

SPECIES

Speyside Fields for Wildlife

Working with farmers to create species-rich wildflower meadows for birds and insects on agricultural land, this small group of independent conservation-minded local people was set up in 2016.

Crops are left unharvested throughout the autumn and winter. Flower mixes are also planted to provide pollen and nectar for a range of insects during the summer including bees and butterflies. The crop sown includes quinoa, linseed and fodder radish and is carefully chosen so that flowering plants and seeds are available throughout the year at various times. Sites between a quarter hectare and one hectare are carefully chosen to ensure that the winter bird crop and wild flower mixes will grow well. Farmers interested in the scheme and who have suitable land, prepare the soil and sow the seed and work closely with Speyside Fields for Wildlife. SFW raises funds through private donations from interested parties and funding partners and provides funding to the farmers for the loss of the land.

A single hectare of wildflowers along the Speyside Way has provided feeding habitat for well over 1,000 bramblings, chaffinches, linnets, reed buntings and yellowhammers, as well as countless insects.

The Cairngorms National Park Authority has committed a further £10,000 over the next five years to support more sites.

