

A snowy owl with white feathers and dark brown spots is perched on a large, dark, textured rock. The owl is looking towards the left of the frame. The background consists of more rocks and some moss.

Birds in Moray & Nairn

2014

Birds in Moray & Nairn in 2014

MORAY & NAIRN BIRD REPORT
No.29 – 2014

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

Cover photograph: Snowy Owl near Ben Macdui, 3 September 2014 (Richard Somers Cocks).

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Mute Swan to Goosander (all wildfowl)	Bob Proctor
Quail to White-billed Diver (gamebirds and divers)	Martin Cook
Fulmar to Shag (including shearwaters)	Richard Somers Cocks
Little Egret to American Coot (herons, grebes, raptors and rails)	Martin Cook
Oystercatcher to Snipe (all waders)	Duncan Gibson
Pomarine Skua to Great Black-backed Gull (skuas, auks, terns and gulls)	Richard Somers Cocks
Feral Pigeon to Long-tailed Tit (including pigeons, owls, falcons, crows, hirundines and tits)	Martin Cook
Yellow-browed Warbler to Sedge Warbler (all warblers)	Bob Johnson
Waxwing to Rock Pipit (including thrushes, chats, wagtails and pipits)	Martin Cook
Brambling to Corn Bunting (all finches and buntings)	Bob Johnson

EDITORIAL

Moray & Nairn, despite its richness in habitats and birds, has a rather small band of active birders. This is both a curse and blessing! It does mean that, apart from the favoured coastal sites, many parts of our area receive only occasional visits from birders. As a consequence, detailed knowledge of some aspects of our bird distribution is lacking - and doubtless many scarce birds escape detection. On the plus side, the opportunities to find ones own birds, and to make an individual contribution to local knowledge, are high.

Evidence of this can be found in this Report, which contains articles revealing unexpected richness in both seabird passage and breeding warbler densities. These have been down to the work of individuals whereas the Black-headed Gull survey was conducted on a larger scale by members of Moray Bird Club - the Moray branch of the SOC.

This edition of Birds in Moray & Nairn, the 29th edition of the Moray & Nairn bird report, is available only online at www.birdsinmorayandnairn.org. For those who wish a hard copy, this can be printed from the website.

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

HOW TO SUBMIT RECORDS

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

1. To Birdtrack

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

BirdTrack is an exciting new web-based bird recording project that looks at migration movements and distributions of birds throughout Britain and Ireland. It provides facilities for observers to store and manage

their own personal records as well as using these for the production of local bird reports, and to support species conservation at local, regional, national and even international scales.

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

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

2. To the Moray and Nairn Recorder

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

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

ASSESSMENT OF RARITY RECORDS

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

A three-tier system of record assessment exists:

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

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

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

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

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

The following species are currently on the MNRC list:

Bewick's Swan	Bean Goose	American Wigeon
Green-winged Teal	Garganey (except adult male)	Ring-necked Duck
Ruddy Duck (except adult male)	Surf Scoter (except adult male)	Balearic Shearwater
Leach's Petrel	Red-necked Grebe	Black-necked Grebe
White Stork	Spoonbill	Bittern
Little Egret	Great White Egret	Honey-buzzard
Rough-legged Buzzard	Hobby	Spotted Crake
Corncrake	Crane	Avocet
Little Ringed Plover (except lower River Spey)	American Golden Plover	Temminck's Stint
Pectoral Sandpiper	Buff-breasted Sandpiper	Red-necked Phalarope
Grey Phalarope	Long-tailed Skua	Sabine's Gull
Ring-billed Gull	Black Tern	Roseate Tern
Turtle Dove	Nightjar	Hoopoe
Wryneck	Green Woodpecker	Red-backed Shrike
Great Grey Shrike	Golden Oriole	Chough
Bearded Tit	Shore Lark	Yellow-browed Warbler
Reed Warbler	Icterine Warbler	Lesser Whitethroat
Firecrest	Nuthatch	Rose-coloured Starling
Bluethroat	Red-breasted Flycatcher	Black Redstart
Yellow Wagtail	Richard's Pipit	Water Pipit
Common Rosefinch	Hawfinch	Lapland Bunting

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

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

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

OBSERVERS CONTRIBUTING TO *BIRDS IN MORAY & NAIRN 2014*

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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 22 apparently occupied territories were recorded in 2014, with 17 pairs producing 75 young; of these, 43 appear to have fledged. The mean total of fledged young in 2014 is lower than the mean of 4.5 fledged young for the last 10 years. A territorial dispute noted at Loch Oire. No breeding occurred this year on the Cooper Park pond, Elgin as the pond was drained for construction of the flood alleviation embankment: this pair could account for some wandering individuals or a breeding pair at a new site.

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

Year	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Pairs	13	18	19	10	14	17	17	13	19	13	17
Young fledged	67	65	110	51	59	57	84	53	53	73	43
Mean	5.2	3.6	5.8	5.1	4.2	3.3	4.9	4.1	2.8	5.7	2.5

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

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Loch Flemington	27	21	18	16	6	4	nc	16	19	77	43	28
Nairn	12	8	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	10	10	nc	10
Loch Loy	7	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	2	nc	2	8	nc
Findhorn Bay	8	11	26	50	70	75	16	3	11	8	17	39
Lossie estuary	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	2	2	nc	nc	1	nc	nc
Loch Spynie	98	58	24				Breeders		36	37	42	50
Cloddach	nc	18	17				Breeders		24	29	20	4
Loch Oire	6	4	2				Breeders		2	2	nc	3
Loch na Bo	nc	2	3				Breeders		2	nc	10	7
Spey estuary	4	4	4	10	25	31	27	9	4	8	1	1

nc = no count received

Only one other site held ten or more: 12 Nairn Bar 7 Dec.

Coastal records (max. counts): 8 Burghead Bay 24 Feb and 10 between Delnies-Nairn 7 Dec.

Individuals in stubble fields with Whooper Swans included 2 Calcots 17 Oct and a single at Salterhill 27 Dec.

[Black Swan *Cygnus atratus*

Escape.

One Westerfolds Farm 2 Nov (GR,AL,AJL,RP) was reported until 29 Dec. After the initial finding at Westerfolds Farm it was subsequently seen at several widely dispersed sites between Findhorn Bay and Foresterseat (Lhanbryde), associating throughout its stay with Whooper Swans: Calcots 5 & 8 Nov, Sunbank (Lossiemouth) 8-9, 17 & 22 Nov, Findhorn Bay 16 & 18 Nov, Salterhill 16 Nov, Alves 20 Nov, Waukmill (Elgin) 17-19 Dec and Calcots-Foresterseat 22-29 Dec.

Previous records have occurred in 1994 (1 Findhorn Bay 18 Apr and 3 near Roseisle maltings 21 Apr-9 May) and 1996 (singles Lossie estuary 6 Mar, Findhorn Bay 11 Mar-11 May and Loch Spynie 17 Mar; probably two individuals involved.)



Black Swan with Whooper Swans, Foresterseat 29 December 2014 (Photo: Gordon Biggs)

Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus*

Common migrant and winter visitor.

Winter-spring: In Nairn three sites were used: Loch Flemington (26 on 7 Jan), Nairn Bar (5 on 21 Mar) and Crachies (near Auldearn) (2 on 14 Jan). In Moray, birds were recorded at 13 sites (one fewer than 2013), though unlike 2013 no flocks exceeded 20 individuals. Largest counts from each site were: 1 Burnside of Enzie 2 Jan, 19 Urquhart 10 Jan, 1 (the Polish-ringed individual from 2013) Cloddach quarry 21 Jan & 1 Feb, 10 Pitairlie 25 Jan, 15 Calcots 1 Feb, 15 Loch na Bo 7 Feb, 8 Kirkhill 27 Feb, 18 Findhorn Bay 4 Mar,

18 (west) Lossiemouth 8 Mar, 19 (north-west) Burghead Bay 9 Mar, 20 Loch Spynie 10 Mar, 16 Muirton 12 & 13 Mar and 19 Inchbroom 15 Mar. Some of these records may refer to the same wandering flock.

Spring: The largest flock during this period was 24 Findhorn Bay 11 Apr, otherwise only very small numbers recorded; 7 Calcots area 1 & 9 Apr and singles Loch Spynie 19 Apr, River Spey (Mosstodloch) 26 Apr and Spey estuary 29-30 Apr. In late spring 2 south-west Burghead 1 May and singles River Spey (Mosstodloch) 7 May and Cloddach quarry 17 May. The single bird at Loch Spynie, River Spey (Mosstodloch), Spey estuary and Cloddach quarry, as well as the adult in summer at Findhorn Bay (below) could be the same wide-ranging individual.

Summer: A single adult Loch Kirkcaldy 11 Jun, and another with Mute Swans in the southern part of Findhorn Bay 11 & 14 Jun.

Autumn: The first record for the autumn period was 25 Hilton (Delnies) 25 Sep, quickly followed by 16 Findhorn Bay 28 Sep and 19 Loch Spynie 29 Sep. In October large numbers arrived from 4th onwards with the majority consisting of flocks less than 100. The largest 'group', of 552 individuals, consisted of two flocks in neighbouring stubble fields: 217 Bailliesland Farm and 335 Gordonsward Farm on 24th (RP). Elsewhere, site counts (max.) for October included: 2 Montgrew 8th, 37 Lossie estuary 9th, 28 Burghead Bay 10th, 32 Coltfoot area 10th, 230 Lossiemouth 15th, 330 Duffus Castle 19th, c.200 Loch Spynie 19th, 3 Balormie pig farm 21st, 10 Loch Oire 22nd, 7 Laikenbuie (Nairn) 23rd, c.50 Bogmoor 23rd, 11 Delnies-Nairn 26th, 112 Loch Flemington 26th, c.150 Lochhills 26th, 46 Findhorn Bay area 27th, 13 Clochan 28th and 5 Elgin 29th. Despite the large numbers in October being recorded around the Elgin area (from Duffus Castle-Lochhills), these were only the precursor to unprecedented numbers in November when counts on 17th at Sunbank (442) and Kinneddar (265) totalled 707 individuals in two adjacent fields (RP), while two other flocks that were checked immediately following these counts at Salterhill (21) and Wester Calcots (85) gave a grand total of 813 in the Elgin/Lossiemouth area (RP). The total of 707 in the Sunbank/Kinneddar fields is more than double the previous record for Moray & Nairn: 327 in the Duffus Castle/Loch Spynie area 29 Oct 2011. Regular flock counts between 4-30 Nov in the Elgin/Lossiemouth area exceeded 100 (considered a high count in normal years) on 12 dates. Three other large counts probably consisted of birds from the Elgin/Lossiemouth flock: 205 Westerfolds 2nd, 218 Alves 24th and 179 Findhorn Bay 29th. Elsewhere in November, counts recorded (max. for each site) were more typical: 22 Delnies 2nd, 146 Broadley crematorium 4th, 66 Lower Hempriggs 5th, 2 Loch na Bo 5th, 10 Moyness 6th, 11 east Spey estuary 9th, 2 Loch Flemington 16th, 5 Balblair (Loch Flemington) 16th, 99 Salterhill 17th, 26 Crofts of Dipple 20th, 17 Loch Kirkcaldy 23rd, 7 east Nairn 25th and 50 Meikle Kildrummie (Nairn) 29th.

Winter (December): In Nairn, birds were recorded at two sites: Loch Flemington 1 on 11th and Nairn golf course 11 east on 18th. In Moray, seen at 12 sites: 63 Westerfolds 4th, 1 Loch Oire 9th, 17th & 20th, c.100 Windyridge 14th, 136 Earnhill (Forres) 15th, 98 Waukmill (Elgin) 17th, 188 east Findhorn Bay 27th, 69 Salterhill 27th, 5 Roseisle maltings 28th, 147 Foresterseat (Lhanbryde) 28th, 6 Moss of Barmuckity 28th, 1 Loch na Bo 20th & 31st and 1 Spey estuary 30th.

Six colour-ringed individuals were seen during this period: see 'Ringing Section' for details.

Brood sizes reported in October-December 2014:

	1	2	3	4	5
Frequency	3	14	16	7	6

The mean from the 46 broods reported was 3.0 young, compared to 2.8 in 2013.

Mean brood sizes in flocks: Muirton 3.0 on 9 Nov (7 broods), Salterhill 2.7 on 16 Nov (9 broods), 4.2 on 17 Nov (6 broods), 2.8 on 18 Nov (4 broods), 3.0 on 27 Dec (2 broods) and Sunbank 2.7 on 23 Nov (7 broods).

Bean Goose *Anser fabalis*

Rare winter visitor.

Two at Portknockie 22-23 Jan (LS,MJHC) were of the Tundra race *A.f.rossicus*.



Bean Geese, Portknockie 23 January 2014 (Photo: Lenny Simpson)

Pink-footed Goose *Anser brachyrhynchus*

Very common migrant and winter visitor.

Winter (January-mid March): Ten flocks reported from Nairn, with two in excess of 1000; 1600 Moyness 19 Mar and 2500 Easter Glackton (near Tomhommie) 26 Mar. Smaller flocks (max. counts) were seen at Nairn (19 on 21 Jan), Loch Flemington (500 on 17 Feb), Aitnoch (19 on 21 Feb), Househill (Nairn) (400 on 24 Feb), Nairn Bar (12 on 6 Mar), Achavraat (15 on 10 Mar) and Crook (Nairn) (750 on 17 Mar). Similar to recent years in Moray where widely scattered flocks roamed the coastal strip. Only a few counts exceeded 1000 birds: 6000 Findhorn Bay 19 Jan and c.2000 Meft (Urquhart) 22 Feb.

Spring passage (max. counts): The largest flocks seen during this period were 1100 Loch Flemington 1 Apr, 4500 Findhorn Bay 5 Apr (with a further nine counts exceeding 1000) and 1500 Loch Spynie 5 Apr. Later during this period, c.1000 east Loch Spynie 2 May and c.1500 Findhorn Bay 8 May.

Flock sizes of less than 1000 birds during this period were:

1-100	101-200	201-300	301-400	401-500	501-600	601-700	701-800	801-900	901-1000
30	7	1	2	6	3	2	3	0	3

Summer: Present again in the Netherton area of Findhorn Bay from 11-15 Jun (singles 11th & 15th but 3 on 14th).

Autumn: The first sighting during this period was 17 Findhorn Bay 9 Sep (about a week earlier than 'normal'). These were followed by two groups: 39 south Findhorn Bay 11 Sep and c.30 over Forres 12 Sep. From 14-18 Sep, eight records received (largest count 284 Findhorn Bay on 15th), then daily from 19-31 Sep with 40 counts received (largest count 4000 Findhorn Bay on 24th, five other counts from Findhorn Bay exceeded 1000): typically, the other large counts were also from the Findhorn Bay area. Of the other records in Sep: 16 flocks contained less than 100 individuals and 12 flocks contained over 100 individuals. In Nairn, 5000+ Carse of Delnies 2 Oct. Elsewhere in Nairn, eight flocks recorded but none exceeded 500 individuals. The largest flocks during the autumn period were recorded in late October when 8000+ Findhorn Bay on 24th, c.8000 Bailliesland Farm on 24th and c.10000 Findhorn Bay on 25th. In Moray, away from Findhorn Bay (where 19 counts exceeded 1000), other large counts included: 2000 Lossiemouth on 15th, c.4000

Balormie pig farm (Drainie) on 22nd and c.5500 Bailliesland-Inchbroom on 22nd. A total of 22 other counts were received with the vast majority containing less than 500 individuals. Well inland, over the Cairn Gorm plateau, were: 65 Cairn Lochan 4 Oct and 140 Ben Macdui 11 Oct. In November, flocks over 1000 (max. counts) were seen at Findhorn Bay (6800 on 29th; 23 further counts exceeding 1000), Duffus Castle (3500 on 4th), Mosstodloch (2250 on 8th), Montgrew (c.2500 on 19th), Crofts of Dipple (2000 on 20th) and Alves (3000 on 25th). The only sizeable flock in Nairn during Nov was 2800 Mains of Balnagowan on 16th.

Winter: By far the largest December flock in recent years was 10500 in Findhorn Bay on 7th, with six other large counts (all over 4500) occurring in the bay during December. Maximum counts in excess of 1000 also occurred at Hempriggs (c.1500 on 21st), Calcots (c.1000 on 26th) and Salterhill (c.1500 on 27th).

White-fronted Goose *Anser albifrons*

Very scarce winter visitor.

Records assigned to the Greenland race *A.a.flavirostris* only involved singles: in the Muirton area (adult) 9-10 & 14 Feb (RP,MJHC,JW), Mosstodloch 8 Nov (MJHC) and Loch Spynie 22 Nov (DMG). Unusually, a single (juvenile) at Urchany (Cawdor) 7-8 Nov (JAC,TJW): there have only been five previous records of the species in the Nairn part of Moray & Nairn recording area since publication of MNBR began (these were 1992, 1993, 1994, 1997 and 2006).

Records assigned to the European race *A.a.albifrons* from Nairn in November involved 6 (2 adults, 4 juveniles) on 7th and 7 on 8th at Urchany (Cawdor) (JAC,TJW): see comment for Greenland race.

Greylag Goose *Anser anser*

Rare breeder and very common winter visitor.

Winter-spring: Flocks containing 500 or more birds were recorded at four sites (three sites in 2013), maximum counts at each site were: 720 Loch Flemington 11 Jan, c.500 Muirton 14 Feb, 600 Wester Manbeen 1 Mar and 500 Loch Spynie 14 Apr. However, these maximum counts were lower than recent years with none exceeding 1000. Twenty-four other sites held small flocks.

Range of all flock sizes reported containing less than 400 individuals Jan-Apr:

	1-100	101-200	201-300	301-400
2014	41	10	1	3
2013	51	6	8	3
2012	39	7	3	1

Well inland, and probably part of the Dava breeding population, were: 10 Knock of Braemoray 20 Feb, 23 Braemoray Lodge 21 Feb, 230 Lochan Tùtach 21 Feb, 200 Loch Achavraat 10 Mar, 2 Black Loch 25 Mar and 1 Dava lochans 23 Apr.

Summer: In the Dava breeding area were 6 pairs Dava moor 11 Apr, 15 Drumloch area 3 May (14 still there 15 May), 4 Little Aitnoch 20 May, 2 Loch Kirkaldy 27 May, 53 Black Loch 2 Jun, 1 Knock of Braemoray 8 Jun and 4 pairs (each with a brood) Dunearn 11 Jun. Two new areas close to the Dava breeding area were Clunas Reservoir (52 with c.7 broods present on 31 May and 25 fledged young 30 Jun) and Loch of Boath (25 on 24 May). Potential new sites, well away from the traditional area included: 3 Inchnacape 3 May (MJHC), 1 Lochanan a' Ghiubhais 19 May (MJHC) and 25 Tomintoul 21 May (MMS).

In the coastal strip, early in the season a pair Loch Spynie 18 Mar-18 Apr. Breeding was confirmed again, following the successful breeding in 2013, at Lossie Forest on 17 May (brood of one half-grown) (MJHC) and what appears to be the same family group on 6 Jul at Loch Spynie (RP). Four adults present at the Cloddach quarry 29 Jun but no broods were seen (MJHC).

Non-breeding flocks were regular at Findhorn Bay between 4 Jun-28 Jul (101 on 23 Jun and 108 on 25 Jun, with a further 16 counts involving less than 65 individuals). Wandering individuals or small groups were

also at Burghead (8 on 23 Jun), Loch Spynie (singles 29 May & 6 Jun, 5 on 9 Jun, 4 on 18 Jun and 3 on 24 Jun), Urquhart (20 on 9 Jun), Spey estuary (5 on 2 May, 6 on 4 May, 2 on 30 May and 1 on 8 Jun) and Portknockie (1 on 8 Jun).

Late summer: All records in August occurred at Findhorn Bay: 15 on 1st, 69 on 6th, 3 on 8th, 65 on 9th, 430 on 14th, 36 on 18th, 227 on 23rd, c.350 on 27th and c.500 on 29th.

Autumn: Difficult to assess which are local birds and which are Icelandic breeders returning in September. Three large counts recorded in September from Findhorn Bay: 400 on 8th, 450 on 9th and 520 on 10th were unlikely to be Icelandic breeders as these are at least two weeks earlier than expected. They probably originated from the Dava/Lochindorb breeding population.

Counts during October: Bailliesland-Inchbroom 100 on 15th, 250 on 22nd and 146 on 24th. Otherwise only very small flocks (majority less than 20), though 36 at Achavelgin, Littlemill (Nairn) on 13th were unusual but close enough to the Dava breeding area to involve wandering individuals from there. In November, a large increase in the number of flocks exceeding 100 individuals to 18 (up from only one flock in 2013): 1300 Stynie (Mosstodloch) on 9th, 'several thousand' (roost) Loch na Bo on 22nd and c.1000 (roost) Loch Spynie on 29th were the largest.

Winter (max. counts only): Unlike last year when no flocks exceeded 500, this year six flocks over 500 were recorded: 718 Muirton 4 Dec, 2300 Clochan (flying toward Loch na Bo roost) 5 Dec, 500+ Waterford Farm 18 Dec, 750 (roost) Loch Spynie 26 Dec, 992 Salterhill 27 Dec and c.750 Findhorn Bay 29 Dec. Three other counts exceeded 100: 216 Earnhill 15 Dec (increasing to 480 on 17th) and c.160 Nairn golf course 18 Dec.

[Bar-headed Goose *Anser indicus*

Escape.

A group of seven flew past the Spey estuary from the east on 2 Jul and then headed north-east into the Moray Firth (DW). Recorded on two previous occasions: 1 Kingston 28 Aug 1977 and 2 Loch Spynie, then Lossie estuary, 6 Jun 1991.]



Bar-headed Geese passing the Spey estuary, 2 July 2014 (Photo: David Whitaker)

Snow Goose *Anser caerulescens*

Rare visitor or escape.

One near Crofts of Dipple 20 Nov (DR) was the only record.

Canada Goose *Branta canadensis*

Scarce migrant in summer, rare in winter.

Winter records: Recorded at three sites; Loch Flemington (12 on 17 Feb), Loch Spynie ('present' on 11 Nov) and Findhorn Bay (17 on 26 Dec and 19 on 28 Dec).

Summer and early autumn passage: First flock 32 Strathlene 5 Apr. Most regular in Findhorn Bay when recorded from 9 Jun-27 Sep. There appears to be a semi-resident flock of about 10-30 individuals present on Findhorn Bay during this period (seen on 32 occasions), with numbers increasing in August when 86 on 23rd and in September when counts were made on 1st (124), 16th (43), 17th (49), 18th (35) and 19th (41). Elsewhere, 25 Lossiemouth 7 Jun, 24 Portknockie 8 Jun, 1 Carse of Delnies 16 Jun, 61 Drumduan Mill 17 Aug and 53 Spey estuary 2 Sep.

Barnacle Goose *Branta leucopsis*

Scarce migrant and winter visitor.

Winter-spring: One adult Troves (Elgin) 25 Jan and 1 Findhorn Bay 20 Feb. Later in the spring, 1 Loch Spynie 5 Apr, 2 Findhorn Bay 15 Apr & 5 May and 1 Spey estuary 12 May.

Summer: No summer records were received this year.

Autumn: The first were 14 Findhorn Bay 19 Sep. The other September records may relate to the same group of three, seen at Spey estuary (flew east) 22 Sep and Findhorn Bay 29-30 Sep. In October, the largest group was 15 Bailliesland Farm on 24th, elsewhere only small numbers or singles were recorded; Findhorn Bay (2 on 8th, 4 there on 10th and 1 on 11th & 22nd), Bailliesland Farm (1 on 22nd & 26th) and Lossiemouth (1 on 6th). Small numbers seen in November but from more scattered locations; Duffus Castle (4 on 4th), Mosstodloch (2 on 5th & 8th), Urchany (Nairn) (5 on 7th, 2 on 8th), Alves (6 on 25th), and East Mains (Gilston) (3 on 30th).

Brent Goose *Branta bernicla*

Scarce migrant and winter visitor.

Dark-bellied Brent Goose *B.b.bernicla*: 9 Lossie estuary 8-9 Oct (DM,EH) included 5 adults and 4 juveniles (RP). Only 7 from 10-15 Oct and then down to a single juvenile from 17-22 Oct. A single juvenile was present with the Nairn Light-bellied Brent Goose flock from 27-30 Dec (BB,C&DS); possibly the lone juvenile from Lossie estuary.

Light-bellied Brent Goose *B.b.hrota*:

Winter: Present in the Nairn area from 2 Jan-7 Apr with a maximum of 74 on 7 & 17 Jan. The flock sometimes fragments into smaller groups seen on the shore between Delnies and Nairn Bar.

The range of all flock sizes reported here during January-April was:

1-10	11-20	21-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	61-70	71-80
7	3	5	10	11	7	11	3

Unusual were 2 Loch Flemington 17 Feb.

Away from the Nairn area, 22 Burghead 1 Feb and 1 Lossie estuary 14 Feb.

Autumn passage period (Sep-Oct): The first returning individual to the Nairn wintering area was on the east beach on 28 Sep, and still only one present on October 24th, 26th & 29th. There were 3 on 2 Nov, followed by an increase in late November to 12 on 25th, 16 on 27th and 17 on 30th. Passage was very poor in other

areas compared to 2013, with records from only three sites: Findhorn Bay (10 on 5 Sep, 22 on 4 Oct), Lossie estuary (3 on 4 Oct) and Strathlene (7 west on 18 Sep).

Winter: A November record involved 2 Findhorn Bay on 10th. The remaining winter records concerned the Nairn flock which had gradually increased to a maximum of 45 on 29 Dec.

Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*

Fairly common visitor in winter and spring. Scarce breeder.

Breeding: A total of 27 broods were reported from Findhorn Bay, however, there are obvious duplications throughout the summer. It is assumed that seven were distinct from each other, giving a mean of 11.0 chicks. On the Spey estuary a brood of six was reported in June-July with the whole brood successfully fledging. Seen in potential breeding areas at Loch Flemington, Cloddach quarry (6 on 3 May), Barmuckity, Lossie estuary and Broadley (Clochan).

Best monthly counts at coastal sites were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Nairn/Culbin Bars	113	129	95	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	6	nc	155
Findhorn Bay	150	116	139	95	78	153	196	38	20	15	30	70
Lossie estuary	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Spey estuary	0	4	10	11	14	12	9	0	0	0	0	0

One other site with a large count: 15 Carse of Delnies 20 Feb.

On the sea: 6 Nairn 1 Feb & 20 Mar, 2 Nairn harbour (mouth) 3 Feb and 1 Burghead 22 Feb (2 on 25 Feb).

At Lossiemouth during seawatches a single flew west on 18 Apr and 10 east 22 Aug.

[Muscovy Duck *Cairina moschata*

Escape.

One was reported on only two dates at the Cooper Park pond, Elgin (1 & 18 Jan), prior to the pond being drained in April (RP,AET). This individual has been present annually from 2009-2013. Another was at Buckpool harbour on 2 Feb and 27 Apr (C&DS,GM) presumably the same individual which was present in 2013.]

Mandarin Duck *Aix galericulata*

Probable escape or feral origin.

Less records than 2013, though from similar geographical areas.

Cawdor/Croy area: 3 Cawdor Wood 8 Mar, 2 Kilravock Castle 31 Mar and 2 Croy 15 Apr.

Forres: A pair at the war memorial near the Mosset on 7 Apr. At Sanquhar pond a male 2 Jan, a pair intermittently 9 Jan-14 Apr (5 dates) when joined by a second female on 14 Apr.

Elgin: A reduction in numbers at the Cooper Park pond, Elgin as the pond was drained for construction of a flood alleviation embankment. A single male on eight dates from 13 Jan-11 Mar and then on 14 Dec. Elsewhere in the Elgin area, single males were on the River Lossie, at the West Road bridge 12 Mar and at the Cooper Park 10 Apr.

Loch Oire: A male on several dates 7 May-13 Jun. A different male present on 22 Jun.

Wigeon *Anas penelope*

Very common winter visitor and rare breeder.

Breeding: At Loch Kirkaldy, a group of 4 on 27 May, a female 11 Jun and a female/juvenile 5 Aug (MC,MJHC) were in suitable habitat. Also a male near Milltown (Cabrach) on 13 May (FM).

Non-breeders in summer (May-July): Present Findhorn Bay 5 May-12 Jun (max. 9 on 5 May), 1 Lossie estuary 14 & 19 Jul, 2 Cloddach quarry 29 Jun, present Spey estuary 2 May-7 Jul (max. 5 on 15 May & 25 Jun) and present Loch Spynie 11-26 May (max. 3 on 15 May).

Winter: Monthly maximum counts at main coastal sites were:

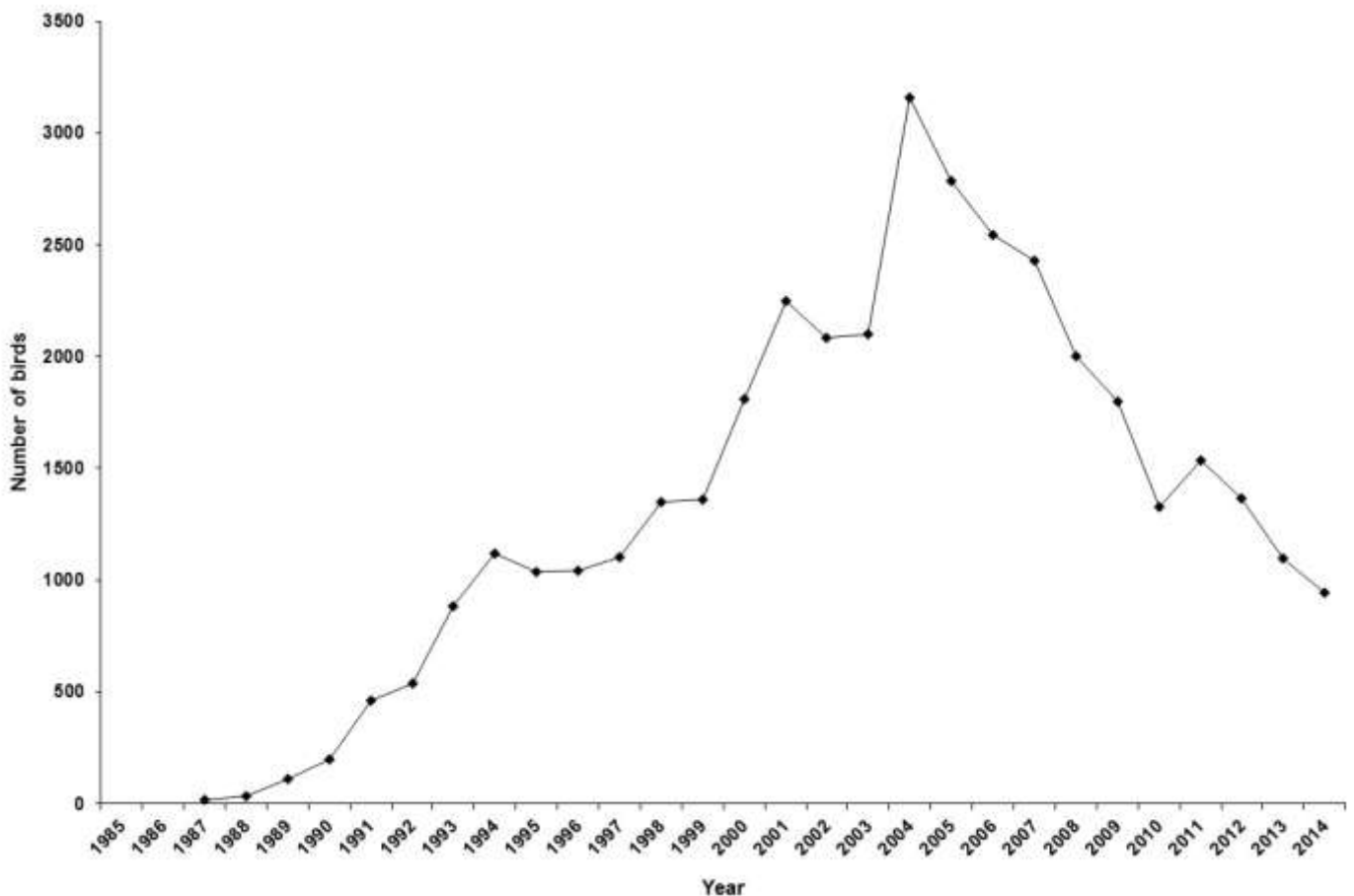
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Nairn harbour area	80	50	100	nc	nc	nc	37	86
Nairn/Culbin Bars	511	600	110	nc	359	185	344	594
Findhorn Bay	624	561	174	250	1490	4060	2000	684
Lossie estuary	690	872	280	17	149	485	946	774
Spey estuary	190	35	65	23	100	95	85	155

Other large coastal counts included 185 Kingsteps 11 Feb, 950 Carse of Delnies 10 Oct and 395 Hilton (Delnies) 17 Dec.

First back in autumn: 2 Spey estuary 21 Aug, 145 Findhorn Bay 27 Aug and 5 Lossie estuary 28 Aug.

Regularly seen on seawatches off Lossiemouth harbour from 13 Aug-6 Dec (max. 27 on 7 Oct).

Annual maxima of Wigeon at the Lossie estuary 1985-2014:



On freshwater:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Loch Flemington	50	23	nc	nc	nc	nc	59	nc	nc
Loch Loy	56	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	5	20	7
Cran Loch	2	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	80	10	2
Loch Spynie	5	350	2	2	nc	102	200	37	nc
Cloddach quarry	nc	800	217	nc	nc	84	290	388	590
Nether Dallachy	nc	15	10	4	nc	nc	nc	85	8
Loch Oire	60	110	73	21	1	16	80	3	50

Other counts on freshwater included 20 Loch of Blairs 7 Jan, 25 Loch Tùtach 21 Feb, 17 Loch Kirkaldy 23 Nov and 56 Loch na Bo 29 Nov.

American Wigeon *Anas americana*

Rare visitor.

Single males were seen on the Spey estuary 11 May (KP,MJHC,RP) and at Cloddach quarry 30 Nov, 14 & 22 Dec (MJHC,DAG). These are about the 10th-11th records for Moray & Nairn (excluding known returning individuals).



American Wigeon, Cloddach quarry 22 December 2014 (Photo: Duncan Gibson)

Gadwall *Anas strepera*

Scarce visitor.

Findhorn Bay: 2 on 20 Jan (RSC) and 2 on 11 Jun (AJL).

Lossie estuary: A juvenile, associating with Wigeon, on 14 & 19 Oct (RP) was the 6th record for the estuary.

Loch Spynie: A male on 26 Jan and one on 10 Feb. Later in the year, present intermittently from 27 Aug-15 Oct maximum of 3 on 4 Sep and 2 on 20 Sep and 15 Oct.

- Cloddach quarry: A pair on 30 Nov (MJHC).
 Loch Oire: A male was present on 22 dates between 4 Jan-6 Mar. In summer, 1 on 26 May and a male on 12 & 19 Jun. In autumn, 2 males on 20 Oct and a male with 2 females on 26 Oct.
 Loch na Bo: A single male on 29 Nov & 20 Dec (MJHC).
 Spey estuary: A male on 9 & 13 May (MJHC) and a pair on 15 & 17 May (MJHC,AJL).

Teal *Anas crecca*

Scarce breeder and very common winter visitor.

Breeding: Breeding confirmed at Glenferness House (brood of c.5) and Black Loch (Dava) (brood of one) (MJHC).

Records from potential breeding sites during the breeding season included 5 Loch Noir 19 May, 1 Loch of Boath 24 May, 3 Loch Kirkaldy 27 May, 3 Clunas Reservoir 31 May and 3 Loch Achavraat 14 Jun.

In the coastal strip in summer (max. counts): 14 Findhorn Bay 5 May, 2 Loch Spynie 15 May & 9 Jun, 3 Netherton 11 & 14 Jun and 21 Jul, 3 Loch Oire 9 Jul and 19 Spey estuary 21 Jul.



Teal flock on Spynie canal, 1 November 2014 (Photo: Duncan Gibson)

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

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Loch Flemington	72	34	4	nc	nc	nc	1	14	nc
Loch Loy	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	4	10	5
Cran Loch	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	200	240	11
Findhorn Bay	108	11	185	106	9	224	91	44	136
Lossie estuary	40	90	33	17	8	1	70	35	78
Loch Spynie	30	70	nc	3	2	25	130	408	32
Spynie Canal	100	nc	60	nc	nc	nc	nc	400	c.1000
Cloddach quarry	nc	39	14	nc	nc	27	37	18	35
Loch Oire	59	19	20	17	nc	23	85	29	30
Loch na Bo	nc	57	15	nc	nc	nc	nc	32	10
Spey estuary	94	60	28	30	59	95	108	nc	87

The estimate of 1000 Spynie Canal 14 & 22 Dec has only been exceeded on three previous occasions, all at Loch Spynie, where 1046 in 2000, 1700 in Nov 2002 and 1500 in Dec 2002.

Other large counts: 50 Lower Dallachy pool 7 Feb, 97 Montgrew 19 Nov, 40+ Loch Kirkaldy 23 Nov and 234 Carse of Delnies 17 Dec.

Regular on seawatches off Lossiemouth from late Aug-Oct, max.22 on 22 Oct.

On the sea were 15 Roseisle 10 Oct, 1 Burghead Bay 26 Jan, 1 Portgordon 2 Feb and a male off Lossiemouth harbour 26 Dec.

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*

Common resident breeder and winter visitor.

Breeding: The mean brood size from 10 broods was 4.8 chicks.

Up country: Breeding confirmed at Glenlivet Distillery, Loch Allan, Loch Kirkaldy and Loch Belivat. Also recorded in suitable breeding habitat at Well of the Lecht (Tomintoul), Inverlochry (Strath Avon), Craigellachie, Aberlour, Loch Noir, Loch of Boath and Loch Trevie.

Coastal lowlands: Broods were seen at Clune, Loch Flemington, Nairn, Loch of Blairs, Loch Spynie, Loch Oire and Kingston. Also recorded in suitable breeding habitat in the coastal strip at Findhorn Bay, Myreside (Elgin) and Spey estuary.

Best monthly flocks in regularly counted areas were:

Freshwater:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Loch Flemington	38	14	10	6	2	nc	nc	nc	4	24	21	6
Loch Loy	54	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	51	nc	40	120	17
Cran Loch	12	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	7	nc	20	nc	nc
Sanquhar pond	16	18	3	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	14	8	nc
Cooper Park, Elgin	12	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	5	nc	nc	24	28	13
Loch Spynie	30	7	4	10	16	12	50	12	25	27	76	20
Cloddach quarry	nc	120	110	nc	nc	69	nc	nc	172	206	292	225
Loch Oire	68	73	51	32	nc	nc	19	20	34	65	50	51
Loch na Bo	nc	37	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	11	nc	83	256
Nether Dallachy tip	nc	35	16	5	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	8	24

Other freshwater sites holding more than 50 birds were: 170 River Nairn 17 Jan, c.136 Merryton Bridge (Nairn) 2 Feb, 84 River Spey (Craigellachie) 3 Feb, 50+ Loch Belivat 6 Nov and c.70 Kellas 17 Dec.

Coastal sites:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Delnies-Nairn	14	2	nc	nc	nc	2	nc	89
Nairn	70	61	80	150	nc	110	130	145
Nairn/Culbin Bars	21	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	14
Findhorn Bay	467	303	105	200	123	108	166	343
Lossie estuary	nc	2	2	18	8	6	nc	7
Spey estuary	26	2	nc	20	27	9	23	12

Maximum monthly counts during the summer period from Findhorn Bay were 62 in April, 128 in May, 176 in June and 109 in July and at the Spey estuary, 15 in May and 27 in July.

Only one other coastal site held more than 50 birds: 111 Portgordon-Strathlene 19 Jan.

Unusual during seawatches at Lossiemouth but 2 in off the sea on 2 Nov and 2 west 26 Dec.

The hybrid male Mallard × Pintail was present again at the Mosset pond (Forres) on four dates: 11 & 19 Jan, 1 Feb and 30 Mar (AJL).

Pintail *Anas acuta*

Fairly common winter visitor and migrant. Occasional breeder.

Present at nine sites (three in 2013).

Carse of Delnies: 3 on 14 Sep (JAC).

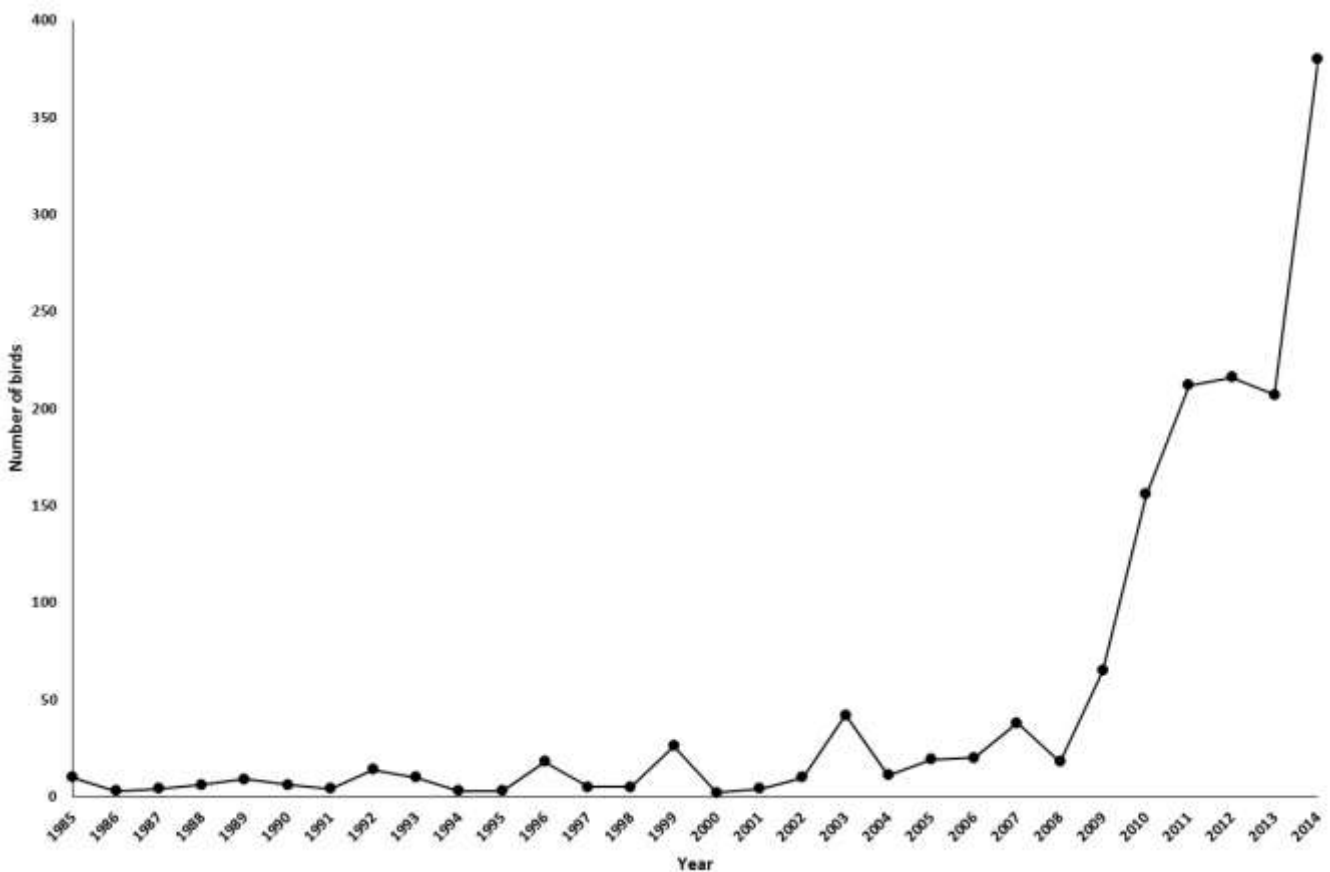
Loch Loy: 4 on 8 Nov (AD).

Findhorn Bay: Recorded from 1 Jan-8 May and 9 Sep-30 Dec. Maximum counts in each period were c.330 on 9 Jan and 380 on 7 Dec (RSC,GM *et al.*).The count of 380 now becomes the largest flock ever recorded in Moray & Nairn with the previous highest, also from Findhorn Bay, being 216 on 12 Feb 2012.

Best monthly counts in 2014 were:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
330	275	243	143	6	0	0	0	66	212	254	380

Annual maxima of Pintail at Findhorn Bay 1985-2014:



- Lossiemouth: A female flew west on the early date of 15 Aug (RP).
- Loch Spynie: A male on 14-15 Sep (MJHC,DAG) and two birds 15 Oct (HF).
- Loch na Bo: A female on 1 Feb (MJHC).
- Loch Oire: A female on 22 & 30 Mar (RP).
- Dallachy tip pool: A female on 9 Mar (MJHC).

Spey estuary: A female on 22 Apr (MJHC).
A wandering female could account for the sightings at the last four locations.

The hybrid male Mallard × Pintail was present again at the Mosset pond (Forres) on four dates: 11 & 19 Jan, 1 Feb and 30 Mar (AJL).

Garganey *Anas querquedula*

Rare in spring.

A male was at Loch Spynie on 13 & 17 May (AB,MJHC).



Garganey on Loch Spynie, 13 May 2014 (Photo: Alan Bowie)

Shoveler *Anas clypeata*

Occasional breeder and scarce migrant.

Seen at six sites (six in 2013).

Findhorn Bay: Present from 9 Jan-25 Mar and 22 Sep-30 Dec.

Best monthly counts at Findhorn Bay for each sex in 2014 were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Male	2	2	3	1	1	1	1
Female	2	2	2	0	1	1	1

Cloddach quarry: A male on 8 Jun and 16 Nov.

Loch Spynie: A male on 20 Apr, two males & female on 17 Nov, male & female 23 Nov and a female on 21 Dec. Records with sex unattributed were: 1 on 3 Dec, 2 on 13 Nov, 3 on 15 Oct, 4 Nov & 7 Dec and 4 on 28 Nov & 6 Dec.

Loch na Bo: A male on 8 Feb, 15 Apr, 5 Nov and 20 Dec.

Loch Oire: A male from 21 Feb-1 May, 27 Sep and 6 Dec.

Spey estuary: A male on 22 Mar & 6 Apr.

Pochard *Aythya ferina*

Scarce winter visitor and occasional breeder.

Recorded at three sites: Loch Flemington, Loch Spynie and Loch Oire. Still a scarce species in Moray & Nairn following the sharp decline in numbers from 2002 onwards.

Loch Flemington: Single birds on 30 Jan (male), 31 Jan, 1 Mar, 12 Nov and 27 Nov.

Loch Spynie: One on 4 Sep, a female on 23-28 Nov & 7 Dec.

Loch Oire: A male on 5 Nov.

Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligala*

Scarce breeder and common winter visitor.

Breeding: A pair with a brood of four was at Black Loch (Dava) on 14 Jun (MJHC) - the only breeding record received.

Other potential breeding sites occupied during the summer months included Loch Flemington, Loch Belivat, Loch of Blairs, Cloddach quarry, Loch Spynie, Loch Oire, Dallachy tip pool and Spey estuary.

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

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Loch Flemington	6	1	8	15	6	3	nc	nc	3	nc	nc	3
Loch Spynie	29	30	56	111	36	15	36	35	70	50	56	46
Cloddach quarry	35	36	33	nc	nc	8	nc	nc	37	44	77	79
Cooper Park	22	15	16			Pond drained				3	14	26
Nether Dallachy tip	nc	nc	3	2	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	7
Loch na Bo	nc	8	13	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	13	nc	35	34
Loch Oire	34	44	56	131	48	48	66	49	44	49	14	19

Elsewhere, 28 Loch Loy 20 Jan and 12 Brodie Castle pond 2 Dec.

At the coast, birds were seen in Findhorn Bay on 12 Jan (1), 24 Mar (2) and 25 Nov (1). Dates on the Spey estuary were 25 Jan (5), 15 May (3), 30 May (1), 17 Jun (3), 5 Jul (1) and 31 Aug (1).

Scaup *Aythya marila*

Scarce winter visitor.

At the coast:

Burghead Bay 1 on 29 Sep, 2 males on 21 Oct and 1 male on 23 Oct.
Lossiemouth Seen on seven seawatches from 24 Sep-26 Oct with a total of 60 recorded flying west. Best count was 30 on 4 Oct.

Estuaries:

Findhorn Bay During the summer two males & two females Netherton 17 May, then only a single pair present from 18-26 May. In July, one on 3rd-4th and a female on 7th. In the autumn, a male 28-29 Sep, two males 2-6 Oct and a female 11-12 & 18 Nov.

Spey estuary A single female at Kingston 25 Oct.

Inland:

Loch Spynie This was the only inland site with any reports. In the early part of the year a maximum of two females present from 5 Jan-22 Feb. A single (different?) female remained from 29 Apr-4 May. No records from later in the year.

Eider *Somateria mollissima*

Scarce breeder, common offshore.

Breeding: The only breeding reports were of six downy chicks attended by three females at Buckpool 14 Jun (RP) and a female with one duckling at Portknockie on 5 Jul (RM).

Regular counts (max.) from coastal areas:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Delnies-Nairn	32	31	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	39	nc	25	nc	4
Nairn	40	40	3	nc	1	22	nc	nc	2	27	22	67
Culbin/Nairn Bars	4	12	20	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	14	nc	nc
Findhorn Bay area	25	27	20	12	14	10	7	nc	nc	nc	1	110
Burghead Bay	52	81	14	9	nc	5	34	1	83	57	74	106
Burghead	92	100	40	12	4	24	8	7	2	12	69	20
Burghead-Hopeman	102	85	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	73	nc	95
Lossiemouth	20	nc	nc	nc	nc	6	1	2	17	76	140	58
Spey Bay (Tugnet)	16	13	13	14	4	20	nc	5	6	4	1	nc
Spey estuary	nc	nc	nc	1	nc	1	nc	1	4	2	4	24

In harbours (max. counts): 104 Burghead 28 Jan (RSC), 3 Hopeman 27 Sep (C&DS), 4 Lossiemouth 28 Jun (RP) and 61 Buckie 16 Feb (MJHC).

Individuals showing characters of Northern Eider *S.m.borealis* were seen at Burghead in January (1 on 17th, 2 on 18th, 'present' on 19th and 28th) (PS,C&DS,TB) and February ('present' on 20th) (SA).

King Eider *Somateria spectabilis*

Rare visitor.

A male King Eider has been a regular winter visitor to the coast of Moray & Nairn since November 2009, with most records in the vicinity of Nairn or Burghead. Over the same period, a King Eider has been present in summer on the Ythan estuary in Aberdeenshire. Close examination of the dates of stay at these two locations shows no overlap and it is now considered that the same long-staying bird accounts for all records of King Eider since 2009. This position has been agreed by the SOC Recorders of Moray & Nairn and Aberdeenshire, and by Nigel Hudson, Secretary of British Birds Rarities Committee - and is set out in the Report on rare birds in Great Britain in 2014 (*British Birds* 108:565-633).

In 2014, Moray & Nairn, the King Eider was seen intermittently off Nairn between 13 Jan-12 Feb (C&DS, DMP,MF,MJHC *et al.*) with one sighting along at Burghead on 29 Jan (per Birdguides). It was seen at Burghead on 2 Apr (RP) and 1 May (RJ) before departing to Aberdeenshire for the summer.

In autumn, the bird reappeared in eclipse plumage in Burghead Bay on 26 Sep (DH) and was seen there, or off Burghead, on 10-13 Oct (MJHC,ND,JDG), 8-9 Nov (MJHC,GB,DM) and 28 Dec (C&DS). It was off Nairn on 22-23 Oct (RHD *et al.*).

King Eider has now been recorded in Moray & Nairn in 23 of the last 39 years but, due to returning individuals, it is impossible to assess how many different birds have been involved.



King Eider, Burghead Bay 10 October 2014 (Photo: Martin Cook)

Long-tailed Duck *Clangula hyemalis*

Common winter visitor offshore.

Coastal records in summer (June-July): 1 Spey Bay (off Tugnet) 12 Jun and a female in Lossiemouth harbour 15 Jun.

Maximum monthly counts were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Oct	Nov	Dec
Delnies-Nairn	60	18	nc	nc	17	nc	38
Nairn	81	30	nc	nc	142	63	16
Nairn Bar	12	nc	nc	nc	350	36	15
Culbin Bar	12	2	nc	nc	54	nc	44
Off Findhorn	c.60	25	71	400+	237	c.320	nc
Findhorn Bay	6	12	11	7	nc	5	4
Burghead Bay	82	12	26	300	300+	680	65
Off Burghead	13	60	nc	33	250+	250	30
Burghead-Hopeman	15	26	nc	nc	28	nc	56
Lossiemouth	6	nc	11	16	2	170	66
Spey Bay	8	nc	nc	8	10	4	nc
Spey Bay (off Tugnet)	2	7	67	130	20	4	nc
Portgordon-Strathlene	15	20	15	nc	nc	nc	8

In harbours (max. count): 6 Burghead 2 Feb, 5 Hopeman 8 Feb, 4 Lossiemouth 15 Feb and 5 Buckie 5 Feb (9 & 22 Feb).

Other counts (over 50): At Portknockie, 56 on 30 Jan & 57 on 24 Nov.

On estuaries (max. counts): 3 Lossie estuary 16 Feb.

No inland records were received this year.

Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra*

Common winter visitor, small numbers in summer.

Summer records (May-July), maximum counts from each site, included: 5 Buckie harbour to Cullen 4 May, c.300 Lossiemouth west beach 5 May, 50 Carse of Delnies 16 Jun, 94 Burghead Bay 8 Jul and 13 off Burghead 5 Jul. Regular off Lossiemouth during seawatches where maximum during 30 minute counts was 142 flying west on 28 Jun.

Maximum monthly counts were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Delnies-Nairn	6	4	nc	nc	nc	2	nc	7
Nairn Bar	42	5	nc	nc	nc	70	nc	45
Culbin Bar	45	nc	nc	nc	nc	1	nc	16
Burghead Bay	50	55	100+	2	c.300	336	46	20
Burghead Bay (Roseisle)	18	nc	nc	nc	790	320	c.150	20
Burghead	32	150	115	nc	nc	30	50	60
Burghead-Hopeman	50	44	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	15
Lossiemouth	nc	nc	26	5	42	40	17	9
Spey Bay (off Tugnet)	6	9	20	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc

Notable counts (max.) from other sites: 200 off Burghead 2 Apr, 30 Hopeman 9 Apr, 34 Carse of Delnies 25 Sep, 210 Spey Bay (Boar's Head Rock) 24 Oct.

On estuaries, 1 Findhorn Bay 25 & 27 Feb. A male was in Burghead harbour 2 Apr.

Surf Scoter *Melanitta perspicillata*

Rare, but regular, visitor.

A male was in Burghead Bay, off Roseisle Forest FC car park, on 9-10 & 12 Oct (AJL,MJHC,TJW *et al*).



Surf Scoter with Velvet and Common Scoters, Burghead Bay 10 October 2014 (Photo: Martin Cook)

Velvet Scoter *Melanitta fusca*

Fairly common winter visitor.

Another year with low numbers.

Maximum counts for main areas were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Oct	Nov	Dec
Nairn Bar	nc	2	nc	2	nc	nc
Culbin Bar	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	12
Burghead Bay (Findhorn)	c.15	8	7	14	31	nc
Burghead Bay	20	10	5	73	32	2
Burghead Bay (Roseisle)	18	nc	nc	105	12	10
Burghead	3	20	nc	12	10	1
Lossiemouth	nc	nc	nc	10	5	4

In spring: 80 Burghead 7 Apr, 8 Roseisle 9 Apr, 40 Burghead Bay 10 Apr and 70 off Findhorn 15 Apr.

Coastal summer records included: 16 Burghead Bay 17 May and 1 Lossiemouth 27 Jul.

Regular off Lossiemouth during seawatches from late Aug, maximum count was 8 in 30 minutes 15 Oct.

Unusual was a male in Findhorn Bay 19 Feb-26 Mar and 19 & 21 May (RSC,GM,MJHC).

Exceptionally, a male was on Loch Spynie on 29 Jan (DW); this is the first inland record of Velvet Scoter in Moray & Nairn.



Velvet Scoter in Findhorn Bay, 8 February 2014 (Photo: Gordon McMullins)

Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*

Rare breeder and fairly common winter visitor.

Breeding: A pair Loch Allan (Dava) 13 Mar and mating noted there on 17 Mar (AR). A male on Black Loch (Dava) 17 May (MJHC). In potential breeding habitat were a pair River Spey (Delnapot) 22 Apr.

Summer records in the coastal strip included: a female Spey estuary 28 May, male Spey estuary 3 Jun and single birds on Loch Oire 7 Jun & 3 Jul and Loch Spynie 27 Jul.

Maximum counts on most frequented lochs were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Loch Flemington	24	12	21	7	nc	nc	8	29
Loch Spynie	18	20	17	36	3	2	19	7
Cloddach quarry	nc	2	nc	nc	1	nc	4	3
Loch na Bo	nc	18	38	nc	nc	nc	11	6
Loch Oire	3	2	4	10	1	5	3	5
Nether Dallachy tip	nc	23	13	18	nc	nc	3	4

Well inland were 3 males River Spey (Aberlour) 17 Jan.

Maximum counts at most frequented coastal sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Oct	Nov	Dec
Delnies-Nairn	6	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	4
Nairn/Culbin Bars	8	2	5	nc	3	4	9
Nairn	8	5	5	nc	nc	4	2
Findhorn Bay	25	40	41	32	4	19	22
Burghead Bay	8	nc	nc	nc	nc	11	nc
Burghead-Hopeman	nc	3	nc	nc	nc	nc	2
Lossie estuary	2	2	2	nc	nc	nc	3
Spey estuary	36	28	15	7	10	7	13
Spey Bay (off Tugnet)	nc	nc	23	nc	nc	4	nc

Smew *Mergellus albellus*

Rare winter visitor.

The 'redhead' remained on Loch na Bo 1 Jan-29 Mar (CAG,MJHC,RHD *et al.*). This individual arrived on 2 Nov 2013; being re-found here following its initial discovery on Loch Oire the day before. Another 'redhead' was well inland on Loch Allan (Dava) 20 Feb (AR).



Smew on Loch Allan, 20 February 2014 (Photo: Alison Ritchie)

Red-breasted Merganser *Mergus serrator*

Scarce breeder, fairly common offshore.

Breeding: Following four blank years breeding was confirmed this year with three broods being reported. A female with a brood of nine was seen on the lower River Findhorn 1 Jun (AJL), a female with a brood of three in Findhorn Bay 25 Jun and a different female with a brood of six in Findhorn Bay 21 & 23 Jul and 6 Aug (RSC). Two in potential breeding habitat on the River Findhorn (Darnaway) 15 Jun.

Coastal records in summer (May-Jun): pair Spey estuary 11 May, pair Lossie estuary 14 Jun, 14 Carse of Delnies 16 Jun and 5 Spey estuary 21 Jun.

Regular monthly maximum counts at Findhorn Bay and Burghead Bay:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Findhorn Bay	26	26	15	20	22	12	5	9	7	9	9	10
Burghead Bay	8	2	24	33	11	nc	nc	8	27	27	10	8

Maximum monthly counts at other sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Delnies-Nairn	3	1	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	9
Nairn	6	10	3	8	4	6	7	6	7	6	6
Nairn/Culbin Bars	8	5	15	nc	nc	26	7	6	7	6	6
Burghead	4	2	1	14	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	4
Lossiemouth	1	3	2	1	2	4	3	8	8	8	8
Spey Bay	1	nc	10	6	nc	nc	8	nc	nc	nc	nc
Spey estuary	12	4	5	10	nc	12	4	5	5	5	5

Other notable counts involved: 8 Strathlene-Buckie 24 Jan and 13 Carse of Delnies 3 Sep.

On estuaries in winter: On Lossie estuary, 1 male 19 Jan, 15 & 21 Feb, 1 on 22 Mar, 3 on 26 Apr and 1 female 13 & 23 Oct and 27 Dec.

In harbours: 2 females Burghead 16 & 21 Feb (1 female on 19-20 Feb) and 1 female Buckie 2-16 Feb.

On rivers in winter: Maximum of 6 on River Nairn (Househill) 19 Nov and a pair River Nairn (Broadley) 20 Nov.

On freshwater lochs:

Loch Tùtach: 1 on 21 Feb.

Loch Flemington: 1 male 6 Jan, 1 on 7-11 Jan and up to 4 between 19 Jan-16 Feb.

Loch Spynie: present between 1 Jan-19 Feb with max. 3 on 15 Feb. In autumn, 1 on 15 Oct.

Goosander *Mergus merganser*

Scarce breeder and fairly common visitor.

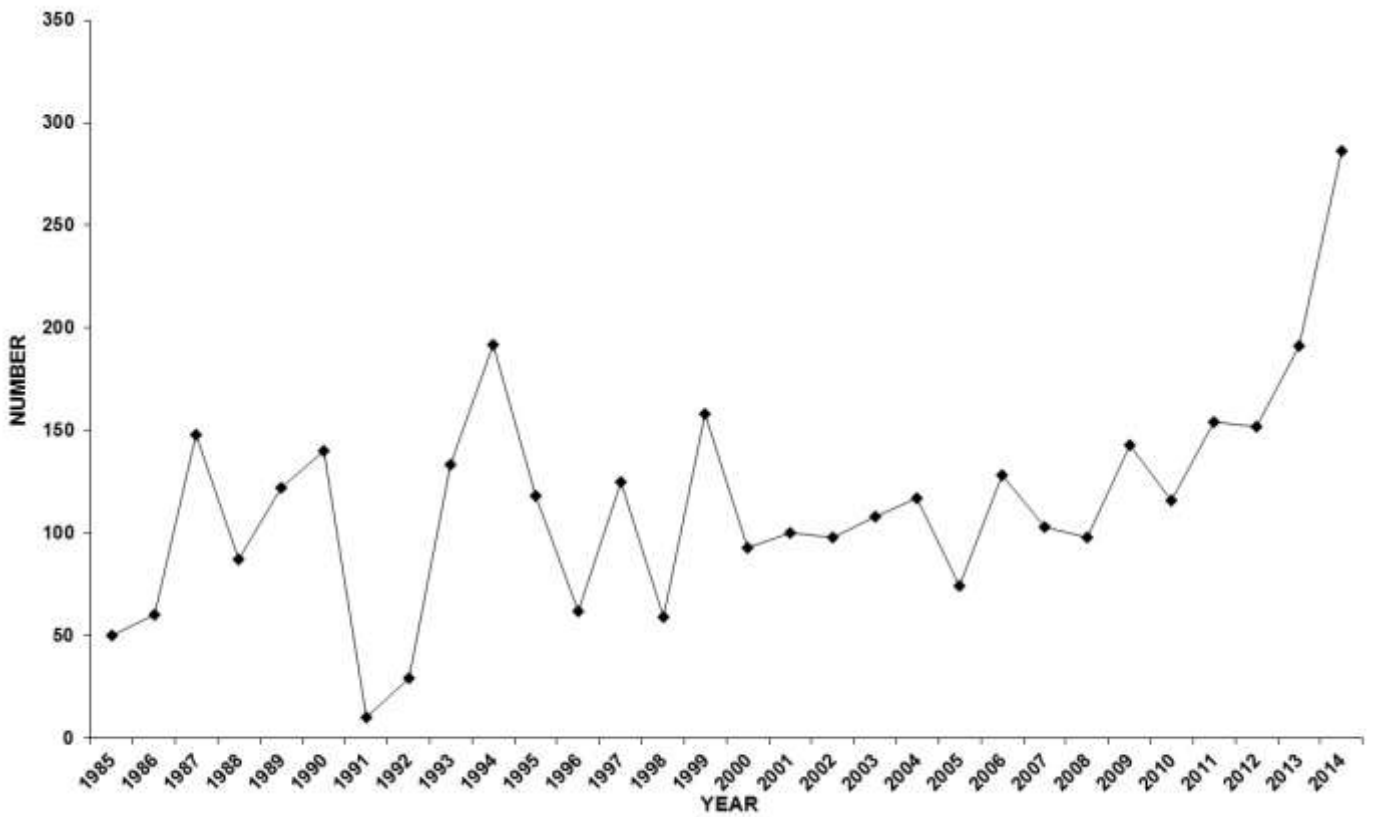
Breeding: Breeding was confirmed at Ballindalloch Castle where two females were seen with a brood of six on 27 May (MC); the last confirmed breeding was in 2010 at Aberlour.

Seen in potential breeding areas: 1 Loch Allan (Dava) 26 Feb, 1 Loch Belivat 26 Feb, 2 Kilravock 1 Mar, pair River Spey (Aberlour) 22 Mar, pair Burn of Aberlour 30 Mar, 5 Cragganmore-Blacksboat 1 Apr, pair River Spey (Mosstodloch) 14 Apr, female Inchroly 18 Apr and female Brodie Castle pond 10 & 12 Apr.

Maximum monthly counts:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Nairn	2	1	nc	2	nc	nc	nc	5	nc	nc	9	1
Culbin	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	24	nc	nc	22	12	nc	nc
Findhorn Bay	1	nc	1	2	51	34	38	28	80	17	4	3
Burghead Bay	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	38	62	nc	62	12	1
Cloddach quarry	nc	1	7	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	5	1
Loch Spynie	nc	nc	3	3	nc	nc	nc	nc	1	nc	nc	nc
Lossie estuary	nc	nc	nc	nc	17	1	nc	17	37	5	2	nc
Loch Oire	17	16	5	5	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	3	16
Loch na Bo	2	5	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	1	7
Speymouth	1	3	10	62	112	119	121	286	232	39	4	1

Annual maxima of Goosander at Speymouth 1985-2014:



Three large counts at Speymouth over a short period in late August (286 on 24th, 251 on 26th and 267 on 29th (MJHC)) were all higher than the previous record counts: 192 in 1994 and 191 in 2013.

Elsewhere, 1 (dead) Buckie harbour 16 Feb and 50+ Portgordon 12 Jul.

Inland in autumn and winter were: 1 male intermittently Cooper Park pond (Elgin) 1-25 Jan (2 males on 6 Dec), 7 Miltonduff distillery pool 6 Jan, 1 Loch Belivat 31 Jan, 2 Loch Allan (Dava) 11 Oct, 2 females River Lossie (Cathedral weir, Elgin) 18 Oct, 1 River Nairn (Househill) 4 & 19 Nov, 3 females River Spey (Rothes) 23 Nov. Two flew west over Edgar Road (Elgin) 27 Feb and 3 south over Elgin cemetery 29 Dec.

Quail *Coturnix coturnix*

Rare summer visitor and breeder, occasionally more numerous.

Singing reported from only three areas, at Ballochford 3 Jul (WRPB), at Darkland between 13 Jun-12 Jul (JDL,MJHC) and at King Cairn (Moyness) on 15 Jun (SJF). Later in the year, single birds were seen at Findhorn Bay 21 Jul (RSC) and Little Kildrummie 15 Aug (GA). In recent years the total number of singing Quail has varied as follows:

2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
4	2	6	8	8	4	4	2	9	0	0	2

Red-legged Partridge *Alectoris rufa*

Introduced scarce breeder. Commonly released.

Away from the immediate vicinity of known releases for game shooting, reports were: 2 Ballindalloch 10 May, 1 Delnashaugh 5 May, 2 Braemoray Lodge 21 Feb, 'present' Bridge of Brown 2 Jul, 6 Clochan 12 Jan (and 1 on 5 Apr), 1 Clunas reservoir 30 Jun, 2 Craigellachie 10 Apr, 2 Drainie (Lossiemouth) 8 Apr, 1 Drummuir 11 Mar, 2 Dufftown 10 Apr, 2 Dunearn 10 Jun, 2 Holme Rose (Kilravock) 31 Mar, 2 Inverlochry (Strath Avon) 7 Jun, 2 Kellas 4 Jun, 1 Knockomie (Forres 9 Apr), 2 Loch Kirkaldy 27 May, 2 Lochan Tutach 21 Feb, 1 Portknockie 4 May, 3 Speyslaw 20 Apr (1 on 17 May), 1 Sunnybrae (Glenlivet) 7 Jun, 2 Tomcork 19 May, 1 Tynet 21 Mar and 2 Upper Auchenreath 13 May.

The only indication of 'wild' breeding was at Clochan where a pair was observed mating on 30 Apr.

Red Grouse *Lagopus lagopus*

Very common resident breeder.

As usual, only a few reports: 12 Beinn Mheadhoin 13 Sep, 40 near Carn a' Gharbh-ghlaic 5 Dec, 20 Dava 11 Apr, 35 between Broom Knowe and Blackwater Lodge (Cabrach) 12 Jan, 25 Glenmarkie 30 Nov, 10 Knock of Braemoray 6 Dec (and smaller numbers there in Jan, Apr and May), 6 Lagganauld 2 Sep and 3 Loch of Boath 24 May.

Ptarmigan *Lagopus muta*

Fairly common resident breeder.

Counts on Ben Rinnes were 2 on 1 Jan, 16 on 11 Jan, 3 on 5 May, 15 on 18 Jul and 17 on 23 Nov (AE,DM). More reports than usual from the Cairngorms. Evidence of breeding at Ben Avon (4 broods on 23 Jun), Cairn Lochan (4 broods on 9 Jun), Garbh Uisge Beag (female with 18 chicks on 24 Jun) and Lochan Buidhe (brood of chicks on 24 Jun).

At other times, counts of 10 or more in the Cairngorms were 21 Beinn a' Chaorainn 15 Nov, 30 Beinn Mheadhoin 13 Sep, 68 in one flock on Mullach Lochan nan Gabhar (Ben Avon) 23 Jun (and 17 on 2 Sep), 33 Ben Macdui 10 Oct (and 12 on 26 Jun, 10 on 24 Jul), 37 Lochan Buidhe area 13 Sep, 41 Cairn Lochan 10 Aug (10 there 9 Sep, and 18 on 20 Sep and 4 Oct), 30 Coire Raibeirt 15 Nov and 11 Beinn a' Chaorainn Beag 4 Oct.

Black Grouse *Tetrao tetrix*

Scarce resident breeder.

Recorded at Aitnoch (7 on 20 Oct), Aldivalloch (3 on 26 Mar, 1 on 8 Apr), Alltachbeg (1 on 4 Apr), Badnafrave (1 on 5 Apr), Bank Farm (Cabrach) (5 on 21 Apr), Bellandy (3 on 24 Aug), Loch of Boath (1 on 30 May), Ferness (1 on 10 Oct), Glenmarkie (3 on 3 May, 1 on 29 Nov), Knock of Braemoray (seen in 5 months, max. 14 on 27 Sep), Lecht (2 on 29 Mar), near Carn a' Chrasgie (1 on 22 Apr) and north of Tomintoul (4 on 4 Jun).

Most unusually, two birds (male and female) were seen in a young forestry plantation near Mossyards (Roseisle) on 14 Feb (HF).

Capercaillie *Tetrao urogallus*

Scarce resident breeder.

Breeding: Birds continue to persist at low densities in Moray & Nairn, spread across a number of fragmented forests. Leks or single cocks were located in eight areas, containing a total of 17 males, similar to 2011-2013. No broods of young were reported, although no formal brood surveys took place (GMA, RSPB).

Grey Partridge *Perdix perdix*

Common resident breeder.

In the breeding season (April-July), birds were seen at Hopeman (2 on 9 Apr), Kinloss (pair with brood of 10 on 1 Jul), Kinnudie (Auldearn) (2 on 15 May), Kintessack (2 on 12 Apr), Netherton/Seafield (2 on 15 & 20 Jun) and Speyslaw (1 on 1 Jul).

At other times, 1 Cawdor 20 Mar, 10 Covesea 13 Sep, 10 Darkland 25 Jan, 10 Easter Allanaha 24 Aug, 4 Findhorn Bay (near Netherton) 12 Jan (and 2 on 7 Feb, 2 on 18 Mar, 1 on 23 Sep, 4 on 29 Dec), 3 Foynesfield 24 Oct, 3 Hempriggs 8 Aug, 8 Kinloss 3 Sep and 10 Nov, 2 Kirkton (Alves) 20 Feb, 6 Middlefield (Forres) 27 Sep, 28 (in coveys of 18 and 10) Milton Brodie 26 Dec, 2 Miltonduff 5 Jan, 10 Roseisle maltings 15 Oct and 8 Scotsburn 4 Feb.

Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus*

Very common resident breeder.

Widespread. Broods of downy chicks seen upcountry at Fodderletter and Tomachlaggan.

[Reeves's Pheasant *Syrnaticus reevesii*

Escape.

Two males, released locally, were near Kirkmichael Church in Strath Avon on 5 May (RP).]



Reeves's Pheasant, Strath Avon 5 May 2014 (Photo:Bob Proctor)

[Indian Peafowl *Pavo cristatus**Escape.*

A small population of unknown origin was at large to the west of Tomintoul. One was seen just north of Bridge of Avon on 5 Apr (JAC) and 25 Jun (ATP). On 21 May, four males were near Bridge of Brown (LGRE).]

Red-throated Diver *Gavia stellata**Rare breeder. Fairly common autumn and winter visitor offshore.*

Summer: On lochans in south Moray were 1 on 9, 13 & 25 Mar (AR) and a pair on 8 & 23-25 Apr (AR,GM). There was no evidence of breeding.

Best monthly counts in main coastal sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Nairn/Delnies	7	10	nc	44	nc	nc	nc	nc	7	1	5	2
Burghead Bay	5	12	4	14	11	1	0	0	2	10	12	3
Lossiemouth (flying past)	6	1	1	5	3	3	1	2	3	14	20	12
Spey Bay	11	6	9	38	37	0	0	0	18	120	16	3

Notable counts included 44 Carse of Delnies 19 Apr (LSc) and, in Spey Bay, 38 off Tugnet 20 Apr, 37 on 5 May, and 120 on 24 Oct comprised of 72 off Tugnet and 48 between Boar's Head Rock and Lossiemouth (MJHC).

Elsewhere, a few were scattered along the coast at all seasons except mid summer. No count exceeded four.

Black-throated Diver *Gavia arctica**Rare breeder. Scarce autumn and winter visitor offshore.*

Upland lochs: One pair bred for the 8th successive year. On 22 May, one adult was incubating and the other adult nearby. On 18 Jun, the pair was on the loch but the two unhatched eggs were cold and cracked - reason for failure unknown. (IH,IF).

Monthly maxima in Burghead Bay and Spey Bay were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Delnies/Nairn	4	2		2					3	4		1
Burghead Bay	6	2	3	11	9	2	1	0	2	1	1	0
Spey Bay	1	0	3	2	2	0	0	0	2	3	0	0

The usual small spring build-up in Burghead Bay resulted in a best count of 11 from Findhorn dunes on 25 Apr (GM).

Elsewhere, 6 from a boat between Buckie-Cullen 6 Apr (AW). In the same area, off Cullen 2 on 13 Apr, 1 on 14 Apr, 4 on 4 May and 2 on 5 May, off Strathlene 1 on 24 Jan and, off Portknockie, 1 on 17 Feb, 2 on 8 Mar, 1 on 5 May and 1 on 24 Nov. Also, 1 Covesea 20 Sep and 2 Hopeman 8-9 Apr.

Sixteen were noted passing Lossiemouth, mostly during autumn when the best day was 14 Oct with four seen.

Great Northern Diver *Gavia immer**Scarce visitor offshore.*

January-March: In Burghead Bay, and from Burghead headland, 2-3 were often seen but 9 were visible on 30 Jan (MJHC). One remained in Burghead harbour between 22 Jan-22 Feb and another was regularly in the mouth of Findhorn Bay, opposite the village, between 30 Jan-20 Feb.

Good numbers in spring, especially in east Moray. Between Buckie-Cullen were 15 on 6 Apr (AW), 26 on 4 May (LGRE), 37 on 5 May (MJHC) and 12 on 7 May (MJHC). Highest counts elsewhere at this season were 6+ Burghead 4 Apr (DMP), 10 Spey Bay 2 May (MJHC) and 11+ there 11 May (GM).

None were seen offshore during June-August.

September-December: Offshore movement was detected by regular sea watches off Lossiemouth (RP). First was 1 on 4 Sep, followed by further singles on 26 & 28 Sep. Passage picked up rapidly in October with best day on 9th when 22 adults (in breeding plumage) flew west in one hour. Small numbers were seen on most days when watches took place, notably 10 on 2 Nov, 8 on 8 Nov, 10 on 9 Nov, 14 on 14 Dec and 5 on 25 Dec. At other sites, only a few records of 1-2 birds.

White-billed Diver *Gavia adamsii*

Rare visitor.

One off Burghead 2-10 Apr (RP,TB,GB,MJHC *et al.*). Between Portknockie-Cullen, 3 from a boat on 3 May (LS,DM *et al.*) and 1 visible from the clifftop in front of Cullen caravan park between 4-8 May (MJHC,RSC).

This is the 7th successive year of occurrence in Moray & Nairn.



White-billed Divers off Portknockie 3 May 2014 (Photos: David Main)

Fulmar *Fulmarus glacialis*

Common breeder, very common offshore.

Breeding: Return indicated by 100+ back on ledges at Portknockie on 30 Jan. Seven pairs were also noted on cliffs at Cummington on 9 Feb.

Passage: Counts in the early summer were relatively low with the highest counts past Lossiemouth being 25 in 30 minutes on 22 May and 24 in 30 minutes on 25 May. Late summer and autumn passage was higher with 108 in 1 hour on 10 Aug, 138 in 30 minutes on 17 Aug and 126 in 1 hour on 7 Sep (RP). Other counts at this time included 60 seen off Burghead on 13 Aug.

A northern 'Blue' Fulmar passed Lossiemouth on 7 Sep (RP).

Cory's Shearwater *Calonectris diomedea*

Rare migrant in late summer and autumn.

Two records of single birds flying west past Lossiemouth on 29 Jul and 14 Aug (RP). There has been only one previous record, also past Lossiemouth, on 9 Jul 2000.

Sooty Shearwater *Puffinus griseus*

Very scarce migrant in late summer and autumn.

A better year for sightings with the first single bird seen on 28 Jun off Lossiemouth. Several sightings were then made off Lossiemouth between mid August and end of September with the highest counts of 5 on 7 Sep and 7 on 27 Sep (RP). Other sightings included 1 Portknockie 16 Jul (LS) and 3 Burghead 21 Oct (RHD).

Annual totals since 2004 have been as follows:

2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
0	23	1	38	11	0	7	605	11	1	27

Manx Shearwater *Puffinus puffinus*

Fairly common offshore in summer and autumn.

First of the year was 1 Lossiemouth 9 Jun. Regular passage was seen at Lossiemouth between mid June and end of September with the highest counts of 80 on 28 Jun, 54 on 6 Aug with a further 60 in a raft on the sea on same date, 129 in 2 hours on 17 Aug and 42 on 27 Sep (RP). Other sightings included 16 Burghead on 13 Aug (AM) and four at Nairn on 28 Aug (ABe).



Manx Shearwater off Lossiemouth 27 September 2014 (Photo: Duncan Gibson)

Storm Petrel *Hydrobates pelagicus*

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

None were seen passing offshore but 12 were caught during nocturnal ringing sessions at Tronach Head; 7 on 24 Jul, 4 on 28 Jul and 1 on 2 Aug (AY).

Gannet *Morus bassanus*

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

In mid winter, regular sightings of small numbers along the coast at the start of the year with 5 Delnies-Nairn 19 Jan, 5 Burghead 27 Jan and 5 Lossiemouth 26 Jan. Passing Lossiemouth in December during 1 hour counts were 14 on 4th, 9 on 6th and 4 on 13th (RP).

Passage was recorded past Lossiemouth between April-November (RP). Best days in each month were:

April: 34 in 30 minutes on 12th.

May: 155 in 30 minutes on 25th.

June: 135 in 30 minutes on 28th.

July: 151 in 30 minutes on 7th, 364 in 1 hour on 18th.

August: 131 in 1 hour on 15th.

September: 242 in 2 hours on 7th, 446 in 1 hour on 27th

October: 418 in 1 hour on 1st, 425 in 1 hour 4th, 462 in 1 hour on 7th, 593 in 1 hour on 17th.

November: 309 in 1 hour on 9th.

Elsewhere in autumn, 296 past Strathlene in 30 minutes on 22 Oct (MJHC) and 287 at Burghead on 27 Sep (JDG). Counts of 50 or more elsewhere included 62 Carse of Delnies 19 Apr, 67 Burghead Bay 22 Oct and 117 Culbin Bar 26 Oct.

Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

Rare breeder and fairly common winter visitor.

Breeding: Four occupied nests at the small Covesea colony on 7 Jun, on which date two nests contained broods of four young, one nest contained an unknown number of young and an adult was still incubating eggs in the fourth (MJHC).

Counts of 25 or more were 44 Burghead 2 Sep, 25 Burghead-Hopeman 26 Oct, 26 Culbin Bar 26 Oct, 38 Halliman Skerries (Lossiemouth) 9 Sep, 30 Lossiemouth 26 Oct and 40 between Portgordon-Strathlene 7 Dec. At the Spey estuary 25 or more were counted on six dates between 29 Aug and 14 Sep, with the maximum of 66 on 31 Aug.

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

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Loch Spynie	8	8	5	4	8	0	0	1	1	nc	5	7
Tugnet (mouth of Spey)	5	2	1	1	0	0	0	66	54	17	11	6
Findhorn (mouth of Bay)	5	5	2	2	3	1	4	14	16	21	22	19

Inland: Mostly at Loch Spynie - see table above. Elsewhere, 1 Aberlour 19 Jan, 1 Cloddach Quarry (SW of Elgin) 9 Mar, 1 Loch Allan (Dava) 17 Mar, 12 Loch Flemington 31 Jan, 5 Loch no Bo (Llanbryde) 16 Dec and 10 Loch Oire 25 Jan.

A bird at Loch Spynie on 16 & 18 Dec, showed characters of Continental Cormorant *P.c.sinensis* (MJHC,RHD).

Shag *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

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

Breeding: At Portknockie/Bow Fiddle Rock cliffs, numbers fell to 66 occupied nests on 19 June. Numbers also declined to 72 occupied nests at Tronach Head on 20 Jun. Little change at Covesea, where 18 occupied nests were counted on 7 Jun (MJHC).

Over the last ten years the occupancy of the three colonies (apparently occupied nests) has been as follows:

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Portknockie	49	49	73	79	79	76	85	93	86	66
Tronach Head	8	nc	21	23	26	60	58	53	86	72
Covesea	13	13	13	11	14	14	17	14	16	18

Several high counts were recorded flying past Burghead including 80 on 23 Jun, 100+ on 11 Aug and 53 at the harbour on 23 Oct. Elsewhere 108 between Portgordon-Strathlene 27 Oct and 50 Lossiemouth 26 Oct.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

Rare visitor.

One was at Loch Flemington 11-12 Jan (AG) before being relocated on 6 Feb around the Minister's Pool (Kingstons) (KC,JAC) where it remained until 26 Feb (IT *et al.*). This the 9th record for Moray & Nairn.

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

Fairly common resident breeder.

Heronries: Eleven occupied nests at Aberlour (AE) and seven at Loch Spynie (RP).

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

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Findhorn Bay	4	4	2	3	9	16	17	19	32	19	5	6
Lossie estuary	0	1	0	1	2	7	14	12	12	9	6	0
Spey estuary	6	5	0	1	9	3	8	7	4	2	3	1

Best days at each site were 32 Findhorn Bay 23 Sep (GM,RSC), 14 Lossie estuary 23 Jul (RP) and 9 Spey estuary 30 May (MC).

The only counts of five or more elsewhere were 6 Nairn Bar 14 Oct and 5 Loch Flemington 6 Apr.

Occasionally recorded on rocky shores such as between Burghead-Hopeman, at Lossiemouth harbour and west beach, and at Buckie.

Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia*

Rare visitor.

An exceptional series of records in Findhorn Bay. One (2nd summer) was first seen on 14-17 Jun and there were two (both 2nd summer) by 24 Jun, both remaining until at least 27 Jul. By 6 Aug there were three (two 2nd summer and one 1st summer). These were seen regularly until 23 Aug but only two remained on 24-25 Aug. After a gap, one reappeared on 16 Sep and was last seen on 10 Oct (RHD,GM,RSC *et al.*). A single bird flying over Lossiemouth on 11 Sep (JW) is presumed to be the bird seen in Findhorn Bay from 16 Sep. This is the fifth occasion on which Spoonbills have been seen in Moray & Nairn. Previous records, all of single birds, were at Culbin Bar on 19 Oct 1964, Findhorn Bay on 2 July 1977, Loch Spynie on 11 Jul 1984 and the Spey estuary on 18 Jun 2013.



Spoonbills in Findhorn Bay, 9 August 2014 (Photo: Richard Somers Cocks)

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

Scarce breeder, scarce on the estuaries in winter.

Mid-winter: On freshwater in January and December were 1 Loch na Bo 2 Jan, 1 Loch Spynie 4 Jan (and 1 on 21 Dec), 2 Loch Flemington 19 & 24 Jan (and 1 on 7 Dec) and 1 Brodie Castle lake 2 Dec.

Present in spring/summer (*italics* = proved breeding) at Achavraat, Black Loch (Dava), Brodie Castle lake, Clunas reservoir, Cran Loch, *Glenferness House*, Loch Allan (Dava), Loch Belivat, Loch Flemington, Loch Kirkaldy, Loch Loy, Loch of Blairs, *Loch Oire*, Loch Romach, *Loch Spynie* (2 pairs) and Nether Dallachy tip pool.

Largest post-breeding congregations in summer/autumn were 32 Loch Spynie 24 Aug & 6 Sep, 19 Loch Flemington 4 Sep and 13 Loch na Bo 13 Sep.

Coastal in autumn/winter: Regular in Findhorn Bay (mostly around the creeks of the south and west sides) where highest counts were 5 on 13 Jan, 8 on 16 Feb, 11 on 27 Oct and 8 on 13 Nov. Usually only 1-2 on the Spey estuary but 4 on 10 Jan and 25 Oct. Less frequently seen on the Lossie estuary where 2 on 27 Jan, 1 on 26 Dec, 2 on 27&29 Dec, 3 on 28 Dec and 1 on 30 Dec.

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*

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

Freshwater: One adult on Loch Spynie 10-15 May (HF,CAG *et al.*).

Coastal: In winter, 1 Burghead Bay (off Findhorn beach) 14 Feb (RSC) and 11-13 Mar (GM), and 1 off Nairn 1 & 8 Feb (MJB,DP). In spring, 1 off Hopeman 9 Apr (PR). In autumn, 1 Burghead Bay (off Roseisle Forest FC car park) 9 Oct (AJL) and 11 Nov (RSC).



Great Crested Grebe, Loch Spynie 15 May 2014 (Photo: Grahame Anderson)

Red-necked Grebe *Podiceps grisegena*

Very scarce migrant and winter visitor.

One off Burghead on 1 Mar (DMP,MJHC) and one in Burghead Bay on 29 Oct (AS) were the only records.

Slavonian Grebe *Podiceps auritus*

Rare breeder. Scarce offshore in winter.

Breeding: For the first time for at least 50 years, no Slavonian Grebes were found on freshwater lochs during the breeding season. After several years of hanging on by a thread it appears that the species has finally been lost to Moray & Nairn as a breeder.

On freshwater at other seasons, only at Loch Spynie where 1 on 3 Feb (JDG) and 1 on 12-27 Oct (CAG,RP *et al.*).

Coastal: In Burghead Bay, monthly maxima were:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
8	3	4	3	9	42	28	2
(5th)	(24th)	(11th)	(5th)	(19th)	(13th)	(11th)	(3rd)

(RSC,GM,JDG *et al.*)

Also 1 on 8 Jul. The very high count of 42 on 13 Oct (JDG) has been equalled on 24 Jan 2012 and exceeded only by 43 on 19 Nov 2011 and 61 on 17 Oct 2009.

Just inside Findhorn Bay was a single bird off Minton point on 17-18 Nov (RSC).

Elsewhere, 1 off Hopeman 27 Dec (RC), 1 Lossie estuary 2-6 Oct (FA,DM *et al.*), 2 off Lossiemouth 10 Oct (C&DS) and single birds flying past Lossiemouth on 22 & 24 Oct (RP). Off Nairn, 1 on 11 Jan (RJFP), 1 on 31 Jan-1 Feb (JDG,MJB,JS), 1 on 13 Nov and 5 on 4 Dec (RJFP).



Slavonian Grebe, Burghead 30 January 2015 (Photo: Richard Somers Cocks)

Honey-buzzard *Pernis apivorus*

Rare breeder.

No proof of breeding in the most recent breeding area - with only a single record of one bird (RHD).

Red Kite *Milvus milvus*

Occasional breeder, reintroduced in Highland and North-east Scotland.

Breeding: One pair bred near Cawdor, successfully raising two young (BE,JAC,MJHC). This is the first breeding in Moray & Nairn in 'modern' times. Although formerly a numerous breeding species, Red Kites probably ceased to breed in Moray around the 1850s. Between 1989 and 1994 a joint RSPB and SNH project began, to reintroduce Red Kites to the Highlands. During those years, 93 birds, of Swedish origin, were reintroduced in the Black Isle and a population of around 50 pairs now breeds there. At least one, and probably both, of Moray & Nairn's first breeding pair originated from that population. Elsewhere, single birds were seen near Clunas reservoir 30 May (LSc), Croy 3 Feb (AET), Foresterseat 24 Dec (JM), Highland Boath 22 Apr (JAC), Little Urchany 8 Nov (TB) and Loch Flemington 11 & 24 Jan (PM,HM).



Red Kite near Cawdor, 8 November 2014 (Photo: Tony Backx)

White-tailed Eagle *Haliaeetus albicilla*

Rare visitor.

Two records: 1 Carn Mor (Ladder Hills) 1 Jun (DM) and 1 Fords of Avon (Cairngorms) 12 Oct (JDG).



David Main

White-tailed Eagle in the Ladder Hills, 1 June 2014 (Photo: David Main)

Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*

Occasional breeder and very scarce visitor.

As usual, most records came from Loch Spynie but no territorial activity was witnessed. An immature male was seen on 8 Apr (PR) and a female between 10-20 May (HF,AET,AMu). No further reports until one female/juvenile between 27 Aug-6 Sep (GB,CAG *et al.*).

Elsewhere, 1 immature Findhorn Bay 19 Aug (DW).

Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus*

Rare resident breeder, very scarce migrant and winter visitor.

Breeding: Sixteen current and former sites were checked in west Moray and Nairn. Five sites were found to be occupied by pairs in west Moray but none in Nairn. Three pairs were successful, rearing 14 young between them. The other two pairs failed prior to, or during, incubation (JKC). One pair bred in east Moray - the nest contained three young on 26 Jun (IF).

Outside the breeding season, 1 Carse of Delnies 20 Sep (AS), 1 Tarras (Forres) 4 Oct (BC), 1 Teindland 6 Mar (DM) and 1 Tomnamoon 16 Sept (MCR).

Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis*

Rare resident breeder.

Breeding: Six pairs were located, and the nests of four of them were found. Two of the nests were successful and the other two failed (AY). Single birds were also seen in seven other localities.

Winter: Single birds were seen at Loch Flemington 10 Jan, Dundurcas 7 Feb and Tomnamoon 9 Nov.

Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*

Common resident breeder.

Breeding season (April-July) records included birds/pairs at Budgate (Cawdor) (nest found), Clune, Croy, Cullen, Dufftown, Findhorn Bay, Forres, Kinloss, Lethen Bar, Linkwood (Elgin) (female carrying food), Loch Oire, Loch Spynie, Lossiemouth and near Tomintoul.

Prey seen to be captured during the year included Jackdaw (Clochan), Collared Dove (Clochan) and Redshank (Lossie estuary).

Buzzard *Buteo buteo*

Common resident breeder.

Groups of five or more together were 9 Gordonstoun 31 May, 8 Tomnamoon 10 Sep, 6 Hilton of Delnies 10 Oct, 6 Kinloss 12 Mar and 5 Loch Spynie 9 Sept.

Rough-legged Buzzard *Buteo lagopus*

Rare visitor.

A juvenile was seen c.2km to the west of Carn a' Gharbh-ghlaic (itself to the west of Lochindorb) on 4-5 Dec (JAC,AWi). This is the 13th record for Moray & Nairn, and the first since Dec 1994. [What was probably the same bird was later relocated to the south-east of Lochindorb (outside Moray & Nairn) where it was last seen on 1 May 2015.]



Rough-legged Buzzard, near Carn a' Gharbh-ghlaic 5 December 2014 (Photo: Andy Williams)

Golden Eagle *Aquila chrysaetos*

Rare resident breeder.

Breeding: At the three usual/most recent breeding sites: i) no breeding activity, ii) a pair bred but failed to rear young (KD), iii) a pair occupied the site but no young were reared (EW).

Away from breeding areas was 1 Barns of Bynack 20 Apr (RDH).

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*

Scarce summer visitor and breeder.

First reports not until 6 Apr when single birds were seen over Forres, at Loch Spynie and on the Spey estuary.

Breeding: One of the best years ever. In west Moray & Nairn, nine pairs were found. Seven pairs laid eggs and all were successful, raising a total of 18 young, giving a productivity of 2.6 young per laying pair. In east Moray, five pairs bred successfully, raising 13 young - also a productivity of 2.6 young per pair (RHD).

Largest congregations, as always, were in Findhorn Bay where 5-6 were not unusual in August-September; largest counts were 7 on 10 & 17 Sep, and 8 on 4 Sep. Last of the year was 1 Findhorn Bay 25 Sep.

Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus*

Scarce breeder and winter visitor.

Breeding: Detected in the breeding season only at Loch Spynie, where 5 calling on 15 Apr (MJHC) and 4 calling in north-east fen on 24 May (RP).

At other times, present all months at Loch Spynie with 1-2 visiting feeders close to the hide. Elsewhere, 1 Cran Loch 11 Oct (AD), 1 Laikenbuie 3 Dec (AS), 1 Findhorn Bay 27 Nov (AS) and 1 by the Mosset Burn at Half Davoch 23 Jan (RHD).



Water Rail, Loch Spynie 26 November 2014 (Photo: Gordon Biggs)

Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

Fairly common resident breeder.

Breeding proved (*italics*) or probable at *Loch Flemington*, Loch of Blairs, Loch Oire and Loch Spynie.

Best counts were 12 Loch Oire 9 Jul (and 10 on 1 Oct), 9 Loch Flemington 19 & 29 Jan (and 8 there on 27 Nov) and 6 Loch Loy 8 Nov.

Coot *Fulica atra*

Scarce resident breeder and winter visitor.

Breeding proved (*italics*) or probable only at *Loch Oire*, and Loch Spynie.

Maximum monthly counts on main lochs were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Loch Flemington	8	3	2	nc	0	nc	1
Loch Spynie	8	11	12	14	10	18	14
Loch Oire/na Bo	2	8	9	2	3	2	1
Cloddach quarry	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Elsewhere, 2 Nether Dallachy tip pool 7-14 Feb (1 on 27 Feb), 2 Findhorn Bay 3 Jan (1 on 26 Nov) and 1 Loch Loy 14 Dec.

American Coot *Fulica americana*

Rare visitor

Found at Loch Flemington on 4 Jan, a 1st winter bird remained on the loch until 14 Apr, spending the vast majority of its time on the north (Highland recording area) side of the loch. On at least two occasions however, 18 Mar (AM) and 4 Apr (RP), it swam across into Moray & Nairn waters on the south side of the loch. This is the first record of this species in Moray & Nairn, and only the eighth in Britain since the first was recorded in 1996.



American Coot with Coot, Loch Flemington 28 January 2014 (Photo: Gordon Biggs)

Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*

Very common resident breeder, winter visitor and migrant.

First inland were 3 Cloddach quarry 1 Feb, followed by 2 Aberlour 8 Feb. The birds visiting the tern nesting platform at Loch Spynie are a good sign of birds moving inland; two were there on 15 Feb and 3 on 9 Mar. Single birds were at Lhanbryde pig farm on 18 Feb and at Pittendreich (Miltonduff) 22 Feb. In Elgin, 2 Cooper Park pond 10 Feb, 2 flying over in darkness on 16 Feb, 1 in the Wards area 18 Feb and 7 flying over on 28 Feb. At potential breeding sites in Elgin on 2 Mar there were two on the roof of the Town Hall and 2 on Halfords' roof (where also seen on 22 Mar). At another potential breeding site - 5 Forres Academy 18 Feb. Up-country, a pair was at Achdregnie 11 Mar and on 6 Apr pairs were at Burnside (near Dulsie) and at two locations on the banks of the river Findhorn near Drynachan.

Pre-breeding inland flocks included 30 Aberlour 22 Feb (and 45 there on 25 Feb). At Cloddach quarry were 77 on 27 Feb and 81 on 9 Mar and at nearby Nether Birnie pool there were 16 on 23 Feb and 52 on 2 Mar. A rather unusual flock of 29 were roosting on the roof of Macrae & Dick (Elgin) on 15 Mar. Elsewhere, 25 Loch Flemington 21 Mar and 30 Marypark 22 Mar. A flock of 16 Loch of Boath 24 May were perhaps failed (or non-) breeders.

Breeding: Various breeding records received; at Moray College (Elgin), a pair incubating 17 Apr, one chick 1 Jun and another single chick 18 Jun (different brood from 1 Jun). An incubating adult was at Brodieshill (Alves) 18 Apr and probably another at Burnside (near Dulsie) 27 Apr. Taking advantage of the tranquillity of local cemeteries, at Elgin there was an adult incubating 15 May with a half-grown chick on 12 June and at Lossiemouth there was a pair with a clutch of three on 20 May with a possible other pair in the old cemetery and on 23 May there two pairs, one with a brood of four and one with a clutch of three (RP). Two well grown chicks were at The Oaks (Elgin) on 6 Jun. One downy chick was reported at Ballcorach (Strath Avon) 7 Jun and another brood of one chick was at Glenlivet distillery 7 Jun.

No sizeable inland post-breeding flocks reported, best being 10 Cloddach quarry 29 Jun, 21 Dunphail 29 Jun and 20 Tomintoul 30 Jul.

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

Apr: 132 Findhorn Bay 19th.

May: 142 Findhorn Bay 1st.

Jun: 10 Lossie estuary 23rd, 15 Hopeman 29th and 119 Findhorn Bay 30th.

Jul: 231 Findhorn Bay 18th, 146 Spey estuary 21st and 650 Lossie estuary 31st.

Aug: 19 Nairn 3rd, 60 Delnies 6th, 150 Spey estuary 7th, 26 Burghead 8th, 450 Findhorn Bay 8th and 100+ Lossie estuary 15th.

Sep: 521 Findhorn Bay 3rd, 62 Lossie estuary 6th, 202 Nairn Bar 18th and 20 Nairn 28th.

Winter maxima at the coast were:

	Jan	Feb	Oct	Dec
Nairn/Culbin Bars	884*	590*	975*	552*
Findhorn Bay	548	501	590	479
Burghead-Hopeman	58	71	203	103
Lossiemouth	37	42	91	73
Portgordon-Strathlene	62	95	79	35

*Combination of counts at Nairn Bar and Culbin Bar which were carried out concurrently.

Outwith the above dates there were monthly maxima in Findhorn Bay of 318 on 8 Mar and 475 on 15 Nov.

Golden Plover *Charadrius apricaria*

Common breeder, migrant and winter visitor.

Early up-country on 11 Mar when 6 Ben Rinnes and calling was heard at Suie. Also 1 Knock of Braemoray 15 Mar and 1 Corryhabbie 16 Mar.

Pre-breeding flocks were 16 Achmore (Glen Rinnes) 26 Mar and 33 flew over Auchmair (Cabrach) 21 Apr. In breeding habitat were 2 Knock of Braemoray 6 Apr (and single birds on 18 & 24 May and 22 Jun), one pair Ben Rinnes 6 Apr, 4 Braes of Glenlivet 20 Apr and one pair at Meikle Conval 27 Apr. Also 5 Clune 30 Apr (and 6 on 5 May), 2 Loch of Boath 24 May, 1 Carn a' Chrasgie 31 May, 5 Ladder Hills 1 Jun and 4 Hill of Mackalea 9 Jun.

First back at the coast on 13 Jul when 3 Findhorn Bay and 1 Lossiemouth west beach.

Post-breeding up-country flocks included 45 Ben Rinnes 18 Jul and 20 Corryhabbie Hill 24 Aug. On the Cairngorms plateau at least one was seen at Lochan Buidhe on 9 Sep.

In autumn, a flock remained at Machattie's Cairn (Drummuir) where c.70 on 17 Oct, 6 on 30 Nov, c.110 on 22 Dec and 72 on 23 Dec (WMM). Also 10 on the summit of Hill of Mackalea 29 Nov.

Winter coastal maxima were:

	Jan	Feb	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Kinloss	123	nc	112	186	96	45
Findhorn Bay	155	54	134	375	392	393

Outwith the above locations, a flock of c.50 flew over Clochan 26 Dec.

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*

Scarce autumn migrant and winter visitor.

Highest counts were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Nairn/Culbin Bars	7	13	16	nc	10	nc	3
Findhorn Bay	0	0	0	5	6	4	0
Lossiemouth	0	0	0	3	4	0	0

Dates of best counts were 13 Nairn Bar 16 Feb (and 16 there 21 Mar), 10 Culbin Bar 20 Oct, 6 Findhorn Bay 10 Oct and 4 Lossie estuary 10-13 Oct.

An unusual inland (just) record of one flying over Loch Spynie, calling, on 22 Nov (RP).

Adults in breeding plumage are unusual in Moray & Nairn so 1 Findhorn Bay 3-4 Jun (GM,RSC) and 1 Lossie estuary 13 Aug (DAG) were notable.

2014 was another poor year with no large counts. Annual maxima in recent years have been:

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
23	28	17	27	30	18	17	20	24	11	46	27	16	16

The largest Grey Plover flock recorded in Moray & Nairn was 130 at the Nairn/Culbin Bars on 14 Oct 1978.



Grey Plover in Findhorn Bay, 3 June 2014 (Photo: Richard Somers Cocks)

Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*

Very common migrant breeder, small numbers in winter.

Pre-breeding flocks up-country included 26 Clune 4 Mar, 20 Sluie 11 Mar and 50 Ballinalloch 22 Mar. Also a few at Achdregnie 11 Mar, 10 Glenmarkie 3 May, 11 Loch of Boath 24 May and 12 Loch Kirkaldy 27 May.

Breeding: In the coastal lowlands, a flock of 35 Gilston 9 Mar showed some territorial behaviour and this was also noted at Speyslaw on 17 May. Elsewhere, 4 pairs Clarkly Hill 27 May and one mobbing a crow at Bogheads (Nairn) 29 May. A pair with a single chick was seen at Findhorn Bay 26 Jun and an anxious pair were at Wallfield (near Garmouth) 1 Jul. Upcountry, 4 Black Loch (Dava) 2 Jun.

Post-breeding flocks away from the coast before the end of September included 18 Achavraat 14 Jun, c.80 Nether Birnie 14 Sep, c.70 Ardivot 22 Sep and c.250 in a field east of Nairn 29 Sep.

During October, flocks of 100 or more included 680 Coltfoot 12th, and at Balormie pig farm there were 166 on 19th, 224 on 22nd and 243 on 23rd. At Findhorn Bay, 157 on 27th and 126 on 30th.

In mid-winter, flocks included:

Jan-Feb: c.200 Loch Spynie 15 Jan, 28 Miltonhill 27 Jan, 20 Achnatone (Nairn) 7 Feb, 37 Nether Birnie pool 23 Feb and 28 Cloddach quarry 27 Feb.

Nov-Dec: a large flock was regular in the area to the south of Lossiemouth, around Balormie, Muirton and Kinneddar. November counts were 205 on 4th, c.450 on 13th & 23rd, 720 on 25th and 550 on 29th. Later, 170 on Dec 13. Elsewhere, 192 Findhorn Bay 1 Nov and, on 17 Dec, 105 Carse of Delnies and 130 Findhorn Bay.

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

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
F Bay	0	17	0	0	5	7	2	0	6	157	192	130
Spey	0	3	2	0	0	6	22	65	2	0	0	30

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*

Rare summer visitor and breeder.

Following a blank year in 2013, birds were again present on the lower River Spey. In spring, a pair was mating on the shingle at Tugnet on 5 May (M&DG) and an adult and a fledged juvenile were in a wet field at Tugnet on 10 Jul (MJHC). One was still present on 11 Jul (JM) and, on 12 Jul, one was seen at the east end of the Lein at Kingston (C&DS) and on the Spey estuary (LS). The last record was of one at the lagoon at Kingston 30 Jul (C&DS).

Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*

Scarce resident breeder and very common migrant.

Breeding: Confirmed only at Lossiemouth east beach where an adult with a clutch of two eggs on 5 Jul.

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

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
F Bay	29	28	6	221	985	72	21	12	42	35	34	33
Lossie	0	1	12	47	133	22	9	65	60	1	0	0
Spey	0	1	3	28	44	15	16	1	2	0	0	0

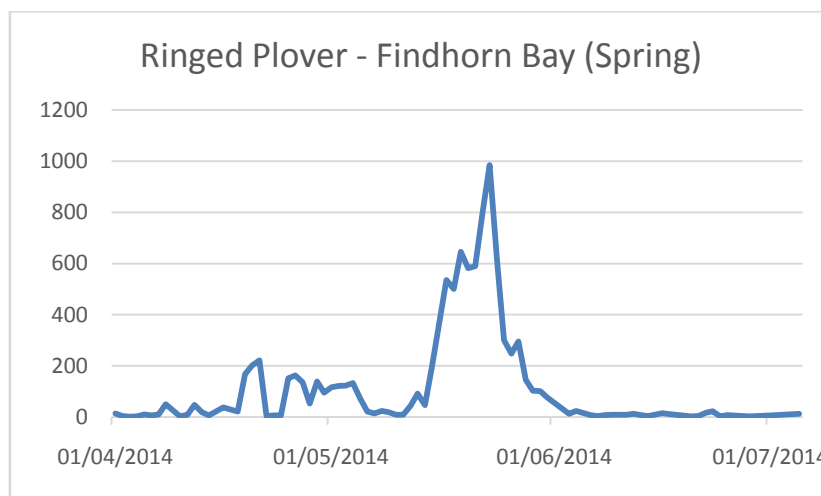
Winter maxima at the coast were:

	Jan-Feb	Nov-Dec
Nairn/Culbin Bars	2	16
Findhorn Bay	29	34
Kinloss	31	39
Burghead-Hopeman	30	8
Lossiemouth	1	0
Portgordon-Strathlene	31	22

Two March counts exceeded ten: 19 Portgordon 8th and 12 Lossie estuary 29th. Double-figure October counts mainly from Findhorn Bay and Kinloss but the highest count was 84 Culbin Bar on 20th.

Spring passage (April-early June):

Findhorn Bay: a series of regular counts was undertaken during this period as illustrated in the graph below:



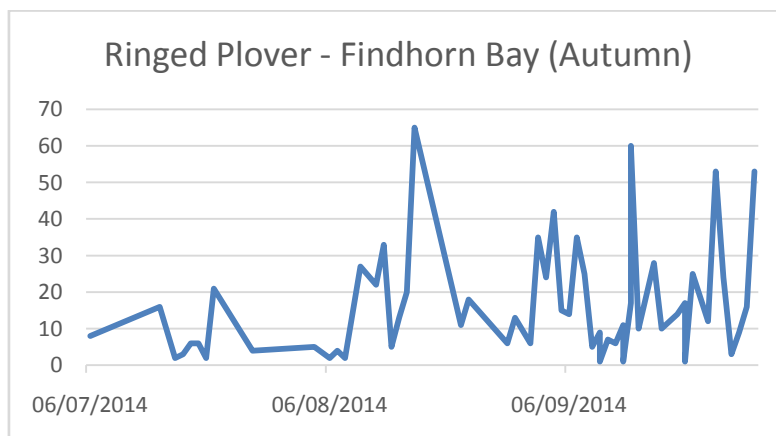
Peak movement took place during late May with a high of 985 on 23 May.

Lossiemouth: records received from 18 dates during this period peaking at 133 on 23 May exactly in line with Findhorn’s passage.

Spey estuary: twenty-seven records during this period but only nine in double figures - highest was 44 on 18 May.

Autumn passage (July-September):

Findhorn Bay: counts were undertaken during this period are illustrated in the graph below:



Numbers fluctuated greatly without the clear peak revealed in spring.

Lossie estuary: numbers also fluctuated here, with a peak count of 65 on 17 Aug coinciding exactly with the peak date at Findhorn Bay.

Spey estuary: only eight records received with a peak count of 16 on 15 Jul.

Dotterel *Charadrius morinellus*

Scarce summer visitor and breeder.

All records from the Cairngorm plateau area.

In the Cairn Lochan area there was one female on 7 May (JDG), one pair and three other females 9 Jun (CR) and a male with a brood of three young chicks on 24 Jun (MJHC). At Feith Buidhe there two males and one female 1 Jun (AE) and one female on 3 Jun (CR). Also on 3 Jun there was one female at Coire Domhain and a nest with a clutch of three was found at Garbh Uisge Beag (CR). Three birds were seen at Ben Macdui on 7 Jun (PM). A male giving distraction display was noted near Lochan Buidhe 24 Jun (MJHC) and more distraction display by an individual on 5 Jul at Coire Raibert (PRG).

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*

Scarce migrant.

Spring: The first arrival was one flying west along the coast of Burghead Bay on 8 Apr (RSC). This is the earliest ever in Moray & Nairn, assuming that two birds in March 1978 were more likely to have overwintered in Scotland. The next arrivals were on 13 Apr when two flew over Portknockie, two flew west in Burghead Bay and one was in Cullen Bay. Subsequent spring flight records (of 1-2 birds) came from Covesea, Culbin Bar, Findhorn Bay, Burghead Bay, Lossiemouth, and Cullen. Five were at the Spey estuary on 30 Apr. Inland, by a short distance, were one over Spynie Palace on 26 Apr and an unusual record of one in a field near Loch Spynie 17 May. Small numbers fed in Findhorn Bay on several days; 8 on 30 Apr, 5 on 3 May, 4 on 4 May, 1 on 8 May and 1 on 2 Jun. The last spring record was 1 Findhorn Bay 12 Jun.

The table below shows the earliest spring dates since 2004:

2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
26 Apr	22 Apr	23 Apr	22 Apr	27 Apr	24 Apr	22 Apr	21 Apr	4 May	21 Apr	8 Apr

Autumn: Extreme dates of passage were 7 Jul (2 Spey estuary) and a rather late 13 Oct (1 Findhorn Bay). Sixty-nine records were received totalling 200 birds, but duplication is probable. The only flocks in double figures were 13 Spey estuary 11 Jul, 16 flying west off Lossiemouth 27 Jul and 10 Spey estuary 24 Aug. There was one (slightly) inland record of 1 Windyridge 4 Oct.

There was also one winter record, of 1 Findhorn Bay 29 Dec (GM). This is only the second winter record for Moray & Nairn, the first being one in a flock of Curlew at Hopeman on 27 Jan 2008.

Curlew *Numenius arquata*

Common breeder. Very common migrant and winter visitor.

Breeding: Very few records received from potential breeding grounds. First reported up-country were 2 Loch Belivat 2 Apr. Subsequently, two records of singles in the Dava area 26 Apr, 6 Glenmarkie 3 May and 2 Ordbreck (near Cawdor) also on 3 May. Later, 1 Ben Rinnes 1 Jun and a flock of 18 in the Ladder Hills 1 Jun. A post-breeding flock of 34 was at Cloddach quarry 29 Jun.

The highest counts of post-breeding flocks in early summer/autumn from the most popular coastal locations were:

	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept
Findhorn Bay	218	417	365	305
Lossiemouth	6	7	129	20
Spey estuary	6	180	339	240

Inland there were flocks of 60 over Loch Spynie 30 Aug and c.200 Nether Birnie 14 Sep (and 55 there 27 Sep).

Coastal winter maxima were:

	Jan	Feb	Oct	Dec
Nairn/Culbin Bars	179	184	211	296
Findhorn Bay	319	293	344	205
Burghead-Hopeman	4	8	16	4
Lossiemouth	3	11	10	125
Portgordon-Strathlene	13	30	26	4

The highest count during November was 221 Findhorn Bay on 27th.

Inland flocks of 100 or more were in the Ardivot/Windyridge area, where c.150 on 25-26 Jan, and at Cloddach quarry/Nether Birnie where 255 on 1 Feb, 185 on 26 Oct, c.200 on 9 Nov and 245 on 14 Dec.

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*

Scarce migrant.

Spring (April-June): The first record was of one at Findhorn Bay 1 Apr followed by two the next day. Eight other records from Findhorn Bay during spring - all of less than ten except 21 on 28 Apr. Last were 4 on 8 Jun. Elsewhere, 1 Spey estuary 24 Apr and 2 there 17 May.

Autumn (July-October):

Findhorn Bay: Well over 100 counts received. The first was a flock of 20 on 4 Jul which was the month's highest count. Other monthly maxima were 33 on 23 Aug, 48 on 10 Sep and 56 on 28 Oct (GM,RSC).

Lossie estuary: Only nine records, between 7 Jul-28 Sep. All of five or less except 11 on 1 Sep and 7 on 15 Sep (RP,DAG,HF).

Spey estuary: Only three singles, on 5 Jul, 24 Aug and 14 Sep (MJHC).

Wester Delnies: a pool of floodwater attracted birds between 5-18 Sep. Most numerous between 8-11 Sep when 7-9 were present daily (C&DS,SM *et al.*).

Roseisle/Burghead Bay: 8 on 8 Sep (AJL) and 4 on 18 Sep (MJHC).

Inland records: A flooded area of the pig farm at Scarffbanks (Loch Spynie) attracted 74 on 6 Sep, decreasing to 37 on 7 Sep, 7 on 8 Sep and only 1 on 11 Sep (RP,MJHC,DAG,FA). One flew over Loch Spynie 14 Sep. An even larger flock inhabited the Nether Birnie/Cloddach Quarry area with counts of 111 on 13 Sep, c.100 on 14 Sep, c.50 on 18 Sep, 148 on 27 Sep, c.140 on 5 Oct and 52 on 26 Oct (MJHC,DAG). These large inland flocks are extremely unusual and 148 is, by a large margin, the most ever recorded inland in Moray & Nairn - the previous best being c.40 flying over Loch Spynie in July 2011. Elsewhere, at Balormie pig farm (Drainie), one on 22-23 Oct (RP).

Late autumn/winter (November-December):

Findhorn Bay: 12 on 4 Nov and 13 on 5 Nov. During the rest of November, birds were seen on nineteen dates, all in single figures, but still 7 on 26th (RSC,GM). During December, one was seen on 2nd and 31st (GM).

Cloddach Quarry: 67 remained on 9 Nov, but only 1 on 22 Dec amongst a flock of Curlew (DAG).



Black-tailed Godwits at Cloddach quarry, 27 September 2014 (Photo: Martin Cook)

Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*

Common winter visitor and migrant. Small numbers in summer.

Monthly maxima at main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Nairn/Culbin Bars	90	137	60	10	22	23	55
Nairn	11	nc	20	17	4	nc	20
Findhorn Bay	55	87	38	8	11	18	28
Burghead/Hopeman	10	44	81*	4	23	29	50*
Lossiemouth	3	6	5	1	4	6	9

*Burghead only

Maximum annual count at any site since 2003 has been:

2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
265	420	215	300	436	198	75	107	204	150	90	137

The last count exceeding 1000 was back in winter 1996-97.

During April and May, the only counts in double figures were 18 Burghead 6 Apr and 21 Findhorn Bay 1 May. In late May, 3 Findhorn Bay (in breeding plumage) 28th.

Summer:

June: 3 Burghead 2nd and, in Findhorn Bay, 4 on 1st, 3 on 2nd then 1 all month with 2 on 15th and 3 on 28th.

July: 4 Spey estuary (in breeding plumage) 7th. One in Findhorn Bay on 5th, 10th and 27th.

August: 1 Findhorn Bay 8th and 15th, 2 Nairn 20th, 2 Lossie estuary 14th-17th and 1 on 24th.

Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

Common winter visitor, small numbers in summer.

Winter monthly maxima at main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Oct	Dec
Delnies - Nairn	13	17	15	10
Nairn/Culbin Bars	43	24	0	0
Findhorn	32	34	63	32
Burghead bay	0	37	0	16
Burghead-Hopeman	49	32	30	38
Lossiemouth	2	11	15	7
Spey estuary	1	10	0	10
Portgordon-Strathlene	48	111	166	66

The highest counts during other winter months were 61 Burghead 24 Mar and 41 Findhorn Bay 10 Nov.

Spring: Still some high numbers during April especially at Burghead where c.90 on 3rd, 88 on 5th and 72 on 7th. At Portgordon, 48 on 11th and 47 on 16th. In May, 2 Spey estuary 11th and present Findhorn Bay 20th-26th, maximum 4 on 21st. What is assumed to be the last spring sighting prior to migration to breeding grounds was of 3 Spey estuary 8 Jun.

Summer-autumn: The first assumed returning birds were 4 Spey estuary 4 Jul and 5 there next day. Later in the month, 1 Findhorn Bay 26 Jul and 2 Lossie estuary 30 Jul. During August, numbers started to pick up with location highs of 16 Nairn 3rd, 12 Burghead 7th, 24 Lossiemouth north pier 16th and 20 Findhorn Bay 20th. The same locations also had reasonable peak counts during September, of 18 flying west past Lossiemouth 7th, 10 Burghead 10th, 32 Findhorn 17th and 28 Nairn 28th. Also 12 Hopeman on 27 Sep.

Knot *Calidris canutus*

Very common migrant and winter visitor.

Winter maxima were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Oct	Nov	Dec
Nairn/Culbin Bars	3980	3700	70	231	250	2531
Nairn east beach	2800	nc	100	50	c.2000	c.4000
Findhorn Bay	c.1050	c.1000	c.600	c.100	32	4

The Nairn east beach flock is the same as the flock around the Bars - its location depending largely on the state of the tide.

Elsewhere, c.280 Burghead 16 Dec.

During April-June, the only counts in double figures were from Findhorn Bay where 16 on 1 May and 12 on 3 May. The only breeding plumaged birds were singles at Lossie estuary 4 May and Findhorn Bay 4 Jun.

Last in spring was 1 Findhorn Bay 7 Jun.

The first assumed to be returning from breeding grounds, showing breeding plumage, was 1 Lossie estuary 6-7 Jul. Subsequently on autumn passage:

July: 3 Findhorn Bay 21st and 126 on 27th, 11 Lossie estuary 27th and, at Spey estuary, 2 on 7th, 1 on 15th, 4 on 21st and 9 on 23rd.
 August: 1-2 Lossie estuary 21st-28th and, in Findhorn Bay, 4 on 9th-10th, 9 on 17th and 110 on 23rd.
 September: In Findhorn Bay, 104 on 1st, 184 on 5th and 157 on 25th. At the Lossie estuary, 1 on 7th, 3 on 11th, 8 on 22nd and 3 on 27th.

Ruff *Calidris pugnax*

Scarce autumn migrant, rare in spring.

All records were in autumn.

August: First was 1 Lossie estuary 8th-9th (DM,DAG,HF), followed there by 2 on 14th and 3 on 15th (HF), 1 on 21st (FA) and 2 on 30th (DAG). In Findhorn Bay, 1 on 30th and 2 on 31st, 1 Spey estuary 26th and 1 Wester Delnies pig farm 29th (SJF).

September: As a result of heavy rain the pig fields at Scarffbanks farm provided some good muddy pools. An excellent flock of 16 was feeding there on 6 Sep (DAG,RP,MJHC), gradually declining to 15 on 7 Sep (AJL), 14 on 8 Sep (FA) and 2 remaining on 9 Sep (MJHC). The flock of 16 is the largest in Moray & Nairn since 21 at Lhanbryde pig farm in September 1998 - Ruff are clearly strongly attracted to flooded pig fields. At another pig farm, at Wester Delnies, birds were present between 1st -11th, with the highest counts of 6 on 3rd (LSc) and 8th (JAC,AMN). Also 3 there on 28th (GB) and 1 on 30th (CGL). Elsewhere, 6 Findhorn Bay 13th (DAG) (and 2 on 17th (GM)), 3-4 Roseisle 7th-8th (AJL), 11 Bruntland 2nd (TB) and 1 Nether Birnie 14th (DAG).

October: 1 Wester Delnies 1st (AJL), 1 Roseisle 10th (MJHC), 1 Findhorn Bay 11th (DAG) and 1 Colfield 13th (JGD) - the latest in Moray & Nairn since 1 Lossiemouth 1 Nov 1999.

Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*

Scarce migrant.

Following those in 2013, there were further spring records. First was 1 Findhorn Bay 15-16 May followed by another single bird there on 26 May (GM).

As usual, autumn passage was stronger:

July: 1 Spey estuary 12th (LS).
 August: At the Lossie estuary, 1 on 16th (AJL), 1 moulting adult on 30th (RP,DM) and 3 juveniles on 31st (DAG,MJHC). Also 4 Findhorn Bay 31st (AJL).
 September: 1 Spey estuary 5th (MJHC), 2 Findhorn Bay 2nd, 9th & 11th (AS), and, at Wester Delnies pig farm, 1 on 2nd (AM), 2 on 3rd -5th (LS,JDG,AS,SM) and 1 on 6th (C&DS,FA).
 October: 1 Findhorn Bay 11 Oct (DAG).

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	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
Nairn/Culbin Bars	123	122	150	nc	15	nc
Lossiemouth	47	29	42	24	13	nc
Findhorn Bay	9	16	16	18	41	17
Nairn	25	14	60	51	nc	nc

Late summer-autumn:

	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Nairn/Culbin Bars	nc	nc	nc	185	23	197
Lossiemouth	56	38*	c.90	35	40*	10*
Findhorn Bay	53	10	3	14	12	9
Nairn	nc	nc	32	36	23	30

* In flight off shore during seawatch (RP).

As usual, the Nairn/Culbin Bars held the largest numbers; 123 on 19 Jan, 150 on 21 Mar, 185 on 20 Oct and 197 on 7 Dec. Elsewhere, a group of 25 at Burghead on 3 Dec was very unusual.

The last birds reported prior to departing to breeding grounds were 17 at Findhorn Bay 1 Jun and the first noted back was a single showing signs of summer plumage at Lossie estuary 13 Jul.

Dunlin *Calidris alpina*

Scarce breeder, very common migrant and winter visitor.

Breeding: no breeding records were received.

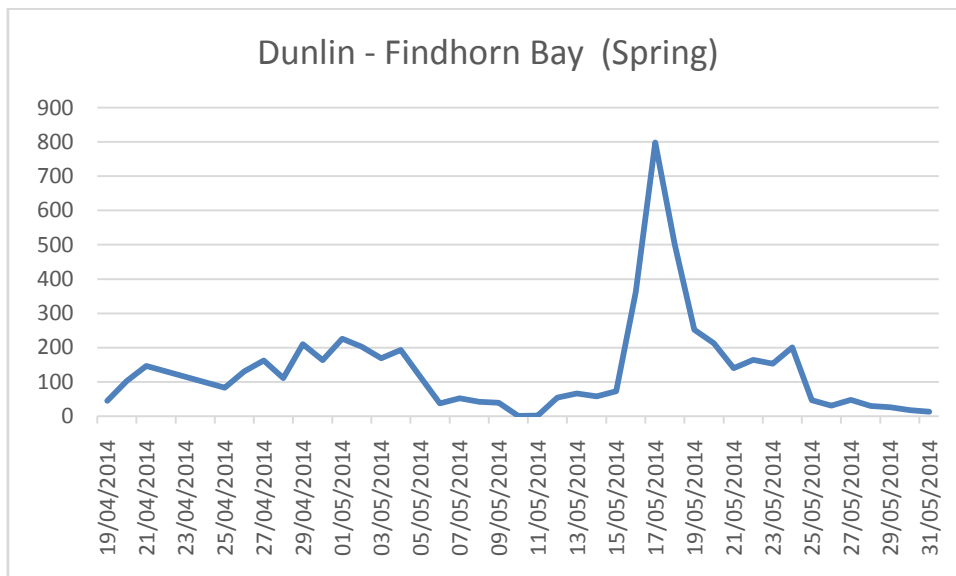
Winter monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Oct	Nov	Dec
Nairn/Culbin Bars	1151	1015	300	nc	186
Findhorn Bay	1375	1267	540	1140	1100
Lossiemouth	22	29	14	90	71
Spey estuary	22	90	23	0	0

The highest count during March was 1325 at Findhorn Bay on the 5th.

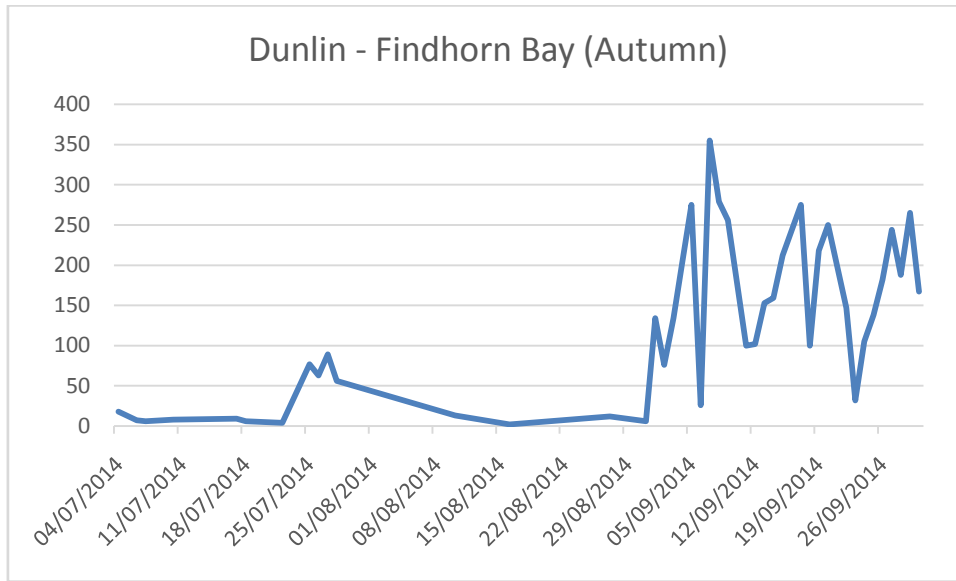
Elsewhere, 105 Portgordon harbour 7 Feb was the only count to exceed 100.

Spring passage: Regular counting in Findhorn Bay, revealed fluctuating numbers, indicating passage in late April and throughout May, as shown below:



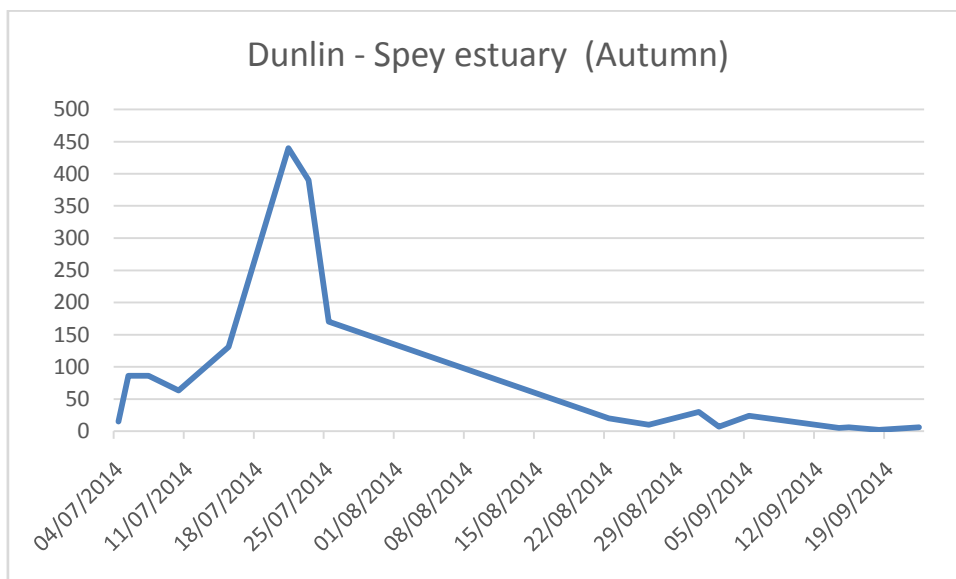
During May the peak number was 798 on 17th at Findhorn Bay. Other mid-late May peaks were 63 Spey estuary 18th, 200 Carse of Delnies 19th and 27 Lossie estuary 23rd.

Autumn passage (July-September): Once again the numerous records from Findhorn Bay gave the following indication of autumn migration:



The peak count at Findhorn Bay during this period was 355 on 7 Sep.

Records from the Spey estuary indicated a passage during late July with a peak of 440 on the 21st. The Spey estuary records are illustrated in the graph below:



The autumn peak at Spey estuary on 21 Jul was close to the late July arrival detected in Findhorn Bay.

During autumn, the Wester Delnies pig farm attracted Dunlin on sixteen dates from 29 Aug until 13 Sep with the highest count of 41 on 10 Sep. The date almost coincides with the peak Findhorn Bay autumn count on 7 Sep.

Purple Sandpiper *Calidris maritima*

Common winter visitor.

Main winter site maxima were:

	January-March	October-December
Burghead-Hopeman	19	3
Lossiemouth	15	15
Portgordon-Strathlene	8	13

A very poor year with low numbers. This is the first time in Moray & Nairn that a year has passed with no count exceeding 40.

The annual maximum flock sizes since 2003 are shown below:

2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
126	113	95	54	73	144	100	120	100	73	45	19

The last spring record was 17 Lossiemouth north pier 18 Apr. A possible returning bird was at Lossiemouth north pier 23 Jul but there were no other records until one was at the same location on 16-17 Aug.

Little Stint *Calidris minuta*

Very scarce migrant, mostly in autumn.

Spring: Two records - 1 Spey estuary 28-31 May (RSC,JM,RC) and 1 Lossie estuary 23 Jun (RP,DAG).

Autumn: The first returning from breeding grounds was 1 Findhorn Bay 25 Jul (RSC).

Subsequently:

Lossie estuary: 1 on 21 Aug (FA), 19 Sep and 3 Oct (DAG).

Culbin Bar: 1 on 24 Aug (ISS).

Findhorn Bay: 1 on 30 Aug (DAG), 2 on 8 Sep (GM), 2 on 10 Sep (GM,RSC) and 1 on 11 Sep (AS).

Spey estuary: 3 on 5 Sep (MJHC).

Slightly away from the coast, at the pig farms:

Wester Delnies: 3 on 1 Sep, 4 on 3 Sep (LS), and 1 remaining 4-10 Sep (JDG *et al.*).

Scarffbanks: 3 on 6 Sep (DAG,RP,MJHC).



Little Stints in Findhorn Bay, 10 September 2014 (Photo: Gordon McMullins)

Pectoral Sandpiper *Calidris melanotos*

Rare visitor.

Another excellent year with two records - muddy pools at pig farms were the attraction:

Scarffbanks: 1 adult 6-9 Sep (DAG,RP,MJHC,FA).

Wester Delnies: 1 juvenile, also found on 6 Sep (AS) and remaining until 15 Sep (AMN *et al.*).

These are the 14th and 15th records for Moray & Nairn.



Pectoral Sandpiper, Scarffbanks 6 September 2014 (Photo: Duncan Gibson)



Pectoral Sandpiper, Wester Delnies 11 September 2014 (Photo: Tony Backx)

Grey Phalarope *Phalaropus fulicarius*

Rare visitor.

One was watched at Nairn on 30 Jan (DMA). This represents the 7th record in Moray & Nairn, the most recent being in 2008.

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*

Common summer visitor and breeder.

Arrival: First were 1 Craigellachie 10 Apr and 1 Forres 12 Apr. Later in April, 1 Blacksboat 18th, 2 on the banks of the Spey at Rothes 19th and, well up-country, 4 Drynachan-Banchor and 1 Dulsie Bridge on 20th.

The first arrival dates (in April) since 2004 have been:

2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
18th	17th	23rd	15th	20th	9th	17th	12th	10th	15th	10th

Breeding: During late April-June many records came from potential breeding sites along the Spey and Findhorn rivers. Other fresh water sites occupied in the breeding season included Cloddach quarry, Lochan Tutach, Loch of Boath and Clunas reservoir. Four records at Loch Spynie are likely to refer to migrants. Post breeding assemblages in double figures were 21 Spey estuary 5 Jul and 12 Lossie estuary 17 Jul. Last of the year was 1 Loch Spynie 19 Sep.

Dates for 'last record of the year' have fluctuated greatly over recent years:

2004*	2005*	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
5 Sep	16 Oct	14 Sep	2 Sep	21 Sep	4 Sep	31 Jul	28 Sep	19 Aug	28 Aug	19 Sep

* During the November of 2004 & 2005, on the Spey near Fochabers, there were records of what was presumed to be an over-wintering bird.

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*

Very scarce migrant, rare in winter.

January-February: 1 Netherton (south end of Findhorn Bay) 21 Jan (DMA). One was also here on 1 Nov 2013, which suggests the possibility of overwintering although the lack of additional sightings is strange.

Mid-summer: An unusual record of 1 Cloddach quarry (main pool west of the river) on 21 Jun (DAG).

Autumn migration: 1 Lossie estuary 27 Jul (HF,DAG), 1 Findhorn Bay 8 Aug (JDG), and 1 Cloddach quarry 27 Sep and 5 Oct (MJHC,DAG).

November-December: 1 Cloddach quarry 16 Nov (RP,DM) and, close by, 2 Wester Manbeen 18 Nov (FA). At the end of the year, 1 Easter Calcots (on River Lossie) 29 Dec (FA) and 1 Findhorn Bay (south side) 31 Dec (GM).

Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus*

Very scarce migrant.

Spring: 1 Lossie estuary 3 Jun (AMI).

Autumn: 1 over Findhorn 30 Aug (SJF) and 1 Lossie estuary 1-12 Sep (DAG,AJL *et al*).



Spotted Redshank, Lossie estuary 11 September 2014 (Photo: David Main)

Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

Scarce migrant, very scarce in winter.

Spring (late March-June): In April, 1 Findhorn Bay on 2nd, 6th, 10th & 14th with 2 on 7th. Also, 1 Hopeman 4th & 9th and 1 Burghead 5th. At Lossie estuary, 2 on 29 Apr and 1 on 15 May, and at the Spey estuary, 2 on 17 May.

Late summer-autumn (July-October): First was 1 Spey estuary 10 Jul. Subsequently, sixty-three records were received from coastal locations, ranging from Culbin Bar to Portknockie, thirty-nine of which were of 1-2 birds. Largest counts were 11 Lossie estuary 27 Jul (unusually numerous here), 11 Findhorn Bay 8 Aug and 4 Culbin Bar 24 Aug. Four Findhorn Bay 26 Oct were quite late.

Inland, 2 flew north over Lossie Spynie 10 Aug, on the muddy pools at Scarffbanks pig farm there were 2 on 6 Sep, 3 on 7 Sep, 2 on 9 Sep and 1 on 19 Sep. At Cloddach quarry, 1 on 14 Sep.

Winter: Recorded only in Findhorn Bay where, in the first winter period, 1 from 12-20 Jan (GM,RSC). In the second winter period, 1 on 13-18 & 30 Nov, and 3 on 21 Nov. Last was 1 on 2 Dec (RSC,GM *et al.*).

Redshank *Tringa totanus*

Scarce breeder, very common migrant and winter visitor.

Breeding: Disappointingly, no proved breeding records were received. Birds were, however, present in the Tomintoul area 21 & 22 May (MMS). A pair was also noted in the Ladder Hills 1 Jun (DMai). Up to 12 were also recorded in the Netherton area on the south side of Findhorn Bay, a potential breeding site, during May, Jun and early July (GMcM,RSC).

Spring (March-May):

Findhorn Bay: Regular counting in the bay revealed the following pattern of weekly maximum counts:

26/2- 4/3	5/3- 11/3	12/3- 18/3	19/3- 25/3	26/3- 1/4	2/4- 8/4	9/4- 15/4	16/4- 22/4	23/4- 29/4	30/4- 6/5	7/5- 13/5	14/5- 20/5	21/5- 27/5	28/5- 3/6
314	398	376	551	572	715	332	335	70	5	1	0	11	11

(RSC,GM)

The peak passage period in late March and early April is clear. In comparison with 2013, the main passage period finished about two weeks earlier.

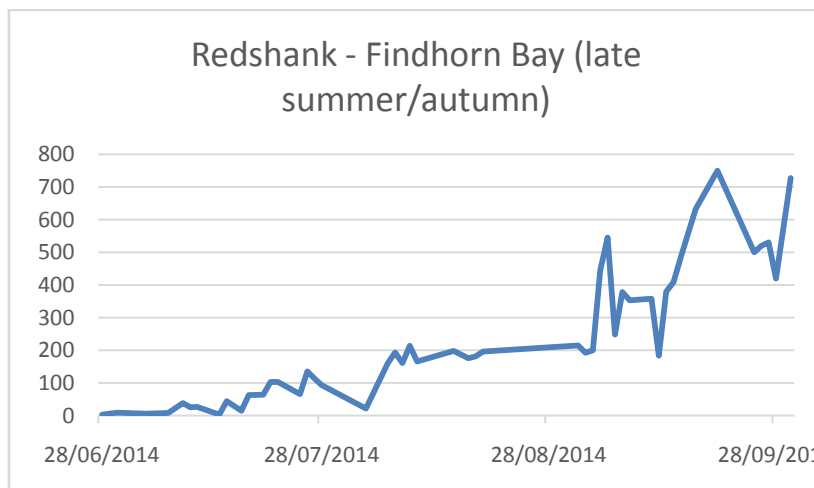
Lossie estuary: The highest monthly counts were 42 on 31 Mar and 142 on 12 Apr. Unusually, none in May.

Spey estuary: Only small numbers, with highest counts of 11 on 12 Mar and 18 on 16 Apr. No May records.

Elsewhere, 63 at the mouth of Nairn harbour 21 Mar and 20 Portgordon 20 Apr, and no May records.

Late summer/autumn (late June-September):

Findhorn Bay: The build-up of numbers is illustrated by the graph below:



The peak count during this period was 750 on 20 Sep.

Highest counts (monthly maxima) elsewhere were:

	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
Nairn	nc	2	22	42
Lossiemouth	9	39	19	38
Spey estuary	0	8	13	9

Also 41 Carse of Delnies 25 Sep.

Winter: Monthly maxima at the coast were:

	Jan	Feb	Oct	Nov	Dec
Nairn/Culbin Bars	32	23	90	22	88
Findhorn Bay	490	414	810	840	870
Burghead-Hopeman	20	17	22	20	14
Lossiemouth	14	22	55	45	51
Portgordon-Strathlene	46	55	46	nc	51

Maximum winter counts in Findhorn Bay since 2005 have been:

2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
490	636	905	1080	828	536	500	599	513	870

Jack Snipe *Lymnocyptes minimus*

Scarce migrant and winter visitor.

First winter period: Kingsteps had 2 on 11 Jan (DJ), 1 on 18 Jan (MCB,KB), 2 on 19 Jan (GP) and 1 on 2 Feb (KB). There was 1 at Findhorn Bay on 20 Jan (RSC).

Early spring: 1 Findhorn Bay 31 Mar (RHD) and 1 Kingsteps 3 Apr (DMA).

Autumn/winter: 2 Drainie 12 Oct (HF) and at Kingsteps, 3 on 26 Oct (GP), 2 on 2 Nov (AS), 3 on 28 Nov, 3 on 7 Dec (GP) and 1 on 17-18 Dec (RC). Also 1 Heathfield (near Loch Flemington) 9 Nov (JAC) and 1 Cloddach quarry 30 Nov (MJHC).

Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola*

Common resident breeder, migrant and winter visitor.

Early winter: 1 Pitgaveny woods 3 Jan, 1 Loch Loy 21 Jan and 2 Loch Spynie 24 Jan (1 on 26 Jan). Further inland, 2 Lethen Bar 14 Jan (1 on 6 Feb) and 1 Clune 7 Feb. During March, 1 Lynemore on 11th, 1 flew over the Kinloss-Findhorn road on 12th and 1 Tynet on 15th.

Breeding: The only roding was noted at Carron on 17 Mar & 14 Apr and at Delmore (Aberlour) 4 May. Records in potential breeding areas were 2 Shaw Hill 4 Apr, 5 Loch Belivat area 9 Apr, 1 Coulmony 11 Apr, 1 Clune 17 Apr, 1 Conglass Water 12 May, 1 Lethen valley 24 May and 1 Cawdor wood 14 Jun.

Autumn/winter: A tired migrant was found sheltering in a chicken run at Clochan 3 Nov. Single birds were at Aldroughty 15 Nov, Lossie estuary 16 Nov, Loch Spynie 19 & 22 Nov (and 7 Dec) and Loch na Bo 22 Nov. Multiple sightings involved 4 Duffus 18 Nov, 4 Clashdhu 20 Dec and 2 Laikenbuie 19 Nov.

Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*

Common breeder and migrant.

Breeding: Drumming was heard at Aldivalloch (Cabrach) 26 Mar and Aldivalloch-Reekimlane 8 Apr. A pair were noted at Inchroy 18 & 19 Apr. Other records from potential breeding locations included one in the north-east fen of Loch Spynie 6 Apr & 2 May, and a single bird at Clune 30 Apr. Further inland, 2

Glenmarkie 3 May, 1 Bridge of Brown area 21 May and presence noted in the Tomintoul area 21 & 22 May and 4 Jun. Also, 4 Loch of Boath 24 May.

Winter-spring: At the Snipe 'hotspot' of Kingsteps were 14 on 11 Jan, 10 on 18 Jan, 30 on 19 Jan, 15 on 8 Feb, 21 on 16 Feb and 3 on 1 Mar. Elsewhere, single birds were seen at Culbin Bar 19 Jan, Cloddach quarry 1 Feb, Findhorn Bay 8 Mar, Culbin 21 Mar, Spey estuary 6 Apr and on the lower reaches of the River Findhorn 19 Apr.

Autumn-winter: Still up-country were 2 Tomnamoon 12 Sep and 1 Knock of Braemoray 27 Sep. All other records were within the coastal fringe where Kingsteps once again held excellent numbers with counts of 65 on 26 Oct (GP), c.25 on 2 Nov and 31 on 7 Dec. Groups of 10 or more elsewhere included 23 Lossie estuary 22 Nov, 21 Kinloss 10 Nov and 17 Spey estuary 9 Nov.

Pomarine Skua *Stercorarius pomarinus*

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

An unusually good year for sightings, mainly off Lossiemouth where the earliest was 1 on 22 May. Single birds were seen 30 Aug and 4 Sep, and then 4 in 1 hour on 21 Sep, 9 (1 adult & 8 juveniles) in 1 hour on 15 Oct, and 11 on 21 Oct. Last sighting was 1 on 2 Nov (RP). Elsewhere in October single birds were recorded at Burghead on 12th and 21st (RHD,ND).

Arctic Skua *Stercorarius parasiticus*

Fairly common migrant in summer and autumn.

Winter: A very unusual sighting of 1 flying east off Lossiemouth on 1 Jan (JDL).

Spring: The only sightings in May were 1 off Burghead on 6th and 2 off Lossiemouth on 22nd.

Summer: In June-July the only records were at Lossiemouth where 1 on 29 Jun, 3 in 1 hour on 23 Jul and 2 on 29 Jul (RP).

Autumn: Numerous sightings at Lossiemouth between August and mid November. High counts included 3 on 8 Aug, 7 in 1 hour on 20 Aug, 13 in 1 hour on 30 Aug, 13 in 1 hour on 7 Sep, 12 in 1 hour on 1 Oct, 5 in 1 hour on 2 Nov, and the last sighting of 4 on 16 Nov (RP). Elsewhere, single birds were seen off Findhorn on 24 & 26 Aug, 4 & 11 Sep (RSC), and in Burghead Bay on 13 Aug, 16 Sep and 7 Oct (AM,AJL). The only other sightings were at Carse of Delnies where 3 on 3 Sep and 2 on 9 Sep (LSc,AMN).

Long-tailed Skua *Stercorarius longicaudus*

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

Three single birds were recorded late in the year off Lossiemouth, on 1 & 15 Oct and on 15 Nov (RP).

Great Skua *Stercorarius skua*

Fairly common migrant in summer and autumn.

Spring: First were 1 Lossiemouth 19 Apr followed by 1 Findhorn 26 May.

Summer: In June-July six sightings at Lossiemouth included 3 on 19 Jun, 3 on 14 Jul and 2 on 27 Jul (RP). The only records elsewhere in July were 1 in Findhorn Bay 14th (RSC) and 1 Portnockie 1 on 16th with 2 on 17th (LS).

Autumn: In August-October birds were recorded (mostly 1-2) passing Lossiemouth on thirty-seven dates. Significant passage indicated by 7 in 1 hour on 13 Aug, 7 in 1 hour on 17 Aug, 5 in 30 minutes on 21 Sep and 8 in 30 minutes on 7 Oct (RP,DM). Elsewhere, 6 flew past Portnockie in 30 minutes on 13 Aug (JM).

Puffin *Fratercula arctica*

Very scarce offshore.

A few more reports this year with 2 in Burghead Bay on 29 Jun (EH), 3 past Portnockie on 16 Jul (LS) and, last of the year, 1 past Burghead on 21 Oct (RHD). At Lossiemouth single birds were reported on 9 occasions during May-September with the majority being seen in early July (RP).

Black Guillemot *Cephus grylle*

Scarce breeder and scarce offshore.

Breeding: Highest counts of adults on the sea below breeding cliffs were 12 Portknockie 29 Mar (LS) and 25 Tronach Head 11 Apr (MJHC). The combined total of 37 is fewer once again than the 42 counted in spring 2013 and 53 in 2012. On 9 Jul, two nests were found at Portknockie and two at Tronach Head, where one chick was ringed in the usual crevice on 20 July - another was lying dead below (MJHC).

Away from the east Moray breeding area, a significant passage took place past Lossiemouth on 15 Aug, when 71 passed (all but one flying west) in 90 minutes (RP). A similar passage was noted there at that time of year in 2013. Otherwise, many sightings along the coast in autumn/winter, notably 20 Lossiemouth 16 Aug, 25 Carse of Delnies (Nairn) 3 Sep, 3 Burghead 10 Oct and 34 Lossiemouth 2 Nov.

Razorbill *Alca torda*

Scarce breeder, very common offshore.

Breeding: At the Portknockie colony, 98 adults were at potential breeding sites on cliff ledges on 19 Jun (MJHC).

Smaller numbers offshore in spring and early summer this year. Off Burghead on 29 Mar, 250 were estimated, and 280 passed Lossiemouth on 3 Apr. Numerous sightings at Lossiemouth during June-August with 69 on 2 Jul the highest. By mid September, numbers passing Lossiemouth rose rapidly and counts of more than 250 were 344 on 26 Sep, 469 on 27 Sep, and 1251 on passage in 2 hours on 28 Sep. All but a few of these birds in September were flying west (RP). Counts of 100 or more at other localities were 260 off Tugnet (Spey Bay) 10 Apr (MJHC), 100 in Burghead Bay 10 Apr (PR) and 466 on 27 Sep (JDG) and 124 off Findhorn 29 Sep (RSC).

Notable autumn/winter counts at Lossiemouth were 662 mainly flying west on 5 Oct, 864 on 25 Oct, 771 on 1 Nov and 200 on 9 Nov (RP).

Little Auk *Alle alle*

Very scarce visitor in autumn and winter. Occasionally more numerous.

Sightings more numerous this year in both winter seasons.

January-February: At Nairn, 1 on 30 Jan and 3 on 31 Jan (DMA). At Burghead, 2 on 30 Jan, 2 on 31 Jan and 2 on 2 Feb (CAG,DMP), and at Findhorn, 2 on 1 Feb. Single birds passed Lossiemouth on 26 Jan and 1 Feb (RP).

November-December: All sightings were during sea watches off Lossiemouth where 12 on 2 Nov, 1 on 9 Nov, 2 on 15 Nov, 3 on 18 Nov and 1 on 6 Dec (RP).

Guillemot *Uria aalge*

Very common offshore.

Most of the sightings in January-February came from the west of the area with 11 reports of 1-2 birds off Findhorn (RSC,GM). Elsewhere 3 Burghead 8 & 23 Feb, and 5 Nairn Bar 19 Jan. By spring, notable sightings included 30 Burghead Bay 10 Apr (PR) and 80 between Buckie-Cullen 4 May (LGRE). Over the summer months there were numerous sightings of small numbers off Lossiemouth with best counts of 10 on 28 Jun and 5 on 8 Jul. Highest counts for the rest of the year at Lossiemouth were 118 on 21 Oct, 23 on 1 Nov and 58 on 14 Nov (RP).

Little Tern *Sterna albifrons*

Very scarce summer visitor and rare breeder.

First of the year were 2 Lossie estuary 27 Apr. Several sightings of a pair on Lossiemouth east beach during May, and by 7 Jun an adult was incubating on the beach (DAG,MJHC). The only other sightings came from the Spey estuary where 5 were seen in late May at Tugnet (RSC), followed by a pair in June and then a pair probably breeding west of the river mouth in early July (MJHC).

Sandwich Tern *Sterna sandvicensis*

Very common summer visitor and occasional breeder.

Arrival: First of the year were 3 Nairn 25 Mar, followed by 2 off Findhorn beach (and probably the same 2 on moorings in Findhorn Bay) on 29 Mar. First sightings at other locations were 2 Burghead 2 Apr, 6 Lossie estuary 6 Apr and 4 Spey estuary 18 Apr.

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

2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
1 Apr	1 Apr	31 Mar	3 Apr	22 Mar	25 Mar	27 Mar	18 Mar	3 Apr	25 Mar

A high spring count was 166 Nairn east beach 20 Apr.

Breeding: No breeding in 2014. Breeding was last confirmed in Moray & Nairn in 2005.

First juveniles, with adults from colonies outwith Moray & Nairn, were noted from mid July. From the colour ringed birds observed at Findhorn most of the juveniles had come from the Forvie NNR on the Ythan Estuary. Some had also arrived from breeding sites on the Northumbrian coast, and a few from Norfolk and the Netherlands. Several counts over 300 were observed at Findhorn in late August with 482 on 20th, 450 on 21st, 375 on 22nd and 380 on 31st (RSC). Elsewhere, 80 off Burghead 13 Aug.

Half-monthly maximum counts of flocks on the shore at Findhorn, Lossie estuary and Spey estuary in July-September were:

	Early Jul	Late Jul	Early Aug	Late Aug	Early Sep	Late Sep
Findhorn	72	135	180	482	145	67
Lossie estuary	3	8	23	1	15	0
Spey estuary	4	0	0	7	2	8

Best passage counts late summer and autumn past Lossiemouth were 35 in 1 hour 28 Aug, 15 in 1 hour 5 Sep, and 11 in 30 minutes 11 Sep (RP).

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*

Summer visitor and fairly common breeder.

Arrival: First were 2 Spey estuary 24 Apr and 2 Lossie estuary 27 Apr.

Breeding: At Loch Spynie, there were at least 20 apparently occupied nests on the platform on 6 Jul but no subsequent records of the number of chicks which fledged. At the Spey estuary, 10-20 pairs were nesting on the west side of river mouth on 8 Jun but the colony was later deserted without raising young (MJHC). Inland, one pair bred on the roof of Walkers factory in Aberlour. Two young were on the roof on 20 Jun and the family party of adults with 2 young was seen on the nearby River Spey on 15 Jul (AE). This is the first instance of roof nesting by Common Terns in Moray & Nairn.

High counts at various sites included 290 on Findhorn beach 27 Aug, up to 315 Lossie estuary 13-15 Aug, and 61 Spey estuary 21 Aug. High passage counts at Lossiemouth also occurred in the second half of August, with 382 in 90 minutes on 15th, 141 in 1 hour on 23rd and 94 in 1 hour on 30th (RP). Last of the year were 23 on Findhorn beach 4 Oct (RSC).

Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea*

Summer visitor and fairly common breeder.

Arrival: First returning bird was 1 Spey estuary 1 May.

Breeding: The only record of nesting was on the shingles of the Spey estuary where there were 20-30 pairs on the west side of the river mouth on 8 Jun. By 5 Jul, 255 adults were in the breeding colony but most sitting birds were hidden from view. On 7 Jul, all pairs still had eggs but the colony was abandoned by 15 Jul (MJHC).

High post-breeding count at Lossie estuary was 200+ on 15 Aug. Large numbers of 'commic' (Common or Arctic) terns were also present at the Spey estuary in July *e.g.* 120 on 18th and 115 on 25th with most of these being Arctic Terns. Last of the year were 2 Portgordon 3 Oct.

Sabine's Gull *Xema sabini*

Rare migrant.

A good year for sightings. A juvenile was on the Spey estuary 21-22 Sep (DAG,MJHC). Then three records at Lossiemouth where single juveniles were seen at the estuary on 28 Sep and 18 Oct (DAG,HF) and a juvenile flew east offshore on 2 Oct (RP). Up until this year there had been 15 records for Moray & Nairn - assuming that these four records refer to different birds, the total now stands at 19.



Sabine's Gull, Lossie estuary 28 September 2014 (Photo: David Main)

Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla*

Very common breeder and migrant.

Breeding: A good increase in apparently occupied nests (AON) at both the Covesea and Portknockie colonies in 2014 after a poor season the previous year. There were 569 AONs at Covesea on 7 Jun and 336 AONs at Portknockie on 19 Jun (MJHC).

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

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Covesea	302	437	474	420	468	535	540	590	425	569
Portknockie	158	246	238	263	332	355	360	365	233	336

High counts elsewhere along the coast included 237 on Findhorn beach 15 Sep (RSC), 520 on sea at Burghead 29 Sep (MJHC), 2000 estimated on sea off Lossiemouth on 1 Oct (RP) and 58 at Spey estuary 22 Aug. Peak passage counts offshore this year were in late summer/autumn as is typical for this species.

Counts passing Lossiemouth in 1 hour included 961 on 1 Sep, 928 on 1 Oct, 1366 on 13 Oct and 499 on 1 Nov (RP).

Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

Fairly common resident breeder and very common winter visitor.

Breeding: Numbers at Loch Spynie were down slightly this year, with 10-12 apparently occupied nests in May (MJHC,RP). Elsewhere, on moorland south-west of Dallas, Loch Dallas held 112 nests (with 245 adults counted) on 19 May and, nearby on the same day, there were 33 nests with 62 adults at Loch Noir (MJHC). The only other breeding colony was at Brokentore (Kellas) where there were 133 adults with 38 apparently occupied nests on 2 May (TB).

Counts over 300 on Findhorn Bay included 460 on 14 Jul, 342 on 25 Jul and 337 on 2 Sep (RSC,GM). Elsewhere on the coast, high counts included 300 Nairn 20 Aug, 116 Culbin Bar 26 Oct, 200 Hopeman 28 Dec and 370 Lossie estuary 13 Oct. Also at Lossie estuary, 126 on 7 Jul included 33 juveniles. The largest flock of the year occurred at Balormie pig farm (beside RAF Lossiemouth) where 2113 were counted on 24 Oct (RP).

Little Gull *Hydrocoloeus minutus*

Very scarce visitor.

A good year for sightings.

First winter period: Lossiemouth had up to three adults and two 1st winter birds 22-31 Jan, with numbers rising to a high count of 11 on 1 Feb (DAG,KS *et al.*).

Summer: Three locations held birds regularly for several weeks. At Findhorn, up to five, mostly 1st summer birds, were seen between 4 Jun-22 Jul (RSC,GM *et al.*). At Lossie estuary, up to two 1st summer birds were between 21 Jun-27 Jul, with four present on 8 Jul (RP,DAG,HF *et al.*). At Spey estuary up to four 1st summer birds were also recorded 17 May to 15 Jul (MJHC).

Autumn: Sightings included 1 adult and one 2nd winter at Lossiemouth on 10 Oct, one 2nd winter at Findhorn on 11 Oct and, final sighting of the year, 1 adult Lossie estuary 21 Oct (RP,DAG,HF).



Little Gull, Lossiemouth 27 January 2014 (Photo: Gordon Biggs)

Mediterranean Gull *Larus melanocephalus*

Very scarce visitor.

The recent trend of increased sightings continued in 2014 with several reports. The first sighting, of 1 adult, came on 1 Feb at Nairn (KS). At Loch Spynie, one 1st winter was present 28 Mar to 19 Apr, and one 1st summer was then seen at Lossie estuary 13-16 Jul. Later in the year, multiple sightings were recorded at Lossie estuary during October and November of up to two 1st winter and two 2nd winter birds. Elsewhere, one adult at Dipple (Fochabers) on 5 Mar (DD), one adult at Spey estuary on 10 Mar (MJHC), one adult Kingsteps 28 Nov (AS) and one at Findhorn Bay on 10 Sep (MCB).



Mediterranean Gull, Lossie estuary 24 August 2014 (Photo: Duncan Gibson)

Common Gull *Larus canus*

Very common resident breeder and winter visitor.

Breeding: The colony at Dunearn held 460 adults on 14 Jun with probably 100+ breeding pairs. At the Tips of Corsemaul site (east of Dufftown) around 125 pairs were seen on 1 Jun (WRPB). Breeding was noted at several sites around Elgin including 12 nests at Hewdens yard on 16 May, 4 nests in Elgin cemetery (two of them on bushes) with an estimated 20 breeding adults on 12 Jun, a nest on the Town Hall with a brood of at least one and another at Moray College (where a pair had nested in the fork of a tree) with a brood of three on 18 Jun. On the Glenfiddich warehouses roofs (Dufftown) were 32 pairs on 2 May (WRPB). Elsewhere, single nests were reported from Lossiemouth cemetery with a brood of one on 19 Jun, on a rooftop at Fochabers on 26 May and at Buckie cemetery on 4 Jul (RP). At Aberlour, 6 pairs were observed nesting at three rooftop locations on 1 May - at Walkers factory (2 pairs), Glenallachie warehouses (3 pairs) and on Aberlour House (AE).

Flock counts in excess of 400 away from breeding areas included 400 Kintessack (Forres) 21 Mar, 430 Culbin Bar and 780 Nairn Bar both on 26 Oct. Several high counts were reported between September-November at Lossie estuary with a maximum 1000 estimated on 19 Oct (RP). Similar counts were also noted at Spey estuary over this period with a maximum of 1200 on 15 Oct (MJHC).

Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus*

Summer visitor and scarce breeder. Very scarce in winter.

Wintering: Recorded in both winter periods. At the start of the year, an adult was at Lossie estuary 10 Jan (DAG) and another at Loch Oire 11 Jan (DMP). It is likely that the Lossie estuary bird was over-wintering as one has been seen at this location in recent years. Other early sightings, all on 1 Feb, were 3 at Nairn, 2 at Burghead and 2 at Loch Flemington. In December there were 2 Lossie estuary 12th and an adult at the nearby Balormie pig farm on 28th (DM,RP).

Arrival: March arrivals included 3 Cloddach Quarry 9th, 3 Loch Oire 15th, 3 Kinloss 18th and 3 Lossie estuary 23rd.

Breeding: Recorded at two sites in Elgin: an apparently occupied nest (AON) on Halfords roof on 11 May and a brood with one downy chick on Aldi's roof on 14 Jun. Elsewhere, there was an AON at Seafield Hospital (Buckie) on 14 Jun.

High counts of the year included 68 Lossie estuary 14 Jun (RP) and 63 Loch Oire 2 Jul (MJHC).

Herring Gull *Larus argentatus*

Very common resident breeder and winter visitor.

Breeding: Several sites around Elgin held apparently occupied nests: Aldi's (1), Bishopmill (Blane Place) (1), Linkwood (old sawmill) (3), Land Street (1) and near the Town Hall. Six apparently occupied nests were at Buckie's Seafield Hospital on 14 Jun. Undoubtedly there were many more inland/urban sites around the region where breeding took place but was not recorded.

Monthly maximum counts on the Lossie estuary and at Cooper Park pond (Elgin) were as follows (note: Cooper Park pond was drained for much of 2014 which affected numbers):

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Lossie est.	52	59	27	300	416	832	182	500	600	1144	466	252
Cooper Pk.	73	144	128	nc	nc	nc	29	nc	nc	nc	72	92

Elsewhere, counts over 800 were recorded at Loch Oire with 885 on 12 Feb and 957 on 1 Mar, at Findhorn Bay with 840 on 17 Jun, at Spey estuary with 990 on 21 Jul, 1500 on 7 Aug and 1300 on 20 Oct, and at Delnies with 1000 on 3 Sep. The highest count of the year was from the skerries off Lossiemouth where an estimated 4000 were feeding on 15 Jun.

Iceland Gull *Larus glaucooides*

Very scarce winter visitor.

As always with this species, duplication is impossible to discount fully as mobile individuals around the coastal strip may account for more than one sighting. Observers are requested to note the ages of individuals involved, and whether birds are considered the same or different to any others seen around the same period to assist in obtaining a full picture of the number of individuals seen.

Another good year, but once again difficult to ascertain the exact number of birds. It is probable that there was a similar number to 2013 with around 15 involved.

Burghead: One 1st winter 11 & 24 Nov (JPY,TB).

Hopeman: One 1st winter 29 Dec (MJHC).

Llanbryde: One adult 18-23 Feb at pig farm (RP,CB).

Urquhart: Two adults on 23-24 Feb (RP, EH).

Loch Oire: Up to two adults were present 6 Jan-1 Feb. Between 1-5 Mar, two adults and one juvenile were reported, with one adult remaining until the end of March (DD,RP et al). On 11 Feb a Kumlien's Gull *L.g.kumlieni* (probably 1st winter) was found and was seen regularly until 1 Mar (DD,MJHC,JAC et al.).

Loch Spynie: One adult 15 Feb (DAG).

- Lossie estuary: One adult 9 Jan and 25-27 Jan (DAG,CAG,DD). In the summer, there were several sightings of a 1st summer bird between 2-28 Jun (DAG,HF). One was seen on 29 Aug (RP). In November, one adult and three 1st winter birds were present on 15th and a different 1st winter was there on 18th (RP). There were then several sightings of an adult and a 1st winter up to 30 Dec (many obs.).
- Cullen: One 1st winter 9 Mar (JM).



Iceland Gull, Burghead 24 November 2014 (Photo: Tony Backx)

Glaucous Gull *Larus hyperboreus*

Very scarce winter visitor.

Another year with an increasing number of sightings.

A single 1st winter was seen at Loch Spynie on 25 Jan (RP), and again on 5 & 29 Mar, 25-26 Apr and 1 May (RC,DAG,HF,MJHC *et al.*). Nearby at Lossie estuary and Lossiemouth, a 1st winter bird was seen on 27 Jan (CAG), and on 8, 21 & 24 Apr (PR,SMu,HF). At the end of the year there were several reports of a 1st winter bird from 11 Nov to 14 Dec (JRB,DM,RP *et al.*). Elsewhere, a 1st winter was seen at Loch Oire on 8 Mar (JM) and a 2nd winter on 29 Mar and 3 Apr (DD,EH). Other single 1st winter sightings were reported at Burghead 31 Jan (DMP), at Cloddach quarry 1 Feb (MJHC), at Kinloss 13 Feb (per Birdguides), at Findhorn 19 Feb (MJHC), at Nether Dallachy 1 Mar (MJHC) and at Cullen 2 Mar (JM). Also several sightings of single birds at Spey Bay 20 Feb-8 Mar and again on 22 Apr (DAG,SA).

Great Black-backed Gull *Larus marinus*

Scarce resident breeder and common visitor.

Breeding: Only reported on the cliffs at Portknockie, where a pair raised one chick on the Bow Fiddle Rock and a second pair raised 2 chicks on another stack a little further west (MJHC). Another pair was on cliffs at Tronach Head 20 Jun (MJHC).

Overall, numbers similar to 2013, although slightly fewer at Lossie estuary with a maximum of 140 on 13 Sep (RP). At Spey estuary in late summer/autumn numbers were higher peaking at 620 on 14 Oct (MJHC). These estuaries are only about 10 km apart and the extent of interchange between these two flocks is uncertain. Lesser numbers were also present at Findhorn which peaked at 108 on 23 Aug (RSC,GM).

Maximum monthly counts were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Lossie est.	2	46	14	50	112	4	3	97	140	105	40	57
Spey est.	nc	32	63	113	78	3	127	300	480	620	nc	80
Findhorn	nc	4	nc	8	11	3	16	108	72	58	nc	nc

The only other coastal counts to exceed 50 were 60 Nairn east beach 14 Jan and 68 Culbin Bar 26 Oct. Loch Spynie had reasonable numbers in the winter months with 23 on 19 Jan, 22 on 31 Mar and 25 on 16 Dec.

Feral Pigeon *Columba livia*

Very common resident breeder.

The only reports of flocks exceeding 100 were 250+ Portknockie 24 Nov and 200 Buckie harbour 27 Oct. Similar numbers are regular in central Elgin.

Stock Dove *Columba oenas*

Scarce resident breeder.

Breeding season: Two pairs bred in nest boxes at Loch Spynie (CAG,RP). Other records in the period late March-July included 1 Brodie Castle 18 Mar, 5 Clune 4 Apr (also here, 6 on 21 Feb, 9 on 4 Mar and 3 on 8 May), 4 Elgin Convent 17 Mar (also here, 6 on 18 Jan and 4 on 22 Feb), a pair Howford Bridge 2 Apr and 5 South Darkland 24 May.

Autumn/winter records from additional localities were 2 Cullen House 27 Feb and 3 Heathfield 27 Oct.

Woodpigeon *Columba palumbus*

Very common resident breeder.

Flocks estimated at 100 or more included 1000 Achnatone 18 Jan (and 100 on 4 Feb), 1000 Darkland 25 Jan, 500 Pitgaveny 20 Feb, 350+ Seafield (Forres) 31 Dec, 300 Househill (Nairn) 11 Jan (and 100 on 18 Jan), 300 Loch Spynie 4 Jan (and 150 on 28 Nov), 200 Clune 25 Aug (and 140 on 8 Jan), 200 Loch Flemington 12 Jan, 100 Auldearn 31 Mar, 100 Ballindalloch 22 Mar and 100 Hopeman 4 Feb.

The long breeding season indicated by nest building in Elgin on 21 Aug.

Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*

Very common resident breeder.

The only flock of 10 or more was 16 Scarffbanks 19 Nov. Furthest up country were 6 Tomintoul 3 May.

Maximum counts each year since 1986 have been:

1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995
35	26	41	35	22	38	52	66	25	100
1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
22	24	26	17	31	32	17	19	20	22
2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	
16	11	14	11	22	20	14	16	16	

Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus*

Summer visitor and fairly common breeder.

Arrival: First song heard Muldearie 24 Apr (quite early), Drynachan valley 27 Apr and Kronyhillock Wood 30 Apr.

Subsequently seen or heard in May-June at Achagour, Ben Rinnes, Carron, Clune, Coldburn, Coulmony, Craigellachie, Culbin, Dufftown, Dulsie Bridge, Dunphail, Findhorn, Findrassie, Glenferness, Kinloss, Knock of Braemoray, Kronyhillock Wood, Loch Allan, Loch Belivat, Loch Dallas, Loch Kirkaldy, Loch of Boath, Lossie Forest, Mains of Sluie, Ordbreck, Shaw Hill, Tomcork, Tomintoul, Urquhart and Wellheads (Clochan).

Later in the year, 1 Nairn 17 Jul, 1 Kinloss 8 Aug and 1 Dufftown 27 Aug.

Barn Owl *Tyto alba*

Scarce resident breeder.

Breeding season reports came from Aultmore, Berryburn, Budgate, Drummuir, Easterton, Lhanbryde, Loch Spynie, Montgrew and Roseisle.

The number of occupied breeding-season localities reported in each of the past 12 years has been:

2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
15	11	13	21	10	9	5	0	1	9	5	9

At other times of year, reports came from the following additional sites: Balnaspirach (Nairn) (Nov), Barmuckity (Oct), Ben Rinnes distillery (Oct), Dufftown-Craigellachie (Dec), Carron (Oct), Clochan (Nov), Craigellachie (Nov), Darkland (Dec), Daugh of Kinermony (Dec), Dunearn (Oct), Elchies (Jan, Mar, Dec), Forres (Nov, Dec), Geddes (Feb), Hempriggs (Oct), Hopeman (Nov), Knockando (Sep), Laikenbuie (Dec), Lhanbryde-Lossiemouth (Dec), Meikle Kildrummie (Oct), Mosstodloch (Dec), Portknockie (Jan) and Westertown (Dufftown) (Dec).

The total number of localities from which Barn Owls were reported (at any time of year) since 2003 is:

2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
33	31	27	31	21	40	20	11	13	21	12	30

Although the number of breeding season records remains disappointing, the overall number of localities which provided sightings is showing signs of a healthy recovery after the weather-related population crash of 2009-11.

Snowy Owl *Bubo scandiacus*

Very scarce visitor.

For the second successive year, a male spent several weeks on the Cairngorms plateau. An adult male was found in the Ben Macdui area on 19 May and was last seen there on 17 Oct (RI,JDG,MJHC,PRG *et al.*).

A total of c.38 Moray & Nairn records has now accumulated of which 22 were on the Cairngorms plateau. The distribution of records by decade is as follows:

Pre 1940s	1940s	1950s	1960s	1970s	1980s	1990s	2000s	2010s
4	1	3	14	2	6	5	1	2



Snowy Owl near Ben Macdui, 3 September 2014 (Richard Somers Cocks).

Tawny Owl *Strix aluco*

Common resident breeder.

Records received from 13 typical localities.

Long-eared Owl *Asio otus*

Scarce resident breeder.

Breeding: An adult and two juveniles were found near Fornightly on 13 Jun (TJW). The only other record concerned a pair in the Backlands - Clarkly Hill area in June (TA *et al.*).

Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus*

Rare breeder and very scarce migrant.

Breeding: Present in summer in moorland breeding habitat were 1 just south of Carn a' Chrasgie 28 Jul (JAC), 1 Dunearn 26 Jun (PSw) and 1 Dava 1 & 31 Jul (MC,AJL). Three other summer records were near the coast where breeding is unlikely though not impossible: 1 Clarkly Hill 27 May (RJ), 1 Covesea 5 Apr and 20 Jun (JT,AJL) and 1 Portknockie 20 Jul (LS).

No autumn or winter records were received.

Swift *Apus apus*

Summer visitor and common breeder.

Arrival: Apparently a late arrival - the only records prior to May 10 were 1 Burghead 6 May, 1 Dufftown 9 May.

Early-mid summer best counts were 30 over The Wards (Elgin) 22 Jul and 1 Aug, 24 Nairn 13 Jul, 20 over Bishopmill (Elgin) 19-23 Jul and 20 Tomintoul village centre 13 Jun.

Swifts become scarce in Moray after mid August so 25-30 over Linkwood (Elgin) 23 Aug and c.60 Kinloss barracks 25 Aug were unusual. Last of the year were 6 Dufftown and 6 Nairn on 27 Aug.

Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*

Very scarce visitor and occasional breeder.

Breeding: Two pairs on the River Spey. At Dundurcas, a pair on 8 May and a single bird on 14 May (AY). Just downstream from Mosstodloch, single birds were seen on 10-11 May and a pair on 17 May - a nest hole was located but the outcome was unknown (AY).

At other times, single birds were seen at Dufftown (near Parkmore Distillery 9 Aug and at confluence of River Dullan and River Fiddich on 16 Aug) (DW), Findhorn Bay (at Mosset Burn) 21 Jun (JPy), Loch Oire 3 Oct (EH), Loch Spynie (7 sightings between 19 Sep-26 Dec) (CAG *et al.*), Lossie estuary 1, 16 & 30 Dec (DM,GB) and Tugnet 19 Sep and 9 Nov (DRe,MJHC).

Green Woodpecker *Picus viridis*

Very scarce visitor.

Present only along the upper River Spey near the Moray boundary. Here, birds were seen and heard between Delnapot and Pitchroy on 15 Apr and 16 Sep (NS,CA) and heard on other dates across the river from Inveravon School (per NS,CA).

Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major*

Common resident breeder.

Widespread in woodlands and visiting garden feeders. A leucistic bird, almost entirely white but with a red cap, visited a Forres garden on 24 Jun (CM). Near Teindland Mains, one flew over 2km of open moorland between blocks of woodland.



Leucistic Great Spotted Woodpecker, Forres 24 June 2014 (Photo: Carol Menzies)

Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*

Scarce resident breeder.

Breeding season (April-July) records included birds/pairs at Carse of Delnies, Clunas reservoir, Clune, Covesea (bred on cliffs close to the Cormorant colony), Drynachan, Dulsie Bridge, Easter Galcantray, Easter Greens (Dunphail), Elgin (The Wards), Findhorn Bay, Forres, Kinloss, Milltown airfield (Bailliesland) (pair with 3 fledged juveniles on 1 Jul), Tomintoul and Tronach Head (brood of three chicks in old crows' nest on 20 Jun).

Merlin *Falco columbarius*

Scarce resident breeder and migrant.

Breeding: 46 sites were checked and 16 of these were found to be occupied by pairs, all of which laid clutches. Twelve pairs were successful, and these raised 40 young between them. Mean brood size (fledged young) overall was 2.5 per pair, but better in Nairn at 3.3 young per pair than in east Moray (2.9) and west Moray (1.5) (BCo,JKC). In west Moray, one of the failed pairs lost its large young to predators and one of the Nairn nests failed when the eggs disappeared, again probably due to predation (JKC). In relation to Moray east of the Spey, Brian Cosnette commented: "Occupation rate of the visited sites, 9 from 21 checked (42%), showed an encouraging rise over the past few years. Eventual breeding success of Merlins in [east] Moray this year was very good with only one complete loss, which probably was a result of milder weather across May-July".

Outside the breeding season, single birds were seen in the lowlands at Bailliesland 1 Mar, Darkland 2 Feb, Findhorn Bay 15 & 24-26 Nov, near Kinloss 22 Dec, Laikenbuie 22 Oct, Lossiemouth 8 Jan and 26 Feb, Portknockie 17 Feb, Roseisle 20 Oct and Urquhart 11 Oct. Still upcountry in autumn/winter were 1 Ben Rinnes 11 Jan and 1 Blackwater Lodge (Cabrach) 12 Jan. Also a notable high-altitude record of 1 near Garbh Uisge Beag on the Cairngorms plateau on 20 Sep (AG).

Hobby *Falco subbuteo*

Rare visitor.

One was seen along the southern edge of Findhorn Bay between Kinloss and the Mosset Burn on 19 Jun and 1 Jul (AJL). This is the 13th record for Moray & Nairn.

Peregrine *Falco peregrinus*

Rare resident breeder.

Breeding: A national Peregrine survey took place in 2014 and many current and former breeding sites were checked. In total, 20 sites were visited; of these, five sites were occupied by pairs and three by single birds. Four of the five pairs bred successfully and the fifth failed at the egg stage (JKC,MJHC). The great majority of the unoccupied former breeding sites were on moorland managed for grouse shooting, and no pairs were found there.

In late summer-winter, single birds were reported from Clochan (Aug, Oct), Dava (Feb), Elgin (Feb), Findhorn Bay (Jan-Mar, Sep-Dec), Lecht (Sep), Lossie estuary (Feb, Sep, Oct), Portknockie (Jan), Shaw Hill (Jan, Mar), Spey estuary (Dec), Spynie canal (Jan) and Tomnamoon (Sep). Birds were seen on the Cairngorms plateau at Garbh Uisge Beag 22 Jul and near Lochan Buidhe 13 Sep.

Great Grey Shrike *Lanius excubitor*

Very scarce winter migrant.

One was found in a mist net during a Lesser Redpoll ringing session in Teindland Forest on 6 Dec (AY). This is the sixth record this century, following other single birds at Scarffbanks in October 2000, Findhorn in November 2001, Kinloss in October 2002 and April 2008, and Archiestown in December 2011.



Great Grey Shrike, Teindland Forest 6 December 2014 (Photo: Alastair Young)

Magpie *Pica pica*

Common resident breeder.

Recorded at Arradoul, Braes of Enzie, Burghead, Boharm, Clochan, Covesea, Drainie, Howford Bridge, Findhorn, Hopeman, Kingsteps, Kinloss, Lochdhu (Nairn), Lossiemouth, Nether Birnie, Roseisle maltings, Salterhill, Tarras and Teindland Mains.

Largest groups were 9 Clochan 22 Feb, 9 Kinloss 24 Feb and 8 Kingsteps 16 Mar.

Jay *Garrulus glandarius*

Fairly common resident breeder.

Breeding season: April-August reports came from Caysbriggs, Clashach Quarry forest, Clune, Kellas oakwood, Loch na Bo, Loch Spynie, Mosstodloch and Elgin oakwood/Quarry Wood.

At other seasons, Jays were seen at Ardivot, Binsness, Bogmoor, Burghead, Carnoch (Rathven), Cluny Hill, Darnaway, Duffus Castle, Galcantray, Greenside (Teindland), Heathfield, Kinloss, Kintessack, Lethen Bar, Loch Belivat, Loch Oire, Lossie estuary, Orton, Sanquhar Loch, Shaw Hill, Teindland Mains, Tomnamoon, Wellheads and Wester Calcots.

A large count of 16 in the Clune (Auldearn) area on 19 Aug (TJW).

Jackdaw *Corvus monedula*

Very common resident breeder.

Largest counts were 300+ flying east over Findhorn Bay 20 Jan, 100 Howford Bridge 7 Feb, 75 Loch Flemington 9 Jan, 52 Bank Farm (Cabrach) 21 Apr, 45 Clochan 12 Jan, 40 Crachies 6 Feb, 35 Aberlour 7 Apr, 35 Loch Belivat 3 Apr, 33 Lossiemouth 5 Oct, 30 Glenmarkie, 30 Heathfield 27 Oct, 30 Lethen Bar 9 Jan and 30 Nairn 9 Jan.

Rook *Corvus frugilegus*

Very common resident breeder.

No colony counts received.

Highest count was of 700+ flying east Findhorn Bay 20 Jan. Several winter counts of 100-200 in the Nairn area and at Hopeman.

Carrion Crow *Corvus corone*

Very common resident breeder.

Maximum monthly counts at the Lossie estuary were:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
nc	nc	24	nc	nc	24	45	82	37	16	nc	nc

Elsewhere, counts exceeding 20 were 49 Scarffbanks 12 Apr, 33 Spey estuary 22 Mar and 32 Nairn 15 Mar.

Hooded Crow *Corvus cornix*

Scarce visitor and rare breeder.

Pure Hooded Crows (or Carrion x Hooded hybrids very closely resembling Hooded) included 3 Auldearn 1 Feb, 1 Burghead 4 Feb, 6 Apr and 31 Aug (and 2 on 30 Apr), 1 Cawdor 8 May, 1 Clune 4 Apr, 1 Crofts of Buinach 2 Jan, 1 Cummington 18 Jan, 4 Delnies 9 Sep (and 2 on 16 Jun), 4 Findhorn Bay 23 Aug (and 1 on 28 Jun), 2 Glenmarkie 3 May, 8 Kingsteps 11 Feb (and 2 on 30 May), 4 Loch Flemington 7 Jan (and 2 on 12 Jan, 1 on 6 & 10 Apr, 1 on 15 May), 1 Loch of Boath 24 May, 1 Lossie estuary 22 Feb, 18 Jul and 30 Aug, 9 Nairn 4 Dec (and 6 on 2 Aug - and 1-2 all year), 10 Nairn Bar 6 Mar (and 2 on 16 Jan), 1 Scarffbanks 30 Jan, 1 Spey Bay 22 Mar and 1 Wester Delnies 13 Sep.

Hybrids were particularly numerous around Nairn/Nairn Bar where monthly maxima were 10 on 18 Sep, 23 on 14 Oct, 20 on 13 Nov and 10 on 4 Dec. On Lossie estuary, 3 on 27 Jun, 4 on 18 Jul and 7 on 3 Aug.

Raven *Corvus corax*

Scarce visitor and rare breeder.

Breeding: A pair bred in the usual site at Tronach Head and raised five young (MJHC, MPH). This pair is likely to account for sightings at nearby Portknockie on 21 Jan, 4 Feb and 16 Sep (2). Also at the coast, 1 Burghead 1 Feb, 2 Covesea 26 May and 1 there 12 Oct.

No suggestion of breeding inland despite a regular presence in the uplands. Reports included 8 Achdregnie/Suie 11 Mar, 1 Loch Belivat 2 Apr, 2 just south of Carn na Sguabaich 5 Dec, 1 Dufftown 5 Apr, 1 Drynachan 7 Apr, 1 Blackwater Lodge (Cabrach) 12 Jan, 2 Hill of Glenroads (Glenfiddich) 21 Jan, 1 Knock of Braemoray 1 Jan, 20 Feb and 6 Apr, 8 Ladder Hills/Lecht 1 Jun (4 on 2 Jan, 6 on 4 Sep and 2 on 3 Dec), 1 over Morinsh Forest 18 Jan, 1 Shaw Hill 3 Apr, 1 Tomintoul area 23 Apr and 21 May, 1 Tomnavoulin 24 Apr and 1 Well of Lecht 2 Jul.

Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*

Very common resident breeder and scarce migrant.

Counts of 10 or more were 20 Lethen Bar 6 Feb (and 15 there 14 Jan), 19 Greenside Cottage (Windyridge) 4 Oct, 16 Shaw Hill 28 Aug, 15 Clune 10 Apr, 10 Roseisle Forest 10 Oct and 10 Loch Spynie 28 Nov.

Suspected coastal migrants, following heavy rain and east winds, were 1-2 Lossiemouth (Quarry Road) 8-9 Oct, 3 Strathlene 8 Oct and 1 Covesea golf club car park (with a Yellow-browed Warbler) 9 Oct.

Blue Tit *Cyanistes caeruleus*

Very common resident breeder.

First song Loch Oire 25 Jan.

Nest boxes:

	Pairs	Mean clutch	Mean fledged brood (all pairs)	Mean fledged brood (successful pairs only)
Loch Spynie	23	7.9	7.1	7.5 (n=22) (RP)
Broadleaf sites*	14	8.0	6.8	6.8 (n=14) (HC)
Conifer sites**	10	6.8	6.5	6.5 (n=10) (HC)

* Broadleaf sites were at Keith, Cairnfield, Cloddach and Birkenhill

** Conifer sites were at Knauchland, Cloddach, Thomshill and Caysbriggs

At Loch Spynie, also a broadleaf site, clutch sizes were a little larger than in 2013 (7.5) and fledging success also improved (6.1 in 2013). The proportion of juveniles caught per adult for ringing at the Loch Spynie 'Constant Effort Site' was 3.3:1, up a little on 2.9:1 in 2013, indicating better post-fledging chick survival (RP).

Great Tit *Parus major*

Very common resident breeder.

No reports of song in January; first was at Nether Dallachy 7 Feb and Cooper Park (Elgin) 10 Feb.

Nest boxes:

	Pairs	Mean clutch	Mean fledged brood (all pairs)	Mean fledged brood (successful pairs only)
Loch Spynie	13	6.5	6.1	6.1 (n=13) (RP)
Broadleaf sites*	11	6.5	6.3	6.3 (n=11) (HC)
Conifer sites**	12	6.1	5.0	5.5 (n=11) (HC)

* Broadleaf sites were at Keith, Cairnfield, Cloddach and Birkenhill

** Conifer sites were at Knauchland, Cloddach, Thomshill and Caysbriggs

At Loch Spynie, also a broadleaf site, clutch size was larger than in 2013 (5.3) as was the average brood size of successful pairs (5.2 in 2013). Productivity, as assessed by ringing at the 'Constant Effort Site' at Loch Spynie, was 3.8 juveniles caught per adult, a considerable improvement on 1.0 in 2013 (RP).

Crested Tit *Lophophanes cristatus*

Common resident breeder.

Nest boxes:

	Pairs	Mean clutch	Mean fledged brood (all pairs)	Mean fledged brood (successful pairs only)
Lossie Forest	5	6.0	5.2	5.1 (n=5) (MJHC)

One pair raised 7 young from an unusually large (for Lossie Forest) clutch of 7 eggs.

Elsewhere, confirmation of breeding only reported from Roseisle Forest where an adult was carrying food on 24 May (EM).

Away from the coastal forests, reports from other areas included 2 Gow Moss (Keith) 8 Jun (WMM), 4 near Lethen Bar 11 Apr (TJW) and 1 Loch Kirkaldy 5 Aug (MC). Also sightings at Shaw Hill in February, April, May and August - usually 2-3 but 6 on 6 May (TJW).

Coal Tit *Periparus ater*

Very common resident breeder.

First song Linkwood (Elgin) 13 Jan and Loch Oire 25 Jan.

Bearded Tit *Panurus biarmicus*

Former rare breeder.

Three were found in Kingston reedbed on 25 Oct and one of these was trapped and ringed (AY). On 19 Nov, c.5 were in Loch Spynie reed bed beside the old railway line (MJHC), and one (possibly more) was in the reeds on the west side of Loch Spynie on 26 Dec (JDL).

These are the first records since 2008, prior to which a small breeding population had survived at Loch Spynie since 1998.



Bearded Tit, Kingston 25 October 2014 (Photo: Alastair Young)

Skylark *Alauda arvensis*

Very common breeder and migrant.

First song Broadley (Clochan) 9 Jan and Speymouth Parish Church 23 Jan. Song reported from seven other localities in the first 2 weeks of February.

Subsequently, notable concentrations were 8 singing Portknockie 17 Feb, 4 singing Lossiemouth east beach 11 Feb and 3 singing south-east edge of Findhorn Bay 16 Feb.

No counts of more than ten were received.

Sand Martin *Riparia riparia*

Summer visitor and very common breeder.

Arrival: An exceptionally early bird was at Loch Flemington on 12 Mar (GMS) - the earliest on record in Moray & Nairn. It, or another, was still there on 14 Mar and there were 3 on 20 Mar. Also very early were 2 between Cummington-Hopeman on 16 Mar (DM). No further reports until 10 Loch Spynie 3 Apr.

Spring counts of 100 or more were 200+ Loch Spynie 15 Apr (120 on 16 Apr and c.100 on 22 Apr) and 100+ Loch Oire 14 Apr.

Colony counts: c.10 occupied burrows Clashach quarry 7 Jun, c.50 birds at a colony in the bank of the River Findhorn just east of Balnught, at least one occupied burrow and 14 birds in dunes at Nairn east beach, c.6 occupied burrows at Troncah Head and 15-30 adults at a colony in dunes east of Findhorn village in April-May.

After the breeding season, c.200 were resting on a south-facing shingle bank at the Kingston side of the Spey estuary on 21 Jul.

Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

Summer visitor and very common breeder.

Arrival: In early April, 1 Lintmill 9th, 1 Findhorn Bay 10th, 2 Forres 10th, 4 Nairn 10th, 1 Aberlour 13th and 2 Loch Spynie 13th. Upcountry on 16th were 2 Auchanhandoch (Dufftown) and 2 Cragganmore.

Late summer flocks included *c.*200 Speymouth Parish Church 31 Jul, 50+ Loch Spynie 9 Jun, 50+ Dyke 28 Aug, 50 Findhorn beach 4 Sep and 50 Househill (Nairn) 8 Sep. A reedbed roost at Loch Spynie held around 1000 birds on 25 Aug.

A white hirundine, either this species or House Martin, was seen at Auldearn on 11 Aug (JC).

In October, 2 Covesea 9th, 1 Dyke 10th, 1 Nairn 12th and 2 Lossiemouth 19th. Unusually, there were five November records: 1 Dufftown 5th, 1 Kinloss 6th, 2 Fochabers 20th, 1 Findhorn 20th and 1 Burghead 25th.

House Martin *Delichon urbicum*

Summer visitor and common breeder.

Arrival: 5 Loch Spynie 9 Apr and 2 Findhorn 10 Apr were early. The only other April reports were 2 Forres 18th, 1 Fochabers 20th and 1 Loch Spynie 22nd.

Breeding: The largest colony reported was at Herricks water treatment plant (near Keith) where 50 complete nests were counted on 18 Jun - at least 10 (and probably more) were confirmed as active (WMM). The Buckie High School colony only had four nests on 14 Jul. Elsewhere, 12 apparently occupied nests Spynie Kirk manse, and another two on the kirk itself.

Late summer counts: A large flock built up at Kinloss where estimates were 100 on 25-26 Aug, 500 on 28 Aug and 200 on 4 & 11 Sep (AJL). Elsewhere, 109 roosting on a ledge near Lossiemouth north pier 17 Aug increased to *c.*200 by 31 Aug. Also, 60 Findhorn 6 Aug and *c.*60 Nairn 27 Aug.

Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus*

Very common resident breeder.

The largest flocks reported were 31 Windyridge 4 Oct, 24 Loch Spynie 27 Jan, 22 Lethen Bar 6 Feb, 18 Tomnamoon 5 & 23 Sep, 17 River Findhorn woods (near Findhorn Bay) 10 Oct (16 there on 28 Oct), 15 Balblair (Loch Flemington) 22 Jan and 15 Kinloss 9 Oct.

Yellow-browed Warbler *Phylloscopus inornatus*

Rare migrant.

Following heavy rain and east winds, one in Quarry Road, Lossiemouth 8 Oct (RP) and a second at Covesea 9 Oct (MJHC). These are the fifth and sixth records for Moray and Nairn, following single birds at Lossiemouth (Oct 1998), Loch Spynie (Sep 2001), Portknockie (Oct 2005) and Strathlene (Oct 2006).

[Wood Warbler *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*

Summer visitor and rare breeder.

No records in 2014; following one record in 2013, none in 2012, one in 2011 and none in 2010.]

Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*

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

Arrival: Unlike 2013 (when there were no March records), a total of 25 records in March, mostly single singing birds. First arrival dates in March: Kintessack 13th, Brodie Castle and Rafford (2) 16th, Kingsteps 17th, Nairn and Wester Newforres 18th, Loch na Bo (3) and Nairn (3) 20th, Spey Bay 22nd, Inshoch Wood 24th, Broom of Moy 25th, Bognafuaran Wood and Wester Galcantray 26th, Blairnafade and Loch Oire 28th and Cloddymoss 31st.

Notable amongst 37 records in April: 5 singing birds along one mile of River Nairn 2nd, 13 Clune 10th, several at Altyre Woods (near Rafford) 12th, 4 Garmouth viaduct and 6 Mosstodloch 14th. Elsewhere singing birds (mostly single) at: Mulben, Loch Spynie, Sanquhar Loch and Clovenside, Dallachy (2), Cotts

of Innes (Urquhart) (3), Roseisle Forest, Wood of Mulderie, Loch Park, Bishopmill and Maryfield, Loch of Blairs and the Lein (Kingston).

Subsequently, multiple singers included 8 along River Nairn between Nairn-Cawdor 3 May, 13 Loch na Bo 4 May and 15 Loch Belivat area 6 May.

A survey of riparian woodland along the lower River Spey from the river mouth to Boat o' Brig revealed 61 singing males (AY).

At Loch Spynie Constant Effort ringing site, the ratio of juveniles to adults was 1.0:1, from a sample of 16 birds (RP).

Autumn: 1 Tomnamoon 11 & 26 Sep and 20 Oct, 1 Portknockie 19 Sep, 1 Elgin 21 Sep, 1 Kingston 28 Sep, 1 Fochabers 2 Oct, 2 Lossiemouth and 3 Covesea 9 Oct after heavy rain and east winds, the last for the year.

Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus*

Summer visitor and very common breeder.

Arrival: One singing at Loch Oire on 7 Apr (EH) equalled the earliest recorded in Moray & Nairn (1996 and 2002). Other early arrivals in April: 2 Clune (Darnaway) 11th, 1 Altyre Woods (near Rafford) 12th and 1 Mosstodloch 14th. Widespread from 16th – earlier than 2012 and 2013.

Subsequent counts of 10 or more were 35 Loch Belivat area 6 May (TJW), 30 Shaw Hill 6 May (TJW) and 20 Loch of Boath 24 May (LSc). On 25 May, 26 were singing along the 5.5km stretch of the old railway line between Craigellachie and Balvenie (Dufftown) (DAG) - this is an increase on 2013, when 18 were counted on an earlier date in May, but fewer than in 2012, when 31 were counted on a similar date, and significantly fewer than in 2011, when 58 were counted, but again on an earlier date in May.

Productivity, as measured by ringing at the 'Constant Effort Site' at Loch Spynie, was 2.0 juveniles caught per adult – up from 0.9 in 2013 (RP).

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*

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

January-March: Noted in gardens and at feeders in Elgin (up to 2 males and up to 2 females between 1 Jan-3 Mar), Forres (1 male on 4 & 25 Jan and 7 Feb), Nairn (1 male between 30 Jan-11 Feb), Lossiemouth (1 male and up to 2 females between 10-26 Feb) and Buckie (1 male 13 Feb, 1 female 26 Feb, 2 on 11 Mar).

Spring/summer: Individual singing males recorded 10 & 12 Apr Brodie and 14 Apr Mosstodloch and Sanquhar Loch (Forres). First female recorded 22 Apr Delnapot. Eight along lower reaches of River Findhorn on 19 Apr.

On 3 May, 12 singing males and 2 females were found along the River Nairn between Nairn and Cawdor (DMA). On 25 May, 14 were recorded along 5.5km of the old railway line between Craigellachie and Balvenie (Dufftown) (DAG). Widespread across Moray & Nairn throughout May-July.

A survey of riparian woodland along the lower River Spey from the river mouth to Boat o' Brig revealed 53 singing males (AY).

Productivity, as measured among 17 individuals trapped for ringing at the 'Constant Effort Site' at Loch Spynie, was 6.0 juveniles per adult (RP). At Clochan, 29 were trapped for ringing, mostly at fruiting *Viburnum* bushes, between 22 Aug-23 Sep and here the ratio was 8.7 juvenile/first year birds per adult (MJHC).

Autumn: Records from Portknockie on 16 (2) & 19 Sep, and 8 Oct. Single birds at Loch Oire 19 Sep, Windyridge 4 Oct and Clochan 27 Oct. On 9 Oct, following heavy rain and east winds, 6 males recorded in Quarry Road (Lossiemouth).

November-December: 2 in a Forres garden 5 Nov, 1 male Elgin 4 Dec, 1 female Portknockie between 8-15 Dec, and single birds on garden feeders at Dyke 17 Dec and Nairn where one male 22 & 28 Dec.

Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin*

Summer visitor and scarce breeder.

The only breeding season records were of four singing males along the lower Spey between the river mouth and Boat o' Brig (AY) and one on the lower reaches of the River Findhorn on 7 May (AJL).

Autumn coastal migrants were represented by two birds, at separate locations in Lossiemouth on 9 Oct, following heavy rain and east winds (DAG,MJHC).

Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca*

Rare visitor and occasional breeder.

First record since 2010: 1 singing at Cunninghaugh (Nether Dallachy) on 19 Jun (MG) and 21 Jun (MJHC). No sign on 14 Jul.

Whitethroat *Sylvia communis*

Summer visitor and very common breeder.

Arrival: First, in April, was 1 singing Portknockie 28th. First singing birds in May were 1 Nairn 2nd, 1 Cullen 4th then widespread from 5th onwards.

Confirmed breeding: In August, 4 fledged juveniles Heathfield (Croy) 5th and 5 juveniles trapped for ringing at Loch Spynie on 10th (RP) out of total of 7 trapped in 2014 in north-east fen.

September: 1 Tomnamoon on 6th and 1 by old railway line, Portknockie on 16th and 19th.

Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella naevia*

Summer visitor and scarce breeder.

Recorded at 13 sites. Singing birds (single unless stated) were heard at Boharm (Craigellachie) 15 Apr, Inchberry, Keith and Raefin (near Clochan) 20 Apr, Croy 24 Apr, Spynie Canal 26 Apr, Cullen 27 Apr, Muldearie (near Keith) 28 Apr, Grange (near Keith) 29 Apr, Heathfield (Croy) 3 May, Keith golf course 3 & 14 May, Mulben 17 May (possibly 2) and Hidden Hills area (Rafford) 7 Jun.

Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

Summer visitor and common breeder.

Arrival: First were at least two singing in Spynie Palace reedbed 20 Apr and single birds at Balvenie (Dufftown) and Tugnet on 28 Apr. Widespread from the second week in May.

Up-country singers were near Tomintoul on 21 May and at Dunearn Lodge on 14 Jun.

Breeding: At the 'Constant Effort Ringing Site' in the north-east fen at Loch Spynie, the number of juveniles caught per adult was 2.7:1, significantly higher than 2013 (0.4:1), and the highest ratio since 2009 (3.0:1) (RP). First juvenile trapped there on 25 Jun.

Autumn: One late bird at Kinloss Barracks on 29 Oct (AJL).

Waxwing *Bombycilla garrulus*

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

Winter-spring: One large flock: 42 Buckie 3 Mar (LS). Otherwise only small numbers. In Elgin, 1 on 23 Jan, 5 in New Elgin on 4 Feb, 8 on 15 Feb and 1 on 27 Mar. In Forres, 5 on 3 Feb, 4 on 4 Feb and 6 on 9 Feb. Elsewhere, 2 Nairn 7 Mar and 1 Fochabers 28 Mar.

Autumn-winter: 1 Dyke 13 Nov, 1 Forres 13-14 Nov, 2 Elgin 28-29 Nov, 2 Portknockie 23 Nov and 1 Lossiemouth 21 Nov, with 2 there 23 Nov-4 Dec. The only larger flock was 17 Pluscarden 23 Nov.

Treecreeper *Certhia familiaris*

Very common resident breeder.

Notable records were of four in the same Sycamore tree at Forres Academy on 10 Mar and one on a peanut feeder in a Forres garden on 18 Jan.

Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*

Very common resident breeder.

First song Loch na Bo 1 Feb. On 11 Mar, one was singing among scree boulders in treeless country up the Kymah Burn in Glenlivet.

On 25 May, 24 were counted along the old railway line between Craigellachie and the Balvenie warehouses in Dufftown (DAG). Other breeding season counts included 25 Clune 10 Apr (TJW), 15 Loch Belivat 6 May (TJW) and 13 Loch of Boath 24 May (LSc). Breeding confirmed at Kingsteps (Nairn) and Knock of Braemoray.

At Loch Spynie Constant Effort ringing site, the ratio of juveniles to adults was 5.6:1, slightly up from 5.3:1 in 2013 (RP).

Best winter counts were 26 Culbin Bar 7 Dec (AY), and 10 Lethen Bar 14 Jan and 6 Feb (TJW).

Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*

Very common resident breeder and winter visitor.

Following the breeding season, a large flock estimated at 2000+ built up in late June-mid July at the south end of Findhorn Bay.

Autumn/winter flocks included 4000 Kinneddar 29 Nov, 1500 Balormie pig farm 22 Oct, 1300 Windyridge 4 Oct, 1068 (counted from a photo) Gordonstoun 13 Oct, 500 Hopeman 10 Sep and 300 Carse of Delnies 10 Oct. Still 350 in an upcountry flock at Aldivalloch (Cabrach) on 26 Mar.

Estimates of numbers using the Loch Spynie roost were 1000 on 18 Sep, 2400 on 29 Nov (counted from a photo) and 500 on 26 Dec. On 1 Aug, c.600 were flying to a roost at the east end of Elgin.

Rose-coloured Starling *Sturnus roseus*

Rare visitor.

An adult made frequent visits to a garden feeder at the east end of Hopeman on 28-29 June (JP,MJHC,RP,DAG *et al.*). This is the 10th record for Moray & Nairn, and the first since 2008. All have been in the period June-August except for one in October.



Rose-coloured Starling, Hopeman 29 June 2014 (Photo: Gordon Biggs)

Dipper *Cinclus cinclus*

Common resident breeder.

Breeding: Breeding was confirmed at Forres (under bridge over Mosset Burn off Grantown Road), Nairn (in railway bridge), Nairn-Cawdor (along the river) and Sanquhar Loch (Forres). Also noted in the breeding season on the lower reaches of the River Findhorn, at Lintmill (Cullen) and at Well of the Lecht (Tomintoul) where three were seen on 30 Jul and another was found dead in a trap.

Additional localities holding Dippers at other seasons were Aberlour, Elgin (River Lossie), Garmouth viaduct, Black Water (near Blackwater Lodge, Cabrach) 12 Jan, Holme Rose-Kilravock (8 along River Nairn), A939 Logie Bridge (River Findhorn) and Auchanhandoch (Dufftown).

Recorded at high altitude on the Cairngorms plateau where 1 at the head Garbh Uisge Mor near Ben Macdui 5 Aug (JDG) and at Lochan Buidhe on 10 Oct (RI).

Ring Ouzel *Turdus torquatus*

Summer visitor and scarce breeder.

Coastal migrant: 1 Portknockie 24 Apr (LS).

Breeding: 1 adult with 2 juveniles on Ben Rinnes summit 5 Jul (AE) and a pair at Inchrory 18 Apr (NS,CA).

Blackbird *Turdus merula*

Very common resident breeder, winter visitor and migrant.

Breeding: First song Lossiemouth 29 Jan and Elgin 3 Feb. Early for an upcountry site was a nest with 3 young at Auchanhandoch (Dufftown) on 3 Apr.

Counts of 10 or more included 21 Forres 17 Jan, 16 Elgin (Fogwatt Lane) 22 Nov, 15 Ballindalloch Castle 27 May, 11 Linkwood (Elgin) 12 Nov and 10 Findhorn 30 May.

Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris*

Very common migrant and winter visitor.

Winter-spring: Flocks of 20 or more were c.70 Sheriffston 1 Jan (21 on 6 Jan), 48 Mains of Moy 2 Jan, 65 Loch Spynie 4 Jan, 80+ Muir of Linksfield 11 Jan, 67 Knockanbeg (Glen Rinnes) 18 Jan, 150 Earnhill 30 Jan, 50 Knock of Braemora 2 & 20 Feb, 30 Middlefield (Forres) 6 Feb, 66+ Nairn 5 Mar and 20 Burnside (Dulsie) 6 Apr. Last in spring was 1 Auchanhandoch 1 May.

Summer: Strangely, one spent 5 minutes in a garden in Clochan on 28 Aug (MJHC).

Arrival: First birds of the autumn were very early - 3 Windyridge 4 Oct. Only two other October records; 'present' Tom nan Clach 13 Oct and 1 Tomnamoon 22 Oct.

Autumn-winter: Flocks of 20 or more included 120 Tomnamoon 5 Nov (35 on 31 Dec), 50+ Moyness 6 Nov, 20 Dyke 8 Nov, 90 near Easter Coltfoot 11 Nov, 60 Loch Flemington 12 Nov, 150+ Mundole 18 Nov, 67 Dallas Dhu 23 Nov, 40 Glenmartkie 30 Nov, 200+ Wester Moy 4 Dec, 120 Broom of Moy 5 Dec, 407 Clochan 11 Dec and 38 Loch Spynie 28 Dec.



Fieldfare, Clochan 28 August 2014 (Photo: Martin Cook)

Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos*

Very common breeder and migrant. Scarce in winter.

Mid winter: As usual, over-wintering birds were almost exclusively found, in very small numbers, in close proximity to the coast. In January, 3 Portknockie-Tronach Head 1st, 1 Hopeman 4th, 1 Nairn 13th, 1 Findhorn 14th, 1 Kingston 14th and 1 Lossie estuary 25th. No December records, but 6 Portknockie 24 Nov and 1 Cloddach quarry 30 Nov (unusually far inland in winter).

First song Cooper Park (Elgin) 7 Feb. Upcountry, several singing in woodlands around Achdregnie (Glenlivet) 26 Mar.

Redwing *Turdus iliacus*

Very common migrant and winter visitor.

Winter-spring: Flocks of 20 or more were 40 Lethen Bar 9 Jan, c.20 Loch Loy 21 Jan, 35 Forres 1 Feb and 70 Holme Rose-Kilravock (along River Nairn) 1 Mar. Last in spring were 3 Loch Belivat 9 Apr and 2 Clune 10 Apr.

Arrival: First, in October, were 12 Windyridge 4th, 15 Darkland 8th, 2 Clochan 9th and 19 Knock of Braemoray 11th.

Autumn-winter: Flocks of 20 or more were 179 over Tomnamoon 14 Oct (80+ there 17 Oct), 600+ over Auchanhandoch 17 Oct, 20 Clochan 17 Oct (40 on 28 Oct), 20+ Fornightly 20 Oct, c.20 Alves 24 Oct, c.70 Darkland 28 Oct, 80 Croy 30 Oct, 26 Westerfolds 2 Nov, 100 Nairn 7 Nov (50 on 10 Nov), 250 over Linkwood (Elgin) 11 Nov, 22 Broadley (Nairn) 20 Nov, 20 Loch Spynie 23 Nov, 50+ Wester Moy 4 Dec and 50 Roseisle maltings 6 Dec.

Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus*

Very common resident breeder and migrant.

First song Bishopmill (Elgin) 2 Jan and Clochan 10 Jan.

Flocks of 10 or more were 60 Brodie 5 Sep, 50-60 Dulsie Bridge 28 Sep, 25 Tomnamoon 7 Sep (10 on 1 Nov) and 10 Lagganauld 2 Sep.

Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata*

Summer visitor and common breeder.

Arrival: First of the year were two early records on 3 May: 1 Glenmarkie (east of Dufftown) (MCH) and 1 along the River Nairn between Nairn and Cawdor (DMA). These are, by one day, the earliest ever in Moray & Nairn.

Breeding was confirmed at Aberlour and Laikenbuie (Nairn). Two pairs were in Ben Rinnes Wood on 8 Jun and four birds were found along the old railway line between Craigellachie-Dufftown on 25 May.

Summer reports elsewhere came from Cawdor oakwood, Culbin Forest, Kinloss, Loch Oire, Mulderie, Nairn, Roseisle Forest and near Crook (Nairn).

Last of the year was 1 Nairn 28 Aug.

Robin *Erithacus rubecula*

Very common resident breeder and migrant.

First song at Linkwood 4 Jan.

Breeding season: A good population around Clune where 26 were located in four hours on 10 Apr. Other counts at this time included 15 Shaw Hill 15 Apr, 13 Craigellachie 10 Apr and 14 along the old railway line between Craigellachie-Dufftown on 25 May. Productivity at Loch Spynie, as measured by ringing at the Constant Effort Site, was 3.2 juveniles per adult - up from 2.0 in 2013 (RP).

Autumn: On 19 Sep, 15 were along the old railway line at Portknockie and on 26 Sep two flew in off the sea at Lossiemouth. On 8 Oct, 25 were counted along Quarry Road, Lossiemouth.

Red-breasted Flycatcher *Ficedula parva**Rare migrant.*

One 1st winter bird was found in Lossiemouth (Quarry Road) on 8 Oct following east winds and rain (RP). This is the first record for Moray & Nairn. More details can be found on page 122 of this Report.

Pied Flycatcher *Ficedula hypoleuca**Very scarce migrant, occasional breeder.*

One male was perched on the wire netting surrounding a Pheasant pen at Delnabo (Tomintoul) on 3 May (MJHC).

Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros**Rare migrant.*

One female/immature was in Lossiemouth (west end of Shore Street) on 7 Oct (RP). This is the 18th record for Moray & Nairn.

Monthly distribution of records is as follows:

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

Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus**Summer visitor and scarce breeder. Very scarce migrant.*

Breeding season: Good numbers found in the woods south-west of Loch Belivat where 1 on 21 Apr and 6 on 6 May (TJW). Also at Lethen Bar where 3 on 30 Apr and 9 on 6 May (TJW). Elsewhere, 1 male Dava 2 May (KG), 2 singing males Dulsie 27 Apr (DAG), 1 male carrying food Kellas oakwood 4 May (MJHC), 3 singing near Kirkmichael Church (Strath Avon) 7 Jun (RP), 2 Knock of Braemoray 4 May (PRG), 1 singing Loch Kirkaldy 11 Jun (MJHC), 1 Loch of Boath 24 May (LSc) and 1 pair Tearie which reared a brood of 6 young in the same nest box which was used in 2013 (AR,MJHC).

Autumn: The only coastal migrant was 1 Lossiemouth 10-11 Oct (DAG).



Redstart, Tearie 29 May 2014 (Photo: Alison Ritchie)

Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra*

Summer visitor and scarce breeder. Very scarce migrant.

Breeding habitat: The only records were 1 Clunas reservoir 30 Jun (MCR), 1 Altnaglander (Strath Avon) 21 May (MMS) and 1 Lagganvoulin (Tomintoul) also 21 May (MMS).

Coastal migrants: In spring, 1 Kinloss barracks 21 May (AJL). In late summer/autumn, 1 on the south side of Findhorn Bay 18 Aug (AJL) and presumably the same bird nearby on 28 Aug (RHD). Later, 1 Strathlene (Buckie) 16 Sep (MJHC) and a remarkably late bird which inhabited a nursery field of small spruces with rank weeds at Oldtown (Roseisle) between 19 Nov-3 Dec (MW, MJHC).



Whinchat, Roseisle 20 November 2014 (Photo: Martin Cook)

Stonechat *Saxicola rubicola*

Scarce resident breeder and migrant.

Breeding season:

Coastal: occupied sites (*italics = confirmed breeding*) were Burghead-Cummingston, *Carse of Delnies*, Cullen Bay, *Kingston*, Kinloss, Lossiemouth east beach, *Portknockie* and *Roseisle Forest (west end)*.

Inland: *Clunas reservoir*, *Coldburn (Dallas)*, Dava, *Glack Harnes (Ben Rinnes)*, Gow Moss (Aultmore), Highland Boath (2 pairs), Knock of Braemoray, *Loch Kirkcaldy* and Lochanan a' Ghiubhais.

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

Coastal: Culbin Bar (Jan, Dec), Findhorn (Jan, Feb, Sep-Nov), Lossiemouth west beach (Oct), Spey Bay (Sep) and Strathlene (Sep, Oct).

Inland: Berryburn (Dec), Feakirk (Oct), Heathfield (Sep) and Tomnamoon (Sep).

Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe*

Summer visitor and fairly common breeder and migrant.

Arrival: First, in March, were 1 (very early) Lossiemouth 17th, 1 Findhorn 25th and 1 Strathlene (Buckie) 28th. Small numbers along the coast in April but more in May when 6 Burghead 1st and, at Kinloss, 6 on 5th, 10 on 6th, 6 on 7th and 9 on 9th. Later, on 17 May, 4 at Findhorn and 5 at the Lossie estuary. Last coastal migrant was 1 Findhorn 28 May.

Breeding: In upcountry breeding habitat were 1 Ailnack gorge 3 May, a pair Auchmair (Cabrach) 21 Apr (and 1 on 3 May), a pair Bank Farm (Cabrach) 21 Apr, 1 Berryburn 19 May, 1 near Aldunie (Cabrach) 8 Apr, a pair Cairnbrallan (Cabrach) 17 May, 2 Clune 30 Apr, a pair Coldburn 4 May, 1 Dava 28 Apr, 1 Drynachan 7 Apr, 1 Dulsie 20 Apr, 2 Glenlivet 21 Apr, 2 Glenmarkie 3 May, 1 Knock of Braemoray 24 May, 4 Lecht 30 Jul, 1 Loch of Boath 24 May, 3 Tomintoul 11 Jun and 1 Tomnavoulin 24 Apr. At high altitude in the Cairngorms were fledged young near Ben Macdui on 24 Jul, 2 Cairn Lochan 17 May and 1 Garbh Uisge Beag 24 Jun (2 on 27 Aug).

No evidence of breeding near the coast though a pair on Dallachy airfield on 31 May seemed late to be migrants.

Autumn: Still in the Cairngorms were 3 near Ben Macdui 13 Sep (1 on 25 Sep) and 1 Beinn Mheadhoin 13 Sep. Nearby, 1 East Meur Gorm Craig 2 Sep.

First back at the coast were 1 Lossie estuary 4-5 Jul, 1 Spey estuary 4, 10 & 12 Jul and 3 Kinloss 17 Jul. Regular coastal sightings followed in August and September - usually only 1-2 birds but 5 Kinloss 18 Aug and 3 Lossie estuary 19 Aug. In October, reports were 2 Nairn 4th, 1 Loch Flemington 5th, 1 Findochty 8th, 1 Kinloss 8th and 1 Nairn 27th. Last of the autumn were 1 Findhorn 3 Nov and two very late records, of 1 Lossiemouth west beach 16 Nov and 1 Cummington 19 Nov.

Duncock *Prunella modularis*

Very common resident breeder.

First song, in February, at Linkwood (Elgin) on 24th and Findhorn on 25th.

Productivity at Loch Spynie, as measured by ringing at the Constant Effort Site, was 0.3 juveniles per adult (RP).

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

Very common resident breeder.

Largest flocks reported were 60 Spey Bay 23 Sep, c.60 Speymouth Parish Church 31 Jul and 45 Nairn (at The Maggot) 3 May. Upcountry, 24 Tomintoul 3 May and 18 Tomnamoon 27 Sep.

Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*

Common resident breeder.

Breeding: At Clochan, six nestboxes were occupied:

	Pairs	Mean clutch	Mean fledged brood (all pairs)	Mean fledged brood (successful pairs only)
First broods	6	4.4	3.2	3.2 (n=6)
Second broods	5	4.8	4.8	4.8 (n=5)
Third broods	2	5.5	5.5	5.5 (n=2)

(MJHC)

Elsewhere in the breeding season, 2 Bishopmill (Elgin) 6 Apr (also 1 recently fledged juvenile 27 May), 20 Corbiewell 7 Jul, 1 Cummington 27 May, 6 Middlefield (Forres) 15 Jun, 4 Broadley (Moray Crematorium) 9 Apr, 4 Moy House 17 May, 1 Roseisle 29 Jun, fledged juveniles Darkland 24 May, 2 Speymouth Parish Church 31 Jul, 5 Spynie Palace 7 Apr, 6 Tarras 2 Jul and 1 Nairn west golf course 2 May.

At other times, 44 Windyridge 4 Oct, 30 Scarffbanks 16 Dec (20 there 28 Dec), 18 Middlefield (Forres) 6 Feb, 18 Portknockie 27 Feb, 10 Loch Flemington 22 Jan, 8 Earnhill 2 Jan, 8 Easter Greens 25 Nov, 7 near Dyke 4 Dec, 5 Bailliesland 24 Oct, 5 Heathfield 30 Oct, 4 Cruats Farm (Portknockie 8 Oct), 4 Mosset Burn (at Findhorn Bay) 29 Oct, 4 Forres 9 Jan, 4 Lossiemouth 31 Mar and 1 Burnside of Enzie 23 Mar.

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*

Summer visitor and common breeder. Very scarce in winter.

Winter: 1 Elgin (on Tyock Burn in Edgar Road) 16 Feb and 16 Dec, 1 Forres (Mosset Burn) 22 Feb, 1 Househill (Nairn) 10 Nov, 1 over central Elgin 15 Nov, 1 Nairn harbour 4 & 29 Nov and 16 Dec, 1 Clochan 5 Dec, 1 Moyness 7 Dec and 1 Lossiemouth (north pier) 23 Dec.

Breeding season records were received from 18 localities.

Pied Wagtail *Motacilla alba*

Very common breeder and migrant.

Passage: A relatively poor showing of 'White Wagtails' *M.a.alba*. In spring, 1 Findhorn Bay 9 Apr, 1 Lossiemouth west beach 17 Apr, 3 Burghead 24 Apr, 1 Spey estuary 1 & 13 May and 1 Lossie estuary 10 May. In late summer/autumn, 1 Cullen 22 Aug, 1 Lossie estuary 2 Sep, 1 Delnies 3 & 9 Sep, 1 Findhorn Bay 5 Sep, 1 Scarffbanks 6 Sep, 2 Wester Delnies 6-7 Sep and 3 Dunphail 29 Sep.

Notable counts of Pied Wagtails *M.a.yarellii* were 25+ Nairn harbour 12 Sep (20 on 5 Feb and 2 Aug), 25 Wester Delnies 4 Sep, 22 Lossie estuary 19 Jul, 20 Spey estuary 7 Aug, 19 Forres 4 Jan, 16 Kinloss 26 Mar and 10 Findhorn 7 Aug.

First seen back at Auchinhandoch (Dufftown) 25 Feb.

Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis*

Summer visitor and common breeder.

Arrival: First reports, in April, were 1 Wood of Ordiquish 14th, 1 Delnapot 16th, 1 Gow Moss (Keith) 19th, 1 near Loch Belivat 21st and 1 Blue Hill quarry (Aberlour) 21st.

Subsequent reports in breeding habitat were: several singing Drynachan area 27 Apr, 1 Meikle Hill (Dallas) 5 May, 8 Clune 6 May, 8 Shaw Hill 6 May, 1 Whiteash Hill Wood 11 May, 16 Loch Belivat area 16 May, 1 Wellheads (Clochan) 17 May, 2 Loch of Boath 24 May, 2 Craigellachie-Dufftown (along old railway line) 25 May, 1 Loch Kirkaldy 27 May, 1 Loch Allan (Dava) 2 Jun, 1 Kellas oakwood 4 Jun, 1 Tomintoul 4 & 6-7 Jun and 1 Ben Rinnes Wood 8 Jun.

Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis*

Very common breeder and migrant.

Unusual inland in winter so 1 Knock of Braemoray 12 Jan and 8 there on 28 Dec were notable.

Counts of 20 or more were 50 Findhorn Bay (south side) 30 Jun (28 on 10 Oct), 45 Kinloss 16 Apr, 40 Clune 27 Aug, c.40 Darkland 30 Aug, 30 Knock of Braemoray 6 Apr (37 on 24 May, 52 on 22 Jun), c.30 Findhorn dunes 20 Oct, 30 Stob Bac an Fhurain 2 Sep, 28 Lethen Bar 27 Aug, 25 Burnside-Little Aitnoch 31 Jul, 20 Loch Belivat area 2 Apr (and 20 on 28 Aug, 23 on 11 Sep) and 20 Clunas reservoir 30 Jun.

Numerous on the Cairngorm plateau in late summer/early autumn when 30 near Ben Macdui 28 Jul, c.100 there 13 Sep and 40 on 25 Sep.

One flew in off the sea at Lossiemouth harbour on 26 Sep.

Rock Pipit *Anthus petrosus*

Scarce breeder, fairly common in winter.

Breeding season: 2 singing Lossiemouth west beach 29 Mar, 1 Burghead 6 & 25 Apr and 1 Portgordon harbour 25 Apr.

Counts of 5 or more were 20 Portgordon-Strathlene 27 Oct (5 on 16 Feb, 5 on 8 Mar, 9 on 7 Dec), 8 Findhorn 24 Nov (5 on 27 Oct) and 6 Burghead 1 Feb. Other winter records of 1-2 at Hopeman and Nairn.

Brambling *Fringilla montifringilla*

Fairly common winter visitor and migrant.

Few records in early winter period with maximum 50 Cawdor Woods 8 Mar (AJC). Otherwise, 1 Croy 7 Jan (and 22 Mar), 1 Crachies (Auldearn) 6 Feb; 1 just north of Dufftown 16 Feb, 2 Achdregnie (Braes of Glenlivet) 11 Mar and 6 Brodie Castle 18 Mar. Last in Spring was 1 male in a Forres garden on 7 Apr.

First in autumn was 1 Strathlene 8 Oct following heavy rain and east winds.

In the second winter period, 6 Burghead maltings 6 Dec was the only record.

Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*

Very common resident breeder, migrant and winter visitor.

First song, in February, at Forres 6th, Dallachy 7th and Findhorn 14th.

Flocks of 30 or more included: 100 Crachies 30 Jan (also 50 on 14 Jan and 70 on 6 Feb), 60 Kronyhillock Wood 8 Sep, 60 Loch Spynie 28 Nov, 30 Tomnamoon 5 Sep, 40 Findhorn 6 Dec and c.30 Kintessack 4 Dec.

Productivity at Loch Spynie, as measured by ringing at the Constant Effort Site, was 0.7 juveniles per adult (RP).

Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

Very common resident breeder.

Groups of 10 or more included 20 feeding on Goat Willow and Rowan at Glenmarkie (east of Dufftown) 30 Nov, 16 Knock of Braemoray 28 Dec, 14 Windyridge (nr Loch Spynie) 4 Oct, 10 Lethen Bar 14 Jan and 10 Spynie Palace 16 Feb.

Productivity at Loch Spynie, as measured by ringing at the Constant Effort Site, was 2.5 juveniles per adult, up from 2.0 in 2013 (RP).

Greenfinch *Chloris chloris*

Very common resident breeder.

First song Dallachy tip 7 Feb.

Flocks of 10 or more included 26 Belivat area 18 Aug (12 there 11 Sep), 22 Fochabers 26 Jan, 13 Achareidh estate (Nairn) 10 Mar, c.12 Loch Flemington 8-9 Jan and 10 Loch Spynie 28 Dec.

Linnet *Linaria cannabina*

Very common resident breeder.

Flock counts of 50 or more were: c.500 Sheriffston 29 Nov (200 there 24 Dec and c.300 on 26 Dec), 500 Urquhart area 10 Jan (and 300 there on 17 Dec), c.400 Darkland 1 Jan (and c.100 there 5 Jan, c.400 on 14 Feb, 170 on 5 Apr), c.400 Wester Delnies 7 Sep, 250 Lossie estuary 31 Aug (and 250 there 23 Sep), 200 Findhorn Bay 15 Jun (and c.100 there 12 Sep and 56 on 30 Dec), c.200 Duffus 6 Jan, 150 Spey estuary 21 Jul, 140 Middlefield (Forres) 6 Feb, 100+ Dyke 14 Oct, c.100 Covesea 15 Feb, 95 Gilston 9 Mar, 80 Dounduff (Forres) 28 Oct, 80 Porttannachy (Portgordon) 1 Jan, 54 Kinloss 5 May and 50 Heathfield (Croy) 12 Nov.

Twite *Linaria flavirostris*

Scarce resident breeder and winter visitor.

A flock was present on the saltmarsh in the south of Findhorn Bay (near Netherton) in the second winter period. Monthly maximum counts of this flock were as follows:

Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
50 (21st)	65 (28th)	nc	c60 (29th)
(RSC,GM <i>et al.</i>)			

A flock of 200 was at Carse of Delnies 17 Dec (JDG). Elsewhere, 15 Clune 8 Jan (and 3 there 21 Jan) (TJW), 1 Findhorn 1 Feb (and 2 there on the dunes 7 Apr) (ABe,PR), 14 Nairn 15 Mar (AC) and 2 Portknockie 26 Mar (KR).

At high altitude on the Cairngorms plateau were 5 Garbh Uisge Beag 20 Sep (AG).

Lesser Redpoll *Acanthis cabaret*

Common resident breeder and migrant.

Breeding season: Records included 1+ Dava 2 May, 3 Belivat area 5 May, 2 Lethen Bar 8 May, 1 Burnside-Little Aitnoch 20 May (and 1 there 31 Jul), 2 Loch of Boath 24 May, 3 Loch Kirkaldy 27 May (and heard there 11 Jun), 2 Black Loch (Dava) 2 Jun (and heard there 14 Jun), 1 displaying in Kellas oakwood 4 Jun, heard Dunearn Lodge, Dunphail and Loch of the Clans all on 14 Jun, 1 Whiteness Head 16 Jun, 2 Knock of Braemoray 13 Jul and heard Coldburn (Dallas) 15 Jul.

At other times, largest flocks were: 600 (in two flocks of 180 and 420) Ordiquish (Fochabers) 5 Dec (AY), 200 Teindland 1 Dec (180 on 6 Dec and 30+ on 6 Mar) (AY,DM), 155 Newton 1 Dec (AY), 100+ Laikenbuie 15 Nov (AS) and 40 Loch Spynie 4 Feb (AET).

Common (Mealy) Redpoll *Acanthis flammea*

Rare winter visitor and migrant.

Two were caught and ringed out of a large flock of Lesser Redpolls at Thief's Hill (Ordiquish) on 21 Dec (AY). This is only the 15th record of Common Redpoll in Moray & Nairn although, as this record suggests, it is highly likely that birds are overlooked in flocks of Lesser Redpolls.

Common Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra*

Common resident and irruptive migrant breeder.

Scottish Crossbill *Loxia scotica*

Probable common resident breeder.

In view of the virtual impossibility of separating these species in the field without recording the calls, all crossbill records are combined.

Flocks of 10 or more were: 50-100 Morinsh Forest (Auchbreck) 18 Jan, 60 Bogeney 2 Feb, up to 50 (on 15 Apr) Shaw Hill/Lethen Bar regularly between 1 Apr-8 May, 30+ Ferness 11 Apr, 24 Teindland 6 Dec, c.20 Darnaway Forest 6 Apr, 16 Clune 8 Jan (and 10 there 10 Apr), 15 Belivat area 2 Apr, 15 Loch Romach 7 Apr, 15 Laikenbuie 31 Oct and 11 Dunnyduff Wood 24 May.

Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*

Very common resident breeder.

First song record Dallachy tip 7 Feb.

Flocks of 10 or more included: 100+ Moyness 18 Sep, 50 Croy 12 Nov, 35 Findochty 12 Feb, 34 Windyridge 4 Oct, 32 Findhorn 29 Jan (and 14 there on 14 Jan), 23 Nairn 18 Jan (and 23 on 5 Oct, 10 on 19 Oct), 20 Howford (Nairn) 8 Sep, 20 Roseisle Forest 29 Sep, 15 Rafford 10 Dec, 14 Lossiemouth 30 Apr, 12 Findhorn Bay 27 Nov, 12 Kinloss 29 Sep (and 10 there on 27 Aug), 11 Tomnamoon 9 Sep and 10 Kingsteps 11 Feb.

Siskin *Spinus spinus*

Very common resident breeder and migrant.

Flocks of 20 or more were: 300 Thief's Hill (Wood of Ordiequish) 3 Oct (WMM), c.70 Laikenbuie (Nairn) 31 Oct, c.50 Loch Spynie (in Alders along old railway line) 19 Nov, 50+ Tomnamoon (near Logie) 28 Oct (also 35 there 23 Sep and 30 on 1 Nov), c.50 Laikenbuie 15 Nov and 20 Nairn 15 Mar.

Snow Bunting *Plectrophenax nivalis*

Common winter visitor and rare breeder.

Breeding:

Early-mid summer on the Cairngorms plateau: 1 on 5 May then 4 males and 1 female 13 May (PRG), 2 pairs 20 May (RDH), 2 pairs, 1 male and 1 other 1 Jun (AE), 3 on 14 Jun, 6 on 24 Jun (including 1 male collecting food for young (MJHC)) and 1 on 25 Jun.

Late summer-autumn on the Cairngorms plateau: 10 on 24 Jul and, in August, 15 on 5th (including fledged juveniles) (JDG), 4 on 6th, 4 on 10th, 3 on 25th and 1 on 27th. In September, 25+ on 9th (DP), 2 on 13th, 4 on 14th and 9 on 25th (MJB).

First coastal records in autumn, all on 26 Oct, were 1 Culbin Bar, 2 Lossiemouth and 1 Nairn Bar.

Winter: Sizeable flocks were regular at two sites, where monthly maximum counts were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Oct	Nov	Dec
Nairn/Culbin Bars (& east Nairn)	8 (18th)	54 (16th)	15 (16th)	2 (26th)	nc	80 (7th)
Lossiemouth east beach	20 (3rd)	21 (22nd)	30 (4th)	2 (26th)	38 (12th)	7 (27th)

Elsewhere, coastal reports included 5 Burghead 6 Mar, 24 Spey Bay 9 Nov, 1 Portknockie 1c Dec and 1 Buckpool 7 Dec.

Inland reports in late autumn/winter included: 34 Clune 8 Jan (and 5 there 14 Jan), 40+ along Mosstodloch-Garmouth Road 14 Jan, 14 Scaln 2 Mar, 1 between Carn a' Gharbh-ghlaic and Carn na Sguabaich 26 Oct (and 2 there 7 Nov), 12 The Scalp 29 Nov, 1 Ben Rinnes 12 Nov and 13 Machattie's Cairn 22 Dec (and 5 there 23 Dec). Still high in the Cairngorms were 10 Coire Raibert 15 Nov (PRG).

Last at the coast in spring were 7 Lossie estuary 1 Apr and still 2 there on 14 Apr.



Snow Bunting, Cairngorms plateau 19 May 2014 (Photo: Robert Ince)

Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella*

Very common resident breeder.

Flocks of 20 or more were: c.110 Myreside 9 Mar, 55 Crachies (near Auldearn) 6 Feb (30 there 30 Jan and 23 on 14 Jan), 40 Maryhill 8 Mar, c.40 Garmouth 25 Feb, 30 Burghead 4 Jan, 30 Croy 28 Oct, 28 Kronyhillock Wood 5 Mar, 24 Dallas Dhu (Forres) 16 Feb, 25 Cullen Bay 14 Apr, 22 Burnside of Enzie 23 Mar, 20 Heathfield 29 Sep (20 there also on 3 & 8 Oct, 22 on 27 Oct, and 20 again on 12 Nov) and 20 Porttannachy (Portgordon) 1 Jan.

Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus*

Very common resident breeder.

Present in the breeding season at Dava (1 pair 2 May), Tugnet (2 males 4 May), Tomcork (1 male 19 May), Nairn (2 on 28 May), Loch of the Clans (1 on 14 Jun), Coldburn (1 juvenile 15 Jul).

The proportion of juveniles to adults trapped for ringing at Loch Spynie 'Constant Effort Site' was 0.9:1.0, up slightly on 2013 (0.7:1.0).

Largest winter flock was 10 feeding on stubble Tugnet 1 Mar.

Corn Bunting *Emberiza calandra*

Scarce resident breeder.

Breeding season: Singing in the coastal lowlands east and west of River Spey, between Brandston (Lochhill) and Portgordon, were 7 between Mosstodloch and Binns (Garmouth) 6 Apr, 1 Broadley 9 Apr (and 21 May), 1 Dipple 11 May, 1 Mains of Tannachy (Portgordon) 17 May, 4 Dallachy (singing during 10-31 May), 2 Portgordon 19 Jun, 1 Brandston 1 Jul, 2 Ferniefield 1 Jul, 2 Garmouth 1 Jul, 3 Mosstodloch-Newton 1 Jul and 2 Corbiewell 7 Jul.

A large early spring gathering of 80 (71 in one flock) between Bogmoor and Tugnet 3 Apr (PK).

In winter, 1 Drainie (Lossiemouth) 30 Nov and 1 Binns 30 Dec.

ADDITIONS/CORRECTIONS TO 2003 REPORT**Pallas's Warbler *Phylloscopus proregulus***

Following a review of historical records by Moray & Nairn Rarities Committee, the record of Pallas's Warbler at Urquhart on 20 Oct 2003 is now considered to be not proven.

SEABIRD MOVEMENTS OFF LOSSIEMOUTH IN 2014**BOB PROCTOR****Introduction**

I started seawatching at Lossiemouth in 1985 after the purchase of a telescope. I decided to watch from the harbour/Shore Street area for a number of reasons; there was a good headland protruding into the Moray Firth, observation point not too high, close to home and the possibility of using a car for shelter. Other observers also included Lossiemouth as a seawatching point and with regular coverage over a number of years, a series of notable records started to arise including firsts for Moray & Nairn: Cory's Shearwater (9 Jul 2000), Balearic Shearwater (24 Sep 2000) and Great Shearwater (3 Sep 2007). Further records of Balearic Shearwater and Great Shearwater occurred on 14 Aug 2005 and 14 Sep 2007 (2) respectively.

During these early years there were also notable movements which included records of scarce species locally, such as Sabine's Gull, Leach's Petrel, Storm Petrel and Long-tailed Skua, some of these periods of good seawatches also involved large 'unprecedented' counts of Manx Shearwater, Sooty Shearwater, Little Auk and Pomarine Skua; many of these record counts still stand. The majority of these early seawatches were predominately in the 'traditional' late summer-early autumn period.

In late 2013 I decided to record seabird movements off Lossiemouth throughout 2014 rather than concentrating only on the traditional autumn passage period. This was an attempt to see how numbers of seabirds passing Lossiemouth might change throughout a year and the best weather conditions for a good seabird passage to occur. A total of 150 hours were spent seawatching from Lossiemouth harbour, resulting in a minimum of 65,832 individuals of 29 seabird species.

Methods

A minimum of two 30 minute periods were completed each month, though in the autumn passage period more visits were undertaken. Seawatches were completed at various times throughout the day and in different weather conditions. If two or more seawatches were undertaken consecutively these were split into 30 minute periods. Seawatches were undertaken from a car as this offered protection during inclement weather and strong winds. The car was parked at the western end of Lossiemouth harbour. The sea off the harbour area was scanned alternating between a pair of binoculars and a telescope.

Counts concentrated on recording 'seabird' species (*i.e.* sea-ducks, divers, shearwaters, Fulmar, Gannet, grebes, skuas, terns, Kittiwake and auks). Species not counted included Black-headed, Common, Herring, Lesser Black-backed and Great Black-backed Gulls as on the majority of counts, when present, individuals were not considered 'on passage' but appeared to be involved in localised movements; from Lossiemouth to off-shore feeding areas, or moving close in-shore between Lossiemouth and other in-shore areas. Similarly, species frequently seen flying close in-shore such as Eider, Red-breasted Merganser, Cormorant and Shag were not included in the regular passage counts as these were also deemed to be moving to or from roost sites or feeding areas.

A trough is present 5 km north of Lossiemouth harbour with depths ranging from 58-62 m, increasing to 82-84 m to the north-east (Admiralty Chart 1978). It is assumed that most of the feeding seabirds that were well off-shore were associated with this area. Birds that were obviously feeding in one area are not included in the passage counts (*e.g.* c.60 Manx Shearwaters associating with a Minke Whale on 6 August) as they were not considered 'on passage'. Likewise, birds feeding by following trawlers and other fishing boats were not included in the counts. Trawlers were only regular off Lossiemouth from mid September to late October, then very intermittently to late November.

Weather conditions



28 Jun: Windy conditions with good passage



27 Jul: Relatively calm conditions with good passage



17 Aug: Strong northerly winds but few birds observed

The remains of Hurricane Bertha passed through during 10-12 Aug, with strong winds still present from 13-17 Aug. Despite the increasing strength of on-shore winds and associated rain the hoped-for increase in seabird numbers didn't materialise during seawatches.

Ex-hurricane Gonzalo arrived overnight on 20-21 Oct but the stormy weather was very short-lived. Similar to ex-hurricane Bertha the hoped-for increase in passage did not materialise, though numbers of species passing Lossiemouth increased slightly.

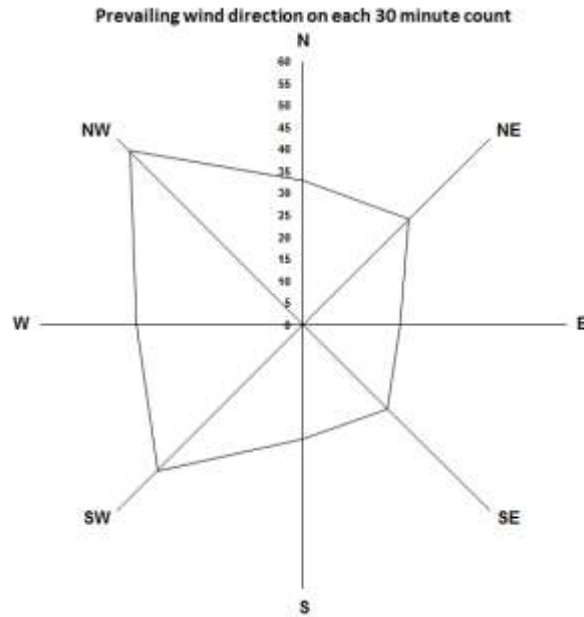


7 Oct: A large swell making observations difficult



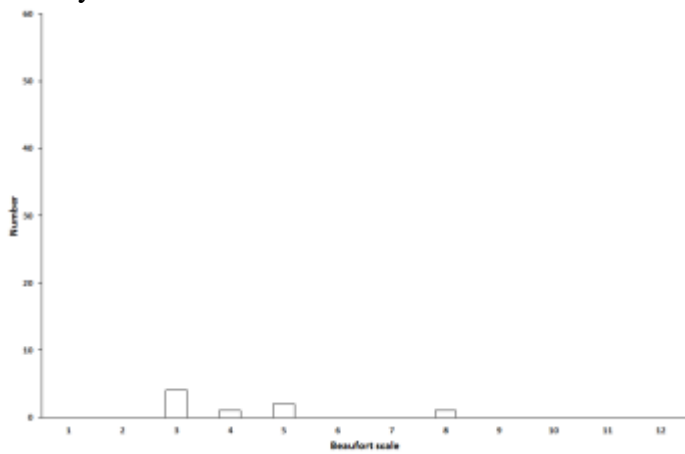
21 Oct: A low number of individuals but a 'good' species count

The prevailing wind was recorded on each seawatch. In 2014, the wind was mainly from a westerly sector with the majority of records from the northwest.

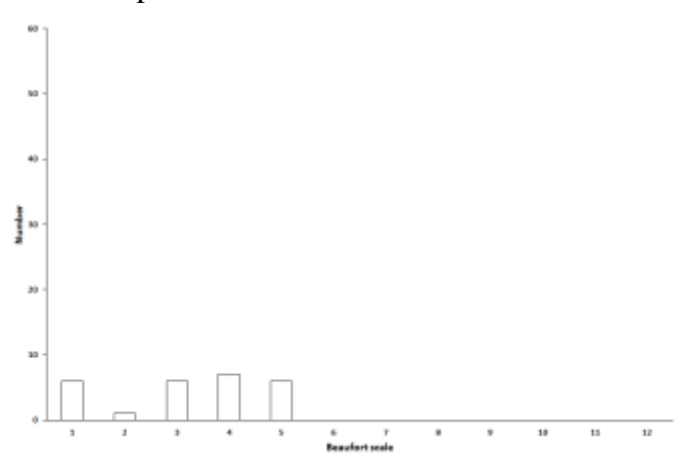


On the majority of seawatches (83%) the wind force was less than Beaufort scale force 5. In 2014, the wind force did not exceed force 8.

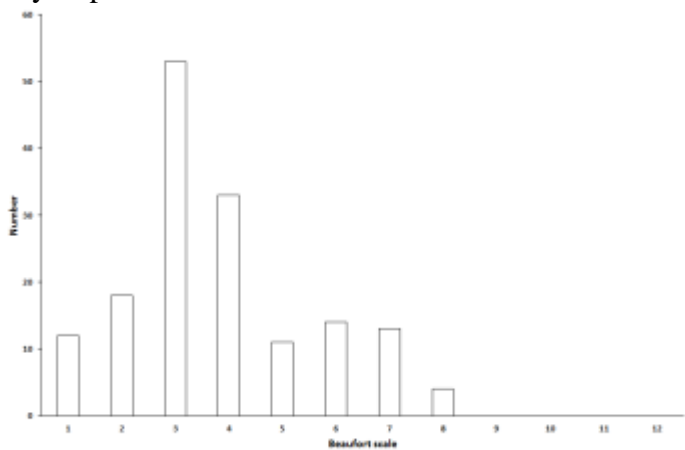
January-March



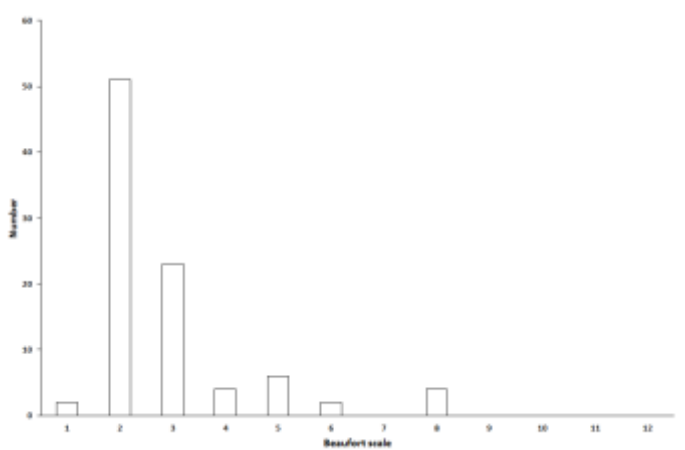
April-June



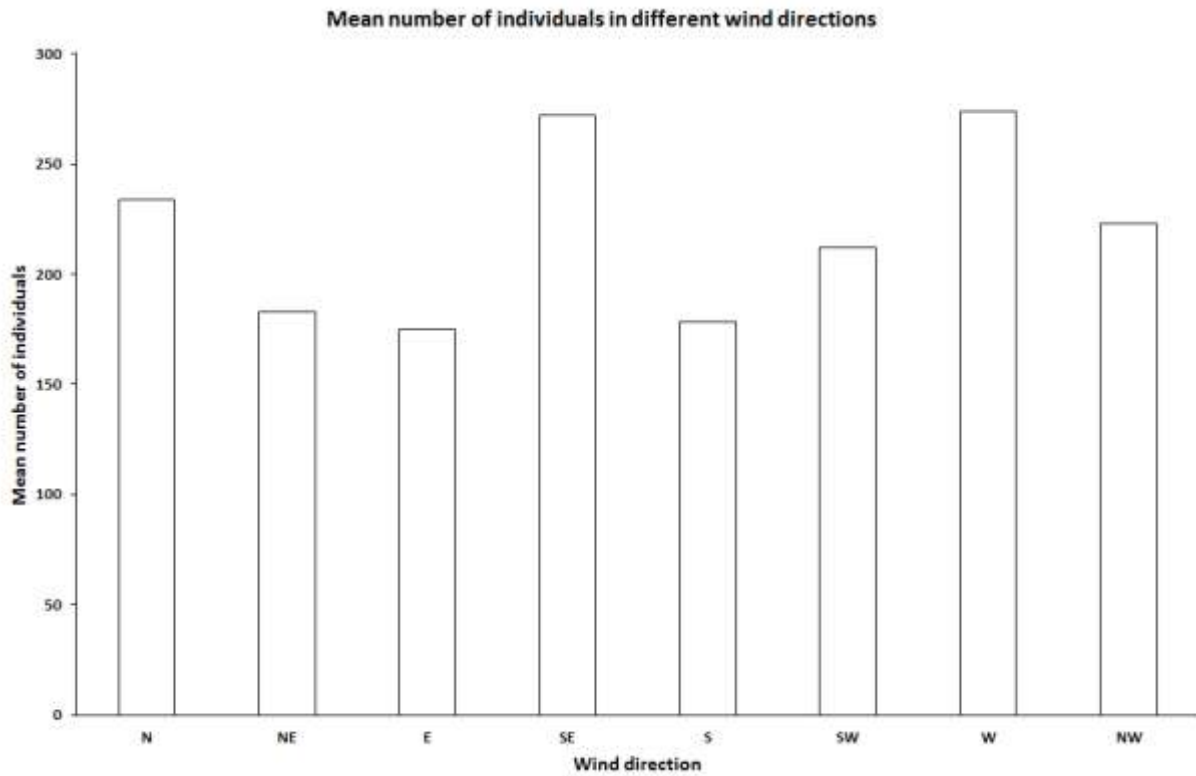
July-September



October-December

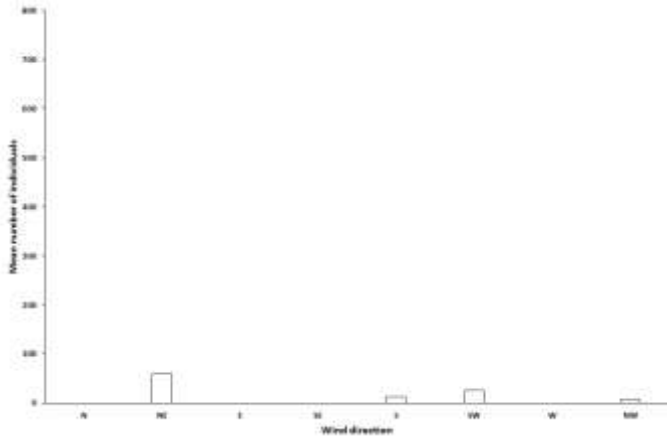


Recording weather conditions throughout the year indicated that winds from the south and east were generally the least productive, however, as the graph of mean number of individuals shows, good seawatches occurred in off-shore south-easterly and south-westerly winds. It has been assumed that on-shore winds are the most productive but in 2014 this appears not to have been the case, with north-easterly winds having one of the least productive mean number of individuals recorded.

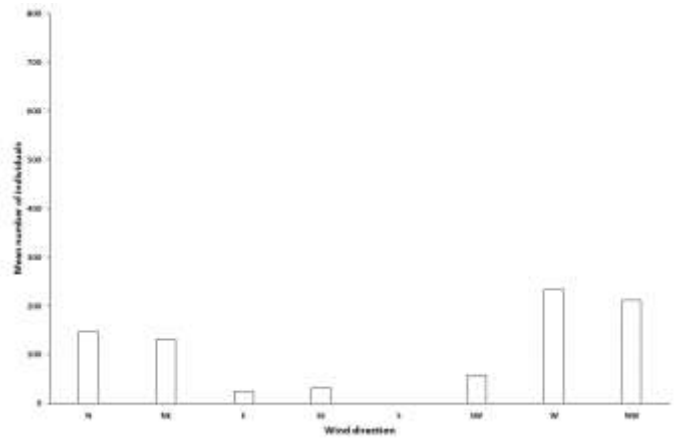


Counts and wind directions were split into three-month periods. When these periods are examined the winds having the largest counts included westerly and northwesterly in April-June, south-westerly and westerly in July-September and northerly in October-December.

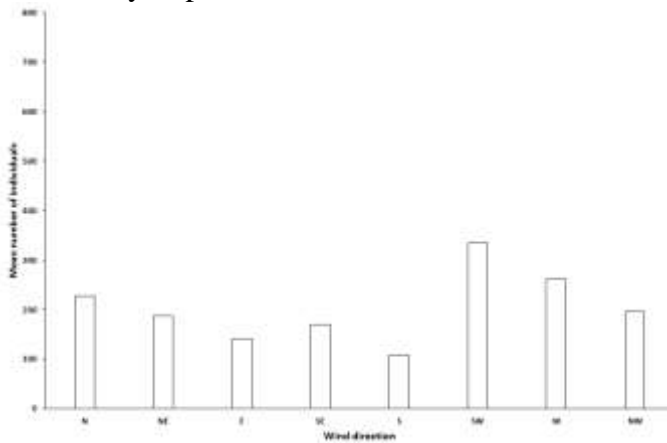
January-March



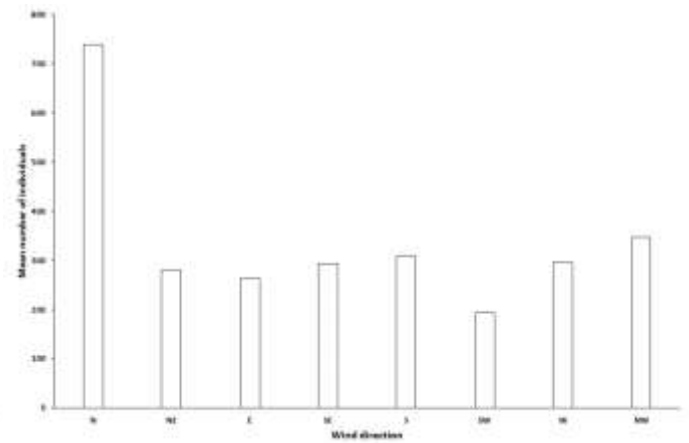
April-June



July-September

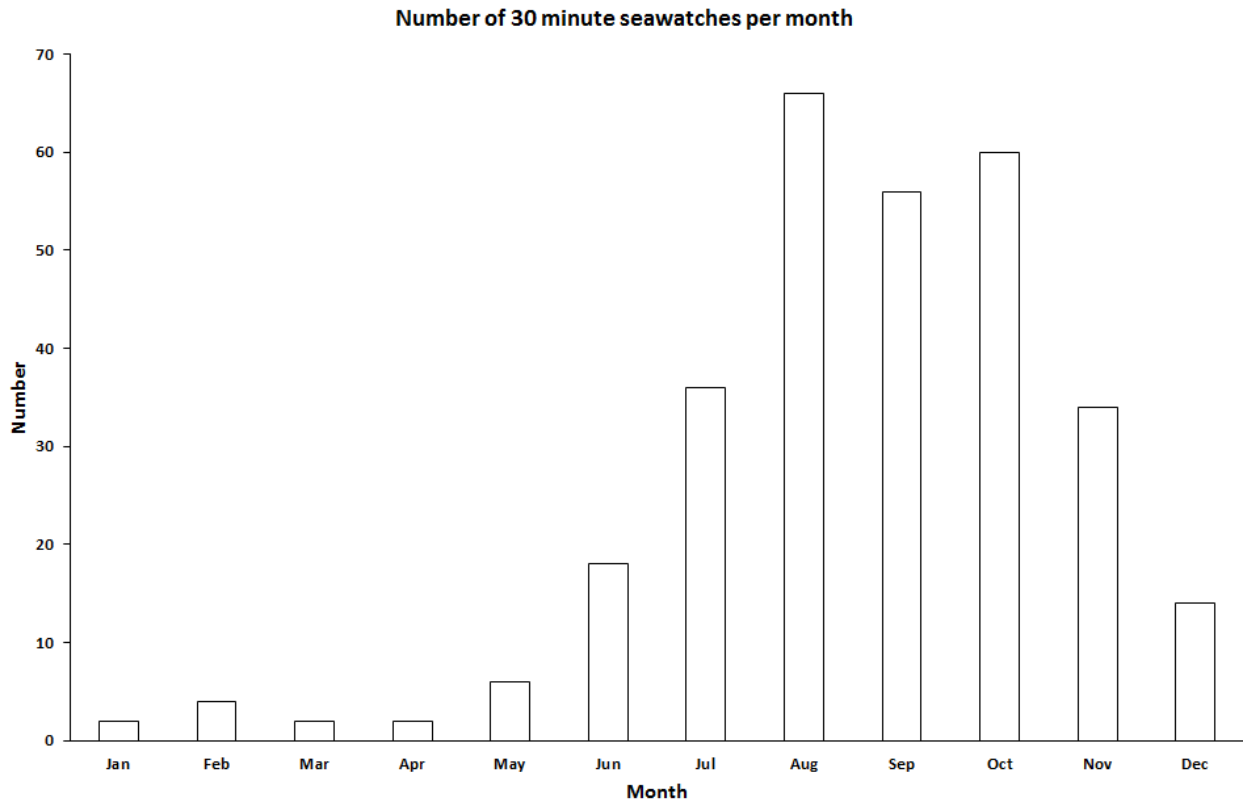


October-December



Seawatch results

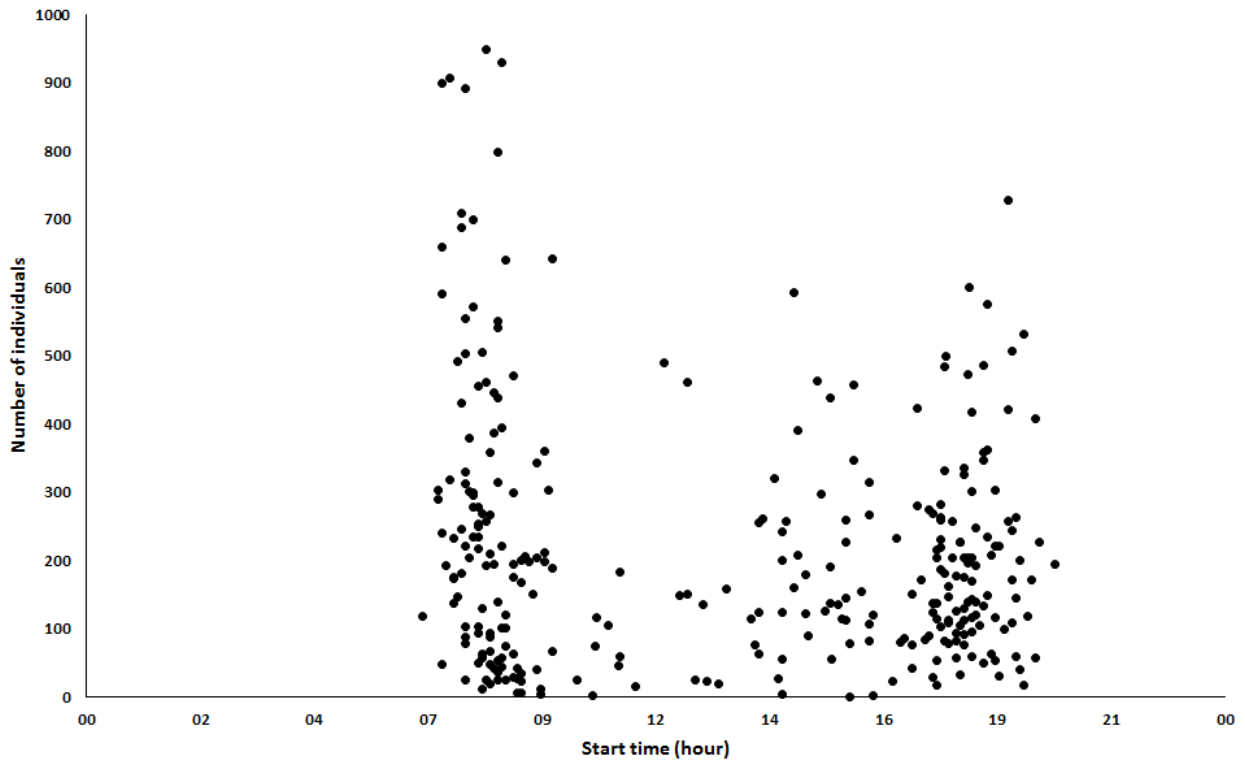
A total of 150 hours was spent seawatching in 2014. The vast majority of seawatches were during the traditional late summer and autumn passage periods. A total 68 species were recorded during seawatches, of which 29 were from the list of 'seabird' species. The total count of seabird species in 2014 involved a minimum of 65,832 individuals.



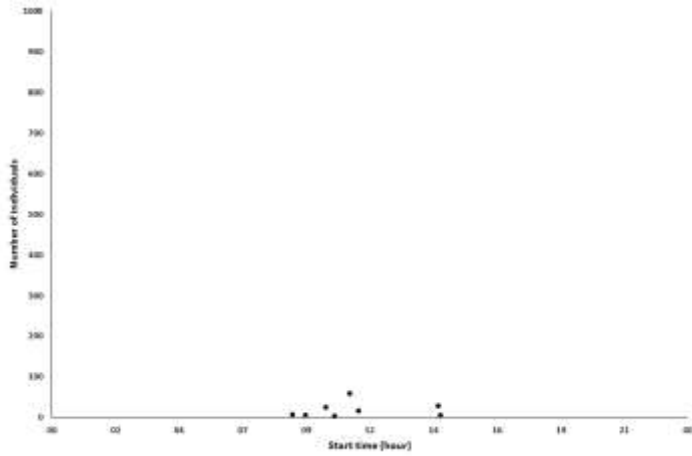
The earliest start time for a seawatch was 07:05, while the latest was 20:25. The count with the largest number of species recorded and the six counts with the largest number of individuals seen occurred during the early morning (*i.e.* before 09:00).

There is a slight correlation between the number of individuals and the total number of species seen during a passage. However, not all high counts of individuals involved a high species count (*e.g.* on 5 Oct a count of 930 individuals involved only four species).

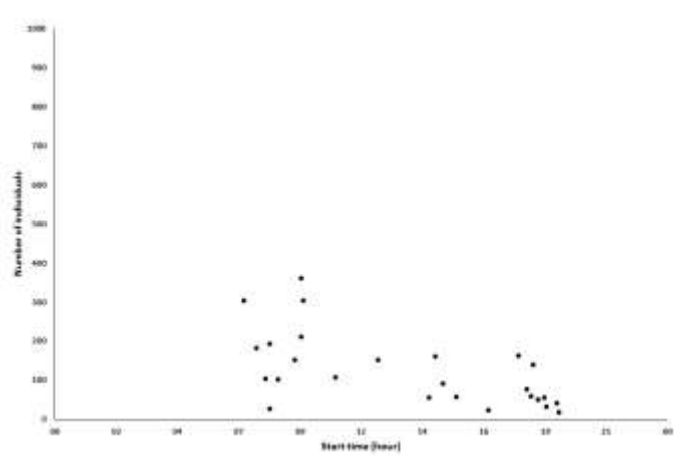
Total number of individuals and start time of seawatches



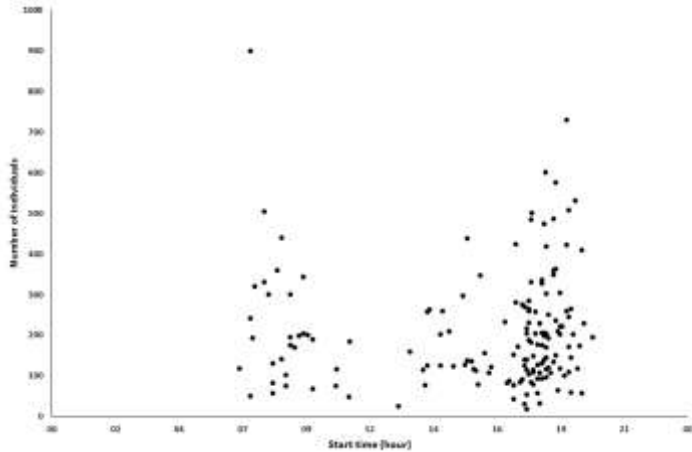
January-March



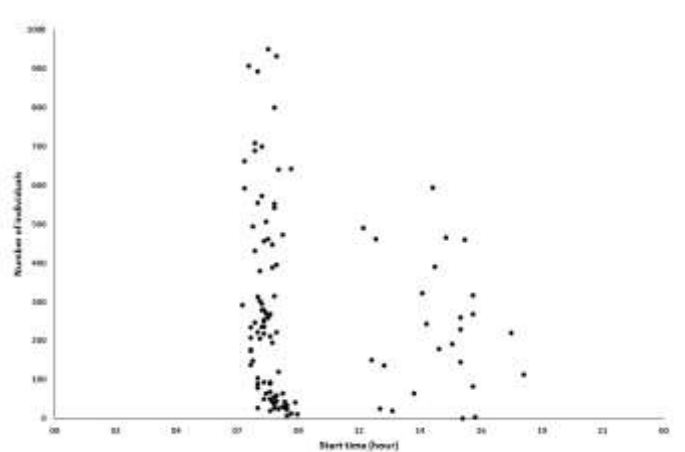
April-June



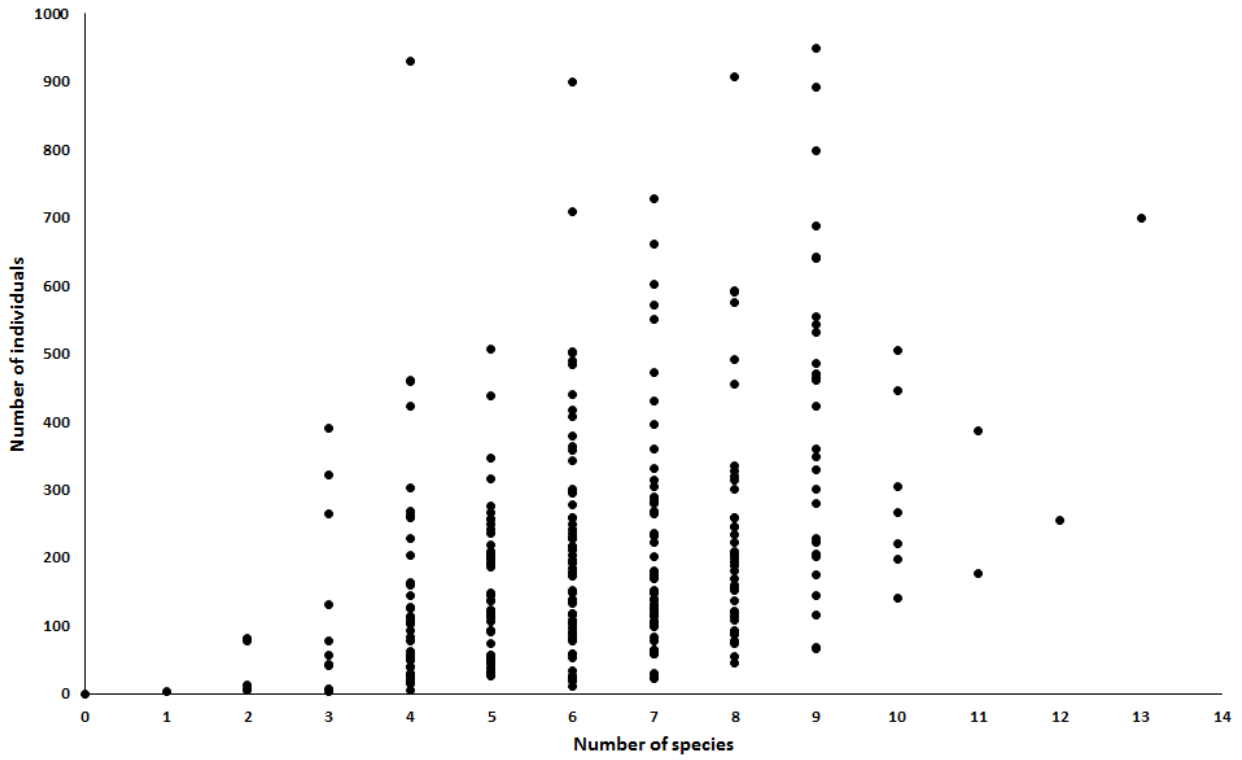
July-September



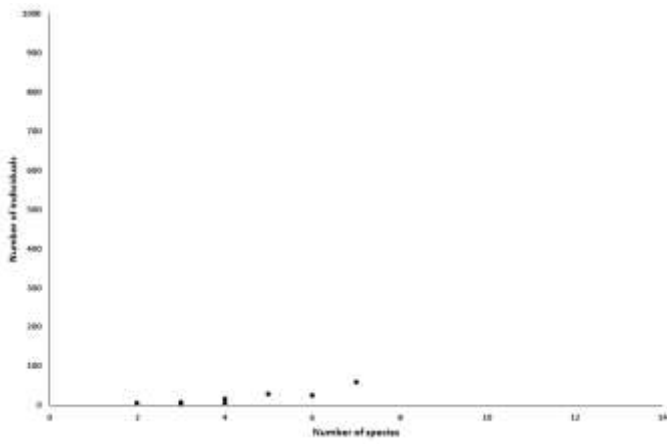
October-December



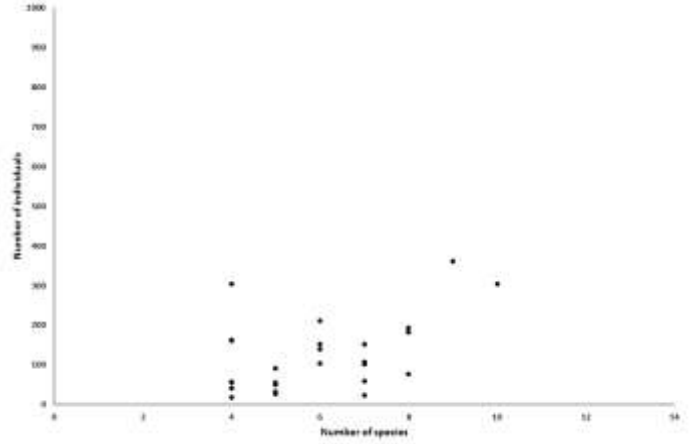
Total number of individuals and number of species



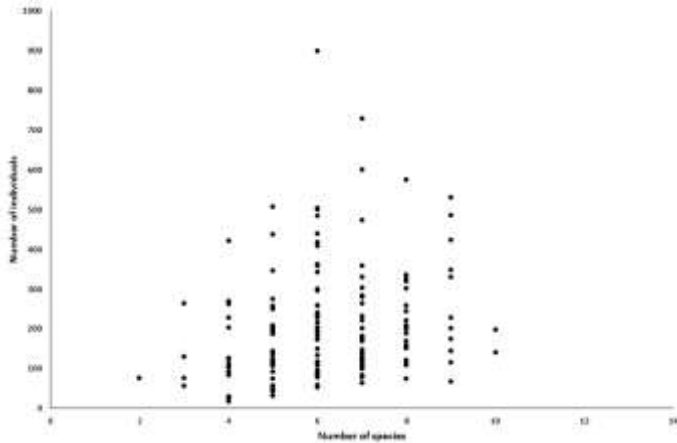
January-March



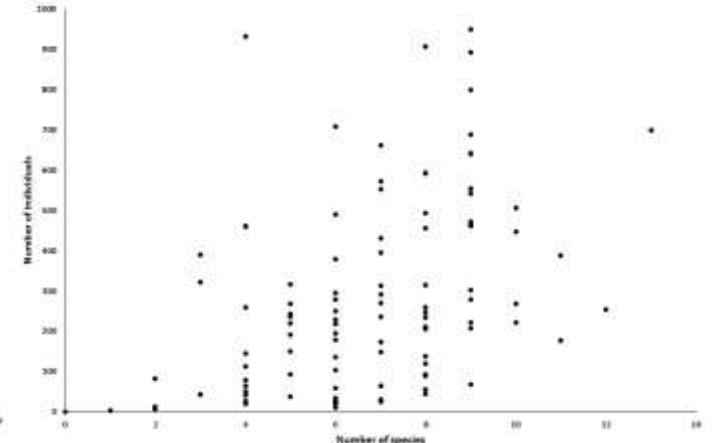
April-June



July-September

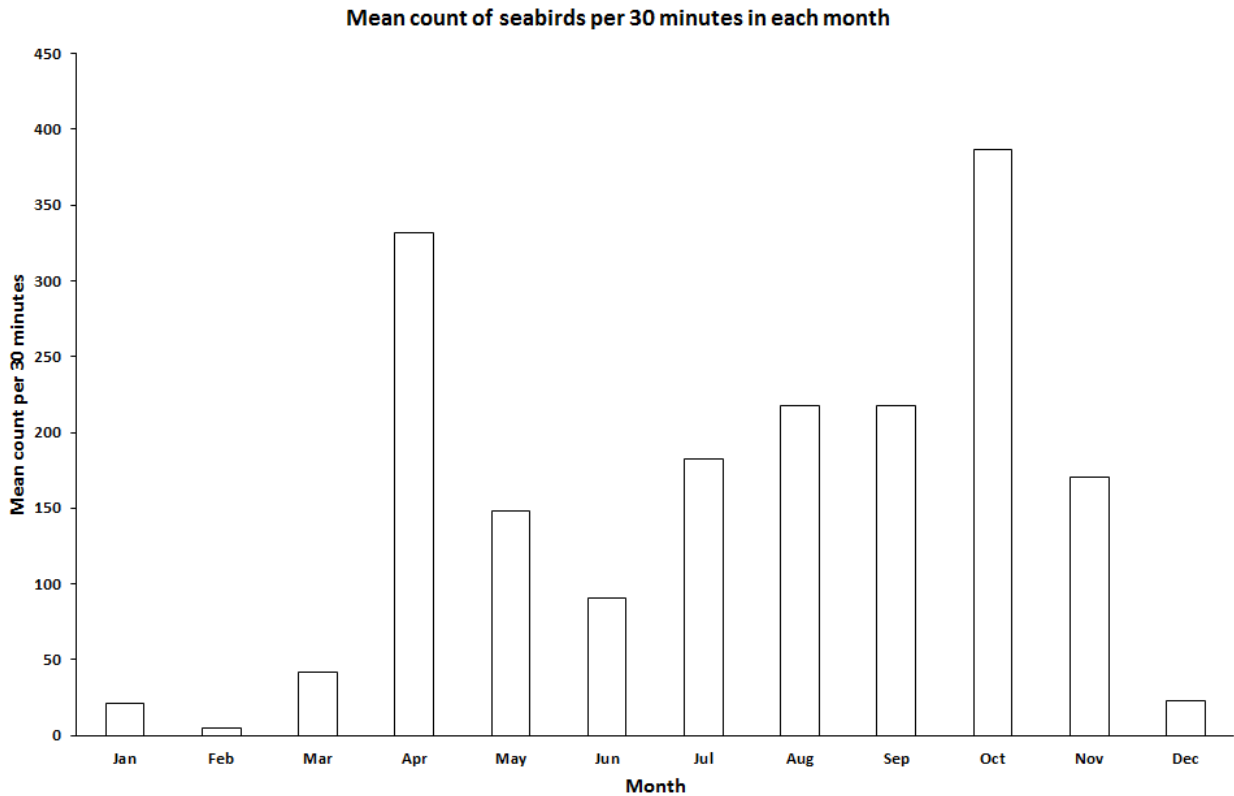


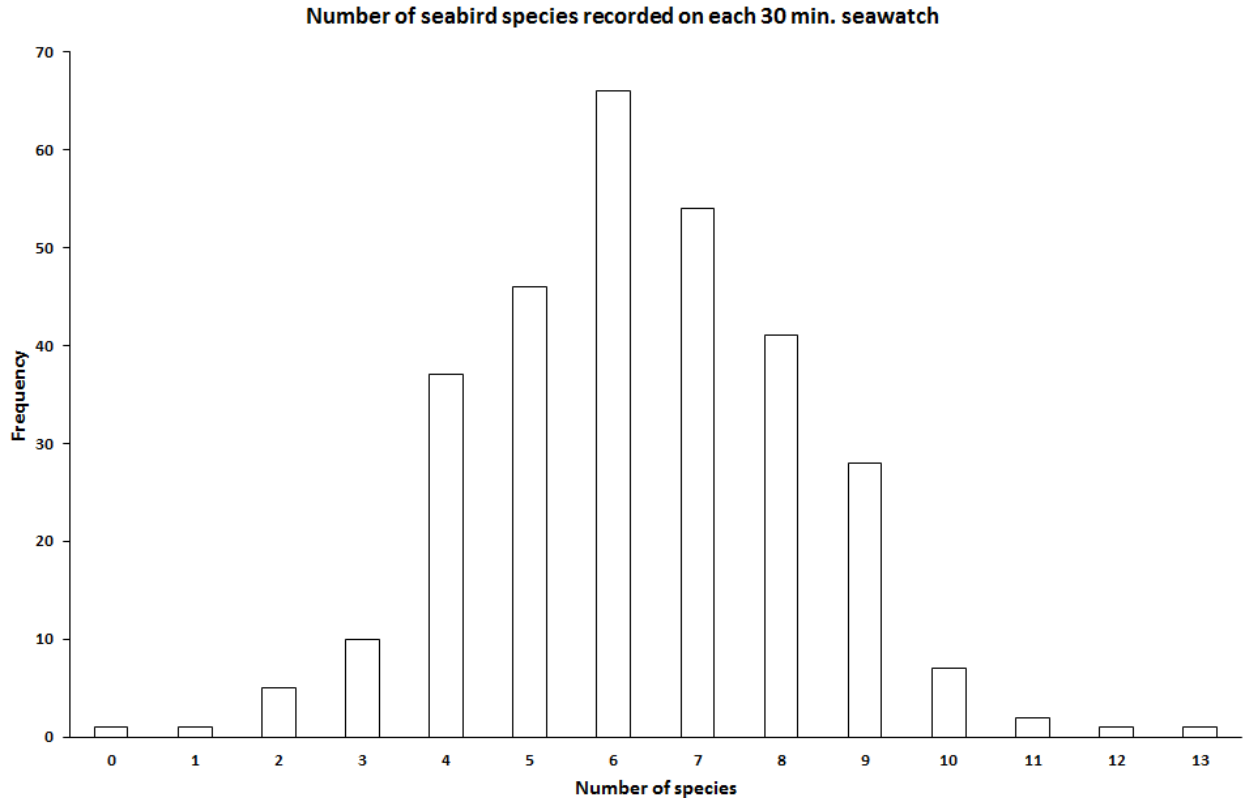
October-December



	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. 30 min. counts	2	4	2	2	6	18	36	66	56	60	34	14
Number of birds	43	20	84	663	891	1639	6567	14388	12205	23202	5805	324
Mean per 30 mins.	22	5	42	332	149	91	182	218	218	387	171	23

Two obvious peaks were present during the year; a spring peak in April and an autumn peak in October. The traditional autumn passage period produced some of the best seawatching day totals and species totals. However, one of the highest species total recorded involved one of the lowest counts of individuals, which demonstrates that interesting seawatches need not involve large numbers passing off-shore. Numbers passing Lossiemouth dropped off in November and particularly in December. There was an obvious reduction in both the number of individuals and species passing from 15 Nov throughout the winter period, when most counts were below 100 individuals (frequently less than 50) and species totals were mostly six or less.





An arbitrary total of ten or more species, or a count of over 500 individuals, in 30 minutes was considered a very good passage. Seawatches producing totals of ten or more species occurred on 11 occasions; one in late summer (28 Jun) and ten in the autumn/early winter period (30 Aug-15 Nov), while records over 500 individuals occurred on 26 occasions (29 Jul-1 Nov). Apart from the summer record, all of these good seawatches corresponded with the traditional late summer and autumn periods.

The wind directions which coincided with large species counts were northerly (1), easterly (1), southerly (2), south-westerly (3), westerly (2) and north-westerly (2). High counts of individuals occurred in all wind directions: northerly (3), north-easterly (1), easterly (2), south-easterly (7), southerly (2), south-westerly (2), westerly (5) and north-westerly (4).

A total of 17 very low species counts (totals 0-3) occurred in February (3), July (1), September (4), October (7) and December (2). These low counts were associated with winds from a north-easterly (2), south-easterly (7), southerly (3), westerly (2) and north-westerly (3) direction.

The following table is a summary of the best seawatches for species and number of individuals in date order. Weather details show a variety of weather conditions, wind direction and wind strength produced good seawatches.

Date	Time	Weather	Best species totals (n=11)	Best individuals totals(n=10)
28 Jun	07:25-07:55	N5-6, overcast, some drizzle, occasional rain	10 species recorded: Common Scoter 142, Gannet 86, Kittiwake 35, Manx Shearwater 19, Fulmar 15, Razorbill 3, Sooty Shearwater 1, Red-throated Diver 1, Great Skua 1, Guillemot 1	
29 Jul	19:25-19:55	W3, cloudy		727 individuals recorded: Kittiwake 661, Gannet 55, Fulmar 4, Sandwich Tern 3, Arctic Skua 2, Common Tern 1, Cory's Shearwater 1
30 Aug	08:40-09:10	W4, rain	10 species recorded: Kittiwake 69, Gannet 35, Sandwich Tern 13, Fulmar 7, Common Tern 7, Arctic Skua 2, Manx Shearwater 1, Red-throated Diver 1, Great Skua 1	
7 Sep	09:20-09:50	NW5, occasional rain	10 species recorded: Fulmar 62, Gannet 41, Kittiwake 38, Razorbill 34, Sandwich Tern 9, Manx Shearwater 6, Guillemot 5, Sooty Shearwater 1, Red-throated Diver 1, Arctic Skua 1	
28 Sep	07:30-08:00	SW3, bright		899 individuals recorded: Razorbill 590, Kittiwake 233, Gannet 55, Common Scoter 18, Arctic Skua 2, Red-throated Diver 1
1 Oct	07:55-08:25	W4, cloudy		587 individuals recorded: Kittiwake 390, Gannet 158, Razorbill 120, Common Scoter 13, Arctic Skua 2, Velvet Scoter 1, Red-throated Diver 1, Great Northern Diver 1, Great Skua 1
1 Oct	08:25-08:55	W4, cloudy		949 individuals recorded: Kittiwake 538, Gannet 260, Razorbill 125, Common Scoter 7, Arctic Skua 7, Red-throated Diver 4, Guillemot 3, Black Guillemot 1, Long-tailed Skua 1
5 Oct	08:45-09:15	SE2, cloudy		930 individuals recorded: Gannet 503, Razorbill 322, Kittiwake 102, Velvet Scoter 4, Scaup 3, Common Scoter 1, Black Guillemot 1, Arctic Skua 1
7 Oct	07:55-08:25	SE2, persistent heavy rain, huge swell		708 individuals recorded: Kittiwake 550, Gannet 122, Common Scoter 22, Arctic Skua 12, Velvet Scoter 1, Razorbill 1
13 Oct	07:40-08:10	N2, cloudy		906 individuals recorded: Kittiwake 837, Long-tailed Duck 35, Razorbill 15, Common Scoter 9, Gannet 5, Great Northern Diver 3, Red-throated Diver 1, Little Gull 1
15 Oct	08:10-08:40	E2, cloudy	13 species recorded: Kittiwake 571, Gannet 76, Razorbill 34, Pomarine Skua 4, Arctic Skua 4, Common Scoter 2, Velvet Scoter 2, Long-tailed Duck 1, Red-throated	699 individuals recorded: Kittiwake 571, Gannet 76, Razorbill 34, Pomarine Skua 4, Arctic Skua 4, Common Scoter 2, Velvet Scoter 2, Long-tailed Duck 1, Red-throated

15 Oct	08:40-08:10	E2, cloudy	Diver 1, Black Guillemot 1, Long-tailed Skua 1, Great Skua 1, Little Gull 1	Diver 1, Black Guillemot 1, Long-tailed Skua 1, Great Skua 1, Little Gull 1 799 individuals recorded: Kittiwake 595, Gannet 143, Razorbill 35, Velvet Scoter 8, Long-tailed Duck 5, Pomarine Skua 5, Red-throated Diver 4, Common Scoter 3, Great Northern Diver 1
19 Oct	08:20-08:50	SW4, cloudy	10 species recorded: Gannet 224, Kittiwake 224, Razorbill 36, Long-tailed Duck 8, Common Scoter 5, Black Guillemot 3, Velvet Scoter 2, Red-throated Diver 1, Great Northern Diver 1, Guillemot 1	
20 Oct	08:30-09:00	NW3, cloudy	10 species recorded: Kittiwake 143, Gannet 91, Long-tailed Duck 14, Common Scoter 6, Black Guillemot 4, Razorbill 3, Great Northern Diver 2, Pomarine Skua 2, Velvet Scoter 1, Red-throated Diver 1	
22 Oct	08:35-09:05	SW2, cloudy	10 species recorded: Gannet 203, Kittiwake 190, Red-throated Diver 14, Long-tailed Duck 13, Common Scoter 13, Razorbill, 7, Great Northern Diver 3, Slavonian Grebe 1, Black Guillemot 1, Guillemot 1	
1 Nov	08:00-08:30	S2, cloudy		892 individuals recorded: Razorbill 421, Kittiwake 231, Gannet 157, Long-tailed Duck 36, Guillemot 23, Black Guillemot 16, Common Scoter 5, Great Northern Diver 2, Red-throated Diver 1
2 Nov	07:45-08:15	S2, cloudy	11 species recorded: Gannet 64, Razorbill 37, Long-tailed Duck 33, Common Scoter 7, Little Auk 7, Guillemot 7, Red-throated Diver 6, Kittiwake 6, Black Guillemot 4, Great Northern Diver 3, Arctic Skua 2	
2 Nov	08:15-08:45	S2, cloudy	12 species recorded: Gannet 116, Kittiwake 68, Long-tailed Duck 28, Razorbill 26, Velvet Scoter 3, Great Northern Diver 3, Arctic Skua 3, Red-throated Diver 2, Little Auk 2, Common Scoter 1, Guillemot 1, Pomarine Skua 1	
9 Nov	08:35-09:05	W2, cloudy	11 species recorded: Gannet 206, Kittiwake 63, Razorbill 60, Long-tailed Duck 24, Guillemot 12, Common Scoter 9, Great Northern Diver 5, Black Guillemot 3, Velvet Scoter 2, Red-throated Diver 2, Little Auk 1	
15 Nov	08:00-08:30	SW2, cloudy	10 species recorded: Kittiwake 91, Gannet 81, Long-tailed Duck 28, Pomarine Skua 6, Velvet Scoter 5, Razorbill 4, Red-throated Diver 2, Arctic Skua 2, Common Scoter 1, Little Auk 1	

Species summaries

Each of the 29 seabird species recorded during the year are summarised in the following section. As an indication of the species status within Moray & Nairn as a whole, the status information relating to non-breeding data from the main Species Accounts are given in italics.

Scaup

Scarce winter visitor.

Only recorded in the autumn with a total of 60 individuals seen in September and October. In September, 17 were seen over two seawatches while, in October, 43 were seen passing over seven seawatches. The largest 30 minute count involved 17 during a late afternoon seawatch on 4 Oct.

Long-tailed Duck

Common winter visitor offshore.

A total of 1300 individuals was seen.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Mean count/30 mins	0	0	6.0	8.0	0	0	0	0	0.1	8.3	19.1	8.8
Monthly total	0	0	12	13	0	0	0	0	3	497	649	123
Highest 30 min. count	0	0	11	16	0	0	0	0	2	47	48	38

Common Scoter

Common winter visitor, small numbers in summer.

A total of 850 individuals was seen.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Mean count/30 mins	0	0	13.5	1.0	0	11.5	2.1	0.1	3.7	3.5	3.0	1.2
Monthly total	0	0	27	2	0	207	77	7	205	207	101	17
Highest 30 min. count	0	0	26	2	0	142	50	5	40	22	16	5

Velvet Scoter

Fairly common winter visitor.

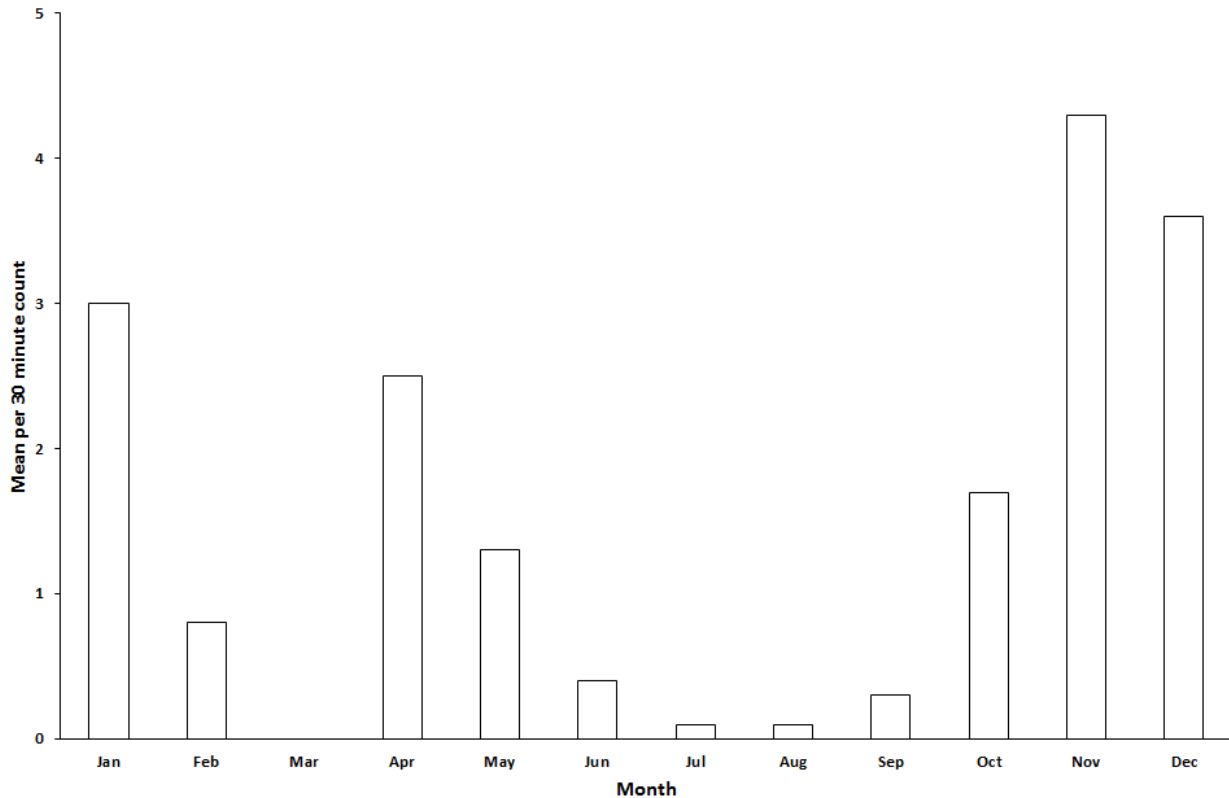
A total of 54 individuals was seen during August-December. The largest group was 8 males on 15 Oct, otherwise only singles or small groups recorded.

Red-throated Diver

Fairly common autumn and winter visitor offshore.

A total of 353 individuals was seen. The largest group together was 9 on 22 Oct.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Mean count/30 mins	3.0	0.8	0	2.5	1.3	0.4	0.1	0.1	0.3	1.7	4.3	3.6
Monthly total	6	3	0	5	8	8	2	5	17	102	147	50
Highest 30 min. count	6	1	0	5	3	3	1	2	3	14	20	12



Black-throated Diver

Scarce autumn and winter visitor offshore.

Only singles were seen. Similar to other divers, largest numbers were seen during the autumn period. In spring, seen on 12 Apr (2) and early summer on 14 Jun. Later in the year recorded on 26 Sep, 14 Oct (4), 17 Oct (2), 18 Oct (2), 24 Oct and 23 Nov. In winter, 2 on 6 Dec.

Great Northern Diver

Scarce visitor offshore.

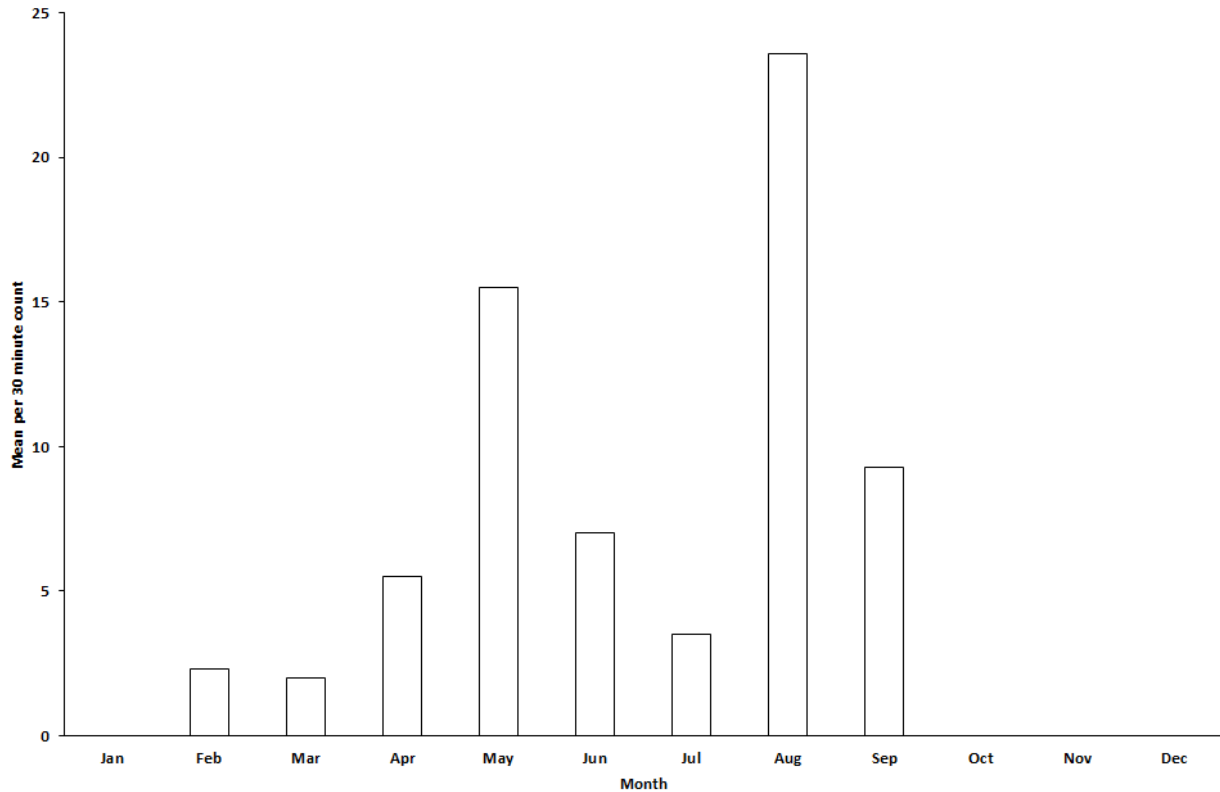
A total of 134 individuals was seen. Apart from one sighting in late March, all other records occurred in the autumn and second winter periods, with the majority in October. Totals in each month were: March (1), September (3), October (57), November (33) and December (28). Two consecutive counts on 9 Oct resulted in 22 individuals (3 singles, 2, 2, 2, 2, 2, 2, 3 & 4); all in breeding plumage.

Fulmar

Very common offshore.

A total of 2444 individuals was seen. One ‘Blue’ Fulmar was seen on 7 Sep. Despite regular seawatches and periods of good passage none were seen after 21 Sep until one flew east on 17 Nov. After the breeding season, individuals leave the Moray Firth and North Sea areas to become more pelagic in their habits.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Mean count/30 mins	0	3.0	2.0	5.5	15.7	6.8	3.5	23.6	9.3	0	<0.1	0
Monthly total	0	9	4	11	94	122	127	1555	521	0	1	0
Highest 30 min. count	0	8	3	10	25	15	9	138	64	0	1	0



Cory's Shearwater

Rare visitor.

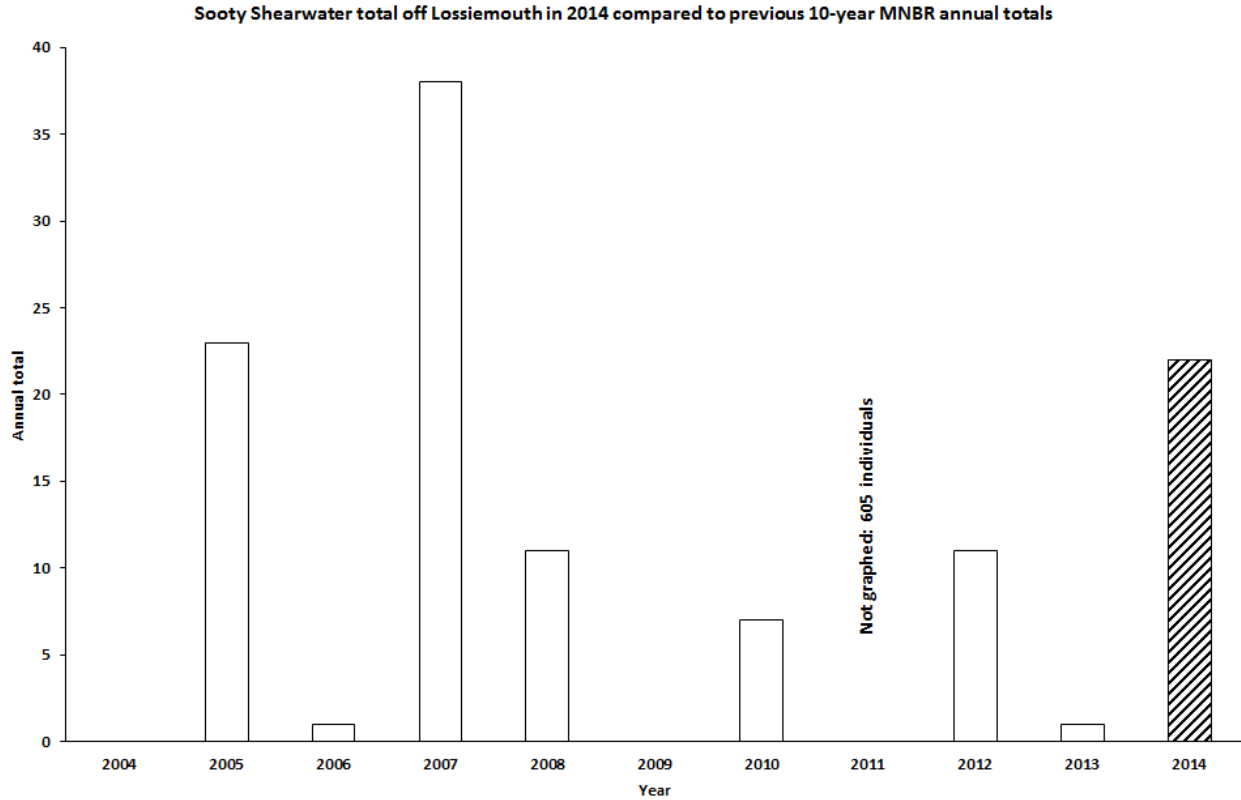
Two singles were seen flying west; the first on 29 Jul and the second on 14 Aug. These could possibly relate to the same individual given the fairly short period of time between sightings. The only previous record off the coast of Moray & Nairn was of one off Lossiemouth on 9 Jul 2000.

Sooty Shearwater

Very scarce migrant in late summer and autumn.

A total of 23 individuals was seen. Individuals or small groups passed in June (28th), August (13th & 18th), September (7th (5), 21st, 22nd (3), 24th (3), 27th (7; 3 together)) and November (8th).

The 10-year mean for Sooty Shearwater in Moray & Nairn between 2004-2013 from annual reports is 70. Although this is skewed because of the unprecedented total of 605 recorded in 2011. The median for this period is nine individuals; this would be closer to an annual total in a typical year. The following graph has the 2011 total excluded to illustrate a more typical 10-year graph.



Manx Shearwater

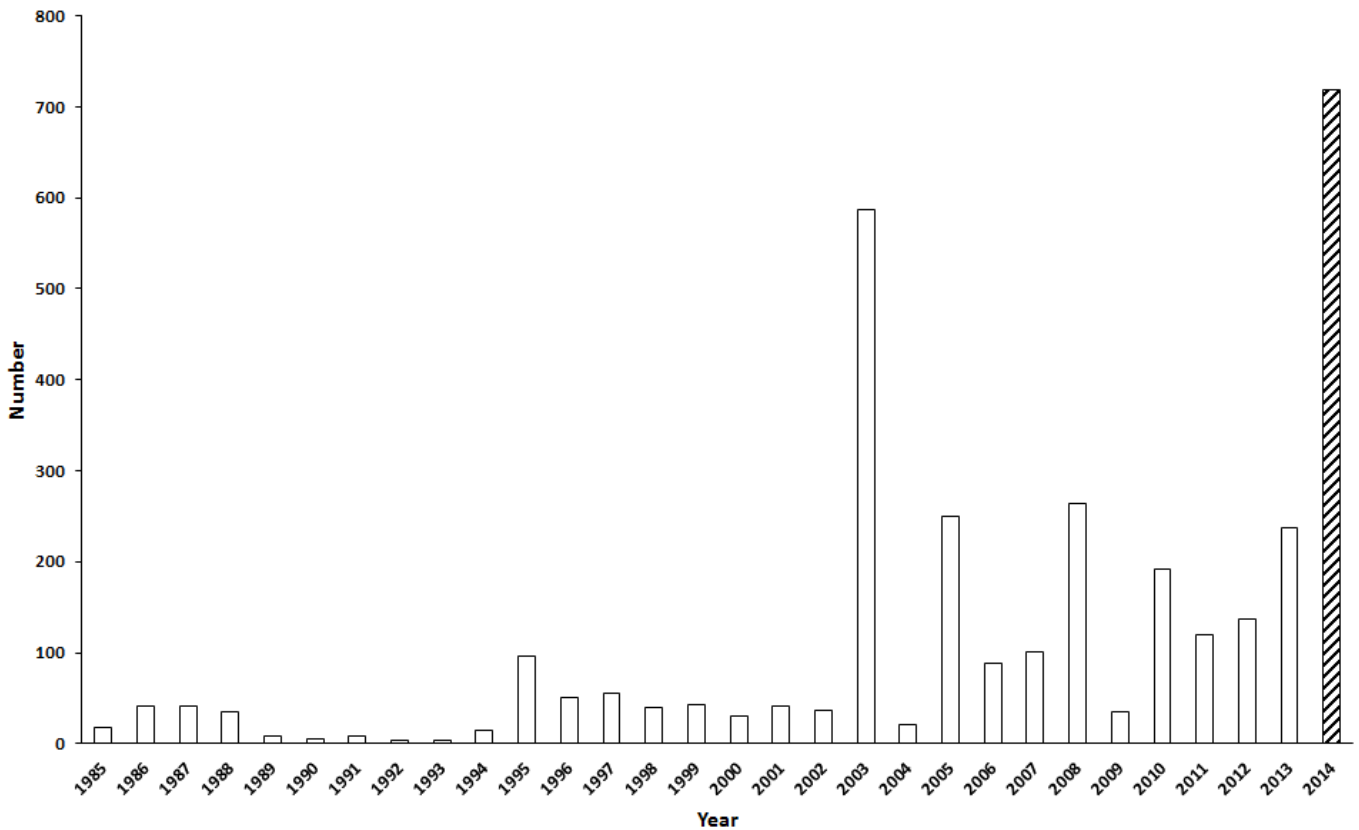
Fairly common offshore in summer and autumn.

A total of 719 individuals was seen.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Mean count/30 mins	0	0	0	0	0	5.2	2.1	6.4	2.1	0.1	0	0
Monthly total	0	0	0	0	0	93	76	422	120	8	0	0
Highest 30 min. count	0	0	0	0	0	47	22	60	40	5	0	0

The 10-year mean for Manx Shearwater in Moray & Nairn (excluding feeding groups where possible) between 2004-2013 from annual reports is 145. The total from this study was 719 and is well above the 10-year mean. The previous best year was 2003, when nearly 600 Manx Shearwaters were recorded in Moray & Nairn. The large total in 2014 is probably just a result of increased seawatching effort, but it could also have been an unprecedented year for the species passing Lossiemouth.

Manx Shearwater totals published in MNBR from 1985-2013

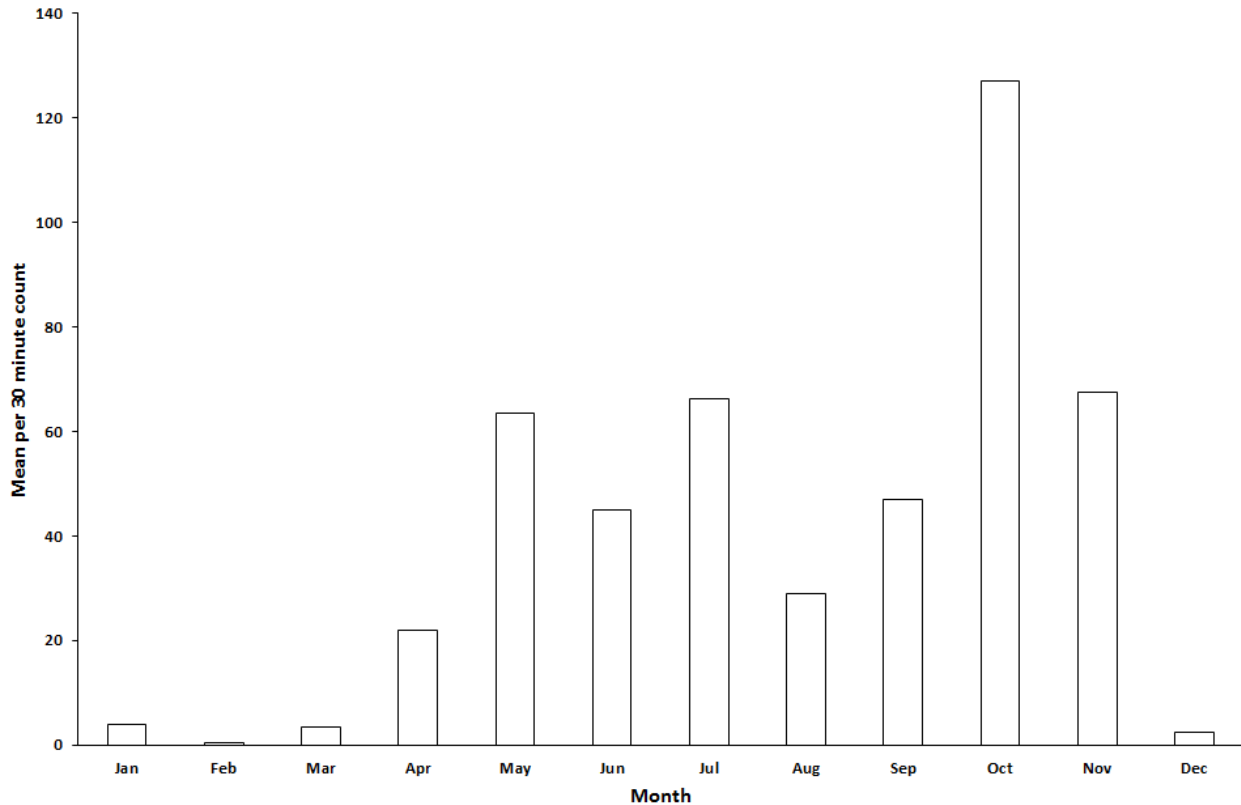


Gannet

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

A total of 18,102 individuals was seen. Low numbers recorded in January-March before increasing in April. There was an obvious autumn peak in October, before a dramatic drop in numbers through November, and especially in December.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Mean count/30 mins	4.0	0.5	3.5	22.0	63.5	45.0	66.3	28.9	46.9	126.8	67.4	2.4
Monthly total	8	2	7	44	381	810	2387	1908	2627	7605	2290	33
Highest 30 min. count	5	2	5	34	155	135	190	80	240	503	206	13



Slavonian Grebe

Scarce offshore in winter.

Single records on 22 & 24 Oct probably related to the same individual.

Pomarine Skua

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

A total of 61 individuals was seen. Singles or very small groups (consisting of 2-3 individuals) were recorded in the spring (May) and then again in the autumn through to early winter (August, September, October & November). The largest multiple sighting involved 9 on 15 Oct. The majority of these sightings occurred during periods of on-shore winds.

Arctic Skua

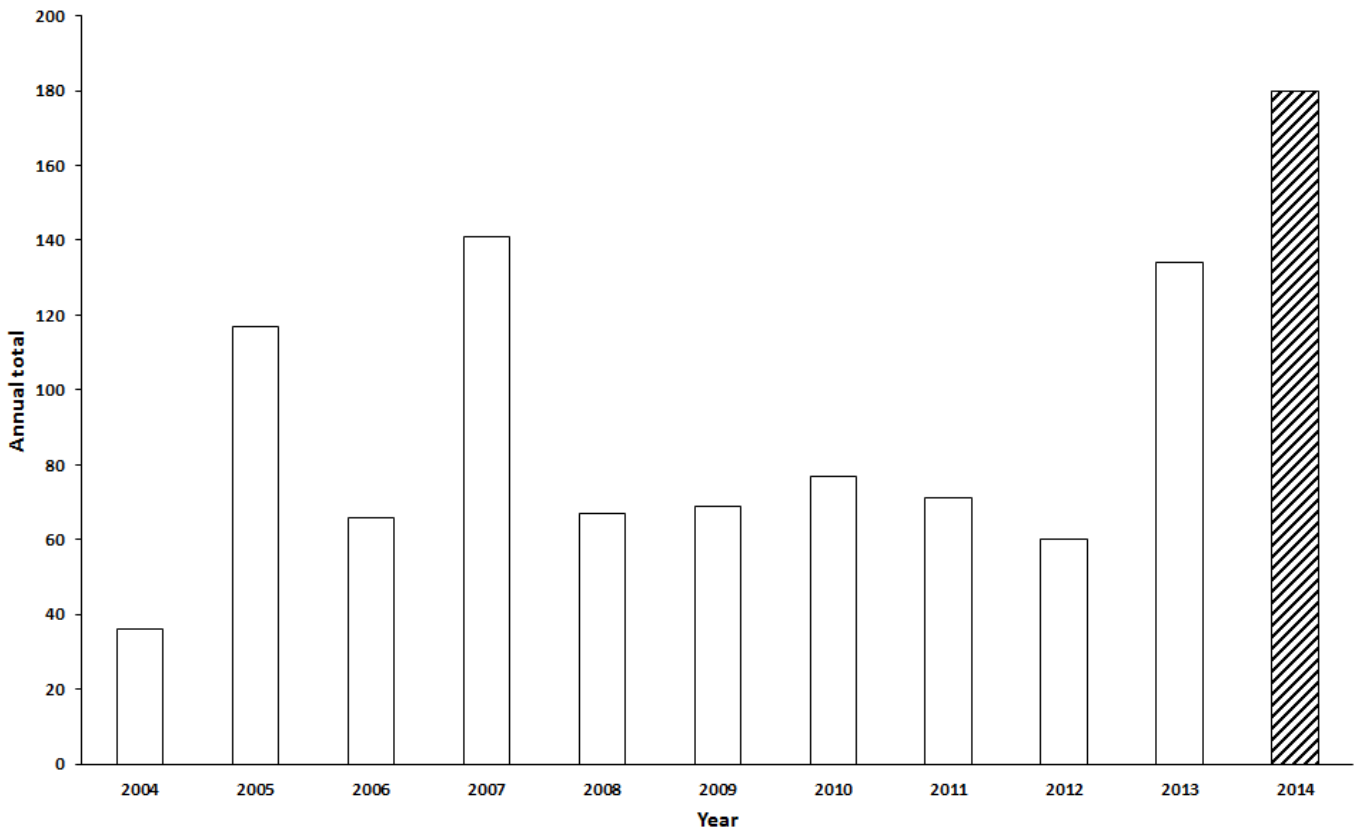
Fairly common migrant in summer and autumn.

A total of 180 individuals was seen.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Mean count/30 mins	0	0	0	0	0	0.1	0.1	0.8	1.0	0.8	0.4	0
Monthly total	0	0	0	0	0	1	5	54	57	49	14	0
Highest 30 min. count	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	8	12	12	4	0

The 10-year mean for Arctic Skua in Moray & Nairn between 2004-2013 from annual reports is 84. The total for this study is much higher than the 10-year mean and is probably the result of increased effort. As this species is regularly seen close in-shore many individuals can be recorded by land based seawatching.

Arctic Skua total off Lossiemouth in 2014 compared to previous 10-year MNBR annual totals



Long-tailed Skua

Rare visitor.

Juveniles were seen on 1 Oct, 15 Oct and 15 Nov.

Great Skua

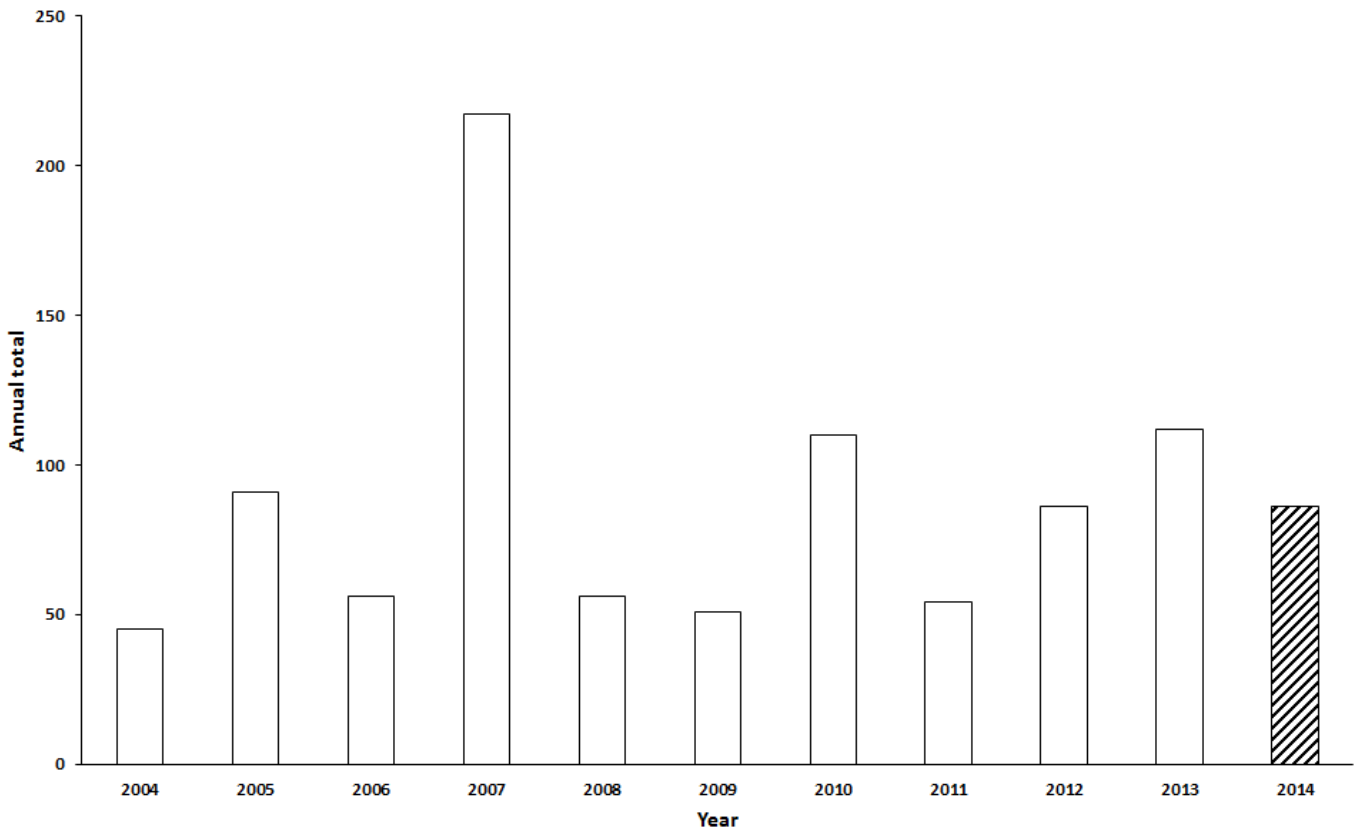
Fairly common migrant in summer and autumn.

A total of 86 individuals was seen.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Mean count/30 mins	0	0	0	0	0	0.2	0.2	0.7	0.3	0.2	0	0
Monthly total	0	0	0	0	0	4	7	47	17	11	0	0
Highest 30 min. count	0	0	0	0	0	3	2	4	5	8	0	0

The 10-year mean for Great Skua in Moray & Nairn between 2004-2013 from annual reports is 88. The 2014 total is very close to the 10-year mean. This is another species where individuals can be seen passing very close to shore.

Great Skua total off Lossiemouth in 2014 compared to previous 10-year MNBR annual totals



Puffin

Very scarce offshore.

Nine individuals were seen. The majority was observed during summer seawatches; singles were recorded in May (11th), June (4th & 21st) and July (3rd, 8th (2), 14th & 19th). In the autumn, seen once in early September (7th).

Black Guillemot

Scarce offshore.

A total of 394 individuals was seen. The largest monthly total was 220 in August.

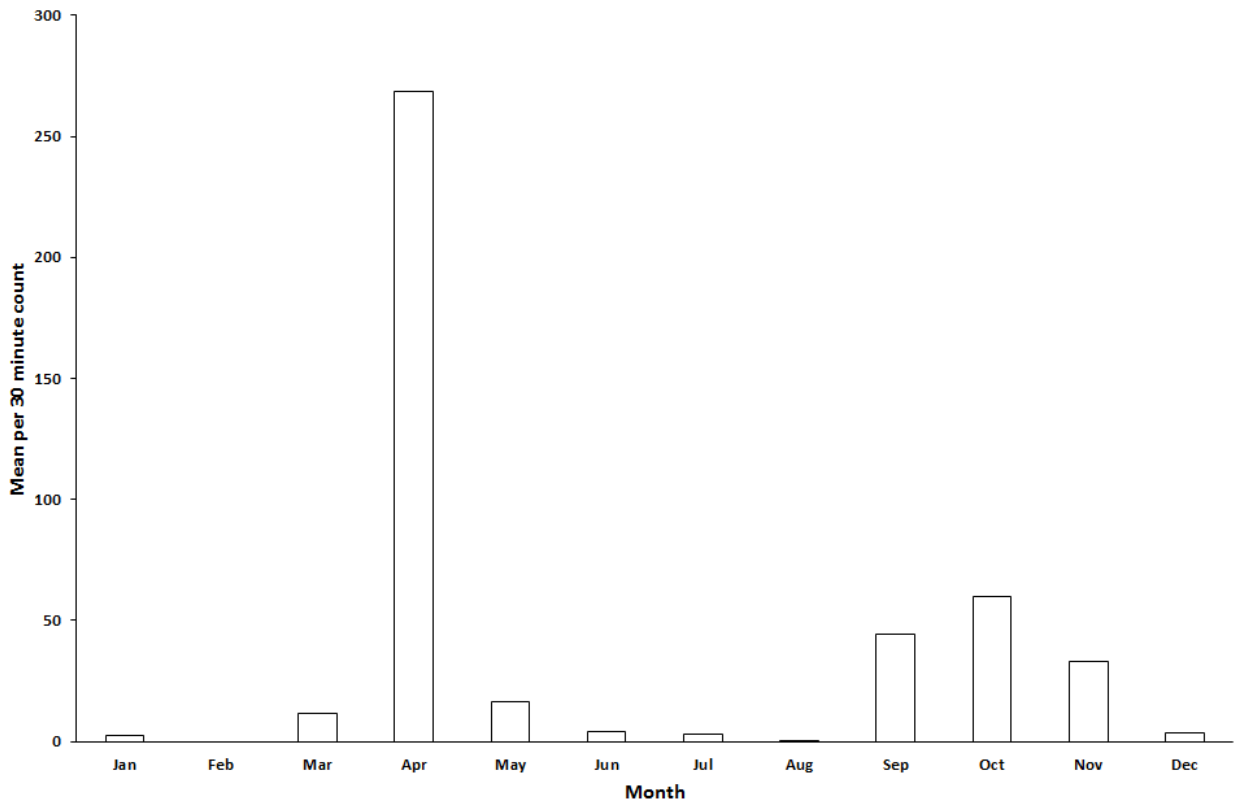
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Mean count/30 mins	0.5	0	0	1.0	0	0.1	0.2	3.3	0.3	1.0	2.4	0.6
Monthly total	1	0	0	2	0	1	6	220	17	58	80	9
Highest 30 min. count	1	0	0	2	0	1	4	30	4	10	24	3

Razorbill

Very common offshore.

A total of 8098 individuals was seen.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Mean count/30 mins	2.5	0	11.5	268.5	16.3	4.1	2.9	0.2	44.3	60.0	33.3	3.8
Monthly count	5	0	23	537	98	74	104	10	2481	3580	1133	53
Highest 30 min. count	5	0	16	280	38	21	69	4	590	447	421	21



A total of 12 seawatches involved counts exceeding 250 individuals. The highest 30 minute spring count was 280 on 3 Apr, with another high count of 257 on 12 Apr. During the autumn 10 counts exceeded 250 individuals; the largest count occurred on 28 Sep when 590 were counted flying west into the Moray Firth.

Little Auk

Very scarce visitor in autumn and winter. Occasionally more numerous.

Singles were seen on 26 Jan, 1 Feb, 9 Nov, 15 Nov (2), 18 Nov (3) and 6 Dec. A small passage occurred on 2 Nov when 12 flew west.

Guillemot

Very common offshore.

A total of 348 individuals was seen.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Mean count/30 mins	0.5	0	0	0.5	1.0	0.9	0.3	0.1	0.7	2.6	3.3	0
Monthly total	1	0	0	1	6	17	12	5	41	154	111	0
Highest 30 min. count	1	0	0	1	6	4	3	4	6	91	36	0

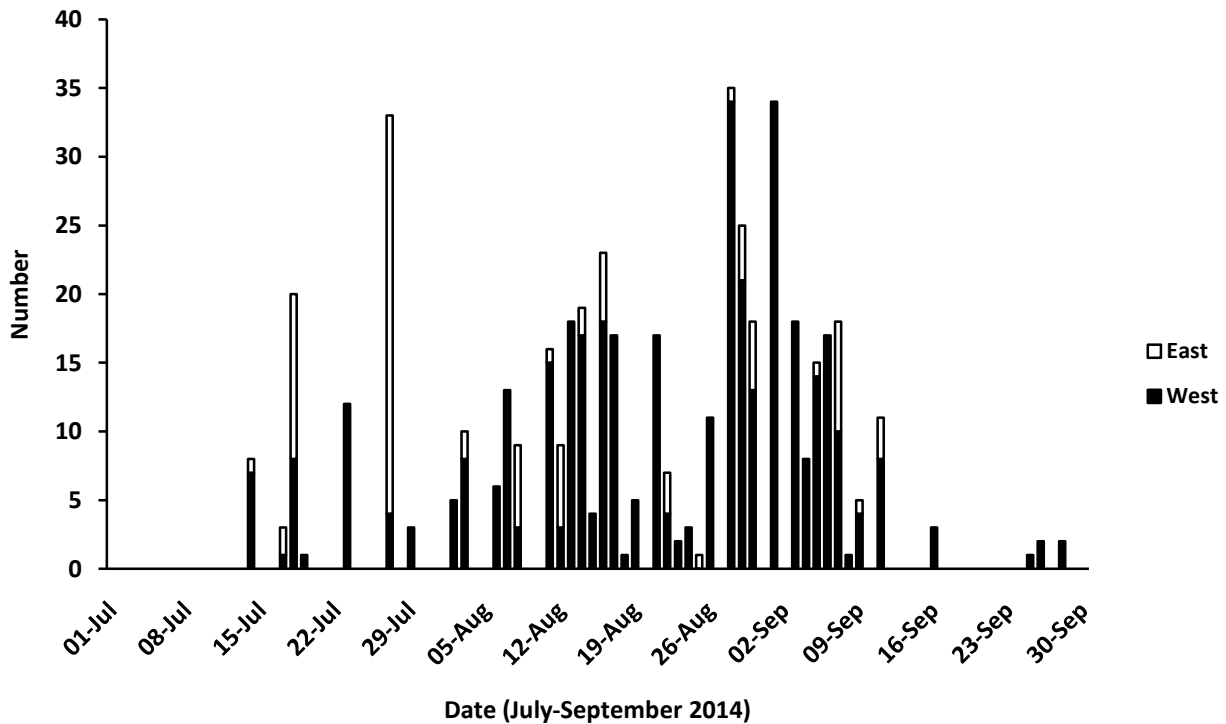
Sandwich Tern

Very common summer visitor.

A total of 512 individuals was seen. Less frequent on seawatches after 11 Sep, last seen on 8 Oct.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Mean count/30 mins	0	0	0	0	0	1.0	2.3	4.2	2.4	<0.1	0	0
Monthly total	0	0	0	0	0	18	83	274	135	2	0	0
Highest 30 min. count	0	0	0	0	0	8	27	25	18	2	0	0

The graph illustrates that the recorded passage in late summer and autumn is predominately in a westerly direction. This fits the general trend of individuals arriving in late summer and autumn from breeding areas along the North Sea coasts and travelling west into the Moray Firth.



Common Tern

Summer visitor.

A total of 3002 individuals was seen. These large numbers, particularly in August, corresponded with increased numbers loafing on the Lossie estuary.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Mean count/30 mins	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.7	37.3	5.3	0	0	0
Monthly total	0	0	0	0	0	0	240	2464	298	0	0	0
Highest 30 min. count	0	0	0	0	0	0	68	199	63	0	0	0

Arctic Tern

Summer visitor.

Small numbers were seen in May (6), June (6) and July (9).

Sabine's Gull

Rare migrant.

A juvenile was seen on 2 Oct. This could relate to an individual seen at the Spey estuary 21-22 Sep and Lossie estuary 28 Sep.

Little Gull

Very scarce visitor.

Singles seen on 26 Jan (adult) and 14 Jul (1st summer) corresponded with an increase in sightings at the mouth of the River Lossie in the early winter period and the Lossie estuary in summer. A 1st winter bird was seen on 13 & 15 Oct.

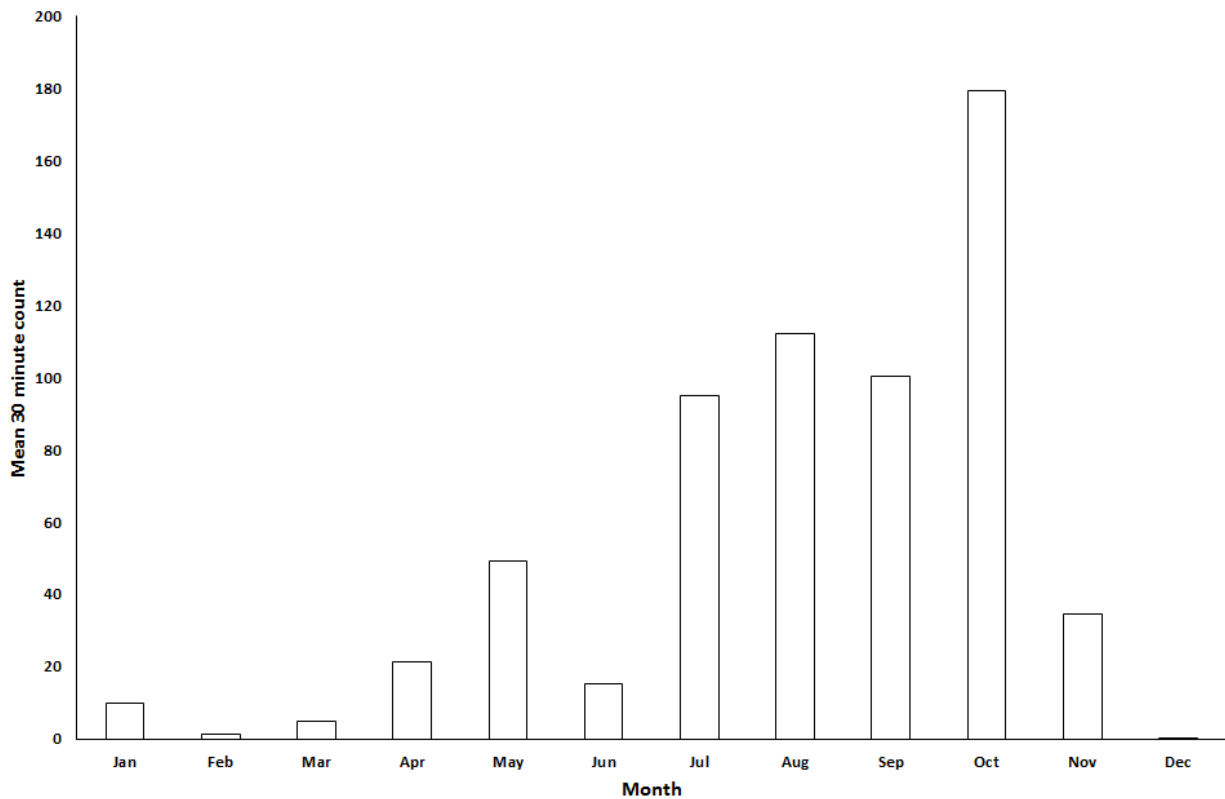
Kittiwake

Very common migrant.

A total of 29,031 individuals was seen. This was the commonest species recorded.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Mean count/30 mins	10.0	1.3	5.0	21.5	49.2	15.2	95.1	112.3	100.3	179.2	34.4	0.3
Monthly total	20	5	10	43	295	274	3425	7412	5618	10754	1171	4
Highest 30 min. count	20	3	9	31	109	35	661	424	531	837	231	3

From late July to mid October, 14 counts exceeded 400 individuals per 30 mins, with the largest count of 837 occurring on 13 Oct.



Other species recorded during seawatches

Whooper Swan	Pink-footed Goose	Greylag Goose	Shelduck
Wigeon	Teal	Mallard	Pintail
Eider	Goldeneye	Red-breasted Merganser	Cormorant
Shag	Grey Heron	Oystercatcher	Golden Plover
Grey Plover	Ringed Plover	Whimbrel	Curlew
Bar-tailed Godwit	Turnstone	Sanderling	Purple Sandpiper
Dunlin	Redshank	Black-headed Gull	Common Gull
Lesser Black-backed Gull	Herring Gull	Great Black-backed Gull	Carrion Crow
Skylark	Starling	Fieldfare	Redwing
Robin	Meadow Pipit	Snow Bunting	

Notable records for other species:**Shelduck**

Ten together flying east on 22 Aug.

Teal

The majority were seen in the autumn period: August (10), September (31) and October (45). The early autumn sightings did not correspond with an increase in numbers at Lossie estuary, where the first was seen on 28 Sep. In winter, 2 on 6 Dec.

Pintail

A female was seen flying west on 15 Aug.

Goldeneye

Only seen in October-December: 14 Oct (male), 18 Oct (3 males, 1 female), 1 Nov (4 males), 2 Nov (3 males, 2 females), 8 Nov (male), 9 Nov (female), 15 Nov (female), 7 Dec (female), 25 Dec (female) and 26 Dec (female).

Golden Plover

Thirteen on 27 Jul and one on 12 Aug.

Grey Plover

Two together in off the sea on 27 Sep and 5 Oct.

Whimbrel

The only group seen was five on 6 Aug, otherwise singles on 7 Aug and 4 & 7 Sep.

Bar-tailed Godwit

Two singles were seen on 21 Oct and two together on 24 Oct.

Carrion Crow

Two together flying east well out from the harbour on 24 Oct.

Skylark

One in off the sea on 5 Oct.

Starling

One in off the sea on 7 Dec.

Fieldfare

Ten in off the sea on 7 Nov.

Redwing

Singles in off the sea on 2 & 7 Nov.

Robin

Three in off the sea on 26 Sep.

Meadow Pipit

Two were seen flying west on 12 Apr and one in off the sea on 26 Sep.

Snow Bunting

One in off the sea on 2 Nov, one flying east on 17 Nov and another overhead 4 Dec.

Non-avian records**Minke Whale**

A single off the harbour on 6-7 Aug, with a feeding group of c.60 Manx Shearwaters present on the sea around the feeding whale.

Bottle-nosed Dolphin

Very regular off the harbour throughout the summer with records assumed to relate to the same group. Largest counts were 12 on 15 Jul and 12+ on 4 Sep. Less frequent from late September onwards.

Orca

A pod of three, including one mature bull, was seen moving east on 9 Jun.

Harbour Porpoise

A single on 17 Jul and two on 28 Sep.

Weather conditions

The number of each 30 minute seawatches and the prevailing wind direction are summarised in the following tables. These indicate the spread of seawatches throughout a month, how many seawatches were undertaken on each day and wind direction (including changes in direction in subsequent seawatches). The wind was recorded as ‘calm’ when the wind was very light, making an assessment of direction difficult.

January

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	
			1												
			S												
16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
										1					
										S					

February

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
1	1													2
S	S													NW
16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28		

March

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	
														1	
														SW	
16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
														1	
														NE	

April

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
		1									1			
		NE									W			
16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30

May

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	
										1					
										NE					
16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
						2			2		1				
						NE			NW		NE				
									Calm						

June

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
			1 E				2 E SE	1 Calm					1 Calm	
16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
			2 SW		1 W		1 Calm	1 NE			1 NE	5 N	2 N	

July

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	
1 NE	3 SW	1 S	1 N			1 Calm	3 NE						4 S Calm	2 S	
16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
	2 NE	4 E	3 E NE				3 NE				2 Calm		2 W	4 NW	

August

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	
	2 N	4 N NE			4 NW Calm	2 Calm	2 SE		2 NE	2 NW	2 W	2 NW	3 NW	3 N	
16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
4 NW	6 NW N	2 N	2 N	2 N	2 N	4 NW	2 W	2 N	2 NE	2 NE		2 SE	2 SE	4 W N	

September

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
2 W	2 W	2 NE	2 E	2 NW	4 W NW	8 NW	2 NW	2 Calm		2 E				
16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
2 S					2 NE	4 S		2 NW	2 W	4 W	5 W SW	6 SW E	1 SE	

October

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
4 W	2 SW		4 W	4 SE		6 SE	2 W	2 NW	2 NW			4 N NE	2 NE	2 E

16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
	2	2	4	2	6	4		2	2	2					
	SE	S	SW	NW	NW	SW		SW	SW	SW					

November

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
2	4					1	3	2					2	4
S	S					SE	S	W					SE	SW

16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
2	4	2				2	2						2	2
W	E	E				SE	SW						SE	SW

December

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
			2		2	2						2	2	
			SW		SW	W						SW	SW	

16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
									2	2					
									SW	SW					

BREEDING BLACK-HEADED GULLS IN MORAY & NAIRN IN 2014

MARTIN COOK

Introduction

In Scotland, the Black-headed Gull is considered to be a common and widespread breeding species throughout much of Scotland with the exception of the north and west Highlands (BS3). The Scottish breeding population has been surveyed on three occasions, Operation Seafarer in 1969-70, the Seabird Colony Register (SCR) Census in 1985-88 and Seabird 2000 in 1998-2002.

The numbers of apparently occupied nests (AONs) counted in Moray and in Nairn were as follows:

Survey	Dates		Coastal AONs	Inland AONs	TOTAL AONs
Operation Seafarer	1969-70	Moray	0	No survey	Incomplete survey
		Nairn	0	No survey	
Seabird Colony Register (SCR)	1985-88	Moray	40	723	913
		Nairn	10	140	
Seabird 2000	1998-2002	Moray	0	174	565
		Nairn	300	91	

Although considered 'coastal', the large Nairn colony in Seabird 2000 was at Easter Lochend (NH8453), about 4km inland from the coast. Most Black-headed Gull colonies in Moray & Nairn are further inland and

were not surveyed at all in 1969-70 and probably incompletely in 1985-88. The inland coverage in 1998-2002 was likely to have been more complete. Bearing this in mind, it appears that a substantial reduction in breeding Black-headed Gulls took place between the late 1980s and the late 1990s.

Many other counts of Black-headed Gull colonies in Moray & Nairn have been undertaken over the years on an irregular basis, and these are listed under the relevant 10km square in the Appendix. It may well be that this list is incomplete, and any other historical counts would be gratefully received.

During fieldwork for the 2002-06 Breeding Birds of North-east Scotland atlas, colonies were mapped but not systematically counted. Nonetheless it was apparent at that time that many colonies in Moray were now unoccupied or much reduced. In an attempt to quantify the present situation, Moray Bird Club (the Moray branch of the SOC) undertook a survey of Black-headed Gull colonies in Moray & Nairn in the summer of 2014.

The survey was organised on a 10km square basis, with participants undertaking to visit known former colonies and other suitable habitat within their allocated 10km square. Coverage of the 40 whole or part 10km squares in Moray & Nairn was achieved by 32 observers. It is thought that very few, if any, colonies were missed.

Table 1. Breeding colonies of Black-headed Gulls in Moray & Nairn in 2014 (NH94 was surveyed in 2015).

	Occupied sites	Main feature in square, or occupied site	Occupied site grid ref	Apparently occupied nests	Apparently incubating adults	Total adults
NH83	0	Streens		0	0	0
NH84	0	Clunas		0	0	0
NH85	0	Nairn		0	0	0
NH93	0	Aitnoch		0	0	0
NH94	0	Ferness		0	0	0
NH95	0	Auldearn		0	0	0
NH96	0	Culbin		0	0	0
NJ00	0	Loch Avon		0	0	0
NJ03	0	Dava		0	0	0
NJ04	2	Loch Noir	NJ0945	33	33	62
		Loch Dallas	NJ0947	112	112	245
NJ05	0	Forres		0	0	0
NJ06	0	Findhorn Bay		0	0	0
NJ10	0	Inchrory		0	0	0
NJ11	0	Tomintoul		0	0	0
NJ12	0	Strath Avon		0	0	0
NJ13	0	Ballindalloch		0	0	0
NJ14	1	Loch of the Cowlatt	NJ1244	0	0	14
NJ15	1	Brokentore	NJ1854	38	34	133
NJ16	0	Burghead		0	0	0
NJ17	0	Covesea		0	0	0
NJ21	0	Lecht		0	0	0
NJ22	0	Glenlivet		0	0	0

NJ23	0	Ben Rinnes		0	0	0
NJ24	0	Aberlour		0	0	0
NJ25	0	Fogwatt		0	0	0
NJ26	1	Loch Spynie	NJ2366	12	9	16
NJ27	0	Lossiemouth		0	0	0
NJ32	0	Cabrach		0	0	0
NJ33	0	Dufftown		0	0	0
NJ34	0	Drummuir		0	0	0
NJ35	0	Fochabers		0	0	0
NJ36	0	Spey Bay		0	0	0
NJ42	0	The Buck		0	0	0
NJ43	0	Glass		0	0	0
NJ44	0	Caird's Hill		0	0	0
NJ45	0	Keith		0	0	0
NJ46	0	Buckie		0	0	0
NJ54	0	Rothiemay		0	0	0
NJ55	0	Edingight		0	0	0
NJ56	0	Cullen		0	0	0
		TOTALS		195	188	470

In summary, breeding was confirmed at only four colonies, where a total of 195 apparently occupied nests was found. This represents a substantial further decline in population since the SCR and Seabird 2000 surveys.

The reasons for this decline are unclear. Habitat change may be implicated in some instances, but other colonies have disappeared from sites where little habitat change is apparent. Whatever the reasons, it is now clear that the continued presence of Black-headed Gulls as a breeding species in Moray & Nairn cannot be taken for granted.

Appendix. Current and historical counts of Black-headed Gull colonies in Moray & Nairn.

NH84

Loch of Boath (NH8845) 1986 (21 pairs), 1988 (2 pairs), 1993 (0), 2014 (0).

NH85

Easter Lochend/Muir of the Clans (NH8453) 1991 (80 pairs), 1992 (25 pairs), 1993 (120 pairs), 1994 (120 pairs), 1995 (160 pairs), 1997 (c.700 adults), 2000 (c.300 pairs), 2014 (0).

Loch Flemington (NH8152) 1989 (50-60 pairs), 2014 (0).

NH93

Dunearn (NH9339) 1992 (230 pairs), 2009 (c.30 pairs), 2011 (25 adults), 2014 (0).

NH93/94

Dava lochans (various grid refs) 1958 (c.200 pairs), 1986 (200+ pairs), 1990 (315 pairs), 1992 (7 pairs), 1993 (0), 1994 (c.5 pairs), 1995 (45 pairs), 1996 (150 pairs), 1997 (c.120 pairs), 1998 (c.130 pairs), 2000 (135 AONs), 2009 (0), 2014 (0).

NH94

Achavraat (NH9148) 1989 (50-80 pairs), 1995 (0), 2014 (0).

Ardclach (NH9445) 1989 (30-40 pairs), 1993 (23 pairs), 1994 (70 pairs), 1995 (55 pairs), 1996 (0), 1997 (0), 1999 (0), 2014 (0).

Carn Achadh Gaibhre (NH9245) 1995 (135 pairs), 1996 (40 pairs), 1997 (45 pairs), 1998 (c.55 pairs), 1999 (c.30 pairs), 2000 (82 pairs), 2014 (0).

Drumlochan (NH9543[?]) 1988 (85 pairs), 2014 (0).

Loch Belivat (NH9547) 1958 (c.130 pairs), 1989 (0), 2014 (0).

NH95

Black Loch/Tearie (NH9855) 1958 (1375 pairs), 1970 (900-1100 pairs), 1989 (80 pairs), 1990 (40 pairs), 1993 (0), 2014 (0).

Fleenas (NH9051) 1991 (40 pairs), 1992 (85 pairs), 1993 (80 pairs), 1994 (7 pairs), 1995 (35 pairs), 1996 (3 pairs), 1997 (40 pairs), 1998 (7 pairs), 1999 (23 pairs), 2000 (6 pairs), 2001 (3 pairs), 2002 (16 pairs), 2003 (0), 2014 (0).

Fleenasnagael (NH9150) 1994 (60 pairs), 1995 (110 pairs), 1997 (6 pairs), 1998 (8 pairs), 1999 (3 pairs), 2000 (3 pairs), 2014 (0).

NJ04

Auchlochan (NJ0241) 1989 (20+ pairs), 1996 (10 pairs).

Loch Dallas (NJ0947) 1986 (80 pairs), 1988 (112 pairs), 1991 (45 pairs), 1995 (45 pairs), 1996 (c.60 adults), 2012 (20+ pairs), 2013 (c.50 AONs, 230 ads), 2014 (112 AONs, 245 ads).

Loch Noir (NJ0945) 1969 (70 pairs), 1979 (600 pairs), 1987 (40-50 pairs), 1988 (6 pairs), 1995 (0), 2000 (4 pairs), 2009 (6 pairs), 2010 (15-20 pairs), 2013 (45 ads), 2014 (33 AONs, 62 ads).

Moss of Dunphail (grid ref?) 1992 (11 pairs), 2000 (7 pairs), 2014 (0).

NJ06

RAF Kinloss (grid ref?) 1960s (up to 500 pairs), 2014 (0).

Findhorn Bay (grid ref?) 1995 (1 pair), 2014 (0).

NJ11

Auchnahyle (NJ1614) 1992 (3 pairs), 2014 (0).

Lochan Uaine (NJ1415) 1995 (3 pairs), 2014 (0).

NJ14

Loch of the Cowlatt (NJ1244) 1982 (20 pairs), 1987 (30-40 pairs), 1990 (55 pairs), 1992 (16 pairs), 1995 (3 pairs), 2000 (18 pairs), 2014 (14 ads).

Lochs of Bogmussach (NJ1347) 1992 (25 pairs), 1993 (52 pairs), 1995 (0), 1996 (10 pairs), 1997 (35 pairs), 1999 (7 pairs), 2000 (7 pairs), 2001 (45 pairs), 2002 (85 pairs), 2003 (21 pairs), 2004 (4 pairs), 2005 (28-30 pairs), 2006 (47 pairs), 2014 (0).

Lochs of Little Benshalag (NJ1143) 1987 (30-40 pairs), 1990 (45 pairs), 2014 (0).

Tapp (grid ref?) 1992 (1 pair), 2014 (0).

NJ15

Brokentore (NJ1854) 1988 (100 pairs), 1994 (25 pairs), 2014 (38 AONs, 133 ads).

NJ24

Archiestown (grid ref?) 1958 (c.20 pairs), 2014 (0).

NJ25

Cloddach quarry (NJ2059) 1991 (65-70 pairs), 1992 (60 pairs), 1994 (0), 2000 (1 pair), 2014 (0).

NJ26

Loch of Cotts (NJ2666) 1938 (150 pairs), 1958 (4-5 pairs).

Loch Spynie (NJ2366) 1938 (500 pairs), 1958 (100 pairs), 1988 (20 pairs), 1994 (2 pairs), 1995 (13 pairs), 1996 (10 pairs), 1998 (1 pair), 1999 (8-9 pairs), 2000 (17 pairs), 2001 (20 pairs), 2002 (15 pairs), 2003 (15-17 pairs), 2004 (c.7 pairs), 2005 (20 pairs), 2006 (20 pairs), 2007 (18 pairs), 2008 (22 pairs), 2010 (14 pairs), 2011 (5 pairs), 2012 (10 pairs), 2013 (14 pairs), 2014 (12 AONs, 16 ads).

Maverston (NJ2963) 1991 (40 pairs), 2014 (0).

Speyslaw (NJ2866?) 1938 (100 pairs), 1989 (0), 2000 (1 pair), 2014 (0).

NJ33

Mortlach Hills (various grid refs) 1985 (150 pairs), 1988 (100 pairs), 2002 (3-4 pairs), 2003 (2-3 pairs), 2007 (1 pair), 2014 (0).

NJ36

Bogmoor/Garmouth (NJ3464) 1976 (35-40 pairs), 1986 (70 pairs), 1990 (250-300 pairs), 1991 (50 pairs), 1992 (30 pairs), 1993 (160 pairs), 1994 (200 pairs), 1995 (50 pairs), 1998 (10 pairs), 2002 (60 pairs), 2008 (10 pairs), 2009 (12 pairs), 2014 (0).

Nether Dallachy landfill site (NJ3664) 2001 (c.20 pairs), 2002 (2 pairs), 2014 (0).

NJ45

Montgrew (NJ4551) 1994 (30 pairs), 1996 (40 pairs), 1997 (20 pairs), 2001 (1 pair), 2014 (0).

10km squares where no colonies were located in 2014:

NH83, 96

NJ00, 03, 05, 10, 12, 13, 16, 17, 21, 22, 23, 27, 32, 34, 35, 42, 43, 44, 46, 54, 55, 56.

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A POPULATION SURVEY OF SINGING WARBLERS ALONG THE LOWER RIVER SPEY

ALASTAIR YOUNG

Blackcaps *Sylvia atricapilla* are now widespread breeders in much of lowland Moray, although usually at low densities. They are concentrated in areas of deciduous broadleaf woodland, especially along river valleys and in the policies of large houses. Their current numbers represent a huge increase, much of which has taken place over the last 30 years. In 1988, only 28 singing males were recorded in the whole of Moray & Nairn (MNBR 1988) despite the fact that much active fieldwork was taking place for the 1988-91 BTO Atlas. By 2005, Blackcaps had become far more numerous and, in that year, 154 singing birds were found (MNBR 2005). It is likely that further increase has taken place since that time. Although Blackcaps are now sufficiently widespread in Moray & Nairn that many are not routinely reported, the BTO Breeding Bird Survey indicates a 415% increase in the Scottish Blackcap population over the period 1995-2013.

Chiffchaffs *Phylloscopus collybita* inhabit many of the deciduous broadleaf woodlands where Blackcaps are found but show a preference for woodlands containing a well-developed shrub layer. Chiffchaffs have also shown a large increase in range and numbers in Moray & Nairn; 20 singers were found in 1988, and 95 in 2005. The Scottish Breeding Bird Survey reveals a 472% increase during 1995-2013.

Garden Warblers *Sylvia borin* have also shown increased numbers but remain scarce in comparison with Blackcap and Chiffchaff. They typically breed in areas of mature broadleaf woodland with a dense understory, especially along river valleys. Nine singing birds were found in 1988, and only 14 in 2005. The species is too scarce to be monitored by the Scottish Breeding Bird Survey.

During April and May 2014 the population of singing Blackcaps, Garden Warblers and Chiffchaffs was surveyed along the River Spey from the river mouth to Boat o' Brig.

The riparian woodlands along the sides of the Spey were walked, and the habitat and area recorded (Table 1). Due to time limitations and access issues, the east side of the river was surveyed between the river mouth and Fochabers, and the west side upstream from Fochabers.

Table 1. Sections of river surveyed.

EAST SIDE OF RIVER (SPEY BAY TO FOCHABERS)			
SECTION	LOCATION	HABITAT	AREA (ha)
1	Spey Bay (NJ349652) to viaduct (NJ348642)	mature Alder/Sycamore and scrub	11.81
2	viaduct to, and including, Culriach (NJ349630)	regenerating scrub, Alder/ willow, occasional mature trees	29.4
3	Culriach to Warren wood (NJ348622)	willow/Alder scrub	5.93
4	Warren wood (NJ346605)	Scots Pine and regenerating broadleaf scrub	60.2
5	Warren shingle (area to west of track along edge of wood)	willow/Alder scrub	11.3
6	Warren to Fochabers (NJ342593)	mature broadleaf - Alder/Sycamore etc	14.5
WEST SIDE OF RIVER (FOCHABERS TO BOAT O' BRIG)			
7	Inchberry Place strip (NJ339595- NJ331589) - to west of ditch along wood edge	mature broadleaf woodland	3.77
8	Fochabers to cliff face on bend (NJ340575)	willow/Alder scrub - broadleaf plantation	19.62
9	Burnside of Dipple (NJ333573) to St Mary's (NJ327554)	willow/Alder scrub	60.2
10	St Mary's to Haugh island (including the island) (NJ318531)	mature willow/Alder and Sycamore	20.22
11	Haugh island to Boat o' Brig (NJ318518)	mature willow/Alder and Sycamore	3.98
12	St Mary's wood (NJ324553)	mature broadleaf and scrub	4.27
			245.2



Blackcap, Forres 21 April 2013 (Photo: Alison Ritchie)

The numbers of singing birds of each species are shown in Table 2. These numbers can be used to calculate a population density, given as the number of singing males per km².

Table 2. Numbers of singing warblers in riparian woodland between the river mouth and Boat o' Brig.

SECTION	BLACKCAP		GARDEN WARBLER		CHIFFCHAFF	
	SINGING MALES	DENSITY (males/km ²)	SINGING MALES	DENSITY (males/km ²)	SINGING MALES	DENSITY (males/km ²)
1	3	25.40			3	25.40
2	5	17.01			9	30.61
3					1	16.86
4	3	4.98			7	11.63
5	5	44.25	1	8.85	6	53.10
6	3	20.69			1	6.90
7	1	26.53				
8	3	15.29			3	15.29
9	15	24.92			12	19.93
10	3	14.84	1	4.95	3	14.84
11	2	50.25	1	25.13	1	25.13
12	1	23.42				
TOTALS	44	17.94	3	1.22	46	18.76

Although only one side of each stretch of river was surveyed in detail, it was sometimes possible to hear other birds singing on the opposite side of the river. These casual records of singing males included 9 Blackcaps, 1 Garden Warbler and 15 Chiffchaffs.

In the main survey, a total of 44 Blackcaps, 3 Garden Warblers and 46 Chiffchaffs was recorded. The figures indicate a high density of both Blackcap and Chiffchaff along the river which reflects the good habitat present and the increase in numbers recorded overall in recent years. While 2014 may have been a particularly good year and conditions were suitable to record them, these still represent some of the highest densities in Scotland.

**RED-BREASTED FLYCATCHER AT LOSSIEMOUTH -
NEW TO MORAY & NAIRN**

BOB PROCTOR

Following the rain, south-easterly winds and Black Redstart of the previous day, I decided to buy a sandwich for lunch and head down to Lossiemouth to walk around some trees. The easiest area, and one I've

checked before is along Quarry Road, an area with a few mature trees, scrubby Sycamore, Gorse and Ivy. I arrived and started walking along the road, stopping frequently to scan any movement in the vegetation.

It was apparent that there were a lot of Robins about which added to the expectation that some of these could be migrants. I stopped at one area and noticed a movement in an area of Gorse and Ivy. I got onto the bird and quickly identified it as a Yellow-browed Warbler. Unfortunately, my phone was re-charging back at the office so I couldn't phone the news out. I walked a little further and counted a few more Robins. Many of these were fly-catching. I lifted my binoculars on the next bird, expecting it to be another fly-catching Robin, when I realised it was a Red-breasted Flycatcher. I watched it for about five minutes before a female Sparrowhawk flew through the area. I stayed for a further 10 minutes but couldn't relocate either bird. I decided to leave the area and let others know.

Initially, the bird was found when fly-catching and when it spread its tail, the wheatear-like tail pattern was seen well. When perched, the bird frequently drooped its wings below the level of the tail. It was a relatively non-descript bird with uniform light brown/buff upperparts and off-white-white underparts, buffier on the upper breast and flanks. The large eye and white eye-ring were both obvious as were the small buff tips along the greater coverts and buff fringes to the tertials.

Having returned to the office I arranged to leave early and headed back down to Lossiemouth where I met up with Duncan Gibson. After a while I relocated the Yellow-browed Warbler, and Duncan and I watched it for a while before it was lost again. Unfortunately, despite two hours of looking, the Red-breasted Flycatcher wasn't relocated.

RINGING REPORT 2014

BOB PROCTOR

Numbers of birds ringed in Moray & Nairn during 2014:

	FG*	Pullus	Total		FG*	Pullus	Total
Storm Petrel	11		11	Bearded Tit	1		1
Hen Harrier		13	13	Sand Martin	78		78
Goshawk		3	3	Swallow	98	18	116
Buzzard		1	1	House Martin	1		1
Oystercatcher	2	8	10	Long-tailed Tit	54		54
Dotterel		5	5	Chiffchaff	45		45
Curlew	1		1	Willow Warbler	132		132
Knot	10		10	Blackcap	60		60
Dunlin	4		4	Whitethroat	11		11
Redshank	45		45	Grasshopper Warbler	1		1
Woodcock	2		2	Sedge Warbler	96	1	97
Black Guillemot		1	1	Treecreeper	8	5	13
Sandwich Tern	4		4	Wren	72		72
Common Tern	72		72	Starling	224	11	235
Common Gull	4	11	15	Blackbird	154	20	174
Lesser B-b. Gull	1		1	Song Thrush	24	4	28
Herring Gull	7		7	Redwing	5		5
Great B-b Gull		2	2	Mistle Thrush	1		1
Woodpigeon	12		12	Spotted Flycatcher	3		3
Collared Dove	14	1	15	Robin	200		200
Barn Owl	1	5	6	Dunnock	140		140
Tawny Owl		5	5	House Sparrow	818	7	825
Swift	1		1	Tree Sparrow	79	66	145
Great Sp. Woodpecker	22		22	Grey Wagtail	1		1
Kestrel	1	4	5	Pied Wagtail	83		83
Merlin		20	20	Chaffinch	398	4	402
Peregrine		4	4	Brambling	1		1
Great Grey Shrike	1		1	Greenfinch	271		271
Magpie	2		2	Goldfinch	156		156
Jay	1		1	Siskin	306		306
Jackdaw	2		2	Linnet	1		1
Carrion Crow		2	2	Lesser Redpoll	540		540
Goldcrest	39		39	Common Redpoll	2		2
Blue Tit	346	344	690	Bullfinch	22		22
Great Tit	211	239	450	Yellowhammer	15		15
Crested Tit	9	26	35	Reed Bunting	215	1	216
Coal Tit	95		95	TOTALS	5236	831	6067

*FG=full grown

From: Robinson, R.A., Leech, D.I. & Clark, J.A.(2015) The Online Demography Report: Bird ringing and nest recording in Britain & Ireland in 2014. BTO, Thetford (<http://www.bto.org/ringing-report>, created on 1 Sep 2015).

Recoveries in 2014:

All ringing recoveries reported for 2014 are included in this section with the more interesting ones given in full. Anyone finding a ringed bird in Moray or Nairn is asked to pass the details to Bob Proctor or 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

WHOOPE SWAN

The Polish-ringed individual from last year was seen again in 2014:

AH0401	1f	050810	Ozarow Fish Ponds, Mokrsko, Lodz voiv, POLAND
(3R91)	VV	260613	Loch Katrine, Glengyle, Central Region 1621 km
	VV	290613	Loch Oire 1569 km
	VV	130913	Spey estuary
	VV	290913	Cloddach quarry
	VV	210114	Cloddach quarry
	VV	010214	Cloddach quarry

With the large numbers present in the autumn movements from Iceland and wintering areas included:

A7962	1f	150806	Krokavatn, Jokuldalsheidi, ICELAND
(B9U)	VV	231014	Balliesland Farm
ZZ4739	8f	180106	Caerlaverock, Dumfries
(L74)	XF	221114	Loch Spynie
ZZ7863	5f	240107	Caerlaverock, Dumfries
(D4U)	VV	251214	Foresterseat, Calcots
	VV	271214	East Mains, Gilston

ZZ6477 (V6K)	8m VV	280109 171114	Martin Mere, Lancashire Salterhill, near Elgin
ZY0839 (G4R)	5f VV	160310 131214	Martin Mere Waulkmill, Elgin
ZY2330 (Z6U)	8f VV	290212 171114	Caerlaverock, Dumfries Salterhill, near Elgin

These individuals were very site-faithful in their respective wintering areas until the sightings around Elgin: L74 and Z6U were both regularly seen around Caerlaverock, with L74 also being seen around Martin Mere. V6K was only seen in Lancashire, mainly around Martin Mere, until it was resighted at Mains of Philorth, Fraserburgh on 30 Oct 2011 and then at Salterhill on 17 Nov 2014. G4R was only seen around Martin Mere, while D4U was only seen around Caerlaverock until their sightings around Elgin.

PINK-FOOTED GOOSE

1460394	Ad f XF shot	050114 150114	Blackburn Findhorn Bay	92 km
TPU	Ad f VV	020114 241014	Blackburn Balliesland Farm, Elgin	

GREYLAG GOOSE

CLL	3f VV VV VV VV VV VV	061105 221105 051207 170209 020212 180114 010314	Loch Eye Urquhart, Cromarty Firth Mains of Geanies, near Loch Eye Kilcoole, Co. Wicklow, EIRE Durrans Mains, Caithness Loch Spynie Wester Manbeen
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STORM PETREL

E200806	4 V V	130714 240714 010814	Store Faerder, Tjome, Vestfold, NORWAY Tronach Head, nr Portgordon Sumburgh	795 km 672 km
2351368	4 V	240714 010814	Tronach Head, nr Portgordon Isle of May	170km

CORMORANT

5194990	1 V sick	070698 081014	Craigleith Spey Bay	181 km
5263601	1 XL	070713 150314	Bullers of Buchan Kingston	83 km

A colour-ringed chick (APU) from Dunbuy Island, Bullers of Buchan from 2013 was seen on 5 Feb 2014 at Findhorn Bay; this individual was seen at Burghead and Hopeman in 2013. A further individual (BVI) ringed at Dunbuy Island was initially seen at Aberdeen harbour from 23 Aug to 24 Nov 2013 before being

resighted in 2014 on the south side of Loch Flemington on 9 Jan and 2 Feb, then at Lossiemouth on 22 Feb, before returning to Aberdeen on 12 Apr.

SHAG

A typical selection of sightings concerning colour-ringed individuals originating from the Isle of May and other north-east colonies. Recoveries involved four individuals from the Farne Islands (244 km), one from Inchmickery (191 km) and one from Bullers of Buchan (75 km).

OSPREY

AA	1m	040707	Moray
	VV	300509	Rutland Water
	VV	03-050413	Somerset
	VV	May 2013	Lossie estuary
	VV	120514	Lossie estuary

OYSTERCATCHER

FP11107	7	060399	Findhorn Bay	
	X	010613	Geitavik, NordurMulasysla, ICELAND	1029km
FP21339	3	300900	Culbin Forest, near Forres	
	V	110301	Burghead	13 km
	XL	030514	Faray, Eday, Orkney	180 km
FP46017	8	280908	Castle Stuart	
	X	050514	Nairn	18km
FH29173	3	050909	Llanfairfechan, Conwy	
	XF	160414	Mulben	480 km
FP56279	8	121003	Whiteford Sands, Gower, Swansea	
	VV=B	270714	Moray College UHI, Elgin	672 km
FH74713 (BU)	?	260213	Dublin, EIRE	
	VV	170714	Lossie estuary	
	VV	250714	Dublin, Eire	
FH74828	8	300114	Boosterstown, Dublin, EIRE	
	XL	140414	Blackhillock	510 km

A colour-ringed individual (ALN) seen at the Lossie estuary on 31 Jul 2014 was ringed on 2 Dec 2012 at Beaumaris on Anglesey.

LAPWING

DE09412	1	050613	Tomintoul	
	XF	040414	Auchriachan, Tomintoul	2 km

RINGED PLOVER

A colour-ringed individual seen on the Lossie estuary on 7 Apr 2014 was originally ringed at Hayling Island, Hampshire on 18 Sep 2013.

CURLEW

FR83050	Ad	290985	Gordon's Mill, Udale Bay	
	XF	190614	Nairn	18 km

This individual was only four years short of the British longevity record of 32 years and 7 months.

KNOT

SV70859	5	280101	Buckpool, Buckie	
	V	140814	Wrangle Tofts, Lincolnshire	553 km

SANDERLING

B05071	?	091012	Asenko village, GHANA	
	VV	160514	Findhorn Bay	

SANDWICH TERN

A total of 116 individually colour-ringed birds were seen at Findhorn Bay. These originated from Forvie Sands NNR (84), Findhorn Bay (2), Inner Farne Island (15), Coquet Island (8) and Blakeney Point (Norfolk) (6). Two were presumed to have originated from the Netherlands although no confirmation of their details have been received.

COMMON TERN

1V015142	3	020910	Salinas de La Tapa, Cadiz, SPAIN	
	VV	160814	Findhorn Bay	2349 km
SR48863	3	220814	Findhorn Bay	
	V	030914	Ythan estuary	102 km
ST09765	6	310713	Seal Sands, Teesmouth	
	V	220814	Findhorn Bay	367km
ST36106	1	080712	Avoch	
	V	290814	Findhorn Bay	35km
ST45018	1	280614	Ardullie Point, Cromarty Bridge	
	V	290814	Findhorn Bay	47 km

ARCTIC TERN

SX02392	1	060795	RAFKinloss	
	V	250714	Ythan estuary	101 km

This individual was retrapped after 19 years 2 weeks and is similar to a previous Ythan estuary movement in 2013.

BLACK-HEADED GULL

6215032	8	250311	Breiavatnet, Stavanger, NORWAY	
(JHZ3)	VV	310311	Breiavatnet, Stavanger, NORWAY	
	VV	230511-		
		180611	Ulsrudvann, Oslo, NORWAY	308 km

	VV	190811- 270212	Lossie estuary	544 km
	VV	210312	Breiavatnet, Klepp, NORWAY	
	VV	070512	Hovindammen, Oslo, NORWAY	306 km
	VV	300912- 061012	Lossie estuary	544 km
	VV	291212- 250213	Cooper Park pond, Elgin	548 km
	VV	270213	Lossie estuary	544 km
	VV	110313	Cooper Park pond, Elgin	548 km
	VV	090413	Bispevika, Oslo, NORWAY	303 km
	VV	150613	Østensjøvannet, Oslo, NORWAY	306 km
	VV	270713- 020214	Lossie estuary	544 km
K00091 (J2CR)	?	150712	Mosvangen Camping, Stavanger, NORWAY	
	VV	230912	Cullen	518 km
	VV	100413	Mosvangen Camping, Stavanger, NORWAY	
	VV	070513	Mosvatnetøstsiden, Stavanger, NORWAY	1 km
	VV	110613	Mosvatnetøstsiden, Stavanger, NORWAY	1 km
	VV	150613	Mosvangen, Stavanger, NORWAY	
	VV	210814	Cullen	518 km
EG78440	1	060607	Sand Holm, Harray Loch, Orkney	
	XF car	061114	Hopeman	145 km
EX51439	4	251013	Cooper Park pond, Elgin	
	VV	161114	Cooper Park pond, Elgin	Local
COMMON GULL				
5168401 (J5E5)	8	090709	Prestvannet, Tromsø, NORWAY	
	VV	200411	Prestvannet, Tromsø, NORWAY	
	VV	050212	Cooper Park pond, Elgin	1709 km
	VV	080813	Prestvannet, Tromsø, NORWAY	
	VV	180114	Cooper Park pond, Elgin	1709 km
	VV	151114	Lossie estuary	1702 km
5192960 (JR62)	?	230814	Byparken, Bergen, NORWAY	
	VV	041014	Lossie estuary	575 km
5150100 (JX78)	?	100713	Håvik, Karmøy, Rogaland, NORWAY	
	VV	161114	Lossie estuary	530 km
HERRING GULL				
E22518 (8JA0)	3	241113	Ty Coed, Vale Marais, Guernsey	
	VV	251014	Lossie estuary	915 km

GN32905	1	180605	Inver, Dunbeath	
	VV	261207	Cooper Park pond, Elgin	
	VV	060408	Cooper Park pond, Elgin	
	VV	040114	Cooper Park pond, Elgin	66 km
GR59160	1	290614	Inver, Dunbeath	
	VV	061214	Cooper Park pond, Elgin	66 km
T:272	10f	240512	Peterculter	
	VV	140712	Duthie Park, Aberdeen	
	VV	040614	Lossie estuary	

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL

MA26628	10	230110	Pitsea Landfill Site, Essex	
(VF0T)	VV	151114	Lossie estuary	

A total of 16 colour-ringed individuals from various Caithness colonies were reported, mainly from the Lossie estuary. Another individual (T:011) ringed at Fraserburgh on 8 Feb 2012 was seen on 26 July 2014 at Lossie estuary.

WOODPIGEON

FP62685	3	011012	Keith	
	XF	120914	Keith	Local

BARN OWL

GF81704	1	280611	near Loch Buidhe, StrathCarnaig	
	X	171114	Westerton, Moray	62km

MERLIN

DE05524	1m	260614	near Nairn	
	XF car	210714	Inverness	19 km

BLUE TIT

D043301	?	131212	Cairnfield, Buckie	
	V	160314	Bridge of Don, Aberdeen	73 km

GREAT TIT

TK58945	1	130511	Loch Spynie	
	V	130914	Lossiemouth cemetery	4 km

TR88951	1	080613	Oakenhead, near Lossiemouth	
	V	010114	Coral Cottage	3 km

Y250948	4m	310712	Loch Spynie CES	
	V	030214	Greenside Cottage, Windyridge	3 km

CRESTED TIT

D210942	1	090613	Whiteash Hill Wood	
	V	301114	Teindland Forest, Carraburn, near Rothes	9km

Y769900	1	030512	Lossie Forest	
	V	240314	Lossiemouth Cemetery	5 km
COAL TIT				
Y597446	?	180212	Cairnfield, Buckie	
	V	241113	Breakachy, Highland	97 km
	V	210914	Breakachy, Highland	97 km
WILLOW WARBLER				
EPY151	4f	100814	Loch Spynie	
	XF	300814	West Tullyfergus, Perth & Kinross	117 km
SEDGE WARBLER				
Y978539	4	250513	Loch Spynie CES	
	V	180814	Sandouville, Seine-Maritime, FRANCE	940 km
Y993992	3J	280714	Kingston	
	V	130814	Trilbardou, Seine-et-Marne, FRANCE	1046km
D634125	3	260714	Loch Spynie CES	
	V	090814	Titchfield Haven, Fareham, Hampshire	773 km
D634257	3	310814	Loch Spynie CES	
	V	060914	Rutland Water CES, Rutland	579 km
SONG THRUSH				
RT43516	6f	020612	Invererne, Forres	
	V	070513	Invererne, Forres	
	XF	080414	Springfield, Forres	3 km
TREE SPARROW				
D218149	3J	250713	near Bridge of Don, Aberdeen	
	V	280614	Inchberry, nearFochabers	76km
CHAFFINCH				
D451540	?	250413	Cairnfield, Buckie	
	X	160514	Drybridge	3 km
GREENFINCH				
TE13284	5f	020314	Inchberry, Fochabers	
	V	040414	Keith	13 km
TT66950	?	190712	Keith	
	V	190913	Buckie	19 km
TT83809	3m	130912	Stow Bardolph, Norfolk	
	V	171214	Buckie	601 km

SISKIN

L155600	6m V	010314 290414	Retford, Nottinghamshire Inchberry, near Fochabers	493 km
X216339	6m V	230213 290414	Reading, Berkshire Inchberry, near Fochabers	692km
Y571187	6m V	160213 290314	Great Yarmouth, Norfolk Inchberry, near Fochabers	635km
Y609597	3Jm V	020512 220314	West Tofts, Norfolk Inchberry, near Fochabers	618 km
Y615456	5m V	010513 190214	Inchberry, near Fochabers Iver Heath, Buckinghamshire	693 km
Y795281	6m V	040513 010314	Mundole, near Forres Brandon Fen, Lakenheath Fen	629 km
Y993704	6m V	230314 260314	Inchberry, near Fochabers Kerrow, Cannich	101km

LESSER REDPOLL

D738332	4m V	210414 311214	Aldermaston GP, West Berkshire Whiteash Hill, Moray	702 km
L778018	3 V X	191211 060312 240214	Mildenhall, Suffolk Holywell Row, Suffolk Roths	2 km 620 km

BULLFINCH

D634024	5f XF	010614 191114	Loch Spynie CES Elgin	5 km
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SNOW BUNTING

TL96116	5m VV	110413 190514	Glen Shee Cairngorms	27 km
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GRID REFERENCES OF LOCALITIES MENTIONED IN THE SPECIES ACCOUNTS
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Aberlour	NJ2642	Balormie	NJ2167
Achagour	NH9346	Balvalley Moss	NJ3725
Achareidh	NH8656	Balvenie	NJ3242
Achavelgin	NH9150	Banchor	NH9140
Achavraat	NH9148	Bank Farm	NJ3929
Achdregnie	NJ2424	Bankhead	NH9658
Achnatone	NH9149	Bardonside	NJ2154
Achmore	NJ2631	Barmuckity	NJ2461
Ailnack	NJ1414	Barns of Bynack	NJ0405
Aitnoch	NH9839	Bauds of Cullen	NJ4766
Allaburn	NJ1961	Beatshach	NJ2737
Aldivalloch	NJ3626	Beinn a' Chaorainn	NJ0401
Aldroughty	NJ1862	Burnside of Geddes	NH8851
Aldunie	NJ3626	Beinn a' Chruinnich	NJ2313
Alltachbeg	NJ3626	Beinn Mheadhoin	NJ0201
Altnaglander	NJ1628	Bellandy	NJ2832
Altyre Woods	NJ0253	Bellie cemetery	NJ3561
Alves	NJ1362	Ben Aigan	NJ3048
Archiestown	NJ2344	Ben Avon	NJ1302
Ardclach	NH9545	Ben Macdui	NN9999
Ardgye	NJ1563	Ben Main	NJ3535
Ardivot	NJ2267	Ben Rinnes	NJ2435
Arndilly	NJ2848	Berryburn	NJ0545
Arthur's Bridge	NJ2567	Bin of Cullen	NJ4764
Auchbreck	NJ2028	Binn Hill	NJ3065
Auchenhalrig	NJ3761	Binns	NJ3164
Auchindoun Castle	NJ3437	Binsness	NJ0362
Auchinhandoch	NJ3338	Birchfield	NJ1614
Auchlochan	NJ0241	Birkenhill	NJ2260
Auchmair	NJ3828	Bishopmill	NJ2163
Auchnarrow	NJ2123	Black Loch	NJ2163
Auchroisk	NJ3351	Blackhillock	NJ2044
Auchtertyre	NJ1858	Blacksboat	NJ1838
Auldearn	NH9155	Blackwater Lodge	NJ3328
		Blairnafade	NH8451
Backlands	NJ1469	Blinkbonnie	NJ3365
Badcheer	NJ3532	Boar's Head Rock	NJ2867
Badentinan	NJ2957	Boat o' Brig	NJ3251
Badnafrave	NJ2015	Boath	NH8845
Bailliesland	NJ2565	Bogeney	NJ0243
Balblair	NH8051	Bogheads	NH9155
Ballcorach	NJ1526	Boghole	NJ9655
Ballindalloch Castle	NJ1736	Bogmoor	NJ3562
Ballnellan Burn	NJ1326	Bognafuaran	NH8954
Ballochford	NJ3633	Boldow	NJ1740
Balnacoul	NJ3146	Bow Fiddle Rock	NJ4968
Balnaspirach (Nairn)	NH8654	Braes of Enzie	NJ3959
Balnught	NH8840	Braidbog	NJ3561NJ4963

Brandston	NJ2865	Clackmarras	NJ2458
Bridge of Avon	NJ1835	Clarkly Hill	NJ1368
Bridge of Brown	NJ1220	Clashach	NJ1570
Bridgend	NJ3731	Clochach	NJ4060
Broadley	NJ3961	Clockeasay	NJ2962
Brodie Castle	NH9757	Cloddach	NJ1958
Brodieshill	NJ1059	Cloddymoss	NH9860
Brokentore	NJ1854	Clovenside	NJ0459
Broom Knowe	NJ1059	Clunas Reservoir	NH8646
Broom of Moy	NJ0159	Cluny Hill	NJ0458
Broombank	NH9255	Cnoc Lochy	NJ1621
Broomton	NH9654	Coire Raibeirt	NJ0003
Brown Muir	NJ2555	Coldburn	NJ1449
Bruntland	NJ1264	Coldhome	NJ3639
Buckie	NJ4165	Coleburn	NJ2455
Buckpool	NJ4165	College of Roseisle	NJ1366
Budgate	NH8349	Coltfield	NJ1163
Burghead	NJ1169	Conglass Water	NJ1916
Burghead Bay	NJ0867	Conicavel	NH9953
Burgie Wood	NJ0958	Cook's Cairn	NJ3027
Burnside	NH9440	Corbiewell	NJ3165
Burnside of Birnie	NJ2259	Corryhabbie Hill	NJ2829
Burnside of Dipple	NJ3256	Cotts of Innes	NJ2766
Burnside of Enzie	NJ3960	Coulmony	NH9747
Burnside of Geddes	NH8851	Covesea	NJ1870
Byres	NJ3562	Covesea Skerries	NJ1971
		Coxton	NJ2660
Cabrach	NJ3827	Coxtontower	NJ2660
Cairn Ballantruan	NJ1524	Crachies	NH9453
Cairn Gorm	NJ0003	Craigellachie	NJ2844
Cairn Lochan	NH9802	Craigmill Lodge	NJ1052
Cairn Uish	NJ1750	Craigroy	NJ1250
Cairneyhillock	NJ2658	Cragganmore	NJ1636
Cairnfield	NJ4162	Cran Loch	NH9459
Calcots	NJ2563	Croftglass	NJ2530
Cantsford	NJ0754	Crofts of Buinach	NJ1855
Cardhu	NJ1843	Crofts of Dipple	NJ3259
Cardnach Farm	NJ1942	Cromdale Hills	NJ1226
Carn a' Chrasgie	NJ1942	Crook	NH8854
Carn a' Gharbh-ghlaic	NH8935	Crooked Wood	NJ2762
Carn Allt a' Chlaiginn	NJ3230	Croy	NJ1657
Carn Daimh	NJ1824	Cruats Farm	NJ4968
Carn Liath	NJ2515	Culbin Bar	NH9662
Carn Mor	NJ2618	Culbin Forest	NH9862
Carn na Sguabaich	NH8736	Cullen	NJ5167
Carron	NJ2241	Cummingston	NJ1368
Carse of Delnies	NH8356	Cunninghaugh	NJ3564
Catherinebraes	NJ2544		
Cawdor	NH8449	Dallas	NJ1252
Caysbriggs	NJ2466	Dallas Dhu	NJ0356
Charlestown of Aberlour	NJ2642	Dallas Lodge	NJ1052

Dallasbraughty	NJ0346	Fèith Buidhe	NJ0909
Darkland	NJ2662	Ferness	NH9644
Darnaway Castle	NH9955	Ferniefield	NJ3064
Daugh of Kinermony	NJ2441	Findhorn Bay	NJ0462
Dava	NJ0038	Findochty	NJ4668
Delmore	NJ2442	Findrassie	NJ1965
Delnabo	NJ1617	Fochabers	NJ3458
Delnapot	NJ1737	Fodderletter	NJ3458
Delnashaugh	NJ1835	Fogwatt	NJ2357
Delnies	NH8356	Fords of Avon	NJ0403
Deskford	NJ5061	Foresterseat	NJ2562
Dounduff	NH9949	Fornighty	NH9350
Drainie	NJ2168	Forres	NJ0358
Drumdivan	NH8454	Foynesfield	NJ0358
Drumduan Mill	NH9156		
Drumfurrich	NJ2944	Garbh Uisge Beag	NH9900
Drumin	NJ1830	Garbh Uisge Mòr	NH9900
Drummuir	NJ3844	Garlinebeg	NJ1741
Drybridge	NJ4362	Galcantray	NH8148
Drynachan	NH8639	Garmouth	NJ3364
Dufftown	NJ3239	Garmouth viaduct	NJ3464
Duffus	NJ1668	Gateside	NJ3647
Duffus Castle	NJ1867	Geddes	NH8852
Dulsie	NH9341	Gervally	NH9948
Dulsie Bridge	NH9341	Gilston	NJ2066
Dunearn	NH9341	Glack Harnes	NJ2836
Dundurcas	NJ2950	Glacks of Balloch	NJ3534
Dunnyduff Wood	NJ4449	Glass	NJ4239
Dunphail	NJ0047	Glen Avon	NJ1006
Dyke	NH9858	Glen Gheallaidh	NJ1338
Dykeside	NJ1159	Glen Latterach	NJ1951
		Glen Lossie	NJ1347
Earnhill	NJ0160	Glen Rinnes	NJ2834
Earnside	NJ1062	Glenallachie	NJ2741
East Mains	NJ2066	Glenfarclas Distillery	NJ2138
East Meur Gorm Craig	NJ1504	Glenferness	NH9443
Easter Allanaha	NJ1062	Glenlatterach Reservoir	NJ1952
Easter Calcots	NJ2563	Glenmarkie	NJ3837
Easter Cloves	NJ1461	Glenmullie	NJ1916
Easter Galcantray	NH8148	Gollachy Burn	NJ4064
Easter Gaulrig	NJ1514	Gordonstoun	NJ1869
Easter Greens	NJ0449	Gordonsward	NJ2564
Easter Lawrenceton	NJ0858	Gow Moss	NJ3853
Easter Newforres	NJ0658	Gownie	NJ2842
Easterton	NJ2156	Greenside	NJ2656
Edinkillie	NJ0246		
Elchies	NJ2245	Half Davoch	NJ0451
Elgin	NJ2162	Hardmuir	NH9556
Elginshill	NJ2663	Heathfield	NH8050
		Heldon Wood	NJ1257
Feakirk	NJ0344	Hempriggs	NJ1063

Herricks	NJ4549	Kronyhillock Wood	NH8349
Highland Boath	NH8844	Kylnadrochit Lodge	NJ1419
Hill of Glenroads	NJ3031		
Hill of Mackalea	NJ3638	Ladder Hills	NJ2719
Hill of Maud	NJ4662	Ladycroft	NJ2444
Hillhead	NJ2058	Laggan	NJ3436
Hill of Mulundy	NJ1053	Lagganauuld	NJ2026
Hillpark	NJ4360	Lagganvoulin	NJ1817
Hills of Cromdale	NJ1226	Laikenbuie	NH9052
Hilton of Delnies	NH8456	Lecht	NJ2413
Holme Rose	NH8048	Leids Hill	NJ4126
Hopeman	NJ1469	Lein	NJ3365
Househill	NH8855	Lethen Bar	NH9351
Howford	NH8753	Lethenhill	NJ1058
Humbrack	NJ2556	Lhanbryde	NJ2761
Hunt Hill	NJ2346	Lintmill	NJ5165
		Little Aitnoch	NH9640
Inchberry	NJ3155	Little Pitlurg	NJ4245
Inchbroom	NJ2566	Little Urchany	NH8748
Inchnacape	NJ2020	Loch Allan	NH9939
Inchrory	NJ1708	Loch Belivat	NH9547
Innes House	NJ2764	Loch Dallas	NJ0947
Innesmill	NJ2863	Loch Flemington	NH8152
Inshoch Wood	NH9558	Loch Kirkaldy	NH9641
Inveravon	NJ1837	Loch Loy	NH9358
Invererne	NJ0360	Loch Noir	NJ0945
Inverharroch Farm	NJ3831	Loch of Blairs	NJ0255
Inverlochy	NJ1324	Loch of Boath	NJ0255
		Loch of the Clans	NH8353
Johnstripe	NJ0447	Loch Oire	NJ2860
		Loch Park	NJ3543
Keith	NJ4250	Loch Romach	NJ0652
Kellas	NJ1754	Loch Spynie	NJ2366
Kerrow	NH9941	Loch Trevie	NJ0944
Kilravock	NH8149	Lochan Buidhe	NJ2366
Kilravock Castle	NH8149	Lochan Tùtach	NH9840
Kinermony	NJ2541	Lochanan a' Ghubhais	NH9840
Kingsteps	NH9057	Lochbuie	NJ2153
Kingston	NJ3365	Lochindorb	NH9736
Kinloss	NJ0661	Lochs of Bogmussach	NJ1347
Kinneddar	NJ2269	Lochyhill	NJ0559
Kinnudie	NH9055	Logie	NJ0150
Kintessack	NJ2269	Logieburn	NJ2656
Kirdellbeg	NJ1741	Longmorn	NJ2358
Kirkhill	NJ2462	Lossie estuary	NJ2469
Kirkmichael Church	NJ1423	Lossiemouth	NJ2370
Kirkton	NJ2462	Lower Auchenreath	NJ3763
Knauchland	NJ5651	Lower Blairnain	NJ2738
Knock of Braemoray	NJ0141	Lower Bogrotten	NJ4861
Knock of Gownie	NJ2942	Lower Dallachy	NJ4861
Knockanbeg	NJ2632	Lower Hempriggs	NJ1064

Lyne of Knockando	NJ1745	Nairn	NH8856
Lynemore	NJ1438	Nairn Bar	NH9260
Macbeth's Hillock	NH9656	Nether Bellandy	NJ2833
Machattie's Cairn	NJ3547	Nether Birnie	NJ2059
Mains of Kirdells	NJ1739	Nether Dallachy	NJ3663
Mains of Balnagowan	NH8154	Nether Meft	NJ2764
Mains of Moyness	NH9553	Netherbyre	NJ1557
Manachie Farm	NJ0356	Netherton	NJ0361
Manbeen	NJ1959	Newbold Wood	NJ0558
Maryfield	NJ2364	Newforres Wood	NJ0657
Marypark	NJ1938	Newton nursery	NJ1663
Maviston	NH9458	Newton of Darnaway	NH9853
Meikle Balloch Hill	NJ3534	Newton of Innes	NJ2866
Meikle Coire Riabhach	NJ2513	North Darkland	NJ2662
Meikle Conval	NJ2937		
Meikle Kildrummy	NH8553	Oldtown	NJ1367
Mid Mains	NJ1966	Ordiquish	NJ3357
Middlefield	NJ0360	Ordbreck	NH8747
Midwood	NJ4261	Orton	NJ3153
Mill of Grange	NJ0460	Overton	NJ2745
Millhill	NJ3158		
Milltown	NJ2758	Paddockhaugh	NJ2058
Milltown of Laggan	NJ2834	Parks of Innes	NJ2763
Milton Brodie	NJ0962	Paul's Hill	NJ1140
Miltonduff	NJ1860	Penick	NH9356
Miltonhill	NJ0963	Philaxdale	NJ1667
Monadh an t-Sluich Leith	NJ2617	Pitairlie	NJ2465
Monahoudie Moss	NJ2243	Pitchroy	NJ1738
Monaughty	NJ1260	Pitgaveny	NJ2465
Moniemouies	NJ2756	Pittendreich	NJ1961
Montgrew	NJ4551	Pluscarden	NJ1456
Moor of Tore	NJ1054	Portgordon	NJ3964
Morinsh Forest	NJ2330	Portknockie	NJ4868
Moss of Barmuckity	NJ2461	Porttannachy	NJ3864
Moss of Birnie	NJ2051		
Mosstodloch	NJ3360	Quarrywood	NJ1864
Mossyards	NJ1566		
Moycroft	NJ2362	Rafford	NJ0656
Moyness	NH9553	Recletich	NJ2834
Muir of Holmie	NJ4161	Redhill	NJ1661
Muir of Linksfield	NJ2264	Reekimlane	NJ3625
Muir of Miltonduff	NJ1859	Refouble	NH9540
Muir of the Clans	NH8352	Relugas	NH9948
Muirhead	NJ0863	Rhinturk	NJ3632
Muirton	NJ2268	Rinour	NJ1740
Muiry Wood	NJ0558	Rosarie	NJ3849
Mulben	NJ3550	Roseisle Forest	NJ1166
Mulderie Mains	NJ3950		
Mundole	NJ0156	Salterhill	NJ2067
Myreside	NJ2164	Sanquhar Loch	NJ0458

Scabbed Hill	NJ4160	Tomintoul	NJ1618
Scalan	NJ2419	Tomnamoon	NJ0450
Scarffbanks	NJ2366	Tomnavoulin	NJ2126
Scout Hill	NJ3331	Tormore Distillery	NJ1534
Scotsburn	NJ2760	Torrieston	NJ1658
Scotstonhill	NJ2662	Tronach Head	NJ4768
Seafield	NJ0261	Troves	NJ2459
Shaw Hill	NH9748	Tugnet	NJ3465
Sheanspark	NJ3645	Tynet	NJ3861
Shearleat	NH8641		
Shelter Stone	NJ0001	Upper Bruntlands	NJ1943
Sherriffmill	NJ2062	Upper Dallachy	NJ3662
Sheriffston	NJ2561	Upper Knockando	NJ1843
Sluie	NJ0052	Upper Mulben	NJ3652
South Darkland	NJ2661	Urchany	NH8748
Spey Bay	NJ3767	Urquhart	NJ2862
Spey estuary	NJ3564		
Speymouth	NJ3564	Wallfield	NJ2965
Speyslaw	NJ3465	Waterford Fm	NJ0259
Spynie canal	NJ2366	Waukmill	NJ2362
Spynie Palace	NJ2365	Well of The Lecht	NJ2315
St. John's Meads	NJ0155	Wellheads	NJ3860
Stob Bac an Fhurain	NJ1303	Wellhill	NJ0061
Stoneyford pond	NJ0455	Wester Calcots	NJ2463
Strath Avon	NJ1425	Wester Delnies	NH8355
Strathlene	NJ4467	Wester Elchies	NJ2542
Stronachavie	NJ1318	Wester Gaulrig	NJ1513
Strondow	NJ1644	Wester Manbeen	NJ1960
Strypes	NJ2758	Wester Newforres	NJ0657
Succoth	NJ2935	Westerfolds	NJ1967
Suie	NJ2724	Westertown	NJ1925
Surradale	NJ1665	Whiteash Hill	NJ3857
		Whitefolds	NJ2425
Tanzie	NJ3146	Whitetree	NJ1156
Tapp	NJ1447	Whitewreath	NJ2357
Tarras	NJ0659	Windyridge	NJ2367
Teindland	NJ2655	Wood of Mulderie	NJ3751
Tervieside	NJ2330		
The Scalp	NJ3636	Yellowbog	NJ1448
Thief's Hill	NJ3654		
Thomshill	NJ2157		
Tips of Corsemaul	NJ3939		
Todholes	NJ1054		
Tom nan Clach	NH8634		
Tomachar	NJ2432		
Tomachlaggan	NJ1522		
Tombreck	NJ1218		
Tomcork	NJ1349		