

MANAGING RECREATION AND CAPERCAILLIE IN BOAT OF GARTEN WOODS

Proposal I

Ask people to stay on paths in the high and medium sensitive areas (see map) during the bird breeding / rearing season (1 April – 15 August)

Pros	Cons	Would you comply with this measure?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As long as you can veer off the path to avoid puddles etc. • Quite reasonable • Limiting access • Definable timescale • Good idea • As above. Important during the breeding season • All in favour • Can't think of any • This will help reduce disturbance • Look at case studies to see what has & hasn't worked in the UK & abroad • Good idea but use sensitively worded & placed signs • Less disturbance • How people are asked is important • Could be supported • What about lekking time? • Dates should not be fixed • Some people won't take any notice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signs about caper being in the woods might actually attract more of the type of person coming just to see capers who may go off-track Suggestion – Signs could point out that the best place to see caper is the Osprey Centre – (RSPB might even contribute funds!) and how to get there. • Visitors, particularly bird watchers, may go further off paths • Would twitchers do so? • Is entirely • Holiday makers to be made aware. (April-Aug peak holiday time) • None • Not everyone will be aware of the info & issues nor be accessible to being made aware of environmental issues – seasonal or otherwise • Where will people go? Will they end up disturbing other sensitive areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • Yes • Yes • Yes • Definitely – get children to design signs! • Definitely – signs would have to be sympathetic to woods and seasonal to stop sign boredom i.e. “failure to notice the notices” • Yes • Yes – sign workshop • Yes • Not really in any event my wife and I do not enter sensitive areas in the breeding season • Yes • Yes • Yes • Yes. The 2 locals! • Yes. Agreed by all. Never fully enforceable but majority would comply. • Phrase the request/signs reasonably.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourism industry mustn't be affected – does B of G need a caper watch? • Displacement impacts – must be thought about – the Salmon Trail (wading), The Moor (waders) • Continuing into perpetuity – estate management & long term planning must take these things forward – long term forest plan • Monitoring and counting work especially if B of G is pilot • Alternatives – changes of status of the area around B of G that might be impacted • An acceptable proposal, but both Easter & summer holidays come within this, so visitors would need a good info. • Main firebreak is not a good path due to puddles and mud • Risk that if signposting draws attention to the presence of Capercaillie, more people might go off path to see them/photograph them. • Definable time scale • Signage necessary • Most people stay on paths anyway • See some people picking mushrooms off paths • Not a big ask, so should work • If asking to stay on paths 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to ensure good communication to visitors as well • Some serious birdwatchers would stray off paths. How do you monitor it? • Might displace walks to other places which might also be good for caper • But people would also be responsible in other places. Why wouldn't they? • Signs could be adjustable • Adverse impacts at all times of year from people going off paths. • Also other interests such as Pine Martin, Red Squirrels • Must improve the paths to ensure they are safe and usable • Amateur bird watchers unlikely to follow good practice and may be encouraged to come here (counter productive) • Main route is long, straight and uninteresting • It can get difficult to use in bad weather • It is unrealistic – can't get message to visitors • Photographers and wildlife watchers go off paths • Would need lots of intrusive signs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure sign is removed when not needed. • Use the school children to keep the signs up to date. • General support on table • Yes, but some might and others wouldn't
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Proposal 2

Establish screening along paths in high and medium sensitive areas by planting native vegetation

Pros	Cons	Would you support this measure?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mounds created on certain stops where most sensitive perhaps, but has to look natural • Natural way of doing - may also improve habitat • Protection for wildlife • Even use a few benches here and there! • Could be effective. Should be as natural looking as poss. Use deadwood as well as live plants • ? • None – it's a totally preposterous idea • Will improve structural diversity, which will have an overall positive effect on the woodland • Good idea- use natural colonisers – broom & birch (see edge of tracks to see current examples. Use what already grows well) • Structure or forest would alter for the better • Improving habitat for Capercaillies further in the centre e.g. scraped areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost – who pays? The tax payer? • Heavy vehicle • 40m corridor • Obscures views through trees • Slow growing • Felling required • Not in favour of anything regimented - cutting away existing vegetation for planting • Needs to be a mixture of vegetation to look natural & add to visually • Could be unsightly if done too regimentally. Will prevent some wildlife watching • Cost? Time to grow to maturity? • None • Not able to see into parts of the forest so people might want to stray off path • Adverse impact of screen on caper using the tracks? i.e. Capercaillie wouldn't use tracks. • Cover from ground predators of caper? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • Yes • No as I feel we live in a natural environment and although planting shrubs native to this area is sensitive still cause a mess while planting goes on. • Cost • Is this idea being set up for housing eventually being built? • Yes • Done correctly – yes • Yes – Bob Grant does not think this has been tried elsewhere • Yes – Also use dead wood. Juniper • No - who pays for it, who maintains it & for how long • Yes • Yes • Yes • Yes, provided right species e.g. holly and juniper (no non natives) • Generally supportive • Yes

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self seeding – scrappy ground e.g. letting species establish themselves • Birch & broom where ground disturbed – tracks, burrowing • Screening should be natural species – not sitka spruce, Norway – holly, rowan • Would be a more varied structure • Regeneration = good • Perhaps some screening by juniper could be effective. Broom grows quickly and dies back to allow other trees, shrubs to grow ... but this becomes unsightly when it dies • Possibly having some viewpoints. • It is what a native pine wood should like • Use branches as natural screening and highlight potential to see wildlife • Stepped plan is positive • Juniper very effective (slow growing) • Mix of natural and regeneration planting • Incorporate farming areas - Broom could be included • Looks more natural 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't want height to put off the birdwatchers • Safeguard some views • Corridor effect – away from edge • Invertebrates too • The value of tracks for caper eg. gritting • Who would pay for screening • not entirely clear • A variety of ways of approaching it. • Including contribution of good forestry practice by the estate • Heavy machinery has an effect, but managing a 40 meter corridor might be good • Might the thinning and screening disturb the Capercaillie • Holly gets grazed. Humans picking holly • Corridor deadwood as well as regeneration screening eg. Brashing piles • Not sure of effectiveness • Mechanical methods can be destructive of soil and field layer (can this be done better through RSPA) • Take a long time • Costly 	
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Proposal 3

Erect temporary hessian screens to deliver more immediate screening until native vegetation is established.

Pros	Cons	Would you support this measure?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No • Immediate • Nil • None • Another totally daft idea • Only in areas that require extreme protection due to proximity of lek & high levels of human use. Seasonal • None • Could use deadwood. Brushwood. 2 votes • Tops off trees. Lop & top? • Brash. From thinning. • Tree with tops knocked off are also good for wildlife and form granny Pines of the future • Idea of hazel temporary screen, aspen & willow • Could the screen be seasonal? Possibility explored • Hessian screening - other "neutral" looking screening that would provide a temporary screen until natural screening grew. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rather unnatural • Unsightly • Collapse under weight of snow • Ugly, Horrid • Eyesore. Could highlight sensitive areas. Fire Risk. Detrimental to business (tourism) and local wellbeing • Advertises most sensitive areas • Cost? Unsightly. Hessian has short life • Commercial – lots of people (visitors) come here to walk in the woods – spend money in local business • Hessian could deter visitors and takeaway the natural aspect of the woods. • None • Man made feature • Caper might hit it • Visual impact. Not natural • Annual Maintenance cost. • Snow • Would caper fly into it • Don't like the artificial aspects • Another obstacle to caper? • Won't last • Unsightly • Hemmed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No definitely not • Don't know • No • No • Hate the thought – no way • No - Not been tried before elsewhere • No • Definitely no! • No Who pays for it, Who maintains it & for how long • Unsure – would like to see more evidence • No • ? • Deadwood would be better • No support for this meantime • No support • Should be more deeply in woodland • Not much support

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recognise that visual screening for birds may help them, but visual impact for walkers not good.• No support• Short term screening	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Drawing more attention• Maintenance/costs• Visual impact• Vandalism• Draws attention to the sensitive area• Negative effect• Visual barrier• Asking too much – not fair on people using the woods• Hessian won't last long• Hessian unsightly• Draws attention to sensitivity of woods• Could feel hemmed in• cost	
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Proposal 4

Request that dogs are kept on a lead in the high and medium sensitive areas during the bird breeding / rearing season (1 April – 15 August)

Pros	Cons	Are you a dog owner? Y/N Would you comply with this measure?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • As above. Important during the breeding season • On the lead more control of dog – yes, to keep them on the paths • Essential measure • Impractical • Will reduce disturbance • Information to allow people to behave responsibly - unlike present • Yes, but.....displacement • Language & communication • 16-17 houses in crescent – 9 have dogs • Info to guesthouses & hotels – B of G promoting caper, be proud of the Biodiversity. • Long, slow process of influencing change • Agreed, but signage may be necessary, and leads should be short – not long. • Peer pressure would work but in long term • Feasible and reasonable • Doesn't affect some people as dog on lead anyway 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It might detract visitors coming to Boat – not being able to freely let their dog off the lead • Difficulty of enforcement • You mustn't demonise dog owners • None • Not everyone will respond • People will travel to alternative sites • Need somewhere else to run • Need to reinforce message via signs etc • Kennel club 25%, rural areas 30-50 % • Many people are in the habit of letting dogs run about, and may not be willing to change habits. • Do not demonise dog owners • People are encouraged to go into the woods to avoid other sensitive areas • Will take time to establish new habits • Must be on a short lead – not a 20m • Close control could be tried • Some dogs are well behaved and don't need to be on a lead to stay on paths • Too restrictive to ask to be on lead 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not a dog owner • No • Yes • Yes • Yes – However, dog owners must not be demonised over Capercaillie; there are a number of other threats • Yes (not at the moment) • Yes • Yes and not visiting the area at the critical time • Yes • Own 2 dogs. Yes but would also seek alternative areas 3 times/week to give dogs a really good run • Yes - already do • 5/7 people in group own a dog • Yes, generally close control could do • Acceptable to all • Owner of dog under close control wouldn't put on a lead • Would prefer if asked dogs to be under close control or a lead.

Proposal 5

Alternative off lead dog walking areas / routes could be improved. The following sites have been suggested as offering the greatest potential:

Bonfire Field – secure fencing and gate		
Pros	Cons	Would you use this site as an alternative to the woods?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is it not for housing? • Good • Takes dogs out of forest • Fence needs to be improved • It's in set aside. It's a tenanted farm. Not grazed at present. Lot of people already walk dogs • Cost • Bonfire field backs onto caravan park and this may be an alternative site for new housing • Could be a good dog exercise area for less- abled people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need a dog poo bin at the gate if this site becomes busy • Not an attractive walk & whilst locals may use it visitors probably not • Good • Good wader site, waders are very spp to the area and if anything more susceptible to dog disturbance • Stock adjacent/concentration of dogs/wader habitat • Not everybody wants to walk dogs in open, adverse weather • Pond & waders • Stock fencing on far side is not dog proof • Waders & grebes also important for wildlife • Other dogs around on field • Backs onto caravan site • Dog walking location not so attractive for dog owners walk – prefer woods • Money /cost • Would be hard to walk on without a path 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No, possible future housing site. • No • Yes • Yes if necessary (have done) • Yes • No • No longer • Yes but seasonally due to waders • Unlikely – too bleak • Yes • Yes in favour • Needs rylock fencing • Already used but dogs generally on a lead • Not popular suggestion • Would use in addition to woods, not instead of wood

Salmon trail –fencing to separate dogs / people from stock		
Pros	Cons	Would you use this route as an alternative to the woods?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Useable but fencing? • Good • Good alternative, easier to manage livestock than wildlife • Also safe fenced access to river bank – not just tracks • Essential • Problem with sheep & fencing • Shelter important to stock. • Might be otters? Not seen otter signs • Fencing along river bank • Fishermen objections • Cattle water • Electric fencing • Link to Mitta loch? • Could be more attractive than paths in woods • Could extend salmon trail to Kinchurdy farm 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Too much to fence - farmer has virtually no fencing down there • Distance (remote) by comparison • Good • The farm has to be taken into account • Too far from houses unless you have transport • In the suggested areas, appropriate fencing would be needed, and on the salmon walk, much fence improvement needed • At present dogs have to be kept on leads because of livestock in fields • Difficult to do – farmer not maintaining fence • Expensive – very expensive (SRDP) not for tenant to pay • Dogs can frighten sheep even on a lead • Not currently an alternative in cattle season (May - Oct) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes I do but not with a dog. A dog has to be on a lead on this trail • Yes • Yes if necessary have done (often) • Yes • No • No longer • Yes • Yes, as well as many others to S, E & West of the sensitive area. Already use this area • Yes • Older people can't walk very far. Facilities are bonfire field, corner woodland, low value woodland • Do use it already but with dogs on lead – livestock • Could be

How could this work in practice?

These are the things that people thought would work. Are there any others?

- Ranger
- Articles in the BOG Standard
- Signage on site
- Information on the community path leaflet

Any other comments

- There is no point in doing mitigation if you then build houses in the woods.
- Suggest more liaison with RSPB to see if they can offer any alternative walks in less sensitive areas.
- Welcome packs for new residents.
- Website.
- (Ranger) - Someone on the staff at the RSPB Osprey hide maybe interested in taking on this job
- (Ranger) – ranger would tend to make people disobey
- Woods and tracks leaflets with more information
- Measuring the caper problems & reasons to obey rules
- Ranger – No, Articles –Yes, Signage – Yes, Info – Yes
- Strathspey has 75% of UK population
- Polite signage would be acceptable asking people to control their dogs during the breeding season. MUST NOT type of signage would not work.
- All cost issues – visual issues
- Happy to share info I have noted dog walking extensively throughout the wider area

- Want to improve natural heritage value around Boat of Garten, but improvements should be maintained. Forestry practice & housing developments shall not undermine these improvements.
- Many more paths in these areas – than those shown. Consider using the peripheral areas as alternatives
- Waterfront disturbance at loch when waders are breeding i.e. Slavonian Grebe
- Also wader issues
- Summarise in bog standard
- Give link to report on CNPA website
- Point of all the areas with caper are important i.e. Loch Vaa, Deshar wood, Abernethy
- Birch wood – issue is sheep
- Railway is a barrier
- Idea of signs on desire lines of the path
- Website
- Display on caper in village
- Scope for more paths around the less sensitive area
- Impact of domestic cats
- Experience of having a Ranger in Nethy has been very valuable
- Might there be funding for this, or could we share with Nethy – joint post?
- All measures suggested could be useful and welcome pack for new residents could include info on paths & capers
- Are there low sensitive areas on RSPB land which could be used by dog walkers
- Good visitor information
- Remember that there are many other factors that affect Capercaillie e.g. weather, pine martin or other predation that has as much if not greater impact on Capercaillie survivability

- Do something about motor bikes using the wood.
- Do caper become habituated to the sight of dogs
- Welcome packs for new residents
- Ranger – very useful as one at Nethy is very popular
- Ranger – Popular idea with group
- Ranger – youth training opportunity
- Signage – Info for holiday cottages very important – also B & B – leaflets & signage support (landmark hotel folders)
- Signage - not too much and alternate them
- Signage – seasonal is best (less habituation)
- Web site – already one in use – could be used
- Get RSPB involved
- Ranger – positive, friendly, not policing e.g. Nethybridge along model of Explore Abernethy Ranger
- Signage on site – polite, ask nicely – informative for visitors showing where can go. Orientational panels at main entrances
- Community path leaflet – up-to-date plus another leaflet on wildlife
- Consistency across Park in terms of messages.
- Over time people will change their behaviour
- Nice display somewhere about Capercaillie