



Grey partridge populations are now responding on our two demonstration sites.

Demonstrating the possible

THE SCOTTISH Grey Partridge Recovery Project is working to improve the plight of the grey partridge, focusing on our two demonstration sites at Whitburgh Farms in Midlothian and Balgonie Estate in Fife. These sites provide an excellent means of showing practitioners and policy influencers how to manage grey partridge populations and the additional benefits for other farmland wildlife.

These goals received a huge boost from the EU in the shape of partial funding from the Interreg programme, which you can read more about on page 11. Farmers and policymakers from a variety of countries will visit demonstration farms to share best practice and encourage a large-scale uptake of appropriate measures, as well as trying to reach as many farmers in Scotland and each of the partner countries as possible.

Grand Grouse Draw winner

THE DRAW to win the ultimate sporting challenge – an unforgettable day's driven red grouse shooting for eight guns during the 2017 season on the Invermark Estate, in the heart of the famed Angus Glens, generously donated by The Earl of Dalhousie – was won by Sophie Butler of Upper Hamnish Farm, near Leominster, Herefordshire. The draw was made on 10 December 2016.

More than 32,000 tickets were sold for the draw, which raised in excess of £64,000 for the GWCT.

Golden Plover award opens



ARE YOU promoting biodiversity in Scotland's uplands? If so, you should apply for this year's Golden Plover award.

Run by The Heather Trust and the GWCT, and with support from Lindsays solicitors, the award highlights the best of progressive, forward-thinking moorland management.

This year the award is focused on the north-west of Scotland, Argyllshire and the Isles and judges will be looking for passion, pride and a devotion to the best outcomes.

Michael Yellowlees, head of rural services at Lindsays, said: "We are delighted to continue supporting the Golden Plover Award which celebrates the dedication and enthusiasm involved in the effective management of Scotland's uplands."

Find out more at www.goldenploveraward.co.uk.



The prizewinning young artists with organisers and sponsors.

Art competition winners

THE PRIZEGIVING for the annual Perth & Kinross Schools art competition, organised by the Trust and sponsored by Julian Jardine Art Studio, Blackadders Solicitors and Dunkeld House Hotel, took place on 24 November. More than 400 youngsters entered their art depicting a British game species, with Morrison's Academy, Crieff, winning the overall prizes in the junior and senior schools sections.

The winners and runners-up were presented with certificates by Bob Band, from Perth and Kinross Council, and the prizes awarded by Nicola Porter of Blackadders and Terri McAllister of Dunkeld House Hotel, with trophies awarded by Julian Jardine.

Sheena Stewart, our education and events assistant, said: "Now in its 12th year, the competition produced some wonderful art. Thanks must go to our sponsors and those donating prizes as well as Perth & Kinross Council's Education and Children's Services departments. Without them all, and not least all the young artists, this event would not be the annual success that it has become."

Pupils plant hedge at Balgonie

PUPILS FROM Milton of Balgonie Primary School have been visiting our Balgonie Estates site to help with their outdoor learning programme 'Natural Connections'. The children first visited the estate in April 2016 to learn about creating habitats for game and songbirds and to understand the research work being carried out by the GWCT team. They have been assisting Dave Parish in planting a new hedge with hawthorn, blackthorn, guelder rose, beech, holly and dog rose to create a variety of food resources and shelter for wildlife, as well as good nesting cover in spring and good escape cover/shelter in the winter. Balgonie Estates very generously provided a variety of plants, with the assistance of Kingdom Farming.

Pupils showing off their hedge planting skills on Balgonie Estates.





Gathering of neighbours at Auchnerran to hear about the new laser project.

Trial of laser wildlife control

The Game and Wildlife Scottish Demonstration Farm (GWSDF), Auchnerran, is a partner in an exciting new project part-funded by EU-LIFE. This project involves organisations across Europe, led by Alex Mason at Liverpool John Moores University, and will be testing existing laser technology, that is currently very successfully used to scare birds, on a range of mammal species. In particular, at Auchnerran we will be focusing on rabbits, deer, rats and some of the predatory species that can take wader eggs.

The lasers work simply by scaring the birds away as the device projects a small, green dot towards them. It does not harm them in any way and is perfectly safe to operate – all the GWSDF team have been thoroughly trained by the manufacturers and the Bird Control Group. We aim to install the devices so that they project onto patches of grass at night (in the case of rabbits and deer) or around carcasses sited

to attract carrion eaters (foxes, stoats, etc) and see if we can exclude individuals from these carefully defined areas. It is important to note that the lasers are large, programmable and password-protected, so they should never end up projecting anywhere other than the pre-determined trial zone.

Before we started this project, we were very keen to make sure all our neighbours knew exactly what was happening so they were not surprised by the night-time light shows soon to start across the farm. At the end of November we invited them to the farm to see the lasers and find out about the project and we will continue to keep everyone up-to-date with our findings.

This is really a test of principle and if successful, we will start exploring how the technology might be exploited in a practical manner. It is hoped it might provide a non-lethal alternative to other control methods (like rodenticides for example) in some circumstances.

Auchnerran's inaugural shoot day

LAST NOVEMBER saw the first shoot day at the Game & Wildlife Scottish Demonstration Farm, Auchnerran. The mixed species walked-up event was bought at our Scottish Auction by Denzil Skinner, who was joined by three guns on the day. The dog handling team comprised Nigel Hayward and Luise Janniche.

The farm has a range of game-rich habitats from whin clumps for woodcock, to small birch and conifer woodlands for pheasants. The Mosstown Bog provided fantastic sport for the guns with snipe, rabbit, hare and woodcock, with ample opportunities at numerous species, including a whizzing miss at a red-leg partridge.

On the wetlands the dogs flushed approximately 20 snipe, with the guns managing to get two. The bag came to 23 head of four different species. The guns, dog team and hosts thoroughly enjoyed the complete game and wildlife experience as Auchnerran is a shoot with an intriguing past and an exciting, demonstrative future.

Thanks to all involved who made it a special day for the sporting GWCT Scotland memory books.

(L-R) Luise Janniche, Victor Beamish, Denzil Skinner, Tony Whalley, Hugh Wauton and Nigel Hayward.



Fife & Kinross

Gin cocktails

Seventy guests enjoyed the Fife & Kinross committee's second dinner and auction at Loch Leven's Larder last September, raising £10,000. They were treated to damson gin cocktails before enjoying a delicious dinner, including venison, courtesy of committee member Steve Wade of Woodmill Shooting.

The chairman, Douglas Williams, conducted the auction, before the event's sponsors, Fife Mitsubishi, Isuzu and Subaru, provided guests with lifts home.

West

Dinner at Òran Mór

The west of Scotland annual dinner and auction will be held on Thursday 9 March at Òran Mór, Byres Road, Glasgow. Guests will be treated to a Sloegasm drinks reception followed by a three-course dinner, followed by an auction conducted by comedian Fred MacAulay. Applications for tickets (priced £65 each) for a table of 10 or 12 or individual applications to the Members Table should be made to shamilton@gwct.org.uk.

The dinner will be held at the fabulous Òran Mór.

