



Birds in Moray & Nairn

2001

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MORAY & NAIRN BIRD REPORT
No.17 - 2001

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Compiled by Martin Cook, with assistance from John Mackie (waders) and Bob Proctor (wildfowl).

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

INTRODUCTION

Review of the year

Following the outstanding year of 2000 it was almost inevitable that 2001 would prove quieter, and so it proved with no new species added to the area's list. To some extent this was attributable to access restrictions resulting from the Foot & Mouth Disease epidemic further south. Nonetheless some memorable events stand out, not least the impressive influx of Waxwings early in the year, with most larger towns and villages hosting some of these spectacular birds; as many as 100 in Elgin at the peak. Several rarities put in a multiple appearance; Green-winged Teals were seen at Findhorn Bay, Kingston and Loch Spynie, and Mediterranean Gulls visited Kingston, Lhanbryde, Roseisle and Lossiemouth. American Wigeon, now expected on the Lossie estuary in winter, was a more unusual find on Lochs Spynie, Flemington and Oire. The Loch Oire bird frequently posed obligingly close to the lay-by, permitting an outstanding viewing opportunity. Although no 'firsts' for Moray & Nairn were found, a quartet of 'seconds' were fair compensation. These comprised a Baird's Sandpiper in Findhorn Bay, a swiftly passing Cory's Shearwater off Lossiemouth, a mist-netted Yellow-browed Warbler at Loch Spynie and a Red-breasted Goose, perhaps the bird of autumn 2000 on return migration. An American race Black Scoter accompanied the Burghead Bay scoter flocks from October until the year's end. A Pectoral Sandpiper at Lhanbryde brought the tally of trans-Atlantic visitors to six. Although 'scarce migrants' were thin on the ground, two Garganey, a Bluethroat and a Great Grey Shrike provided seasonal interest.

New English names – the issue revisited

Regular readers of this Report will no doubt recall that in 'Birds in Moray & Nairn in 2000' it was decided to adopt the new English bird names as proposed by the Records Committee of the British Ornithologists' Union and officially adopted by the SOC in January 2001. The intended purpose of this revised nomenclature was to standardise English names and remove ambiguity when, for example, the British list contains six species of Wheatear.

Twelve months ago this Report followed guidelines from the SOC and introduced the new names, with a view in part to assessing local reaction. Reaction has been duly forthcoming, and the opinions volunteered by many local birders have been very largely unfavourable. Furthermore the Editor attended a conference of Scottish Bird Recorders in Perth in November 2001 where the issue was debated. At this meeting the case for change was not well made and the contrary arguments were persuasive. It has therefore been decided to revert to the traditional names. In this respect we shall not be alone; neither the BTO, the RSPB or the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust have adopted the changes, nor have journals and magazines such as *Birding World*, *Birding Scotland*, *Birdwatching* or *Birdwatch*. Nevertheless in a very few instances minor change seems appropriate. Where more than one species with a shared specific name occurs in Britain in significant numbers then the new names will be used in this Report e.g. Eurasian Wigeon (to distinguish from American Wigeon) and Eurasian Teal (to distinguish from Green-winged Teal). For other species, where very little likelihood of confusion arises, no change is necessary – and in any case unique scientific (Latin) names will avoid any ambiguity.

North-east Scotland Breeding Bird Atlas

This exciting new project covering the North-east Scotland and Moray (but not Nairn) recording areas began this spring, in 2002. Further information about the project, and how to become involved, is given in an article later in this Report.

Submission of records

The area covered by this Report is Moray and that part of Highland which corresponds to the former Nairn District. Lochindorb, formerly at the southern tip of Moray, now falls outside the revised Moray boundary which runs along the A939. A small part of the former Nairn District boundary lies along the western shore so records from the loch continue to be included in the Report.

All records for inclusion in the 2002 Report will be welcomed by the Moray & Nairn Bird Recorder at the following address:

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Important records do not have to be of unusual birds. Every local bird watcher can help because many more records of common species are needed. For example, a much greater sample size of summer migrant arrival dates would be valuable. Please submit your records at regular intervals or in a single batch as soon as possible in January 2003.

Once again the Editor is very pleased to acknowledge the generous financial support of Walkers Shortbread Ltd, Aberlour.

The Editor gratefully acknowledges the help of John Mackie and Bob Proctor in the preparation of the species accounts. Once again Bob has produced the Ringing Report.

ASSESSMENT OF LOCAL RARITY RECORDS

The Moray & Nairn Rarities Committee exists to consider records of local rarities which do not fall within the scope of the British Birds Rarities Committee or the Scottish Birds Rarities Committee.

There follows a list of those species (or subspecies) which are considered by the Moray & Nairn Rarities Committee. If you see one of these species please contact the area Recorder as soon as possible for a description form.

Please note that this list has been updated as from 2000.

Black-necked Grebe	Crane	Richard's Pipit
Balearic Shearwater	Little Ringed Plover	Yellow Wagtail
Leach's Petrel	Temminck's Stint	Bluethroat
Bittern	Pectoral Sandpiper	Lesser Whitethroat
Little Egret	Buff-breasted Sandpiper	Icterine Warbler
White Stork	Grey Phalarope	Yellow-browed Warbler
Spoonbill	Red-necked Phalarope	Firecrest
Bewick's Swan	Long-tailed Skua	Bearded Tit
Bean Goose	Mediterranean Gull	Red-backed Shrike
Green-winged Teal	Sabine's Gull	Great Grey Shrike
Garganey (not adult male)	Roseate Tern	Hawfinch
Ring-necked Duck	Black Tern	Common Rosefinch
Ruddy Duck (not adult male)	Turtle Dove	Lapland Bunting
Surf Scoter (not adult male)	Nightjar	
Honey Buzzard	Hoopoe	
Hobby	Wryneck	
Spotted Crake	Shore Lark	
Corncrake	Water Pipit	

Subspecies:

Cormorant (*P.c.sinensis*) Rock Pipit (*A.p.littoralis*)

Chiffchaff (*P.c.tristis/abietinus*)

Also records in the following categories:

All 'firsts' for Moray & Nairn

The first five records for any species in Moray & Nairn

Out-of-season records for a species (e.g. Willow Warbler in December)

Significant out-of-habitat records for a species (e.g. coastal Ravens).

OBSERVERS CONTRIBUTING TO 2001 REPORT

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CHRONOLOGICAL SUMMARY OF THE YEAR

JANUARY

1st 9 Brent Goose Nairn, 1 American Wigeon Lossiemouth, 1 Iceland Gull Burghead, 2nd 1 Red-necked Grebe Culbin Bar, 1 Smew Loch Spynie, 5th 8 Waxwing Portknockie, 7th 1 Red-breasted Merganser Loch Spynie, 1 Glaucous Gull Kingston, 8th 9 Waxwing Knockando, 1 Waxwing Longmorn, 11th 8 Barnacle Goose Miltonhill, 12th 38 Waxwing Lossiemouth, 14th 1 Green-winged Teal Findhorn Bay, 12 Pintail Nairn Bar, 2 Scaup Loch Spynie, 2 Surf Scoters Nairn/Culbin Bars, 3 Bearded Tit Loch Spynie, 20th 6 Waxwing Nether Dallachy, 27th 76 Waxwing Elgin.

FEBRUARY

1st 9 Waxwing Lossiemouth, 6th 3 Waxwing Aberlour, 11th 1 American Wigeon Loch Spynie, 19 Pintail Culbin Bar, 3 Surf Scoter Nairn/Culbin Bars, 1 Smew Loch Flemington, 1 Iceland Gull Elgin, 15th 1 Canada Goose Miltonhill, 17th 38 Waxwing Hopeman, 21st 42 Waxwing Drumduan, 42 Waxwing Forres, 52 Waxwing Nairn, 24th 97 Waxwing Elgin.

MARCH

1st 1 Surf Scoter Lossiemouth, 100 Waxwing Elgin, 4th 12 Woodcock Newbold Wood, 1 Iceland Gull Hopeman, 5th 1 American Wigeon Loch Flemington, 10th 15 Black-throated Diver Burghead Bay, 14th 16 Waxwing Forres, 51 Waxwing Nairn, 25th 30 Waxwing Duffus, 55 Tree Sparrow Westfield, 27th 31 Waxwing Hopeman, 29th 2 Black Redstart Burghead.

APRIL

1st 50 Waxwing Elgin, 4th 1 Glaucous Gull Nairn, 7th 1 Iceland Gull Lossie estuary, 8th 1 Iceland Gull Burghead, 9th 1 Green-winged Teal Kingston, 10th 1 Glaucous Gull Lossie estuary, 11th 1 King Eider Kingston, 12th 1 Waxwing Clochan, 16th 22 Waxwing Forres, 31 Waxwing Hopeman, 17th 1 Red-breasted Goose Redhill, 22nd 83 Red-throated Diver Spey Bay, 1 Canada Goose Findhorn Bay, 1 White Wagtail Findhorn Bay, 23rd 1 White Wagtail Fochabers, 29th 1 Glaucous Gull Hopeman.

MAY

1st 1 White Wagtail Lossiemouth, 2nd 1 Iceland Gull Nairn, 5th 14 Great Northern Diver Spey Bay, 6th 11 Raven Carn Mor, 7th 1 Whimbrel Scarffbanks, 8th 1 Glaucous Gull Lossie estuary, 4 Waxwing Elgin, 16th 1 Garganey Loch Oire, 1 Garganey Loch Spynie, 18th 1 Scaup Loch Spynie, 20th 7 Canada Goose Findhorn

Bay, 1 Whimbrel Kingston, 2 Green Woodpecker Banchor, 1 Green Woodpecker Elgin, 22nd 1 Little Gull Findhorn Bay, 25th 2 Little Ringed Plover Kingston, 29th 5 Whimbrel Lossiemouth.

JUNE

9th 1 Iceland Gull Lossie estuary, 11th 1 Red-backed Shrike Ballindalloch, 14th 1 Glaucous Gull Tugnet, 19th 2 Gadwall Loch Spynie, 22nd 1 Quail Nether Dallachy.

JULY

1st 2 Little Gull Garmouth viaduct, 15th 1 Little Gull Lossiemouth, 18th 6 Whimbrel Lossie estuary, 1 Glaucous Gull Lossie estuary, 21st 5 Storm Petrel Lossiemouth, 1 Kingfisher Wester Gauldwell, 24th 153 Lesser Black-backed Gull Lossie estuary, 25th 1 Curlew Sandpiper Lossie estuary, 26th 1 Glaucous Gull Burghead, 2 Puffin Burghead, 27th 1 Bearded Tit Loch Spynie, 29th 2 Gadwall Loch Spynie, 31st 1 Bearded Tit Loch Spynie.

AUGUST

1st 1 Kingfisher River Nairn, 8th 1 Cory's Shearwater Lossiemouth, 26 Manx Shearwater Lossiemouth, 16th 1 Little Stint Kingsteps, 18th 22 Black-tailed Godwit Lossiemouth, 22nd 4 Ruff Lossie estuary, 2 Puffin Lossiemouth, 24th 1 Glaucous Gull Lossie estuary, 26th 1 Wood Sandpiper Montgrew, 28th 8 Greenshank Montgrew, 30th 1 Little Stint Kingston, 1 Kingfisher Loch Spynie, 31st 3 Green Sandpiper Montgrew.

SEPTEMBER

1st 19 Black-tailed Godwit Findhorn Bay, 1 Pomarine Skua Spey Bay, 2nd 1 White Wagtail Kingston, 7th 16 Black-tailed Godwit Lossie estuary, 8th 22 Sooty Shearwater Lossiemouth, 9th 31 Sooty Shearwater Lossiemouth, 1 Spotted Redshank Findhorn Bay, 33 Arctic Skua Lossiemouth, 48 Great Skua Lossiemouth, 14th 1 Gadwall Kingston, 1 Little Stint Findhorn Bay, 7 Black-tailed Godwit Kingston, 1 Mediterranean Gull Kingston, 15th 1 Mediterranean Gull Lhanbryde, 16th 1 Pomarine Skua Spey Bay, 18th 6 Curlew Sandpiper Findhorn Bay, 20th 1 Little Stint Findhorn Bay, 21st 1 Baird's Sandpiper Findhorn Bay, 23rd 2 Little Stint Lossie estuary, 24th 3 Little Stint Findhorn Bay, 25th 1 Yellow-browed Warbler Loch Spynie, 27th 1 Bluethroat Strathlene, 28th 1 Pectoral Sandpiper Lhanbryde, 1 White Wagtail Strathlene, 29th 2093 Barnacle Goose through Moray, 14 Brent Goose Hopeman, 2 Kingfisher Loch Spynie.

OCTOBER

3rd 1 Spotted Redshank Findhorn Bay, 7th 1 Scaup Loch Spynie, 8 Curlew Sandpiper Findhorn Bay, 22 Black-tailed Godwit Findhorn Bay, 3 Puffin Nairn Bar, 8th 1 Gadwall Kingston, 10th 10 Brent Goose Lossiemouth, 20 Brent Goose Findhorn Bay, 11th 7 Black-throated Diver Burghead Bay, 3 Surf Scoter Burghead Bay, 23 Slavonian Grebe Burghead Bay, 12th 34 Brent Goose Findhorn Bay, 13th 1 Spotted Redshank Findhorn Bay, 14th 1 Redstart Lossiemouth, 21st 4 Jack Snipe Lein, 23 Black-tailed Godwit Roseisle, 1 Mediterranean Gull Roseisle, 23rd 11 Blackcap Findochty, 23 Goldcrest Findochty, 24th 2 Red-necked Grebe Burghead Bay, 27th 1 American Wigeon Loch Oire, 1 Scaup Loch na Bo, 1 Black Scoter Burghead Bay, 29th 1 Gadwall Loch Spynie.

NOVEMBER

6th 1 Waxwing Lossiemouth, 10th 1 Green-winged Teal Loch Spynie, 8 Pintail Loch Spynie, 16 Little Auk Lossiemouth, 1 Great Grey Shrike Findhorn, 11th 6 White-fronted Goose Mid Mains, 1 Gadwall Loch Spynie, 12th 23 Slavonian Grebe Burghead Bay, 15th 1 Canada Goose Hempriggs, 1 Green Woodpecker Nairn, 17th 90 Whooper Swan Westfield, 9 White-fronted Goose Loch Spynie, 1 Iceland Gull Lossie estuary, 1 Little Auk Findhorn, 18th 2 Canada Goose Loch Spynie, 19th 1 American Wigeon Lossie estuary, 21st 70 Tree Sparrow Wester Calcots, 28th 2 Red-necked Grebe Burghead Bay.

DECEMBER

1st 13 Brent Goose Nairn, 1 Glaucous Gull Lossie estuary, **2nd** 1 Iceland Gull Lossie estuary, **13th** 1 Mediterranean Gull Lossie estuary, **16th** 1 (different) Mediterranean Gull Lossie estuary, 64 Scaup Nairn Bar, 14 Jack Snipe Kingsteps, 5 Jack Snipe Nairn/Culbin Bars, 1 Iceland Gull Nairn, **17th** 1 Smew Loch Flemington, **18th** 80 Tree Sparrow Westerfolds, **20th** 1 Puffin Portgordon, **27th** 1 Waxwing Elgin, **29th** 1 Iceland Gull Loch Spynie.

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

Red-throated Diver *Gavia stellata*

Rare breeder. Common autumn and winter visitor offshore.

Summer: One bird at the usual inland site on 11 Apr but nothing subsequently (MJHC). Coastal reports in the June-August period came from Burghead Bay (2 on 23 July, 17 on 17 Aug), Lossiemouth (2 on 4 July), Spey Bay (15 on 18 Aug) and Portgordon (2 on 4 July).

Large numbers in Spey Bay in spring: 83 on 22 Apr (only 2 in summer plumage) and 38 on 5 May (MJHC). Few counts have previously been made at this time of year so it is unclear whether this is exceptional.

Best monthly counts offshore in each winter period were:

	Jan	Feb		Oct	Nov	Dec
Nairn/Delnies	2	2		nc	nc	nc
Nairn/Culbin Bars	39(14 th)	1		14	9	4
Burghead Bay	5	5		17	47(12 th)	9
Spey Bay	4	nc		78(12 th)	25	14

nc = no count received

Only a few along the rocky coasts e.g. 8 Covesea 20 Jan, 4 Burghead-Lossiemouth 15 Nov and 9 Portgordon-Strathlene 14 Jan. Unusual were 1 in Lossiemouth harbour 5 Nov and 1 in Lossie estuary 15-16 Dec.

Black-throated Diver *Gavia arctica*

Rare breeder. Scarce autumn and winter visitor offshore.

As usual, only small numbers with Findhorn/Burghead Bay the most favoured site. Monthly maxima here were 15 on 10 March (MJHC), 5 on 9 Apr, 3 on 23 July, 7 on 11 Oct, 3 on 12 Nov and 2 on 13 Dec.

Elsewhere, 4 Spey Bay 24 Apr, with singles there 5 May, 12 Oct and 9 Dec, 1 Lossiemouth 24 Sept and 1 Nairn/Culbin Bars 17 Dec.

Great Northern Diver *Gavia immer*

Scarce visitor offshore.

As in 2000, significant numbers were present in Spey Bay, between Kingston and Boar's Head Rock, in spring e.g. 12 on 22 Apr and 14 on 5 May (MJHC).

Also here were 7 on 20 Nov (CD). In Burghead Bay, best monthly counts were 2 on 20 Jan, 1 on 2 Apr, 4 on 11 Oct, 8 on 12 Nov (CD) and 2 on 13 Dec. Elsewhere, 5 between Burghead-Lossiemouth 15 Nov (and 2 there 18 Dec), 1-2 off Lossiemouth in Apr, May and Sept, 1 off Nairn in Jan, Feb and Dec, 4 Nairn/Culbin Bars 4 Nov and 1 there 17 Dec.

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

Scarce breeder, scarce on the estuaries in winter.

Mid-winter: On breeding waters in January and December were 1 Loch Spynie 24-29 Dec and on Loch na Bo, up to 6 (28th) in Jan and 3 on 7th and 24th Dec.

Present in spring/summer (*italics* = proved breeding) at Auldearn, Brodie, *Cloddach quarry* (2 pairs), *Culbin Forest*, *Dallachy*, *Dava* (Loch Allan), *Fochabers lake*, Loch Flemington, *Loch na Bo* (3 pairs), *Loch Loy* (3 pairs), *Loch Oire* (2-3 pairs), *Loch Spynie*, Lossie Forest (north pool and Nether Unthank pools) and Rafford.

Best post-breeding congregations in autumn were 17 Loch na Bo 15 Sept (still 12 there on 9-16 Oct and 2 Nov), 8 Loch Spynie 10 Sept and 6 Loch Flemington 7 Oct.

Coastal in winter: Around Findhorn Bay were 5 on 14 Jan and 3 back there by 16 July with 2-3 in Sept-Dec, substantially less than in recent years. At Kingston, 4 on 7 Jan, 3 on 14 Feb; one back there from 13 July until the end of the year, with 2 on 10 Nov. Elsewhere 1 Lossie estuary 7 Jan and 2 Nairn harbour 26 Jan.

(Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*

Rare breeder and very scarce offshore in autumn and winter.

No records, following annual presence at Loch Spynie since 1984. During that period breeding was proved in 13 years but young were reared in only 5, with none since 1990. Flooding and predation were the suspected causes of nest failure in many years.)

Red-necked Grebe *Podiceps grisegina*

Very scarce migrant and winter visitor.

1 Culbin Bar 2 Jan (ISS) and 2 Burghead Bay 24 Oct and 28 Nov (AJL).

Slavonian Grebe *Podiceps auritus*

Rare breeder. Scarce offshore in winter.

Breeding: A very encouraging year after recent setbacks. A total of 7 pairs was present and 6 of these were successful, raising 11 young between them. Number of breeding pairs and production of young in the last 10 years has been as follows:

Year	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Pairs	13	13	11	13	8	12	9	8	3	7
Young	8	5	7	12	2	2	5-6	1	3	11

Site 2 – Three back 1 Apr and 3 pairs by 22 Apr. Two pairs bred; one pair was successful, raising two young. Last 2 seen 16 Sept.

Site 4 – One pair 21 May but only singles seen 28 June and 16 July. On 16 Aug however two pairs were found, one with 3 large young and one with two medium sized young. All five young were still present on 2 Sept and subsequently fledged. Last was 1 on 7 Oct. A very welcome improvement at this site where up to 7 pairs were regular during the early/mid 1990s but there was a rapid decline to only 2 pairs in 1998, 1 pair in 1999 and only a brief visit by 1 pair in 2000.

Site 7 – On 27 May, two pairs building and a 5th, unmated, adult. Interesting behaviour observed when an adult grebe seized a Moorhen chick by the leg, eliciting an attack by the adult Moorhen, which recovered the chick. On 8 July, one pair with 2 young, one pair with 1 young and still the unmated adult. All three juveniles well grown by 29 July and subsequently fledged.

At Loch Spynie, 1 juvenile 13 Aug, 2 from 24 Aug-6 Sept with 1 remaining until 14 Oct.

Coastal: Monthly maxima in Burghead Bay were:

Jan	Feb		Oct	Nov	Dec
1	1		23 (11 th)	23 (12 th)	7 (16 th)

(IFo,CD,DMP, JDHM et al.)

Elsewhere, 2 Burghead-Lossiemouth 18 Dec, 3 Nairn/Culbin Bars 14 Jan and 7 Nov, and 1 Spey Bay 19 Dec. Two summer plumage adults off Lossiemouth east beach 21 Apr (DG).

Fulmar *Fulmarus glacialis*

Common breeder, very common offshore.

Breeding: returning to nesting cliffs were c30 off Clashach Quarry, Hopeman 25 Jan and 12 back on Cummingston cliffs 16 Dec in anticipation of the 2002 season.

Passage: A strong movement past Lossiemouth in early September, especially on 8th (345 between 1650-1750) and 9th (558 between 0800-0900 and 348 between 1600-1700) (RP). All but 16 were heading west.

Cory's Shearwater *Calonectris diomedea*

Rare migrant.

One flew east past Lossiemouth 8 Aug (RP). This record is currently under consideration by Scottish Birds Rarities Committee. If accepted it will be the second for Moray & Nairn, following the first, also seen off Lossiemouth by the same observer, on 9 July 2000.

Sooty Shearwater *Puffinus griseus*

Very scarce migrant in late summer and autumn.

Notable passage west past Lossiemouth in early September. On 8th, 22 between 1650-1750 (RP) and, on 9th, 31 of which 28 between 1600-1700 (RP). Also 1 off Cullen 22 Sept (DG) and two late records in October, 1 west past Findhorn 12th (IFo) and 2 west past Burghead 28th (BG). Only in September 1988 (26 on 24th) have similar numbers been seen; less than 10 being the annual norm.

Manx Shearwater *Puffinus puffinus*

Scarce offshore in summer and autumn.

Only two 'good' days with significant passage past Lossiemouth – 24 heading east and 2 west in 15 minutes on 8 Aug and 12 west in 1 hour on 8 Sept (RP). Otherwise 2 east Kingston 26 Apr and 1 west Lossiemouth 9 Sept.

Storm Petrel *Hydrobates pelagicus*

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

Tape luring at Lossiemouth attracted 5 birds on 21 July and 1 on 4 Aug (DS).

Gannet *Morus bassanus*

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

Main dates for passage off Lossiemouth were 12 May (80 east in 1 hour), 8 Sept (179, mostly west, in 1 hour), 9 Sept (703, mostly west, in 4 hours) and 18 Oct (358 west in 3 hours).

Notable feeding congregations were 290 off Nairn/Culbin Bars 7 Oct, 103 on the sea in Spey Bay 18 Aug and 77, mostly juveniles, off Findhorn 29 Sept.

Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

Scarce resident and common winter visitor.

On the Covesea/Halliman Skerries (Lossiemouth) were 27 on 20 Jan, 15 on 21 May, 8 on 29 June, 17 on 13 July, 19 on 1 Aug, increasing substantially to 46 on 17 Aug, 39 on 12 Sept, 44 on 23 Sept and 56 on 11 Oct (JDHM). Along the Portgordon-Buckpool coast were 25 on 13 Feb, 42 on 25 Aug, 34 on 25 Oct and 26 on 23 Nov with smaller numbers in other months.

Other sites yielding counts of 15 or more were Burghead Bay (19 on 13 Dec), Burghead-Hopeman (16 on 11 Feb, 24 on 16 Aug, 33 on 29 Aug, 21 on 7 Oct and 15 on 16 Dec), Nairn/Culbin Bars (23 on 7 Oct), Spey Bay (19 on 24 Jan and 15 on 15 Sept) and Strathlene (30 on 17 Sept).

In summer, 8 (including 2 adults) on the cliffs at Covesea 16 June. One pair nested there in 1962 but nothing since despite the near-annual presence of a few adults.

Inland, monthly maxima at Loch Spynie were:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
1	4	1	2	2	1	3	1	1	5	10	11

With the exception of 12 on 12 April 1981, end-of-year counts were unprecedented; best days being 11-12 Nov (10) and 1 Dec (11). Birds of Continental race *P.c.sinensis* were again present; 1 in Feb and July-Nov, and 3 in Dec (RP et al.). Other inland cormorants were at Craigellachie (1 on 8 Jan and 2 on 5 Dec), Loch na Bo (1 on 24 Dec) and Loch of Blairs (1 on 14-18 May).

Shag *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

Scarce breeder and common visitor, chiefly in winter.

Breeding: Continued increase on the cliffs opposite to the Bow Fiddle Rock at Portknockie where 31 occupied nests on 4 June (MJHC). Also one more pair at Covesea where 5 nests on 16 June, and the new breeding site at Tronach Head, established in 2000, held 1 nest with young on 4 July (MJHC).

Winter counts: 84 Burghead Bay 12 Nov, 33 Burghead-Lossiemouth 15 Nov, 17 Lossiemouth 3 Oct, 30 Portgordon-Strathlene 16 Dec and 57 Spey Bay 19 Dec.

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

Scarce resident breeder.

Heronries: 11-12 nests Loch Spynie (MJHC), c6 nests Binsness (JDHM) and 1 nest Connage nr. Buckie (MJHC). Also bred Nether Dallachy.

On the estuaries in late summer and autumn, best counts in each month were:

	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Findhorn Bay	10	22	nc	nc	nc	7
Lossie estuary	5	11	5	5	2	8
Kingston	6	9	14	nc	nc	nc

2 Fochabers Lake 10 Aug of which one caught 30 small fish in 5 minutes.

Mute Swan *Cygnus olor*

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

Breeding: 16 pairs were reported on territories this year. Three pairs did not attempt to breed or failed early during incubation. Twelve pairs produced 54 young, most of which probably fledged.

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

Year	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94
Pairs	14	14	7	13	12	9	9	14
Young fledged	33	52	31	55	47	48	44	61
Mean	2.4	3.7	4.4	4.2	3.9	5.3	4.9	4.4

Year	95	96	97	98	99	00	01
Pairs	10	14	16	15	15	15	12
Young fledged	24	35	50	31	68	51	54
Mean	2.4	2.5	3.1	2.1	4.5	3.4	4.5

Maximum monthly counts of local flocks (excluding breeding birds in May-August) were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Findhorn	6	nc	nc	7	nc	41	nc	nc	11	8	nc	17
Lossie estuary	5	3	4	3	0	0	1	0	2	0	6	6
Loch Spynie	30	29	7	Breeders					15	32	27	32

Three non-breeding flocks were counted.

Nairn: 33 on 29 Apr (though only 23 on 30 Apr) and 24 on 1 May.

Findhorn Bay: 14 on 9 May, increasing to 32 on 21 May. By 14 Sep, this flock had dropped to 9 individuals.

Kingston: maximum of 19 present on 22 May.

Two moving west well offshore at Buckpool on 6 Apr.

Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus*

Common migrant and winter visitor.

Winter-spring: No birds were recorded in Nairn District. This is unusual as this was the species 'stronghold' during this period in previous years, with no blank years noted in any Bird Reports from 1985 onwards.

In Moray, flocks were present at 9 sites, these were typically small groups; Kinloss (4 on 23-26 Jan), Coltfoot (6 on 12 Jan), Crosslots, Duffus (9 on 13-15 Feb), Loch Spynie (1 on 26 Jan), Lochindorb (2 on 11 & 21 Apr), Mid Mains (4 on 14 Jan), Milltown airfield (7 on 27 Mar), Milltonhill (max. 8 on 14 Jan) and West Mains (4 on 20 & 22 Jan).

Autumn: First flock (involving 6 birds) was seen on 5 Oct at Loch Spynie; a typical arrival date. Main arrival occurred from 24-28 Oct with 12 flocks reported. More flocks than usual in Oct, particularly in Moray with 12 sites recording birds. Very rare in Nairn District with only 1 bird present at Loch Flemington on 7 Oct). Overall, recorded flocks were much larger than in recent years, with the largest flock seen at Mid Mains on 31 Oct (this contained 105 adults and 13 juveniles). In November recorded at 15 sites in Moray and 1 in Nairn. Flocks with 10 or more individuals were seen at Westfield (74 adults, 16 juveniles on 17th), Balormie/Drainie (max. 60 adults, 12 juveniles on 15th), Sarradale (max. 60 adults, 5 juveniles on 9th), Loch Spynie (60 on 17th), Loch Loy (max. 39 adults, 8 juveniles on 28th), Silverhills (55 on 15th, 7 adults, 16 juveniles on 17th), Mid Mains (12 adults, 2 juveniles on 6th), Duffus (9 adults and 2 juveniles on 1st), Moy

(19 on 6th) and Invererne (7 adults, 4 juveniles on 2nd). Many more juveniles were recorded this year, indicating a good breeding season. A minimum of 142 juveniles were seen compared to 33 last year. A mean of 2.4 juveniles/pair recorded for known broods.

Winter: 5 sites held flocks in December; Kinloss (7 on 2nd), Brandston (present from 5-8 Dec, max. 34 adults, 16 juveniles on 7th), Loch Spynie (present 1-27, max. 46 on 8th), Urquhart (4 flew over on 12th) and Newton of Struthers (11 adults, 4 juveniles on 16th).

Pink-footed Goose *Anser brachyrhynchus*

Common migrant, increasing in winter.

Winter (January-mid March): One flock seen in Nairn District; c.600 Druim on 28 Mar. In Moray, reports were received from only four sites; Clochan (10 on 7 Jan, increasing to 20 on 12 Feb), Miltonhill (c.2000 on 26 Jan), Miltonduff (40 on 25 Mar) and Roseisle (270 on 6 Jan).

Spring passage: The largest flock seen during this period was 4200 roosting at Findhorn Bay on 29 Apr. Other groups seen during this period included c.3000 Miltonhill on 2 Apr, 280 west Kingston on 12 Apr, 4000 Findhorn Bay on 13 Apr, 440 Easter Coltfoot on 19 Apr, 164 Hempriggs on 22 Apr and 120 Loch Spynie on 3 May. Extensive flights were noted over Lossiemouth on the nights of 20th/21st and 26th/27th Apr.

Summer: 1 Findhorn Bay on 27 Jun.

Autumn: Skeins were heard over Lossiemouth on the night of 15th/16th Sep. This is a typical arrival date. Three sites reported flocks on 16 Sep (80, 5, 30, 10 & 27 flying south-west over Clochan, 50 flying south-east at Tugnet and 40 over Darkland). Main autumn arrival occurred in early October (Findhorn Bay 3000 roosting on 4th, increasing to 13000 roosting on 7th).

Winter: Large flocks during the period included; 8500 Findhorn Bay on 3 Nov, 7240 Clochan on 2 Dec, 3500 Sheriffston on 15 Dec, 2500 Barmuckity on 15 Dec and 2000 Darkland on 26 Dec.

Lower numbers recorded during both winter periods, but particularly in the first period despite the largest counts in Moray & Nairn occurring on 4 & 13 Nov 2000, when ca.15,000 were recorded at Westerton.

White-fronted Goose *Anser albifrons*

Scarce winter visitor.

All birds were of the Greenland race. A welcome increase in numbers reported but still less than some flocks seen in the mid-1990's.

Winter-spring: Sightings were concentrated in a small area, with sightings at Easter Cloves, Kirkhill (Alves), Hempriggs, Roseisle maltings, Bridgend (Roseisle), Crosslots, Burnside Farm (Newton) and Batchen (Miltonduff). A maximum of two birds seem to account for all of these records between 8 Feb and 14 May (RFH).

Autumn: Two records in October; 4 (west over the sea) Findhorn on 27th (DMP) and 1 Earnside 13th (RFH).

Winter: In November a neck-collared family party of 2 adults and four juveniles was first seen on 11th at Mid Mains (DG). These were subsequently seen at Mid Mains on 12th (RFH), Windyridge on 17th (RFH) and Loch Spynie on 18th (DG). Other sightings during this period included: Loch Spynie (9 on 17 Nov (DG, MJHC), 1 juvenile on 6 Dec (DMP) and 1 on 8 Dec (DG)), Muirton (2 on 25 Nov (DG)), Windyridge (1 on 17 Nov (DG)), Duffus Castle (1 (with collared birds) on 6 Dec (RFH)), Easter Newforres (1 on 9 Nov (RFH)), Coltfoot (2 on 2 Nov (RFH)) and Darkland (1 on 26 Dec (JDL)). Apart from the 9 birds at Loch Spynie it seems likely that once more 2 birds account for all of these records.

Greylag Goose *Anser anser*

Common winter visitor.

Winter-spring: Numbers during this period appeared to be less than recent years. Flocks containing 500 or more birds were seen at only 3 sites (max. counts only); 1200 Clochan 7 Jan, 500 Findhorn Bay 14 Jan and 600 Crosslots 4-8 Apr.

Summer: No breeding data received from Lochindorb. Two birds were present at Loch Spynie on 1 Jun, while single birds were present at Kingston from 10 Jun to 9 Sep and Montgrew on 23 Aug.

Autumn: First record of the autumn occurred on 27 September. Main arrival in first half of October, with several flocks recorded. Birds were seen on 4th (4 Clochan), 7th (11 Findhorn Bay), 12th (200 Loch Spynie) and 14th (200 Corskie and 35 Loch Spynie). Three sites held large numbers (500 or more) in November; 1800 Duffus on 1st, c.2000 Loch Spynie on 2nd, increasing to 5300 on 17th and c.7000 Findhorn Bay on 18th.

Winter: The only sizeable flock seen during this period was 3620 at Clochan on 2 Dec.

[Bar-headed Goose *Anser indicus*

Escape

2 in Findhorn Bay 23 May (RHD).]

Canada Goose *Branta canadensis*

Scarce migrant in summer, rare in winter.

Winter-spring: All records presumably relate to a single bird that remained in the Miltonhill area from 2000. It was seen at Miltonhill on 15 Feb, East Grange on 17 Feb and Findhorn Bay on 22 Apr (RFH).

Only one group of migrants bound for the Beaully Firth moulting area were recorded; 7 at Findhorn Bay on 20 May (EH).

Winter: An individual was seen at Hempriggs on 15 Nov (RFH). Two were seen at Loch Spynie on 18 Nov (DG). One of these remained in the Loch Spynie area until 28 Dec at least. This individual was seen at Duffus Castle, Silverhills, Muirton, Windyridge and Loch Spynie (RFH, RP, DG).

Barnacle Goose *Branta leucopsis*

Scarce migrant and winter visitor.

Winter-spring: Seen at 8 sites over this period. All records related to single birds, except 8 Miltonhill 11 Jan and 2 Burnside Farm, Newton on 2-3 Feb. Singles were seen at Roseisle (1-3 Jan), Clochan (7 Jan), West Mains (22 Jan), Roseisle maltings (12 Apr), Wester Manbeen (15 Feb), Batchen, Miltonduff (16 Feb), Burnside Farm, Newton (19-20 Feb), Unthank, Duffus (21 Feb) and Miltonhill (2 Apr).

Autumn: An excellent migration period for the species. First flocks were seen on 29 Sep, arrival dates for last 3 years have been 21 Sep. Recorded at 6 sites on 29th; 84 Findhorn Bay, 676 Lossiemouth, 1 Lossie estuary, c.400 Speymouth, c.200 Buckpool and 732 Strathlene. Those at Lossiemouth and Strathlene were flying east. The passage on 29th contained 2093 birds, beating the previous best on a single day by 546, when 1547 were recorded on 8 Oct 1995. Autumn passage continued on 30 Sep, with 1 Lossie estuary, c.55 east Lossiemouth, 450 Loch Spynie and 960 Findhorn Bay. Smaller numbers seen through October; 5 Lossie estuary 5th, 10 Earnside 10th, 1 Findhorn Bay 13th, 3 east Lossiemouth 20th, 7 east Strathlene 20th, 5 Findhorn Bay 27th, 2 Loch Spynie 27th, 6 Lossie estuary 27th and 3 Burgie 28th.

Winter: 3 Findhorn Bay 18 Nov. Otherwise singles seen at Windyridge 17 Nov, Loch Spynie 24 Nov, 6-8 Dec, Calcots 16 Dec, Darkland 26 Dec and Hempriggs 26 Dec. Many of these single records presumably relate to the same bird.

Brent Goose *Branta bernicla*

Scarce migrant and winter visitor.

All records were assigned to race. The majority of these concerned the pale-bellied form *hrota*, only one record involved the dark-bellied race *bernicla*.

In the first winter period birds were only seen at 7 sites; In Nairn, what appears to be the same flock of 9 were recorded at Nairn (off the harbour) on 1 Jan to 10 Feb, and at Nairn/Culbin Bars on 14 Jan (when 10 present) and 11 Feb. In Moray, singles were recorded at Kirkhill, Alves on 8 Feb, Wester Manbeen on 15 Feb, Batchen, Miltonduff on 16 Feb and Burnside Farm, Newton on 20 & 23 Feb.

The only record of *bernicla* was 2 Findhorn Bay 14 Jan (CD).

Autumn passage period (Sep-Oct): First individual was seen on 6 Sep at Findhorn Bay. None until mid-Sep when 3 Lossie estuary on 15th-16th and 3 Findhorn Bay on 19th-20th (same flock?). Later, 14 over Hopeman 29th. In October seen at Lossiemouth (10 on 10th), Findhorn Bay (20 on 10th, 34 west (flocks: 9, 11, 14) on 12th & 3 on 13th) and Burgie (1 on 25th).

Winter: In December seen at Nairn (13 off the harbour on 1st, 6 on 24th and 13 on 29th) and Nairn/Culbin Bars (4 on 16th).

Red-breasted Goose *Branta ruficollis*

Vagrant or escape.

Probably the same individual as that seen in 2000 was seen again with Pink-footed and Greylag Geese in west Moray from 17-19 Apr (RFH *et al.*). It was initially seen at Redhill (17th-18th), then in the Easter Coltfoot and Roseisle area on 19th. If accepted by British Birds Rarities Committee this will be the second record of the species in Moray & Nairn.

[Muscovy Duck *Cairina moschata*

Escape.

Seen at Loch Spynie and the Lossie estuary. At Loch Spynie, 6 appear to have been released deliberately on 19 Jan, dropping to 4 on 24 Jan. On the Lossie estuary, 1 on 1 Mar was probably part of the Loch Spynie flock.]

Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*

Numerous spring and summer visitor and breeder.

Breeding: Broods were seen at Findhorn (1, 2, 4), Kingston (5) and RAF Kinloss (9). The latter were 'escorted' off the runway to Findhorn Bay. At the end of the season, 2 adults were seen with 36 young on 6 Jul, dropping to 28 young on 17 Aug, and probably represents the total production of young for the Findhorn Bay area.

Best monthly counts at coastal sites were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Nairn/Culbin Bars	76	97	nc	nc	nc	nc	24	nc	nc	0	nc	66
Findhorn Bay	23	53	nc	61	76	74	nc	35	8	0	nc	0
Lossie estuary	0	7	9	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kingston	0	0	5	22	32	23	4	0	0	0	0	0

Inland: Seen at 6 sites. Largest inland numbers were seen at Clochan, where 17 on 25 Mar, increasing to 25 on 30 Mar. These are the largest numbers to be recorded at Clochan. At Dallachy, 2 on 5 May and 4 on 16 Jun were on forest pools. Elsewhere, 2 Roseisle 15 Feb, 4-6 Muir of Lochs 1 Apr - 3 Jun, 1 Miltonhill 9 Apr and 4 Loch Spynie 19 May.

Eurasian Wigeon (Wigeon) *Anas penelope*

Common winter visitor and scarce breeder.

Breeding: In the traditional breeding area of west Moray and east Nairn no broods were seen this year. One pair seen in the area on 11 Apr (MJHC).

Non-breeders in summer included birds at Kingston from 12 May - 26 Jun (max. 10 on 26 Jun) and Loch Spynie from 12 May - 8 Jul (max. 7M, 2F on 22 Jun).

Winter: Monthly maximum counts at main coastal sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr		Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Nairn/Culbin Bars	542	490	nc	nc		nc	52	nc	1032
Findhorn Bay	920	470	1900	nc		270	1380	nc	546
Lossie estuary	2106	900	335	86		250	750	771	2246
Kingston	300	192	270	61		nc	180	nc	nc

Continued growth in numbers at Lossie estuary; the December total is the largest count for the estuary in over 10 years of counting (RP). Also c.400 off Roseisle 15 Feb. Seen on seawatches from Lossiemouth on 8 Sept (25 west) and 9 Sept (15 west).

On freshwater:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr		Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Loch Spynie	422	1400	nc	nc		2	5	66	520	371
Cloddach quarry	17*	165	100	3		nc	1	52	39	322
Loch Oire	0*	1	12	0		0	29	207	350	65
Loch na Bo	92*	109	58	nc		0	0	0	160	96

* Cloddach quarry, Loch Oire and Loch na Bo were frozen for a large part of the month.

Counts over 100 at other inland sites included; 240 Miltonduff distillery pond on 28 Jan, then 144 on 25 Mar and 200 on 24 Dec, 149 Loch Flemington on 11 Feb and 160 Loch Loy on 28 Nov.

American Wigeon *Anas americana*

Vagrant.

First winter period: The adult male remained on the Lossie estuary from 2000, and was present until 4 Mar. It also visited Loch Spynie on 11 Feb (DG, CAG, RP, JDL). Another adult male (identified on plumage differences) was present at Loch Flemington from 5-25 Mar (RP, DMP, BG); this record remains under consideration by Scottish Birds Rarities Committee.

Second winter period: The adult male returned to the Lossie estuary on 19 Nov for a 4th consecutive year. It was more elusive than previous years and was only seen on two other dates, 15 Dec (RP) and 30 Dec. An adult male was found at Loch Oire on 27 Oct (MJHC) and remained there until the end of the year. Plumage details indicate that this was a different male from the Lossie bird. This record also awaits the verdict of SBRC.

Gadwall *Anas strepera*

Scarce visitor.

Seen at two sites in the latter half of the year.

Loch Spynie: 2F on 19 June (IP), 2 on 29 Jul, 1M on 29 Oct (IFo) and 1F on 11 Nov (MJHC).

Kingston: 1M present on 14 Sep (MJHC) and 8 Oct (HF).

Eurasian Teal (Teal) *Anas crecca*

Scarce breeder and common winter visitor.

Breeding: Confirmed at 1 site; Loch of Bogmussach, where 1 chick was seen on 6 Jul (JDHM).

Potential sites occupied during the breeding season included Loch Spynie 19 May, Kingston 12 May - 10 Jun (max. 4) and Montgrew 26-29 Jun.

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

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr		Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Loch Flemington	nc	11	nc	nc		nc	nc	12	nc	1
Nairn Bar	91	nc	nc	nc		nc	nc	4	nc	16
Culbin Bar	70	nc	nc	nc		nc	nc	nc	nc	114
Sanquhar Loch	31	62	nc	nc		nc	nc	nc	nc	nc
Findhorn Bay	360	nc	nc	nc		4	nc	nc	nc	360
Lossie estuary	0	0	0	1		6	11	5	0	1
Loch Spynie	10	235	nc	nc		nc	nc	215	647	424
Spynie Canal*	632	454	nc	nc		nc	nc	nc	728	nc
Cloddach quarry	46	79	25	2		6	34	30	54	161
Loch Oire	8	49	13	7		0	nc	44	223	93
Loch na Bo	68	93	nc	nc		nc	nc	nc	nc	nc
Kingston	5	20	26	22		80	200	100	50	nc
Montgrew	nc	nc	nc	nc		56	56	nc	nc	nc

*Spynie Canal counts were from the old railway bridge to Gilston.

Other coastal sites with records: 1 Burghead Bay (off Findhorn) on 2 Apr and 5 west Lossiemouth on 5 Sep.

Green-winged Teal *Anas carolinensis*

Vagrant.

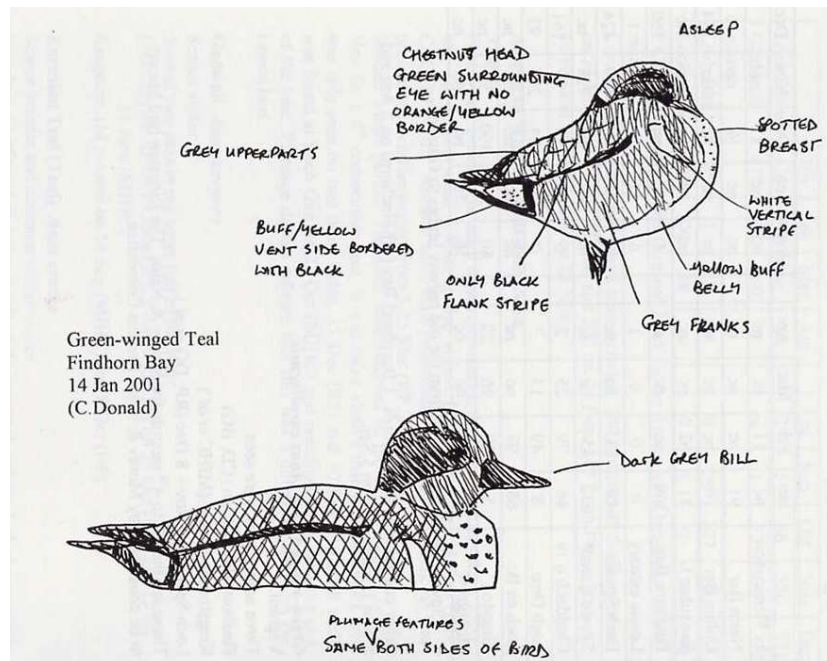
Three adult males were seen.

Findhorn Bay: 14 Jan (CD, BG).

Kingston: 9-28 Apr (MJHC *et al.*).

Loch Spynie: 10 Nov – 8 Dec (RP, DG *et al.*).

These are the 2nd to 4th records for Moray & Nairn. The Kingston bird has yet to be considered by Moray & Nairn Rarities Committee.



Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*

Numerous resident breeder and common winter visitor.

Breeding: The mean brood size from 37 broods was 6.4 chicks. 4 sites away from the coastal strip were used; Dava lochans, Lochindorb, Raitcastle reservoir, Foresterseat (Pluscarden).

Best monthly flocks in regularly counted areas were:

Freshwater:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Loch Flemington	35	128	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	97	nc	43
Sanquhar Loch	42	80	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc
Loch Spynie	527	110	nc	8	nc	137	446	166	52	48	203	261
Cloddach Quarry	6	62	15	10	nc	27	57	217	228	99	145	121
Loch Oire	25	34	18	14	12	26	57	38	55	40	68	110
Loch na Bo	222	172	45	16	9	9	50	56	87	72	74	176
Montgrew	nc	nc	nc	nc	5	nc	nc	69	183	nc	nc	nc

Other freshwater sites holding more than 50 birds included: Spynie Canal (244 on 11 Jan), Cooper Park, Elgin (53 on 4 Jan) and Loch Loy (82 on 8 Jul).

Coastal sites:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Nairn/Culbin Bars	530	236	nc					nc	nc	43	250	nc
Findhorn Bay	205	235	nc					247	nc	105	nc	451
Lossie west beach	75	6	nc					nc	26	19	18	46
Lossie estuary	52	0	16					19	26	0	0	51
Kingston	60	68	30					82	nc	nc	73	nc
Portgordon-Strathlene	72	96	nc					nc	nc	11	nc	72

Other coastal sites holding more than 50 birds included 246 Roseisle 15 Feb and 118 Primrose Bay 25 Jan. At Loch Oire, a buff-coloured female mated with a 'normal' male, producing 1 buff, 1 normal and 2 intermediate chicks (JDHM). A female and a brood of two were seen just off the tarred road, walking along the track to Loch Spynie (RP).

Pintail *Anas acuta*

Scarce winter visitor and migrant. Has bred.

Present at 6 sites.

Nairn: 1F on 1 Oct (RPC).

Nairn Bar: 12 on 14 Jan and 2 on 16 Dec (DJa).

Culbin Bar: 19 on 11 Feb (AY).

Findhorn Bay: 1M present from 11-13 Feb (ISS), 1 on 30 Sep (DMP), then 3F on 3 Oct (DMP) and 4 on 16 Dec (CD).

Burghead Bay: 1F on the sea 27 Oct (DMP).

Loch Spynie: 1M 14 Jan - 4 Feb (EH,DG,CAG). A pair present 13 May (DG), F still there 15 May (C&GH). Present in autumn/winter from 27 Oct - 2 Dec (many obs.). Maximum of 8 on 10-12 Nov, which were aged/sexed as 1M, 6F, 1 juvenile (HF).

Garganey *Anas querquedula*

Rare in spring.

Two records, both of adult males on 16-17 May, at Loch Spynie (MJHC, JP, DG, AMcN, JDHM) and Loch Oire (MJHC, EH, MDe).

The species has appeared more regularly in recent years with only 1997 lacking records since 1995.

Shoveler *Anas clypeata*

Rare breeder and scarce migrant.

Best monthly counts at Loch Spynie for each sex are given below.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Males	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0
Females	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0
Sex?	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	6
Max. total	0	0	0	2	1	1	0	0	0	1	5	6

Elsewhere; 1M Kingston 31 May, 1F Cloddach quarry 16 Sep, 3 Findhorn Bay 18 Sep (then 1 on 30 Sep), 1F Lossie estuary 6 Oct, 1M, 1F Loch na Bo on 28 Oct (1M 20-21 Dec) and 1 Loch Oire 4 Nov.

Pochard *Aythya ferina*

Common winter visitor and occasional breeder.

Maximum monthly counts were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Loch Spynie	21	8	nc	3	nc	nc	2	nc	1	2	5	27
Loch na Bo	1	3	10	nc	0	0	0	0	nc	3	7	6

Maximum counts per year at Loch Spynie since 1987 are given below:

1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
33	54	58	65	89	99	62	64	33	17	9	36	69	61	27

Seen at 3 other sites; 2 Loch Oire 20 Jul (1 there 31 Aug), 1 Loch Flemington 7 Oct and 2M Kingston 12 Oct.

Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligala*

Scarce breeder and common winter visitor.

Breeding: The mean brood size from 14 broods was 4.9 chicks. Broods were seen at Auldearn reservoir, Cloddach quarry, Cooper Park (Elgin), Loch Spynie, Loch Oire and Loch na Bo. A nest with a clutch of 4 was found at Loch na Bo on 25 May (PGS).

Other records during summer months were: 1M, 2F Loch Allan (Dava) on 11 Apr and 4M, 2F on a forest pool at Dallachy 1 May, dropping to 1M, 1F on 5th.

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

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Loch Flemington	nc	11	nc	11	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	9	nc	1
Loch Spynie	135	54	nc	nc	65	32	68	78	46	126	50	75
Cloddach quarry	8	97	7	19	nc	20	15	20	36	21	11	39
Cooper Park	14	17	10	4	nc	11	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc
Loch na Bo	43	78	25	30	8	5	13	30	27	43	42	43
Loch Oire	0	6	14	26	20	18	8	11	4	18	15	3
Kingston	nc	4	nc	1	8	10	19	2	46	58	15	nc

Maximum counts exceeding 10 individuals at other sites included; Loch Loy (17 on 28 Nov), Auldearn reservoir (11 on 30 Apr, 15 on 18 Jul and 11 on 28 Aug) and Fochabers lake (18 on 23 Mar, 11 on 10 Aug and 24 on 7 Nov).

Offshore: 4 Buckpool 18 Jan, 2 Portgordon-Strathlene 9 Feb, 1 Burghead Bay 15 Dec and 5 Spey Bay 15 Dec.

Scaup *Aythya marila*

Scarce winter visitor.

Inland records: Present at Loch Spynie on four dates; 2 on 14 Jan (JDL), 1M on 18-20 May (RP, DG, HF, CAG) and 1 on 7 Oct (JDL). A male was also seen at Loch na Bo on 27 Oct (MJHC).

Coastal records: On 14 Jan, singles were seen at Burghead Bay (EH) and Culbin Bar (AY), while a group of 5 were present at Nairn Bar (DJa, DB).

Later in the year 1M Spey Bay 16 Sep (IFo), 1 Lossiemouth 6 Oct (DG) and 2F Kingston lagoon 12 Oct (MJHC).

Off Nairn Bar, 3 on 7 Oct had risen to 64 on 16 Dec (DJa). The latter count is the largest in the Districts since the huge influx in 1996.

Common Eider (Eider) *Somateria mollissima*

Scarce breeder, common offshore.

Breeding: 8 broods reported, of which the mean brood size was 2.4 chicks. The average brood size for the last 12 years is 2.5 chicks.

Mean number of chicks calculated from distinct broods 1990-2001:

Year	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Broods	9	6	7	3	5	9	8	19	16	10	9	8
Mean	2.0	3.3	3.3	2.0	3.0	3.3	3.9	3.2	3.4	2.1	3.2	2.4

Maximum monthly counts at coastal sites (these are the same coastal stretches as previous co-ordinated counts):

	Jan	Feb		Oct	Nov	Dec
Nairn/Culbin Bars	161	75		118	83	187
Findhorn/Burghead Bay	1010	60		nc	228	322
Burghead-Lossiemouth	311	82		115	300	261
Spey Bay	22	nc		nc	125	172
Portgordon-Strathlene	112	155		16	nc	80

(RSPB *et al.*)

In spring/summer: 260 Kingston 12 Apr and 240 moulting males there 26 Jun. In Burghead Bay, 74 on 26 June and 362 on 17 Aug. 35 Strathlene 1 Apr.

King Eider *Somateria spectabilis*

Rare visitor.

The only record concerned an adult male off Kingston/Tugnet from 11-22 Apr (MJHC, RM *et al.*). This is assumed to be the same male returning for a 9th year. The record is still under consideration by British Birds Rarities Committee.

Long-tailed Duck *Clangula hyemalis*

Common winter visitor offshore.

Maximum monthly counts were:

	Jan	Feb		Nov	Dec
Nairn Bar	1166	457		nc	282
Culbin Bar	800	626		nc	466
Findhorn/Burghead Bay	1500	320		853	2391
Burghead-Lossiemouth	168	33		88	109
Spey Bay	56	nc		21	213

In summer, 47 Burghead Bay 12 July and a male was seen in Findhorn Bay on 6 Jul. The only inland record was 1F Loch Flemington 25-27 Oct.

Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra*

Common winter visitor, small numbers in summer.

Maximum monthly counts in autumn/winter were:

	Jan	Feb		Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Nairn Bar	1805	870		nc	138	nc	703
Culbin Bar	1600	2670		nc	35	nc	1173
Findhorn/Burghead Bay	928	300		960	nc	1250	2640
Burghead-Lossiemouth	40	6		nc	nc	21	200
Spey Bay	90	nc		nc	nc	279	420

In summer, good numbers in Burghead Bay where 600 on 23 July and 800 on 10 Aug.

An adult male of North American race *M.n.americana* (Black Scoter) was present in Burghead Bay from 27 Oct - 30 Dec (DMP *et al.*). If accepted by British Birds Rarities Committee this will be the 4th record for the Districts, with previous records occurring at Culbin Bar (1989) and off Findhorn (1992, 1993).

Surf Scoter *Melanitta perspicillata*

Rare, but regular, visitor.

A typical series of records from Burghead Bay and Nairn/Culbin Bars area involving adult males. A minimum of three individuals could account for all the records in Moray & Nairn.

Nairn/Culbin Bars: Two males were seen on 14-15 Jan with 3 there on 11 Feb (DB, DJa *et al.*).

Burghead Bay: An adult male was present on 6 Jan, 18 May, 23 & 29 Aug. Regularly seen from 6 Sep to 6 Dec, usually involving only one male, but 3 males seen on 11 Oct and 2 on 13 Oct (many obs.).

Lossiemouth east beach: A single male was present from 1-3 Mar (JDHM, DB).

Velvet Scoter *Melanitta fusca*

Common winter visitor.

Maximum systematic counts for main areas were:

	Jan	Feb		Nov	Dec
Nairn Bar	251	180		nc	113
Culbin Bar	24	420		nc	44
Burghead Bay	300	40		535	954
Spey Bay	nc	nc		95	110

Generally, counts were below 15 at other sites except 280 off Burghead 2 March, 15 Nairn/Culbin Bars 20 March, 50 off Kingston 22 Apr and 18 Boar's Head Rock 30 Apr. In summer, 7 Lossiemouth 20 May and 2 Findhorn 17 Aug.

Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*

Rare breeder and common winter visitor.

Breeding: At the traditional breeding site no chicks were seen this year. A pair + 2F were seen in the area on 11 Apr and 1F on 13 Jun. Inland summer records included individuals at Loch Spynie (7 on 2 May (displaying) and 2 on 3 Jun).

Maximum counts on most frequented lochs were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May		Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
L. Flemington	nc	3	nc	3	nc		nc	0	nc	5
Loch Spynie	10	11	4	56	7		3	19	6	11
Cloddach quarry	2	5	nc	nc	nc		0	0	1	1
Loch na Bo	7	10	11	7	nc		0	2	4	6
Loch Oire	2	2	5	1	nc		0	0	0	0

Inland winter records included two from the River Spey, 1F Kinermony on 28 Jan and 1M Aberlour 6 Feb, and 11 Loch of Blairs 29 Nov.

Highest monthly counts in coastal areas were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr		Oct	Nov	Dec
Nairn/Culbin Bars	26	6	nc	nc		nc	nc	15
Findhorn Bay	21	38	11	nc		nc	nc	4
Burghead Bay	9	nc	nc	nc		nc	29	47
Burghead-Hopeman	36	31	16	3		1	5	27
Burghead-Lossiemouth	nc	nc	nc	nc		nc	45	18
Lossiemouth	26	6	14	nc		nc	5	22
Lossie estuary	8	3	1	3		0	0	3
Spey Bay	13	8	nc	6		nc	38	21
Kingston/Tugnet	nc	2	8	28		4	15	nc
Portgordon-Buckpool	79	53	30	9		3	9	nc
Portgordon-Strathlene	61	71	nc	nc		nc	nc	53

A large coastal record involved 40 Hopeman 19 Jan.

Smew *Mergellus albellus*

Rare winter visitor.

Seen at 2 sites. At Loch Flemington an adult male was again present in both winter periods, from 11 Feb - 25 Mar (BG, DJa *et al.*) and on 17 Dec (RFH). This was presumably the same bird as that seen there each winter since December 1988.

At Loch Spynie a 'redhead' was present from 2 Jan - 25 Feb (CAG *et al.*).

Red-breasted Merganser *Mergus serrator*

Scarce local breeder and common visitor.

Summer: Breeding confirmed only at Findhorn Bay where 3 broods consisting of 3, 6 and a remarkable 17 (or 18) (JDHM). A wary female on the River Spey at Dipple, showed signs of breeding 6 June (JDHM). In other suitable breeding areas were 1 pair Kingston 12 Apr and 2 on River Findhorn (A96 bridge) on 23 May. Mean number of chicks calculated from distinct broods 1990-2001:

Year	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Broods	5	9	8	5	6	9	4	8	7	2	5	3
Mean	7.0	7.7	9.4	7.0	7.2	10.6	4.3	7.0	5.6	5.5	7.8	8.7

Maximum monthly counts of coastal flocks outwith the mid-summer period were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Nairn/Culbin Bars	8	1	nc	nc				74	46	nc	15
Findhorn Bay	15	3	nc	nc				nc	nc	12	4
Burghead Bay	2	nc	nc	nc				20	7	39	18
Burghead-Hopeman	8	13	6	7				nc	0	7	7
Burghead-Lossiemouth	nc	nc	nc	nc				nc	nc	28	8
Spey Bay	15	nc	nc	12				nc	nc	19	1
Portgordon-Buckpool	3	1	4	2				nc	4	0	nc
Portgordon-Strathlene	7	8	nc	nc				nc	nc	nc	6

Also 20 Nairn on 14 Jan and 17 there 30 Apr.

The only record on an inland loch was 1F Loch Spynie 7 Jan - 7 May (CAG *et al.*).

Goosander *Mergus merganser*

Widespread but scarce breeder.

Breeding: Confirmed breeding occurred at Findhorn Bay, where a female with 7 well grown young were seen on 31 Jul (JDHM).

Maximum monthly counts at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Loch Flemington	0	1	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	0	nc	2
Cloddach quarry	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7
Loch Spynie	2	6	2	4	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	3
Lossie estuary	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	30	26	7	0	0
Speymouth	nc	nc	nc	24	33	100	50	18	25	nc	nc	nc

39 Portgordon 27 Jul were probably part of the Speymouth moulting flock. Passing offshore were 5 west off Covesea 17 Aug and 5 west off Lossiemouth 3 Oct. Inland, a high count of c.150 on the River Spey between Ballindalloch and Tugnet on 14 Oct (IF) and 5 Sanquhar Loch 1 Feb & 16 Mar.

The peak counts of moulting birds at Speymouth 1985-2001 are:

Year	1985	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	2000	01
Peak	50	60	148	87	122	140	10	29	133	192	118	62	125	59	158	93	100

The mean count for 1985-2001 is 97 birds.

Red Kite *Milvus milvus*

Formerly common breeder, now being reintroduced in North Scotland.

Two reports from Nairn district (May and Oct (2 birds)) and a further two from Moray (Oct and undated). One of the Moray records concerned a wing-tagged juvenile from the Black Isle, seen at Logie on 29 Oct and back on the Black Isle later in the year.

Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*

Very scarce visitor, usually in spring.

Female or immature birds were at a Moray locality on 5 Apr (DL), 15-23 May (C&GH,JP,AMcN) and 29 July (NS). A male was present on 19 May (JDHM,DG,HF).

Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus*

Scarce resident breeder, migrant and winter visitor.

Breeding: Six pairs were located of which one disappeared before laying, for reasons unknown. The other five pairs were successful, fledging 16 young between them at a mean of 3.2 young per successful pair (JC). Away from breeding areas, 1 Culbin Bar 14 Jan, 1 Culbin Forest 15 May, 1 Kinloss 27 Feb, 1 Lein (Kingston) 6 Aug and 21 Oct, 1 Letterach 5 Jan, 1 Miltonhill 12 Nov and 1 Spynie canal 20 July.

Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis*

Rare resident breeder.

Present in at least 3 localities in spring/summer.

At other times, 1 Clochan 2 Dec, 1 Duffus 13 Jan, 1 Loch Spynie 14 Jan and 1 Urquhart 13 Nov.

Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*

Common resident breeder.

Reported in the breeding season (Apr-July) at Clochan, Kinloss, Kirkhill quarry, Loch Loy wood, Newton of Struthers, Pitchroy, Roseisle and Westfield.

At Lossiemouth harbour a Sparrowhawk became trapped in a lobster pot while pursuing House Sparrows on 20 Aug. Single birds were seen on Culbin Bar on 14 Jan and 7 Oct.

Buzzard *Buteo buteo*

Fairly common resident breeder.

An almost white bird, showing only pale brown on the wings was reported at Milton Brodie on 13 Oct. Nearest to the coast were 2 Nairn Bar 14 Jan and 1 there 11 Feb.

Golden Eagle *Aquila chrysaetos*

Rare resident breeder.

The three usual/most recent breeding sites were checked: i) no sign of any occupancy. ii) one pair raised two young. iii) no information received. (MJHC,JJCH).

Elsewhere, 1 Drynahan 5 May (RPC).

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*

Scarce summer visitor and breeder.

Arrival: First back, in March, were 1 Garmouth 28th and 2 Findhorn Bay 31st. Usual regular fishing at Speymouth and Findhorn Bay, and more regularly than before on the Lossie estuary. Fishing in the open sea off Portgordon-Buckpool on 10 Aug and 25 Aug. Last 1 Findhorn Bay 22 Sept.

Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*

Widespread but scarce resident breeder.

Breeding season (April-July) records from College of Roseisle, Covesea, Earnhill, Gordonstoun, Hopeman, Innes House, Lochindorb, Miltonduff and York Tower.

1 Nairn Bar 7 Oct.

Merlin *Falco columbarius*

Scarce resident breeder and migrant.

Breeding: 42 sites were checked of which only 20 were occupied by pairs; the lowest occupancy rate being in south-east areas. Average clutch size at 7 nests was 4.4 eggs. All 20 pairs were successful, raising a minimum 70 young. Average fledged brood size for 9 pairs in the west of the area was 3.75 young, a healthy situation. (JC,BC).

Outside the breeding season, birds were seen in the coastal plain as follows: 1 College of Roseisle 25 Feb, 1 Culbin Bar 11 Feb, 1 Duffus 4 Feb, 1 Findhorn Bay 30 Sept, 1 Kinloss 16 Aug, 24 Sept and 9 Nov, 1 Loch Spynie 27 Dec, 1 Lossie Forest 4 Nov, 1 Moy 13 Dec and 1 Urquhart 27 Aug and 3 Oct.

Peregrine *Falco peregrinus*

Scarce resident breeder.

Breeding: In the west of the area, four sites were checked of which only one was occupied. This pair reared 3 young from 4 eggs (JC). No information was received from the east of the area.

In the coastal plain, away from breeding sites, the seasonal distribution of records was:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
7	2	4	2	1	0	1	3	5	2	5	4

22 localities yielded records with birds seen most frequently around Findhorn Bay. In Nov-Dec one was regularly to be seen roosting on Elgin cathedral.

Red Grouse *Lagopus lagopus*

Very common resident breeder.

Ptarmigan *Lagopus mutus*

Common resident breeder.

The outlying population on Ben Rinnes remained. Two pairs were seen on 31 March and best counts at the end of the year were 11 on 13 Oct and 8 on 14 Dec (AE).

Black Grouse *Tetrao tetrix*

Scarce resident breeder.

A lek just across the east Moray border contained 12 males on 5 May (RPC). Otherwise only a few casual records received; 1F Beatshach 1 Jan (AE), 1-2 regular Dava in May (ISS) and 1 Inchnacape 18 May (JDL).

Capercaillie *Tetrao urogallus*

Scarce resident breeder.

In this and future Reports, Capercaillie records will be given under the broad geographical areas used in the 1999 Report. These areas will cover the same woodland blocks from year to year and will thus be comparable.

Area	Records in 2000
South-east Nairn	None reported
West Moray	Up to 11 males lekking in one area in spring, with 9 females seen.
North central Moray	None reported
South central Moray	None reported
East Moray	Two males, one lekking and one probably doing so, c1km apart

Red-legged Partridge *Alectoris rufa*

Introduced scarce breeder. Commonly released.

Still large numbers of released birds in the Drynachan area (RPC,IA). Small numbers of released or feral birds elsewhere included 1 Clochan 28 June and 3 there 14 Oct, 2 Corries 10 May and 1 dead on the road there 8 Oct, 1 roadkill Craigellachie 13 Oct, 2 Glenmullie 18 May, 1 Knock of Braemoray 19 Oct and 2 Midthird 12 Apr.

Grey Partridge *Perdix perdix*

Common resident breeder.

Restricted access to the countryside resulted in few reports of this species. Best coveys encountered were 15 Kinloss 31 Dec, 12 Dipple 3 Oct, 12 Fochabers 3 Oct, 10 Scarffbanks 10 Feb, 10 Muirtown (Dyke) 2 Nov and 9 Mundole 4 Aug. An adult with at least 10 small chicks was at Tarras on 10 June. Present on Nairn Bar on 14 Jan (3), 11 Feb (2) and 7 Oct (1).

Quail *Coturnix coturnix*

Rare summer visitor and breeder, occasionally more numerous.

1 calling Nether Dallachy 22 June (IFo) was the only report; the poorest year since 1991 when none was heard.

Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus*

Very common resident breeder.

Present on Culbin Bar on 14 Jan (2), 7 Oct (1) and 16 Dec (3).

Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus*

Fairly common breeder and winter visitor.

Heard in the breeding season at Kinloss, Loch Belivat, Loch Flemington and Loch Spynie. On 25 May, pairs or individuals were located in 4 areas on the Lein (Kingston) (PGS). At other times, heard Loch Spynie 14 Jan (2) and regularly Oct-Dec (max. 3 on 17 Oct), Kinloss 15 Sept (1), Loch Oire 23 Nov (2) and Loch of Blairs 29 Nov (1).

Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

Fairly common resident breeder.

Breeding proved (*italics*) or probable at *Auldearn*, Elgin (Cooper Park), Fleenas, *Fochabers lake*, *Fogwatt*, *Loch Oire*, *Loch na Bo*, Loch of Blairs, Loch Spynie, Miltonduff distillery pond, *Montgrew*, Nether Unthank pools, Rafford, *Raitcastle* and Sanquhar Loch.

Most seen together only 6 Montgrew 4 Sept.

Coot *Fulica atra*

Scarce resident breeder and fairly common winter visitor.

Breeding proved (*italics*) or probable at Auldearn, *Cloddach quarry*, Dallachy forest pool, *Loch Loy (5 pairs)*, Loch of Blairs, *Loch Oire*, *Loch na Bo*, Loch Spynie and Lossie Forest pools.

Maximum monthly counts on main lochs were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Loch Flemington	6	10	nc	nc	nc	nc	19	nc	2
Loch Spynie	76	82	nc	5	6	3	4	8	45
Loch Oire/na Bo	8	14	5	8	17	21	11	14	12
Cloddach	nc	2	nc	nc	nc	nc	7	2	nc

Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*

Very common resident breeder, winter visitor and migrant.

Breeding: No inland reports in January. In February, 16 Mundole on 12th, 1 Elgin Academy 13th and 2 Cooper Park, Elgin 17th. Already 56 Cloddach on 18th and 4 upcountry at Dufftown on 20th. 10 Craigellachie 21st. In March, 122 Mundole on 14th and 99 Cloddach and 59 at nearby Miltonduff distillery pool on 25th. Still 54 Mundole 4 Apr and 24 Miltonduff 18 Apr. For the second successive year one pair nested Speyside High School (Aberlour) roof, rearing 3 young. Three pairs Elgin Academy roof.

Post breeding flock of 64 Blacksboat 9 July. Last inland, in late August, were 1 Fochabers 24th and 1 Montgrew 26th.

Spring, summer and early autumn counts at the coast:

April: 96 Lossie estuary 10th and 43 Burghead 24th.

May: 70 Findhorn Bay 21st, 21 Burghead 22nd, 46 Buckpool 25th and 7 Lossie estuary 28th.

June: 36 Lossie estuary 11th.

July: 42 Burghead 3rd, 42 Buckpool 4th. On the Lossie estuary, 64 on 14th, 85 on 18th, rising to 132 on 25th, 160 on 28th and 181 on 30th. 370 Findhorn Bay 31st.

Aug: 219 Lossie estuary 3rd (142 on 25th) and 130 Burghead 21st.

Sept: 135 Lossie estuary 5th and 380 Findhorn Bay 23rd.

Winter maxima at the coast were:

	Jan	Feb	Oct	Dec
Nairn/Culbin Bars	1478	1570	1364	1142
Findhorn Bay	980	537	590	1145
Burghead-Hopeman	220	163	129	98
Lossiemouth	61	9	97	82
Portgordon-Strathlene	285	239	172	160

Also, in March, 200 Covesea 15th and 111 Lossie estuary 30th.

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*

Rare summer visitor and breeder.

Two on the estuary shingles at Kingston 25 May showing courtship behaviour (MJHC). Breeding has also been suspected or proved in the area in 1996, 1999 and 2000.

Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*

Scarce resident breeder and very common migrant.

Breeding: One pair with a chick Findhorn 17 June and breeding behaviour noted Culbin Bar in July-August. Distraction display Kingston shingles on 10 June. Three pairs bred Lossiemouth east beach and breeding behaviour noted Buckpool 25 May. First pair back Lein, Kingston 13 Feb but after early courtship no breeding was proved. Repeated failure due to predation and disturbance seems to have led to cessation of breeding here – an area where up to 8 pairs nested in the early 1980s with considerable success.

Inland, 1 pair Cloddach quarry 18 May, 2 pairs there 24 May and 3 pairs 1 July. At least 2 young raised to fledging. 1 migrant Montgrew 21 June.

Winter maxima at the coast were:

	Jan-Feb	Nov-Dec
Nairn/Culbin Bars	13	44
Findhorn Bay	1	5
Burghead-Hopeman	15	22
Lossiemouth	39	42
Portgordon-Strathlene	28	25

Spring passage (April-early June):

Lossie estuary: Counted in April on 7th (4), 21st (22), 24th (26), 28th (78) and 29th (60) and in May on 4th (74), 5th (67), 18th (43) and 19th (c100). In June, 62 on 1st, 101 on 2nd, down to 31 on 4th and 43 on 11th. Peaks indicated in late April and mid May-early June.

Findhorn Bay: 35 on 3 May and 43 on 24 May.

Kingston: 12 on 12 May, 23 on 22 May and 7 on 10 June.

Burghead: In May, 18 on 4th, 30 on 15th and 91 on 22nd.

Nairn: 45 on 5 June.

Autumn passage (July-September) peaked in mid August:

Lossie estuary: 22 on 25 Jul, 51 on 19 Aug and 28 on 1 Sept.

Kingston: 35 on 18 Aug.

Findhorn Bay: 20 on 31 July, 107 on 15 Aug and 58 on 14 Sept. Later, 45 on 7 Oct.

Burghead: 32 on 1 Aug, 50 on 21 Aug and 42 (incl 11 juv) 6 Sept.

Culbin Bar: 30 on 12 Aug.

Dotterel *Charadrius morinellus*

Scarce summer visitor and breeder.

Golden Plover *Charadrius apricaria*

Common breeder, migrant and winter visitor.

Breeding: In suitable habitat were 1 Ben Rinnes 31 March, 2 Cairn Liath 6 May, 2 Lochindorb 20 May and 12 Corryhabbie Hill 7 July.

Last upcountry in October were 13 Ben Rinnes 13th, 11 Carn a Ghille Chiarr 6th and 1 Cairn Lochan 19th.

Winter coastal maxima were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar		Oct	Nov	Dec
Findhorn Bay/RAF Kinloss	42	87	48		63	86	nc
Lossiemouth	79	nc	24		25	90	83
Portgordon/Buckpool	17	99	0		0	313	0

Flocks may alternate between inland and coastal feeding so zero counts at the coast may not indicate absence from an area.

Elsewhere, 32 Culbin Bar 2 Jan, 80 Nairn Bar 5 Oct and, in the Milltown airfield/Loch of Cotts area, 68 on 15 March and 104 next day.

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*

Scarce autumn migrant and winter visitor.

A disappointing year with birds visiting the usual scatter of localities but generally in very low numbers, even at the Nairn/Culbin Bars where best counts were 23 on 14 Jan, 11 on 11 Feb, 10 on 7 Oct and 20 on 16 Dec.

Following 1 there on 20-22 Sept, a good flock of 48 in Findhorn Bay on 7 Oct. Single birds visited the Lossie estuary on 30-31 March, 24 July, 25 Aug and 8 Oct, and 9 were there on 12 Sept. Elsewhere, 1 Burghead 18 Feb, and 3 Cummingston 27 Aug. An unusual report of 14 Crosslots 14 April (RFH).

Annual maxima at the Nairn/Culbin Bars since 1991 were as follows:

Year	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Date	6 Oct	2 Oct	23 Sep	9 Oct	30 Sep	21 Jan	9 Feb	11 Oct	10 Oct	9 Jan	14 Jan
Max	73	41	101	59	61	42	114	71	55	60	23

The highest ever count there was 130 on 14 Oct 1978.

Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*

Very common migrant breeder, small numbers in winter.

Breeding: At Cabrach, 8 on nests and 37 (probably 18 pairs) in the area 11 Apr. 15 pairs Tomintoul 10 Apr. An early territorial pair Carsehill 22 March, 1 pair Miltonhill 2 Apr and 2 pairs Standingstone 22 Apr. First chick Crosslots 24 May. In July, 4 Drynachan 2nd and 2 pairs Tarras 10th.

In winter, 80 Bank of Roseisle 26 Jan and 32 Blervie 7 Feb. Returning flocks in the pre-breeding period included 117 Cloddach 18 Feb, 65 Milltown 15 March and 36 Miltonduff 22 March.

Post-breeding flocks:

July: c500 Cloddach 7th.

Aug: 750 Cloddach 5th, 275 Montgrew 31st.

Sept: 18 Kingston 2nd, 236 Montgrew 4th, 480 Cloddach 16th, 105 Findhorn Bay 22nd, 47 Kinloss 26th and 250 Birnie 29th.

Oct: 155 Findhorn Bay 3rd (300 there 13th), 47 Kinloss 8th, 120 Windyridge 12th, 20 Corskie 14th, 34 Lhanbryde 14th.

Nov: 94 Kinloss 3rd, 120 Loch Spynie 24th, 160 Salterhill 30th.

Dec: 71 Strathlene 16th, 24 Sheriffston 25th.

Knot *Calidris canutus*

Very common migrant and winter visitor.

Winter maxima were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr		Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Nairn/Culbin Bars	234	550	nc	nc		nc	156	nc	145
Burghead-Hopeman	40	2	120	200		210	0	nc	0
Lossiemouth	350	15	370	400		7	37	45	350
Portgordon-Strathlene	125	185	45	90		nc	0	nc	3

In Findhorn Bay, 300 on 9 Sept and 782 on 7 Oct.

Counts in summer months were:

May: 350 Findhorn Bay 3rd.

July: 3sp Lossiemouth 21st, 4sp Findhorn Bay 31st.

August: At Burghead, 46 (most sp) on 1st, 82 on 16th and 65 on 25th. 6sp Findhorn Bay 7th and 18 (6sp) there 17th, 20 Lossiemouth 18th.

(sp = summer plumaged adults)

Sanderling *Calidris alba*

Scarce migrant and fairly common but very localised winter visitor.

Monthly maxima in autumn and winter at the two best sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Nairn/Culbin Bars	112	157	nc	nc	7	46	nc	73	nc	101
Lossiemouth/Covesea	41	31	58	41	29(sp)	63	1	23	50	20

On passage in spring were 2 Lossie estuary 19-23 May and, at Burghead, 6 on 24 Apr, 4 sp on 15 May and 7 sp on 22 May. Otherwise, 6 Burghead 21 Aug, 30 juveniles Findhorn Bay 2 Sept (14 on 22nd), 5 Hopeman 19 Feb, 12 Spey Bay 1 Sept and 1 Portgordon harbour 23 Nov.

Little Stint *Calidris minuta*

Scarce migrant, mostly in autumn.

Very limited numbers, between 16 Aug and 30 Sept.

First was 1 Kingsteps 16 Aug (RP) followed by 1 Kingston 30 Aug (MJHC). In September in Findhorn Bay were 1 on 14th (JDHM) and 1 on 20th-30th (DMP, RP, MJHC) but 3 on 24th (AJL). Elsewhere, 2 Lossie estuary 23 Sept (RP).

Baird's Sandpiper *Calidris bairdii*

Rare vagrant.

1 juvenile Findhorn Bay 21-24 Sept (DMP et al.). This record has yet to be considered by British Birds Rarities Committee. The only previous record for Moray & Nairn was also in Findhorn Bay, on 5-6 Oct 1982.

Pectoral Sandpiper *Calidris melanotos*

Rare vagrant.

1 Lhanbryde pig farm pool 28 Sept (RP). This is the 7th record for Moray & Nairn, and the 2nd inland. Previous occurrences of this trans-Atlantic visitor have been at Kingston (Oct 1986 and July 2000), Lossiemouth (Sept 1988), Findhorn Bay (July 1967 and May 1990) and Montgrew (Sept 1999).

Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*

Scarce autumn migrant.

Earliest of autumn, in summer plumage, was 1 Lossie estuary 25-28 July (HF, JDHM, SM, DG). Subsequent records spanned the period 19 Aug-13 Oct but numbers were low with 6 the largest group seen:

Findhorn Bay: juveniles were seen in September on 6th (1), 18th-20th (6), 21st (3), 22nd (4), 23rd (3) and 29th (2). In October, 8 on 7th (CD) and 1 on 13th (DMP, MJHC, RP).

Lossie estuary: In August, 1 on 19th, 2 on 22nd and 4 on 23rd (DG, RP, EH).

Nairn Bar: 1 on 7 Oct (DJa).

Purple Sandpiper *Calidris maritima*

Common winter visitor.

Main winter site maxima were:

	Jan-March	Oct-Dec
Delnies-Nairn	4	4
Burghead-Hopeman	58 (11 Feb)	17
Lossiemouth	110 (11 March)	15
Portgordon-Strathlene	100 (9 Feb)	112 (16 Dec)*

* of which 110 were at Portessie

Dunlin *Calidris alpina*

Scarce breeder, very common migrant and winter visitor.

Breeding: Probably involved in breeding were 1 Lochan Dubha 1 May (RPC), 1 Cairn Liath 6 May (AE) and 1 Lochindorb 17 June (IA).

Winter monthly maxima at main sites were:

	Jan	Feb		Oct	Dec
Nairn/Culbin Bars	2846	2400		114	363
Findhorn Bay	2000	250		1758	220
Lossiemouth	180	220		57	201
Portgordon-Strathlene	105	140		30	133

Spring passage: Only at Lossiemouth was coverage adequate to indicate two minor peaks in early and mid May in an otherwise light passage:

Lossiemouth: 12 on 28 Apr then, in May, 52 on 4th, 19 on 5th, 14 on 18th, 30 on 19th and 14 on 22nd.
Otherwise fewer than 10.

Findhorn Bay: In May, 26 on 3rd, 45 on 9th and 16 on 24th.

Burghead: 10 on 13 Apr. In May, 7 on 4th, 12 on 15th and 16 on 22nd.

Present in mid summer were 1 Lossiemouth 11 June and, at Kingston, 2 on 10 June and 15 on 26 June. A partial albino seen on the latter date had an almost white head, upperparts a mixture of white and normal feathers and belly patch pale grey. The bill, legs and eye were dark as normal.

Autumn passage (July-September):

Lossiemouth: 1 on 1 July, 7 on 18th and an influx of 49 on 25th, falling to 26 by 30th. Throughout August and September numbers remained very low with no count exceeding 14.

Findhorn Bay: 78 on 31 July. Small numbers in August with peak count only 43 on 21st. In September, 76 on 14th rising to 264 on 22nd and 280 on 23rd.

Culbin Bar: 32 on 12 Aug.

Kingston: 23 on 1 July. Remaining very scarce throughout with best counts only 27 on 18 Aug and 21 on 2 Sept.

Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*

Scarce autumn migrant, rare in spring.

A poor year with only five areas hosting birds and no count exceeding four.

Findhorn Bay: In September, 1 on 1st-2nd, 6th and 14th and 2 on 18th and 24th (DMP,RP,AJL,JDHM). In October, 2 on 3rd and 22nd (DMP).

Lhanbryde: 1 on the pig farm pool on 28 Sept (RP).

Loch Spynie: 2 on 15 Sept (DG).

Lossie estuary: 1 on 14 Aug (RP,JDHM), 4 on 22 Aug and 2 on 15 Sept (DG,EH,JDHM).

Burghead: 1 roosting, unusually, on the rocky foreshore at Burghead on 21 Aug (JDHM).

Jack Snipe *Lymnocyptes minimus*

Scarce migrant and winter visitor.

Winter-spring: Only 2 records, both on 11 Feb, when 1 Culbin Bar (AY) and 1 Findhorn Bay (ISS).

Autumn-winter: 1 Kingston 23 Sept and 4 on the nearby Lein 21 Oct (MJHC). At Kingsteps, 3 on 7 Oct (DJa) and 2 on 25 Oct (DMP). On 16 Dec, 14 at Kingsteps and another 5 on the adjacent Nairn/Culbin Bar saltmarshes (DJa,AY). This is the largest number ever reported from one area in Moray & Nairn.

Common Snipe (Snipe) *Gallinago gallinago*

Common breeder and migrant.

Breeding: 2 Lochindorb 30 May was the only breeding season report, no doubt due to access restrictions during the Foot & Mouth Disease outbreak.

In coastal areas early in the year, 10 Nairn/Culbin Bars and 4 Findhorn Bay on 14 Jan. In Lossiemouth, 4 Seatown canal 18 Jan and 2 on the estuary 24 Feb.

In autumn/winter, 3 Kingston 27 July and best days on the estuary thereafter were 30 Aug (14), 14 Sept (18) and 12 Oct (18). On the nearby Lein were 21 on 21 Oct. On 24 Sept, 3 flew in off the sea at Lossiemouth. Good numbers in November in a marsh on RAF Kinloss ground where 12 on 7th, 35 on 9th and 47 on 13th. Elsewhere, 4 Montgrew 4 Sept, 12 over Barmuckity 12 Oct and 20 on ploughland at Sheriffston on 25 Dec.

Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola*

Common resident breeder, scarce migrant and winter visitor.

Breeding: Roding reports only from Carron, on 23 Apr, and Newbold Wood, Forres where noted from 22 May-30 June.

In cold weather in early January birds were seen near the coast at Clochan, Findhorn Bay, Findrassie, Lossie Forest, Nairn Bar, Nairn golf course and Troves. In Newbold Wood birds were flushed every 100 yards on 7th (ISS). In February, 3 Kinloss 5th, 2 Loch Oire 7th, 2 Nairn Bar 11th, 1 Lossie Forest 18th and 1 Meads of St John 19th. On 4 March, 12 were flushed in c200 yards in Newbold Wood, including 3 together (ISS).

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*

Scarce migrant.

Very small numbers. On spring and autumn passage only in Findhorn Bay.

No spring migrants reported. Birds on late summer-autumn migration were noted between 25 July-3 Nov:

Lossiemouth: On the estuary, 1 on 25 July (HF), 3 on 30 July, 1 on 14 Aug, 3 on 17 Aug and 16 on 7 Sept (JDHM). On 18 Aug, 22 flew east past the west beach (CAG).

Findhorn Bay: Present between 17 Aug (2) and 22 Oct. In September, seen on 1st (19), 2nd (17), 14th (6), 22nd (12), 29th (10) and 30th (22). In October, 20 on 3rd, 22 on 7th and 21 on 22nd (DMP, MJHC,CD). A flooded field at Roseisle held 23 on 21 Oct and 21 next day, almost certainly the Findhorn Bay flock (DMP). Still 7 here on 3 Nov (EH).

Kinloss: In August, 17 on 20th, 18 on 21st and 3 on 24th. Later, 8 on 25 Sept (AJL).

Kingston: 7 on 14 Sept (MJHC).

Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*

Very common winter visitor and migrant. Small numbers in summer.

Monthly maxima at main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Nairn/Culbin Bars	260	76	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	1	nc	204	nc	77
Findhorn Bay	74	nc	nc	nc	16	1	nc	nc	10	351	nc	90
Burghead	129	220	98	27	14	0	18	38	36	38	20	18
Lossiemouth	9	10	11	3	0	0	0	24	3	3	nc	2

All those at Burghead on 18 July were summer-plumaged adults as were most of the 38 seen on 1 Aug.

Other reports were 16 Covesea 15 March, 5 Kingston 22 May (an unusual species here), and 2 Portgordon 9 Feb where also 1 on 7 Oct.

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*

Scarce migrant.

Spring: First was 1 over Scarffbanks 7 May. Subsequent records, all in May, were singles Kingston 20th and 22nd, 1 Lossiemouth 20th and 5 there 29th.

Autumn: Spread of dates from 22 July-22 Sept; 78 birds in all.

Distribution of flock sizes was:

Flock size	1	2	3	4	5	6	11
No. of flocks	15	5	4	2	2	2	1

The two flocks of 6 were at rest on the Lossie estuary on 18th and 21st July and may refer to the same birds. No evidence of a reversal of the downward trend in autumn numbers, which has continued since 1990 when 452 were counted.

Curlew *Numenius arquata*

Common breeder. Very common migrant and winter visitor.

Breeding: 5 pairs Tomintoul area 10 Apr (IF) and, nearer the coast, 3 pairs with nests in the Tarras valley 10 June (ISS). An upcountry flock of 17 Tomfarclas 13 June.

Largest flocks in summer/early autumn were:

July: 30 Culbin Bar 9th, 24 Lossie estuary 7th, 135 Buckpool 27th, 179 Findhorn Bay 31st.

Aug: 126 Cloddach 5th, 380 Kingston 13th, 371 Findhorn Bay 17th, 80 Lossie estuary 25th.

Sept: 220 Cloddach 16th.

Coastal winter maxima were:

	Jan	Feb		Oct	Dec
Nairn/Culbin Bars	517	287		333	204
Findhorn Bay	150	120		511	119
Burghead-Hopeman	15	20		163	4
Lossiemouth	12	1		46	4
Portgordon-Strathlene	32	161		10	12

Winter flocks elsewhere were:

February: 186 Salterhill 16th.

March: 100 Covesea 15th, 43 Milnorduff 22nd, 57 Findhorn Bay 24th, 103 Cloddach 25th, 158 Longmorn 28th.

Oct: 46 Lossie estuary 3rd, 130 Windyridge 4th, 80 Kingston 12th.

Nov: 32 Lossie estuary 1st, 70 Hopeman 28th.

Dec: 180 Windyridge 10th, 240 Milnorduff 24th.

Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus*

Very scarce migrant.

1 Findhorn Bay 9 Sept, 3 Oct and 13 Oct (DMP), possibly the same individual.

Common Redshank (Redshank) *Tringa totanus*

Scarce breeder, very common migrant and winter visitor.

Breeding: Up country 2 pairs Lochindorb 13 May and 1 pair near Tomintoul 10 Apr. In the lowlands, regular in summer at Montgrew (max 3 on 19 May) and breeding suspected there. On territorial pair Kincorth 27 June.

Spring at the coast: A good series of counts on the Lossie estuary gave the following: In March counted on 11th (240), 16th (53), 23rd (174), 30th (245), in April on 3rd (71), 7th (218), 11th (186), 20th (125), 22nd (70), 28th (19) and in May on 1st (8), 4th (1) and 8th (none). Also at this season were 120 Kingston 28 Apr, 102 Portgordon 6 Apr, 430 Findhorn Bay 20 March and 206 there 9 Apr.

Late summer/autumn:

Lossie estuary: 6 on 1 July rising steadily through the month to 53 on 13th and 84 on 28th. In August, 76 on 19th, 117 on 25th and 91 on 31st. In September, 80-90 all month until 117 on 24th.

Burghead: 5 on 3 July, rising to 26 on 1 Aug and 32 on Sept 6-13.

Findhorn Bay: 163 on 3 Aug, 380 on 14 Sept and 300 on 23 Sept.

Elsewhere, 20 Portgordon 4 July and 41 there on 1 Sept, and 10 Kingston 13 Aug was a typical count all through the period.

Winter: Monthly maxima at the coast were:

	Jan	Feb		Oct	Dec
Nairn/Culbin Bars	511	107		56	321
Findhorn Bay	600	270		950	185
Burghead-Hopeman	70	26		115	73
Lossiemouth	102	8		162	84
Portgordon-Strathlene	128	172		195	171

Some high counts at the Bars, where 500 has not been exceeded since 1995, and Findhorn Bay where 950 was the best since 1988. At Nairn, 57 on 14 Jan, 23 on 11 Feb and 80 on 9 March.

Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

Scarce migrant, very scarce in winter.

Winter: For the second successive year no reports of wintering birds were received.

Spring: 1 Lossie estuary 20 Apr, 1 Lochindorb 11 May (second year running here in spring), 1 Kingston 12-13 May. Later, 1 Findhorn Bay 27 June.

Late summer/autumn (July-October): In Findhorn Bay, most together were 3 on 16 July and 4 on 15 Aug. Last singles on 29-30 Sept, 2 Oct and 13 Oct. Singles Lossie estuary on six dates between 7 July-13 Sept. At Kingston in August, 1 on 5th, 3 on 13th and 18th, 1 on 21st and 4 on 30th. Last of the year was 1 Kingsteps 19 Oct. Most inland, as usual, at Montgrew where, in August, 1 on 11th-14th, 3 on 17th, 1 on 23rd and 8 on 28th. Elsewhere, 1 Fogwatt 21 Aug and 1 Loch Spynie on 10 Aug and 31 Aug.

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*

Very scarce migrant, occasional in winter.

A very poor year, with 3 Montgrew 31 Aug (MJHC) the only record.

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*

Very scarce migrant.

1 Montgrew 26 Aug and 30 Aug were probably the same bird (MJHC,DMP).

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*

Summer visitor and common breeder.

Arrival: 2 Cloddach quarry 11 Apr (IF) were the earliest ever in Moray & Nairn by 3 days. Main arrival however appears to have been late with no further reports until 1 Garmouth 27th, 2 Kingston 28th and 1 Mundole 29th.

Breeding: Cloddach quarry: Display 18 May, 2 pairs all season.

Kingston: 1 pair proved to breed and possibly a second (MJHC).

River Findhorn: 11 pairs between Limekilns-Findhorn Bay (JDHM).

River Spey: 9 pairs between Garmouth viaduct-Fochabers and 2 pairs Blacksboat-Delnapot in June-July (JDHM).

River Nairn: 5 pairs Firhill-Aldersyde, including 2 broods 19 June (JDHM).

Lochindorb: 3 pairs on SE side in May and 7 birds there 17 June (ISS,IA).

Largest group at the coast in late summer was only 8 Kincorth 24 July. Last 1 Kingston 9 Sept.

Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

Common winter visitor, small numbers in summer.

Winter monthly maxima at main sites were:

	Jan	Feb		Oct	Nov	Dec
Findhorn	46	nc		36	55	27
Burghead-Hopeman	43	29		86	38	34
Lossiemouth	18	15		13	2	15
Portgordon-Strathlene	160	263		253	nc	239

Other winter counts included 5 Nairn/Culbin Bars 14 Jan (19 there on 11 Feb), 30 Nairn 14 Jan (37 on 8 Feb) and, in March, 44 Lossie estuary 14th, 35 Nairn 9th, 196 Portgordon 15th and 34 Burghead 30th. In autumn, 23 Portgordon 1 Sept.

Spring-summer:

April: 25 Nairn 7th, 203 Portgordon 6th, 46 Burghead 13th, 79 Portgordon 24th.

May: 26 Burghead 1st, 20 Buckpool 25th.

July: 14 Portgordon-Buckpool 4th, 2 Lossie estuary 21st and 12 there 28th.

Aug: 43 Burghead 16th, 6 Covesea 17th, 8 Hopeman 19th.

Pomarine Skua *Stercorarius pomarinus*

Scarce migrant offshore in summer and autumn, rare in winter.

Single birds were seen in Spey Bay on 1 Sept (MJHC) and 16 Sept (IFo) – an exceptionally poor showing.

Arctic Skua *Stercorarius parasiticus*

Fairly common migrant in summer and autumn.

First was 1 Lossiemouth 15 June. Late summer/autumn passage observed between 7 July-24 Sept, 68 birds in total, but only two notable days. On 11 July, 11 passed Lossiemouth (RP) and on 9 Sept, 33 were counted, also passing west, in 2 hours (RP,MJHC,DG).

Great Skua *Catharacta skua*

Scarce migrant in summer and autumn.

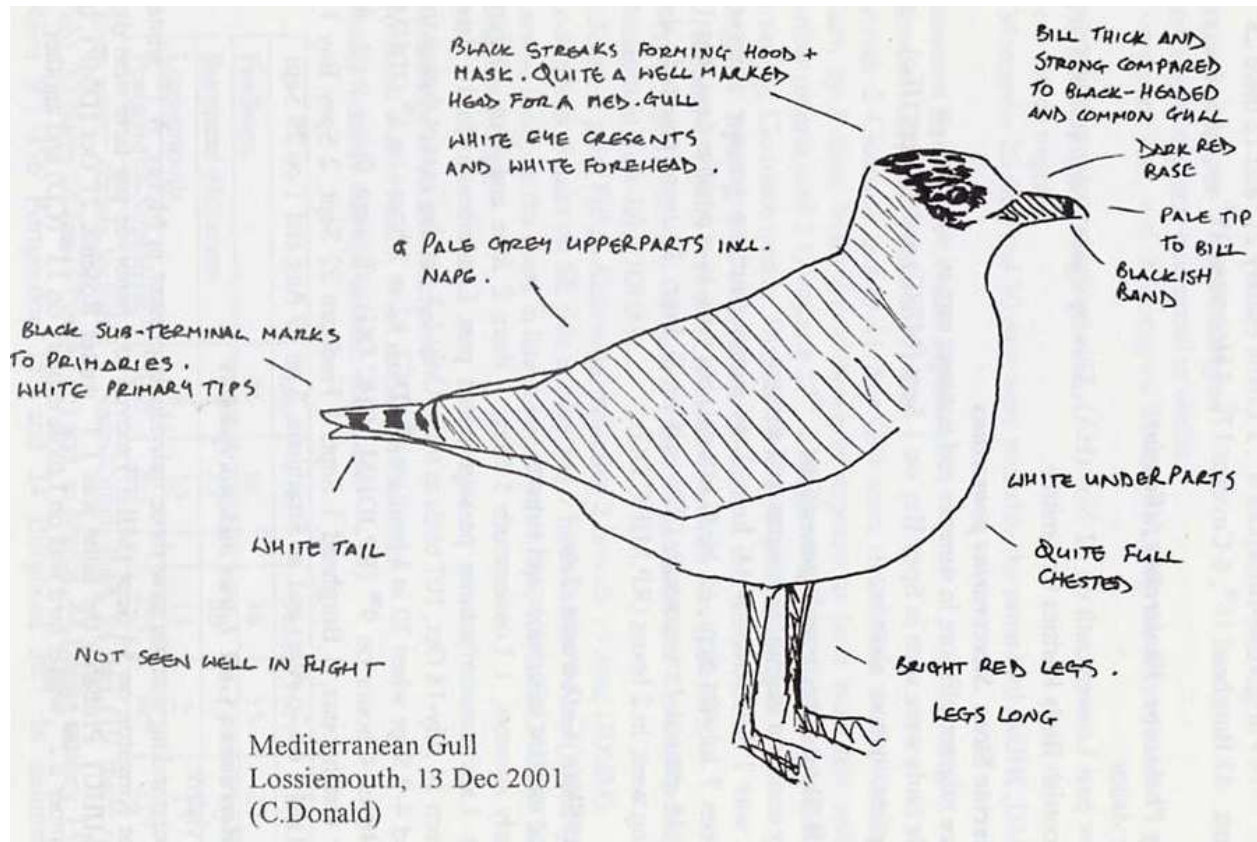
In early summer, 1 Lossiemouth 5 May, 3 there 2 June and 1 on 10 June (DG). Late summer/autumn passage noted past Lossiemouth on 10 dates between 14 July-18 Oct, 107 birds in total. Only 1-3 per day except during the period 4-9 Sept when 20 in 1 hour on 4th (DG), 12 in 2 hours on 5th (JDHM) and 48 in 4 hours on

9th (RP,JDHM,MJHC,DG); all were flying west. At other watchpoints, 3 Burghead 1 Sept, 1 Findhorn 22 Sept, 2 Spey Bay 11 Aug (and 1 on 26 Aug) and, at Strathlene, 2 on 19 Aug and 1 on 29 Sept.

Mediterranean Gull *Larus melanocephalus*

Rare visitor.

An outstanding autumn saw three individuals present in Moray. A 1st winter bird at Kingston on 14 Sept (MJHC) moved to Lhanbryde pig farm next day (RP,MJHC). Probably the same was 1 1st winter Roseisle 21 Oct (DMP). In December a 2nd winter bird was on Lossie estuary on 13th (CD) and another, differently marked, 2nd winter was seen there intermittently from 16 Dec into 2002 (JDHM,CAG,RP). These are the 5th-7th records for Moray & Nairn, the previous four being on Lossie estuary April-May 1989, Lossie estuary Oct-Nov 1998, Findhorn Bay Oct 2000 and Loch Flemington Dec 2000.



Little Gull *Larus minutus*

Very scarce visitor.

One 1st summer Findhorn Bay 22 May, 2 adults Garmouth viaduct 1 July (MJHC), 1 adult Speymouth 13 July (EH) and 1 adult Lossiemouth 15 July (DG). Of 55 birds seen in the last 10 years, 24 have been around the mouth of the River Spey from Garmouth to Tugnet; for people wishing to see the species this is clearly the best place to look.

Black-headed Gull *Larus ridibundus*

Very common resident breeder and winter visitor.

Breeding: Substantial increase at Lochs of Bogmussach where 45 pairs (only 7 in 2000) and 85 juveniles on 6 July (JDHM). Few other colonies counted: 20 nests Loch Spynie platforms, c20 nests at a new colony near Nether Dallachy refuse tip, 3 pairs Fleenas and 1 pair Montgrew.

Counts exceeding 100 were c2000 Lossie estuary 27 Dec following large numbers all month (RP), 700 Spey Bay 20 Nov, 595 Nairn 14 Jan, 450 Findhorn Bay 31 July, 242 Loch Spynie 6 Dec (already 1 with brown hood), 200 Nairn Bar 7 Oct, 197 Lossie estuary 20 Aug, 115 Burghead Bay 15 Nov and c100 Loch Oire 14 Dec.

Common Gull *Larus canus*

Very common resident breeder and winter visitor.

Breeding: Back to Newton 14 Feb and by 16 March on fields around Corsemaul but not seen in the colony there until 2 Apr. 25 pairs nested RAF Kinloss, 3 pairs near Nether Dallachy refuse tip and 3 pairs Fochabers river shingles.

Counts of 300 or more were: c1000 Lossie estuary 27 Dec, 769 Lhanbryde pig farm 23 Sept, 710 Loch Oire 24 Dec, 610 Kinloss 20 Aug, 530 Findhorn 15 Aug, 400 Spey Bay 20 Nov, 349 Burghead Bay 12 Nov, 330 Nairn 12 Jan and 300 Montgrew 28 March.

Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus*

Summer visitor and fairly common breeder.

Arrival: 3 Urquhart 26 Feb (EH) were exceptionally early. March sightings were 1 Elgin 4th and 10th, 3 there on 20th and 5 on 27th. Elsewhere 1 Lossie estuary 4th and 14th, and 2 Montgrew 28th.

In breeding habitat were 1 Bow Fiddle Rock 4 June, 3 Dava 11 Apr and a mating pair Upper Dallachy 25 May.

Large non-breeding flocks at 3 localities in summer/autumn: On the Lossie estuary a steady increase in monthly peaks from 33 on 28 May to 89 on 16 June and 153 on 24 July (RP), with a rapid decline thereafter. The July count is the highest ever in Moray & Nairn, away from Tips of Corsemaul gullery. At Cloddach quarry, 22 on 3 June, a peak of 78 on 1 July (JDHM), 27 on 5 Aug and 20 on 16 Sept. Also good numbers at Lhanbryde pig farm in September where 38 on 8th, 73 on 15th (MJHC) and 57 on 23rd. Ten or more elsewhere at Culbin Bar (18 on 12 Aug), Loch Spynie (41 on 22 June), Garmouth (10 on 7 June) and Findhorn Bay (10 on 30 May).

Herring Gull *Larus argentatus*

Very common resident breeder and winter visitor.

Breeding: A search of Buckie rooftops revealed only 1 nest on 16 June (MJHC), curious in view of the substantial colonies now established in Elgin, Lossiemouth, Nairn and Burghead. One nest on river shingles at Garmouth viaduct 17 June.

Monthly maximum counts on the Lossie estuary were:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
1343	1840	74	nc	750	974	nc	c2000	nc	nc	300	c1000

L.a. argentatus birds were identified on 6 Jan (7), and 31 Dec (15) (RP).

Large flocks elsewhere were 1973 Nairn 12 Jan (750 there 16 Aug), 1130 North Alves/Kinloss 11 July, 700 Spey Bay 20 Nov and 320 Hopeman 19 Jan.

Iceland Gull *Larus glaucooides*

Very scarce winter visitor.

Another good year with 45 sightings in 6 localities involving a minimum of 8 birds.

Burghead: 1 2nd winter 1 Jan (DMP) and 1 2nd summer 8-13 Apr (DMP).

Cooper Park (Elgin): 1 2nd winter 11 Feb-4 March (DG,CAG et al.).

Hopeman: 1 3rd winter 4 March (PTH).

Loch Oire: 1 immature 22 March (EH).

Loch Spynie: 1 adult 29 Dec (DG,CAG).

Lossie estuary: 1 3rd summer 7-15 Apr (RP,CAG), 1 2nd summer 9 June (RP), 1 3rd winter 17 Nov and 2-31 Dec (JDHM,DG et al.) and 1 adult 13-30 Dec (CD,RP,DG et al.).

Nairn: 1 1st summer 2 May (DMP) and 1 1st winter 16 Dec.

A bird showing the characters of subspecies *L.g.kumlieni* (Kumlein's Gull) was seen on the Lossie estuary on 6 Jan (RP). This record remains under consideration by British Birds Rarities Committee. If accepted this will constitute the first for Moray & Nairn.

Glaucous Gull *Larus hyperboreus*

Very scarce winter visitor.

As usual, the Lossie estuary was the most favoured site: In spring/early summer, 1 1st summer 10 Apr (JDHM), 1 2nd summer 8 May-16 June (JDHM,RP,IFo,DG) and 1 3rd summer 16 May (SD). In mid summer, 1 immature 18-26 July (DG). Later, 1 1st summer 24 Aug (JDHM), 1 3rd winter 25 Aug (RP) and 1 2nd winter 1-31 Dec (DG et al.).

Elsewhere, 1 1st summer Burghead 26 July (DMP), 1 2nd summer Hopeman 29 Apr-5 May (DG), 1 2nd winter Kingston 7 Jan (CAG), 1 adult Nairn 4 Apr (SF) and 1 2nd summer Tugnet 14-20 June.

Great Black-backed Gull *Larus marinus*

Scarce resident breeder and common visitor.

Breeding: 1 pair Covesea 16 June and 2 pairs RAF Kinloss 17 June.

Counts: Monthly maxima on the Lossie estuary were:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
50	96	nc	nc	14	160	nc	92	521	227	208	104

Otherwise numerous only at Kingston/Tugnet where 185 on 13 Aug, 520 on 15 Sept, 360 on 12 Oct and 155 on 20 Nov. Also, 70 Culbin Bar 12 Aug (68 there 7 Oct), 52 Nairn 12 Jan and 48 Strathlene 17 Sept.

Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla*

Common breeder and very common migrant.

Breeding: 386 apparently occupied nests Covesea 16 June was similar to 2000. 118 nests Portknockie 4 June was an increase over recent years (MJHC). Over the last 10 years the number of apparently occupied nests at these colonies has varied as follows:

	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Covesea	257	444	566	544	350	314	326	323	384	386
Portknockie	106	99	77	89	85	107	82	69	104	118

An unusual inland record concerned 2 Lochindorb 11 March (DMP), a remarkably similar date to a previous occurrence there, of 8 adults on 12 March 1999.

For the second successive year, autumn flocks at the estuaries were small, with nothing exceeding 550 Kingston 2 Sept and 250 Nairn 16 Aug. No days of substantial autumn passage offshore were reported; 165 past Lossiemouth in 1 hour on 8 Sept being the best.

Sandwich Tern *Sterna sandvicensis*

Very common summer visitor and occasional breeder.

Arrival: In March, 1 Findhorn 28th, 2 Burghead 31st and 5 Lossiemouth 31st. Best spring counts were 140 Nairn 2 May and 38 Burghead 4 May.

No evidence of breeding although 1 adult was seen in the Arctic Tern colony at Garmouth viaduct on 17 June. First incoming juvenile noted Lossie estuary 14 July with 2 adults. In late summer, highest counts of birds 'on the ground' were 75 Tugnet shingles 2 Sept, 64 Portgordon 25 Aug, 40 Lossie estuary 20 Aug and 20 Findhorn Bay 16 Sept. Last to leave in October were 1 Nairn 4th, 2 Lossiemouth 8th and 1 Burghead 11th.

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*

Summer visitor and fairly common breeder.

Breeding: 10 incubating on Spey shingles at Garmouth viaduct 17 June (MJHC) and 1 pair on river shingles above Fochabers 6 June. Further upstream, 2 Aberlour on several dates 28 May-14 July but no evidence of breeding (AE) and 1 Rothes 14 June. At Mundole, 3 adults on 6 May and 7 on 12 June but nothing on 14 July after flooding (JDHM). At Loch Spynie, 5 pairs nested on the platforms; four chicks were present on 21-22 July but probably none fledged (CAG,JDHM et al.).

In late summer, c30 Buckpool 27 July and last 2 reported Lossiemouth 23 Sept.

Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea*

Summer visitor and common but local breeder.

Breeding: At RAF Kinloss, 240 adults 22 May (AJL), c100 on nests 17 June and 103 well grown chicks ringed 2 July (MJHC). On the Spey shingles at Garmouth viaduct, 107 on nests 17 June (MJHC). On 24 June a few small chicks present, 5 fledged young on 15 July (JDL). No other breeding on shingles upstream to Fochabers. On Lossiemouth east beach at least 4 pairs nested, fledging success uncertain (DG et al.).

Large numbers loafing on Lossiemouth east beach in late summer: 364 on 17 July, 155 on 18 July, c300 on 21 July and 30 on 14 Aug (JDHM,DG).

Little Tern *Sterna albifrons*

Very scarce summer visitor and rare breeder.

Breeding: Site 3 – First one back 28 Apr. Number of adults variable all summer but peaks 17 on 26 May, 15 on 10 June and 16 on 17 July. At least 6 pairs bred and min. 4 young fledged, perhaps more (JDHM,DG,MJHC et al.). Occupancy at this site over the last 10 years has been as follows:

	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Max. adults	0	0	6	18	4	7	4	4	4	17
Pairs nesting	0	0	1	1	1-2	3	1-2	2	2	6
Pairs successful	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	2	2	2+
Young fledged	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	3	4	4+

Common Guillemot (Guillemot) *Uria aalge*

Very common offshore.

Unusually large numbers on the sea in August: 940 including several juveniles off Kingston 11th (MJHC), 277 (also including juveniles) Burghead 16th (JDHM), c150 off Lossiemouth 9th (122 on 27th) and c120 off Findhorn 15th. Later, 84 Burghead Bay 12 Nov and 53 Culbin Bar 7 Oct.

No significant passage reported; 52 west Lossiemouth 18 Oct in 1 hour being the best. 10 fresh corpses along 1 mile of shore Culbin Bar 2 Jan.

Razorbill *Alca torda*

Very common offshore.

Numerous on the sea off Lossiemouth in late April: c100 on 22nd, c200 on 24th (when also c100/hour heading west) and c300 on 25th (DG,JDHM). Also 40 off Kingston on 22 Apr. Outnumbering Guillemots off Findhorn where an exceptional 670 on the sea 17 Aug but only 20 more off Roseisle Forest picnic site

(MJHC). Also in August, c50 on the sea off Kingston 11th and, off Lossiemouth, 80 on 9th and c200 on 22nd. Later, 36 Burghead Bay 12 Nov, 6 Nairn Bar 7 Oct and 7 Spey Bay 20 Nov.

Black Guillemot *Cephus grylle*

Scarce offshore, rare breeder.

Breeding: At least 3 pairs probably bred. Proof at Tronach Head where 2 chicks reared in the usual crevice – 3 adults offshore there 4 July (MJHC). At Portknockie, 5 adults present 28 Apr (EH). On 4 June one adult flew into a concealed site on the cliff and another left a crevice further along the cliff. Two other adults swam on the sea nearby (MJHC).

A scatter of offshore sightings in most months, all singles except 3 Lossiemouth 10 Nov and 2 there 9 Dec.

Little Auk *Alle alle*

Scarce winter visitor.

In November, 16 west past Lossiemouth in 80 minutes on 10th (DMP, MJHC) and 1 Findhorn 17th (JDHM).

Puffin *Fratercula arctica*

Scarce offshore.

The usual thin scatter of reports: 2 Burghead 26 July (DMP), 2 Lossiemouth 22 Aug (EH), 3 Nairn Bar 7 Oct (DJa) and 1 Portgordon 20 Dec. Also 1 found dead Lossiemouth 7 Feb (MS).

Feral Pigeon *Columba livia*

Very common resident breeder.

Counts of 100 or more were 230 Burghead maltings 11 Oct, 200 Wester Manbeen 25 Nov and 110 Cloddach 26 Aug.

Stock Dove *Columba oenas*

Scarce resident breeder, formerly common.

Breeding season: Seen in the period late March-July at Calcots (1 on 14 Apr), Cloddach (3 on 25 March, 4 on 1 July), Kinloss (5 on 9 July), Lhanbryde (1 on 20 July), Linksfield (1 on 18 May), Loch Oire (2 on 26 Apr), Loch Spynie (3 on 29 July), Meft (4 on 20 March, 2 on 27 Apr), Miltonhill (2 on 30 May), Scarffbanks (2 on 12 Apr), Sherrifston (1 on 21 March), Spynie Hill (2, song heard, 28 June) and Urquhart (12 on 24 March, 2 on 25 Apr, 3 on 24 May).

At other sites, 1 East Grange 21 Aug and 1 Westfield 2 Dec.

Woodpigeon *Columba palumbus*

Very common resident breeder.

Largest count was 1500 on linseed Darkland 10 Jan. 500 Clarkly Hill, Cummington 28 Nov. A cold weather movement saw 810 passing steadily west over Clochan in c30 minutes on 26 Dec.

On 24 Aug two active nests were only c20m apart at Loch Spynie.

Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*

Very common resident breeder.

Only 5 flocks of 10 or more: 32 Kinloss 13 Nov, 32 Dyke 28 Nov, 30 Cassieford early Apr, 10 Kintessack 10 Dec and 10 Roseisle maltings 15 Aug. An eggshell found Dufftown 16 Apr, suggesting a prompt start to breeding here.

Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus*

Summer visitor and common breeder.

Arrival: No April reports but, in early May, 1 Balnakeith 2nd, 1 Kinloss 3rd, 1 Tomfarclas 4th, 1 Birnie 5th and 1 Nairn 5th. c10 calling Pluscarden area mid June.

Barn Owl *Tyto alba*

Scarce resident breeder.

Breeding: Only six definite pairs and birds were seen in 2 other localities during April-July.

Outside the breeding season, and away from known breeding sites, single birds were seen at Aberlour (Jan), Alves (March), Cothall (Jan), Coxton (Jan), Daugh of Carron (Oct,Nov), Dipple (Feb), Duffus (Feb), Dyke (Nov), Findrassie (Feb), Forres (Jan), Haughs (Rothes) (Sept,Dec), Hempriggs (Jan), Kinermory (Jan,Feb,March,Oct,Nov), Kinloss (Jan,Feb,March), Montgrew (Jan), Moy (2 in Dec), Mundole (Aug,Oct,Dec), Nether Dallachy (Dec), Ruthrie (Aberlour) (Oct), Clochan (Nov) and Westerton (Inchberry) (Nov).

Tawny Owl *Strix aluco*

Common resident breeder.

Breeding: Due to Foot & Mouth Disease restrictions the nestboxes in Lossie Forest were not checked. Daytime hooting in May was noted at Loch Spynie, Tearie Wood and Threapland.

Long-eared Owl *Asio otus*

Scarce resident breeder.

Breeding: Young were seen or heard calling at Caysbriggs (JDHM), Kinloss (AJL), Forres (Muiry Wood/Lochyhill area) (ISS,IP,RF) and Lossiemouth golf course (TM). Breeding also likely on the Lein at Kingston where birds hunted regularly from early May until late July (PGS). Also 1 Sweethillock 13-14 May (DG).

In the winter periods: 1 Nairn in Jan and March, 1 Dyke 13 March, 1 Sandyhillock 29 Oct and, very strangely, 1 roosting on a rooftop ledge near Moray Council HQ in central Elgin on 26 Jan (ISS). Roadkills were found at Burgie 18 March, Tarras 1 Apr and Westfield 23 March.

Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus*

Rare breeder and very scarce migrant.

Proved to breed in only one moorland area, in east Moray. Also present on one moor in south Moray.

An arrival of coastal migrants took place on easterly winds in mid October. Records were 1 Lossiemouth station park 12th (HF), 2 Strathlene 15th (RP) and 1 in off the sea at Lossiemouth harbour 18th (JDHM). How many more must have arrived undetected?

Swift *Apus apus*

Summer visitor and common breeder.

Arrival: Rather late. First were 3 Elgin 11th, 3 Lossiemouth 12th and 2 Rothes 15th. More numerous by 17th when 60 Loch Spynie and 20 Kingston.

Mid season counts were c150 Kingston, feeding low over the coastal shingles, 16 June, 300+ Culbin Forest (Buckie Loch) 17 June and 25 Clochan, where seldom seen, 29 June.

Last reports, in August, were 1 Elgin 19th, 2 Forres 22nd, 1 Nairn 22nd and 2 Lossiemouth 24th.

Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*

Very scarce visitor and occasional breeder.

One well-watched bird frequented Loch Spynie from 30 Aug-14 Oct (many obs.) often perching obligingly in front of the hide. It was joined by a second bird from 29 Sept-7 Oct (IP,RF et al.).

Elsewhere, 1 on the R. Fiddich below Wester Gauldwell 21 July (M.Hendry per RP) and 1 on the R.Nairn 4 Aug (J.Dunbar per AJL).

Green Woodpecker *Picus viridis*

Very scarce resident, scarce breeder in recent years.

Still no significant improvement in status. Two heard Banchor 20 May (CAG) and one there 1 July (ISS) so the possibility exists of breeding here. Otherwise only 2 records; 1 calling Quarry Wood, Elgin 20 May (CAG) and 1 in a garden at Park Farm, Nairn 15 Nov (per DB).

The annual number of localities providing breeding season records of Green Woodpeckers since 1985 is as follows:

1985	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	2000	01
1	1	1	7	8	6	7	12	6	15	10	4	0	2	3	1	2

The reasons behind the sudden surge and equally dramatic collapse in population would be fascinating to know.

Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major*

Common resident breeder.

Clearly the habit of visiting garden bird feeding stations is now widespread. In 2001 this was reported in Clochan (June), Dufftown (Dec), Forres (June, Dec), Kingston (Nov), Kintessack (Jan-March, May, Oct-Dec), Longmorn (Sept), Rafford (June) and Urquhart (Feb). No seasonal bias evident here.

Skylark *Alauda arvensis*

Common breeder and migrant.

First song heard in February at Duffus (4th), Longmorn (12th), Newton (14th) and Shempston (15th). Five singing Urquhart 8 March.

No reports of large flocks, best being 24 Nairn/Culbin Bars 11 Feb and 12 Kinloss 14 Feb.

Sand Martin *Riparia riparia*

Summer visitor and common breeder.

Arrival: Unusually, no March records. First in April were 10 Loch Spynie 2nd, 1 Nairn 4th, 2 Lochindorb 5th, 3 Rothes 6th and 30 Cloddach 7th.

Colony counts (apparently occupied burrows) were 10 Aldersyde, 34 Bogmoor, 15 Corbiewell, 17 Findhorn dunes, c30 Pathside Quarry in Fairyhills Wood, 8 Forres (R Findhorn nr. Greshop Industrial Estate), 18 Hill of Arndilly, 65 Kirkhill Quarry (Bishopmill) – big increase here, c10 Linkwood, 4 Lyne of Knockando, 16 Pittendreich and 28 Todholes (Moor of Tore, Rafford).

Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

Summer visitor and very common breeder.

Arrival: Later than usual. First in April were 2 Auldearn 19th, followed by 20 Loch Spynie 21st and 1 Findhorn 22nd. Six other observers saw their first during the period 23rd-25th. Rapidly widespread thereafter.

Breeding: In the Lhanbryde barn, 4 pairs bred. Details were:

	No. of pairs	Average clutch	Average brood hatched	Average brood fledged
First brood	4	5.0	4.8	4.8
Second brood	5	5.0	4.5	4.5

Both clutch sizes and productivity were a little lower than in 2000 (RP).

No very large post-breeding congregations, best were 100 Kinloss 23 Aug and 100 Conicavel 30 Aug. Very rapid departure over 2-3 days in late September with very few remaining into October. Last to depart in October were 4 Lossiemouth 21st, 1 Nairn 23rd and 1 Mundole 26th. Exceptional was 1 Findhorn 18 Nov (JDHM).

House Martin *Delichon urbica*

Summer visitor and common breeder.

Arrival: The only April arrivals were 1 Nairn 26th, 'several' Duffus 29th and 1 Forres 29th. Not up to strength until c12th May.

Breeding: 30 apparently occupied nests Buckie High School 16 June (the same as in 2000), 8 a.o.nests Milne's High School (Fochabers) and 10+ nests Roseisle maltings. 2 nests Clochan and 2 nests on the cliffs at Portknockie. A poor season in Nairn; nests collapsing after heavy rain and no second broods (RPC).

Best pre-departure flock at Kinloss where 76 on 23 Aug and 73 on 14 Sept. Last were 3 Loch Spynie 26 Oct (JW).

Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis*

Summer visitor and common breeder.

Only 3 reports of this much under recorded species; 1 Craigellachie 16 May (AE), 1 Littlemill (Nairn) 11 May and noted as singing in Glen Rinnes in early summer (WRPB).

Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis*

Very common breeder and migrant.

A recently fledged brood on Kingston saltmarsh on 10 June.

At Nairn/Culbin Bars were 19 on 14 Jan and 101 on 16 Dec. Other 'double figure' counts were 60 Miltonhill 9 May, 47 Kinloss 30 Aug, 21 Lochindorb 11 Apr and 18 Burghead-Hopeman 7 Oct. Visible southward migration noted at Dufftown in autumn.

Rock Pipit *Anthus petrosus*

Scarce breeder, fairly common in winter.

Breeding: 3 pairs Portknockie 4 June, 1 fledged brood Covesea 16 June. Song at Portgordon 13 Feb. 3 pairs Burghead 30 March.

Winter counts: Along the rocky shore between Portgordon-Strathlene were 24 on 9 Feb, 44 on 7 Oct and 30 on 16 Dec. Elsewhere, 7 Burghead-Hopeman 14 Jan, 22 Culbin Bar 11 Feb, 16 Nairn 18 Nov and 7 Lossiemouth harbour 28 Sept.

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*

Summer visitor and common breeder. Scarce in winter.

Breeding: Riverside surveys by JDHM revealed 2 pairs R.Spey between Fochabers-Bogmoor, 3 pairs R.Findhorn between Limekilns-Forres, 4 pairs R.Nairn between Aldersyde-central Nairn and 2 pairs on the R.Spey at Rothes. Elsewhere, 1 Drynahan 2 July, 1 Lossie Green weir (Elgin) 16 Apr and 7 May, a nest with young Sanquhar Loch 7 May and a pair Urquhart 27 Apr. At least 13 (probably 3 families) around Montgrew lake 21 June.

On the coast in autumn was 1 Strathlene 28 Sept.

Pied Wagtail *Motacilla alba*

Very common breeder and migrant.

Passage: Few 'White Wagtails' *M.a.alba* were reported. In spring, 1 Findhorn Bay 22 Apr (ISS), 1 Fochabers 23 Apr (AY) and 1 Lossie estuary 1 May (JDHM). In autumn, 1 Kingston 2 Sept (MJHC) and 1 Strathlene 28 Sept (RP).

The autumn roost (of Pieds) at Loch Spynie held 54 birds on 6 Oct and c100 on 26 Oct. Best count elsewhere was 40 Nairn 13 Aug.

Waxwing *Bombycilla garrulus*

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

Winter-spring: The largest influx since 1996 saw substantial flocks of Waxwings in many areas. In the course of documenting this influx it is impossible to establish with any degree of certainty how much overlap and mixing takes place within one town (doubtless a great deal), or even between towns (probably much less).

Aberlour: 3 on 6 Feb (AE) and 1 on 30 March (MJHC).

Clochachan: 1 on 12 Apr (MJHC).

Drumduan (Nairn): 42 on 21 Feb (ISS).

Duffus: 6 on 7 Jan, 1 on 4 Feb and, in March, 10 on 18th, 21 on 24th and 30 on 25th (EH,MDe).

Elgin: Here it is particularly difficult to know how much overlap takes place between, say, flocks observed in Bishopmill and in New Elgin. Probably birds roam the town widely visiting favoured feeding sites, where berries or apples are available, in rotation. Flocks of 10 or more were reported as follows: In January, 10 Cooper Park 8th, 11 near the BR goodsyard 10th, 12 on 16th, 28 on 18th, 13 Academy St and 12 Bishopmill 20th, 30 Bishopmill 21st rising to 42 on 22nd, 76 Brodie Drive 27th and c50 near Elgin Academy 29th. In February, 44 in Academy St 3rd and c70 Bishopmill 4th, 64 Academy St 10th, 30 Bishopmill 14th, c50 there 19th, 16 New Elgin 20th and as many as 97 Bishopmill 24th. In March, c100 (the Bishopmill flock?) beside the mart on 1st, 65 New Elgin and 30 Reidhaven St 10th, 90 Bishopmill 14th, c50 New Elgin 17th and 62 Bishopmill 26th-28th. In April, c50 Bishopmill 1st, 34 on 6th, 20 New Elgin 23rd, 24 Cooper Park 21st and 30 there 25th. In May, 8 Bishopmill 6th and last 4 New Elgin 8th. (CAG,RP et al.). Two birds in Elgin on 25 Apr were engaged in apparent courtship behaviour with the male display flighting and feeding the female (PC).

Forres: In February, 22 on 4th, 23 on 17th, 41 on 20th, 42 on 21st, 30 on 22nd and 26 on 27th-28th. In March, 16 on 14th and 11 on 27th-29th. In April, 19 on 3rd, 40 on 6th and 22 on 16th. (AJL,ISS,IP,JDHM,WGT et al.).

Garmouth: 2 on 18 March (EH).

Hopeman: 5 on 1 Jan, 8 on 2 Jan and up to 5 most days 20-31 Jan. In February, 14 on 1st, 28 on 4th-5th, 23 on 11th, 31 on 16th, 38 on 17th and 15 on 21st. In March, 6-8 on 3rd-6th rising to 18 on 11th and 22 on 15th. Thereafter 18 most days, rising to 31 on 27th. In April, 31 daily until 16th, falling to 10 on 21st and last 2 on 23rd (PTH,HF).

Knockando: 9 on 8 Jan (AE).

Longmorn: 1 on 8 Jan (IJ).

Lossiemouth: In January, 12 on 7th-8th, 14 on 9th, 16 on 10th, 38 on 12th, 20 on 13th, 9 on 14th, 6 on 15th-17th, 20 on 23rd and 25 on 28th. In February, 9 on 1st and 1 on 9th-14th. Last was 1 on 3-4 March. (DG,JDHM,SM et al.).

Nairn: 10 on 4 Jan, 22 on 26 Jan, 52 on 21 Feb and, in March, 20 on 6th, 51 on 14th, 23 on 22nd and 21 on 27th. Last 3 on 10 Apr. (RPC,JDHM et al.).

Nether Dallachy: 6 on 20 Jan.

Portknockie: 8 on 5 Jan and 3 on 15 Jan (ISS).

Autumn: A return to normality in the second winter season when the only records were 2 Kinloss 27 Oct-3 Nov (PTH), 1 Lossiemouth 6 Nov and 21 Nov (JDHM,MS) and 1 Elgin 27 Dec (RMO).

Dipper *Cinclus cinclus*

Common resident breeder.

Breeding season reports from Altyre, Burnside of Enzie, Fochabers, Forres, Mundole, Rothes (R.Spey) and Sanquhar Loch. On 14 Oct c30 were counted along the R.Spey between Ballindalloch and Tugnet (IF). 1 R.Lossie in central Elgin 3 Dec.

Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*

Very common resident breeder.

Reports received only from the Nairn/Culbin Bars where 23 on 14 Jan, 11 on 11 Feb, 5 on 7 Oct and 6 on 16 Dec (AY,DJa).

Dunnock *Prunella modularis*

Very common resident breeder.

First song Lossiemouth 1 Feb. On the Nairn/Culbin Bars were 10 on 14 Jan, 3 on 11 Feb, 8 on 7 Oct and 6 on 16 Dec.

Robin *Erithacus rubecula*

Very common resident breeder and migrant.

On the Nairn/Culbin Bars, 9 on 14 Jan, 7 on 7 Oct and 3 on 16 Dec. Also along the coast on 7 Oct were 3 Burghead-Hopeman and 13 Portgordon-Strathlene. At Strathlene in September were 6 on 28th and 10 on 29th.

Bluethroat *Luscinia svecica*

Rare migrant.

1 female/immature male Strathlene 27-29 Sept (DMP,RP,MJHC). This record, potentially the 7th record for Moray & Nairn, awaits consideration by Moray & Nairn Rarities Committee. Five have been in spring and two in autumn.

Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*

Rare migrant.

A substantial fall of Black Redstarts in NE Scotland in late March was represented in Moray by two birds at Burghead; 1 adult male 29th (JDHM) and 1 female/immature male 29th-31st (RGB,MK). These are the 12th and 13th records in Moray & Nairn, and the first since 1997.

Common Redstart (Redstart) *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

Summer visitor and scarce breeder. Very scarce migrant.

A total lack of breeding season reports presumably reflects a lack of observer visits to suitable habitat rather than anything amiss with the population.

Only one autumn migrant, a male at Lossiemouth on 14 Oct (CAG).

Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra*

Summer visitor and scarce breeder. Very scarce migrant.

Recorded in breeding habitat in summer only at Ellick near Dufftown (WRPB). Probably migrants were 1 Kintessack 4 May (CS-W) and 1 Burghead 27 May (RPC).

Stonechat *Saxicola torquata*

Scarce resident breeder and probable migrant.

Breeding: Very under-recorded due to access difficulties during the Foot & Mouth outbreak. Proved breeding established only at Kingston, where 4-5 pairs along the coast from the village to a point one mile west of the rifle range (PGS), Covesea (2 pairs), Kinloss, Culbin Bar and inland at Yellowbog. Present also at Bridge of Brown and Glack Harnes, Ben Rinnes.

Coastal records in autumn/winter were also received from Burghead, Findhorn, Garmouth, Hopeman, Lossie estuary, Nairn and Portgordon. Up country records in winter are more unusual so 1 Fleenas 8 Feb and a pair at Glack Harnes, Ben Rinnes 27 Oct and 2 Dec were noteworthy.

Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe*

Summer visitor, fairly common migrant and local breeder.

Arrival: First on the coast were 4 Kingston 4 Apr and 1 Lossiemouth 6 Apr. Reported thereafter in April only at Kingston until 24th-27th when also at Kinloss, Lossiemouth (9 on 24th) and Burghead (7 on 24th). Further arrivals on 21-22 May when 1 Clochan, 2 Kingston, 2 Kinloss, 1 Kintessack and 4 Lossiemouth. Still coastal in June were 1 Kingston 5th and 1 Kinloss 6th. First inland was 1 Lochindorb 5 Apr.

First back at the coast were 2 Kingston 31 July and 1 Kinloss 1-3 Aug. Later in August were 1 Strathlene 19th, 1 Burghead 21st and 2 Kinloss 22nd. Last inland were 1 Carn a Ghille Chearr 6 Oct and 1 Ben Rinnes 13 Oct. At the coast, 1 Lossiemouth 20-21 Oct was the last of the year.

Ring Ouzel *Turdus torquatus*

Summer visitor and scarce breeder.

No reports from breeding areas. In autumn, 1 Scurran of Well, Ben Rinnes 13 Oct (AE) among a good crop of Crowberries.

Blackbird *Turdus merula*

Very common resident breeder, winter visitor and migrant.

First full song Lossiemouth 13 Feb, nest building on 9 Apr. Upcountry, 4 males gathering food along the edge of a moorland plantation at Badcheer 9 June.

Substantial immigration with 'winter thrushes' in mid October; 52 Strathlene 15th (55 on 23rd), 28 in off sea Kinloss 18th and 7 arriving Lossiemouth 18th.

Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris*

Very common migrant and winter visitor.

Winter-spring: Flocks of 30 or more were 40 Scarffbanks 8 Jan, 62 Forres 11 Feb, 36 Kellas 18 Feb, 185 Covesea 28 Feb and 40 Mossyards 14 March. In April, 1 Nairn 2nd and 6 Lochindorb 5th.

An interesting presence in the Cabrach area where one was found in a small moorland edge copse on 9 June (MJHC). There was no further evidence to suggest breeding.

Autumn: 1 Nairn 3 Oct was well ahead of the main widespread arrival during 15-17 Oct when many flocks of immigrants appeared along the coast. Counts at this time included many overflying Urquhart early on 15th, 230 Kinloss 17th, 25 Lossiemouth 18th, 157 Kinloss 18th, 40 Strathlene 23rd and 'hundreds' Darnaway 24th. Clearly many overflew the coast and pitched inland where thousands were flying west past Mains of Clunymore on 14th. At greater altitude, 70 Cairn Lochan 19th. Further passage over Kinloss in early November when 400 on 1st, 100 on 2nd, 176 on 7th and 200 on 9th. Good numbers present elsewhere in November e.g. 120 Brodie 3rd, 34 Scarffbanks 4th, 240 Mossyards 6th, 300 Darkland 7th, 200 Burghead 9th, 130 Westfield 10th, 180 Clochan 10th, 100 Foresterseat 10th, 50 Findhorn 11th, 50 Birnie 13th, 270 Ballachraggan 17th, 280 Easterton 28th and 60 Tarras 29th. In December, 200 Salterhill 23rd.

Severe weather after Christmas saw many birds fleeing to low ground. On 30 Dec many flocks of 10-20 birds were encountered all along the coast between Portgordon-Lossiemouth and 50 were in Cullen on 31 Dec. Hungry flocks also stripped berries in Forres gardens.

Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos*

Very common breeder and migrant.

In the mid winter months, January records were 1 Buckie 14th, 1 Clochan 14th, 1 Cloddach 28th, 1 Elgin 29th, 1 Kinloss 16th, 1 Kintessack 11th, 28th and 29th, 2 Nairn 16th and 2 Lossiemouth on 3rd, 11th and 22nd. Five along the shore between Portgordon-Strathlene 9 Feb. In December, 1 Cloddach 24th, 2 Elgin 29th, 1 Kintessack 29th-31st, 1 Lossiemouth 31st and 1 Nairn Bar 16th.

First song Elgin 29 Jan. In February first heard at Kingston on 1st, Clochan on 12th, Elgin on 13th, Lhanbryde 14th and Urquhart 14th. Very late song at Urquhart 24 Oct.

Evidence of autumn coastal immigration on 29 Sept when 20 Strathlene and 7 in one garden in Lossiemouth. Later, 15 Strathlene 15 Oct, 10 there 23 Oct and 4 Nairn/Culbin Bars 7 Oct.

Redwing *Turdus iliacus*

Very common migrant and winter visitor.

Winter-spring: Reports of 50 or more were 80 Culbin Bar 11 Feb, 70 Broom of Moy 31 Jan, 70 Urquhart 13 Feb, 64 Kinloss 27 Feb (78 there on 2 March) and 50 Sanquhar Loch 8 Jan. Last seen was 1 Lossiemouth 23 Apr.

On 29 April a pair of Redwings was flushed from a small copse of trees in the Cabrach area and breeding was strongly suspected (per MJHC). None were present when the site was revisited on 9 June.

Autumn: First arrivals 29 Sept when 10 Strathlene, 20 Burnside of Enzie and 30 in off the sea Hopeman. Main influx 14-15 Oct when many flocks making landfall off the sea between Kingston-Lossiemouth. Also noticed overflying Elgin, Clochan and Loch Spynie. Migrants audible overnight 22-23 Oct over Lossiemouth. Further arrivals Kinloss 1 Nov. Biggest flocks subsequently were 400 Foresterseat 10 Nov, 135 Clochan 10 Nov, 90 Ballachraggan 17 Nov and 70 Clochan 18 Nov. In the late December cold spell individuals and small groups were scattered all over Lossiemouth in streets and gardens.

Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus*

Common resident breeder and migrant.

Largest late summer flocks in the uplands were 40 Aultahuish 25 Aug and 35 Fodderletter 30 Aug. At the coast, 4 Culbin Bar 11 Feb, 14 Kinloss 7 Aug and 1 Sept and 12 there 19 Sept. On 24 Oct 13 flew in off the sea at Lossiemouth.

Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella naevia*

Summer visitor and scarce breeder.

Only one report received, a singing bird at Loch Oire on 3 May (EH).

Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

Summer visitor and common breeder.

Arrival: First song Lein (Kingston) 3 May and Loch Spynie 5 May.

At least 5 pairs bred in fields near the canal at Tarras. 3 singing Rothes 14 June. Furthest inland, 1 Ballindalloch 28 May.

At Loch Spynie 'Constant Effort Site' 55% of 62 birds trapped for ringing were juveniles, compared with only 31% of 42 birds in 2000; apparently a successful 2001 breeding season (RP).

Last was 1 Loch Spynie 16 Sept.

Whitethroat *Sylvia communis*

Summer visitor and common breeder.

Arrival: 1 Nairn 30 Apr, 1 Lein (Kingston) 3 May, 1 Loch Spynie 5 May (4 there by 7 May) and 1 Forres 7 May.

Subsequently, 5 singing Broom of Moy 23 May, 10 singing Garmouth-Essil along Speyside Way 7 June and 5 pairs Cloddach 1 July (JDHM).

Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin*

Summer visitor and scarce breeder.

Single singing birds were located as follows: Bodnastalker 21 May, Craigellachie 28 May and 1 June, R.Findhorn near Findhorn Bay 9 May, Forres (beside R.Findhorn) 25 June, Keith 25 June, Loch Oire 17 May, Loch Spynie 17 May, Maggieknockater 13 May, Parkmore (Dufftown) 22 May, Piperhill 26 June, Rafford 15 July and York Tower 12 May.

One autumn migrant trapped Clochan 13 Oct.

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*

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

January-April: 1M and 1F regularly Academy St, Elgin Jan-March but an influx there in early March peaking at 3M and 3F on 11 March – the most ever reported together in winter in Moray & Nairn, still 1M,1F on 4 Apr (CAG). Elsewhere, 1M Duffus 14 Jan and 3-17 March, 1M Forres Jan-Feb and a pair at a different birdtable in March, 1M Kingston 7 Feb, 1M Kintessack 1 Jan, 1 Lossiemouth 6 Jan, 1M Portgordon 12 Jan and 1M,1F Spey Bay 7 Jan.

Spring/summer: Song heard from 22 Apr (at Loch Spynie). Singing birds were located at Aberlour, Auldearn (2), Binsness, Brodie (4), Cloddach (2), Cloddymoss, Craigellachie, Dallas Dhu, Dufftown, Essil, Findrassie, Fochabers lake, Fochabers (R.Spey) (2), Forres (along lower R Findhorn from Limekilns to Findhorn Bay) (9 (JDHM,AJL)), Garmouth (3), Kellas (2), Kinloss, Lesmurdie (Elgin), Loch Loy, Loch Oire (2), Loch na Bo (3), Loch of Blairs (2), Loch Spynie (3), Milltown, R.Nairn (Aldersyde-Harbour (6 (JDHM))), Pitgaveny, Pluscarden (2), Rothes (3), Sanquhar Loch and Tearie. A respectable 61 singers, bearing in mind access restrictions to some sites.

Autumn: Coastal migrants were 1 Portknockie 27 Sept, 1 Strathlene 29 Sept and, later, 11 Findochty 23 Oct including 6 together in one small sycamore (MJHC).

Late November-December: 1F Elgin on 3 dates in Dec and 1M 21 Dec, and 1 Nairn 1 Dec, were the only wintering birds reported.

Yellow-browed Warbler *Phylloscopus inornatus*

Rare migrant.

1 trapped and ringed Loch Spynie 25 Sept (RP) – the second record for Moray & Nairn following the first at Lossiemouth in October 1998.

Wood Warbler *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*

Summer visitor and scarce breeder.

A nest with 6 young was found in Kellas oakwood on 27 May (BC,MC) and 5 well-grown young remained on 7 June (MJHC). No information from Cawdor.

Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*

Summer visitor and scarce breeder. Scarce migrant and rare winter visitor.

Singing birds were heard at Altonburn, Brodie Castle (3), Califer Hill, Caysbriggs, Cloddach, Cloddymoss, Dallas Dhu, Dufftown, Findrassie, Fochabers (2), Forres (R.Findhorn) (2), Garmouth, Hazelbank, Hill of

Maud (2), Hill of Urchany (3), Kingsteps, Kinloss, Kintessack, Lein (Kingston) (4), Limekilns, Loch Loy, Loch na Bo (4), Loch of Blairs, Loch Spynie, Lossie Forest (3), Meads of St.John, Monaughty Forest (3), Nairn, Piperhill (2), Pitgaveny, Sanquhar Loch, Speymouth Forest, Teindland Forest and Upper Dallachy. Fifty two singers in total.

Autumn: 1 Clochan 22 Sept and 29 Sept, 1 Kingsteps 7 Oct, 1 Loch Flemington 7 Oct and 1 Elgin 21 Oct.

Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus*

Summer visitor and very common breeder.

Arrival: Rather late, with none before 1 Brodie 19 Apr and 1 Burgie 20 Apr. Eight other observers had 'firsts' on 22-25 Apr. Widespread after 25th.

Later, 16 singing down lower R.Findhorn 7 May, 16 singing along the old railway line between Rafford-Stoneyford 12 May and 11 Loch of Blairs 14 May (AJL).

At Loch Spynie 'Constant Effort Site' 46% of 26 birds trapped for ringing were juveniles, compared with 57% of 47 birds in 2000 (RP).

Last coastal migrant was 1 Strathlene 23 Oct.

Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*

Very common resident breeder and scarce migrant.

In coastal habitats, 3 Binsness 14 Jan feeding along the tideline, 2 Nairn Bar 7 Oct and 7 Nairn/Culbin Bars 16 Dec. At Strathlene, 23 autumn migrants in a small area of gorse 23 Oct.

Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata*

Summer visitor and common breeder.

Arrival: First report was 1 Urquhart 10 May.

Three breeding pairs Kirkhill Wood, Elgin 24 June. Considered scarce around Forres. Last reports were 4 Kinloss 5 Sept and 1 Lossie Forest 9 Sept.

Bearded Tit *Panurus biarmicus*

Rare breeder.

Still a few at Loch Spynie from where 3 records were received; 3 (at least 2 males) on 14 Jan (CAG,JDL), 1 male 27 July (CAG) and 1 heard 31 July (DJa).

Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus*

Very common resident breeder.

Flocks of 15 or more were 48 Bridge of Brown 8 July, c40 Sanquhar Loch 8 Jan, 26 Lein (Kingston) 12 Oct, 25 Clochan 28 Oct, 20 Auldearn 8 July, 20 Inchberry 14 Oct, 18 Loch Loy 8 July (and 16 there 26 May) and 15 Kinloss 21 Nov.

Visits to garden bird feeders appear to be becoming increasingly frequent. This behaviour was noted in Aberlour (6 on 1 Jan, further visits on 24 Feb, 1 March, 4 March and 6 again on 8 Dec), Clochan (3 on peanuts on 29 Dec), Craigellachie (6 on 1 Dec) and Kintessack (1 on peanuts Jan-Feb and larger numbers in Oct-Dec, max 12 on 29 Nov).

Crested Tit *Parus cristatus*

Fairly common resident breeder.

Nest boxes:

	Pairs	Average clutch	Average fledged brood/pair	
Culbin Forest	3	?	0.0	(WGT)
Lossie Forest	6	6.0	3.7	(MJHC)

In Culbin coverage was not as full as usual; 2 of the nests were predated. In Lossie one nest was predated and one deserted; the reason for the decline in occupancy from 12 boxes in 2000 is unknown.

Records from 'fringe' areas were 1 Conicavel 30 Aug, 1 Culbin Bar 13 Jan (although the species is common in the adjacent forest), heard Loch na Bo 16 Jan and 29 Jan, 1 Monaughty Forest 29 May, heard Sleepieshill Wood 29 Jan and recorded during the year in Wood of Dundurcas.

Coal Tit *Parus ater*

Very common resident breeder.

Nest boxes: 2 boxes occupied Culbin with average clutch 9.5 and average fledged brood 5.0. In Lossie Forest 1 pair laid a clutch of 10 eggs but the outcome is unknown.

Blue Tit *Parus caeruleus*

Very common resident breeder.

Nest boxes:

	Pairs	Average clutch	Average fledged brood/pair	
Lossie Forest	13	8.0	?	(MJHC)
Culbin Forest	4	?	2.3	(WGT)
Loch Spynie	9	9.0	8.7	(RP,CAG)

Clutch sizes at Loch Spynie were high and the fledging rate excellent.

First song heard Cooper Park, Elgin 17 Jan.

Great Tit *Parus major*

Very common resident breeder.

Nest boxes:

	Pairs	Average clutch	Average fledged brood/pair	
Lossie Forest	9	6.2	?	(MJHC)
Culbin Forest	2	6.0	2.5	(WGT)
Loch Spynie	14	6.0	5.1	(RP,CAG)

Clutch sizes were smaller than usual.

First song Fochabers 18 Jan and Clochan 12 Feb. Early for the 2002 season was a singer in Elgin on Christmas Day. Unusual habitat choice exhibited by a bird foraging on the dome of Dr Gray's Hospital, Elgin on 21 Sept.

Treecreeper *Certhia familiaris*

Very common resident breeder.

Nest boxes:

	Pairs	Average clutch	Average fledged brood/pair	
Lossie Forest	4	5.0	?	MJHC
Culbin Forest	3	?	3.0	WGT

Two of the Culbin boxes suffered predation.

Red-backed Shrike *Lanius collurio*

Rare migrant.

1 male in the Ballindalloch area 11-12 June (per PC). This is the 11th record for Moray & Nairn but the first since 1992. The date and habitat raise interesting possibilities.

Great Grey Shrike *Lanius excubitor*

Very scarce migrant and winter visitor.

1 Findhorn 10-11 Nov (DMP,ISS,AJL); the record awaits consideration by Moray & Nairn Rarities Committee. Since 1990 there have been four records, in February, October and November (2).

Jay *Garrulus glandarius*

Scarce visitor and rare breeder.

Breeding season: 1 Loch Oire/Loch na Bo area 13 Apr, 30 Apr, 15 May and 10 July (EH), 1 Romach Hill 13 June (IF) and 1 Rosarie 5 June (SM). Also present (undated records) in Darnaway and Elchies Forest.

At other times, 1 Craigellachie 22 Oct (IFo), 1 Knockando 17 Oct (ISS), 1 Loch Oire 28 Feb, 25 Oct, 1 Nov, 13 Nov (2) and 6 Dec (EH), 1-2 Loch na Bo on several dates Jan-Feb and Nov-Dec with 3 on 2 Nov (EH,JDHM), 2 Loch Spynie 6 Oct (MJHC), 1 Lochs of Bogmussach 25 Aug (MJHC), 1 Logie 18 Nov (DMP), 2 Lossie Forest 3 Aug (EH), 1 Mosstodloch 20 Oct (DMP) and 1 Sleepieshill Wood 2 Jan and 27 Aug (EH).

Magpie *Pica pica*

Fairly common resident breeder.

Noted in 28 localities during the year but proved breeding only at Longmorn. Few upland reports received but present Glen Rinnes.

Most together were 6 Mundole 11 Oct and 5 Scarffbanks 22 Feb.

Jackdaw *Corvus monedula*

Very common resident breeder.

180 Laiken Quarry 14 Jan and c300 roosting Little Conval wood, Dufftown 20 Feb. A bird with white primaries was seen in Forres on 22 March.

Rook *Corvus frugilegus*

Very common resident breeder.

c1000 roosting Little Conval wood, Dufftown 20 Feb and c3000 at a pre-roost gathering Drumnagorrach 14 Nov.

Carrion/Hooded Crow *Corvus corone*

Very common resident breeder.

Best monthly counts on the Lossie estuary were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Carrion	29	37	43	22	6	12	8	12	19	48	46	25
Hooded	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0
Hybrid	2	3	1	2	0	1	1	2	4	4	3	0

(note - the max count for each 'category' in a given month may not have been on the same day)

Rather fewer here than in recent years.

Counted at two roosts where c100 Little Convul wood, Dufftown 20 Feb, and at Loch na Bo were c100 on 17 Jan, 30 on 21 Feb and 50 on 3 Nov. Highest flock counts elsewhere were 124 Findhorn Bay 30 July, 72 Roseisle 30 Jan (consisting of 65 Carrion and 6 hybrid) and 34 Lhanbryde pig farm 14 Oct.

Apparently pure Hooded Crows, away from Lossiemouth, were 2 Lhanbryde pig farm 14 Oct, 1 Culbin Bar 7 Oct, 1 Loch Spynie 19 Jan, 1 Roseisle 15 Jan, 9 May and 30 May, 1 Newton of Struthers 24 March, 1 Findhorn Bay 9 Apr, 3 May, 30 May and 2 on 14 Sept, 1 Netherton 19 Apr, 1 Waterford 19 Apr, 2 Nairn 30 Apr, 1 Tarras 4 June, 1 Lossie Forest 17 Sept and 1 Burghead 10 Dec.

At Findhorn a pairing between a pure-looking Hooded and a Carrion produced 2 hybrid young, one closely resembling pure Hooded (JDHM).

Raven *Corvus corax*

Scarce visitor, formerly widespread breeder.

11 Carn Mor 6 May (AE) was the only report received.

Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*

Very common resident breeder and winter visitor.

Nestboxes: 8 out of 9 nestboxes at Clochan were occupied and all were successful. Average brood size at fledging was 4.0, a little smaller than the 4.3 achieved in 2000 (MJHC).

As ever, pig farms proved an attraction for feeding flocks including c1000 Balormie 12 Nov and c400 Covesea 11 Sept. Elsewhere, c800 Minton 3 July, 500 juveniles Kincorth 27 June and 160 Burghead 7 Oct. On 14 Oct c600 roosted in trees near Tesco's store in Forres.

(Rose-coloured Starling *Sturnus roseus*

Rare vagrant.

A bird of this species was reputedly seen at Findhorn on 24-25 June, at a time when an unprecedented influx of the species into Britain took place. However, the identity of the observer(s) is unknown. Clearly this record is unacceptable in the absence of more detail but anyone with any further knowledge is urged to contact the Area Recorder).

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

Very common resident breeder.

Nestboxes: 8 out of 12 nestboxes at Clochan were occupied; 7pairs were successful in raising a first brood of average size 2.9, no information on second broods (MJHC).

Flock counts: 78 Forres 26 Aug, 49 Clochan 1 July, 27 Kintessack 14 July and 25 Craigellachie 14 Oct. In Lossiemouth harbour 30-40 birds regularly pecked at drying lobster pots during late summer, attracting the attentions of a Sparrowhawk (see under that species).

Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*

Fairly common resident breeder.

Breeding season: At Longmorn, return to the nest boxes first noted 6 March with building taking place in 5 boxes by 19 March. Subsequently a very encouraging 9 boxes were used, with at least 5 pairs raising two broods (H&JMacD).

Evidence of breeding elsewhere included 4 pairs Shempston 22 June, 1 pair Netherton 9 May, 1 pair with newly fledged young Clochan 17 June and 1 pair Westfield 22 June (JDHM).

In autumn/winter, good numbers around Westerfolds, where 40 on 20 Jan, 60 on 30 March and c80 on 18 Dec, and Westfield where 54 on 4 Feb and 55 on 25 March. Also 70 Wester Calcots 21 Nov (25 there 4 Oct), 45 RAF Lossiemouth 11 Jan, 45 Dipple 3 Oct (30 there 20 Sept) and 11 Clochan 14 Oct. Other sites were 2 Darkland 27 Dec, 2 Kinloss 27 Nov and 1 Loch Flemington 14 Jan. The habit of birdtable feeding continued at Clochan and Longmorn all year and was also noted at Darkland and Kintessack.

Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*

Very common resident breeder, migrant and winter visitor.

First song Fochabers 18 Jan, Elgin 13 Feb and Lossiemouth 13 Feb.

Flock counts were 300 Brodie Castle 26 Jan and 200 Ordiquish 28 Jan.

Brambling *Fringilla montifringilla*

Fairly common winter visitor and migrant.

Winter-spring: 10 Logie 20 Jan otherwise only single birds feeding in gardens, at Urquhart 6 March, Clochan 13 March, Forres 3 Apr and Dufftown 19 April.

Autumn: 1 Urquhart 15-16 Oct, 6 Kinloss 1 Nov, 6 Dyke 6 Nov, 1 Mains of Clunymore 6 Nov, 1 Urquhart 24 Nov and 1 Meft 9 Dec. During hard weather in late December several entered gardens e.g. 3 Clochan 28th, 2 Darkland 29th, 1-3 Elgin 27th-30th and 5 Kintessack 31st.

Greenfinch *Carduelis chloris*

Very common resident breeder.

Feeding flocks included 350 Cragganmore 15 Oct, 100 Ordiquish 28 Jan, 50 Conicavel 30 Aug and 26 Tearie 26 July.

Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*

Common resident breeder.

At least 3 pairs Chapelton-Sanquhar 18 July.

Best flocks of the year were 400 Ordiquish 28 Jan feeding on oilseed rape stubbles (AB,MJHC) and 220 Pathside 19 Apr (RHD). Other flocks of 10 or more were 22 Kincorth 14 Jan, 22 Kinloss 18 Sept, 18 Hempriggs 4 March, 16 Lossiemouth 20 Apr (14 there on 13 March) and 11 Portgordon 9 Feb. Feeding on peanuts in a Kintessack garden were 2 on 12 Apr and 14 Apr.

Siskin *Carduelis spinus*

Very common resident breeder and migrant.

Small numbers Clochan March-May where only 56 were trapped and ringed, markedly less than in recent years. Elsewhere, 50 Maryfield 16 Feb, 20 Nairn 27 Nov, 14 Kinloss 9 July, 13 Hopeman 2 Jan and 10 juveniles Maggie-knockater 14 July. Up to 4 in a Dufftown garden March-April, and once in autumn, but at nearby Mains of Clunymore present all spring and summer but not in autumn/winter.

Linnet *Carduelis cannabina*

Very common resident breeder.

Flocks of 100 or more were 1000 Montgrew 5 Jan, 300 Ordiquish 28 Jan, 300 Pitgaveny 1 Feb, 250 Crosslots 31 Jan, 220 Portknockie 4 July, 150 Darkland 3 March and 100 Conicavel 30 Aug.

Nest building Lein (Kingston) 23 Apr. 10 Nairn/Culbin Bars 7 Oct.

Twite *Carduelis flavirostris*

Scarce resident breeder, a few on the coast in winter.

The only report from breeding haunts was 2 Lochindorb 5 Apr (MK).

At the coast in winter were c50 Nairn/Culbin Bars 11 Feb and 16 Dec (DJa).

In agricultural areas, c100 Buinach 21 Jan (DBy) and 10 Hopeman 21 Jan (EH).

Lesser Redpoll (Redpoll) *Carduelis cabaret*

Common resident breeder and migrant.

Around Loch Oire were 3 on 18 Apr, 3 on 24 May and 6 on 5 Dec. Seen occasionally in the Dufftown area in September and early November.

Common Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra*

Irregular scarce visitor and probable scarce breeder.

Scottish Crossbill *Loxia scotica*

Probable common resident breeder.

Crossbill records in 2001, in order of flock size, were 20 Culbin Forest 1 July (9 there 15 May), 20 Loch na Bo 18 July (17 on 21 June), 12 Tom a'Chadalair 7 Jan, 12 Morinsh Forest 23 Jan, 9 Roseisle 13 Oct, 4 Cloddach 5 Aug, 2 Leid's Hill 7 Oct, 1 Loch Spynie 8 July and 18 July and 1 Yellowbog 25 Aug. Also heard Lochs of Bogmussach 6 July.

Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

Common resident breeder.

In the breeding season, 6 pairs Hill of Urchany 26 June (JDHM) and 3 Monaughty Forest 29 May. At other times, 11 Loch of Blairs 17 Nov, 7 Loch na Bo 3 Jan, 1 central Elgin 2 Jan and 4 Lein (Kingston) regularly in Jan-March, with 5 on 16 Apr and 23 Nov. 1 Dava moor 20 Jan was over 1 mile from the nearest trees.

Snow Bunting *Plectrophenax nivalis*

Common winter visitor and rare breeder.

Winter counts: Best monthly counts at regular Snow Bunting sites on the coast were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar		Oct	Nov	Dec
Nairn/Culbin Bars (& west Nairn)	50 (17 th)	46 (11 th)	nc		0	nc	128 (16 th)
Lossiemouth east beach	30 (14 th)	30 (4 th)	29 (1 st)		0	40 (17 th)	60 (15 th)

First of the winter were 3 Ben Rinnes 13 Oct. Subsequently inland, 29 Lecht ski carpark 11 Dec and 40 Knock of Braemoray 22 Dec.

Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella*

Very common resident breeder.

First song Lossiemouth 7 March. Young still in the nest Covesea 18 Aug.

Flocks of 20 or more were c100 Garmouth 4 March, 76 Westfield 4 Feb, 60 Findhorn Bay 20 Jan, 60 Westerfolds 20 Jan (50 there 30 March and 40 on 18 Dec) and 22 Nether Dallachy 26 Apr. Also 11 feeding in Lossiemouth east beach dunes 15 Jan.

Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus*

Common resident breeder.

Present in the breeding season at Cloddach quarry (2 singing males 18 May), Culbin Bar (4 on 17 June), Culbin Forest pond (1 on 1 July), Dallas Dhu (3 males at distillery pond 14 May), Kingston (seen regularly in gorse on the shingle Apr-July), Kinloss (3 males 18 June), Loch Oire (singing 21 March), Tarras (4 pairs on 10 June), Tugnet (1 carrying food on 29 June) and Urquhart (singing 14 March).

Feeding on seeds of dune grasses in October were 24 Culbin Bar and 3 Nairn Bar on 7th, and 26 Lossiemouth east beach on 14th. Later, still 9 Lossiemouth 24 Nov and 6 Nairn/Culbin Bars 16 Dec. Elsewhere in winter,

12 Ruthrie (Aberlour) 8 Feb feeding on uncut barley, 6 Westfield 4 Feb and 2 Darkland 11 Jan. One appeared to fly in off the sea at Cullen 31 Dec.

Corn Bunting *Miliaria calandra*

Scarce resident breeder.

Birds located in spring/summer (singles unless stated and *singing birds in italics*) at *Binn Hill (Garmouth), Buckie, Clochan, College of Roseisle/Bank of Roseisle, Cummingston (early song on 30 March but not subsequently), East Grange, Easter Oldtown, Easter Coltfoot, Garmouth, Loch Flemington, Longmorn, Portgordon, Sanquhar Mains (gathering nesting material on 5 May), Spey Bay and Urquhart.*

At other times, 11 Clochan 7 Jan and 1 feeding on weed seeds on tide line shingle at Portgordon 16 Dec.

ADDITIONS/CORRECTIONS TO 2000 REPORT

Balearic Shearwater *Puffinus mauritanicus*

Add: 1 at sea c2km off Strathlene 21 Sept (IFo). This becomes the 2nd record for Moray & Nairn. The other two, also in September 2000, were off Strathlene on 2nd and off Lossiemouth on 24th.

Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus*

page 18 (3rd paragraph) should start: First flock was 9 seen on 4 Oct at Loch Spynie,

Add: 51 Loch Spynie 4 Nov.

Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*

Add to table of highest monthly counts in coastal areas:

Burghead-Hopeman	12 in March, 5 in November
Lossiemouth	3 in March, 5 in November

Black Grouse *Tetrao tetrix*

The 'Cabrach' lek was in fact outside the Moray boundary.

Common Whitethroat *Sylvia communis*

Final line should read: Coastal migrants in September at Strathlene were 1 on 21st and 1 on 25th.

DECISIONS OF SCOTTISH BIRDS RARITIES COMMITTEE

The following record **has** been accepted:

Cory's Shearwater	Lossiemouth	July 2000
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The following record **has not** been accepted:

Great Shearwater	Nairn	April 2000
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DECISIONS OF MORAY & NAIRN RARITIES COMMITTEE
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The following records **have** been accepted:

Balearic Shearwater	off Strathlene	Sept 2000
Green-winged Teal	Findhorn Bay	Jan 2001
Green-winged Teal	Loch Spynie	Nov-Dec 2001
Little Ringed Plover (2)	Kingston	May 2001
Pectoral Sandpiper	Lhanbryde	Sept 2001
Mediterranean Gull	Kingston	Sept 2001
Mediterranean Gull	Lhanbryde	Sept 2001
Mediterranean Gull	Lossiemouth	December 2001
Black Redstart (2)	Burghead	March 2001

The following record **has not** been accepted:

Grey Phalarope	Lossiemouth	Nov 2001
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GRID REFERENCES OF LOCALITIES MENTIONED IN THE SPECIES ACCOUNTS

Aberlour	NJ265428	Carron	NJ222414
Achdregnie	NJ245246	Cassieford	NJ049601
Aldersyde	NH863532	Cawdor	NH845500
Altonburn	NH862566	Caysbriggs	NJ248669
Auchindoun	NJ347375	Chapelton	NJ049583
Auldearn	NH918555	Clarkly Hill	NJ131684
Aultahuish	NJ140495	Clashach Quarry	NJ162702
		Clochach	NJ402608
Badchean	NJ353326	Cloddach quarry	NJ200591
Balculchaich	NH873495	Cloddymoss	NH982599
Ballachraggan	NJ133492	College of Roseisle	NJ138665
Ballindalloch	NJ178365	Coltfield	NJ117637
Balnageith	NJ026578	Conicavel	NH995535
Balormie	NJ215680	Connage	NJ451649
Bank of Roseisle	NJ148668	Corbiewell	NJ319654
Barmuckity	NJ243617	Corries	NJ162356
Batchen	NJ188610	Corryhabbie Hill	NJ281289
Beatshach	NJ270372	Covesea	NJ186705
Ben Rinnes	NJ255355	Coxton	NJ262606
Binn Hill	NJ305655	Craigellachie	NJ290450
Bin of Cullen	NJ480643	Cran Loch	NH945590
Binsness	NJ030628	Crosslots	NJ179672
Blackhillock	NJ087537	Culbin Bar	NH965627
Blervie	NJ063554	Culbin Forest	NH990620
Boar's Head Rock	NJ289680	Cullen	NJ513671
Bodnastalker	NJ162532	Cummingston	NJ133690
Bogmoor	NJ357629		
Bow Fiddle Rock	NJ495688	Dallas Dhu	NJ035566
Brandston	NJ288655	Darkland	NJ267623
Bridge of Brown	NJ124206	Daugh of Carron	NJ225395
Brodie	NJ978572	Dava	NJ005387
Broom of Moy	NJ020593	Delnies	NH845563
Buckie	NJ425657	Dipple	NJ329569
Buckpool	NJ412653	Drainie	NJ215687
Burghead	NJ114689	Druim	NH914577
Burghead Bay	NJ080670	Drumduan	NH916567
Burgie	NJ093595	Drynachan	NH865397
Burnside	NJ168697	Dufftown	NJ325400
Burnside of Enzie	NJ393606	Duffus	NJ170688
		Dulsie	NH932416
Cabrach	NJ385270		
Cairn Liath	NJ253158	Earnhill	NJ013607
Califer Hill	NJ083570	Earnside	NJ107624
Carn a Ghille Chearr	NJ139298	East Grange	NJ095617
Carn Kitty	NJ090428	Easter Cloves	NJ145617
Carn Mor	NJ266183	Easter Coltfield	NJ120645

Easter Newforres	NJ062586	Knockando	NJ182429
Easter Oldtown	NJ139674		
Elchies Forest	NJ220460	Lecht	NJ245133
Elgin	NJ215625	Leid's Hill	NJ417267
Ellick	NJ172231	Lein, Kingston	NJ334657
Essil	NJ338635	Letterach	NJ280210
		Lhanbryde	NJ275615
Fairyhills Wood	NJ025565	Linkwood	NJ233615
Findhorn	NJ040645	Little Conval Wood	NJ297387
Findhorn Bay	NJ045625	Littlemill	NH913502
Findochty	NJ463680	Loch Allen	NH998393
Findrassie	NJ195652	Loch Flemington	NH810520
Firhall	NH881552	Loch Loy	NH933587
Fleenas	NH913500	Loch na Bo	NJ283600
Fochabers	NJ345585	Loch of Blairs	NJ023557
Fodderletter	NJ144214	Loch Oire	NJ886608
Foresterseat	NJ253628	Loch Spynie	NJ235665
Forres	NJ035585	Lochindorb	NH975365
		Lochs of Bogmussach	NJ136473
Garmouth	NJ338644	Logie	NJ012506
Glack Harnes	NJ283633	Longmorn	NJ235584
Glen Builg	NJ182058	Lossie estuary	NJ243700
Glencorrie	NJ327363	Lossie Forest	NJ270680
Glenmullie	NJ195169	Lossiemouth	NJ235710
Gordonstoun	NJ183689	Lyne of Knockando	NJ176453
Halliman Skerries	NJ214723	Maggielockater	NJ318459
Haughs	NJ279478	Mains of Clunymore	NJ349402
Hazelbank	NJ109558	Maryfield	NJ230648
Hempriggs	NJ103638	Meads of St John	NJ014548
Hill of Delnapot	NJ160375	Meft	NJ271635
Hill of Maud	NJ460630	Mid Mains	NJ195666
Hill of Urchany	NH890507	Milltown airfield	NJ265655
Hopeman	NJ145695	Milton Brodie	NJ092627
		Miltonduff	NJ182599
Inchnacape	NJ202202	Miltonhill	NJ099630
Innes House	NJ279650	Minton	NJ046635
Invererne	NJ033606	Monaughty Forest	NJ132595
		Montgrew	NJ453517
Kellas	NJ172543	Morinsh Forest	NJ235300
Kellas oakwood	NJ157540	Mosstodloch	NJ330600
Kincorth	NJ012617	Mossyards	NJ158669
Kinermory	NJ254420	Muir of Lochs	NJ304624
Kingsteps	NH903573	Muirton	NJ225684
Kingston	NJ337655	Mundole	NJ013569
Kinloss	NJ065618		
Kinneddar	NJ223693	Nairn	NH883567
Kirkhill	NJ248228	Nairn Bar	NH922603
Knock of Braemoray	NJ012418	Nether Dallachy	NJ360640

Newton	NJ162638	Tarras	NJ062597
Newton of Struthers	NJ085614	Tearie	NJ988569
		Threapland	NJ285610
Ordiquish Wood	NJ360555	Todholes	NJ103548
		Tom a' Chadalair	NJ185197
Parkmore	NJ339415	Tomfarclas	NJ202373
Pathside	NJ383555	Tomintoul	NJ170185
Piperhill	NH868513	Towiemore	NJ394456
Pitchroy	NJ177380	Tronach Head	NJ477687
Pitgaveny	NJ240652	Tugnet	NJ348655
Pittendreich	NJ195613		
Pluscarden	NJ147568	Unthank	NJ172669
Portgordon	NJ395642	Urquhart	NJ286627
Portknockie	NJ490685		
		Walkerstrough	NJ395557
Raitcastle	NH890528	Waterford	NJ028597
Redhill	NJ162614	West Mains	NJ187663
Romach Hill	NJ063507	Wester Gauldwell	NJ305450
Rosarie	NJ384500	Wester Manbeen	NJ193602
Roseisle	NJ138666	Westerfolds	NJ195679
Roths	NJ277495	Westerton	NJ190652
Ruthrie	NJ263414	Westerton (Inchberry)	NJ318568
		Westfield	NJ163653
Sanquhar Loch	NJ041581	Windyridge	NJ233674
Sanquhar Mains	NJ043567	Wood of Dundurcas	NJ300517
Sarradale	NJ171658		
Scarffbanks	NJ237663	Yellowbog	NJ147489
Shempston	NJ183683	York Tower	NJ163630
Sherrifston	NJ255618		
Silverhills	NJ208682		
Sleepieshill Wood	NJ295615		
Spey Bay	NJ354653		
Speymouth	NJ345656		
Standingstone	NJ135644		
Stonewells	NJ283657		
Strathlene	NJ449674		
Sweethillock	NJ136612		

A RETURN TO THE CANADA GOOSE SEEN NEAR LOSSIEMOUTH ON 16 APRIL 1988

BOB PROCTOR

Introduction

Having read the first *Birding World* article on vagrant Canada Geese *Branta canadensis* in Britain (Batty & Lowe 2001), I was prompted to look back at the 1988 record of a Canada Goose near Lossiemouth on 16th April. All this was due to the chin strap depicted in the article for western Canada Goose forms, and which was drawn in the description published in the Moray & Nairn Bird Report 1988.

Currently, 11 subspecies of Canada Geese are generally recognised (Ogilvie 1978, Ogilvie & Young 1998), though the taxonomy is 'confused' (Batty & Lowe 2001). This taxonomic muddle has led some authors (e.g. Madge & Burn 1988) to suggest that *taverneri*, at least, may be an intergrade link between small dark *minima*, large dark *occidentalis* and pale *parvipes*.

Nevertheless, five races have been recorded in Britain and Ireland in an apparently wild state so far (Table 1). The British feral population is composed mainly of *canadensis*, this too is a possible vagrant, but is difficult to prove without a ringing recovery.

Table 1: Canada Goose subspecies, and those occurring in Britain & Ireland.

Subspecies	Recorded in UK & Ireland
Atlantic <i>B.c.canadensis</i>	Yes
Interior (or Todd's) <i>B.c.interior</i>	Yes
Moffitt's <i>B.c.moffitti</i>	
Giant <i>B.c.maxima</i>	
Lesser <i>B.c.parvipes</i>	Yes
Taverner's <i>B.c.taverneri</i>	Yes
Dusky <i>B.c.occidentalis</i>	
Vancouver <i>B.c.fulva</i>	
Aleutian <i>B.c.leucopareia</i>	
Richardson's <i>B.c.hutchinsii</i>	Yes
Cackling <i>B.c.minima</i>	Yes

THE LOSSIEMOUTH BIRD RE-ASSESSED

At the time of the occurrence, with the available literature that I had, my conclusion was that the bird showed characters that best fitted either *parvipes* or *hutchinsii*. This assumption was based on:

- The overall paleness of the individual
- Size estimated to be similar to either Pink-footed or Barnacle Goose. Feeding and resting with Greylag Geese and described as 'obviously smaller'
- Structure of the bill. Described as small and stubby like Barnacle Goose

A review of recent literature throws new light on the subject. Photographs by Leo Boon from Lubbock, Texas in 1999, show *parvipes* to have a pale chest and flanks. This is certainly similar to the Lossiemouth bird. However, the bill structure and length in the photographs is definitely unlike the Lossiemouth individual. The photographs indicate much longer billed individuals, while the bill on the Lossiemouth bird was described as small and stubby.

More photographs by Leo Boon from Lubbock, Texas in 1999 show a *taverneri* standing close to an individual from one of the larger race (*canadensis* or *maxima*) and several *parvipes*. The side view shows an individual with a rather pale chest and pale flanks, however, this appears to be a photographic effect, as other photographs of the same bird show a dark breast.

The identification of Taverner's Canada Goose is suggested by Batty & Lowe (2001) to depend on size and structure; thus, the "relatively short, compact bill and square head eliminate *parvipes*". Certainly, photographs accompanying both articles (Batty & Lowe 2001, Batty *et al.* 2001) show Lesser Canada Goose with a much longer bill, more reminiscent of the *canadensis* race, rather than the dumpy bill shape of Barnacle Goose.

The most intriguing feature about the Lossiemouth bird was the black, unbroken chin strap. From the current literature, this appears to be feature of the western forms of Canada Goose, though some individuals may not always show a chin strap. Photographs depicting individuals with such straps have been published (*e.g.* Ogilvie & Young 1998, Batty & Lowe 2001, Batty *et al.* 2001). Western forms showing chin straps relate to the sub-species *taverneri*, *minima*, *occidentalis* and *leucopareia*. However, the latter three all appear to be consistently much darker than *taverneri*, and certainly darker than the Lossiemouth bird. Additionally, *occidentalis* and *leucopareia* have not occurred in Britain.

The race *minima* is very small, and compared to *taverneri*, individuals are frequently much darker. Typically, however, there is much overlap in the darkness shown by individuals when seen in a group. These can range from very dark to shades getting close to *parvipes*, in particular the paleness of the chest.

From the most recent literature and web-sites on vagrant Canada Geese, I am convinced that the Lossiemouth individual should be re-assessed with evidence pointing towards a possible re-identification as *B.c.taverneri*. There are a number of reasons for this, namely;

- The chin strap. This is a characteristic of the western races.
- Bill size and shape are both 'wrong' for *parvipes*, which has a much longer bill structure compared to the Lossiemouth bird which had a much more stubbier bill.

Estimation of size is difficult with a lone individual, particularly as *taverneri* and *parvipes* overlap and *hutchinsii*, although smaller, may not be obviously so in the field.

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RECENT TRENDS IN NUMBERS OF SOME COMMON FARMLAND FINCHES

IAN FRANCIS & MARTIN COOK

During the last decade, several publications have drawn attention to changes in populations of bird species in Britain (Gibbons et al. 1993; RSPB et al. 1996; Gregory et al. 2001). In addition, the BTO regularly publishes 'alerts' for species where population or breeding parameters appear to be changing adversely. One problem with some of the data underpinning such analyses is that the geographical spread of census work is not even. Despite the advent of the Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) in 1995, little systematic survey work has been carried out in Moray & Nairn, largely as a result of the small number of observers in this area. If we wish to attempt to seek trends in populations of local birds then the Bird Report provides perhaps the best data set available, at least for many species.

There are, however, problems with bird report data:

- The records are not collected in any way systematically, so one has to assume that in each year there is a reasonable chance of a 'good' and 'representative' peak count in flock sizes.
- Variation in number of observers and 'observer effort'. Fewer observers were contributing records in 1985, and only a small, but variable, number of observers count finch flocks.

Nonetheless it is probably still worth trying to use these data sets in the absence of anything more reliable, and it does appear that some consistent trends may be emerging for some species. At the very least it may provide some pointers or provoke further work to verify some apparent changes.

This article presents the maximum flock counts, as published in Moray & Nairn Bird Reports, for four common finch species during the period 1985-2001.

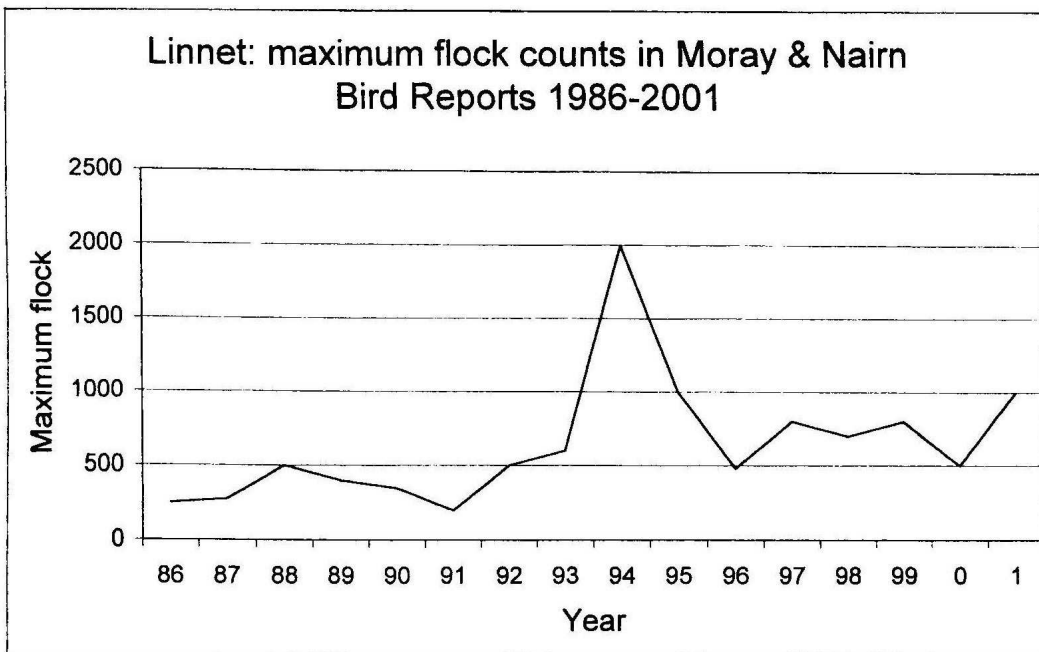
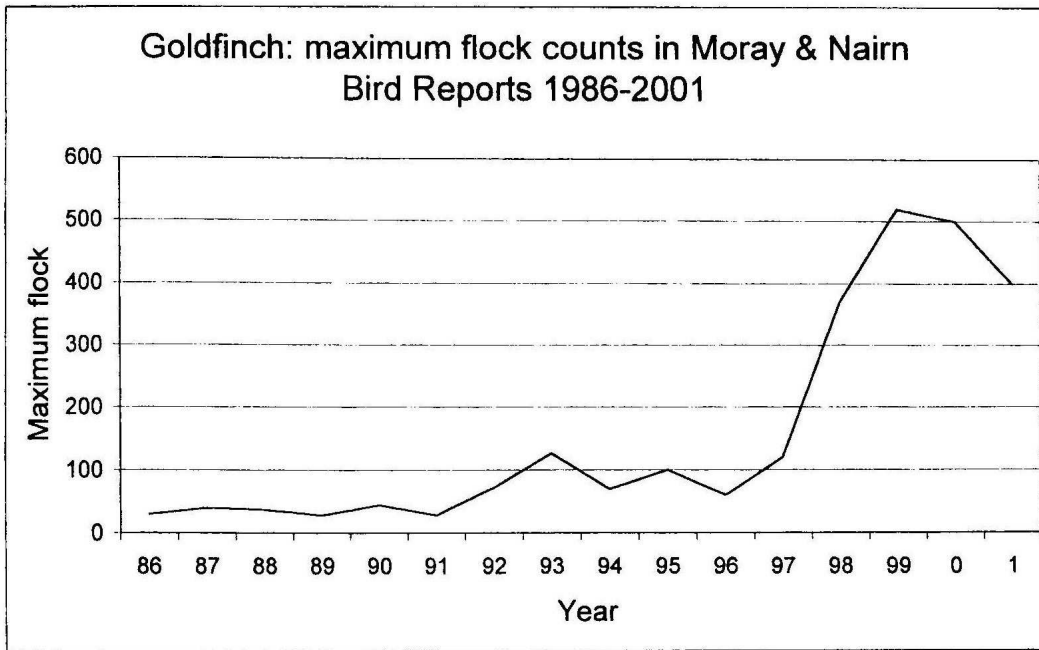
Trends suggested are:

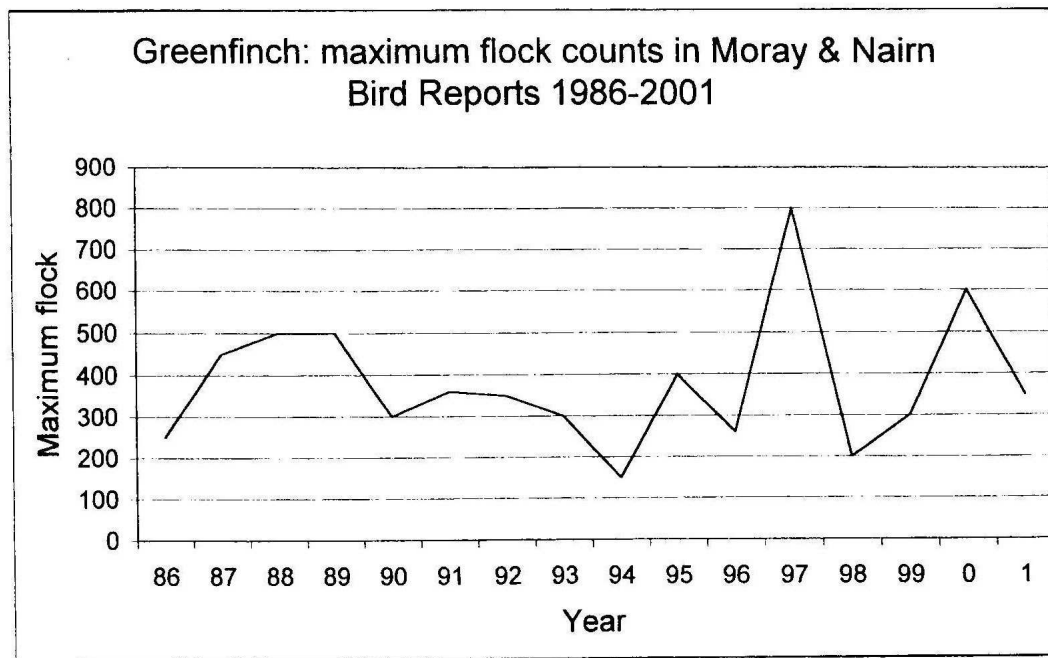
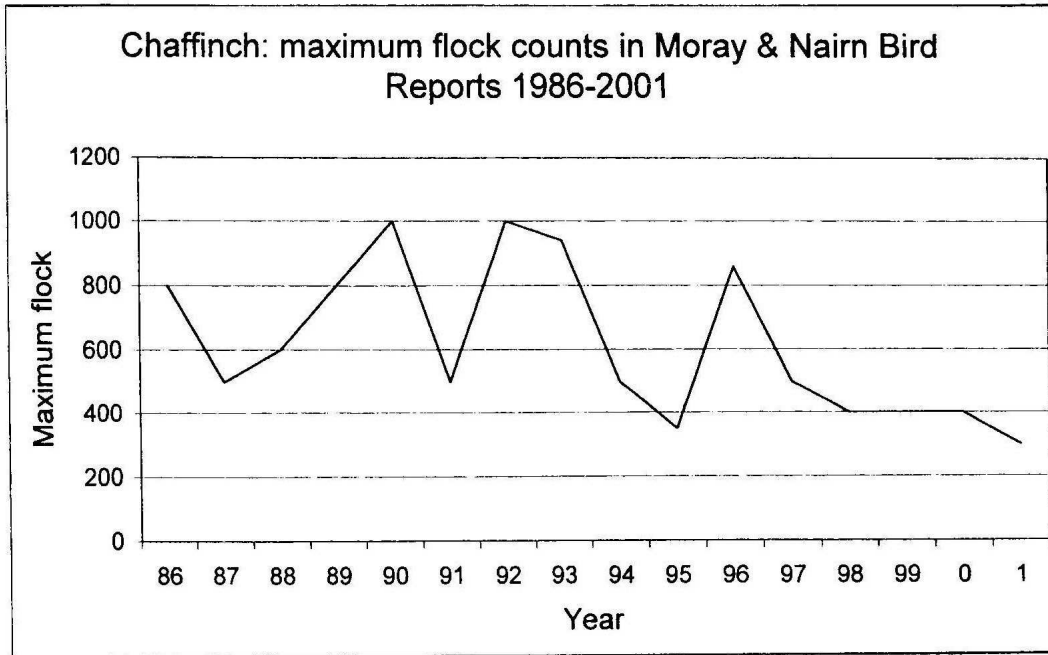
Goldfinch: a substantial increase, especially since the mid 1990s. British BBS data reveals a significant increase over the period 1994-2000 (Raven & Noble 2001).

Linnet: a steady increase over the period, in contrast to a small decline nationally since 1994.

Chaffinch: great fluctuations but suggestion of a decline. National BBS data suggests a small increase since 1994.

Greenfinch: no evident trend locally despite a significant national increase during 1994-2000.





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NORTH -EAST SCOTLAND BREEDING BIRD ATLAS

Twenty years have passed since fieldwork began for the pioneering '*Birds of North-East Scotland*' Atlas. Published in 1990, the recording period spanned 1981-1984 and breeding evidence for all bird species was located in each of 395 recording units in what is now Aberdeenshire and Aberdeen City. In addition, information on winter occurrence and migration was collated and analysed. This was a ground-breaking book, and remains unique in its breadth and depth of coverage of all aspects of the distribution and occurrence of birds in this area.

Many changes have taken place since then, particularly in the numbers and distribution of breeding birds. Following discussions between many local ornithologists and representatives of different clubs and organisations, it has been decided to attempt a 'new' breeding bird atlas, beginning in 2002 and spanning a five-year period. The new atlas will include Moray (which has never had a breeding bird atlas), and is being run by an informal committee of local birders under the auspices of the Scottish Ornithologists' Club Grampian branch and the Moray Bird Club.

The recording unit will be the tetrad – 2x2km squares on the Ordnance Survey grid. This means that, in terms of the number of squares to be visited, the task is enormous – but the detail and amount of information revealed makes this approach well worthwhile.

There are two main points to stress. One is that everyone with an interest in birds in NE Scotland or Moray can contribute and every breeding record from anywhere is potentially of value. The second is that it will take an enormous collective effort by everyone in the area to achieve the result

RECORDING BREEDING BIRDS

The Breeding Bird Atlas aims to find the 'highest' level of breeding activity of every bird species in every tetrad, over the period of the atlas. Records will accumulate from year to year, for each tetrad and from all sources, so that a 'composite' 5-year picture of the breeding birds in each tetrad is produced. The results from all tetrads are combined to produce the atlas maps. Records will come from many origins, from individuals 'adopting' a tetrad and working it intensively to 'casual' sightings of one breeding species by one observer in a square. Specialist surveys and the results from those studying individual species will also be incorporated as much as possible. It is clear from this that any breeding record is potentially of value, as it may not have been recorded by anyone else. The approach to the atlas will change over time as the maps begin to fill in. In subsequent years, tetrads lying in 'blank' areas on the maps will need to be targeted specifically. We hope that groups of birders will become interested in visiting under-recorded areas as the project proceeds.

One of the most rewarding ways to participate is to adopt a study area – perhaps one tetrad or a group of tetrads. Covering one or more close to home and the same some distance away is a useful and interesting way to work. Good results can be obtained by making two or three visits to a tetrad, each lasting perhaps 2-3 hours, during the course of the breeding season. These should include, if possible, visits at dusk or night to record nocturnal species. Noting 'supplementary' records of breeding for any species in any tetrad is also an essential part of the project.

No special skills are required, just an ability to identify birds and to match their behaviour to the recording codes provided, and basic map-reading skills to locate the appropriate tetrad, but full instructions will be given on how to do this.

Cards are provided for more detailed working of tetrads and for noting casual records from anywhere, and it is also possible to enter casual or supplementary records via the NE Scotland Breeding Bird Atlas web page, developed with help from Paul Doyle – www.nescotlandbirdatlas.org.uk.

Over time, we hope that every tetrad in the area will receive at least one visit. However, we wish to encourage choice, and it makes sense for observers to adopt the square in which they live, unless already adopted by others (though even in this situation breeding records can be combined for the master list). Ideally, observers would volunteer to cover tetrads in all parts of the area, perhaps a mixture of one or more close to home and one or more in a remote area. All tetrads chosen or allocated will be co-ordinated by the Atlas organising committee. We request that if you choose to adopt one or more tetrads you contact Martin Cook in Moray or Ian Francis in Aberdeenshire to register this (addresses below). You will then receive the recording card with the OS tetrad map. For short passing visits to tetrads or casual records, there is no need to do this; simply use the general tetrad card (without the map), the supplementary record card, or enter records via the web page.

RECORDING PERIOD

2002 has been a Pilot Year to assess and refine methods and test the overall feasibility of the project. The Atlas recording period will certainly last 5 years, with a possible follow-up year to fill any remaining gaps. During each year, any breeding record will be accepted from any appropriate date, depending on the breeding biology of each species. However, we anticipate that few records will come from the last three months of each year so we request return of all cards by 30 September. The breeding season recording period notionally begins on 1 April. However, some species begin nesting earlier than this (such as Heron, Tawny Owl, Crossbills, Raven, Pigeons), so please use your discretion and include any breeding records from any date within the year.

PLEASE HELP

We hope very much that you will choose to participate. Full instructions and support will be given to all taking part. If you have not taken part in work for the Atlas in 2002 but would like to become involved in 2003, either by adopting a 'tetrad' or collecting supplementary records, please do contact us.

Ian Francis (Aberdeenshire): 019755 62457 (evenings) 01224 624824 (day)

ifnp@clara.co.uk

Martin Cook (Moray): 01542 850296 (evenings)

martin.cook9@virgin.net

On behalf of the North-East Scotland Breeding Bird Atlas Organising Committee

RINGING REPORT

BOB PROCTOR

Numbers of birds ringed in Moray and Nairn during 2001:

	Full grown	Pullus	Total		Full grown	Pullus	Total
Wigeon	20		20	Blackcap	12		12
Teal	1		1	Yellow-browed Warbler	1		1
Sparrowhawk	1		1	Wood Warbler		5	5
Oystercatcher	75	3	78	Chiffchaff	2		2
Knot	141		141	Willow Warbler	58		58
Dunlin	45		45	Goldcrest	11		11
Bar-tailed Godwit	18		18	Long-tailed Tit	45		45
Redshank	14		14	Crested Tit		22	22
Turnstone	16		16	Coal Tit	15	10	25
Arctic Tern		104	104	Blue Tit	90	99	189
Little Tern		4	4	Great Tit	35	76	111
Black Guillemot		2	2	Treecreeper	7	3	10
Woodpigeon	1	2	3	Jackdaw	30	4	34
Collared Dove	6		6	Carrion Crow	1		1
Barn Owl		2	2	Starling	10	32	42
Rock Pipit	2		2	House Sparrow	78	20	98
Swallow	1	55	56	Tree Sparrow	13		13
Waxwing	1		1	Chaffinch	107	2	109
Wren	19	1	20	Greenfinch	80		80
Duncock	24		24	Goldfinch	8		8
Robin	59	4	63	Siskin	69		69
Blackbird	71	8	79	Bullfinch	11		11
Song Thrush	16	4	20	Yellowhammer	28		28
Sedge Warbler	61		61	Reed Bunting	10	4	14
Whitethroat	1		1				
Garden Warbler	1		1				
				GRAND TOTAL	1315	466	1781

Recoveries in 2001:

All ringing recoveries reported to the end of February 2002 are included in this section with the more interesting ones given in full. Information was supplied by M.J.H.Cook, R.Morrison, R.Proctor, R.L.Swann, W.G.Taylor and from Highland Ringing Group bulletins. Additional records were extracted from the annual

ringing report published by the BTO (Clark, J.A. *et al.* 2001. *Ringing & Migration* 20:239-288). Anyone finding a ringed bird in Moray or Nairn is asked to pass the details to Martin Cook.

Ringling 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

STORM PETREL

2183610	4	020800	Portessie, Buckie	
	v	020801	Noss Head, Wick	87 km
2183615	4	040800	Portessie, Buckie	
	v	230701	Eilean nan Ron	127 km

CORMORANT

5207841	1	160601	North Sutor	
	X	280801	Lossiemouth	42 km

A colour-ring sighting:

ADF	1	270600	Car Craig, Firth of Forth	
	vv	110201	Portgordon	182 km

SHAG

1345832	1	020798	North Sutor	
	X	040701	Nairn	15 km
1364676	1	160601	North Sutor	
	X	280801	Lossiemouth	36 km

MUTE SWAN

U5957	1	070896	Loch Oire, Lhanbryde	
	XF	280301	Findhorn	25 km

WHOOPER SWAN

Z97763 (9SP)	f	020299-260399	Caerlaverock, Dumfries
	vv	081199-280300	Caerlaverock
	vv	181100-290301	Caerlaverock
	vv	171101	nr. Lossiemouth
	vv	181101	Caerlaverock

Clearly Lossiemouth was a stop-off before the one day flight on to the usual wintering quarters.

PINK-FOOTED GOOSE

Two neck-collared birds were reported:

IVF	4f	280700	Thjorsarver, Arness, ICELAND
	vv	170301	Lower Hempriggs
LAY	4m	290700	Thjorsarver, Arness, ICELAND
	vv	200201	Loch Leven, Perthshire
	vv	240301	Loch Leven
	vv	171101	Loch Spynie

WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE

A neck-collared family party of two adults (P8C and P5D) with five juveniles (P1F, P2D, P5C and P9D) was seen at Mid Mains, near Gilston, on 11-12 Nov, at Windyridge on 17 Nov and on Loch Spynie on 18 Nov. This group was ringed, together, on 3 Oct 2001 at Hvanneyri, SW Iceland, where they remained until at least 5 Oct.

GREYLAG GOOSE

5201419	3f	161099	Loch Eye	41 km
	+	120101	near Elgin	
5207618	3f	241000	Loch Eye	42 km
	+	--0101	near Elgin	

Interesting sightings of neck-collared birds include:

LFV	3f	210700	Blondous, Austur-Hunavatns, ICELAND
		131100-281200	Easter Ross
		120201	Clochachan
SDX	3m	190700	Blondous, Austur-Hunavatns, ICELAND
		040401	Isle of Bute
		081201	Loch Spynie

WIGEON

FP21298	6f	120300	Loch Flemington
	+	301000	Mand Flak, Vadehavet, Jylland, DENMARK 811 km

OSPREY

G8109	1	010785	Moray	
	XL	041099	Herencia, SPAIN	2026 km
1367825	1	170799	Moray	
	?	101299	Kambo, near Kadiolo, MALI	5235 km

These records are the 1st Mali and 7th Spanish records of British Ospreys to be found in the respective countries (Clark, J.A. *et al.* 2001. *Ringing & Migration* 20:239-288)

BUZZARD

GF73147	1	240697	near Inver, Easter Ross	
	v	240501	Culbin Forest	26 km

OYSTERCATCHER

Only movements over 50km are listed:

FA19772	3	170886	Findhorn Bay	
	X	010401	River Dee, Drumoak, Aberdeen	98 km

Six local movements (under 50km) occurred: 5 under 20 km (range 2-17 km) and 1 at 20 km.

KNOT

7237277	4	270586	Balsfjord, Troms, NORWAY	
	v	280101	Buckpool, Buckie	1695 km
CE37829	3	010985	Poole Harbour, Dorset	
	v	280101	Buckpool	780 km

BLACK-HEADED GULL

6148336	1	100789	Hanangervatnet, Farsund, Vest-Agder, NORWAY	
	vv	121099	Nairn Harbour	629 km

This individual has been recorded in several winters at Nairn harbour since 1989.

COMMON GULL

ET88584	1	100601	Nigg Ferry	
	X	160101	Hopeman	35 km

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL

A colour-ringed individual was seen at the Lossie estuary on 26th May. Unfortunately, the full inscription was not seen. However, the bird was almost certainly ringed at Orfordness on the Suffolk coast, 2-3 years ago. Information received from Landguard Bird Observatory indicated that no Lesser Black-backed Gulls from this project have been seen further north than Manchester.

HERRING GULL

GN29433	1	250600	Berriedale	
	X	170800	Lossiemouth	52 km

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL					
HT64130	1	300698	Nigg Ferry		
	X	150701	near Hopeman		33 km
SWALLOW					
P594748	1	210701	Lhanbryde		
	XF	040801	Lhanbryde		
SEDGE WARBLER					
P219097	4m	050600	Loch Spynie CES		
	XF	270501	Loch Spynie CES		
LONG-TAILED TIT					
898921	3	250897	Lossiemouth		
	vB=f	180700	Loch Spynie CES		6 km
COAL TIT					
N408863	3	230901	Lossiemouth		
	XF cat	061001	Lossiemouth		
SISKIN					
J527368	6m	160300	Kinver Edge, Staffordshire		
	v	170400	Clochan, Buckie		576 km
P104033	5m	300100	Bishopmill, Elgin		
	v	010701	Reay		104 km
P275097	5m	270400	Clochan, Buckie		
	v	180301	Inverurie		52 km
P275123	5m	290400	Clochan, Buckie		
	v	160401	Isle of Rum		209 km
P275221	3J	010700	Clochan, Buckie		
	X	110501	Wester Phoinneas, Beauly		90 km