

Badenoch & Strathspey Conservation Group  
**STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE**  
**Hearing Session**

**Provision of the Local Plan**

**Boat of Garten H1**

**Summary of objection(s)**

This allocation is excessive in scale and conflicts with the aims of the Park.

The woodland is extremely important for the endangered capercaillie. It is strategically placed between Kinveachy and Abernethy SPAs for capercaillie. This wood is known to support over 1% of the Scottish population. These figures indicate that the population of caper in this wood is of national significance and is sufficient for the wood to qualify as an SPA for capercaillie.

There is evidence from field research undertaken recently within this wood and Anagach Wood that recreational disturbance (walkers, cyclists, dogs etc) impacts on capercaillie. This research demonstrates that in Boat of Garten wood caper avoid the most disturbed area of the wood nearest the village. Thus, their droppings are sparser within 700m of the much-disturbed zone near the village. This research also shows that their droppings are sparser within 250m of tracks. A distance between tracks of over 500 m is required to provide capercaillie with relatively peaceful havens. Larger peaceful refuges are needed for hens to successfully rear broods (the actual size has not yet been determined).

The allocation H1 would create a new heavily disturbed area in what is currently woodland. It is likely that this new area of housing would be avoided by caper to a comparable extent as the current heavily disturbed zone i.e. by up to 700m, and especially so for 250m. The allocation would increase the recreational disturbance in the wood, and would also be likely to lead to new 'desire line' paths becoming established between the new housing and the already existing paths.

Overall, the effect of this allocation would be to expand the impact of recreational disturbance on caper.

An invertebrate new to Scotland, a slender groundhopper, was recorded on the allocation site in 2008.

Scottish Biodiversity List species of invertebrates on this site include Wood ants. There has been no proper survey of invertebrates.

Red squirrel dreys occur on the site, including dreys not referred to in the survey by the developer.

The allocation impacts on the Priority Habitat of Caledonian pinewood.

The allocation ignores the Reporter's recommendation for an earlier appeal on a site that included the present site.

**Recommendation.**

Omit allocation from LP.

Moss R. 2008. The Distribution of capercaillie droppings in relation to sources of disturbance: Part II. Boat of Garten Wood. Progress Report to Capercaillie BAP Group – Draft.

British Wildlife December 2008. Recent Records.

SEIRU Report PPA/270/380 2006.

Documents provided to HC planners and SEIRU by BSCG on wildlife interest of this site. HC Ref BS/02/00230/OUTBS and appeal ref P/ PPA/270/380 2006

Additional statement.

SNH used a multiplier of x2 to arrive at a population figure for the wood based on numbers of males attending the lek.

Since then, new information has come to light, indicating that a multiplier of x4 is more accurate and should be used. SNH is aware of the new information and has passed it on to their ornithologists. The multiplier should be x4, which indicates that the population in the wood is over 1% of the UK population (see Grouse, Watson and Moss 2008).

The Capercaillie Project Officer now uses a multiplier of x4.

It is our current understanding that SNH have not updated their Appropriate Assessment in the light of this new information.

BSCG has (in most detail in April 2009) recorded red squirrel dreys on the site. We have recorded substantially more dreys than on the survey provided by the developer. We consider this new information is fatal to development on this site.

We have recently recorded at least one wood ant nest of a Scottish Biodiversity List Species within the proposed allocation site.

We have recorded some specimens of juniper (a UK priority species) within the site.

We have recorded vascular plant interest within the site (e.g. winter greens *Pyrola* spp., Creeping ladies tresses *Goodyera repens*, Chickweed wintergreen *Trientalis europaea*). *Pyrola media* is an SNH Framework species and may be present.

We have recorded significant lower plant interest on the site. This includes the liverwort *Nowellia curvifolia* an indicator of the UK priority species *Buxbaumia viridis* that has not been surveyed for; and the ancient pinewood indicator moss Ostrich plume feather- moss *Ptilium crista-castrensis*.

We have recorded on the site at least 3 species of fungi of national interest (including the toothed fungi *Bankera fuliginosa* and *Hydnellum peckel*).

We consider surveys should be undertaken for invertebrates, vascular plants, lower plants, lichens and fungi.

During survey work on HI we appreciated the extent of CI, and the extent of the car park area within CI. We therefore extend our points raised against HI regarding disturbance, squirrel dreys, and invertebrates, as also applying to CI. There is also *Nowellia* on CI. In addition, there may be other natural heritage interest on CI.

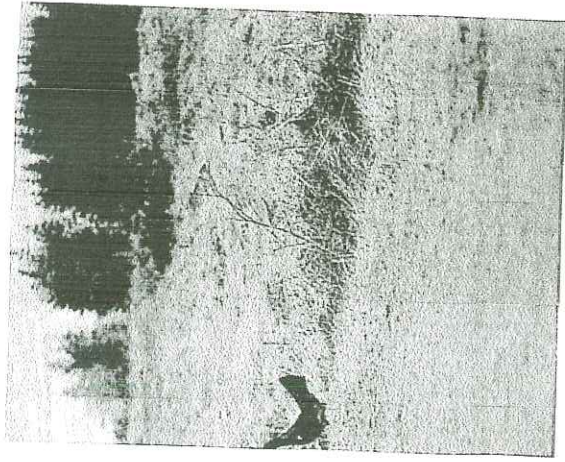
Had we realised the extent of CI previously we would have objected to this allocation and recommended that it should be dropped

Additional Documents

Page from Grouse explaining x4 multiplier.

story of British and regions. Collectively they ing life histories of any ly they have their own he ptarmigan is a resident ain areas, the black grouse is dinary mating displays, the ur largest birds and the red ger one of the few British e most heavily researched imilar problems, including , pests, disease and food ounded by issues of ilations and controversy nercial worth of grouse.

w Naturalist series, written eading grouse specialists, ghts into the natural history irds, including aspects of storical relevance of their hind population fluctuations servation efforts.



he open at a Perthshire lek, now defunct. block of Sitka spruce. The trees were felled after earing, as seen in this 1990 picture. The birds ring, and also around it on forest roads (shown) eared some years after the clear-felled area was ing was left unplanted. (Robert Moss)

w pink patches of bare skin on the head, uring fights (see Fig. 139). It is unusual for many expire, wounded and apparently

action display when flushed by a human or other grouse, involves running in front of r, one or both wings dragging as if injured. hed hen typically rises from tall heather close ounded. She dips low over the heather as if or 10-20m, then rises and flies directly away es dogs and presumably other predators away d lands unseen in a nearby tree, where she

**Lek counts**

Counts of cocks at leks are the easiest way to monitor population trends. In Britain, the statutory authorities arbitrarily consider a local population of any bird species to be of national importance if it contains more than 1 per cent of the national population. Hence the proportion of cocks that attend leks is of practical importance for designating Special Protection Areas (SPAs).<sup>15</sup> The number of cocks at a lek normally peaks during a few days in late April. In a typical survey, one or two counts are done between late March and early May. These very probably miss some young cocks, sub-adults on the periphery, and adults not at the lek that morning.

Youngsters and sub-adults typically comprise about half the total cock population.<sup>16</sup> On rainy mornings, some adult cocks display near their roost site and do not trouble to attend the lek. In addition, some habitually display alone in all weathers, at stances removed from any lek. Hens and cocks are presumably equal in number, and so we have a rule of thumb: the total breeding population is about four times the number of cocks seen during lek surveys.<sup>17</sup>

The contribution of each lek to a population can be assessed from the frequency distribution of counts (Fig. 81). From this, the proportion of the known lekking population that occurs in leks of each size is readily calculated (see Fig. 82). For practical purposes, it is reasonable to assume that this distribution resembles that of

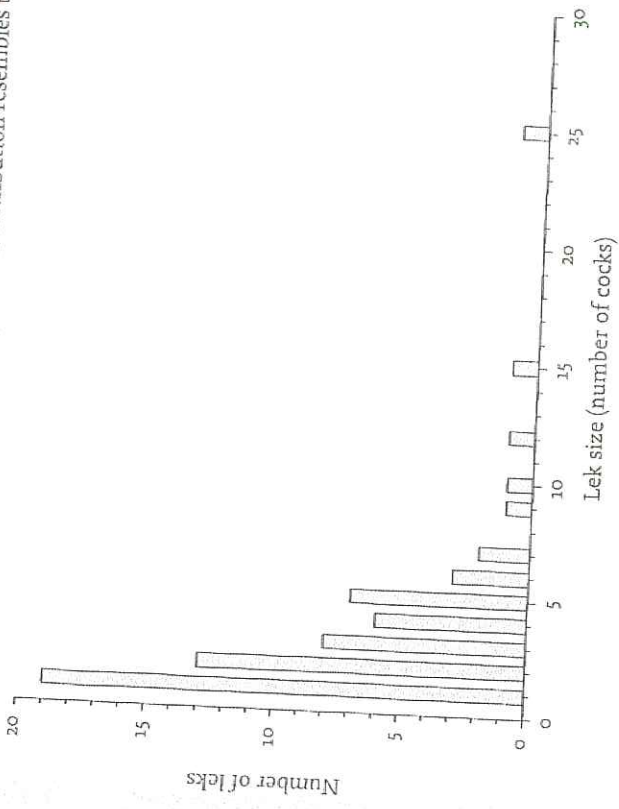


FIG 81. Counts of cocks at all known leks in Scotland, 2004.

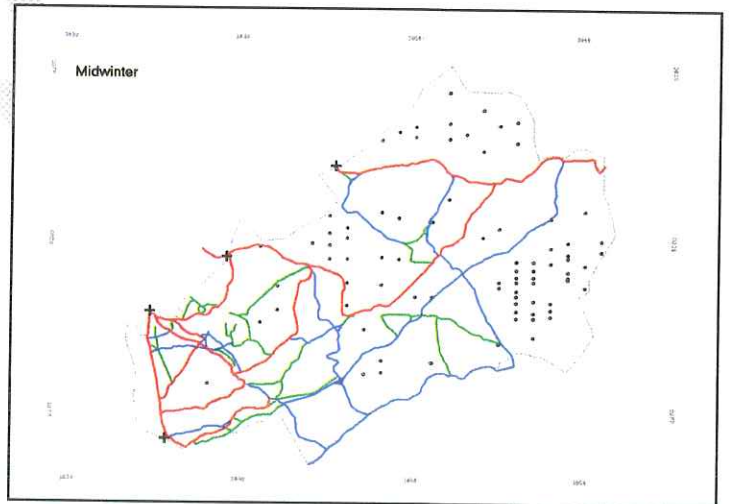
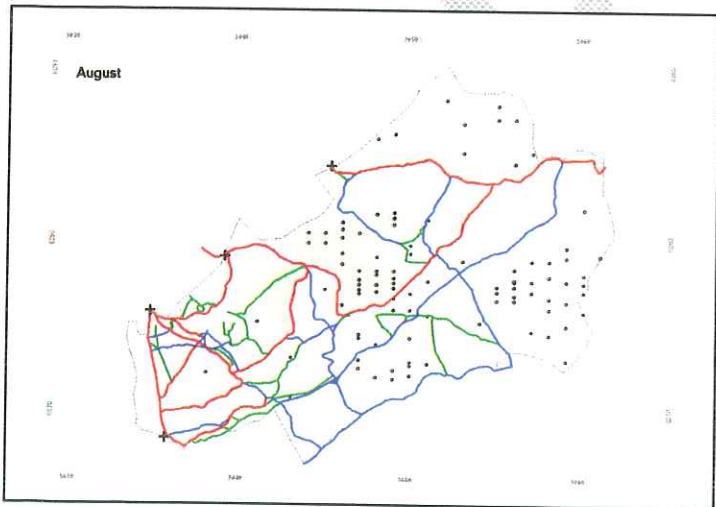
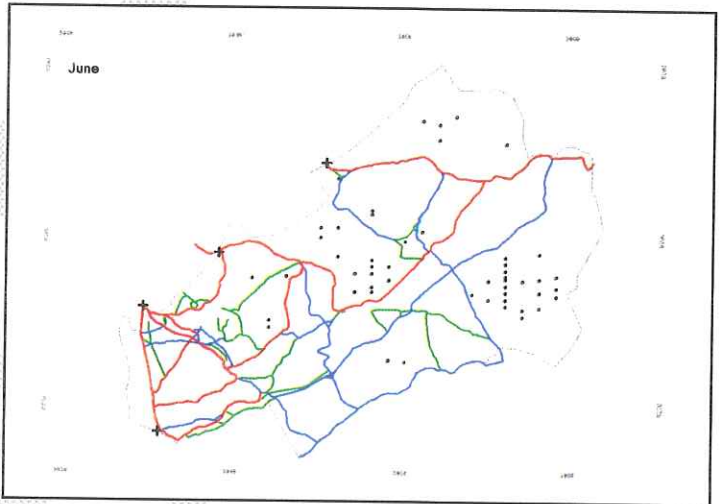
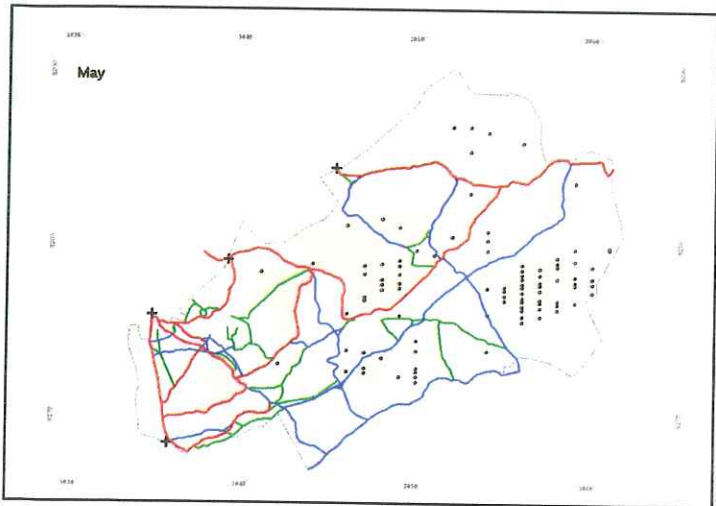
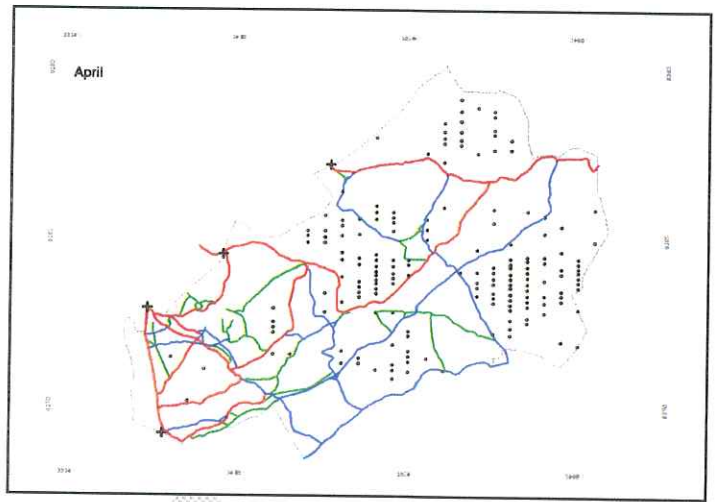
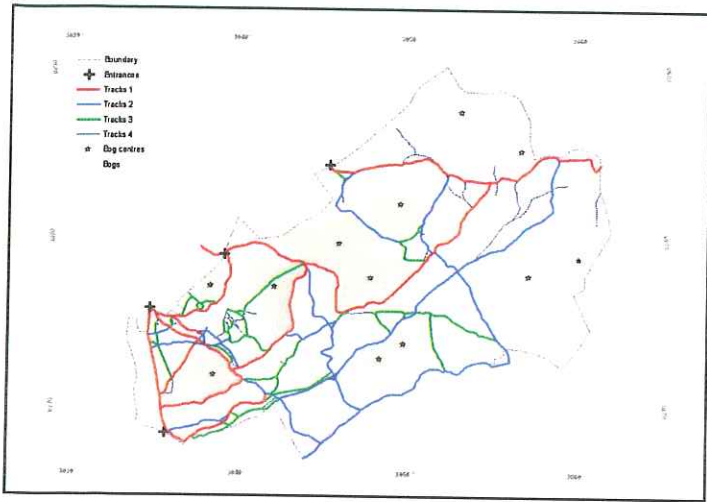


Figure 1. Distribution of droppings on transects in Anagach Wood during five surveys in 2006-7. North-south transects, 100 m apart, covered the entire wood.