

# ACHA-BHEINN

## WOODLAND CREATION: ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Simon Lawrence – Director, Lawrence Environmental Consultants. PhD; CEnv CIEEM.

### 1 Black grouse habitat management

- 1.1 **Lek area grazing:** The applicant proposes to graze the Acha Bheinn lek area of marshy & acid grassland and bracken with ponies on an annual basis. This will cover a buffer zone (50-70m) around the main oblong lek arena within an electric fence taped zone. The duration and timing of the grazing will be set according to the number of ponies and seasonal weather and grass growth.
- 1.2 **Lek areas cutting:** The Acha Bheinn lek along with the leks that are accessible on the Barmolloch woodlands will be flail mowed (or strimmed as appropriate) bi-annually and then reviewed thereafter in order to maintain a sward of c. 2-4cm height during March to May. This close-cropped zone will cover c. 10-30m radius around the lek centres. The mowing will take place outside of the lekking period & chick stage (late March to end of June) and also focus on suppressing soft rushes, bracken and any dense scrub beyond the c. 30m radius above to c. 60-80m distance. Where ground conditions allow the flail mowing will cut swathes through other areas of soft rushes or bracken during access and egress to the site. The selection of treatment areas will be flexible and respond to the sites used by black grouse in the subsequent monitoring.
- 1.3 **Predator control:** The applicant proposes undertake control of foxes and hooded/carrion crows on and around the application area at Achan Bheinn. By preference this will involve the deployment of Larsen traps during late winter to early summer for territorial crows around the most likely black grouse nesting habitat. Where possible the predator control will be coordinated with the sheep farming management at Stroneksa to the north. These measures will follow best practice and comply with the legal requirements for pest control.
- 1.4 **Records & reporting:** A log of the results of these measures will be maintained by the applicant or their agents in line with the lek monitoring period.