



# NORTHERN SEAS & COASTS

Ornithological highlights from Scotland's northern waters

## Scottish Birdwatchers' Conference 2020

Elgin Town Hall, 1 Trinity Place, Elgin, IV30 1UL

Presentations: Saturday 21st March

Field trips (optional): Sunday 22nd March

BTO is a Registered Charity Nos 216652 (E&W), SC039193 (Scotland)  
SOC is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation SC009859

## BOOKING FORM

Ideally please book online at ([www.the-soc.org.uk](http://www.the-soc.org.uk)). Alternatively, please complete this form in block capitals and return with a cheque payable to: **SOC, Waterston House, Aberlady, EH32 0PY**. If you have any queries or prefer to make a credit/debit card booking over the phone, please call 01875 871330.

Name(s) and any affiliation: (to appear on badge)	
Address:	
	Postcode:
Tel:	Email:
Any special dietary requirements?	
Please tick if you have limited mobility <input type="checkbox"/> or are a wheelchair user <input type="checkbox"/>	
Where did you hear about the conference?	
Would you like to join staff, volunteers and other delegates for an informal meal at Elgin Town Hall after the conference? Advance booking is required and details of how to pay (direct to the caterer) along with menu choices will be provided along with your conference booking acknowledgement. Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Would you be interested in joining an organised outing on the Sunday? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If yes, it would be helpful if you could indicate your preferred location (see 'Local Birdwatching' overleaf): Spey Estuary <input type="checkbox"/> Lossie Estuary <input type="checkbox"/> Findhorn Bay <input type="checkbox"/> Culbin Bar <input type="checkbox"/> Moray Firth (boat trip) <input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Conference and booking fee:</b> The charge for the conference is £35.00 (incl VAT) per person. A limited number of discounted places are available to under 25s and students, priced at £25.00 (incl VAT). This includes registration fee, lunch and teas/coffees. Please book online or return the booking form along with payment to arrive no later than 28th February. Booking will be confirmed by email (or post, as applicable). We regret that no refunds can be issued after 8th March 2020.	
I enclose a cheque payable to the 'SOC' <input type="checkbox"/>	
The SOC's data protection policy is available at <a href="http://www.the-soc.org.uk/privacy-policy">www.the-soc.org.uk/privacy-policy</a> Data from this booking form may be shared with BTO for the purpose of administering the conference only.	

# PROGRAMME

09:00 – 09:45 Registration and tea/coffee



## SESSION 1

- 09:45 – 09:50 Ian Bainbridge (SOC President)  
*Welcome and introduction*
- 09:50 – 10:25 Colin Moffat (Chief Scientific Advisor, Marine Scotland)  
*The marine environment - Setting the scene*
- 10:25 – 11:00 Daisy Burnell (Seabirds Count Project Co-ordinator, JNCC)  
*Overview of seabirds of the northern seas*

11:00 – 11:30 Tea/coffee

## SESSION 2

- 11:30 – 11:50 Bob Swann (Highland Ringing Group)  
*Moray Firth Curlew studies*
- 11:50 – 12:10 Ron Summers (Highland Ringing Group)  
*A breeding study of Greenshanks in coastal North Sutherland*
- 12:10 – 12:40 Martin Cook (Moray Bird Club)  
*The birdwatcher's year in Spey Bay*

12:40 – 14:10 Lunch

## SESSION 3

- 14:10 – 14:50 Roy Dennis (Roy Dennis Wildlife Foundation)  
*Reminiscences of seabird work on Fair Isle*
- 14:50 – 15:20 Liz Humphreys (Senior Research Ecologist, BTO Scotland)  
*Tracking Arctic Skuas in the northern seas – where do they go to feed?*

15:20 – 15:50 Tea/coffee

## SESSION 4

- 15:50 – 16:20 Nina O'Hanlon (Post-doc Research Assoc, Univ of the Highlands and Islands)  
*Seabirds and plastics*
- 16:20 – 17:00 Barbara Cheney (Research Fellow, Univ of Aberdeen Lighthouse Field Station)  
*Cetaceans in the northern seas*
- 17:00 – 17:05 Raffle
- 17:05 – 17:15 Chris Wernham (Associate Director Country Offices, BTO)  
*Summing up*

17:15 Close of Conference

18:30 – 21:00 Evening meal (optional)



## LOCAL BIRDWATCHING

Whether you are interested in exploring the area independently or joining an organised group outing, there are several sites within easy reach of the conference centre.

### SPEY ESTUARY

Viewing the lagoons, saltmarsh, shingle banks and main channel of the Spey Estuary. Birdlife will include wildfowl, gulls (perhaps Iceland or Glaucous), divers and sea ducks. Meeting at the Scottish Dolphin Centre in Tugnet, then walking a short distance across the shingle to view the river mouth and sea.

### LOSSIE ESTUARY

The estuary is bound by dunes to the north and Lossie Forest to the east. As well as wildfowl, the estuary holds significant numbers of gulls (Iceland and Glaucous both possible). Small groups of Snow Bunting can often be seen near the dunes. Meeting in the estuary car park and walking along the waterfront to Lossiemouth Harbour to look for Purple Sandpipers, seabirds and seaducks. Total walk length ~6 km.

### FINDHORN BAY

A spectacular almost land-locked tidal bay which holds significant numbers of waders over the winter months plus varied wildfowl including Pintail. We will meet at the bird hide car park at the entrance to Findhorn village and then walk a short distance to the bay. We will then drive to Burghead Bay where we can expect sea duck including Velvet Scoters and Long-tailed Duck as well as divers and possibly Slavonian Grebe.

### CULBIN BAR

We will have permission to drive through Culbin Forest to gain easy access to the remote RSPB reserve at the Bar. The site is characterised by areas of saltmarsh and at low tide extensive mudflats and sands which hold good numbers of waders. Wigeon and Shelduck are numerous in the channels. We will meet in the Forestry Scotland car park and car share to the start of the walk.

### MORAY FIRTH BOAT TRIP

A two-hour trip on a twelve-seater RIB leaving Findhorn Marina. Cost is £30 per person, payable in advance. The inner Moray Firth has considerable numbers of over-wintering sea ducks at this time of year including Long-tailed Duck, Common Scoter, Velvet Scoter and Eider. Divers and auks should also be seen as well as many gull species. This trip will be weather dependant.

### OTHER SITES

For those wishing to explore the local area independently then details of other sites (as well as those listed above) can be found on the SOC app '*Where to Watch Birds in Scotland*'. This can be downloaded FREE from the App Store and Google Play.