



Making a home for the capercaillie

The capercaillie is the largest grouse in the world. Its Gaelic name means "Horse of the Woods".

They need our help now. Due to poor chick survival, caused by climate change and other factors, their numbers have declined dramatically. Here in Glen Tanar we are making every effort to reverse the decline by improving the habitat and increasing the awareness of the capercaillie's plight.

What we are doing to help the capercaillie

The capercaillie depends on blaeberry, a plant that grows in the pine forests. The blaeberry provides caterpillars and other insect life for the chicks to eat, and leaves and berries for the adults to eat. We are burning and cutting old overgrown heather, clearing bracken and thinning trees to encourage the blaeberry to grow.

Habitat management techniques include burning, swiping, strimming and spraying.

The capercaillie needs a varied habitat where it can find food and shelter. Young capercaillie need shelter from the elements and from predators like hawks. To improve the habitat we are building brushwood shelters, thinning parts of the forest to increase light for shrubs and creating forest thickets.

Birds sometimes collide with deer fences. We are removing fences where we can and marking essential fences to make them more visible to the birds.

You can help too

Dogs and people can harm the capercaillie. Dogs can frighten the hen bird and she is forced to fly off leaving her young chicks alone and vulnerable to predators. People can disturb the adults and prevent them from breeding.

You can help by:

- *Staying on the tracks*
- *Keeping your dog on a lead*

Foxes, crows and other animals like stoats and weasels prey on capercaillie chicks. We trap and snare these predators using legal recommended methods to give the chicks a better chance of survival. If you come across any traps, please leave them alone. We check them daily when they are in use.