

# Carrbridge Capercaillie Conservation Strategy

## Community consultation, Summer 2020

### 1. What was the purpose of the consultation?

To enable all residents in the Carrbridge community area to share their views about the Carrbridge Capercaillie Conservation Strategy to help shape its development.

### 2. How long did the consultation last?

8 weeks from 8th June to 31st July.

### 3. How did people share their views?

Residents were invited to share their views online or via a freepost form, posted to all households in the Carrbridge community area.

### 4. What could residents comment on?

All aspects of the strategy. Residents were invited to share their feelings about the strategy and the Key Actions within, to suggest ways the strategy could be strengthened and to share any other related comments.

### 5. What was the response rate?

8% of residents shared their views.

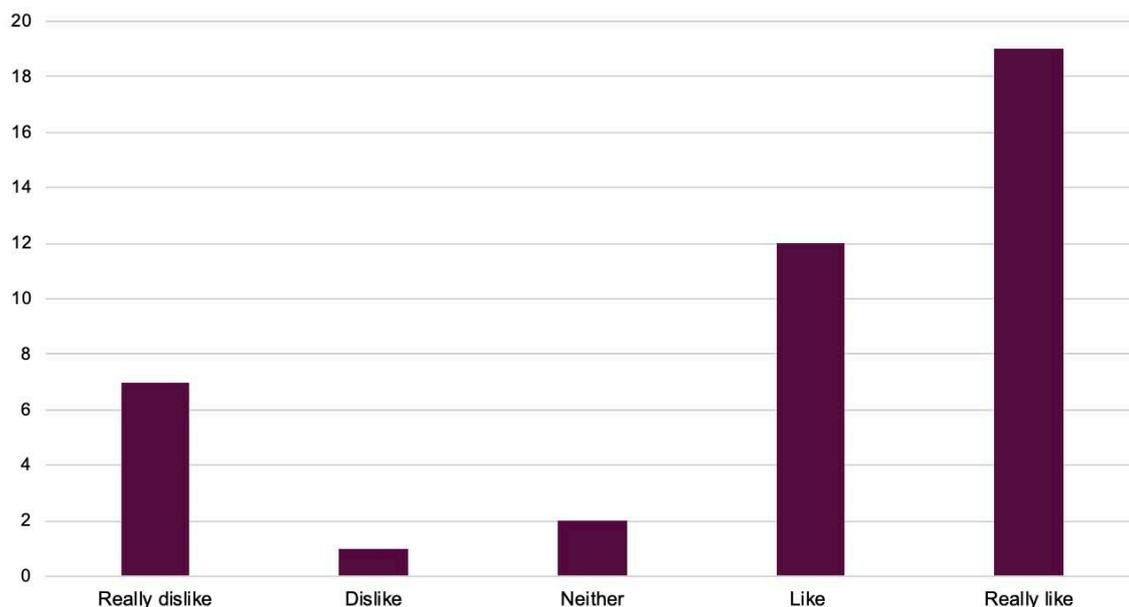
### 6. Could residents ask questions as part of the consultation?

Yes. Three virtual Q&A sessions were available for residents to ask questions to the Carrbridge Capercaillie Group and CNPA staff. No residents attended the sessions or submitted any questions to be answered.



## The results

In general, how do you feel about the Carrbridge Capercaillie Conservation Strategy?



Please feel free to share the reasons behind your feelings:

- I think it is great if a local community gets actively involved in the conservation of endangered species such as the capercaillie.
- This is a fantastic species of bird that we are very lucky to have. It is very important to protect it not just for ourselves but for future generations. I know how much work has gone into this from volunteers and it is very much appreciated.
- Pleased that it recognises the importance of habitat improvement and open engagement with local communities; also that the strategy as it unfolds will be informed by research.
- So proud to see this happening in our village. We need to protect nature.
- I like the idea, but it won't work.
- It's all good for nature conservation.



- Exceptional ambition however failed to manage initial communications phase so allowing false information to be promulgated around village by minority.
- I am very pleased that the capercaillie are being looked after and hope you are successful.
- Money should be spent on causes such as schooling, houses, fixing roads etc.
- So many positives - what is not to like!
- We would commend all of those who have been involved in the strategy so far, however, given the current covid pandemic and the implications for education, health and job prospects in Scotland, and the Park particularly, it would be entirely inappropriate and insensitive to spend such large sums of money on the strategy. In supporting this project, the CNPA risks significant damage to its reputation when many of the Park residents face losing their livelihoods and the health and education of our children. Surely, in all of the aims of the CNPA ultimately, in these times of crisis, people must come first.
- I believe the feeling of well-being is an important part of our health both mentally and physically. Our environment is a huge part of that, particularly connecting with the natural world.
- Something positive about the village.
- Great to conserve capercaillie but wouldn't want restricted access, although happy for dogs to be kept on leads. There are other areas further away from civilization that would be more suitable?
- I moved to Carrbridge as a road foreman to work on the present A9. I made plans to stop heavy plant from causing vibrations constructing the new road due to a capercaillie nesting. Back then I wasn't familiar with the powers above me. I had never seen capercaillie till I came to Carrbridge, but I didn't like to see the female put off her nest and the chicks not getting hatched. Since then I've got up early and took oatmeal and hard boiled eggs mixed to feed young chicks near Insharn and at Bogroy, but sadly people disturbance has made them move.
- We really dislike the whole Capercaillie Project and strategy. It has divided a highland village and lead to bad feelings within the community. The Strategy has been compiled by the working group without any consultation with the community, and yet is called a community lead Project!



- As far as I am aware capercaillie are not an indigenous species. To spend so much money on this project especially in today's pandemic situation is not advisable.
- Just so great that the village is getting involved here. Well done to the people in the village that have worked so hard to make this happen.
- I worry lots of time and money will be spent on great and worthwhile conservation tasks whilst pine martens and badgers undo all efforts.
- The capercaillie is a beautiful iconic bird and the species needs help to survive and thrive.
- Capercaillie have lived round Carrbridge for years and we locals have left them alone. This group are attracting people to the village specifically looking for capercaillie.
- I value the caper and live on the very edge of one of the more remote forest areas. I am now lucky if I have a fleeting glimpse of a caper once a year. I think you are only managing inexorable decline - this decline is related, in a large part, to the increase in predators. The forest is crisscrossed with badger runs. There is a healthy Goshawk population. I see Pine Martens and their scat everywhere and Ravens are now nesting. You will not be able to do anything about this. I fear the fate of this, and other ground nesting birds is sealed!
- Helping conservation of an endangered iconic species by our community is to be supported and encouraged by every normal considerate resident.
- I think that it is really important to do all we can to protect and save capercaillie. While I think that the likes of RSPB, Wildland Scotland, FLS, SNH should be more proactive with their predator management that is not relevant to Carrbridge because I know that the local gamekeepers are working very hard to manage foxes and crows. It would be good though if they were able to tackle the problems caused by pine martens and badgers. I think we have good habitat around the village but anything that can be done to improve it further is to be welcomed. Also, I think that we have to do a very thorough job in educating the public about their responsibilities when out walking and biking, especially those with dogs. Good luck to the ranger with that. I think volunteering opportunities will be attractive to people and links with the Primary School very important too! I think the strategy captures most of this.



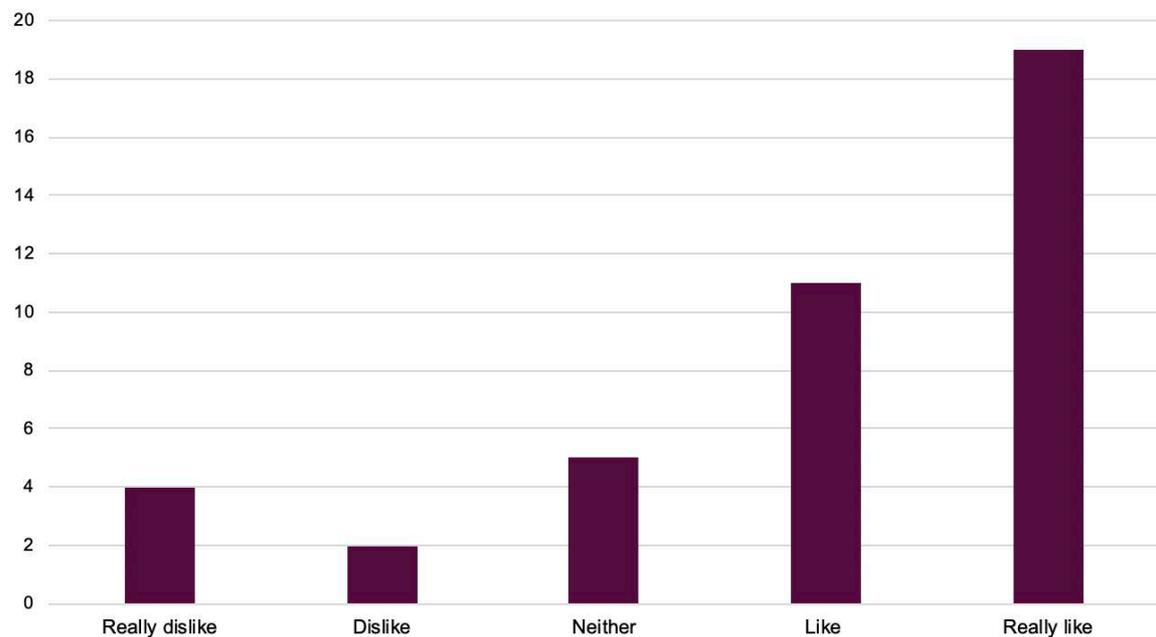
- On carefully reading this report my conclusion is that the actions or lack of them will result in the extinction of the Capercaillie in Scotland. Threats to Survivability. The CNPA (Cairngorms National Park Authority) has applied for funding of around £3 million (quote Director CNPA) to enhance capercaillie. Most of this money is from the Heritage Lottery Fund which disperses public money to 'Heritage Projects'. This equates to a spend of around £3,000 per bird (working on a 1000 bird estimate). The CNPA Report highlights the threats to the remaining Capercaillie population as follows (with my comments) Lack of Habitat - (too close to expanding villages in Speyside) Low Productivity - (too many males not enough females - in one area count there were said to be 13 males and one female) Predation - There are 15 times more badgers than foxes in and around Carrbridge which along with pine martens have decimated the Capercaillie population - recent video evidence shows a pine marten eating 5 Capercaillie eggs over a 15-minute period. Both species are known to Hoover up ground nesting birds but are now protected by law whereas foxes and certain birds can be dealt with as vermin. Collision with unmarked deer fences - it appears there has been one recorded collision recently resulting in death. There are currently approx 15 miles of fences around the village many of which are already marked. Collision with Cars - there has been one recorded fatal collision recently in this area. Human disturbance - the residents of Carrbridge have lived in harmony with Capercaillie and Ospreys quite successfully in this area avoiding disturbance of locally well-known nesting areas. The publicising of the project as well as the national advertising of the Big Capercaillie Weekend in Carrbridge attracted visitors to the village looking for the birds as well as every birdwatcher wanting to 'tick off Capercaillie' on their 'Must See' list. Hill walkers, bikers. The Right to Roam Legislation directly brings people in contact with the Capercaillie. It is not acceptable to even suggest the restriction of public access which would be against the very principals of the Right to Roam. All the above points lead to the conclusion that the Capercaillie is under threat from any one of the above factors but all put together makes the extinction of the breed certain unless action is taken to remove the Capercaillie from the threats. Nowhere in the CNPA report has this been put forward as a sensible proposal for the protection and survival of the breed. All the current proposals do is perpetuate past practices but with no action to help the birds survive. Planting trees and picking up feathers will not protect the Capercaillie from all the threats listed above.



- As a community, the village of Carr-Bridge is highly fortunate in its location and close association with the surrounding forest and natural environment, with many key mutually-dependent ecosystems and species of animal, bird and plant, of which the capercaillie is just one important example. Irresponsible or over-development around the village could put this at risk and in the long term I believe that the attractiveness and prosperity of the community will be best served if the welfare of the natural environment is always given a high priority in planning for the future.
- It's a fantastic opportunity to support such a wonderful creature.
- A huge amount of money is to be spent on a species which is not threatened with extinction globally but is in decline again in this area. Attempts to increase numbers have failed in the past and will probably fail again with current ideas of predator control and also the advertising of the area as a capercaillie zone resulting in more disturbance to wildlife.
- The capercaillie are in grave danger of becoming extinct in Scotland, as such the Carrbridge Strategy as part of CNP Capercaillie Project is endeavouring to address the problem by involving, educating and motivating both locals and visitors to their plight. Despite criticism of the project there are no alternative plans out there to save this iconic bird for Scotland's heritage.
- Carrbridge is an important area for caper - I hope this work helps.
- It is important to take responsibility for the environment we live in. This project will hopefully help to work out why capercaillie numbers have gone down. The actions taken to protect it will not only benefit capercaillie but also other species of animals and plants.
- Capercaillie are extraordinary birds and we are hugely fortunate to have them so close to our community. Our forests are internationally important for capercaillie and for other pinewood wildlife. This project is a great opportunity for the community to work together and to make a difference for capercaillie and the wildlife around us. During Covid restrictions, the wildlife around has become even more meaningful for many of us. I'm aware that some people in the village don't support the project, and they are entitled to that view, but many of the people I know really do care about capercaillie, and we want to work together with local land managers to support this bird.



## How do you feel about the Key Actions outlined in the strategy?



### Please feel free to share the reasons behind your feelings:

- Raising awareness and understanding of the factors impacting on capercaillie is key to a successful conservation strategy. Responsible outdoor access minimising impact on sensitive species is impossible without community support.
- A fair mix of ambition with necessary community inclusion messages.
- A well outlined strategy. I am pleased to see that predator management is being discussed. I agree it is very important to build community interest in these birds by providing information in a non-forceful manner. I'm not sure how a community orchard will help capercaillie.
- Great to see action - full stop.
- Key Action 4 'Focus on opportunities to enjoy the Carrbridge area while minimising impacts on caper.' Linking upgraded walking and cycling track would be good around the village and info boards / signage (as in Boat woods).



- As a broad statement of aspirations, the key actions encompass well the many, sometimes competing, priorities around which the strategy will be carried forward. The proof, of course, will be in how these aspirations are actually applied and implemented in practice.
- People and dogs are not a good mix to help capercaillie in the woods.
- Not feeling too concerned or involved, if it doesn't affect life in the village.
- As local resident we did not receive any communication as to what we would like to be included in the Key Actions. Can the capercaillie not be saved without spending so much money?
- There seems to be a good balance between improving the environment and habitat while allowing people to engage with and experience the natural environment and nature.
- Worried about the areas to be fenced off. The small path network as well as the larger ones have been invaluable to locals when cycling and walking to keep to social distancing. With the impact of another 80 houses in Carrbridge walking areas would be vitally important.
- Creating new habitat and improving existing habitat is an important aspect of the conservation project and educating the general public about the project and concerns for the survival of the Capercaillie.
- Well done for having the courage to mention predator control. Most other orgs ignore this and focus solely on habitat loss. However, to 'learn and understand' will be meaningless without the ability to act. Jump ahead and listen to the experts - the gamekeepers, and get something other than window dressing done! A licensed badger cull would be a start.
- Looks like every avenue is being investigated.
- The main beneficiary of this plan is local hunting estates giving them a legitimate reason for ridding the area of predators of grouse.
- Not sure about the community orchard in particular relation to capercaillie but I do generally like the idea of an orchard! I also like improvements to entrances to popular walking areas and better paths/trails. Lots of volunteering opportunities and lets make sure we give credit where credit is due as/when we see numbers going up (fingers crossed).



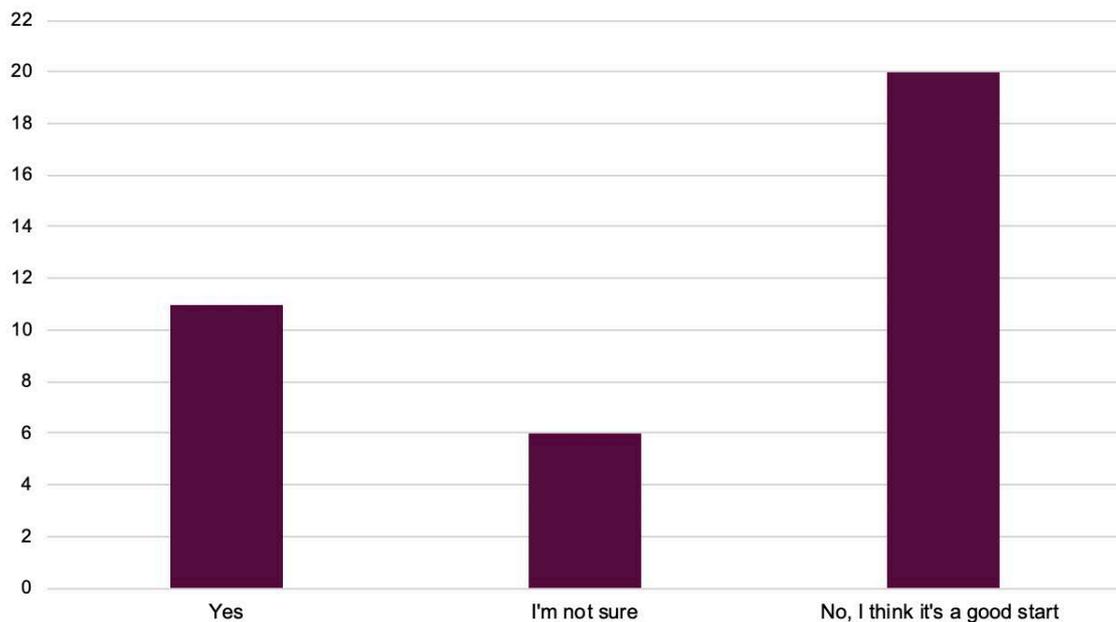
- Quote 'to improve habitat, research genetic diversity (pick up feathers) strengthen monitoring, raise awareness of the plight, work with communities'. It is too late! All you are doing is what everybody has done over many years in Loch Lomond and Abernethy. If you carry on like this there will ZERO capercaillie. The proposal titled Think outside the Box was put to the Carrbridge Capercaillie Group in September 2019 as follows: Buy a secure and remote breeding and living reservation for genetically different Capercaillie from areas of Europe or further where they have successfully bred and survived. This area could be 100 hectares or more. Fence this area with buried 3 metre outward overhanging wire to prevent climbing predators entering (cost £14 per metre). Catch and release those ground roaming predators who do manage to enter (they will not re-enter after being caught a few time). Employ staff to monitor and record those birds, the leks, the nests in the secure area. Because it is secure from predators and public, cameras can be used to extensively monitor the progress of the birds. The chicks can be tagged, and the breeding programme can be carefully monitored, and action taken for any potential threats from disease, genetic duality and population balance. With secure space there could be many, many breeding leks with ample females and healthy secure chicks. Release the birds – the birds can easily fly out if they want to, but I expect that they will remain if there are no ground threats and the flying threats can be discouraged or removed. This has never been discussed as an option.
- Good start - support for gamekeepers who do so much good work.
- While the CNP Project is tackling the numerous problems affecting the Capercaillie within the National Park, the Carrbridge Strategy is focused on addressing local participation, involving them in caring for the future of the Caper and encouraging them to share the countryside with wildlife in a responsible manner, hand in hand with conservation and consideration for the environment.
- Well rounded. Very good for all forest users.
- Summary suggests increasing awareness and understanding but so far attempts to 'educate' and involve community have resulted in unpleasantness and division in the village. Project needs to be moved far away from villages and into a protected area in the Park. "Strategy" booklet is summarising what CCC Group want people to believe. There is no acknowledgement of doubts and concerns raised by a large number of people in the community.



- Doing nothing is not an option.
- It makes sense to make people of the community aware of the plight of capercaillie and how they can help by respecting the environment and changing their behaviour.
- To get it to work, CNPA should listen to the views of the local people.
- Ridiculous that Lottery money should go to such a cause. I support Mr. Williamson's letter in the 'The Strathy'.
- This is an excellent strategy, both in content and form. I like the way this is laid out. It's easy to see how it has been derived from the survey that was undertaken the process of which I very much support. The actions have been derived from the survey outcomes, and in turn we then see by what can be achieved. It's simple and logical. On the whole, I agree with the actions, though I question one or two, and the emphasis in some areas.



## Do you think the strategy could be strengthened?



### Please feel free to share the reasons behind your feelings:

- It is the first strategy so there will always be room for improvement, this will come through experiencing what works and what doesn't. I agree that keeping a flexible outlook is essential.
- Minimizing human disturbance, marking fences and improving habitat only addresses some of the factors impacting on capercaillie. Scientific research has shown that low productivity and predation are playing a major role, so I think this strategy would be stronger if it would include management plans to reduce predation pressure, at least as a short-term measure to kick-start population recovery.
- Great start. Lot of work putting this together. Well done! I think it will evolve through time.
- I think forestry is the biggest challenge. Growing up in Carrbridge during the 1970/80s the forests had a lot more ground litter, shrubs, scrub and fallen trees. The risk of fire has seen all this removed possibly reducing habitat.
- The Strategy is a good start and others with positive ideas are being asked to share these, which will help to improve and expand the Strategy.



- A few years ago, Karen Derrick of CNPA organised a community get together in the village hall to assist in the way forward for the village (what folk wanted etc.) (bike park etc.) I wonder if it would be worth re visiting this plan again to see where we are in Carrbridge and how it might tie in with the strategy.
- Any form of strengthening would help.
- Let local people and gamekeepers have more say in what should be done. Employ local people as rangers not outsiders.
- All the documentation that came with this consultation is in the English language, given that the English language wouldn't even have the word capercaillie without Gàidhlig it would maybe be an idea to use the Gàidhlig language in the project? There are plenty of Gàidhlig speakers within the strath and lots of resources (Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, Bunsgoil Inbhir Nis) locally that would be more than willing to help. Giving people a sense of their place within a largely Gàidhlig landscape increases their sense of worth and belonging in the area.
- No. Scrap it. Spend money on people instead.
- There is no current public viewing location for seeing capercaillies in Scotland following the demise of the lek at Loch Garten. In my opinion a priority should be to find a suitable lek and develop it as a wildlife watching area using local employment and so that money comes into the community. This could provide this project with financial sustainability in the future. There is a real issue with projects in the CNPA, where lots of money is thrown at them, a non-local is employed as the expert and then at the end of the project the non-local person moves on and all the expertise built up at public expense is lost to the area. It is currently madness having private operators profiteering from the presence of capercaillies in our local woods and not contributing anything to the local economy. Why can't we have an award-winning wildlife experience that funds itself, employs local people and most importantly causes no harm to the birds by watching them in a way where they are unaware of the human presence. There are lots of examples of these hides particularly in Finland.
- We think it would be very difficult to strengthen the strategy as we do not agree with it in the first place. The project has been handled very badly from the beginning.



- Your strategy can only be strengthened by directly addressing predator control. Set targets and outline actions. Clearly you will not be allowed to do this, and you will be limited to managing decline up to the point of extinction.
- I feel that one of, if not the most important thing to ensure the best chance of Capercaillie survival in Scotland is habitat and creating larger areas of linked forests. Without this happening on a large scale I fear all the work done will not be enough. Capercaillie live side by side predators like pine martens in Sweden without huge issues. I know habitat is on the action plan but I think it needs to be the first and most important action. I understand only 1% of Scotland's natural pine forests remain and the UK is one of the most heavily deforested countries on the planet. Without rebuilding this it seems like bailing water out of the Titanic. This is my opinion and I am certainly not an expert.
- It's a good strategy – strong in community involvement. Practical volunteering sounds good. The predation issue is divisive, but we cannot continue to watch / study and monitor the decline of caper, knowing pine martens predate them constantly (scientific fact).
- The CNPA Vision says on the front page 'Passionate about playing our small part in global wildlife survival'. This is complete rubbish. Nowhere in this report does it mention the definition of success. There are perhaps 1000 birds (-5 dead recorded recently) now but how will we know if this £3 million plus has been sensibly spent if there is no clear method of judging the success or otherwise of any strategy. Nowhere in the document is there mention of the future for the Capercaillie. It only talks about doing what has always been done in the past and there is clear evidence that this has been a failure. Why? The Capercaillie population is declining, and we are going to do nothing but monitor, pick up feathers, plant trees and attract a curious (and perhaps COVID) public to Carrbridge to roam the woods to witness the species die! This Strategy needs a serious Plan.
- More predator control.
- Need to set goals for conservation. State what is expected after 1 year, 5 years etc. Decide how to protect capercaillies when also protecting pine martens and other predators. Stop advertising information about capers and just get on with conservation work quickly.



- The impression I have is that there is a small core of local residents who are strongly opposed to proposals for capercaillie conservation, for a variety of personal, business or other reasons. It will be obviously be of benefit for the future success of the strategy if the concerns and objections of this group can be seen to be acknowledged in the way that the initiative is constructed and put into practice. This is unlikely to be achieved alone by fine words, reassuring newsletters or further colourful booklets. I would suggest that detailed examples of practical measures to address some of the areas of potential friction/ disagreement will be more likely to put people's minds at rest and bring the community together behind the strategy. A key example would appear to be the issue of access vs. protection, demonstrating how existing access opportunities can not only be maintained and upgraded, but also expanded without threat to the capercaillie population. On many occasions in the past I have drawn attention to the potential to establish a complete wide-circuit boundary route around the village, which could become an additional focus for raising the profile of the village, as with the carving and porridge competitions (ecological interest walks, annual runs, cycling & crosscountry skiing events, etc). Some three quarters of such a circuit is already in existence and only one further footbridge across the river would be required in the linking up of the route.
- Currently within the Carrbridge Community Area there are private bird guides operating showing people capercaillie for profit. This includes Heatherlea using the Inverlaidnan estate driving minibuses through the woods also various other guides using Tolquhonie and Baddengorm. All available research shows that disturbance by humans in vehicles and by foot increased stress levels and the hormone cortisone within these birds effecting their behaviour and ultimately reproduction. It would be useful to monitor the stress levels in birds in these woods by measuring cortisone within their droppings. If stress levels are found to be high, capercaillie viewing for profit should be stopped reduced in consultation with SNH and other cases. It is crazy that this is operating without any feedback mechanism, there is nothing to show whether the current disturbance levels by private forms are having an effect on one of our rarest breeding birds. This also involves birds that move back and forth from the Kinveachy SPA and should be subject to an Appropriate Assessment by the CNPA.



- I would like to see lots of emphasis on good signage, and serious consideration to the 'lek cam' idea.
- There are woods that are in the public domain within the birding community as places to go to see capercaillie due to the activities of bird guides, these are Inverlaidnan, Tolquhonie and Baddengorm. As people have been taken to these locations by bird guides people who later visit Speyside by themselves are going into these woods unaccompanied for free. This is obviously a big problem during the lekking period and during chick rearing times. Disturbing a capercaillie lek and a brood are both wildlife crimes under the WCA 1981 as amended. It is crucial that birders are aware of this before setting foot in these woods. To back up a strategy of reducing disturbance, camera traps set on access tracks near leks during the lekking season could send back instant live images triggered by movement on these tracks so that any birdwatchers could be recorded. Obviously, this would need to happen in consultation with landowners and the Wildlife Crime Officer for the Highlands. Currently there is no deterrent at all, we should all be working towards a national park that doesn't have any wildlife crime. I understand that one of the key tenets of the project is to improve locals understanding and use of the local woods in relation to capercaillie, but this is no use if visitors aren't going to abide by the same thinking!
- This strategy in Carrbridge has caused discontent among the residents. The Park Authority should be ashamed of itself for setting the community against itself.
- Key Action 1: I'd question the value of the Capercaillie Conference. I'd prefer to see more of the excellent community gatherings in the Village Hall that the group held. These were really focussed on information exchange, chatting and opportunities for folk to talk about how they'd like to get involved. I'd also like to see more emphasis on the areas where the community can contribute directly, such as informing the community about the birds' sensitivities, and how to get messages across to visitors; also how we can help with practical projects such as the fence-marking or putting up signage. It's important for land managers to make their own decisions about predator management for capercaillie. There's no doubt it is a vitally important area to discuss, but I feel it is more of a national debate, rather than a local issue, and I'm unclear what role the community has in discussing predation. There are a couple of issues flagged in the consultation as 'important', which don't appear to be addressed in the Key Actions: where and how to create safe spaces, and identifying the areas of high disturbance-risk.  
*Response continued overleaf ...*



- Key Action 2: I really like action 9. Businesses have a key role to play, esp with visiting bird-watchers, wildlife photographers and dog-walkers. Also, perhaps those who are so vociferously against the project would be willing to meet with others in the community, for a facilitated discussion, so we can understand their concerns. Key Action 3: All good, but actions 4 & 8 are particularly important. Key Action 4: Again, all good, but esp trail signage. It's be great to employ some really good interpretation designers, so we have something engaging, informative, inspiring and provocative (in a good way!). Key Action 5: I feel we have a great opportunity to become an international exemplar of how a community can work together to safeguard a threatened species on their doorstep. That would be a fine accolade for our community. Key Action 6: Throughout, we need to ensure the linkage is between people and all elements of the surrounding environment, of which capercaillie are an important part. *(End)*



### **Please feel free to share any other comments you have about the strategy:**

- The key message of sharing the woodlands is to me critical. This concept is perhaps critical to the success, adoption and behavioural change. No one species has the right to every square inch of ground. Neither wildlife or human should be in that position. The compromise to ensure there are no no-go zones is a challenge.
- I find the conflict between conservation of the species and pleased to see 'tourism' in the low level of consensus.
- Representative data: Willing to change certain behaviour - Limit where people can go. Bookends in the access debate. This is a key matter and key in future language and transparency. The former is a very strong and positive statement that could be a cornerstone of comms.
- Map representation: inclusion of map representation of ideas as they develop will be helpful. Potentially contentious but show transparency and early adoption in comms could help build understanding.
- Is there merit in making available comparative data from other countries. The headline decline stats are arresting - how does this compare to other Northern European countries?
- How does all of this sit and fit with the VABS led community reviews that were carried out 2 years ago (?) Referral back to that starting point would be helpful and how this supports the identified ambitions from residents.
- The Strategy booklet: perhaps an abridged version could be helpful in comms as the delivered booklet is a long read.
- With the advent of covid 19, the world has changed, tourism, civic society and life has changed. Vitally important that the strategy is reviewed in terms of being fit for purpose and recognising a post covid life. Your letter mentions the delay in launch but makes no further reference to how c19 has changed or influenced thinking. The national tourism strategy launched on 11th March is in re-design and so are several others. Perhaps broad recognition is required to sense check the way ahead.
- More money being spent on a lost cause. Interesting no reply envelope included.
- A lot of people want this - please do not allow a loud minority to spoil this.



- I was sorry to hear of the bad publicity this group and the project had the past few months. Maybe a bit more openness is necessary, make the meetings public and well-advertised. Your brochure lists no less than 9 members and off to get in touch, but there are no contact details. As a not-too-bothered resident of the village, I feel the monthly newsletter and brochure and surveys (2 or 3 now?) a bit much. A quarterly or 6 month's notice would probably be enough. Also concerned that this elusive bird is getting a lot of publicity and we might get unwanted visitors. Maybe a more active approach to inform visitors, some information boards or signs?
- This strategy has obviously taken a lot of time, thought and effort! Well done to all volunteers! Good effort.
- The Project was started by a group of people who have never been voted for by the community. They have large amounts of money at their disposal and so far never asked the community how it should be spent. We feel this has been dumped on the village and in the economic climate when so many people are going to be in hardship due to covid 19 the money should be spent elsewhere.
- I suspect a change in the approach to forestry may be required. A less commercial approach may be necessary to create a natural forest. This may require financial commitments to achieve.
- Well done for trying! I would volunteer but I know that the effort is hamstrung from the start and I would end up frustrated and disappointed.
- I have never come across such a badly thought out strategy for such an important project. The strategy is long winded, repetitive and lacks direction and has no measure of success at all. I am appalled that an institution like the National Lottery Heritage fund, which dispenses public funds has agreed to grant such an unprecedented amount of money to a 'Strategy' that does not have a clear outcome.
- Cairngorm is very lucky to get the money and I agree with what the project is doing. It will help ALL conservation not just the capers.
- Sorry, I have lost the will to fill in yet another questionnaire. Please could the paid experts and enthusiastic volunteers just get on with the project.
- If you want to save the caper stop cutting down mature pine forests. Eradicate the pine marten from known caper habitats. Control the spread of bracken. Keep dogs on leads in woods.



- All nature and humans are benefiting - for the lottery to give so much money towards this is a fantastic achievement.
- Stop wasting money on unnecessary tasks. Next you will want to re-introduce Dinosaurs and the Dodo!
- A suggestion would be to have longer term ranger positions available (even if there are less rangers) to provide continuity, avoid year on year re-training, allow them to gain the trust of locals and local contacts and build their own knowledge.
- We attended a talk in Carrbridge Village Hall which was extremely informative. My only comment would be that I feel the capercaillie and chicks are up against a lot of predators. I have had a badger take a chicken from the coop in my garden (confirmed by prints in March snow). We have also seen pine martins boldly explore our garden. I would not mind if there was a bit more control of these predators.
- Well done to everyone involved. There is a small (nasty) minority who have done their best to scupper it. They don't care about capercaillie although they pretend they do. They are only interested in causing trouble. They do not speak for the majority of the village, they have their own agenda.
- I would not support culling one protected species to save another! Trap and relocate is the only method of control I would support.
- I used to rear turkeys in Donegal, and I know how hard it is for young chicks to get a good start in life. I thank the Carrbridge volunteers for their time in supporting the capercaillie project whether paid or unpaid. Capercaillie used to come and eat with the hens and donkeys, not any more sadly.
- Use your conscience to determine whether this really is the best use of resources. Thank you.
- There will of course be the usual bunch of moaners who will try to pull it to pieces. Stay strong - the village is behind you! It is a good document.
- Worried about the impact on tourism - this in my view would not protect the capercaillie or residents of Carrbridge.



- A key factor in encouraging people and capercaillie to exist comfortably alongside one another would seem to be the extent to which access routes can be made so attractive and suited to the demands of the local and visiting populations that passers through will feel no need to stray from the routes provided. There are so many examples where schemes are laid out by planners who drive cars and think in terms of right angle turns, with little regard for extra distance, or any variation in the surface, whilst those on foot will always discover the shortest and most suitable route to cut the corner and find the best conditions underfoot. A few suggestions to consider: when thinking about existing or potential new routes, talk to the people who really know the forest best. Notably those who use the tracks daily and roam widely. Don't spurn the dog walkers or demonise them - they offer one of the best sources of invaluable experience and knowledge. Recognise that day trippers, dog walkers, and locals alike will all appreciate CIRCULAR walks that bring them back close to home, their car or other starting point. But just simply drawing a hopeful ring on a map is not enough in itself: for a route to be successful it must be matched to the needs of the particular user group and must be of a dependable and consistent standard all the way round. If it is promoted as an all ability track, it should have the appropriate surface for the full route, without any risk from flood, muddy patches, roots or rocks, steep slopes, pinch points, or other obstacles. For cross-country skiing, no fences or other features that could present a hidden danger when covered by snow. For cycling, resilient tracks well marked in advance according to standard of difficulty and, crucially, regularly maintained to avoid restore the heavy damage that has become so evident on the existing walking tracks since the rise in popularity of mountain biking. Check that signposting of routes (supported with maps sheets on paper) is actually clear to the users and easy to follow from start to finish of a route. I have on numerous occasions pointed out to confused tourists that they may find the You Are Here forest walk boards at Landmark and at the cemetery easier to follow if they think of them as having been displayed the wrong way up! On route marking, remember that some 10% of the population is colour blind, and furthermore that colour coded signposts will fade and also can become more difficult or impossible to decipher depending on the lighting conditions (remember those short winter days). Much better to waymark routes with symbols rather than colours. Why not use pictures of local animals and birds to distinguish the different routes. Create a premium boundary route for the whole village and give it the honour of becoming the Capercaillie Trail even! *Response continued overleaf ...*



- Plan routes with due consideration to the fact that many people use the forest tracks all year round, including for several months over the winter when walks may be conducted entirely in the dark. Look to removing difficult and hazardous pinch points where tripping, slipping on ice, losing the route when covered by snow, or wayside ditches may all present a risk. Crossing the Snakey Bridge into Carr Wood for example has become a matter of taking your life in your hands in recent years with no guard rails and a deteriorating slippery surface in rain, ice or snow. Whenever there is a difficult section of a track - for mud, ice, flooding, rocks, roots or whatever - this is where people will be tempted to stray from the official path and over time will establish alternative detours and or broadening will be created. *(End)*
- The CCC Group is self elected and has too many members who have dual interested. Stop producing ra-ra booklets and newsletters saying how supportive and enthusiastic the village is. Many people are not in favour and many don't want to be part of it. Stop putting up miles of plastic fence protection.
- Keep up the good work!
- The Strategy encourages people to address conservation and care for the environment and understand the delicate balance required to achieve success for the future heritage of the Capercaillie in Scotland.
- I want to thank everyone on the Carrbridge Capercaillie Group, and in the CNPA, who have worked so hard and relentlessly (many of them voluntarily), to develop this project, and to have done so in such an open and engaging way. In my view it has been exemplary. This group has worked in the face of sustained and unpleasant opposition. In doing so they have shown great strength of character and persistence - I'm enormously grateful to them, and to NH Lottery Fund, for doing so. Thank you for the opportunity to comment, and I wish the whole project great success as we move forward.

