

Birds in Moray & Nairn



2007

Birds in Moray & Nairn in 2007

MORAY & NAIRN BIRD REPORT
No.23 – 2007

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Compiled by Martin Cook, Duncan Gibson, Andy Jensen, and Bob Proctor.

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

Cover photograph: Dipper, River Lossie near Cloddach June 2007 (© Duncan Gibson).

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the 23rd edition of Birds in Moray & Nairn, formerly known as the Moray & Nairn Bird Report. During the period since the first edition in 1985 the format has changed from a slender, stapled document of 25 Gestetner-duplicated A4 pages to the present perfect-bound product containing colour photography. There has also been a substantial increase in the number of contributing observers (23 in 1985, 110 in 2007) and in the volume of records submitted (14259 in 2007). Clearly, computerisation has greatly assisted with the handling of so many records and observers who do not already do so are encouraged to enter and submit their records by means of the Excel spreadsheet which can be obtained from the editor on request. This greatly helps with the compilation of the annual Moray & Nairn database. Added value is achieved by attaching a map reference to records, whether or not the spreadsheet is used. The map reference is only required to a four-figure level of accuracy e.g. NJ3465 for the mouth of the Spey.

The usual pattern of the geographical spread of records, and of species involved, has been maintained in 2007 with great emphasis on a small number of, mostly, coastal or freshwater sites. While intense regular watching of these sites is very valuable it is clear that proportionally very few records are received from inland parts of Moray & Nairn. Although these areas seldom produce much in the way of rarities, it is here that the greatest gaps in our knowledge of local birds lie. This lack of coverage was rectified to some degree in the summer months by the North-East Scotland Breeding Bird Atlas fieldwork. In winter, current fieldwork for the new BTO Atlas will also help. There remains however a need for some systematic visiting of inland sites to count and record what may seem to be common-place bird life. Another area where we might profitably focus is on single species surveys. In addition to organised survey work it is possible for individuals to make valuable contributions in ways such as

- counting the rookeries in a 10km square
- surveying a stretch of river for Grey Wagtails, Common Sandpipers and Dippers
- recording the breeding and wintering population of Rock Pipits along a stretch of rocky shore
- studying the proportions of Carrion, Hooded and hybrid crows in an area of countryside

Many other such 'mini-projects' are of course feasible but are only of maximum value if repeated annually in a comparable manner.

John Mackie 1928-2008

John Mackie, who died in April 2008 in his eightieth year, was a stalwart of local bird watching and recording for nearly 30 years.

The Navy brought John to Moray in the early 1970s where he was based at Lossiemouth. After leaving the Navy he taught science for a while at Keith Grammar School before devoting himself seriously to bird watching following his retirement.

I first met John in the mid 1980s when I became Bird Recorder for the area and it soon became apparent that the volume of information that he was collecting was sufficient in itself to warrant the start of an annual bird report. At that time, and for many years afterwards, John's records formed the backbone of the Moray & Nairn Bird Report. In 1996 he agreed to start compiling and writing the 'wader' section of the Report and this he continued to do with characteristic attention to detail until 2004.

John was a bird-watcher in the true sense – never especially excited by rarities, and certainly not if these were outside his home patch of Moray & Nairn. Instead he would visit a number of localities repeatedly over weeks, months and years, piecing together patterns of numbers and seasonal occurrence. He was in the field virtually every day, largely preferring his own company, attempting to avoid contact with dogs and counting and recording all that he saw. His field notebook was often the inside of a cigarette packet, from which he transcribed the interest of the day into a substantive log that he maintained every year.

When he lived at Mundole near Forres, John's favourite haunt was the Carse of Delnies where, in September 1994, he added Buff-breasted Sandpiper to the Moray & Nairn list. After moving to Lossiemouth he was more likely to be found on the estuary, at Loch Spynie or, on a Sunday afternoon, at Cloddach quarry. But in many ways his major contribution was in visiting less promising localities where other bird watchers seldom go, and returning home with original counts and observations.

Always a willing participant in local and national surveys, John covered a large number of tetrads for both the 1988-91 BTO Atlas and the North-East Scotland Breeding Bird Atlas in 2002-6. In addition to his work for the Moray & Nairn Bird Report, he served for several years on the Moray & Nairn Rarities Committee. He possessed an encyclopaedic knowledge of place names on local OS maps and could be relied on to locate any obscure record that was submitted by others.

As a quietly prominent participant in all birding matters in Moray & Nairn over so many years, John will continue to be seriously missed by all his friends.

Martin Cook

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 2008 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 2009.

The Editor is very grateful for generous financial support from the following organisations and individuals:

- Baxters Food Group
- Dr Melvin Morrison, Keith
- Smith & Catto, Funeral Directors
- Walkers Shortbread Ltd, Aberlour

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.

ASSESSMENT OF LOCAL RARITY RECORDS

The Moray & Nairn Rarities Committee exists to consider records of local rarities that 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) that 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 ad.M)	Roseate Tern	Hawfinch
Ring-necked Duck	Black Tern	Common Rosefinch
Ruddy Duck (not ad.M)	Turtle Dove	Lapland Bunting
Surf Scoter (not ad.M)	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)

Species in atypical (for Moray & Nairn) habitat.

OBSERVERS CONTRIBUTING TO 2007 REPORT

J.Bell (JBe), W.R.P.Bourne (WRPB), K.Boyd (KB), H.Brown (HB), L.Bruce (LB), R.P.Campbell (RPC), F.Clark (FC), T.Comerford (TC), M.Convery (MCo), M.J.H.Cook (MJHC), P.Cosgrove (PC), B.Cosnette (BC), J.K.Craib (JKC), J.Darroch (JD), R.H.Dennis (RHD), D.Devonport (DGD), C.Donald (CD), A.Douse (AD), T.Earl (TE), S.Eaves (SE), A.Edward (AE), C.S.Elder (CSE), H.Farquhar (HF), I.Ford (IFo), J.Forsyth (JFo), J.Fowler (JFw), I.Francis (IFr), R.Fraser (RF), G.George (GG), C.A.Gervaise (CAG), D.A.Gibson (DAG), P.Gordon Smith (PGS), L.Graham (LG), F.Grigor-Taylor (FG), C.Hall (CH), T.Hall (TH), E.Harwood (EH), G.Hewitt (GH), R.F.Hewitt (RFH), R.D.Hind (RDH), P.T.Hirst (PTH), R.H.Hogg (RHH), H.Holbrook (HH), S.Hotson (SH), N.Humphries (NH), P.Hyvonen (PH), R.Irvine (RI), D.Jardine (DCJ), O.Jenkins (OJ), A.Jensen (AJ), J.Kelly (JK), A.Kydd (AK), J.D.Law (JDL), A.J.Lawrence (AJL), A.Leitch (ALe), S.M.Lister (SML), N.London (NL), C.Lyddon (CLy), W.McBryde (WM), D.McCullough (DMc), J.&H.MacDonald (J&HMacD), M.Macgarvin (MMac), J.D.H.Mackie (JDHM), P.Maton (PM), M.Morris (MMo), M.Morrison (MM), R.Morrison (RMo), C.Mynott (CM), M.O'Reilly (MO), B.Parker (BP), D.Parnaby (DPa), N.Penford (NP), D.Philip (DPh), I.Phillips (IP), L.Phipps (LPh), W.Polson (WP), J.Poyner (JPo), R.Prentice (RPr), R.Proctor (RP), J.Protheroe (JPr), D.M.Pullan (DMP), M.Reid (MR), P.Roberts (PR), S.E.Rosser (SER), C.Round (CR), N.Rushton (NR), L.Schofield (LSc), R.D.S.Scott (RDSS), L.Selwood (LSe), R.Shand (RS), M.Sharpe (MS), R.A.Shewan (RAS), K.Silvan (KSi), A.Sime (ASi), D.Slater (DSI), R.Smith (RS), D.Stevenson (DSt), H.A.Stewart (HAS), G.Storey (GS), I.S.Suttie (ISS), W.G.Taylor (WGT), S.Taylor (STa), I.Thomas (ITh), D.Thomson (DTh), C.Townshend (CTo), D.Turley (DTu), A.Turner (ATu), C.Walker (CW), Y.Watson (YW), P.Wilson (PW), A.Young (AY).

Apologies to anyone accidentally omitted.

CHRONOLOGICAL SUMMARY OF THE YEAR

JANUARY

1st c1000 Eider, 800 Common Scoter Kingston, 1 Smew Loch na Bo, 2 Waxwing Lossiemouth, 2nd 1 Snow Goose Garmouth, 51 Golden Plover Portgordon, 22 Snow Bunting Lossiemouth, 4th 1 Kingfisher Loch na Bo, 5th 1 Greenshank Lossiemouth, 6th 12 Whooper Swan Loch na Bo, 28 Pintail Nairn Bar, 2 Waxwing Mosstodloch, 7th 1 Barnacle Goose Lossiemouth, 13th 32 Waxwing Kinloss, 16th 1 Jack Snipe Kinloss, 18th 250 Golden Plover Kinloss, 21st 22 Brent Goose Delnies, 82 Pintail Nairn Bar, 1 Surf Scoter Nairn Bar, 27 Little Grebe Findhorn Bay, 17 Grey Plover Culbin Bar, 188 Sanderling Nairn/Culbin Bars, 1 Black-tailed Godwit Delnies, 1 Kingfisher Aberlour, 2 Waxwing Duffus, 45 Twite Carse of Delnies, 35 Twite Kingsteps, 42 Snow Bunting Nairn Bar, 25th 1 Greenshank Findhorn Bay, 28th 2 Gadwall Loch Flemington, 28th 3 Waxwing Forres, 3 Waxwing Mosstodloch, 28th 20 Twite Findhorn Bay, 30th 7 Jack Snipe Loch Flemington, 31st 1 Chiffchaff Rothes.

FEBRUARY

1st 3 Waxwing Mosstodloch, 2nd 1 Red-necked Grebe Burghead Bay, 3rd 1 Smew Loch na Bo, 68 Purple Sandpiper Lossiemouth, 1 Greenshank Lossiemouth, 4th 1 Gadwall Loch Flemington, 5th 20 Brent Goose Nairn, 40 Snow Bunting Nairn, 6th 320 Golden Plover Kinloss, 9th 1 Mediterranean Gull Loch Spynie, 110 Fieldfare Clochan, 11th 1 Smew Loch na Bo, 2 Iceland Gull Loch Spynie, 4 Blackcap New Elgin, 13th 1 Red-necked Grebe Burghead Bay, 14th 1 Glaucous Gull Mosstodloch, 16th 1 Mediterranean Gull Delnies, 17th 1 Shoveler Loch Spynie, 18th 17 Brent Goose Nairn, 1 Green-winged Teal Loch Flemington, 65 Pintail Nairn Bar, 10 Scaup Nairn Bar, 8 Black-throated Diver Culbin Bar, 8 Black-throated Diver Burghead Bay, 26 Little Grebe Findhorn Bay, 18 Slavonian Grebe Burghead Bay, 16 Grey Plover Culbin Bar, 27 Twite Nairn Bar, 40 Twite Delnies, 60 Snow Bunting Nairn Bar, 19th 43 Goldeneye Loch Spynie,

21st 1 Snow Goose Mosstodloch, 2 Mandarin Elgin, 1 Lesser Whitethroat Alves, 22nd 1 Mediterranean Gull Loch Spynie, 23rd 1 Mealy Redpoll Dallas, 25th 1 Canada Goose Garmouth.

MARCH

4th 1 Green-winged Teal Gilston, 2 Mandarin Elgin, 5th 1 Smew Loch na Bo, 6th 2 Iceland Gull Hillhead, 1 Lesser Whitethroat Alves, 8th 1 Barnacle Goose Loch Flemington, 10th 1 Greenshank Lossiemouth, 13th 1 Barnacle Goose Findhorn Bay, 14th 21 Whooper Swan Loch Spynie, 24th 5000 Pink-footed Goose Milltown airfield, 1 Canada Goose Kingston, 1 Chiffchaff Forres, 1 Bearded Tit Loch Spynie, 27th 3500 Pink-footed Goose Roseisle maltings, 1 Snow Goose Bruntland, 28th 1 Smew Loch na Bo, 29th 1 Shoveler Loch Spynie, 1 Osprey Fochabers, 31st 1 Brent Goose Lossiemouth, 57 Sanderling Nairn, 1 Greenshank Lossiemouth, 2 Bearded Tit Loch Spynie.

APRIL

1st 3500 Pink-footed Goose Findhorn Bay, 1 Brent Goose Lossiemouth, 4 Ptarmigan Ben Rinnes, 2 Greenshank Lossiemouth, 1 Iceland Gull Lossiemouth, 3rd 6000 Pink-footed Goose Glassgreen, 1 Shoveler Loch Spynie, 1 Smew Loch na Bo, 6 Slavonian Grebe Burghead Bay, 1 Black-necked Grebe Burghead Bay, 1 Iceland Gull Lossiemouth, 1 Glaucous Gull Lossiemouth, 4th 1 Glaucous Gull Loch Spynie, 5th 20 Sandwich Tern Lossiemouth, 6th 1 Iceland Gull Loch Spynie, 7th 1 King Eider Burghead, 2000 Common Scoter Spey Bay, 9th 1 Iceland Gull Hillhead, 10th 53 Goldeneye Loch Spynie, 13th 1 Surf Scoter Spey Bay, 32 Black-throated Diver Burghead Bay, 11 Slavonian Grebe Burghead Bay, 15 Black Guillemot Tronach Head, 6 Raven Dunphail, 14th 1 Willow Warbler Garmouth, Kingston, Forres and Loch Spynie, 15th 2 Barnacle Goose Wester Lawrenceton, 59 Black-throated Diver Burghead Bay, 1 Great Skua Burghead, 1 White Wagtail Cloddach and Spey Bay, 16th 4 Wheatear Lossiemouth, 17th c300 Sand Martin Loch Spynie, 8 Swallow Loch Spynie, 19th 1 House Martin Loch Spynie, 20th 1 Iceland Gull Lossiemouth, 21st 3 Common Sandpiper Cloddach, 3 Greenshank Lossiemouth, 1 Great Skua Burghead, 1 Cuckoo Rafford, 22nd 1500 Pink-footed Goose Findhorn Bay, 22nd 3 Gadwall Tugnet, 73 Black-tailed Godwit Findhorn Bay, 1 Whimbrel Clochan, 2 Raven Tronach Head, 26th 1 Garden Warbler Garmouth, 27th 1 Great Skua Lossiemouth, 28th 2 Barnacle Goose Findhorn Bay, 28 Red-throated Diver Spey Bay, 9 Great Northern Diver Spey Bay, 1 Iceland Gull Loch Spynie, 29th 1 Hoopoe Glenfiddich, 30th 2 Raven Ben Rinnes.

MAY

2nd 1 Garganey Loch Spynie, 1 King Eider Burghead, 1 Iceland Gull Lossiemouth, 1 Whitethroat Kinermory and Pittendreich, 4th 2 Whimbrel Lossiemouth, 5th 1 Great Skua Lossiemouth, 1 White Wagtail Lossiemouth, 7th 1 Slavonian Grebe Loch Spynie, 3 Crested Tit Sleepieshill Wood, 8th 1 Swift Loch Spynie, 9th 12 Black-tailed Godwit Findhorn Bay, 3 Arctic Skua Burghead, 5 Arctic Skua Lossiemouth, 11th 2 Barnacle Goose Miltonduff, 12th 3 Whimbrel Lossiemouth, 13th 25 Red-throated Diver Spey Bay, 29 Black-throated Diver Findhorn, 1 Whimbrel Tugnet, 1 Wood Sandpiper Miltonduff, 3 Arctic Skua Burghead, 2 Glaucous Gull Kingston, 10 Swift Rothes, 1 Ring Ouzel Cairn Uish, 14th 1 Whimbrel Clochan, 15th 18 Manx Shearwater Burghead, 16th 1 Barnacle Goose Loch Spynie, 2 Shoveler Loch Spynie, 1 Green Sandpiper Cloddach, 1 Iceland Gull Lossiemouth and Urquhart, 2 Bearded Tit Loch Spynie, 18th 1 Grey Plover Lossiemouth, 19th 2 Barnacle Goose Miltonduff, 20th 1 Whimbrel Kingston, 5 Raven Carn Liath, 21st 1 Curlew Sandpiper Lossiemouth, 3 Whimbrel Delnies, 22nd 23 Sanderling Lossiemouth, 23rd 1 Bonaparte's Gull Loch Spynie, 1 Iceland Gull Loch Spynie, 1 Glaucous Gull Spey Bay, 26th 4 Manx Shearwater Lossiemouth, 2 Whimbrel Lossiemouth, 27th 1 Iceland Gull and 1 Glaucous Gull Loch Spynie, 28th 7 Manx Shearwater Lossiemouth, 1 Great Skua Lossiemouth, 1 Iceland Gull Culbin Bar, 29th 6 Manx Shearwater Lossiemouth, 31st 6 Canada Goose Forres, 3 Gadwall Kingston, 1 Glaucous Gull Kingston.

JUNE

2nd 3 Canada Goose Findhorn Bay, 5 Canada Goose Loch Spynie, 1 Little Stint Findhorn Bay, 3 Whimbrel Findhorn Bay, 3rd 3 Gadwall Kingston, 2 Little Egret Findhorn Bay, 4th 19 Canada Goose Cloddach, 2 Garganey Kingston, 1 Grey Plover Kingston, 1 Little Gull Garmouth, 2 Bearded Tit Loch Spynie, 6th 1 Greenshank Findhorn Bay, 1 Iceland Gull Stonewells, 1 Glaucous Gull Lossiemouth, 9th 3 Sanderling Lossiemouth, 1 Great Skua Lossiemouth, 10th 2 Scaup Spey Bay, 1 Storm Petrel Spey Bay, 1 Little Egret Kingston, 1 Little Ringed Plover Kingston, 1 Arctic Skua Lossiemouth, 1 Little Gull Loch Spynie, 11th 1 Wood Sandpiper Miltonduff, 12th 3 Bearded Tit Loch Spynie, 13th 2 Whimbrel Lossiemouth, 14th 1 Whimbrel Findhorn Bay, 16th 2 Manx Shearwater Lossiemouth, 3 Arctic Skua Lossiemouth, 18th 1 Mediterranean Gull Lossiemouth, 22nd 9 Canada Goose Covesea, 1 Quail Duffus, 1 Iceland Gull Loch Spynie, 26th 1 Little Ringed Plover Kingston, 27th 1 Quail Clochan, 28th 1 Whimbrel Lossiemouth, 1 Little Gull Lossiemouth, 29th 1 Manx Shearwater Lossiemouth, 30th 3 Little Ringed Plover Kingston, 1 Kingfisher Fochabers.

JULY

2nd 1 Quail Clochan, 4th 1 Glaucous Gull Lossiemouth, 5th 1 Quail at Stynie Glebe, 6th 3 Little Ringed Plover Kingston, 8th 3 Quail near Lossiemouth, 11th 2 Scaup Lossiemouth, 13th 2 Great Skua Lossiemouth, 14th 1 Arctic Skua Lossiemouth, 1 Great Skua Burghead, 6 Great Skua Lossiemouth, 1 Little Stint Findhorn Bay, 5 Manx Shearwater Lossiemouth, 15th 1 Little Egret Findhorn Bay, 1 Shoveler Kingston, 1 Whooper Swan Findhorn Bay, 16th 5 Greenshank Findhorn Bay, 56 Knot Findhorn Bay, 20th 1 Redstart Scarffbanks, 28th 1 Little Gull Lossiemouth, 31st 6 Arctic Skua Lossiemouth.

AUGUST

2nd 1 Little Egret Findhorn Bay, 5th 15 Black-tailed Godwit Findhorn Bay, 7 Whimbrel Lossiemouth, 6th 8 Great Skua Lossiemouth, 2 Sooty Shearwater Lossiemouth, 18 Black Guillemot Lossiemouth, 7th 115 Sandwich Tern Burghead Bay, 8th 34 Canada Goose Binsness, 6 Greenshank Binsness, 1 Iceland Gull Urquhart, 5 Whimbrel Broomhill, 9th 1 Shoveler Loch Spynie, 10th 4 Great Skua Portknockie, 1 Marsh Harrier Findhorn Bay, 1 Wood Sandpiper Loch Spynie, 11th 41 Canada Goose Findhorn Bay, 7 Great Skua Lossiemouth, 1 Ruff Findhorn Bay, 3 Whimbrel Kingston, 12th 2 Black-tailed Godwit Miltonduff, 15th 9 Black-tailed Godwit Findhorn Bay, 17th 1 Gadwall Loch Spynie, 19th 9 Arctic Skua Lossiemouth, 7 Great Skua Lossiemouth, 10 Manx Shearwater Lossiemouth, 1 Sooty Shearwater Lossiemouth, 9 Whimbrel Lossiemouth, 5 Great Skua Strathlene, 1 White Wagtail Kingston, 1 Ruff Lossiemouth, 22nd 70 Sanderling Culbin Bar, 23rd 8 Black-tailed Godwit Kingston, 2 Little Stint Kingston, 3 Ruff Kingston, 25th 2 Gadwall Loch Spynie, 26th 6 Black-tailed Godwit Speyslaw, 3 Great Skua Lossiemouth, 27th 20 Black-tailed Godwit Culbin Bar, 30th 8 Arctic Skua Lossiemouth.

SEPTEMBER

1st 32 Black-tailed Godwit Findhorn Bay, 2nd 2 Ruff Kingston, 3rd 23 Arctic Skua Lossiemouth, 1 Great Shearwater Lossiemouth, 38 Great Skua Lossiemouth, 11 Long-tailed Skua Lossiemouth, 17 Manx Shearwater Lossiemouth, 2 Pomarine Skua Lossiemouth, 2 Sooty Shearwater Lossiemouth, 8th 2 Brent Goose Lossiemouth, 6 Greenshank Findhorn Bay, 1 Pomarine Skua Lossiemouth, 3 Puffin Lossiemouth, 9th 1 Curlew Sandpiper Findhorn Bay, 5 Great Skua Lossiemouth, 10th 6 Arctic Skua Lossiemouth, 28 Great Skua Lossiemouth, 1 Pomarine Skua Lossiemouth, 1 Sabine's Gull Lossiemouth, 3 Sooty Shearwater Lossiemouth, 29 Little Grebe Loch Spynie, 1 Little Gull Burghead Bay, 14th 2 Great Shearwater Lossiemouth, 13 Manx Shearwater Lossiemouth, 15 Sooty Shearwater Lossiemouth, 14 Great Skua Lossiemouth, 1 Pomarine Skua Lossiemouth, 120 Pink-footed Goose Archiestown, 15th 3 Curlew Sandpiper Lossiemouth, 3 Storm Petrel Strathlene, 17th 3 Arctic Skua Lossiemouth, 7 Great Skua Lossiemouth, 1 Pomarine Skua Lossiemouth, 3 Manx Shearwater Lossiemouth, 1 Sooty Shearwater Lossiemouth, 1 Sabine's Gull Lossiemouth, 19th 44 Black-tailed Godwit Findhorn Bay, 8 Canada Goose Findhorn Bay, 20th 1 Mediterranean Gull Lossiemouth, 24th 2 Curlew Sandpiper Findhorn Bay, 25th 4

Arctic Skua Lossiemouth, 11 Great Skua Lossiemouth, 1 Pomarine Skua Lossiemouth, 3 Manx Shearwater Lossiemouth, 1 Sooty Shearwater Lossiemouth, 2 Pomarine Skua Burghead, 26th 10 Arctic Skua Lossiemouth, 7 Great Skua Lossiemouth, 4 Manx Shearwater Lossiemouth, 1 Sooty Shearwater Lossiemouth, 28th 1 Curlew Sandpiper Findhorn Bay, Grey Plover Findhorn Bay, 1 Ruddy Duck Loch Spynie, 29th c20 Bearded Tit Loch Spynie, 1 White Wagtail Kingston, 30th 18 Bearded Tit Loch Spynie, 1 Chiffchaff Kingston, 1 Glaucous Gull, 1 Kingfisher Spey Bay, 1 Mediterranean Gull Lossiemouth.

OCTOBER

1st 18 Black-tailed Godwit Findhorn Bay, 4 Grey Plover Findhorn Bay, 1 Red-necked Grebe Nairn, 21 Slavonian Grebe Burghead Bay, 2nd 6 Brent Goose Nairn, 1 Chiffchaff Elgin, 37 Red-breasted Merganser Culbin Bar, 166 Sanderling Culbin Bar, 5th 30 Fieldfare Ben Rinnes, 6th 1 Mediterranean Gull Lossiemouth, 7th 12 Barnacle Goose Lossiemouth, 14 Bearded Tit Loch Spynie, 11 Jack Snipe Kingsteps, 2 Little Stint Kingston, 19 Pintail Nairn Bar, 1 Pomarine Skua Lossiemouth, 207 Sanderling Culbin Bar, 3 Whimbrel Hopeman, 17 Whooper Swan Loch Spynie, 8th 26 Barnacle Goose Findhorn Bay, 18 Pintail Findhorn Bay, 9th 13 Slavonian Grebe Burghead Bay, 10th 2 Little Stint Kingston, 12th 1 Little Auk Lossiemouth, 13th 1 Curlew Sandpiper Findhorn Bay, 4 Great Northern Diver Spey Bay, 2 Shoveler Findhorn Bay, 14th 1 Barnacle Goose Findhorn Bay, 1 Chiffchaff Tugnet, 7800 Pink-footed Goose Findhorn Bay, 15th 2 Curlew Sandpiper Findhorn Bay, 35 Twite Findhorn Bay, 17th 4 Snow Bunting Findhorn, 19th 6 Grey Plover Nairn Bar, 205 Sanderling Nairn Bar, 20th 1 Glaucous Gull Lossiemouth, 14 Pintail Findhorn Bay, 23rd 1 Swallow Elgin, 22 Twite Netherton, 26th 1 Kingfisher Findhorn Bay, 28th 1 Brent Goose Cloddach, 226 Sanderling Nairn Bar, 30th 154 Golden Plover Kinloss.

NOVEMBER

1st 1 Kingfisher Kingsteps, 10 Waxwing Lossiemouth, 2nd 1 Kingfisher Findhorn, 3rd 2 Arctic Skua Lossiemouth, 3 Gadwall Loch Spynie, 1 Little Auk Lossiemouth, 27 Stock Dove Scarffbanks, 4th 7 Raven Easter Gaulrig, 6th 1 Brent Goose Spey Bay, 7th 1 Pomarine Skua Lossiemouth, 8th 1 Little Auk Lossiemouth, 7 Waxwing Forres, 70 Whooper Swan Tugnet, 11th 1 Barnacle Goose Findhorn Bay, 128 Little Auk Lossiemouth, 5 Pomarine Skua Lossiemouth, 1 Sooty Shearwater Lossiemouth, 12th 400 Fieldfare Loch Spynie, 109 Little Auk Burghead, 15th 1 Firecrest Conicavel, 16th 400 Fieldfare Kinloss, 18th 35 Pintail Findhorn Bay, 2 Shoveler Loch Spynie, 1 Waxwing Kinloss, 20th 16 Waxwing Elgin, 22nd 197 Golden Plover Kinloss, 24th 976 Little Auk Lossiemouth, 40 Little Auk Portgordon, 25th 1 Greenshank Findhorn Bay, 50 Little Auk Lossiemouth, 27th 4 Mandarin Elgin, 28th 136 Whooper Swan Garmouth, 30th 1 Swallow Nairn.

DECEMBER

1st 1 Kingfisher Kingston, 6 Mandarin Elgin, 128 Whooper Swan Garmouth, 8th 60 Snow Bunting Lossiemouth, 9th 8 Brent Goose Nairn Bar, 6 Grey Plover Culbin Bar, 6 Jack Snipe Kingsteps, 2 Little Auk Nairn Bar, 72 Pintail Nairn Bar, 186 Sanderling Culbin Bar, 14th 166 Golden Plover Kinloss, 22nd 1 Iceland Gull Loch Spynie, 23rd 5 Scaup Kingston, 24th 1 Short-eared Owl Findhorn Bay, 26th 1 Iceland Gull Loch Spynie, 28th 8 Grey Plover Culbin Bar, 30th 2 Barnacle Goose Roseisle, 1 Hen Harrier Burgie.

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

Mute Swan *Cygnus olor*

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

Breeding: A total of 15 apparently occupied territories was recorded this year, with 13 pairs producing 51 young; of these 48 appear to have fledged. Productivity was the lowest since 1998 and probably caused by a very wet breeding season. In at least two cases flooding may have been the cause of failure at Kingston: these nests were 60m apart. Two broods combined at Loch Spynie to produce a group of 14 young with one pair of adults.

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

Year	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Pairs	16	15	15	15	12	17	11	13	18	19	13
Young fledged	50	31	68	51	54	56	52	67	65	110	48
Mean	3.1	2.1	4.5	3.4	4.5	3.3	4.7	3.6	3.6	5.8	3.7

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

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Loch Flemington	13	15	3			Breeders			nc	33	nc	10
Findhorn	11	18	nc	23	nc	58	3	8	21	21	nc	18
Lossie estuary	7	0	2	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	2
Loch Spynie	65	45	14			Breeders			7	25	53	103
Cloddach	nc	12	11			Breeders			nc	10	10	21
Kingston	nc	nc	nc			Breeders			4	nc	nc	2

nc = no count received

The largest count of non-breeders at Findhorn Bay was a flock of 58 at Netherton 4 Jun. The Loch Spynie count of 103 recorded in December is another increase at this site.

Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus*

Common migrant and winter visitor.

Winter-spring: In Nairn District only one site was used this year: Loch Flemington where max. 4 on 21 Jan. In Moray, flocks were recorded at five sites, all were groups of less than ten except: Loch na Bo (max. 12 on 6 & 14 Jan), Hardmuir (22 on 19 Feb) and Loch Spynie (max. 21 on 14 Mar).

Summer: One individual spent the late summer in Findhorn Bay between 12 Jul-19 Sep (PH, DAG, RHH, RHD).

Autumn: The first flocks were recorded on 7 Oct at Lossie estuary (3 flying south), Hopeman (12 flying south) and Loch Spynie (17 & 2). Thirteen further groups were seen in October, the largest was 85 in Findhorn Bay on 10th. In November, flocks with 10 or more individuals were seen at seven sites: Lossiemouth (14 on 5th), Tugnet (peaking at 100 on 7th), Archiestown (14 on 8th), Loch Spynie (19 on 8th), Clochan (14 on 11th), Findhorn Bay (12 on 23rd) and Garmouth (136 on 28th).

Winter (December): In Nairn District, two sites held flocks: Nairn Bar (6 on 9th & 25th) and Loch Flemington (4 on 9th). In Moray, flocks containing 10 or more individuals were seen at four sites: Connagedale (peaking at 128 on 1st), Alves (21 on 8th), Easter Calcots (25 on 9th) and Muldearie (10 on 15th). The very large flock around Speymouth in Nov-Dec (Tugnet and Connagedale) was usually to be found feeding in flooded stubble fields. The group contained a number of colour-ringed individuals; for details see the Ringing section later in this report. This was the largest gathering recorded in Moray & Nairn since the 1950s/early 60s when Loch Park often hosted even larger numbers.



Whooper Swans, Speymouth 1 Dec 2007 (© Duncan Gibson)

Pink-footed Goose *Anser brachyrhynchus*

Common migrant, increasing in winter.

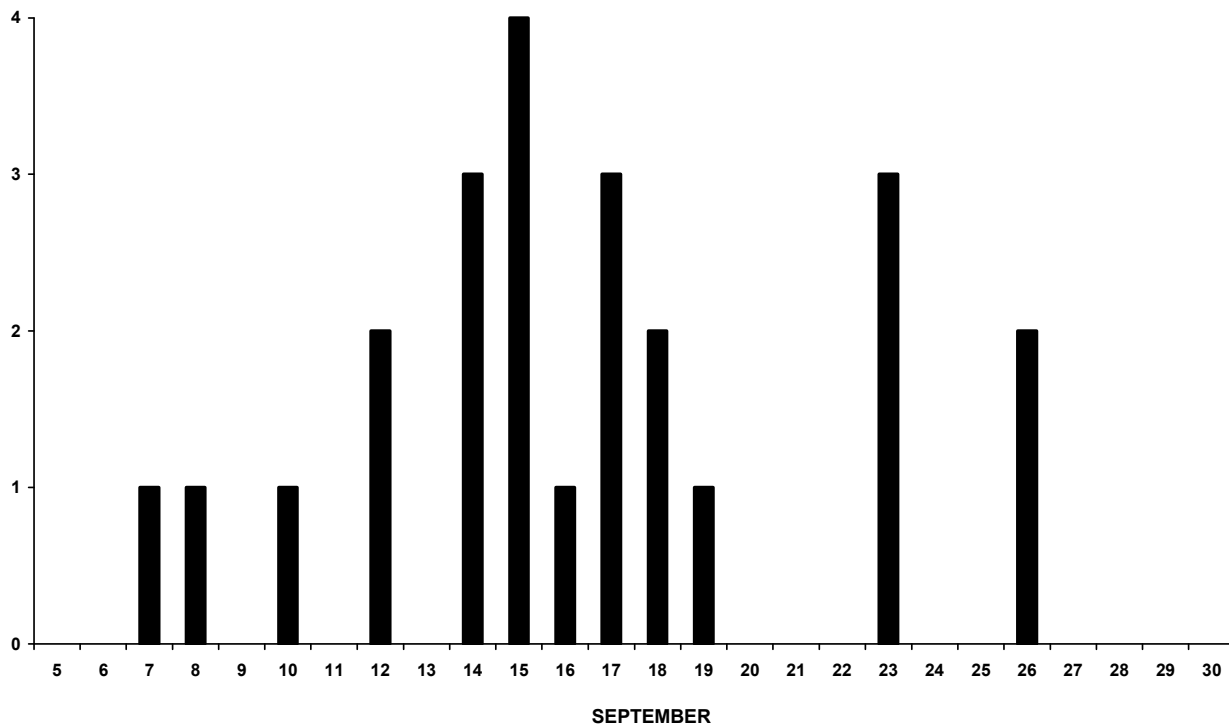
Winter (January-mid March): One report from Nairn District involved a single individual on Nairn Bar 21 Jan and 18 Feb. Another winter period with few large flocks in Moray District, those over 1000 included: 1500 Hillhead 1 Jan, 2000 Milton (Kinloss) 9 Feb, 2000 Alves 11 Mar, 2400 Findhorn Bay 13 Mar and 1000 Cloddach quarry 24 Mar. Only four other sites held over 100 birds.

Spring passage: A total of five groups were recorded flying west or north-west, between 12-28 Apr; the largest was 400 over Elgin 23 Apr. Feeding flocks were typically larger during this period: 3500 Findhorn Bay 1 Apr, 6000 Glassgreen 3 Apr, 2800 Broadley (Nairn) 9 Apr and 4500 Gollanfield 13 Apr.

Summer: 3 Kingston 10 Jun was the only record. Since 1985, Kingston has recorded 33% of summer records.

Autumn: The first arrivals were four skeins seen on 14 Sep (a typical date): 120 south-east Archiestown, 30 south Hillhead, 60 Ben Aigan and 70 Innes House. The next day a further five flocks were recorded: Elgin ('hundreds'), Lossiemouth (120 east & 60 east), Kingston (20), Strathlene (140 east) and Loch Spynie (3).

Frequency of arrival dates of first autumn flocks 1985-2007.



Winter: A similar decline in wintering numbers to those reported last year. Only two large flocks reported in December, those over 1000 included: 6000 Roseisle 2nd and 1000 Urquhart area 17th.

Two hybrids with assumed Pink-footed Goose × White-fronted Goose parentage were seen at Alves 11 Mar (RHD).

White-fronted Goose *Anser albifrons*

Scarce winter visitor.

No records of White-fronted Goose were received this year for the first time since at least 1985.

Greylag Goose *Anser anser**Common winter visitor.*

Winter-spring: Flocks containing 500 or more birds were recorded at only three sites (max. counts only): 1200 Lower Bogrotten 2 Jan, 1100 Milton (Kinloss) 9 Feb and 800 Cloddach 24 Mar. The reduction in numbers locally is probably due to the Icelandic population wintering further north within Scotland.

Summer: In the Lochindorb breeding area the largest count was 172 adults with 209 young (41 broods) on 10 Jun (RHD). A slight expansion of the breeding area to include Auchloch (Knock of Braemora) (four pairs seen on 13 Apr and a pair with three young on 13 May) (RHD, ISS, MJHC) and Loch Stuart (pair on 9 Apr) (MJHC). In the coastal strip one Kingston 13 Jul-22 Sep (MJHC, CAG).

Autumn: The first flock was seen at Milnorduff pool (15 on 2 Oct); a rather late date. These were followed by 82 Kinloss 4 Oct and 95 over Findhorn Bay 8 Oct. The largest count in October was 200 Loch Spynie on 12th and no large influx occurred during this month.

Winter: Flocks over 500 occurred at only two sites: 1400 Broadley (Clochan) 22 Dec and 800 over Elgin 30 Dec.

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

A total of three individuals were recorded in 2007.

Two records of white-morph individuals which, from photographs and associated species, probably relate to two birds. What was presumably the individual from Lower Bogrotten in 2006, was relocated near Garmouth 2 Jan and remained around Garmouth, Muir of Lochs, Upper Dallachy and Western Bauds until 23 Feb (DAG, RHD, AJ), and continued to associate mainly with Greylag Geese. Photographs in MNBR 2006 suggest that this individual was a first-year on bill colour. From 27-29 Mar, another white-morph individual, this time associating mainly with Pink-footed Geese, and with a brighter adult-type bill, was found in the Roseisle-Bruntlands area (DAG, AJL, RP). These are the 9th-10th records of white morph Snow Goose (minimum of 15 birds) to occur since 1967.

A blue-morph Lesser Snow Goose was seen flying south with Greylag Geese at Kinloss 4 Oct (AJL). This is the second record of a blue-morph individual following the record of one at Miltonhill in 2005, from 27 Sep-11 Oct.



Snow Goose, Roseisle 27 Mar 2007 (© Duncan Gibson)

Brent Goose *Branta bernicla*

Scarce migrant and winter visitor.

A dark-bellied Brent Goose *B.b.bernicla* was present on the Lossie estuary 31 Mar-8 Apr (RP, CAG, RHD, DAG).

All other individuals assigned to a race were Light-bellied Brent Geese *B.b.hrota*.

Winter: The regular winter flock was once again recorded in the Nairn area. The maximum count was 22 on the sea near Delnies 21 Jan. This flock was last seen on 18 Feb (17 birds).

Autumn passage period (Sep-Oct): Only two reports during the migration period 2 flying west off Lossiemouth 8 Sep and 1 Cloddach quarry 28 Oct.

Winter: At Nairn, the wintering flock was present on 2 Oct (6 birds) increasing to only eight individuals by 9 Dec. The only other record during this period was a single at Boar's Head Rock 6 Nov.

Barnacle Goose *Branta leucopsis*

Scarce migrant and winter visitor.

Winter-spring: Seen at seven sites over this period, Muirton Cottage (1 on 7 Jan), Binns (Garmouth) (1 on 7 Jan), Loch Flemington (1 on 8 Mar), Findhorn Bay (1 on 13 Mar, 2 on 28-29 Apr), Wester Lawrenceton (2 on 15 Apr), Miltonduff (2 on 11-19 May) and Loch Spynie (1 on 16-24 May).

Autumn: Birds were recorded over Nairn 24 Sep (no count), 12 west Lossiemouth 7 Oct and 26 south Findhorn Bay 8 Oct (single sightings Findhorn Bay 14, 16 & 19 Oct probably related to the same bird).

Winter: 1 Findhorn Bay 11 Nov, 2 Clochan 15 Dec and 2 Roseisle 30 Dec.

Canada Goose *Branta canadensis*

Scarce migrant in summer, rare in winter.

Winter: A single near Stynie Glebe (Mosstodloch) 25 Feb (DAG) and presumably the same individual later at Kingston 24 Mar (MJHC).

Summer-early autumn: Typically the majority of records were from this period. Seen in Findhorn Bay on 11 dates between 2 Jun-19 Sep, maximum count was 41 on 11 Aug (RHD). Elsewhere, 19 Cloddach quarry 4 Jun, though one of these may have been a hybrid (CAG, DAG) and 5 Loch Spynie 2 Jun, dropping to 4 on 7 Jun (RP).

Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*

Numerous spring and summer visitor and breeder.

Breeding: The mean brood size from five broods was 7.6 chicks. Broods were seen at Findhorn Bay (including Netherton), Kingston and Montgrew. The latter site is well inland (near Keith) and this pair is thought to have nested close to the River Isla. In potential breeding areas were 3 Urquhart 28 Apr, 2 Loch Spynie 10 May, 1 Lossie estuary 19 May and 2 Miltonduff 15 Jun.

Best monthly counts at coastal sites were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Nairn/Culbin Bars	72	110	97	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	11	nc	66
Findhorn Bay	50	78	99	108	39	122	90	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc
Lossie estuary	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kingston	2	6	10	37	30	20	3	nc	nc	nc	6	nc

Mandarin *Aix galericulata*

Probable escape or feral origin.

Only seen on the River Lossie, Elgin. In the early part of the year a male and white female were seen between Sheriffmill and A96 roadbridge on 21 Feb & 4 Mar (RP). Later three males and a white female were seen on 27 Nov, increasing to five males and a white female near the Leisure Centre on 28 Nov & 1 Dec (CAG). Presumably part of this group (3M, 1 white F) moved to Sheriffmill 24 Dec (RP).

Wigeon *Anas penelope*

Common winter visitor and scarce breeder.

Breeding: At the usual lochans a female was seen on 26 May though no evidence of breeding noted (MJHC).

Non-breeders in summer (May-July): 24M Findhorn Bay 19 Jun, pair Kingston 11-13 Jun, present Loch Spynie 3 May-25 Jul (max. 4 on 28 Jun & 8 Jul) and 1M Lossie estuary 3 Jul.

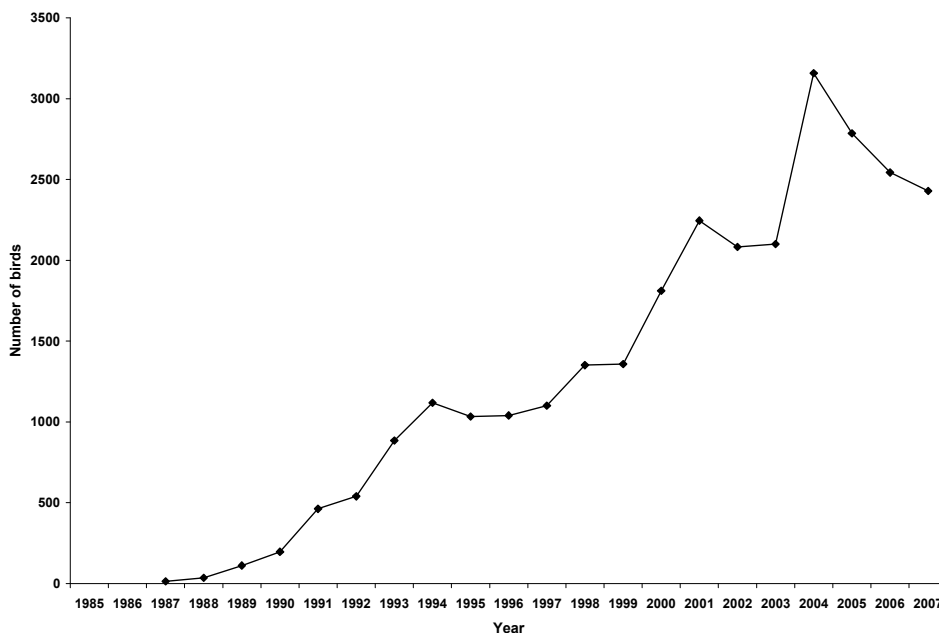
Winter: Monthly maximum counts at main coastal sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Nairn/Culbin Bars	562	154	nc	nc	nc	448	nc	652
Findhorn Bay	1097	1485	nc	nc	200	1800	1600	1800
Lossie estuary	2429	2000	110	13	194	809	800	1896
Kingston	216	nc	46	nc	25	100	nc	335

For the third successive year numbers of Wigeon using Lossie estuary have continued to fall since the peak of 3158 in 2004.

Number of Wigeon at the Lossie estuary 1985-2007 (from MNBR):

On freshwater:



	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Loch Flemington	574	428	200	nc	nc	nc	210	nc	636
Loch Loy	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	30	17	17	nc
Loch Spynie	600	nc	3	nc	24	7	12	300	800
Miltonduff pool	nc	80	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc
Miltonduff distillery	nc	10	75	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc
Cloddach quarry	nc	190	28	nc	nc	nc	60	172	155
Loch Oire	70	100	121	8	6	41	71	284	287
Loch na Bo	190	75	3	nc	nc	nc	nc	90	275

The 'white-headed' female returned for its 8th year and was seen at both the Lossie estuary (28 Jan) and Loch Spynie (3 Dec).

Gadwall *Anas strepera*

Scarce visitor.

Seen at four sites.

Loch Flemington: 2 on 28 Jan and 1M on 4 Feb (DCJ, DAG).

Loch Spynie: present from 17 Aug-29 Dec, max. counts were 1M, 2F on 3 Nov and 2M, 1F on 11 Dec (HF).

Kingston/Tugnet: present 22 Apr-4 Jun, max 2M,2F (MJHC, RHD).

Teal *Anas crecca*

Scarce breeder and common winter visitor.

Breeding: No confirmed breeding attempts were reported this year.

Potential breeding sites occupied during the breeding season included Scalán, Dunphail, Kingston, Loch Allan, Loch Stuart, Stoneyford pond (Rafford), Miltonduff, Loch Spynie and Loch Oire.

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	nc	12	nc	nc	nc	nc	28	nc	nc
Cran Loch	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	65	190	250	nc
Findhorn Bay	525	1010	nc	nc	52	nc	nc	nc	42
Hillhead pool	10	nc	68	2	nc	nc	nc	nc	130
Lossie estuary	8	4	0	4	1	2	8	3	32
Loch Spynie	18	36	4	9	nc	25	nc	12	15
Cloddach quarry	nc	9	11	nc	nc	nc	nc	12	2
Loch Oire	30	25	24	6	nc	nc	3	50	14
Loch na Bo	10	nc	6	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	67
Kingston	25	nc	nc	nc	150	90	70	nc	26

The count of 32 (24M, 8F) at the Lossie estuary 26 Dec is the largest count there since at least 1985 (RP). An unusual record was two on the sea Portgordon 22 Apr (MJHC).

One other site held over 50 birds: 81 Loch Flemington 9 Dec.

Green-winged Teal *Anas carolinensis**Vagrant.*

A male was present on Loch Flemington 18 Feb and another was on Spynie Canal, Gilston 4-5 Mar (DAG, MJHC, CAG). This species was first recorded in Moray in 2000, and was seen annually until 2005. This constitutes the 14th and 15th records for Moray & Nairn.



Green-winged Teal, Loch Flemington 18 Feb 2007

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos**Numerous resident breeder and common winter visitor.*

Breeding: The mean brood size from six broods was 8.2 chicks. Two females with broods were seen at Loch Allan 26 May. In the breeding season birds were found in moorland areas on Lochan Tutach and Lochs of Little Benshalag.

Best monthly flocks in regularly counted areas were:

Freshwater:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Loch Flemington	24	19	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	72	nc	62
Loch Loy	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	37	95	2	nc
Loch Spynie	94	8	8	4	3	64	134	183	50	nc	40	200
Cloddach quarry	nc	90	55	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	90	144	129
Loch Oire	82	70	18	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	14	67	85
Loch na Bo	nc	2	4	nc	5	nc	nc	nc	nc	1	4	135

The only other freshwater site holding more than 50 birds was Cran Loch (72 on 10 Nov).

Coastal sites:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Nairn/Culbin Bars	50	17	4	nc	nc	31	nc	18
Findhorn Bay	253	245	nc	nc	60	95	nc	326
Lossie estuary	23	4	2	6	20	25	16	5

Other coastal sites holding more than 50 birds were: Carse of Delnies (126 on 21 Jan) and Gollachy Burn (Portgordon) where 53 on 16 Feb and 79 on 2 Dec.

Pintail *Anas acuta*

Scarce winter visitor and migrant. Has bred.

Present at seven sites.

Nairn Bar: This site held the largest numbers recorded for the year in both winter periods. Seen in Jan-Feb when the maximum count was 82 on 21 Jan, and then in Oct-Dec when the maximum count was 72 on 9 Dec (DCJ). The count of 82 on Nairn Bar has only been exceeded once before when 86 were recorded at Loch Spynie on 7 Oct 1995.

Loch Flemington: 1 on 7 Oct (DCJ).

Loch Loy: c.40 on 3 Mar (DAG). Birds commute between this loch and the Nairn Bar.

Findhorn Bay: Present from Jan-Apr, when the maximum count was 38 on 18 Feb (CD) and then Sep-Dec, when the maximum count was 35 on 18 Nov (DAG).

Loch Spynie: 1F on 15 Jan and a pair on 25 Mar (DAG).

Kingston: 1F on 4 May (MJHC).

Portgordon: 1F on 2 & 21 Jan (MJHC), present for the 6th successive year with the Mallard flock at the mouth of the Gollachy Burn.

Garganey *Anas querquedula*

Rare in spring.

Seen at two sites.

Loch Spynie: A male was present from 2-7 May (CAG, RP, DAG).

Kingston: A pair was present on 4 Jun (MJHC).



Garganey, Loch Spynie 4 May 2007 (© Duncan Gibson)

Shoveler *Anas clypeata*

Rare breeder and scarce migrant.

A welcome increase in records and seen at three sites.

Nairn Bar: A single on 9 Dec (DCJ).

Findhorn Bay: A pair present on 13 & 15 Oct (DAG).

Loch Spynie: Present from February to November with a male and female seen regularly throughout this period, though only together as a pair on 16 May. A female with a flying brood was seen on 5 Aug (RHD). This is the first confirmed breeding since 1995 when a female, with 11 tiny ducklings, were seen at Drainie 9 Jun.

Pochard *Aythya ferina*

Common winter visitor and occasional breeder.

Counts were received from five sites.

Cloddach quarry: 1M on 25-28 Jun.

Loch Loy: A single unsexed individual seen on 16 Sep, 7 Oct and 10 Nov.

Loch na Bo: A male on 28 Jan and an unsexed individual on 25 Feb.

Loch Oire: A single unsexed individual on 14 Nov.

Loch Spynie: The decline continues. Although only two were seen together, the total for the year included four individuals: a male, first-year female and two juveniles.

Maximum monthly counts were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Loch Spynie	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	2	0	0	1	1

Winter maxima at Loch Spynie since 1989 are given below:

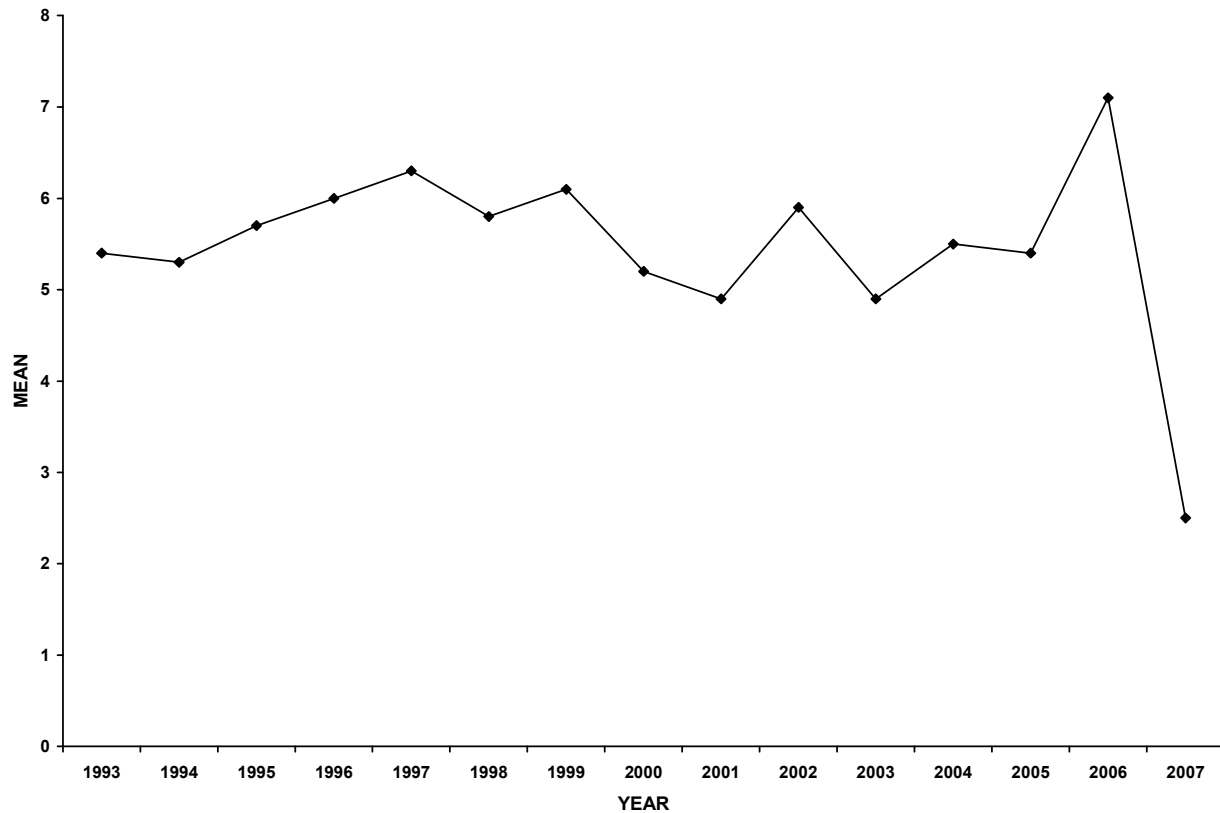
1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
36	65	65	99	56	64	33	17	36
1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
69	61	27	66	17	17	8	7	2

Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligala*

Scarce breeder and common winter visitor.

Breeding: The mean brood size from four broods was 2.5 chicks, and is the lowest mean brood size in the last 15 years, possibly the result of the very wet summer. Broods were only seen at Loch Oire and Loch Spynie.

Mean brood size for Tufted Duck 1993-2007:



Other potential breeding sites occupied during the summer months included: Loch Allan, Loch Stuart and Lochan Tutach.

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

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Loch Flemington	10	21	10	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	5	nc	6
Loch Spynie	41	60	82	121	84	19	50	100	70	125	143	117
Cloddach quarry	nc	24	14	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	15	23	15
Cooper Park	56	53	61	19	nc	19	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	50
Loch na Bo	5	19	25	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	7	25	23
Loch Oire	18	8	21	38	22	28	nc	11	20	8	9	8
Kingston	8	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	16

Coastal records in winter: Kingston (8 on 1 Jan and 5 on 5 Dec).

Scaup *Aythya marila*

Scarce winter visitor.

Inland, seen only on Loch Spynie where 1F on 6 & 28 Jan (RP, AJ) and 1F on 12 Oct & 18 Nov (RS, DAG).

Coastal records were received from five sites.

Nairn area: 200 on 21 Jan was the largest count of the year, though only 10 there on 18 Feb (DCJ).

Findhorn Bay: One 24 Feb (PH).

Lossie estuary: Two males 11-17 Jul (DAG).

Kingston: Five on 23 Dec (MJHC) had dropped to 2M, 1F by 29 Dec (RP). In June, a pair present on 13th (AJ) were probably the same as the Spey Bay individuals seen on 11th.

Spey Bay: Three females on 6 Jan (AJ), pair flying west on 10 Jun (DPa) and 1F on 2 & 5 Dec (DPa, JCP). In June, a pair on 11th and 1M on 13th (AJ).

Eider *Somateria mollissima*

Scarce breeder, common offshore.

Breeding: Three broods reported, of which the mean brood size was 2.3 chicks.

Mean number of chicks calculated from distinct broods 1997-2007:

Year	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Broods	19	16	10	9	8	12	5	3	2	3	3
Mean	3.2	3.4	2.1	3.2	2.4	2.9	2.4	2.3	2.5	3.0	2.3

Max. monthly counts at main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Nairn/Culbin Bars	14	104	24	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	21	nc	7
Burghead Bay	nc	35	65	30	6	126	5	10	576	70	nc	26
Burghead-Hopeman	40	47	nc	12	7	nc	nc	nc	nc	173	nc	257
Spey Bay	1000	30	25	nc	nc	31	nc	80	375	352	120	85

(counts in Spey Bay were sometimes made from the west (Lossiemouth) end and sometimes from the east (Kingston) end but the same flocks are presumed to be mobile within the Bay).

Other counts over 100 (max.) were: 154 Cullen 7 Apr and 100 Carse of Delnies 8 Aug.

Two males, showing characters of the Northern race *borealis*, were seen off Lossiemouth harbour 7 Oct (RP, DAG). This is the third record following individuals off Tugnet 23-24 Apr and 5 May 2000, and off Nairn golf course 8-9 Oct 2005.

King Eider *Somateria spectabilis*

Rare visitor.

A first-winter male was present at Burghead 7 Apr-23 May (SML,MJHC,CAG,RP,RHD). This is the third record of a young male, following individuals in 1982 and 1986. The total number of different King Eiders which have been seen in Moray & Nairn is difficult to establish with any certainty due to returning individuals in successive years. The species has, however, been seen in 17 of the last 32 years since the first record in 1976. All have been males.



King Eider, Burghead 7 Apr 2007 (© John Jennings)

Long-tailed Duck *Clangula hyemalis*

Common winter visitor offshore.

Coastal records in summer: 1 Burghead 2 Jun.

Maximum monthly counts were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Oct	Nov	Dec
Nairn Bar	82	118	10	nc	nc	nc	15
Culbin Bar	1	32	nc	nc	nc	nc	40
off Findhorn	nc	5	2	2	nc	120	2
Burghead Bay	6	190	12	120	15	64	6
Burghead	25	nc	nc	nc	40	20	140
Lossiemouth	nc	30	nc	525	nc	nc	nc
Spey Bay	nc	nc	30	800	nc	nc	nc
Kingston	1320	nc	nc	1000	nc	nc	nc

Many fewer than usual in Burghead Bay, but rather more in Spey Bay than in recent years.

Inland records: 2 Loch Spynie 24 Jan and 1 Loch Loy 10 Nov.

Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra*

Common winter visitor, small numbers in summer.

Summer coastal records only in Burghead Bay where the highest count was 170 on 19 Jul.

Maximum counts at other seasons were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Nairn Bar	410	65	nc	nc	nc	1	nc	2
Culbin Bar	nc	43	3	nc	nc	7	nc	3
Burghead Bay	25	nc	1	14	22	32	nc	nc

As with Long-tailed Duck, very few in Burghead Bay or off the Bars but a substantial flock in Spey Bay where 520 Boar's Head Rock 13 Oct.

Surf Scoter *Melanitta perspicillata*

Rare, but regular visitor.

Nairn Bar: 1M on 21 Jan (DCJ).

Spey Bay: 1M on 13 & 15 Apr (per Birdguides).

Following the large numbers of up to 5-6 in Burghead Bay in recent years, this is the lowest total since 1987 and 1988.

Velvet Scoter *Melanitta fusca*

Common winter visitor.

Maximum counts for main areas were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Oct	Nov	Dec
Nairn Bar	162	33	nc	8	nc	nc
Culbin Bar	167	49	nc	nc	nc	nc
Burghead Bay	1	18	6	56	nc	nc

Coastal summer records: 4 Burghead 1 Jun and 1 Spey Bay 9 Jul.

A large count in late spring consisted of 110 Spey Bay 7 Apr.

Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*

Rare breeder and common winter visitor.

Breeding: A pair in the traditional breeding area on 9 Apr but no evidence of breeding (MJHC). At another loch, three females/juveniles were seen on 9 Jul (MJHC).

Inland summer records included 1 Loch Spynie 17 Jul.

Maximum counts on most frequented lochs were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Loch Flemington	5	13	15	nc	nc	nc	nc	11
Loch Spynie	25	60	37	112	2	10	50	18
Loch na Bo	4	2	6	nc	nc	nc	1	2
Loch Oire	9	3	1	1	nc	nc	4	4

The spring build up at Loch Spynie in March-April has been regularly noted, with large totals being recorded from 1990 onwards. In 2007, two counts over 100 were recorded in Apr (112 on 7th and 111 on 8th) (RHD). These are 2-3 times greater than recent counts and the largest concentration ever recorded at the loch, the previous highest count was 76 in 1998.

Although regular on the Spey at Aberlour in winter, 10 (8M,2F) on 11 Jan (AE) was an unusually high number. Also there were 2 on 17 Mar and 4 on 22 Dec.

Maximum counts at most frequented coastal sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Oct	Nov	Dec
Nairn/Culbin Bars	1	13	3	nc	nc	nc	1
Findhorn Bay	24	42	10	nc	12	nc	nc
Burghead Bay	1	1	2	nc	nc	nc	nc
Burghead-Hopeman	3	12	nc	nc	nc	nc	1
Lossiemouth	18	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc
Lossie estuary	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kingston/Tugnet	7	5	7	13	2	30	25

Smew *Mergellus albellus*

Rare winter visitor.

The male from 2006 remained at Loch na Bo from 1 Jan-6 Apr (RHD, MJHC, *et al.*).



Smew, Loch na Bo 2 Jan 2007 (© Martin Cook)

Red-breasted Merganser *Mergus serrator*

Scarce local breeder and common visitor.

Summer: Breeding confirmed on the River Findhorn at Darnaway where broods of 6 and 7 were seen in May (ISS). On Culbin Bar on 15 Jul was a female with a brood of 8 but these may have travelled some distance (ISS).

Mean number of chicks calculated from distinct broods 1997-2007:

Year	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Broods	8	7	2	5	3	1	1	-	-	5	3
Mean	7.0	5.6	5.5	7.8	8.7	8.0	7.0	-	-	5.6	7.0

Coastal records in summer (May-June): 8 Burghead Bay 1 May, 3 Kingston 4 Jun and 4 Spey Bay 22 Jun.

Maximum monthly counts were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Nairn/Culbin Bars	2	18	34	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	117	nc	2
Findhorn Bay	13	18	8	16	6	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	6
Burghead Bay	1	2	3	16	nc	nc	nc	nc	11	5	nc
Burghead-Hopeman	3	4	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	4	nc	nc

One inland record in winter: 1 Loch Flemington 9 Dec.

Goosander *Mergus merganser*

Widespread but scarce breeder.

Breeding: No broods were reported this year but presence in breeding habitat in spring/summer at Aberlour, Achdregnie, Elgin (Rivver Lossie), Kilravock Castle and Suie.

Maximum monthly counts at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Cloddach quarry	1	3	3	2	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	1	nc
Loch Spynie	2	5	4	14	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc
Lossie estuary	28	nc	5	5	25	nc	3	24	2	6	nc	nc
Speymouth	nc	nc	nc	12	51	72	nc	103	nc	nc	nc	nc

Peak counts of moulting birds at Speymouth 1989-2007 are:

1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
122	140	10*	29*	133	192	118	62	125	59
1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	
158	93	100	98	108	117	74	128	103	

* almost certainly incomplete counts

Inland in winter (max. counts): 1F Rothes 31 Jan, 2 Dunphail 28 Feb, 1 Drynchan 25 Nov, 3 (1M,2F) Blacksboat Bridge 9 Dec and 4 (2M,2F) Aberlour 22 Dec. Unusual behaviour noted at Garmouth viaduct 22 Dec when a Goosander nearly drowned a Little Grebe (EH).

Ruddy Duck *Oxyura jamaicensis*

Rare visitor.

A female on Loch Spynie 28 Sep (DAG) was the only record. This is about the 25th record for the Districts.

Red Grouse *Lagopus lagopus*

Very common resident breeder.

On lower hills near the coast were 1 Bin of Cullen 13 Apr, and present throughout the year on Ben Aigan where a family group of seven on 5 Jul.

Ptarmigan *Lagopus muta*

Fairly common resident breeder.

Two pairs Ben Rinnes 1 Apr (AE) where subsequent numbers much better than in 2006, suggesting a successful breeding season: 18 on 12 Oct (AE) and 12 on 7 Nov (MMac). Very few reports received from elsewhere; just two pairs Ben Macdui 7 Apr and 2 Cairn Gorm 27 Mar.

Black Grouse *Tetrao tetrix*

Scarce resident breeder.

As usual, a highly under-recorded species as few birders spend much time in Black Grouse habitat. Only targeted survey work is likely to reveal anything like the true status of the species in Moray & Nairn. For example, fieldworkers for the North East Scotland Breeding Bird Atlas during 2002-6 found the species in 32 tetrads in Moray, and others are to be found in Nairn.

The only reports in 2007 were 1 Blairnamarrow (Tomintoul) 20 Apr (IF), 2 Glacks of Balloch 13 May (MJHC,AJ), 4 Carn Ruigh Thuim (Dava) 13 May (MJHC,AJ) and 8 males Knock of Braemoray 13 Apr (RHD) where a nest was found on 15 May (ISS).

Capercaillie *Tetrao urogallus*

Scarce resident breeder.

Two leks in west Moray contained a maximum of 14 males but few if any young were reared here, probably because of cold, wet weather in late spring (ISS). In SE Nairn were 11 (2M,9F) on 12 Apr (MJHC,RHD) and a single bird was in north central Moray on 23 Feb (RHD).

Red-legged Partridge *Alectoris rufa*

Introduced scarce breeder. Commonly released.

Records included 40 Inveravon 25 Dec (obviously released stock), 5 Ballindalloch Castle 18 Feb, 2 Bellehiglash 18 Dec, 1 Boharm 17 Apr, 2 Clocahn 29 Jun, 3 Drybridge 22 Dec, 2 Glen Rinnes 9 Jun, 2 Laggan (Dufftown) 13 May, 1 Lein (Kingston) 1 Apr (2 seen here 30 Apr and 17 May), 1 Scarffbanks 1 Jun, 1 Midwood (Clochan) 14 Jan (6 there 24 Dec) and 2 Speyslaw 13 Oct. Also, curiously, one in a Portknockie garden on 18 Mar (LS) and another in central Buckie on 17 Jun (MJHC).

Grey Partridge *Perdix perdix*

Common resident breeder.

Very few reports and counts were submitted unfortunately. The largest coveys were 10 Urquhart 25 Dec, 9 Urquhart 16 Jan, 8 Culbin Bar 21 Jan, 6 Castle Hill 8 Jan and 6 Roseisle 28 Dec.

Quail *Coturnix coturnix*

Rare summer visitor and breeder, occasionally more numerous.

Quite a good year with calling birds in 7 localities. At Clochan, calling was heard regularly between 27 Jun-8 Jul with 2 birds on 8 Jul (MJHC). In the coastal plain near Lossiemouth single birds were calling on 8 Jul at Bailliesland, Gordonsward, Inchbroom and Leuchars (MJHC). Others were at Duffus 15-22 Jun (EH) and Stynie Glebe 5 Jul (MJHC).

In autumn, a quail was seen at Nether Unthank on 21 Oct (FG) but on this very late date the possibility of an escape from captivity cannot be ruled out.

Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus*

Very common resident breeder.

Largest autumn/winter counts received were 30 Bridge of Avon 25 Dec and 30 Midwood (Clochan) 14 Jan. Much larger numbers will of course have been present in areas surrounding release sites prior to the shooting season.

[Reeves's Pheasant *Syrnaticus reevesii*

Escape.

An adult male was watched and photographed in a field at Maviston near Nairn on 9 Apr (TE).]



Reeves's Pheasant, Maviston 9 Apr 2007 (© T. Earl)

[Indian Peafowl *Pavo cristatus*

Escape.

1 Kincorth 7 May (DAG).]

Red-throated Diver *Gavia stellata*

Rare breeder. Common autumn and winter visitor offshore.

Summer: Only one inland report, of a pair on 26 May on a loch in the area where breeding has most frequently taken place in the past (MJHC). Lack of observations make it impossible to know whether these were failed local breeders or a visiting pair.

At the coast in the April-July period, significant counts were 17 Boar's Head Rock 28 Apr and 25 there 13 May. Also 12 Burghhead Bay 13 Apr (still 6 on 4 Jun), 6 Findhorn 22 Apr and 6 Tugnet 28 Apr.

Best monthly counts offshore in each winter period were:

	Jan	Feb	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Nairn/Delnies	No counts received this year					
Nairn/Culbin Bars	nc	26	nc	9	nc	0
Burghead Bay	1	1	4	5	1	4
Spey Bay	30	nc	4	29	6	3

Again apparently very scarce compared with former years – but some more regular counts would be highly desirable.

Seawatching off Lossiemouth in November revealed a small westerly passage on most days, best being 19 in 2 hours on 11th (DAG).

Black-throated Diver *Gavia arctica*

Rare breeder. Scarce autumn and winter visitor offshore.

Upland lochs: One pair bred but failed (IFr, MJHC).

Monthly maxima in Burghead Bay were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
nc	8	1	67	29	1	nc	nc	2	4	8	nc

Peak counts during the spring assembly were 67 on 15 Apr and 29 on 13 May (DAG, MJHC, RHD, AJ). Elsewhere, 8 Culbin Bar 18 Feb (AY), 2 Tugnet 22 Apr, 1 Kingston 11 May and 4 Kingston 5 Oct (MJHC).

Great Northern Diver *Gavia immer*

Scarce visitor offshore.

Only a few in spring in Spey Bay where best count was 5 Boar's Head Rock 28 Apr (MJHC). Also 4 there 13 Oct. Elsewhere, 3 Burghead Bay 22 Sep and 25 reports of 1-2 birds at four coastal localities between 22 Sep-15 May.

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

Scarce breeder, scarce on the estuaries in winter.

Mid-winter: In January and December, 5 Loch na Bo 2-6 Jan with 6 there 28 Jan, 2 Loch Flemington 21 Jan, 1 Cooper Park (Elgin) 28 Jan, 1 Loch Spynie 22-23 Dec with 2 on 26 Dec, and 2 Cloddach quarry 30 Dec.

Present in spring/summer (*italics* = proved breeding) at Altyre House pond (2 pairs), Cloddach quarry, Fochabers lake, Loch Allan, Loch Flemington, Loch Loy, Loch na Bo, Loch of Blairs (4 pairs), *Loch Oire* (an exceptional 8 pairs (MJHC), *Loch Spynie* (2 pairs), and Stoneyford pond (Rafford).

Best post-breeding congregations in late summer/autumn were 33 Loch Oire 10 Sep, 29 Loch Spynie 10 Sep, 14 Loch Flemington 7 Oct and 13 Loch na Bo 7 Oct.

Coastal in winter: Most numerous around the Binsness region of Findhorn Bay where high counts were 27 on 21 Jan, 26 on 18 Feb and 15 on 20 Feb. Also regular, but in much smaller numbers, at Kingston where usually only 1-2 but 3 on 3 Feb. The Lossie estuary held singles on 21 Jan and 22 Dec, with 2 on 20 Oct.

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

Only 3 records, of single birds in Burghead Bay on 2 Feb (AJL) and 13 Feb (RHD), and another off Nairn about 1 Oct (RPC).

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

Breeding: 2 pairs present of which one nested, unsuccessfully.

Site 2 – None seen until 15 Apr when 3 birds appeared. Two pairs 25 Apr-7 May but by 13 May the site was deserted. One pair was back on 31 May and 2 pairs by 4 Jun. A nest was built and a bird appeared to be incubating on 24 Jun but by the following day the water level had risen and washed out the nest. Another nest held eggs on 5 Jul but this also failed for unknown reasons. The pair was last seen on 20 Jul.

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 1995.

	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07
Sites	4	3	4	3	3	2	3	4	2	2	2	4	1
Pairs	13	8	12	9	8	3	7	10	8	4	8	4	2
Young	12	2	2	5-6	1	3	11	6	9	7	0	0	0

This mirrors, over recent years, the national decline of this attractive species as a breeder in Scotland. Unless there is a rapid reversal of fortunes it looks very likely that Slavonian Grebes will soon cease to breed in Moray & Nairn.

The only other inland record, at any season, was 1 Loch Spynie 7 May (DAG).

Coastal: Monthly maxima in Burghead Bay were:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2 (6 th)	18 (18 th)	3 (27 th)	11 (13 th)	nc	21 (1 st)	nc	3 (1 st)

(AJL,CD,RSh,EH et al.)

Elsewhere, 2 Nairn Bar 18 Feb (DCJ), 1 Spey Bay 27 Jan and 1 Kingston 5 Oct (EH).

Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis**Rare visitor.*

One adult in breeding plumage was seen in Burghead Bay from the Roseisle Forest picnic area on 3 Apr (RSh). There have been only six previous Moray & Nairn records, most recently in Nairn harbour in December 1978.

Fulmar *Fulmarus glacialis**Common breeder, very common offshore.*

Breeding: The only report relating to breeding was of 54 birds apparently occupying nesting sites at Cullen on 21 May (DTh). Passage: Three counts exceeded 100. The largest count of the year was of 754 past Lossiemouth in two hours on 3 Sep (RP) – the largest count in the Districts since 2000. The same site accounted for the other counts over 100 – 132 passed in an hour on 10 Sep and 100 passed in an hour on 17 Sep.

Great Shearwater *Puffinus gravis**Rare visitor.*

Three birds were recorded from Lossiemouth – the first records for Moray & Nairn. The first passed west in the early evening of 3 Sep (RP) and two passed west in the evening of 14 Sep (MJHC).

These birds were part of an unprecedented influx of this species into Scottish waters in late summer 2007, which included a record 7,114 past Butt of Lewis (Outer Hebrides) on 8 Sep.

Sooty Shearwater *Puffinus griseus**Very scarce migrant in late summer and autumn.*

After a disappointing 2006 when only one bird was recorded, a return to form with 38 records in 2007 – the third highest annual total in Moray & Nairn since at least 1985. Previous higher counts were 42 in 1988 and 57 in 2001. All records were in the late summer/autumn period – estimated monthly totals were:

Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov
3	33	-	2

The peak count was 15 west past Lossiemouth in two hours on the evening of 14 Sep (MJHC). The majority of records were from this site, with the exception of two past Burghead on 2 Sep and one past Strathlene on 11 Nov (MJHC). The latter individual was probably the same as the bird which passed Lossiemouth a little earlier on the same day (DAG). This is only the second November record for Moray & Nairn.

Manx Shearwater *Puffinus puffinus**Scarce offshore in summer and autumn.*

The annual total was 101 records, a reasonable year. Estimated monthly totals were:

May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
35	4	7	12	43

Spring: Passage was noted from 15 May, when 18 passed Burghead (JBe). A total of 17 birds were recorded from Lossiemouth on three dates (DAG).

Summer: 11 birds were noted in June and July off Lossiemouth.

Autumn: After light passage in August (all 12 past Lossiemouth on two dates), a reasonable passage occurred in September, coinciding with some impressive seawatching from the Moray coast. Records centred on Lossiemouth with 41 birds logged on seven dates, with peaks of 15 on 3 Sep (MJHC, RP) and 13 on the following day (MJHC). Singles were also noted from Strathlene and Kingston.

Storm-petrel *Hydrobates pelagicus**Summer and autumn visitor offshore, probably very common at night.*

One flew west past Spey Bay on 10 Jun – the earliest recorded in Moray & Nairn since records began to be published in the annual bird report in 1985 (DPa). Three were noted from Strathlene on 15 Sep – two flying west and one east (MJHC).

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

A good series of counts in late summer/autumn, with ten counts over 100 recorded. Passage counts at Lossiemouth (all one hour counts unless stated) were 163 on 19 Aug, 178 on 30 Aug, 322 on 30 Aug, 139 on 9 Sep, 319 on 10 Sep, 376 on 17 Sep, 500 on 25 Sep (in two hours – the highest count of the year) and

102 on 26 Sep. Other counts over 100 were 100+ in Burghead Bay on 26 Aug and 116 off Culbin Bar on 7 Oct.

Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

Scarce resident and common winter visitor.

Breeding: No breeding was noted in Moray & Nairn this year.

There were three counts over 100: 156 Cullen 27 Jul, 102 on the Halliman Skerries (Lossiemouth) 7 Oct and 100 Portknockie 28 Dec. Inland, 1-2 on the Spey at Aberlour in January and December.

Birds showing characteristics of the continental race *P.c.sinensis* were again at Loch Spynie. In the first winter period, two adults and one 1st year bird were recorded in January on four dates. In May a 1st year bird was seen on two dates. In October/November, three adults and one 1st year bird were seen on seven dates (RP). It is difficult to tell where duplication is involved, but the autumn series of sightings definitely involved four birds. In addition, a single bird was seen at Loch na Bo 18 Mar (MJHC).

Shag *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

Scarce breeder and common visitor, chiefly in winter.

Breeding: After recent small increases, numbers increased markedly at Portknockie/Bow Fiddle Rock cliffs where 73 occupied nests were noted on 4 Jun (49 in 2006). Numbers remained stable at Covesea with 13 occupied nests noted on 27 May (13 in both 2005 and 2006). At Tronach Head, 21 occupied nests were counted on 4 Jun. (all counts MJHC).

Counts: There were three counts exceeding 100: 458 Portknockie 14 Jan was the highest count of the year (MJHC), also 108 between Portgordon-Strathlene 16 Feb with 281 here 7 Oct.

Inland, two birds were recorded at Loch Spynie – an adult between 1-7 Mar (CAG, DAG) and one sitting beside the hide on 4 Sep, which was found dead the following day (CRound et al.). These appear to be the first inland records in Moray & Nairn since the annual bird report began in 1985.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

Rare visitor.

2 Findhorn Bay 3-4 Jun, 1 remaining until 15 Aug (RHD et al.) and 1 Kingston 10 Jun (DPa, P&IB). These are the 3rd and 4th records for Moray & Nairn (following singles in Findhorn Bay in 1983 and 2006) although it seems very likely that the Kingston bird was the same as the one which left Findhorn Bay earlier in the month.



Little Egret, Findhorn Bay 11 Aug 2007 (© Duncan Gibson)

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

Fairly common resident breeder.

Heronries: Numbers of occupied nests were 7 Aberlour (AE,IP,RF), 3 Balnellan (Cragganmore), 21-24 Binsness, 2-3 Connage (Buckie), 1 Gardenhead (Grange), 6-7 Hillockhead (Keith), 12 Loch Spynie (MJHC), 19-22 Low Wood (Kingsteps), c10 Nether Dallachy and 1 Rinnachat Wood (Kinermony). The Auchbreck site was deserted. (all counts IP,RF unless stated).

Best counts at Binsness (Findhorn Bay) in the late summer-winter period were 30 on 27 Aug and 24 on 30 Sep. Early in the year, 18 on 21 Jan. At Kingston, 7 on 4 Jun was the most seen while 8 on 12 Aug and 6 on 20 Oct were the best days on the Lossie estuary. Other records came from throughout the area, including 1 Strathlene skerries 2 Sep and 1 in remote Glen Builg 17 Jun.

Honey Buzzard *Pernis apivorus*

Rare breeder.

One pair bred successfully in Moray, raising one young (RHD,RHH,MJHC).

Red Kite *Milvus milvus*

Formerly common breeder, now being reintroduced in Highland Scotland.

Three records of single birds in different localities in lowland Moray. At present their appears to be little prospect of breeding Red Kites becoming established in Moray & Nairn despite the relatively short distance from the release area where they are well established.

Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*

Very scarce visitor, usually in spring.

Records from one Moray locality from 14 Apr. Elsewhere, 1 juvenile/female flew east from Findhorn Bay 10 Aug (RHD).

Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus*

Rare resident breeder, very scarce migrant and winter visitor.

Breeding: Thirteen sites were checked of which five were occupied by pairs and four by single birds. The five pairs all bred successfully. Mean clutch size was 5.0 and the five pairs produced 10 young between them, giving a mean brood size of 2.0 young per successful pair. This is rather lower than the long term average of 2.7 young per successful pair (JKC).

Away from breeding areas were 1 Archiestown 7 Jun (NL) and a male hunting in a rushy field near Burgie 30-31 Dec (ISS,BP).

Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis*

Rare resident breeder.

Present in at least 4 localities in spring/summer. In winter, 1 Culbin Bar 18 Feb (AY).

Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*

Common resident breeder.

Breeding season (Apr-July) records included birds/pairs at Aberlour, Keith, Califer Hill, Culbin Forest, Elgin, Findhorn, Forres, Kingston, Kinloss, Loch Flemington, Loch Spynie, Lossiemouth, Nairn, Rafford, Roseisle, Sanquhar and Urquhart. Four over Dunphail on 21 Jan included 3 females and 1 male that showed partial display.

Woodcock, Blackbird and Magpie were recorded as prey species in the Forres area.

Buzzard *Buteo buteo*

Fairly common resident breeder.

Most reported soaring together were 10 Conicavel 25 Aug, 6 Aberlour 8 Oct and 5 Loch Spynie 17 Sep.

A leucistic individual was seen just to the west of Alves on several occasions between 2 May-15 Aug. The plumage was mostly creamy coloured with a few sandy coloured feathers (JDL et al.).

Golden Eagle *Aquila chrysaetos*

Rare resident breeder.

Breeding: At the three usual/most recent breeding sites: i) one immature bird 3 Mar but none of the old eyries was renovated, ii) a pair laid eggs but no young were raised, iii) no information received (MJHC,RHD).

Elsewhere, single soaring birds were seen in south-east Moray on 2 Oct and 24 Oct (GG). A chick ringed in an eyrie on Glenfeshie Estate in the south-west Cairngorms on 2 Jul moved into Moray on c25 Nov and remained around the Glenlivet, Glen Fiddich and Ladder Hills area until the end of the year (RHD). More detail can be found on www.roydennis.org.

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*

Scarce summer visitor and breeder.

Breeding: It was a reasonable breeding season for ospreys, with 9 pairs in West Moray, mainly feeding in Findhorn Bay; 7 pairs laid eggs and 6 pairs reared a total of 12 young. One breeding male was injured by an otter at a small loch at Dunphail, and died; it's youngest chick then died in the nest. In East Moray there were 6 pairs, 5 of which laid eggs and 4 pairs were successful with 9 young (RHD).

Extreme dates recorded for the year were 29 Mar-9 Sep although the latter date is most unlikely to have been the last Osprey in Moray in 2007. Most together were 4 Findhorn Bay on 2 Aug and 1 Sep, and 3 Kingston 13 Jul.

The female and 2 chicks at a nest near Forres were fitted with transmitters to permit satellite tracking. The female, 'Logie', left Moray on 4 Aug and England on 10 Sep. She arrived at her wintering site, Ilha Roxa in Guinea Bissau, on 28 Sep. One of the chicks left England on 12 Sep and had reached Andalusia in Spain by 22 Sep when the transmitter failed. The other chick was lost at sea on 11 Sep having flown SSW from Anglesey and failed to make landfall (RHD). A lot of detail including route maps can be found on www.roydennis.org.

Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*

Widespread but scarce resident breeder.

Breeding season (April-July) records included birds/pairs at Achdregnie, Alves, Keith, Forres, Kinloss, Knockandhu, Myreton and Spey Bay.

Merlin *Falco columbarius*

Scarce resident breeder and migrant.

Breeding: 38 sites were checked; 15 of these were occupied by pairs, all of which laid clutches. Mean clutch size (for seven west Moray/Nairn clutches) was 4.0. Only 7 pairs were successful, and these raised a very poor 11 young between them, at a mean brood size of 0.7 per laying pair (1.6 per successful pair). Reasons for failure were largely weather related, with low temperatures and persistent rain causing some pairs to move or fail early in the season. At least three broods died in the nest just prior to fledging due to prolonged heavy rain. (BC,JKC).

Outside the breeding season, single birds were seen in the coastal plain as follows: Findhorn Bay/Kinloss 10 Aug, Kingston 10 Oct, Kinloss 25 Nov, Nairn 10 Mar, Nether Meft 27 Jan, Stynie Glebe 4 Dec and Urquhart 30 Mar. 1 Archiestown 1 Feb, 27-28 Feb and 3 Mar, and 1 Dallas 23 Feb were a little further inland.

Peregrine *Falco peregrinus*

Scarce resident breeder.

Breeding: Eleven sites were checked of which only five were occupied. Two pairs were successful, raising at least four young between them. All the grouse moor sites were either unoccupied or failed (JJCH).

In late summer-winter, single birds were reported from Aldunie (Cabrach) (Dec), Ben Aigan (Oct), Findhorn Bay (Aug,Dec), Keith (Mar), Clochan (Jan), Croughly (Aug), Forres (Aug), Hopeman (Jan), Inchberry (Oct), Kinloss (Jan,Dec), Loch Spynie (Jan,Mar,Sep,Dec), Lossiemouth (Aug,Sep), Nairn Bar (Feb,Dec), Nether Dallachy (Feb) and Sherrifston (Jan). Two were in Rothes Glen on 3 Nov, Findhorn Bay on 22 Aug and Carse of Delnies on 8 Aug.

Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus*

Fairly common breeder and winter visitor.

Heard in the breeding season at Lein reedbed (Kingston) (PGS) and Loch Spynie (RP et al.) but no attempt was made to assess numbers. At other times the only report was 1 Cran Loch 7 Oct (AD).

Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

Fairly common resident breeder.

Breeding proved (*italics*) or probable at Cloddach quarry, Fochabers lake, Forres golf course, Loch Flemington, Loch Loy, Loch na Bo, Loch Oire, Loch Spynie and Sanquhar Loch (Forres).

Fewer counts this year than usual; best were 11 Loch Spynie 23-26 Dec, 9 Loch Oire 7 Oct, 5 Cran Loch 7 Oct, 5 Forres (Mosset Pond) 16 Nov and 5 Loch Flemington 29 Mar.

Coot *Fulica atra*

Scarce resident breeder and fairly common winter visitor.

Breeding proved (*italics*) or probable at Cloddach quarry, Fochabers lake, Loch Flemington, Loch Oire, Loch na Bo and Loch Spynie.

Maximum monthly counts on main lochs were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Loch Flemington	48	31	10	nc	nc	68	nc	35
Loch Spynie	5	30	18	6	nc	nc	4	13
Loch Oire/na Bo	3	2	2	2	1	0	nc	0
Cloddach quarry	11	14	8	nc	nc	9	16	12

Numbers continue to be low except at Loch Flemington.

Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*

Very common resident breeder, winter visitor and migrant.

Breeding: First inland were 5 Cloddach Quarry 20 Jan. In Elgin were 2 Bishopmill playing fields 12 Feb and on 14 Feb one on a supermarket roof and two at a known nest site at Moray College. Two were at Scarffbanks Farm 17 Feb. On the nesting platform at Loch Spynie there were 19 on 17 Feb and 14 on 3 Mar. Well inland at Aberlour 12 were noted on 18 Feb and the first to return around Speyside High School on 22 Feb. At Dunphail there were two on the 23 Feb and 12 on 27 Feb.

The pre-breeding assembly at Cloddach Quarry held 81 on 4 Feb, 267 on 25 Feb rising to over 500 on 13 Mar.

Breeding noted at Lein (Kingston) with two clutches started in May, unfortunately both failed. A nest with a clutch of three was noted at Kingston 4 Jun. Three pairs nested on Elgin Academy roof but no young reared due to Herring Gull predation. Three pairs Forres golf course suffered crow predation and reared only one young – from a nest on top of the greenkeeper's shed. A pair with a brood was at The Oaks (Elgin) 27 May.

No large post-breeding flocks reported but assemblies of 17 at Birchfield (Glen Avon) 17 Jun and 15 Garline Farm (towards Tormore Distillery) 15 Jul.

Spring, summer and early autumn counts of ten or more at the coast:

Apr: 29 Lossiemouth Estuary 8th.

May: 50 Culbin Sands 1st, Findhorn Bay 150 on 9th and 120 on 20th.

Jun: Findhorn Bay numbers increased from 140 on 2nd, 230 on 3rd to 300 on 19th. 20 Portgordon 30th.

Jul: Fluctuating numbers at Lossiemouth 217 on 6th, 177 on 11th, 75 on 15th and 359 on 18th. 200 Findhorn Bay 16th and 17 Cullen 27th.

Aug: At Lossiemouth, 25 on 3rd, 51 on 4th, 125 on 7th, 22 on 12th and 17 on 25th. At Carse of Delnies, 20 on 8th and 218 on 12th.
 Sep: 50 Findhorn Bay 8th, 17 Lossiemouth Estuary 9th and 25 between Findhorn-Burghead Bay 20th.

Winter maxima at the coast were:

	Jan	Feb	Oct	Dec
Nairn/Culbin Bars	573	770	548	877
Findhorn Bay	500	1545	600	505
Burghead-Hopeman	102	111	300	248
Lossiemouth	c200	227	43	37
Portgordon-Strathlene	67	56	141	108

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*

Rare summer visitor and breeder.

A single adult was seen at Kingston on 10 Jun and 26 Jun. Also in the Kingston area, three adults including a very anxious pair were on an island beside the golf course on 30 Jun with the same situation on 6 Jul. On 13 Jul there was only the pair left at the same location but they showed no signs of anxiety (MJHC). It seems likely that they attempted to breed but failed for unknown reasons. This is the 8th year since 1996 that this species has been recorded in the district.

Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*

Scarce resident breeder and very common migrant.

Breeding: A pair was back at the Lein (Kingston) 27 Feb, and a nest with eggs was found on 14 Apr. One young was raised from this nest but two further attempts failed due, probably, to crow predation. Two juveniles were included in a count of 44 at Kingston 13 Jul. At Cloddach Quarry there was a pair on 21 Apr and three individuals seen on 25 Apr. An adult was seen with two chicks here during the summer but the date was not recorded. In RAF Kinloss an adult was incubating three eggs on 1 May. Two pairs were there 14 May then back to one pair 28 May, finally a pair with chick on 31 May. One nest was found amongst shingle at the old swimming pool at Strathlene 19 Jun and one individual was nearby at the back of the Buckie shipyard on 19 Jul. Near the Quarry pool (Fochabers) was a pair with a brood of three fledglings and one additional adult on 30 Jun.

Up to 4 non-breeding birds were present in May-June at the pool near Miltonduff.

Winter maxima at the coast were:

	Jan-Feb	Nov-Dec
Nairn/Culbin Bars	1	0
Findhorn Bay	124	nc
Burghead-Hopeman	6	0
Lossiemouth	15	11
Portgordon-Strathlene	22	0

Spring passage (April – early June)

Twenty records of 10 or more birds from five locations between 8 Apr-18 Jun.

Lossiemouth: 24 on 8 Apr, 18 on 15 Apr, a peak of 72 on 23 Apr, 26 on 19 May, 52 on 21 May and 15 on 18 Jun.

Findhorn Bay/Netherton pool: 50 on 22 Apr. A flock of 196 on 3 Jun was pausing before onward movement to more northerly breeding areas.

Kingston: Numbers rose from 10 on 4 May and 30 on 11-20 May, to 46 on 30 May and a maximum of 51 on 4 Jun, before falling to 16 on 10 Jun. The peak passage coincides with that in Findhorn Bay.

Carse of Delnies: 16 on 10 June.

Autumn passage (July-September)

Records of 10 or more birds listed below:

Kingston: 19 on 6 Jul, 44 on 13 Jul, 15 on 7 Aug, 17 on 12 Aug and 37 on 18 Aug.

Findhorn Bay: 10 on 7 Jul. In August, 26 on 5th, 30 on 6th, 22 on 14th, 10 on 23rd, c70 on 26th and 65 on 27th. Later, 15 on 16 Sep and 48 on 23 Sep.

Also 12 Culbin 29 Jul, 20 Carse of Delnies 8 Aug, 17 Lossie estuary 16 Sep (13 there 30 Sep) and 62 (probably Findhorn Bay birds) in RAF Kinloss ground on 25 Sep.

Dotterel *Charadrius morinellus*

Scarce summer visitor and breeder.

No records were received for 2007.

Golden Plover *Charadrius apricaria*

Common breeder, migrant and winter visitor.

Breeding: Two early birds were at Knock of Braemoray 2 Jan. On Ben Aigan summit were 17 on 8 Feb, 15 on 3 Mar, 17 on 4 Mar and two small groups of two and three on 22 Mar. One was on Ben Rinnes on 23 Feb, two on territory at Lochindorb 24 Mar and birds were calling at Achdregnie (Glenlivet) 25 Mar. The Ladder Hills had one pair at Geal Charn 14 Apr and three pairs at Cairn Liath 20 May. Calling also heard at Moidach Moor (Dunphail) 13 May. In the Chapelton/Knockando area 27 birds were seen together 13 May. Finally eight birds in summer plumage at Mill Our (east of Glenlatterach) 20 May.

The first to return back to the coast was a moulting adult at Kingston on 13 June.

Ones and twos recorded at Findhorn Bay, Lossiemouth and Kingston in Jul, Aug and Sep.

Still up country on Ben Rinnes in October were 24 on 12th, 20 on 21st and finally 2 on 28th.

Winter coastal maxima were:

	Jan	Feb	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Kinloss/Findhorn Bay	295	340	68	154	197	166
Findhorn Bay	0	0	17	147	123	0
Portgordon-Buckpool	51	0	nc	1	nc	0

A large flock of c450 were at Culbin Bar on 28 Dec.

Outwith these dates was a flock of 217 at Netherton pool to the south of Findhorn Bay on 22 Apr.

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*

Scarce autumn migrant and winter visitor.

A poor year with records received from five locations. It is the second year in succession that the highest count has been under 20. As usual the greatest number of records and the highest counts came from the Nairn/Culbin Bars.

Nairn Bar had singles on 6 & 21 Jan and 18 Feb. In October there were 15 on 7th, 6 on 19th and 4 on 28th. Later, 2 on 9 Dec.

Culbin Bar hosted the highest count of the year with 17 on 21 Jan and 16 on 18 Feb. Also there, 3 on 7 Oct, 6 on 9 Dec and 8 on 28 Dec.

Autumn records mostly from Findhorn Bay where 2 on 28 Sept, 4 on 1 Oct and 5 on 4 Oct. Also, 1 Covesea 27 Oct.

Single birds were on the Lossie estuary on 26 Jan, 18 May (an almost full summer plumage bird) and 25 May. The only record from Kingston was 1 on 4 Jun.

Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*

Very common migrant breeder, small numbers in winter.

Breeding: the first display was noted up country at Sluie 25 Mar with 40 birds in the area. Pre-breeding flocks also up country of 100 Blackhillock (Archiestown) 5 Feb, 30 Sluie 3 Mar, 60 Achdregnie 25 Mar and 50 Scalán 19 Apr. In the coastal fringe pre-breeding flocks of 352 (highest count of the year) Kinloss 18 Feb, 80 Cloddach Quarry 25 Feb, 74 Miltonduff 27 Feb and 156 to the south of the airfield (Kinloss) also 27 Feb. Birds recorded in breeding territory were six pairs Netherton 26 Mar, 12 pairs Bogeney 1 Apr, one pair Lochindorb 13 May and six pairs Upper Blackwater (Glenfiddich) 17 May. Breeding successful at Miltonduff with an adult and three young seen 11 & 17 May.

Post breeding flocks of 50 or more:

Jul: 75 Garline Farm 15th

Aug: Urquhart had 100 on 3rd, 66 on 24th and 50 on 28th. At Kingston were 119 on 23rd and 125 on 30th.

Sep: 100 Urquhart 3rd and 80 there on 12th. 70 Burnside of Enzie 21st.

Oct: 200 Urquhart 1st and 60 there 22nd. 110 Buckie 26th and another 110 Cloddach Quarry 28th.

Mid winter flocks of 50 or more: 350 Burgie 20 Jan, 170 Findhorn Bay 28 Jan, 340 Lossiemouth 12 Nov, 204 in the Covesea/Lossiemouth area 9 Dec and 53 Buckie 24 Dec.

Knot *Calidris canutus*

Very common migrant and winter visitor.

Winter maxima were:

	Jan	Feb	Oct	Nov	Dec
Nairn/Culbin Bars	1340	110	4	110	750
Findhorn Bay	260	565	300	500	1060
Burghead-Hopeman	nc	120	700	nc	nc
Lossiemouth	11	nc	nc	nc	10
Portgordon-Strathlene	nc	1	3	nc	nc

The Dec count of 1060 at Findhorn on 27th occurred after the ice melted in the bay; this is the highest number counted there since October 2000.

Counts in other months were:

Mar: 160 Nairn Bar 17th, 20 Burghead 24th, 28 Findhorn Bay 30th and 206 Carse of Delnies 31st.

Apr: In Findhorn Bay were 130 on 9th, 32 on 19th and 25 on 22nd.

May: 40 Burghead on 13th.

Jun: Small numbers at Findhorn where 4 on 2nd and 1 on 3rd.

Jul: 56 in summer plumage Findhorn Bay 16th. Single birds Cullen 17th and Lossie estuary 19th.

Aug: Fluctuating numbers at Findhorn Bay where 4 on 4th rising to 23 on 11th, 100 on 18th and c200 on 26th before falling to 48 on 28th. At Lossie estuary, 1 on 7th, 26 on 14th and 14 on 19th. Kingston counts included 25 on 18th, 15 on 19th, 17 on 23rd and 12 on 30th. Also 18 Culbin Bar 22nd and 4 Burghead 23rd.

Sep: In Findhorn Bay, 70 on 2nd, 220 on 10th, 170 on 24th and 460 on 28th. On Lossie estuary were 7 on 4th, 11 on 9th and 1 on 23rd; also 31 Lossiemouth west beach 8th. 8 Kingston 2nd.

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	108	97	40	nc	nc
Lossiemouth	23	nc	nc	nc	23

Late summer-autumn:

	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Nairn/Culbin Bars	12	70	nc	226	41	166
Lossiemouth	11	4	30	58	52	3

Records were received for every month except April. Autumn passage was highlighted in October at the Nairn/Culbin Bars where 166 on 2nd, 207 on 7th and 226 on 28th. Also in Oct, Lossiemouth had 7 on 6th, 11 on 7th and 58 on 22nd. Away from the two best sites were up to four in Findhorn Bay in Jan, Feb, Mar, Aug & Dec. A single bird was at Kingston on 31 May.



Sanderling, Lossiemouth 20 May 2007 (© Duncan Gibson)

Little Stint *Calidris minuta**Scarce migrant, mostly in autumn.*

A poor year with only six birds, at two locations. On 2-3 Jun there was a summer-plumaged bird on the pool at Netherton (Findhorn Bay) (RHD, ISS DAG, AJL). Another single was in Findhorn Bay on 14 Jul (Birdguides). At Kingston were 2 on 23 Aug (MJHC) and another 2 between 7-10 Oct (MJHC,RHD).

Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea**Scarce autumn migrant.*

Another poor year with records only from Findhorn Bay and the Lossie estuary.

A spring migrant, coming into summer plumage, was on the Lossie estuary on 21-22 May (DAG). This is only the sixth spring occurrence in Moray & Nairn.

In autumn on the Lossie estuary were 3 on 15-17 Sep (DAG,CAG,RP). At Findhorn Bay were 2 on 24 Sep, 1 on 28 Sep (RHD), 1 on 13 Oct and 2 on 15 Oct (DAG).

Purple Sandpiper *Calidris maritima**Common winter visitor.*

Main winter site maxima were:

	Jan-Feb	Oct-Dec
Burghead-Hopeman	5	10
Lossiemouth	68	73
Portgordon-Strathlene	42	31

Unusually there were no March records. The latest spring record was 29 Lossiemouth west beach 5 Apr. First back were 15 in summer plumage at Lossiemouth north pier 14 Jul.

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

Breeding: The only record from potential breeding grounds was of four pairs at Carn Liath (Ladder Hills) 20 May (IF).

Winter monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Oct	Dec
Nairn/Culbin Bars	1060	450	26	650
Findhorn Bay	950	1875	300	840
Lossiemouth	189	190	40	163
Portgordon-Strathlene	0	8	2	5

Other winter records were 400+ Carse of Delnies 21 Jan (and 380 there 9 Dec), 40 Lossie estuary 11 Nov and 11 Kingston 23 Dec.

Spring passage: At Findhorn Bay/Netherton pool areas there were 14 on 12 May, a peak of 200 on 3 Jun then down to 39 on 5 Jun and only two there 29 Jun. At Kingston in June were 27 on 4th, 50 on 11th, 104 on 20th but only 10 on 31st. Only three May or June records from Lossie estuary with the highest count of c60 on 19 May. Elsewhere 68 Carse of Delnies 21 May.

Autumn passage (July – September):

Findhorn Bay/Netherton: 60 on 5-6 Aug, a peak in Aug of 250 on 26th but only 100 there 27th. In September, a substantial flock of 600+ on 10th had dwindled to 120 on 24th and 132 on 28th.

Lossie estuary: Only nine records received with the largest monthly numbers being 19 on 4 Aug and 20 on 30 Sep.

Kingston: Fourteen records received with fluctuating numbers. Monthly highs were 14 (incl 4 juveniles) on 13 Jul, 71 on 7 Aug and 10 on 15 Sep.

Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*

Scarce autumn migrant, rare in spring.

Autumn coastal migrants recorded from 11 Aug until 15 Sep. The total number of individuals is hard to ascertain due to uncertainty over whether new or long-staying birds are involved in some instances.

At Findhorn Bay there were singles on 11 Aug (DAG), 15 & 20 Aug (RHD) and 1 Sep (DAG). There was one on the Lossie estuary 20 Aug (DAG). Kingston faired better with three on 12 & 23 Aug, a single on 30 Aug and two on 2 & 15 Sep (MJHC).

Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola*

Common resident breeder, scarce migrant and winter visitor.

Breeding: First roding at Newbold Wood (Forres) 30 Mar and roding noted again there as late as 12 Jul. Roding also at Dunphail on 11 Apr and 13 May. At Newforres Wood (Forres) an adult flushed from a nest with a single egg on 29 Apr and four "hatched" shells were in the nest on 24 May (ISS). Nearby, an adult with a brood of two chicks in Muiry Woods 3 Jun (ISS) and two juveniles in Newbold Wood 28 Jul (ISS). Adults noted at/near potential breeding habitat included two flying over Lower Chanie 4 Mar, one at Rafford 12 May and three at Tips of Clunymore 17 May.

Winter: Two in woodland at Loch Spynie 8 Jan, one Binsness 21 Jan and three Cawdor Wood 28 Jan. Two at RAF Kinloss 15 Nov and a single at Loch na Bo 18 Nov. In December, singles on 16th at Muiry Wood (Forres), on the 17th at Braes of Enzie, Burnside of Enzie and Inchdemmy Wood (Kinloss), on 22nd at Clochan and on 23rd at Brodie and Midwood (Clochan).

Jack Snipe *Lymnocyptes minimus*

Scarce migrant and winter visitor.

A total of nine records received from four sites.

Winter-spring: 1 RAF Kinloss 16 Jan (AJL). At Kingsteps, 6 on 21 Jan and 2 on 18 Feb (DCJ). At Loch Flemington were 7 on 30 Jan (RPC) and 2 on 18 Feb (ALe). Also on 18 Feb, 2 Culbin Bar (AY).

Autumn-winter: 11 Kingsteps/Nairn Bar 7 Oct and 6 there 9 Dec (DCJ) when also 1 Culbin Bar (AY).

Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*

Common breeder and migrant.

Breeding: Bird(s) heard in possible breeding habitat at Achdregnie 25 Mar, three in the Knockandhu/Chapelton area 13 May. Two were displaying at Loch Builg 3 Jul and drumming was heard in the early hours of the morning at Cloddach Quarry 21 Jul.

In the costal fringe in the early part of the year were 2 Kingston 1 Jan and 1 Culbin Bar 21 Jan with 3 there on 18 Feb. At Kingsteps, 42 on 21 Jan and 36 on 18 Feb. Another three singles reported, at Nairn Bar 21 Jan and RAF Kinloss on 21 Jan and 4 Apr. There was a gathering of 23 on 18 Feb at Loch Flemington.

Autumn-winter: Only one August record of three flying east over the south of Findhorn Bay. Ones and twos reported on twelve occasions during Sep, Oct, Nov and Dec from various locations including Nairn/Culbin Bars, Findhorn Bay, RAF Kinloss, Kingston, Spey Bay and Portgordon/Strathlene. Three flew over Lossiemouth Estuary 2 Sep. At Kingston there were 6 on 15 & 29 Sep, and 4 Culbin Bar 7 Oct. Good numbers of 27 Nairn Bar 7 Oct and 20 Kingsteps 1 Nov where also 38 on 9 Dec. One inland record, of one flushed at Clochan 21 Dec.

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*

Scarce migrant.

Winter: 1 Carse of Delnies 21 Jan (RHD) was unusual as the species is scarce here in winter.

Spring: On the Lossie estuary were singles on 24 Mar (CAG) and 22 May (DAG). Two at Nairn 15 Apr (CSE). At Findhorn Bay, an impressive 73 in summer plumage 22 Apr (RHD, DAG) and 12 on 9 May (RHD).

Autumn: Fifteen records received from Findhorn Bay between 15 Jul-15 Oct. Counts of ten or more were 15 on 5 Aug (DAG), 32 on 1 Sep (RHD), 15 on 6 Sep (YW), 44 on 19 Sep, 16 on 28 Sep and 18 on 1 Oct (RHD). At Kingston was 1 on 7 Aug and 8 on 23 Aug (MJHC). Six flew over RAF Kinloss 16 Aug (AJL). On 27 Aug, 20 were at Culbin Bar (ASi). Last of the year was 1 Lossiemouth west beach on 21 Oct (YW).

Inland, 2 Miltonduff pool 12 Aug (CAG), a single there 2-3 Oct (DAG) and 6 in a flooded field at Speylaw 26 Aug (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	39	55	34	nc	nc	nc	nc	37	nc	1
Findhorn Bay	212	436	nc	3	7	11	3	7	nc	0
Burghead-Hopeman	nc	29	nc	22	nc	5	nc	14	nc	6
Lossiemouth	2	1	nc	6	1	nc	nc	6	nc	1

Elsewhere, 182 Carse of Delnies 21 Jan.

The count of 436 in Findhorn Bay 18 Feb (CD) is the highest number there for 10 years. It is the tenth year in succession that there have been no flocks in Moray & Nairn exceeding 500; in the ten years prior to that, counts over 500 and even over 1000 were not unusual around the Nairn/Culbin Bars .

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*

Scarce migrant.

Spring: First was 1 over Clochan 22 Apr. Singles also at Clochan 14 May and 1 Jul and at Tugnet 13 May and Kingston 20 May. Further west, 3 Carse of Delnies 21 May, 3 Findhorn Bay 3 Jun and one there 14 Jun. Reported in the Lossiemouth area (singles unless stated) on 4 May (2), 5 May (2), 12 May (3), 13 May (2), 25 May (7), 26 May (2), 30 May, 13 Jun (2), 28 Jun, 30 Jun.

Autumn: Eighteen coastal records, mostly of singles, from various locations from Culbin in the west to Kingston in the east. Other than singles there were 2 Findhorn Bay 5 Aug, 7 Lossiemouth area 7 Aug, with 9 there 19 Aug and 3 Kingston 11 Aug. Quite late were 3 Hopeman 7 Oct. Inland, 1 over Cloddach Quarry 21 Jul, 5 Broomhill 8 Aug and 4 over South Darkland 20 Aug.

Distribution of flock sizes was:

Flock size	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
No. of flocks	25	6	5	1	1	0	2	0	1	0

This is the first year since 2000 that there were no flocks greater than ten. The autumn total (including possible duplicate counts) of 53 is also very poor.

Curlew *Numenius arquata*

Common breeder. Very common migrant and winter visitor.

Breeding: First birds noted up country were calling at Craigellachie 13 Mar. Other records from potential up-country breeding sites in Mar-May from Achdregnie, Lower Chanie, Dunphail, Lochindorb and Knockandhu /Chapelton area. In the coastal fringes, three pairs Newforres-Hillhead area 30 Apr and an adult with one young at Tarras 12 Jun.

Largest flocks in summer/early autumn were:

Jul: 200 Findhorn Bay 16th, 62 Lossiemouth West Beach 27th and 40 Culbin Bar 29th.

Aug: 200 Findhorn Bay 5th increasing to 414 there 21st. Good numbers throughout at Kingston where 182 on 7th, 345 on 12th, 215 on 23rd and 179 on 30th. 98 Carse of Delnies 12th.

Sep: 372 at Kingston 2nd and c220 Miltonduff Pool 2nd.

Coastal winter maxima were:

	Jan	Feb	Oct	Dec
Nairn/Culbin Bars	202	279	204	172
Findhorn Bay	229	325	nc	124
Burghead-Hopeman	11	218	13	84
Lossiemouth	39	3	180	11
Portgordon-Strathlene	6	4	75	0

Additional winter flocks of over 100 from other locations were 410 on flooded fields at Miltonduff 4 Feb, 116 Tugnet 10 Feb and 120 Kingston 7 Oct.

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*

Summer visitor and common breeder.

Arrival: First back was 1 Cloddach Quarry 15 Apr followed by 3 Tugnet 22 Apr.

Breeding: records received from several potential breeding locations but very little in the way of proved breeding.

Breeding up country: A pair at Blacksboat 28 Apr. Two in the Knockando/Chapelton area 13 May. Three Upper Blackwater (Glenfiddich) 17 May and six along the Aberlour-Craigellachie stretch of the Spey on 21 May (STa).

Breeding in the lowlands: 3 Cloddach Quarry 21 Apr and 7 May. At Kingston, one on 4 May and a pair displaying on 20 May. The only juveniles noted were two with an adult on the Spey shingles near Garmouth 26 Jun.

More likely to have been on passage were single birds at Loch Spynie on 1 May and 24 May, and at Miltonduff pool on 15-17 May. Also 2 Binsness 28 Apr and 7 May, 1 near the mouth of the Findhorn 25 May and 2 Cullen 21 May.

Late summer/autumn: Still a pair up country at Loch Builg 3 Jul (IFr). Three Cloddach Quarry 30 Jun and 2 there 13 Jul. At Loch Spynie, 4 on 2 Jul and still 3 the following day. At the coast, 3 Binsness 12 Aug and small numbers throughout July-August at Kingston where best days were 6 Jul (8), 14 Jul (8), 4 Aug (6) and 7 Aug (6). Last there was 1 on 2 Sep.

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*

Very scarce migrant, occasional in winter.

A poor year with only one bird recorded, at Cloddach quarry on 16-17 May (AJ,RP).

(Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus*

Very scarce migrant.

No records were received this year. This is the fourth "blank" year since 1987.)

Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

Scarce migrant, very scarce in winter.

Spring (late March-June): 2 Lossie estuary 1 Apr and 3 there 21 Apr. Three flew over Loch Spynie 29 Apr (the Lossie birds?) and one was at Netherton (Findhorn Bay) on 6 Jun.

Late summer-autumn (July-October):

Coastal locations:

Culbin Bar: 1 on 17 Aug.

Findhorn Bay: Seen regularly between 12 Jul-16 Sep; a late individual was present on 28 Oct. Best days were 16 Jul (5), 8 Aug (6) and 8 Sep (6).

Lossiemouth: At the estuary there were eight records of single birds between 25 Jul-4 Sep.

Kingston: 1 on 13 Jul was, unusually, the sole record.

Inland locations:

Cloddach quarry: A single bird on 22 Jul

Loch Spynie: 1 flew over on 6 Jul and on 25 Jul single birds flew over on three occasions – probably, but not certainly, the same bird involved each time.

Winter: The over-wintering bird from 2006 was seen at Lossie estuary on 5 Jan and regularly thereafter until 24 Feb. Late March-late April records may have related to the same individual or to different passage birds. A single bird was recorded at Findhorn Bay on 25 Jan. This may also have been over-wintering although it was only detected on the one date. The only late winter record was of one on the Lossie estuary on 25 Nov.

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*

Very scarce migrant

Two spring birds and one in autumn. One was on the field pool near Miltonduff on 13 May (AJ,MJHC, RHD,DAG) and another was at the same location on 11 Jun (AJ,DAG). One was heard calling whilst flying south over Loch Spynie on 10 Aug (RP).

Redshank *Tringa totanus*

Scarce breeder, very common migrant and winter visitor.

Breeding: The only record from up country was of two in the Knockandhu/Chapelton area 13 May (STa).

Coastal breeding was proved on the marshes on the south side of Findhorn Bay, between Netherton and Binsness, where four pairs were found on 2 Jun. On 4 Jun, one pair was accompanied by a brood of two chicks, and two full-grown young were seen on 19 Jun (RHD,MJHC). Two at Miltonduff pool 13 Jun were a possible breeding pair, but 3 Loch Spynie 19 Apr were more likely to have been migrants.

Spring (March-early June): Passage was indicated with counts from the Lossie estuary and Findhorn Bay. At Lossie there were 124 on 10 Mar and 168 on 31 Mar. Numbers then reduced to 48 on 8 Apr and 40 on 23 Apr with only four on 9 Jun. Findhorn Bay held 58 on 30 Mar with a massive increase to a peak of 720 on 9 Apr and then a drop to 87 on 19 Apr. Elsewhere 60 Nairn Bar 17 Mar and 82 Nairn 31 Mar. The record of 720 in Findhorn Bay is the largest spring congregation since 747 were recorded there in March 1998.

Late summer/autumn (July-September): Numbers at Lossiemouth ranged from 6 on 2 Jul to 67 on 30 Sep. At Kingston more than ten were present on only three days; 23 on 6 Jul, 17 on 13 Jul and 11 on 7 Aug. As usual, largest numbers were in Findhorn Bay where 40 on 16 Jul and in Aug, 200 on 6th, 170 on 27th and 214 on 28th. In September, 100 on 8th, 400 on 24th and a maximum of 500 on 28th.

Winter: Monthly maxima at the coast were:

	Jan	Feb	Oct	Dec
Carse of Delnies	97	136	121	78
Nairn/Culbin Bars	103	60	2	100
Findhorn Bay	440	905	nc	5
Burghead-Hopeman	8	17	14	7
Lossiemouth	106	31	111	179
Portgordon-Strathlene	88	118	80	64

Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

Common winter visitor, small numbers in summer.

Winter monthly maxima at main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Oct	Nov	Dec
Findhorn	29	24	nc	nc	0
Burghead-Hopeman	20	19	22	nc	14
Lossiemouth	22	c30	5	nc	1
Portgordon-Strathlene	118	nc	81	nc	162

Other winter counts of ten or more from other locations: 23 Cullen 2 Jan, 24 Culbin Bar 21 Jan, 10 Spey Bay 3 Nov and 39 Culbin Bar 9 Dec.

Spring-summer:

Apr: 35 Burghead 8th and 44 there 15th, 16 Hopeman-Cummingston 16th and 11 Lossiemouth 23rd.

May: 5 Burghead 1st, 4 Lossiemouth 13th and 2 Kingston 20th.

Jun: Singles at Kingston 4th and 10th, and 3 there on 11th.

Jul: 2 summer-plumaged birds Kingston 2nd, 1 Cullen 17th, 1 Lossiemouth 22nd, 15 flying west past Lossiemouth 26th and 1 Culbin Bar 29th.

Aug: At Lossiemouth, 11 on 4th, 8 on 25th and 4 heading west offshore on 31st. At Findhorn, 7 on 11th, 5 on 17th and 16 on 26th. Burghead hosted 3 on 23rd and 2 on 28th, and there was 1 Carse of Delnies 8th.

Autumn:

Sep: 1 Kingston 2nd and 8 there 22nd. 1 Lossiemouth 8th and 2 on 22nd. 6 Burghead 16th. At Findhorn, best count by far was 82 on 23rd.

Great Skua *Stercorarius skua*

Scarce migrant in summer and autumn.

The annual total was 217 records, allowing for duplication, this is by far the highest annual recorded total in Moray & Nairn since the formation of Moray & Nairn Bird Report in 1985. Estimated monthly totals were:

Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
3	3	2	11	44	154

Spring: The first bird of the year was off Burghead on 15 Apr (DAG), with the next also here on 21 Apr, and a single off Lossiemouth on 27 Apr. May records consisted of three single birds past Lossiemouth on three dates.

Summer: Both June records were off Lossiemouth on 1st and 9th. July records comprised of 10 birds off Lossiemouth (three dates) and one off Burghead. August records were mainly from Lossiemouth (33 birds on ten dates) with five off Strathlene (one date), three off Portknockie (one date), two off Kingston (two dates) and one off Nairn (one date).

Autumn: An impressive total in September was focused on Lossiemouth with 150 birds passing on eight dates. On the evening of 3 Sep, 38 passed in 2.5 hours (MJHC, RP) – part of the impressive seabird movement on that date, while on 10 Sep, 28 flew west in 1.5 hours (DAG). Finally, the largest count of the year was of 41 on 25 Sep in three hours (DAG, JPo, RP), the highest day count since 2001. Elsewhere, two passed Strathlene (one date) and two passed Burghead (two dates). The final birds of the year were seven off Lossiemouth on 26 Sep.

Pomarine Skua *Stercorarius pomarinus*

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

The third spring record since MNBR began in 1985, off Burghead on 11 May (per Birdguides) was the first of 32 records this year - the highest annual total since the exceptional total of 1992 when 654 birds were recorded (largely thanks to 646 past Lossiemouth on 9 Oct).

Twenty-one were logged in September. From Lossiemouth (all birds flying west), 3 passed on 3rd, 1 on 8th, 1 on 10th, 2 on 14th and 1 on 17th (DAG, MJHC, RP). From Burghead, 4 passed on 2nd, 3 on 4th and 2 on 25th (per Birdguides, RHD). Singles were seen in Spey Bay on 8th and 15th (YW) and 1 from Portknockie on 9th.

One bird was seen in October flying west past Lossiemouth on 7th (DAG).

In November, 2 were in Spey Bay on 5th (RDH), 1 west past Lossiemouth on 7th (DAG), 5 past Lossiemouth on 11th (the highest count of the year) (DAG, RP) and finally one east past Strathlene on the same date (MJHC).

Arctic Skua *Stercorarius parasiticus*

Fairly common migrant in summer and autumn.

The annual total was 141 records. Allowing for duplication, an excellent year and the highest annual total since 1994. Estimated monthly totals were:

Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov
1	11	4	16	24	82	1	2

Spring: The first bird of the year was in Spey Bay on 11 Apr (YW), the earliest arrival since the formation of the MNBR in 1985. May records were six off Burghead (two dates) and five off Lossiemouth (one date).

Summer: June records were all off Lossiemouth (two dates). July records comprised of 11 birds off Lossiemouth (four dates), two off Spey Bay (one date), one off Culbin Bar and one off Findhorn. August records were mainly from Lossiemouth (19 birds on six dates) with three off Strathlene (one date) and two off Strathlene (one date).

Autumn: An impressive total in September was centred on Lossiemouth with 70 birds past on 11 dates, including the peak count of the year of 20 on 3 Sep (MJHC, RP) – part of the impressive seabird movement on that date. Small numbers (1-2) were also seen from Burghead Bay, off Findhorn, Nairn, Portknockie and Spey Bay. In October, one passed Lossiemouth on 1st, and the final record of the year was two past Lossiemouth on 3 Nov.

Long-tailed Skua *Stercorarius longicaudus**Rare visitor.*

On 3 Sep, 11 passed Lossiemouth between 1700-1900 hrs (MJHC,RP), part of the excellent seabird movement on that day. Long-tailed Skuas were seen almost annually off our coast in the early-mid 1990s, but prior to 2007 there has been only one record in the last nine years, a single bird in 2005. The annual pattern of occurrence since the first 'modern' record in 1988 has been as follows:

1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
1	0	3	3	4	5	3	110	0	14
1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	11

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

A very good year with two records, the 10th-11th for Moray & Nairn and the first since 2002. A juvenile flew west past Lossiemouth in the evening of 10 Sep (DAG, RP), and another juvenile passed the same site on 17 Sep (RP).

Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla**Common breeder and very common migrant.*

Breeding: 474 apparently occupied nests (AON) at Covesea 27 May (MJHC) was an increase from 2006 (437 AON). This is the highest number reported at this site since 1995 (544 AON), and continues the welcome trend of increasing numbers at the site. Numbers of AON in the past 10 years at Covesea are as follows:

1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
326	323	384	386	369	347	397	302	437	474

Elsewhere, 238 AON at Portknockie 4 Jun (157 mainland, 81 Bow Fiddle Rock) was a slight decrease from 2006 (246 AON). A sample of 57 used nests on 12 Jul contained only 16 half-grown chicks. No nest had more than one chick (MJHC). Breeding took place once again at Burghead where there were two nests with incubating adults on 4 Jun (MJHC). Kittiwakes were first noted breeding here in 1993 (1 pair) and again in 1994 (5 pairs) but have not been there since.

The only three figure counts offshore were 127 Lossiemouth 19 Aug and 109 Lossiemouth 17 Sep (RP). Counts offshore have been much reduced in the last two years.

Inland: A 1st winter bird was at Loch Spynie on 21 Oct (RP), the first inland record since 2001, and only the fourth record since the MNBR began in 1985.

Bonaparte's Gull *Chroicocephalus philadelphia**Vagrant. First record.*

The first record for Moray & Nairn of this North American species was a 1st summer bird at Loch Spynie 23-26 May (DAG et al). The same bird was also seen at Lossiemouth on 25 May (RHD), but spent most of it's time over the loch, giving excellent views.



Bonaparte's Gull, Loch Spynie 25 May 2007 (© Duncan Gibson)

Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

Very common resident breeder and winter visitor.

Breeding: The only colony count received was at Loch Spynie, where c.18 nests were counted on the platform on 19 Apr (CAG), with 30 chicks of various ages on the platform on 17 Jun (DAG). Elsewhere, an anxious pair was in the gullery at Corsemaul 24 Apr (WPRB).

Flock counts in excess of 500 were c.680 on the Lossie Estuary 21 Sep, with 778 here on 24 Sep. At Loch Spynie, c.800 were present 23 Dec with c.500 here 29 Dec.

Little Gull *Hydrocoloeus minutus*

Very scarce visitor.

After the good numbers in 2006, a return to normal levels in 2007, with between 3-5 birds recorded. A 1st summer was at Garmouth viaduct 4 Jun (MJHC) with conceivably the same bird at Loch Spynie on 10 Jun (RP, DAG). What may have been the same individual lingering unseen in the area was at Loch Spynie 26 Jun, and possibly the same bird again at the Lossie Estuary 28 Jun (DAG). A bird of an unspecified age was at the Lossie Estuary 28 Jul (per Birdguides). Finally, one flew west close inshore in Burghead Bay 10 Sep (AJL).

Mediterranean Gull *Larus melanocephalus*

Very scarce visitor.

Continuing the trend of increasing sightings of this attractive gull, after the record numbers of 2006 (four individuals) – another four birds were seen this year. The first record of the year was a 1st winter bird at

Loch Spynie 9 Feb (RHD). This bird was ringed with a long white ring indicating Dutch/Belgian origin. What was likely to be the same 1st winter bird was at Loch Spynie from 22-25 Feb (AJL, CAG, DAG). This bird had a similar ring and the inscription was read, the bird originating from Antwerp in Belgium (see ringing section). The adult bird was again seen off Delnies (Nairn) 16 Feb (PC) for it's second winter. A 1st summer bird was on the Lossie estuary (unringed) 18 Jun (DAG) and was also reported at Loch Spynie two days previously (per Spynie logbook). Finally, a 1st winter bird was at the Lossie Estuary on nine dates between 20 Sep-21 Oct (DAG, RP et al). These are the 16th-18th records for Moray & Nairn, the Delnies bird being a returning individual.



Mediterranean Gull, Lossie estuary 13 Oct 2007 (© Duncan Gibson)

Common Gull *Larus canus*

Very common resident breeder and winter visitor.

Breeding: c.140 were visible at Tom Mor colony 5 May (IF). Although no complete count was made at this site in 2007, it seems numbers are down on the c.2500 pairs in 2006 (when hundreds of large chicks were starting to fledge) and c.3000 pairs in 2005. Approximately 250 birds were over the Corsemaul colony 1 Apr (WRPB), with c.390 on the hill to the south 5 May (IF). There were c.1000 pairs at this site in 2006. In Elgin, breeding occurred at the old gas works site, with an estimated 100+ chicks produced (RP). Breeding also occurred in Elgin cemetery, with an estimated 20 chicks fledged (RP). Elsewhere, c.35 occupied nests were on the foreshore at Boars Head Rock 5 Jun, but only two nests here on 23 Jun (MJHC, PGS). In Glen Avon, 2 nests were found on riverside shingle at Foals Craig 17 Jun, and 24 adults with 8 young were recorded on the shingles at Dalestie 8 Jul (MJHC, ISS). Breeding also occurred at Moray Crematorium (Broadley) with at least one nest with young at this site (RP).

Flock counts in excess of 300 away from breeding areas were 423 roosting at Kinloss 1 Feb, c.380 Kingston 30 Aug, 361 in a flooded field at Colfield 6 Oct, c.500 Loch Spynie 23 Dec, c.500 Loch na Bo 27 Dec, and finally, the highest count of the year of c.600 Loch Spynie 29 Dec.

Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus*

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

Wintering: Individuals were recorded in both winter periods. In the first winter period, an adult was at Cooper Park (Elgin) 1 Jan, with two adults at Loch Spynie on the same date (RP). One of an unspecified age was at Urquhart 10 Jan (EH). A bird at Nairn 18-23 Feb (RPC, DAG, DJ) was possibly an overwintering bird rather than an early migrant, as was a bird at the Lossie Estuary 21 Feb (DAG). In the second winter period, one of an unspecified age was on Culbin Bar 9 Dec (AY) with an immature at Loch Spynie 31 Dec (DAG).

Arrival: Other than likely wintering birds, the first report was 1 Loch Spynie 8 Mar (CAG), with one Cooper Park (Elgin) the following day (DAG). Numbers at Cloddach quarry built up rapidly from 2 on 11 Mar to 14 on 12 Mar.

Breeding: The only records received were of an anxious pair in the gullery at Corsemaul (WPRB) and one on a nest at Bow Fiddle Rock (Portknockie) 4 Jun (MJHC).

The only count over 50 this year was 51 Lossie Estuary 12 Aug (RP). A bird possibly of race *L.f.intermedius* was on the Lossie estuary 3 Aug (RP).

A hybrid gull, assumed to be of Lesser Black-backed Gull x Herring Gull parentage was seen on the Lossie estuary between July and October (see Yellow-legged Gull section).

Herring Gull *Larus argentatus*

Very common resident breeder and winter visitor.

Breeding: There were no reports of breeding other than one with eggs in the Common Gull colony at Boars Head Rock 5 Jun (PGS).

Monthly maximum counts on the Lossie Estuary were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
217	90	44	nc	246	200	332	250	590	1470	23	73

Highest numbers of the year, were mainly at Loch Spynie in the winter months, with c.2000 21 Jan, c.1900 19 Feb, c.1000 16 Dec and c.2000 23 Dec. Elsewhere, c.1200 were at Carse of Delnies 21 Jan, c.2000 at Hillhead pools (Forres) 6 Mar and c.1100 Kingston 30 Aug.

A leucistic individual was at Lossie Estuary and Loch Spynie in late June/July (AJ, DAG). A hybrid gull, assumed to be of Lesser Black-backed Gull x Herring Gull parentage was seen on the Lossie estuary between July and October (see Yellow-legged Gull section).

(Yellow-legged Gull *Larus michahellis*

Rare visitor.

A bird resembling this species was seen on four occasions between late June and October at the Lossie estuary, and a young Herring Gull was seen soliciting for food from it. However, from photographs and consultation with experts, it was considered to fall within the range of Herring Gull/Lesser Black-backed Gull hybrid – a pitfall when searching for Yellow-legged Gull.)

Iceland Gull *Larus glaucoides*

Very scarce winter visitor.

In the first winter period, an adult and a 1st winter bird were at Loch Spynie 11 Feb (CAG,DAG,RM,RP), with the adult seen later that day at the Lossie estuary. Two 1st winter birds were at Hillhead pools (Forres) 6 Mar (AJ), with one or the other of these birds being seen at this site on four other occasions to 2 May (MJHC,DAG).

In the spring, a confusing series of records centred around Lossiemouth/Loch Spynie. In April, a 1st winter bird was on the Lossie estuary on 1st and 3rd, and what was thought to be the same individual was at Loch

Spynie on 6th (DAG). A 1st winter/1st summer bird was seen on 20th and a very pale 1st winter on the 23rd and 26th (DAG). During May, this very pale 1st winter bird was seen at the Lossie estuary on four dates (and was also seen at nearby Loch Spynie), and a bird at the Lossie Estuary on 18th and 26th was considered by the observer to be one of those seen in March at Hillhead pools (DAG). In addition, a 2nd summer bird was recorded on 16th and 26th (DAG, RP). A 2nd summer on Culbin Bar 28 May (per Birdguides), an immature at Stonewells 6 Jun (EH), a 1st summer at Loch Spynie 22 Jun (SE) and a bird of an unspecified age at Urquhart 8 Aug (EH) could conceivably relate to these wandering Lossie Estuary individuals.

In the second winter period, the only record was of an adult at Loch Spynie (many obs), presumably the regular wintering bird at this site.

A reasonable year, but difficult to ascertain the exact number of birds involved from the confusing series of sightings of immature birds in the early summer, but perhaps nine individuals involved.



Iceland Gull, Loch Spynie 6 Apr 2007 (© Duncan Gibson)

Glaucous Gull *Larus hyperboreus*

Very scarce winter visitor.

A 2nd winter bird at Wester Bauds (Mosstodloch) 14 Feb (per RP) was the first sighting of the year. An adult commuted between the Lossie estuary and Loch Spynie between 3-5 Apr (DAG). In the summer months, an adult and a 1st summer individual were at Spey Bay 13 May (AJ,MJHC,RHD,DAG), with the adult seen at Spey Bay again 23 May, and on the Lossie Estuary 4 Jul (DAG). The 1st summer bird was seen again at Loch Spynie 27 May (DAG), at Kingston 31 May (MJHC) and on the Lossie Estuary 6 Jun and 4 Jul (DAG). In the autumn, a 4th winter bird was at Spey Bay 30 Sep (DP), a 2nd winter on the Lossie

Estuary 20 Oct (RP) and an adult at Portknockie 21 Dec (per Birdguides). A reasonable year, with probably seven individuals being responsible for these sightings.

Great Black-backed Gull *Larus marinus*

Scarce resident breeder and common visitor.

Breeding: The only reports of breeding were of two pairs Tronach Head 2 Jun and a pair at Bow Fiddle Rock (Portknockie) on 4 Jun and 12 Jul (MJHC).

In the Tugnet area, at the mouth of the Spey, maximum counts included 60 immature birds 22 Apr, and then a late summer-autumn build-up resulting in higher numbers in August-October, peaking at c.200 on 30 Aug. At the Lossie estuary, numbers at the same time peaked at 331 on 23 Sep, the highest count of the year. Elsewhere, 90 were on the skerries at Strathlene 29 Sep.

Little Tern *Sternula albifrons*

Very scarce summer visitor and rare breeder.

Breeding: Site 3 – two on 5 May, were the first birds back. The peak count of the year was of 20, with some “visiting” the nesting site 25 May. The site was devoid of any tern species on 9 Jun, so a disappointing year here (DAG).

Site 4 – one adult on 13 Jul (MJHC) was the only record.

The last sightings of the year were 3 feeding Findhorn Bay 21 Aug (ISS) and 2 Lossiemouth east beach 9 Sep (CAG).

Sandwich Tern *Sterna sandvicensis*

Very common summer visitor and occasional breeder.

Arrival: The first record of the year was 1 past Lossiemouth 31 Mar. Arrival dates in the last ten years have been as follows:

1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
29 Mar	28 Mar	25 Mar	28 Mar	24 Mar	26 Mar	28 Mar	1 Apr	1 Apr	31 Mar

Whether there is any significance in the slightly later arrival dates in the last three years remains to be seen.

The main arrival in 2007 followed from 5 Apr, when 20 were counted flying west past Lossiemouth, and birds were also seen at Burghead, Findhorn and Nairn.

Breeding: No breeding records in Moray & Nairn this year.

Peak counts were 62 (including only 3 juvs) Culbin Bar and 68 Findhorn Bay 15 Jul, 65 off Cullen 27 Jul, 115 Burghead Bay 7 Aug, 198 east past Strathlene in 45 mins on 19 Aug, 67 Culbin Bar 27 Aug and finally 67 west past Lossiemouth in 1 hour on 29 Aug.

The last sighting of the year was a single off Lossiemouth west beach on 24 Oct.

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*

Summer visitor and fairly common breeder.

Arrival: A single was at Aberlour on the River Spey 24 Apr with 2 Loch Spynie the same day. One was on the River Spey at Fochabers 28 Apr.

Breeding: At Loch Spynie, 14 nests were on the platforms on 16 Jun (MJHC) but breeding success was poor here with 3 chicks on the near platform on 24 Jun, but only 1 on 28 Jul (CAG, DAG). Despite regular sightings of up to 3 birds on the Spey at Aberlour in May there was no indication of breeding here (AE). No breeding detected elsewhere, including the Garmouth viaduct area.

Peak counts were very low this year, with 23 at Loch Spynie on 6 Jul being the highest count. Last of the year were 2 Spey Bay 5 Oct.

Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea*

Summer visitor and common but local breeder.

Arrival: First returning birds were noted back on 22 Apr with 2 at Tugnet.

Breeding: A very disappointing season. The main site at RAF Kinloss held c.45 birds on 31 May (AJL). Although likely to have taken place, breeding was not confirmed at Kinloss this year, and the absence of any birds in the colony in late June certainly indicates a lack of success (MJHC). Elsewhere, 67 occupied nests were on the shingle between Boars Head Rock and Lossiemouth on 6 Jun (PGS) although the site was abandoned on 23 Jun and breeding failed here too. At Garmouth viaduct, there were 19 nests on 4 Jun and 35 on 30 Jun (with c.200 birds around this site) (MJHC), although here also there was a total breeding failure. There were 2 occupied nests on the shingle at Kingston 4 Jun but within a few days the birds were gone (MJHC). At Lossiemouth, 40 adults were in a potential breeding area in May but there was no evidence of nesting and certainly no success.

Away from colonies, the highest count of the year was 29 Spey Bay 28 Jul.

The last records of the year, in October, were 1 Culbin Bar on 2nd and 2 (adult and juv) Spey Bay on 4th.

Guillemot *Uria aalge*

Very common offshore.

Counts were generally low in 2007, with only five reaching double figures: 13 Culbin Bar 18 Feb, 94 Burghead 4 Jun, with 32 Burghead Bay the same date, 19 past Lossiemouth 3 Sep and 14 past the same site 9 Sep.

Inland, one was caught on the River Spey at Milton (Strath Avon) 21 Sep (CTo) and was released at Nairn. This is only the third inland record since 1885. Following severe gales in January 1885 many storm blown birds were found up to 5 miles inland from the sea between Burghead and Nairn, and another was found at Newmill nr. Auldearn 19 Oct 2004. This bird is therefore the furthest inland in Moray & Nairn by some distance.



Guillemot, Strath Avon 21 Sep 2007 (© Chris Townshend)

Razorbill *Alca torda*

Very common offshore.

Breeding: After the successful breeding between 2003-2006, birds were again present on the cliffs at Portknockie. On 13 Apr, 3 were ashore on separate ledges and 8 others were on the sea below the cliff. On 4 Jun there were five apparently occupied sites on the cliffs with an incubating bird at each. However, none were seen (including around the back of Bow Fiddle Rock) on 12 Jul and it seems breeding failed at this site this year (MJHC). Elsewhere, the only significant offshore counts were of 28 Culbin Bar 18 Feb and 140 Roseisle 1 Oct.

Black Guillemot *Cephus grylle*

Scarce offshore, rare breeder.

Breeding: At Tronach Head, 6 pairs on the sea on 13 Apr and 8 pairs on the sea 22 Apr (MJHC, ISS). A clutch of two eggs were in the usual crevice 12 Jul and a brood of one was ringed 10 Aug (MJHC). This is the 22nd successive year of breeding at this site. At Portknockie, a bird was on scree at Bow Fiddle Rock 4 Jun, and two birds were seen entering nest sites here 10 Aug (MJHC).

At other times, away from breeding areas birds were very scarce in the first winter period, with only two sightings in early April. The majority of records were from August onwards, and centred around Lossiemouth on seawatches. Peak count was of 18 west in a 30 min seawatch on 7 Aug (DAG, RP). Elsewhere, generally in ones and twos and scattered along the coast between Findhorn and Strathlene.

Little Auk *Alle alle*

Scarce winter visitor.

The only spring record was the wing of a long dead bird found at Burghead 7 Apr (MJHC), perhaps from the previous autumn or winter.

In October, 1 flew west past Lossiemouth on 12th (DAG). In November, singles passed Lossiemouth on 3rd and 8th (DAG). The 10th saw a single pass Strathlene, despite large numbers being present in the North Sea (MJHC). These numbers filtered through to Moray & Nairn the following day when 142 flew west past Lossiemouth (MJHC, DAG, RP) and four past Strathlene (MJHC). On 12th, 109 passed Burghead in 30 mins (DMP) and four were at Lossiemouth (DAG). Two birds flew west past Lossiemouth 19 Nov (DAG). The final significant movement of the year occurred on 24th & 25th Nov. At Lossiemouth, on 24th, an impressive 976 birds flew west in 2hrs 15mins (DAG). This is the highest count in Moray & Nairn since records began – the previous highest count being 968 past Lossiemouth on 29 Nov 1987. Elsewhere, 40 passed Portgordon in 10 mins and six passed Strathlene in 30 mins (MJHC). The 25th saw 50 west past Lossiemouth (DAG) and four east past Strathlene (MJHC). The final record of the year was two east past Nairn Bar 9 Dec (DCJ).

Puffin *Fratercula arctica*

Scarce offshore.

A slight reduction from 2006, with 23 birds recorded in 2007. All were in the second half of the year. First were 3 past Lossiemouth 8 Sep (DAG). In late September-early October there was, unusually, a scatter of single birds feeding close inshore along the coast. There were ten reports of such single birds during the period 30 Sep-13 Oct, ranging from Nairn in the west to Portknockie in the east. Three further birds were found dead on beaches.

Feral Pigeon *Columba livia*

Very common resident breeder.

125 on the Bow Fiddle Rock (Portknockie) 14 Jan, 80 Ianstown (Buckie) 2 Dec, 75 Drybridge 22 Dec and 50 Aldunie (Cabrach) 16 Dec were the only significant counts received.

Stock Dove *Columba oenas*

Scarce resident breeder, formerly common.

Breeding season: Records in the period late March-July included 1 Bishopmill (Elgin) 15 Jul, a pair Cloddach 15 May, 5 Findrassie 2 Jun, 1 Innes House 6 Jun, 4 Kilravock Castle 15 Apr, up to 5 in Mar-Jul RAF Kinloss, c12 Kirkhill 31 Mar, 7 Linksfield (Elgin) 12 May, 2 Loch Oire 22 Jun, 2 Coral Peel (Lossie Forest) 13 Jun, 8 Miltonduff 23 Mar, 1 Nairn 21 Jun, a pair Nether Birnie 13 May, 3 Old Mills (Elgin) 17 Mar, 2 Stonewells 6 Jun and 2-3 regularly Urquhart Mar-Jun.

During the winter periods, other localities where birds were seen included Castlehill, Conicavel, Easter Calcots, Loch Spynie, Meft, Netherton (display flights seen 28 Jan) and Scarffbanks, where a flock of 27 was counted on 3 Nov (RP). This is the largest flock seen in Moray & Nairn since 33 in Feb 1995, also at Scarffbanks.

Woodpigeon *Columba palumbus*

Very common resident breeder.

Very early nesting at Culbin where a bird was incubating a single egg in a tree on the bar on 21 Jan.

Largest flocks reported were c2000 Barmuckity 20 Nov, 1400 Wellheads (Clochan) 10 Feb (500 there 1 Jan, still 400 on 11 Mar and 290 on 17 Nov), 550 Drybridge 22 Dec, 500 Kinloss 10 Jan, 400 Spynie Palace 16 Feb, 355 Hillpark 18 Nov and 300 Strypes 23 Nov. Passage noted over Kinloss in autumn when c1500 flew south on 16 Nov.

Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*

Very common resident breeder.

11 Clochan 27 Jan was the only double-figure count received.

Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus*

Summer visitor and common breeder.

Arrival: April records (all single calling birds) were at Todholes (Rafford) 21st (a very early bird), Lower Chanie (near Maggieknockater) 27th, Cairn Uish and Drynachan 28th, and Assich Forest 29th.

Subsequently heard at Aberlour, Craigellachie, Archiestown, Chapelton, Cloddach, Cullen, Dunphail moor, Findrassie, Kinloss, Lein (Kingston), Myreton, Upper Bogside and Windyridge. Rather more 'lowland' reports than usual. Last was 1 Kinloss 14 Aug and 17 Aug.

Barn Owl *Tyto alba*

Scarce resident breeder.

Breeding: During Apr-Jul, birds were seen in 10 localities.

At other times of year, reports came from Rafford, Burgie, Tarras, Auldearn, Bogeney, Cardhu, Clochan, Drumfurich, Easter Bauds, Gateside (Alves), Inveravon School, Kinermony, Marypark, Newton, Ordies (Alves), Overton and Rothies.

Tawny Owl *Strix aluco*

Common resident breeder.

An interesting record of successful breeding in an outbuilding in the remote Blackwater Lodge (Cabrach). The well-feathered chick was photographed there (GG). Elsewhere, breeding was confirmed at Firhall (Nairn), Nether Birnie and Newbold Wood (Forres).

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

Breeding: Confirmed only at RAF Lossiemouth where 2 young were reared (DSI). Other reports were 1 Dava 14 May (RHD), 1 Fochabers woods 11 May (AJ), 1 Glenallachie (Aberlour) 18 Jun (AE) and 1 Kinloss 1 Jun (RHD).

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

Breeding: Reported from only one upland locality in summer.

Also only a single winter record; 1 Findhorn Bay saltmarsh 24 Dec (RHD).

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

Arrival: No April records, for the second consecutive year, and the latest arrival since 2002. Earliest was a single over Loch Spynie 8 May. Numbers built up here steadily to 50+ on 15 May and 81 on 7 Jun (the highest count of the year). Other arrivals from 12 May onwards included 10 Rothes 13 May and 2 Kinloss 14 May.

Largest congregations of feeding birds were 80 Loch Spynie 20 Jul, 30 Tomintoul 2 Aug and 50 Loch Spynie 7 Aug. Few were seen after the first week of August, last of the year were 1 Conicavel 19 Aug and a late bird over the Spynie Canal 15 Sep (CAG).

Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis**Very scarce visitor and occasional breeder.*

As usual, a scatter of records from a wide variety of riverine, coastal and still-water sites, mainly in the winter periods. In order of date, reports (all single birds) were from Loch na Bo 4 Jan (CAG), Aberlour 21 Jan (AE), Spey Bay 30 Sep (DPa), Muckle Burn 26 Oct (GG), Kingsteps 1 Nov (DTu), Findhorn 2 Nov (GG) and finally Kingston 1 Dec (DAG).

On the Spey at Fochabers, one on 30 Jun (MJHC). At least one had been seen here regularly by fishermen in June, raising possibilities of breeding nearby. Two birds were seen there on 15 Aug (JK).

Hoopoe *Upupa epops**Rare visitor.*

One Bridgehaugh (Glenfiddich) 29 Apr (CW). This is the 17th record in Moray & Nairn, and the second in the past 15 years (after one in 2003). Hoopoes were seen in nine years during the period 1981-1992 but this is only the second record since that time, despite a considerable increase in the number of observers. Months of arrival for all 17 birds are shown below:

Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov
3	3	1	-	1	2	5	2

Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major**Common resident breeder.*

Very widespread in suitable woodlands throughout Moray & Nairn, and an increasing visitor to garden nut feeders. No notable records received this year aside from two ringed at Clochan in late August.

Skylark *Alauda arvensis**Common breeder and migrant.*

First song heard, in February, at Longmorn 2nd, Ardivot 3rd, Findhorn Bay 3rd, Portgordon 16th and The Lein (Kingston) 17th.

Counts included 35 Culbin Bar 18 Feb (and 18 on 21 Mar), 13 Nairn Bar 18 Feb, up to 25 at Kinloss throughout the year (25 on 3 Jul) and 15 Rosevalley 1 Oct.

Sand Martin *Riparia riparia**Summer visitor and common breeder.*

Arrival: Only two reports in late March, of 6 Loch Flemington 29th and 5 Nairn the same day. Then a gap of over a week until a spate of records from 7 Apr onwards. Six sites recorded birds in April, although most records were from Loch Spynie where numbers built up from c.20 on 8th to c.300 on 17th. There were 80 at the Quarry Pool (Fochabers) colony on 11 Apr.

Dates of first arrival since 1999 are as follows:

1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
18 Mar	21 Mar	2 Apr	26 Mar	25 Mar	18 Mar	20 Mar	31 Mar	29 Mar

Colony counts (apparently occupied burrows) were 348 Quarry Pool (River Spey, near Fochabers) 28 April, with 727 holes “in good repair” in late June at this site (MJHC). The number of pairs in colonies of this magnitude is notoriously difficult to ascertain with accuracy. This is however by far the largest colony currently occupied in Moray & Nairn, and quite possibly the largest there has ever been in recent times. In 1965 there was a colony of 560 pairs in this area but no count seems to have been attempted since. Elsewhere, c.300 Glen Rinnes sand pit (also much increased over the 180 when last counted in 2002), 15-20 Clashach quarry (Hopeman) (45 in 2006), c.10 Lossiemouth west beach (in dunes facing the sea) and 1 Corbiewell (3 in 2006). As in 2006, up to 200 birds were estimated around the dunes at Kinloss in May but no colony count was made.

An estimated 500 birds left the Loch Spynie roost on 24 Aug (RP). Last report was of 2 over the airfield at Kinloss 14 Sep.

Swallow *Hirundo rustica**Summer visitor and very common breeder.*

Arrival: The first report was of a single bird at Forres on 13 Apr – the latest arrival date since 2001 – the trend has been for first birds to be recorded in the first week of April. Next was 1 Aberlour 14 Apr. Elsewhere, eight localities recorded their first birds in the following week.

First arrival dates since 1999 are as follows:

1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
2 Apr	8 Apr	19 Apr	24 Mar	1 Apr	3 Apr	4 Apr	2 Apr	13 Apr

Breeding: In the Lhanbryde barn, there were 18 occupied nests during the season (2 more than in 2006), of which 10 were active simultaneously on 9 Jun. Mean clutch size (of the 18 accessible nests) was 3.3 eggs and mean brood size at fledging was 2.4; both means were the lowest in the 10 years that this site has been studied although numbers remained relatively stable from 2006. However, the number of nesting attempts was the highest recorded and the total number of young fledged (44) was the second highest recorded. (RP). Elsewhere a slightly unusual site was the ruined bothy on Culbin Bar where a deserted nest with five eggs was found on 17 Aug.

The only significant post breeding flock was approximately 700 exiting the Loch Spynie roost on 24 Aug (RP).

Four sites held birds lingering into October. There were two November records of single birds, at Burghead 18 Nov (J&HMacD) and at Grigorhill (Auldearn) 22 Nov (DPh). An exceptionally late bird lingered at Nairn, and was seen 30 Nov and 6 Dec (RPC). This is only the second December record in Moray & Nairn, the latest ever being two birds that remained at Lossiemouth until 14 Dec 2003. These birds were the last of a group of six that stayed at Lossiemouth into December 2003.

House Martin *Delichon urbicum*

Summer visitor and common breeder.

Arrival: The first record was of 2 Burghead 17 Apr. Nine other sites recorded their first birds by the end of April. Arrival in the 2nd-3rd week of the month seems typical.

Arrival dates since 1999 have been as follows:

1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
4 May	21 Apr	26 Apr	22 Apr	16 Apr	17 Apr	18 Apr	21 Apr	17 Apr

Few early summer counts were made, the peak being c.50 over Loch Spynie 26 May.

Breeding: Few records were received: 14 occupied nests Buckie High School 14 Jul, where numbers have remained steady over recent years. Otherwise the only other breeding record received was of two flying around the usual nesting geo at Portknockie cliffs 10 Aug.

Best late summer/autumn congregations were 210 Kinloss 24 Aug, and 100+ Forres 5 Sep and 13 Sep rising to 200+ 14 Sep. Last of the year were 6 Burghead 9 Oct.

Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis*

Summer visitor and common breeder.

Breeding season records (all single singing males unless stated) were from Archiestown, Craigellachie-Dufftown old railway line (2 singing males), Drynachan ("several"), Edinvale, Kellas (2 singing males), Lochindorb, Loch Oire (2), Logieburn, Tomfarclas, Tips of Clunymore (2 singing males) and Torwinny (2 singing males). In autumn, one flew south over Loch Spynie calling 24 Aug (RP).

Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis*

Very common breeder and migrant.

Counts in the winter/spring period included 38 Culbin Bar 21 Jan and 35 there 18 Feb. 150 passed over Kinloss airfield 7 Feb (AJL) (the highest count of the year) and finally 32 Roseisle 8 Apr.

In autumn/winter, counts included 32 Kinloss 23 Aug, 20 Burghead 9 Oct, 67 Kinloss 3 Dec and 35 there 14 Dec.

Rock Pipit *Anthus petrosus*

Scarce breeder, fairly common in winter.

Breeding: The only record received was of a very anxious bird at Buckpool 19 Jun.

Winter counts between Portgordon-Strathlene were 19 on 21 Jan, 22 on 16 Feb and 29 on 7 Oct (MJHC). Maximum counts along the Portgordon-Strathlene rocky shore (c.7km) in the October-December period in recent years have been as follows:

1993	94	95	96	97	98	99	2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07
37	45	18	50	72	31	47	30	44	48	56	20	37	41	29

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*

Summer visitor and common breeder. Scarce in winter.

Breeding: 1 pair Cloddach Quarry, 2 pairs Drumin (Glenlivet) and a female with 2 young Aberlour. A juvenile in front of the hide at Loch Spynie on 2 Jul was probably raised nearby. Highest count of the year was ten along the Spey between Aberlour and Craigellachie on 21 May.

Winter: Records seem increasingly frequent. In the first winter period, birds were seen at Buckie, Cloddach quarry, Forres and Urquhart. In the second winter period records were received from Aberlour, Ballantruan, Clochan, Elgin and Loch Spynie.

Pied Wagtail *Motacilla alba*

Very common breeder and migrant.

Passage: Records of 'White Wagtails' *M.a.alba* in spring were (all single birds unless stated) Cloddach quarry 15 Apr, Spey Bay golf course 15 Apr and Lossiemouth west beach 5 May. In autumn, singles were recorded at Kingston 19 Aug and 29 Sep.

Counts of Pied Wagtails were c.50 Lossiemouth west beach 18 Apr, 103 (the highest count of the year) Kingston 23 Aug and 22 Findhorn Bay 26 Aug.

Waxwing *Bombycilla garrulus*

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

A poor year for Waxwings in both winter periods.

Winter-spring: 2 Lossiemouth 1-2 Jan (RHD), 2 Mosstodloch 6-9 Jan rising to 3 on 28 Jan-7 Feb (AJ, MJHC, RP), 32 Kinloss 13 Jan (the highest count of the year) (AJL), 2 Duffus 21 Jan (EH), 1 Hopeman 25 Jan (PTH) and 3 Forres 28 Jan (AJL).

Autumn-winter: 10 Lossiemouth 1-8 Nov (MS), 7 Forres 8-9 Nov (RP, AJL), 1 Kinloss 18 Nov (CAG), 16 Elgin 20 Nov, falling to 6 on 24 Nov (CAG,RI,RP). There were 7-8 at Garmouth viaduct just prior to 15 Dec, although they could not be found on that date (MJHC).

Dipper *Cinclus cinclus*

Common resident breeder.

The only breeding records received were of a pair copulating on the Burn of Rothes in Rothes Park 31 Jan, a pair feeding young at Drumin (Glenlivet) 25 Mar, a bird incubating four young at Altyre bridge 13 Apr, and an adult with two young at Aberlour 15 May.

Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*

Very common resident breeder.

The proportion of juveniles to adults trapped at Loch Spynie 'Constant Effort Site' was a low 2.4 (from 6.3 in 2006), suggesting a poor breeding season (RP).

Counts exceeding ten birds included 36 singing along a 5.5km section of the Speyside Way between Craigellachie and Dufftown 20 May (MJHC), 12 Kilravock Castle 15 Apr and 12 between Aberlour and Craigellachie on the Speyside Way 21 May.

On 1 Sep one was on the Shelter Stone at Loch Avon in the heart of the Cairngorms.

Dunnock *Prunella modularis*

Very common resident breeder.

First song in Elgin in February, at Linkwood 1st and Dr Gray's Hospital 2nd, followed by Dufftown 13th and Clochan 24th. Not heard at Kingston until 7 Mar.

Robin *Erithacus rubecula*

Very common resident breeder and migrant.

First full song in January at Dunphail 28th and Lein (Kingston) 29th.

Counts from the spring/summer months were 12 Broadfield (Keith) 5 Mar, 10 Dunphail 25 Mar, 16 Kilravock Castle 15 Apr and 15 between Aberlour and Craigellachie on the Speyside Way 21 May.

In the autumn, 14 in 4km² in Strathavon 4 Nov was the only count exceeding ten.

Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

Summer visitor and scarce breeder. Very scarce migrant.

Breeding season records were 4 Drynahan area 28 Apr and 1M 22 May, up to 3 singing males Kellas oakwood in May/June, 1 mobbing two cuckoos Lochindorb 1 Jun and a male with a fledged brood Inchrory 17 Jun.

A juvenile along the fence at Scarffbanks (Loch Spynie) 20 Jul was probably on passage (RP).

Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra*

Summer visitor and scarce breeder. Very scarce migrant.

Only three records were received, and no breeding reports – a disappointing total. This species is under recorded in Moray & Nairn. All records were single birds: Dava Moor 30 Apr (RHD), Archiestown 13 May (AJ, MJHC et al) and Croughly 6 Aug (LPh).

Stonechat *Saxicola rubicola*

Scarce resident breeder and probable migrant.

Inland moorland breeding records (pairs, territorial males or proven breeding) were recorded from Achdregnie-Suie (Glenlivet), Dalestie (Glen Avon), Dava Moor, Elrick (Cabrach), Glack Harnes (Ben Rinnes), Glen Builg, Loch Allan, Loch of the Cowlatt and Rhinagoup (Dallas).

Coastal breeding recorded (pairs, territorial males or proven breeding) at Cullen, Findhorn, Kingston, Lossiemouth, Portknockie and Strathlene. At Kingston there were 5-6 pairs between the Lein and a point c.1.5km west of the rifle range. Adults were carrying food on 26 Apr. At least three pairs were successful and at least two had second broods (PGS).

Up country in autumn/winter were 1F Glack Harnes (Ben Rinnes) 1 Jan, 2 Moss of Birnie (Glenlatterach) 5 Jan, a pair Glack Harnes (Ben Rinnes) 21 Nov and 1 Dunphail 29 Nov. In non-breeding lowland areas in autumn/winter were 1M Scarffbanks (Loch Spynie) 7 Jan, 2 pairs Hillpark (Drybridge) 18 Nov and 3M, 2F Moss of Barmuckity 20 Nov.

Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe*

Summer visitor, fairly common migrant and local breeder.

Arrival: As in 2006, there were no March records this year. First back in April were at Lossiemouth west beach where 1 on 6th and 4 on 8th. Subsequently only small numbers were reported at a scatter of coastal sites, with no significant migrant falls; spring maximum was 9 on the Lein (Kingston) 27 May.

Breeding: Very few records received. Pairs up country at Rhinagoup (Dallas) 14 Apr and Ben Rinnes 30 Apr could relate to breeding birds, although could also relate to birds still on passage. A juvenile in the Loch of the Cowlatt area on 9 Jul indicates breeding locally there.

Back at the coast early were 1 juv Lossie Estuary 30 Jun-1 Jul, followed by birds at Findhorn Bay, Kinloss and Portknockie in the following few weeks. Best autumn coastal passage count was only 4 Kinloss 22-24 Aug. Last of the year was 1 Ben Rinnes 12 Oct and 1-2 Kinloss airfield 8-15 Oct.

Ring Ouzel *Turdus torquatus**Summer visitor and scarce breeder.*

The only records received were 1M Cairn Uish 13 May (CAG), 1M singing Dalestie (Glen Avon) 17 Jun (MJHC), 2M singing Glen Builg 17 Jun (MJHC) and 1F at the latter site 8 Jul (ISS).

Blackbird *Turdus merula**Very common resident breeder, winter visitor and migrant.*

First song was noted in Elgin, on Wards Road 29 Jan. At Kingston adults were carrying food for young on 25 Apr and in Lossiemouth fledged young were seen on 28 Apr. During the summer months 15 were recorded in an area of 4km² in the Knockandhu/Chapleton area on 13 May, and 20 were counted between Aberlour and Craigellachie in the countryside around the Speyside Way on 21 May.

The only notable winter counts were 15 Spey Bay area 2 Jan, 10 Kinloss 23 Nov and 10 Midwood (Clochan) 24 Dec.

Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris**Very common migrant and winter visitor.*

Winter-spring: Flocks of 30 or more were c.50 Hillhead pools 1 Jan, 250 Foresterseat 1 Jan, c.150 Mill of Grange 7 Jan, 110 Wellheads (Clochan) 9 Feb, 250 Scarffbanks (Loch Spynie) 28 Feb, 30 Broadfield (Keith) 5 Mar and 30 Urquhart 19 Mar. Last in spring was 92 Half Davoch 9 Apr.

Arrival: First migrant arrivals earlier than 2006, with 3 Lower Chanie 1 Oct the first record, followed by 30 Ben Rinnes 5 Oct. Arrival dates of first birds in autumn since 1999 have been:

1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
25 Sep	26 Oct	3 Oct	8 Oct	13 Oct	4 Oct	15 Sep	21 Oct	1 Oct

Autumn-winter: Counts of 50 or more were “hundreds” Duffus Castle 7 Oct, 50 over Lower Chanie 15 Oct (with 100 over 25 Oct), 50 Elgin 28 Oct, 400 Loch Spynie 12 Nov, 120 Kinloss airfield 13 Nov (c.400 16 Nov), 105 in near Fochabers 25 Nov, 59 Tomintoul 2 Dec and 53 Inveravon 24 Dec.

Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos**Very common breeder and migrant.*

First song was heard in February at Lein (Kingston) 13th, Clochan 16th, Keith 18th, Elgin 22nd and Dufftown 23rd.

The only breeding records received were a bird gathering nest material at Chapleton (Forres) 6 Mar, a pair investigating nesting area at Lower Chanie 28 Mar and adults carrying food for young at Lein (Kingston) 4 May. Counts in the summer months were of 16 in 4km² in the Knockandhu/Chapleton area on 13 May and 6 singing along the Speyside Way between Craigellachie and Dufftown 20 May.

In mid winter, 1 Aberlour 22 Dec.

Redwing *Turdus iliacus**Very common migrant and winter visitor.*

Winter-spring: Very small numbers were present in Moray & Nairn in the first winter period, with the exception of c.50 Hillhead pools (Forres) 1 Jan, c.40 Mill of Grange 7 Jan, 250 Scarffbanks (Loch Spynie) 28 Feb and 50 Broadfield (Keith) 5 Mar. Last in spring was 1 Lein (Kingston) 10 Apr.

Autumn: The first arrival was noted at Spey Bay 5 Oct.

Arrival dates of first birds in autumn since 1999 have been:

1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
30 Sep	11 Oct	29 Sep	8 Oct	9 Oct	4 Oct	25 Sep	10 Oct	5 Oct

Autumn-winter: Counts of 100 or more were “hundreds” Duffus Castle 7 Oct, 100+ Aberlour 19 Oct, 100+ Lower Chanie 25 Oct, 200 Loch Spynie 12 Nov and 200 Kinloss 13 Nov (still 100 here 16 Nov).

Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus*

Common resident breeder and migrant.

First song in late January at Forres 26th and Dunphail 28th.

Breeding: The only breeding record received was of adults collecting food for young at Dunphail 11 Apr.

Best flock counts of the year were 35 Dallas Dhu pond 19 Aug (the highest count of the year), 20 Dunphail 19 Sep, 13 Lhanbryde 13 Oct and 17 Linkwood (Elgin) 28 Nov.

Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella naevia*

Summer visitor and scarce breeder.

Recorded from nine sites. First heard at Wester Gauldwell farm 28 Apr (GG). Other singing birds were reported from Lower Chanie 29 Apr (GG), Aberlour 29 Apr (AE), Myreton 1-20 May (1-2) (EH), Easter Newforres 13 May (MJHC), Hillhead pool 13 May (AJ), Loch Spynie 15 May-12 Jun (max. 3) (AJ,RP), Tomintoul 16 May (NP), Dufftown 20-21 May (MJHC,DAG).

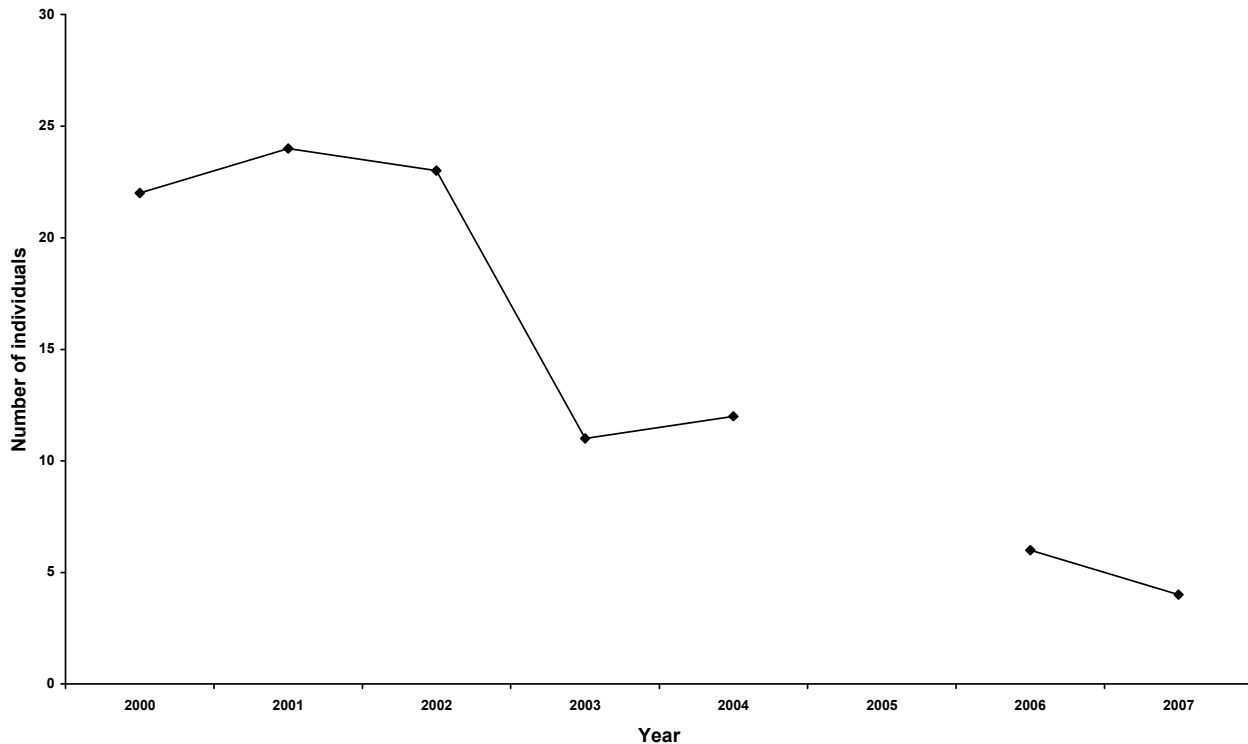
Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

Summer visitor and common breeder.

Arrival: First song heard below Spynie Palace 28 Apr (CAG, DAG) and then Hillhead pool 30 Apr (ISS). In early May song heard at the Lein (Kingston) 1st and Kinloss 2nd.

Ringling at the ‘Constant Effort Site’ in the north-east fen at Loch Spynie estimated the adult population at only four individuals (RP). This is the lowest recorded total from this study. The highest estimate was 24 in 2001. This suggests an effect on adult birds during migration or on the wintering grounds in Africa.

Adult Sedge Warblers trapped during the first six visits at Loch Spynie CES:



The proportion of juveniles caught per adult was 6.3, an all time high, suggesting a very good breeding season despite the cold and wet summer (RP).

The last individual was a juvenile trapped at Loch Spynie 24 Aug.

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*

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

January-March: 1M Forres 17 Jan, 1F Clochan 10 Feb, 2M, 2F New Elgin 11 Feb, 1M Aberlour 23 Feb, and 1F there 1Mar. In one Elgin garden, 1M,1F 1-2 Jan and 16 Jan, and 1M almost daily in Jan-Mar, with 2M on 14 Feb.

Spring/summer: Singing birds (singles unless stated) were found at Aberlour, Aberlour-Craigellachie (6), Blacksboat, Boharm cemetery (2), Caysbriggs, Clochan, Corbiewell, Craigellachie, Craigellachie-Dufftown (an impressive 15 along the 5.5km Speyside Way spur (WRPB,MJHC), Dunphail, Fogwatt (3), Garmouth viaduct (2), Kellas (2), Kilravock Castle, Kinloss, The Lein (2), Lhanbryde, Linkwood, Loch Spynie (8), Coral Peel (3), Muiry Wood, Nairn (2), Newbold Wood, Pitgaveny (2), Quarry Pool (Fochabers) (2), River Findhorn (3), Spey Bay, Spynie Palace, The Grove Nursing Home and Urquhart (4). The 65 reported is almost half the total for 2006, however, this species is well established in Moray & Nairn woodlands and the decline in records is likely to be due to the end of fieldwork for the North-East Scotland Breeding Bird Atlas.

Autumn: No coastal migrants noted in 2007. The only reports during this period were 2M, 2F (trapped) Clochan 15-16 Sep.

Late November-December: 1M Kingston 14 Dec, 1M Lhanbryde 27 Dec, unsexed Urquhart 28 Dec and 1M Elgin 29 Dec.

Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin*

Summer visitor and scarce breeder.

Singing birds (singles unless stated) were found beside the Speyside Way between Aberlour-Craigellachie, along the 5.5km Speyside Way spur between Craigellachie-Dufftown (2), and at Dufftown, Garmouth viaduct, Loch Spynie and Urquhart.

Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca*

Rare visitor and occasional breeder.

The over-wintering bird, first seen c.5 Nov 2006, remained in the garden at Carsehill, near Alves until c.25 Apr (LB, MJHC et al.). It was apparently a first-winter bird of nominate race *curruca*.

Whitethroat *Sylvia communis*

Summer visitor and common breeder.

Arrival: First seen or heard in late April at Portgordon 28th, Clochan 29th and Fochabers 30th.
Last record of the year was a single near the golf course at Milton Brodie 22 Sep.

Wood Warbler *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*

Summer visitor and scarce breeder.

No reports of Wood Warbler were received this year.

Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*

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

Winter: 1 Rothes 31 Jan (AJ).

Arrival: March singing birds were located at Muiry Wood on 24th, The Lein (Kingston) on 25th, and Loch na Bo, Urquhart and Loch Spynie on 27th.

Subsequently, singing birds were found at Bin of Cullen, Boat o' Brig, Caysbriggs (5), Dallas Dhu (2), Elgin, Garmouth viaduct, Kinloss, Laiken Forest (2), Loch of Blairs, Loch Spynie (4), Lossie Forest (2), Lossiemouth cemetery, Newbold Forest, Pitgaveny (2), Quarry Wood (2), Roseisle, West Hardmuir and Wester Newforres.

Autumn: Individuals were heard in Oct at Elgin 2nd, Loch Spynie 7th and Tugnet 14th.

Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus*

Summer visitor and very common breeder.

Arrival: First was a single at Braes of Enzie 11 Apr, followed by 1 Strath Avon 13 Apr. A slight influx in mid Apr with four sites recording individuals on 14th (Binn Hill, The Lein, Muiry Wood and Loch Spynie) and three sites on 15th (Boat o' Brig, Kilravock Castle and Waterford).

Results from ringing at the 'Constant Effort Site' at Loch Spynie, showed that the proportion of juveniles caught per adult fell to 1.4, suggesting the cold and wet summer had an effect on local birds (RP). Counts received from Craigellachie-Dufftown (along 5.5km Speyside Way spur) included 31 singing birds on 20 May (MJHC) and 30 on 21 May (DAG).

Last report was 2 Kinloss 3 Sep.

Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*

Very common resident breeder and scarce migrant.

Counts over ten individuals included 16 Kinloss 18 Oct and 13 in the woods near Garline Farm (Ballindalloch) on 16 Nov.

Firecrest *Regulus ignicapilla*

Accidental.

A first-winter female was trapped, ringed and photographed at Conicavel 15 Nov (DSI). This is the third record for the Districts following three Dorback Burn, near Relugas 4 Oct 1970 and a single Clochan 2 Nov 1980.



Firecrest, Conicavel 15 Nov 2007 (© Dave Slater)

Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata*

Summer visitor and common breeder.

Arrival: First record was 5 birds found in five hours in the woods between Aberlour-Craigellachie on 21 May.

Other breeding season records from Cullen, Dunphail, Findrassie, Glen Brown, Hopeman (feeding young), Inchrory (feeding young) and Kinloss.

Bearded Tit *Panurus biarmicus*

Rare breeder.

Breeding: In the Loch Spynie reedbeds two males and a female were seen food carrying on 12 Jun (AJ).

Birds were seen or heard between 24 Mar-7 Oct. Best count of the year was 15-20 close to the hide on 29 Sep (RPr) and 18 (no doubt the same flock) close by on 30 Sep (CAG). There were 14 on 7 Oct (JDL). These encouraging numbers are much greater than at any time since Bearded Tits were first found at Loch Spynie in 1998.

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

Some large counts included 35 Blacksboat 9 Dec, 35 Callender 15 Dec, 30 Midwood 24 Dec, 13 Greshop Wood (Forres) 1 Dec, 12 Dunphail 8 Jan and 10 Strath Avon 4 Nov.

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

Nest boxes:

	Pairs	Mean clutch	Mean fledged brood (all pairs)	Mean fledged brood/successful pair	
Lossie Forest	9	6.8	?	?	(MJHC)
Loch Spynie	3	7.0	7.0	7.0	(RP,CAG)

A poor year at Loch Spynie with occupancy of nest boxes and average fledging of broods at their lowest levels since recording started in 1994.

Highest reported counts were 12 Midwood 8 Jan and 12 Bridge of Avon 25 Dec.

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

Nest boxes:

	Pairs	Mean clutch	Mean fledged brood (all pairs)	Mean fledged brood/successful pair	
Lossie Forest	12	6.0	?	?	(MJHC)
Loch Spynie	9	6.4	6.1	5.9	(RP,CAG)

The average clutch size at Loch Spynie was the same as 2006, while the average brood fledging from successful pairs increased very slightly from 5.1.

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

Breeding: Disappointingly, no Crested Tits occupied nest boxes in Lossie Forest in 2007. Two breeding attempts at natural sites were recorded; near Lossiemouth 2 Apr (RI) and Kinloss 21 May (AJL). A single on the Bin of Cullen 13 Apr (JD) indicates that a population still survives at this site.

One feeding on nut feeders at Loch Spynie 22 Jun is only the fourth record from the loch area, despite the proximity of the Lossie forest population. Largest group recorded was 4 Kinloss 2 May.

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

First song: Singles in Elgin singing at Linkwood 1 Feb and Dr Gray's Hospital 2 Feb.

Largest count together was 46 Kynadrochit Lodge 2 Dec. Two previous counts exceed 100 individuals: 270 Cawdor 7 Jan 1984 and 144 Lossie forest 29 Sep 1985.

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

One breeding record, from Loch Spynie, where a clutch of five eggs was laid in a nest box; these produced four young to fledging. An unusual mid-winter count of four in one tree at Loch na Bo on 5 Feb.

Jay *Garrulus glandarius**Scarce resident breeder.*

Breeding season: April-July reports came from Archiestown, Dunphail, Findrassie, Arthur's Bridge, Loch Spynie, Craigellachie, Craigellachie-Dufftown railway, Scoot Moor and Kellas.

At other seasons, Jays were seen in the following additional sites: Oakwood (Elgin) (Jan, Mar, Sep, Nov, Dec), Culbin Forest (Jan), Conicavel (Jan, Aug), Darnaway (Feb), Caysbriggs (Feb, Sep), Midwood (Feb, Dec), Loch na Bo (Mar), Sluie (Aug), Urquhart (Aug, Nov), Teinland (Sep), Quarrel Wood (Sep), Wellheads (Sep), Blacksboat (Sep, Dec), Kinloss (Oct, Dec), Sanquhar Loch (Oct), Orton (Oct), Brodie (Nov), Aberlour (Dec), Braidbog (Dec), Hill of Maud (Dec), Inchbroom (Dec), Inveravon (Dec) and Bauds Wood (Dec).

Most records typically 1-2 together; largest group was 9 Loch Spynie 3 Nov (RP) – the most ever recorded together in Moray & Nairn. The next largest group size was five, recorded at three sites: Darnaway 10 Feb, Oakwood 20 Nov and Loch Spynie 12 Sep & 21 Oct.

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

Very few records were received. Breeding continued within Forres for the second successive year at Newbold Wood. A group of seven together near Newton, Drybridge 18 Nov was the largest count. Two well inland at Tomintoul 2 Jan was unusual.

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

Highest count received was 600 Findhorn Bay 21 Dec (RHD). Other counts of 100 or more were: 160 Conicavel 11 Aug and 100 Dalnapot 11 Nov.

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

The largest flock counts included 800 going to roost Culbin Forest 21 Dec and 200 Broadfield, Keith 5 Mar.

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
127	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	45	50	nc	47	nc	nc

Elsewhere, 88 going to roost Roseisle 30 Dec, 72 Linksfield (Elgin) 17 Nov and 50 Spey Bay area 2 Jan.

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	2	nc	nc	nc	1	nc	1	2	nc	5	nc	nc
Hybrid	4	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	4	4	nc	2	nc	nc

Other 'good' Hooded Crows (maximum counts and singles unless stated) were seen at Archiestown 19 Mar, Cawdor 14 Apr, Culbin Bar (2) 21 Mar and 1 May, Cullen 7 Apr and 27 Jul, Findhorn (2) 4 Jun and 9 Aug, Kilravock Castle (2) 15 Apr, Kingston 20 May, Linksfield, Elgin 2 Aug and 17 Nov, Loch Flemington 29 Mar, Nairn Bar (3) 21 Jan, Scarffbanks 7 Apr, Tugnet 22 Apr and Urquhart (2) Jan-Mar, Oct, Dec.

Hybrids are frequent throughout Moray & Nairn. Largest count was 6 Culbin Bar 18 Feb.

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

Breeding: a pair was found on the cliffs at Tronach Head near Portknockie on 22 Apr. At least one bird was carrying sticks and one of them bore a ring (ISS). On 28 Apr the pair was seen again, associating with an apparently complete nest on a cliff ledge (MJHC). On 13 May and subsequent visits no birds could be found. Ravens are very early nesters and it is quite possible, but by no means certain, that they had made a breeding attempt prior to their discovery in April.

They are increasingly encountered in south Moray around the Cabrach, Tomintoul-Lecht and Knock of Braemoray areas. Largest count was 10 Lecht ski centre 2 Aug. 2 Ben Rinnes 30 Apr.

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

Nestboxes: Five out of 10 boxes at Clochan were occupied. All were successful and mean brood size at fledging was 4.4. Breeding success in nest boxes at Clochan since they were erected in 2000 has varied as follows:

Year	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Boxes available	7	9	9	9	9	10	10	10
Boxes occupied	6	8	9	7	4	5	5	5
Successful boxes	6	8	9	6	4	5	4	5
Mean fledged brood size	4.3	4.0	4.2	3.8	4.0	5.2	4.3	4.4

Flocks of 500 or more (away from roosts) were 3000 Covesea pig farm 1 Oct, 2000 Findhorn Bay 22 Jun, 840 Roseisle maltings 12 Nov and 500+ Kinloss 14-21 Mar. Estimates of numbers using the reedbed roost at Loch Spynie were 3000 on 24 Aug and 5000 on 16 Nov, although only 2000 on 2 Dec.

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

Very common resident breeder.

Flock counts of 25 or more were 70 Clochan 1 Sep (60 there 27 Jan), 33 Nairn 3 Sep and 28 Tomintoul 2 Dec. At Longmorn, a brood of three fledged from a nest in the branches of a Sitka Spruce tree on 17 Jun (J&HMacD). Such nests are unusual with the vast majority being built in cavities in buildings.

Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*

Fairly common resident breeder.

Breeding season: At Longmorn, nest building commenced in late March and the first brood hatched by 10 May, fledging on 26 May. Nine nest boxes were occupied. Most pairs raised two broods and two pairs raised three. The last brood fledged by 16 Aug, giving a total of 16 broods fledged from the nine boxes (J&HMacD). Elsewhere breeding was noted at Kirkhill and South Darkland, where one pair occupied a nest box. Also recorded in the breeding season at Alves, Clochan, Easter Cotts, Kingston, Lower Chanie, Midwood, Orbliston, Pitairlie, Thornhill and Urquhart.

Flock counts were generally small, best being 24 Urquhart 5 Jan (21 there 14 Mar and 13 on 19 Jan), 16 Moss of Barmuckity 20 Nov, 10 Keith 5 Mar, 9 Clochan 20 Jan. Other winter localities (less than five birds) were Archiestown, Cothill, Findhorn, Lein (Kingston) and Little Pitlurg, where up to four were present Oct-Dec for the first time.

Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*

Very common resident breeder, migrant and winter visitor.

First song, in February, heard at Kingston 12th, Linkwood and Loch Spynie 13th and Dufftown 23rd.

Flock counts of 100 or more in winter/spring were 800 Pindler's Croft 10 Jan, 550 near Tomintoul 17 Nov, 155 Drybridge 18 Nov, 150 Altyre 25 Feb, 150 Keith 5 Mar, 100 Braidbog 15 Dec and 100 Kintessack 21 Jan.

Brambling *Fringilla montifringilla*

Fairly common winter visitor and migrant.

Very small numbers reported. At garden feeders were 3 Longmorn 22 Jan, 2 South Darkland 9 Feb and 1 Aberlour 11 Feb and 22 Feb. Other records were 2 Dufftown 20 Mar, 1 Urquhart 24 Jan and 1-2 Archiestown 24 Jan, 18-20 Mar, 29 Oct, 13 Nov and 3 Dec.

Greenfinch *Carduelis chloris*

Very common resident breeder.

First song/display flighting at Kingston 7 Jan and Elgin 1 Feb.

Best flocks reported were 200 Cloddymoss 25 Jan, 35 Dunphail 23 Nov (feeding on Noble Fir cones) and 20 Spey Bay 3 Feb.

Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*

Common resident breeder.

Counts of 10 or more together were 71 Burnside of Dipple 25 Nov, 50 Dunphail 8 Jan, 40 Clochan 11 Oct, 24 Bishopmill (Elgin) 23 Dec, 20 Spey Bay 15 Sep, 20 Urquhart 13 Feb, 19 Kinloss 21 Dec and 18 Elgin 14 Feb.

Siskin *Carduelis spinus*

Very common resident breeder and migrant.

More abundant than usual with sizeable flocks present in many forests, especially in the late winter period. Numbers were often hard to ascertain and only a few flocks were counted; those containing 20 or more birds were 400 Strathavon 8 Nov, 200 Stynie Glebe 4 Dec, 164 Blacksboat 9 Dec, 150 Rosarie Forest 24 Nov, 68 Delnabo 4 Nov, 60 Hill of Maud 15 Dec, 50 Delnapot 11 Nov, 50 Kinloss 18 Oct, 45 Sanquhar Loch (Forres) 27 Jan, 40 Inveravon 24 Dec, 30 Lower Chanie 10 Nov, 30 Rothes 31 Jan, 25 Craggan More 16 Nov and 22 Bauds Wood (Cullen) 30 Dec.

Linnet *Carduelis cannabina*

Very common resident breeder.

Rather few counts reported. Flocks of 100 or more were 230 Clochan 31 Dec, 192 Garmouth 7 Oct, 170 Midwood (Clochan) 18 Nov, 150 South Darkland 10 Feb, 150 Tugnet 16 Sep, 150 Urquhart 21 Mar, 133 Strathlene 29 Sep and 120 Kinloss 8 Nov.

Twite *Carduelis flavirostris*

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

In up-country breeding habitat were 2 Dalestie (Glen Avon) 17 Jun (MJHC) and 3 there 8 Jul (ISS). As usual, the low-lying coast between Delnies and Findhorn Bay hosted small numbers in winter. Counts were 45 Carse of Delnies 21 Jan (RHD) (still c40 there 18 Feb (DAG)), 35 Kingsteps 21 Jan (DCJ), 27 Nairn Bar 18 Feb (DCJ) and around Findhorn Bay were 34 on 24 Jan (AJL), c20 on 28 Jan (DAG), 3 on 29 Jan (ISS), 35 on 15 Oct (AJL), 22 on 23 Oct (RHD) and 6 on 23 Nov (RHD).

Lesser Redpoll (Redpoll) *Carduelis cabaret*

Common resident breeder and migrant.

In summer the only reports received were 6 Glanlatterach Reservoir 9 Jun, 1 Knockandhu 13 May, 5 Loch Allan 26 May and 6 Myreton 1 May.

Best winter flocks were 16 Delnabo 4 Nov, 50 Strathavon 12 Nov and 22 Dunphail 29 Nov.

Common (Mealy) Redpoll *Cardualis flammea*

Very scarce migrant and winter visitor.

1 Dallas 23 Feb (RHD). Of major interest was the presence of six birds at Dunearn on 21 Jul (RHD). It is thought likely that this was a family group. Breeding of Mealy Redpolls has seldom been recorded in Scotland, and then mostly in the Northern Isles; although also in Sutherland in 2000.

These are the first records in Moray & Nairn since 1996, at a time prior to the separation of Lesser and Mealy Redpolls as separate species.

Common Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra*

Irregular scarce visitor and probable scarce breeder.

Scottish Crossbill *Loxia scotica*

Probable common resident breeder.

Counts of 10 or more Crossbill sp. were 30 Tom an Ime (Cragganmore) 16 Nov, 25 Milton (Tomintoul) 2 Dec, 21 Auchindoun Castle 28 Dec, 13 Hill of Maud 15 Dec, 13 Holmie (Clochan) 17 Nov, 10 Kinloss 12 Jul, 10 Essil 10 Apr, 10 Glenmullie 16 Dec and 10 Stronachavie 2 Dec. It is likely that most of these flocks were Common Crossbills. Also considered to be Common were 12 Glenlivet 13 May, 12 Dounduff Wood 2 Aug and 24 Dunphail 24 Dec.

The only confident claim of Scottish was 2 Cawdor Wood 28 Jan.

Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula**Common resident breeder.*

A female was feeding two fledged young at Broom of Moy in late July. Largest group of the year was 12 Lynemore (Glen Gheallaidh) 15 Dec in a mixed area of pine/birch woodland and heather moorland. No other group exceeded the sixes counted at Kinloss 1 Feb, Muiry Wood (Forres) 16 Dec, Urquhart 28 Feb and Wester Gaulrig 4 Nov.

Snow Bunting *Plectrophenax nivalis**Common winter visitor and rare breeder.*

First coastal record in autumn was 4 Findhorn 17 Oct.

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

	Jan	Feb	Oct	Nov	Dec
Nairn/Culbin Bars (& east Nairn)	42 (21 st)	60 (18 th)	18 (28 th)	nc	95 (9 th)
Lossiemouth east beach	25 (8 th)	20 (14 th)	nc	29 (24 th)	60 (6 th)

Compared with 2006, numbers in Jan-Feb at both sites were much lower, but a bit higher at the end of the year.

Elsewhere, in the lowlands, 80 over Spey Bay car park 2 Dec and 15 Stynie Glebe (Mosstodloch) 4 Dec. Upcountry, 19 Aldunie (Cabrach) 16 Dec. Last in spring at the coast were 2 Spey Bay 17 Apr.

Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella**Very common resident breeder.*

First song Longmorn 19 Mar and Lein (Kingston) 23 Mar. Still singing Findhorn Bay 5 Aug.

Flock counts (10 or more) were 70 Meft 8 Jan, 40 Urquhart 13 Jan, 25 Archiestown 25 Jan (12 there 16 Mar), 20 Spey Bay 3 Feb (15 there 2 Jan), 18 Loch Flemington 29 Mar and 12 Greshope (Forres) 16 Dec.

Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus**Common resident breeder.*

Present in the breeding season at Archiestown, Findrassie, Keith, Kinloss, Lein (Kingston) where first song heard 28 Mar, Loch Flemington, Loch Spynie, Spey Bay and Urquhart.

Again, good numbers in winter in the dunes around Findhorn village where 10 on 28 Jan and 14 on 18 Feb. Regular in small numbers on the Nairn and Culbin Bars in winter.

Corn Bunting *Emberiza calandra**Scarce resident breeder.*

Singing birds were located at Nether Dallachy, Lochhill, Spey Bay and Stonewells.

A flock seen intermittently around Clochan contained 14 on 11 Mar, 17 on 29 Apr and 12 on 31 Dec. The species is often very late to commence breeding as suggested by the late April birds still in a flock. Elsewhere, 18 Speyslaw 13 Oct was the only other group reported.

ADDITIONS/CORRECTIONS TO 2005 REPORT

Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*

Add: One pair bred on the River Spey upstream from Fochabers and a fledged brood of four young was seen. They also bred here in 2001 or 2002 (I. Tennant).

Red-backed Shrike *Lanius collurio*

Add: A male was seen along the track towards Scarffbanks Farm near Loch Spynie on 28 May (R. Smith). A bird reported at Ballindalloch in May 2001 was never submitted to Moray & Nairn Rarities Committee so the 2005 bird becomes the 11th record for Moray & Nairn and the first since 1992

ADDITIONS/CORRECTIONS TO 2006 REPORT

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*

Add: 300 off Lossiemouth 28 Dec.

Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*

Add: Regular on the Spey at Aberlour in winter, max. 5M,2F on 27 Feb.

Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

Add: Several winter records on the Spey at Aberlour, max. 3 on 24 Jan and 2 on 12 Nov.

Golden Eagle *Aquila chrysaetos*

Line 3 should readan adult and two immature birds on 12 Feb.....

Peregrine *Falco peregrinus*

Add: Breeding: 16 sites were checked. Only five were occupied of which two were successful with five young fledging between them (JJCH).

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*

Under 'Breeding' add: Up to three adults regularly on the Spey at Aberlour 1 May-17 Jul but no evidence of breeding (AE).

Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca*

There have been seven previous records in Moray & Nairn, not five as stated.

DECISIONS OF BRITISH BIRDS RARITIES COMMITTEE

The following records **have** been accepted:

King Eider	Burghead	7-23 April 2007
Bonapartes's Gull	Loch Spynie	23-26 May 2007

DECISIONS OF SCOTTISH BIRDS RARITIES COMMITTEE

The following records **have** been accepted:

Great Shearwater	Lossiemouth	3 September 2007
Great Shearwater (2)	Lossiemouth	14 September 2007

DECISIONS OF MORAY & NAIRN RARITIES COMMITTEE

The following records **have** been accepted:

Green-winged Teal	Gilston	4 March 2007
Green-winged Teal	Loch Flemington	18 February 2007
Black-necked Grebe	Burghead Bay	3 April 2007
Little Egret (2)	Findhorn Bay	3-4 June (1 until 15 Aug) 2007
Little Egret	Kingston	10 June 2007
Little Ringed Plover (up to 3)	Kingston	July 2007
Long-tailed Skua (11)	Lossiemouth	3 September 2007
Mediterranean Gull	Loch Spynie	9-25 Feb 2007
Mediterranean Gull	Lossiemouth	18 June 2007
Mediterranean Gull	Lossiemouth	20 Sep-21 Oct 2007
Mediterranean Gull	Delnies	16 February 2007
Sabine's Gull	Lossiemouth	10 September 2007
Sabine's Gull	Lossiemouth	17 September 2007
Hoopoe	Glenfiddich	29 April 2007
Lesser Whitethroat	Alves	Nov 2006-c25 April 2007
Firecrest	Conicavel	15 Nov 2007

GRID REFERENCES OF MAJOR LOCALITIES MENTIONED IN THE SPECIES ACCOUNTS

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

Roseisle	NJ138666	Tarras	NJ062597
		Tomintoul	NJ170185
Sanquhar Loch	NJ041581	Tugnet	NJ348655
Scarffbanks	NJ237663		
Spey Bay	NJ354653	Urquhart	NJ286627
Speymouth	NJ345656		
Strathlene	NJ449674		

**BIRDS OF THE MORAY MOORS
A RESURVEY OF THE LADDER HILLS AREA 2007**

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Summary

Eleven one-km squares were surveyed for moorland birds in 2007. The results were compared with those from a survey of the same 11 squares in 1997, which also used the same method. Five species showed evidence of population decline within the survey area: Hen Harrier (decline to extinction), Red Grouse, Dunlin, Skylark and Wheatear, with five other species showing evidence of increase: Golden Plover, Common Gull, Meadow Pipit, Stonechat and Raven. Other species either showed no change or were encountered rarely.

1. Introduction

Moorland bird surveys have been carried in upland Morayshire in the 1980s by the former Nature Conservancy Council and in 1997 by RSPB Scotland (Francis *et al.* 1999). In 2007, a further resurvey of selected 1-km squares was carried out using the same methods as the 1997 survey. This report presents the results, which relate largely to areas within the Ladder Hills SSSI/Special Area of Conservation.

2. Background and methods

Several areas of Moray's moorlands were surveyed by NCC teams in 1988 and 1989 (Shepherd *et al.* 1988, 1989). They used variants and precursors of the method now standard for moorland survey work (Brown and Shepherd 1993). In 1997, RSPB Scotland carried out surveys of 45 1-km squares across the Moray moors, using the Brown and Shepherd method. As noted in the RSPB report (Francis *et al.* 1999), the variations in the earlier methods meant that a conclusive comparison of data from 1987/88 and 1997 was not possible, as in particular differences in observer effort levels influenced the results.

In 2007, we resurveyed 11 of the 1-km squares in the Ladder Hills area, almost entirely lying within Glenlivet Estate centred on the Lecht area (Table 1), using the same methods as in the 1997 survey. This makes the results comparable for these squares between 1997 and 2007. Most of the squares fell entirely or partially within the Ladder Hills SSSI/SAC. The number of observer hours expended on the surveys in both years was almost identical - c.53 hours in total, or about 4.8 hours per square, divided between an early and late season visit in each. The survey dates and time of day of visits was also similar in each year. The Brown and Shepherd method divides each 1-km square into four 500x500m quadrants, each systematically covered on foot for around half an hour on each visit. The birds seen are counted and mapped, and after both visits the results are combined and estimates made of the number of individuals or pairs in the 1-km square.

We then compared the results from 1997 and 2007. Since methods and observer hours were identical, this comparison should give a reasonable idea of changes in numbers for most species (though some, such as Snipe, are skulking and are not well-surveyed by this method). Ideally, a larger sample of squares would have been better, since chance effects, weather and seasonal factors might influence bird counts. The changes described below should be viewed with this caveat in mind.

Table 1. One-km squares surveyed in the Lecht area in 2007

NJ2212	Camore/Carn Ealasaid
NJ2213	Meur Crionach
NJ2313	Beinn a'Chruinnich
NJ2214	Lurg Dhubh
NJ2215	The Garlet
NJ2314	Bridge of Lecht
NJ2315	Lecht Mine
NJ2414	Lochan gun Doimhna
NJ2415	Tom na Broighleig
NJ2514	Caochan Crom
NJ2515	Carn Liath

3. Results

Table 2 presents the estimated totals of birds in each square in 1997 and in 2007, and highlights the changes for moorland species. Five moorland bird species were considered to have decreased and five increased in numbers. Nine more showed either little apparent change or were rarely encountered. These changes were considered more likely to be real if a) the number of a species recorded in either year was five or more, and b) the apparent change was more than 10% between the two years. These criteria are arbitrary, but eliminate species with very small numbers of encounters, or where changes were small and less distinguishable from possible 'noise' caused by survey or weather-related variables. These changes over the 11-year period between 1997 and 2007 are discussed below, with reference to the earlier NCC surveys from 1988 and 1989.

4. Discussion

This discussion concentrates on apparent changes between 1997 (as reported in Francis *et al.* 1999) and 2007. Reference is made though to the surveys carried out by the NCC in 1998 and 1989, but as explained above, direct comparison is not possible due to variations in methods.

4a. Moorland species showing evidence of decline 1997-2007

Hen Harrier

This species has disappeared completely as a breeding bird in the Ladder Hills. There are now no known pairs in the entire SSSI. In the 1990s, numbers peaked at 11 territorial pairs in 1994 with an average of eight pairs from 1991-1994 (RSPB wing-tagging study). In our survey squares, during this period there were up to four territorial pairs (Brian Etheridge/Jim Craib/NESRSG pers. comm.). There is evidence from the previous Moray Moors survey that numbers in the Ladder Hills survey tetrads may have increased between the late 1980s and 1997 (Francis *et al.* 1999), though survey effort was greater in 1997. There were national surveys of Hen Harriers in 1988/89, 1998 and 2004, which showed an increase in the Scottish population from 479 territorial pairs in 1988/89 (436 pairs in 1998) to 633 territorial pairs in 2004 (Sim *et al.* 2007). However, this increase was confined to the west of the country; numbers in the eastern Highlands declined from 109 to 65 territorial pairs, especially on grouse moors, and our area appears to have mirrored this decline. The habitat within the Ladder Hills SSSI/SAC remains suitable for Hen Harriers; numbers are almost certainly limited by human action leading to few possible recruits from nearby areas, together with more intensive burning of suitable areas of longer heather.

**Table 2: Moray Moors resurvey of Ladder Hills
1-km squares, 2007, compared with 1997 survey - summary comparison**

Comparison of 'moorland' bird and mammal numbers
recorded in 53 hours of survey work in 11 1-km squares, 1997 and 2007

Numbers recorded are individuals, except those in ***bold italics = pairs***
Where numerical change is >10%, and numbers seen were >5 in any year,

Increase =
Decrease =

BIRDS	1997	2007
Mallard	4	3
Hen Harrier	6	0
Buzzard	5	5
Golden Eagle	0	1
Merlin	1	2
Red Grouse	153	116
<i>Golden Plover</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>20</i>
<i>Dunlin</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Snipe</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Curlew</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>
Common Gull	12	400
Skylark	12	0
Meadow Pipit	199	220
Whinchat	0	1
Stonechat	0	7
<i>Wheatear</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>5</i>
Ring Ouzel	2	1
Raven	5	22
Carrion Crow	2	0

Red Grouse

The total number of individuals encountered in all squares dropped by 24% over the 11-year period from 153 to 116. Between 1988/89 and 1997, there was an 8% decrease, which may actually have been greater than this as effort levels in 1997 were greater than in the 1980s. Over Scotland as a whole, from a sample of 52 1-km squares, the BTO national Breeding Bird Survey reported a non-significant decrease of 12% between 1994 and 2006 in Scotland (Raven *et al.* 2007). Red Grouse numbers are well known to vary as population cycles change, and a general picture of decline over the last 10 years appears to be reflected by our results. Census data presented on the Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust website (<http://www.gct.org.uk/text03.asp?PageId=335>) suggests a clear cycle in population densities on 23 sites on Scottish estates, with a peak July/August density of some 50 or so adults per 100 ha in 1998-1999 dropping gradually to around half of those levels by 2005.

Dunlin

Numbers of Dunlin recorded were small, but there was an apparent decline from nine to five pairs, and also a shift in their location. Between 1988/89 and 1997, numbers apparently increased four times with

twice the survey effort. However, Dunlins are extremely hard to survey effectively, being inconspicuous and with numbers varying annually and according to site conditions. There is no reliable information nationally on changes in breeding populations, though the distributions recorded in national breeding bird atlases suggested a decrease of 44% in number of occupied 10-km squares in the UK between 1968-72 and 1988-91. There appears to be no useful information on range or trends since then, though the new national breeding atlas soon to commence (2008-2011) should rectify this.

Skylark

No Skylarks were recorded in the survey squares in 2007, compared with 12 in 1997. Between 1988/89 and 1997, there was no change in numbers recorded, despite twice the survey effort, indicating a decline in that period too. This apparent decline is more severe than those recorded nationally; over Scotland as a whole, from a sample of 188 1-km squares, the BTO national Breeding Bird Survey reported a non-significant decrease of 8% between 1994 and 2006 in Scotland (Raven *et al.* 2007). However, this relates to all breeding habitats, not just the uplands. There appears to be little information on trends in upland or moorland areas, though Sim *et al.* (2005) reported a non-significant increase on 12 upland study plots in NE Scotland between 1986-91 and 2000 and they conclude that the estimated 13-15% of the British breeding population found in the uplands has not suffered the large declines seen on lowland farmland. Although Skylarks at low densities can be quite elusive, it does however appear that they are now very scarce in the Ladder Hills area.

Wheatear

Only five Wheatears were recorded in 2007, compared with 12 in 1997. Between 1988/89 and 1997, the evidence suggested an increase in these upland squares. From a sample of 73 1-km squares, the BTO national Breeding Bird Survey reported a non-significant increase of 23% between 1994 and 2006 in Scotland (Raven *et al.* 2007). Sim *et al.* (2005) reported a non-significant increase on 12 upland study plots in NE Scotland between 1986-91 and 2000. Wheatears are quite conspicuous and are not easily overlooked. The apparent trend in numbers in our survey squares therefore appears contrary to suggestions from elsewhere, though this may be related to our relatively small sample size.

4b. Moorland species showing evidence of increase 1997-2007

Golden Plover

Numbers apparently increased from 17 to 20 pairs between 1997 and 2007. Between 1988/89 and 1997, there was no clear change. From a sample of 41 1-km squares, the BTO national Breeding Bird Survey reported a non-significant increase of 21% between 1994 and 2006 in Scotland (Raven *et al.* 2007). Sim *et al.* (2005) reported a non-significant decrease of 37% on 12 upland study plots in NE Scotland between 1986-91 and 2000 and concluded that over the British uplands, there was evidence of a long-term and widespread decline in parts of the country. The trend in our squares was the opposite of this, though based on a small sample size of breeding pairs. It seems that there may well be local variability in abundance trends, even if there is a more general decline.

Common Gull

Numbers of this species showed a large increase from 12 to 400 birds between 1997 and 2007, mainly due to the fairly recent establishment of a breeding colony around the Lecht Ski Centre. This is mostly concentrated on Beinn a' Chruinnich (at least 125 pairs present) but also on Meikle Corr Riabhach. Between 1988/89 and 1997, there was no clear change in Common Gull numbers, which were also very small. The BTO national Breeding Bird Survey does not sample enough squares with this species to report a trend, though in NE Scotland, there have been some large declines in the big moorland colonies, coupled with some redistribution into newer smaller colonies such as this.

Meadow Pipit

Numbers increased from 199 to 220 individuals between 1997 and 2007. Between 1988/89 and 1997, numbers apparently decreased by 7% despite increased survey effort. From a sample of 194 1-km squares, the BTO national Breeding Bird Survey reported a significant decrease of 22% between 1994 and 2006 in Scotland (Raven *et al.* 2007). Sim *et al.* (2005) reported a non-significant decrease of 1% on 12 upland study plots in NE Scotland between 1986-91 and 2000. The evidence from these 1-km squares on the Ladder Hills is that Meadow Pipit numbers are still quite high and there is no evidence of serious decline – rather, general stability with some fluctuation, or even increased numbers.

Stonechat

No Stonechats were recorded in these squares in 1997 but there were seven in 2007. Between 1988/89 and 1997, no real change was detected. It does seem from local bird reports that in the last ten years or so there has been a very significant increase generally in Stonechat numbers in NE Scotland, probably linked in part to the absence of severe winter weather. The BTO national Breeding Bird Survey does not sample enough squares with Stonechats to produce a trend, but Sim *et al.* (2005) reported a significant increase (5300%!) on 12 upland study plots in NE Scotland between 1986-91 and 2000.

Raven

Numbers increased in our squares from five to 22 individuals between 1997 and 2007, though even in 1997 there were small post- or non-breeding flocks present in the Ladder Hills in late spring and summer. Numbers have increased significantly across the whole of the NE Scotland uplands since then. In 1988/89 Ravens were also recorded in one Ladder Hills square. From a sample of 39 1-km squares, the BTO national Breeding Bird Survey reported a non-significant increase of 49% between 1994 and 2006 in Scotland (Raven *et al.* 2007). Sim *et al.* (2005) reported an increase of 1040% on 12 upland study plots in NE Scotland between 1986-91 and 2000 and concluded that recent Raven increases in the whole of Britain probably reflected a general decline in the level of persecution.

4c. Moorland species showing little evidence of change 1997-2007, or those rarely encountered

The following species showed little evidence of change and/or were rarely encountered (five or fewer in either year): Mallard, Buzzard, Golden Eagle, Merlin, Snipe, Curlew, Ring Ouzel, Whinchat and Carrion Crow. No further interpretation is presented for these species.

4d. General discussion and conclusions

The bird community of these 11 upland moorland 1-km squares which lie largely in the Ladder Hills SSSI appears to be generally diverse with most species showing relatively small or no changes in numbers over the last ten years or so. However, there are some exceptions to this. On the negative side, the complete loss of Hen Harrier as a breeding species is a serious reduction in the suite of species listed on Annex 1 of the EU 'Birds' Directive that occupy the site. Red Grouse numbers appear to have dropped in line with cyclical changes occurring more generally across Scotland. Dunlin numbers may be lower, but this is a difficult bird to survey. The apparent loss or large decline of Skylark and Wheatear are hard to explain and in both cases do not appear to reflect recent trends in the Scottish uplands. On the positive side, the increase in numbers of Stonechat and Raven do reflect wider trends, though apparent increases in Golden Plovers and Meadow Pipits may not. A new, large Common Gull colony has established itself and this behaviour is typical of these moorland-nesting gulls in NE Scotland.

All of the numbers of birds estimated using the Brown and Shepherd method are estimates and prone to some degree of error. We covered only 11 1-km squares, which is a relatively small sample, and the summer of 2007 was particularly wet, which may have affected bird numbers and ease of detection. We did not set out to measure any habitat variables, and certainly no gross changes were noted. However, changes in the degree and intensity of burning or grazing may have had subtle effects on birds, and some reduction in the extent of longer heather was apparent.

Ideally, this survey should be repeated again in 2016 or 2017, using the same Brown and Shepherd methods. By that time, the results of the new national breeding bird atlas (2008-2011) will be available, as well as the NE Scotland Breeding Bird Atlas from 2002-2006. These sources of information should allow a much more refined assessment of future changes in bird numbers on the Ladder Hills area of the Moray Moors.

5. Acknowledgements

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PROBLEMS WITH NORTH-EAST SCOTTISH COMMON GULLS*W.R.P. BOURNE*

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Until recently there has been a large population of Common Gulls in NE Scotland (Bourne 2004a, 2006). The species was not known to breed in Banffshire by George Edward in 1850, and this was first noticed in the Mortlach and Correen Hills in the 1880s. Harvie Brown & Buckley (1897) reported that Common Gulls then bred on the Carn Hills between the Deveron and Bogie, near the summit on Carn Gruamach. These hills are not easy to locate, but there are a number of remote ones of this name between the headwaters of the Deveron and Fiddich, where it is now proposed to locate the Dorenell wind-farm. There do not appear to be many gulls there now, but they may have been displaced.

By the period between the wars there were colonies of scores and hundreds of pairs with smaller numbers of the big gulls on most of the heathy hill-tops in the agricultural areas. With the development of forestry after World War II many of these were displaced, and presumably rejoined the birds in the original core areas, where the colonies came to number thousands. They became so large in the 1980s (Tasker et al. 1991, Mitchell & Thompson 1998) that they were considered of international importance. Thus when more recently they started declining it was a matter of concern.

Considering possible causes, there has long been some adult mortality early in the season, but no more than tens of birds even in large colonies. It was investigated by the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries for Scotland during a search for avian influenza for the World Influenza Unit in 1974, and some birds were found to have been either shot, or poisoned by an organophosphate, dimethoate. There were two other cases of poisoning by organophosphate at that time. One adult gull was noted to be "dopey" in May 1992, and one was weak and unable to hold up its head in April 2007, which is said to be characteristic of botulism, possibly from feeding on garbage dumps before much invertebrate food becomes available. Later in the year many chicks have also been found dead of starvation regularly in dry summers, and in 2004 this mortality continued along the shore after the breeding season (Bourne 2004b). Foxes hang about the colonies, but do not seem to kill many birds. Dead chicks were once found on a hill-top, which might have been due to a Stoat, and sucked eggs once by a burn, which might have been due to a Mink, but this seems unusual, though it might help to drive the birds away.

When the Correen Hills were visited after a storm on 12 June 1993 over a thousand pairs of Common Gulls on a high bare hilltop had lost interest in their nests, and sometimes still fresh eggs were being scavenged by corvids. Another breeding failure was also reported there the following year, and after this the colony was gradually deserted, while Common Gulls returned to an old, lower, more sheltered site 12 km away near Boultenstone. In the spring of 2007 birds started to lay in the huge colony at Corsemaul in the Mortlach Hills in late April as usual until there was a severe northerly storm in early May, after which all the nests found on the north slope except one in a sheltered site were found to have been predated, and there was the unprecedented total of 11 freshly dead adult Common Gulls there. Some were sent for investigation, but nothing was found- I wonder if they died from exposure? Some birds later relayed, and colonies on lower, south-facing slopes elsewhere were less severely affected, while one behind the predator-proof fence of a gas pipeline inspection site on low ground near Aberdeen had a normal productivity (Table 1).

Usually it is not easy to follow the birds' progress. JNCC counts of nests (Tasker et al. 1991) have produced higher figures than my counts of birds (Bourne 2004a). The easiest thing to measure is clutch-size (Table 1). In the enclosed low site it could be seen that the birds would relay until they had achieved near total breeding success, even if the last chicks did not fledge until August in some years. In the

hilltop colonies while the whole hillside may move with chicks in good years, they may be hard to find in bad ones, though Jon Hardey has followed birds in enclosures for SNH. The most important factor affecting their breeding success appears to be the weather. Early in the season high winds with low temperatures may chill the eggs and possibly even kill the adult birds in the more exposed sites. Some relay, but it does not continue so long. Later drought may lead to starvation of the young, possibly by driving the worms on which they are largely fed deeper, and this may continue after they fledge (Bourne 2004b). It is not clear to what extent the other local gulls, also in decline (notably the Black-heads and Herring Gulls), are affected by the same factors - predation by Foxes and Mink may be more important here.

In 2008 the birds laid a fortnight later after a cold April. There were some dead and dying at first, and again birds were investigated by SNH and SSPCA, but nothing positive was found. Only 43% of the nests were occupied with an average clutch size of only 2.3 on 21 May, and after further bad weather there were still two late clutches of two hatching on 18 June, when only six half-grown chicks could be found in the whole Corsmaul colony, half of them dead, with a dead Mountain Leveret. Large numbers of adult gulls with few chicks continued to frequent surrounding country until 31 July, when hundreds of birds left north down the Fiddich valley at 2030 hrs.

Table 1. Welfare of North-East Scottish Common Gull colonies

Nature of site	Site/ conditions	2007 Date	Clutch size (+chicks)				Mean clutch size	% nests occupied	Old/ new dead birds
			c/0	c/1	c/2	c/3			
Low protected site	Leuchar Moss	31/5	0	0	6 (+1)	15 (+10)	2.8	100	0/0
High, north-facing	North Corsemaul (N.C.)	27/4	25	3	4	11	2.4	42	7/3
	N.C. after gale	14/5	0	1	0	0	(1)		3/11
	N.C. repeat nests	23/5	25	4	6	1	1.7	31	3/0
High, south-facing	South Corsemaul	16/5	12	3	1	3	2.0	37	3/3
	Tom Mor	16/5	19	13	13	26	2.2	72	4/1
	Boulten-stone	31/5	29	4	6	9	2.2	40	3/0
		2008 Date							
High, north-facing	N.C. after cold April	8/5	30	8	1	1	1.3	25	0/3
	N.C. after rain	21/5	37	4	11	13	2.3	43	6/0
	N.C. after rain	18/6	23	1	2	0	1.7	11.5	2/0

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BONAPARTE'S GULL AT LOCH SPYNIE NEW TO MORAY & NAIRN

DUNCAN GIBSON

I was on holiday on Wednesday 23rd May 2007 so I set out for a days birding staying fairly local to my home town of Lossiemouth. In the morning I paid visits to Kingston, Garmouth Viaduct then Spey Bay. Nothing too exciting to see at any of these locations apart from reasonable numbers of terns at Spey Bay. I was actually hoping for a Little Gull at Speymouth. I left Spey Bay, probably just in time before being asked the inevitable question “have you seen the Osprey yet?” and headed for Loch Spynie.

The loch was typically quiet for this time of year apart from the squabbling Black-headed Gulls and Common Terns fighting for territory on the nesting platform. There were a few small gulls on the water adjacent to the platform, which I had a look through. Amongst the Black-headed Gulls was another gull that looked different. It was obviously an immature bird and had little or no black in the hood, a small and black pointed bill and a distinctive dark ear patch; my initial thoughts were that I was looking at a Bonaparte's Gull. Never having seen Bonaparte's Gull my ID was based on memory from photographs and illustrations I have seen of the species, in my quest to turn up something out of the norm amongst the gulls on the Lossie Estuary!

I quickly attached my camera to my telescope to get some record shots of the bird, which was not easy, as it was fairly mobile. The bird then flew off which was quite frustrating as I hadn't had time to get perfect views of it or good photographs. I had a look at my Collins Bird Guide and was pretty happy that this was a Bonaparte's Gull, but the rarity of it was leaving me rather doubtful. I then phoned Bob Proctor and probably blurted out a few incoherent words about a possible immature Bonaparte's Gull. Unfortunately with his work commitments he couldn't come down. I then phoned Charlie Gervaise with the same tale, but once again he had other commitments but would try and get down later. I couldn't think of anyone else local that would be available at that time. I was left on my own!

I then had a dreadful thought that it may have been an immature Little Gull or even an immature Kittewake, but another quick glance at Collins put my mind at ease. Over the next couple of hours the bird reappeared several times to feed, plunge diving for small fish. During these feeding periods I got excellent views of it in flight, on the water and finally perched. All the important characteristics were looking good for Bonaparte's. After feeding, the bird would then fly off to rest on farmland beside the canal at the other side of the loch.

Charlie Gervaise arrived with his granddaughter, but the bird had once again left the loch and flown over the canal and out of sight. Charlie stayed for a while but the bird didn't return. He had only left the hide for 30 seconds when it reappeared. He quickly returned and managed to see the gull briefly at a distance through my scope and did remark that it was certainly different.

Bob Proctor eventually arrived between work commitments, but once again the bird had just finished feeding and had flown off to rest. He waited as long as he could but also had to leave. He was going to ring some Treecreepers nearby in one of Charlie's nest boxes before returning to work. After 5 minutes the bird arrived back. I immediately phoned Bob who ran down to the hide. Luckily this time the bird had landed on the loch in front of the hide and I had my scope onto it for him. Over the next few minutes Bob was able to study the bird in detail, on the water, in flight etc. taking notes and sketching the bird, wing patterns etc. I can't remember his exact words, but he did say that it was definitely a "Bony's" and a "first for the district", quite a relief for me to have it confirmed!

Behaviour :- the gull would spend several minutes flying over the loch, twisting and turning and plunge diving for small fish. The wing beats were generally faster than a Black-headed Gull and the diving was Tern like, sometimes briefly submerging below the surface. The gull would sometime alight on the surface of the loch to swallow the fish. It was only seen perching occasionally. After the feeding it would fly away from the loch to a field out of sight to rest (other gulls also dropping into this area). The gull would then reappear 30 – 50 minutes later to feed in the same manner.

Description :-

Size & structure: slightly smaller than Black-headed Gull seen in comparison both on the water and in flight. A more delicate and slender gull than the Black-headed Gulls

Plumage: Forehead and crown white with dark grey flecks. Prominent grey/black ear spot. Hindcrown, hindneck and mantle very pale grey. Scapulars grey. In flight the upper wing showed clear crisp patterns. Primary 10 had a black outer edge and the remaining primaries had a neat black fringe with small white tips, this resulted in a crisp black triangular "V" to the wings. This black fringe extended into the inner wing with the secondaries also having black tips but with a pale edge. This formed a very distinctive sharp trailing edge. Carpal bar brown. Inner primary coverts white with the outer primary coverts having a dark edge. The remaining upper wing being grey as scapulars. In flight the under side in the wing had a dark trailing edge. Underside of primaries translucent when the gull was viewed twisting and turning in flight. Rump and tail white with a fairly broad black band near the tip which a very slim white fringe. This band was incomplete, from left to right, tail feathers 1 – 6 and 11&12 had the complete black band but feathers 7 – 10 were completely white. This may indicate regrown from tail damage rather than replaced by normal moult. Underside white.

Bare parts: Eyes black. Legs pale pink. Bill black, short and pointed obviously smaller and neater than the Black-headed Gulls.

The bird remained in the area for a few days and was last seen on 26 May. The only sighting away from Loch Spynie was on the Lossie estuary on the late evening of 25 May by Roy Dennis. It could be rather elusive and unpredictable, but also showing extremely well on some occasions for the people fortunate enough to see it.

**GREAT SHEARWATER AT LOSSIEMOUTH
NEW TO MORAY & NAIRN**

BOB PROCTOR

Seawatching in the autumn at Lossiemouth had been very productive with a good selection of common and with the possibility of some scarce species. One of the species that was seen in large numbers on the West Coast and off Ireland was Great Shearwater. Numbers at western sites included 7,114 past the Butt of Lewis. However, of most interest to local birders was birds moving into the North Sea and with the right winds, these could potentially move past our coastline as they try to re-orientate themselves.

On 3rd September, I'd received a phone call from Martin Cook to say that a good passage of seabirds was underway at Lossiemouth and included all four skuas. I left as soon as I could and was in position for a two hour seawatch by 6pm. At about 7.30pm a large shearwater came into view from behind the seawall and flew closer. I realised that it was a Great Shearwater. It banked 3-4 times showing its' upperparts and underparts. I telephoned Duncan Gibson who was at the opposite end of the seawall, however, he was unable to locate it from his position. The bird continued flying west until I lost it in a trough when it was approximately off Covesea lighthouse.

Description

Size: A large shearwater (*i.e.* larger than Manx Shearwater) and estimated to be about the size of a Fulmar, though a direct comparison was not possible. The individual was definitely smaller than the Gannets passing.

Jizz: This individual sheared less rapidly than the Manx Shearwaters involved in the passage. The stiff wings and slow shearing gave a flight impression similar to the Fulmars passing, rather than the lazy flight of Cory's Shearwater.

Plumage: At the closest it flew to my position, it banked towards me, and its' upperparts could be clearly seen. At this distance features noted included the blackish primaries and primary coverts (*i.e.* the outer half of the wing), and what appeared to be a very narrow blackish trailing edge along the secondaries. I was unable to confirm if this trailing edge was caused by dark secondaries or an effect caused by lighter feathers in the wing (*e.g.* the coverts). The upperparts (lesser, median and greater coverts, secondaries, mantle, back and nape area) were brownish-grey. The lighter lesser, median and greater coverts contrasted with the darker primaries and primary coverts. The tail was obviously black, contrasting with the back, and appeared slightly elongated; the shape was obviously different when compared to the squared tail shape of Manx Shearwater and Fulmar. An obvious white band was present between the black tail and the browner rump. The bird showed a dark brown cap.

The bird banked a little further away so that its underside was showing. The underside of the wings were obviously white, with dark (blackish-brown) primaries and trailing edge. Near the axillary area a dark stripe was seen, angled from the trailing edge toward the carpal area. The dark belly smudge and undertail coverts, easily seen on close birds off Massachusetts, was not seen on this individual: this may have been the result of my position to the bird, the dark background of the sea, or the distance between my position and the bird when I was able to view the belly region.

RINGING REPORT

BOB PROCTOR

Numbers of birds ringed in Moray & Nairn during 2007:

	FG	Pull.	Total		FG	Pull.	Total
Purple Sandpiper	26		26	Blue Tit	46	33	79
Redshank	4		4	Great Tit	25	51	76
Herring Gull		1	1	Treecreeper	3	4	7
Guillemot	1		1	Jay	2		2
Black Guillemot		1	1	Jackdaw	1		1
Tawny Owl		2	2	Starling	1	18	19
Collared Dove	1		1	House Sparrow	91		91
Grt. Spot. Woodpecker	2		2	Tree Sparrow	6		6
Swallow		52	52	Chaffinch	36		36
Rock Pipit	1		1	Greenfinch	17		17
Wren	28		28	Goldfinch	18		18
Duncock	10		10	Siskin	89		89
Robin	36		36	Lesser Redpoll	2		2
Blackbird	27	8	35	Bullfinch	1		1
Song Thrush	4		4	Reed Bunting	29		29
Redwing	1		1				
Sedge Warbler	54		54	TOTALS	691	170	861
Blackcap	15		15				
Whitethroat	2		2				
Chiffchaff	4		4				
Willow Warbler	85		85				
Goldcrest	2		2				
Firecrest	1		1				
Long-tailed Tit	14		14				
Coal Tit	6		6				

FG = Fully Grown Pull. = Chick

Recoveries in 2007

All ringing recoveries reported for 2007 are included in this section with the more interesting ones given in full. Information was supplied by M.J.H.Cook, D.Gibson, R.Proctor, D.Slater 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

WHOOPEL SWAN

In late autumn 2007 a large group of Whooper Swans was present at Connagedale, near Garmouth. Within the group 10 colour-ringed individuals were present and inscriptions read on 1 December.

FVI was ringed in 1991 at Pollur, N-Mul, Iceland. It has been seen annually in Iceland and Eire. In Moray, this individual was seen at Gilston in 1996 and Balormie in 2001.

VJH was ringed at Martin Mere in 1993. This individual was seen once in Iceland, at Armotasel, N-Mul in 1996. The wintering areas for this individual include sites in Lancashire, Co. Donegal and Co. Tyrone.

5XZ was ringed in 1996 at Borgarey, Skagafjordur, Iceland and was seen in Iceland in 2001 and 2005. The wintering area has been in Eire, mainly in Co. Donegal, but also in Co. Clare. The sighting at Connagedale was the first away from Iceland or Eire.

9SP was ringed in 1998 at Caerlaverock and seen every year there since it was caught. This individual was seen in Moray in 2001 at Balormie, Silverhills and Westfield.

LS9 was ringed at Martin Mere in 2002 and seen annually at this site in 2003-2007. It was seen in Iceland twice: Keldunes, N-Thing in June 2003 and Lonsfjordur, S-Mul in October 2003.

J67 was ringed at Langavatn, S-Thing, Iceland in 2005. No other sightings have been recorded before Connagedale.

J74 was ringed at Martin Mere in 2005 and seen there in 2006 and 2007. The sighting at Connagedale was the first away from Martin Mere.

K49 was ringed in 2005 at Saenautavatn, N-Mul, Iceland and was resighted at Saenautavatn in 2007. The only other sighting away from Iceland was this year at Connagedale.

ZL9 was ringed in Axartjorn, S-Thing, Iceland and recaptured in Sandvatn, S-Thing in 2005. The only sightings in the UK were Monymusk in 2006 and Wick in 2007.

B5J was ringed in Saenautavatn, N-Mul, Iceland in 2006 and recaptured at the same site in 2007. The sighting at Connagedale is the only other sighting.

WIGEON

FP83521	4F	301105	Slimbridge, Gloucestershire	
	+	181006	Findhorn Bay	660km

SHAG

Chicks from the Isle of May were recorded at Lossiemouth (four were seen alive and one found dead).

CORMORANT

FCT	1	280606	Forvie
	VV	010107	Loch Spynie
FAD	1	280607	Forvie
	VV	080907	Loch Spynie
FDD	1	280607	Forvie
	VV	080907	Lossiemouth

Both FDD & FAD remained in the area throughout the winter and into 2008.

OYSTERCATCHER

FP11027	8	060399	Findhorn Bay	
	X	130705	Vadso, Finnmark, NORWAY	2117 km

This is the second Moray-ringed Oystercatcher to Norway. The recovery dates suggests that it would have been on, or very near, its breeding area. Two chicks from Norway have been recovered in Moray.

FV90724	1	250501	Aberlour	
	V	160407	Tain	62km

One found dead at Lossiemouth was over 5 years old when recovered, while another from Findhorn was over 12 years old.

MEDITERRANEAN GULL

E910705	1	240506	Antwerp, BELGIUM
(3V72)	VV	130706	Antwerp, BELGIUM
	VV	240207	Loch Spynie

Although this is the second colour-ringed individual to be recorded in the Districts, it is the first to have the inscription read in the field.

BLACK-HEADED GULL

ET73729	1	260699	near Aberdeen Airport	
	VV	300707	Lossiemouth	87 km

COMMON GULL

5106625	5	090806	Nidaro, Trondheim, NORWAY	
	VV	100207	Loch Spynie	978 km

This is the fourth movement of a Norwegian Common Gull to Moray.

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL

FP83984	10	270206	Stoke Orchard landfill site, Gloucester	
	VV	170706	Lossie estuary	647 km
	VV	201007	Lossie estuary	
FP86138	10	291005-200106	near Hempsted, Gloucester	
	VV	250606	Lossie estuary	
		261006-151206	near Hempsted, Gloucester	
	VV	120507	Lossie estuary	
	VV	110607	Lossie estuary	
	VV	140607	Lossie estuary	655 km

The wintering site for both of these appears to be Gloucestershire. It would be interesting to know whether these are breeding locally (e.g. on buildings in Elgin).

HERRING GULL

Movements over 100 km are given in full below:

ES006630	1	090798	Kandalashskiy Nature Reserve, Murmansk, RUSSIA	
(K811)	VV	230304	Lossie estuary	2080 km
	VV	100207	Loch Spynie	2083 km
NS002829	1	090706	Kandalashskiy Nature Reserve, Murmansk, RUSSIA	
(KX02)	VV	210107	Cooper Park, Elgin	2077 km
	VV	241207	Loch Spynie	2075 km
GF31318	5	270206	Stoke Orchard landfill site, Gloucester	
	VV	280407	Lossie estuary	647 km
GN13801	5	160307	Seamer Carr landfill, near Scarborough	
	VV	050507	Lossie estuary	
	VV	130707	Lossie estuary	
	VV	301107	Seamer Carr landfill, near Scarborough	

NS002829 is the second Herring Gull from Russia to be seen in Moray & Nairn. These records are the furthest west that the organisers have received in this recent study. It is also interesting to note that both ES006630 and NS002829 returned to the area for another winter.

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL

E30	1	150607	Rothiesholm, Stronsay, Orkney	
	VV	210907	Lossie estuary	154 km

E30 was the longest movement reported. Another 11 colour-ringed individuals from various Caithness colonies were seen in Moray (mainly at Lossie estuary).

COMMON TERN

SX60897	5	270694	Fort George	
	X	310707	Kingsteps, Nairn	14 km

ARCTIC TERN

SX07766	1	040795	Kinloss	
	X	270607	Sands of Forvie	102km

GUILLEMOT

X43579	1	040795	Canna	
	X	180207	Cullen	234km

WAXWING

P556038	5f	290103	Rovaniemi, Lappi, FINLAND	
	XF	220106	Forres	1809 km

This is the first Finnish movement to Moray and only the ninth for the UK.

SEDGE WARBLER

R507793	3J	030803	Loch Spynie CES	
	V	170803	Icklesham, Sussex	794 km
	V	220803	Tour aux Moutons, Donges, Loire-Atlantique, FRANCE	1153 km

This is the fifth movement to this area of France, and the third to Loire-Atlantique. An interesting onward movement from southern England to France, this individual covered the 359 km in five days (almost 72km per day).

Summary of movements from Loch Spynie CES site in the north-east fen:

Year	Ring Number	Region & Country	Distance (km)	Days
1999	N927613	Saint-Seurin-D'Uzet, Charente-Maritime, FRANCE	1360	55
2000	P219152	Icklesham, Sussex	794	19
	P477031	Leighton Moss, Lancashire	390	7
2002	4422867	Le Massereau, Frossay, Loire-Atlantique, FRANCE	1163	275
	P631363	Sandwich Bay Estate, Kent	772	323
2003	R507793	Icklesham, Sussex	794	14
	R507815	Haverton Hill, Cleveland	363	10

2004	R777736		Elburg, Korte Waarden, Gelderland, THE NETHERLANDS	819	15
2006	T292268		Trunvel, Treogat, Finistere, FRANCE	1086	25
	T292291		Mars-Ouest, Saint-Philbert-de-Grand-Lieu, Loire-Atlantique, FRANCE	1187	18

STARLING

CT13917	1	120507	Clochach, Buckie		
	X	090707	Kinloss		33km

BRAMBLING

R207450	4m	071203	Craigearn, near Kemnay		
	V	120306	Inchberry, Fochabers		58 km

GOLDFINCH

R085787	5m	230207	Killlearn, Central		
	VV	230607	Bishopmill, Elgin		191 km

This is the second longest movement involving Moray, following the movement from Forres to Shropshire (550 km). Other, more local movements, have included Clochan to Newburgh (2) and Ardersier to Loch Spynie.

SISKIN

T462703	6m	010305	Slaley, Northumberland		
	V	110507	Clochach, Buckie		308 km

A local breeder, originally ringed on migration north from a southerly wintering area.

LINNET

T546020	5f	120206	Westermoy Farm, Contin		
	V	241206	Wester Lochend, Nairn		33 km
T546032	4f	120206	Westermoy Farm, Contin		
	V	020107	Wester Lochend, Nairn		33 km
V147278	5m	230107	Blackpark, Nairn		
	V	080307	Balaldie, Easter Ross		25 km
V147287	5m	230107	Blackpark, Nairn		
	V	160407	near Balintore		22 km
V147333	5f	230107	Blackpark, Nairn		
	V	250407	near Balintore		22 km
V147586	5f	060207	Blackpark, Nairn		
	V	081207	Bindal Muir, Tarbet Ness		30 km

V547720	5m	140107	Portmahomack	
	V	050207	Blackpark, Nairn	28 km
V547735	6m	140107	Portmahomack	
	V	230107	Blackpark, Nairn	28 km

A series of localised movements from an ongoing study, undertaken by Highland Ringing Group, on farmland finches.