

Speyside Fields for Wildlife

2020 Report

This is the fourth year of our activities. Seven sites were planted this year.

In contrast to the cold wet spring of 2019, the spring of 2020 was warm and damp. These ideal growing conditions saw the seeds germinate and grow well. With little or no frosts during September, flowers were still blooming into October and butterflies and other insects were still active on bright sunny days.

With the mild open weather continuing well into November, bird flocks only began to build up then.

By mid-December however, the weather changed and winter gripped much of the Highlands. From early January, through to mid-February, deep snow and frost covered much of the countryside and wildlife had a tough time.

Our seed crops were heavily utilised during this period and flocks of over one thousand finches were present at Mousa, Balliemore and Ballinluggan.

Significant records are given for each site.

Our project was nominated for a Nature of Scotland award and we were awarded a Highly Commended in the Community Initiative category.

In addition to the fields established this year, we responded to numerous enquiries for advice from across UK. These ranged from people wishing to create wildlife fields, to gardeners wishing to plant mini wild flower meadows. We have also been in discussion with CNPA and HC on how best to safeguard wildflower rich roadside verges.

Thanks again to CNPA and to all our patrons and supporters for their support.

Seed details have been recorded separately.

If you wish details of these then please get in touch.

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Mousa 0.5 ha Sown on 5th May



Tractor sowing at Mousa on 5th May.

Photo 6th August. Corn annuals at Mousa.



Photo 14th February. Hungry times: finches at Mousa.

5 th July	3 roe deer.
2 nd Sept	5 roe deer, doe + 2 kids and 2 kids on their own.
25 th Nov	160 linnets, 20 chaffinches, 20 bramblings.
30 th Dec	500 linnets, 30 chaffinches, 15 bramblings, 1 redpoll.

Balliemore 1 ha sown 5th May



Photo 6th August. Corn annuals and radish at Balliemore.



Photo 6th February. Linnets and bramblings at Balliemore.

30 th September	30 linnets, 1 reed bunting.
28 th October	125 chaffinches, 35 linnets, 7 dunnocks, 3 robins, 1 wren, 5 blackbirds.
24 th November	150 linnets, 90 chaffinches, 4 robins, 5 dunnocks, 2 blackbirds, 1 wren, 2 roe deer.
1 st December	80 linnets, 10 chaffinches, 6 bramblings, 2 robins, 1 blackbird, 1 dunnock, 1 pheasant.
4 th December	150 chaffinches, 40 bramblings, 15 linnets, 1 robin, 2 dunnocks, 1 sparrowhawk, 1 merlin.
11 th December	160 linnets, 70 chaffinches, 30 bramblings, 2 robins, 2 dunnocks, 1 wren, 1 blackbird, 1 buzzard.
20 th January	900 linnets, 50 bramblings, 50 chaffinches.
6 th February	1000 linnets, 20 bramblings, 12 chaffinches, 3 wrens, 3 dunnocks, 1 buzzard, 3 pheasants.

Croft of Clachaig 0.5 ha



Photo 13th August. Sandy and Peter admire the corn annuals.

13th January 30 linnets, 6 greenfinches, 1 dunnoek.

Croft 20 Skye of Curr 0.5 ha sown 5th May



Photos 2nd September. Corn annuals and black oats at Croft 20



2nd Dec 20 chaffinches, 3 linnets, 2 bramblings, 1 greenfinch, 1 redpoll, 1 wren, 3 pheasants.

Ballinlaggan

1.5 ha

sown 5th May



Photo 12th August. Mark, Paddy and Stewart admire the corn annuals.



Photo 6th January. Ca.1000 linnets enjoyed the radish and linseed over the winter.

21 st June	32 peesies (6 young), 2 oystercatchers and 2 brown hares.
2 nd Oct	50 linnets, 1 sparrow hawk .
26 th Oct	35 linnets, 3 pheasants.
1 st Dec	20 linnets, 10 chaffinches, 3 pheasants, 3 reed buntings, 9 dunnocks.
22 nd Dec	450 linnets, 10 chaffinches, 2 dunnocks, 15 pheasants, 1 sparrow hawk, 1 red-legged partridge.
6 th Jan	1000 linnets, 12 chaffinches, 6 bramblings, 6 dunnocks, 5 pheasants, 1 wren.

Easter Tulloch 0.5 ha hand sown 19th May



Photo 12th August. Corn annuals and bird seed crop.

16 th June	Peesie with 4 eggs.
19 th Nov	83 chaffinches, 2 robins, 1 wren.
14 th Dec	230 chaffinches, 2 dunnocks
6 th Dec	50 chaffinches, 2 dunnocks, 1 wren.

Deshar 0.5 ha



Photo 22nd August. Corn annuals, radish and fodder crop.

10 th Dec	250 chaffinches, 5 goldfinches.
3 rd Jan	10 redpolls, 1 Mealy redpoll.
15 th Jan	20 goldfinches, 5 linnets, 2 roe deer.
31 st Jan	20 goldfinches, 20 redpolls, 20 reed buntings.

Sadly, this field was compromised when sheep were let in from mid-January and the seed crop was heavily impacted.

Other birds recorded using the fields this season or hunting the birds were: bullfinch, yellowhammer, skylark, redwing, mistle thrush, greylag geese, barn owl, kestrel, sparrowhawk, wood pigeon, stock dove, feral pigeon, rook, crow, jackdaw, whitethroat, blackbird, oystercatcher, woodcock. Thanks to Pete Gordon for helping to record the birds.

Desmond

