



Please help us secure the future of Speccott Moor

Speccott Moor, in a beautiful and remote part of north Devon, is a stunning area of Culm grassland – very rare, species rich, wet meadow that is home to some of our most threatened wildlife. It is surrounded by woodlands, and the flower rich meadows are interspersed with pockets of scrub and wet flushes and cut across by little streams. Snipe, reed bunting, grasshopper warbler and other wetland loving birds frequent the site, and in spring and summer it becomes a riot of colour and buzzing insects, with the rare marsh fritillary butterfly a common sight. Views across the rolling Devon countryside towards Dartmoor are spectacular.



Culm grassland is a stunning diverse habitat

At 60 acres in size, **Speccott is one of the largest remaining areas of unprotected Culm grassland.** This habitat is a real Devon speciality and of international conservation importance, but only tiny fragments remain following decades of agricultural improvement, mining for ball clay, neglect and unsympathetic conifer planting. The site has been well cared for by its current owner, but it has no legal protection. This means there would be nothing to stop a new owner draining and reseeding the fields, spelling an abrupt end to all its natural richness. Tragically, we have seen this happen again and again across the county.

Devon Wildlife Trust wants to buy the site and secure its future by turning it into a nature reserve. As well as its superb biodiversity, the site borders the popular Tarka Trail, so there will be a wonderful opportunity for thousands of Trail users to look across a stunning landscape of Culm grassland at its best. If we succeed, we plan to use part of the Moor as a donor site - a source of seed to help re-establish wet meadows elsewhere in the county. Speccott Moor is a haven for scarce plants such as wavy St John's wort and fen bedstraw, and swathes of devil's bit scabious and meadow thistle.

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Devon Wildlife Trust has been given the opportunity to purchase Speccott and safeguard it for the future. Very generous individuals have already stepped forward to help, and the Trust will be dedicating a significant proportion of its reserve acquisition fund towards the cost. **We are now looking to raise a further £50,000 to be able to purchase the site and ensure that Speccott Moor will be a premier nature reserve as well as a vital source of seed for grassland restoration across northern Devon.**

Scientists tell us that we need at least 30% of our land in recovery for wildlife if we want to stop the continuing rapid decline of biodiversity. We also know that wet meadows like this one can play a crucial role in tackling climate change and helping us achieve net zero carbon emissions. If we can secure the future of Speccott Moor, we will be taking one more important step towards these crucial goals.



Speccott Moor is a haven for Devil's-bit scabious – Photo: Amy Lewis



Speccott Moor supports a breeding population of the rare marsh fritillary butterfly – Photo: Chris Root

As someone who cares passionately about the future of our meadows, **I would be extremely grateful if you felt able to make a donation to help us achieve our target.** You can donate securely online at www.devonwildlifetrust.org/donate-speccott-moor or do contact me for further details.

Securing Speccott Moor would be a huge win for wildlife. And if we succeed, we will be inviting donors for a special visit to the site next year when it is looking its best.

Thank you so much for your help.

Harry Barton



Chief Executive
Devon Wildlife Trust

