicola rubicola*

Scarce resident breeder and migrant.

Breeding season (April-August, *italics* = confirmed breeding): Coastal: occupied sites were *Burghead*, *Cummingston*, *Hopeman*, *Findhorn*, *Kingston*, *Kinloss*, *Lossie estuary*, *Portgordon*, *Portknockie*, *Strathlene* and *Tronach Head*. Inland: *Achavraat*, *Achneim Wood*, *Ailnack gorge*, *Blairfindy Lodge to Carn Daimh* (4 pairs), *Carn Uish*, *Clunas Reservoir* (4 pairs), *Delavorar*, *Delnabo*, *Drynachan*, *Elrick*, *Glass*, *Glen Brown* (3 pairs), *Glenferness*, *Knock Farm*, *Knock Wood*, *Ladderfoot*, *Little Conval*, *Loch Builg*, *Loch Flemington*, *Loch Kirkcaldy*, *Lower Cabrach*, *Mill of Grange*, *Moss of Mayen*, *Mount of Haddoch*, *Moyness*, *Muir of Linksfield*, *Newlands of Fleenas*, *Refouble*, *Roths*, *Ruallan*, *Tomintoul*, *Westerfold* and *Whiteash Hill Wood*.

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

Coastal: *Buckpool* (Dec), *Carse of Delnies* (Jan, Feb), *Clashach Cove* (Oct), *Covesea* (Oct, Dec), *Culbin Bar* (Feb), *Cullen* (Dec), *Findochty* (Jan), *Nairn Bar* (Jan), *Spey Bay* (Mar, Oct) and *Tugnet* (Sep, Oct, Nov). Inland: *Auchlochan* (Nov), *Auldearn* (Dec), *Balormie* (Mar), *Barmuckity* (Nov), *Ben Aigan* (Nov), *Black Loch* (Dava) (Dec), *Bogeney* (Nov), *Burn of Brown* (Nov), *Coltfield* (Nov), *Croy* (Jan), *Dava* (Oct, Nov), *Dunearn* (Sep), *Forres* (Oct, Nov),

Glack Harnes (pair on 7 Nov), Glenlivet (Nov), Grange Crossroads (Oct), Inchnacape (Oct), Kinneddar (Dec), Knock of Braemoray (Nov), Little Aitnoch (Jan, Sep), Lochbuie, Meikle Urchany, Rafford (Oct), Urquhart (Dec), Well of the Lecht (Sep) and Wellheads (Dec).

Largest counts were 11 Clunas Reservoir 9 Jul, 10 Kinloss airfield 16 Jun and 9 Findhorn 2 Jun.

Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe*

Summer visitor and fairly common breeder and migrant.

Arrival: First, in March, were 1 Nairn harbour 22nd and 4 Spey Bay golf course 24th. No coastal spring count exceeded four birds. First inland report was from Lower Cabrach on 10 Apr.

Breeding: Confirmed up country at Auchmair (Cabrach) where an adult with three juveniles was noted on 3 Aug, and on Ben Aigan where a juvenile was on Mullach Lochan nan Gabhar on 12 Jul. Also in possible breeding habitat were a pair on Ben Aigan plateau 29 Apr, 1 Berry Burn 23 Apr, 1 Clunas Reservoir 25 May, 1 Cromdale Hills 26 Jul, present Dorenell wind farm 7 & 13 May and 4 Jun, 1 Glenmullie 29 Aug, 1 Lurg Dhubh (Lecht) 27 Jun, a pair Meikle Cairn 25 May, 1 Moss of Mayen 10 May. Probable lowland breeding took place at Knock Farm near Keith (2 juveniles on 16 Jul) (IF) and at Covesea where a newly fledged juvenile was seen on 17 Jul (AWF).

First back at the coast in mid/late summer were 1 Burghead 13 Jul, 2 Kinloss 15 Jul, 1 Nairn 18 Jul and 1 Spey estuary 19 Jul. At Findhorn Bay, 1 female on 26 Jun and a juvenile on 7 Jul, while a juvenile in the dunes on 27 Jul still showed some signs of down. However there was no confirmation of breeding near Findhorn.

Autumn counts at the coast were generally small, never exceeding four birds. Last, in October, were 2 Lossie estuary 4th, 1 Findhorn 6th and 1 Burghead 7th.

Dipper *Cinclus cinclus*

Common resident breeder.

Breeding: Reported in March-July at Carron, Cloddach, lower Cabrach, Dyke, Fochabers, Forres, Kilravock, Kirktown of Deskford, Nairn, Sluie, Upper Bogside and, in the Cairngorms, Water of Caiplich at Cnap na Cul-ath, Cathar na Feithe Buidhe and south of Geal Charn Beag. At other times of the year localities holding Dippers were Allanreid, Ardclach, Ballindalloch, Drynachan, Firhall, Glenfiddich Lodge area, Glenmullie, Half Davoch, Holme Rose, Linn Falls (Aberlour), Logie Steading and Waterford-Seafield (River Findhorn).

Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*

Common resident breeder.

The only counts of 10 or more were 30+ in a Forres garden 2 Feb and 10+ Bogmoor 21 Mar.

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

Very common resident breeder.

Highest counts were 50+ Hopeman 13 Oct, 35+ Nairn 5 Oct, 32 Burghead 8 Aug, 30 Urquhart 19 Feb and 20 Mains of Moyness 31 Dec.

Dunnock *Prunella modularis*

Very common resident breeder.

First song Glassgreen (New Elgin) 27 Jan and Elgin cemetery 31 Jan.

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*

Summer visitor and common breeder. Very scarce in winter.

Winter (January-February and December): Nearly all records were at, or within a few miles of, the coast: 1 Clochan 18 Feb, 1 Linkwood (Elgin) 14 Dec, 1 Findhorn Bay 19 Feb, 1 Forres 30 Dec and 2 Nairn 16 Jan (and 1 there 11-24 Dec). At Lossiemouth, 1 at the harbour 9 & 16 Dec; also in Lossiemouth, a Grey Wagtail visited a feeder attached to the window of a flat on 12 Jan and again on 23 Nov and 31 Dec (CTh). Further inland were 1 Aberlour 17 Jan and 29 Dec, and 1 Moor of Tore 8 & 14 Dec.

Breeding season reports came from Achneim Wood, Cloddach, Clunas Reservoir, Delnabo, lower Cabrach, Drumin Castle, Drynahan, Firhall, Forres (Mosset Pond), Gallowhill, near Glenfiddich Lodge, Glengeoullie, Inchrory, Kilravock, Kirkhill, Kirktown of Deskford, Knockando, Lecht Ski Centre, Loch Builg, Lossie estuary, Lurg Dhubh (Lecht), Loch Avon, Nairn, Sanquhar pond, Todholes and Tombae. On 19 Aug, 12 were counted along a 200m stretch of the River Findhorn at Sluie.

At the coast, 5 Mosset Burn at Findhorn Bay 12 Nov, 2 Lossie estuary 5 Sep and 4 Spey estuary 2 Aug.

Pied Wagtail *Motacilla alba*

Very common breeder and migrant.

Highest late summer/autumn counts were 24 Lossiemouth airfield 5 Aug and 18 Spey Bay 8 Aug.

Passage: A few 'White Wagtails' *M. a. alba* were seen in April, notably at Balormie where 7 on 13th, 4 on 18th and 1 on 19th. Also, 1 Cullen 5th and 2 Lossiemouth west beach 19th. An unusually early bird was at Moycroft (Elgin) on 11 Mar. In late summer/autumn, 4 Spey estuary 11 Aug and single birds at Nairn on 11 & 29 Sep.

Inland in winter, 1 Aberlour 10 Feb and 2 there 30 Dec.

Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis*

Very common breeder and migrant.

January-February: Very small numbers reported from coastal areas only.

March-May: Evidence of an influx in mid-late April, when counts of 10 or more in lowland areas included 100 near Auldearn 12th, 80+ Newlands of Inchnacaorach (Cawdor) 13th, c.80 Muir of Holmie (Clochan) 14th, 50 Ardivot 11th, 48 Findhorn Bay 29th, 34 Nairn 21st, 25 Urquhart 15th and 15+ Kirkhill 11th. In the uplands, 35+ Clunas Reservoir 13 Apr.

Seen on spring passage during seawatches off Lossiemouth harbour between 31 Mar-3 May. Notable counts (all flying west) were made on 31 Mar (23 in 1 hour), 1 Apr (67 in 2 hours), 11 Apr (58 in 1 hour) and 12 Apr (52 in 1 hour).

June-July: 50+ Clunas Reservoir 3 Jun and 30 Dalestie 31 Jul.

Late summer/autumn: c.100 Cassieford-Mill of Grange, 100+ Blairfindy Lodge-Carn Daimh 24 Aug, 45 Kinloss 23 Sep and 30 Rothes wind farm 23 Aug.

November-December: Only small numbers in lowland areas. Still well inland were 5 Knock of Braemoray 12 Nov (2 there 28 Nov), 2 Auchlochan 12 Nov and 1 Glenlivet 2 Nov.

Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis*

Summer visitor and common breeder.

Arrival: First reports, in April, were 1 Altyre 16th, 2 Burntack 18th, 3 Culcharry 22nd and 1 Loch Kirkcaldy 22nd.

Breeding: Confirmed only at Knock Wood (adult carrying food 18 Jun) and Whiteash Hill Wood (adult carrying food 30 May). Elsewhere, presence noted at Achneim Wood, Airdrie

Plantation, Altyre, Burntack, Clunas Reservoir, Delavorar, Drynachan, Ferness, Kilravock, Loch Belivat, Loch Kirkcaldy, Rafford and Urquhart.

Rock Pipit *Anthus petrosus*

Scarce breeder, fairly common in winter.

Breeding: Confirmed only at Lossiemouth where an adult was feeding young at the north pier on 27 Jun. Present elsewhere in the breeding season at Buckie, Burghead, Portgordon and Portknockie.

Autumn/winter counts included 21 Portgordon-Strathene 18 Oct (6 on 13 Dec), 9 Findochty 20 Sep, 6 Lossiemouth 11 Jan & 22 Sep and 5 Burghead 20 Jan.

Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*

Very common resident breeder, migrant and winter visitor.

First song noted 20 Feb in Elgin.

The only reports of 50 or more were 240 Dipple Farm 28 Dec and 90 Cloddach quarry 7 Dec.

Brambling *Fringilla montifringilla*

Fairly common winter visitor and migrant.

January-April: Very few reports: 1 near Maggieknockater 14 & 26 Jan and 1 Kinloss 13 Apr.

October-December: 40+ Logie Steading 15 Dec, 30+ Gateside 21 Oct, 17 Arndilly 12 Dec, 12+ Succoth (Lower Cabrach) 18 Oct, 4 Elgin (Linkwood) 19 Oct, 3 Fogwatt 30 Dec, 2 Achneim 7 Nov, 2 near Maggieknockater 25 Dec, 1 Forres 13 Oct, 1 Gallowhill 28 Oct, 1 Findhorn Bay 3 Nov, 1 Cragganmore 30 Dec and 1 Moor of Tore 30 Dec.

Hawfinch *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*

Rare visitor.

Recorded at three localities: 1 near Maggieknockater 25 Apr (GG), 1 male Keith 9 May (WMM) and 1 female Marcassie (Rafford) 24-30 Dec (DPu).



Hawfinch, Marcassie 24 December 2020 (Dan Puplett)

Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

Very common resident breeder.

Counts of 10 or more were 19 Teindland Forest 7 Feb, 15 Duneart Lodge 15 Jan, 14 Dalcharn 28 Nov, 14 Ordiquish 26 Nov and 12 Forres Enterprise Park 24 Oct.

Greenfinch *Chloris chloris*

Very common resident breeder.

The only flock to exceed 20 birds was feeding on the rose hips at Lossiemouth harbour – 13 were present on 7 Nov, increasing to 17 on 11 Nov and 25 on 21 Nov. Groups of 10-20 were 14 Lossiemouth airfield 14 Apr and 10 Findochty 22 Jan.

Twite *Linaria flavirostris*

Scarce resident breeder and winter visitor.

No records from potential breeding areas.

Winter flocks were found on the saltmarshes at Kingsteps/Nairn Bar and at the south end of Findhorn Bay.

At Findhorn Bay a flock was present on 1 Jan (36 birds) and 8 Jan (35) (RHD, RSC) and during 11 Oct-18 Dec when five counts ranged from 45-55 with highest counts on 28 Nov (GM) and 12 Dec (GM).

Larger numbers were on the marsh east of Kingsteps, inside the Nairn Bar. Here there were 100 on 12 Jan and 80 on 9 Feb (GP). Autumn counts were higher still, with 70 on 15 Nov (GP) rising to estimates of 400-500 on 11 Dec (AMA, DMA, DB) and 300+ on 12 Dec (PRG).

Only a few reports from other sites: 15 Crannoch 26 Oct (JMa), 6 Easter Bauds 14 Feb (AY), 3 Burghead 29 Sep (CTa) and 2 Hopeman-Cove sea 19 Dec (PB).

Linnet *Linaria cannabina*

Very common resident breeder.

Flocks of 100 or more were 600 Clochan 31 Aug, 375 Spey Bay 14 Sep, 200 Darkland 19 Dec, 150 Lossiemouth airfield 5 Nov, 150 Newmill (Auldearn) 20 Dec, 125 Easter Bauds 28 Dec, 100 Kirkhill 27 Feb and 100 Netherton 18 Oct.

Common (Mealy) Redpoll *Acanthis flammea*

Rare winter visitor and migrant.

Two caught and ringed Teindland Forest 23 Oct (AY).

Lesser Redpoll *Acanthis cabaret*

Common resident breeder and migrant.

Breeding season (April-July) records came from Ardclach, Assich, Carron, Clunas Reservoir, Cragganmore, Dava, Delavorar, Drynahan, Findhorn, Fochabers, Forres, Glenferness, Inchrory, Loch Belivat, Loch Kirkcaldy, Lossiemouth, Nairn and Parkhill.

Flocks of 20 or more were 200 Teindland 23 Oct, 90 Kingsteps 11 Dec, 50 Loch Spynie 14-30 Oct & 15 Nov and 25 Cragganmore 3 Apr & 12 Oct.

Scottish Crossbill *Loxia scotica*

Probable common resident breeder.

Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra*

Common resident and irruptive migrant breeder.

In view of the absence of any known means of separating these species (see *British Birds* 115:218-220), all crossbill records are combined.

Flocks of 10 or more: 70 Conicavel 12 Jul, 64 Cairnty 14 Jun, 44 Teindland 26 Aug, 32 Ordiquish 15 Mar, 30 Ben Aigan 9 Aug, 30 Whiteash Hill Wood 11 Jun, 26 Nairn 18 Jul, 21 Buckpool 18 Oct, 20 Achneim 16 Aug, 20 Knock Wood (Keith) 16 Jul, 20 Loch of Blairs 31 Aug, 18 Bogeney 8 Mar, 16 Crannoch 22 Sep, 11 Cullen 22 Dec, 11 Darkland 16 Oct and 10 Delachule 31 Jan. Also recorded, in smaller numbers, at Assich, Cawdor, Clunas Reservoir, Culbin Forest, Dava, Delnabo, Dorenell, Findhorn, Forres, Glenferness, Glengeoullie, Kilravock, Kinloss, Loch Kirkcaldy, Newlands of Fleenas, Roseisle Forest, Todholes, Tomintoul, Torrieston, Tugnet and Urquhart.

Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*

Very common resident breeder.

Flocks of 10 or more were 120 Lossiemouth airfield 12 Aug, 100 Findhorn Bay 8 Oct, 98 Kinloss 23 Sep, 60 Moss-side (Nairn) 2 Aug, 50 Firhall 24 Jan, 50 Forres 8 Oct, 40 Tugnet 17 Sep, 30 Nairn 1 Feb, 24 Findochty 22 Jan, 22 Findhorn 19 Sep, 20 Cummingston 2 Oct, 20 Nether Dallachy 13 Sep, 15 Loch Flemington 17 Jun, 13 Clunas Reservoir 1 Nov and 10 Urquhart 19 Feb.

An unusual record of 1 at 600m at Lecht Ski Centre 26 Jun.

Siskin *Spinus spinus*

Very common resident breeder and migrant.

Flocks of 10 or more were 50+ Loch Spynie 6 Jan & 17 Sep, 30 Forres 5 Dec, 26 Sanquhar Woods 10 Dec, 20 Todholes 8 Feb, 12 Assich 28 Nov and 12 Glengeoullie 21 Aug.

Snow Bunting *Plectrophenax nivalis*

Common winter visitor and rare breeder.

Breeding: On the Cairngorms plateau, 5 singing males 26 Jun (DMP), 4 birds on 9 Jul (CM), an adult with 2 fledged juveniles 10 Jul, a male feeding a flightless juvenile 20 Jul (TSt) and 1 juvenile 30 Jul (JD). A male and 3 juveniles were feeding on biscuit crumbs on Ben Macdui summit 26 Jul (AE) and on Ben Avon, a male was scavenging picnic scraps Leabaidh am Daimh Buidhe 12 Jul (IF).

Inland in winter: 3 Ben Rinnes 26 Nov, 12 Delachule (Tomintoul) 2 Feb, 1 Clunas Reservoir 6 Mar and 1 Mullach Lochan nan Gabhar (Ben Avon) 6 Nov.

Coastal areas in winter:

Carse of Delnies: 11 on 26 Nov.

Nairn & Nairn Bar: 13 on 9 Feb, 35 on 10 Nov, 14 on 22 Nov and 18 on 1 Dec.

Findhorn: 1 on 30 Oct.

Kinloss airfield: 2 on 9-11 Nov.

Culbin Bar: 10 on 24 Dec.

Burghead-Hopeman: 1 on 1 Nov and 15 Nov.

Lossiemouth: On the estuary, 25 on 8 Jan, 5 on 23 Nov, 12 on 17 Dec and 51 on 7 Dec. On the airfield, 62 on 14 Dec and 97 on 15 Dec.

Speymouth: 1 Kingston 22-26 Sep (first of the autumn). At Tugnet, 2 on 26 Sep, 2-3 throughout Oct, rising to 5 on 4 Nov (the final date).
Cullen: 3 on 25 Oct.

Corn Bunting *Emberiza calandra*

Scarce resident breeder.

Breeding: Singing birds reported at Balormie (1 on 16 May), Buckie (1 behind Tesco 25 May), Easter Bauds (6), Garmouth (1 on 18 May), Inchberry-Dipple (3), Linksfield (Elgin) (1 on 15 May and in June), Orbliston (1), Porttannachy (1 during 13 May-12 Jun), Preshome (Clochan) (1 during 3-30 May) and Wellheads area (4 on 24 Jun).

Late spring flocks were 25 near Loch Oire 5 May and 18 Hilton (Buckie) 21 May. Later, 8 Balormie 17 Jul.

Winter: 4 Kinneddar-Ardivot 28 Dec.

Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella*

Very common resident breeder.

Reports of flocks of 20 or more were 85 Dipple Farm 28 Dec, 58 Lossiemouth airfield 25 Feb (still 54 on 19 Mar), 47 Easter Bauds 5 Jan, 25 Kingston 13 Mar and 20 Cullen 4 Jan.

Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus*

Very common resident breeder.

Breeding season reports came from Achavraat, Achneim, Broom of Moy, Clochan, Clunas Reservoir, Dunphail, Dyke, Easter Delnies, Findhorn Bay, Kingston, Kinloss, Kirkhill, Knock Farm, Loch of Blairs, Loch Flemington, Loch Spynie, Myreside, Parkhill, Tomintoul and Tugnet.

In autumn, 32 roosted Kingston reedbed 24 Sep. In winter, 24 Dipple Farm 28 Dec.

[Painted Bunting *Passerina ciris*

Escape.

One was photographed in a Forres garden on 25 Apr (per AY).]



Painted Bunting, Forres 25 April 2020

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Duck, Ring-necked	23	Gull, Common	54	Pipit, Meadow	83
Duck, Tufted	24	Gull, Glaucous	55	Pipit, Rock	83
Dunlin	46	Gull, Gt. Black-backed	55	Pipit, Tree	83
Dunnock	82	Gull, Herring	56	Plover, Golden	36
Eagle, Golden	67	Gull, Iceland	56	Plover, Grey	37
Eagle, White-tailed	68	Gull, Less. Black-backed	57	Plover, Little Ringed	36
Egret, Great White	66	Gull, Little	53	Plover, Pacific Golden	37
Egret, Little	66	Gull, Mediterranean	54	Plover, Ringed	38
Eider	25	Gull, Sabine's	53	Pochard	23
		Harrier, Hen	67	Ptarmigan	29
		Harrier, Marsh	67	Puffin	62
		Hawfinch	84	Quail	30
		Heron, Grey	65	Rail, Water	32
		Hobby	72	Raven	73
		Honey-buzzard	67	Razorbill	61

Redpoll, Common	85	Tern, Little	58
Redpoll, Lesser	85	Tern, Sandwich	57
Redshank	50	Thrush, Mistle	79
Redshank, Spotted	52	Thrush, Song	79
Redstart	80	Tit, Blue	74
Redstart, Black	80	Tit, Coal	74
Redwing	79	Tit, Crested	74
Robin	80	Tit, Great	74
Rook	73	Tit, Long-tailed	75
Ruff	45	Treecreeper	78
Sanderling	45	Turnstone	43
Sandpiper, Common	50	Twite	84
Sandpiper, Curlew	45	Wagtail, Grey	82
Sandpiper, Green	50	Wagtail, Pied	82
Sandpiper, Purple	47	Warbler, Garden	77
Sandpiper, Wood	52	Warbler, Grasshopper	77
Scaup	24	Warbler, Sedge	76
Scoter, Common	26	Warbler, Willow	76
Scoter, Velvet	26	Warbler, Yell.-browed	76
Shag	65	Waxwing	74
Shearwater, Manx	64	Wheatear	81
Shearwater, Sooty	63	Whinchat	81
Shelduck	17	Whimbrel	40
Shoveler	18	Whitethroat	77
Shrike, Great Grey	72	Wigeon	19
Siskin	86	Wigeon, American	20
Skua, Arctic	60	Woodcock	48
Skua, Great	59	Woodpecker, G. Spotted	70
Skua, Long-tailed	60	Woodpecker, Green	70
Skua, Pomarine	59	Woodpigeon	31
Skylark	75	Wren	77
Snipe	49	Yellowhammer	86
Snipe, Jack	48		
Sparrow, House	82		
Sparrow, Tree	82		
Sparrowhawk	67		
Starling	79		
Starling, Rose-coloured	78		
Stint, Little	48		
Stonechat	81		
Swallow	75		
Swan, Mute	15		
Swan, Whooper	16		
Swift	30		
Teal	22		
Tern, Arctic	58		
Tern, Black	59		
Tern, Common	58		

RINGING REPORT 2020

BOB PROCTOR

Numbers of birds ringed in Moray & Nairn during 2020:

	FG*	Pullus	Total		FG*	Pullus	Total
Storm Petrel	98		98	Willow Warbler	63		63
Shag	1	1	2	Chiffchaff	34		34
Osprey		5	5	Sedge Warbler	33		33
Honey-buzzard		1	1	Blackcap	14		14
Golden Eagle		3	3	Goldcrest	167		167
Sparrowhawk	2		2	Wren	21		21
Goshawk		1	1	Treecreeper	13		13
Hen Harrier		17	17	Starling	75	2	77
Oystercatcher	2	2	4	Blackbird	75	6	81
Turnstone	3		3	Redwing	15		15
Redshank	6		6	Song Thrush	3		3
Kittiwake		2	2	Spotted Flycatcher		5	5
Buzzard				Robin	56		56
Herring Gull		3	3	Dipper	1		1
Woodpigeon	1	1	2	House Sparrow	123	44	167
Collared Dove	1		1	Tree Sparrow	12	32	44
Barn Owl	6	2	8	Dunnock	59	7	66
Long-eared Owl	1		1	Pied Wagtail	162		162
Great Sp. Woodpecker	15		15	Chaffinch	192		192
Merlin		4	4	Bullfinch	7		7
Peregrine		3	3	Greenfinch	119		119
Magpie	1		1	Linnet	2		2
Coal Tit	422		422	Common Redpoll	8		8
Crested Tit	31		31	Lesser Redpoll	430		430
Blue Tit	399	30	429	Goldfinch	198	5	203
Great Tit	178	24	202	Siskin	174		174
Sand Martin	629		629	Yellowhammer	3		3
Swallow	703	30	733	Reed Bunting	27		27
Long-tailed Tit	62		62	TOTALS	4682	230	4912

*FG=full grown

From: Robinson, R.A., Leech, D.I. & Clark, J.A. (2021) The Online Demography Report: Bird ringing and nest recording in Britain & Ireland in 2020. BTO, Thetford (<http://www.bto.org/ringing-report>, created on 27 June 2021).

Recoveries in 2020:

All ringing recoveries reported for 2020 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

PALE-BELLIED BRENT GOOSE

A colour-ringed individual was seen amongst the Nairn flock on 25-31 Dec 2019 and 1 Jan 2020. It was originally ringed at Nairn on 25 Jan 2015.

Another individual (DDON) was seen on the west beach, Nairn on 14 Nov 2020. Originally ringed in Dublin Bay, Ireland on 7 Feb 2018, before being resighted at Grunnafjordur, Iceland on 7 May 2017, at Snaefellsnes, Iceland on 11 Sep 2017, in Dublin Bay, Ireland on 12 Nov 2017 & 19 Mar 2018, at Traigh Mhor, Barra on 24 Apr 2018 and at Grunnafjordur, Iceland 12 May 2018.

WHOOPEE SWAN

XY1322	6	050320	Caerlaverock
(yellow ZPY)	VV	230620-060820	Spey estuary

An interesting mid-summer record.

GREYLAG GOOSE

141589	Ad.f	180716	Blonduos, ICELAND	
	XF shot	291020	Duffus	1,252 km
5271905	3m	090715	Highland Wildlife Park, Kincaig	
	XF shot	110920	Howford, Nairn	50 km

(orange NAJ)		210717	Blonduos, ICELAND	
VV		111117	Dalnain Bridge	
VV		040320	Ballendal Farm, Braco	
VV		040320	Loch Spynie	

STORM PETREL

5E02451	4	270719	Erkna Øst, Giske, NORWAY	
	V	150720	Portknockie	726 km
E211529	4	040820	Revtangen, Klep, NORWAY	
	V	120820	Portknockie	503 km
2511938	4	270719	Portknockie	
	V	050720	Tjeldnes, Jolle, Farsund, NORWAY	561 km
2511946	4	280719	Portknockie	
	V	070820	Nolsoy, Streymoy, FAROE ISLANDS	683 km

With continued petrel ringing activity at Portknockie and Burghead, a number of movements occurred within the UK (including Orkney, Shetland, the West Coast and Northumberland). A summary of distances travelled (km) for all movements are given in the table below:

km	1-50	51-100	101-150	151-200	201-250	251-300	301-350
Number	0	4	1	2	2	0	1

km	351-400	401-450	451-500	501-550	551-600	601-650	651-700
Number	0	0	0	2	1	0	2

SHAG

Other than the expected Isle of May movements, movements over 100 km included:

1499890	1	060718	Fidra, Firth of Forth	
	VV	221120	Portknockie	177 km

OSPREY

1447198	1	120713	Black Isle	
	VV	250620	Loch Spynie	58 km
	VV	080820	Spey Bay	68 km
	VV	290820	Lossie estuary	59 km

GOSHAWK

GR87205	1m	190615	near Heldon Hill	
	VV	180620	Moray	

HEN HARRIER

FB14422	1f	150716	Dava, Moray	
	V nest	150617	Glen Tromie, Kingussie	66 km

OYSTERCATCHER

FJ11591	8	061018	Barbaraville	
	XF	080320	Findhorn Bay	32 km
FS96766	3	010720	near Cawdor	
	XF car	110720	Little Urchany	0 km

BAR-TAILED GODWIT

K05510	3f	080916	Kragero, Telemark, NORWAY	
(yellow NNA)	VV	270916	Lossie estuary	763 km
	VV	140217	Findhorn Bay	
	VV	220417	Burghead	
	VV	090318	Findhorn Bay	
	VV	270518	Porsanger, Finnmark, NORWAY	
	VV	01-020918	Cata Sand, Sanday, Orkney	
	VV	250120	Findhorn Bay	783 km

KNOT

SR23803	5	270720	Ainsdale, Merseyside	
(orange EVT)	VV	231120	Findhorn Bay	

SANDWICH TERN

(blue NL9)		190612	Haringvliet, Zuid-Holland, THE NETHERLANDS	
	VV	120516	Coquet Island, Northumberland	
	VV	060519	Scolt Head, Norfolk	
	VV	140420	Ameland, Friesland, THE NETHERLANDS	
	VV	170920	Findhorn beach	
(blue KKP)		090617	Scolt Head, Norfolk	
	VV	070820	Port Seton, Lothian	
	VV	090920	Findhorn beach	
1588120		270615	Texel, THE NETHERLANDS	
(blue T19)	VV	260715	Teesmouth	
	VV	170819	Findhorn beach	
	VV	210820	Findhorn beach	
	VV	250820	Longniddry, Lothian	
1594228		230618	Texel, THE NETHERLANDS	
(blue 6T8)	VV	051119	Swakopmund, NAMIBIA	
	VV	070820	Findhorn beach	
(white M9C)		301019	Donana National Park, Huelva, SPAIN	
	VV	210920	Findhorn beach	
DD34692		230618	Hunterston, Ayrshire	
(white E33)	VV	131118	Gansbaai, Western Cape, SOUTH AFRICA	
	VV	210820	Findhorn beach	

	VV	270820	Port Seton, Lothian	
	VV	04-190920	Findhorn beach	
DT36013		020716	Inner Farne, Farne Islands	
(white USF)	VV	150816	Findhorn beach	
	VV	210718	De Slufter, Texel, THE NETHERLANDS	
	VV	180620	Rhyl, Wales	
	VV	050820	Findhorn beach	
DT52909	Ad.	300519	Scolt Head Island, Norfolk	
	VV	230419	Scolt Head Island, Norfolk	
	VV	140920	Findhorn	588 km
DT52939	Ad.	280519	Scolt Head Island, Norfolk	
	VV	180619	Scolt Head Island, Norfolk	
	VV	290719	Port Seton, East Lothian	408 km
	VV	261119	Western Cape, SOUTH AFRICA	9,844 km
	VV	140920	Findhorn	588 km
(white USV)	1	020716	Inner Farne, Farne Islands	
	VV	150517	Mile 4 Salt Works, Swakopmund, NAMIBIA	
	VV	170818	Ythan estuary	
	VV	170619	Coquet Island, Northumberland	
	VV	291119	Greenways Beach, Strand, SOUTH AFRICA	
	VV	110720	Coquet Island, Northumberland	
	VV	170920	Findhorn beach	



Sandwich Tern white USV, Findhorn beach 17 September 2020 (Richard Somers Cocks)

(white VVC)	1	240620	Griend, THE NETHERLANDS	
	VV	030920	Findhorn beach	
DD83090		120713	Inner Farne, Farne Islands	
(red UAK)	VV	100915	Odiel Marshes, Andalucia, SPAIN	
	VV	170517	Inner Farne, Farne Islands	
	VV	280218	Playa del Muellito, FUERTEVENTURA	
	VV	060519	Renesse, Verklikkerplaat, THE NETHERLANDS	
	VV	080820	Findhorn beach	
(red UBF)		170713	Inner Farne, Farne Islands	
	VV	260216	Swakopmund, NAMIBIA	
	VV	270420	Coquet Island, Northumberland	
	VV	020920	Findhorn beach	
(yellow ESC)		050613	Forvie Sands NNR, Ythan estuary	
	VV	170720	Findhorn beach	
DE03148		270618	Lady's Island Lake, Wexford, IRELAND	
(yellow K3D)	VV	170818	Colwyn Bay, Conwy, Wales	
	VV	050820	Findhorn beach	
DD78409		290618	Sgarbheen, Lady's Island Lake	
(yellow K6F)	VV	170720	Findhorn beach	
DK52586		200615	Inner Farne, Farne Islands	
(yellow UBT)	VV	290518	RSBP Ham Wall, Somerset	
	VV	190919	Kartong, THE GAMBIA	
	VV	160719	Formby Point, Liverpool	
	VV	040820	Findhorn beach	
DK0788	Ad	090617	Scolt Head Island, Norfolk	
	VV	210418	Titchwell RSPB, Norfolk	6 km
	VV	070720	Coquet Island, Northumberland	300 km
	VV	070820	Port Seton, East Lothian	408 km
	VV	090920	Findhorn	588 km
DK52839		120615	Inner Farne, Farne Islands	
(yellow UKJ)	VV	180917	Padstow, Cornwall	
	VV	230918	Whitley Bay, Tyne & Wear	
	VV	030519	Espinho Beach, PORTUGAL	
	VV	020820	Findhorn beach	
DD01680	3	290814	Findhorn Bay	
	VV	080820	Ferry Ness, Longniddry, Lothian	188 km
DD04703	1	190613	Blakeney Point, Norfolk	
	VV	270914	Whitley Bay, Tyne & Wear	281 km
	VV	130916	Dornoch Point	627 km
	VV	040717	Scolt Head Island, Norfolk	19 km

VV	250817	Fanoe, DENMARK	552 km
VV	120919	Findhorn	
VV	140920	Findhorn	596 km

HERRING GULL

Only movements over 100 km are given in full below:

ES010865	1	190616	Kandalakshskiy Nature Reserve, RUSSIA	
(white KS46)	VV	061020	Lossie estuary	2,081 km
FA42106	1	100714	Storholmen, Møre og Romsdal, NORWAY	
(black J969H)	VV	160815	Lossie estuary	
	VV	050416	Lossie estuary	
	VV	110416	Lossie estuary	
	VV	090716	Lossie estuary	
	VV	150716	Lossie estuary	
	VV	240716	Lossie estuary	
	VV	030916	Lossie estuary	692 km
	VV	040917	Kvassheim, Rogaland, NORWAY	405 km
	VV	090518	Sandshamn, Møre og Romsdal, NORWAY	9 km
	VV	260719	Simonnes, Møre og Romsdal, NORWAY	1 km
	VV	040420	Storholmen, Møre og Romsdal, NORWAY	
	VV	280720	Haugsfjorden, Møre og Romsdal, NORWAY	
	VV	290820	Lossie estuary	692 km
GV31815	5	260216	Rufforth Waste Disposal site, York	
(yellow Y:144)	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	09 & 251218	Lossie estuary	
	VV	270919	Lossie estuary	
	VV	01 & 110120	Lossie estuary	
	VV	210320	Lossie estuary	
	VV	141120	Lossie estuary	437 km
GV52998	3	041116	Rufforth Waste Disposal site, York	
(3K7B)	VV	200318	Whinney Hill tip, Altham, Lancashire	
	VV	051020	Lossie estuary	437 km
GG99088	1	100718	Sule Skerry, Orkney	
(yellow 9C2B)	VV	281020	Lossie estuary	

ES010865 is the fourth Herring Gull from the Kandalakshskiy Nature Reserve near Murmansk, Russia to be recorded locally.

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL

Only movements over 100 km are given in full below:

MA12895	1	150607	Rothiesholm Head, Orkney	
	VV	040217	Lossie estuary	
	VV	290820	Lossie estuary	155 km
MA30205	10	170118	Pitsea landfill site, Essex	
(orange L5ST)	VV	150918	Lossie estuary	
	VV	08 & 091218	Lossie estuary	
	VV	251218	Lossie estuary	
	VV	050919	Ugie estuary, Peterhead	
	VV	101020	Lossie estuary	728 km
MA39248	1	080715	Garbh Eilean, Western Isles	
(yellow 0W6B)	VV	050915	Lossie estuary	185 km
	VV	110617	Fraserburgh Harbour	260 km
	VV	230418	Lossie estuary	185 km
	VV	150719	Blackhouse, Peterhead	274 km
	VV	110920	Lossie estuary	185 km
MA43029	1	260617	Isle of May	
	VV	130817	Arbroath	40 km
	VV	200119	Loch Spynie	172 km
	VV	180120	Lossie estuary	
	VV	120920	Lossie estuary	176 km
MA43065	1	060618	Isle of May	
	VV	200119	Loch Spynie	172 km
	VV	020120	Lossie estuary	176 km
	VV	130720	Banff beach	165 km
(yellow 3K5B)	Ad.	090718	Sule Skerry, Orkney	
	VV	031018	Lossie estuary	
	VV	141018	Lossie estuary	
	VV	181018	Lossie estuary	

A total of 11 colour-ringed individuals from various Caithness colonies were also reported, mainly from the Lossie estuary.

BLACK-HEADED GULL

The Norwegian ringed individual K00091 (white J2CR) was re-sighted at Cullen in August and September 2020. This individual has previously been recorded at Cullen in August and September, with onward sightings to Lancashire in November where it has overwintered with sightings in January and February. All summer records have been from around Stavanger and within 0-2km of the ringing site.

EZ29145	1	190617	Ythan estuary	
(yellow 2CX3)	VV	131017	Lossie estuary	90 km
	VV	190119	Loch Spynie	84 km
	VV	030719	Ythan estuary	
	VV	241020	Balormie pig farm	91 km
ES24796	8	070199	Cooper Park pond, Elgin	
	VV	010320	Cooper Park pond, Elgin	Local
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	
	VV	020119	Cooper Park pond, Elgin	
	VV	160220	Cooper Park pond, Elgin	Local

Despite its age, ES24796, at 21 years 1 month 23 days, is still 11 years short of the British longevity record of 32 years 3 months 26 days.

KITTIWAKE

EX56697	1	200612	Lowestoft harbour, Suffolk	
(orange VS)	VV	220712	Lowestoft harbour, Suffolk	
	VV	170515	Lowestoft harbour, Suffolk	
	VV	060920	Findhorn beach	672 km

GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER

LH53966	6f	150614	Cairnfield, Buckie	
	V	060814	Cairnfield, Buckie	
	V	131215	Cairnfield, Buckie	
	V	251020	Cairnfield, Buckie	Local
LK05233	6m	300616	Cairnfield, Buckie	
	V	191220	Cairnfield, Buckie	Local

COAL TIT

Y993569	5	090314	Inchberry, near Fochabers	
	V	281220	Inchberry, near Fochabers	Local
Z230467	5	090314	Inchberry, near Fochabers	
	V	281220	Inchberry, near Fochabers	Local
Z495672	5	010215	Inchberry, near Fochabers	
	V	010220	Inchberry, near Fochabers	Local

At 6 years 9 months 19 days, Y993569 has attained a good age for a Coal Tit, although the British longevity record is 9 years 2 months 25 days.

BLUE TIT

Z495672	5	010215	Inchberry, near Fochabers	
	V	010220	Inchberry, near Fochabers	Local

GREAT TIT

Z474819	5m	200215	Cairnfield, Buckie	
	V	300820	Cairnfield, Buckie	Local
TW59457	1	300520	Caysbriggs, near Lossiemouth	
	V	030420	Astcote, Northamptonshire	630 km

An unprecedented movement by TW59457.

SAND MARTIN

S615298	3	250718	Errol, Perth & Kinross	
	V	240820	Kingston	142 km

SWALLOW

ACL2022	3	060820	Castle Stuart, near Balloch	
	V	080820	Kingston	63 km

LONG-TAILED TIT

HVN622	2	260216	Inchberry, near Fochabers	
	V	130320	Inchberry, near Fochabers	Local

WILLOW WARBLER

KPT116	3	300719	Carse of Ardersier, near Nairn	
	XF cat	230420	Forres	23 km

WREN

KRK434	3	190819	Keith	
	XF cat	030420	Keith	1 km

STARLING

LL79618	6f	260120	Wellington Park, Montrose	
	XF	260620	Househill, Nairn	127 km

BLACKBIRD

LE67532	6f	240414	Mundole, near Forres	
	XF car	100820	Forres	Local
LE67536	6m	130614	Mundole, near Forres	
	V	261020	Mundole, near Forres	Local
RP64773	6m	010215	Inchberry, near Fochabers	
	V	170520	Inchberry, near Fochabers	Local

ROBIN

AE23396	3	290918	Mannez Quarry, Alderney, CHANNEL ISLANDS	
	XL	210620	Findhorn	886 km

DIPPER

RZ31406	3f	261016	Hillhead, near Birnie	
	V	020220	Hillhead, near Birnie	Local

HOUSE SPARROW

NF75372	2m	231118	Buckie	
	XF	260120	Buckie	Local

DUNNOCK

TJ94262	3	210717	Inchberry, near Fochabers	
	V	301220	Inchberry, near Fochabers	Local

NF68772	6	180220	Mundole, near Forres	
	XF predated	040420	Redcraig, Forres	Local

PIED WAGTAIL

ANL9249	3	170820	Kingston	
	V	141020	Kirkton of Logie Buchan	73 km

CHAFFINCH

Z085880	3m	260714	Cairnfield, Buckie	
	V	180620	Cairnfield, Buckie	Local

S079278	4f	300616	Cairnfield, Buckie	
	V	230820	Anwoth, Dumfries & Galloway	315 km

S079331	5m	170716	Cairnfield, Buckie	
	V	180620	Cairnfield, Buckie	Local

BRAMBLING

AFF0007	5m	090219	Inchberry, near Fochabers	
	V	141020	Breibhig, Barra, Western Isles	268 km

GREENFINCH

TJ94250	5m	130617	Inchberry, near Fochabers	
	XF car	270820	Wood of Dundurcas, Rothes	5 km

TL04130	5f	070720	Forres	
	XF	030820	Nairn	16 km

LESSER REDPOLL

AXJ4433	4	261019	Teindland Forest, near Findlay's Seat	
	V	161020	Pett Level, Sussex	783 km

ANB2300	3 V	171118 010320	Orlestone Forest FC, Orlestone, Kent Ordiequish Forest, Fochabers	764 km
AXJ4396	3m V	261019 081120	Teindland Forest, near Findlay's Seat Eversley Common, Hampshire	710 km
AXJ4894	5 V	070220 171120	Ordiequish Forest, Fochabers Boothby Great Wood, Lincolnshire	546 km
ARN4328	3 V	241020 031120	Teindland Forest, near Findlay's Seat Kilnsea, East Yorkshire	487 km
GOLDFINCH				
S526676	4m V	121216 100120	Clochan, Buckie Cromdale	46 km
SISKIN				
AFA4001	4m V	240717 190219	Clochan, Buckie South Perrott, Devon	752 km
AYD5647	6m V	170419 100320	Clochan, Buckie Drumla, North Ayrshire	275 km
AFF0059	5f V	100319 060520	Inchberry, near Fochabers Shebster	114 km
YELLOWHAMMER				
VP24160	4f XF hit glass	190617 211020	near Cawdor near Cawdor	Local

SEABIRD MOVEMENTS OFF LOSSIEMOUTH 2020**BOB PROCTOR****Introduction**

This year saw the completion of the seventh season of regular seawatching throughout a year off Lossiemouth harbour. A total of 141 hours were spent seawatching. A minimum of 43,126 individuals of 28 seabird species was recorded.

Location

Location of Lossiemouth nationally and on coastal Moray.

Methods

The methodology adopted in 2014 was repeated in 2020. 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 seven 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 2020

A total of 141 hours were spent seawatching in 2020. Seawatches produced a total of 28 'seabird' species. The total count of seabird species in 2020 involved a minimum of 43,126 individuals. A further 40 other species were recorded during seawatches.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. 30 min. counts	8	14	16	30	26	24	14	34	36	36	26	18
Number of birds	153	904	3435	4299	3934	2718	2477	7942	6792	6685	2959	828
Mean per 30 mins.	19	65	215	143	153	113	117	234	189	186	114	46

The wind during the seven years (2014-2020) was predominantly from a westerly direction, particularly from the south-west (Fig. 1).

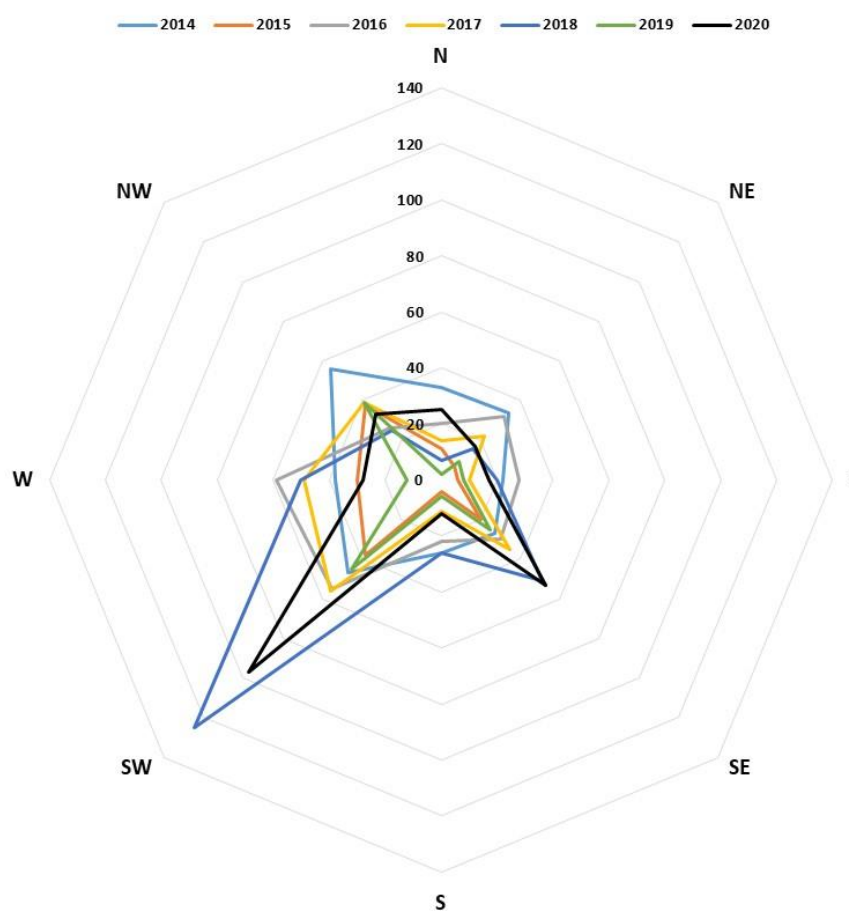


Figure 1: Wind direction during seawatches at Lossiemouth 2014-2020.

The wind force only exceeded force 8 on the Beaufort scale on eight occasions (all were force 9).

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.

Scaup

Scarce winter visitor.

A total of 20 individuals were recorded; 2 in Apr, 2 in May, 7 in Nov and 9 in Dec.

Summary of annual totals 2014-2020:

Year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Total birds	60	0	0	2	24	7	20
Time (hours)	150	77	136	118	160	73	141
Birds/hour	0.4	0.0	0.0	<0.1	0.2	0.1	0.1

Velvet Scoter

Fairly common winter visitor.

A total of 41 individuals were recorded in 2020; Mar (14), Apr (2), May (13), Jun (4), Oct (7) and Nov (1).

Summary of annual totals 2014-2020:

Year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Total birds	54	16	23	21	39	13	41
Time (hours)	150	77	136	118	160	73	141
Birds/hour	0.4	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.3

Common Scoter

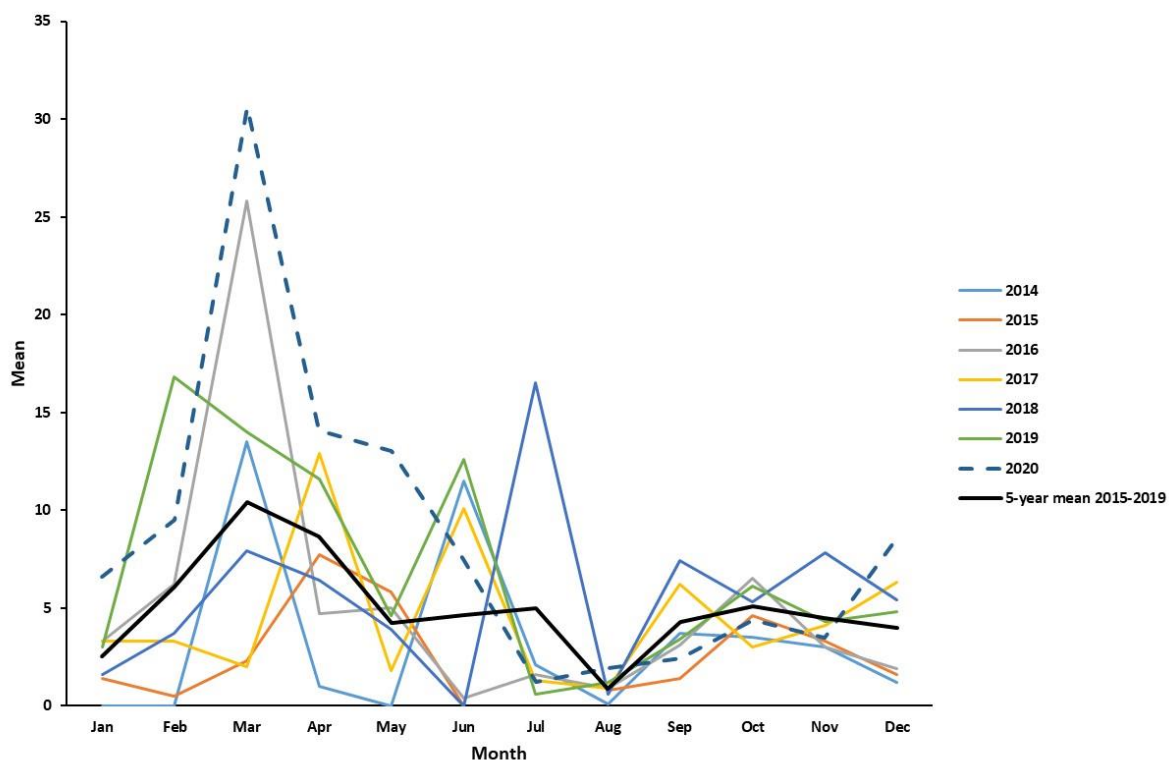
Common winter visitor, small numbers in summer.

A total of 2,192 individuals were seen in 2020. Recorded throughout the year. The highest annual total and well above the 5-year mean for January-June.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Mean count/30 mins	6.6	9.5	30.6	14.1	13.0	7.5	1.2	1.9	2.4	4.4	3.5	8.6
Monthly total	53	133	490	424	338	181	17	66	86	158	91	155
Highest 30 min. count	15	44	241	67	88	50	16	20	13	19	9	35



Common Scoters, Burghead September 2020 (Richard Somers Cocks)



Summary of annual totals 2014-2020:

Year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Total birds	850	453	1344	1156	2111	848	2192
Time (hours)	150	77	136	118	160	73	141
Birds/hour	5.7	5.9	9.9	9.8	13.2	11.6	15.6

Long-tailed Duck

Common winter visitor offshore.

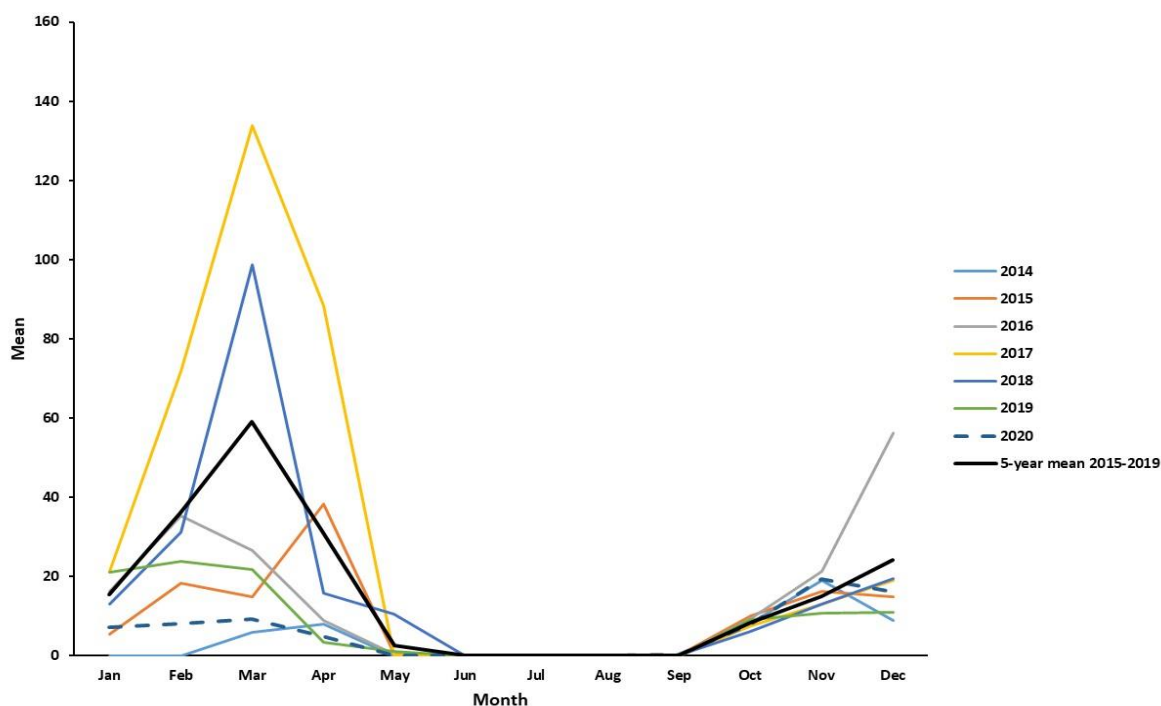
A total of 1,553 individuals were seen in 2020.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Mean count/30 mins	7.1	8.0	9.3	4.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	7.9	19.4	16.2
Monthly total	57	112	148	146	0	0	0	0	8	286	504	292
Highest 30 min. count	18	27	29	12	0	0	0	0	8	43	56	48

The first record in the autumn was eight on 27 Sep.



Long-tailed Ducks, Burghead January 2020 (Jack Harrison)



Summary of annual totals 2014-2020:

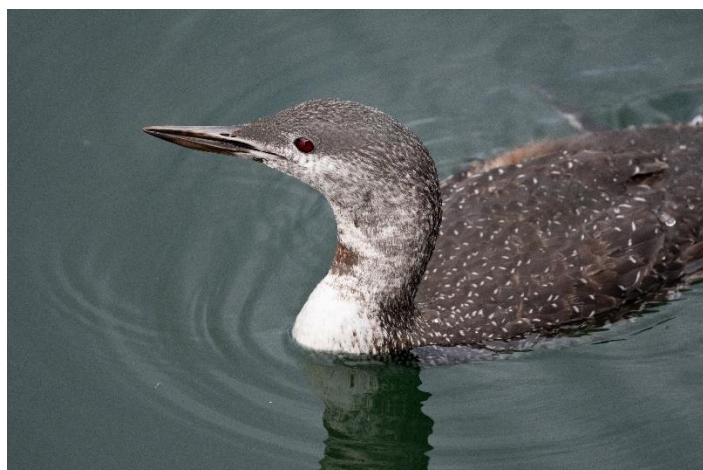
Year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Total birds	1300	1574	3205	4575	4579	917	1553
Time (hours)	150	77	136	118	160	73	141
Birds/hour	8.7	20.4	23.6	38.8	28.6	12.6	11.0

Red-throated Diver

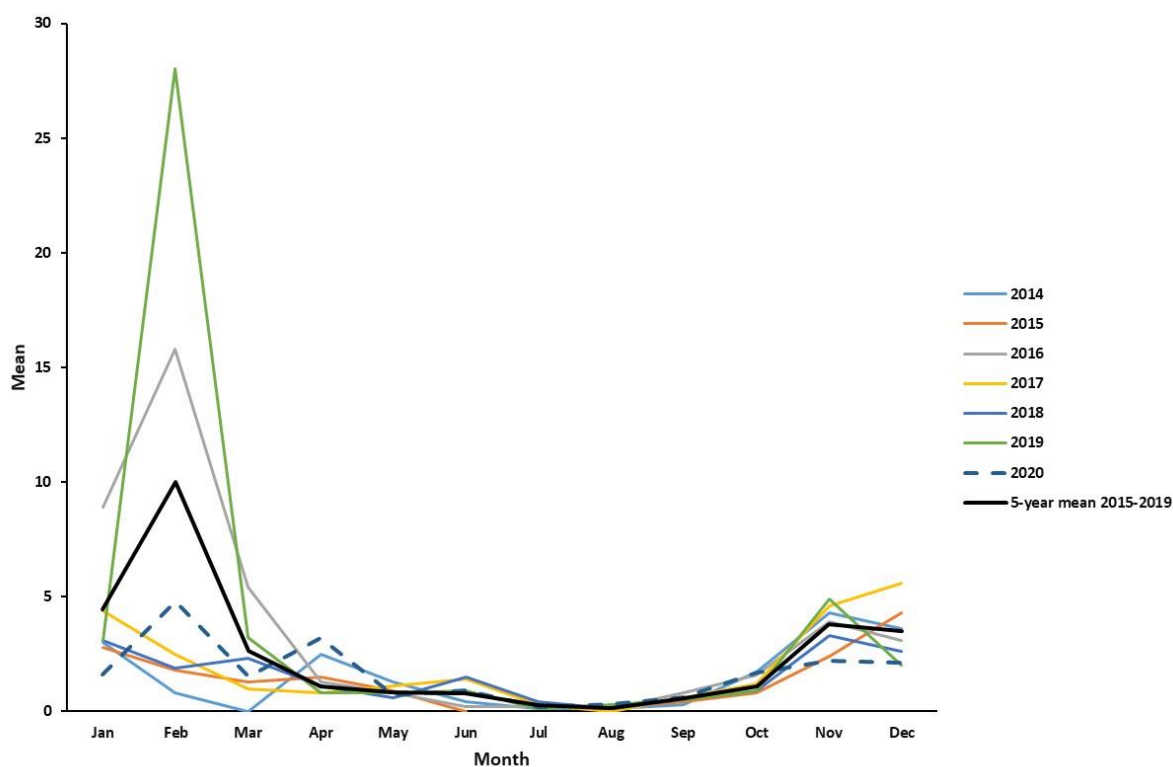
Fairly common autumn and winter visitor offshore.

Recorded throughout the year again. A total of 427 individuals were seen.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Mean count/30 mins	1.6	4.8	1.5	3.2	0.7	0.9	0.2	0.3	0.6	1.7	2.2	2.1
Monthly total	13	67	24	97	17	21	3	11	20	60	56	38
Highest 30 min. count	3	40	12	15	5	9	2	3	5	6	6	9



Red-throated Diver, Burghead
September 2020 (Mike Crutch)



Summary of annual totals 2014-2020:

Year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Total birds	353	190	855	418	329	197	427
Time (hours)	150	77	136	118	160	73	141
Birds/hour	2.4	2.5	6.3	3.5	2.1	2.7	3.0

Black-throated Diver

Scarce autumn and winter visitor offshore.

Singles seen in 2020 on 25 Jan, 16 Feb, 3 Apr and 1, 15, 28 & 29 Nov.

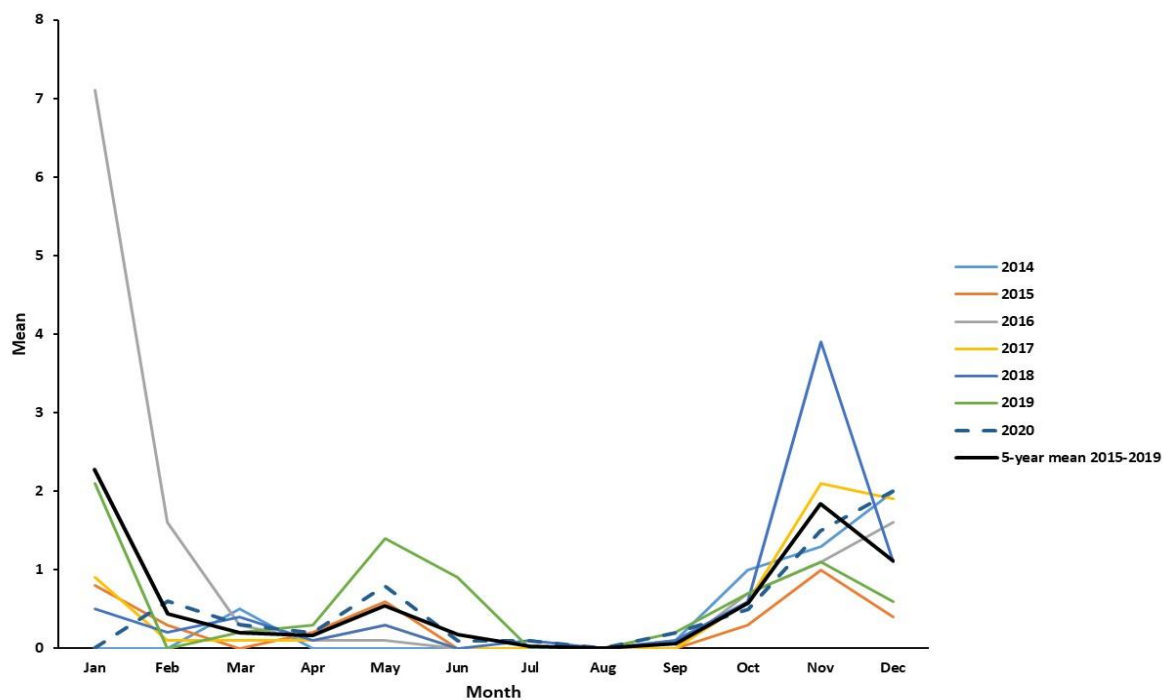
Summary of annual totals 2014-2020:

Year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Total birds	16	13	6	11	8	5	7
Time (hours)	150	77	136	118	160	73	141
Birds/hour	0.1	0.2	<0.1	<0.1	<0.1	0.1	<0.1

Great Northern Diver

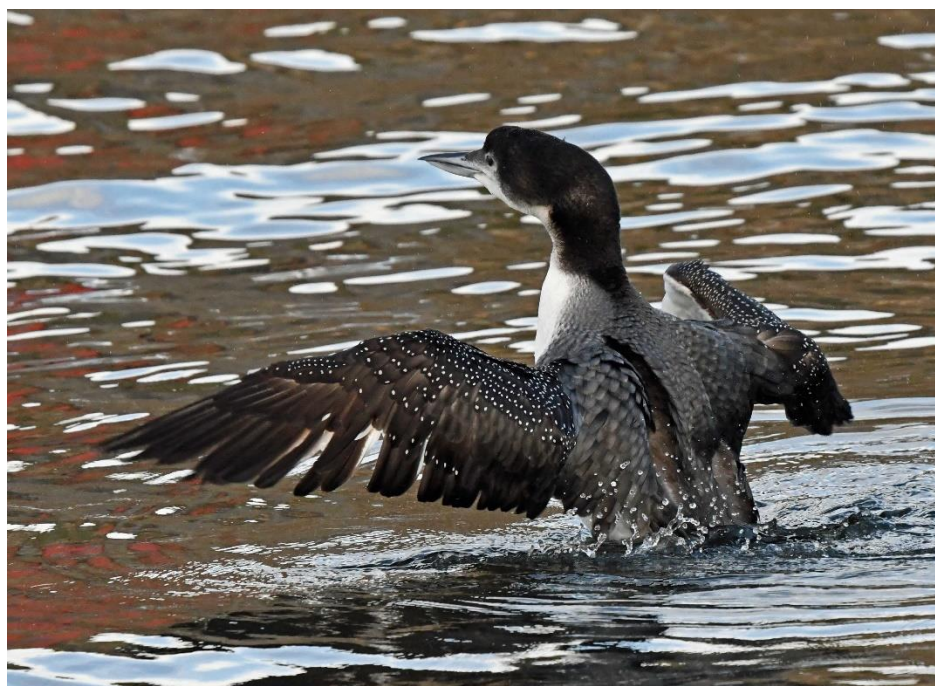
Scarce visitor offshore.

A total of 146 individuals were seen in 2020. Unusually, none recorded in January.



Summary of annual totals 2014-2020:

Year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Total birds	134	47	266	113	112	90	146
Time (hours)	150	77	136	118	160	73	141
Birds/hour	0.9	0.6	2.0	1.0	0.7	1.2	1.0

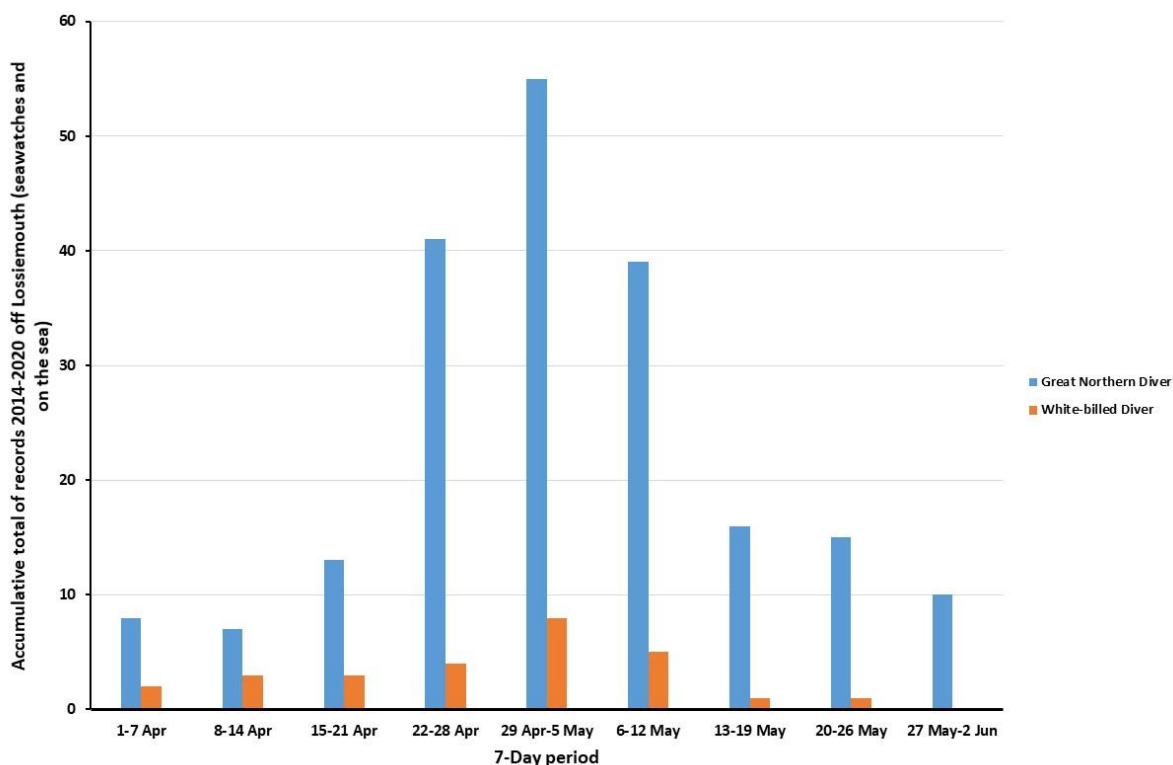


Great Northern Diver, Burghead
January 2021
(Chris Thomas)

White-billed Diver

Rare visitor.

One on 2 & 3 May.



Fulmar

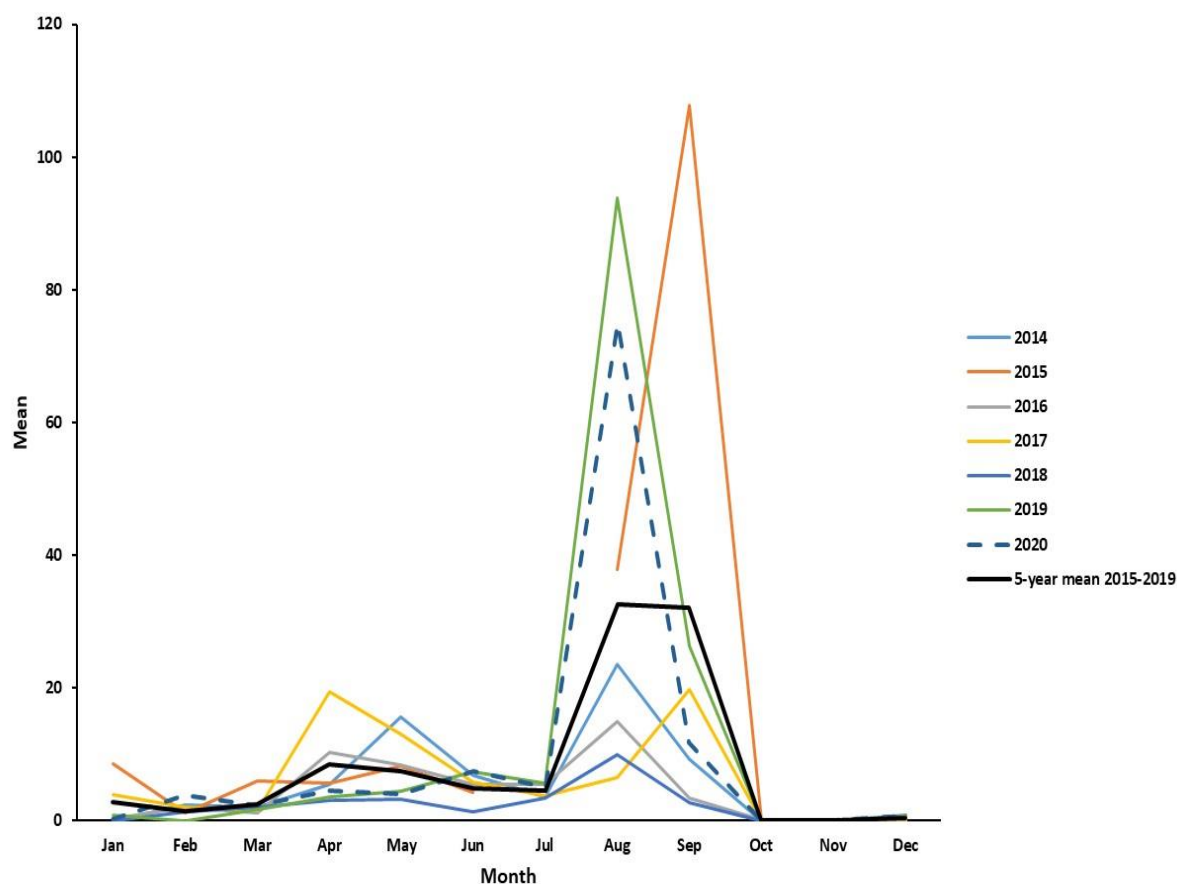
Very common offshore.

A total of 3,222 individuals were seen in 2020. Less frequent offshore from 13 Sep and last seen on 26 Sep, before 3 were seen on 13 Dec, 1 on 19 Dec and 11 on 20 Dec. The second highest annual total with the August mean well above the 5-year mean.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Mean count/30 mins	0.3	3.9	2.2	4.6	4.0	7.5	5.0	74.9	2.1	0.0	0.0	0.8
Monthly total	2	55	35	138	103	180	70	2547	424	0	0	15
Highest 30 min. count	1	12	10	15	11	35	15	493	109	0	0	6



Fulmar, Cummingston
January 2021 (David
Main)



Summary of annual totals 2014-2020:

Year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Total birds	2444	4551	1285	1795	1020	2586	3222
Time (hours)	150	77	136	118	160	73	141
Mean	16.3	59.1	9.5	15.2	6.4	35.4	22.9

Sooty Shearwater

Very scarce migrant in late summer and autumn.

Eight were recorded; 4 in Aug, 3 Sep and 1 in Oct.

Summary of annual totals 2014-2020:

Year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Total birds	23	4	4	39	16	7	8
Time (hours)	150	77	136	118	160	73	141
Mean	0.2	<0.1	<0.1	0.3	0.1	<0.1	<0.1

Manx Shearwater

Fairly common offshore in summer and autumn.

A total of 106 individuals were seen 2020.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Mean count/30 mins	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.6	0.8	0.2	0.3	1.5	0.0	0.0	0.0
Monthly total	0	0	0	3	16	20	3	11	53	0	0	0
Highest 30 min. count	0	0	0	2	5	9	2	5	48	0	0	0

Summary of annual totals 2014-2020:

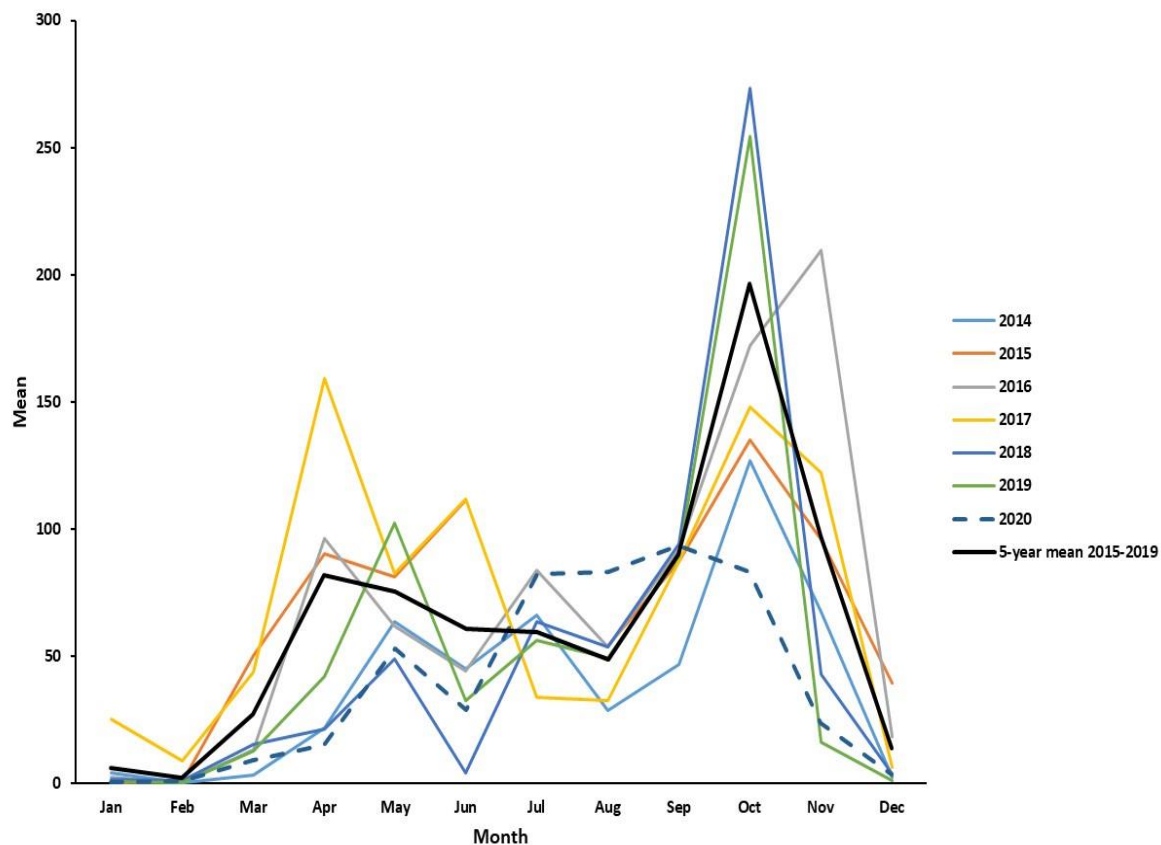
Year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Total birds	719	119	288	258	477	98	106
Time (hours)	150	77	136	118	160	73	141
Birds/hour	4.8	1.6	2.1	2.2	3.0	1.3	0.7

Gannet

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

A total of 13,734 individuals were seen in 2020. The lowest annual mean with most months well below the 5-year mean.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Mean count/30 mins	0.5	0.9	9.2	15.1	53.2	29.1	82.4	83.2	93.4	83.4	23.9	3.7
Monthly total	4	13	147	452	1383	699	1154	2828	3363	3003	321	37
Highest 30 min. count	4	3	73	61	226	82	144	194	279	243	70	13



Summary of annual totals 2014-2020:

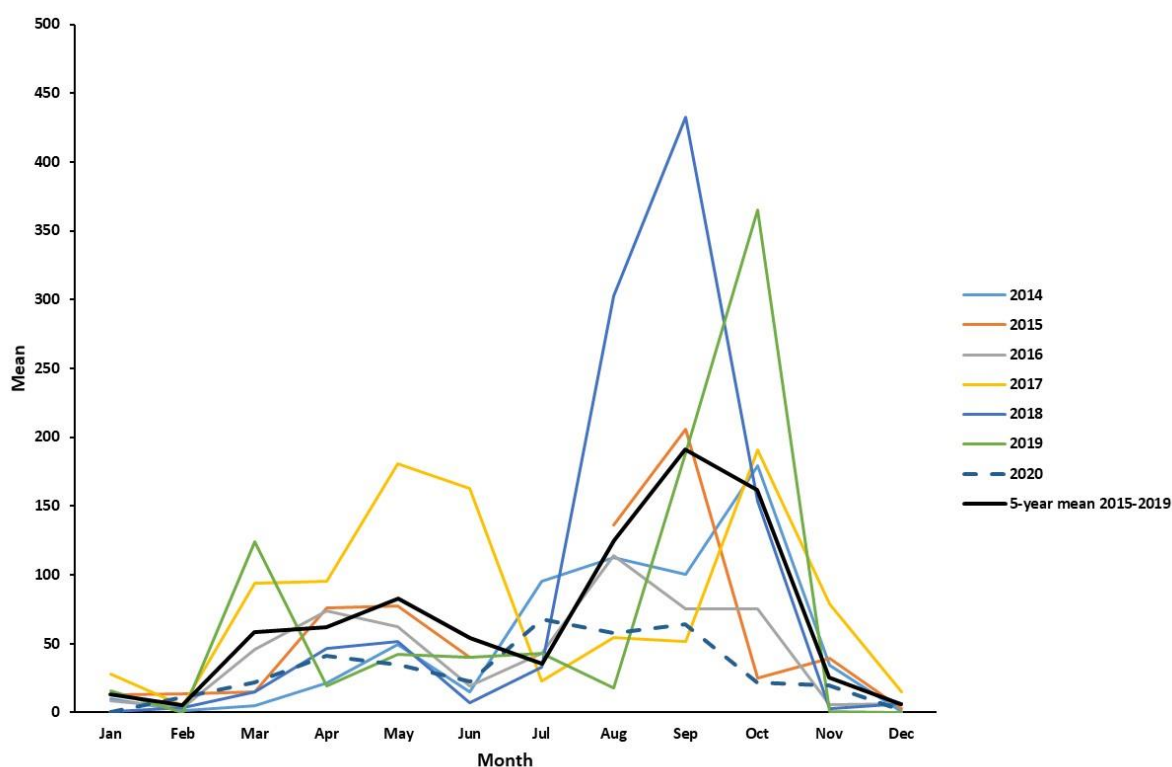
Year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Total birds	18102	12128	18732	19441	22426	10633	13734
Time (hours)	150	77	136	118	160	73	141
Birds/hour	120.7	157.5	112.8	164.7	140.2	145.7	97.4

Kittiwake

Very common migrant.

A total of 9,712 individuals were seen in 2020; well below the 5-year mean, particularly during the autumn period, and the lowest annual mean recorded.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Mean count/30 mins	0.1	10.9	21.7	41.1	34.8	22.3	68.0	57.6	64.0	21.9	19.9	1.3
Monthly total	1	152	347	1232	904	534	952	1957	2303	789	517	24
Highest 30 min.count	1	87	97	123	80	72	309	180	405	154	104	6



Summary of annual totals 2014-2020:

Year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Total birds	29031	13601	13440	20435	45659	14059	9712
Time (hours)	150	77	136	118	160	73	141
Birds/hour	193.5	176.6	98.8	173.2	285.4	192.6	68.9

Little Gull

Very scarce visitor.

One flew east on 13 Mar.

Iceland Gull*Very scarce winter visitor.*

One flew west on 21 Sep.

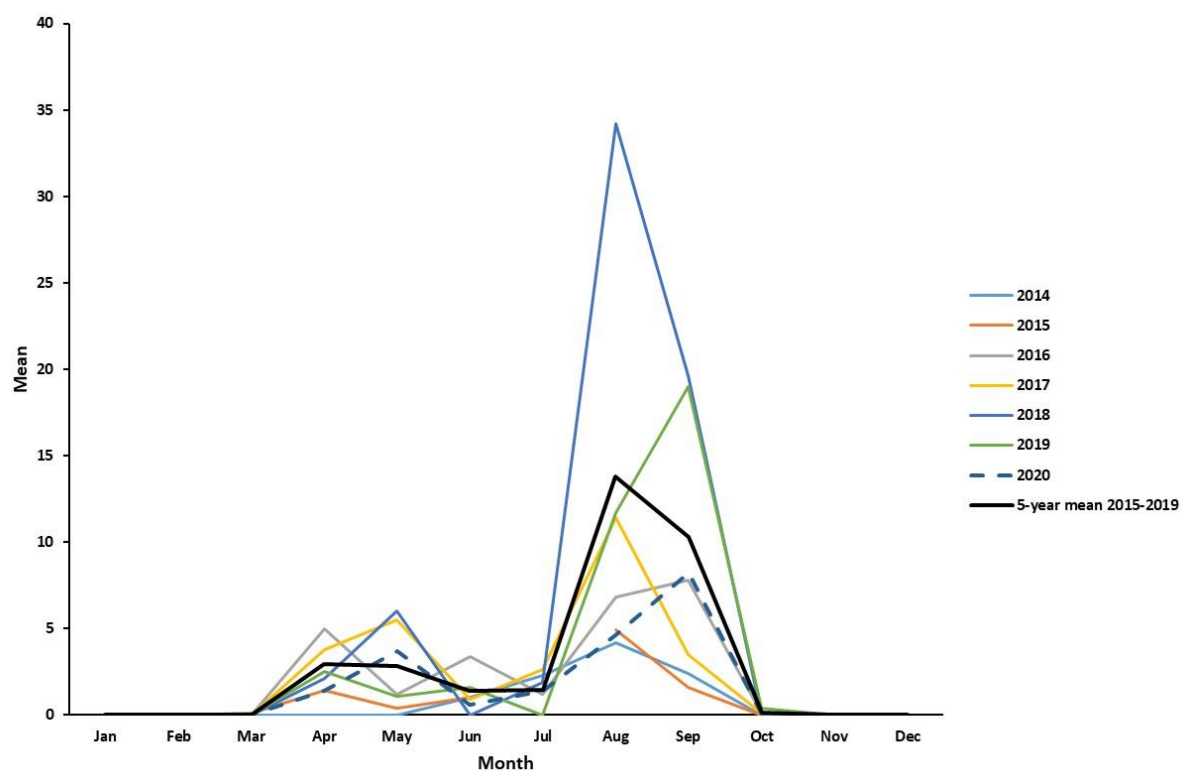
Glaucous Gull*Very scarce winter visitor.*

Two records; an adult on 9 Feb and a 3CY flew east on 18 Jul.

Sandwich Tern*Very common summer visitor.*

A total of 628 individuals were seen in 2020. Last seen on 6 Oct (single), in previous years last records were on 8 Oct 2014, 26 Sep 2015, 17 Oct 2016, 1 Oct 2017, 2 Oct 2018 and 19 Oct 2019.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Mean count/30 mins	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.4	3.7	0.6	1.4	4.6	8.2	<0.1	0.0	0.0
Monthly total	0	0	0	43	96	15	20	158	295	1	0	0
Highest 30 min. count	0	0	0	12	41	2	3	51	68	1	0	0



Summary of annual totals 2014-2020:

Year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Total birds	512	188	703	580	2798	732	628
Time (hours)	150	77	136	118	160	73	141
Birds/hour	4.3	2.4	5.2	4.9	17.5	10.0	4.5

Little Tern*Very scarce summer visitor.*

A total of 5 flew east on 11 Jul.

Common Tern*Summer visitor.*

A total of 503 individuals were seen in 2020.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Mean count/30 mins	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.1	2.8	7.4	6.3	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0
Monthly total	0	0	0	0	1	106	67	104	213	12	0	0
Highest 30 min. count	0	0	0	0	1	10	20	56	41	4	0	0

A small breeding colony nearby made the assessment of 'passage' birds difficult.

Arctic Tern*Summer visitor.*

A total of five individuals were recorded in 2020.

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

A total of 55 individuals were seen in 2020.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Mean count/30 mins	0.0	0.0	0.1	<0.1	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.4	0.7	0.1	0.0	0.0
Monthly total	0	0	1	1	5	4	1	13	26	4	0	0
Highest 30 min. count	0	0	1	1	2	2	1	4	6	3	0	0

Summary of annual totals 2014-2020:

Year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Total birds	86	30	22	60	77	40	55
Time (hours)	150	77	136	118	160	73	141
Mean	0.6	0.4	0.2	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.4

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

None were recorded off Lossiemouth in 2020.

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

A total of 46 individuals were seen in 2020.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Mean count/30 mins	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.8	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0
Monthly total	0	0	0	0	4	3	1	27	11	0	0	0
Highest 30 min. count	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	5	3	0	0	0

Summary of annual totals 2014-2020:

Year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Total birds	180	48	52	41	86	21	46
Time (hours)	150	77	136	118	160	73	141
Birds/hour	1.2	0.6	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.3	0.3

Long-tailed Skua

Rare visitor.

Two adults flew west on 29 Aug.

Little Auk

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

A total of 12 recorded; 4 in Feb, 2 in Oct and 6 in Nov.

Summary of annual totals 2014-2020:

Year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Total birds	21	18	40	54	4	9	12
Time (hours)	150	77	136	118	160	73	141
Birds/hour	0.1	0.2	0.3	0.5	<0.1	0.1	<0.1

Guillemot

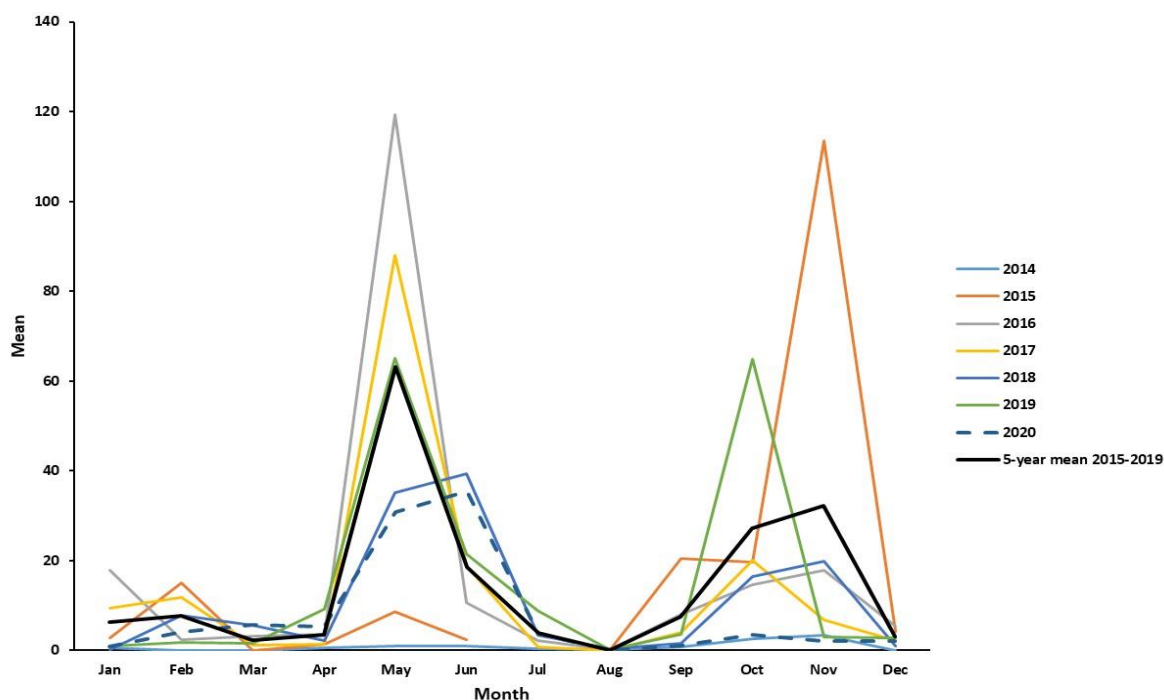
Very common offshore.

A total of 2,274 individuals were seen in 2020.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Mean count/30 mins	0.8	4.1	5.7	5.3	30.7	35.5	3.6	0.1	1.1	3.5	2.0	2.1
Monthly total	6	57	91	160	797	852	51	4	41	127	51	37
Highest 30 min. count	2	11	28	38	134	233	13	2	6	18	17	8



Guillemot, Burghead September 2020 (David Main)



Summary of annual totals 2014-2020:

Year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Total birds	348	3912	4375	2494	2592	2911	2274
Time (hours)	150	77	136	118	160	73	141
Birds/hour	2.3	50.8	32.2	21.1	16.2	39.9	16.1

Razorbill

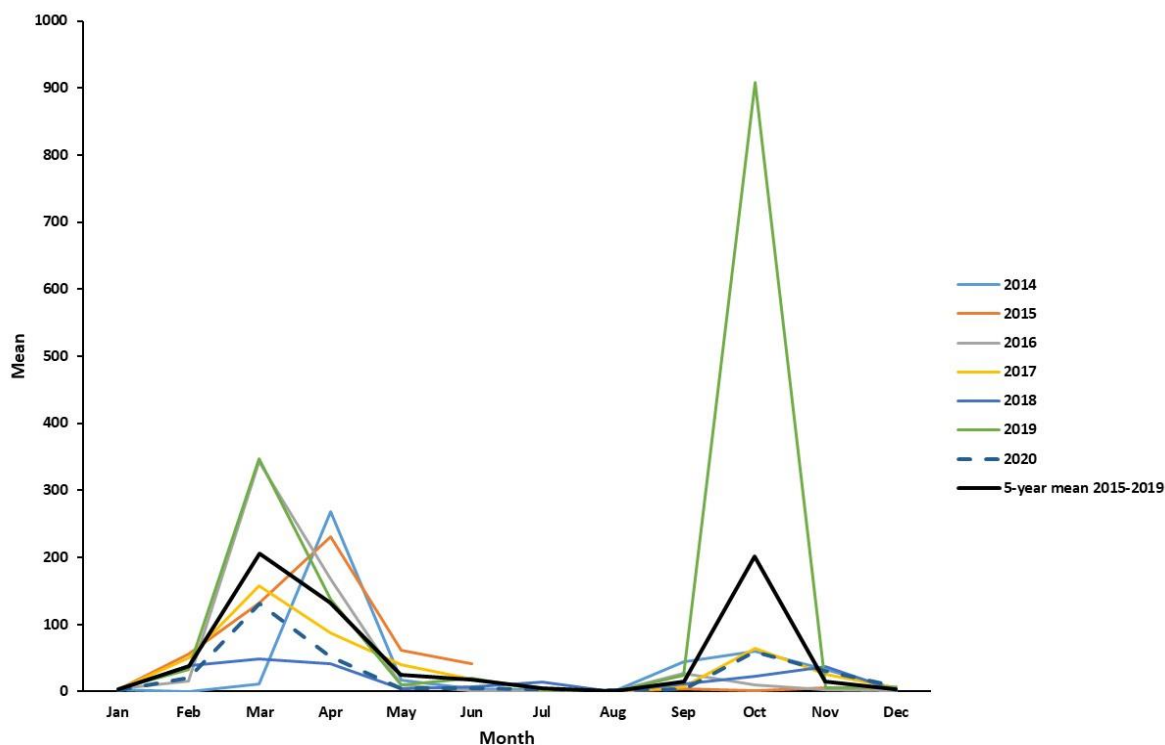
Very common offshore.

A total of 7,498 individuals were seen in 2020.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Mean count/30 mins	1.6	19.8	131.6	52.4	4.6	5.0	3.9	1.7	3.8	59.3	29.8	7.1
Monthly count	13	277	2106	1572	119	121	55	59	136	2136	776	128
Highest 30 min.count	4	65	631	199	32	17	17	8	42	283	198	46



Razorbill, Burghead September 2020 (Mike Crutch)



Summary of annual totals 2014-2020:

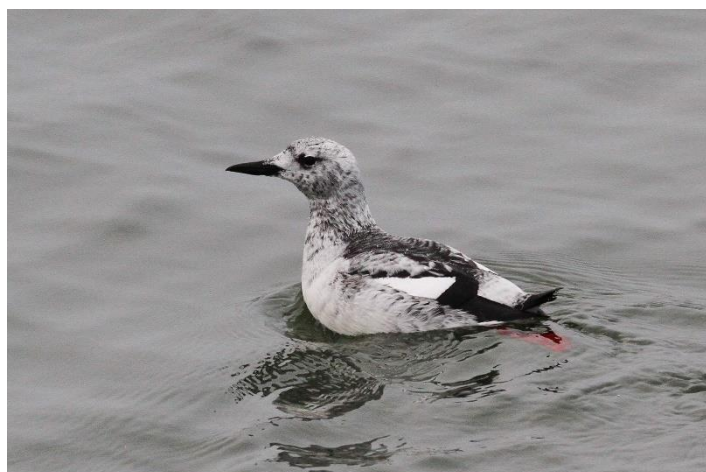
Year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Total birds	8098	6920	13001	7501	5979	5975	7498
Time (hours)	150	77	136	118	160	73	141
Birds/hour	54.0	89.9	95.6	63.6	37.3	81.8	53.2

Black Guillemot

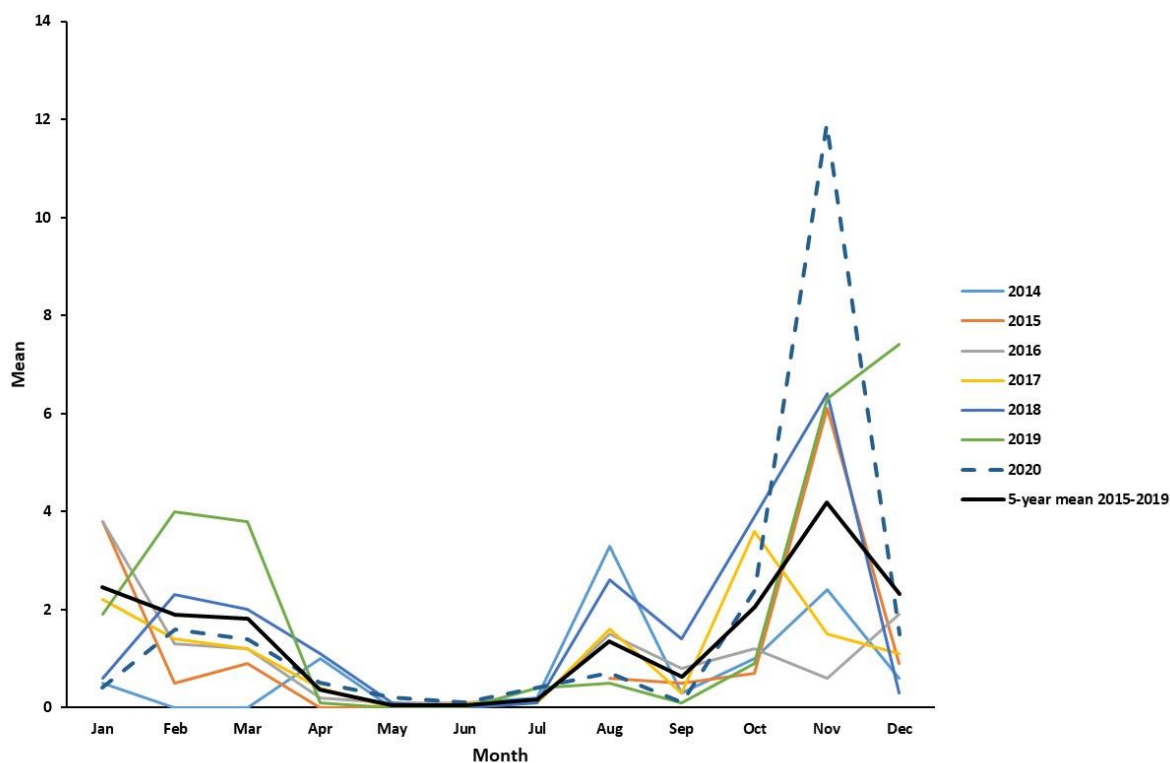
Scarce offshore.

A total of 503 individuals were seen in 2020.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Mean count/30 mins	0.4	1.6	1.4	0.5	0.2	0.1	0.4	0.7	0.1	2.4	11	1.5
Monthly total	3	23	23	15	6	3	5	25	2	86	285	27
Highest 30 min. count	1	8	7	7	2	1	3	6	1	18	73	13



Black Guillemot, Burghead
November 2021 (Gordon Biggs)



Summary of annual totals 2014-2020:

Year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Total birds	394	218	278	313	511	233	503
Time (hours)	150	77	136	118	160	73	141
Birds/hour	2.6	2.8	2.0	2.7	3.2	3.2	3.6

Puffin

Very scarce offshore.

A total of 74 individuals were seen in 2020.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Mean count/30 mins	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.1	<0.1	0.5	2.4	0.4	0.1	0.2	<0.1	0.0
Monthly total	0	0	3	3	1	11	33	12	2	8	1	0
Highest 30 min. count	0	0	2	3	1	6	15	5	2	4	1	0

Summary of annual totals 2014-2020:

Year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Total birds	9	4	36	8	96	16	74
Time (hours)	150	77	136	118	160	73	141
Birds/hour	0.1	<0.1	0.3	0.1	0.6	0.2	0.5

Notable records of other species

Pale-bellied Brent Goose

Singles flying west on 4 Sep & 9 Oct.

Barnacle Goose

In October, groups of 9 (4th), 13 (5th) & 26 (6th) were seen flying east.

Pink-footed Goose

Large passage noted on 4 & 5 Apr; 586 on 4th and 515 on 5th.

Whooper Swan

Groups were seen on 8 Mar (6 & 5 flew west), 22 Mar (6 west, 3 east), 5 Apr (2 west) and 8 Nov (4 east).

Shelduck

Four groups recorded; 2 flew west on 3 Apr, 5 east on 3 May, 1 west on 24 Oct and 3 west on 13 Nov.

Wigeon

In spring, only recorded during April; 29 between 1st-26th. Commoner in the autumn and winter period with 325 recorded from 4 Sep-20 Dec; largest count 75 on 25 Oct.

Pintail

Two groups in autumn flying west; 21 on 5 Sep and 9 on 6 Oct.

Teal

Frequently recorded between 21 Mar-19 Dec. Largest 30-minute counts were 132 (07:30-08:00) and 42 (08:00-08:30) on 4 Oct.

Goldeneye

Three in spring and 17 in the autumn.

Golden Plover

One flew west on 23 Aug.

Whimbrel

One on 23 May.

Bar-tailed Godwit

Two flew west on 2 Apr.

Greenshank

One flew east on 16 Aug.

Woodpigeon

Three flew south on 18 Apr.

Peregrine

One on 1 Apr.

Carrion Crow

Common on seawatches 8 Mar-16 May; 119 were seen during this period. . The largest day total in spring was 30 over two hours flying north-west over the Moray Firth (25, 2, 2, 1 in each 30 minute period). In the autumn, 5 west on 10 Oct

Skylark

A group of 3 flew west on 8 Mar and a single west on 11 Apr.

Meadow Pipit

Common on seawatches in spring (31 Mar-3 May) with a total of 225 individuals flying west. The largest 30-minute count was 37 on 11 Apr.

Snow Bunting

Recorded on 25 & 26 Dec when a group of 4 and a single flew over.

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
Badcheat	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	NH8654

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	Clochach	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	Fornighty	NH9350
Drumdivan	NH8454	Forres	NJ0358
Drumduan Mill	NH9156	Foynesfield	NJ0358
Drumfurrich	NJ2944		
Drumin	NJ1830	Garbh Uisge Beag	NH9900
Drummuir	NJ3844	Garbh Uisge Mòr	NH9900
Drybridge	NJ4362	Garlinebeg	NJ1741
Drynachan	NH8639	Galcantray	NH8148
Dufftown	NJ3239	Garmouth	NJ3364
Duffus	NJ1668	Garmouth viaduct	NJ3464
Duffus Castle	NJ1867	Gateside	NJ3647
Dulsie	NH9341	Geddes	NH8852
Dulsie Bridge	NH9341	Gervally	NH9948
Dunearn	NH9341	Gilston	NJ2066
Dundurcas	NJ2950	Glack Harnes	NJ2836
Dunnyduff Wood	NJ4449	Glacks of Balloch	NJ3534
Dunphail	NJ0047	Glass	NJ4239
Dyke	NH9858	Glen Avon	NJ1006
Dykeside	NJ1159	Glen Gheallaidh	NJ1338
		Glen Latterach	NJ1951
Earnhill	NJ0160	Glen Lossie	NJ1347
Earnside	NJ1062	Glen Rinnes	NJ2834
East Mains	NJ2066	Glenallachie	NJ2741
East Meur Gorm Craig	NJ1504	Glenfarclas Distillery	NJ2138
Easter Allanaha	NJ1062	Glenferness	NH9443
Easter Calcots	NJ2563	Glenlatterach Reservoir	NJ1952
Easter Cloves	NJ1461	Glenmarkie	NJ3837
Easter Galcantray	NH8148	Glenmullie	NJ1916
Easter Gaulrig	NJ1514	Gollachy Burn	NJ4064
Easter Greens	NJ0449	Gordonstoun	NJ1869
Easter Lawrenceton	NJ0858	Gordonsward	NJ2564
Easter Newforres	NJ0658	Gow Moss	NJ3853

Gownie	NJ2842	Kintessack	NJ2269
Greenside	NJ2656	Kirdellbeg	NJ1741
		Kirkhill	NJ2462
Half Davoch	NJ0451	Kirkmichael Church	NJ1423
Hardmuir	NH9556	Kirkton	NJ2462
Heathfield	NH8050	Knauchland	NJ5651
Heldon Wood	NJ1257	Knock of Braemoray	NJ0141
Hempriggs	NJ1063	Knock of Gownie	NJ2942
Herricks	NJ4549	Knockanbeg	NJ2632
Highland Boath	NH8844	Kronyhillock Wood	NH8349
Hill of Glenroads	NJ3031	Kylnadrochit Lodge	NJ1419
Hill of Mackalea	NJ3638		
Hill of Maud	NJ4662	Ladder Hills	NJ2719
Hillhead	NJ2058	Ladycroft	NJ2444
Hill of Mulundy	NJ1053	Laggan	NJ3436
Hillpark	NJ4360	Lagganauld	NJ2026
Hills of Cromdale	NJ1226	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
Miltonhill	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	Thief's Hill	NJ3654
Redhill	NJ1661	Thomshill	NJ2157
Reekimlane	NJ3625	Tips of Corsemaul	NJ3939
Refouble	NH9540	Todholes	NJ1054
Relugas	NH9948	Tom nan Clach	NH8634
Rhinturk	NJ3632	Tomachar	NJ2432
Rinour	NJ1740	Tomachlaggan	NJ1522
Rosarie	NJ3849	Tombreck	NJ1218
Roseisle Forest	NJ1166	Tomcork	NJ1349
		Tomintoul	NJ1618
Salterhill	NJ2067	Tomnamoon	NJ0450
Sanquhar Loch	NJ0458	Tomnavoulin	NJ2126
Scabbed Hill	NJ4160	Tormore Distillery	NJ1534
Scalan	NJ2419	Torrieston	NJ1658
Scarffbanks	NJ2366	Tronach Head	NJ4768
Scaut Hill	NJ3331	Troves	NJ2459
Scotsburn	NJ2760	Tugnet	NJ3465
Scotstonhill	NJ2662	Tynet	NJ3861
Seafield	NJ0261		
Shaw Hill	NH9748	Upper Bruntlands	NJ1943
Sheanspark	NJ3645	Upper Dallachy	NJ3662
Shearleat	NH8641	Upper Knockando	NJ1843
Shelter Stone	NJ0001	Upper Mulben	NJ3652
Sherriffmill	NJ2062	Urchany	NH8748
Sheriffston	NJ2561	Urquhart	NJ2862
Sluie	NJ0052		
South Darkland	NJ2661	Wallfield	NJ2965
Spey Bay	NJ3767	Waterford Fm	NJ0259
Spey estuary	NJ3564	Waukmill	NJ2362
Speymouth	NJ3564	Well of The Lecht	NJ2315
Speyslaw	NJ3465	Wellheads	NJ3860
Spynie canal	NJ2366	Wellhill	NJ0061
Spynie Palace	NJ2365	Wester Calcots	NJ2463
Stob Bac an Fhurain	NJ1303	Wester Delnies	NH8355
Stoneyford pond	NJ0455	Wester Elchies	NJ2542
Strath Avon	NJ1425	Wester Gaulrig	NJ1513
Strathlene	NJ4467	Wester Manbeen	NJ1960
Stronachavie	NJ1318	Wester Newforres	NJ0657
Strondow	NJ1644	Westerfolds	NJ1967
Strypes	NJ2758	Westertown	NJ1925
Succoth	NJ2935	Whiteash Hill	NJ3857
Suie	NJ2724	Whitefolds	NJ2425
Surradale	NJ1665	Whitetree	NJ1156
		Whitewreath	NJ2357
Tanzie	NJ3146	Windyridge	NJ2367
Tapp	NJ1447	Wood of Mulderie	NJ3751
Tarras	NJ0659		
Teindland	NJ2655	Yellowbog	NJ1448
Tervieside	NJ2330		
The Scalp	NJ3636		

