

Birds in Moray & Nairn in 2009

MORAY & NAIRN BIRD REPORT
No.24 Part 2 – 2009

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

EDITORIAL

Welcome to the 24th edition of Birds in Moray & Nairn, formerly entitled the Moray & Nairn Bird Report.

Regular readers may notice some minor changes to the English names, scientific names and species order which appear in the systematic list of species accounts. Some explanation for these changes may be helpful. Traditionally, perhaps, there has been greater stability in the use of scientific names than of English names and the view was often taken that the English name used for a species did not matter hugely so long as the scientific name was also given. In recent times however the pace of taxonomic change has quickened and scientific names are now as prone to change as English ones. For this reason the International Ornithological Congress made recommendations for a list of agreed English bird names at the international level. These names were adopted by the British Ornithologists' Union (BOU) for international use, and by the SOC (e.g. in *The Birds of Scotland*). In some cases, however, these international English names do not correspond to the 'everyday' names used within Britain e.g. 'Hedge Accentor' in place of Dunnock and 'Little Plover' instead of Little Ringed Plover. Also, and in many more cases, the international name uses a prefix which is unfamiliar in the language of most British birders e.g. 'Winter' Wren, 'Common' Blackbird and 'European' Greenfinch. In acceptance of the reality that few British birders will use these international English names in everyday reference to our British birds, the BOU Records Committee publishes a list of English vernacular names in current usage within Britain, and uses these names in its publications. The SOC now also uses these names in its journal *Scottish Birds*.

The *Moray & Nairn Bird Report* (and *Birds in Moray & Nairn*) has continued to use English vernacular names throughout and will continue to do so – following any changes that may be recommended in the BOU (and consequently SOC) list. Once such recent change is the adoption of the name Honey-buzzard for *Pernis apivorus* (in place of Honey Buzzard) to remove the suggestion that this species is closely related to the *Buteo* buzzards.

Further taxonomic research is throwing new light on species relationships, resulting in significant changes to the order of species in the Scottish list – most recently involving the sequence of passerines.

As always, the production of this report would not be possible without the input and assistance of many people. Special thanks are due to Duncan Gibson, Andy Jensen and Bob Proctor for help with writing species accounts, and to Bob Proctor for his informative Ringing Report. Thanks also to the many observers who have taken the trouble to submit their records for inclusion in the report.

The editor expresses special gratitude to the following organisations and individuals for their generous financial support:

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

Submission of records

In earlier reports, guidance was offered on the type of records that are likely to prove most valuable for inclusion in Birds in Moray & Nairn. These guidelines are reproduced, with amendments, below:

- Arrival dates of summer visitors in spring
- First dates inland for species which desert the uplands in winter
- Last dates of departing summer visitors in autumn
- Arrival dates of winter visitors in autumn
- Last dates of departing winter visitors in spring
- Records of rarities and scarce birds
- All records relating to influxes (e.g. Waxwing, Quail etc.)
- Counts of flocks of commoner species
- Regular counts throughout the year from a local 'patch'
- Comments on increases or decreases of any species
- Counts of seabird passage (preferably for timed periods)
- First dates for song or other breeding behaviour in spring
- Breeding colony counts for colonial nesting species
- Data obtained from nest box schemes
- Notes of interesting or unusual behaviour

It should be emphasised, however, that all records are welcome – better to receive more information than can be accommodated in the report than to lose any potentially significant records. All records that are received are stored electronically on Excel databases – nothing is discarded.

Records may be submitted periodically during the year or in one batch as soon as possible after the end of the year, and by the end of January at the latest. Although any format is acceptable, the editor would be very grateful to receive as many submissions as possible on Excel spreadsheets – such a spreadsheet with appropriate headings may be obtained from the editor/bird recorder. Minimum information required for each record should include species name, number, date and location (if possible with a 6-figure map reference, although a 4-figure map reference is often adequate).

Please submit your records to the Moray & Nairn Bird Recorder, and report editor, at the following address:

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ASSESSMENT OF RARITY RECORDS

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

A three-tier system of record assessment exists:

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

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

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

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

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

The following species are currently on the MNRC list:

Bewick's Swan	Avocet	Great Grey Shrike
Bean Goose	Little Ringed Plover	Chough
American Wigeon	American Golden Plover	Firecrest
Green-winged Teal	Temminck's Stint	Bearded Tit
Garganey (not ad.M)	Pectoral Sandpiper	Shore Lark
Ring-necked Duck	Buff-breasted Sandpiper	Pallas's Warbler
Ruddy Duck (not ad.M)	Grey Phalarope	Yellow-browed Warbler
Surf Scoter (not ad.M)	Red-necked Phalarope	Lesser Whitethroat
Balearic Shearwater	Long-tailed Skua	Icterine Warbler
Leach's Petrel	Sabine's Gull	Reed Warbler
Bittern	Mediterranean Gull	Nuthatch
Little Egret	Ring-billed Gull	Rose-coloured Starling
White Stork	Roseate Tern	Bluethroat
Spoonbill	Black Tern	Black Redstart
Black-necked Grebe	Turtle Dove	Yellow Wagtail
Honey-buzzard	Nightjar	Richard's Pipit
Hobby	Hoopoe	Common Rosefinch
Spotted Crake	Wryneck	Hawfinch
Corncrake	Golden Oriole	Lapland Bunting
Crane	Red-backed Shrike	

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

If you find a rare species in Moray & Nairn, please contact the recorder (Martin Cook) who will provide forms and forward these to the relevant committee.

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

OBSERVERS CONTRIBUTING TO 2009 REPORT

H.Addlesee (HA), P.Adshead (PA), V.Anderson (VA), A.Ash (AA), H.Bain (HBa), P.Batten (PBa), J.Bell (JBe), S.Benn (SB), N.Bielby (NBi), Grey P.Biggarr (PBig), P.Bingham (PBin), J.Birkett (JBi), P.Bone (PBo), W.R.P.Bourne (WRPB), A.Bowie (ABo), A.Breen (ABr), J.Brighthouse (JBr), G.Brind (GB), D.Brown (DBr), M.Brown (MB), N.Burgum (NBu), J.Butcher (JBU), G.Campbell (GCa), R.P.Campbell (RPC), S.Chalmers (SCh), J.Clark (JCI), A.J.Clunas (AJC), M.Coath (MCoa), M.Coleman (MCol), T.Comerford (TC), M.J.H.Cook (MJHC), J.Cornfoot (JCo), B.Cosnette (BC), J.K.Craib (JKC), D.Cree (DC), G.Cross (GCr), A.Cuthbert (ACu), K.Cuthbert (KC), S.Dalrymple (SD), J.Deans (JDe), R.H.Dennis (RHD), D.G.Devonport (DGD), B.Dodson (BD), A.Douse (ADo), P.Drysdale (PD), D.Dugan (DD), A.Dunbar (ADu), K.Duncan (KD), M.Durney (MDu), S.Eaves (SEa), A.Edward (AE), C.S.Elder (CSE), S.Elder (SEI), M.Esson (ME), H.Farquhar (HF), S.Fenwick (SF), M.Finn (MF), J.Forsyth (JFo), I.Francis (IFr), C.Fraser (CF), R.Fraser (RF), M.Galloway (MG), G.Garner (GGa), A.Garrod (AGa), G.George (GGe), C.A.Gervaise (CAG), D.A.Gibson (DAG), R.Gomes (RG), I.Gordon (IG), P.Gordon (PG), P.Gordon Smith (PGS), L.Graham (LG), K.L.Guthrie (KLG), C.Hall (CHal), T.Hall (TH), S.Halsey (SHa), C.Hamlett (CHam), G.Hamlett (GHa), J.Hammond (JHa), M.Harvey (MH), E.Harwood (EH), R.F.Hewitt (RFH), P.T.Hirst (PTH), J.Hogg (JHo), R.H.Hogg (RHH), H.Holbrook (HH), K.Horsfall (KHo), N.Humphries (NH), P.Hyvonen (PH), V.Ireland (VI), D.C.Jardine (DCJ), A.Jensen (AJ), R.Johnson (RJoh), M.Johnston (MJ), R.J.Jones (RJJ), C.Kail (CK), R.Kail (RK), P.W.Knott (PWK), K.Kortland (KK), C.Lane (CLa), J.D.Law (JDL), A.J.Lawrence (AJL), D.Leeming (DLe), K.Leeming (KL), J.Leestmans (JL), P.Lincoln (PLi), A.Little (ALi), D.Lloyd (DL), P.A.Lloyd (PAL), N.London (NL), C.Lyddon (CLy), B.Lynch (BL), S.McArdle (SMc), W.MacAlpine (WMacA), D.McCullough (DMc), D.Macdonald (DMac), J.&H.MacDonald (J&HMacD), P.Macdonald (PMc), M.Macgarvin (MMac), H.Maggs (HM), R.Mair (RMa), J.Matthews (JMa), R.A.Mavor (RAM), D.Merrie (DM), S.Milligan (SM), C.Mitchell (CMi), E.Mitchell (EMit), M.Morris (MMo), L.Morrison (LMO), W.M.Morrison (WMM), S.D.Morton (SDM), J.Moss (JMos), A.Murray (AMu), L.Oldershaw (LO), A.Owen (AO), A.Palethorpe (AP), E.Penman (EP), I.Phillips (IP), L.Phipps (LPh), D.Pierce (DPi), J.Pinnick (JPi), N.G.Pleasance (NGP), M.Polson (MP), T.Poole (TP), J.Pott (JPot), J.Poyner (JPoy), R.Prentice (RPr), L.Price (LPr), R.Proctor (RP), J.Protheroe (JPr), D.M.Pullan (DMP), D.Ramage (DR), R.Reglinski (RR), C.Reid (CRe), M.Reid (MR), P.Rhodes (PRh), S.Richards (SR), C.J.Richardson (CJR), T.Rogers (TR), S.E.Rosser (SER), C.Round (CRo), J.Ryall (JRY), F.Scott (FS), R.D.S.Scott (RDSS), E.Seal (ES), J.Selvidge (JSe), M.Sharpe (MSh), D.Short (DSh), A.Sime (ASi), D.Slater (DSI), D.M.Smith (DMS), K.Smith (KSm), R.Smith (RSm), M.Souter (MSo), H.A.Stewart (HAS), F.A.Strachan (FAS), C.J.Sugden (CJS), I.S.Suttie (ISS), R.Swift (RSw), W.G.Taylor (WGT), C.Taylor (CTa), S.Taylor (STa), P.Thoms (PeT), D.Thomson (DTh), A.Tolmie (ATo), A.Tribe (ATr), R.Tribe (RT), A.E.Turner (AET), P.Turner (PTu), J.Wallace (JWal), J.Watson (JWat), Y.Watson (YW), W.Weld-Moore (WW-M), I.Wilde (IW), S.Willis (SW), G.D.Woodard (GDW), A.Young (AY).

Apologies to anyone accidentally omitted.

SPECIES ACCOUNTS

The following terms are used at the start of each species account to denote relative abundance:

Breeding species:

Occasional	Has bred but none in most years
Rare	1-10 pairs in most years
Scarce	11-50 pairs
Fairly common	51-200 pairs
Common	201-500 pairs
Very common	more than 500 pairs

Non-breeding species:

Rare	1-20 records in total
Very scarce	Not rare but less than 10 in most years
Scarce	10-50 in most years
Fairly common	51-200 in most years
Common	201-500 annually
Very common	more than 500 annually

Mute Swan *Cygnus olor*

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

Breeding: A total of 17 apparently occupied territories was recorded, with 14 pairs producing 69 young; of these 57 appear to have fledged.

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

Year	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Pairs	15	15	12	17	11	13	18	19	10	14	17
Young fledged	68	51	54	56	52	67	65	110	51	59	57
Mean	4.5	3.4	4.5	3.3	4.7	3.6	3.6	5.8	5.1	4.2	3.3

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

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Loch Flemington	3	6	nc			Breeders			nc	22	nc	40
Loch Loy	24	10	5			Breeders			26	10	14	nc
Findhorn Bay	17	14	nc			Breeders			52	70	nc	10
Lossie estuary	0	0	0	9	6	0	0	0	5	0	0	0
Loch Spynie	82	28	10			Breeders			20	43	80	78
Cloddach	15	14	51			Breeders			nc	44	61	43
Loch na Bo	13	37	3			Breeders			2	4	nc	nc
Kingston	nc	nc	nc			Breeders			18	11	nc	nc

A large summer count of 39 Spey Bay 22 Jun. Three Buckie harbour 15 Feb.

Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus*

Common migrant and winter visitor.

Winter-spring: In Nairn District three sites were used: Loch Flemington (6 on 25 Jan), Auldearn (9 on 19 & 28 Mar) and Loch Loy (max. 21 on 21 Feb). In Moray, flocks were recorded at 10 sites, all were groups of

less than 10 except: 56 Loch na Bo 9 Feb, 42 Balliesward Farm 29 Mar, 24 Loch Spynie 31 Mar and 16 Findhorn Bay 12 Feb.

Spring: The largest flock during this period was 14 Balliesward Farm 5-6 Apr.

Summer: One on the River Spey at Rothes 13 Jun (AY).

Autumn: The first autumn flock was 51 Findhorn Bay 30 Sep. These were followed in October by 3 Loch Flemington (4th), 11 Loch Loy (11th) and 12 Loch Spynie (11th). Three flocks recorded in late October: 8 Cloddach Quarry, Elgin (25th), 8 Roseisle Forest (21st) and 6 Tugnet (31st). In November, flocks with 10 or more individuals were seen at 10 sites, of which two counts exceeded 100: 121 Scarffbanks on 20th and 109 Easter Calcots on 21st, though these are likely to relate to the same flock.

Winter (December): In Nairn District, only Loch Flemington held a flock: 9 on 6th, 15 on 13th and 13 on 20th. In Moray, seen at two sites: Loch na Bo (55 on 6th) and Loch Spynie area (present 4th-28th; max. 33 on 20th).

Pink-footed Goose *Anser brachyrhynchus*

Common migrant, increasing in winter.

Winter (January-mid March): In Moray only a small number of sites containing flocks over 1000 individuals, these included Coltfoot (4000 on 6 Mar), Cloddach Quarry, Elgin (2000 on 1 Jan & 15 Mar, rising to 5000 on 18 Mar), Hillhead pool (2500 on 28 Feb) and Forres (2000 on 25 Feb). A leucistic individual was amongst a flock of 800 at Kinloss 7 Feb (RHD).

Spring passage (max. counts): The largest flocks seen during this period were 1500 Milltown airfield 25 Mar, 5600 Tarras 4 Apr, c.3000 Hillhead pool 6 Apr, 1000 flying west Kingston 18 Apr and 1700 Findhorn Bay 26 Apr. Elsewhere numbers were much lower with records from 12 sites but no other flocks over 1000. Still obvious migration taking place in May over Findhorn Bay where 400 (5th) and 1000 (10th) were recorded.

Summer: 30 Loch Oire area 17 Jun (EH) and 7 Findhorn Bay 20-21 Aug (RHD,DMP). The latter may have been a family group, though one appeared to have a damaged wing.

Autumn: The first arrivals were two skeins on 14 Sep; 26 flying east Elgin and 15 at Auldearn. From 18-30 Sep many skeins arrived, with the largest being 8000 Findhorn Bay 30 Sep. In October, two flocks over 1000 were seen at Findhorn Bay (2000 on 1st and 3100 on 13th). In November, flocks with over 1000 individuals were seen at Findhorn Bay (14500 on 15th), Milltown airfield (6000 on 14th), Mains of Moyness (2000 on 26th), Loch Oire area (1000 on 19th) and Easter Calcots (1000 on 21st)

Winter: Only three large flocks reported in December, none were over 500.

White-fronted Goose *Anser albifrons*

Scarce winter visitor.

One adult of Greenland race *A.a.flavirostris* Findhorn Bay 30 Sep (DMP).

Greylag Goose *Anser anser*

Common winter visitor.

Winter-spring: Flocks containing 500 or more birds were recorded at only four sites (max. counts only): Cloddach quarry (Elgin) (1000 on 1 Jan), Manbeen (600 on 1 Jan), Loch Spynie (800 on 13 Feb) and Clochan (550 on 24 Jan).

Summer: No data received from the Lochindorb breeding area. Elsewhere in the Dava area; two pairs flying anxiously over moorland at Loch Allan, a pair Loch Kirkcaldy and 5, including two pairs, Lochan Tutach 25 Apr, a pair Loch Dava 2 May and 6 Little Aitnoch 14 Jun. In the coastal strip 7 Cloddach quarry (Elgin) 28 Apr and 3 Loch Spynie 5 May could have been late migrants. However, a single remained at Cloddach quarry throughout the summer from 17 Jun-29 Nov.

Autumn: The first flocks were seen flying over Kinloss in late Aug (16 on 19th and 31 on 27th) but such early dates suggest these were probably from a local feral population. The first skein of 139 Archiestown 24 Sep is

a more typical arrival date for Icelandic breeders. No large counts received during October. In November, the only large counts reported were 400 Milltown airfield 14 Nov and 150 Spynie Palace 27 Nov.

Winter (max. counts only): 600 Westerfold 29 Dec was the only count exceeding 500. The only other Dec report was 100 Loch Spynie 12 Dec.

Snow Goose *Anser caerulescens*

Vagrant or escape.

A blue morph seen at Roseisle maltings 19-20 Jan (RHD,CAG) was the only record from the early part of the year. Two (consisting of a blue morph and white morph) were seen at North Darkland (Lhanbryde) and Lhanbryde 24 Dec (JDL), and then re-found at Coxtontower 27-28 Dec (ALi,RP,DAG,CAG). This is the 13th record of a white-morph and the 4th-5th records for a blue-morph Snow Goose. In Moray single blue-morph Snow Geese have occurred at Miltonhill (2005), Kinloss (2007) and Miltonhill area (2008); the combination of dates and locations suggests a returning individual.

Canada Goose *Branta canadensis*

Scarce migrant in summer, rare in winter.

One winter record concerned the long-staying individual at Cloddach quarry (Elgin), present from 29 Nov 2008 until 28 Apr (MJHC et al.).

Summer and early autumn passage: Nine records received between May-Aug: 23 Findhorn Bay 31 May, 2 Tugnet 1-2 Jun, 7 Lossie estuary 8 Jun, 25 west over Elgin golf course 13 Jun, 1 Lossie estuary 13 Jun, 1 Spey Bay 21 Jun, 3 Findhorn Bay 25 Jul and 2 Binsness 9 Aug.

Barnacle Goose *Branta leucopsis*

Scarce migrant and winter visitor.

Winter-spring: No records during this period. An assumed hybrid Barnacle Goose x Pink-footed Goose was at Hillhead (Forres) 15 Apr (RP).

Summer: At Speymouth and Tugnet a group of five was present from 22 Jul-7 Aug (DAG,JPi,MJHC). These were probably of a feral origin as a breeding attempt just outside Moray may have been successful in 2009.

Autumn: A small and brief passage occurred between 29 Sep-3 Oct, with birds at Findhorn Bay (20+ on 29 Sep, 18+ on 30 Sep and 14 on 3 Oct), and Loch Spynie (1 on 3 Oct).

Winter: Only records were 2 Findhorn Bay 15 Nov and 1 Lossie estuary 28-29 Dec.

Brent Goose *Branta bernicla*

Scarce migrant and winter visitor.

The only record of Dark-bellied Brent Geese *B.b.bernicla* was 4 Spey Bay 17 Apr (DLe,KL).

All other birds 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 flock was present from Dec 2008 and last seen 28 Feb. The maximum count was 69 on 25 Jan, with a slightly smaller group of 64 on 22 Feb.

Autumn passage period (late Aug-Oct): Flocks were present at the Lossie estuary from 23 Aug-4 Oct (max. 72 on 22 Sep) and included six colour-ringed individuals (see Ringing Section). Flocks were also present in September at Burghead Bay (19 on 16th), Burghead (24 on 27th), Findhorn Bay (6 on 30th) and Spey Bay (2 on 16th, 11 on 23rd & 15 on 26th). In the Nairn area, two groups were seen in both Sep (two on 23rd & six on 24th) and Oct (eight on 3rd & 13 on 4th).

Winter: In the Nairn area, 28 on 9 Dec rising to 34 on 31 Dec.

Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*

Numerous spring and summer visitor and breeder.

Breeding: One brood, of four chicks, at Kingston 13 Jul (MJHC). In potential breeding areas were 3 Cloddach quarry (Elgin) 8 Jun, 6 Kinloss 4 May and 2 Miltonduff pool 7 Apr.

Best monthly counts at coastal sites were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Nairn/Culbin Bars	106	137	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	12	nc	69
Findhorn Bay	14	58	82	nc	nc	nc	nc	11	nc	1	nc	6
Lossie estuary	0	0	0	2	11	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Kingston	nc	nc	10	11	14	20	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc

(Muscovy Duck *Cairina moschata*

Two were present for most of the year at the Cooper Park (Elgin) though dropping to one on 28 Dec (RP).)

Mandarin *Aix galericulata*

Probable escape or feral origin.

A continued decline in records from the Elgin area: only two records received involving a single Elgin 15 Apr (JBi) and a female Cloddach quarry (Elgin) 13-17 Jun (CAG,DAG).

Wigeon *Anas penelope*

Common winter visitor and scarce breeder.

Breeding: At Dava, a female was present on 14 Jun, but no broods were seen (MJHC).

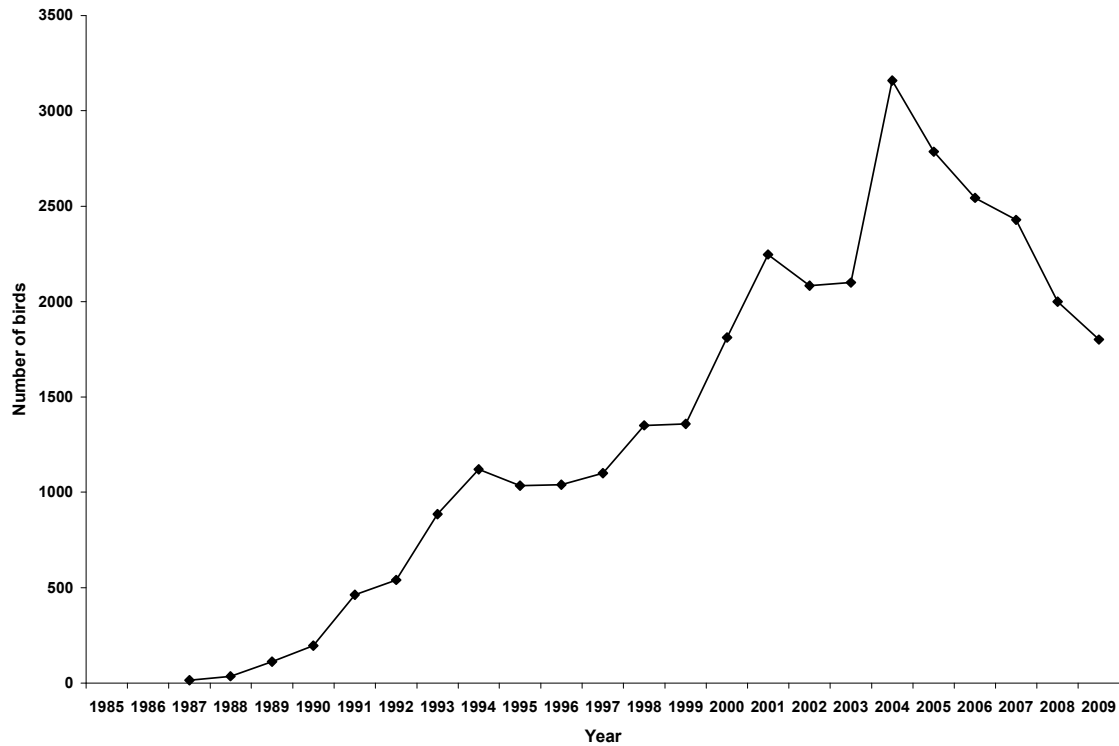
Non-breeders in summer (May-July): a male Lossie estuary 1 May, 2 Kingston 10 May-23 Aug (pair together 5 Jul) and at Loch Spynie, present almost daily 3-29 Jul (max. 22 on 29th).

Winter: Monthly maximum counts at main coastal sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Nairn/Culbin Bars	609	106	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	46	nc	nc	nc	302
Findhorn Bay	2300	440	nc	nc	nc	nc	320	1800	nc	nc	nc	1500
Lossie estuary	1700	1175	400	12	nc	nc	164	387	nc	1625	nc	1800
Kingston	nc	58	128	19	nc	nc	20	40	nc	nc	nc	150

Numbers of Wigeon using Lossie estuary fell for the 5th consecutive year following the peak of 3158 in 2004.

Number of Wigeon at the Lossie estuary 1985-2009:



On freshwater:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Loch Flemington	304	400	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	250
Loch Loy	60	210	85	nc	nc	10	50	10	nc
Loch Spynie	8	4	nc	8	12	36	5	400	21
Cloddach quarry	453	600	128	nc	nc	nc	200	250	nc
Loch Oire	38	19	26	nc	3	14	50	100	58
Loch na Bo	200	42	10	nc	nc	nc	nc	48	nc

[Chiloe Wigeon *Anas sibilatrix*

Escape.

Seen at three sites however, as with records from 2008, no dates overlapped; again the assumption is that these relate to the same adult male wandering between sites. Seen at Loch Oire on 12, 14 & 15 Jan (EH) before moving to Kingston where present in Feb (6th & 28th) (RP) and Jul (8th) (JPi). Then at Loch Spynie from 17 Jul-17 Aug (CAG,DAG,RP) before returning to Kingston from 6 Sep-26 Dec (RP,JPi,MJHC).]

Gadwall *Anas strepera*

Scarce visitor.

Seen at three sites.

Loch Flemington: 2 on 25 Jan (DCJ) and 1 male on 1 Feb (DMP).

Findhorn Bay: a pair 10 Oct (DMP).

Loch Oire: a single bird 2 Nov-9 Dec (EH).

Teal *Anas crecca*

Scarce breeder and common winter visitor.

Breeding: A brood of five was seen at Glenlatterach Reservoir 27 Jun (RP) and another brood on Loch Builg pools 10 June (IFr).

Potential breeding sites occupied during the breeding season included Dulsie, Kingston, Loch Belivat, Loch Kirkcaldy, Loch Spynie, Loch Tutach and Wester Calcots Farm.

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

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Nairn Bar	100	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	80
Cran Loch	20	180	70	60	nc	40	5	60	nc
Loch Loy	100	55	65	6	nc	5	2	5	nc
Findhorn Bay	184	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	25
Lossie estuary	15	9	2	0	0	0	2	0	27
Loch Spynie	50	18	12	nc	10	4	17	40	136
Spynie Canal	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	120	nc	250
Cloddach quarry	93	50	2	nc	nc	nc	2	23	nc
Loch Oire	25	nc	25	nc	nc	nc	100	40	nc
Loch na Bo	2	24	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc
Kingston/Tugnet	70	nc	25	nc	40	40	nc	nc	200

Other sites holding 50+ birds: 192 Miltonduff 3 Jan and 70 Hillhead 6 Oct.

Green-winged Teal *Anas carolinensis*

Vagrant.

Spynie Canal/Gilston area: a male, first seen at Loch Spynie in Dec 2008, was relocated amongst a group of Teal on 31 Jan (DAG,RP) and remained in the area until 15 Feb, though elusive. In December a male was seen on 6 Dec (DAG,RP,WW-M) and again on 12 Dec (CAG).



Green-winged Teal, Spynie canal 31 January 2009 (Duncan Gibson)

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*

Numerous resident breeder and common winter visitor.

Breeding: The mean brood size from nine broods was 6.0 chicks. Broods were seen at Kingston, Loch Belivat, Loch Builg pools, Loch Spynie and Miltonduff pool. Also in summer at suitable sites: Cran Loch, Dulsie, Loch Kirkcaldy, Loch Loy, Loch Oire, Loch Tutach, Lossie estuary and Wester Calcots Farm.

Best monthly flocks in regularly counted areas were:

Freshwater:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Loch Flemington	79	13	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	2	nc	75
Loch Loy	75	200	65	37	nc	nc	nc	nc	70	30	150	nc
Cran Loch	45	6	36	45	nc	nc	nc	nc	2	nc	nc	nc
Loch Spynie	410	51	16	3	3	65	461	200	27	15	60	406
Cloddach quarry	129	94	36	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	369	202	nc
Loch Oire	104	84	66	13	30	66	83	nc	80	56	118	51
Loch na Bo	30	143	11	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	1	nc	nc

Other freshwater sites holding more than 50 birds were: 112 Nether Dallachy 31 Oct, 79 Brodie 5 Dec and 75 Spynie Canal 12 Dec.

Coastal sites:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Nairn/Culbin Bars	199	6	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	25	nc	34
Findhorn Bay	80	30	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	40	140	nc	150
Lossie estuary	25	1	2	nc	nc	nc	nc	4	4	11	0	12
Lossiemouth	51	21	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	18	nc	15
Kingston	20	28	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	60	nc	nc	nc	nc

Other coastal sites holding more than 50 birds were: 250 Findhorn Bay 14 Jul, 84 Tugnet 29 Jul, 82 Gollachy Burn mouth (Portgordon) 25 Jan (54 there 22 Feb).

Pintail *Anas acuta*

Scarce winter visitor and migrant. Has bred.

Present at nine sites.

Nairn Bar: 4 on 25 Jan (DCJ) and 42+ on 9 Dec (DMP).

Loch Loy: present on 18 Jan (5), 14 Mar (1), 20 Dec (5) and 11 Oct (16) (ADo).

Findhorn Bay: present January-April (max. 65 on 17 Feb [ISS]) and then August-December (max. 58 on 10 Oct [DMP]).

Cloddach quarry: pair on 25 Oct (MJHC).

Miltonduff: 1M on 19-20 Feb (DAG).

Loch na Bo: 1F on 9 Feb (CAG).

Loch Oire: 1F on 18 Jan and 8 Feb (MJHC).

Loch Spynie: pair on 24 Oct (DAG) and 2M on 8 Nov (RP) were the only records.

Spey Bay: 2 on 3 May (JPi).

Garganey *Anas querquedula**Rare in spring.*

Seen at Loch Spynie from 25 Apr-9 May. One male from 25 Apr-2 May (DAG,RP,RHD), increasing to three males together on 3 May (HF,DAG), though only two found later on 3 May (both remaining until 4th), and back to one from 6-9 May. This is the first occurrence of three males together.

Shoveler *Anas clypeata**Rare breeder and scarce migrant.*

Recorded from a more widespread series of localities compared to 2008.

Nairn: 1 on 26 Nov (RPC).

Nairn Bar: male on 25 Jan (DCJ).

Findhorn Bay: 2 on 25 Aug (RHH) and 4 on 28 Aug (RHD).

Lossie estuary: a first-winter male with Wigeon on 26 & 28 Dec (RP) during a period of severe cold weather. A male was present on 5 Apr (DAG).

Nether Dallachy: a pair on 31 Oct (MJHC).

Loch Spynie: seen from February-October. A pair on 31 Mar. Largest count of the year was 1M and 3F on 18 Apr. Otherwise, single males 28 Feb and 4-5 Apr, and single females 18 Jul and 24 Oct (many obs.).

Pochard *Aythya ferina**Common winter visitor and occasional breeder.*

Loch Spynie: present from 15 Feb-18 Apr and 13 Sep-20 Dec. A single male was recorded on the majority of occasions, though two males on 18-19 Feb and 5-20 Dec.

Loch Oire: 1 on 7 Sep.

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

Breeding: Only one brood, of five ducklings, was seen, at Cloddach quarry (Elgin) (CAG).

Other potential breeding sites occupied during the summer months included Dava, Loch Allan, Loch Belivat, Loch Oire, Loch Spynie 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 Loy	15	18	20	15	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	5	nc
Loch Spynie	44	20	55	97	28	10	32	40	41	90	130	75
Cloddach Quarry	86	124	78	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	20	68	nc
Cooper Park	43	57	24	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	15	nc	34
Loch na Bo	24	76	28	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	5	nc	nc	nc
Loch Oire	14	nc	18	nc	35	16	26	15	27	8	32	nc

Coastal records included 6 Findhorn Bay 25 Jan and 4 Kingston 24 Jan.

Scaup *Aythya marila**Scarce winter visitor.*

Recorded inland at three sites: 1M Cloddach quarry 13-17 Jun (CAG,DAG), 1M Loch na Bo 15 Mar (MJHC) and, at Loch Spynie, 1F on 18 Jan (DAG), 1F on 25 Sep (CHam,GHa) and 1M on 28 Sep (VA).

At the coast, 8 Nairn 31 Jan (RPr), 15 Spey Bay 23 Sep (JPi) and, in Burghead Bay, 12 off Findhorn 8 Apr (AP), 16 there 16 Sep (DSI) and 3 off Roseisle 14 Oct (CAG).

Eider *Somateria mollissima*

Scarce breeder, common offshore.

Breeding: 1F with 3 well-grown young Culbin Bar 4 Jul (ISS).

Counts over 100 (max. at each site) were 289 Burghead 2 Oct, 206 Burghead-Hopeman 22 Feb and 128 Tugnet 21 Mar.

Interesting behaviour involved a group of 85 sheltering inside Burghead harbour 19 Dec during a period of rough seas, with 46 still there on 29 Dec.

King Eider *Somateria spectabilis*

Rare visitor.

A male was in the Burghead area from 17 Nov, remaining into 2010 (DAG,HH,RP,MJHC et al.). Although variously described as an adult or a 2nd winter bird, no written evidence has been received that more than one individual was present in the area (despite anecdotal reports). King Eiders have now been seen in Moray & Nairn in 18 of the last 34 years, although the likelihood of returning birds makes any assessment of the number of individuals involved very uncertain. All have been males.

Long-tailed Duck *Clangula hyemalis*

Common winter visitor offshore.

No coastal records in summer.

Maximum monthly counts were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Oct	Nov	Dec
Delnies-Nairn	nc	40	nc	nc	nc	nc	50
Nairn Bar	12	3	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc
Culbin Bar	3	10	nc	nc	nc	nc	7
off Findhorn	nc	10	nc	400	35	23	400
Burghead Bay	nc	200	nc	nc	350	150	67
Burghead	nc	6	200	nc	22	nc	nc
Burghead-Hopeman	nc	24	nc	nc	nc	nc	15
Lossiemouth	40	nc	nc	nc	3	nc	nc
Spey Bay	nc	nc	8	1	nc	1	nc
Portgordon-Strathlene	37	43	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc

Two records from estuaries: 2 Findhorn Bay 20 Dec and 1 Lossie estuary 28 Apr.

Inland, at Loch Spynie, 1 (sex unknown) 7 Feb and 1F 20 Nov.

Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra**Common winter visitor, small numbers in summer.*

Maximum counts were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Nairn Bar	6	18	nc	nc	nc	12	nc	nc
Culbin Bar	8	9	nc	nc	nc	2	nc	3
off Findhorn	20	2	nc	nc	120	15	40	400
Burghead Bay	nc	nc	nc	286	200	290	nc	nc
Burghead-Hopeman	nc	9	nc	nc	nc	20	nc	55

Elsewhere, 150 Spey Bay 17 Apr and 30 Lossiemouth east beach 23 Oct.

In summer, c.30 Lossiemouth 6 Jun and 186 Burghead Bay 23 Jul.

Surf Scoter *Melanitta perspicillata**Rare, but regular, visitor.*

Burghead Bay: Off Roseisle Forest, 2M together on 24 & 30 Aug (RHH,DAG,CAG) and 1M on 27 Aug (RHD).

Velvet Scoter *Melanitta fusca**Common winter visitor.*

Maximum counts for main areas were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Oct	Nov	Dec
Nairn Bar	4	1	nc	2	nc	nc
Culbin Bar	2	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc
Burghead Bay	14	2	3	150	15	nc

In late spring, 50 off Findhorn 6 Apr dropping to 30 by 30th.**Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula****Rare breeder and common winter visitor.*

Breeding: No breeding records, nor inland summer records, were received.

Maximum counts on most frequented lochs were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Loch Flemington	8	21	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	5
Loch Loy	5	1	2	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc
Loch Spynie	25	43	30	16	5	24	50	45
Cloddach quarry	nc	5	1	nc	nc	nc	4	nc
Loch na Bo	5	7	30	nc	nc	nc	10	nc
Loch Oire	3	2	nc	nc	nc	nc	10	nc

Only a small build up recorded this year at Loch Spynie in spring.

Maximum counts at most frequented coastal sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Oct	Nov	Dec
Delnies-Nairn	nc	3	nc	nc	nc	nc	23
Nairn/Culbin Bars	9	1	nc	nc	1	nc	6
Findhorn Bay	8	4	48	nc	nc	nc	nc
Burghead Bay	1	nc	nc	10	nc	nc	nc
Burghead-Hopeman	nc	11	nc	nc	nc	nc	7
Lossie estuary	0	0	2	0	0	0	8
Kingston/Tugnet	42	nc	15	15	9	nc	nc
Portgordon-Strathlene	3	4	nc	nc	nc	nc	5

Well inland on the River Spey at Aberlour were 1M on 25 Jan, 2M on 11 Feb, 1M on 13 Dec and 1M, 2F on 25 Dec.

Smew *Mergellus albellus*

Rare winter visitor.

The presumed returning adult male (first seen in 2006) was at Loch na Bo from 8 Feb-15 Mar (many obs.). On 21 Feb it was seen on Loch Oire (RP,CAG). Also 1 Cran Loch 6 Mar (RHD).

Red-breasted Merganser *Mergus serrator*

Scarce local breeder and common visitor.

Breeding: A female and brood of four chicks at Spey Bay 2 Jun (JPi).

Inland pairs were present at Dulsie Bridge 19 Apr and Loch Spynie 28 Feb-15 Mar.

At the coast in summer (May-Jun) were 36 Nairn Bar 1 Jun.

Maximum monthly counts were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Delnies-Nairn	nc	5	nc	nc	nc	1	nc	1
Nairn/Culbin Bars	10	nc	nc	nc	nc	235	nc	2
Findhorn Bay	nc	5	nc	6	4	nc	0	nc
Burghead Bay	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	27	nc	nc
Burghead-Hopeman	nc	5	nc	nc	nc	1	nc	5
Lossie estuary	1	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc
Spey Bay	nc	nc	6	6	nc	5	nc	nc
Portgordon-Strathlene	nc	3	nc	nc	nc	4	nc	nc

The count of 235 off the Bars on 4 Oct was the first time that 200 has been exceeded there since Oct 2002 when 223 were recorded.

Goosander *Mergus merganser*

Widespread but scarce breeder.

Breeding: No confirmed breeding records, but birds in potential breeding areas included a pair Auchmair (Cabrach) 12 Mar, 1F Mosset Burn (Forres) 13 Mar, 1M River Nairn (Nairn) 30 Apr and 3F Banchor 2 May.

Maximum monthly counts at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Aberlour	4	nc	2	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	14	nc	6
Cloddach Quarry	nc	1	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	1	nc
Elgin	5	4	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	3	nc
Loch Spynie	2	3	2	1	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	1	nc
Lossie estuary	nc	1	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	26	21	nc	nc	nc
Speymouth	nc	nc	4	5	15	40	143	140	30	7	nc	nc

A late inland record: 1F Rothes 28 Oct.

Red Grouse *Lagopus lagopus*

Very common resident breeder.

At Ben Aigan, seen March-July, usually 1-2 birds but 4 on 12 Mar. Two birds showing distraction display on 30 May indicated breeding there. Elsewhere, 1F with a brood of flying young Lecht ski area 3 Jul and 2 pairs Scurran of Well (Ben Rinnes) 5 Apr.

Ptarmigan *Lagopus muta*

Fairly common resident breeder.

On Ben Rinnes, 14+ on 17 Jan and 12 on 26 Jun (JMos, AE). In the Cairngorms, 3 Cairn Lochan 18 Apr (SM), 2 Coire Raibeirt 9 Sep (PBig), 1F with nest (7 eggs) Creag Dubh (Beinn Mheadhoin) (IFr) and 2 Loch Etchachan 21 Mar (LO).

Black Grouse *Tetrao tetrix*

Scarce resident breeder.

7M Bridge of Brown 10 Apr and 9 there 2 May (JBi,CLy), and 1F Glacks of Balloch 2 Apr (MJHC) were the only reports.

Capercaillie *Tetrao urogallus*

Scarce resident breeder.

Area	Records in 2009
South-east Nairn	Single birds at two sites in May-June
West Moray	Min. 6M and 2F in Apr-June, including 1F with a chick
North central Moray	1 immature male found dead 18 Sep
South central Moray	Min. 2F at one site
East Moray	4 occupied woods – a) 1M b) 2M 2F c) 1F d) 2F

Red-legged Partridge *Alectoris rufa*

Introduced scarce breeder. Commonly released.

The only group of 10 or more was 12 Ballindalloch 18 Oct. Small groups of up to three birds were seen at Cloddach quarry (Apr), Dulsie (Feb, May), Easter Calcots (Nov), Innesmill (May, Sep), Kingston (Mar, May, and June-July at the rifle range when a brood of chicks was seen), Loch Oire (Mar-May, Nov), Recletch (Glen Rinnes) (Feb), Succoth (Glen Rinnes) (Nov) and Tomintoul (Mar).



Red-legged Partridges, Clochan 28 June 2008 (Martin Cook)

Grey Partridge *Perdix perdix*

Common resident breeder.

Four good-sized coveys were 18 Kinloss 29 Oct, 17 Netherton 17 Sep, 16 Nairn 2 Dec and 12 Kinloss 9 Jan. Otherwise, 6 Coltfoot 29 Jan, 6 Nairn 4 Oct, 7 Netherton 23 Aug and 28 Aug and 1-2 at Binns (Jun), Cullen (Apr), Fochabers (Jul), Garmouth (May), Innesmill (May, Sep), Miltonhill (Feb) and Park of Innes (Feb).

Quail *Coturnix coturnix*

Rare summer visitor and breeder, occasionally more numerous.

Single birds were heard at Dallas Dhu (Forres) 21 Jun-1 Jul (AJL,ISS), Duffus Castle 16 Jul (DAG), Netherton 14-17 Jul (RHD) and Wester Calcots 6 Jul (JDL).

Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus*

Very common resident breeder.

Seven females fed below a bird table at Kingston in both winter periods.

[Reeves's Pheasant *Syrnaticus reevesii*

Escape.

In Strath Avon, near Tomintoul distillery, were 1M in October, 3M in late November (MMac) and 1M 6 Dec (RP).]

Red-throated Diver *Gavia stellata*

Rare breeder. Common autumn and winter visitor offshore.

Summer: In the usual moorland area, one pair on 25 Apr (MJHC) but no evidence of breeding.

At the coast in the April-July period, highest counts were 5 Portknockie 1 Apr, 3 Burghead Bay 23 Jul, 13 Findhorn 21 Apr (8 there 13 Apr), 4 flying east off Lossiemouth 16 May and 3 Spey Bay 12 Apr.

Best monthly counts offshore in each winter period were:

	Jan	Feb	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Nairn/Culbin Bars	3	nc	nc	2	nc	nc
Burghead Bay	nc	nc	2	28	6	1
Spey Bay	1	nc	1	5	12	nc

Very probably these low numbers reflect a lack of counts and the number of birds present is likely to be substantially higher.

Seawatching counts from Lossiemouth in October and November revealed up to 5 birds/hour, mostly flying west (DAG).

Black-throated Diver *Gavia arctica*

Rare breeder. Scarce autumn and winter visitor offshore.

Upland lochs: One pair bred, for the third successive year, but the nest failed. Four adults were present at the site in early July (IFr, MJHC).

Monthly maxima in Burghead Bay were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
4	25	2	22	nc	nc	nc	nc	3	1	nc	nc

(RHD, RP, AJL et al.)

Elsewhere, 15 Spey Bay 22 Nov (DAG) and 1 Tugnet 7 Mar (MJHC).

Great Northern Diver *Gavia immer*

Scarce visitor offshore.

Very few reports; 4 Burghead Bay 7 Nov (DAG) and 2 Tugnet 7 Mar (MJHC) were the only records of more than one bird. Singles were seen in Spey Bay on 22 Apr (CAG), Burghead Bay on 27 Jan (AJL), 17 Sep (DMP), 4 May (RP) and off Lossiemouth on 13 Apr and 23 May (DAG).

White-billed Diver *Gavia adamsii*

Rare visitor.

For the second successive year, an adult was found off Burghead in spring. It remained from 1-4 May (DAG, DMP, AE, RP, MJHC et al.). This is the 8th record for Moray & Nairn.

Fulmar *Fulmarus glacialis*

Common breeder, very common offshore.

Breeding: Birds at nest sites were 30 at Clashach quarry (Hopeman) 15 Feb, with many on ledges at Tronach Head the same day. Elsewhere in April, one pair was mating at Cullen on 11th, with 90 birds in the area. Late in the year, birds were back around nest sites in early December at Bow Fiddle Rock and Cummingston. Passage: Only one count over 50 birds received, 50 east past Strathlene 16 May in just 10 minutes.

Manx Shearwater *Puffinus puffinus*

Scarce offshore in summer and autumn.

The annual total was 35 birds, a poor year.

Monthly totals were:

Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
7	6	7	13	2

Summer: All records were off Lossiemouth, in June four west 5th and three west 19th, and in July five west 14th and one west 17th (DAG).

Autumn: Passage was light with records only on two days in August and September. In August eight past Burghead 4th (DP) and in September 13 off Lossiemouth 12th. Finally two passed Lossiemouth 2 Oct, the last record of the year (DAG).

Gannet *Morus bassanus*

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

Spring: A good passage on 16 May, with 50 birds east past Strathlene in 10 mins, and 146 off Burghead.

Autumn: A series of counts over 100 birds off the Moray coast in late September/early October. In Burghead Bay, approximately 100 birds, mostly juveniles were offshore 27 and 30 Sep. In October, a minimum of 200 birds were still in Burghead Bay, with 176 off Findhorn 8th. Around the same time, on 1st 165 passed Lossiemouth, and on 4th 350 were off Culbin Bar, and 200 off Nairn Bar. Numbers peaked off Findhorn 14th with 800 off Findhorn (90% of which were juveniles indicating a good breeding season), tailing off to 500 the following day (RHD).

Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

Scarce resident and common winter visitor.

Highest coastal counts were 36 Cullen 11 Apr, 17 Burghead-Hopeman 22 Feb and 17 Tugnet 31 Oct.

Inland, 2 Gilston 31 Jan, 2 Aberlour 3 Feb, and single birds in winter at Loch na Bo, Myreside (Elgin) and Rothes.

At Loch Spynie monthly maxima were:

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

Birds showing characteristics of the continental race *P.c.sinensis* were again at Loch Spynie. An adult was present 28 Mar, and was noted on six further dates to 6 Jun. A second year bird was also at the site between late April and mid May, with a first year bird 6 June (RP, CAG).

Shag *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

Scarce breeder and common visitor, chiefly in winter.

Breeding: Numbers remained stable at Portknockie/Bow Fiddle Rock cliffs where 79 occupied nests were counted 21 Jun (79 in 2008) (MJHC). Apparently occupied nests here since 2000 have been as follows:

2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
27	31	40	43	47	49	49	73	79	79

Numbers declined slightly at Covesea with 14 occupied nests 23 May (13 in 2005, 2006 and 2007, 11 in 2008) (MJHC). At Tronach Head, 26 occupied nests 21 Jun – a slight increase again at this site.

Counts: 49 between Portgordon-Strathlene 25 Jan and 48 Cullen 11 Apr.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

Rare visitor.

1 Findhorn Bay 4-6 Sep (RHD,RP,DAG,AJL,J&HMacD,CAG et al.) was the 5th record for Moray & Nairn. All previous records have been in, and since, 2006 with the exception of the first, in 1983. All have been in Findhorn Bay except one at Kingston in June 2007.

Great White Egret *Ardea alba*

Rare visitor.

1 Dallasbraughty (Dunphail) 17-23 Nov (RHD,MJHC,RP,DAG,DMP, J&HMacD et al.) was the first record for Moray & Nairn. Remarkably, another bird was flushed from a ditch at Pitairlie at 3.40pm on 22 Nov by two observers who had seen the Dallasbraughty bird at 11.30am the same morning (J&HMacD). This bird may have remained in the Spynie area as a Great White Egret was seen in flight close to the loch on 24 Dec (DAG).



Great White Egret, Dallasbraughty 18 November 2009 (Roy Dennis)

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

Fairly common resident breeder.

Heronries: 9 nests Aberlour 1 May (AE) and 12 Loch Spynie 6 Apr (RP).

Best counts on the estuaries in the late summer-winter period were 28 Findhorn Bay 25 Aug, 12 Lossie estuary 24 Sep (and 11 on 28 Jul) and 5 Kingston 22 Aug. Also at the coast, 7 Nairn Bar 4 Oct.

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

Scarce breeder, scarce on the estuaries in winter.

Mid-winter: None on freshwater in January and December, although just outside this period were 1 Loch Spynie 1 Feb and 1 Cloddach quarry 29 Nov.

Present in spring/summer (*italics* = proved breeding) at *Ardclach*, Brodie Castle, *Cloddach Quarry* (3 pairs), Loch Allan (Dava), Loch Loy, Loch na Bo, Loch of Blairs, *Loch Oire* (8 pairs, 6 with nests on 1 Jun (MJHC)) and *Loch Spynie*.

Best post-breeding congregations in late summer/autumn were 38 Loch Oire 29 Jul (33 there 20 Sep), 14 Loch Spynie 20 Sep and 13 Loch Flemington 4 Oct.

Coastal in winter: 23 Binsness 27 Dec, 3 Lossie estuary 1 Jan (2 on 10 Jan and 1-2 in late Dec) and 1 Kingston 31 Oct.

Red-necked Grebe *Podiceps grisegina*

Very scarce migrant and winter visitor.

As usual, only in Burghead Bay where 1 on 2 Jan (RHD),
1 on 2 Oct (AJL), 4 on 13 Oct (AJL, CAG) and 1 on 21 Oct (PWK).

Slavonian Grebe *Podiceps auritus*

Rare breeder. Scarce offshore in winter.

Breeding: Probably, no breeding attempt was made in 2009.

Site 2 – one adult in breeding plumage 5-19 Apr and a pair 5-22 Jun. Display was seen on 13 Jun but no nest was found and no birds seen after 22 Jun.

The only other inland records were 1 Loch Spynie 15 Sep and 12-26 Oct (DAG,CAG).

Coastal: Monthly maxima in Burghead Bay were:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
7 (2 nd)	7 (12 th)	6 (20 th)	6 (2 nd)			11 (17 th)	61 (17 th)	25 (7 th)	15 (7 th)

An excellent year for the species in Burghead Bay where numbers in October, in particular, were exceptional. Counts in October included 30 on 2nd, 35 on 13th, 58 on 14th, 61 on 17th and 24 on 30th (AJL,CAG,RHD, DAG,JPoy et al.). Previously, the most in Burghead Bay was 23 in October and November 2001.

The only other coastal records were singles off Lossiemouth on 19 Apr (CAG) and 1 Oct (DAG).

Honey-buzzard *Pernis apivorus*

Rare breeder.

One pair bred successfully in Moray in the site used in 2007 and 2008, raising two young (RHD).

Red Kite *Milvus milvus*

Formerly common breeder, reintroduced in Highland and North-east Scotland.

A good year with 6 records. Single birds were seen near Dunearn 17 May (RHD), Edinkillie 14 Apr (RHD), Elgin 1 Sep (CAG), Findhorn 7 Oct (MH), Hunt Hill (GGa) and Shearleat (Drynachan) 9 Apr (DD).

White-tailed Eagle *Haliaeetus albicilla*

Rare visitor.

A wing-tagged bird from Co. Kerry was in the Inchroty/Lecht area between 20 Sep-18 Nov (KD,RHD).

Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*

Very scarce visitor, usually in spring.

A single female was seen at Loch Spynie on 18 May and 4 Jun (CAG,HF, AMu). The only other record of the year was a female flying over fields at Broadley (Clochan) on 23 May (MJHC).

Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus*

Rare resident breeder, very scarce migrant and winter visitor.

Breeding: Seven pairs were located and all laid eggs. The mean clutch size from five clutches was 4.3 – at the middle of the range for Hen Harrier clutches. Five pairs were successful, fledging 13 young between them. Two pairs failed at the small young stage for unknown reasons.

Winter records were 1M Earnside (Alves) 3 (and mid) Jan (RP,ISS) and 1 ‘ringtail’ Loch Spynie 4 Nov (HH).

Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis*

Rare resident breeder.

Reported from only one potential breeding site in spring.
Otherwise, 1 over Kinloss airfield 22 Jul (AJL).

Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*

Common resident breeder.

Breeding season (Apr-July) records included birds/pairs at Loch Loy, Loch Oire and Myreside.

Buzzard *Buteo buteo*

Fairly common resident breeder.

Three pairs nested around RAF Kinloss airfield (AJL).

A congregation of 9 birds was feeding in a field at Ardye 15 Nov and 3 Dec (RP,J&HMacD). The leucisitic bird at Alves was seen on 29 Jan and 11 Feb.

Golden Eagle *Aquila chrysaetos*

Rare resident breeder.

Breeding: At the three usual/most recent breeding sites: i) and ii) no sign of occupancy (MJHC,RHD), iii) no information received.

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*

Scarce summer visitor and breeder.

Breeding: It was a good breeding season for ospreys, with 9 pairs in West Moray & Nairn, mainly feeding in Findhorn Bay; 9 pairs laid eggs and 9 pairs reared a total of 17 young. One female in Nairn laid a clutch of 4 eggs. In East Moray the situation was not so good with only 5 pairs located, 4 of which laid eggs and 3 pairs were successful with 8 young (RHD).

One at Nairn 27 Mar was the first of the year and 1 Findhorn Bay 29 Sep was the last. Four Findhorn Bay 23 May and 6 Sep were the most together, away from breeding sites.

Much valuable and interesting information relating to local Ospreys can be found in Roy Dennis's website at www.roydennis.org.

Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*

Widespread but scarce resident breeder.

Breeding season (April-July) records included birds/pairs at Auchnarrow, Banchor, Bridge of Brown, Dunearn, Kinloss (2 pairs on the airfield each raised 3 young (AJL)) and Spey Bay.

At the coast, 3 near Boar's Head Rock 24 Jul and 2 Lossiemouth east beach 6 Sep.

Merlin *Falco columbarius*

Scarce resident breeder and migrant.

Breeding: 42 sites were checked; 13 of these were occupied by pairs, all of which laid clutches. 12 pairs were successful, and these raised 45 young between them, at a mean brood size of 3.5 per laying pair (3.8 per successful pair). Early site checks showed a fair degree of occupancy by birds at some of the known sites although low numbers of pairs were subsequently found to be breeding. The recent low occupancy rate and patchy distribution in Moray was again evident although the overall breeding performance was an improvement on recent years with the mean success rate similar to other areas of North-East Scotland (BC,JKC).

Outside the breeding season, single birds were seen at Binsness 27 Dec, Findhorn Bay 5 Sep, Kinloss 6 Jan, Lethen (Auldearn) 13 Oct, Loch Kirkcaldy 28 Feb, Loch Spynie/Spynie Palace 27 Nov and 16 Dec, Lossiemouth 1 Oct (on the rocks off the breakwater) and Nairn Bar 4 Oct (2).

Peregrine *Falco peregrinus*

Scarce resident breeder.

Breeding: Three pairs and a single male reported on territories but no information on breeding success.

In late summer-winter, single birds were reported from Culbin Bar (Jan, Oct), Dunphail (Feb), Findhorn (Oct), Forres (Mar), Kingston (Sep), Kinloss (Jan), Lhanbryde (Mar), Loch Spynie (Mar, Nov), Lossie estuary (Sep), Nairn Bar (Jan, Oct), Findhorn Bay (Sep) and Loch Avon (Nov).

Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus*

Fairly common breeder and winter visitor.

Present in all seasons at Loch Spynie where 3 on 18 Jan and 4 on 17 Oct and 28 Dec. At Kingsteps pool, 2 adults and 2 large juveniles 14 Aug (SF).

Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

Fairly common resident breeder.

Breeding proved or probable at Cran Loch, Loch Kirkcaldy, Loch Loy, Loch na Bo, Loch Oire and Loch Spynie.

In icy weather, large numbers frequented the edge of an unfrozen area of water at Loch Spynie, apparently feeding on gull or wildfowl droppings– highest counts were 58 on 6 Jan (CAG) and 56 on 2 Feb (RAM). Best winter count elsewhere was 8 Loch Flemington 22 Feb and 28 Feb.

Coot *Fulica atra*

Scarce resident breeder and fairly common winter visitor.

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

Maximum monthly counts on main lochs were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Loch Flemington	9	11	nc	nc	nc	1	nc	4
Loch Loy	8	12	8	6	nc	3	nc	nc
Loch Spynie	20	8	2	nc	4	3	2	3
Loch Oire/na Bo	2	2	1	nc	1	1	0	0
Cloddach quarry	4	8	25	nc	0	1	1	0

Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*

Very common resident breeder, winter visitor and migrant.

First inland were an early 3 at Cloddach quarry 18 Jan and 9 there on 8 Feb. Nine records of one's and two's noted in and around Elgin from 10- 28 Feb. Four outside Elgin Town Hall 17 Feb. The Loch Spynie nesting platform held 5 on 18 Feb, 11 on 1 Mar and 18 on 7 Mar. Also singles Clovenside cemetery (Forres) 23 Feb

and Clochan 28 Feb. Well inland, 2 Aberlour 17 Feb and 16 there 20 Feb. On 28 Feb, 2 Archiestown and 7 Dulsie. 2 Dunphail 15 Mar.

Pre-breeding flocks at Cloddach quarry of 240 on 15 Mar, 37 on 5 Apr and 40 on 28 Apr. At the pig unit at Wester Calcots Farm there were 30 on 28 Mar and 15 on 3 Apr.

Breeding: The only record of breeding activity was of two nests at Tynet Chapel 26 Apr. There was an “anxious” pair on the beach at Covesea 23 May.

The only post-breeding flock noted was 30 at Dufftown 13 Jul.

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

Apr: 30 Spey Bay 1st, 30 Lossie estuary 17th and 44 Spey Bay 24th.

May: 20 Lossie estuary 9th.

Jun: 11 Lossie estuary 11th.

Jul: At Lossie estuary, 128 on 8th, 48 on 17th and 101 on 19th and a very high count of 1029 on 24th. At Spey Bay, 40 on 13th and 50 on 23rd.

Aug: At Lossie estuary, 20 on 6th, 111 on 13th, 401 on 16th and 59 on 29th. A minimum of 200 Findhorn Bay 10th and 48 Kingston 22nd.

Sep: 900 Findhorn Bay 6th and at Lossie estuary, 64 on 6th and 22 on 24th.

Winter maxima at the coast were:

	Jan	Feb	Oct	Dec
Nairn/Culbin Bars	1234	620	843	270
Findhorn Bay	490	1030	230	400
Burghead-Hopeman	nc	253	7	233
Lossiemouth	108	73	96	17
Portgordon-Strathlene	102	97	152	99

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*

Rare summer visitor and breeder.

On the lower Spey shingles, 4-5 adults and one brood of 3 chicks on 28 Jun; on 3 Jul, only one pair and one chick there (MJHC). Later, 2 Kingston 13 Jul.

Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*

Scarce resident breeder and very common migrant.

Breeding: Inland, one pair Newton Nursery 11 Mar, one pair in a field at Clochan 25 May and one pair at a possible nest site at Cloddach quarry 3 Jun. A pool at Miltonduff had singles on 27 & 28 Apr. At the coast, at Lossiemouth east beach, there were probably two pairs, one with one chick, on 30 May - at the same location were 5 adults and 3 well-grown chicks on 14-17 Jun. On the shore of Lossie Forest, in the Boar's Head Rock area, 2 adults were on nests on 29 Jun. At the Lein (Kingston) one pair bred but failed, and a single bird was on the Spey shingles at Garmouth on 6 Jun.

Winter maxima at the coast were:

	Jan-Feb	Nov-Dec
Nairn/Culbin Bars	11	16
Findhorn Bay	12	nc
Kinloss	25	48
Burghead-Hopeman	nc	7
Lossiemouth	1	3
Portgordon-Strathlene	3	nc

Spring passage (April – end of May):

Seventeen records of 10 or more birds received from four locations during this period. Peak spring passage noted on 16 May with 413 at Findhorn Bay and 64 at Spey Bay.

Culbin: 45 on 4 May

Findhorn Bay/Netherton pool: 71 on 21 Apr, 58 on 26 Apr, 286 on 13 May
and 413 on 16 May.

Lossie estuary: in April, 27 on 10th, 24 on 11th and 36 on 26th. In May, 22 on 1st and 23 on 9th.

Spey Bay/Tugnet: in May, 30 on 15th, 64 on 16th, 10 on 17th and 120 on 22nd.

Autumn passage (July – September):

Twenty-one records of 10 or more birds received from four locations during this period; no obvious peak passage time.

Findhorn Bay: in Aug, 104 on 20th and 120 on 26th. In Sep, 50 on 3rd and 250 on 5th.

Burghead area: 18 on 8 Aug, 42 on 12 Sep and 32 on 27 Sep.

Lossie estuary: in Aug, 15 on 12th, 35 on 13th, 31 on 17th, 19 on 18th, 35 on 20th and 76 on 23rd. In Sep, 14 on 13th.

Spey Bay/Kingston: 13 on 13 Jul, 17 on 22 Aug and, in Sep, 18 on 6th, 15 on 10th and 20 on 17th.

Dotterel *Charadrius morinellus*

Scarce summer visitor and breeder.

10 Cairn Lochan 11 May (PBo) and two juveniles there 25 Jul (DSh & CRe).

Golden Plover *Charadrius apricaria*

Common breeder, migrant and winter visitor.

Twelve birds in summer plumage Kinloss 23 Apr.

Breeding: Records from high ground of potential breeding birds included singles on Ben Aigan on 1-2 Mar, 19 May and 29 Jul, a pair on Ben Rinnes 5 Apr (where 14 on 16 Jul), 2 Beinn a'Chruinnich (Lecht) 29 Jun and 1 Cromdale Hills 26 Jul.

First at the coast in late summer were singles at Lossie estuary 17 Jul and Kinloss 22 Jul.

Winter coastal maxima were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Kinloss	130	nc	nc	nc	nc	184	nc
Findhorn Bay	127	120	500	17	89	200	nc

Also 37 Broadley (Clochan) 26 Jan.

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*

Scarce autumn migrant and winter visitor.

At Nairn/Culbin Bars, 15 on 25 Jan, 8 on 22 Feb, 3 on 4 Oct and 2 on 20 Dec. In Findhorn Bay, 1 on 26 Apr, 1 (in summer plumage) 2 Aug and (the highest count of the year) 24 on 5 Sep. Also 1 Lossie estuary 15 Sep. The only inland record was an unusual sighting of 2 over Loch Spynie 15 Aug.

Maximum annual counts have declined over the last ten years:

Year	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Max. count	60	48	28	17	27	30	18	17	20	24

The last maximum count exceeding 100 was in 1997, when 114 were at the Nairn/Culbin Bars – the same site as the record count of 130 in 1978.

Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*

Very common migrant breeder, small numbers in winter.

Breeding: Two displaying Tomintoul 11 Mar and 4 displaying Kinloss 31 Mar. Four birds in nesting fields at Cabrach House 2 Apr with 2 incubating there 28 Apr. Still at least 3 in the Cromdale Hills 26 Jul.

Pre-breeding flocks included 37 Clochan 16 Feb, 25 Tomintoul 18 Feb, 18 Archiestown 25 Feb, 9 Dunearn 28 Feb, 18 Cabrach Church 1 Mar and 26 Altyre 5 Mar. In the coastal fringe, 40 over Loch Spynie 17 Mar.

No post breeding flocks of any significance were recorded.

Winter flocks of 40 or more: In January, 44 Gowshillock 25th and 100 Salterhill 31st. At the end of the year, 677 Drainie (Lossiemouth) 4 Oct rising to an impressive 870 on 11 Oct, but only 67 remaining on 19 Nov. In the Loch Spynie/Scarffbanks Farm area, 200 on 14 Oct, 300 on 4 Nov, 555 on 8 Nov, 96 on 15 Nov and c300 21 Nov. Elsewhere, 40 Cloddach quarry 25 Oct and 210 Kinloss 17 Nov.

Knot *Calidris canutus*

Very common migrant and winter visitor.

Winter maxima were:

	Jan	Feb	Oct	Nov	Dec
Nairn/Culbin Bars	2180	4000	110	nc	311
Findhorn Bay	140	800	40	nc	60
Lossiemouth	10	90	1	nc	1

At Nairn west beach, 2000 on 22 Feb and 3000 on 6 Dec. The count of 4000 at Nairn Bar on 22 Feb is the highest since 4800 at Nairn Bar on 15 Jan 2006.

Counts of 50 or more in other months were:

Mar: 100 Nairn 19th.

Apr: 65 Findhorn Bay 26th, mostly in summer plumage.

Jul: 80 (summer plumage) 25th.

Aug: 70 Findhorn Bay 30th.

Sep: In Findhorn Bay, 100 on 3rd and 140 on the 5th & 6th.

The last record of birds prior to departing to breeding grounds was of 22 in Findhorn Bay 17 May and the first arrival back was one in summer plumage at Lossiemouth estuary 5 Jul.

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	98	110	nc	29
Lossiemouth	46	12	10	4	7

Late summer-autumn:

	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Nairn/Culbin Bars	nc	nc	nc	176	nc	14
Lossiemouth	7	29	18	53	20	64

Little Stint *Calidris minuta*

Scarce migrant, mostly in autumn.

A poor year with only four records, all from Findhorn Bay area in autumn. At Netherton, 1 on 26 Aug (RHD) and in September, 3 on 3rd (JPoy), 2 on 6th (DAG,RHD) and 2 on 10th (CAG).

Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*

Scarce autumn migrant.

A poor year with only nine records, including presumed duplicate records of the same birds in Findhorn Bay. 1 Lossie estuary 30 Aug (HF). At Findhorn Bay, 2 on 4-5 Sep (AJL,RHD, DAG), 3 on 6 Sep (RHD, DAG) and 1 juvenile on 17 Sep (DMP). Also 2 Kingston 6 Sep (MJHC).

Purple Sandpiper *Calidris maritima*

Common winter visitor.

Main winter site maxima were:

	Jan-Feb	Oct-Dec
Burghead-Hopeman	17	26
Lossiemouth	c100	90
Portgordon-Strathlene	48	15

The latest spring record was of a flock of approximately 50 on the rocks off Lossiemouth north pier on 3 May. The first recorded returning from breeding grounds was one flying west past Lossiemouth on 3 Sep. There can be a large variation in the timing of autumn return e.g. 14 Jul in 2006 but not until 18 Oct in 2008.

Dunlin *Calidris alpina*

Scarce breeder, very common migrant and winter visitor.

Breeding: There were no records received.

Winter monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Oct	Nov	Dec
Nairn/Culbin Bars	1280	940	nc	41	nc	516
Findhorn Bay	50	200	500	90	1100	10
Lossiemouth	200	172	6	5	28	147

One other sizable winter record of c500 near Nairn pier 6 Dec.

Spring passage: At Findhorn Bay, 46 on 26 Apr, a peak of 98 on 13 May and 68 on 16-17 May. At Lossiemouth, maximum of 30 on 10 May and at Spey Bay, eight records with a maximum of 30 on 17 May.

Autumn passage (July – September):

Findhorn Bay: A rise from 100 on 10 Aug, 150 on 18 Aug, 180 on 26 Aug, 200 on 30 Aug to a peak of 600 on 5 Sep.

Lossie estuary: Maximum count only 25 on 6 Aug.

Spey Bay/Kingston: Small numbers - peaks of 41 on 27 Jul and 40 on 22 Aug.

Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*

Scarce autumn migrant, rare in spring.

A very poor year with only four records received: 1 Kinloss airfield 4 Sep (AJL), 3 Lossie estuary 6 Sep (1 there 8 Sep) (HF) and a single by a flooded pool at Mill of Grange on the south end of Findhorn Bay 10 Sep (IFr).

Jack Snipe *Lymnocyptes minimus*

Scarce migrant and winter visitor.

An extremely poor year with only four records, all from Kingsteps.

Winter-spring: Single birds on 25 Jan (DCJ) and 22 Feb (SB).

Autumn-winter: 1 on 9 Dec (DMP) and 2 on 20 Dec (DCJ).

Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*

Common breeder and migrant.

Breeding: Drumming on 25 Apr at Loch Kirkcaldy and Lochan Tutach.

Winter-spring: As usual, highest numbers at Kingsteps where 13 on 25 Jan and 37 on 22 Feb. At the Lein (Kingston) were 17 on 1 Mar. In cold weather during February, 2 on an area of snow free grass at Linkwood Road, Elgin 13 Feb and 1 Spynie canal 14 Feb. Well inland, after heavy snow, 1 on the road Marypark 10 Feb and 2 on the road Cardhu 12 Feb, one of which was caught by a Tawny Owl.

Autumn-winter: First in the coastal area were 4 Kingston 13 Jul - later there were 4 on 22 Aug and 11 on 19 Sep. At Kingsteps, 27 on 4 Oct and 11 on 20 Dec. At Forres, 20 Chapelton 11 Oct. Unusually numerous at Cloddach quarry in autumn where 41, including a flock of 31 in flight, on 25 Oct (MJHC).

Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola*

Common resident breeder, scarce migrant and winter visitor.

Breeding: Roding noted on 19 Mar at Carron and Dunphail, and first at Forres on 5 Apr. During the breeding season, 4 Glenlatterach Reservoir 15 Apr, and singles at Loch Belivat 2 May, Loch Spynie 10 May and Monahoudie Moss (Archieston) 14 Jul.

Winter: During January-March and November-December there were 27 records from various lowland locations between Nairn Bar in the west and Bin of Cullen in the east, totalling 44 birds. Nineteen of these records were of single birds but there were 4 Midwood (Clochan) 19 Jan and 8 Binsness 27 Dec. During these months there were six records received from further inland: on 28 Feb there were 2 Banchor, 2 Little Aitnoch and 1 Lochan Tutach. On 1 Mar there were 2 Bank of Corinacy (Cabrach) and 3 Cabrach church. Also 1 Glenallachie (Aberlour) 12 Dec. Severe cold weather in December resulted in the appearance of Woodcock in large numbers over lowland Moray, including in some unusual places e.g. beside the A96 at Alves and Elgin, in Greshop Industrial Estate (Forres), on Kinloss airfield (2), over Linkwood (Elgin), at Longmorn distillery, flying down a street in Lossiemouth, and on the shore (2) and in gardens in Nairn. One feeding in the open along a Darnaway roadside verge was caught by a Tawny Owl.

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*

Scarce migrant.

Winter: Unusual to have so many winter records; 1 Findhorn Bay 14 Jan (NL), 5 Kingsteps 31 Jan (LG) and 2 Netherton (Findhorn Bay) 28 Feb (RP).

Spring: Most records from Findhorn Bay where, in April, 5 on 21st, 4 on 22nd, 82 in summer plumage on 26th (RHD,ISS), 45 on 27th and 21 on 30th (AJL). Also 21 there on 10 May (RHD). At Cloddach quarry, 19 on 28 Apr (IFr, CAG) and a single on 17 May (DAG).

Autumn: First were 4 Findhorn Bay and 5 Kingston on 2 Aug (DAG), and 7 Kingston 9 Aug (DAG). Fourteen other records received from Findhorn Bay/Mill of Grange/Netherton area between 11 Aug-6 Oct; counts exceeding ten were 32 on 2 Sep, 34 on 5 Sep (RHD,ISS), 21 on 10 Sep (KLG) and 18 on 4 Oct (DGD). Elsewhere, 1 Nairn 18 Aug (SF), and 14 over Loch Spynie 15 Aug (CAG). At Lossie estuary, 4 on 30 Aug, 1 on 31 Aug, 2 on 10 Sep and 1 on 22 Sep (CAG,HF). At Kingston, 1 on 22 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	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Nairn/Culbin Bars	43	43	nc	nc	nc	nc	74	nc	36
Findhorn Bay	6	30	nc	75	nc	10	nc	nc	nc
Burghead-Hopeman	nc	1	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	14
Lossiemouth	6	1	6	1	2	3	2	1	3

Also 21 Nairn 27 Dec. First back at the coast was 1 Kingston 5 Jul.

A poor year. The table below shows the maximum annual count at any site over the last ten years:

Year	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Max. count	225	351	255	265	420	215	300	436	198	75

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*

Scarce migrant.

Spring: First were 2 flying east past Lossiemouth 24 Apr. An unusual inland record of one flying over Loch Allan (Dava) 25 Apr (MJHC). All other spring records were during May: 1 Culbin Bar 4th, 2 Lossiemouth west beach 5th, 1 Kingston 9th, 7 Findhorn Bay 10th, 3 Strathlene 16th and 7 Burghead on 16th-17th.

Autumn: Twenty five records between 4 Jul-22 Sep. Some records were of bird(s) calling but not seen – assuming only a single bird in each of these cases, the autumn passage total amounts to 50 birds. The only flock of 10 or more was 11 Spey Bay 17 Jul.

Curlew *Numenius arquata*

Common breeder. Very common migrant and winter visitor.

Breeding: Inland, 4 Ballochford (Dufftown) 1 Mar. Later, 2 calling and displaying Ben Aigan 29 May.

In spring, c250 Milnorduff pool 3 Mar and 214 Lossie estuary 20 Mar. At Spey Bay, 60 on 26 Mar, 100 on 4 Apr and 30 on 13 May. Also 60 Findhorn Bay 31 May.

Flocks of 100 or more in summer/early autumn were:

Jul: 170 Kingston 13th and 330 Findhorn Bay 14th.

Aug: 100 Spey Bay 16th, 300 Findhorn Bay 20th and 280 Kingston 22nd.

Sep: 360 Kingston 6th and 150 there on 19th.

Coastal winter maxima were:

	Jan	Feb	Oct	Dec
Nairn/Culbin Bars	381	174	530	173
Findhorn Bay	420	360	180	196
Burghead-Hopeman	nc	37	nc	75
Lossiemouth	7	116	125	6
Portgordon-Strathlene	6	9	34	15

Additional winter flocks of over 100: 150 Burnside Farm (Torrieston) 3 Jan, 150 Ardivot 15 Jan and 100 there 19 Dec. In the Loch Spynie area, 150 on 23 Feb, 100 on 14 Oct and 9 Nov, and 150 on 27 Nov. At Kingston, 100 on 28 Feb and 355 on 4 Oct. Near Miltonduff pool were 120 on 6 Oct.

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*

Summer visitor and common breeder.

Arrival: 1 Lossiemouth 9 Apr (WRPB) was the earliest ever in Moray & Nairn, by 2 days. First inland was 1 Ardclach (on the River Findhorn) 19 Apr.

Breeding: Two pairs Cloddach quarry 13 & 17 Jun. On 2 Jul there were again two pairs, one with a brood of two chicks (CAG). Recorded up country at Aberlour (agitated bird on 3 Jun), Ballindalloch, Drynachan, Lochan Tutach, Banchor and Loch Builg (two pairs 10 Jun and one bird showing distraction display 3 Jul).

Late summer/autumn: 22 records were received, mostly around the mouth of the Spey where best counts were 31 on 13 Jul (MJHC), 10 on 22 Jul and 14 on 29 Jul. Elsewhere, 2 Broom of Moy 23 Jul and singles Findhorn Bay 24 Jul and 28 Aug. Last of the year were 2 on floodwater beside the road at Burnside of Enzie (Clochan) 4 Sep.

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*

Very scarce migrant, occasional in winter.

Eleven records received from six locations: 1 flying north Loch Spynie 22 Jul (RP), 1 Loch Oire area 26 Jul (EH) and 2 Cunninghaugh pool (Nether Dallachy) 29 Jul (MJHC). In Findhorn Bay, 1 near the mouth of the river Findhorn 12 Aug (AJL), 2 on 30 Aug (RHD) and 2 on 10 Sep (CAG). One flew over Bishopmill (Elgin) on 13 Sep (RP). At the Lossie estuary, singles on 31 Aug (CAG), 5 Sep (DAG, HF) and 19 Sep (CAG), and 2 there on 2 Oct (CAG) were the last of the year.

Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus*

Very scarce migrant.

A very poor year, the only record being 1 Nairn Bar 4 Oct (DCJ).

Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

Scarce migrant, very scarce in winter.

Winter: 1 Findhorn Bay 14 & 28 Jan (NL, RHD).

Spring (late Mar-Jun): Only three records, all of single birds - Lossie estuary and Kingston 11 Apr and one flying over Loch Spynie 29 Apr.

Late summer-autumn (Jul-Oct):

Nairn: 1 on 15 Aug.

Findhorn Bay/Netherton pool: recorded between 16 Jul-10 Sep, mostly 1-2 birds but 4 on 9 Aug, 10 on 20 Aug, 14 on 30 Aug and 4 on 2 Sep.

Lossiemouth: singles on 14 Jul, 1-2 Aug and 5-6 Sep, with larger groups of 4 on 3 Aug, 2 on 16 Aug and 5 on 19 Aug.

Kingston/Tugnet: 11 records of 1-3 birds between 10 Jul-18 Aug, and 7 on 22 Aug.

Peak autumn passage apparent between 19-30 Aug. Slightly inland, 1 flying south over Loch Spynie 7 Aug and one over Bishopmill 22 Aug.

Redshank *Tringa totanus*

Scarce breeder, very common migrant and winter visitor.

Breeding: No records were received from up country. At the coast, anxious calling suggested breeding at Kingston, where 4 birds on 13 Jul.

Spring (Mar-early Jun): At Lossiemouth, 10 on 14 Mar, 11 on 20 Mar, 22 on 17 Apr and 41 on 25 Apr. Inland, a probable migrant at Miltonduff pool 21 Apr.

Late summer/autumn (Jul-Sep): Highest counts on Lossie estuary were 51 on 15 Jul and 57 on 14 Aug. In Findhorn Bay, 150 on 10 Aug, 500 on 18 & 20 Aug, 200 on 3 Sep and 600 on 27 Sep. Smaller numbers elsewhere with 28 Nairn 14 Aug and 7 Tugnet 12 Sep.

Winter: Monthly maxima at the coast were:

	Jan	Feb	Oct	Dec
Nairn/Culbin Bars	187	45	42	175
Findhorn Bay	828	590	155	210
Burghead-Hopeman	nc	13	12	27
Lossiemouth	38	19	70	23
Portgordon-Strathlene	28	71	97	36

Elsewhere, 44 Burghead Bay 4 Oct and c300 west of Nairn pier 6 Dec.

Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

Common winter visitor, small numbers in summer.

Winter monthly maxima at main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Oct	Dec
Culbin Bar	46	6	nc	9
Findhorn	27	21	70	nc
Burghead-Hopeman	nc	15	70	43
Lossiemouth	13	12	1	61
Portgordon-Strathlene	112	50	43	53

Additional winter counts of 10 or more from other locations were 14 Delnies-Nairn 22 Feb, 20 Burghead Bay 4 Oct and 15 Spey Bay 28 Oct.

Spring-early autumn:

Apr: At Spey Bay, 50 on 5th and c40, some in summer plumage, on 26th. Elsewhere, 70 Cullen 11th and 6 Nairn 15th.

May: 2 Findhorn Bay 16th.

Jun: 11 Lossiemouth east beach 17th.

Jul: 1 Lossiemouth north pier 15th.

Sep: 31 Findhorn 11th.

Pomarine Skua *Stercorarius pomarinus*

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

Nine birds were recorded in 2009, an average year.

Spring: Continuing the recent trend of spring records in the Moray Firth (with records in May/June in 2005, 2007 and 2008), 6 individuals were logged from three sites in mid May. On 16th, 2 Burghead (RHD), 1 east past Lossiemouth (DAG) and 1 east past Strathlene (MJHC). On 17th, 2 east past Burghead (RHD).

Autumn: Passage was light with just three records, all off Lossiemouth – 2 west 13 Sep, and 1 west 21 Oct (DAG).

Arctic Skua *Stercorarius parasiticus*

Fairly common migrant in summer and autumn.

The annual total was 69 records. Estimated monthly totals were:

May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
14	2	1	0	41	11

Spring: First were 1 Lossiemouth 3 May and 1 Burghead 4 May. Later in May, 4 Burghead 16th and 17th, 2 Lossiemouth 16th (and 1 there 18th) and 1 Strathlene 16th.

Summer: Very few reports - single birds off Lossiemouth on 5th and 6th June and 1 Kingston 13th. Unusually, no birds were reported in August.

Autumn: All but two records were at Lossiemouth. In September, 1 Lossie estuary 2nd, 20 past the harbour 12th (DAG), 10 on 13th, 1 on 25th, 1 (on the estuary) 26th and 6 west on 30th. Elsewhere, 1 Strathlene 4th and 1 Burghead 15th. In October, off Lossiemouth, were 9 on 1st and 2 on 3rd.

Great Skua *Stercorarius skua*

Scarce migrant in summer and autumn.

The annual total was 51 records. Estimated monthly totals were:

Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
1	2	2	14	3	17	12

Spring: First was 1 Lossiemouth 23 Apr and, in May, 1 there 16th and 17th.

Summer: 2 Lossiemouth 5 Jun. In July, 13 west past Lossiemouth 18th was the peak count of the year (DAG). The only other sighting in the month was one on the beach west of Boars Head rock 24th. Only 2 in August - off Lossiemouth on 28th and 30th.

Autumn: Sightings in September again focused on Lossiemouth where 7 on 12th and 8 on 13th. Elsewhere, 1 Burghead 15th and 1 in Burghead Bay 30th. In October, 10 flew west past Lossiemouth 1st, 1 between Burghead and Hopeman 4th and (last of the year) 1 Roseisle 21st - latest in Moray & Nairn since one off the same site on 14 Nov 2002.

Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla*

Common breeder and very common migrant.

Breeding: 468 apparently occupied nests (AON) at Covesea 23 May (MJHC) was a welcome increase from 2008 (420 AON), while 332 AON at Portknockie 15 Jun was a good increase from 2008 (263 AON), and the highest number logged at this site.

Passage counts offshore were poor again, continuing the recent theme. The largest counts were 25 Lossiemouth 27 Aug and 36 Lossiemouth 30 Sep.

Black-headed Gull *Larus ridibundus*

Very common resident breeder and winter visitor.

Breeding: Colony counts were c.30 pairs Dulsie 2 May, 12 nests Spey shingles at Garmouth golf course 6 Jun and six pairs Loch Noir 12 Jul. None at the Dava colony. At Loch Spynie, 13 large chicks on the platform 17 Jun.

Flock counts in excess of 200 were 450 Loch Spynie 1 Jan (350 there on 18 Jan), 290 Findhorn Bay 4 Oct, 420 Loch Spynie 29 Nov and 320 Findhorn Bay 20 Dec. Large numbers at Loch Spynie in December where max. count of c.1000 on 20th.

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

A good year. Once again, recorded in the Garmouth/Spey Bay area, where a 1st summer bird on the Spey near Garmouth viaduct 5 Jun (JBr). Elsewhere in summer, an immature bird at Cullen 22 Jul (RDSS). In autumn, single adults passed Lossiemouth on 12 Sep (DAG) and 30 Sep (RP), and 1 was at Lossiemouth west beach on 3 Oct (CAG).

Common Gull *Larus canus**Very common resident breeder and winter visitor.*

Breeding, up-country: c.500 pairs were at Tips of Corsemaul 9 May with at least 28 clutches (IF, WPRB). At Beinn a'Chruinnich (Lecht) 29 Jun c.200 pairs were present with many flying young (IF). At the Hill of Macklea colony at Glass in early May, c.150 birds were dispersed over the colony with a few dozen nest sites but no eggs/chicks (IF, WPRB). At Upper Mulben, c.100 were at the bonded warehouses 13 Jun (WPRB). On 3 Jul, c.20 pairs were at Meikle Coire Riabhach (Lecht) (IF) and six well grown chicks were at Glenlatterach reservoir 27 Jun (RP). Small numbers were also noted breeding on the rooftops of Balvenie, Glenfarclas, Glenfiddich and Glen Rinnes distilleries. In Elgin, breeding occurred at the old gas works site, with c.150 pairs on 18 Mar (RP), and also in Elgin cemetery, with an estimated 15 pairs (RP).

Breeding, coastal plain: c.40 pairs on the foreshore between Lossiemouth and Boars Head Rock 6 Jun (IF, MJHC) and c.200 birds were nesting in a field by Forres bypass 6 Jun (AJL).

Flock counts in excess of 200 away from breeding areas were 250 Loch Spynie 1 Jan, c.500 Loch Flemington 13 Dec, c.200 Loch Spynie 20 Dec and c.500 Westerfolds 27 Dec.

Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus**Summer visitor and fairly common breeder. Very scarce in winter.*

Winter: A 3rd winter/adult bird Loch Spynie 1 Jan and 2 Feb. Elsewhere, 1 Cran Loch 18 Jan and, in the second winter period, 1 Lossie estuary 29-30 Dec.

Arrival: Other than likely wintering birds, the first reports were of single birds at Kingsteps and the pig farm units around Loch Spynie on 28 Feb. Small numbers (1-3 birds) were then recorded around Lossiemouth/Loch Spynie/Elgin from this date, with a widespread arrival from mid March when 20 were in Elgin and 28 at Lossiemouth.

Breeding: The only records received were one on a nest Bow Fiddle Rock, Portknockie 1 Apr, 1 AON Balvenie distillery 10 Apr and 8 AON Auchroisk distillery 9 Jun.

The only significant counts were 94 Tugnet 5 Jul and 41 Cooper Park (Elgin) 16 Aug.

A hybrid gull, assumed to be of Lesser Black-backed Gull x Herring Gull parentage was again seen on the Lossie estuary on four dates between March and August.

Herring Gull *Larus argentatus**Very common resident breeder and winter visitor.*

Breeding: Most reports of breeding were in urban Elgin, with broods noted at Blane Place at Bishopmill, and rooftops around Moycroft (RP). Approximately 40 pairs with many chicks were at Auchroisk distillery 9 Jun (WPRB).

Monthly maximum counts on the Lossie estuary were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
22	3000	42	133	117	150	289	875	60	576	508	206

Large numbers at Loch Spynie in the winter months where 850 on 1 Jan, 500 6 Jan, 400 on 20 Dec (with approximately 5% being of the Scandinavian race *argentatus*) and c.1000 present later that day.

On 11 May, c.5000 large gulls (predominantly this species) were feeding in the shallows between Lossiemouth east beach and Boars Head Rock (DAG). Other counts above 300 were 344 Cooper Park (Elgin) 10 Jan, 370 Loch Oire 9 Feb, 300 Tugnet 5 Jul and 308 Findhorn Bay 20 Dec. As usual, pigfarms in the coastal strip held good numbers.

A hybrid gull, assumed to be of Lesser Black-backed Gull x Herring Gull parentage was seen on the Lossie estuary on four occasions between March and August.

Iceland Gull *Larus glaucoides*

Very scarce winter visitor.

An excellent year with at least 18 individuals, possibly more.

First winter period: The regular adult was present around Loch Spynie from 2007 until 6 Apr (DAG,RP et al), and was also seen at Lossie estuary occasionally during this period. What was probably this bird, was also seen in Elgin on Cooper Park pond 3 Mar (CAG). A second adult was present 4 Jan (RP) and may be the same individual seen around the Wester Calcots pig farm area in late March-early April. A 2nd winter and a 3rd winter were also seen on a number of dates early in the year around Loch Spynie/Lossiemouth (many obs). From early March however, a very confusing picture in the Wester Calcots pigfarm/Lossiemouth/Loch Spynie area, where a number of immature birds were recorded, a few lingering to mid May (DAG,RP et al). At Wester Calcots pig farm, four individuals were seen together on a number of occasions (RP,AJ) - the most individuals seen together at one site in Moray & Nairn. This site attracted at least nine birds throughout the late winter, with two juveniles, three 2nd winters, two 3rd winters and two adults noted (RP). In the Loch Oire/Loch na Bo area, a juvenile, 2nd winter and 3rd winter were noted on various dates between 6 Feb-6 Apr (RP,DAG,EH) although birds may have been commuting between here and the Loch Spynie/Wester Calcots area. A juvenile at Delnies 22 Feb (DAG) is likely to have been an entirely separate bird however.

Summer: A 1st summer was at Lossiemouth east beach 3 Jun (SF) and an adult was at the Lossie estuary 17 Aug (CAG).

Second winter period: What was likely to be the regular adult returned to Loch Spynie 12 Dec (CAG et al) and was also seen at the Lossie estuary. A 3rd winter bird was at Burghead 10 Oct (DMP).

Glaucous Gull *Larus hyperboreus*

Very scarce winter visitor.

Probably 7 individuals were responsible for the sightings in 2009.

First winter period: 2 juveniles in the Loch Spynie/Lossiemouth/Wester Calcots pig farm area on many dates between the start of the year and at least 6 Apr (DAG,RP et al). Also one (unspecified age) Loch Oire 29 Jan (EH) and a juvenile Philaxdale (Duffus) 25 Apr (RP) and Lossie estuary 11 May (DAG).

Summer: A 1st summer bird Lossie estuary on five dates between 16 Jul-30 Aug (DAG,RP,JPo).

Second winter period: 2 adults Loch Spynie 12 Dec (CAG) and a 2nd winter there 19-20 Dec (RP,JDL).

Great Black-backed Gull *Larus marinus*

Scarce resident breeder and common visitor.

Breeding: The usual reports of breeding in small numbers along the east Moray coast were of two pairs Covesea cliffs 23 May, one nest at Tronach Head 24 May and one pair Portknockie 21 Jun (MJHC). Elsewhere, a pair with one young Burghead 28 Jun (HH) and an unusual record of a nest on a warehouse roof at Auchroisk distillery 9 Jun (WRPB).

The highest counts of the year as usual were in late summer/early autumn. At Tugnet, 540 (mostly adults) 19 Sep with 344 a week later. At the Lossie estuary, 330 on 3 Sep rising to a peak of 566 on 10 Sep, before dropping to 315 on 13 Sep and 332 on 27 Sep. The count of 10 Sep is the highest in Moray & Nairn since 570 Tugnet 11 Oct 2004. Elsewhere, 98 Culbin Bar 20 Dec.

Little Tern *Sterna albifrons*

Very scarce summer visitor and rare breeder.

Breeding: Site 3 – first 2 back 9 May (DAG). Numbers incubating were low, with only three nests established. At least three chicks hatched, but ultimately the colony failed and no chicks fledged (DAG,CAG). The largest count of non-incubating adults was 20 on 29 Jun, also down from 2008. The reason behind another failure at this site is unclear, but the site suffers heavily from disturbance and from high tides.

Site 4 – as at Site 3, first 2 back 9 May. No subsequent records.

Site 5 – an estimated 10 pairs 29 Jun, with at least one bird incubating and one pair with a chick. No chicks were noted 3 Jul and it is unlikely that any young were fledged at this site (CAG,DAG,IF,MJHC).

Away from breeding sites, 2 Nairn Bar 1 Jun (DCJ).



Little Tern, near Lossiemouth 29 June 2009 (Ian Francis)

Black Tern *Chlidonias niger*

Very scarce visitor in summer and autumn

Two east past Burghead 16 May (RHD) was the first record in Moray & Nairn since 2006.

Sandwich Tern *Sterna sandvicensis*

Very common summer visitor and occasional breeder.

Arrival: First of the year were 2 Findhorn Bay 22 Mar (CAG). This is the earliest in Moray & Nairn since 21 Mar 1997 at Burghead. Birds were widely spread along the coast from 1 Apr.

Breeding: No breeding in Moray & Nairn. Eight adults with 5 juveniles Findhorn Bay 12 Jul were likely to have originated from a colony further south.

The only counts over 100 were 150 Findhorn Bay 3 Sep and 126 there 6 Sep.

Last of the year were 2 Lossiemouth 30 Sep.

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*

Summer visitor and fairly common breeder.

Arrival: In April, 1 Loch Spynie 20th, 1 Findhorn 21st and 6 Spey Bay 24th. Breeding: At Loch Spynie, 13 nests on the platforms on 30 May with 14 chicks of various ages on 1 Jul and 11 chicks of various ages (6 very small) on 19 Jul (CAG,DAG,RP et al). One pair Cloddach Quarry 17 May (DAG) but no evidence of breeding. On the Spey, up to 4 Aberlour in May (AE), 2 Ballindalloch 2 May (AE) and 1 Blackboat 7 Jun (MJHC), but no breeding evidence.

Peak counts were up to 52 at Loch Spynie throughout the breeding period, 92 Lossie estuary 23 Jul and 40 Spey Bay 10 May.

Last of the year was one on the Spey at Aberlour 7 Sep.

Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea*

Summer visitor and common but local breeder.

Arrival: First were 2 Lossiemouth east beach 14 Apr.

Breeding: At RAF Kinloss, c.50 birds dropping into long grass 6 Jun (MJHC) and 100-200 birds in June-early July (AJL) but no young were seen and the colony presumably failed. At Garmouth viaduct, 10-20 nests 6 Jun and 140 adults 28 Jun but no young were seen (MJHC). A new colony (at least in recent years) was established on the shingle of the Lossie Forest foreshore where c.100 pairs bred (200-300 adults present in June) and at least 100 chicks fledged (CAG,DAG,IFr,MJHC).

Away from colonies, the highest counts of the year were 144 Lossie estuary 23 Jul and 206 there the following day (RP).

Last of the year, in early October, were 1 Lossiemouth 1st, 7 Lossiemouth 3rd, 1 Burghead Bay 4th and 1 Lossiemouth 4th.



Arctic Tern, near Lossiemouth 29 June 2009 (Ian Francis)

Guillemot *Uria aalge*

Very common offshore.

Very few records received. Off Findhorn in October were 105 on 8th and c.500 on 14th.

Razorbill *Alca torda*

Very common offshore.

Breeding: 20 birds were ashore on cliffs in the Bow Fiddle Rock (Portknockie) area on 1 Apr and as many as 36 adults with a minimum of four chicks on 21 Jun (MJHC). One on cliffs at Tronach Head on 21 Jun (MJHC), hinting at possible future colonisation here.

The only significant offshore count was 250+ Burghead 7 Apr.

Black Guillemot *Cephus grylle*

Scarce offshore, rare breeder.

Breeding: 15 Bow Fiddle Rock 1 Mar (RP). An early morning count on 1 Apr revealed 28 adults on the sea below Tronach Head and 35 below the Bow Fiddle Rock/Portknockie cliffs (MJHC). After a blank year in 2008, two young were raised in the usual crevice at Tronach Head, where 19 adults offshore on 13 Jul (MJHC).

Elsewhere, birds were seen at Burghead Bay, Findhorn and Lossiemouth during April-November. Mostly very small numbers passing offshore – max. counts 7 Burghead 16 May, 5 Findhorn 7 Oct and 6 Burghead Bay 7 Nov.

Little Auk *Alle alle*

Scarce winter visitor.

Another poor year, with only two records - single birds past Burghead on 9 Oct (KLG) and 18 Oct (HH).

Puffin *Fratercula arctica*

Scarce offshore.

A very poor year with only one record, of a single bird flying west past Lossiemouth 18 Jul (DAG).

Feral Pigeon *Columba livia*

Very common resident breeder.

150 Elgin 29 Dec, 150 Myreside 29 Dec, 130 Relugas 25 Apr and 89 Bow Fiddle Rock (Portknockie) were the only counts exceeding 50.

Stock Dove *Columba oenas*

Scarce resident breeder, formerly common.

Breeding season: Records in the period late March-July included 1 Auchtertyre 3 May, 3 Cloddach quarry 15 Mar, 2 Elgin 20 Mar, up to 6 Kinloss May-Jul, 1 Loch Flemington 27 Jul, 1-2 Loch Oire Apr-Jul, 1 pair in an old building Lossie Forest 29 Jun, 1 Pittendreich 3 May. Around Loch Spynie, 2 pairs bred in nestboxes – one was predated (RP). Late summer reports from Innesmill and Sluie.

Additional winter localities were Forres, Gilston, Milton Brodie, Muir of Lochs and Reclitich (Glen Rinnes). Best count was 15 Scarffbanks 27 Sep.

Woodpigeon *Columba palumbus*

Very common resident breeder.

Largest estimated flocks were up to 2000 Scarffbanks early Feb, 700 Dunphail 13 Dec (600 there 7 Jan), 500 Gilston 27 Dec, 400 Netherton 3 Jan and 200 Cloddach 14 Feb.

Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*

Very common resident breeder.

A pair was nest-building in a tree in Elgin as early as 19 Jan. No large groups reported – best were 11 Clochan 15 Sep and 7 Mundole 14 Feb.

Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus*

Summer visitor and common breeder.

Arrival: Earliest was 1 Altyre 26 Apr, followed by calling birds at Lethenhill 4 May and others on 11 May at Archiestown and Dufftown.

Subsequently heard at Ben Rinnes, Culbin Forest, Drynachan, Dulsie Wood, Kinloss, Little Aitnoch, Loch Belivat, Lochan Tutach, Lossie Forest, Ben Aigan and Shaw Hill.

Barn Owl *Tyto alba*

Scarce resident breeder.

Breeding: During Apr-Jul, birds were recorded in only 5 localities.

At other times of year, reports came from Alves, Archiestown, Auldearn, Brodie, Buckie, Burgie, Cantsford, Coxtontower, Craigellachie, Rothes, Dykeside, Forres, Glenferness, Hillhead, Kinloss, Kingston, Lhanbryde, Newforres, Spynie canal and Knockando. Four birds were found dead in farm buildings in Strath Avon following cold weather during the 2008-09 winter.

Tawny Owl *Strix aluco*

Common resident breeder.

Widespread through much of the area apart from the treeless uplands. Records in 2009 from Aberlour, Archiestown, Bridgend (Cabrach), Cabrach Church, Carron, Clochan, Craigellachie, Easterton (Cabrach), Findhorn, Glenallachie, Leids Hill (Cabrach), Loch Spynie, Nether Birnie and close to the mouth of the River Findhorn.

At Cardhu, near Knockando, a Tawny Owl was seen to catch a Snipe at the roadside on 12 Feb (AE).

Long-eared Owl *Asio otus*

Scarce resident breeder.

1 Tarras 18 May (ISS) and 1 Overton (Craigellachie) 5 Aug (AE) were the only records received.

Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus*

Rare breeder and very scarce migrant.

Breeding: Proved at one site in south-west Moray (JJC) and possible at a north Moray site (KLG).

Probable migrants were a bird circling high over Findhorn Bay on 29 Sep (DMP) and one seen flying in off the sea at Lossiemouth on 31 Oct (CAG). In winter, 1 Duffus 27 Feb (AJL).

Swift *Apus apus*

Summer visitor and common breeder.

Arrival: First were 2 Loch Spynie 4 May and 1 Findhorn 8 May but main arrival not until mid May.

Breeding: Five birds prospecting buildings in Dallas 12 Jun (RP).

Only two gatherings of over 50 birds were recorded - 65 Loch Spynie 18 May and c.100 there 6 Jun (RP).

Small numbers of birds lingered into August at Archiestown, Elgin, Findhorn Bay, Garmouth, Loch Spynie, Lossiemouth, Sluie and Kinloss but there were only two September records, 1 Lossie estuary 5th (DAG,HF) and 1 Spynie churchyard 7th (RP).

Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*

Very scarce visitor and occasional breeder.

Around Loch Spynie, what was likely to be the same bird (a male) was seen on eight occasions between 12 Jul-29 Nov (DAG et al). Elsewhere, 1 Kingsteps 25 Jan (DCJ), 1 Tugnet 15 Jul (JPi), 1 Aberlour 26-27 Aug (AE), 1 Findhorn Bay 2 Sep (RHD) and 1 Kilravock 18 Sep (DBr).

Green Woodpecker *Picus viridis*

Very scarce visitor resident.

1 calling Loch na Bo 15 Mar (MJHC) and 29 Mar (CAG), and one there 20 Jul (CAG). Also one by the Findhorn at Logie Steading 16 Jul (CAG). These are the first records since 2006.

Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major*

Common resident breeder.

Breeding: Thriving around Forres where 10-12 pairs located in the town woodlands and Rafford area. Elsewhere, breeding confirmed at Loch na Bo, Glen Gheallaidh (Lynemore), Lochan Tutach, Ben Aigan and Conicavel. A juvenile in riparian woodland beside the Spey at Tugnet 18 Jun was pure white, except for an orange cap (PBin).

Magpie *Pica pica*

Fairly common resident breeder.

Recorded from Boat of Brig, Braes of Enzie, Clochan, Covesea, Craigroy, Dallasbraughty, Duffus, Elginshill, Forres, Hopeman, Kingsteps, Laggan, Miltonhill and Nether Dallachy. All records involved 1-2 birds, except 3 Dallasbraughty 20 Nov.

Jay *Garrulus glandarius*

Scarce resident breeder.

Breeding season: April-July reports came from Bridge of Brown, Clochan, Dulsie Wood, Gownie (Aberlour), Loch Belivat, Loch Oire, Loch Spynie, Oak Wood motel (Elgin), Shaw Hill, St Johns Meads, Torrieston and Whiteash Hill Wood.

At other seasons, Jays were seen at the following sites: Altyre (Oct), Cardinach (Dec), Charlestown (Jan), Cloddymoss (Oct), Conicavel (Aug), Drynachan (Oct), Braes of Enzie-Mulben (Sep), Kinloss (Oct), Loch of Blairs (Nov), Loch na Bo (Oct), Loch Oire (Aug), Loch Spynie (Mar, Aug, Oct-Dec), Pluscarden (Oct), Sanquhar Pond (Dec), Machattie's Cairn (Nov) and Wellheads (Mar).

Largest count was 6+ Conicavel 24 Aug.

Jackdaw *Corvus monedula*

Very common resident breeder.

Highest count was 250 Tomintoul quarry 8 Dec (IFr), with only one other count of 100 or more: 100 Spey Bay 20 Oct. Two together with white neck patches Cooper Park, Elgin 10 Jan were similar to northern birds *C.m.monedula* (RP).

Rook *Corvus frugilegus*

Very common resident breeder.

Birds carrying nest material were seen at Forres 18 Feb and Sheriffmill, Elgin 27 Feb. Three counts of 100 or more were received: 236 Paddockhaugh 5 Feb, 100 Inchnacape (Tomintoul) 21 Jul and 100 Spey Bay 4 Aug.

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
nc	nc	32	nc	nc	39	112	56	127	nc	nc	11

Elsewhere, 61 Macbeth's Hillock 5 Dec, 25 Dallas 25 Jan, 24 Nairn Bar 25 Jan and 20 Spey Bay 6 Sep.

Hooded Crow *Corvus cornix*

Scarce visitor.

Hooded Crows in Nairn district included 1 Maviston 28 Feb, 1 Nairn Bar 25 Jan, 6 Macbeth's Hillock 5 Dec and 1 Penick 1 Mar. In west Moray recorded at 4 Roseisle Forest 21 Oct, 1 Miltonhill 1 May and 2 Yellowbog 25 Jan. On the Lossie estuary, 2 on 1 Mar (1 on 15 & 25 Mar), 2 on 23 & 28 Jul, 1 on 18 Aug and 1 on 24 Sep.

Hybrids were widely recorded. Best counts were 10 Nairn Bar 25 Jan, 7 Lossie estuary 23 Jul, 4 Dallas 25 Jan, 3 Culbin Bar 25 Jan, 22 Feb and 4 Oct, and 3 Macbeth's Hillock 5 Dec. Also seen at Linkwood (Elgin), Paddockhaugh and Roseisle Forest.

Raven *Corvus corax*

Scarce visitor, formerly widespread breeder.

Breeding was confirmed at Tronach Head where a nest with four young was found on 3 May (MJHC); they were still in the nest on 24 May and the fledged brood was seen nearby on 7 Jun (JMa). Also near the coast, an unusual record of three flying over Forres 18 Dec (AJL).

A flock of eight birds was at Loch Kirkcaldy 25 Apr (MJHC). Singles were seen inland at Aldunie (Cabrach) (Mar), Archiestown (Aug), Ben Rinnes (Jun, Nov), Cabrach church (Nov), Cromdale Hills (Jul), Inverharroch (Mar) and Little Aitnoch (Jun). Two were seen at Knock of Braemoray (May) and Dunphail (Feb), and 4 Cairn Ballantruan (Oct).

Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*

Very common resident breeder and scarce migrant.

No meaningful data were received this year.

Firecrest *Regulus ignicapilla*

Accidental.

A female or first-winter was seen at Deskford 5 Dec (AA). This is the fourth record for Moray & Nairn following three Dorback Burn, near Relugas 4 Oct 1970, and singles at Clochan 2 Nov 1980 and Conicavel 15 Nov 2007.

Blue Tit *Cyanistes caeruleus*

Very common resident breeder.

Nest boxes:

	Pairs	Mean clutch	Mean fledged brood (all pairs)	Mean fledged brood/successful pair	
Loch Spynie	9	5.8	3.4	6.2	(RP, CAG)

A very poor year at Loch Spynie: the poorest since monitoring started in 1994. At Loch Spynie, the decline in fledged young was also reflected in results from ringing at the 'Constant Effort Site', where the proportion of juveniles caught per adult fell from 2.3 in 2008 to 1.4 (RP).

Great Tit *Parus major*

Very common resident breeder.

First song Aberlour 23 Jan, followed by Loch Spynie, Lein (Kingston) and Clochan 24 Jan.

Nest boxes:

	Pairs	Mean clutch	Mean fledged brood (all pairs)	Mean fledged brood/successful pair	
Loch Spynie	6	6.8	4.2	6.3	(RP, CAG)

A stable year at Loch Spynie for chicks fledging from nest boxes, which is also reflected in results from ringing at the 'Constant Effort Site' where the proportion of juveniles caught per adult was 0.6 in 2008 and 0.8 in 2009 (RP).

Crested Tit *Lophophanes cristatus*

Fairly common resident breeder.

Breeding: In Lossie Forest, two nest boxes were occupied. Both pairs laid clutches of 7 eggs, and 7 young fledged from both boxes (MJHC).

Otherwise, 1 Loch Belivat 21 Feb, 7 Roseisle Forest 21 Oct and 1 Muir of Lochs 23 Nov.

Coal Tit *Periparus ater*

Very common resident breeder.

No significant records received in 2009.

Bearded Tit *Panurus biarmicus*

Rare breeder.

Eleven years after Bearded Tits were first found at Loch Spynie, no records were received this year. Following reduced numbers in 2008, and severe weather in February 2009, it seems that they may now be extinct in Moray.

Skylark *Alauda arvensis*

Common breeder and migrant.

First song, in February, at Lossiemouth east beach 1st, Scarffbanks 15th, Tronach Head 15th, Longmorn (Elgin) 16th and Linkwood (Elgin) 18th.

In the first winter period, best counts were 70 Tugnet 6 Feb, 30 Muirton Cottage 7 Feb and 60 Buckpool 12 Feb. In autumn, 24 were at Kinloss 18 Sep, with 22 on both Nairn and Culbin Bars 4 Oct.

In late December, a concentration of records, coinciding with harsh weather that saw many Skylarks on the move. Counts of 20 or more were 74 Burghead 29th, 70 Covesea 29th, 30 Cummington 29th, 70 Duffus 21st, 20 over Elgin 20th and 20 Hopeman 29th. The most remarkable numbers however were at Westerfolds where 1200 were counted on 29 Dec including 400 on the snowy road (RP, RAM). This is the largest flock recorded on the ground in Moray & Nairn since records began, surpassing the c.550 near Spey Bay in snowy weather in March 2006.

Sand Martin *Riparia riparia*

Summer visitor and common breeder.

Arrival: The earliest arrival since 2004, with 8 Loch Spynie 21 Mar and 29 Loch na Bo 22 Mar. A more substantial arrival in early April when birds at Burghead Bay, Coldholme (Auchindoun), Kingsteps and Overton (Craigellachie). Numbers grew at Loch Spynie from early April, with c.100 on 4th, c.200 present 6th and 9th, c.300 on 21st and c.250 27th.

Largest colony count was again at Quarry Pool (River Spey, near Fochabers) where 864 good condition burrows were counted on 8 Jul (MJHC). This was a complete rebuild of the colony as no burrows remained in March after erosion of the cliff over the winter. Colony counts elsewhere (apparently occupied burrows)

included 175 Glen Rinnes sandpit 30 May, 110 Banchor riverbank 20 Jun, 100 Clashach Quarry 7 Jun, 100 on the Spey at Laggan House (Carron) 12 Jul, 30 Elgin golf course 15 Jul, 10-20 RAF Kinloss 6 Jun in seaward facing dunes, 15 River Nairn (Howford Bridge) 30 Apr, 4-6 Glenlatterach reservoir 27 Jun and 5 Burghead 28 Apr. The Corbie well (Garmouth) colony was deserted.

Highest summer count away from colonies was 100 Spey Bay 21 Jun. Last report was 12 Kinloss 26 Aug.

Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

Summer visitor and very common breeder.

Arrival: First was 1 Lossiemouth 3 Apr with small numbers appearing at Loch Spynie from the following day. Widespread arrival from mid April onwards.

Breeding: In the Lhanbryde barn, there was a peak of 5 simultaneously active nests on 21 Jul. Mean clutch size of the first brood was 3.0 eggs and of the second brood was 5.0 eggs, with a mean of 1.8 chicks and 5.0 chicks respectively (RP).

Counts exceeding 50 at autumn gatherings prior to migration were 200 Dallas Dhu (Forres) 24 Aug, 100 Kinloss 26 Aug, 100 Grant Park (Forres) 29 Aug, 200 Lossie estuary 31 Aug and 1 Sep, 200 Clochan 2 Sep and 70 Lossiemouth 19 Sep.

In October, 6 Burghead Bay 2nd and 1 Conicavel 4th. Unusually, there were three November records, all of single birds – Loch Spynie 5th, Lossie Forest 10th and Burghead 21st.

House Martin *Delichon urbicum*

Summer visitor and common breeder.

Arrival: Several Loch Spynie 5 Apr (CAG), were the earliest on record in Moray & Nairn, closely followed by 1 Broom of Moy 6th and 2 Dallas 9th. Widespread arrival from mid April onwards.

Breeding: Counts of occupied nests included 7 Spynie Hall (Quarrywood) 26 Jun, 5 Glenlatterach Reservoir 27 Jun and 9 Buckie High School 5 Jul. None on Milne High School (Fochabers).

Largest late summer/autumn counts were 150 Forres 11 Aug, 220 Kinloss 26 Aug (150 there 2 Sep) and 60 Clochan 2 Sep. Up to 4 Lossiemouth in late September and last of the year were 2 Burghead Bay 2 Oct.

An unusual record was of a pure white bird at Cloddach quarry 6 Sep (CAG).

Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus*

Very common resident breeder.

The only double-figure flocks were: 12+ Tazie (Ben Aigan) 30 Jan and 10 Waterford (Forres) 15 Nov.

Results from ringing at the 'Constant Effort Site' at Loch Spynie showed a slight increase in the proportion of juveniles caught per adult from 3.4 in 2008 to 5.0 (RP).

Wood Warbler *Phylloscopus collybita*

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

One singing Quarrelwood (Elgin) 18 Jun (JDL).

Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*

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

Arrival: March singing birds were located along the River Spey at Quarry pool, Fochabers on 21st, Dallas Dhu (Forres) 22nd and Moor of Tore (Rafford) on 28th. A further four singers were located in early April: at Kingsteps (2) and Kintessack on 2nd and Loch Oire on 4th. Subsequently, singing birds were found at Altyre (8), Archiestown, Broom of Moy (2), Burghead, Cloddach quarry, Cloddymoss, Conicavel, Culbin Forest, Drummuir (several), Forres, Garmouth (2), Glen Lossie (Dallas), Heldon Wood (2), Kingsteps (2), Kintessack, The Lein (Kingston), Lethenhill (2), Loch na Bo (6), Loch of Blairs, Loch Oire, Loch Spynie (2+), Mulben (several), Shaw Hill, Spey Bay, Spynie Palace, St John's Meads (River Findhorn) (4), Stoneyford Pond (Rafford) (4), Torrieston (2), Upper Dallachy (2) and Whiteash Hill Wood.

Through the summer and early autumn a total of 11 was trapped at the north-east fen at Loch Spynie.
Autumn: In September, 3 Clochan 14th, singles at Brodie and Loch Spynie 27th and 1 Cathay (Forres) 1 Oct.

Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus*

Summer visitor and very common breeder.

Arrival: The first records were singles at Spynie Palace, Altyre, Blacksboat and St Johns Meads (River Findhorn) on 12 Apr (six days earlier than 2008), followed over the next few days by 14 individuals on 13th-16th. Along the old railway line between Dufftown-Craigellachie the largest count was 58 singing birds on 23 May (MJHC). Large counts also from Dulsie Wood; 37 on 17 May and 21 on 20 Jun.

Results from ringing at the 'Constant Effort Site' at Loch Spynie showed a fall in the proportion of juveniles caught per adult from 3.5 in 2008 to 2.1 in 2009 (RP).

Last report was one Conicavel 4 Oct.

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*

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

January-March: 1M Lhanbryde 6-7 Feb and 1M Lossiemouth 16 Jan and 12 Mar were the only records.

Spring/summer: Singing birds (singles unless stated) were found at Aberlour, Altyre (2), Ballindalloch, Banchor, Bellie cemetery (2), Bishopmill (Elgin), Blacksboat, Clovenside cemetery (Forres), Cluny Hill cemetery (Forres), Craigellachie (5), Dallas, Drummuir (2), Dufftown, Dufftown-Craigellachie old railway line (15; up from 8 in 2008), Garmouth, Heldon Wood (2), Linkwood (Elgin), Loch na Bo (4), Loch Oire (2), Loch Spynie (4), Mulben (2), River Findhorn, Stoneyford Pond (Rafford) (2), Torrieston (3), Tyock (Elgin) and Quarry pool (Fochabers) (2).

Autumn: single females at Clochan 16 Sep and Archiestown 2 Nov.

Late November/December: 1 Knockomie, Forres 9 Dec.

Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin*

Summer visitor and scarce breeder.

In May, singles at Torrieston (3rd), Aberlour (26th) and Loch Oire (25th-29th).

One trapped and ringed at Loch Spynie 7 Aug.

Whitethroat *Sylvia communis*

Summer visitor and common breeder.

Arrival: First was 1 Findhorn 29 Apr.

Three pairs with young Dallas Dhu, Forres 23 Jun (AJL).

Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella naevia*

Summer visitor and scarce breeder.

Recorded at ten sites; an increase of six sites from 2008. First heard in April at Rosarie on 21st (and 3 present on 1 May) (WMM), followed by singing birds on 25th at Spynie Canal (DAG) and on 28th at Aultmore, Inchberry (2), Mulben and Orton (AY). Other singing birds were heard at Wester Coxtan 5 May (EH), Nether Dallachy 5 Jun (JBr) and Bardonside 13 Jun (JDL). The only record from Nairn District was a single Loch Flemington 1 Jun (DCJ).

Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

Summer visitor and common breeder.

Arrival: First song, at Kinloss and The Lein (Kingston) 30 Apr. In early May song heard at 10 sites between 1st-10th. Ringing at the 'Constant Effort Site' in the north-east fen at Loch Spynie estimated the adult

population at eight individuals, down from 14 individuals in 2008. The proportion of juveniles caught per adult was 3.2, up from 2.6 recorded in 2008 (RP).

Waxwing *Bombycilla garrulus*

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

Winter-spring: Small numbers remained in both Elgin and Forres from late 2008, and these small flocks were mobile around both settlements. 30-40 were regular around Elgin in Jan-Feb, max. 50 in Academy Street 22 Feb and in Forres 40-50 were frequently seen in Jan-Feb, max. 68 on 15 Feb. In March, 30 Elgin 8th, 16 Findochty 16th, and in April, 14 Forres 10th, 3 Mosstodloch 10th, 25 Elgin 18th, 4 Forres 19th and lastly 2-3 Elgin 20th.

Autumn-winter: No Waxwings were seen during this period, for the first time since 1998.

Treecreeper *Certhia familiaris*

Very common resident breeder.

No significant records received in 2009.

Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*

Very common resident breeder.

First song Lein (Kingston) 16 Mar. The snow in early 2009 appears to have hit this species hard, with very few records in the first part of the year, although Nairn Bar and Culbin Bar which would have remained relatively snow free, held 10 and 4 respectively on 25 Jan.

No adults were trapped at Loch Spynie 'Constant Effort Site' (RP), perhaps reflecting the impact of the harsh weather, although there were 30 singing birds along a 5.5km section of the old railway line between Dufftown and Craigellachie on 23 May (MJHC). In autumn, 12 Culbin Bar 4 Oct.

Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*

Very common resident breeder and winter visitor.

Nestboxes: Four out of 10 boxes at Clochan were occupied. All were successful and mean brood size at fledging was 5.3, above average for recent years.

c1000 using the Loch Spynie roost on 20 Aug and 9 Nov. Away from roosts, 400 Covesea 7 Feb.

Dipper *Cinclus cinclus*

Common resident breeder.

The only confirmed breeding was four birds (including one juvenile) on the River Livet at Drumin (Glenlivet) 24 May - 6 birds were reported from this site on 31 Jan and two pairs on 22 Feb (J&H MacD).

Anecdotal evidence from Nairn, reported many fewer on the River Nairn than formerly (RPC).

Ring Ouzel *Turdus torquatus*

Summer visitor and scarce breeder.

A female and at least two young on the summit of Ben Rinnes 23 Jun (AE) was the only record received in 2009.

Blackbird *Turdus merula*

Very common resident breeder, winter visitor and migrant.

Breeding: First full song noted in Elgin 26 Jan. 14 singing males along a 5.5km section of the old railway line between Dufftown and Craigellachie on 23 May (MJHC).

Winter counts: In the first winter period, 11 in a Longmorn (Elgin) garden 8 Feb. In late autumn, an influx of thrushes brought 13 flying along the clifftop at Strathlene 23 Oct, "large numbers" at Archiestown 2 Nov, 24 Succoth (Glen Rinnes) 15 Nov and 16 (mostly males) Linkwood (Elgin) 27 Nov. In harsh weather in late

December, 11 in an Elgin garden 22nd (with 18 on 31st), 14 Kinloss 22nd and 28 in a garden at Longmorn (Elgin) 30th.

Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris*

Very common migrant and winter visitor.

Winter-spring: Generally small numbers reported in first winter period, although substantial flocks included 400 Coltfoot and 1500 Covesea 7 Feb, and 182 Altyre 5 Mar (RHD). Last in spring were 4 Scarffbanks 5 Apr.

Arrival: First migrant arrivals 10 Oct at Dufftown, a typical date.

Autumn-winter: The arrival on 10 Oct was the precursor to a very substantial arrival in late autumn. In mid October numbers started to build up along the length of Strath Avon - in late October, large flocks of up to 2000 had appeared here, although numbers elsewhere were generally low, aside from a build up to c.200 around Tanzie (Ben Aigan), and 75 at Linksfield (Elgin) 30th. From the second week of November, large numbers were logged from many locations, with 18 sites producing a count of a hundred or more. Flocks exceeding 500 included 1000 Delmore (Aberlour) 8th, 580 Machattie's Cairn (Sheanspark) 8th, "thousands" at both Dufftown and Glen Fiddich 13th, "hundreds" Cabrach 14th, 1000 Beatshach (Glen Rinnes) 15th (with 500 nearby at Glack Harnes), 1000 Milltown of Laggan 15th, hundreds moving east Archiestown 16th, 1000 Dunphail 19th and 950 roosting in the forest at Coldburn (near Dallas) 26th. Still flocks of 1000 or more in Strath Avon but numbers were much lower here by the end of November.

Numbers declined in December as birds dispersed to other areas; highest counts included 100-200 around Forres, Loch Oire, Loch Spynie, Macbeth's Hillock (Brodie), Pitairlie and Upper Bruntlands.

Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos*

Very common breeder and migrant.

In January, first song heard at Lein (Kington) 12th, Clochan 18th and Elgin 22nd. 12 singing birds along a 5.5km section of the old railway line between Dufftown and Craigellachie 23 May (MJHC), and 10+ singing around Cabrach 1 Mar (RP).

Redwing *Turdus iliacus*

Very common migrant and winter visitor.

Winter-spring: As with Fieldfare, very small numbers in the first winter period, with only seven records received and just three counts above 40 birds: 90 Nether Dallachy 6 Feb, 55 near Dava Way (Forres) 21 Feb and 44 Altyre 5 Mar. Last in spring were 3 Kingsteps 2 Apr.

Autumn: First arrival was 12 over Scarffbanks 1 Oct but no others until 10 Oct onwards.

Autumn-winter: In contrast to the spectacular movement of Fieldfare in mid/late November, Redwing numbers were relatively low. About 100 were at Drynachan 23 Oct, and large numbers moved past Archiestown on 2 Nov. In November, 200 Bridge of Brown 7th (IFr) was the highest count of the year, and 100 were feeding on rowans at Tanzie (Ben Aigan) 10th. A small minority of Redwings was amongst the Fieldfares around Dufftown. In December, 150 Linksfield (Elgin) 4th was the only flock to exceed 100.

Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus*

Common resident breeder and migrant.

First song Forres 19 Feb. Highest count was 37 in an area of Elchies Forest 10 Sep. Otherwise, 7 Kinloss 6 Feb, 5 Dulsie 28 Feb, 5+ Ben Aigan 11 Mar and 28 Nov. Unusual records of birds on the beaches at Nairn and Lossiemouth in late December are likely to reflect the difficult feeding conditions during severe weather at the time.

Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata*

Summer visitor and common breeder.

Arrival: On 14 May, a single at Spynie Palace.

Other breeding season records from Archiestown (single carrying food 5 Jul), Kinloss, Loch Spynie and Lossie Forest.

Robin *Erithacus rubecula*

Very common resident breeder and migrant.

First full song Lein (Kingston) 17 Feb.

Productivity at Loch Spynie 'Constant Effort Site' was 3.6 juveniles per adult, up from 2.3 in 2008, suggesting a good breeding season. Counts from the spring/summer months were 16 singing in one hour at Dulsie Wood 17 May and 14 along a 5.5km section of the old railway line between Dufftown and Craigellachie 23 May (21 at this site in 2008) (MJHC).

In, autumn, 8 Nairn Bar 4 Oct.

Bluethroat *Luscinia svecica*

Rare migrant.

A single male was at Hopeman 18 May (PeT). The bird was not assigned to race, but the date suggests it was of the nominate 'red spotted' race, *L.s.svecica* of northern Europe, with UK records of the 'white spotted' race, *L.s.cyanecula* of southern and central Europe, typically falling earlier, in late March and April.

This is the 9th record for Moray & Nairn and the first since 2003, which was also at Hopeman.

Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*

Rare migrant.

A male at RAF Lossiemouth 4-5 Mar (MB). This is the 15th record for Moray & Nairn and the first since 2002. Ten have occurred in the March-May spring period, with singles in each month between July-December except September.

Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

Summer visitor and scarce breeder. Very scarce migrant.

Breeding season: three singing males Dulsie - Drynachan area 19 Apr (DAG), one female Gervally (Relugas) 25 Apr (MJHC), a singing male Banchor 2 May, a female Shaw Hill 17 May (MJHC), singing male Delmore (Aberlour) 25 May (AE), one male Lynemore 7 Jun and two pairs with fledged young and feeding young at Little Aitnoch 14 Jun (MJHC).

An unusual mid-summer record of one in Findhorn dunes 25 Jul (DMP).

Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra*

Summer visitor and scarce breeder. Very scarce migrant.

The only record was 1 female Spey Bay 22 Jun (JPi).

Stonechat *Saxicola torquatus*

Scarce resident breeder and probable migrant.

Inland moorland breeding was recorded from Ben Rinnes, Machattie's Cairn (Gateside), Glenlatterach reservoir and Lochan Tutach.

On the coastal plain, breeding was reported close to the shore opposite Boar's Head Rock, Clashach Quarry (Hopeman), Kinloss, Lein (Kingston) (3 pairs), Lossie Forest (two pairs), Myreside, Portgordon, Roseisle beach, Roseisle crossroads and Tronach Head.

Up country in autumn/winter were a pair Ben Rinnes 13 Jan, 1 Leids Hill (Cabrach) 1 Mar, 2 males and 1 female Machattie's Cairn (Gateside) 8 Nov, 1 Succoth (Glen Rinnes) 15 Nov, 1 Coldburn (Carn Uish) 26 Nov and 1 Ballnellan Burn (Strath Avon) at 400 m in Nov.

Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe*

Summer visitor, fairly common migrant and local breeder.

Arrival: 1 Wellhill 21 Mar was the first March record since 2005. Later, 2 males Lein (Kingston) 2 Apr, and then more widespread on the coast from mid April onwards. Earliest arrival dates since 2000 are as follows:

2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
6 Apr	4 Apr	28 Mar	24 Mar	20 Mar	22 Mar	6 Apr	6 Apr	14 Apr	21 Mar

Peak spring count was 31 in fields at Mid Mains 25 Apr (RP), with 13 Lein (Kingston) the following day – the most ever seen there (PGS). 5 Greenland race birds, *O.o.leucorhoa*, were at Lossiemouth 5 May (RHD). Autumn coastal passage counts were low, with peaks of 4 Kinloss 8 Sep and 5 Findhorn 23 Sep. On 4 Oct, birds were near Burghead, on Nairn Bar, between Portgordon-Strathlene (3) and on Strathlene golf course. Last of the year was 1 Spey Bay 15 Oct.

Dunnock *Prunella modularis*

Very common resident breeder.

First song Kingston 24 Jan and Elgin 9 Feb. Highest count of the year was 7 Nairn Bar 4 Oct.

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

Very common resident breeder.

Flock counts of 25 or more were 65 Kingston 22 Aug, 60 Clochan 23 Jul and 30 Spey Bay 22 Aug.

Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*

Fairly common resident breeder.

Breeding season: At Longmorn, first nest building 13 Mar – suspended in bad weather and resumed by 4 Apr. Several broods hatched by 10 May and up to 15 newly fledged young were seen on 31 May. 23 on bird tables 18 July. Second broods fledging by 25 July. A total of 17 broods fledged from 11 nest boxes (J&HMacD).

Breeding was also confirmed at South Darkland where 3 nest boxes were occupied and 22 birds were present on 5 Jun (JDL). Elsewhere, birds were present in the breeding season at Kingston, Little Pitlurg, Loch Oire area, Taznie (Ben Aigan), Mid Mains (Gilston), Clochan and Upper Dallachy.

At other times, c.40 Loch Oire area 18 Aug and 9 Sep, 29 Inchberry mid March and 1-5 birds at Conicavel, Gilston, Midwood and Paddockhaugh.

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*

Summer visitor and common breeder. Scarce in winter.

Breeding: 2 juveniles Loch Spynie 26 Jun were probably reared nearby.

Winter: In the first winter period, birds were seen at Aberlour, Buckie harbour and Elgin. In the second winter period the only record received was from Aberlour. A downturn in winter records after recent good years.

Pied Wagtail *Motacilla alba*

Very common breeder and migrant.

Counts exceeding 20 birds were 28 Spey Bay 4 Aug, 45 Grant Park (Forres) 30 Aug, 30 Spey Bay 31 Aug and 25+ to roost Loch Spynie 9 Nov.

Passage: Records of 'White Wagtails' *M.a.alba* in April were 1 Netherton (Findhorn Bay) 6th, 2 Lossie estuary 11th, 4 Lossiemouth north pier 22nd, 2 Kingston 26th and an impressive 18 Netherton 26th (ISS).

Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis*

Summer visitor and common breeder.

Breeding: Singing males recorded at Archiestown, Banchor, Drynahan/ Dulsie area (3), Little Aitnoch, Loch Belivat, Lochan Tutach, Lynemore, Rosarie (3) and Shaw Hill (2).

Other records included 1 over Linkwood (Elgin) 28 Apr and 1 over Loch Spynie 9 Aug.

Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis*

Very common breeder and migrant.

In late summer-autumn, 38 Kinloss 18 Aug, c.100 south in an hour over Sluie 24 Aug, 26 Culbin Bar 4 Oct and 120 around the summit of Meikle Balloch Hill 9 Nov.

In the uplands in mid winter was 1 Ben Rinnes 2 Jan.

Rock Pipit *Anthus petrosus*

Scarce breeder, fairly common in winter.

Breeding: 2 pairs Covesea 23 May.

Winter counts between Portgordon-Strathlene were 11 on 25 Jan and 26 on 4 Oct (MJHC).

Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*

Very common resident breeder, migrant and winter visitor.

Early singing at Lossiemouth cemetery 24 Jan, Kingston 14 Feb, Scarffbanks 15 Feb and Linkwood (Elgin) 18 Feb. On 23 May, 47 singing males were counted along c5 km of the route of the old Dufftown-Craigellachie railway line (MJHC). Productivity at Loch Spynie Constant Effort Site was measured at 0.3 juveniles/adult – slightly down on 2008 (RP).

Flock counts included 400 Archiestown 14 Jan, 200 Upper Bruntlands 6 Dec, 70 Gilston 8 Feb, 50 Myreside 8 Feb, 47 Strondow 25 Jan and 40 Nether Dallachy 6 Feb.

Brambling *Fringilla montifringilla*

Fairly common winter visitor and migrant.

Largest flocks were 50 Gilston 8 Feb and 34 Pitgaveny 25 Dec. Also, 7 Dunphail 3 Feb, 6 Pluscarden 15 Nov, 4 Kirkhill (Glen Rinnes 15 Nov), 3 Loch Oire 5 Feb, 1-2 Loch Spynie Feb-Apr and 1 Roseisle Forest 6 Apr. Up to 4 in several gardens, mostly in snowy weather, in both winter periods e.g. at Archiestown, Clochan, Forres, Longmorn, Lossiemouth and South Darkland.

Greenfinch *Carduelis chloris*

Very common resident breeder.

First song Clochan 27 Feb.

An interesting report of 200+ feeding on spruce seeds in a forest clearing at 360 m on the west flank of Cnoc Lochy (upper Strath Avon) in November (MMac).

Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*

Common resident breeder.

Flocks of 10 or more were 100 Waterford (Forres) 30 Nov, 88 Forres 6 Dec, 30 Myreside 8 Feb, 30 Spey Bay 22 Aug, 26 Kinloss 23 Nov, 24 Elgin (at a garden feeder) 14 Dec and 21 Buckpool 12 Feb.

Siskin *Carduelis spinus*

Very common resident breeder and migrant.

Flocks of 20 or more were 200+ Strath Avon in Nov, 60 Findhorn 25 Jan, 60 Loch Kirkcaldy 25 Apr, 50 Croftglass (Glen Rinnes) 13 Dec, 50 Nairn 31 Dec (feeding in Alders at the riverside), 40 Brodie 5 Dec and 30+ Loch Spynie 25 Dec.

Linnet *Carduelis cannabina*

Very common resident breeder.

A remarkable flock at North Darkland contained 3350 Linnets on 8 Feb – the birds, feeding on unharvested Oilseed Rape, were counted from a photograph (JDL). Other flocks of 100 or more were 450 South Darkland 1 Jan, 300 Bishopmill (Elgin) 15 Feb, 160 Croftglass (Glen Rinnes) 13 Dec, 160 Rafford 30 Dec, 100 near Loch Oire 18 Jan, 100 Myreside 8 Feb, 100 Rhinturk (Cabrach) 26 Nov and 100 Spey Bay 1 Sep. A mixed flock of 600-700 finches at Coxtan 28 Dec contained many Linnets, with some Greenfinches and Lesser Redpolls.

Twite *Carduelis flavirostris*

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

An unusually large flock of 160 on the saltmarsh in Findhorn Bay on 10 Jan (RHD) – part of this group probably accounted for 12 on the west side of the bay on 25 Jan (DGD). Around Culbin Bar, 30 on 31 Jan (RHD), 6 on 4 Oct (AY) and 18 on 20 Dec (AY). Also 19 between Delnies-Nairn on 4 Oct (IW).

Lesser Redpoll *Carduelis cabaret*

Common resident breeder and migrant.

Breeding season records from Glen Rinnes, Glenlatterach Reservoir (pair with brood on 27 Jun), Little Aitnoch, Loch Kirkcaldy and Lochan Tutach.

Winter flocks of 10 or more included 40 Burnside of Enzie (Clochan) 29 Dec, 40 on Alders Cloddach Quarry 29 Nov and 30 Rinour 6 Dec. Six at Tanzie (Ben Aigan) 10 Dec were feeding on the seed heads of mint.

Common Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra*

Common resident and irruptive migrant breeder.

Scottish Crossbill *Loxia scotica*

Probable common resident breeder.

Counts of 10 or more crossbill sp. (most likely to have been Common Crossbills) were 100 Croftglass (Glen Rinnes) 13 Dec, 100 Tervieside (Glen Rinnes) 13 Dec, 30 Kingsteps 4 Oct and 21 Kinloss 2 Nov. Smaller numbers were reported from Ben Aigan, Cloddach quarry, Culbin Bar, Keith, Loch Belivat, Loch Kirkcaldy, Lossiemouth cemetery, Meikle Balloch Hill, Nether Dallachy, Roseisle, Shaw Hill and South Darkland.

The adults at a nest in Culbin Forest were probably Scottish Crossbills. They were feeding a brood of 3 large young on 19 Apr and these had fledged by 30 Apr (SF).

Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

Common resident breeder.

6 Cardinach 6 Dec and 6 Loch Spynie 25 Dec were the largest groups reported.

Hawfinch *Coccothraustes coccothraustes**Rare visitor.*

1 in a garden in Aberlour on 29 Apr (RT,ATr). This is the 7th record for Moray & Nairn, and the first since 2000. Four have been in April, one in July and two in October.



Hawfinch, Aberlour 29 April 2009 (Robert Tribe)

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

No autumn coastal records until 23 Oct when 10 Lossiemouth east beach and 1 Strathlene.

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

	Jan	Feb	Oct	Nov	Dec
Nairn/Culbin Bars (& E.Nairn)	106 (25 th)	20 (1 st)	0	nc	60 (10 th)
Lossiemouth east beach	65 (2 nd)	70 (1 st)	10 (23 rd)	nc	20 (29 th)

At other sites, 70 Muirton 6-7 Feb, 65 Nairn west beach 31 Jan (20 there 14 Nov), 57 Ben Rinnes 13 Jan (55 in a flock near the summit – still 31 there 17 Jan but only 2 on 17 Feb), 30 Delnies-Nairn 22 Feb, 25 Lower Hempriggs 10 Feb, 22 Sheanspark 8 Nov, 14 Tugnet 31 Oct, 8 Kinloss 11 Feb, 7 Burghead 4 Nov (5 there 14 Nov), 2 Ben Aigan 1 Mar, 2 Cairn Gorm (near the summit) 7 Nov and 1 Roy's Hill 28 Mar.

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

First song heard Kingston 15 Feb and Spynie Kirk 26 Feb.

Flocks of 10 or more included 102 Kinloss 10 Feb, 86 Mulben 30 Dec, 50 Gilston 8 Feb (still 40 on 15 Feb), 40 Nairn harbour area 31 Dec, 30+ Archiestown 4 Feb (15 on 25 Jan), 30 Foresterseat 1 Jan, 30 Nether Dallachy 6 Feb, 26 Dallas Dhu (Forres) 25 Oct (still 15 on 8 Nov) and 15 Moor of Tore (Rafford) 28 Mar.

Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus*

Common resident breeder.

Present in the breeding season at Cloddach quarry (23 on 11 Apr), Glenlatterach Reservoir, Kinloss, Loch Spynie and, upcountry, at Loch Belivat and Lochan Tutach. Productivity at Loch Spynie Constant Effort Site was 0.9 juveniles per adult (RP).

An exceptional congregation of 100 Gilston 8 Feb, reducing to 75 by 15 Feb (RP). Other autumn/winter groups were 20 Nether Dallachy 6 Feb, 14 Cloddach quarry 18 Mar, 6 Dunphail 4 Nov, 5 Kinloss 10 Feb, 5 Loch Spynie 25 Dec, 4 Archiestown 13 Mar and 3 Aberlour (beside the Spey) 4 Feb. At the coast, 1-3 on the Nairn/Culbin Bars in Jan, Feb and Oct.

Corn Bunting *Emberiza calandra*

Scarce resident breeder.

Singing birds were located at Bogmoor, Brandston, Newton of Innes, Upper Dallachy (2) and to the east of Binn Hill (Garmouth). Also recorded in spring/summer at Binns, Spey Bay, Upper Dallachy and near Loch Oire.

At Clochan, 36 on 26 Jan and 18 on 15 Feb. Also, on 6 Feb, 32 Nether Dallachy and 7 Upper Dallachy.

ADDITIONS/CORRECTIONS TO 2007 REPORT

Jay *Garrulus glandarius*

The largest groups recorded in Moray & Nairn have been 12 Muldearie 27 Aug 2003 and 11 Loch Spynie 12 Aug 2005.

RINGING REPORT 2009

BOB PROCTOR

Numbers of birds ringed in Moray and Nairn during 2009:

	FG	Pull.	Tot		FG	Pull.	Tot
Little Ringed Plover		1	1	Garden Warbler	1		1
Arctic Tern		79	79	Whitethroat	1		1
Black Guillemot		2	2	Sedge Warbler	51		51
Common Gull		5	5	Wren	19	1	20
Stock Dove		2	2	Starling		21	21
Woodpigeon	2		2	Blackbird	7		7
Grt.Spot.Woodpecker	4		4	Song Thrush	1		1
Blue Tit	19	74	93	Robin	29		29
Great Tit	17	34	51	Dunnock	2		2
Crested Tit		14	14	Meadow Pipit	1		1
Coal Tit	4		4	Chaffinch	6		6
Swallow	30		30	Siskin	1		1
House Martin	3		3	Bullfinch	1		1
Long-tailed Tit	17		17	Reed Bunting	46	1	47
Chiffchaff	11		11				
Willow Warbler	111		111				
Blackcap	11		11	TOTALS	395	234	629

FG = Fully Grown Pull. = Chick Tot = Total

Recoveries in 2009

All ringing recoveries reported for 2009 are included in this section with the more interesting ones given in full. Information was supplied by M.J.H.Cook, D.Gibson, R.F. Hewitt, R.Proctor, from Highland Ringing Group bulletins and the BTO website (<http://www.bto.org/ringing/index.htm>). 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

MUTE SWAN

ZZ8773	1m	210707	New Herrington, Tyne & Wear	
	XF	231209	Findhorn Bay	337 km

Another unusual movement, following those to Cheshire (1997; 504km), Cumbria (2003; 384km) and Powys (2004; 636km).

WHOOPEE SWAN

ZY0553	Ad.m	050209	Welney, Norfolk	
	XF	250609	Rothes	598 km

U7V – Ringed Martin Mere, Lancashire on 19 Nov 2008. The only sighting is from Easter Calcots 15 Nov 2009.

PINK-FOOTED GOOSE

1408075	3m	161207	Loch of Lintrathen, Angus
	VV	280209	Hillhead pool, near Forres

BRENT GOOSE (LIGHT-BELLIED)

A large passage of Light-bellied Brent Geese at the Lossie estuary in September resulted in six colour-ringed birds being identified.

HF – An adult female ringed in 2008 at Alftanes, SW Iceland. Only two prior sightings, around Strangford Lough and Larne Lough.

NF – An adult male ringed in 2008 at Alftanes, SW Iceland. The 2008-09 winter was spent around Strangford Lough, Dungarvan harbour and Clonea Bay.

JU – An adult male ringed in 2008 at Akranes, W Iceland. The 2008-09 winter was spent around Killala Bay in Ireland.

UH – An adult male ringed in 2007 at Strangford Lough. The area around Strangford Lough and Dublin Bay is this individual's main wintering area. It was sighted in 2008 in west Iceland.

ZL – An adult ringed in 2007 at Dundrum Bay, Co Down. The area around Dundrum Bay and Strangford Lough is this individual's main wintering area. The sighting at Lossie estuary is the first away from Ireland.

41 – A first-year female ringed at Killala Bay in Ireland on 14 Feb 2008. Only seen around the Killala Bay area in 2008-09. Seen at the Lossie estuary 24-29 Sep 2009.

WIGEON

FP23439	5m	020203	Dalcross	
	X shot	191202	Carse of Delnies, Nairn	9 km

CORMORANT

5236363	1	210608	North Sutor	
	X	300309	River Spey, Garmouth	53 km
5253511	1	240607	Horse Island NR, Ardrossan	
	X	150108	Portgordon	253 km

Two colour-ringed Cormorants from colonies in north-east Scotland were seen in Moray.

SHAG

1379138	6m	300504	North Sutor	
	X	140209	Lossiemouth	40 km

A total 223 colour-ringed individuals was recorded in the winter of 2009-10 at the Bow Fiddle Rock, Portknockie. Although the majority of colour-ringed individuals originate from the Isle of May, birds from Caithness (2), Bullers of Buchan (5), Craigleith (3), Drumcarrach (1) and Fidra (4) were also recorded.

RED KITE

GC18455	1m	170606	Leanig, Black Isle	
	+	260407	Tomintoul	
GC18427	1f	150607	Redcastle, Black Isle	
	+	120407	Cawdor Estate	

SPARROWHAWK

EG91050	1f	010908	Hauxley Reserve, Northumberland	
	XF	170209	Fochabers	273 km

OSPREY

233609	1	270692	Minatangen, Valer, NORWAY	
	VB=F	010797	near Forres	
	VB=F	010798	near Forres	
	VB=F	010799	near Forres	

This is the second Norwegian-ringed Osprey to be recorded in Britain & Ireland (Coiffait, L. *et al.*, 2009. Ringing Report 2008. *Ringing & Migration* 24(4):310).

KESTREL

ES63200	1F	010602	near Cawdor	
	XF	120109	near Nairn	6 km

PEREGRINE

AJ54406	1	220609	near Nairn	
	X	120909	Tore	31 km
GC34643	1m	050608	near Nairn	
	X	020109	Hill of Beath, Fife	166 km
GC34645	1f	050608	near Nairn	
	XF	040909	Cullen	63 km

OYSTERCATCHER

FA68108	5	290195	Findhorn Bay	
	X	190309	Stylt, Nordfriesische Island, GERMANY	796 km
FA92866	5	250197	Findhorn Bay	
	VV	130408	Nupasveit, ICELAND	1171 km

FA92866 was also seen at Nupasveit in March and April each year from 2002-2007.

A chick, ringed at RAF Lossiemouth 22 May 2001 travelled 147 km to Perth before it was killed by a Peregrine on 11 August 2009.

Two Oystercatchers moved from Saltburn and Bunchrew to Lossiemouth. There were also two local recoveries from Lossiemouth.

LITTLE RINGED PLOVER

NV37566	1	010708	Garmouth	
	VV	210609	near Aberdeen	82 km

KNOT

7502542	6f	260508	Finnmark, NORWAY	
	VV	310109	Nairn Harbour	
SV70897	5	280101	Buckpool, Buckie	
	V	260506	Finnmark, NORWAY	1975 km
SX11186	3	060997	Findhorn Bay	
	V	240209	Griend, NETHERLANDS	732 km

SANDERLING

872266	?	220507	Sandgerdi, ICELAND	
		090409	West beach, Lossiemouth	
		201209	Nairn	
H321997	4	030408	Baie D'aouatif, Banc D'arguin, MAURITANIA	
	VV	030609	Benacre, Suffolk	3936 km
	VV	100609	Lossiemouth	4339 km
B03834	?	210909	Asenko Village, GHANA	
	VV	27-280809	East beach, Lossiemouth	

These colour-ringed individuals are the first records from Iceland, Mauritania and Ghana to be recorded in Moray & Nairn.

B03834 was still present at Esiama, Ghana on 6 June, and is only the third record for Britain of a Sanderling ringed there, while H321997 is the fifth from Mauritania.

REDSHANK

A local recovery from Portgordon, a year after ringing.

KITTIWAKE

ES75418	8	200699	North Sutor	
		250309	Covesea	34 km

BLACK-HEADED GULL

571432	1	190603	Alftanes, Kjosar, ICELAND	
	VV	301007	Cooper Park, Elgin	1237 km

6170462	1	160696	Froylandsvatnet, NORWAY	
	VV	281008	Cooper Park, Elgin	541 km

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL

FA83984 (Blue 550) was re-sighted at the Lossie estuary (7 Sep 2009) having spent the winter (19 Nov 2008 to 14 Feb 2009) around landfill sites in Gloucestershire.

HERRING GULL

ES006630	1	090798	Kandalashskiy Nature Reserve Murmansk, RUSSIA	
(K811)	VV	030109	Loch Spynie	2083 km

GA39548	10	300109	Seamer Carr, Scarborough	
	VV	220309	Lossie estuary	
	VV	010809	Lossie estuary	

The Murmansk individual returned for another winter, following reports in 2004 and 2007.

The Scarborough individual may have summered locally. Another individual from the Scarborough area was seen at the pool at Wester Calcots Farm on 4th May.

A chick from Golspie was seen in Nairn (45 km), while chicks from Dunbeath were seen in Elgin (66 km) and found dead at Lossiemouth (58 km).

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL

An adult seen at Burghead had been ringed at Nigg Ferry 14 years previously.

Movements over 150 km included:

MA12830	1	070707	Rothieholm Hd, Stronsay, Orkney	
	VV	260409	Lossie estuary	
	VV	030509	Lossie estuary	154 km
MA12850	1	150707	Rothieholm Hd, Stronsay, Orkney	
	VV	300709	Lossie estuary	154 km

MA12830 was also on the Lossie estuary in 2007 and 2008.

A total of 11 colour-ringed chicks from various Cathness colonies were seen in Moray (mainly at the Lossie estuary). Inland a colour-ringed individual (E50) was seen on the ice at Loch Spynie on 10th Jan.

COMMON TERN

XR25303	1	060787	Findhorn bridge, Forres	
	X	290409	nr Cromdale	29 km

GUILLEMOT

X43579	1	040795	Isle of Canna	
	XF	180207	Portknockie	134 km

PUFFIN

EJ78929	Ad.	180782	Isle of May	
	XF	031006	Burghead	179 km
ER44163	Ad.	250690	Isle of May	
	XF	041006	Burghead	179 km
ER46507	1	120792	Isle of May	
	X	251006	Findhorn	179 km
ES54620	Ad.	250695	Isle of May	
	XF	021006	Lossiemouth	177 km
ES78157	Ad.	240696	Isle of May	
	XF	071007	Culbin Bar	178 km

COLLARED DOVE

EL11002	1	280608	Elgin	
	XF cat	070609	Nairn	35 km

Previous movements include birds from Hampshire, Cambridgeshire, Perthshire, Fair Isle and Newburgh.

BARN OWL

GN05946	1	210608	Lynemore	
	X	170209	Drummore of Cantray, Cawdor	36 km

TAWNY OWL

GC57270	1	070608	Crathie	
	XF car	120709	Roths	54 km

GREAT TIT

TE13150	1	300509	Inchberry, Fochabers	
	V	280609	Bin Forest	23 km
VH98883	?f	290599	Cospeito, Durham	
	V	020106	Keith	346 km

SWALLOW

V142781	1	130608	Lhanbryde	
	V	190909	Icklesham	790 km
X427310	3	081008	Arreton, Isle of Wight	
	XF	130609	Findhorn	791 km

WILLOW WARBLER

9B0279	3	270202	Blairgorm, Nethybridge	
	XF car	180508	near Forres	36 km
BKP003	4m	200407	South Walney, Cumbria	
	V	100509	Loch Spynie CES	404 km

SEDGE WARBLER

V857665	3	220709	Loch Spynie CES	
	V	080809	Icklesham	794 km

STARLING

CF31354	6m	220100	Bishopmill, Elgin	
	V	020209	Cramlington, N'berland	304 km

REDWING

8A45991	3	201005	Hovden, Hareid, NORWAY	
	V	250207	Forres	750 km

ROBIN

T863143	3	210707	Invererne, Forres	
	XF	211008	Milton of Grange, Forres	1 km

HOUSE SPARROW

TB77614	4f	190506	Mundole, near Forres	
	XF	150407	Redcraig, Forres	9 km
TJ31308	6m	050108	Mundole, near Forres	
	XF	150808	Forres	3 km

CHAFFINCH

T398394	3m	171204	Blervie House, Rafford	
	XF	160707	Rafford, Forres	2 km

GOLDFINCH

T705508	3m	261205	Towcester, N'hamtonshire	
	?	230107	Burghead	633 km

SISKIN

V996725	5m	080208	Grimston, Norfolk	
	XF	100508	Culbin Forest, Forres	600 km

T850687	5f	020406	Clochach, Buckie	
	V	110309	Neerpelt, Limburg, BELGIUM	893 km

V423222	3J	120808	Clochach, Buckie	
	V	140509	West Linton, Borders	209 km

GRID REFERENCES OF LOCALITIES MENTIONED IN THE SPECIES ACCOUNTS
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Aldivalloch	NJ3626	Boar's Head Rock	NJ2867
Aldunie	NJ3626	Boat o' Brig	NJ3251
Altyre Woods	NJ0253	Boath	NH9155
Alves	NJ1362	Bogmoor	NJ3562
Archiestown	NJ2344	Boldow	NJ1740
Ardclach	NH9545	Bow Fiddle Rock	NJ4968
Ardgye	NJ1563	Braes of Enzie	NJ3959
Ardivot	NJ2267	Braidbog	NJ4963
Arthur's Bridge	NJ2567	Brandston	NJ2865
Auchindoun Castle	NJ3437	Bridge of Avon	NJ1835
Auchlochan	NJ0241	Bridge of Brown	NJ1220
Auchmair	NJ3828	Bridgend	NJ3731
Auchnarrow	NJ2123	Broadley	NJ3961
Auchroisk	NJ3351	Brodie Castle	NH9757
Auchtertyre	NJ1858	Brodieshill	NJ1059
Auldearn	NH9155	Broom of Moy	NJ0159
Badcheer	NJ3532	Broombank	NH9255
Badentinan	NJ2957	Brown Muir	NJ2555
Ballindalloch Castle	NJ1736	Buckie	NJ4165
Ballnellan Burn	NJ1326	Buckpool	NJ4165
Ballochford	NJ3633	Burghead	NJ1169
Balvalley Moss	NJ3725	Burghead Bay	NJ0867
Balvenie	NJ3242	Burgie Wood	NJ0958
Banchor	NH9140	Burnside of Dipple	NJ3256
Bank of Corinacy	NJ3829	Burnside of Enzie	NJ3960
Bardonside	NJ2154	Burnside of Geddes	NH8851
Bauds of Cullen	NJ4766	Byres	NJ3562
Beatshach	NJ2737	Cabrach	NJ3827
Beinn a' Chaorainn	NJ0401	Cairn Ballantruan	NJ1524
Beinn a' Chruinnich	NJ2313	Cairn Gorm	NJ0003
Beinn Mheadhoin	NJ0201	Cairn Lochan	NH9802
Bellie cemetery	NJ3561	Cairn Uish	NJ1750
Ben Aigan	NJ3048	Calcots	NJ2563
Ben Macdui	NN9999	Cantsford	NJ0754
Ben Main	NJ3535	Cardhu	NJ1843
Ben Rinnes	NJ2435	Cardnach Fm	NJ1942
Berryburn	NJ0545	Carn Allt a' Chlaiginn	NJ3230
Bin of Cullen	NJ4764	Carn Daimh	NJ1824
Binn Hill	NJ3065	Carn Liath	NJ2515
Binns	NJ3164	Carron	NJ2241
Binsness	NJ0362	Catherinebraes	NJ2544
Birchfield	NJ1614	Caysbriggs	NJ2466
Bishopmill	NJ2163	Charlestown of Aberlour	NJ2642
Blackhillock	NJ2044	Clackmarras	NJ2458
Blacksboat	NJ1838	Clashach Cove	NJ1570
Blackwater Lodge	NJ3328	Clochan	NJ4060

Clockeasy	NJ2962	Dufftown	NJ3239
Cloddach	NJ1958	Duffus	NJ1668
Cloddymoss	NH9860	Duffus Castle	NJ1867
Clovenside	NJ0459	Dulsie	NH9341
Cluny Hill	NJ0458	Dulsie Bridge	NH9341
Cnoc Lochy	NJ1621	Dunearn	NH9341
Coire Raibeirt	NJ0003	Dunphail Ho	NJ0047
Coldburn	NJ1449	Dykeside	NJ1159
Coldhome	NJ3639	Earnhill Fm	NJ0160
Coleburn	NJ2455	Earnside	NJ1062
College of Roseisle	NJ1366	Easter Calcots	NJ2563
Coltfield	NJ1163	Easter Cloves	NJ1461
Conicavel	NH9953	Easter Gaulrig	NJ1514
Cook's Cairn	NJ3027	Easter Lawrenceton	NJ0858
Corbiewell	NJ3165	Easter Newforres	NJ0658
Covesea	NJ1870	Easterton	NJ2156
Covesea Skerries	NJ1971	Edinkillie	NJ0246
Coxton	NJ2660	Elgin	NJ2162
Coxtontower	NJ2660	Elginshill	NJ2663
Craigellachie	NJ2844	Feakirk	NJ0344
Craigmill Lodge	NJ1052	Fèith Buidhe	NJ0909
Craigroy	NJ1250	Ferniefield	NJ3064
Cran Loch	NH9459	Findhorn Bay	NJ0462
Croftglass	NJ2530	Findochty	NJ4668
Crofts of Dipple	NJ3259	Findrassie	NJ1965
Cromdale Hills	NJ1226	Fochabers	NJ3458
Crooked Wood	NJ2762	Fogwatt	NJ2357
Culbin Bar	NH9662	Foresterseat	NJ2562
Culbin Forest	NH9862	Forres	NJ0358
Cullen	NJ5167	Garbh Uisge Mòr	NH9900
Cummingston	NJ1368	Garlinebeg	NJ1741
Cunninghaugh	NJ3564	Garmouth	NJ3364
Dallas	NJ1252	Garmouth viaduct	NJ3464
Dallas Dhu	NJ0356	Gateside	NJ3647
Dallas Lodge	NJ1052	Gervally	NH9948
Dallasbraughty	NJ0346	Gilston	NJ2066
Darnaway Castle	NH9955	Glack Harnes	NJ2836
Dava	NJ0038	Glacks of Balloch	NJ3534
Delmore	NJ2442	Glass	NJ4239
Delnabo	NJ1617	Glen Avon	NJ1006
Delnies	NH8356	Glen Gheallaidh	NJ1338
Deskford	NJ5061	Glen Latterach	NJ1951
Drainie	NJ2168	Glen Lossie	NJ1347
Drumdivan	NH8454	Glen Rinnes	NJ2834
Drumfurrich	NJ2944	Glenallachie	NJ2741
Drumin	NJ1830	Glenfarclas Distillery	NJ2138
Drummuir	NJ3844	Glenferness	NH9443
Drybridge	NJ4362	Glenlatterach Reservoir	NJ1952
Drynachan	NH8639	Glenmullie	NJ1916

Gollachy Burn	NJ4064	Loch Allan	NH9939
Gordonsward	NJ2564	Loch Belivat	NH9547
Gownie	NJ2842	Loch Flemington	NH8152
Half Davoch	NJ0451	Loch Kirkaldy	NH9641
Hardmuir	NH9556	Loch Loy	NH9358
Heldon Wood	NJ1257	Loch of Blairs	NJ0255
Hill of Mackalea	NJ3638	Loch Oire	NJ2860
Hill of Maud	NJ4662	Loch Park	NJ3543
Hill of Mulundy	NJ1053	Loch Spynie	NJ2366
Hillhead	NJ2058	Lochan Tùtach	NH9840
Hillpark	NJ4360	Lochbuie	NJ2153
Hills of Cromdale	NJ1226	Lochindorb	NH9736
Hopeman	NJ1469	Lochs of Bogmussach	NJ1347
Howford Bridge	NH8753	Lochyhill	NJ0559
Humbrack	NJ2556	Logie	NJ0150
Hunt Hill	NJ2346	Logieburn	NJ2656
Inchberry	NJ3155	Longmorn	NJ2358
Inchnacape	NJ2020	Lossie estuary	NJ2469
Innes House	NJ2764	Lossiemouth	NJ2370
Innesmill	NJ2863	Lower Auchenreath	NJ3763
Inveravon	NJ1837	Lower Blairmain	NJ2738
Invererne	NJ0360	Lower Bogrotten	NJ4861
Inverharroch Fm	NJ3831	Lower Hempriggs	NJ1064
Johnstripe	NJ0447	Lyne of Knockando	NJ1745
Keith	NJ4250	Lynemore	NJ1438
Kellas	NJ1754	Macbeth's Hillock	NH9656
Kerrow	NH9941	Machattie's Cairn	NJ3547
Kilravock	NH8149	Mains of Kirdells	NJ1739
Kinermony	NJ2541	Mains of Moyness	NH9553
Kingsteps	NH9057	Manachie Fm	NJ0356
Kingston	NJ3365	Manbeen	NJ1959
Kinloss	NJ0661	Marypark	NJ1938
Kinneddar	NJ2269	Maviston	NH9458
Kirdellbeg	NJ1741	Meikle Balloch Hill	NJ3534
Kirkhill	NJ2462	Meikle Coire Riabhach	NJ2513
Knock of Braemoray	NJ0141	Mid Mains	NJ1966
Knock of Gownie	NJ2942	Midwood	NJ4261
Kylnadrochit Lodge	NJ1419	Mill of Grange	NJ0460
Ladder Hills	NJ2719	Millhill	NJ3158
Ladycroft	NJ2444	Milltown	NJ2758
Laggan	NJ2026	Milltown of Laggan	NJ2834
Lecht Road	NJ2413	Miltonduff	NJ1860
Leids Hill	NJ4126	Miltonhill	NJ0963
Lein	NJ3365	Monadh an t-Sluich Leith	NJ2617
Lethen	NH9351	Monahoudie Moss	NJ2243
Lethenhill	NJ1058	Monaughty	NJ1260
Lhanbryde	NJ2761	Moniemouies	NJ2756
Little Aitnoch	NH9640	Montgrew	NJ4551
Little Pitlurg	NJ4245	Moor of Tore	NJ1054

Moss of Barmuckity	NJ2461	Rinour	NJ1740
Moss of Birnie	NJ2051	Rosarie	NJ3849
Mosstodloch	NJ3360	Roseisle Forest	NJ1166
Moycroft	NJ2362	Salterhill	NJ2067
Muir of Holmie	NJ4161	Sanquhar Loch	NJ0458
Muir of Miltonduff	NJ1859	Scabbed Hill	NJ4160
Muir of the Clans	NH8352	Scarffbanks	NJ2366
Muirhead	NJ0863	Scout Hill	NJ3331
Muirton	NJ2268	Scotstonhill	NJ2662
Muiry Wood	NJ0558	Shaw Hill	NH9748
Mulben	NJ3550	Sheanspark	NJ3645
Muldearie Mains	NJ3950	Shearleat	NH8641
Mundole	NJ0156	Shelter Stone	NJ0001
Myreside	NJ2164	Sherriffmill	NJ2062
Nairn	NH8856	Sheriffston	NJ2561
Nairn Bar	NH9260	Sluie	NJ0052
Nether Bellandy	NJ2833	South Darkland	NJ2661
Nether Birnie	NJ2059	Spey Bay	NJ3564
Nether Dallachy	NJ3663	Speymouth	NJ3465
Nether Meft	NJ2764	Spynie Canal	NJ2366
Netherbyre	NJ1557	Spynie Palace	NJ2365
Netherton	NJ0361	St. John's Meads	NJ0155
Newbold Wood	NJ0558	Stoneyford pond	NJ0455
Newforres Wood	NJ0657	Strath Avon	NJ1425
Newton nursery	NJ1663	Strathlene	NJ4467
Newton of Darnaway	NH9853	Stronachavie	NJ1318
Newton of Innes	NJ2866	Strindow	NJ1644
North Darkland	NJ2662	Strypes	NJ2758
Ordiquish	NJ3357	Succoth	NJ2935
Orton	NJ3153	Surradale	NJ1665
Overton	NJ2745	Tanzie	NJ3146
Paddockhaugh	NJ2058	Tapp	NJ1447
Parks of Innes	NJ2763	Tarras	NJ0659
Paul's Hill	NJ1140	Teindland	NJ2655
Penick	NH9356	Tervieside	NJ2330
Philaxdale	NJ1667	Tips of Corsemaul	NJ3939
Pitairlie	NJ2465	Todholes	NJ1054
Pitgaveny Ho	NJ2465	Tomachar	NJ2432
Pittendreich	NJ1961	Tombreck	NJ1218
Pluscarden	NJ1456	Tomcork	NJ1349
Portgordon	NJ3964	Tomintoul	NJ1618
Portknockie	NJ4868	Tomnavoulin	NJ2126
Quarrywood	NJ1864	Tormore Distillery	NJ1534
Rafford	NJ0656	Torrieston	NJ1658
Recltich	NJ2834	Tronach Head	NJ4768
Redhill	NJ1661	Troves	NJ2459
Refouble	NH9540	Tugnet	NJ3465
Relugas	NH9948	Tynet	NJ3861
Rhinturk	NJ3632	Upper Bruntlands	NJ1943

Upper Dallachy	NJ3662
Upper Knockando	NJ1843
Upper Mulben	NJ3652
Urquhart	NJ2862
Waterford Fm	NJ0259
Wellheads	NJ3860
Wellhill	NJ0061
Wester Calcots	NJ2463
Wester Elchies	NJ2542
Wester Gaulrig	NJ1513
Wester Manbeen	NJ1960
Westerfolds	NJ1967
Westertown	NJ1925
Whiteash Hill	NJ3857
Whitefolds	NJ2425
Whitetree	NJ1156
Whitewreath	NJ2357
Yellowbog	NJ1448