

## CAIRNGORMS LOCAL OUTDOOR ACCESS FORUM

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- Title:** CNP Capercaillie Framework Update
- Prepared by:** Justin Prigmore, Cairngorms Nature Officer
- Purpose:** This paper provides an update on the development of the conclusions of the Capercaillie Framework

### Advice Sought

Views are sought on the content of the conclusions and agreement of the approach taken. Input is also requested into the development of the draft recommendations.

### Update

1. Building on the advice provided by the LOAF at the last two meetings, conclusions have been developed with further input from the Project Team and Project Board. See attached paper.
2. Main conclusions being put forward which have relevance to Access are as follows:
  - a. Capercaillie will avoid using open woodland habitat next to tracks, if the tracks are well used, by about 125m either side of the track. The threshold for how frequently a path needs to be used to have this effect is not known.
  - b. Caper can be attracted to forest tracks (to drink, ingest grit, etc) that are not frequently used. Based on anecdotal evidence, this can make them vulnerable to sporadic, unpredictable disturbance on low use paths.
  - c. Keeping people on tracks can allow caper to become habituated to predictable disturbance and allow them to use adjacent habitat.
  - d. Dog walking is probably the most significant activity likely to have a negative impact, based on anecdotal evidence.
  - e. There is a lack of consistent messages on signage across the CNP relating to caper and dogs and what is expected of visitors.
  - f. Dog walkers need areas to allow their dogs to be exercised off-lead.
  - g. Access takers are increasingly obtaining information by personal recommendation through social media.

- h. There are a range of Communities where, due to the proximity of the woodland/caper habitat and the increase in development planned, there is a requirement for a focussed approach similar to that developed at Boat of Garten. These include Grantown, Aviemore, Carrbridge, Nethy Bridge, and potentially Kinncraig.
- i. The current Ranger staff allocation doesn't adequately cover all the potentially 'at risk' sites.
- j. To reduce fragmentation, edge effects and the effects of disturbance there is a need for increasing the size and connectedness of patches of habitat that are available to caper to create refuges of continuous habitat.
- k. The creation of more good quality habitat in areas without human pressure is likely to be beneficial.

### **Next steps**

- 3. Further consultation on the conclusions with AOCC, Caper Framework Project Team and CNPA Board.
- 4. Finalise and agree the conclusions with the Caper Framework Project Board.
- 5. Develop the recommendations, consult and approve.
- 6. Identify actions and staffing implications required to deliver recommendations in Phase 2.

### **Input from the LOAF**

- 7. The LOAF is requested to give agreement that the approach taken to draw the conclusions has been conducted using the most appropriate methods and that the best available evidence has been used (either empirical or expert opinion). Views on the applicability of recommendations based on addressing the issues presented from the conclusions are encouraged. Suggested draft recommendations will be put forward for discussion at the meeting.

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