

Carrbridge Capercaillie Group meeting notes

Tuesday 6 December

Action Plan: 2022 - 2023

The Action Plan for 2022 - 2023 was approved by the Project Board on 23 June. The Cairngorms Capercaillie Project Team have since been supporting the Carrbridge Capercaillie Group to deliver the Action Plan. The group met with members of the Project Team to review the progress made against all actions and identify next steps.

Action from the Action Plan 22/23: Update the Carrbridge Paths leaflet to include reference to the seasonal signage and encourage responsible access in capercaillie areas around the village.

Update: The CNPA Outdoor Access and Recreation Team have scheduled the reprint of the Carrbridge leaflet in early 2023. This will be done in consultation with the relevant community organisations.

Action from the Action Plan 22/23: Purchase and install an all-weather Carrbridge Nature noticeboard to provide a central hub for sharing information about nature around the village.

Update: Highland Council have confirmed that planning consent is required to upgrade the noticeboard.

ACTION: A further enquiry will be made to the Highland Council for more information.

Action from the Action Plan 22/23: Scope the potential for new capercaillie related experiences for visitors and residents.

Update: The group visited Landmark to view the new Ancient Forest Adventure exhibit which is in development. Capercaillie will feature as one of the spotlight species within the exhibit, which will open in 2023.

ACTION: Follow-up with Landmark to confirm whether they require any more information or assets from the project or the group.

Action from the Action Plan 22/23: Commission the production of small capercaillie keepsakes for visitors and residents and invest the donations received into wildlife projects around Carrbridge.

Update: Costs for capercaillie stickers, pin badges, keyrings, mugs and sew-on patches have been sourced.

ACTION: The group to review the costs and potential ways to make the keepsakes available to visitors and residents.

Action from the Action Plan 22/23: Commission the production of a carved capercaillie to include in the Carvings Trail around Carrbridge.

Update: A preferred site for a family of capercaillie carvings has been identified with agreement of the landowner, Highland Council. The site at the entrance to Ellan Woods involves felling unsafe trees to create suitable bases for the carvings. The Highland Council granted permission for the work to go ahead, agreed to contribute towards the costs and the community were made aware of the works. However, preparatory work has been stopped by the Highland Council following complaints by residents. The matter is to be discussed in the new year (see Action). Meanwhile, suitable hardwood is being sourced for the capercaillie carvings.

ACTION: The group to meet Cllr. Bill Lobban in January to agree a way forward. The contractor to be paid for felling work completed.

Actions from the Action Plan 22/23: Work with the CNPA Ranger Team and landmanagers to install seasonal signage around Carrbridge (developed and tested as part of the 2021 Action Plan) to promote responsible access and dog walking in capercaillie areas during the 2022 and 2023 breeding seasons.

Update: Conversations have begun with the CNPA Ranger Manager regarding CNPA Ranger Team support for installing and monitoring the seasonal signage in 2023.

ACTION: The group to meet with the CNPA Outdoor Access and Recreation Team to review the findings of the 2022 trial and any updates to the seasonal signage.

Action from the Action Plan 22/23: Support more habitat creation and predator control for capercaillie on Seafield Estate.

Update: Conversations have begun with Seafield Estate re the potential for more habitat creation and predator control to be delivered as part of the Carrbridge Capercaillie Conservation Strategy and the costs involved.

Action from the Action Plan 22/23: Support the second phase of the pilot genetic lek survey aimed at developing a more accurate approach to estimating the size of local capercaillie populations using genetic material (droppings).

Update: This work has begun. 182 droppings were collected at 2 lek sites this spring and are currently being analysed to identify the number of individual birds that attended the lek sites and their sex. The results of the analysis will then be compared to the number of birds seen to identify whether genetic methods are more accurate and could therefore be used to increase confidence levels in lek surveys.

Action from the Action Plan 22/23: Commission a parasitology analysis of samples collected as part of the pilot genetic lek survey to check for potential causes of chick mortality.

Update: Carolyn is meeting members of the Highland Wildlife Park team in mid-December to confirm the costs and timescales for this work.