

Birds recorded around the Kinghorn Loch area



By Rena Wallace
Based on Bird Surveys conducted by
Danny Wallace



Kinghorn Loch
Drew Wallace

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During 2010 weekly surveys were conducted around Kinghorn Loch and surrounding area by local bird watcher Danny Wallace. These surveys were then sent to me and a monthly data base set up. To date over sixty different species have been recorded and it is interesting to see the various fluctuations in numbers and species over the twelve months of the year.

We had an exceptionally cold winter at the beginning of 2010 and the loch was frozen for many weeks during which time an amazing amount of birds could be seen on the ice.

In the spring the Great Crested Grebes produced three chicks but only one survived. The coots and mallards produced dozens of chicks successfully.

In the Autumn we said goodbye to the many swallows who spent the summer feeding their young in and around the loch area.

Winter started very early with the first snow arriving on 26th November, 2010 and with a very heavy snowfall overnight on 28th November. The snow and freezing conditions persisted for over a month.

The loch was completely frozen over for many weeks and many of the visiting birds who had arrived at the beginning of December were forced to move on to find food to survive.

At the beginning of December 393 Coots, 138 Greylag Geese, 163 Pochard, 229 Tufted ducks and 11 Mute Swans were recorded in residence.

I would like to thank Danny for his time consuming work recording these birds and for many of the lovely photographs he produced and also to my husband Drew for his photographs.

My sincere thanks go to the **Kinghorn Loch Users Group (KLUG)** for funding the printing of this booklet.

The booklet is free and the publication is not for profit however donations would be appreciated. I hope you will find it useful in identifying the many birds in and around the loch area.

The following pages record the different species recorded over 2010.

Rena Wallace



Drew Wallace

Blackbird

A well loved song bird. The male bird is black with a distinctive orange beak whilst the female is brown.



Danny Wallace

Blackcap

The male's black and female's brown crown distinguish it from all other warblers. Song a musical, high pitched, rather staccato warble.



Danny Wallace

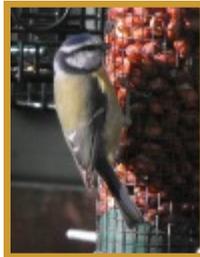
Black-head Gull

Generally the most frequently seen gull inland. The dark brown hood of the breeding plumage, white blaze on forewing and red bill and legs

are distinctive.

Blue Tit

One of the commonest tits and with a substantial amount of blue in its plumage. Likes to nest in a hole in a tree and readily takes to nest boxes.



Drew Wallace

Bullfinch

A very distinctive bird with its black crown, rosy breast and cheeks and white rump. Females are similar but duller. Likes to eat fruit buds.



Drew Wallace

Buzzard

The most common large bird of prey. It soars overhead with broad wings in a leisurely fashion uttering a loud gull like *pee-oo* cry.



Danny Wallace

Canada Goose

The largest of our three black-necked geese and likely to be seen inland. A long established introduction from North America, it now breeds widely by freshwater throughout Great Britain. Its call is a loud double trumpeting *ker Konk*. We have one permanent resident at loch usually seen with the Greylag Geese.



Drew Wallace

Carrion Crow

A common bird in Britain the all black carrion crow differs from the rook with its feathered face and harsher voice.

Chaffinch



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One of our most common birds, breeding in woods, scrub, hedgerows, parks and gardens. The male's handsome plumage is distinctive.

Chiffchaff

One of the earliest migrants to arrive usually in late March. Best distinctions are its monotonous *chiff-chaff* song and call-note *hweet*. More restricted to mature woodland. It appears browner, with less green and yellow in its plumage than a Willow Warbler.



Danny Wallace

Coat Tit



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The smallest British tit, easily identified by the prominent white patch on its nape and also by its high pitched *ticha ticha* call.

Collared Dove

A newcomer, which has only bred in Britain since the 1950s. Larger than the Turtle Dove, with duller grey plumage and more white in the tail and a black neck bar. Song is persistent *coo-cooo-cuh*.



Drew Wallace

Common Gull

Smaller than a herring gull, but with both bill and legs a greenish yellow. Widespread and common both inland and by the sea. It has a shrill mewing *kee-ya* sound. Breeds mainly in Scotland and Ireland.

Coot

Differs from a moorhen by its white bill and forehead. Aggressive chases are characteristic and it dives readily. 180 coots recorded on the loch in mid January, 2010.



Danny Wallace

Cormorant

The largest all-dark British seabird, with a white face patch and in the breeding season also white thigh patches. Can be seen on inland fresh water during the winter.

Dunnock



Danny Wallace

Also known as a Hedgesparrow, the Dunnock is a common breeding bird in woodland, scrub, farmland, parks and gardens. Thin bill, grey breast and speckled flanks all distinguish it from the house sparrow. It has a loud *chee-ip* sound along with various chirps and twitters.

Fieldfare



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The larger of our two winter visitor thrushes. It has a blue-grey head and rump contrasting with the chestnut back. Widespread throughout Britain especially on farmland with hedges and berry-bearing shrubs Has a harsh repeated *chack-chack*.

Goldeneye

A diving duck recognisable by its peaked head and the drake by its white face-spot. A common winter visitor to both fresh and salt water. Breeds only at one or two places in the Scottish Highlands.



Danny Wallace

Goldcrest

The smallest British bird. It has a tiny, needle-like bill. The male having an orange and the female a yellow crest. Found mostly wherever there are a few pines, spruces, yews or other conifers.



Goldfinch

Widespread throughout Britain but uncommon in north half of Scotland. Very colourful bird having a unique combination of black, white, red and yellow plumage. Well known for its habit of feeding on thistle seeds.



Danny Wallace

Great Crested Grebe

Our largest grebe, it is very distinctive in breeding plumage with double horned crests and reddish facial frills used in their remarkable head-wagging courtship display. Nest always over water, often anchored to aquatic vegetation. Female carries chicks on her back. Three chicks born but only one survived in 2010.



Danny Wallace

Great Spotted Woodpecker



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The largest of our two black and white woodpeckers and easily recognised by its size, red vent and red nape-patch (absent in the female). It has a curious rattling song, made by pecking vigorously at resonant dry wood.

Great Tit

The largest in the tit family being the size of a sparrow. Recognised by its white cheeks on a black head and broad, black bib running down a yellow breast.



Drew Wallace

Greenfinch

One of the commonest garden birds and also seen flocking with other finches on farmland during the winter. Bright yellow wing patches on a dull greenish yellow plumage.



Danny Wallace

Grey Heron

The largest long-legged British bird that wades in water. Often seen as a huge, broad-winged bird flapping slowly overhead.



Danny Wallace

Greylag Goose



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A winter visitor it frequents northern farmland and coastal areas. Best distinguished by its pale grey forewing in flight and its combination of orange bill and pink legs. We have

three permanent residents on the loch.

Grey Wagtail

Blue-grey upperparts, yellowish rump and longer tail distinguish it from the yellow wagtail. It has a shorter higher pitched call than other wagtails.



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Herring Gull

A common gull by the sea and also inland. Yellow bill and pink legs distinguish it from the smaller Common Gull. Breeds on sea cliffs and on buildings in seaside towns.

House Martin

Summer visitor which arrives a little later than the swallow, in mid or late April. Distinguished by its white rump, short tail and all-white underparts. Builds a mud nest on buildings or in caves.

Kestrel

Common bird of prey seen in both cities and the countryside. Best known for its habit of hovering in search of prey usually small rodents.

Kingfisher

A beautiful bird, most often seen as a sapphire flash as it speeds down a river or pond. Breeds in holes by or near fresh water.



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Lesser Black-backed Gull

Widespread around the coast and breeding mainly on the ground. Both bill and legs yellow in colour.

Linnet

A bird of heaths and scrub, but found in a wide variety of man-made habitats, often breeding in small colonies like the greenfinch. Has a grey head and chestnut back.



Danny Wallace

Magpie

Unmistakable with its long tail and black and white plumage. Common in farming areas it has a chattering chuckle.



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Little Grebe



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Also known as Dabchick, the Little Grebe is our smallest and commonest grebe. The Little Grebe is an accomplished diver and has a whinnying cry.

Longtailed Tit

A very distinctive small tit, usually seen in groups flying from bush to bush and easily identified by their long tails. Makes a beautifully woven nest from moss and cobwebs.



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Mallard

The largest and commonest British wild duck both inland and on the coast. Drake has green head, white neck-ring and purple-brown breast. Females are brown with a blue and white bar on their wing.



Danny Wallace



Moorhen

Easily recognised by its red bill and forehead. Perches in trees and bushes. A very common and widespread waterfowl in Britain.



Danny Wallace

Mute Swan

The most common swan and recognised by its orange bill and black knob. Nests in a huge pile of vegetation.



Danny Wallace

Pheasant



Drew Wallace

A well known game bird, the male bird is very colourful whereas the female is brown with a shorter tail. Prefers to run for cover but has a noisy

take-off when flying. It produces a *karrk-karrk* sound.

Pied Wagtail

Well known for their habit of wagging their tails up and down. This is the only black and white species in Britain and it is widespread and common in all seasons.

Pochard

The male duck has a chestnut head, black breast and grey under parts. 135 recorded on loch during mid January, 2010. Their numbers started to increase again during October and 163 were recorded in December, 2010.



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Redwing



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The smaller of Britain's two winter visitor thrushes. Recognised by its white eye-stripe and red flanks and under-wing. Often seen with fieldfares.

Reed Bunting

Most often found in reed-beds or by fresh water. Cock has a striking black head-dress and the hen is more sparrow-like but distinguishable by white outer tail feathers. Has a squeaky song.



Danny Wallace



Robin

One of Britain's best loved birds. Whole face and breast an orange-red. Sings throughout the year.

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Rock Dove

The rarest British breeding dove confined to Scottish and Irish coasts. The Rock Dove has white rump, greyish wing-tips and broad black wing-bars.

Sand Martin

The plumage is quite different from both the Swallow and House Martin being a sandy brown above, and white with a brown chest-bar below. Also has a short tail. Arrives before the swallow in late March.

Sedge Warbler

Has a conspicuous white eye-stripe and a varied song, which has more harsh notes than Reed and Marsh Warblers.



Danny Wallace

Siskin

A small greenish finch. Yellow rump of both sexes and black crown and chin of male are good field marks. Much commoner as a winter visitor.



Danny Wallace

Skylark

Common throughout Britain and performs a sustained song often from a great height. Generally a streaky brown, slightly crested with white outer tail.



Danny Wallace

Song Thrush

Common and widespread in gardens, woods, farmland and other open country with trees and bushes. Conspicuously spotted breast and loud, clear, repetitive song.



Danny Wallace



Sparrowhawk

Combination of long tail, blunt wings and 'flap and glide' flight distinguish it from the Kestrel. Hunts by flying fast usually low amongst woodland or along hedgerows.



Drew Wallace

Starling

A widespread and common bird. Has striking plumage and a bustling gait. Call a harsh descending *tcheer*. Has a rather warbly song. Good mimic.



Drew Wallace

Swallow

This summer visitor is identified by its long, forked tail, all blue under parts and chestnut throat and forehead. A highly skilled, graceful and aerobatic flying bird it normally only settles on the ground to collect nesting material.



Danny Wallace



Drew Wallace

Swift

A common summer migrant breeding in crevices in buildings. Long wings, short tail and all-dark plumage. Present mid May to early August.



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Treecreeper

The only small land bird with a curved beak and the only one that climbs trees, indeed being hardly ever seen away from tree trunks. Nests in remarkably narrow crevices, often between ivy stems and a tree-trunk.

Tree Sparrow

Different from the House Sparrow in that it has an all-chestnut crown and a black cheek-patch. Nests in small colonies in holes in trees, cliffs and buildings. Habitat is usually woods and areas with mature trees. Has a high-pitched *teck* sound.



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Tufted Duck

A common diving duck. The drake has a head-tuft and dark back. Breeds in fresh water throughout Britain.

303 recorded on loch during mid January 2010.



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Water Rail

A shy, skulking bird with a long red bill and barred flanks. Voice very varied, clucking, grunting and squealing.



Danny Wallace

a dancing song flight. Summer visitor breeding throughout Britain and wintering in Africa.

Wigeon

Mainly a winter visitor whose presence can be detected by its characteristic *whee-oo* call.

Breeds most commonly in Scotland. Male's buff cream and chestnut head and grey underparts are distinctive.



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Willow Warbler

Found wherever there are trees or shrubs. Very like the Chiffchaff but has slightly yellower underparts and usually paler, flesh-coloured legs. Has a *hoo-eet* call.



Danny Wallace

Woodcock

Like a big, stocky Snipe and usually found in damp woodland. Rises noisily and dodges rapidly away. Breeds throughout Britain. Migrates from the Continent each Autumn.

Woodpigeon

Britain's largest pigeon and regarded as a serious agricultural pest.

Drew Wallace



Wren

One of Britain's smallest birds and found in a wide range of habitats. It has a warm brown plumage and a habit of cocking up its remarkably short tail.



Danny Wallace

Song is a loud and vigorous burst of clear, trilling notes. It also has a scolding *tic-tic-tic*.

Yellowhammer

Bright yellow bird well known for its monotonous high-pitched song. Females are browner and less yellow. Habitat is farmland, hedgerow, heath and scrub.



Danny Wallace

Whitey

This booklet would not be complete if we did not mention my favourite little white farmyard duck who has been a resident on the loch for quite some time and is most often seen with some of the mallards.



Danny Wallace

Farmyard Geese

Lastly I must mention the noisy three white farmyard geese who screech at most visitors on arrival. They have been resident for many years and are always seen parading around together intimidating all in their path.



Drew Wallace

Notes

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