

MINUTES OF THE 15th MEETING OF THE SCOTTISH WILDCAT ACTION STEERING GROUP

Thursday 2nd February 2017
SNH Battleby

Attendees – see Annex 1
Chair – Anna Meredith

AGENDA ITEM 1 - WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

Annex 2 provides a list of attendees.

Apologies were received from Kenny Kortland and Gareth Mason was welcomed as the FCS representative. Best wishes were passed on from the group members to Eileen Stuart who is currently recovering from injuries following an accident.

Anna Meredith provided the chairing role for this meeting.

Allan Bantick also attended in an observer capacity and was welcomed as the future chair for the Steering Group.

AGENDA ITEM 2 - ACTION PLAN PROGRESS AND REPORTING

MG reported that an update of action plan progress had been partially completed but was not finished. There was still a need to contact some of the SWCAP partners to check on how the actions they are leading on are progressing. However, some general observations can be made: a small number of action points are largely completed (although it would be appropriate to review these); the large proportion of the remaining action points are underway and ongoing; a small proportion of the remaining action points have made only limited progress so far.

There are certain categories of action points which fall within the latter category. These include some of those that fall under the land management-related actions of 2.1 and 2.2 – this was not seen as a major concern as the initial phase of the project had had to focus staff resources on project start-up, survey, TNVR etc., but the establishment of the new land management sub-group (see agenda item 9) will help to progress these over the coming year. One action which had not progressed substantially related to the need to progress the sourcing of funds (action 3.11), although it was noted that SNH had identified some additional staff support to assist with this from May.

It was agreed by the members that a full two year review of the SWA was necessary, to assess progress, identify gaps and issues, and inform any adaptive changes to methods and priorities. The next Steering Group meeting will therefore focus on this exercise.

- **Action point 15.1** – MG to ensure the updated action plan progress note is circulated in good time before the new Steering group meeting, and all to contribute to a review of the action plan at the next meeting.

AGENDA ITEM 3 - *EX SITU* PROJECT UPDATE

SR reported that a recent focus has been on designing appropriate protocols for semen extraction from wildcats. This has had to take into account licensing requirements, and discussions have involved RZSS veterinary and conservation staff, and SNH. Methods are being tested using captive animals – a first test highlighted issues with storage and semen viability, a second test will take place shortly. It is anticipated that one or two wildcats in one of the Priority Areas will be trapped this spring, and assessments made on the viability of semen sampling. Other measurements will be taken at the same time, and the animals will be microchipped to speed up any future identification and processing of trapped cats. Although there remain some uncertainties over the viability of any semen collected and stored, there are potentially significant benefits to wildcat conservation from trialling this technique.

The IUCN Felid Specialist Group will be meeting at the RZSS during March. The members of the IUCN group have offered to meet Steering Group members on Sunday 26 March. This could provide an opportunity to ask the IUCN specialists to contribute to the SWA review process (including Priority Areas work).

- **Action point 15.2** – All to let SR know if they wish to meet the IUCN Specialist Group members on 26 March

AGENDA ITEM 4 - PRIORITY AREAS PROJECT UPDATE

See Annex 3 which provides a written report from RC. RC's update was based around the report – additional issues raised and discussed included:

- The current Morvern survey will finish in March
- Project officer time spent at Morvern has been higher than anticipated, impacting on work at Strathpeffer. MG, RC and Keri L are identifying ways by which this can be reduced e.g. through further contractor input
- Morvern and Strathpeffer present very different challenges and further thought is needed on how resources should be targeted and prioritised in the future (to be discussed further at the forthcoming review meeting)
- The ongoing survey at Strathavon has not picked up any new significant results (to be discussed further at the forthcoming review meeting)
- The statistical analysis of last winter's survey data is being led by RC and Keri L, and Kerry Kilshaw will assist in an independent referee role
- The experience gained from the first season of TNVR work has highlighted a range of issues, and this will be used to review and improve methodologies for the next season
- The possibility of analysing livers from cats (e.g. road traffic accidents, animals euthanased when fatal disease detected etc.) for rodenticide presence was raised
- Consideration could be given to ensuring members of the public are informed once their cat records are verified, and also to encourage more feral cat records
- It was noted that SNH are currently identifying some limited part-time staff support to assist with project funding, who will liaise with RZSS and others. Funding issues will be included in the review at the next meeting

AGENDA ITEM 5 - UPDATE FROM RESEARCH MEETING OF 19/1/17 + WILDCRU PROPOSAL ON GPS WORK

MG gave a verbal update on the research meeting of 19/1/17 at the RZSS in Edinburgh which involved the SWA Project team members, AK, SR, AB, Helen Senn, Ben Harrower, Kerry Kilshaw (by VC). A note of the meeting will be circulated to all in due course, highlighting some agreed actions. In particular it had been agreed that better ways of communicating between the key research partners was required, to enable quicker decision making. Related to this was the desire to establish a suitable shared data/photo repository accessible by the key research partners. It was anticipated these actions would be progressed after the TNVR season was completed. It was pointed out that such improvements would also help to ensure research outputs could be 'celebrated' and promoted, and to enable the continued transparency of the SWA work.

RC described the WildCRU proposal which has been put together by Kerry Kilshaw, with the intention that work would focus on SWA PAs. The main aims were to examine wildcat ecology throughout the year (particularly in summer when activity is not picked up so regularly via camera traps), and to collate information to guide the proactive management of wildcats around the PAs. To include studies of examination of interactions with neutered cats. GPS collars to be used have a lifespan of about one year, and could possibly involve around 10 animals.

The following discussion suggested by Steering Group members demonstrated interest in the WildCRU proposal, but it was emphasised that there was a need to ensure the project design carefully addresses agreed SWA actions. Licensing implications will need to be carefully considered and addressed.

AGENDA ITEM 6 + 7 – COMMS UPDATE AND THE RESPONSIBLE CAT OWNER CAMPAIGN

VB provided a verbal report of the comms meeting involving around 35 individuals from a wide range of partner organisations, the majority of whom were staff who lead on comms. A key aim of that meeting was to try and develop ideas for the Responsible Cat Ownership Campaign.

The campaign will use the hashtag 'supercat', and will focus on encouraging people to neuter, vaccinate and microchip their pet cats. It will be more 'fun-based' for a general audience (e.g. a mural is being produced in Huntly), and fact-based for special audience groups (e.g. farmers). 'Advocats' will be encouraged to tell people why they took their animals to the vet, and the potential benefits this will bring to wildcats. There will be a special focus of effort around the PAs, in particular those areas where there may be a greater proportion of more socio-economically deprived households who may require support in neutering/vaccinating/microchipping any cats they own. Leaflet drops are planned for specific areas. An event is planned for the Dingwall Mart. It is hoped local vets can be involved (e.g. by having 'Ask a vet days' at local supermarkets).

There will be a soft launch on 28/2 to coincide with 'World Spay Day'. Gordon Buchanan will be involved in the publicity. A range of partners, such as NTS, Aigas, CNPA and FCS have plans to promote the event in various ways.

The SWA online survey resulted in about 1500 responses which are currently being analysed by veterinary colleagues, and will be used to inform the development of the campaign. There is the potential to repeat the survey in future years to measure possible changes in attitudes, views etc. The campaign will be evaluated and reviewed in December 2017, in particular assessing how harder-to-reach audiences have been captured.

- **Action point 15.3** – RC to investigate progress with getting support from a drugs company in providing vaccines for the veterinary work (Stg Group members believed an MOA exists with the company concerned).
- **Action point 15.4** – MG to find out from Eileen Stuart what feedback was received from SG over the draft position statement on responsible cat ownership that was discussed by the Steering Group in 2016.

AGENDA ITEM 8 - UPDATE ON FORUM EVENT OF 9/11/16 AND PLANNING FOR NEXT EVENT

DH provided a verbal update and reported that there was a good turn-out at the event held on 9th November at Lonach Hall, Strathdon, and generally positive feedback from attendees. Ideally it would have been preferred if more representatives of the land use sector had been present, so some thought is needed on how this might be addressed for the next event. A highlight of the day was the presentation by Tony Rivas of the Iberian Lynx conservation project, who described the captive breeding project going on, and the success achieved to date.

It was felt that a longer lead-in time would be sensible to allow more preparation time for the next forum event. Some time after 20 October would be good, to take account of stalking season timing, and increase the likelihood of land user attendance. Venues such as the Strathpeffer Pavillion were suggested, and sponsorship opportunities. Steering Group members were invited to volunteer to help organise the next Forum.

- **Action point 15.5** – NTS and RZSS are both possibilities for organising the next Forum. Both organisations to agree on who will lead, and start some initial preparatory work.

AGENDA ITEM 9 AND 10 - WILDCATS AND LAND MANAGEMENT: UPDATE ON A NEW SUB-GROUP + SHARING GOOD PRACTICE EVENT ON 24/2/17

HC was able to update the members for both agenda items. Work on initiating a sub-group is ongoing – a draft TOR has been produced, and will be circulated to steering group partners (plus potential sub-group members) in due course for input. Predator control is likely to be one key issue to be addressed by the group, along with a range of other land use topics.

- **Action point 15.6** – HC to forward a draft TOR for comment, and then to organise a first meeting, ideally before the next Steering Group meeting [*update 23/2 – HC has now left SWA and so this action point will be delayed*]

The SGP event will be held on 24/2 at SNH Battleby. It will focus primarily on wildcats and planning, development, and forestry. It is now fully booked with about 70 attendees, primarily ecological consultants, developers, foresters, SNH Operational staff and planners. SRDP will not be covered in great detail this time.

AGENDA ITEM 11 - FUTURE CHAIRING OF THE STEERING GROUP + FUTURE MEETING FREQUENCY

AB was formally welcomed as the new chair of the Steering Group. One of his first duties in his new role will be chairing the SGP event on 24/2. VB and colleagues will look into opportunities for a media announcement to publicise AB's new role.

Steering Group members were content that the current meeting rate frequency was reasonable (about four times a year), and this fitted in with the required, quarterly reporting frequency to HLF. It was suggested that HLF might be invited to a future Steering group meeting.

- **Action point 15.7** – MG to look into organising the next Steering Group meeting for early May

AGENDA ITEM 12 - MINUTES OF LAST MEETING + ACTION POINTS

The draft minutes of the previous meeting were accepted, subject to two minor amendments that were identified.

From 21st September 2016

- **Action point 14.1** – MG, with input of all, to update action plan. **DISCHARGED** (See new AP 15.1)
- **Action point 14.2** – RC and KK to discuss possible opportunities for an honours student review of forest habitat management measures. **ONGOING**
- **Action point 14.3** – Consideration to be given to inviting WildCRU to the next Steering Group meeting, if the agenda allows, to present and discuss their wildcat research proposal. **DISCHARGED**
- **Action point 14.4** – SR and RC to look at opportunities and practicalities of semen extraction from wild animals. **DISCHARGED**
- **Action point 14.5** – All to send RC their comments on the draft cat sighting iRecord verification protocol by 1/11/16. **DISCHARGED**
- **Action point 14.6** – VB to arrange a meeting of partner comms staff. **DISCHARGED**
- **Action point 14.7** – VB to finalise media protocols, taking the above discussion into account. **CARRIED FORWARD**
- **Action point 14.8** – WBW to draft a programme and run by MG, RC, VB for comment. **DISCHARGED**
- **Action point 14.9** – RC to proceed with trialling the remote surveillance technology as discussed and approved by the Steering Group. **DISCHARGED** (21 'mink police' purchased, SIM cards to come, 2 or 3 being tested)
- **Action point 14.10** – ES to contact SGA to discuss next steps and to consider setting up an appropriate sub-group, HC to draft some initial ideas that could be used for TOR. **DISCHARGED** (See new AP 15.6)

From 13th June 2016

- **Action point 13.1** – RC and Project Team to provide initial thoughts on the barriers/constraints to the uptake of the wildcat SRDP package, to be circulated to the Steering Group before the next meeting. **DISCHARGED** (*agreed that this was a task for the new land use sub—group to take on*).
- **Action point 13.2** – RC and Priority Areas staff to provide VM with images of high scoring wildcats for use in comms work. **CARRIED FORWARD** (*relates to the data/photo repository proposals that arose from the recent research meeting*)
- **Action point 13.3** – RC and Project Team to look at the extent of clustering of wildcat records to assess the extent to which individuals may be interacting. **CARRIED FORWARD** (*to be looked at as part of the May Steering Group meeting/review, linked to 13.4*)
- **Action point 13.4** – ALL to note that the next Steering Group meeting will include an agenda item to look at the results of the monitoring work and to discuss how these can be used to help prioritise future actions. **CARRIED FORWARD**
- **Action point 13.18** – ER to send protocols for dealing with kittens to AM. AM then to forward these to the BMVA, and discuss appropriate best practice advice etc. **DISCHARGED**

From 10th March 2016

- **AP 1** WBW to explore if there is any capacity in CNPA to assist a LEADER application. *but action point amended - to link in with need to identify appropriate funding packages as described in AP5 of 10th December.* **ONGOING**
- **AP 5** The collation of wildcat survey details and results outwith priority areas to be encouraged via the Scottish Wildcat Forum. **ONGOING**

From 10th December 2015

- **AP 5** SG members to request help from their fundraising teams (where appropriate) to help with co-ordinating a few select and carefully targeted applications in early 2016. *but action point amended - SNH to look whether there is staffing support available for helping with fund-raising work, and then appropriate funding packages to be identified in collaboration with ALL.* **ONGOING**

AGENDA ITEM 13 - ANY OTHER BUSINESS

This was the last Steering Group meeting attended by Lindsay Mackinlay, who is leaving NTS shortly. Lindsay has been involved in the SWA, and previous wildcat action work, from an early stage – he was thanked for his significant contribution over the years.

Martin Gaywood SNH.

23rd February 2017

Annex 1

Current Action Point list - for review at next meeting:

From 2nd February 2017

- **Action point 15.1** – MG to ensure the updated action plan progress note is circulated in good time before the new Steering group meeting, and all to contribute to a review of the action plan at the next meeting.
- **Action point 15.2** – All to let SR know if they wish to meet the IUCN Specialist Group members on 26 March
- **Action point 15.3** – RC to investigate progress with getting support from a drugs company in providing vaccines for the veterinary work (Stg Group members believed an MOA exists with the company concerned).
- **Action point 15.4** – MG to find out from Eileen Stuart what feedback was received from SG over the draft position statement on responsible cat ownership that was discussed by the Steering Group in 2016.
- **Action point 15.5** – NTS and RZSS are both possibilities for organising the next Forum. Both organisations to agree on who will lead, and start some initial preparatory work.
- **Action point 15.6** – HC to forward a draft TOR for comment, and then to organise a first meeting, ideally before the next Steering Group meeting [*update 23/2 – HC has now left SWA and so this action point will be delayed*]
- **Action point 15.7** – MG to look into organising the next Steering Group meeting for early May

From 21st September 2016

- **Action point 14.2** – RC and KK to discuss possible opportunities for an honours student review of forest habitat management measures. **ONGOING**
- **Action point 14.7** – VB to finalise media protocols, taking the above discussion into account. **CARRIED FORWARD**

From 13th June 2016

- **Action point 13.2** – RC and Priority Areas staff to provide VM with images of high scoring wildcats for use in comms work. **CARRIED FORWARD** (*relates to the data/photo repository proposals that arose from the recent research meeting*)
- **Action point 13.3** – RC and Project Team to look at the extent of clustering of wildcat records to assess the extent to which individuals may be interacting. **CARRIED FORWARD** (*to be looked at as part of the May Steering Group meeting/review, linked to 13.4*)

- **Action point 13.4** – ALL to note that the next Steering Group meeting will include an agenda item to look at the results of the monitoring work and to discuss how these can be used to help prioritise future actions. **CARRIED FORWARD**

From 10th March 2016

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Annex 2

Attendee list

SCOTTISH WILDCAT ACTION STEERING GROUP 2 February 2017

Present:

- David Hetherington – Cairngorms National Park Authority
- Gareth Mason – Forestry Commission Scotland
- Andrew Kitchener – National Museums Scotland
- Lindsay Mackinlay – National Trust for Scotland
- Anna Meredith (chair) – Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies
- Sarah Robinson- Royal Zoological Society of Scotland
- George Macdonald – Scottish Gamekeepers Association
- Martin Gaywood – Scottish Natural Heritage
- Roo Campbell – Scottish Wildcat Action
- Vicky Burns – Scottish Wildcat Action
- Hebe Carus – Scottish Wildcat Action
- Pete Haskell – Scottish Wildlife Trust
- Allan Bantick - (no affiliation)

Apologies:

- Eileen Stuart (chair) – Scottish Natural Heritage
- Kenny Kortland – Forestry Commission Scotland

Annex 3

SCOTTISH WILDCAT ACTION STEERING GROUP 2nd February 2017

SCOTTISH WILDCAT ACTION PROJECT MANAGERS UPDATE 1ST FEB 2017

This update covers four months (Sept – Dec) instead of the usual three-month quarter. Over this period, a large part of the project activity was concentrated on TNVR, with some great early success. Other highlights included the launching of contractor work in the Angus Glens and Morvern and several high-profile television appearances by project staff and volunteers. Throughout this period, project staff have been working hard on several fronts including landowner engagement, volunteer management, online and media engagement and developing two major outputs: the responsible cat ownership campaign and a sharing good practice event. As always, volunteer help in our work has been essential and we are delighted with the commitment to wildcat conservation shown by so many volunteers.

Monitoring

The headline monitoring news was the launching of a full winter survey in Morvern, to complete our major survey of each priority area. As agreed previously with the steering group, this was contracted out. Matt Wilson obtained this contract, following Scottish Natural Heritage procurement procedures. As Morvern is our largest priority area, this survey will involve nearly 140 trail cameras across the peninsula. Though the survey is an external contract, organising land access and provisioning equipment and bait has taken staff time (see below). Early results indicate that the south-western area of Morvern stretching from Lochaline to Drimnin contains the most cat activity and at least two of the cats detected in the scoping survey are still active in that area. A number of unneutered feral cats have also been detected and we will follow up on these.

In preparation for other monitoring over winter, project staff held four trail-camera survey training events and pre-survey meetings (for those already experienced in the survey). These were attended by 69 volunteers.

The Angus TNVR contract (below) also involved short-term (1-3 weeks approx.) deployment of around 50 trail-cameras prior to trap placement. By end of Dec, most of this activity had concentrated on Glen Isla and had yielded around a dozen cats at 26 locations, some detected last year and some new. Fewer marbled tortoiseshell feral-hybrids were detected there in this early survey compared with last winter.

In Strathavon, 40 cameras have been placed out by volunteers to cover areas not surveyed last winter.

Elsewhere, ad hoc trail-camera placements prior to and during TNVR cage-trapping are allowing us to keep an eye on individual cats, though we currently have no plans to use this data to update population assessments.

Statistical analysis of the previous winter data is not yet complete.

Other monitoring activity

The project sent six RTA cats to the museum for post-mortem and genetic testing. Two of these were from Morvern, one from Northern Strathspey and three from Strathpeffer.

TNVR and other cat management

TNVR continued in Strathavon, Strathbogie and began in Northern Strathspey and Strathpeffer (Table 1). Despite an unusually mild-winter hampering our efforts, 34 cats were trapped under TNVR during Sept-Dec. In addition, two pet cats were trapped in Strathpeffer and released. Since the New Year, cats continue to enter our traps and we expect some more success as we hit peak season in Feb. Targeting of wild-living feral cats and hybrids will cease by 1st March (Morvern) or mid-March (all other areas), though targeting of feral cats around villages and farms can continue past this date. While we have been targeting the difficult-to-catch feral cats and obvious hybrids that are living in the wild alongside wildcat, one of our highlights was the successful TNVR of a farm colony in Strathbogie. We were helped in this endeavour by the SSPCA inspector Alison and, between us, succeeded in capturing all 26 cats in the colony in an afternoon. The speed of this was helped through the ground-work put in by Emma to ensure our success.

Table 1: TNVR effort and success Sept-Dec 2016

| Priority Area | Trap nights | Feral / hybrids caught | Wildcat caught | Cats TNVR | SNAP test fails | Kittens rehomed | By-catch | TNVR volunteers |
|---------------------|-------------|------------------------|----------------|-----------|-----------------|-----------------|----------|-----------------|
| Angus Glens | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Morvern | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Northern Strathspey | 34 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 12 |
| Strathavon | 15 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| Strathbogie | 140 | 28 | 1 | 18 | 6 | 4 | 0 | 6 |
| Strathpeffer | 31 | 3 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 8 |
| Total | 221 | 34 | 1 | 21 | 8 | 5 | 0 | 30 |

In all priority areas except the Angus Glens and Morvern, TNVR training for volunteers continues, with 20 volunteers attending TNVR training events held. Volunteer teams are at the stage where they regularly operate independently of the project officer, though oversight continues. By the end of Dec, recruitment for TNVR volunteers totalled 30 (Table 2). In Angus, cage-trapping of feral cats and obvious hybrids located by the contractor and verified by project staff, was only just beginning before the end of the year, though since then the contractor has trapped two cats for neutering. We will provide a review of TNVR in Angus in a later update.

Throughout all areas, identifying pet cats continues to be an issue. In Strathpeffer, where this issue is most severe because of the proximity of the town, Keri has created a community cat board (Fig. 1) onto which the public can post images of their cats and their location, provide feedback and allows Keri to post 'Mogshots' of suspected pet cats coming to our TNVR traps.

Land management

Engagement continues on a regular basis in all priority areas as the Project Officers coordinate their activity with landowners. A significant activity has been the re-connecting with landowners in Morvern prior to the winter survey (Table 2). This was necessarily conducted by Keri Langridge and not the external contractor and led to new permission on an estate we had not succeeded in engaging previously.

Hebe has been developing a Sharing Good Practice (SGP) event on land management, development and wildcats. This will be held at SNH Battlyby on the 24th Feb. Hebe will provide an update on this during the Steering Group meeting.

Table 2. Landowner engagement (previous quarter | this quarter). We introduce to new figures here to summaries our work with landowners other than estates.

| Priority Area | Angus Glens | Morvern | N. Strath-spey | Strath-avon | Strath-bogie | Strath-peffer |
|---|-------------|---------|----------------|-------------|--------------|---------------|
| Number of estates participating | 7 7 | 0 9 | 5 5 | 4 4 | 5 5 | 7 8 |
| Number of other landowning bodies | 2 2 | 0 | 1 1 | 1 1 | 1 1 | 2 2 |
| Number of farms and crofts participating | - 1 | - 2 | - 0 | - 0 | - 3 | - 17 |
| Number of other landowning bodies | - 2 | - 2 | - 1 | - 1 | - 1 | - 3 |
| Percentage of priority area by area (approx.). | 90% 80% | 0% 80% | 90% 90% | 85% 85% | 80% 80% | 70% 70% |
| Number of ambassador estates | 0 0 | 0 | 0 0 | 0 0 | 0 0 | 0 0 |
| Number of estates with project equipment on loan | 0 0 | 0 | 0 0 | 0 0 | 1 2 | 3 2 |
| Number of estates providing data | 1 1 | 0 0 | 1 1 | 1 1 | 0 0 | 0 0 |
| Number of estates signed up to w-f predator control | 2 2 | 0 0 | 4 4 | 1 1 | 0 0 | 0 0 |
| Number of SRDP estates for w-f measures | 1 1* | 0 0 | 0 1* | 0 0 | 0 0 | 0 0 |

*under application process

Public sightings

Sightings from the public continue to flow in. During Sept-Dec , iRecord received 74 sightings (Table 3). Most of these (63) came in through our own project website, showing the importance of the site and our public engagement in boosting reporting rates. Too few feral cat sightings come in however and we need to encourage the public within our priority areas to report these more often.

Table 3. Public sightings received by iRecord for Scotland (all sources, verified and unverified reports).

| | <i>Felis silvestris</i> | <i>Felis silvestris</i> <i>x catus</i> | <i>Felis catus</i> | Total |
|--|-------------------------|---|--------------------|-----------|
| iRecord mammals (Scottish Wildcat Action) | 30 | 27 | 6 | 63 |
| iRecord Cairngorms NP | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| iRecord general data | 3 | 2 | 1 | 6 |
| Mammal Society Mammal Atlas | 2 | 1 | 1 | 4 |
| Grand Total | 36 | 30 | 8 | 74 |

Outreach

Over Sept-Dec, staff provided four public presentations, three young education events and three courses for ecology or land-management professionals (Table 4). In addition, we held a Wildcat Forum on the 9th Nov, which was a great opportunity to connect with the wider partnership, stakeholders and some of the volunteers that have been helping us with our work over the past year.

Table 4. Outreach events ran or attended by project staff. Note this doesn't include the stakeholder/volunteer events (see Monitoring).

| Date | Staff | Outreach event | Attendees |
|------------|-------|--|-----------|
| 29/09/2016 | Keri | Brownies Evanton | 25 |
| 06/10/2016 | Keri | Marybank School talk | c. 40 |
| 07/10/2016 | Keri | Talk for Glenurquart local group | c. 30 |
| 03/11/2016 | Keri | Talks for Strathpeffer Primary | 200 |
| 08/11/2016 | Emma | Wilderness Foundation Youth Group talk | 17 |
| 24/11/2016 | Hebe | SRUC Staff Development Day | - |
| 12/11/2016 | Emma | NTS Guided wildcat walk | 16 |
| 15/11/2016 | Emma | Talk for Huntly Farmers Group | 25 |
| 24/11/2016 | Emma | NESBREC Wildcat course | 25 |

The talks at Strathpeffer primary school was particularly intensive, involving Keri Langridge and a volunteer giving talks to every class in the school over the course of a day. This led to some immediate direct benefits to our work as the children contributed sightings to the community cat board in Strathpeffer (Fig. 1), helping Keri identify some of the many pet cats in the area.

Activity budgets in Morvern and Strathpeffer

Following the review of our activity held last spring, we agreed that Project Officers should focus effort predominantly on one of their two priority area in any given year. We also agreed that, for two priority areas (Angus Glens and Morvern), we would supplement our activity

through the use of contractors. For Keri Langridge, this meant focussing staff time on Strathpeffer with a contractor in Morvern conducting monitoring. Over this reporting period, Keri has spent more time concentrating on Morvern than we anticipated (estimated at 60%), with a lot of this activity aimed towards landowner engagement, provisioning survey equipment and setting up a short burst of TNVR to follow the survey. A lot of this concentration on Morvern is a necessary push to restart our activity in Morvern after an absence and we anticipate this balance will shift back to Strathpeffer, though we won't achieve the ratio in activity we anticipated between the two areas. Nevertheless, a review of activity in these areas will need to occur once the results of the Morvern survey are available. The focus of activity in Strathpeffer will also need to be reviewed, as the high number of potential pet cats around the town of Strathpeffer complicates TNVR activity. Future TNVR may need to shift away from the town, with a greater emphasis on responsible cat ownership in its place.

Comms

Over Sept-Dec our comms were very active, with many news articles and much media. Highlights include a huge appearance by Emma, Roo, Philippa Murphy from FCS and some of our brilliant volunteers in three segments in one episode of [BBC Countryfile](#); a BBC Out of Doors interview with Emma; a programme on wildcats for [BBC Schools](#); news items in the [Scotsman](#) on possible wildcat

kittens; a swathe of news articles based on an NTS press release about a possibly wildcat we found that had been captured and collared in 2013-2014; and articles in [Your Cat Magazine](#), [Wildcats Magazine](#) and [Scottish Mountaineer](#). All this activity helped us increase our online profile too and Facebook remains our most used online engagement tool. Our website could be used more so we will be reviewing this to see how we can improve the website. A recent change was to include a series of 'Mogshot' pages to get feedback from the public on whether any cats we had detected on camera were actually pet cats. You can see these pages from [here](#). Vicky has created a visual summary of our comms activity over the past year (Fig. 2), illustrating our keenness to create more visual content in the future, such as infographics like this.

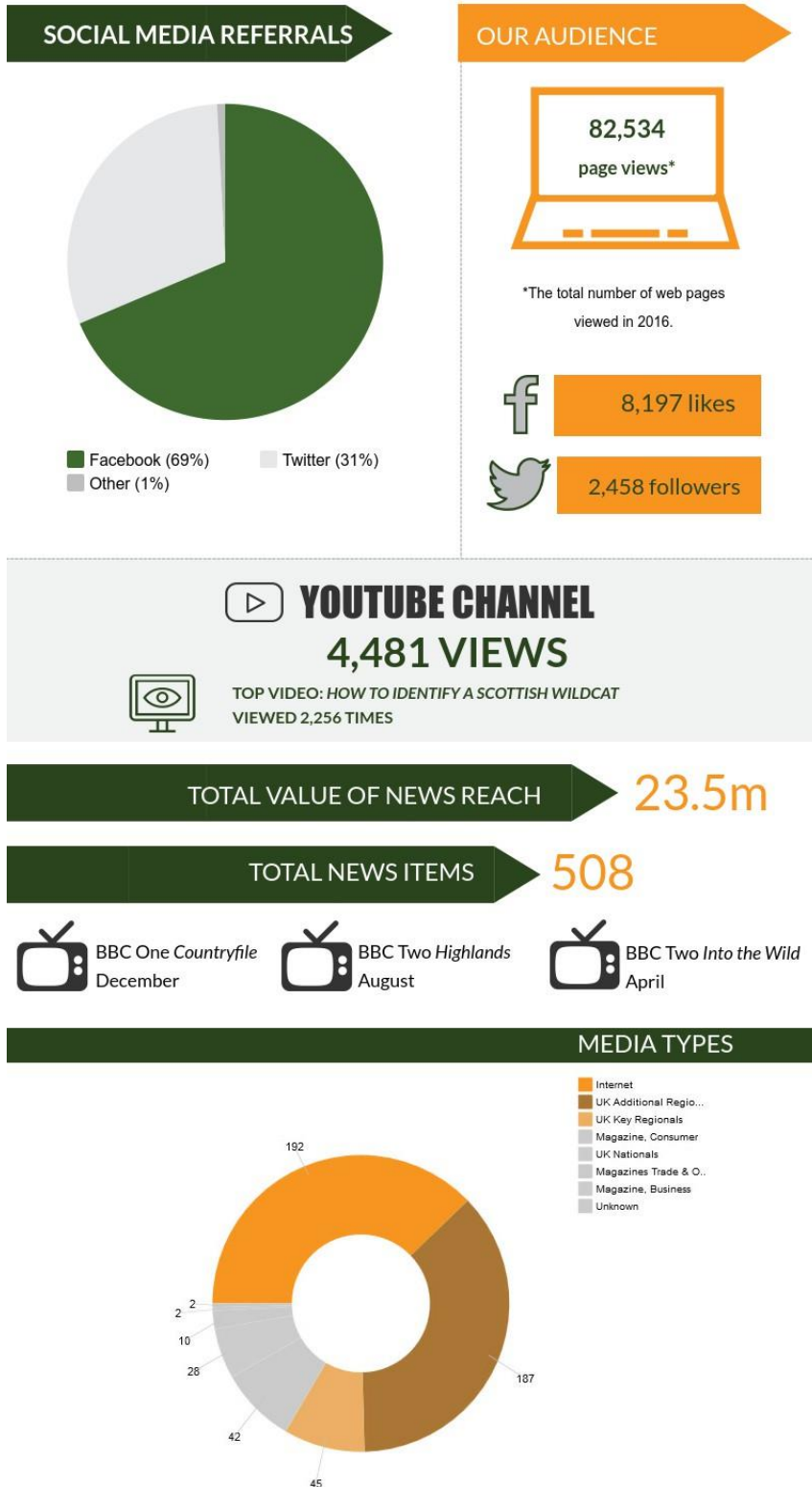


Fig. 1. Community cat board in Strathpeffer.

Communications

Scottish Wildcat Action Annual Report 2016

Fig. 2. Communications summary for 2016



Budget

Budget state is provided in Table 5. To 10th Jan 2017 (36% way through the project), we had spent 27% of our total budget. Our forecast for the current financial year is a total spend of 18% of the budget.

Following a review of spend and discussion on ways we could increase provisioning in some priority areas, we vired budgets from underspending lines to fund contractor work. This is reflected in Table 5, with the revised allocations showing an increase in the available budget to cover professional fees.

Income to the priority areas work includes 50% of £830.86 from small donations through our website, less the PayPal fee, which varies from 3.35% to 6%. This provides us with £399.10. Dec 10th to 26th saw the biggest contribution towards this (11 of 21 donations), perhaps from the increased profile following the BBC Countryfile episode or from Christmas good-will.

Table 5. Actual spend to 2nd Sept 2016 and forecast for the remaining financial year. Most rows are totals from different budget headings but Travel and expenses for volunteers and Other costs include lines from within the headings to illustrate where changes in expenditure are expected.

| Expenditure | Original allocation | | Revised allocation | | Actual | |
|---|---------------------|------------------|--------------------|------------------|-----------|----------------|
| | £ | Total + VAT | £ | Total + VAT | £ | To 10/01/17 |
| Staff costs | £ | 857,037 | £ | 857,037 | £ | 291,118 |
| Recruitment | £ | 1,500 | £ | 1,500 | £ | 325 |
| Training for staff | £ | 4,368 | £ | 4,368 | £ | 3,634 |
| Travel for staff | £ | 27,000 | £ | 27,000 | £ | 10,338 |
| Training for volunteers | £ | 9,000 | £ | 9,000 | £ | 263 |
| Travel and expenses for volunteers | £ | 120,800 | £ | 70,800 | £ | 6,238 |
| Equipment tools and materials | £ | 97,602 | £ | 97,602 | £ | 72,132 |
| Other activity costs | £ | 176,486 | £ | 96,486 | £ | 9,555 |
| Professional fees | £ | 276,796 | £ | 424,196 | £ | 40,918 |
| Publicity and promotion | £ | 10,000 | £ | 10,000 | £ | 7,319 |
| Total cash costs | £ | 1,619,504 | £ | 1,619,504 | £ | 441,840 |
| Total non-cash costs | £ | 336,800 | £ | 336,800 | £ | - |
| Cash income (Excluding SNH) | -£ | 1,190,549 | -£ | 1,190,549 | -£ | 229,905 |
| Non-cash income | -£ | 336,800 | -£ | 336,800 | £ | - |
| Total project income including non-cash income (Excluding SNH) | -£ | 1,527,349 | -£ | 1,527,349 | -£ | 229,905 |