

FINAL

MINUTES OF THE 20th MEETING OF THE SCOTTISH WILDCAT ACTION STEERING GROUP

27 June 2018
Battleby

Attendees – see Annex 1
Chair – Allan Bantick

Annex 2 provides a list of new action points (together with ongoing action points from previous meetings)

AGENDA ITEM 1 - WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

Annex 1 provides a list of attendees.

Apologies were received from David Hetherington, Andrew Kitchener, Karen Ramoo, Duncan McKenzie, Gillian Agnew, Alice Bacon

AGENDA ITEM 2 - RECENT AND PROPOSED CHANGES TO MEMBERSHIP

Anna Meredith now based in Melbourne but to remain as corresponding member. Alice Bacon to be new Dick Vet representative, to start 1 July 2018. It was agreed University of Oxford WildCRU (already an SWCAP partner) to be invited to sit on the Steering Group. AB's role as future Chair to be reviewed after April 2019.

AGENDA ITEM 3 - *EX SITU* PROJECT UPDATE

HS provided a brief update on RZSS ongoing activities. Update given on a paper that has been drafted and submitted to a journal for review, and therefore will make key results to date publically available, once quality assurance completed. This will summarise genetic analyses. In essence the work will highlight that the genetic scores of 'historical' wildcat specimens are higher than the scores of recent samples, and that all recent wildcats sampled to date (defined through pelage) exhibit some level of hybridisation.

AGENDA ITEM 4 – PRIORITY AREAS PROJECT UPDATE + COMMS UPDATE

See Annex 3 for a full report. Two Spanish students with experience of wildcat survey are about to start summer fieldwork in NE Scotland to do quick assessments of some sites outwith Priority Areas, SWA and FES are providing advice and a level of support. MammalWeb app is to be used to try and generate camera trap records by the public. Data from the 2017/18 winter to be made available to the IUCN CSG Review in late July. Agreed that it was timely to review the SWA budget at the next meeting.

AGENDA ITEM 5 – WIDER COMMS AND PROJECT MANAGEMENT ISSUES

Recent campaigns by Wildcat Haven have created additional pressures for SWA staff and partners, and diverted resources away from core wildcat conservation activities. Agreed that SWA should continue to promote the positive work SWA does, and messages based on scientific evidence.

AGENDA ITEM 6 – PROPOSAL TO REINTRODUCE WILDCATS TO ENGLAND

Peter Cooper, project officer for the English Wildcat Reintroduction Project, was welcomed to the meeting. PC gave a presentation on the English proposals, and described the preliminary work to date. The Vincent Wildlife Trust is also drawing up proposals for a Welsh reintroduction project. There followed a discussion, with key issues including the challenges of managing domestic cats (i.e. through TNVR, and addressing responsible pet ownership etc) at potential wildcat release sites, sourcing suitable numbers of animals for release programmes and the need for overarching strategic objectives within the overall GB context. It was agreed that the two projects should continue to liaise closely.

AGENDA ITEM 7 –DOMESTIC CAT OWNERSHIP/MANAGEMENT ISSUES

It was confirmed that the SWCAP Steering Group paper has been submitted to Scottish Government, and to the Parliamentary Petitions Committee who are currently assessing the ongoing petition relating to cat management. A letter for which Anna Meredith has been lead author, signed by a number of SWCAP partners, that summarises related issues and experiences, is about to be submitted to Vet Record for publication

AGENDA ITEM 8 –POTENTIAL FUTURE FUNDING

There was a general discussion on potential funding sources post-2020. The IUCN review is likely to inform and help prioritise the work that will need to be progressed.

AGENDA ITEM 9 – IUCN INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF WILDCAT WORK

The Terms of Reference have been finalised with the IUCN CSG. They will be looking at all wildcat work being undertaken in Scotland. They have produced a concept note that was circulated by MG on 13/6. MG invited members to identify any relevant reference documents/information that could be passed onto the IUCN CSG to assist the review process. A workshop-type event will be organised in September, after the draft IUCN report has been received, to help identify and prioritise future activities.

AGENDA ITEM 10 – MINUTES OF LAST MEETING + ACTIONS POINTS

Minutes accepted. An update of action points is given in Annex 3.

AGENDA ITEM 11 –AOB

KK raised the issue of how forestry management activities need to take account of wildcat conservation requirements, and the approach taken by FES. FES have to deal with similar issues for a range of protected species, and in all cases management has to be defensible and based on scientific evidence. Members agreed this was a reasonable approach.

Martin Gaywood SNH + Keri Langridge SWA

12 July 2018

Annex 1

Attendee list

SCOTTISH WILDCAT ACTION STEERING GROUP 27 June 2018

Present:

- Allan Bantick – SWA Chair
- Kenny Kortland – Forest Enterprise Scotland
- Martin Gaywood – Scottish Natural Heritage
- George Hogg – Scottish Natural Heritage
- Pete Haskell - Scottish Wildlife Trust
- Roo Campbell – Scottish Wildcat Action
- Keri Langridge – Scottish Wildcat Action
- Helen Senn – Royal Zoological Society of Scotland
- Stuart Brooks - National Trust for Scotland

+ Peter Cooper – English Wildcat Project (for agenda item 6 and lunch)

Apologies:

- David Hetherington – Cairngorms National Park Authority
- Alice Bacon – Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies
- Andrew Kitchener – National Museum of Scotland
- Duncan McKenzie – Scottish Wildcat Action
- Karen Ramoo – Scottish Land and Estates

Annex 2

New action points of 27/6/18 (see 20.1 onwards), plus ongoing action points

- For review at next meeting:

AP 17.2 – 24/08/17 – RC/KL

RC/KL will either produce a final draft of the Population Analysis on Formal Survey Data paper for presentation, discussion and agreement at the next meeting of the Steering Group or a substantive update on progress toward the final draft.

Ongoing

AP 17.10 – 24/08/17 – RC/DC

RC/DC will speak to Pete Cairns to review what his, Pete's, future role in the SWA project will be.

Ongoing

AP 18.1 – 16/12/17 - SR and ER, 27/6/18 - MG and PH

Stephen Reeves and Emma Rawling (SWA) to discuss education package options and coordinate, in particular for Aberdeenshire area.

Ongoing (March 2018: SR has also spoken to about 300 pupils over the last few months. June 2018: MG to speak with RC and Stephen Reeves about wider support for the education programme.)

AP 18.9 – 16/12/17 – RC, with MG

RC, with MG input, to draft a statement on the SWA approach to TNVR use on estates etc, and circulate to Steering Group.

Ongoing (RC has produced a first draft)

Action point 19.3 – 27/3/18 - MG to revise SWA Comms Protocol in line with comments received

Ongoing

Action point 20.1 – 27/6/18 – RC to arrange meeting with NT, GH, and KR discuss KR's new role as chair of land management sub-group.

Action point 20.2 – 27/6/18 – MG, AB to invite Kerry Kilshaw to join the Steering Group as a representative of WildCRU.

Action point 20.3 (not until April 2019) – 27/6/18 – MG, GH, AB to discuss and review position of the Steering group chair in April 2019 with a potential to replace AB.

Action point 20.4 – 27/6/18 – RC to liaise with HS, KL, AK and AB to produce a central, coordinated data set that enables recording, tracking and handling of wildcat samples through the analysis cycle, and accessibility of information to key project staff (to involve combination of datasets managed by HS and KL, then to include veterinary data managed by AB and museum data managed by AK)

Action point 20.5 – 27/6/18 - RC to enable better management of samples – specifically to ask AK to locate the 11 wildcat specimens being held by the NMS in storage, and to make them available for genetic analysis + to liaise with vets to improve labelling of samples (Consideration should be given to other ways of highlighting the protocols e.g. waterproof cards? video?).

Action point 20.6 – 27/6/18 – RC to clarify to the Project team that they continue using 'based on pelage' for wildcat definition (this may be reviewed to include genetic information at a future date).

Action point 20.7 – 27/6/18 – RC, KL to coordinate with DB over possible use of ZSL camera-trapping tool and recruitment of students for entering and analysing survey data.

Action point 20.8 – 27/6/18 - RC, MG, GH to prepare budget forecast for 5 year project for discussion at next SG.

Action point 20.9 – 27/6/18 – RC and Project team to undertake their own assessment of the future priorities for the project, taking into account the project budget. Report back to Steering Group at next meeting, to be discussed in conjunction with IUCN review outputs.

Annex 3

Action point progress recorded at meeting of 27 June

AP 16.2 - 11/05/17 - AK

AK to coordinate transfer of samples between specialists, and ensure communications maintained with project staff

Overtaken and updated - see new AP 20.5

AP 16.3 – 11/05/17 – RC

RC will co-ordinate and lead a review of the recording, tracking and handling of wildcat samples through the analysis cycle.

Overtaken and updated - see new AP 20.5

AP 16.6 - 11/05/17 – MG and others

- As participation at/in the steering group meetings is important it was agreed to ask SGA to propose a deputy for when GM is unable to attend.
- Speak to GM/SGA about a member for the Land Management sub-group.
- It was suggested that NFUS be asked to join that group.
- It was suggested that the Highland Partnership Against Wildlife Crime Group be involved in progressing the action and/or the Land Management Group

Overtaken and discharged (Overtaken by events – to be progressed via Land Use Sub-Group)

AP 16.8 - 11/05/17 – AM

AM will pull together a summary of the findings on disease in wild populations and publish them through a letter to the Vet Record.

Discharged

AP 17.2 – 24/08/17 – RC/KL

RC/KL will either produce a final draft of the Population Analysis on Formal Survey Data paper for presentation, discussion and agreement at the next meeting of the Steering Group or a substantive update on progress toward the final draft.

Ongoing

AP 17.10 – 24/08/17 – RC/DC

RC/DC will speak to Pete Cairns to review what his, Pete's, future role in the SWA project will be.

Ongoing

AP 18.1 – 16/12/17 - SR and ER, 27/6/18 - MG and PH

Stephen Reeves and Emma Rawling (SWA) to discuss education package options and coordinate, in particular for Aberdeenshire area.

Ongoing (March 2018: SR has also spoken to about 300 pupils over the last few months. June 2018: MG to speak with RC and Stephen Reeves about wider support for the education programme.)

AP18.2 – 16/12/17 – DM

Press release regarding 'Trusty' to be drafted and circulated for comment.

Discharged

AP 18.3 – 16/12/17 – DM, SWT

DM, in collaboration with SWT, to investigate to what extent the LINK wildcat MSP champion could be involved in promoting local wildcat issues

Discharged

AP 18.5 – 16/12/17 – AB

AB to speak to the SGA about representation at future SWA Steering Group meetings.

Discharged

AP 18.6 – 16/12/17 – AB, DH, RC, MG

AB, DH, RC, MG to produce a first draft of a TOR for the land use sub-group.

Overtaken and discharged (Overtaken by events – to be progressed via Land Use Sub-Group)

AP 18.9 – 16/12/17 – RC, with MG

RC, with MG input, to draft a statement on the SWA approach to TNVR use on estates etc, and circulate to Steering Group.

Ongoing (RC has produced a first draft)

Action point 19.1 – RC to provide HS with details of radio-collared cats so that their samples can be fast-tracked for genetic testing

Discharged

Action point 19.2 – RC in liaison with project officers, to ensure labelling of samples by vets etc is improved. Consideration should be given to other ways of highlighting the protocols (e.g. waterproof cards? video?)

Overtaken and updated - see new AP 20.5

Action point 19.3 – MG to revise SWA Comms Protocol in line with comments received

Ongoing

Action point 19.4 – MG to write to the IUCN CSG, and progress the review

Discharged

Action point 19.5 – MG to finalise the SWCAP paper on responsible cat ownership and wildcat conservation, and arrange for it to be submitted to SG.

Discharged

Action point 19.6 – KR to discuss with SGA contacts issues relating to their engagement with SWCAP activities

Discharged

Action point 19.7 – RC to liaise with NT and progress the group, with the aim of organising a meeting over the next quarter.

Discharged

Action point 19.8 – MG to draft response to Derek Gow setting out SWCAP comments on the English reintroduction proposal, and send once finalised.

Discharged

ANNEX 3

SCOTTISH WILDCAT ACTION PROJECT MANAGERS UPDATE 27TH JUNE 2018

Our project activity through Jan-Mar was predominantly focussed on the various pieces of winter fieldwork including camera surveys, TNVR and wildcat trapping.

Monitoring

We conducted full scale surveys in the Angus Glens, Strathbogie, Strathpeffer and Strathspey along with a reduced survey in Morvern to help identify cats for trapping. In total, around 355 cameras were deployed during the survey with the help of 117 volunteers. While we tried to obtain cat images from the cameras as soon as each was checked by a volunteer, this wasn't followed on all occasions; sometimes volunteers did not return the data or inform us of cats they knew visiting their camera until the end of the survey. Project officers are currently trawling through the survey images and therefore the minimum numbers of wildcats and other cats are not yet available for each area. Since rapid response to knowledge of a cat at a camera is important for the TNVR work, we should seek to improve the reporting rate by volunteers of cats in the future.

MammalWeb, succeed in obtaining internal funding to develop their infrastructure which will allow us to make use of their site for trail camera image identification and for pushing a national citizen science survey for wildcats.. As at the time of writing, users can register with the 'Scottish wildcat project' on the site so that they can upload images or assess images uploaded by others. We intend to keep this a closed project so those that set cameras ('trappers') and those that check images ('spotters') need to register with us first. This will allow some control to avoid nefarious activity by certain other interest groups.

Since the last report we have no new information to report regarding the Exeter CASE student or the genetics study on feral and farm cat interactions with wildcats.

This quarter, five road casualty cats were collected, two in Strathbogie, two in Strathpeffer and one in Morvern. One of the casualties from Strathpeffer was on the A835 around Brahan estate, between NH478548 and NH525558. Road casualties of wildcats or hybrids on this stretch seem unusually common and we will be looking at what we can do to reduce this.

TNVR and other cat management

Emma Rawling, our TNVR officer, has compiled a TNVR report cover the whole autumn-winter period which is appended at the end of this report. Below is the summary for Jan-Mar. This quarter saw TNVR activity across all our areas with the additional work of also specifically aiming to trap wildcats. Sixty one cats were trapped including five cats assessed as wildcat based on pelage at the time of capture. Four of those were fitted with a GPS collars. Of the feral and obviously hybridised cats, the majority of these were wild-living individuals, each taking around as much effort as a wildcat to capture. This winter we experienced relatively heavy snow-fall that locked us out of many locations within our priority areas for 1 – 3 weeks. Given these issues, this was a very impressive effort on the part of the staff and volunteers.

TNVR effort and success Jan – Mar 2018.

Priority Area	Trap nights	Feral / hybrids caught	Wildcat caught	Cats TNVR	SNA P test fails	Kittens rehomed	By- catch	TNVR volunteers
Angus Glens	385	22	2	22	0	0	5	1
Morvern	44	2	0	2	0	0	0	5
Strathbogie	46	12	2	12	0	0	4	4
Strathpeffer	306	15	1	11	1	3	0	11
Strathspey	42	5	0	4	1	0	0	1
Total	823	56	5	51	2	3	9	22

Over this quarter, six *Supercat* neutering vouchers were used.

As with last winter, we have employed contactors to help us with surveying and TNVR in both the Angus Glens and Morvern. Working methods with the contractor were more efficient this year and over twice as many cats were captured as a result. Improvements included giving the contractor (now experienced in assessing pelage) more freedom to choose which cats to target for trapping. As is normal, cats were re-assessed while under sedation at the veterinary clinic. Final decision on any borderline cats scoring near the 17 point pelage threshold were left to project staff.

Public sightings

More sightings were submitted this quarter compared with Oct – Dec 2017. This is however fewer than reported for the equivalent period in 2017 where 99 records including 30 proposed as wildcat were submitted. As at 15th June, 9 (22%) of these had not been reviewed by verifiers. This is an improvement compared with the last quarter thanks to continuing work by the project officers and, in particular, additional voluntary help from Ro Scott. Ro's efforts have considerably reduced our backlog. Of the 14 wildcat records that have been reviewed by verifiers, three were insufficiently detailed for verification, 11 were classes as 'plausible' records and none were classed as 'considered correct' or 'correct'. This reflects the difficulty to identifying wildcats from hybrids, where photographs or highly detailed description from an experienced observer are needed to verify confidently. Plausible records are retained in the iRecord system so that they can be used by the project but they are not passed on to the national records.

Public sightings received by iRecord for Scotland (verified and unverified reports).

	<i>Felis silvestris</i>	<i>Felis silvestris</i> x <i>catus</i>	<i>Felis catus</i>	Total
Reporting quarter	20	17	3	40
Previous quarter	11	12	1	24
1 st April 2015 to end of report quarter	156	208	49	415

Land management

Engagement is summaries in the table below. This is the first time these figures have been provided in the report since the first half of 2017 as staffing changes meant that significant re-engagement with landowners was needed in some areas. Project staff invested a significant amount of effort in contacting landowners and land-managers prior to the winter

survey and this is reflected in an overall increase in engagement in terms of working with us during surveying and TNVR. Engagement with wildcat friendly predator control remains low however. Reasons for this include lack of interest on the part of the estate, lack of time for project staff to work with the estate, or simply that the estate doesn't conduct predator control using methods that put wildcats at risk.

Landowner/manager engagement (last reported quarter | this quarter). These figures were last reported for Apr-Jun 2017 in Morvern, Strathbogie and Strathspey, and for Jan-Mar 2017 in Angus Glens and Strathspey.

Priority Area	Angus Glens	Morvern	Strathbogie	Strathpeffer	Strathspey
Number of estates participating	5 14	9 9	4 4	8 11	5 4
Number of other landowning bodies	2 2	2 2	1 2	3 5	1 3
Number of farms and crofts participating	1 2	10 10	6 12	17 17	0 1
Percentage of priority area by area (approx.).	70% 90%	90% 90%	80% 85%	75% 85%	75% -%
Number of ambassador estates	0 0	0 0	0 0	0 0	0 0
Number of estates with project equipment on loan	0 0	0 3	1 2	0 0	0 0
Number of estates providing data	1 0	0 1	0 0	0 0	1 1
Number of estates signed up to w-f predator control	2 0	0 0	0 0	0 0	4 1
Number of SRDP estates for w-f measures	0 0	0 0	0 0	0 0	0 0

Outreach

Outreach events are provided below. This was a relatively quiet quarter for outreach as project staff and volunteers concentrated on the winter fieldwork. Thanks go to Lindsay Mackinlay for volunteering to talk to the SWT Stirling group.

Outreach events ran or attended by project staff.

Date	Outreach event	Attendees
19/01/2018	Lochaline pre-survey talk	25
26/01/2018	Aberdeen University Students	12
01/02/2018	Strathpeffer P7's - camera monitoring	20
05/02/2018	Rainbows/Brownies Evanton	12
08/02/2018	Moray Bird Club	30
21/02/2018	Ruthven SWI	24
20/03/2018	Cairnie School visit	14
22/03/2018	School visit Lochaline with RZSS Wild About Scotland	24
27/03/2018	SWT Stirling group	30

Budget

Between 31st Jan 2018 and 31st March 2018, project costs totalled £84,869. This relatively high spend over just two months is due to the costs of our field activities (£8,169 on equipment and consumables, £7,819 on travel costs for volunteers) and professional fees (£27,877 on vet costs and field contractors). Actual spend (outstanding amounts plus paid or received) to 31st Mar 2018 is provide in the table below.

Expenditure	Original allocation	Revised allocation	Actual
	Total + VAT	Total + VAT	To 31/03/18
Staff costs	£857,037	£857,037	£501,657
Recruitment	£1,500	£1,500	£659
Publicity and promotion	£10,000	£10,000	£27,522
Training for staff	£4,368	£4,368	£5,782
Training for volunteers	£9,000	£9,000	£462
Travel for staff	£27,000	£27,000	£18,284
Travel and expenses for volunteers	£120,800	£70,800	£17,540
Other activity costs	£176,486	£96,486	£13,937
Equipment tools and materials	£97,602	£97,602	£91,066
Professional fees	£276,796	£424,196	£137,621
Total cash costs	£1,619,504	£1,619,504	£814,530
Total non-cash costs	£336,800	£336,800	£ -
Donations			-£6,727*
Other cash income	-£1,190,549	-£1,190,549	-£761,841
Non-cash income	-£336,800	-£336,800	-£49,800†
Total project income including non-cash income	-£1,527,349	-£1,527,349	-£818,368

*Includes £2,796 donated since 9th Feb 2017 but not received. Note 50% of donations given through our website go to RZSS (after deductions of the PayPal fee).

†Calculated as at 30st June 2017.



Quarterly Communications Update

From: January to March 2018

HYBRID BREEDING STORIES

REGIONAL COVERAGE- 1

Example: Press and Journal – 8 January - Wildcats 'at risk of extinction' by hybrid breeding
<https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/lifestyle/animals/1386143/wildcats-at-risk-of-extinction-by-hybrid-breeding/>

NATIONAL COVERAGE - 1

Example: The Herald - 9 January - Clawing back wildcats from the brink as pure breeds dying out
http://www.heraldscotland.com/news/15815168.Clawing_back_wildcats_from_the_brink_as_pure_breeds_dying_out/

SWA PARTNERSHIP WITH ARTISTS TO RAISE MONEY FOR WILDCATS

LOCAL COVERAGE - 2

Example: Galloway News - 11 January - Wild about the cat – artist's new partnership with SWA
<http://rss.precise-media.co.uk/email/120129/394753845.pdf>

WILDCAT TRAPPING AND GPS COLLARING

NATIONAL COVERAGE - 3

Example: The Herald - 17 January - Wildcats to be fitted with GPS collar in project to save the species
http://www.heraldscotland.com/news/15846622.Wildcats_to_be_fitted_with_GPS_collar_in_project_to_save_the_species/

BROADCAST COVERAGE – 5

Examples: BBC Radio 4 – 20 January - Wild Cats in the Highlands -
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b09m165z>

BBC Highland - News item about wildcat trapping - <https://soundcloud.com/bbc-highlands/1230-highlands-islands-bulletin-17012018>

BBC Radio Scotland Brainwaves Podcast with Pennie Latin: The Scottish Wildcat -
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b09ldpz7>

STV News - 25 January 2018 - Wildcat trapping piece - <https://youtu.be/-rkuNm6Xgsw>

REGIONAL COVERAGE – 2

Example: The Courier - Angus Glens to be prime target area for wildcat trapping DNA study -
<https://www.thecourier.co.uk/fp/news/local/angus-mearns/580651/angus-glens-to-be-orime-target-area-for-wildcat-trapping-dna-study/>

LOCAL COVERAGE – 8

Example: The Highland Times
Crucial work to help save Scottish Wildcats -
<http://www.thehighlandtimes.com/news/2018/01/16/crucial-work-to-help-save-scottish-wildcats/#>

MAGAZINE COVERAGE – 1

Example: The Scottish Farmer - Working to save Scottish wildcats -
http://www.thescottishfarmer.co.uk/news/15885709.Working_to_save_Scottish_wildcats/

SWA RELATED FEATURES AND OTHER STORIES

REGIONAL COVERAGE – 1

Example: The Courier - All Sett To Help – Gayle Ritchie talks to some of Courier Country’s conservation heroes – featuring Nicola Tallach, Angus Glens PO -
<https://www.pressreader.com/uk/the-courier-advertiser-fife-edition/20180127/284679027481070>

ONLINE MAGAZINE COVERAGE – 1

Example: The Weekly News - Mike’s wildcats were not cuddly kittens - <http://rss.precise-media.co.uk/email/120129/395113276.pdf>

Social Media Highlights

TWITTER

Stats for January to March: New Followers: **361**, Tweets: **92**, Tweet Impressions: **261.4k**, Mentions: **568**, Profile Views: **9,954**

Stats for Previous Quarter (October to December): New followers: **174**, Tweets: **119**, Tweet Impressions: **230.5K**, Mentions: **228**, Profile Views: **6,678**

Top Tweet January:

Our Communications Co-ordinator Duncan McKenzie went out in the field with Strathbogie Project Officer Emma Rawling to see for himself what life was like on the front line in the battle to save the Scottish wildcat. Full story here - scottishwildcataction.org/latest-news/20... pic.twitter.com/xNwjaLYr5W

Impressions: 10,774 | Total engagements: 290 | Retweets: 27 | Likes: 47 | Link clicks: 82
| Media engagements: 97 | Detail expands: 18 | Profile clicks: 18

Top Tweet February:

Happy Tuesday everyone! Welcome back to our interactive feature Wildcat Or Not? - All you have to do is tell us whether you think this looks like a [#WildcatOrNot](#) - go!
pic.twitter.com/cHABNA0c44

Impressions: 6458 | Total engagements: 563 | Media engagements: 336 | Likes: 60
| Retweets: 23 | Profile clicks: 25 | Detail expands: 62 | Link clicks: 19

Top Tweet March:

Hello folks! We hope you've got that [#FridayFeline](#) - the image of the day today is this stunning wildcat from our Strathbogie wildcat priority area. If you in the great outdoors this weekend report any sightings here - scottishwildcataction.org/how-you-can-he...
pic.twitter.com/ELdnJ1P4vv

Impressions: 8,825 | Total engagements: 320 | Media engagements: 139 | Likes: 83 |
Retweets: 41 | Detail expands: 21 | Profile clicks: 25 | Link clicks: 9

FACEBOOK

There were **277** new Page Likes between the beginning of January and the end of March 2018.

Top post January:

Morning everyone and welcome to our new interactive feature. All you have to do is tell us whether you think the cat we have posted here looks like a [#WildcatOrNot](#) - go!! We'll give you our answer later today...

Reach: 7,553 | Reactions: 281 | Shares: 10 | Comments: 140 | Likes: 131

Top post February:

It's [#WildcatOrNot](#) again folks. You know what to do, tell us what you think?

Reach: 4,157 | Reactions: 193 | Shares: 3 | Comments: 89 | Likes: 101

Top post March:

Here's a poser for you all. Give us your view on whether you think this cat looks like a [#WildcatOrNot](#) - go!

Reach: 6,467 | Reactions: 368 | Shares: 12 | Comments: 104 | Likes: 245

INSTAGRAM

Top Post January: Good morning folks! It's Tuesday again so that can only mean one thing, time for our regular feature Wildcat Or Not - so tell us if you think this cat looks like a [#WildcatOrNot](#) ?

Likes: 48 | Comments: 7

Top Post February

We've not seen the last of winter just yet and our work to save the Scottish wildcat

continues apace. More here - <http://www.scottishwildcataction.org/latest-news/2018/february/the-winter-s-not-over-yet-and-neither-is-swa-s-hard-work/>

Likes: 57 | Comments: 0

Top Post March:

Welcome to that [#FridayFeline](#) - if you are out and about in one of our wildcat priority areas this weekend then keep your peepers peeled for a Scottish wildcat. See one, report it to us here - <http://www.scottishwildcataction.org/how-you-can-help/#report>

Likes: 42 | Comments: 0

Scottish Wildcat Action Website

Google Analytics:

January – March 2018

Website Users: 8,465 (compared to 5,477 previous quarter) | Page Views: 25,179 (compared to 17,349 previous quarter) | Pages Viewed per session: 2.29 (compared to 2.28 previous quarter) | % which are new visitors 85.1% | Average session duration: 2.02 (compared to 2min 14secs previous quarter) | Operating systems used to access website: 1) iOS (Apple) at 58.65%, 2) Android at 39.24% 3) Windows at 1.25%

FORWARD PLANNING

- Preparation for the launch of the new #GenerationWildcat campaign, including the creation of new marketing materials such as banners, social media material and hard copy leaflets and posters
- Working closely with the team of Project Officers and volunteers on preparation of blog content and future release of information, photos and videos relating to the wildcat trapping season
- Looking into the possibility of enhancing or replacing wildcat information at all zoos which house them and highlighting the latest work of the project within these infographics
- Investigating the possibility of delving deeper into pelage scoring with the public on our social networking channels and highlighting why we do it, whilst at the same time providing vital education to the general public about how to properly identify a wildcat
- Work on a new leaflet for the project which focuses on the most up to date figures as well as points us towards where we are going in terms of the project's legacy
- Initial discussions have taken place about how we can work with an opportunity provided by MammalWeb and how we promote that later in the year

MANAGEMENT OF NEGATIVE PRESS

Thankfully no such issues occurred during this quarter.

Appendix 1a: End of Season TNVR Report 2018 all WPAs



By Emma Rawling Project Officer leading on TNVR, May 2018

Introduction

Trap Neuter Vaccinate and Return (TNVR) was undertaken for feral and hybrid cats in order to reduce hybridisation and disease transmission risk for wildcats as part of the Scottish Wildcat Conservation Action Plan.

TNVR was undertaken in five Scottish Wildcat Action wildcat priority areas (WPAs) over winter 2017-18, which was the second full season of active TNVR under this project. Project officers led TNVR in three WPAs with help of a volunteer field assistant and some local volunteers; in one WPA TNVR was covered by contractors; and in one by a temporary intensive 'pop up' clinic. TNVR was run in tandem and in some cases simultaneously with live wildcat trapping (under separate license) in four WPAs.

A total of **106** animals were treated/ underwent the TNVR process during this season.

Methods

Access permissions:

Every TNVR site had landowner access permission. Not all estates who gave access for general wildcat survey work also gave permission for TNVR as some preferred to continue own lethal control methods.

Calendar dates:

Pre-baiting and camera surveying prior to TNVR commenced in late 2017, but most active trapping commenced in January 2018.

All trapping ceased by the 16th of March 2018 as per protocols designed to ensure heavily pregnant cats or other wildlife where not affected. Some WPAs and sensitive sites ceased earlier on 1st March.

Some opportunistic TNVR activity will be continued over the spring and summer 2018 in very limited cases- where a feral cat is seen in a low risk setting for example a garden or farmyard with no risk to wildcats as by-catch.

In some cases, TNVR work was focussed on shorter concentrated bursts or a week or two, very intensively, and this approach was efficient and mostly successful.

Targets:

Traps were deployed where we had evidence of feral and hybrid cat presence- either camera trap evidence, or public sightings. Both feral cats and hybrids were targeted this year for TNVR, and any cat scoring less than 17 on pelage was considered a target

Staffing:

Staffing of TNVR (site research, prebaiting and active trapping, transfer to vets as well as aftercare of cats etc) varied according to WPA. In some areas the project officer did the majority of all stages due to site access restrictions etc; in others much more of this was delegated to local volunteers. In Angus, all stages were done by contractors.

Training of volunteers:

Each PO undertook training for their TNVR volunteers, utilising materials developed by Emma Rawling. Every volunteer participating in TNVR was asked to sign a confirmation of method and training sheet to ensure our protocols were followed. On the whole, volunteers required considerable supervision and required input from POs during TNVR process.

Contractors:

Contractors were recruited to deliver TNVR in Angus Glens WPA due to the impracticalities of a PO covering two WPAs at the same time, as decided by Steering Group.

The same contractors were used as in 2016/17 which had the benefit of considerable prior and cumulative knowledge of sites and cats.

Vets:

In almost all cases, cats were transferred to local veterinary practices for treatment as previously arranged and agreed with the local PO. Four different practices participated this season. Each cat was delivered with an SWA admission form to ensure consistency of approach and accurate record keeping. Some costs were kept down by us providing SNAP tests from our own supplies as well as sample kits for disease and genetic research.

Pop Up TNVR Clinics:

Due to impractical distance to a vet in Morven WPA, a 'pop up' TNVR clinic was again undertaken in Morven. A vet was contracted to provide services for the period- Alice Bacon. An intensive four days of trapping (by 3 staff) was undertaken with a temporary treatment clinic set up in our local contractor's home. A large amount of community advice and

engagement was also undertaken by staff and vets during this week. *The author of this report did not have access to the budget cost information for this.*

Process:

TNVR trapping was run concurrently with Wildcat trapping (under SNH license for genetic research and GPS collar study only) where wildcats and hybrid/feral TNVR targets were known in the same areas. Where this took place, trapping followed the Wildcat trapping protocols which involved extra checks and safety precautions.

All TNVR was undertaken using techniques outlined in our SWA TNVR Field Guide and every trap site went through the following stages;

Site Selection: based on previous sightings or clues about feral cat presence. A camera trap was placed for a minimum of 1 week 'scoping' beforehand to research each site. This helped ensure only target feral cats were trapped and minimised conflicts with presence of non-targets such as wildcat presence, or pet cats.

Pre-bait Period: The live cage trap was placed in situ but inactive (locked open) and left to blend in with food provided to attract feral cats. Length varied from 2 days to 2 weeks, but most often coincided with compulsory 1 week 'scoping' with cameras .

Live Trapping: Traps were generally run 'live' for 24hrs a day for 4- 5 nights per week according to staff/ volunteer availability and vet opening hours. Every trap checked at least 12hrly, often 8hrly where wildcats were also present or targeted.

Release: All cats were released back at the same site with 36hrs, with the vast majority within 24hrs.

Equipment Used:

Automatic live catch cage traps (of three different designs) were used with good rates of reliability- different project officers had preferences for different designs. Each trap was accompanied by a camera trap set up opposite to monitor all animals visiting the site, before and during the live trapping process.

In some cases Mink Police Trap Alarm units were also used to good effect to allow immediate response to catches and avoid too much site disturbance with in person visits. All traps were baited with food (quail, rabbit, fish and cat food) and scents (fish oil, catnip, valerian root and cat urine, sourced from vets, were tried).



Results for Whole Project

The total numbers of feral cats treated under the TNVR programme across the project area was **106** animals.

The difference in totals between the WPAs is the result of several factors and does not necessarily reflect actual population levels of feral cats in each area. These include: amount of TNVR done previously by other organisations; PO availability and time constraints; volunteer availability and training; landowner cooperation and access issues; weather and so on.

Table 1: Total cats treated during TNVR season in each WPA:

WPA	Number of Cats Treated	Type of Effort
Strathbogie	60	PO led and volunteer assistant
Strathspey	5	PO led and volunteer assistant
Strathpeffer	18	PO led and volunteer assistant
Angus	21	Contractor and volunteers
Morven	2	Pop-Up Clinic
Project Total	106 cats treated.	

Table 2: Breakdown of totals for all areas:

Type of cat treated	No's and % of total	
Cats euthanized by vets on welfare grounds	6	(5.5%)
Kittens and cats rehomed	10	(9.5%)
Pet cats caught and released untreated	4	(3.5%)
Feral cats already TNVR'd or found to be already neutered.	9	(8.5%)
Feral Cats Treated and Released	72	(68%)
Wildcats caught for research and released	5	(5%)

Results per WPA

Strathbogie:

Overall Start date of TNVR 2016: Summer 2017 (on farms), October 2017 main season

Overall End date of TNVR 2017: 16th March 2018

Table 3 Strathbogie Results:

Type of cat	Total number
1 Total number of nights of trapping effort- i.e. when traps were live. Does not include pre-bait periods or inactive days	328
2 Number of different sites targeted with traps (e.g. farm, field or forest block)	26
3 Number of pet cats caught and released untreated	1 (1.5%)
4 Number of Wildcats caught and released untreated (or high quality hybrids)	2 (3% both GPS collared and released)
5 Number of cats euthanized by vets on welfare/ disease grounds	3 (5% all FIV positive)
6 Number of cats caught and then rehomed (kittens)	7 (12% , 6 kittens and 1 pregnant queen)
7 Number of cats neutered and released as ferals	42 (70%)
8 Number of previously TNVR'd ferals re-caught and released	5 (8.5%)
9 <u>Total number of cats caught/ treated during TNVR = add lines 3, 4, 5, 6 , 7 and 8 together to get this figure.</u>	60
10 Number of Pet neutering/ vaccination vouchers used if known	36
11 Number of volunteers directly involved with TNVR (trapping, leafleting, transporting cats etc)	8 plus 1 full time volunteer assistant

Comments:

TNVR in Strathbogie was undertaken in a small scale way, on request, in low risk farm locations throughout late summer and autumn 2017. The main winter TNVR season, run in tandem with wildcat trapping hit full stride from mid-January 2018 onwards. Most trapping was undertaken in intensive week long blocks, in a mix of farm, forest fringe and many remote forest locations. By catch included pine marten, fox, and buzzard. When mink police units were able to be used, they were successful. A number of previously TNVR'd cats were re-caught this year – good to see them still alive and on territory a year after their treatment.

PO Emma and her volunteer assistant Ana undertook the majority of trapping, assisted by local volunteers, especially for farm colonies. Great collaboration with local vets continued. Local CP branch kindly fostered and rehomed several kittens and one pregnant feral queen. No heavily pregnant cats were identified during trapping, and a bias towards feral males in results. PO would support starting trapping early and finishing by 1st March in forest

locations. Several borderline hybrids required consultation on pelage scoring with colleagues.

Strathspey

Overall Start date of TNVR 2016:20th February 2018

Overall End date of TNVR 2017.....16th March 2018

Table 5 Strathspey Results:

	Type of cat	Total number
1	Total number of nights of trapping effort- i.e. when traps were live. Do not include pre-bait periods or inactive days	42 nights
2	Number of different sites targeted with traps (e.g. farm, field or forest block)	6
3	Number of Pet cats caught and released untreated or ferals found to be already neutered.	0
4	Number of Wildcats caught and released untreated (or high quality hybrids)	0
5	Number of Cats euthanized by vets on welfare/ disease grounds	1 FIV positive hybrid
6	Number of Cats caught and then rehomed (kittens)	0
7	Number of Cats neutered and released as ferals	4
8	Number of previously TNVR'd ferals re-caught and released	0
9	<u>Total number of cats caught/ treated during TNVR = add lines 3, 4, 5, 6 , 7 and 8 together to get this figure.</u>	5
10	Number of Pet neutering/ vaccination vouchers used if known	n/a
11	Number of volunteers directly involved with TNVR (trapping, leafleting, transporting cats etc)	1 full time volunteer assistant

Comments:

The new PO in Strathspey, Dr Keri Langridge, undertook almost all TNVR trapping herself with assistance from her full time volunteer assistant Fiona. One key WPA landowner (Seafield Estates Kinveacky estate) did not allow TNVR in certain areas (west of the A9) due to issues with breeding capercaillie and preferring to continue their own precautionary perdoatr control. They did allow TNVR in some areas east of the A9. . Keri reported some problems with some types of traps but positive results using Mink Police units and the GPRS camera traps. No bycatch reported.

A problem was identified with veterinary coverage in Strathspey, with onlt limited support available from the small and overstretched veterinary practice in Grantown. .Keri could not target wildcats because the vet was unable to provide any of of hours support, so only small numbers of hybrid cats were targeted,. Additional TNVR volunteers could not be used due to limited veterinary capacity. Relations with the local CP branch have also improved and more information about their local TNVR activities was forthcoming.

PO recommended starting TNVR earlier and finishing earlier (1st March) next year. Keri also highlights the continuing lack of provision of fostering facilities for kittens or cats young than

16weeks caught during TNVR. Some trapping had to be postponed or abandoned due to the presence of a heavily pregnant female cat.

Strathpeffer

Overall Start date of TNVR 2016: 7th January 2018

Overall End date of TNVR 2017.....16th March 2018

Table 6 Strathpeffer Results:

	Type of cat	Total number
1	Total number of nights of trapping effort- i.e. when traps were live. Do not include pre-bait periods or inactive days	315
2	Number of different sites targeted with traps (e.g. farm, field or forest block)	19
3	Number of Pet cats caught and released untreated	2
4	Number of Wildcats caught and released untreated (or high quality hybrids)	1
5	Number of Cats euthanized by vets on welfare/ disease grounds	1
6	Number of Cats caught and then rehomed (kittens)	3
7	Number of Cats neutered and released as ferals	9
8	Number of previously TNVR'd ferals re-caught and released	2
9	<u>Total number of cats caught/ treated during TNVR = add lines 3, 4, 5, 6 , 7 and 8 together to get this figure.</u>	18
10	Number of Pet neutering/ vaccination vouchers used if known	1
11	Number of volunteers directly involved with TNVR (trapping, leafleting, transporting cats etc)	11

Comments:

New PO Nicola Talloch reported a couple of difficult decisions on borderline hybrids. Bycatch of pine marten reported, which escaped from the brown trap. Several cats that were previously TNVR'd were re-caught. Mink police were used successfully but not compatible with the black trap types.

PO recommends starting TNVR earlier and finishing earlier. One pregnant female hybrid was reported at the tail end of the season. Also a delay in information coming in from survey volunteers, subsequent cat ID and then planning TNVR targeting, which foreshortened the trapping season.

PO has identified an issue with staff being 'on call' 24hrs a day whilst trapping with Mink police units- and how this is managed.

Morvern

Overall Start date of TNVR 2016:11th February 2018

Overall End date of TNVR 2017.....15th February 2018

Table 7: Morven Results:

	Type of cat	Total number
1	Total number of nights of trapping effort- i.e. when traps were live. Does not include pre-bait periods or inactive days	44 trap nights
2	Number of different sites targeted with traps (e.g. farm, field or forest block)	7
3	Number of pet cats caught and released untreated	1
4	Number of Wildcats caught and released untreated (or high quality hybrids)	0
5	Number of cats euthanized by vets on welfare/ disease grounds	0
6	Number of cats caught and then rehomed (kittens)	0
7	Number of cats neutered and released as ferals	0
8	Number of feral cats previously TNVR'd and re-caught and released	1
9	<u>Total number</u> of cats caught/ treated during TNVR = add lines 3, 4, 5, 6 , 7 and 8 together to get this figure.	2
10	Number of Pet neutering/ vaccination vouchers used if known	0
11	Number of volunteers directly involved with TNVR (trapping, leafleting, transporting cats etc)	3

Comments:

The pop-up clinic was undertaken for the second year running in Morvern, organised by PO Keri Langridge with assistance from contractor Matt Wilson. Veterinary support was provided by Alice Bacon (on loan from Fraser Vets, Dingwall) with voluntary assistance from Jenny MacPherson (Vincent Wildlife Trust). SWA volunteer Fiona Pamplin and PM Roo Campbell also assisted with the trapping effort. Traps were run continuously (24hour) for an intensive 4-day period.

Wildcat and feral/hybrid cat trapping locations were identified through community reports and previous camera-trapping (year before and current season). Locations were pre-baited at least one week prior to the clinic. Wildcats and ferals/hybrids were targeted simultaneously (trapping under wildcat protocols only) but low numbers of feral targets were found or reported. Some previously unidentified cats (suspected ferals) were identified as owned pet cats due to much improved community engagement and events/research beforehand and during the trapping effort. All potential wildcat traps used Mink Police.

Several issues with equipment were noted, included the need for larger traps for wildcats (one wildcat was caught on the first night on three separate occasions and managed to escape the trap MSD black trap all three times), and lack of coverage with GPRS cameras, though mink police units worked well. No bycatch reported.

Angus Glens

Overall Start date of TNVR 2017: 19th November 2017

Overall End date of TNVR 2018: 16th March 2018

Table 8: Angus Glens Results:

	Type of cat	Total number
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1	Total number of nights of trapping effort- i.e. when traps were live. Do not include pre-bait periods or inactive days	385
2	Number of different sites targeted with traps (e.g. farm, field or forest block)	35
3	Number of Pet cats caught and released untreated	0
4	Number of Wildcats caught and released untreated (or high quality hybrids)	2 (but later revised as hybrids) & 1 caught and collared under license
5	Number of Cats euthanized by vets on welfare/ disease grounds	0
6	Number of Cats caught and then rehomed (kittens)	0
7	Number of Cats neutered and released as ferals	17
8	Number of previously TNVR'd ferals re-caught and released	1
9	<u>Total number of cats caught/ treated during TNVR = add lines 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 together to get this figure.</u>	21
10	Number of Pet neutering/ vaccination vouchers used if known	none
11	Number of volunteers directly involved with TNVR (trapping, leafleting, transporting cats etc)	3

Comments:

Contractor lead Roisin Campbell Palmer was presented with several borderline hybrids which required further consultation on pelage scoring.

Some local landowners within the WPA are still not allowing TNVR, though relations have improved.

Some issues reported with cats escaping from some traps but team did not use mink police units. Several TNVR'd ferals re-caught during the same season with no issues. No pregnant female cats presented issues. By-catch of some small birds and one pole cat.

Discussion

Identifying Wildcats

Wildcats were actively targeted for trapping for genetic research and GPS collar study in collaboration with Dr Kerry Kilshaw of WildCRU, Oxford University. This trapping was undertaken under license from SNH and with its own specific protocols. Where wildcats and hybrids /feral TNVR targets overlapped, the trapping was combined and always run under the higher caution wildcat protocols. Combining trapping for both wildcats and TNVR was generally feasible (even obligatory in some locations with mixed populations) and helped streamline workloads.

A total of 5 wildcats were caught under this license, and all returned to site with GPS collars.

Identifying hybrids

The majority of cats targeted for TNVR were ferals or obvious hybrids. Cats of mid – high range hybrids (14-16 on pelage score) were also targeted this year in most areas. Animals scoring 17 and above continued to be classified as wildcats and not TNVR'd. The Project officer or contractor made decisions about pelage scoring and neutering with the assistance of the local vet and in some cases a second opinion from project management.

When all the confirmation of DNA results from all these hybrids become available, the use of the 17pelage score cut off should be reviewed in light of these.

Identifying pets

This season project officers managed to streamline the amount of time spent on in preparatory work trying to ensure pet cats were not accidentally targeted or caught during TNVR. This was done by posting, newsletter mail outs, leaflet drops through letterboxes (for at least 1 mile radius of trapping sites) and website/ Facebook publicity. This constitutes vastly more effort than any other organisation undertaking TNVR currently undertakes and helps ensure we can say we have taken even reasonable precaution to avoid inadvertently treating any owned cats without permission.

Only four cats (3.5%) of cats caught during TNVR was identified as a pet cats due to our precautionary protocol which identified a microchip whilst at vets. These cats were trapped in areas where residents had been pre-warned., and all were returned to trap site or home immediately. These scenarios prove our precautions necessary and effective.

Identifying ferals already treated

As we are now working in areas where we have previously done TNVR, some cats previously neutered by us where re-caught but easily identified and released quickly. This is minimised by adequate monitoring beforehand but is not entirely avoidable, though benign. Interestingly a high number of previously TNVR'd cats from the previous season where detected on camera traps – indicating they have survived successfully at least 1 year on the same territory which somewhat validates our presumption of them providing a 'buffer' to new feral cats moving in.

In a few instances (9 cats or 8.5%) feral cats were trapped by our teams that were found to be ear tipped (already neutered) or where previous seasons TNVR cats. A couple of cats when presented at vets, turned out to be already neutered- presumably by CP or other agencies who had not ear tipping, or in one case, had tipped the wrong ear.

Lack of feral sightings from the public

Most TNVR was undertaken on target ferals identified from camera surveys. The number of ferals reported by the public remains very low and needs to be encouraged more.

By-catch:

There were some by catch of other species this season with Pine martens, a fox, a buzzard and a pole cat - all released immediately. This highlights to effectiveness of the pre-trapping camera monitoring to identify the right spots and in some cases traps were moved before going 'live' due to presence of too many badgers etc.

Kittens:

For reasons of welfare these were not actively targeted and again, pre-trapping cameras helped ensure none were caught in standard traps. In one or two instances kittens were

trapped at farm colonies (with their mothers in family traps) and these were rehomed. However we are still relying on informal relationships with other welfare orgs to take in any kittens caught during TNVR for rehoming or cats under 16 weeks too young to be neutered, which is unsatisfactory.

Pregnant cats:

If from pre-trapping camera information this was suspected, no live trapping took place as per our protocols, but it is not always possible to determine pregnancy from camera trap images. Three female cats were caught during TNVR that were pregnant, one of which was rehomed from the farm colony. The two other females were caught during the first two weeks of March so it may be advisable to review the end cut-off date for trapping, possibly bringing it forward to the 1st March, particularly in forest locations.

Trap check intervals and Mink police trap alarms:

Our current standard protocol requires all live traps to be checked every 12hrs (8hrs if wildcats are also present/ may be caught). This is burdensome for staff and volunteers, and may in fact put off some cats from visiting traps due to the increased disturbance and so be counterproductive. It is also true that the vast majority of cats were caught overnight – i.e. found on AM checks.

The use of mink police trap alarms to monitor traps throughout the 24hr period has great advantages though not always applicable to remote sites or those without signal coverage. At some sites it was also possible to use trail cameras that sent images to the POs phone when triggered, in effect giving the same coverage as a trap alarm. We only had a small number of these but they seemed to be effective though again relying on mobile signal coverage.

A recommendation for the future would be that:

- *All traps will be checked every 24hrs in person, as is legal requirement- in the mornings.*
- *Trap alarms are used to monitor the rest of the 24hr period instead of in person visits to minimise disturbance.*
- *Exceptions be made for any high risk scenarios such as the presence of kittens etc. at the POs discretion, where 12hrly in person visits may be preferable*
- *Any site where this equipment is not practical or reliable reverts to in person 12hrly or 8hrly checks as appropriate.*

Weather:

Very cold and snowy weather in February and March was a significant factor in the TNVR season. Whilst it had some advantages in making many cats hungry enough to approach traps, it also meant there were days and weeks when trapping could not take place. Difficulties in safe site access in particular, meant some trapping areas and times had to be abandoned- all traps were removed or locked open during extreme weather.

Disease:

Samples taken from each TNVR case were sent to the Royal Dick Vet and RZSS Wildgenes lab and reports on disease findings etc will come from them in due course. Better sharing of these results between RDVS , RZSS and POs would be most appreciated.

Equipment:

Each PO had different preferences for trap types, and all three types had some success in catching both wildcats and ferals.

Some traps (brown MDS) were found to have some sharp edges due to manufacturing flaws. All traps will be checked before next season and some filing etc done. In one instance a pine marten was able to break out of one of the brown traps by pulling at the mesh on door.

Some traps were found to be too small for larger wildcats, who managed to back out of traps when door closed in particular the black MDS ones where the treadle is more central. Some POs therefore recommended that only extra-large traps be used for Wildcats.

Budget targets:

Original budget targets appeared to allow for up to 60 cats to be TNVR'd in each WPA per year. The overall cost of treatment of each cat is considerable higher, however, that was accounted for in these figures. A full review of budget spend to date is important so any surplus (available to subsidise pet neutering) can be identified.

Volunteers:

A total of 27 volunteers were active across the WPAs in TNVR, the amount of time the contributed to TNVR varied widely- some helped at just one trap site and some only for limited time. Few were completely 'self-guiding' and all required active support from their PO. More TNVR volunteers are needed in most WPAs and will require training etc.

Recommendations for Future

1. This report to be presented to the project Steering Group along with three proposed changes to existing protocols for approval:
 - Altering time of start and finish dates of TNVR season: start earlier and finish by 1st March
 - Changes in equipment used: order more extra-large traps for wildcats.
 - Trap check intervals and mink police now recommended widely.
2. A full TNVR budget review is undertaken during 2018.
3. New project Veterinary Advisor to be invited to help run a CPD training event and for vets to offer in 2018 to help promote TNVR, early neutering and wildcat awareness.

Appendix 1b:

TNVR Stats for whole project to June 2018.

	Strathbogie	Strathavon	Strathpsey	Strathpeffer	Angus Glens	Morven
Year 1:	59	2	4	8	10	8
Year 2:	61	0	5	18	21	2
Total so far :	120	2	9	26	31	10

Grand total: 200 cats! Treated during TNVR

Type of cat	Year 1 (2016-17)	Year 2 (2017-18)	Average over two years
Wildcats caught and released	1%	5%	3%
Cats Euthanised by vets on welfare grounds	11%	5.5%	8%
Kittens rehomed	11%	9.5%	10%

Pet cats released	6%	3.5%	5%
Ferals already done	0%	8.5%	4%
Ferals neutered and released	72%	68%	70%
