Sustainable Management of Forests – Species Conservation – Predator Control for Capercaillie and Black Grouse

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For recent changes to this guidance, please see the bottom of the page .

Table of Contents

Aim

Grant support

Application eligibility criteria

Supporting information

Scoring criteria

How to claim

Technical guidance

Recent changes

Previous versions

Download guidance

Aim

This option offers support for predator control to benefit capercaillie and black grouse which are vulnerable to predation.

This option is only available on forested land.

Grant support

This is an annual grant to support the costs of labour and materials needed to undertake predator control within a 1.5 kilometre radius around active lek or breeding sites. This includes labour costs for shooting and trapping of pest mammals and birds, the monitoring of traps, the humane despatch of live animals, the completion of annual monitoring returns, and associated material costs such as traps.

The grant rate is £6.60 per hectare, per year for up to a maximum of five years.

You can use the Woodland Improvement Grant – Habitats and Species option to support related works which would be beneficial for capercaillie or black grouse habitat management such as removal of fencing, heather swiping, or woodland thinning.

Please discuss these with your woodland officer.

Application eligibility criteria

Please check that you are eligible to apply for Forestry Grant Scheme funding before you begin your application.

Sustainable Management of Forests

You must have an approved Forest Plan for woodland areas of 100 hectares or more, unless in exceptional circumstances a Management Plan is deemed suitable.

For woodland areas less than 100 hectares you must have an approved Management Plan or Forest Plan.

Long-term Forest Plan technical guidance

Management Plan

Please see the 'Supporting Information' section below for the details you need to supply us when applying for this option.

You must use the appropriate standard template to give this information.

Predator control must take place within capercaillie and black grouse core areas or areas that reflect current distribution. You can find core areas on the Scottish Forestry Map Viewer in the FGS Target and Eligibility Areas folder.

You must provide evidence of leks and this must be supported by your local capercaillie and black grouse project officer (or RSPB).

You can apply for grant aid for the area within 1.5 kilometres of an active lek site. However, you may need to control predators on adjoining sites.

All of your proposed work must comply with the UK Forestry Standard .

Other eligibility criteria

You must carry out mammal and bird control in a legal and humane manner.

You must also comply with all appropriate legislation and Codes of Practice including:

- the Open General Licence as issued each year by the Scottish Ministers
- the British Association for Shooting and Conservation (BASC) Codes of Practice on Shooting, Lamping, Trapping of Pest Mammals and Trapping of Pest Birds
- avoid using snares in capercaillie woods

We only pay grants for predator control on forest land. Forest land can include up to 20 per cent integral open ground.

It is desirable if the entire area within the 1.5 kilometre radius (706 hectares) is included in your application. Collaboration, where appropriate, will therefore be viewed favourably.

As black grouse have their lek sites on open ground, an application for predator control on agricultural land may also be required through the Agri-Environment Climate Scheme.

You must keep monitoring forms and submit these annually.

Please give careful consideration to other Schedule 1 species that are nesting or breeding in the area.

This refers to spotlighting or discharging high-velocity firearms.

Supporting information

To help us assess your application you must provide us with supporting information. You must give the details as listed below using the template provided.

Sustainable Management of Forests – Predator Control supporting information template (MS Word, Size: 479.2 kB)
doc_external_url: https://www.ruralpayments.org/media/resources/smf-predator-control-supp-info-template.doc

Provide evidence of the lek site and estimated population, with support from your local capercaillie and black grouse project officer (or RSPB). Detail any predator control efforts from the past five years.

Your site-specific predator / crow control plan must be targeted where it will give the most benefit to the species.

Details requested on the template include:

- an outline of the areas where the control will be undertaken, using Land Parcel Identifiers
- how you will manage the lek area including details of any collaboration
- the number and type of species to be controlled, which may include foxes, crows, stoats and weasels
- the methods that you will use
- the most appropriate period for the activity within the targeted spring or early summer period. Control may take place out with this period but will not be funded
- the number of days or nights that you will carry out the activity each month

You must keep plans up-to-date for those activities that you plan on a weekly basis, such as lamping or shooting.

You must plan throughout the control period and make these available for inspection on request. Include dates when other activities will take place in the management programme.

Please provide a map that shows the active lek sites and the 1.5 kilometre radius perimeter of the Sustainable Management of Forests – Species Conservation – Predator Control boundary.

Example map – Sustainable Management of Forests – Predator Control (PDF, Size: 1.7 MB)
doc_external_url: https://www.ruralpayments.org/media/resources/FGS-SMF-SpCon---Predator-Control.pdf

General mapping guidance for the Forestry Grant Scheme

Scoring criteria

To make sure we achieve the best value for money and to ensure we meet the scheme's objectives, we assess each application using scoring criteria. These criteria differ depending on the option.

The criteria will be written as appropriate to each Forestry Grant Scheme option; please refer to Scoring criteria and clearing process for details.

Each option within your application must meet the threshold score to be considered for approval. In achieving the threshold score, your option must score against each criterion except for additional benefit.

The scores will then be used as the basis for allocating funding on a competitive basis through the Forestry Grant Scheme clearing process.

Delivery of option benefits – black grouse

1 POINT – for applications that meet the eligibility requirements but do not deliver any of the benefits detailed below.

3 POINTS – for applications that provide one or more of the following in addition to meeting the eligibility requirements:

- applications in areas with currently stable populations (the red areas displayed on the Scottish Forestry Map Viewer in the FGS Target and Eligibility Areas folder) where there are leks with, supporting evidence of, three plus males each year since 2010. The management objective must be to improve adult survival and productivity to facilitate range expansion and be clearly described in the associated forest plan or management plan

Or

- applications that form part of a collaborative approach, on a landscape scale, in order to increase the black grouse range and improve connectivity by targeting likely areas where leks can be increased. This management objective must be clearly described in the associated forest plan or management plan

5 POINTS – for applications that meet one of the three-point criteria above and the criteria below:

- applications in areas with declining populations (the blue areas displayed on the Scottish Forestry Map Viewer in the FCS Grants & Regulations – FGS (2014-20) Eligibility/Scoring Criteria folder) where there are leks with, supporting evidence of, three plus males each year since 2010. The

management objective must be to halt the decline and maintain the present range and be clearly described in the associated forest plan management plan

Supplementary point for additional benefit – black grouse

1 POINT – will be awarded, as an additional point, where:

- applications can clearly identify black grouse conservation as an objective in the forest plan or management plan. The plan should detail the specific habitat work proposed to improve the habitat for black grouse

Or

- applications include the active management of adjacent or integral, open ground habitats for the benefit of black grouse

Or

- applications, in 'core' areas, include capital items for fence removal or fence marking to minimise collision risk for black grouse

Delivery of option benefits – capercaillie

1 POINT – for applications that meet the eligibility requirements but do not deliver any of the benefits detailed below.

3 POINTS – for applications that provide one or more of the following in addition to meeting the eligibility requirements:

- applications in 'core' areas (refer to the FGS Target and Eligibility Areas folder in the Scottish Forestry Map Viewer), which include an associated forest plan or management plan, with capercaillie as a clear management objective. The plan must describe how you propose to maintain and increase suitable habitats and be supported by the capercaillie project officer

5 POINTS – for applications that meet one of the three-point criteria above and the criteria below:

- applications in areas designated as Special Protection Areas (SPA) for capercaillie (speak to your local woodland officer)

Supplementary point – additional benefit – capercaillie

1 POINT – will be awarded, as an additional point, where:

- applications, in 'core' areas, include capital items for fence removal or fence marking to minimise collision risk for capercaillie

How to claim

We will pay grants for up to five years for each year that your contract is covered by a Forest Plan or Management Plan. If your Forest Plan or Management Plan expires during the five years of your contract you must ensure that it is renewed in time to be able to continue making annual claims. We cannot pay your claim for any claim year that is not covered by a Forest Plan or Management Plan.

You must claim this grant on your Single Application Form.

You must submit an annual monitoring form that records the date, method, time spent, number and species controlled. The form must contain a map showing the trap and cull locations.

You must complete the template and submit this with your claim. Keep all related records for checking by our woodland officers as evidence of work done.

Sustainable Management of Forests – Predator Control Monitoring Form template (MS Word, Size: 665.1 kB)
doc_external_url: https://www.ruralpayments.org/media/resources/smf-predator-control-annual-monitoring-form-v3.doc

You must submit your annual monitoring form to your local Scottish Forestry office once completed. The Annual Monitoring form runs from 1st January to 31st December in each of the claim years in your contract. It should be submitted to Scottish Forestry as soon as possible after the end of the calendar year. If we do not receive your annual monitoring form we will not be able to pay your annual management claim.

Technical guidance

- Capercaillie and Black Grouse Core Areas
- Long-term Forest Plan technical guidance
- Management Plan
- General mapping guidance for the Forestry Grant Scheme
- RSPB wildlife guide on Black grouse
- UK Forestry Standard
- Forestry Commission Technical Note 19 – Fence marking to reduce grouse collisions
- Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust
- Guidance on avoiding disturbance of Capercaillie

Recent changes

Section	Change	Previous text	New text
Scoring criteria	Guidance amended.	We will set a minimum score that an application for any particular option must achieve to be considered for approval. We will make details available before the start of the scheme.	The criteria will be written as appropriate to each Forestry Grant Scheme option; please refer to Scoring criteria and clearing process for details.
	Specific threshold score removed.	Threshold score = 2 points	-

Previous versions

Previous versions of this page

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