

CONSERVATION AND VISITOR EXPERIENCE DIRECTORATE

Strathspey Farmland Wader Officer (12 months, part time (22.5 hours/week), Band C)

Job Context

The Cairngorms National Park is one of the most important UK mainland sites for breeding wading birds due to its combination of wetlands, wet grasslands and low-intensity mixed farming. Nevertheless, waders such as lapwing and redshank have seen their numbers dramatically reduce by over 50 percent in the last 10 years.

The Strathspey Wetlands and Wader Initiative (SWWI) is a partnership of Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA), Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH), Scottish Agricultural College (SAC), CKD Galbraith, Agri-ecosystems and National Farmers Union Scotland (NFUS). SWWI helps farmers, crofters and land managers in the Cairngorms National Park protect and improve habitats for breeding waders, by:

- Providing a strategic approach to the provision of high-quality breeding wader habitat at landscape scale through targeting Rural Priorities funding applications.
- Fostering collaboration between conservationists, agriculturalists and land managers which pools skills to maximise delivery for key habitats and species in Strathspey.
- Identifying land management projects of benefit to farms and breeding waders and access funding to support them.
- Raising awareness of the importance of the Strathspey wader population and how appropriate land management on farms can help it to survive.
- Carrying out or facilitating research into the causes of wader declines in Strathspey

The SWWI partnership has now sourced funding to support employment of a Strathspey Farmland Wader Officer for a fixed term. The Cairngorms National Park Authority is taking forward this recruitment on behalf of the SWWI. The Authority will host the post and provide line management and facilities support, while the post-holder will work for the SWWI partnership as a collective group.

Job Purpose

To assist the delivery of land management based conservation projects on agricultural land in Strathspey; running farm based demonstration and awareness raising events; helping to co-ordinate monitoring and research projects, and delivering other actions identified by the SWWI as being key to achieving the aims of the partnership.

Responsibilities

- Collaborate on the preparation of agri-environment plans, including habitat assessments, mapping, farm collaboration and drafting option recommendations.
- Carry out advisory visits to agricultural units with the aim of improving habitats for breeding waders.
- Support the delivery of on-farm capital works projects, including scrape creation, rush management and soil improvement programmes.
- Oversee the running of the SWWI machinery loan scheme.
- Assist RSPB with the running of the 2020 Strathspey Breeding Wader Survey, which

covers over 9,000 hectares of agricultural land.

- Co-ordinate SWWI based research and monitoring projects and help facilitate relevant research projects within Strathspey
- Deliver farm demonstration events and work with farmer advocates to showcase wildlife friendly farming and good management for breeding waders and disseminate knowledge gained to similar projects elsewhere in Scotland.
- Collaborate with SWWI partners on creating and delivering an SWWI Communications Plan, including events, shows and leaflets
- Attend all SWWI meetings, collaborate with SWWI partners on work plans, monitoring and recording, and maintain good communication within the partnership

General

- To advise CNPA on wetland and wet grassland habitat best practice and land management issues
- To collaborate with SWWI partners on delivering the actions identified in the SWWI Action Plan 2018 to 2022.
- Work with colleagues on integrated delivery of the four aims of the National Park including the National Park Partnership Plan and Cairngorms Nature Action Plan;
- Raise awareness and understanding of conservation in the National Park, supporting communications and engagement activity to showcase projects, people and places
- Work with farmers, crofters, land owners and interest groups in the Park to increase engagement with conservation of wetland and wet grassland habitats
- Contribute to the development of farmland wader projects of partner organisations that have a relevance to the National Park;
- Represent the CNPA in local, regional and national forums on wetland and wet grassland habitats issues

Person Specification - Knowledge, experience and training

ESSENTIAL

- Experience of wader conservation and wet grassland habitat management;
- Experience of working with farmers and crofters on conservation and land management;
- Demonstrable experience of project planning and delivery
- Good communication skills and interpersonal skills and ability to work constructively with a wide range of partners;
- Able to demonstrate positive and effective team working
- Working knowledge of standard Microsoft Office software; and,
- Full UK driving licence (or access to a driver if disabled).

DESIRABLE

- A recognised qualification in ecology, agriculture, or land management;
- Good understanding of land management in the Cairngorms National Park
- Experience of working with GIS; and,
- Knowledge of Gaelic