

Capercaillie Emergency Plan Programme Board meeting

Friday 10 January | Park Authority office, Grantown-on-Spey

Attendees

- Andy Ford: Director of Nature and Climate Change, Park Authority (Chair)
- Carolyn Robertson: Cairngorms Nature Manager, Park Authority
- Chris Donald: Head of Operations Central Highlands, NatureScot
- John Risby: Highland and Islands Conservator, Scottish Forestry
- Alex Macleod: North Region Manager, Forestry and Land Scotland

1. Aims and responsibilities of the Programme Board

It was agreed that the Programme Board is responsible for:

- a) Enabling and assessing the delivery of the Capercaillie Emergency Plan
- b) Managing associated risks and issues
- c) Working with the Scientific Advisory Group to review the plan's impact based on evidence
- d) Prioritising activities outlined in the plan when necessary, e.g., based on evidence and opportunities for quick wins
- e) Aligning public funding and policy to support delivery
- f) Providing strategic oversight and ensuring a coordinated approach to communications about the plan
- g) Ensuring the plan maintains a national focus, with policy, guidance, and learning applied consistently across all capercaillie areas, within and beyond the National Park
- h) Advocacy and reporting to the Scottish Government, Park Authority, and NatureScot Boards

2. Governance and management

A Scientific Advisory Group, chaired by NatureScot, are responsible for developing and delivering a research and monitoring plan to measure the impact of the activities outlined in the Capercaillie Emergency Plan and to inform adaptive management, and support the specific research actions within the plan.

The proposed membership of the Scientific Advisory Group was discussed. It was agreed that individuals with appropriate knowledge and expertise could also be co-opted to the group as required at the discretion of the Chair and members.

Proposed membership of the Scientific Advisory Group

Organisation	Representative
Forest Research	Head of Land Use & Ecosystem Services Research Group
GWCT	Senior Scientist Scottish Upland Research
NatureScot	Terrestrial Ornithologist
RSPB	Senior Conservation Scientist
RZSS	Head of Conservation
University of Aberdeen	Professor of Ecology
University of St Andrews	Reader in Statistical Ecology
University of Glasgow	Lead for the Capercaillie Integrated Population Model

There are 6 areas of work within the Emergency Plan with stakeholders connected to each area as outlined overleaf. It was agreed that it will be the responsibility of a Project Manager (responsible for managing delivery of the Emergency Plan) to manage the stakeholder groups to ensure coordinated delivery of actions.

Stakeholder groups based on the 6 areas of work in the Capercaillie Emergency Plan

Expanding and improving habitat

- Woodland expansion (p15)
- Woodland restructuring (p16)
- Woodland grazing (p18)
- Robocutting (p20)
- Forest bog restoration (p22)

Stakeholders:

- Scottish Forestry
- CONFOR
- Land managers in target areas
- Peatland ACTION Teams

Reducing the impacts of predation

- Diversionary feeding (p26)
- Monitoring vole populations (p29)
- Lethal control of foxes and crows (p30)
- Monitoring pine marten populations (p32)

Stakeholders:

- NatureScot
- GWCT
- Land managers delivering predator management strategies and or in areas with suitable hen records
- University of Aberdeen
- University of St. Andrews

Removing and marking fences

- Removing and marking fences (p35)

Stakeholders:

- Scottish Forestry
- Land managers in core capercaillie areas
- RSPB

Reducing disturbance

- Reducing disturbance (p39)

Stakeholders:

- Park Authority
- Land managers in targeted areas
- Scottish Orienteering Association
- Badenoch and Strathspey Trail Association
- Aberdeenshire Trail Association
- Developing Mountain Biking in Scotland
- BirdGuides
- Rare Bird Alert
- Scottish Ornithologists' Club
- Lek It Be Champions
- Police Scotland

Capercaillie monitoring

- Monitoring productivity (p43)
- Monitoring leks (46)
- Monitoring morbidity and mortality (p48)

Stakeholders:

- NatureScot
- GWCT
- Carrbridge Capercaillie Group
- Rothiemurchus Estate
- Seafield and Strathspey Estates
- RSPB
- RZSS
- University of Aberdeen
- University of St Andrews

Reinforcement feasibility

- Reinforcement feasibility (p51)

Stakeholders:

- Park Authority
- Land managers in areas relevant to the feasibility study
- NatureScot
- RZSS

3. Reporting progress, risks and issues

Reporting information will be shared publicly and presented for annual review to the Park Authority Board Performance Committee. A suggested format for a Progress Report, including a Risks and Issues log was discussed. It was agreed that the format should mirror that used to report to the Park Authority Board Performance Committee. As well as reporting on the 6 areas of work in the Emergency Plan, reporting on progress and activities of the Scientific Advisory Group should also be included. It was agreed that the Project Manager responsible for managing delivery of the Emergency Plan will also be responsible for reporting.

Actions

1. Carolyn to set the next meeting date in April
2. Chris to confirm who will chair the Scientific Advisory Group
3. Carolyn to draft an update to share with all stakeholders to keep them informed of progress to date delivering the Emergency Plan
4. Carolyn to draft a role description for the Capercaillie Emergency Plan Project Manager