

## Cairngorms Capercaillie Project **SPECIFICATION OF WORK**

Trail camera study of predator activity in  
core capercaillie areas within Kinveachy Forest



This specification of work has been prepared on behalf  
of the Carrbridge Capercaillie Group.

'Survey current predator activity in capercaillie areas in  
Kinveachy Forest' is an action within the Carrbridge Capercaillie  
Conservation Strategy Action Plan, Winter - Spring 2021.



## Project vision and background

The Cairngorms Capercaillie Project, funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, is the coming together of a wider range of people in the Cairngorms National Park, including local residents and visitors, to help secure the long-term survival of capercaillie in the UK.

The UK capercaillie population is in serious decline. It's possible that there are now less than 1,000 capercaillie left and almost all of them live in the Cairngorms National Park. Action in the Park is therefore critical to prevent extinction in the UK.

Saving a species on the brink of extinction will always be complex, and there is no single solution, the project's work therefore involves the following five areas of action delivered across the Cairngorms National Park.

1. Helping communities to create and deliver their own community-led actions for capercaillie.
2. Raising awareness of the plight of capercaillie and how people can help.
3. Researching the genetic diversity of capercaillie in the National Park to help inform action.
4. Improving and creating more habitat for capercaillie.
5. Strengthening current capercaillie monitoring to enable more informed decisions.

## Carrbridge Capercaillie Conservation Strategy

The community of Carrbridge has played a pioneering role in the project as the first community in the UK to create and deliver its own community-led plan to help capercaillie. The Carrbridge Capercaillie Group, made up of local volunteers, have led this process.

In 2019, the group commissioned some research to identify how the community of Carrbridge felt about capercaillie conservation. Over 80% of respondents 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' that 'we should protect capercaillie for future generations' and 'ensure capercaillie will always be in Scotland'. In response, the Carrbridge Capercaillie Conservation Strategy was born. The strategy and the research on which it's based is available at [cairngormscapercaillie.scot](http://cairngormscapercaillie.scot)

## Trail camera study of predator activity in core capercaillie areas within Kinveachy Forest

The research on which the Carrbridge Capercaillie Conservation Strategy is based also identified a perception within the community that predators are a moderately important to very important threat to capercaillie.

When asked if reducing predators should occur before any restrictions are placed on people, on average, respondents slightly disagreed with the statement, but responses varied considerably. Reducing numbers of crows was considered slightly acceptable, reducing birds of prey was seen as unacceptable and there was less consensus around reducing numbers of pine martens.

Regarding the importance of gamekeepers for capercaillie conservation, respondents in general believed gamekeepers were important; the majority (68%) agreed or strongly agreed that gamekeepers are important for capercaillie conservation.



These insights suggest that the community is aware of predator issues, but consensus varies on different aspects. To help residents develop a greater shared understanding of predator issues locally, the Carrbridge Capercaillie Group wish to commission a trail camera study of predator activity in core capercaillie areas within Kinveachy Forest.

The study will repeat the trail camera study carried out by the Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust in 2014. The findings can then be compared to identify any changes in predator activity overtime. This, it's hoped, will be of further help to the community, particularly in light of anecdotal comments about perceived changes in predator activity locally. The trail camera study will enable the Carrbridge Capercaillie Group to contribute scientific evidence to these community conversations.

The study may also help to shed light on the results of capercaillie brood surveys conducted in Kinveachy Forest this year. Only one chick was found in all of the capercaillie areas surveyed and the number of adult birds found was nearly 50% less than last year. This change could be due to several issues, including predation. The trail camera study will help to investigate this issue in more detail and in turn provide the community with a visually engaging insight into their local capercaillie population and what may have contributed to the decline in numbers this year.

### **Services required**

The Carrbridge Capercaillie Group wish to commission a trail camera study of predator activity in core capercaillie areas within Kinveachy Forest using the same methodology as used by the Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust in 2014. The study should investigate:

- the activity of predators within the core capercaillie areas in Kinveachy Forest;
- whether the activity of predators in those areas has changed since 2014

The specific services and outputs required are as follows:

1. Trail cameras baited with peanut butter installed and monitored in capercaillie breeding areas within Kinveachy Forest for 6 weeks during the winter of 2020/21.
2. The cameras should be checked fortnightly to refresh bait and change SD cards.
3. After 6 weeks all cameras should be removed and images downloaded, analysed and a final report produced detailing the findings.
4. The final report should include comparisons with the 2014 survey results.

### **Timescales**

The Carrbridge Capercaillie Group wish to receive the final report by 29 January 2021.

### **Budget**

The budget available is £7,260 (including VAT).

### **Evaluation**

The work shall be awarded based on value for money, which will be judged on:

- understanding of the brief
- previous experience and expertise
- cost

