

Birds in Moray & Nairn

2005

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MORAY & NAIRN BIRD REPORT
No.21 – 2005

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Compiled by Martin Cook, Duncan Gibson (waders), Andy Jensen (seabirds), and Bob Proctor (wildfowl).

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

INTRODUCTION

Review of the year

2005 was a year of increased activity in Moray & Nairn with a total of 10871 records added to the database by 105 observers. The majority of records were submitted directly to the local SOC Recorder while others were received via the BTO's on-line BirdTrack system.

The top 20 species and sites for which records were received are shown below, as is a monthly breakdown of observations:

	Species	Records received	Sites	Records received
1	Mallard	280	Loch Spynie	920
2	Mute Swan	272	Kingston	730
3	Tufted Duck	249	Lossie estuary	684
4	Buzzard	248	Lossiemouth	590
5	Goldeneye	228	Burghead Bay	429
6	Oystercatcher	216	Kinloss	414
7	Wigeon	197	Nairn/Culbin Bars	340
8	Whooper Swan	179	Findhorn Bay	331
9	Cormorant	178	Burghead	291
10	Little Grebe	151	Spey Bay	256
11	Curlew	142	Cloddach quarry	225
12	Grey Heron	141	Loch na Bo	217
13	Ringed Plover	136	Nairn	209
14	R-b. Merganser	134	Cothill	181
15	Blackcap	131	Aberlour/Craigellachie	175
16	Redshank	129	Forres	140
17	Eurasian Teal	128	Loch Oire	138
18	Coot	126	Windyridge	138
19	Red-t. Diver	122	Gilston	129
20	Dunlin	120	Hopeman	124

Monthly spread of records (as % of total records):

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
10.6	7.8	8.5	7.9	8.5	6.3	5.6	8.8	10.1	10.0	7.9	8.1

Comparison with equivalent data for 2004 shows both Mallard and Loch Spynie retaining top positions in their respective lists. In the species list the top five remained unchanged, although Buzzard dropped from 2nd to 4th. The only addition to the top ten was Little Grebe, up from 12th, and replacing Waxwing which, not surprisingly, disappeared from the list following the record-breaking numbers of autumn 2004. New in the bottom half of the top 20 were Grey Heron, Red-breasted Merganser and Red-throated Diver. The list of most popular sites remains little changed from year to year, with the emphasis on water, fresh and coastal. However, the efforts of an individual observer in a local 'patch' such as Cothill can make a significant contribution to our understanding of our local bird distribution. Indeed, systematic recording and counting of common species in inland areas is an aspect of local bird watching that we need to try to improve. In 2005, when 280 Mallard counts were submitted, only 33 records of House Sparrow were received, despite

concerns about population declines of the latter species in many parts of Britain. For reasons of space, not every count of commoner species can be included in the Report but every record is added to the database and kept to form a part of any future analysis.

The year 2004 produced a good selection of rare and scarce birds. Highlights included White-billed Diver, Surf Scoter, Black Scoter, King Eider, American Wigeon, Green-winged Teal and Ring-billed Gull, supported by a varied cast of local scarcities such as Balearic Shearwater, Garganey, Little Ringed Plover, Pectoral Sandpiper, Temminck's Stint, Wood Sandpiper, Long-tailed Skua, Mediterranean Gull, Wryneck, Pied Flycatcher, Yellow-browed Warbler and Lapland Bunting. Interest among the geese was provided not only by the exceptional numbers of Pink-feet present in autumn but also by the presence of single Greater and Lesser Canada Geese among them. A blue morph Snow Goose visited Miltonhill around the same time. Interesting subspecies found during the year were a northern race Eider at Nairn and northern Bullfinches, most notably up to 25 in Aberlour in late winter.

As in the previous three years, fieldwork for the Breeding Bird Atlas occupied many observers in spring and summer, again boosting totals for scarce species such as Blackcap and Chiffchaff. The tiny Razorbill colony persisted at Portknockie. Red-throated Divers bred at one locality but despite presence in the breeding season in suitable habitat, nesting by Quail, Little Ringed Plover and Green Woodpecker could not be proved.

It was generally a quiet autumn for scarce migrant waders, especially Little Stint but with Curlew Sandpiper and Ruff only slightly more numerous. It was a good autumn for Sooty and Manx Shearwaters, as it was for skuas. Single Balearic Shearwater and Long-tailed Skua were the reward for patient sea watching.

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 2006 Report will be welcomed by the Moray & Nairn Bird Recorder at the following address:

Martin Cook
Rowanbrae, Clochan, Buckie, Banffshire AB56 5EQ
Tel. Clochan (01542) 850296
e-mail: martin.cook99@btinternet.com

Please submit your records at regular intervals or in a single batch as soon as possible in January 2007.

The Editor is very grateful for generous financial support from Walkers Shortbread Ltd, Aberlour and from Dr Melvin Morrison, Keith.

The production team of Martin Cook, Duncan Gibson, Andy Jensen, and Bob Proctor would like to acknowledge all the observers who submitted their records without which the annual report would not be possible. Special thanks go to John Mackie who has stepped down for a well earned retirement from the production of the wader counts - a job he has undertaken with meticulous care for many years. Duncan Gibson has now taken over this role.

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.

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 2005 REPORT

I.M.Addis (IMA), D.Barr (DBa), B.Bates (BB), S.Benn (SB), R.Borwick (RBo), W.R.P.Bourne (WRPB), J.Brighthouse (JB), R.Broad (RBr), A.Burgess (AB), D.Butterfield (DBu), R.P.Campell (RPC), A.Comerford (TC), M.J.H.Cook (MJHC), S.Cooper (SC), P.Cosgrove (PC), B.Cosnette (BC), S.Coulter (StC), J.K.Craib (JKC), A.Craig (ACra), A.Crowther (ACro), J.Darroch (JD), R.H.Dennis (RHD), D.G.Devonport (DGD), I.Dillon (ID), R.Dobson (RD), C.Donald (CD), S.Eaves (SE), A.Edward (AE), N.Elkins (NE), A.Farrar (AF), J.Fitzgibbons (JFi), D.Flumm (DF), I.Ford (IFo), J.Forsyth (JFo), I.Francis (IFr), R.Fraser (RF), G.George (GG), C.A.Gervaise (CAG), D.A.Gibson (DAG), P.Gordon Smith (PGS), L.Graham (LG), A.Grant (AG), K.Guthrie (KG), T.Hall (TH), E.Harwood (EH), K.Hawkins (KH), D.Hayes (DH), B.Hedley (BH), R.F.Hewitt (RFH), P.T.Hirst (PTH), A.Hogg (AH), J.Hogg (JH), H.Holbrook (HH), P.Hyvonen (PH), V.Ireland (VI), G.James (GJ), D.Jardine (DJ), A.Jensen (AJ), Richard Jones (RiJ), Roger Jones (RoJ), E.Kleintges (EK), I.Lambert (IL), G.Langan (GL), J.D.Law (JDL), A.J.Lawrence (AJL), A.Leitch (ALe), C.Leslie (CL), J.&H.MacDonald (J&HMacD), J.D.H.Mackie (JDHM), R.Mavor (RAM), P.Michie (PMi), P.Moore (PMo), M.Morrison (MM), R.Morrison (RM), L.Pauli (LP), S.Payne (SP), I.Phillips (IP), J.Poyner (JPo), R.Prentice (RPr), R.Proctor (RP), J.Protheroe (JPr), D.M.Pullan (DMP), J.Quirie (JQ), G.Reed (GR), P.Roberts (PR), L.Schofield (LSc), R.D.S.Scott (RDSS), D.Selbie (DSe), I.Sharp (IS), L.Simpson (LSi), D.Stevenson (DSt), H.A.Stewart (HAS), I.S.Suttie (ISS), W.G.Taylor (WGT), S.Taylor (ST), P.Thompson (PT), D.Thomson (DT), C.Trollope (CT), Y.Watson (YW), M.Whitton (MWh), N.Whyte (NW), I.Wilde (IW), M.Winsch (MWi), V.Wotton (VW), E.Wright (EW), A.Young (AY).

CHRONOLOGICAL SUMMARY OF THE YEAR

JANUARY

2nd 30 Whooper Swan Hatton, 3rd 1 Goshawk Culbin Bar, 450 Curlew Hardhillock, 19 Twite Culbin Bar, 4th 33 Whooper Swan Westerfields, 1 Surf Scoter Culbin Bar, 1 Goshawk Lossiemouth, 9th 18 Pintail Loch Spynie, 11th 1 Chiffchaff Portknockie, 13th 220 Scaup Nairn, 2 Surf Scoter Nairn Bar, 14th 5 Black-tailed Godwit Lower Hempriggs, 15th 1 Green-winged Teal Loch Flemington, 21st 1 American Wigeon Lossiemouth, 22nd 10 Waxwing Brodie, 23rd 6 Little Grebe Findhorn Bay, 1 Goshawk Culbin Bar, 17 Grey Plover Nairn/Culbin Bars, 1 Jack Snipe Culbin Bar, 1 Iceland Gull Loch Spynie, 696 Little Auk Nairn/Culbin Bars, 1 Kingfisher Elgin, 47 Twite Findhorn Bay, 25th 2 Little Auk Lossiemouth, 27th 2 Little Auk Burghead Bay, 29th 1 Surf Scoter Nairn Bar, 30th 1 Iceland Gull Lossiemouth, 1 Little Auk Lossiemouth, 15 Waxwing Hardmuir, 1 Iceland Gull Cullen.

FEBRUARY

4th 10 Waxwing Scarffbanks, 6th 1 Brent Goose Burgie, 1 Jack Snipe Lein, 7th 3 Glaucous Gull Cullen, 11th 1 Iceland Gull Cullen, 11 Waxwing Mosstodloch, 12th 5 Jack Snipe Kingsteps, 41 Snipe Kingsteps, 2 Glaucous Gull Cullen, 7 Twite Culbin Bar, 14th 1 Lesser Black-backed Gull Urquhart, 1 Little Auk Burghead, 26 Waxwing Clochan, 15th 9 Brent Goose Nairn, 250 Scaup Nairn, 16th 1 Glaucous Gull Portknockie, 17th 20 Moorhen Fochabers Lake, 19th 25 northern Bullfinch Aberlour, 27th 2 Lesser Black-backed Gull Urquhart, 36 Corn Bunting Clochan.

MARCH

5th 25 northern Bullfinch Aberlour, 6th 1 Surf Scoter Nairn Bar, 1 Glaucous Gull Loch Spynie, 9th 1 Jack Snipe Kinloss, 17th 2 Mandarin Elgin, 1 Sand Martin Cloddach, 20th 5 Mandarin Elgin, 1 Sand Martin Cloddach, 22nd 1 Wheatear Lein, 26th 60 Brambling near Tomintoul, 27th 29 Snipe Loch Flemington, 28th 2 Glaucous Gull Loch Spynie, 29th 1 Iceland Gull Portgordon, 30th 2 Glaucous Gull Lossiemouth, 1 Kingfisher Howford, 31st 9 Puffin Portknockie.

APRIL

2nd 82 Black-throated Diver Burghead Bay, 19 Slavonian Grebe Burghead Bay, 1 Mediterranean Gull Findhorn Bay, 2 northern Bullfinch Brodie, 3rd 1 Iceland Gull Lossiemouth, 1 Glaucous Gull Lossiemouth, 4th 1 White-fronted Goose Miltonhill, 1 Swallow Grange, 6th 5 Twite Mill of Grange, 8th 1 Manx Shearwater Lossiemouth, 10th 1 Iceland Gull Loch Spynie, 16th 30 Corn Bunting Clochan, 22nd 6 Gadwall Loch Spynie, 23rd 1 Kingfisher Rothiemay, 24th 1 Hen Harrier Binsness, 43 Corn Bunting Clochan, 27th 1 Ring-billed Gull Miltonhill, 30th 50 Corn Bunting Clochan.

MAY

1st 26 Black-tailed Godwit Tugnet, 3rd 1 White-billed Diver Cumingston, 7th 1 Glaucous Gull Lossiemouth, 8th 1 Pomarine Skua Burghead, 10 Arctic Skua Lossiemouth, 10th 10 Arctic Skua Burghead, 11th 1 Pomarine Skua Burghead, 1 Wryneck Ballindalloch, 12th 1 Wood Sandpiper Miltonduff, 14th 8 Black-throated Diver Lein, 47 Great Northern Diver Spey Bay, 6 Gadwall Loch Spynie, 2 Gadwall Kingston, 2 Garganey Loch Spynie, 15th 1 Green Woodpecker Banchor, 18th 2 Temminck's Stint Moray, 25th 1 Little Ringed Plover Kingston, 28th 162 Ringed Plover Kingston, 1 Temminck's Stint Moray, 29th 169 Ringed Plover Lossiemouth, 31st 21 Greater Canada Goose near Whiteness Head.

JUNE

3rd 80 Greater Canada Goose Findhorn Bay, 1 Glaucous Gull Kingston, 5th 1 Sooty Shearwater Burghead Bay, 4 Bearded Tit Loch Spynie, 13th 2 Wryneck Nairn district, 16th 26 Greater Canada Goose Findhorn Bay, 3 Little Gull Garmouth viaduct, 18th 2 Little Ringed Plover Garmouth, 22nd 1 Quail Duffus Castle, 24th 1 Quail Gilston, 1 Quail Salterhill, 1 Glaucous Gull Lossiemouth, 27th 1 Goshawk Forres, 1 Green Sandpiper Miltonduff.

JULY

1st 1 Quail Forres, 1 Quail Seafield, 1 Kingfisher Garmouth, 2nd 1 Green Sandpiper Cloddach, 1 Glaucous Gull Lossiemouth, 4th 1 Marsh Harrier Nairn, 7th 47 Black-tailed Godwit Kingston, 8th 1 Pied Flycatcher Westfield, 9th 1 Little Stint Findhorn Bay, 2 Bearded Tit Loch Spynie, 10th 1 Pectoral Sandpiper Kingston, 80 Lesser Black-backed Gull Cloddach, 11th 1 Little Ringed Plover Kingston, 14th 6 Black-tailed Godwit Kingston, 16th 1 Red-throated Diver Loch Spynie, 20th 1 Quail Easter Newforres, 22nd 46 Greater Canada Goose Culbin Bar, 1 Goshawk Forres, 1 Little Gull Kingston, 23rd 51 Manx Shearwater Lossiemouth, 24th 1 Glaucous Gull Lossiemouth, 20 Raven Carn Liath.

AUGUST

1st 69 Mistle Thrush Sluie, 2nd 1 Red Kite Moray, 7th 735 Fulmar past Lossiemouth, 17 Manx Shearwater Lossiemouth, 9th 14 Manx Shearwater Lossiemouth, 630 Redshank Findhorn Bay, 1 Long-tailed Skua Lossiemouth, 11th 61 Manx Shearwater Lossiemouth, 5 Ruff Kingston, 12th 19 Little Grebe Loch Oire, 14th 1 Balearic Shearwater Lossiemouth, 16th 1 Storm Petrel Kingston, 16 Black-tailed Godwit Kingston, 12 Black Guillemot Lossiemouth, 18th 14 Whimbrel Lossiemouth, 19th 2 Storm Petrel Strathlene, 20th 35 Heron Findhorn Bay, 13 Black Guillemot Lossiemouth, 21st 553 Curlew Kingston, 22nd 1 Pectoral Sandpiper Miltonduff, 23rd 38 Cormorant Strathlene, 6 Ruff Kingston, 24th 1 King Eider Nairn, 44 Black-tailed Godwit Lossiemouth, 6 Great Skua Lossiemouth, 1 Kingfisher Loch Spynie, 25th 150 Sandwich Tern Nairn, 26th 200 Sandwich Tern Findhorn Bay, 28th 1 Sooty Shearwater Lossiemouth, 8 Wheatear Lein, 31st 14 Whimbrel Kingston.

SEPTEMBER

1st 1 Glaucous Gull Lossiemouth, 2nd 35 Little Grebe Loch Spynie, 1 Little Stint Kingston, 1 Glaucous Gull Spey Bay, 48 Tree Sparrow Wester Calcots, 3rd 10 Arctic Skua Covesea, 1 Kingfisher Spynie Canal, 4th 4 Sooty Shearwater Lossiemouth, 9 Curlew Sandpiper Findhorn Bay, 15 Black-tailed Godwit Findhorn Bay, 6 Greenshank Findhorn Bay, 5th 1 Glaucous Gull Kingston, 10 Wheatear Strathlene, 6th 1 Ruff Miltonhill, 13

Whimbrel Lossiemouth, 7th 10 Pink-footed Goose Elgin, 8th 6 Ruff Kingston, 600 Kittiwake Kingston, 9th 5 Curlew Sandpiper Lossiemouth, 1 Pomarine Skua Lossiemouth, 1 Kingfisher Elgin, 11th 17 Sooty Shearwater Lossiemouth, 8 Brent Goose Lossiemouth, 10 Arctic Skua Lossiemouth, 12th 40 Snipe Miltonduff, 13th 6 Curlew Sandpiper Findhorn Bay, 15th 1 Fieldfare Elgin, 16th 2 Spotted Redshank Findhorn Bay, 23rd 2 Curlew Sandpiper Lossiemouth, 24th 13 Greylag Goose Findhorn Bay, 46 Scaup Findhorn, 630 Redshank Findhorn Bay, 25th 1 Spotted Redshank Findhorn Bay, 1 Kingfisher Elgin, 26th 1 White-fronted Goose Coltfield, 27th 1 Snow Goose Miltonhill, 1 Spotted Redshank Findhorn Bay.

OCTOBER

1st 8 Pomarine Skua Lossiemouth, 2nd 15 Little Grebe Loch Flemington, 60 Coot Loch Flemington, 4th 73 Cormorant Halliman Skerries, 7th 1 Kingfisher Lossie estuary, 8th 1 northern Eider Nairn, 9th 19 Pintail Findhorn Bay, 1 Little Stint Findhorn Bay, 1 Curlew Sandpiper Findhorn Bay, 10th 1 Black Scoter Findhorn, 11th 2 Red-necked Grebe Burghead Bay, 12 Slavonian Grebe Burghead Bay, 12th 6 Little Gull Lossiemouth, 13th 5 Red-necked Grebe Burghead Bay, 15th 600 Redwing Portknockie, 20 Brambling Strathlene, 1 Lesser Redpoll Strathlene, 16th 21 Barnacle Goose Nairn Bar, 35 Barnacle Goose Portgordon, 30 Grey Plover Findhorn Bay, 1 Jack Snipe Culbin Bar, 38 Snipe Nairn Bar, 1 Common Sandpiper Nairn Bar, 550 Redwing Findochty, 18th 2 Arctic Skua Findhorn, 21st 32 Greater Canada Goose Findhorn Bay, 22nd 28 Barnacle Goose Ardivot, 7 Pomarine Skua Lossiemouth, 1 Yellow-browed Warbler Portknockie, 23rd 1 Greater Canada Goose Windyridge, 1 Lesser Canada Goose Windyridge, 25th 1 Red Kite Moray, 30th 25000 Pink-footed Goose Windyridge, 1 White-fronted Goose Windyridge, 13 Barnacle Goose Drainie, 1 Arctic Tern Lossiemouth.

NOVEMBER

2nd 1 Little Gull Burghead, 3rd 2 Red-necked Grebe Nairn Bar, 17 Slavonian Grebe Burghead Bay, 5th 1 Swift Kingston, 1 Lapland Bunting Speymouth, 6th 9 Mandarin Elgin, 1 Arctic Tern Lossiemouth, 1 Chiffchaff Clochan, 9th 85 Scaup Kingsteps, 989 Eider Spey Bay, 10th 26 Waxwing Elgin, 13 Twite Nairn, 11th 1 House Martin Lossiemouth, 1 Chiffchaff Spey Bay, 15th 6 Surf Scoter Burghead Bay, 17th 1 Red Kite Moray, 1 Little Auk Cummington, 18th 2 Red-necked Grebe Burghead Bay, 19th 19 Pintail Findhorn Bay, 5 Surf Scoter Burghead Bay, 1 Swallow Lossiemouth, 250 Fieldfare Duffus, 21st 2 Mandarin Brodie Castle, 25th 1 Kingfisher Keith, 4 Waxwing Dufftown, 26th 3 Pomarine Skua Lossiemouth, 1 Glaucous Gull Burghead, 1 Glaucous Gull Lossiemouth, 44 Little Auk Lossiemouth, 12 Little Auk Burghead, 1 Twite Myreside, 27th 7 Brent Goose Covesea, 3 Surf Scoter Burghead Bay, 1 Pomarine Skua Burghead, 1 Mediterranean Gull Nairn, 1 Little Auk Lossiemouth, 3 Little Auk Burghead, 28th 8 Waxwing Aberlour, 12 Waxwing Lossiemouth.

DECEMBER

1st 3 Jack Snipe Culbin Bar, 2nd 1 Hen Harrier Auchindachy, 3rd 1 Glaucous Gull Tugnet, 10 Brambling Burnside of Enzie, 4th 7 Brent Goose Nairn Bar, 2785 Wigeon Lossiemouth, 1 Green-winged Teal Loch Spynie, 550 Eider Nairn Bar, 28 Snipe Nairn Bar, 37 Rock Pipit Portgordon-Strathlene, 2 Twite Nairn Bar, 74 Yellowhammer Windyridge, 7th 11 Slavonian Grebe Burghead Bay, 3 Surf Scoter Burghead Bay, 5 Water Rail Loch Spynie, 10th 34 Pintail Loch Loy, 1700 Common Gull Clochan, 11th 47 Whooper Swan Clochan, 12 Brent Goose Nairn, 200 Scaup Kingsteps, 1 Mediterranean Gull Nairn, 200 Goldfinch Spynie Palace, 18th 2 Red-necked Grebe Burghead Bay, 20th 40 Lesser Redpoll Maviston, 21st 1 Glaucous Gull Cullen, 22nd 13 Stock Dove Scarffbanks, 23rd 18 Waxwing Forres, 24th 1 Iceland Gull Loch Spynie, 26th 21 Ptarmigan Ben Rinnes, 50 Lesser Redpoll Dallas Dhu, 29th 1 Surf Scoter Culbin Bar.

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: No reports in the usual summering breeding area within Moray & Nairn but on a nearby loch just across the boundary was 1 on 23 Apr and a pair in breeding plumage on 13 Jun. At a different Moray locality, one pair bred but one adult and a juvenile were found dead, apparently predated (per RSPB). Unusually, 1 Loch Spynie 16 Jul (DAG); the only previous record there was in Apr 1998.

At the coast in late spring/summer were 6 Boar's Head Rock 14 May, 9 off Carse of Delnies 31 May (and 6 there 27 July), 2 west past Lossiemouth 22 Jul (and 1 on 9 Aug and 20 Aug) and 3 Kingston 27 Aug. In Burghead Bay, 7 on 11 May, 1 on 14 May, 1 on 24 May, 2 on 10 Jun and 2 on 30 Aug.

In early spring (Mar-Apr) best counts were in Burghead Bay where 14 on 3 Apr and 4 on 26 Apr. Elsewhere, 3 Findhorn 2 Apr, 3 Carse of Delnies 8 Mar and 3 Portknockie 19 Mar.

Best monthly counts offshore in each winter period were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Nairn/Delnies	1	nc		nc	nc	1	2
Nairn/Culbin Bars	2	2		nc	12	8	6
Burghead Bay	1	6		8	7	10	6
Spey Bay	2	nc		9	27	34	13

nc = no count received

Only small numbers frequented rocky coasts away from the shallow bays. Highest counts were 3 Portknockie 19 Mar and 3 Burghead-Hopeman 15 Oct.

Best passage on 11 Sep when 15 flew west past Lossiemouth in 90 mins.

Black-throated Diver *Gavia arctica*

Rare breeder. Scarce autumn and winter visitor offshore.

Monthly maxima in Burghead Bay were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
1	2	nc	82	nc	0	0	0	nc	1	1	nc

Further evidence of the large numbers congregating in the bay each spring. On 2 Apr there were 68 at the Findhorn end of the bay and a further 14 off the Roseisle Forest picnic area (AJ,RP). This combined count of 82 exceeds even the 78 counted there on 11 Apr 2004. There were at least 25 in the bay on 3 Apr but only 1 by 25 Apr (AJL). Also in spring were 8 off Lein, Kingston 14 May (MJHC).

At other times/places, 1 Spey Bay 29 Oct, 5 Nov and 8 Dec, 1 Nairn Bar 4 Dec and 1-2 birds off Lossiemouth on 30 Jan, 7 Feb, 19 Mar, 25 Mar and 8 May.

Great Northern Diver *Gavia immer*

Scarce visitor offshore.

In spring a remarkable 47 birds were counted in Spey Bay between Boar's Head Rock and Kingston on 14 May (MJHC). Most were in summer plumage and several were calling persistently. The presence of a small flock in eastern Spey Bay in spring has been noted on a few occasions since 2000, but nothing approaching these numbers.

The only other reports of 2 or more were 2 Lossiemouth 9 Jan and 25 Jan, 2 Cummington 4-10 May, 2 Kingston 5 Nov, 2 Burghead Bay 11 Jan and 3 there 6 Nov. Otherwise 18 reports of singles at 7 coastal localities between 9 Oct-11 May.

White-billed Diver *Gavia adamsii*

Rare visitor

One offshore between Burghead-Cummington between 3-7 May (MO'R,IR et al.). This record is still awaiting acceptance by British Birds Rarities Committee. There have been 5 previous records in Moray & Nairn: 1 Buckie harbour March-May 1972, 1 Findhorn Dec 1975 and another there in May 1974. Tideline corpses were found at Spey Bay in Jan 1955 and at Findhorn in Feb 1970.

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

Scarce breeder, scarce on the estuaries in winter.

Mid-winter: In January and December inland reports were 1 Windyridge 7 Jan (and 1 there 4 Dec), 1 Loch Spynie 9-12 Jan (and 1 there 4 Dec), up to 5 Loch na Bo in mid Jan and up to 6 there in Dec, 2 Cloddach quarry 9 Jan (1 on 23 Jan) and 2 Loch Flemington 13 Dec.

Present in spring/summer (*italics* = proved breeding) at *Ardclach*, Brodie Castle pond, *Cloddach quarry*, *Fochabers Lake*, Gilston, Loch Flemington, Loch na Bo, *Loch of Blairs (3 pairs)*, *Loch Loy*, *Loch Oire (2 pairs)*, *Loch Spynie*, Stoneyford Pond (Rafford) and *Windyridge*.

Best post-breeding congregations in late summer/autumn were at Loch Spynie (max 16 on 2 Aug, rising to an exceptional 35 by 2 Sep), Loch Oire (19 on 12 Aug, still 14 on 16 Sep), Loch na Bo (max 15 on 22 Aug, still 12 on 18 Oct) and Loch Flemington where 15 on 2 Oct

Coastal in winter: 1 Lossie estuary 2-9 Jan and 2 there 12 Dec, 1-2 Nairn harbour in Dec, 1 Kingston Jan-Feb (2 on 9 Jan), 6 Findhorn Bay (Kincorth/Binsness) 23 Jan.

Red-necked Grebe *Podiceps grisegina**Very scarce migrant and winter visitor.*

Most records in Burghead Bay where seen on 11 Jan, 28 Sep, 11 Oct (2), 13 Oct (5 off Findhorn dunes), 20 Oct, 5 Nov, 18-19 Nov (2), 6 Dec and 18 Dec (2) (AJ,AJL,MJHC). Elsewhere 2 Nairn Bar 3 Nov (RPC) and 1 Nairn 9 Oct (SE).

Slavonian Grebe *Podiceps auritus**Rare breeder. Scarce offshore in winter.*

Breeding: 8 pairs held territory but no young were raised.

Site 2 – First one back 21 Mar, 5 pairs by 5 Apr. In mid May 6 pairs (and 1 single) but sadly no young were raised.

Site 4 – Two pairs in Jun, one staying into mid Jul. No nesting attempt took place.

Site 8 – One pair 16 Apr but not subsequently.

Site 12 – One pair 14 Jun but not earlier or later in the season. This is the first record at this site.

The table below shows the number of sites occupied by territorial pairs, the total number of territorial pairs and the number of young raised to fledging since 1994.

	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Sites	5	4	3	4	3	3	2	3	4	2	2	2
Pairs	11	13	8	12	9	8	3	7	10	8	4	8
Young	7	12	2	2	5-6	1	3	11	6	9	7	0

Although the number of pairs remains relatively high the lack of productivity is clearly a concern.

Inland in autumn/winter were 1 Loch Spynie 16-19 Oct and 1 Loch Flemington 16 Jan-27 Mar.

Coastal: Monthly maxima in Burghead Bay were:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2 (11 th)	1 (14 th)	5 (6 th)	19 (2 nd)	2 (24 th)	12 (11 th)	17 (3 rd)	11 (7 th)

(many obs.)

Elsewhere, 2 Burghead-Cummingston 20 Oct (1 there 14 Jan), 2 Culbin Bar 8 Dec, 1 Nairn Bar 16 Oct and 1 Lossiemouth 9 Jan, 19 Mar and 14 Aug.



Slavonian Grebes, Moray 20 April 2004 (© Andy Jensen)

Fulmar *Fulmarus glacialis*

Common breeder, very common offshore.

Breeding: After no reports last year, a breeding colony with 75 birds counted, in the Cullen area (DT), was the only report this year, although success was not indicated.

Passage: Five counts over 100 were noted, with 374 west past Lossiemouth in 2 hours on 23 Jul (AJ) the first of the year. On 7 Aug, a marked passage was noted past the Moray coast, with 122 west past Strathlene in 15 mins (MJHC) and 735 west past Lossiemouth in 1 hour (DAG), the highest individual count here since 2000. 362 west in 3 hours past Lossiemouth on 8 Sep (JDHM) was noted, with approximately 600 west in an hour the following day (AJ).

Sooty Shearwater *Puffinus griseus*

Very scarce migrant in late summer and autumn.

After the first blank year since 1993 in 2004, a real return to form for this species, with the third highest annual numbers on record in Moray & Nairn (after 42 in 1988 and 57 in 2001). An exceptionally early individual was seen on 5 Jun far offshore in Burghead Bay (AJL) – this species has previously only been recorded in the period Aug-Nov before in the county. On more typical dates, 1 flew west past Lossiemouth on 28 Aug (DAG) and 3 flew east early am on 4 Sep (AJ), with another west later that day (DAG). Finally, 17 east past Lossiemouth in 1.5 hours on 11 Sep, the day after a large movement of this species in the North Sea, particularly the Aberdeenshire coast, was the last record of the year (AJ).

Manx Shearwater *Puffinus puffinus*

Scarce offshore in summer and autumn.

A very good year for this species, with 250 birds sighted in total. The first of the year was one off Lossiemouth on 8 Apr (DAG), the earliest record since one in Feb 1993. Birds were almost entirely seen from Lossiemouth, with peak counts being 51 west in two hours on 23 Jul (AJ, DAG), 17 west in 1.5 hours on 7 Aug (DAG), 14 west on 9 Aug (AJ), and finally 61 past in 1.5 hours early am on Sep 11 (AJ), which as with Sooty Shearwater, followed a large movement off the Aberdeenshire coast the previous day.

Balearic Shearwater *Puffinus mauretanicus*

Rare visitor

One west close past Lossiemouth harbour early a.m. on 14 Aug (AJ), was the 4th record for Moray & Nairn (three birds in 2000). In addition, another probable Balearic Shearwater was seen past east on 4 Sep from the same site, but was too distant for certain identification (AJ).

Storm Petrel *Hydrobates pelagicus*

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

One bird flew east past Kingston on 16 Aug (MJHC), and two were lingering offshore from Strathlene late in the evening on 19 Aug (AJ). An improvement on last year's single sighting.

Gannet *Morus bassanus*

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

Only small numbers noted offshore this year, with peak counts in the autumn of 77 off Carse of Delnies on 27 Jul (LSc), 74 west in 30 mins off Lossiemouth on 1 Oct and 92 east in 45 mins on 12 Oct from the same site (JDHM).

Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

Scarce resident and common winter visitor.

Breeding: After no records in 2004, a pair on a ledge at Covesea on 5 Jun was a possible indication of breeding (MJHC).

Most numerous during the year at Halliman Skerries, with peak counts of 34 on 22 Mar, 42 on 13 Aug, 49 on 17 Aug, 54 on 2 Sep and 73 on 4 Oct (JDHM). Elsewhere, 38 at Strathlene on 23 Aug was the highest count (JDHM).

Birds showing characteristics of the continental race *P.c.sinensis* were again at Loch Spynie, but only noted on two dates this year after last years good showing. A bird noted on 3 Jan, relates to the returning individual, which was distinctively small and had a bright orange gular patch (see MNBR 1999 pp.84-92). In the second winter period, a 1st winter bird was noted on 24 Dec (RP).

Shag *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

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

Breeding: Another small increase on the Portknockie cliffs with 49 occupied nests at Bow Fiddle Rock on 8 Jun (31 in 2001, 40 in 2002, 43 in 2003 and 47 in 2004) (MJHC). 13 occupied nests at Covesea on 5 Jun (up from 10 in 2004) (MJHC) and 8 occupied nests on the stack at Tronach Head with large downy young on 8 Jul (up from 7 in 2004) (MJHC).

Winter counts: After last years exceptional counts roosting at Bow Fiddle Rock in both winter periods, there were no reports of numbers from here this year. The highest count of the year was of 160 at Cullen on 2 Aug (DT).

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

Fairly common resident breeder.

Heronries: Numbers of occupied nests were 4 Aberlour (AE,IP), 1 Auchbreck (IP), 2 Connage (IP), 6-9 Nether Dallachy (IP), 12 Loch Spynie (MJHC), 16-20 Binsness (in 2 groups of 13-16 and 3-4) (IP), 2-3 Balnellan (Cragganmore) (IP), 24-26 Low Wood (Kingsteps) (IP), 7-8 Hillockhead (Keith) (IP), 5 Kinermony (AE,IP) and 1 Gardenhead (Grange) (IP)

Monthly maxima on Lossie estuary were:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
nc	nc	nc	1	2	4	10	11	16	9	nc	4

Other counts of 5 or more together (away from heronries) were at Findhorn Bay (14 on 23 Jan, 16 on 8 July, 35 on 20 Aug, 22 on 4 Sept, 14 on 4 Dec) and Kingston (8 on 22 Aug, 7 on 10 Sept, 6 on 18 Dec).

On rocky shores were 3 Strathlene 23 Aug, 2 Buckie 16 Oct, 1 Portknockie 21 Oct, 1-2 Burghead on 4 autumn/winter dates and 2 on Covesea cliff ledges 3 Sep. Furthest upcountry in winter were 2 Loch Allan, Dava 19 Nov.

Mute Swan *Cygnus olor*

Scarce resident breeder. Short-distance migrant. Fairly common in winter.

Breeding: A total of 26 pairs were reported apparently occupying territories. Two pairs were in new sites: Stoneyford Pond and Maryfield. A total of 18 pairs produced 65 young; the majority of which appear to have fledged. The number of pairs is the highest since Moray & Nairn Bird Report (MNBR) began in 1985.

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

Year	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Pairs	10	14	16	15	15	15	12	17	11	13	18
Young fledged	24	35	50	31	68	51	54	56	52	67	65
Mean	2.4	2.5	3.1	2.1	4.5	3.4	4.5	3.3	4.7	5.2	3.6

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
Loch Flemington	4	3	3			Breeders			nc	8	nc	30
Loch Loy	14	50	3			Breeders			1	1	7	17
Findhorn		1	5					1	13	32		6
Lossie estuary	3	2	4	2	2	2	3	0	5	8	4	2
Loch Spynie	79	58	19			Breeders			13	24	28	47
Loch na Bo	12	4	4			Breeders			2	nc	1	nc
Cloddach	4	nc	2			Breeders			7	9	16	22
Kingston	1	2	2			Breeders			9	nc	nc	nc

High numbers remained at Loch Spynie in the early part of the year from 2004. Non-breeding flocks were counted at Nairn (max. 14 on 17 Apr) and Findhorn Bay (max. 37 on 3 Jun). Unusual records included 3 flying down RAF Kinloss runway 4 Oct and 6 Cooper Park, Elgin 24-28 Jan.

Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus*

Fairly common migrant and winter visitor.

Winter-spring: In Nairn District, only two sites were used this year: Loch Loy (max. 4 on 17 Jan) and Cran Loch (7 on 28 Feb). In Moray, flocks were present at 14 sites, all were groups of less than 10 except: 30 Hatton 2 Jan, 17 Silverhills 3 Jan, 16 Cloddach 3 Jan, 33 Westerfolds 4 Jan, 19 Damhead 5 Jan, 20 East Grange 11 Jan, 16 Mid Mains 13 Jan, 16 Gilston 16 Jan, 10 Pitairlie 20 Feb & 3 Mar and 23 Lein (Kingston) 23 Mar.

Spring: A relatively late bird was present on the Miltoduff pool 10-11 May.

Autumn: First flock, seen at Loch Spynie, was 7 on 27 Sep. No other Sep flocks were seen. Two flocks arrived in early October: 8 Findhorn Bay on 1st and 6 Loch Spynie on 2nd. A further 12 flocks arrived throughout the month, the largest was 27 on 30th & 31st, though differing counts of adult/juveniles suggests that three flocks were involved: Gilston (17 ads, 10 juvs), Duffus (15 ads, 12 juvs) and Crosslots (12 ads, 15 juvs). In November, flocks with 10 or more individuals were seen at 7 sites: 10 Forres 2nd, 12 East Grange 4th, 25 Crosslots 4th, 18 Surradale 9th, 10 Cloddach quarry 20th, max. 16 Clochan 20th and 18 Loch na Bo 30th.

Winter (December): In Nairn District, 1 site held a flock: Loch Loy (max. 14 on 10th). In Moray, seen at 7 sites: Muirton (4th-8th, max. 9 on 5th), Loch Spynie (7th-30th, max. 24 on 8th), Loch na Bo (19th-27th, max 19 on 20th), Gilston (18th-28th, max. 9), Dyke (9 on 17th), Cloddach quarry (max. 19 on 27th) and Clochan (10th-31st, max. 47 on 11th).

Pink-footed Goose *Anser brachyrhynchus*

Very common migrant, increasing in winter.

Winter (January-mid March): No flocks reported from Nairn District. The only submitted record during this period was a single on Nairn Bar 12 Feb. Most flocks reported in Moray were relatively small compared with recent years. Flocks over 1000 included: 3000 South Darkland 8 Jan, 2000 Barmuckity 16 & 29 Jan, 1400 Roseisle 23 Feb, 1500 Wester Colfield 17 Mar and 1000 Bracobrae 29 Mar.

Spring passage: Migration was recorded from Ben Aigan (50 north-west on 10 Apr) and Loch Spynie (100 west on 22 Apr). In May, 2 flocks were seen flying northwest at Lossiemouth (45 on 2nd, 100 on 12th).

Summer: One Miltonduff pool 24 & 29 Jun.

Autumn: The first flock (c10) was heard over Elgin on 7 Sep: this is the earliest arrival date since publication of MNBR began in 1985. Followed by 9 flocks on 8th, 5 flocks on 9th and 1 flock on 10 Sep. Typically, most skeins arrived in late Sep and early Oct. The largest gathering was in excess of an estimated 30000 in the Loch Spynie area on 30 Oct: estimates included 25000 Windyridge (AJ) and 17900 Pitgaveny (MJHC). Other large flocks (exceeding 5000) included over 10000 Miltonhill 15 Oct and max. 7500 Findhorn Bay 23 Oct.

The high numbers in the Loch Spynie area around the end of October and early November are reflected in the numbers entering the roost. This is the fourth consecutive year with very large peak counts have occurred at the roost in November:

October			November	
8 th	27 th	30 th	5 th	20 th
5500	11700	12300	23000	5400

At Windyridge, sightings of leucistic individuals involved 1 on 29 Oct and 2 on 30 Oct.

Winter: A reduction in the number of large flocks submitted, or possibly a reduction in the number of birds wintering in the area? Flocks were smaller than recent years, those over 1000 included: 1500 Salterhill 4 Nov, 3000 Mid Mains 18 Nov, 6000 Findhorn 30 Nov, 3000 Lein, Kingston 7 Dec and 5000 Meft 10 Dec.

White-fronted Goose *Anser albifrons*

Very scarce winter visitor.

This was the poorest year for records of the Greenland race *A.a.flavirostris* since publication of MNBR began in 1985. One individual could possibly account for all records: Miltonhill 4 Apr (RFH), Coltfoot 26 Sep (RFH) and Windyridge 30 Oct (AJ).

Greylag Goose *Anser anser*

Very common winter visitor.

Winter-Spring: Flocks containing 500 or more birds were recorded at 4 sites (max. counts only): 1200 Gilston 13 & 16 Jan, 700 Mosstowie 13 Jan, 700 (roost) Loch Spynie 13 Jan and 1300 Western Manbeen 27 Feb.

Summer: One breeding record from the River Dorback, Dava involved a nest, with a dead adult nearby, on 2 May (ISS). No breeding data received from Lochindorb, though 67 adults present on 26 Apr (RP). Elsewhere during the summer: 2-3 (max. 4 on 2 Jul) were at the Miltonduff pool 13 May-30 Jul. and 3 Kingston 15-21 Aug.

Autumn: First flock was 13 Findhorn Bay 24 Sep. In October, flocks over 100 (max. counts) were recorded at Findhorn (100 on 23rd), Loch Spynie (800 on 24th), Drainie (700 on 30th) and Windyridge (100 on 30th).

Roost counts at Loch Spynie peaked in early November:

October		November		December
8 th	30 th	5 th	20 th	10 th
300	1100	2600	1600	900

No winter flocks exceeded 500 this year except counts from Loch Spynie.

Snow Goose *Anser caerulescens**Vagrant or escape.*

The first record of a blue morph Snow Goose occurred in the Miltonhill area when an adult was present from 27 Sep-11 Oct (RFH *et al.*). Since 1967 records of white morph Snow Goose have occurred on 8 occasions (minimum of 13 birds), with the last occurrence in 1993.



Snow Goose (blue morph), Coltfoot 4 October 2005 (© Andy Jensen)

Canada Goose *Branta canadensis**Scarce migrant in summer, rare in winter.*

In 2005, the British Ornithologists' Union Records Committee (BOURC) split 'Canada' Goose into two species. Greater Canada Goose contains 7 subspecies, and includes Atlantic Canada Goose *B.c.canadensis* that forms part of the annual moult migration to the Beaulieu and Cromarty Firths.

No winter records were received this year; all were seen during the summer to late autumn period.

Summer: 21 west near Whiteness Head 31 May (LSc), 80 north-west Findhorn Bay 3 Jun (AJ), 7 Miltonduff pool 6 Jun (AJ,RP), 1 south Aberlour 7 Jun (AE), 26 west Findhorn Bay 16 Jun (AJL) and 46 west Culbin Bar 22 Jul (ISS).

Autumn: 1 Montgrew 26 Aug (MM), 1 Kingston 31 Aug (JDHM), 1 Miltonhill area 28-29 Sep (AJL,DAG), 5 Findhorn Bay 18 Oct (GG) and 32 south Findhorn Bay 21 Oct (AJL).

A medium race individual of the subspecies *B.c.parvipes* was seen in a damp field between Windyridge and Loch Spynie on 23 Oct with a Richardson's Goose *B.h.hutchinsii* (AJ,RP). This record has been submitted to BBRC. These two birds were later seen and photographed at Loch of Strathbeg.

Lesser Canada Goose *Branta hutchinsii**Vagrant or escape.*

Split from Greater Canada Goose by BOURC in 2005. Lesser Canada Goose contains 5 subspecies, though one of these is thought to be extinct.

An individual of subspecies *B.h.hutchinsii* (known as **Richardson's Goose**) was seen in a damp field between Windyridge and Loch Spynie on 23 Oct with a medium-sized Greater Canada Goose *B.c.parvipes* (AJ,RP). This record has been submitted to British Birds Rarities Committee. These two birds were later seen and photographed at Loch of Strathbeg.

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

Winter-spring: Singles were seen at Lossiemouth harbour (feeding on weed on the harbour wall) 14 Jan, Spey Bay 16 Jan (possibly Lossiemouth bird), Miltonhill 16 Jan and Roseisle 21 Feb (possibly Miltonhill bird).

Autumn: The first of this period were 3 Findhorn Bay 24 Sep, followed in the Miltonhill area by 1 on 27th, 4 on 28th and 3 on 29th Sep. A small influx developed in October with about 250 birds recorded. Records occurred at Nairn Bar (21 on 16th), Findhorn Bay (20th-24th; max. 9 on 23rd), the Miltonhill area (mostly singles 4th-15th; max. 9 on 9th & 10th), Wester Manbeen (1 on 22nd), Duffus (10 on 22nd), Drainie (29th-30th; max. 13 on 30th), Loch Spynie area (groups present 23rd-30th; max. 28 on 22nd at Ardivot), Portgordon-Strathlene (birds flying east included 4 on 15th, 10 & 25 on 16th, 4 on 22nd, otherwise 1 on rocks 16th and 4 over Portknockie on 18th).

Winter: No records received.

Brent Goose *Branta bernicla**Scarce migrant and winter visitor.*

All but one of the records were assigned to the pale-bellied race *B.b.hrota*. Winter: The regular wintering group was again present in the Nairn area during Feb-Mar, though numbers have declined to only a maximum count of 9 this year, compared to a high of 48 in 2003. Seen at Nairn on 22 Jan (7) and 15 Feb (9), also on Nairn Bar 23 Jan (7) and 12 Feb (9).

Autumn passage period (Sep-Oct): In Sep, seen at Lossiemouth (8 east on 11th), Lossie estuary (1 1stW on 23rd) and Earnside, Alves (1 on 27th). In October 1 west Lossiemouth on 2nd.

Winter: A single was seen in the Kingston/Spey Bay area on 5 Nov & 6 Dec and Findhorn Bay 28 Dec. On 27 Nov a group of 7 were seen flying west past Covesea and Burghead, probably the same birds were on Nairn Bar 4 Dec. By 11 Dec, the Nairn flock had increased to 12.

The only record of the dark-bellied race *B.b.bernicla* was 1 Burgie 6 Feb (RFH).

[Muscovy Duck *Cairina moschata**Escape.*

A single was recorded at the Brodie Castle pond on 21 Nov and 19 Dec.]

Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna**Fairly common spring and summer visitor and scarce breeder.*

Breeding: 3 juveniles were seen at Kingston 19 & 21 Aug. A pair was present at Montgrew 29 Mar, 1-2 birds were present at the Miltonduff pool 4-24 Jun and 1 Mosstowie 26 May.

Best monthly counts at coastal sites were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Nairn & Culbin Bars	36	nc	nc	2	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	59
Findhorn Bay	49	114	22	10	2	104	nc	9	12	7	nc	nc
Lossie estuary	0	9	0	2	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kingston	4	5	6	8	5	5	nc	3	3	nc	1	nc

Inland: Seen at Loch Flemington (1 on 27 Mar), Roseisle (16 Mar-11 Apr; max. 8 on 11 Apr), Drainie (5 on 13 & 18 Feb), Loch Spynie (1 on 13 Jan-14 May) and Clochan (2-29 Mar: max. 7 on 13th).

[Wood Duck *Aix sponsa**Escape.*

A group consisting of 2 males, 1 female was seen on the River Lossie near the Leisure Centre, Elgin 23 Jan (RP,AJ). The female was aberrantly coloured, being a light tan colour, and was closely associating with a male Mandarin. A male was still on the River Lossie, associating with Mandarins, on 6 Nov (MJHC).]

Mandarin *Aix galericulata**Probable escape or feral origin.*

Seen at four sites in 2005: Kilravock Castle, Brodie, Elgin and Kingston.

Kilravock Castle, Croy: A pair on the pond 17 Mar (SB).

Brodie Castle: 2 on the pond 21 Nov (JDHM).

Elgin area: Since 2002 a small group has persisted on the River Lossie around the Old Mills/Leisure Centre/Cooper Park area. On the River Lossie a male on 23 Jan was associating with a group of 3 Wood Ducks (RP, AJ), a male (at Old Mills) 27 Feb (AJ) and a group of 3 males, 2 females on 20 Mar (RP). The group increased to 9 males (3 leucistic) on 6 Nov (MJHC). On the Cooper Park pond a maximum of 4 on 3 Jul & 14 Aug (JDHM).

Kingston: A single on 15 May & 8 Jun (JPr).

Wigeon *Anas penelope**Very common winter visitor and rare breeder.*

Breeding: No confirmed breeding reported from the traditional breeding area in west Moray.

Non-breeders in summer (May-Jul): Just outside this period, but in the traditional breeding area, were a pair and 3MM on 26 Apr (RP). Elsewhere, 1M Lein, Kingston 7 Jul, 3MM Milntonduff pool 16 Jun and 33 Loch Spynie 26 Jul.

Winter: Monthly maximum counts at main coastal sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr		Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Nairn/Culbin Bars	553	nc	nc	nc		nc	94	nc	241
Findhorn Bay	1170	2200	6	nc		1000	900	nc	425
Lossie estuary	2103	1700	300	3		120	2000	2321	2785
Kingston	150	200	80	3		70	50	120	210

The count at Lossie estuary of 2785 (on 4 Dec) is the largest recorded at this site (RP). Also present through both winter periods was the 'white-headed' female, returning for its 5th winter (it was also seen at Loch Spynie).

Maximum counts (over 100) at other coastal sites included: 210 Burghead Bay 11 Jan and 120 Delnies 8 Mar.

On freshwater:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr		Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Loch Flemington	383	620	200	nc		nc	nc	150	nc	381
Loch Loy	280	480	nc	nc		nc	nc	12	nc	300
Loch Spynie	2070	360	320	170		33	3	149	1200	1300
Gilston	180	340	250	nc		nc	nc	nc	nc	350
Cloddach quarry	767	319	110	1		nc	1	160	258	204
Loch Oire	37	77	83	9		nc	22	279	130	38
Loch na Bo	239	350	121	nc		nc	14	nc	3	320

Maximum counts (over 100) at other inland sites included 180 Tarras 17 Mar.

American Wigeon *Anas americana**Vagrant.*

An adult male on the Lossie estuary was present from 21 Jan-3 Feb (RP *et al.*). The last record from this site was 2001. This is about the 8th individual (not including known returning birds) for the Districts.



American Wigeon (adult male), Lossie estuary 22 January 2005 (© Andy Jensen)

[Chiloe Wigeon *Anas sibilatrix**Escape.*

An adult was on the Lossie estuary 10 Oct (DAG) and the regular adult male remained at Kingston throughout the year (many obs.).]

Gadwall *Anas strepera**Scarce visitor.*

In the early part of the year records of a single male were received from Loch Spynie on 25 & 29 Jan and 3 Apr (AJ,RP). A pair was present on Spynie Canal 2-4 Apr, followed by a pair on Loch Spynie 19 Apr (AJ), increasing to 4MM, 2FF on 22 Apr (JDHM) and 3 pairs on 14 May (RP,JDHM,MJHC). Also on 14 May, a pair was seen at Kingston (MJHC).

Teal *Anas crecca**Scarce breeder and very common winter visitor.*

Breeding: Two broods (2, 1) seen at Lochs of Bogmussach 5 Jun (JDHM).

Potential breeding sites occupied during the breeding season included the Miltonduff pool, Loch na Bo and Kingston.

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

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Nairn/Culbin Bars	19	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	9	nc	2
Loch Loy	24	35	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	22	72
Findhorn Bay	650	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	578
Lossie estuary	2	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	0
Gilston	40	120	35	nc	nc	nc	22	62	160
Loch Spynie	500	74	100	167	nc	nc	11	200	140
Cloddach quarry	137	112	2	4	nc	18	17	190	66
Loch Oire	6	nc	2	nc	2	nc	nc	22	nc
Loch na Bo	9	2	6	2	nc	nc	nc	nc	28
Kingston	110	27	30	nc	80	150	10	83	317

Other sites holding over 50 birds were: Loch Flemington (51 on 12 Feb), Miltonduff pool (90 on 5 Sep) and Montgrew (50 on 16 Sep).

Green-winged Teal *Anas carolinensis*

Vagrant.

Single adult males were reported from Loch Flemington 15 Jan (ID) and Loch Spynie 4-11 Dec (DAG,RP *et al.*). These constitute the 12th and 13th records for the Districts.

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*

Common resident breeder and very common winter visitor.

Breeding: The mean brood size from 27 broods was 5.3 chicks.

Best monthly flocks in regularly counted areas were:

Freshwater:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Loch Loy	nc	23	nc	nc	nc	nc	10	19	84	2	46	nc
Brodie Castle	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	62	73	56	82	82
Loch Spynie	48	112	24	6	35	86	324	93	77	79	15	147
Cloddach quarry	144	39	7	16	nc	nc	71	142	226	182	168	136
Loch Oire	32	16	24	14	12	nc	44	57	23	nc	124	12
Loch na Bo	172	66	62	2	nc	nc	nc	18	19	66	88	92

Other freshwater sites holding more than 50 birds were: Loch Park (200 on 8 Jan), Garmouth viaduct-Tugnet (59 on 19 Jan), Cran Loch (69 on 28 Feb), Lower Bogrotten (165 on 10 Aug), Miltonduff pool (55 on 6 Sep), Montgrew (210 on 16 Sep), Loch of Blairs (78 on 19 Sep), Windyridge (62 on 19 Oct), Newmill (Auldearn) (76 on 1 Nov), Fochabers Lake (68 on 6 Nov), Loch of Boath (105 on 9 Nov) and Gilston (70 on 15 & 21 Dec).

Coastal sites:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Nairn/Culbin Bars	45	26	nc	nc	nc	47	nc	76
Findhorn Bay	326	10	nc	66	nc	5	nc	128
Lossie estuary	16	4	0	20	25	0	0	3
Kingston	75	100	27	111	70	20	70	nc
Portgordon-Strathlene	nc	25	nc	nc	nc	16	nc	17

Other coastal sites holding more than 50 birds were: Nairn estuary (53 on 10 Nov) and Burghead Bay (128 on 11 Jan).

Pintail *Anas acuta*

Scarce winter visitor and migrant. Has bred.

Present at 11 sites.

Nairn Bar: 6 on 4 Dec (AY).

Culbin Bar: 8 on 29 Dec (AJL).

Loch Loy: 2MM, 3FF on 17 Jan, 14MM, 20FF on 10 Dec and 7MM, 5FF on 20 Dec (JDHM).

Cran Loch: 1M on 28 Feb (JDHM).

Findhorn Bay: Present from Jan-Apr then Oct-Dec, maximum count was 19 on 9 Oct (AJ) and 8MM, 11FF on 19 Nov (DAG).

Loch Spynie: Present from 9-16 Jan, maximum 13MM, 5FF on 9 Jan (AJ), declined rapidly to 1-3 birds on remaining dates.

Loch na Bo: 1M on 21 Jan (JDHM).

Loch Oire: 1F on 17 Oct (EH).

Kingston/Tugnet: 1M, 1F on 26 Mar (MJHC), 2FF on 5 Nov (MJHC,AJ) and 1F on 13 Nov (MJHC).

Portgordon: The regular female was again at the mouth of the Gollachy Burn and has now returned for four successive years. Present on 23 Jan, 11 Feb, 6 Mar and 16 Oct (MJHC,RP,AJ).

Garganey *Anas querquedula*

Rare in spring.

A pair was present on 14 May at Loch Spynie (DAG *et al.*).

Shoveler *Anas clypeata*

Scarce migrant and occasional breeder.

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	2	1	1	8	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Females	1	0	0	4	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Sex?	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Max. total	3	1	1	12	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1

Elsewhere, 1M Gilston 27 Mar and 1 Loch Oire 1-9 Feb.

Pochard *Aythya ferina*

Fairly common winter visitor and occasional breeder.

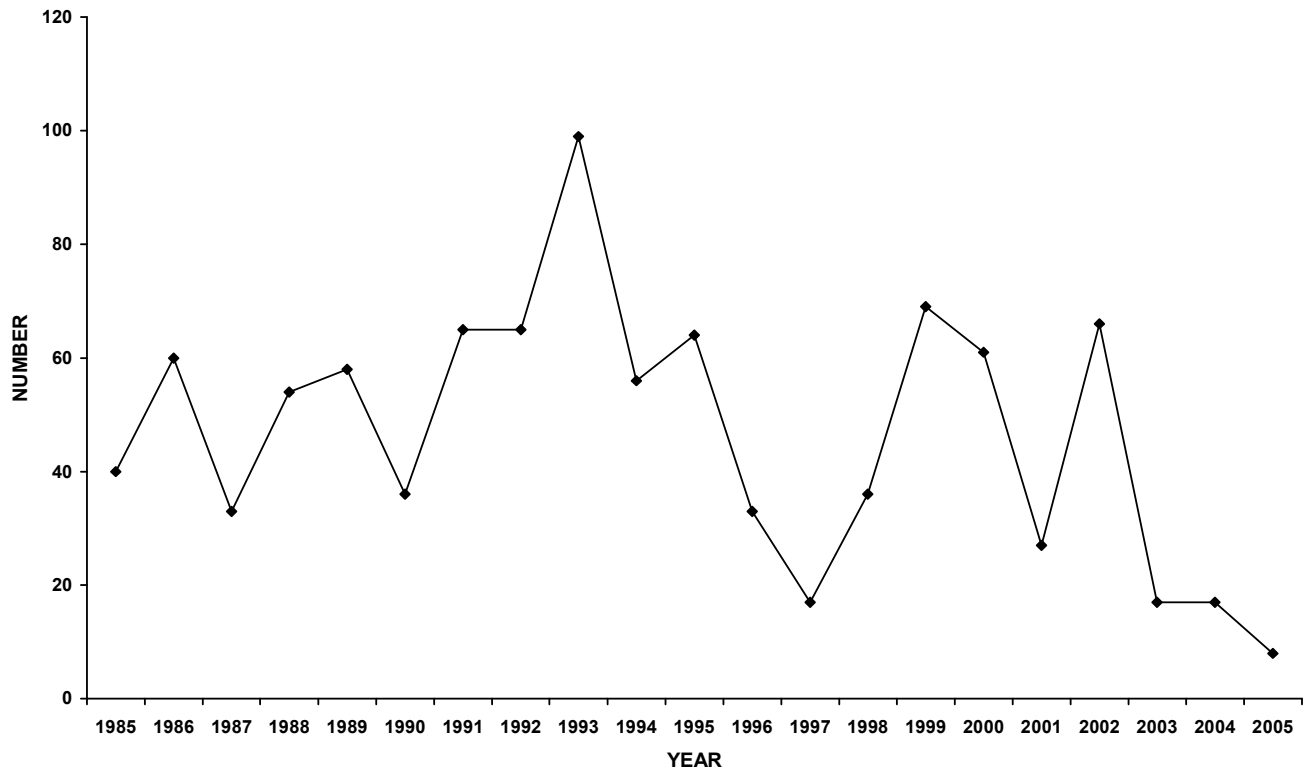
Very low numbers were recorded overall, with records received from 5 sites.

Erratic numbers at Loch Spynie in recent years. However, relatively low over the last three years: 8 in Dec is the lowest winter total at the loch since publication of MNBR began in 1985.

Maximum monthly counts at Loch Spynie were:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
5	1	3	2	0	0	4	2	nc	2	1	8

Winter maxima at Loch Spynie since 1985:



Elsewhere:

Loch Flemington: 1 on 16 Oct.

Cloddach quarry: 1 on 2 & 9 Oct and 20 Nov.

Loch na Bo: Present from 2 Jan-19 Mar (max. 22 on 21 Jan) and 18 Oct-21 Dec (max. 15 on 27 Dec).

Loch Oire: 5 on 19 Feb, and more unusually 1 on 12 Jun.

Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*

Scarce breeder and common winter visitor.

Breeding: The mean brood size from 19 broods was 5.4 chicks. Broods were seen at Stoneyford, Inchstelly, Cloddach quarry, Cooper Park (Elgin), Windyridge, Loch Spynie and Loch Oire.

Other records during summer months included: 10 Dallas 5 Jun.

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

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Loch Flemington	12	6	15	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	17	nc	5
Loch Loy	7	12	nc	nc	nc	nc	5	nc	nc	nc	10	4
Brodie Castle	15	12	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	1	1	3	4	6
Windy-ridge	nc	8	11	89	56	14	7	nc	nc	13	nc	2
Loch Spynie	29	21	74	92	31	20	23	118	71	95	197	88
Cloddach quarry	13	30	18	27	nc	30	24	22	20	46	11	19
Cooper Park	56	57	57	26	17	13	7	18	15	17	41	36
Loch na Bo	78	45	nc	52	nc	nc	nc	67	52	23	47	54
Loch Oire	14	17	14	31	12	59	42	8	10	nc	8	1
Fochabers Lake	11	14	10	nc	nc	1	nc	nc	15	nc	12	nc
Kingston	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	1	4	1	44	10	4	nc

Elsewhere, 18 Newmill (Auldearn) 10 Nov was the only count exceeding 10.

Unusual records involved 11 Burghead Bay 24 Sep (MJHC) and 2 Nairn Bar 4 Dec (AY).

Scaup *Aythya marila*

Scarce winter visitor.

Inland records: 1F Loch Spynie 26 Nov-11 Dec (JDHM,AJ,HH).

Coastal records:

Delnies: 5MM 18 Sep (MJHC).

Nairn area: The large numbers recorded off Nairn/Kingsteps in 2004 continued into 2005: 220 on 13 Jan (ID), 200 on 23 Jan (DJ) and 250 on 15 Feb (RPC). In the later winter period off Kingsteps 85 on 9 Nov (ID) quickly increased to 200 on 11 Dec (AY).

Findhorn Bay: 1F on 24 Aug (JH) and 5 on 27 Sep.

Burghead Bay: Frequently 1-4 birds present between 24 Sep-5 Nov. Maximum 46 on 24 Sep (MJHC), 7MM, 5FF on 9 Oct (AJ), 16 west on 15 Oct (ISS) and 1M, 10FF off Roseisle (RPr).

Lossiemouth: 1M west on 25 Jul (AJ).

Kingston: Present on 6 days between 27 May-10 Sep, usually a single female, but 2 on 15 Jun and 1M, 1F on 10 Sep.

Eider *Somateria mollissima*

Scarce breeder, very common offshore.

Breeding: 2 broods reported, of which the mean brood size was 2.5 chicks. Mean brood sizes between 1988-2005 have remained fairly constant, ranging between 2.1-4.0 chicks. Breeding was also confirmed on Culbin Bar where a predated egg was found.

Mean number of chicks calculated from distinct broods 1995-2005:

Year	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Broods	9	8	19	16	10	9	8	12	5	3	2
Mean	3.3	3.9	3.2	3.4	2.1	3.2	2.4	2.9	2.4	2.3	2.5

Counts over 100 (max.) were 989 Spey Bay 9 Nov, 550 Nairn Bar 4 Dec, 386 Lossiemouth 7 Dec, 348 Burghead-Hopeman 14 Dec, 219 Delnies 18 Mar, 200 Burghead 25 Jan, 175 Culbin Bar 16 Oct and 130 off Lossie Forest 12 Dec.

Northern Eider *S.m.borealis*: An adult male showing characteristics of this distinctive northern race was seen off Nairn golf course, with the King Eider, on 8-9 Oct (AJ, RP). This record has been submitted to

BBRC. It is the second record for the Districts following a male off Tugnet 23-24 Apr & 5 May 2000, though details of this record have still to be submitted. There is currently only one accepted record of this race in Britain (a tideline corpse found 9 Feb 1978 at Musselburgh), however subsequent records are under consideration.

King Eider *Somateria spectabilis*

Rare visitor.

A male, in eclipse plumage, was found off Nairn golf course on 24-27 Aug, and again from 2-11 Oct (MJHC,AJ,RP et al.). The last record for Moray & Nairn was in 2001 (relating to the long-staying male off Hopeman-Lossiemouth).



King Eider (eclipse male), Nairn 9 October 2005 (© Andy Jensen)

Long-tailed Duck *Clangula hyemalis*

Very common winter visitor offshore.

Maximum monthly counts were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Oct	Nov	Dec
Nairn Bar	1069	159	nc	nc	193	672	628
Culbin Bar	415	590	nc	nc	39	14	342
Burghead Bay	1887	nc	12	nc	nc	2800	6219
Burghead	nc	250	nc	nc	400	nc	700
Burghead-Hopeman	2126	nc	nc	nc	128	6	43
Lossiemouth	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc
Spey Bay	19	nc	nc	nc	nc	500	664

Counts elsewhere exceeding 500 included: 2032 Delnies 8 Mar and 1000 Burghead-Cummingston 27 Apr. Still 700 Burghead Bay 7 May.

Inland, singles were recorded at Windyridge (2 & 24 Mar, 18 Aug and 28 Sep) and Loch Spynie (1 Mar). These were probably the same bird.

Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra*

Very common winter visitor, small numbers in summer.

Maximum counts were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Nairn Bar	1983	1510	nc	nc	nc	430	3053	903
Culbin Bar	558	780	nc	nc	nc	178	60	75
Burghead Bay	353	44	800	nc	2325	1570	2540	2536

A combined count at Nairn/Culbin Bars on 3 Jan totalled 3500.

Coastal summer records: 8 Burghead 5 Jun (SE).

The presumed hybrid Common × Surf Scoter, first reported in 1995, was seen in Burghead Bay on 25 Sep (RP) and 13 Oct (AJ).

Black Scoter *Melanitta americana*

Rare vagrant.

Formerly considered as the North American form of Common Scoter, Black Scoter was given full species status in 2005.

A male was seen with other scoter in Burghead Bay, from the east dunes, Findhorn on 10 Oct (RP). This is the 7th record for Moray & Nairn: previous records have been from Culbin Bar (1989) and Burghead Bay (1979, 1992, 1993, 2001 & 2002).

Surf Scoter *Melanitta perspicillata*

Very scarce winter visitor.

Nairn Bar: 2MM on 13 Jan (ID), 1M on 29 Jan & 6 Mar.

Culbin Bar: 1M on 4 Jan (AJL) & 29 Dec (DAG).

Burghead Bay: Present on 11 Jan and then from 17 Sep-13 Dec, usually 1-2 males, maximum count of males was 3 on 27 Nov & 7 Dec. A maximum of 6 birds together in Burghead Bay (off Roseisle) on 15 Nov included 2 adult males, 2 1st winter males and 2 females (IFo), 5 (2 adult males, 2 1st winter males, 1 female) remained in the area on 19 Nov (AJ). This total has only been exceeded on one occasion (7MM, 1F Spey Bay Jan 1979). This is only the 9th female seen in the Districts (last in 2004) and 3rd & 4th records for immature male (last in 2000).

Velvet Scoter *Melanitta fusca*

Very common winter visitor.

Maximum counts for main areas were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Oct	Nov	Dec
Nairn Bar	203	84	nc	23	66	279
Culbin Bar	290	120	nc	35	20	20
Burghead Bay	427	nc	nc	330	500	315

Coastal summer records: 10 Burghead Bay 5 May and 2 Lossiemouth 25 Jul.

Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*

Rare breeder and common winter visitor.

Breeding: No confirmed breeding was reported at the traditional breeding site, but a displaying male was seen on 2 May (ISS).

Inland summer records: a pair (displaying) River Spey, Rothes 1 Apr.

Coastal summer records included: 2MM Burghead Bay 11 May.

Maximum counts on most frequented lochs were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Loch Flemington	8	9	3	nc	nc	2	nc	9
Loch of Blairs	4	6	5	nc	nc	2	nc	nc
Loch Spynie	14	17	61	32	nc	43	13	14
Cloddach quarry	3	3	1	3	nc	nc	nc	nc
Loch na Bo	20	24	21	20	nc	12	19	6
Loch Oire	3	3	4	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc

Maximum counts at most frequented coastal sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Oct	Nov	Dec
Nairn/Culbin Bars	12	3	nc	nc	2	nc	4
Findhorn Bay	22	nc	nc	15	10	nc	24
Burghead Bay	7	2		5	nc	3	8
Burghead-Hopeman	4	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	7
Lossiemouth	2	nc	nc	nc	nc	3	2
Lossie estuary	4	3	4	nc	nc	nc	nc
Kingston/Tugnet	9	nc	10	nc	nc	26	33

Red-breasted Merganser *Mergus serrator*

Scarce local breeder and fairly common visitor.

Summer: Breeding confirmed at Dounduff, near Randolph's Leap where two broods seen (8 young leaving a nest (per ISS) and another, older brood of 6, swimming downstream on 15 June (ISS)). Lower down the River Findhorn: 3 juveniles Findhorn Bay 30 Jun (AJ) and 7 young Binsness 25 Aug (JDHM).

Mean number of chicks calculated from distinct broods 1995-2005:

Year	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Broods	9	4	8	7	2	5	3	1	1	1	4
Mean	10.6	4.3	7.0	5.6	5.5	7.8	8.7	8.0	7.0	7.0	6.0

A pair in suitable habitat along the River Findhorn 6 May (AJ) and 1F Mosset Burn 3 Mar (JDHM).

Coastal records in summer (May-Jun): 2MM, 2FF Kingston 8 May and 15 Burghead Bay 24 May.

Maximum monthly counts were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Delnies	nc	nc	17	nc		nc	nc	nc	nc
Nairn/Culbin Bars	nc	nc	nc	nc		45	113	19	18
Findhorn Bay	9	6	6			24	25	nc	10
Burghead Bay	6	1	nc	5		31	4	10	2
Burghead	2	nc	nc	5		nc	nc	nc	2
Burghead-Hopeman	4	nc	nc	nc		nc	2	7	3
Spey Bay	5	nc	nc	14		nc	6	2	7
Kingston			4	10				3	7

Inland: At Loch Spynie 1M on 21 Mar, 24-25 Apr and 10 May, and 1F on 1 Mar-17 Apr (10 dates) and 23 Oct-5 Nov (4 dates).

Goosander *Mergus merganser*

Widespread but scarce breeder.

Breeding: A female and brood of 5 on Dullan Water, Lettoch 10 Jun (per MJHC) was the only confirmed record.

Birds in potential breeding areas included a pair Logie Steading 20 Mar, pair River Livet, Glenlivet 26 Mar, 1F Loch Allan, Dava 27 Mar, 1 Cawdor wood 13 Apr, 2 Drynachan 23 Apr, 1 flying upstream Barevan, Cawdor 29 May and unspecified numbers at Burn of Tervie, Drumin 3 May and River Spey, Croftintaggart 11 Jun.

Well inland in winter: 2 Aberlour-Craigellachie 16 Jan,

Maximum monthly counts at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Cloddach quarry	nc	1	3	2	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc
Loch Spynie	nc	2	3	3	7	1	nc	nc	1	nc	nc	nc
Lossie estuary	0	0	1	0	34	18	0	20	23	13	0	0
Speymouth	nc	nc	nc	1	7	30	nc	16	74	nc	nc	2

A decrease in numbers moulting at Speymouth. Elsewhere, 14 moulting on the River Spey, Rothes 9 Aug (AJ).

Red Kite *Milvus milvus*

Formerly common breeder, now being reintroduced in North Scotland.

One in central Moray 25 Oct, one west Moray 2 Aug and one in south Moray 17 Nov. Still little sign of colonisation of Moray & Nairn by breeding pairs.

Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*

Very scarce visitor, usually in spring.

Records from one Moray locality from 25 Mar. Elsewhere, 1 Nairn 4 Jul.

Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus*

Rare resident breeder, very scarce migrant and winter visitor.

Breeding: Ten pairs were located, of which nine laid eggs. Average clutch size was 4.8, above average for the area. Seven pairs were successful and fledged 23 young between them, at an average of 3.3 young per successful pair. This, also, is well above the long-term average of 2.8. One of the failed pairs probably lost their young due to fox predation (JC).

Away from breeding areas were 1M Auchindachy 2 Dec (AE) and 1 ringtail Binsness 24 Apr (DAG).

Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis*

Rare resident breeder.

Present in at least 4 localities in spring/summer.

At other times/localities, 1 Culbin Bar 3 Jan (AJL,ISS) and 23 Jan (AY), 1 Sunbank (Lossiemouth) 4 Jan (RP), 1 near Forres 27 Jun (caught and carried off a juvenile Carrion Crow) (ISS) and 22 Jul (AJ).

Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*

Common resident breeder.

Breeding season (Apr-July) records included birds/pairs at Craigellachie, Cawdor, Culbin Forest, Fochabers, Forres, Kingston, Kinloss and Spey Bay.

Buzzard *Buteo buteo*

Fairly common resident breeder.

The impression that Buzzards are now exceptionally widespread in the area is confirmed by the fact that they have been located in the breeding season in 418 out of a total of 607 tetrads in Moray during the first four years of fieldwork for the Breeding Bird Atlas. In Forres, one occasionally removed items from a bird table on the edge of the town.

Most reported together were 7 Kinloss 15 Feb and 10 Aug, 6 Carron 6 Mar, 6 Easterton 27 Feb, 5 Dufftown 3 Apr, 5 Loch of Boath 9 Nov and 5 Tomintoul 20 Mar.

Golden Eagle *Aquila chrysaetos*

Rare resident breeder.

The three usual/most recent breeding sites were checked: i) no breeding activity, ii) a pair laid eggs but failed to raise young, iii) a pair nested but failed. (MJHC,RHD,JJCH).

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*

Scarce summer visitor and breeder.

1 Lossie estuary 9 Apr was the first report. Largest congregation of the year was 7 Findhorn Bay 27 Aug. Last record was 1 Findhorn Bay 24 Sep.

Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*

Widespread but scarce resident breeder.

Breeding season (April-July) records included birds/pairs at Carse of Delnies, Cawdor, Covesea, Cullen, Dallas, Findochty, Forres, Gilston, Inchstelly, Kinloss, Lein (Kingston), Loch of Boath, Miltonduff, Moss of Barmuckity, Nairn and Roseisle Forest. Sea cliff breeding proved at Findochty and suspected at Covesea. 3 Roseisle Forest 9 Nov was the largest group outside the breeding season.

Merlin *Falco columbarius*

Scarce resident breeder and migrant.

Breeding: 42 sites were checked; 19 of these were occupied by pairs, all of which laid clutches. Average clutch size (for 8 west Moray/Nairn clutches) was high at 4.25. Of the 19 pairs, 17 were successful, raising a total of 52 young at an average brood size of 3.1. Productivity was however substantially higher in west Moray and Nairn (3.5 young per successful pair) than in south and east Moray (2.4 young). This was due to some pairs failing in the south-east early in the season when the weather was very cold, and relaying with smaller clutches in late May or June (BC,JKC).

Outside the breeding season, single birds were seen in the coastal plain as follows: Tarras 7 Mar, Barmuckity 6 Feb, Burghead 10 Aug, Loch Spynie 12 Mar, Forres 29 Nov, Kinloss 5 Jan and 4 Oct, Loch of Boath Nov, Lossie estuary Aug, Newmill (Brodieshill) Oct and Sluie Oct.

Peregrine *Falco peregrinus*

Scarce resident breeder.

Breeding: Around 10 pairs are known to have attempted to breed but unfortunately no information was received on breeding success.

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
6	5	1	1	3	1	2	3	9	5	3	2

Birds were recorded in 23 localities; well-watched estuaries such as Findhorn, Lossiemouth and Kingston accounted for 23 of the 41 records.

Red Grouse *Lagopus lagopus*

Very common resident breeder.

In fringe areas, 6 Balloch Hill (Keith) 28 Aug and present Ben Aigan all year, max 5 in Jul-Sep.

Ptarmigan *Lagopus muta*

Fairly common resident breeder.

Reports from Beinn Mheadhoin, Ben Avon, Ben Macdui, Ben Rinnes, Cairngorm and Coire an t-Sneachda. In the outlying Ben Rinnes population, 3 pairs 13 Apr and a good flock of 21 on 26 Dec (AE,RBr).



Ptarmigan, Cairn Gorm 20 August 2005 (© Martin Cook)

Black Grouse *Tetrao tetrix*

Scarce resident breeder.

The only records received were 6M Bogeney 30 Apr (per ISS), 1M Sliaghnaigairn 10 May (1F with 1 juvenile there 1 Jul) (JB), 2M,4F Inchnacape 26 Mar (AJ,RP), 2F Loch Noir in spring and 4M Rochuln in spring (RSPB). Other, undated, reports of birds at Bogeney, Knock of Braemora and Aitnoch.

Capercaillie *Tetrao urogallus*

Scarce resident breeder.

Little information received, and only from 2 areas:

Area	Records in 2005
South-east Nairn	Up to 6 males at one lek
West Moray	4 males at one lek, no males at two other recent leks
North central Moray	No records received
South central Moray	No birds found in a search of one recently occupied wood
East Moray	No records received

Red-legged Partridge *Alectoris rufa*

Introduced scarce breeder. Commonly released.

Records were 1 Connage (Buckie) 27 Feb, 1 Bridge of Avon 31 March, 3 Dufftown 3 Apr, 1 Wester Gauldwell Farm 14 Apr, 2 Tarryblake 17 Apr, 1 Corries 22 Apr, 1 South Darkland 29 Apr, 1 Meft 6 May, 1 Craig an Donich (Drumin) 25 June, 1 Ballacraggan 2 Jul, 2 Midwood (Clochan) 20 Oct and 1 Cothill on 14 Feb, 21 Feb, 12 March, 25 May and 2 July. Still being released at Daless (Drynachan) where 150 on 27 Aug.

Grey Partridge *Perdix perdix*

Common resident breeder.

The only coveys of 10 or more were 12 Brodieshill (Burgie) 25 Aug, 11 Mid Mains (Elgin) 30 Oct, 10 Corskie 31 Aug, 10 Covesea 27 Nov and 10 Scarffbanks 21 Dec. Well established populations near Forres, at Chapelton and Tarras, have recently been lost.

Quail *Coturnix coturnix*

Rare summer visitor and breeder, occasionally more numerous.

Single calling birds were at Duffus Castle 22-23 June (JDHM,DAG,AJ), Easter Newforres 20-21 July (IW,KG,ISS), near Forres tip 1 July (IW), Gilston 24 June (JDHM), Salterhill 24 June (JDHM) and Seafield (Findhorn Bay) 1 July (JDHM).

Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus*

Very common resident breeder.

As usual, large numbers around release areas such as Kellas. More unusual reports were of a male foraging on the rocky shore at Burghead 10 Dec and a female walking down the main street in Findhorn 11 Oct.

Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus*

Fairly common breeder and winter visitor.

Heard in the breeding season at Loch Spynie, Loch Loy, RAF Kinloss and Kingston. A juvenile at Montgrew 16 Sept (AJ) hints at breeding there; this would be the first such report.

Autumn/winter reports were from Loch Spynie reedbeds (most months, up to 4 in March and Sept, and 5 on 7 Dec), Loch na Bo, Kinloss and Kingston. One was watched swimming with Teal on Spynie Canal for 30 secs on 6 Nov (AJ).

Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

Fairly common resident breeder.

Breeding proved (*italics*) or probable at Ardclach, *Brodie Castle pond*, *Cloddach quarry*, Fochabers Lake, *Hillhead (Forres)*, *Inchstelly*, Kellas pool, *RAF Kinloss*, Loch na Bo, Loch of Blairs, *Loch Oire*, *Loch Spynie*, *Lower Bogrotten*, Montgrew, *Sanquhar Loch*, *Stoneyford Pond (Rafford)* and *Windyridge*.

Best counts of full-grown birds were 20 Fochabers Lake 17 Feb (and 17 there 6 Nov), 9 Loch Oire 4-16 Sept, 9 Montgrew 16 Sept, 7 Cooper Park (Elgin) 22-28 Jan, 7 Windyridge 18 Sept, 6 Loch Flemington 3 Dec, 6 Lower Bogrotten 10 Aug and 5 Loch na Bo 21 Jan.

Coot *Fulica atra*

Scarce resident breeder and fairly common winter visitor.

Breeding proved (*italics*) or probable at *Cloddach quarry (2 pairs)*, Loch na Bo, *Loch Loy (2 pairs)*, *Loch Spynie (4 pairs)* and *Stoneyford Pond (Rafford)*.

Maximum monthly counts on main lochs were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Loch Flemington	6	10	nc	nc	nc	60	nc	20
Loch Spynie	78	19	10	24	5	8	6	17
Loch Oire/na Bo	12	14	17	10	14	10	11	3
Cloddach quarry	10	10	11	6	17	17	1	2

The count of 60 at Loch Flemington on 2 Oct is the highest there since Jan 1991, when there were 105.

Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*

Very common resident breeder, winter visitor and migrant.

Breeding: First inland was 1 at Elgin Academy 26 Jan, there were 3 pairs there 4 Feb. At Boroughbriggs 1 on 9 Feb and 3 on 10 Feb. Loch Spynie nesting platform had 3 on 18 Feb, 20 on the 5th and 22 on 10 Mar.

Breeding success: At Elgin Academy only 1 clutch of 2 survived the gull predation. There was a brood of 3 at Forres Golf Course. Adults reported with young at RAF Kinloss, Gordon Castle, Garmouth Viaduct, Ben Avon and Loch of Boath.

Pre-breeding flocks were: 24 Aberlour 16 Feb rising to 52 on 28 Feb. 114 Cloddach 19 Feb. At Gilston pools the numbers rose from 10 on 12 Feb to 44 on 26 Mar. Mundole had 31 on 20 Feb and 10 on 17 Mar. There were 12 at Standing Stones 3 Mar. At Mulben there was 25 on 16 Mar and 60 at Tomintoul 20 Mar.

The only inland post breeding flocks of 50 or over were 82 Cloddach 10 Jul and 50 Elgin Golf Course on 16 Jul.

Spring, summer and early autumn counts at the coast were:

April: Burghead 57 (2nd), 103 (21st), 126 (27th) and Lossiemouth 45 (21st), 58 (28th)

May: Burghead 132 (24th) and Lossiemouth 54 (14th), 39 (22nd)

June: Findhorn Bay 33 (3rd), Lossiemouth 34 (9th) and Burghead 40 (22nd)

July: Burghead 52 (1st), 64 (16th), Covesea 67 (18th), Nairn 60 (22nd), Lossiemouth 44 (7th), 48 (15th), 156 (20th), 238 (21st), 282 (31st) and Portgordon – Buckpool 52 (19th)

Aug: Findhorn Bay 234 (1st), 1100 (9th), 670 (19th) 150 (26th), Kingsteps 73 (9th), Burghead 71 (3rd), 59 (18th), Lossiemouth 129 (4th), c700 (5th), 354 (7th), 93 (24th), Kingston 63 (11th), Hopeman 36 (18th), Portgordon-Buckpool 81 (11th), Strathlene 44 (23rd) and Nairn 200 (27th)

Sept: Covesea 87 (3rd), Culbin Bar 870 (4th), Lossiemouth 50 (4th), 97 (5th), 102 (9th), Portgordon – Buckpool 51 (20th) and Burghead 73 (24th), 33 (30th)

Winter maxima at the coast were:

	Jan	Feb	Oct	Dec
Nairn/Culbin Bars	1050	695	1335	670
Findhorn Bay	980	393	110	630
Burghead-Hopeman	90	79	83	107
Lossiemouth	147	50	64	64
Portgordon-Strathlene	133	78	93	80

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*

Rare summer visitor and breeder.

In the Kingston/Garmouth area, 1 bird was seen loosely associating with Ringed Plover and Dunlin at Kingston lagoon 25 May (AJ). A pair was then seen in the tern colony near Garmouth viaduct 18 Jun (AJ). No other sightings recorded until an adult female located at Kingston estuary 11-12 Jul (MJHC, AJ).

Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*

Scarce resident breeder and very common migrant.

Breeding: Proved breeding at the Lein, Kingston with 1 pair arriving 11 Mar. They eventually raised 1 juv from 2 clutches and were last seen 1 Aug (PGS). At Crashgate 1, RAF Kinloss, a pair with 4 eggs 25 May then 4 young 3 Jun . Also at Kinloss, 2 pairs with broods of 4 and 3 on 16 Jun, then assumed the same 2 pairs with only 4 young 28 Jun. At another location in Kinloss, 1 pair with 2 chicks 26 Jul (AJL).

There was also possible breeding with pairs seen in breeding territory at Findhorn Bay, Cloddach Quarry, Buckpool/Portgordon, Broadley (Clochan), Whiteness Head and Burghead.

Winter maxima at the coast were:

	Jan-Feb	Nov-Dec
Nairn/Culbin Bars	4	nc
Findhorn Bay	32	22
Kinloss	44	47
Burghead-Hopeman	nc	6
Lossiemouth	nc	16
Portgordon-Strathlene	15	nc

Spring passage (April – early June) highest counts were:

Lossiemouth: 68 on 30 Apr, 169 on 29 May, 59 on 13 Jun.

Burghead: 5 on 2 Apr, 40 on 14 May.

Kingston/Tugnet: 74 on 18 May, 162 on 28 May, 57 on 3 Jun.

Findhorn Bay: 16 on 3 Jun.

Autumn passage (July – September) highest counts were:

Lossiemouth: 40 on 29 Aug, 20 on 16 Sep.

Burghead: 12 on 22 Jul, 42 on 30 Aug, 46 on 4 Sep.

Kingston: 11 on 11 Jul, 22 on 11 Aug, 2 on 2 Sep.

Findhorn Bay: 4 on 24 Jul, 5 on 21 Aug, 16 on 28 Sep.

Dotterel *Charadrius morinellus*

Scarce summer visitor and breeder.

1 Ben Macdui 16 Jun (IL). On the 29 Jun in the Cairngorm area a male was seen with 3 chicks (AJ). On the same day a female was seen in Coire Raibeirt with 3 others unseen calling nearby (AJ). In early July a pair with a brood of 1 was recorded in the Cairn Lochan area (DF). 1 fledged young was also recorded at Cairn Lochan ridge on 20 Aug (MJHC).



Dotterel (juvenile), Cairn Lochan 20 August 2005 (© Martin Cook)

Golden Plover *Charadrius apricaria*

Common breeder, migrant and winter visitor.

Breeding: Only a few records of birds in breeding habitat, 1 Ourack 25 Mar (MWi), 1 pair Bogeney 31 Mar (ISS), 10 The Buck (Cabrach) 12 Jun (ACo) and 1 Cairn Lochan ridge 20 Aug (MJHC).

An unusual report of a bird, presumably heading back to the coast, was 1 walking in the middle of the A96 near Alves 11 Jul! Others that made it to the coast in July were 1 Lossie Estuary 20th and 2 there 23rd. During August singles at Kingston 7th and 11th. In September singles Tugnet 4th, Kingston 24th Burghead-Cummingston 30th.

Winter coastal maxima were:

	Jan	Feb	Oct	Nov	Dec
Kinloss/Findhorn Bay	325	85	130	181	420
Lossiemouth/Covesea	nc	nc	11	nc	60
Burghead	nc	nc	nc	nc	11
Portgordon-Buckpool	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc

The table highlights the importance of the Kinloss/Findhorn area as a wintering ground.

Other winter records were 267 Montgrew 3 Nov, 97 Shempston 6 Nov and 80 Culbin Forest 29 Dec.

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*

Scarce autumn migrant and winter visitor.

Records received from four sites:

Nairn/Culbin Bars: 13 on 3 Jan, 17 on 23 Jan, 12 on 16 Oct, 8 on 29 Dec.

Findhorn Bay: In Sep, 3 on 13th, 4 on 24th-25th. In Oct, 5 on 1st, 6 on 2nd, 3 on 13th, 30 on 16th, 9 on 20th, 5 on 22nd.

Burghead: 2 on 10 Nov.

Lossie estuary: 1 in full summer plumage 13 Aug and 1 on 9 Sep.

It is an unusual occurrence that the maximum count from Findhorn Bay (30) has exceeded any counts from the Bars. This also occurred in 2001.

Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*

Very common migrant breeder, small numbers in winter.

Breeding: Reports of single and multiple pairs during February, March, April and May from usual breeding areas including Garline Farm (well inland by 14 Feb), Standing Stones, Gilston Pool, Miltonduff, Bogeney, Dallas, Miltonhill and Kinloss. Proved breeding was indicated by 3 chicks Miltonduff pool 4 May. Only 1 chick raised from 2 pairs Chapelton, Forres 19 May. 1 pair with 4 young Kinloss 6 Jun. Also successful, 1 pair with 2 young Newton of Dalvey 30 Jun and 1 adult with 2 juveniles Dallas area 2 Jul.

Mid winter: January - 1 Gilston Pool 13th, at Roseisle 80 on 16th and 74 on 27th. On the 23rd, 150 Findhorn Bay, 102 Miltonduff and 70 Strathlene. On the 29th, 154 flew south over Stoneyford Pond, Rafford. In December, 79 Easter Coltfoot 7th, 180 Findhorn Bay 22nd, 10 Crosslots 29th and 4 over Clochan 31st. The counts of 154 in January and 180 in December were the highest since 2002.

Pre-breeding flocks:

February: 30 Cloves and 119 Miltonduff 6th, 200 over Windyridge 9th, 32 Loch Flemington 12th, 17 Findhorn Bay 13th, 42 Roseisle 23rd.

March: At Clochan numbers reducing from 285 (2nd), 71 (6th), 12 (12th), 11 (13th) to 8 on 29th. Elsewhere, c120 Westerfolds 12th, 45 Roseisle 18th, 65 Tomintoul 20th, 8 Clochan 29th.

Post-breeding flocks:

June: min 150 Miltonduff 23rd but only 67 on 24th.

July: 36 Miltonduff 2nd, 58 Binsness 8th, 59 Cloddach 10th rising to 78 on 31st.

August: 107 Miltonduff 12th, 84 Cloddach 14th.

September: 56 Clochan 4th, 35 over Windyridge 13th, 38 Cloddach 18th, c130 Windyridge 21st. On 24th, c180 Findhorn Bay, 180 Miltonhill and 45 Tarras. 68 Kinloss 28th.

October: c80 over Windyridge 6th, 184 Burgie 11th, 200 Findhorn Bay 16th, c230 over Windyridge 19th, 343 Mossyards (Bank of Roseisle) 21st, 120 Findhorn 22nd, 270 Muirton 30th, c120 Alves 31st.

November: 35 Montgrew 3rd, 60 Wester Coltfoot 4th, 120 flying over Cloddach 5th, c40 over Scarffbanks 5th, c170 Longhillock 18th.

Knot *Calidris canutus*

Very common migrant and winter visitor.

Winter maxima were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Oct	Nov	Dec
Nairn/Culbin Bars	2550	600	nc	20	nc	820
Findhorn Bay	424	150	nc	300	nc	128
Burghead-Hopeman	nc	2	c230	42	212	c420
Lossiemouth	120	50	nc	1	80	c120

Counts in other months were:

April: 60 Nairn Golf Club 4th, 300 Burghead -Cunnington 12th, 150 Burghead -Roseisle 18th.

May: 88 Lossiemouth 2nd. At Burghead, 170 on 3rd, 25 on 18th and 45 passing by east on 24th.

June: 1 Kingston 3rd, 9 Lossiemouth 4th (partly in summer plumage (SP)).

July: 19 Findhorn Bay 23rd mostly in SP, 4 Lossie estuary 30th in SP.

August: At Burghead, 1 SP 3rd, 12 on 18th, 51 on 29th and 107 on 30th. At Kingston, 1 on 7th, 1 on 14th, 7 on 16th, 5 on 21st and 7 on 23rd. At Findhorn Bay, 10 on the 9th, 13th and 21st, 8 on 24th and 40 on 26th. At Lossiemouth, 2 on 10th-11th in SP, 1 on 12th and 22nd, 6 on 24th, 18 on 26th (including 1 in SP) and 22 on 28th. Elsewhere, 1 Spey Bay 24th and 3 Nairn 27th.

September: At Findhorn Bay, 48 on 1st, 10 on 24th (also 80 heading east). At Burghead, 124 on 6th, 92 on 10th, 5 on the 22nd (in SP) and c40 on 30th.

Sanderling *Calidris alba*

Scarce migrant and fairly common but very localised winter visitor.

Monthly maxima at the two best sites were:

Winter-spring:

	Jan	Feb	March	April	May
Nairn/Culbin Bars	78	12	nc	nc	nc
Lossiemouth	68	60	c60	60	5

Late summer-autumn:

	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Nairn/Culbin Bars	nc	62	35	130	nc	78
Lossiemouth	1	3	50	3	35	47

Outwith the above locations, Covesea had 18 on 15th May (in summer plumage), 39 on 3 Sep and 52 on 4 Oct. Burghead had a peak of 24 in full summer plumage on 24 May.

Little Stint *Calidris minuta*

Scarce migrant, mostly in autumn.

An extremely poor year with only 3 records of single birds. It equals the lowest number recorded since 1986. In Findhorn Bay, 1 on 9 Jul (DAG) and 1 on 9 Oct (AJ). Also 1 Kingston 2 Sep (JB).

Temmincks Stint *Calidris temminckii*

Rare summer visitor and migrant

At one Moray site, 2 on 18 May and 1 on 28 May (MJHC).

Pectoral Sandpiper *Calidris melanotos*

Rare vagrant

1 adult Kingston 10-11 Jul (DAG,AJ,RP,MJHC,JP) and 1 juvenile Miltonduff pool 22 Aug (AJ). These are the 8th and 9th records for Moray & Nairn respectively. The previous records have been Findhorn Bay Jul 1967, Kingston Oct 1986, Lossiemouth Sep 1988, Findhorn Bay May 1990, Montgrew Sep 1999, Kingston Jul 2000 and Lhanbryde Sep 2001.



Pectoral Sandpiper, Kingston 11 July 2005 (© Andy Jensen)

Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*

Scarce autumn migrant.

A reduction in numbers since 2004 and once again records only coming from 2 sites. In Findhorn Bay during September, 6 on 3rd (DAG), 9 on 4th (AJ), 3 on 9th (ISS), 6 on 13th (AJ), 3 on 24th (MJHC) and 2 on 25th (DAG). Later, 1 juvenile Findhorn Bay 9 Oct (AJ). At Lossiemouth, 5 flew west 9 Sep (AJ) and 2 on the estuary 23 Sep (DAG).

Purple Sandpiper *Calidris maritima*

Fairly common winter visitor.

Main winter site maxima were:

	Jan-March	Oct-Dec
Burghead-Hopeman	10	23
Lossiemouth	17	24
Portgordon-Strathlene	49	95

At Lossiemouth outwith the above dates, 32 on 4 Apr, 5 on 18 Apr, 12 on 2 May and 6 on 8 May. First to return in autumn was 1 Lossiemouth West Beach 20 Aug.

Dunlin *Calidris alpina*

Scarce breeder, very common migrant and winter visitor.

Winter monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Oct	Dec
Nairn/Culbin Bars	1340	1530	100	580
Findhorn Bay	610	1770	80	542
Lossiemouth	244	242	56	281
Portgordon-Strathlene	nc	nc	11	n/c

The counts of 1530 at Nairn/Culbin Bars and 1770 at Findhorn Bay are the highest for 3 years.

Spring passage: At Lossiemouth, migration started slowly in late April and peaked in late May. Birds were counted in April on 21st (2), 22nd (3), 27th (10), 29th (38) and 30th (41); in May on 17th (16), 19th (22), 22nd (48), 28th (176) and 29th (167); in June on 4th (41), 13th (42) and 16th (28).

Maximum counts in other locations during this period, all in May were 32 Burghead 18th, 68 Kingston 18th and 51 Tugnet 28th.

No significant numbers recorded in June.

Autumn passage (July – September):

The regular records from Lossiemouth and Kingston were the only indicators of the autumnal movements. In Lossiemouth there were no flocks greater than 7 recorded in July. In August though, things picked up with 9 on 7th, 10 on 12th, 15 on 13th, *320 (16th), 39 on 17th, 30 on 24th and 26 on 29th. September had fluctuating counts with a max of 29 on 9th. On 16 Aug, 320 flew east past Lossiemouth during a 1 hour seawatch (AJ).

At Kingston, fluctuating records made things a little more difficult to analyse. There were maxima of 30 on 11 Jul, 60 on 8 Sep, but more significantly, 69 on 16 Aug coinciding with the Lossiemouth passage.

The only inland records were 1 adult Miltonduff pool 22 Jun and 1 juvenile there 28 Jul (AJ).

Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*

Scarce autumn migrant, rare in spring.

Recorded between typical autumnal dates of 3 Aug-9 Oct. It is not clear exactly how many individuals were involved.

In Findhorn Bay, 1 on 7 Aug, 1-4 Sep and 9 Oct (AJL,AJ,DAG). On the Lossie estuary, 1 on 3 Aug, 2 on 4 Aug and 1 on 28 Aug (DAG,JDHM,RP, AJ). Better numbers at Kingston with, in August, 5 on 11th, 4 on 12th, 3 on 13th, 1 on 16th and 6 on the 23rd-26th (JB). Still 6 there 8 Sep (MJHC).

The only freshwater record was 1 Miltonhill pool 6-7 Sep (AJ).

Jack Snipe *Lymnocyptes minimus*

Scarce migrant and winter visitor.

Winter-spring: 1 Culbin Bar 23 Jan (AY), 1 Lein, Kingston 6 Feb (MJHC, AJ), 5 Kingsteps 12 Feb (DJ) and 1 Kinloss 9 Mar (AJL).

Autumn-winter: 1 Culbin Bar 16 Oct (ALe) and 3 there 1 Dec (ISS).

Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*

Common breeder and migrant.

Breeding: 2 pairs Bogeney 31 Mar. 3 heard Cawdor Wood 13 Apr and at least 1 Hillend (Forres) 30 Apr. Drumming heard 29 May Barevan-Cawdor and on 24 Jun at Moss of Delnahaugh. Also possible breeding Kinloss 31 May where a single bird was described as “agitated”.

Numbers (other than singles) recorded out with the breeding period are:

Feb: 2 Lein, Kingston 6th, 41 Kingsteps 12th

March: 6 Kinloss 19th, 29 Loch Flemington 27th
 August: 2 Kingston 16th (3 on 19th), 4 Miltonduff pool 31st
 Sept: 10 Kingston 2nd (7 on 5th), 2 Findhorn Bay 3rd. At Miltonduff pool, min 30 on 5th and 40 on 12th.
 Oct: 6 Culbin Bar 16th, 38 Nairn Bar 16th, 5 Lein, Kingston 21st, 8 Spynie Canal 29th.
 Nov: 2 Loch of Boath 9th and 2 Inchstelly pool 18th
 Dec: 12 Loch Flemington 3rd, 3 Culbin Bar 4th, 28 Nairn Bar 4th, 2 Balgreen (Lossiemouth) 11th, 2 Keam Farm 29th.

Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola*

Common resident breeder, scarce migrant and winter visitor.

Breeding: 3 Tazie (Ben Aigan) 3 Mar, 2 roding there 21 Mar. Roding also at Newbold Wood (Forres) 17 Apr and Boat of Brig 22 Apr. Adult with brood of 3 in garden bordering Newbold Wood 12 May (ISS). Birds reported in various locations April-July: Gallow Hill, Ballindalloch, Muiry Wood, Innes Farm, Craggan, Edinkillie and Rafford.

Winter: Small numbers reported. In January, 2 flushed from birchwood Loch Spynie 6th, 1 Sourdenhead 9th and 1 Stoneyford Pond (Rafford) 29th. In February, 2 Cran Loch 28th and singles Lossie Forrest 19th and Cloddach 27th. Recorded Tazie (Ben Aigan) Oct-Dec. Also in winter at Strathlene, Newbold Wood, Innes House and Kinloss. An unusual record of one in a garden in Seafield Street, Elgin on 20 Nov (RAM).

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*

Scarce migrant.

A very good year for the species.

Spring: Only 3 records; 1 in summer plumage Findhorn Bay 29 Apr (DAG), 4 Montgrew 30 Apr (MJHC) and 26 Tugnet 1 May (MJHC).

Autumn: First was 1 Findhorn Bay 8 Jul (JDHM). Later, Findhorn had twelve records from 7 Aug-28 Sep, all 4 birds or less apart from 15 on 4 Sep (AJ,AJL,DAG,ISS). Nearby, Kinloss had 2, 1 and 3 birds present on 15, 16 and 17 Aug respectively (AJL).

At Lossiemouth, there were summer plumaged birds present on 4 Jul (2), 14 Jul (6) and 23 Aug (5) (DAG). Also 1 heard flying over 22 Jul (JDHM). A large flock of 44 passed through on the 24 Aug (JH). Last bird at Lossiemouth and the district was 1 on 29 Sep.

At Kingston, all the July sightings were of birds in summer plumage: 47 on 7th (MJHC), 1 on 10th (DAG), 2 on 11th (JPr), 1 on 12th (AJ) and 5 on 13th (DAG). In August, 6 on 3rd (MJHC), 1 on 14th (JB) and 16 on 16th (MJHC).

Last here was 1 on 10 Sep (MJHC). The count of 47 is the highest recorded in the district since 56 in Findhorn Bay in Aug 1998.

Inland at Miltonduff pool was a small flock of 1-5, usually 4, between 31 Aug-21 Sep (AJ,CAG,DAG,JDHM). Elsewhere, 1 over Elgin 14 Jul (AJ).

Winter: Unusual mid winter records on floodwater at Lower Hempriggs where 1 between 5-22 Jan and 5 on 14 Jan (RP,AJ,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	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Nairn/Culbin Bars	215	110	nc	nc	nc	nc	16	87	nc	134
Findhorn Bay	195	185	74	nc	nc	2	25	40	5	79
Burghead	2	36	10	12	23	19	10	49	48	50
Lossiemouth	4	5	3	17	1	3	1	1	1	2

Elsewhere: 10 Carse of Delnies 8 Mar, 2 in summer plumage Kingston 12 Jul, 20 Nairn 22 Jul, 1 Kingston 25 Aug, 4 Covesea 3 Sep and 6 Roseisle 24 Sep.

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*

Fairly common migrant.

Spring: Nine records of 1-2 birds passing through between 22 Apr-31 May, from Whiteness Head in the west to Portknockie in the east.

Autumn: 55 records received between 25 Jun-27 Sep with a total of 160 birds, although duplicate counts are possible. Only 3 flocks greater than 10, all flypasts – 14 Lossiemouth 18 Aug, 14 Kingston 31 Aug and 13 Lossiemouth 6 Sep.

Distribution of flock sizes was:

Flock size	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10+
No. of flocks	35	15	4	5	1	1	1	1	1	3

Curlew *Numenius arquata*

Common breeder. Very common migrant and winter visitor.

Breeding: First inland record was 1 calling Ben Aigan 10 Mar. Other inland records received from Dava, Tomintoul, New Fleenas, Cawdor, Moss of Delnahaugh and Bogeney.

Summer/early autumn: Large numbers Kingston where 350 on 11 Aug, 225 on 16 Aug, 553 on 21 Aug, 240 on 5 Sep and 420 on 10 Sep. At Portgordon-Buckpool, 101 on 11 Aug and 172 on 20 Sep. Elsewhere, 152 Cloddach 21 Aug, 236 Findhorn Bay 27 Aug, 236 Covesea 3 Sep, 120 Culbin Bar 4 Sep and 126 Miltonduff 28 Sep.

Coastal winter maxima were:

	Jan	Feb	Oct	Dec
Nairn/Culbin Bars	191	165	128	94
Findhorn Bay	480	471	130	127
Burghead-Hopeman	90	12	159	120
Lossiemouth	4	5	21	120
Portgordon-Strathlene	157	240	78	nc

Additional winter flocks, with 50 or over, out with the above areas were:

Jan: 450 Hardhillock 3rd, 86 Kinloss 10th, 86 Garmouth 15th, 78 Windyridge 15th, 162 Roseisle 16th, c120 Gilston 28th, 260 Newton 29th

Feb: c180 Windyridge 9th

March: c340 Ardivot 15th, 96 Cloddach 20th

Oct: 171 Cadgers Lane 3rd, 311 Miltonduff pool 4th (254 there 5th), 50 Spey Bay 9th, 52 Cloddach 22nd, 250 Gilston 27th (140 there 30th)

Nov: 54 Plewlands 8th, 132 Salterhill 8th, c130 Milton Airfield 17th, c60 Gilston pool 20th

Dec: c170 Windyridge 4th (c180 there 25th), 134 Cloddach 18th, 190 Kingston 29th

Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus*

Very scarce migrant.

In Findhorn Bay in September, 2 on 16th (AJ), 1 on 25th (DAG) and 1 on 27th (EH).

Redshank *Tringa totanus*

Scarce breeder, very common migrant and winter visitor.

Breeding: Up country were singles Tomintoul 20 Mar and Inchnacape 26 Mar. One pair Feith Musach 18 Jun. In the coastal fringe, 1 Miltonhill 3rd May, a pair mating River Nairn estuary 4 May, another pair in courtship Kincorth area 3 Jun and 2 pairs showing signs of breeding on the saltmarsh near Lake of Moy 8 Jul. Successful breeding at Kingston in July with chicks seen on 7th and a downy juvenile there on the 12th.

Spring (March-early June): Not enough data available to clearly indicate spring passage but records from the Lossiemouth area were 64 on 10 Mar, 40 on 15 Mar, 28 on 22 Mar 13 on 18 Apr and 2 on 14 May.

Late summer/autumn (July-Sept): In Findhorn Bay in August were 630 on 9th, 80 on 13th, 100 on 21st and 300 on 27th. Later, 630 on 24 Sep. Small numbers Nairn where 12 on 22 Jul, 4 on 9 Aug, 9 on 27 Aug and 22 on 15 Sep. Fluctuating counts at Lossiemouth were made on 4 Jul (21), 5 Jul (15), 6 Jul (53), 18 Jul (41), 21 Jul (61), 8 Aug (78), 3 Sep (c40), 4 Sep (50) and 10 Sep (8). At Kingston, in August, were 24 on 3rd, 10 on 11th, 4 on 12th and 3 on 16th. Between Portgordon-Buckpool were 14 on 19 Jul, 43 on 11 Aug and 57 on 20 Sep.

Winter: Monthly maxima at the coast were:

	Jan	Feb	Oct	Dec
Nairn/Culbin Bars	180	470	194	176
Findhorn Bay	365	490	150	435
Burghead-Hopeman	46	64	67	12
Lossiemouth	142	50	86	152
Portgordon-Strathlene	111	157	160	149

Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

Scarce migrant, very scarce in winter.

Spring: Records of singles from five locations - Lossiemouth 1, 17, 24, 27 and 29 Apr and 14 May, flying over Windyridge 15 Apr, Loch Spynie 22 Apr and 12 May. Miltonduff pool had a single on 29 May and one disturbed by a helicopter Kingston 6 June.

Late summer/autumn (July-October): Records received from seven locations.

In Findhorn Bay (mostly in Kincorth/Binsness area), 1-2 many dates 6 Jul-21 Oct with 3 on 6 Jul, 4 on 8 Jul, 3 on 14 Aug, 3 on 25 Aug and 6 on 4 Sept. Apparently unusually scarce here. Present Lossie estuary in all the four summer months; singles except 2 on 28 Jul. A single bird was seen on 20 Jul, and there were regular sightings between 14 Aug-26 Sep and also in October on 8th, 15th and 28th. Most of these single sightings are more than likely to have come from the one bird. 1 also flew over Lossiemouth 15 minutes after midnight on 24 Aug. At Kingston 1 on 7 Jul, then seen in August on 3rd (1), 8th (3), 11th (2), 12th (1), 16th (3). Last there was 1 on 2 Sep. Further west, 1 at the mouth of the River Nairn 15 Sep.

Winter: Early in the year, the over-wintering bird on the Lossie estuary remained from 2004 until 27 Mar. In the latter part of the year the same, or another, bird remained on the estuary during November and until at least 11 Dec (DAG,JDHM et al.).

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*

Very scarce migrant, occasional in winter.

Typically sparse sightings of this migrant: 1 Miltonduff pool 27-29 Jun (AJ) and 1 Cloddach quarry 2 Jul (EH).

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola**Very scarce migrant.*

1 on the pool at Miltonduff 12-13 May (AJ,RP,DAG,MJHC). This is the second year in succession that there has been a record from this site.



Wood Sandpiper, Miltonduff 12 May 2005 (© Duncan Gibson)

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos**Summer visitor and common breeder.*

Arrival: A typical arrival date of 17 Apr at Cloddach quarry. Other April arrivals were Loch Spynie 19th, Aberlour 21st, Garmouth viaduct 22nd, Lochindorb 23rd and Tugnet 24th.

Breeding: Up country records of birds in breeding habitat at Dava and Lochindorb 2 May, Loch Builg 8 Jun and Bogeney 26 Jun. In Glen Avon on 18 Jun they were plentiful up River Avon to NJ143066 but none were found in the next 6km upstream (MJHC). Elsewhere, 5 Aberlour 27 Jul and 1 Rockomie reservoir (Letterfourie) 2 May.

In the lowland plain, records throughout May-July from various locations. Maximum numbers were 2 pairs Cloddach 12 Jun, 2 pairs River Spey at Fochabers 14 Jun and 3 pairs above Howford Bridge (River Nairn) 28 Jun. No proved breeding reported in these areas.

Late summer-autumn: No large post-breeding congregations reported on the estuaries. At Kingston, 5 on 11 Jul and last 1 on 19 Aug. On the Lossie estuary, 2 on 4 Aug and 10 Sep. Best in Findhorn Bay was only 6 Kincorth 26 Jul. Latest for the year was 1 Nairn Bar 16 Oct (DCJ). This very late bird, is the latest ever record of a presumed migrant, the previous latest being 9 Oct in 1991. A bird on the River Spey at Fochabers on 28 Nov 1997 was presumed to be over-wintering.

Turnstone *Arenaria interpres**Common winter visitor, small numbers in summer.*

Winter monthly maxima at main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Oct	Nov	Dec
Findhorn	45	35	20	nc	27
Burghead-Hopeman	36	37	42	25	34
Lossiemouth	35	10	46	34	12
Portgordon-Strathlene	102	108	46	34	70

Other winter counts were 8 Covesea 4 Oct (14 there 27 Oct) and 13 Tugnet 5 Nov.

Spring-summer:

April: 8 Nairn harbour 17th, 7 Lossiemouth 18th.

May: At Lossiemouth, 28 on 8th, 2 on 19th and 1 on 22nd. Also 3 Burghead 24th.

June: 5 Garmouth viaduct 16th

July: 1 Burghead 5th and 20 there 22nd. Birds at Lossiemouth, mostly in summer plumage, seen on 12th (1), 17th (12), 23rd (22) and 24th (27)

August: At Burghead, 14 on 2nd, 27 on 18th and 28 on 30th, 2 Tugnet 5th, 5 Findhorn 19th (and 2 on 27th), 2 Kingston 26th, 38 Lossiemouth 7th (and 9 on 13th), 16 Nairn 9th and 27th, and 17 Hopeman on 18th.

Sept: 1 Findhorn Bay 1st, 15 Hopeman 1st, 38 Burghead 10th, 8 Nairn harbour 15th and 17 Lossie estuary 17th.

Pomarine Skua *Stercorarius pomarinus*

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

A reasonable year, with a number of sightings in late autumn, but also the only Spring record apart from 3 in June 1984. What was probably the same individual, a pale phase adult, was seen at three locations, off Burghead, Cummington and Lossiemouth (DAG,HH) on 8 May, and again off Burghead 11 May (Birdguides). In autumn, records from Lossiemouth consisted of one off the West Beach on 9 Sep (EH), 8 pale phase birds west past the harbour on 1 Oct (DAG), one adult and 6 juveniles west past the harbour on 22 Oct (AJ) and 3 juveniles west past the harbour on 26 Nov (AJ, DAG). The final record of the year was one off Burghead on 27 Nov (BB)

Arctic Skua *Stercorarius parasiticus*

Fairly common migrant in summer and autumn.

A good spring, arrival was noted from 5 May, when 3 were off Burghead (JDHM). There were 49 sightings in total throughout May between Burghead and Spey Bay, peaking at 10 past Lossiemouth on 8 May (AJ) and 10 off Burghead to Cummington on 10 May (HH). In mid summer 2 were 2 miles off Portknockie on 17 Jun (LS). The first returning individual in the autumn was seen on 19 Jul off Nairn. A total of 117 sightings, the majority of which were from Lossiemouth, represents the highest count since 1995. Peak counts were 10 off Covesea on 3 Sep (JDHM) and 10 past Lossiemouth on 11 Sep (AJ). The last record of the year was of 2 off Findhorn on 18 Oct.

Long-tailed Skua *Stercorarius longicaudus*

Rare visitor.

The first record since 1997 was an adult west past Lossiemouth in the evening of 9 Aug (AJ). Since the first modern record in 1988, sightings were annual until 1998, so this bird hopefully marks an upturn in sightings of this species in Moray.

Great Skua *Stercorarius skua*

Scarce migrant in summer and autumn.

The first of the year was seen off Burghead on 4 May (AJ, RP), and was part of an above average spring showing of 10 birds, including an individual on the Lossie Estuary on 1 Jun which was seen to attack, kill and eat a Herring Gull (JDHM)! Autumn passage began on 20 Jul, with 2 past Lossiemouth, and in total 81 birds were seen, with typically only 1-2 on any day, but peaking at 6 off Lossiemouth on 24 Aug (JDHM). The last of the year was off Lossiemouth on 12 Oct, a typical date (JDHM).

Mediterranean Gull *Larus melanocephalus*

Very scarce visitor.

After the first blank year since 1999 in 2004, two individuals were seen. A 2nd summer was at Findhorn Bay on 2 Apr (DAG), and an adult was seen at Nairn on 27 Nov and 11 Dec (Birdguides, AJ). These are the 11th and 12th records for Moray & Nairn.



Mediterranean Gull (2nd summer), Findhorn Bay 2 April 2005 (© Duncan Gibson)

Little Gull *Larus minutus*

Very scarce visitor.

In spring, 3 1st summer birds in the tern colony at Garmouth Viaduct 16 Jun (MJHC), with 2 present 18 Jun. A single bird was seen at Kingston on 22 Jul (JPr). In the autumn, 6 adults flew west past Lossiemouth Harbour on 12 Oct (AJ), and the last of the year was a 1st winter off Burghead on 2 Nov (HH). This is the best annual total of sightings in recent years.

Black-headed Gull *Larus ridibundus*

Very common resident breeder and winter visitor.

Breeding: The only colony counts received were c.28-30 nests at Lochs of Bogmassuch 6 Jun, up from 7 in 2004 (JDHM). At Loch Spynie, 20 nests were counted on the platform on 14 May (MJHC), with 16 adults and 24 chicks on the platform on 11 Jun (DAG).

Flock counts in excess of 500 were c550 Lossie Estuary 14 Jan, 780 attracted by ploughing Pitairlie 9 Feb, 829 Loch Spynie 13 Nov and c770 at the same site 15 Nov.

Ring-billed Gull *Larus delawarensis*

Rare visitor.

1 Miltonhill 27 Apr (DMP) was seen again at nearby Colfield the following day (RP). This is the 5th record for Moray & Nairn, the last of which was an adult bird at Miltonhill floods between 17-24 Sep 1995.

Common Gull *Larus canus*

Very common resident breeder and winter visitor.

Breeding: c3000 pairs Tom Mor colony 21 May and 1000 pairs Corsemaul 13 May, but poor success noted 21 Jun. 25 pairs Ben Main 15 May, with 5 pairs at Auchindoun the same day (WRPB). 100+ nesting Forres Nursery 4 Jun (AJL) and 5 nests were on the beach by Lossie Forest on 1 Jun (PGS). 10 adults and 2 juvs

Rockomie Reservoir (Letterfourie) 19 Jun. Foals Craig (Glen Avon) had 2 fledged young on 4 Jul, and finally one nest was found at Broadley, Clochan on 24 Apr in the forestry nursery (MJHC). Flock counts in excess of 500 were 650 Garmouth 15 Jan, 540 Lower Hempriggs 27 Jan, 800 Standingstone 23 Feb and the peak flock count of the year was c1700 Clochan 10 Dec.

Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus*

Summer visitor and scarce breeder. Very scarce in winter.

Arrival: The picture was confused by likely wintering individuals seen on 14 Feb at Urquhart (EH) and two birds at Kingston on 27 Feb (KG). In spring, 1 adult Lossie Estuary on 6 and 11 Mar (DAG,JDHM), and also seen at Loch Spynie on 8 Mar, was probably the same individual. First birds back in Elgin from 8 Mar (JDHM).

Breeding: 5 pairs Corsemaul (WRPB), and one pair Cloddach (JDHM). However, as in recent years, circumstantial evidence of breeding in Elgin, with birds present in Cooper Park and on rooftops throughout the spring and summer.

Highest count of the year was 80 birds Cloddach 10 Jul (JDHM).

3 adults of race *L.f.intermedius* were on the Lossie estuary on 17 Sep (RP).

Herring Gull *Larus argentatus*

Very common resident breeder and winter visitor.

Breeding: Birds present in Lossiemouth and Cullen, although exact numbers and productivity was not noted at either site. There were no reports of breeding from elsewhere.

Monthly maximum counts on the Lossie estuary were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
1700	60	nc	70	630	nc	c2000	nc	291	186	nc	nc

Elsewhere, counts over 1500 were 1800 Binsness 18 Aug and 2000 Carse of Delnies 27 Jul.

Of an estimated 1700 birds on Lossie Estuary on 14 Jan, 17 out of a sample of 317 were found to be birds of the Scandinavian/Baltic race *L.a.argentatus* (RP).

Iceland Gull *Larus glaucooides*

Very scarce winter visitor.

The wintering adult from 2004 was seen regularly on Loch Spynie or at the nearby pigfarm on many dates, and was last seen 10 Apr (many obs). This bird also visited the Lossie estuary on many occasions throughout the period. 1st winter birds were reported from the Lossie estuary on 30 Jan and 3 Apr (DAG) - conceivably the same individual as 1st winters seen at Cullen on 11 Feb and Portgordon on 29 Mar (MJHC). 2nd winter birds were seen at the Lossie estuary on 12 Mar (DAG,EH), with possibly the same bird seen at Cullen on 31 Jan (Birdguides). In the second winter period, what was presumably the returning adult bird visited Loch Spynie again on 24th Dec (DAG,RP).

A poor year - perhaps only 3 individuals involved, possibly as many as 6.

Glaucous Gull *Larus hyperboreus*

Very scarce winter visitor.

A somewhat confusing picture with perhaps up to 17 individuals involved although interchange between sites is difficult to discount, and the likely number of individuals involved is 13.

In the first winter period, sightings centred around Cullen, with 4 individuals here between 7 Feb-19 Mar: 2 adults, a 2nd winter and a 1st winter (AJ, DAG,MJHC,Birdguides). 1 adult Portknockie 16 Feb (LS) probably related to one of these birds. At the Lossie estuary, 2 adults between 16 Jan-3 Apr (AJ,DAG,RP), with what was almost certainly one of these birds at Loch Spynie on 28 Mar (AJ). 1 1st winter Lossie estuary 13 Feb

(DAG), while it or another commuted between Loch Spynie/Lossie estuary between 6 Mar-1 May (many obs). A different 1st winter Lossiemouth West Beach 19 Mar (AJ). A 2nd winter bird also commuted between these two sites over the period 19-30 Mar (AJ, DAG). Also, 1 3rd winter Lossie estuary on 28 and 30 Mar (RP).

Over the summer period, 1 1st summer commuted between the Kingston/Spey Bay complex and Lossie estuary (AJ,DAG,MJHC), and was probably the lingering 1st winter bird seen at the Lossie Estuary in April. It was last seen on 12 Oct when it had attained 2nd winter plumage (JDHM).

In the second winter period, 1 adult Cullen 21 Dec (Birdguides) probably relates to a returning bird. At the Lossie Estuary, 1 1st winter on three dates between 13-26 Nov (AJ,DAG,JDHM), with 1st winter birds at Burghead 26 Nov (Birdguides) and Tugnet 3 Dec (MJHC) perhaps relating to this bird. A 3rd winter was at the Lossie Estuary on 18 Sep (DAG).



Glaucous Gull (1st winter), Loch Spynie 6 March 2005 (© Duncan Gibson)



Glaucous Gull (2nd winter), Lossiemouth 3 September 2005 (© Duncan Gibson)

Great Black-backed Gull *Larus marinus*

Scarce resident breeder and common visitor.

Breeding: The only report of breeding was of two pairs on Bow Fiddle Rock, Portknockie on 8 Jun, an increase from the single pair last year (MJHC).

Monthly maximum counts in the Tugnet/Spey Bay/Kingston area were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
240	nc	231	nc	nc	129	nc	106	320	357	280	100

Elsewhere, an autumn build up was noted on the Lossie estuary, with 110 on 5 Sep rising to 221 on 28 Oct and 130 Strathlene 7 Aug .

Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla*

Common breeder and very common migrant.

Breeding: 302 apparently occupied nests (AON) Covesea 5 Jun was a substantial reduction on the 397 last year at this site (MJHC). 158 AON at Portknockie on 8 Jun however was an increase on the 109 at this site in 2004 (MJHC). As part of RSPB work to assess Kittiwake productivity in NE Scotland, 46 Covesea nests and 56 Portknockie nests were monitored. The following data on breeding success was obtained:

Site	AON monitored	Successful nests	Feathered young	% successful nests	Young per successful nest	Young per AON
Covesea	46	27	36	58.70	1.33	0.78
Portknockie	56	35	59	62.50	1.69	1.05

The only substantial count offshore was 600 at Kingston on 8 Sep (MJHC).

Sandwich Tern *Sterna sandvicensis*

Very common summer visitor and occasional breeder.

Arrival: First of the year were singles off Lossiemouth and Burghead on 1 Apr, with 15 in Findhorn Bay the following day.

Breeding: 1 pair with nest on the Spey river shingles at Garmouth Viaduct on 1 Jul. No young were reared (MJHC). This is the first breeding in Moray & Nairn since a few pairs nested at the mouth of the Spey in 1994-95.

Late summer peak counts were 150 Nairn 25 Aug and 200 Findhorn Bay 26 Aug. Last of the year were 2 Lossie estuary 1 Oct.

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*

Summer visitor and fairly common breeder.

Arrival: First reports on 22 Apr when 6 Spey Bay and 2 Hopeman.

Breeding: At Garmouth Viaduct, 15 pairs on 16 Jun, with some chicks seen, 15 apparently occupied nests on 1 Jul (with a loafing flock of 52 on the shingle nearby) and a few large chicks noted on 5 Aug (MJHC). At Loch Spynie, 8 adults and 4 juveniles were noted on the platform on 2 Jul (DAG). At RAF Kinloss, an adult with food dropping into long grass on 5 Jul indicated probable breeding here (MJHC). No reports of breeding were received from elsewhere, although 2 adults and a juvenile on the River Spey at Aberlour on 26 Jul hints at possible breeding in that area (AE).

Last of the year were 6 off Lossiemouth 28 Aug .

Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea*

Summer visitor and common but local breeder.

Arrival: Birds were late back this year, with the first noted on 1 May when 25 at Tugnet.

Breeding: The main site at RAF Kinloss held 104 apparently occupied nests (AON) on 4 Jun and 10 pairs feeding young 5 Jul (MJHC). 50 adults were counted there 13 Jul but all gone by 26 Jul (AJL). Breeding was also noted at Garmouth Viaduct, where 44 AON on 1 Jul, and a few large chicks on 5 Aug (MJHC). Elsewhere, 2 juveniles at the Lossie Estuary in amongst 30 adults (JDHM) could relate to birds from one of the above two sites.

Movements offshore in late summer included 30 west past Lossiemouth Harbour in 20 mins on 6 Aug, and 21 east past Strathlene in 30 mins on 10 Sep. Last were 2 off Findhorn 13 Oct (AJ), and a very late juvenile at Lossiemouth between 30 Oct and 6 Nov (IF,JPo). This is the latest date ever recorded in Moray & Nairn.

Little Tern *Sternula albifrons*

Very scarce summer visitor and rare breeder.

Breeding: Site 3 – first back on 8 May (5 days later than 2004), with a subsequent peak count of 9 adults (AJ,DAG,EH) One nest with one egg was noted on 7 Jun, although the site was abandoned by 15 Jun (DAG).

Site 4 - 3 were on nests on 1 Jul (MJHC), with 2 adults and 2 juveniles present on 24 Aug (JH).

Guillemot *Uria aalge*

Very common offshore.

In summer, 4 birds were under the ledges at Portknockie on 1 May (LSi), although there was no suggestion of the first breeding record in Moray & Nairn. Reported counts were very low this year; nothing better than 32 Whiteness Head 31 May and 20 Boars Head Rock (Spey Bay) 14 May.

Razorbill *Alca torda**Very common offshore.*

Breeding: After the successful breeding in 2003 and 2004, 9 adults were under the nesting cliff at Portknockie on 31 Mar, and 8 on ledges here on 1 May. Two pairs were incubating on 8 Jun, with a further four birds in the vicinity. On 8 Jul, 3 ledges were occupied, although only one site was thought to have a chick. In addition, 2 pairs were ashore on the north side of the nearby Bow Fiddle Rock on 8 Jun but they did not appear to be breeding (MJHC,LSi).

Elsewhere, best offshore counts were off Burghead in May. A mixed flock of approximately 650 auks there on 5th were predominantly Razorbills, and c180 Razorbills were there on 24th (JDHM).

Black Guillemot *Cephus grylle**Scarce offshore, rare breeder.*

Breeding: At Tronach Head on 8 Jul, 12 adults were on the sea, and 3 nests were located including one in the traditional site (MJHC). This is the 20th successive year of breeding at this site. At Portknockie, there were 20 birds present on 15 May, with 16 on 8 June (LSi). Breeding success was not reported from this site, although 8 birds were seen on the 8 Jul, visiting two nest sites on the cliff (MJHC). Eleven birds off Cullen on 8 Jul and 2 Aug (DT) no doubt originated at the Portknockie colony, or at Logie Head (just east of the Moray boundary).

At other times, birds were very scarce in the first winter period, with only 4 sightings. A series of sightings off Lossiemouth during seawatches in summer and autumn resulted in a total of 78 birds being seen (AJ), with a peak of 12 west on 16 Aug and 13 west on 20 Aug. Elsewhere, the only record was 1 off Kingston on 5 Nov (AJ).

Little Auk *Alle alle**Scarce winter visitor.*

After the poor year in 2004, with only 2 records, an exceptional count was noted in the early part of 2005 off Culbin and Nairn Bars. Between 12:00 and 15:00 on 23 Jan, a total of 582 were noted from Culbin Bar and 114 from Nairn Bar (AY,DJ), although there will be some duplication of these numbers. It is clear however that there was an exceptional influx into the area by this species, although strangely this was not replicated at other sites in north-east Scotland at the time. Elsewhere in Moray around this time, there were only 2 past Lossiemouth on 25 Jan and a single on 30 Jan (AJ,RP), and two wrecked in Burghead Bay on 27 Jan (HH). In addition, a single was off Burghead on 14 Feb.

In the autumn, one found dead at Cummington on 17 Nov (RFH), was the precursor to a moderate passage past Lossiemouth on 26 Nov, with 44 noted in 2 hours (AJ,DAG), with a single seen the following day. This passage was also noted from Burghead with 12 on 26 Nov (Birdguides) and 3 the following day (BB).

Puffin *Fratercula arctica**Scarce offshore.*

An improvement on the low total of 2004, with 17 birds noted this year. The first of the year was in Burghead Bay on 24 Jan (AJL). In spring an interesting record of 9 off Portknockie on 31 Mar (LS) was the year's peak count. Single birds were noted from seawatches off Lossiemouth on 4 dates in July and August (AJ). In addition, dead birds were found at Burghead Bay on 6 Mar, Lossiemouth on 22 Mar and Kingston on 8 Aug.

Feral Pigeon *Columba livia*

Very common resident breeder.

Largest flocks counted during the year were c500 Elgin town centre 8 Jan and 360 on the Bow Fiddle Rock (Portknockie) 27 Feb (215 there on 22 Oct).

Other counts of 50 or more were 280 Lossiemouth harbour area 30 Dec (170 there 9 Sept), 220 Nairn (120 at harbour, 100 in town centre) 15 Sept, 200 Burghead maltings 1 Dec, 180 Salterhill 15 Feb, 150 North Alves 25 Feb, 120 Standingstone 14 March, 100 Buckie harbour 4 Dec, 100 Miltonhillock 18 Dec, 75 Scarffbanks 2 Jan and 50 Cullen 2 Aug.

Stock Dove *Columba oenas*

Scarce resident breeder, formerly common.

Breeding season: Records in the period late March-July included birds at Altyre, Burgie, Caysbriggs, Cloddach, Half Davoch, Firhill bridge, Howford, Kinloss, Kirkhill (Alves), Mill of Grange, Paddockhaugh (Thomshill), Rothiemay, Scarffbanks, South Darkland and Upper Auchenreath.

Largest flock outside the breeding season was 13 Scarffbanks 22 Dec.

Woodpigeon *Columba palumbus*

Very common resident breeder.

Largest flocks reported were 800 Burnside of Enzie (Clochan) 29 Dec, 600 Clochan 23 Feb, 600 Gilston 25 Oct, 500 Mundole 1 Nov, 500 Woodside (Lhanbryde) 20 Feb, 400 Darnaway 19 Dec and 300 South Darkland 8 Jan.

Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*

Very common resident breeder.

Another year with few large congregations reported. Best were 22 Clochan 13 Nov, 18 Inchbroom 6 Feb and 12 Bogmoor 6 Feb.

In Lossiemouth, nests were located in a TV dish aerial and a small hut at the harbour. Courtship and nest site inspection noted there from 26 Dec.

Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus*

Summer visitor and common breeder.

Arrival: Quite early with several April reports – 1 Kinloss 25th, 1 Cullen 26th and 1 Glen Fiddich 30th.

One calling Roseisle Forest 30 May; Cuckoos are unusual breeders in the coastal plantations.

Barn Owl *Tyto alba*

Scarce resident breeder.

Breeding: Confirmed at 3 sites. Birds seen in 10 other localities in April-July.

Outside the breeding season, and away from known breeding sites, single birds were seen at Archiestown (Jan,Sept,Dec), Bankhead (Dyke) (Jan), Barmuckity (March), Blackhillock (Knockando) (Sept), Cardhu (Jan,Feb,Sept), Covesea (Jan,Nov), Craigellachie (Jan,Oct,Dec), Inveravon School (Jan,Feb), Kinloss (Feb,March), Marypark (March,Sept,Oct,Nov), Muirton (Feb), Overton (Sept), Roseisle (Dec) and Scotsburn (Forres) (Feb).

Tawny Owl *Strix aluco*

Common resident breeder.

The number of tetrads (2kmX2km) for which breeding season records had been received by the end of 2005 was 257, out a total of 607 tetrads in Moray. An interesting record from Longmorn of one attempting to catch bats on 13 Aug (J&HMcD).

Long-eared Owl *Asio otus*

Scarce resident breeder.

Breeding: Confirmed at New Stynie nr. Mosstodloch (young calling 18 June (AJ)), Muiry Wood (Forres) (2 juvs on 27 June (ISS)) and Cotts of Innes (nest with young 8 May (JDHM)). Elsewhere in the breeding season, 1 Lein (Kingston) on 4 occasions in June-July.

At other times, 1 Ladycroft (Archiestown) 9 Oct and 1 Kinermony 6-12 Jan.

Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus*

Rare breeder and very scarce migrant.

Breeding: Reported from only three upland localities in spring/summer. Two birds present Kinloss June-July but no evidence of breeding.

In the lowlands, 1 Portknockie 23 May, 1 Nairn Bar 16 Oct & 6 Nov, 1 Lossie estuary 5 Sep, 1 RAF Lossiemouth 16 Feb & 15 Mar and 1 Covesea 7 Feb.

Swift *Apus apus*

Summer visitor and common breeder.

Arrival: Later than the last two years with the first record being 1 Fochabers 30 Apr and no others until 12 Loch Spynie 8 May. Becoming more generally plentiful during 18-20 May.

Largest congregations of feeding birds were several hundred over fields at Longmorn 30 July and 170 Earlseat (north of Darnaway) 2 Aug. Otherwise 50 over the Spey at Rothies was the most reported. On 8 July, 10 were skimming over the heather near the summit of Ben Rinnes.

Late stayers were 1 Lossiemouth 20 Aug, 1 Tomintoul 21 Aug, 1 Elgin 31 Aug and 5 Sept, and 1 Fochabers 17 Sept. Most notable however was 1 Kingston 5 Nov (MJHC,RP,AJ) and this bird, or another, was also seen at Lossiemouth on the same day (JDHM). In view of the very late date the possibility of this bird being a Pallid Swift *Apus pallidus* was considered and could not be totally eliminated.

Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*

Very scarce visitor and occasional breeder.

Ten records of single birds with a wide scatter of dates and localities: Elgin (River Lossie) 23 Jan (RP), 9 Sep (AJ,CAG) and 25 Sep (CAG), Howford (Nairn) 30 March (L.Schofield), Rothiemay 23 Apr (MJHC), Garmouth viaduct 1 Jul (MJHC), Loch Spynie 24 Aug (JDHM), Spynie canal 3 Sept (CAG), Lossie estuary 7 Oct (EH) and Broadfield (Keith) 25 Nov (P.Michie).

Wryneck *Jynx torquilla*

Rare migrant.

2 at an upland birchwood site in south Nairn district on 13 Jun (JGrierson) raises the possibility of a breeding attempt. 1 near Ballindalloch 11 May (JB) was also in possible breeding habitat but could not be relocated on subsequent days despite several searches. This are the 3rd and 4th records for Moray & Nairn, after 1 Strathlene 21-22 Sep 2000 and 1 dead Bogmoor 25 Aug 2004.

Green Woodpecker *Picus viridis*

Very scarce resident, scarce breeder in recent years.

1 calling intermittently all day at Banchor (Upper Findhorn) 15 May (ISS) was the only report.

Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major*

Common resident breeder.

Many records of probable or proved breeding for the Breeding Bird Atlas, ranging from Tomintoul to the coast. Numbers considered to be increasing around Forres. Frequently visiting garden bird tables in country areas, especially favouring peanut feeders.

Skylark *Alauda arvensis*

Common breeder and migrant.

First song heard Clochan and Portgordon 29 Jan and, in February, at Loch-hills 4th, Loch Spynie 5th, Longmorn 8th and South Darkland 11th. Counts of singing birds were 17 Windyridge-Sunbank 15 Apr, 16 Carse of Delnies 8 March, 14 Gilston-Salterhill 5 March and 13 Maryfield-Windyridge 24 March.

Largest autumn/winter flock counts were 35 Roseisle 8 Nov and 20 Scarffbanks 1 Oct. Evidence of late October passage when 10 over Nairn 25th and 26 in off the sea Covesea 27th.

Sand Martin *Riparia riparia*

Summer visitor and common breeder.

Arrival: In March, 1 Cloddach quarry 20th, 20 Loch Spynie 24th, 6 Loch na Bo 28th and 3 Howford 30th. Largest spring assemblies, as usual, at Loch Spynie where 100 on 12 Apr, 150 on 14 Apr and as many as 400 on 4 May.

Colony counts (apparently occupied burrows) were 6 Aldersyde (River Nairn), 5 Pittendreich, 24 Half Davoch, 50 Elgin golf club, 10 Corbiewell, 30 Cloddach quarry, 24 Bodnastalker, 45 Banchor and 6 Ballachraggan.

Feeding flocks later in summer were 200 Garmouth viaduct 5 Aug and 100 Kingston 8 Aug.

Last of the year was 1 Portgordon 20 Sep.

Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

Summer visitor and very common breeder.

Arrival: First reports, in April, were 1 Grange 4th and 3 Loch Spynie 8th. Only very small numbers thereafter until 19th-21st when quite widely distributed.

Breeding: In the Lhanbryde barn, at least 4 pairs bred and there were 9 active nests during the season – the same as in 2004. Mean clutch size was 4.8 and mean brood size at fledging was 4.3, in both cases an increase on 2004. The latest nest still contained a brood on 18 Sep (RP).

Post-breeding flocks were 150 Wester Greens 7 Aug, 150 Cloddach 21 Aug, 100 Forres 9 Aug, 100 Kinloss 1 Sep, 100 Milltown airfield 20 Sep, 82 Clochan 17 Aug, 80 Kingston 31 Aug, 60 Nairn 27 Aug and 52 Lossie estuary 19 Sep. Late birds were 8 Findhorn 11 Oct, 1 Elgin 12 Oct and especially 1 Lossiemouth 19 Nov (DAG). Although November Swallows might seem very unusual there have in fact been November records in 12 of the last 21 years, with Lossiemouth featuring in 7 years. Latest ever were 2 Lossiemouth which survived until 14 Dec in 2003.

House Martin *Delichon urbicum*

Summer visitor and common breeder.

Arrival: In April were 1 Loch Spynie 18th, 2 Portknockie 24th, 5 Forres 26th, 3 Lossiemouth 27th, 2 Burghead 27th, 3 Elgin 29th, 3 Clochan 30th and 1 Findhorn 30th. Later 40 Loch Spynie 17 May.

Breeding: 14 occupied nests Buckie High School 8 Jul, one more than in 2004.

Best late summer congregations were 210 Kinloss 1-5 Sep, 194 Clochan 17 Aug, 150 Forres 15 Aug-4 Sep, 65 Lossiemouth harbour 2 Sep and 30 Nairn 27 Aug. Last were 1 Duffus 22 Oct and a very late 1 Lossiemouth 11 Nov. Unlike Swallows, there have been very few really late stragglers; November records in only 3 of the last 21 years and December records in 2 years, latest 1 Lossiemouth 11 Dec 2000.

Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis*

Summer visitor and common breeder.

Arrival: No April reports – first in May were 1 Badiemicheal 2nd, 1 Scug Wood 2nd and 1 The Bodach 4th. Other breeding season records came from Altvounnie, Ardclach, Badeach, Banchor, Burntack, Cawdor Wood, Cragganmore, Dallas, Drum Wood, Glen Gheallaidh, Haugh of Kilnmaichlie, Hill of Delnapot, Moss of Delnahaugh, Romach Hill, Sliaghnaigairn, Sluie, Tombreck and Whiteash Hill Wood.

Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis*

Very common breeder and migrant.

Breeding: 16 pairs Moss of Delnahaugh 24 Jun. Counts of individuals included 100 Kinloss 26 Apr, 58 Bantrach-Bogeney 26 Jun, 21 Cawdor 13 Apr and 14 Carse of Delnies 31 May.

Autumn/winter counts included 65 Kinloss 3 Mar (35 there 8 Dec), 37 Kingston 23 Sep (20 there 5 Nov), 30 Cloddymoss 11 Sep, 24 Portknockie 16 Oct, 20 Loch of Boath 9 Nov and 18 Nairn Bar 16 Oct.

Rock Pipit *Anthus petrosus*

Scarce breeder, fairly common in winter.

Breeding: First song Lossiemouth harbour 17 Feb. Elsewhere in spring/early summer were 2 Hopeman 22 Apr, 1 singing Cullen 19 Mar, 1 pair nest building Covesea lighthouse 30 Mar, newly fledged young Covesea 5 Jun and 2 singing Burghead 2 Apr (and 1 carrying food there 22 Jul).

Autumn/winter counts: Between Portgordon-Strathlene were 22 on 23 Jan (of which 14 at Strathlene), 26 on 11 Feb (of which 20 at Strathlene) and 37 on 4 Dec. Best elsewhere were 8 Hopeman 7 Oct and 19 Nov, and 8 Burghead 22 Sep.

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*

Summer visitor and common breeder. Scarce in winter.

Summer: 3 pairs River Spey at Rothes 11 Jun.

Winter: 1 Forres 8 Jan and 20 Feb, 1 Cooper Park (Elgin) 18 Jan, 1 Nairn 1 Nov and 1 Aberlour 27 Nov.

Pied Wagtail *Motacilla alba*

Very common breeder and migrant.

Passage: A poor year for 'White Wagtails' *M.a.alba* of which the only records were 1 Lossiemouth 7 May, 2 Kingston 21 Aug and 1 Nairn rivermouth 15 Sep.

Counts of Pieds were 84 Forres (Grant Park) 15 Aug, 52 Lossie estuary 14 Jul, 50 Nairn 25 Aug, 47 Portknockie 21 Oct, 35 Kinloss 16 Sep, 34 Hopeman 18 Aug, 33 Covesea lighthouse 3 Sep, 32 Burghead 2 Aug, 28 Strathlene 23 Aug, 21 Lossiemouth harbour 10 Sep, 18 Carse of Delnies 27 Jul and 8 Tomintoul 20 Mar.

Waxwing *Bombycilla garrulus*

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

Winter-spring: Despite the presence of unprecedented numbers in the autumn of 2004, most birds moved on rapidly and relatively few remained into 2005. Small numbers were seen in the following locations:

Burghead: 4 on 27 Apr and thereafter for several days (HH). Clochan: 26 on 14 Feb (MJHC). Darnaway: 1 dead on 16 Jan (ISS). Forres: 1 on 1 Jan (AJL), 8 on 14 Jan (J&HMcD) 5 on 15 Jan (AJL), 2 on 4 Mar (KG). Glasterim (Portgordon): 1 on 30 Jan, 3 on 15 Feb and 1 on 27 Mar (MJHC). Hardmuir: 15 on 30 Jan (KG).

Longley (near Brodie): 10 on 22 Jan (AJ,RP). Knockandhu: 4 on 26 Jan (V.Ireland). Mosstodloch: 11 on 11 Feb (A.McNee.). Pitairlie: 3 on 29 Jan (RP). Rothes: 1 late stayer on 5 May (AJ). Scarffbanks: 10 on 4 Feb (RP).

Autumn-winter: A moderate influx from early November saw birds in 9 localities, with most in Elgin. Localities involved were Delmore (Aberlour): 8 on 28 Nov (AE). Dufftown: 4 on 25 Nov (WRPB). Elgin: In the railway station/South St. area in Nov were 17 on 7th, 23 on 8th, 26 on 10th, 24 on 12th, 20 on 14th, 9 on 19th, and 10 on 22nd (AJ,PTH,EH,DAG,CAG, J.Darroch). At Linkwood, 5 on 11 Nov, 1 there 15 Nov and 6 on 6 Dec (RP). In the Cooper Park, 12 on 20 Dec (RM). Forres: 7 on 7 Dec, 8 on 13 Dec, 18 on 23 Dec, 10 on 30 Dec (J&HMcD,AJ, AJL,A.Craig). Hopeman: 3 on 5 Nov (PTH). Kinloss: 1 on 23 Nov (AJL). Loch Spynie: 1 on 6 Nov (JDL). Lossiemouth: 12 on 29 Nov, 5 on 27 Dec, 8 on 31 Dec (JDHM). Tanzie (Ben Aigan): 1-2 between 20-27 Nov (GG).



Waxwing, Moray 9 November 2005 (© Andy Jensen)

Dipper *Cinclus cinclus*

Common resident breeder.

Notable records included 1 Seatown canal (Lossiemouth) 3 Nov, 1 juvenile on the window ledge of a house near a burn in Rafford 18 Jun and an adult at 1000m altitude in Coire Raibeirt in the Cairngorms. The complete absence of Dippers from 10km of the River Avon upstream from Inchroy was unexpected.

Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*

Very common resident breeder.

'Double figure' counts were 25 Cawdor Wood 13 Apr, 16 Cawdor-Barevan 29 May, 16 Nairn Bar 4 Dec (and 13 there 16 Oct), 14 Dufftown area 3 Apr, 13 Tomintoul 13 Mar, 13 Loch of Blairs 23 Nov, 13 Nairn-Cawdor 30 Mar (and 12 there 4 Oct), 11 Aberlour-Craigellachie 8 May, 11 Logie-Auldearn 1 Apr, 10 Roseisle Forest 15 Feb and 10 Inchstelly 17 Dec.

Dunnoek *Prunella modularis*

Very common resident breeder.

First song Dufftown 9 Feb and Aberlour 16 Feb. Counts of singing birds were 7 Maryfield-Windyridge 24 Mar, 6 Clashach quarry area 15 Jun and 5 Cloddach 20 Mar. Other notable counts were 7 Nairn Bar and 4 Culbin Bar 16 Oct.

Robin *Erithacus rubecula*

Very common resident breeder and migrant.

First full song Lein (Kingston) 27 Jan and Scarffbanks 4 Feb. First fledged young Tanzie (Ben Aigan) 7 May.

Autumn counts were 30 Aberlour-Craigellachie 30 Oct, 27 Lein (Kingston) 3 Oct, 21 Nairn Bar 16 Oct, 13 Nairn-Cawdor 4 Oct and 10 Strathlene 16 Oct. At other times, 18 Logie-Auldearn 1 Apr, 14 Tomintoul 20 Mar, 13 Dufftown area 3 Apr, 12 Cawdor Wood 13 Apr and 10 Findhorn 19 Feb.

Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

Summer visitor and scarce breeder. Very scarce migrant.

Located in the breeding season at Kellas oakwood (1M at nest and 2 others singing), Hill of Delnapot (F with food, and fledged juvenile seen), Sliaghmagairn (Ballindalloch area) (song), Cragganmore Wood (fledged young), Craggan (Glenlivet area) (song) and Braetown (Tips of Corsemal) (song).

Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra*

Summer visitor and scarce breeder. Very scarce migrant.

In breeding habitat were 2 pairs Bantrach-Bogeney, 1 pair with a nest at the south end of Glenlatterach reservoir 27 Jul, 1 pair Barevan (Cawdor) and 1 pair with young Bellandy (Glen Rinnes).

Stonechat *Saxicola torquatus*

Scarce resident breeder and probable migrant.

Breeding: Inland moorland pairs (or territorial males) located at Ardcanny (Rothes) (2M), Auldich, Bridge of Lecht, Drynahan, Glack Harnes, Sliaghmagairn and Terriemore. Unusual densities in Glenlatterach, where 4 pairs on 17 Jun (AJ), and, close to the heart of the Cairngorms, in the 10km between Inchroy and Faindouran Lodge where 5 pairs (4 with young) were found on 18 Jun (MJHC).

Coastal lowland pairs were at Burghead Bay, Carse of Delnies (16 birds in the area 27 Jul), Cawdor Wood, Clashach Quarry, Covesea, Culbin Forest, Cullen, Findhorn, Hopeman, Kingston-Lossie Forest rifle range (4-5 prs), Kinloss, Lossie estuary and Portknockie.

Inland in late autumn/winter, 2 Bardonside 20 Nov, 3 Bridge of Brown 23 Oct and 1 Lochindorb 29 Dec. Reported in 19 coastal sites in winter.

Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe*

Summer visitor, fairly common migrant and local breeder.

Arrival: A few early birds on the coast included 1 Lein (Kingston) 22 Mar and 2 Lossie estuary 25 Mar. Subsequent counts of spring migrants were small, best being 6 Burghead-Cummingston 2 May, 5 Drybridge 2 May and 6 Kingston 29 Apr-7 May. First up country report was 2 Aldunie (Cabrach) 30 Mar.

Pairs reported during the breeding season at Aldunie (Cabrach), Ben Avon, Ben Macdui, Inchrory and Terriemore (Lochindorb).

Autumn passage at the coast evident between 8 Aug-19 Oct, notable counts were 8 Lein (Kingston) 28 Aug and 10 Strathlene 5 Sep.

Ring Ouzel *Turdus torquatus*

Summer visitor and scarce breeder.

Occupied sites in the breeding season were Ben Avon (F feeding young 24 Jun (C.Trollope)), Stob Coire an t-Sneachda (Cairngorm) (pair flew over on 28 Jun (AJ)), Foal's Craig (Glen Avon) (pair feeding young 4 Jul (MJHC)), Glen Builg 8 Jun (AC), Little Fergie Burn (Glen Avon) (pair feeding young 4 Jul (MJHC)) and The Saddling (Corryhabbie Hill) (pair on 30 May (AE)).

Blackbird *Turdus merula*

Very common resident breeder, winter visitor and migrant.

First song Cooper Park (Elgin) 10 Jan, Kingston 4 Feb, Lossiemouth 5 Feb, Loch Oire 8 Feb and Portknockie 8 Feb. Nest building noted in March at Lossiemouth 19th, Longmorn 20th and Elgin 25th.

Autumn/winter counts of groups included 14 Stonewells 29 Oct, 24 Stoneyford Pond (Rafford) 23 Oct, 18 Aberlour-Craigellachie 30 Oct, 27 Cooper Park (Elgin) 28 Nov and 10 Inchstelly 17 Dec.

Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris*

Very common migrant and winter visitor.

Winter-spring: Flocks of 30 or more were 50 Lhanbryde 3 Jan, 40 Tanzia (Ben Aigan) 27 Jan, 60 Deskford 5 Feb, 35 Whitegate 5 Feb, 200 Spey Bay 23 Feb, 80 Miltonhill 23 Feb, 60 Maryfield 24 Feb, 100 Kellas 27 Feb, 50 Meft 2 Mar, 45 Clochan 2 Mar, 70 Standingstone 30 Mar and 30 Pathside 4 Mar. Last in spring were 6 Tanzia 15 Apr, 1 Tarryblake 17 Apr and 1 Miltonhill 29 Apr.

Autumn: 1 Elgin 15 Sep was exceptionally early; no others until October when 16 Portknockie 15th but not generally present until 22nd. Largest flocks in late October/early November were 40 Bridge of Brown 23 Oct, 150 Easter Regaule 31 Oct, 120 Clochan 6 Nov and 250 Duffus 19 Nov. Subsequently, 70 Standingstone 17 Dec and 250 Wester Colfield 19 Dec.

Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos*

Very common breeder and migrant.

First song Clochan 25 Jan, Longmorn 4 Feb and Dufftown 5 Feb.

Winter records as usual mainly near the coast: 1 Forres 1 Jan, 1 Scarffbanks 22 Jan, 1 Kingsteps 22 Jan, 1 Elgin 23 Jan, 2 Nairn Bar 23 Jan, 1 Culbin Bar 23 Jan, 1 Buckie 23 Jan, 4 Nairn Bar 4 Dec and 1 Lossiemouth 11 Dec. The flurry of records on 22-23 Jan suggests the early spring return of local breeders.

Redwing *Turdus iliacus*

Very common migrant and winter visitor.

Winter-spring: As usual, only small numbers remained in the area after New Year with best counts being 37 Maryfield 29 Jan, 100 Lossiemouth 15 Feb, 20 Cooper Park (Elgin) 20 Feb, 30 Cothill 28 Feb-1 Mar and 50 Meft 2 Mar. Last were 2 Loch Oire 22 Apr.

Autumn: An early 16 Knockando 25 Sep. First arrivals in October were 5 South Darkland 8th and 1 Clochan 9th. Substantial arrival mid month when 50 Taznie 12th, heard over Lossiemouth 12th, regular small flocks over Elgin all day 13th, 62 Kinloss 13th, 600+ in off sea Portknockie 15th, 200 Strathlene 16th, 550 in off sea Findochty 16th and 200 Findhorn Bay 17th. Best counts later were 60 Windyridge 19 Oct, 120 Stoneyford pond (Rafford) 23 Oct, 200 Kinloss 24 Oct, 200 Pitairlie 25 Oct, 150 Maryfield 25 Oct, 250 Easter Regaule 31 Oct, 300 Pitairlie-Scarffbanks 5 Nov and 40 Wester Calcots 25 Dec.

Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus*

Common resident breeder and migrant.

Best flock counts of the year were 69 Sluie 1 Aug, 48 Scarffbanks 10 Aug, 19 Lochloy Farm 5 Oct, 18 Loch Flemington 2 Oct, 16 Roseisle 8 Nov and 12 Tomintoul 20 Mar.

Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella naevia*

Summer visitor and scarce breeder.

Singing birds reported at Wester Gauldwell (2) 27-30 Apr (GG), Muldearie 10 Jul (MM), Loch Spynie 1 May (AJ), Glack of Midthird (2) 2 May (1 on 12 May) (WRPB), Bellandy (Glen Rinnes) 16 Jul (AE) and Ballindalloch 24 Jul (JB).

Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

Summer visitor and common breeder.

Arrival: First song, in late April, at Loch Spynie 29th and Lein (Kingston) 30th, where at least 6 birds were heard. Reported in 5 other localities by 5 May.

Five singers Duffus Castle 22 Jun. The Constant Effort ringing site at Loch Spynie was not operated in 2005, so population trends there are unknown.

Whitethroat *Sylvia communis*

Summer visitor and common breeder.

Arrival: First song Lein (Kingston) 29 Apr. In early May, 1 Findhorn and 1 Windyridge 2nd, 1 Forres and 1 Miltonduff 4th and 1 Mains of Moy 6th.

Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin*

Summer visitor and scarce breeder.

Singing birds (singles unless stated) were located at Rothes 9 Jun, Fochabers 14 Jun, Howford Bridge 31 May, Pitgaveny Home Farm 13 May, Mundole 6 Jul, Loch Spynie 12 May, Knockandhu (Maggielknockater) 28 Jun, Glenlivet 11 Jun, Dufftown 30 May, Barevan (Cawdor) 29 May, Ballindalloch 30 Apr, Aberlour-Craigellachie (2) 8 May and Aberlour (Lour Burn) 11-29 Jun.

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*

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

January-March: 1M,1F remained from 2004 in the Chandlers Rise area of Elgin until 23 Jan (F) and 14 Mar (M).

Spring/summer: Singing birds were found at Aberlour (3), Altyre, Auldearn, Auldich, Barmuckity (2), Bishopmill, Blacksboat, Bodnastalker (2), Braes of Enzie, Bridgend of Glenlivet, Brodie Castle (3), Brumley

Brae, Carron, Cawdor, Clochan, Cloddach (2), Craig an Donich, Craigellachie (2), Craigroy Farm, Dallas (2), Drum Wood, Duffus, Easter Manbeen, Edinvale, Elgin, Findrassie, Fochabers (7 along Spey 14 Jun (JDHM)), Fochabers Lake, Forres, Garmouth viaduct (2), Gordon Castle (Fochabers), Half Davoch (3), Jointure Wood, Kellas (2), Kincorth, Kinloss, Kintessack, Laverockloch (2), Lethen-Fornighty (4), Letterfourie, Leuchars House, Limekilns Wood (Mundole) (3), Loch Loy (2), Loch na Bo (8 on 27 May (JDHM)), Loch Oire (2), Loch Spynie, Maggieknockater (2), Maryfield (2), Mayen (2), Mill of Grange, Muiry Wood (Forres), Mundole, Pluscarden (3), Quarry Wood, River Findhorn A96-Broom of Moy (5 on 26 Apr (AJ)) and Broom of Moy-Findhorn Bay (a remarkable 18 on 6 May (AJ)), River Nairn upstream as far as Howford Bridge (11 on 31 May (JDHM)) and above Howford Bridge (4), Rafford (3), Raitloan, Rothes (5 along Spey 7 Jun (JDHM)), Rothiemay, Sluie, Stonewells-Speyslaw (7 on 9 Jun (JDHM)), Stoneyford Pond (Rafford), Tearie, Tomnacraggan, Upper Auchenreath, Wellside Farm and Whiteash Hill Wood. This represents a total of 154 singing birds located in 2005, a substantial increase on the previous record of 125 set in 2004. The number of singing birds reported each year since 1986 has risen steeply:

1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995
9	19	28	21	18	9	28	28	64	29

1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
36	68	50	73	73	61	82	116	125	154

This increase can only partly be attributed to improved observer coverage; Blackcaps are without doubt substantially more common summer visitors than was the case 20 years ago.

Autumn: Coastal migrants were 1 Findochty 15 Oct, 1 Portknockie 15 Oct (3 there 22-23 Oct and 1 on 7 Nov), 2 Strathlene 16 Oct and 1 Spey Bay 11 Nov. Inland, 1M Urquhart 11 Nov and 1 Loch Spynie 13 Nov. Late November-December: 1M Aberlour 7-31 Dec, 1 Nairn 11 Dec, 1M Rafford 8-12 Dec, 1F Academy St., Elgin 27 Nov-31 Dec with 1M there 8-28 Dec and 2M 29-31 Dec.

Yellow-browed Warbler *Phylloscopus inornatus*

Rare migrant

1 Portknockie 22 Oct (MJHC) was the third record for Moray & Nairn. Previous occurrences were at Lossiemouth in Oct 1998 and Loch Spynie in Sept 2001.

A warbler at Scarffbanks car park (Loch Spynie) 21 Dec (JDHM) was either this species or Hume's Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus humei*, but unfortunately gave inadequate views for a positive identification.

Wood Warbler *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*

Summer visitor and scarce breeder.

Only two reports of single singing birds; in Kellas oakwood 29 May and Haugh of Rothes 6-9 Jun (AJ).

Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*

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

Winter: 1 Portknockie 11 Jan (LS).

Arrival: An apparently early and widespread arrival in the last week of March when singing birds were heard on 23rd at Garmouth viaduct and Kinloss, on 24th at Lein (Kingston), Spynie Palace and Windyridge, on 25th at Loch Spynie and Pigaveny, at Knockomie on 26th, Forres 28th, and Dallas Dhu (Forres) and Cothall on 31st. A Chiffchaff in Edgar Road, Elgin on 23-24 Mar showed characters of eastern race *P.c.abietinus* (AJ).

In total, over the spring and summer, 95 singing birds were located, only one fewer than the 2004 record total. Sites were Altyre woods, Auldearn, Brodie (2), Burgie (2), Charlestown Forest (4), Cloddymoss (2), Dallas, Dallas Dhu (2), Darnaway, Forres (2), Garmouth viaduct, Hazelbank, Kinloss, Knockomie (2), Lein (Kingston) (4), Limekilns Wood (Mundole) (3), Loch Loy, Loch na Bo (7 on 27 May (JDHM)), Loch of

Blairs (2), Loch Oire (3), Loch Spynie (3), Maryfield, Monaughty Forest (4), Mundole, Nairn, Newton of Dalvey-Cothall (9 on 30 Jun (JDHM)), Newton of Dalvey-Darnaway (2), Pindlers Croft, Pitgaveny, Quarry Wood (4), Retanach (2), River Findhorn below A96 bridge (3), River Spey between Fochabers-Spey Bay (12 on 10 Apr (AJ)), Roseisle Forest, Rothiemay, Sleepieshill Wood, St John's Meads (2), Stonewells-Speyslaw (2), Tearie, Whiteash Hill Wood and Windyridge.

Late singers were at Darnaway 24 Sep, Dallas 28 Sep, Clochan 30 Sep and Loch na Bo 6 Oct.

In autumn, singles Clochan 8 Oct and 6 Nov, and Spey Bay 11 Nov.

Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus*

Summer visitor and very common breeder.

Arrival: First were 3 Lossie Forest 14 Apr but remained scarce until a large scale arrival on 23 Apr when singing birds were suddenly widespread.

Highest counts of singing birds (made by JDHM unless stated) were 39 along River Nairn downstream from Howford Bridge, 35 along River Findhorn in Mundole-Forres area (AJ), 30 Aberlour-Craigellachie 8 May (ST), 27 Cloddach 24 Apr, 26 Limekilns Wood (Mundole) 25 May and 24 Loch na Bo 27 May.

Last of the year were 1 Loch na Bo 16 Sep and 1 Longmorn 7 Oct.

Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*

Very common resident breeder and scarce migrant.

Counts in breeding habitat included 30 Culbin Forest 25 Aug, 20 Newmill (Auldearn) 7 Mar, 20 Logie-Auldearn 1 Apr, 17 Craigroy (Dallas) 4 Apr, 14 Loch na Bo 3 Nov (12 there 13 Dec), 12 Dallas 28 Sep, 12 Loch of Blairs 31 Oct, 10 Roseisle Forest 3 Aug, 10 Tomintoul 21 Aug and 10 Kinloss 23 Sep.

On Nairn Bar were 6 on 23 Jan, 2 on 12 Feb and 4 on 16 Oct.

At Portknockie, 10 in shrubs along the old railway line 22-23 Oct were apparent migrants.

Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata*

Summer visitor and common breeder.

Arrival: First were 1 Laverockloch 13 May and 1 Dyke 15 May.

Breeding season records came from Altyre, Roseisle Forest, Burgie, Cooper Park (Elgin), Cloddach quarry, Dava, Drummuir, Dyke, Inchrory, Kellas oakwood, Kinloss, Laverockloch, Loch of Boath, Logie steading, Howford Bridge and Sluie.

Pied Flycatcher *Ficedula hypoleuca*

Very scarce migrant, occasional breeder.

1 male Westfield (NJ1565) 8 Jul (JDHM). No suggestion of breeding – the bird could not be found in subsequent days.

Bearded Tit *Panurus biarmicus*

Rare breeder.

Breeding: The tiny population at Loch Spynie persists. One pair with a single juvenile 9 Jul (DAG) and 1 of 4 birds seen 5 Jun was a female carrying a faecal sac (MJHC).

Outside the breeding season, 1-4 birds seen or heard in the reedbeds in Jan, Feb and Dec (AJ,MJHC,JDHM,DAG).

Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus**Very common resident breeder.*

Flocks of 15 or more were 30 Craigellachie 16 Jan, 27 Sluie 31 Oct, 24 Longmorn 3 Oct, 20 Tomintoul 11 Sep, 19 Loch Spynie 3 Feb, 18 Speyslaw 9 Jun, 15 Tanzie (Ben Aigan) 3 Oct, 15 Cloddach 9 Oct.

Feeding on garden peanut holders reported regularly in Aberlour 1 Jan-9 Mar and in Urquhart 9 Dec.

Crested Tit *Lophophanes cristatus**Fairly common resident breeder.*

Nest boxes:

	Pairs	Av. clutch	Av. fledged brood/successful pair	
Lossie Forest	5	5.3	4.7	(MJHC)

Two of the 5 nests failed, one of these was deserted at the egg stage and young were predated from the other. Outside 'core' areas were 2 Darnaway 5 Nov (RP,AJ), 2 Conicavel 19 Nov (MJHC,AJ), 1 Cragganmore Wood 17 Jun (JB), 1 Hill of Dalnapot 7 Jul, 1 Loch Allan (Dava) 19 Nov (MJHC), 1 Loch na Bo 12 Aug, 2 Loch of Boath 17 Jul and 9 Nov (LS) and 2 Whiteash Hill Wood 14 May (MJHC).

Several visits to the Bin of Cullen woods in 2004 and 2005 failed to reveal any Crested Tits and it appears that this long-standing, but isolated, population may have died out.

Coal Tit *Periparus ater**Very common resident breeder.*

Very early song at Loch na Bo 3 Jan. More usually, first song heard, in February, at Scarffbanks 4th, Roseisle Forest 15th and Lein (Kingston) 25th. First fledged young Tanzie (Ben Aigan) 4 Jun.

Largest flock counts made during the year were 30 Dallas 28 Sep, 20+ Loch Spynie 30 Dec, 20 Carron 6 Mar and 20 Tomintoul 11 Sep.

Blue Tit *Cyanistes caeruleus**Very common resident breeder.*

Nest boxes:

	Pairs	Av. clutch	Av. fledged brood/pair	
Lossie Forest	13	7.5	?	(MJHC)
Loch Spynie	22	8.0	6.1	(RP,CAG)

The number of nestboxes available at Loch Spynie was increased by 41 in 2005 to a total of 80. For the second successive year, both clutch sizes and fledged broods declined there. Three broods died during a period of wet and cold weather.

Early song noted Elgin 7 Jan. First fledged juveniles Tanzie (Ben Aigan) 18 May. Highest count was 35 Aberlour-Craigellachie 16 Jan.

Great Tit *Parus major**Very common resident breeder.*

Nest boxes:

	Pairs	Av. clutch	Av. fledged brood/pair	
Lossie Forest	17	6.3	?	(MJHC)
Loch Spynie	27	6.3	5.1	(RP,CAG)

At Loch Spynie, average clutch size was reduced from 6.7 in 2004 to 6.3 in 2005. Predation was suspected in the case of 2 failed nests.

First song, in January, at Loch Oire 2nd, Elgin 7th, Lein (Kingston) 26th and Maryfield 29th. Highest count was 30 Aberlour-Craigellachie 16 Jan.

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

Counts: 6 Dufftown area 3 Apr, 4 Cawdor Wood 13 Apr and 4 Nairn-Cawdor 4 Oct.

Jay *Garrulus glandarius**Scarce resident breeder.*

Breeding season: April-July reports came from Forres, Hill of Dalnapot, Hill of the Wangie, Lochloy House, Loch na Bo, Loch Spynie, Lynemore, Mayen, Monaughty Forest, New Fleenas, Rothiemay, Scoot More, Sillyearn Wood, Spynie Palace, Tapp, The Bodach and Wellside.

At other seasons, Jays were seen in the following additional sites: Aberlour (Jan,Nov,Dec), Allachrow (Dec), Altyre House (Mar), Ardcanny (Roths) (Sep), Balloch Hill (Aug), Binsness (Oct), Blacksboat (Oct), Clatternbriggs (Jan,Nov), Cloddymoss (Nov), College of Roseisle (Aug), Culbin Forest (Aug), Darnaway (Jan,Sep-Dec), Kintessack (Oct), Limekilns (Nov), Loch Loy (Oct,Dec), Loch of Blairs (Oct), Loch Oire (Sep,Oct), Lossie Forest (Feb), Midwood (Clochan) (Oct), Quarrelwood (Elgin) (Sep), Roseisle (Aug), Sanquhar (Mar), Sleepieshill (Aug), Sound Moor (Sep), Tom a' Chadalair (Mar), Westfield (Jan), Windyridge (Oct) and York Tower (Mar).

Magpie *Pica pica**Fairly common resident breeder.*

Largest groups reported were 7 Stoneyford Pond (Rafford) 29 Jan and 6 Hopeman 11 Jan.

Jackdaw *Corvus monedula**Very common resident breeder.*

The only daytime count exceeding 100 was 134 Aberlour 16 Feb.

Rook *Corvus frugilegus**Very common resident breeder.*

Rookery counts in Dufftown area revealed 30 nests at NJ305370, 50-60 nests at NJ322391 and 3 nests at NJ323394. In west Elgin, c75 nests near Glen Moray distillery. In Nairn district, 50+ nests Tomloan Farm (NH9048).

An adult at Score (Ferness) 2 Aug had three white outermost primaries on each wing.

Carrion 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
76	21	25	nc	nc	21	27	26	75	27	26	nc

Elsewhere, 77 Binsness 26 Jul, 38 Garmouth viaduct-Speymouth 19 Jan (32 there 29 Nov), 36 Nairn Bar 4 Dec, 33 Nether Meft 9 Jan, 16 Burghead-Hopeman 4 Dec and 15 Carse of Delnies 8 Mar.

Hooded Crow *Corvus cornix**Scarce visitor.*

Hooded Crows or hybrids were seen on the Lossie estuary as follows:

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

Other Hooded Crows (singles unless stated) were seen at Balormie 21 Nov, Binsness (4) 26 Jul (3 there 14 Aug), Brodie Home farm 21 Nov, Burghead 11 Feb, Burgie 7 Nov, Calcots 12 Jan, Carse of Delnies (2) 8 Mar (1 there 27 Jul), Cloddymoss (Culbin) 21 Aug, Cooper Park (Elgin) 29 May and 26 Sep, Culbin Bar (4) 23 Jan (2 there 30 Apr), Dallas (2) 28 Sep, Dufftown 3 Apr, Earnhill 20 Feb, Findhorn 14 Jan, 14 Oct, 1 Aug and 26 Aug (2), Hopeman 21 Oct, Innes Estate 3 Oct, Kintessack 2 Apr, Lingieston 19 Aug, Loch Oire 21 Jul, Lower Hempriggs 15 Jan, Miltonhill 10 Oct, North Alves 19 Oct, Nairn 7 Mar, 3 on 22 Jul, 2 between 25-27 Aug, 1 on 15 Sep, 4 on 25 Oct and 1 on 1-10 Nov, Nairn Bar (4) 23 Jan (1 on 16 Oct), Nairn-Cawdor 30 Mar (2 there 4 Oct), Netherton 8 Feb, Pittensair 29 Apr, Portknockie 10 Jun-6 Sep, Roseisle 11 Apr (2 there 3 Aug), Rothiemay 21 May, Sanquhar Loch 9 Jul, Spynie 25 Feb and Windyridge 18 Sep. A number of other sightings around Lossiemouth are assumed to refer to birds also counted under the Lossie estuary totals given in the table.

Raven *Corvus corax**Scarce visitor, formerly widespread breeder.*

Most notable were 20 over the Speyside Way at Carn Liath 24 Jul (AE) – the biggest group in Moray & Nairn since 1992. Otherwise, 3 Ailnack gorge 31 Jul (ISS), 1 Bridge of Lecht 1 Jun (WRPB), 1 Drynachen 27 Aug (L.Schofield), 1 Foal's Craig (Glen Avon) 4 Jul (MJHC), 1 Tom a' Chadalair 26 Mar (RP,AJ) and 1 Tomintoul 20 Mar (S.Taylor).

Starling *Sturnus vulgaris**Very common resident breeder and winter visitor.*

Nestboxes: Five out of 10 boxes at Clochan occupied with one brood fledging from each. Average brood size at fledging was 5.2, the best in 5 years during which the average fledged brood size has been 4.1 (MJHC).

Largest flocks, away from roosts, were 1500 Ryeriggs 7 Mar, 800 Bishopmill pig farm (Elgin) 7 Sep, 800 Covesea pig farm 9 Nov, 600 Hopeman 18 Aug, 600 Pittensair 4 Feb, 300 Howford pig farm and 250 Lossiemouth playing fields 26 Nov. Clearly, pig farms provide easy pickings.

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

Very common resident breeder.

Flock counts: 60 Station Park, Lossiemouth 6 Sep, 50 Hopeman 15 Aug, 45 Clochan 29 Jan, 20 Kingston 14 Jul, 20 Spey Bay 18 Dec and 15 Carse of Delnies 27 Jul. 1 Tanzie (Ben Aigan) 14-15 Jun was the first ever seen there.

Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*

Fairly common resident breeder.

Breeding season: At Longmorn, nest building began 19 Mar and 11 nest boxes were occupied, 2 more than in 2004. First brood fledged 29 May and the last on 11 Aug. Of the 11 pairs, 2 raised one brood, 6 had two broods and 3 pairs raised three broods. Elsewhere, one pair used a nestbox at Clochan and a pair nested in the stonework of Duffus Castle. Other pairs were found at Duffus, Earnhill, Gilston, Gordonstoun, Miltonhill (2), Stripeside (Grange), Urquhart, Wester Moy (4) and Windyridge (3).

Flock counts: 48 Wester Calcots 2 Sep (35 on 19 Oct, 26 on 13 Nov), 20 Lochhills 29 Oct, 15-18 at Longmorn bird table most days in winter, 14 Barmuckity 15 Feb, 10 Bruntlands 6 Feb, 10 Clochan 4 Sep, 10 Westfield 4 Nov, 8 Windyridge 28 Aug, 6 Duffus Castle 17 Nov and 5 Pitairlie 24 Dec. Other sites holding less than 5 birds were Cothill (Mar), Cranloch (Jan), Gilston (Jan), Knock (Jun), Lesmurdie (Jun), Mains of Moy (May), South Darkland (Jan), Spey Bay (Jun,Oct) and Westerfolds (Feb).

Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*

Very common resident breeder, migrant and winter visitor.

First song, in Feb, heard at Dufftown 2nd, Loch Oire 3rd, Kingston and Scarffbanks 4th and Loch of Blairs 8th. Flock counts of 100 or more in winter/spring were 220 Pitgaveny 24 Jan, 215 Carron 6 Mar, 100 Elgin 7 Jan, 100 Easterton 27 Feb and 100 Fochabers 2 Mar.

In late summer/autumn/winter, counts were 400 Spynie Palace area 4-11 Dec, 300 Brodie 19 Dec, 300 Clochan 11 Dec and 200 Conicavel 17 Dec.

Brambling *Fringilla montifringilla*

Fairly common winter visitor and migrant.

Winter-spring: 1 Scarffbanks 8 Jan, 1 Fochabers 17 Feb, 1 Dufftown (in a town garden) 21 Feb, 3 near Elgin Academy 23 Jan (1 there 6 Feb, 2 on 27 Feb, 6 on 13 Mar) and (the only sizeable flock of the season) 60 Tom a' Chadalair (Tomintoul) 26 Mar.

Autumn-winter: A clear coastal arrival in mid October indicated by 1 Forres 13th, 1 Findhorn dunes (in off sea) 13th, 20 Strathlene 15th, 1 Culbin 16th and 3 Portknockie 17th (2 there 23rd). Later, 2 Sherrifston 19 Nov, 1 in a Clochan garden 20 Nov, 10 Burnside of Enzie 3 Dec and 2 Wellheads (Clochan) 11 Dec.

Greenfinch *Carduelis chloris*

Very common resident breeder.

First song, in Feb, was heard at Kingston 3rd and Elgin 9th. In Silversands Caravan Park, Lossiemouth, 13 singing 9 Apr. First fledged juveniles Longmorn 14 May and Tanzie (Ben Aigan) 16 May.

Largest flock reported was only 40 Windyridge 13 Nov.

Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*

Common resident breeder.

Counts of 10 or more together were 200 Spynie Palace 11 Dec, 76 Forres (Waterford Farm) 4 Sep, 70 Gilston 22 Jan, 70 Mosstodloch 20 Feb, 58 Longmorn 20 Feb (45 there 16 Jan), 34 Cloddach 6 Feb, 32 Inshlach Wood 9 Aug, 32 Kinloss 14 Sep, 32 Standingstone 17 Dec (26 there 29 Jul), 30 Clochan 14 Jan, 30 Fochabers 2 Mar, 24 Innes Home Farm 19 Jan, 24 Windyridge 8 Aug (22 there 27 Jul and 13 Nov), 21 Burghead 26 Dec, 12 Cooper Park (Elgin) 24 Jan and 12 Kingston 31 Aug.

Siskin *Carduelis spinus*

Very common resident breeder and migrant.

In summer, c15 pairs Half Davoch 18 Jun.

Flocks of 20 or more were 250 Spey Bay area 18 Dec, 200 Drynachan 18 Dec, 154 near River Findhorn at Forres 18 Nov, 100 Forres 28 Dec, 87 Stoneyford (Rafford) 29 Jan, 80 Maviston 20 Dec, 80 Spynie Palace 4 Dec, 70 Garmouth viaduct 29 Nov, 70 Washingwells 21 Nov, 60 Cloddach 20 Nov (30 there 20 Mar), 60 Loch na Bo 4 Mar (30 there 3 Nov), 50 Fochabers 2 Mar, 50 Loch Oire 24 Aug, 60 Loch Spynie 25 Jan (50 there 18 Jan and 9 Feb, 30 on 4 Aug), 40 Cloddymoss 21 Aug, 40 Dallas 4 Apr, 30 Inchstelly 18 Nov, 30 Maryfield 29 Sep, 25 Moss of Delnahaugh 24 Jun, 20 Culbin 25 Aug and 20 Nairn 19 Nov.

Linnet *Carduelis cannabina*

Very common resident breeder.

Flocks of 100 or more were 350 Chapelton (Forres) 23 Jan, 250 Cloves 3 Jan, 250 Covesea 26 Oct, 200 Shempston 6 Nov, 200 Strathlene 23 Aug (130 there 10 Sep), 180 Lossiemouth 25 Oct, 140 Bogmoor 11 Aug, 130 Buinnach (Clochan) 5 Feb, 122 North Alves 8 Jul, 120 Gilston 21 Dec, 150 Nairn 27 Aug, 100 Pitgaveny 24 Jan and 100 South Darkland 20 Feb.

Twite *Carduelis flavirostris*

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

Newly fledged young Foal's Craig (Glen Avon) 4 Jul (MJHC). Also up-country but not in the breeding season were 2 Bogeney 21 Oct (ISS).

In coastal areas in winter were 47 Findhorn Bay 23 Jan (CD), 19 Culbin Bar 3 Jan (AJL,ISS) (7 there 12 Feb (AY)), 13 Nairn harbour 10 Nov (JDHM), 5 Mill of Grange 6 Apr (ISS), 2 Nairn Bar 4 Dec (AY) and 1 Myreside 26 Nov.

Lesser Redpoll (Redpoll) *Carduelis cabaret*

Common resident breeder and migrant.

Reported in the breeding season at Barevan-Cawdor, Brodie, Bridge of Tommore (juveniles seen), Clash Wan (Ben Rinnes) ('strong colony' in young spruces), Craig an Donich, Craigellachie, Garronhaugh (Rothiemay), Glenlatterach (3-4 pairs including one feeding young 27 Jun), Hill of Dalnapot, Knockando (many in young plantation at NJ544534), Leanoch, Loch Loy, Logie, Lyne of Knockando, Lynemore, Morinsh, Parkmore (small colony), The Bodach, Tomnabilach and Tomintoul.

Flocks at other times were 50 Dallas Dhu 26 Dec, 40 Maviston 20 Dec, 25 Cloves 3 Jan, 25 Sourdenhead 9 Jan and 20 Nairn 25 Oct. During a period of passerine immigration, 1 flew over Strathlene 15 Oct.

Common Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra*

Irregular scarce visitor and probable scarce breeder.

Scottish Crossbill *Loxia scotica*

Probable common resident breeder.

Despite the fact that the most recent research supports the existence of Scottish Crossbill as a true species it remains indistinguishable to the vast majority of birdwatchers in the field. Recordings of the calls of crossbills and their subsequent analysis by means of sonograms is usually required. Records given below have not been subjected to such scrutiny and are therefore lumped under 'crossbill sp.'

Counts of 10 or more (often approximate counts) were 85 Sluie 1 Aug, 30 Cloddymoss (Culbin) 21 Aug, 20 South Darkland 22 Oct, 14 Cairns Wood (Rothiemay) 30 Apr, 13 Cloddach 2 Oct, 10 Ardoch (Relugas) 2 Aug, 10 Darnaway Forest 5 Nov, 12 Linkwood (Elgin) 8 Aug, 11 Stoneyford pond (Rafford) 28 Jul, 10 Score (Ferness) 2 Aug, 10 over Elgin 10 Jul, 16 Kinloss 20 Oct (10 there 17 Oct) and 10 Sluie 17 Apr.

Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

Common resident breeder.

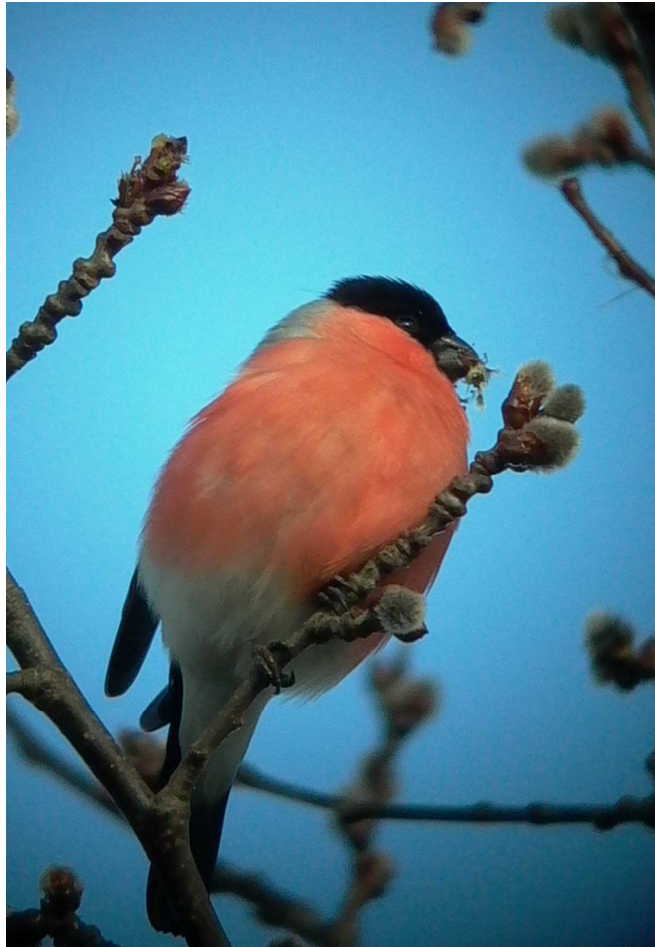
In the breeding season, 2 pairs Loch na Bo 27 May, 2 pairs Limekilns (Mundole) 25 May, single pairs nest building Garmouth viaduct 20 Mar and Tanzie (Ben Aigan) 13 Jun, adults carrying food in 2 places near Tapp 5 Jun, 2 pairs Newton of Dalvey 10 Jun, 4 pairs along River Spey at Fochabers 14 Jun and an adult with fledged juveniles Scoot More 3 Jul.

In late October/early November 2004 a substantial influx of Bullfinches of northern (Scandinavian) race *P.p.pyrrhula* into northern Britain took place. A few such birds were seen in Moray & Nairn in late 2004 but a much larger group was found in Aberlour in February/March 2005. The first 14 were found 9 Feb (AE) and a flock was present continuously until the last 3 on 24 Mar (AE). Maximum counts were 25 on 19 Feb, 5 Mar (13M,12F) and 12 Mar, with only slightly fewer on many dates (AE,MJHC,RP,AJ,JDHM,DAG et al.). Elsewhere, 2 northern race birds Brodie 2 Apr (AJ,RP).

Groups of local birds included 34 Culbin Forest 12 Feb, 22 Loch Allan (Dava) 19 Nov, 12 Loch Loy 5 Oct (7 there 15 Sep), 12 Loch Spynie 2 Apr, 12 Stonewells 29 Oct, 10 Innes estate 14 Sep, 7 Brodie Castle pond 21 Nov, 6 Elgin 28 Feb and 5 Newmill (Auldearn) 7 Mar.



Northern Bullfinches, Aberlour 6 March 2005 (© Duncan Gibson)



Northern Bullfinch, Aberlour 6 March 2005 (© Duncan Gibson)

Lapland Bunting *Calcarius lapponicus*

Rare visitor.

1 Tugnet and Kingston 5 Nov (MJHC,AJ). This is the 12th winter record for Moray & Nairn.

Snow Bunting *Plectrophenax nivalis*

Common winter visitor and rare breeder.

First back in autumn (in October) were 1 Findhorn 8th, 1 Portknockie 9th, 2 Strathlene 15th (1 there 16th), 1 Nairn Bar 16th and 4 Burghead Bay 20th.

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

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Oct	Nov	Dec
Nairn/Culbin Bars (& east Nairn)	6 (23 rd)	3 (12 th)		1 (16 th)	20 (6 th)	47 (1 st)
Lossiemouth east beach	100 (9 th)			30 (27 th)	101 (27 th)	114 (12 th)

Elsewhere, in the lowlands, groups of 5 or more were 50 Spey Bay 6 Dec, 30 Spynie canal 11 Dec, 15 Findhorn Bay 3 Jan and 5 Roseisle 22 Jan. In the hills, 12 Ben Rinnes 24 Oct (7 there 31 Dec) and 10 Bluefolds 30 Nov.

Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella*

Very common resident breeder.

In breeding season, first song Maviston 28 Feb, 7 singing Cloddach 24 Apr.

Flock counts were 74 Windyridge 4 Dec (50 there 13 Nov and 32 on 31 Mar), 64 Gilston 22 Jan, 53 South Darkland 5 Feb (30 there 25 Dec), 46 Caysbriggs 25 Jan, 45 Westerfolds 21 Oct, 40 Mosstodloch 20 Feb, 25 Wester Calcots 19 Oct, 22 Clochan 22 Jan, 12 Forres 18 Dec and 10 Spey Bay 18 Dec.

Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus*

Common resident breeder.

First song Lein (Kingston) 15 Mar. Later, 8 singing Windyridge-Spynie canal 7 Jun. Proof of breeding obtained at Bellandy (Glen Rinnes), Kincorth (Findhorn Bay), Loch Spynie and Windyridge. Probable breeding also at Ardclach, Cloddach quarry, Dallas, Garmouth viaduct, Inchstelly, RAF Kinloss, Miltonhill, Newton of Dalvey and Spey Bay.

No large groups reported. Present as usual in winter on Nairn/Culbin Bars where 2 on 23 Jan, 7 on 12 Feb, 4 on 16 Oct and 1 on 4 Dec.

Corn Bunting *Emberiza calandra*

Scarce resident breeder.

Singing birds were located at Garmouth, Nether Dallachy (3), Spey Bay and Stonewells. Other occupied localities in the breeding season were Barmuckity, Clochan, Lochhill, Urquhart and Oldtown (Roseisle).

Once again, Clochan hosted a substantial flock in spring – 30 on 16 Apr, 43 on 24 Apr and 50 (exact count) on 30 Apr. Also at Clochan, 36 on 27 Feb, 6 on 3 Nov and 9 on 31 Dec. For most of the year, however, Corn Buntings were absent from Clochan.

ADDITIONS/CORRECTIONS TO 2004 REPORT

Ptarmigan *Lagopus muta*

Add: 7 Ben Rinnes 20 Feb and 2 pairs there 29 Mar (AE).

DECISION OF BRITISH BIRDS RARITIES COMMITTEE

The following record **has** been accepted:

Black Scoter	Burghead Bay	Oct 2005
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DECISIONS OF SCOTTISH BIRDS RARITIES COMMITTEE

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

Short-toed Lark	Kingston	Apr 2003
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DECISIONS OF MORAY & NAIRN RARITIES COMMITTEE

The following records **have** been accepted:

Balearic Shearwater	Lossiemouth	Aug 2005
Green-winged Teal	Loch Spynie	Jan 2004
Green-winged Teal	Loch Flemington	Jan 2005*
Green-winged Teal	Loch Spynie	Dec 2005
Surf Scoter (female)	Burghead Bay	Nov 2005
Temminck's Stint (2)	Moray	May 2005
Pectoral Sandpiper	Kingston	Jul 2005
Pectoral Sandpiper	Miltonduff	Aug 2005
Long-tailed Skua	Lossiemouth	Aug 2005
Mediterranean Gull	Findhorn Bay	Apr 2005
Wryneck (2)	Nairn district	Jun 2005
Wryneck	Ballindalloch	May 2005
Yellow-browed Warbler	Portknockie	Oct 2005
Bullfinch (northern race)	Brodie	Apr 2005
Lapland Bunting	Tugnet/Kingston	Nov 2005

*This record was submitted to, and accepted by, Highland Rarities Committee, in whose area the bird spent most of its time.

GRID REFERENCES OF MAJOR LOCALITIES MENTIONED IN THE SPECIES ACCOUNTS
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Aberlour	NJ265428	Hopeman	NJ145695
Auldearn	NH918555	Invererne	NJ033606
Ben Rinnes	NJ255355	Kellas	NJ172543
Binn Hill	NJ305655	Kellas oakwood	NJ157540
Bin of Cullen	NJ480643	Kinermony	NJ254420
Binsness	NJ030628	Kingsteps	NH903573
Bogmoor	NJ357629	Kingston	NJ337655
Bow Fiddle Rock	NJ495688	Kinloss	NJ065618
Brodie	NJ978572	Kinneddar	NJ223693
Broom of Moy	NJ020593	Knockando	NJ182429
Buckie	NJ425657	Lecht	NJ245133
Buckpool	NJ412653	Lein, Kingston	NJ334657
Burghead	NJ114689	Lhanbryde	NJ275615
Burghead Bay	NJ080670	Loch Flemington	NH810520
Burgie	NJ093595	Loch Loy	NH933587
Cabrach	NJ385270	Loch na Bo	NJ283600
Califer Hill	NJ083570	Loch of Blairs	NJ023557
Carron	NJ222414	Loch Oire	NJ886608
Cawdor	NH845500	Loch Spynie	NJ235665
Caysbriggs	NJ248669	Lochindorb	NH975365
Clochan	NJ402608	Lossie estuary	NJ243700
Cloddach quarry	NJ200591	Lossie Forest	NJ270680
Cloddymoss	NH982599	Lossiemouth	NJ235710
College of Roseisle	NJ138665	Milltown airfield	NJ265655
Coltfield	NJ117637	Milton Brodie	NJ092627
Covesea	NJ186705	Miltonduff	NJ182599
Craigellachie	NJ290450	Miltonhill	NJ099630
Cran Loch	NH945590	Monaughty Forest	NJ132595
Culbin Bar	NH965627	Montgrew	NJ453517
Culbin Forest	NH990620	Nairn	NH883567
Cullen	NJ513671	Nairn Bar	NH922603
Cummingston	NJ133690	Pitgaveny	NJ240652
Dava	NJ005387	Portgordon	NJ395642
Delnies	NH845563	Portknockie	NJ490685
Drainie	NJ215687	Roseisle	NJ138666
Drynachan	NH865397	Sanquhar Loch	NJ041581
Dufftown	NJ325400	Scarffbanks	NJ237663
Duffus	NJ170688	Spey Bay	NJ354653
Dulsie	NH932416	Speymouth	NJ345656
Elgin	NJ215625	Strathlene	NJ449674
Findhorn	NJ040645	Tarras	NJ062597
Findhorn Bay	NJ045625	Tomintoul	NJ170185
Findochty	NJ463680	Tugnet	NJ348655
Fochabers	NJ345585	Urquhart	NJ286627
Forres	NJ035585		
Garmouth	NJ338644		
Hempriggs	NJ103638		

**THE STATUS OF BIRDS AT LOCH SPYNIE
PART 2 – PIGEONS TO BUNTINGS**

MARTIN COOK

Of all bird watching sites in Moray & Nairn, Loch Spynie is probably the most visited and the most closely watched. In most, if not all, years more records are submitted to the local recorder from the loch than from any other site. The status of most species that use the loch and its surroundings is now reasonably well known although much more quantitative information is required for many of the more numerous breeding species.

The purpose of this article (and Part 1 in *Birds in Moray & Nairn 2004*) is to summarise the status of all species which are known to have occurred at Loch Spynie, based on available information until the end of 2004.

Feral Pigeon

A few around farm buildings near the loch.

Stock Dove

Frequently seen feeding in fields close to the loch. Usually no more than five but nine on 30 Dec 2000, 17 on 21 Jan 2004 and an exceptional 33 on 18 Feb 1995.

Woodpigeon

Common breeder in the woods and willow scrub around the loch, where active nests may be only 20m apart. Largest flock counted on nearby farmland was 700 on 12 March 1989.

Collared Dove

Only likely to be seen, in very small numbers, around Scarffbanks farm and the loch car park.

Cuckoo

Single birds singing on 11 May 1992 and 4 May 2002.

Barn Owl

Regularly breeds close to the loch and birds are sometimes seen hunting over the marshes and damp fields.

Tawny Owl

Common breeder in the area, occupying tree holes and nest boxes. Sometimes hoots in daylight hours.

Long-eared Owl

One beside the canal on 28 July 1998. Breeding has taken place within 1km of the loch so the species must visit the surrounding fields and woodlands during darkness more often than this single record would suggest.

Short-eared Owl

Four birds were watched hunting together on 9 Nov 1969 and also on 19 Jan 1975. Since then, only one record of a single bird, on 10 Jan 1993.

Swift

First arrivals usually in second week of May, earliest were 2 on 30 Apr 2003. Up to 200 may subsequently gather to feed over the loch, especially in poor weather.

Kingfisher

First seen on 6 Jan 1993. Annual occurrence since 1998 has resulted in birds in September-December 1998, May 1999, April & September 2000, August-October 2001, August & October 2002, January 2003 and October 2004. All single birds except two between 29 Sept-7 Oct 2001.

Hoopoe

One was shot near the loch on 26 Apr 1902.

Green Woodpecker

During the brief period when this species became established as a breeder in Moray & Nairn, birds were seen or heard annually from 1985 to 1989, in 1992 and in 1995. None have been reported since.

Great Spotted Woodpecker

Breeds in woodland close to the loch. Most easily seen by following up the distinctive short, sharp 'kik' call.

Skylark

A numerous breeding species, heard singing in spring high over grazing and arable fields close to the loch. Flocks may be found in stubbles during the winter.

Sand Martin

A common summer visitor, usually first seen hawking for insects over the water in the last days of March. When feeding conditions are difficult elsewhere, large numbers congregate at the loch with estimates of as many as 800 on 12 May 1995 and 700 on 28 Apr 2002.

Swallow

The first Swallows return to the loch in early-mid April and several pairs breed around farms and other buildings close by. As with the martins, adverse weather conditions may result in hundreds gathering to feed over the water. In late summer and early autumn evenings, large flocks assemble to roost in the reed beds. Between 5000-10000 were regular in the 1980s but numbers have been lower in recent years. Few remain by October although there have been stragglers as late as 4 Nov 1987.

Red-rumped Swallow

One from 12-14 May 1995, hawking over the loch with large numbers of other martins and swallows.

House Martin

A frequent summer visitor, seen chasing insects above the water. Most common soon after arrival in late April and May, when up to 50 may be present, or at the end of the breeding season. An estimate of 200 on 16 Aug 1986 was unusual.

Tree Pipit

The only record is of three birds feeding in a field near Scarffbanks farm on 4 May 1992. Although breeding in the nearby pine/birch woodland is a possibility, these birds are more likely to have been migrants.

Meadow Pipit

Breeds thinly in damp and scrubby ground near the loch. Small flocks may be encountered in winter.

Grey Wagtail

An infrequent visitor to the few parts of the loch where a stony shore is exposed.

Pied Wagtail

Breeds around farm buildings close to the loch. Up to 100 regularly roost in the reeds in autumn and winter, occasionally many more e.g. 600 on 25 March 1993. The late date of this large assembly suggests the presence of returning migrants. Birds of the pale-backed Continental race known as White Wagtail are occasionally seen, usually in late April or early May; 11 were feeding in a field beside Scarffbanks farm on 4 May 1992.

Waxwing

The only records from close to the loch are 12 on 26 Feb 1989, 3 on 10 Nov 1996 and 30 flying over on 27 Oct 2004.

Wren

Common resident breeder.

Duncock

Common resident breeder.

Robin

Common breeder. Some are resident and many others pass through the area in late summer and autumn.

Nightingale

One was trapped and ringed in willow scrub on 10 Aug 1988.

Redstart

A juvenile was trapped and ringed on 19 July 1989 but there was no evidence that it was reared close to the loch and this remains the only record.

Stonechat

Seen on three occasions close to the west side of the loch: 1 in summer 1992, 1 on 2 March 1996 and 2 on 12 Oct 1999.

Wheatear

An annual spring migrant in April and early May. Seen in very small numbers along tracks and in bare fields near the loch. Seven on 5 May 1995 is the most counted together.

Blackbird

Common breeder with numbers augmented in autumn and winter by immigrants from the Continent.

Fieldfare

Autumn and winter immigrant to the area with large flocks of newly arrived birds sometimes flying over during mid October-early November. Most move on after Hawthorn and Rowan berries are stripped but smaller flocks may be seen, often feeding on stubbles, throughout the winter.

Song Thrush

Common breeder in loch-side woodlands. Most leave during the early winter but spring return is very early, from mid February.

Redwing

Autumn and winter immigrant, sometimes descending in large flocks to feast on Hawthorn and Rowan berries in October and November. Normally only small numbers remain around the loch in mid winter.

Mistle Thrush

Breeds in nearby woodlands. Flocks gather in late summer and autumn e.g. around Scarffbanks where 84 on 11 Sept 1987 and 57 on 16 Aug 2002.

Grasshopper Warbler

Scarce summer visitor which was heard singing most years during 1985-2000 (but not since) in the marshes to the west of the loch.

Sedge Warbler

Common summer visitor to the reed beds from late April/early May until September. On 15 May 1995, 34 were singing around the edge of the loch.

Marsh Warbler

One was trapped and ringed on 23 Aug 1983.

Lesser Whitethroat

One was trapped and ringed in the willow scrub on 26 Aug 1989.

Whitethroat

Common summer visitor and breeder in drier scrubby areas around the loch, feeding in marshes among willows and reeds.

Garden Warbler

Summer visitor. Singing birds were reported at the loch almost every year between 1985-1995, and in 2001 and 2004. There have been few other sightings but four were trapped and ringed in the willows in August 1988 and they probably occur regularly in this habitat in late summer.

Blackcap

Summer visitor and breeder, most easily heard singing in the woodlands around the south and east of the loch where two or three hold territories each year, with as many as six in 1994 and five in 2004. Migrants pass through in autumn and there are four records of single birds in winter, on 1 Jan 1991, 14 Dec 1996, 29 Nov 1998 and 12 Nov 2003.

Yellow-browed Warbler

One of these vagrants from Siberia was trapped and ringed on 25 Sept 2001.

Chiffchaff

Summer visitor. Two or three birds sing in the loch-side woods each year but breeding has yet to be confirmed. A few feed in the willow scrub in late summer and early autumn. A bird of Siberian race was trapped and ringed on 12 Nov 2000. There are three later winter records, of single birds, on 29 Nov 1988, 6 Dec 1998 and 17-24 Jan 1999.

Willow Warbler

Very common summer visitor and breeder, usually arriving in mid April. Abundant in the willow scrub in late summer. Most have left before September.

Goldcrest

Common breeder in conifers around the loch. Feeds among willows in late summer and autumn.

Spotted Flycatcher

Very scarce summer visitor to the more mature woodlands. Breeding was proved in 2004 for the first time in recent years.

Pied Flycatcher

One spring migrant on 11 May 1975.

Bearded Tit

First seen in the reed beds in 1998 with several records since.

Long-tailed Tit

Common breeder, encountered in parties flitting through the trees at other times of year. Groups are usually less than 20 but sometimes more; the largest counted being 45 on 29 Dec 1987 and about 40 on both 13 Dec 1998 and 17 Jan 1999 (presumably the same party).

Crested Tit

One was trapped and ringed among the willows on 22 July 1989 and another was seen on 30 Jan 1999.

Coal Tit

Common breeder, especially in the conifer woodlands. Gathers into mixed flocks with other tits and Goldcrests in winter.

Blue Tit

Common breeder making extensive use of nest boxes, of which 9-10 are occupied in most years.

Great Tit

Common breeder occupying 12-15 nest boxes in most years.

Treecreeper

Breeds thinly in the woods. Often accompanies tit flocks in autumn and winter.

Red-backed Shrike

One in a scrubby area at the north end of the loch on 17 Aug 1988.

Great Grey Shrike

One in Hawthorns along the track leading to Scarffbanks farm on 11-12 Oct 2000.

Jay

First recorded on 14 Feb 1997 and annually since then (except 1998) with increasing frequency. Breeding may have already taken place but, if not, it is unlikely to be long delayed.

Magpie

Quite often encountered around the vicinity of the loch, breeding nearby. Outside the breeding season usually in very small groups, never more than 5 Scarffbanks 22 Feb 2001.

Jackdaw

Most often heard flying over the loch, sometimes with Rooks. Also in mixed flocks in adjacent arable fields. A sizeable population bred in the Palace before it was roofed. Others nest in tree holes.

Rook

There is a rookery about 1km from the loch and the species is common in nearby fields and flying overhead, sometimes in flocks of hundreds.

Carrion Crow

Breeds close to the loch and is present in surrounding countryside in small numbers at all seasons.

Hooded Crow

Single crows considered to be pure Hooded have been reported on three occasions: 15 March 1998, 10 Jan 1999 and 19 Jan 2001.

Starling

Although a few pairs breed in buildings and tree holes close to the loch, Starlings are most evident when gathering to roost in the reed beds on autumn and winter evenings. As darkness approaches, flocks wheel and swirl in synchronised patterns before plunging into the reeds. Numbers are hard to estimate but may approach 10000 on occasions.

Rose-coloured Starling

One was shot near the loch on 21 June 1851.

House Sparrow

Breeds around human habitation near the loch.

Tree Sparrow

A few pairs probably breed in areas close to the loch. Winter flocks of 50-100 fed in adjacent farmland in winter in the 1980s and early 1990s but fewer are now seen.

Chaffinch

Very common breeder in all types of woodland. Gathers into flocks on farmland in winter e.g. 200 counted at Scarffbanks on 30 Nov 1997.

Brambling

An occasional winter visitor. Close to the loch itself were 3 on 10 Jan 1993. Near the Palace were 15 on 12 Apr 1997 and a single bird on 16 Nov 2003.

Greenfinch

A resident species although there is no recent evidence of breeding in the immediate vicinity of the loch. Mixed finch flocks in winter on neighbouring farmland often contain Greenfinches e.g. 36 at Scarffbanks on 1 Dec 2002 and as many as 150 near the Palace on 13 Feb 2000.

Goldfinch

Nests in shrubby areas close to open ground near the loch and gathers to feed in flocks where small seeds are available. Numbers have increased greatly in Moray over the last 20 years although the largest single flock counted close to the loch remains 85 on 21 Aug 1995.

Siskin

Commonly encountered high in coniferous trees around the loch where it probably breeds although such proof is lacking. Flocks of 50 or more have been seen in six recent winters (max. 80 on 7 Feb 1990 and 7 Dec 1992) but numbers are usually lower than this.

Linnet

Breeds along the adjacent old railway line and other areas with gorse. Largest winter flocks in nearby arable land have been 210 on 19 Aug 1996 and 150 on 7 Feb 2003.

Mealy Redpoll

Up to 10 among the Lesser Redpolls during 23-30 Dec 1995 and 2 on 24 March 1996.

Lesser Redpoll

Not recently reported in the breeding season but sometimes seen among the birches and on stubbles at other times. Largest recent count was 80 in the trees around Scarffbanks between 23-30 Dec 1995.

Arctic Redpoll

Five different individuals among the mixed redpoll flock at Scarffbanks between 23 Dec 1995- 3 Jan 1996. Later, 2 on 24 March 1996.

Common Crossbill and Scottish Crossbill

Crossbills are occasionally present in and around the conifer woods on the east side of the loch. Largest groups have been 27 on 13 Oct 1990 and 26 on 24 Dec 1997. Both forms have probably occurred but most records cannot be attributed either way.

Bullfinch

A few pairs breed in shrubby vegetation and small groups of five or six are commonly encountered in wooded areas in winter. Larger flocks are uncommon but 17 were seen together on 21 Jan 1987.

Snow Bunting

Three were near Scarffbanks on 30 Dec 1998 and one flew over the loch on 1 Jan 1999.

Yellowhammer

Breeds in drier areas with gorse and hawthorn such as along the old railway line. Flocks gather in winter on farmland where best counts have been 45 on 7 Dec 1990 and 30 on 19 Oct 1993.

Reed Bunting

A common breeder in all reed beds and marshes. In summer 1997 18 singing birds were counted around the main loch and on 17 June 1999 there were 12 territories in c40ha of marsh west of the Palace.

Corn Bunting

Formerly common in the area e.g. 150 roosting in a marsh near the loch in December 1948. In keeping with the national decline, numbers in Moray are now very small and there has been no record close to the loch since 1990.

CANADA GOOSE : TAXONOMY AND MORAY & NAIRN RECORDS

ANDY JENSEN & BOB PROCTOR

In the 45th supplement to the American Ornithologists' Union (AOU) checklist, Banks *et al.* (2004) reported that Canada Goose was to be split into two species following recent analysis of mitochondrial DNA. In the autumn of 2005, the British Ornithologists' Union (BOU) followed the AOU and also split Canada Goose into two species. However, further research is underway and the AOU Checklist Committee have suggested that they may look again at the complex.

The two species have mainly been divided by body size: large-bodied (chiefly interior and southern US breeding subspecies) and small-bodied (tundra-breeding subspecies) (Sibley, 2004). However, in the past there have been suggestions of 2-4 species within the group, based on size, biometrics, and body colour.

The AOU and BOU have decided to use different common names for the two species groups: the Americans are using Canada Goose and Cackling Goose, while in Britain, Greater Canada Goose and Lesser Canada Goose are to be

used. Unfortunately this will lead to some confusion in Britain, particularly as the subspecies *parvipes* is commonly known as Lesser Canada Goose, but is placed in the Greater Canada Goose group, and further exacerbating the confusion as the group of small-bodied species is to be given the name Lesser Canada Goose! Stackhouse (2005) suggests renaming the small-bodied group as Tundra Goose, thus ending the confusion with *parvipes*.

The 'large'-bodied group, Greater Canada Goose, involves a total of seven subspecies. Note that these can be known by a variety of English names (some of which can confuse the situation such as Lesser Canada Goose outlined above):

- *canadensis* – Atlantic or Eastern
- *interior* – Interior, or Todd's, or Hudson Bay, or Central
- *maxima* – Giant
- *moffitti* – Moffitt's, or Great Basin, or Western
- *parvipes* – Lesser
- *occidentalis* – Dusky
- *fulva* – Vancouver, or Queen Charlotte

The 'small'-bodied group, known by the BOU as Lesser Canada Goose, involves 5 sub-species:

- *hutchinsii* – Richardson's, or Hutchins's
- *taverneri* – Taverner's
- *minima* – Cackling
- *asiatica* – Bering [thought to be extinct]
- *leucopareia* – Aleutian

Birders in Moray will be most familiar with *canadensis* race Canada Geese, which is the race which has become naturalised in Britain since its introduction in the 17th century to ornamental parks from North America. Since the early 1960s, Canada Geese from the Yorkshire breeding population have undertaken a

regular summer migration to moult in the Beaully Firth, with an increased frequency of birds passing through Moray in the 1970s and 1980s. In the late 1980s birds even began to moult in Moray for the first time, although this has not become a regular occurrence, and since 2000, overwintering has been only noted on one occasion. Since 2000, numbers of

birds passing through the districts typically average approximately 80 a year, although numbers are highly variable with only 7 in 2001, but 221 in 2005, with a peak count noted of 80 north-west over Findhorn Bay on 3 June 2005 the highest count in the districts to date.

In addition, there has been one confirmed record of a small-race Canada Goose in the districts on 16 April 1988 (see MNBR 1988 and 2001). This bird was seen at Muirton Cottage, near Lossiemouth and was initially thought to be either of the subspecies *parvipes* or *hutchinsii*. However, following a review of this bird, it is now thought most likely to be of the race *taverneri*, (see MNBR 2000), and subject to acceptance by the British Birds Rarities Committee (BBRC), will be the first record of the small bodied group in the districts.

Additional birds seen during the winter months in Moray in the past are thought to relate to *canadensis* individuals lingering from the summer, although birds have not been allocated to race in records submitted. These have typically averaged 1-2 records per winter, including a returning bird in the Muirton area between 1991-1997 associating with Greylags, and many of the other records may refer to returning individuals. In addition, one record seen on 6 occasions widely scattered across the districts in the winter of 2003/4 was considered to be of a small/medium race by the observer, although no description has been submitted of this bird.

For birders in Moray looking for small race Canada Geese, the peak time of year is likely to be in the winter months, as shown in the pattern of British records. The perceived mechanism for birds reaching Britain is individuals getting caught up in flocks of geese in Greenland migrating to winter in Britain, with birds frequently reaching Islay with Greenland White-fronted Geese and Barnacle Geese, and others seen across Scotland and Norfolk with Pink-footed Geese.

Of the subspecies listed above, only six have occurred in Britain in a potentially wild state, and are therefore considered as possible vagrants to Moray in the future. The subspecies are as follows, with some key identification pointers for each:

- *canadensis* (Atlantic or Eastern) – large, long necked. Black neck, with white chinstrap. No neck collar Buff body, paler underneath
- *interior* (Interior, or Todd's, or Hudson Bay, or Central) – large, long necked. Slightly smaller than *canadensis*. Long shallow bill
- *parvipes* (Lesser) – shade larger than Pink-footed Goose, but variable in size. Typically slightly paler breast than *taverneri*.
- *hutchinsii* (Richardson's, or Hutchins's) – small and dumpy with a square-looking head and short bill. Palest of the small forms, looking almost silvery. Occasionally has pale neck collar
- *taverneri* (Taverner's) – similar to *parvipes*, but darker breasted and often smaller. Often shows dark line dividing white chinstrap under bill.
- *minima* (Cackling) – tiny (Mallard sized), and dark plumage. Short bill, and short neck. Many have white neck collar at base of black neck sock

There is a large degree of variability within subspecies in size and plumage, and birders encountering a lone Canada Goose within a flock of Pinkfeet or other geese should be wary of assigning the bird to species too readily. The Canada Goose complex is a difficult group and identification of subspecies is a constantly evolving task, with identification criteria being developed constantly. Certain subspecies pairings are notoriously tricky to distinguish, particularly *parvipes* and *taverneri*, which are two different species according to the AOU and BOU groupings! The taxonomy and identification of Canada Geese is a constantly evolving subject.

In late October 2005, there was a large influx of Pink-footed Geese and Barnacle Geese into the Loch Spynie/Lossiemouth area. Whilst searching through a large Pinkfeet flock at Windyridge, AJ found two Canada Geese, one of which seemed very small, and resembled that of a neighbouring Barnacle Goose in both size and structure, whilst the second bird seemed larger and of a similar size, if not slightly larger than the Pinkfeet. Having called RP, the birds were observed for a further 45 minutes or so, before the flock flew off, and were not relocated.

Despite searching the next day and on following days by various individuals, the birds were not seen again either in this location, or with any of the geese flocks in the surrounding area, and due to the flocks of the area being relatively well watched it seems likely they had moved on. Given that neck collar records have shown that Pinkfeet and Greylags roam great distances around the north-east of Scotland and even further on a regular basis, it seems likely the birds departed with these flocks, and the small influx of Barnacle Geese into the Moray area at the time. Elsewhere in Scotland near the time of this sighting, there was also a *parvipes* type Canada Goose in the Meikle Loch area, and *hutchinsii* type Canada Geese in Lothian, Caithness and Dumfries and Galloway. The Caithness individual is particularly interesting as it was associating with a mixed flock of presumably newly arrived Greylags and Pinkfeet, but also a number of Barnacle Geese, which were present in good numbers in this flock too.

Whether or not it was any of these particular individuals involved with this sighting is not known, but it is clear that presumed vagrant Canada Geese were present in Scotland at the time of the sighting, having probably arrived with the wintering geese flocks acting as carrier species. In fact, on the 1st November and again on the 4th November, there were two small race Canada Geese at Loch of Strathbeg and having emailed Scott Paterson, the reserve warden, he emailed AJ a picture of the birds. Although not of great quality, they certainly looked like the Moray birds, and Scott concurred on their racial identification. It seems very likely that these two were the Moray birds.

BIRD 1 – probable *hutchinsii* (Richardson’s Canada Goose):

- Bird was obviously small, and this was even obvious when the bird was sat down partially obscured by Pinkfeet. Size was similar, or even marginally smaller than surrounding Barnacle Geese, confirmed when a Barnacle Goose was stood alongside the bird at one stage
- When the bird stood up alongside the *parvipes* race bird, the top of the *hutchinsii* bird’s head reached to just below the *parvipes* bird’s throat. In terms of body bulk, it was estimated that the *hutchinsii* bird was perhaps 2/3 the body size of the *parvipes* bird.
- The bird was very short necked, although the neck was looked proportionally thicker than the *parvipes* bird. There was no neck collar present at the base of the black “neck sock”, a feature of minima birds, and a factor in ruling out this race.
- Head small and compact. Forehead appeared quite steep, and then a rounded slope led to a flattish crown. The rear of the crown then angled steeply down to the nape and the neck.
- The white cheek patch was comparatively broad and clean unmarked white. The patch was angled slightly back towards the nape. Under the chin, there was no sign of any black chin strap, thus seemingly hinting against *taverneri* as an option for this bird

- The bill was short and triangular, closely resembling Barnacle Goose in size and shape. The bill seemed pale, which originally seemed a little odd, although closer inspection revealed this to be mud staining, as darker areas were visible, particularly at the tip and near the bill base. The bill was much shorter and stubbier than the parvipes bird present, perhaps only 1/2-2/3 the length. From looking at the literature, it seems *taverneri* can show a shorter, stockier bill than parvipes, but the bill on this bird was even shorter than all seen on *taverneri* in the literature. In addition, other features on this bird such as head shape, lack of chin strap and pale breast rule out *taverneri* for this bird
- The bird was short and had a stocky body. When it walked it had a waddling gait, and was relatively short legged.
- There was little contrast between the mantle and flanks, and only slight contrast with the paler breast. The plumage colouration is probably best described as being a pale brown. The pale feather fringing to the mantle shown on the parvipes bird was not visible on this bird as well, and the plumage seemed very concolorous.
- The bird's breast was slightly paler than the rest of the body, and not dark, another feature seemingly ruling out *minima* as an option for this bird.
- The bird was un-ringed, and when in flight and wing-stretching, was seen to be fully winged.

BIRD 2 – probable *parvipes* (Lesser Canada Goose):

- Larger than surrounding Pinkfeet, Greylag like in structure although not quite as large. As mentioned in the description for bird 1, bird 1 was only 2/3 the size of this individual, and reached up to below bird 2's throat when standing
- Neck long and comparatively thin, especially compared to bird 1. There was no neck ring present at the base of the dark neck stocking.
- Head was wedge shaped, with a gently sloping forehead running to the crown. Forehead angle was not as steep as *canadensis* birds. Rear of the crown was gently rounded before descending down the nape and neck.
- The white cheek patch was comparatively thinner than on the *hutchinsii* bird, and was angled back slightly. The cheek patch was a dirty white, not as clean as the *hutchinsii* bird. The cheek patch lacked the hooked effect shown by interior race birds, and therefore this species can also be ruled out, also on size (this bird was smaller than the interior bird AJ had seen previously). Also, there was no sign of a black chin strap on this bird, although there was a dark smudge on the white of the chin closest to the base of the underside of the bill. This was by no means a chin strap, and the white of the cheek patches was obviously continuous under the chin, the smudge perhaps due to staining?
- The bill on this bird was long and shallow sloping in profile, and seemed slightly concave. The angle of the top of the culmen merged in with the angle of the forehead, and the line seemed continuous up to the crown. The bill was longer than *taverneri* birds, and up to twice as long as the *hutchinsii* bird. The bill was pale in colouration, this was thought to be an effect of mud staining as dark areas at the base and tip were visible.
- The mantle shade was a dark chocolaty brown, which contrasted with the slightly paler brown flanks. The upperpart feathering was dark, but had neat rows of paler feather fringing, although this was not strikingly obvious. The flanks contrasted too with the paler breast, resulting in three noticeable shades of brown comprising the body plumage colour. This contrasted noticeably with the *hutchinsii* bird, which essentially was a uniform pale brown aside from the paler breast. The breast was pale, and was not as dark as seen on *taverneri* birds in the literature.
- The bird was un-ringed, and when in flight and wing-stretching, was seen to be fully winged.

Following the AOU/BOU split, it is hoped that by including these descriptions of the two individuals seen in Moray in 2005, and highlighting the species likely to be seen in Moray, that future individuals will be found in goose flocks visiting the districts and can be assigned to subspecies accurately. It is clear that a lot of work

is required in the Canada Goose complex to establish which sub-species belong in which taxon, and also to establish criteria for identification which can be used in the field. Indeed, much of the recent identification criteria has been developed from the analysis of apparent vagrants outwith North America, principally in Britain, Ireland and the Netherlands, so further study of individuals turning up in Britain, and also

Moray, will hopefully continue to contribute to this goal.. Birders in Moray should in particular make note of the following key points:

- Size of the bird;
- Paleness or darkness of plumage, especially the breast and underparts;
- Bill size;
- Head shape;
- Neck length;
- Presence or absence of collar at the base of the neck;
- Presence or absence of a dark chinstrap.

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RINGING REPORT

BOB PROCTOR

Numbers of birds ringed in Moray and Nairn during 2005:

	Full grown	Pullus	Total
Black Guillemot		1	1
Barn Owl		3	3
Swallow	3	49	52
Wren	7		7
Dunnock	6	5	11
Robin	13		13
Blackbird	4		4
Song Thrush	1		1
Sedge Warbler	5		5
Whitethroat	2		2
Blackcap	1		1
Chiffchaff	2		1
Willow Warbler	14		14
Goldcrest	1		1
Long-tailed Tit	2		2
Crested Tit	1	14	15
Coal Tit	17		17
Blue Tit	66	151	217
Great Tit	36	144	180
Starling	1	26	27
House Sparrow	53	3	56
Tree Sparrow	4	4	8
Chaffinch	53		53
Greenfinch	79		79
Goldfinch	29		29
Siskin	127		127
Reed Bunting	4		4
TOTAL	531	400	931

Recoveries in 2005:

All ringing recoveries reported for 2005 are included in this section with the more interesting ones given in full. Information was supplied by M.J.H.Cook, D.Gibson, R.F.Hewitt, I. Kirk, R.Proctor and from Highland Ringing Group bulletins. Anyone finding a ringed bird in Moray or Nairn is asked to pass the details to Martin Cook.

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

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

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

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

RED-THROATED DIVER

1337288	1	180703	Hoy, Orkney	
	X	260205	Nairn	143 km

This is the second recovery of a chick ringed on Hoy. Previous records include adults from Greenland (2) and Shetland.

FULMAR

FA24826	1	270789	Eday, Orkney	
	X	181004	Burghead	171 km

SHAG

In addition to those found in late 2004, a further 8 Isle of May birds and 5 chicks from North Sutor were found along the Moray & Nairn coast during the 2004/05-winter period. Many of these were recovered dead as a result of a large wreck that occurred during the period. These wrecks appear to be the result of changes in food supply caused by climate change.

Individuals from other localities over 100 km included:

1352737	6m	240600	Craigleith, North Berwick	
	XF	190205	Lossiemouth	188 km
1396596	1	260604	Craigleith, North Berwick	
	VV	060305	Lossiemouth	188 km

CORMORANT

5209431	1	200604	North Sutor	
	X	220105	Craigellachie	53 km

MUTE SWAN

Z67044	6f	260389	Sanquhar Loch, Forres	
	+F	080405	Sanquhar Loch, Forres	0 km

Shot on the nest while incubating 6 eggs. As this individual was ringed as an adult it would have exceeded the 16 years shown by the ringing and recovery dates.

GREYLAG GOOSE

One from Loch Eye was shot in Findhorn Bay.

WIGEON

FA96781	6m	060101	Blithfield Res., Staffordshire	
	X	040105	Bogmoor	541 km

OYSTERCATCHER

FA09493	8	020586	Mundole, Forres	
	V	150105	Llanelli, Dyfed, Wales	659 km
FV97782	8	190981	Findhorn Bay	
	X	080704	Rana, Nordland, NORWAY	1311 km

KNOT

SX11173	6	110197	Lossiemouth	
	X	230305	Nordfriesische Inseln, GERMANY	813 km

BLACK-TAILED GODWIT

An adult female, colour-ringed on 24 January 2004 at Terrington, The Wash, Norfolk was sighted on 14th July at Lossie estuary.

REDSHANK

DK77995	4	151294	North Sands, Teesmouth	
	VV	260305	Burghead	

BLACK-HEADED GULL

ET73729	1	260699	Aberdeen airport	
	VV	300505	Lossie estuary	86 km

HERRING GULL

GN77879	2 nd w	100305	Ellington Road landfill, Ashington, Northumberland	
	VV	010705	Lossie estuary	
GN7787-	3 rd w	100305	Ellington Road landfill, Ashington, Northumberland	
	VV	200705	Lossie estuary	
GN94387	1	020704	Mointeach Airinis, Western Isles	
	VV	130305	Cooper Park, Elgin	195 km

The first two individuals were colour-ringed as part of a study into the impact of Herring Gulls feeding on landfills and their influence on other local species.

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL

Movements over 100km are reported in full:

399345	Ad.f	160502	Hornoya, Vardo, Finnmark, NORWAY	
	VV	16-230205	Gloucester landfill	
	VV	260905	Lossie estuary	
MA09364	1	010703	Rothiesholm Head, Orkney	
	VV	020705	Lossie estuary	156 km

Other sightings included Nigg Oil Terminal (1; 41km), Badbea, Caithness (6: 51km), and Ord Point, Caithness (1; 51km).

ARCTIC TERN

SV13967	1	240699	Alness Point	
	X	040505	Lossiemouth	58 km

GUILLEMOT

GH04471	4	250688	Ires Geo	
	X	190305	Nairn	100 km
X09573	1	200694	Ceann Ousdale, Helmsdale	
	X	040405	Portgordon	62 km

PUFFIN

EL27191	6	250703	Sule Skerry, Orkney	
	X	070605	Covesea	164 km

SAND MARTIN

T162095	4	290704	River Findhorn	
	V	210804	Icklesham, Surrex	783 km

SWALLOW

R777829	1	070804	Lhanbryde	
	V	090805	Pitglassie, Dingwall	72 km

WAXWING

NW24537	4f	311004	Pilmuir, Forres	
	V	150105	Orford, Cheshire	472 km
NW24538	3m	311004	Pilmuir, Forres	
	V	111204	Aberdeen	104 km

NW24560	3f	311004	Pilmuir, Forres	
	V	260105	Tinsley, Sheffield, South Yorkshire	487 km
	V	040205	Townend, Sheffield	494 km
NW24576	3m	311004	Pilmuir, Forres	
	V	191204	Rosemount, Aberdeen	104 km

A series of movements resulting from birds trapped during the large invasion of 2004.

ROBIN

T150632	3	280804	Clochachan, Buckie	
	X	220905	Beaully	90 km

BLACKBIRD

7421497	3f	051103	Farsund, Rogaland, NORWAY	
	X	211103	Bogheads, Nairn	616 km

BLUE TIT

R799015	3	060903	Keith	
	X road	030405	Portessie, Buckie	17 km

STARLING

CT36324	3f	051203	Bishopmill, Elgin	
	XF cat	260505	Forres	19 km

Another individual was found locally in Elgin, 3 years after ringing.