



LEAGUE
AGAINST CRUEL SPORTS

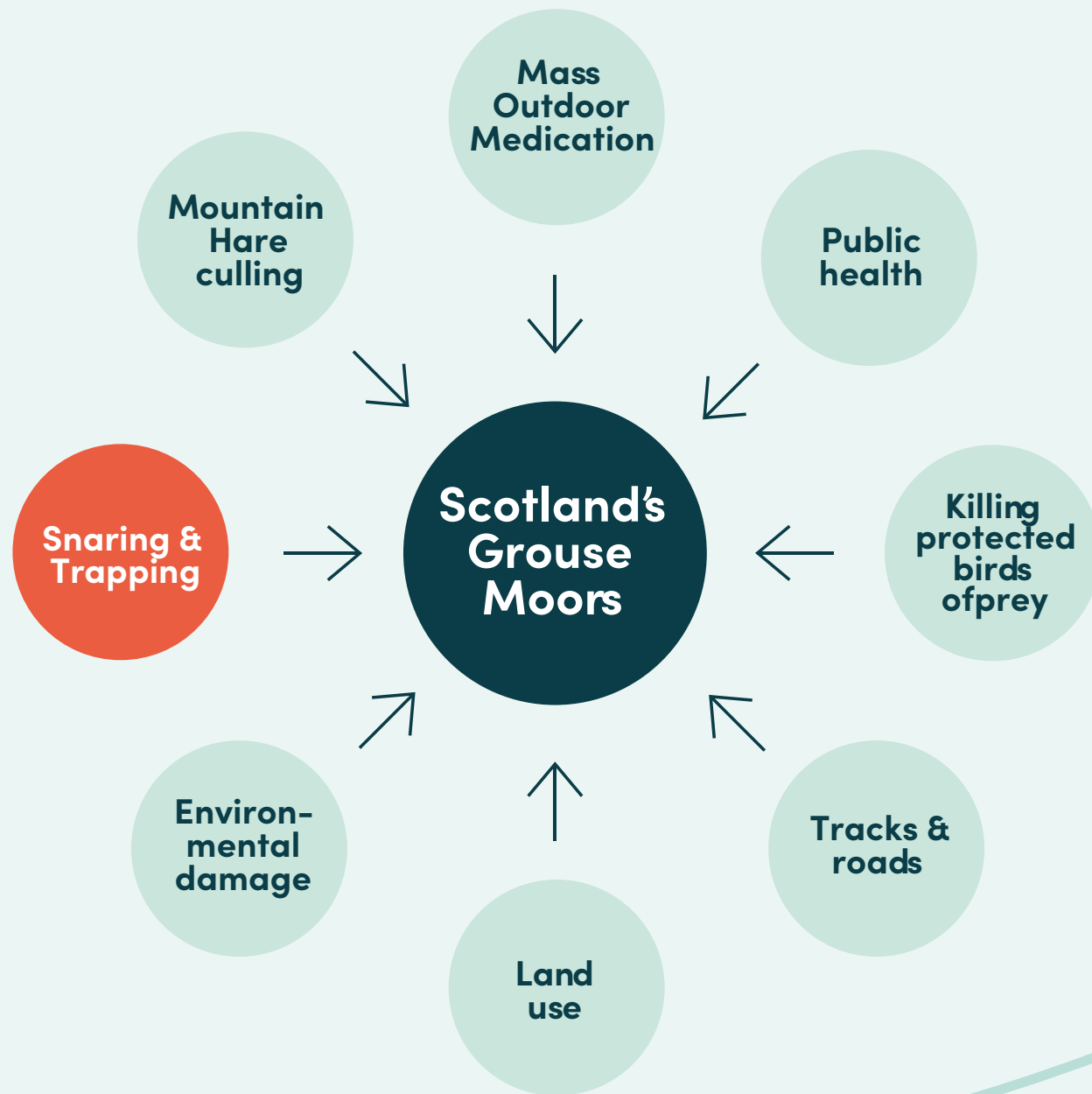
CALCULATING CRUELTY

The results of a field study showing that up to a quarter of a million animals are killed each year in Scotland to ensure more grouse can be shot for “sport”



The circle of destruction surrounding

Scotland's grouse moors



FORWARD

There is a circle of environmental, social and wildlife destruction that surrounds Scotland's driven grouse moors.

At first sight it may appear that Scotland's uplands are a natural environment, however, civil and Government scrutiny is beginning to reveal that shooting estates are far from natural and, in comparison to the huge area they cover, they make a tiny contribution to the Scottish economy.

Since the end of 2018, the League Against Cruel Sports Scotland and partners in the Revive Coalition – a mixture of social justice, environmental and animal welfare organisations - have put the spotlight on the circle of destruction that surrounds Scotland's driven grouse moors. Together with OneKind, the League produced **Untold Suffering**, an in-depth expose of the bewildering range of traps and snares designed to eradicate any animal that might threaten the number of grouse to be shot.

The report was called **Untold Suffering** because no one knew exactly how many of these devices were deployed and how many target and non-target animals they killed. This is because birds such as crows are killed under a "General Licence" issued by Scottish National Heritage and there is no licence at all required to kill foxes, stoats and weasels. There is no need to report to anyone on the number of animals killed. The purpose of the killing is to protect grouse to make sure there are as many as possible to be shot.

So, the League Against Cruel Sports Scotland commissioned a surveyor who had worked on Scottish shooting estates for 20 years, with extensive experience of game management practices. The aim of the intensive survey of seven shooting estates was to identify the extent of the intensive management used to sustain a supposedly wild bird.

The survey lasted fifteen months from June 2018 until September 2019. It is the first ever robust and quantitative study of a representative number of shooting estates. There is one very intensively managed estate, one intensively managed, three which are progressively less

intensively managed and two are practically unmanaged.

Thousands of traps, snares, stink pits, tracks and roads, medicated grit trays, dead sheep and suspected shooting sites were meticulously photographed, GPS-positioned and uploaded to a central database. The findings shocked and appalled us.

The data were sent to Professor Stephen Harris BSc PhD DSc to analyse. Prof Harris has had a lifetime's experience studying the ecology of carnivores in Britain (and elsewhere) and has published extensively on many aspects of predator management. Together with the surveyor, Prof Harris produced a scientific analysis of the data entitled **Hanged by the feet until dead. An analysis of predator killing on Scottish grouse moors**. The majority of this publication summarises that report and provides a picture of the industrial scale of the killing across all Scottish grouse moors.

For too long, shooting estates have promoted the belief that their "sport" is the only way to use somewhere between 10% and 19% of Scotland. They claim that a £23 million contribution to the Scottish economy each year and the equivalent of around 2,500 full time jobs, with an average annual income of around £11,500, is a worthwhile return on the use of this much land.

This report reveals that up to a quarter of a million animals are killed each year in an attempt to totally eradicate foxes, stoats, weasels, along with any other animal that indiscriminately fall into the traps and snares. Research shows that nearly a half of the animals killed are "non target species" such as hedgehogs, dippers and mistle thrush. This killing happens for one reason – to ensure there are more grouse to shoot for "sport". The League and our partners in the Revive coalition call on the Scottish Government to have a root and branch rethink about how best to use this land for the benefit of Scotland's communities, its environment and the animals that should be living there.

Robbie Marsland

Director, League Against Cruel Sports Scotland

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

“This study has provided the first quantified assessment of the intensity of ground predator control on Scottish grouse moors. We found that failure to comply with codes of practice is widespread on Scottish grouse moors, and that the best practice guidelines produced by professional organisations that advises the shooting industry appear at best to be politically expedient but had little impact on trapping practices on Scottish grouse moors.

Grouse shooting in Scotland is dependent on killing up to a quarter of a million animals in traps and snares each year, and nearly a half of these will be non-target species.”

Prof Stephen Harris and Bruce Thain, **Hanged by the feet until dead.** *An analysis of predator killing on Scottish grouse moors.*

The table opposite, taken from Prof Harris’s paper, shows the number of killing devices documented in the field study and extrapolates them to the highest and lowest estimates of the extent of grouse moors in Scotland. Those estimates range from 10% (800,000 hectares) to 19% (1.5 million hectares).



	No. found ^a	Estimated % found	Estimated no. ^b	Estimated no. on 0.8 million ha ^c	Estimated no. on 0.8 million ha ^d	Estimated no. on 1.5 million ha ^e	Estimated no. on 1.5 million ha ^f
No. of snares	108	75%	144	2100	2900	4000	5300
No. of snares set ^g	41	75%	55	800	1100	1500	2000
No. of snare days year ^{-1h}	15,000	75%	20,100	295,000	395,000	555,000	745,000
No. of stink pits	39	80%	49	800	1000	1400	1800
No. of rail traps	1051	95%	1106	21,000	22,000	39,000	41,000
No. of rail traps set ^g	727	95%	765	14,000	15,000	27,000	28,000
No. of rail trap days year ^{-1h}	265,000	95%	280,000	5,250,000	5,525,000	9,850,000	10,360,000
No. of tunnel traps	369	65%	568	7300	11,200	13,700	21,100
No. of tunnel traps set ^g	187	65%	288	3700	5700	6900	10,700
No. of tunnel trap days year ^{-1h}	68,300	65%	105,100	1,350,000	2,080,000	2,535,000	3,900,000
Total no. of spring traps	1420	-	1674	28,000	33,000	53,000	62,000
Total no. of spring traps set ^g	914	-	1053	18,000	21,000	34,000	39,000
Total no. of spring traps set days year ^{-1h}	335,000	-	385,000	6,600,000	7,600,000	12,400,000	14,300,000
No. of mammal cage traps	16	50%	32	320	630	590	1190
No. of mammal cage traps set ^g	2	50%	4	40	797	4	148
No. of mammal cage trap days year ^{-1h}	730	50%	1460	14,450	28,900	27,100	54,200
No. of rabbit drop traps	156	50%	312	3100	6200	5800	11,600
No. of rabbit drop traps set ^g	10	50%	20	200	400	3707	40
No. of rabbit drop trap days year ^{-1h}	3650	50%	7300	72,250	144,500	135,500	271,000

a The number found on the seven estates surveyed i.e. an area of 40,419 ha

b Total number estimated to be present on the seven estates surveyed, allowing for the proportion of each item that BT believed that he found

c Estimate based on the actual number found on the seven estates surveyed and an estimated 800,000 ha of managed grouse moors in Scotland, rounded where appropriate

d Estimate based on the number estimated to be present on the seven estates surveyed and an estimated 800,000 ha of managed grouse moors in Scotland, rounded where appropriate

e Estimate based on the actual number found on the seven estates surveyed and an estimated 1,500,000 ha of managed grouse moors in Scotland, rounded where appropriate

f Estimate based on the number estimated to be present on the seven estates surveyed and an estimated 1,500,000 ha of managed grouse moors in Scotland, rounded where appropriate

g The survey was spread across all seasons and so the proportion of traps that were set on each survey day was assumed to be representative of the annual patterns of use

h Estimate based on the number of days per year that snares or each type of trap were set on the surveyed estates, an estimated 800,000 ha or 1,500,000 ha of managed grouse moors in Scotland, rounded where appropriate

Using mid points between the largest and smallest figures, this table reveals that there are:



**31,000 rail traps of which
21,000 are set and active each day**



**14,200 tunnel traps of which
7,200 are set and active each day**



**750 mammal cage traps of which
94 are set and active each day**



**7,350 rabbit drop traps of which
470 are set and active each day**



**3,700 snares of which
1,400 are set and active each day**

In total, there are around **57,000** killing devices deployed each day in Scotland of which over **30,000** are set and active. This represents the equivalent of over **10,000,000** active trapping and snaring days per year.

The survey also reveals that shooting industry best practice guidance is routinely ignored as:

- 100% of rail traps found and photographed failed to comply with best practice guidelines
- 85% of tunnel traps found and photographed failed to comply with best practice guidelines

The huge scale of traps and snares appears to reveal that the estates' aim is to completely eradicate foxes, stoats and weasels - animals that threaten the grouse. This survey also reveals that, due to the indiscriminate nature of the devices, around a half of those killed are non-target animals such as dippers, mistle thrush and hedgehogs.

Prof Harris's paper goes on to estimate the number of animals that are killed each year on Scottish grouse moors and concludes that:

Each year, an estimated **120,000** to **260,000** animals are snared and trapped on Scottish grouse moors, nearly half would be non-target species.

It is not known how many additional crows, ravens and birds of prey are also shot.

The reason for this massive amount of killing, which continues year after year, is to ensure that there are more grouse available to shoot for "sport".

Recommendations

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The League Against Cruel Sports Scotland and its partners in the Revive coalition firmly believe that it is unconscionable to kill any animal, let alone up to 260,000, to ensure that hundreds of thousands of grouse can then be shot for "sport". Furthermore, the indiscriminate nature of these devices means that nearly a half of those animals are in effect "collateral damage". That is why we recommend banning the use of all traps and snares.

The REVIVE coalition also calls for a range of social justice and environmental measures which would assist reaching Scotland's climate change targets, increase biodiversity and improve animal welfare. Full details of these measures can be found in Revive's Manifesto at www.revive.scot.

Grouse shooting estates, despite occupying somewhere between 10% and 19% of Scotland, contribute only £23 million a year - less than 0.02% - to the Scottish economy. The League believes that there are more beneficial ways of using this land and Revive has documented this in its 2019 report **A Better Way**.



THE FIELD STUDY METHODOLOGY

The aim of the survey was to record the scale, distribution and use of legal grouse moor management equipment and practices. This was done by one surveyor who had worked on Scottish shooting estates for more than 20 years. His background and experience made him invaluable to the project and we are grateful for his assistance. Using the Scottish right to responsible access, the estates were walked and all ground was viewed so that the items being specifically surveyed were likely to be found. All ground was covered at least once. All tracks and watercourses were checked carefully.

Items that were specifically surveyed were:

- All traps and snares
- Pigeon lofts
- Grouse grit stations
- Shooting butts
- Shooting hides
- Water stations
- Muirburn
- Game bird feeders
- Game crop

- Pheasant pens
- Partridge pens
- Electric fences
- Tracks
- Quarries
- Habitat destruction (excluding muirburn)
- Shooting ponds
- Various animals
- Sheep carcasses

The survey was carried out without the estates being notified so that the data were not biased by management practises changing as a result of the survey.

No legally set trap or snare was interfered with in any way.

The time taken to survey an estate varied considerably, this was due to the variations in size of estate, number of items found which required checking and recording and finally, management activity on site.

Multiple photographs were normally taken of each item of note and the exact location and time was uploaded automatically onto a remote database. The data were then plotted onto maps of each estate.

The seven estates were chosen based on ease of access. As the work progressed it became apparent that they represented one very intensively managed estate, one intensively managed, three which are progressively less intensively managed and two are practically unmanaged estates. As such, they represent a cross-section of management techniques.

This is the first time that such a widespread and detailed survey of estates has been undertaken. Nevertheless, we are aware that what we have done is simply taken the lid off a troubling situation and revealed an alarming glimpse of the scale of the intensification of grouse moor management in Scotland.





THE SURVEYOR

The League Against Cruel Sports Scotland recruited an experienced professional to undertake the field work documented in this report. He worked on shooting estates for over 20 years and is familiar with working practices both legal and illegal. For his own personal safety, he asked to remain anonymous and to use a pseudonym on the scientific report. We asked him to share his thoughts and personal perspective on both the overall picture his work uncovered and on the individual estates he mapped.

THOUGHTS FROM THE FIELD

My 15-month survey graphically reveals that animals designated by shooting estate management as unwelcome on grouse shooting estates are subject to the most extraordinary, multi-faceted, highly resourced strategic plan to kill them. It is not just traps, it is a strategically planned network of traps, carefully placed to exploit the animal's natural behaviour to ensure their deaths. Grouse moor managers' aim appears to be not just reducing the populations of unwelcome animals - but their total eradication.

Having worked on shooting estates for 20 years, I was aware of all the types of traps, shooting methods and management practices used. However, when I carried out this survey I saw estates with a new eye and I was shocked at the intensity of management. A comprehensive range of management tools are used in a very well thought out, integrated way which exploits animals' natural behaviours to ensure that whole ecological groups of animals, specifically, predators and scavengers, are largely exterminated from estates.

There is a war going on in our quiet peaceful glens, every single second of every single day, it is relentless, intense and our animals are dying in their hundreds of thousands, all so that more grouse can be killed.

THE ESTATES

The following pages contain maps of each of the surveyed estates. For each, one map show the distribution of traps and snares across the estate. The other adds the distribution of shooting butts, tracks and roads and medicated grit stations.



Grit stations are medicated with anthelmintic drugs in an attempt to control a gut parasite implicated in large grouse population fluctuations. According to a recent report from the Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust, “virtually all grouse managers” are using medicated grit. Deployed either in trays with drainage holes or directly on the ground, there is no effective monitoring of grit use or impact on other flora or fauna. Research does show that contaminated grit stations are a significant route for rapid disease transmission not just in red grouse but other species of high conservation concern. The survey found 7,283 grit stations on the seven estates.

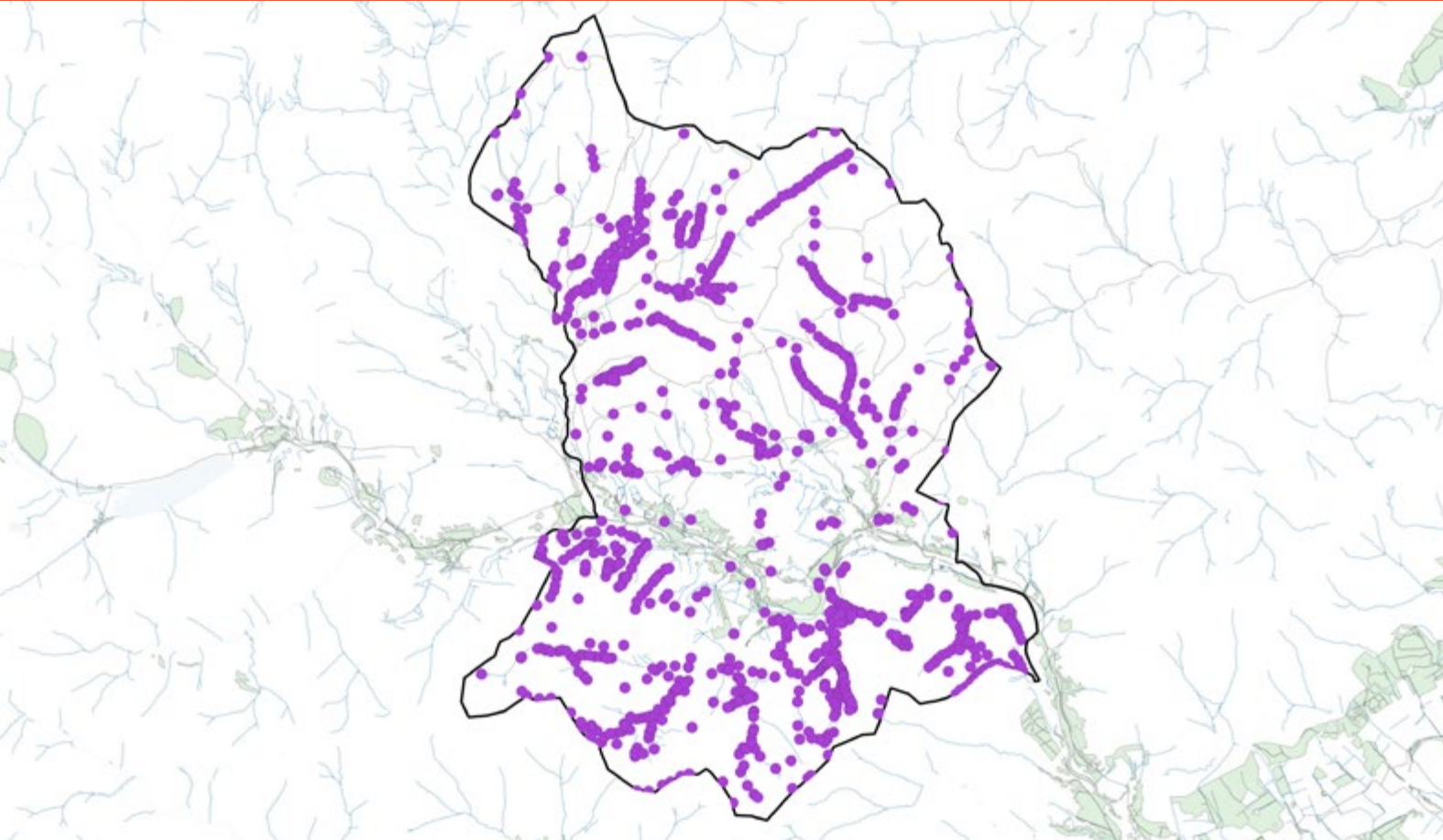
The enormous network of vehicle tracks scar the land and do not require any planning permission, the satisfaction of any minimum standards or the need to inform local and other authorities. The survey found 444kms of tracks and roads on the seven estates.

The shooting butts are the positions from where thousands of red grouse are shot each season. The survey found 1,808 shooting butts on the seven estates.



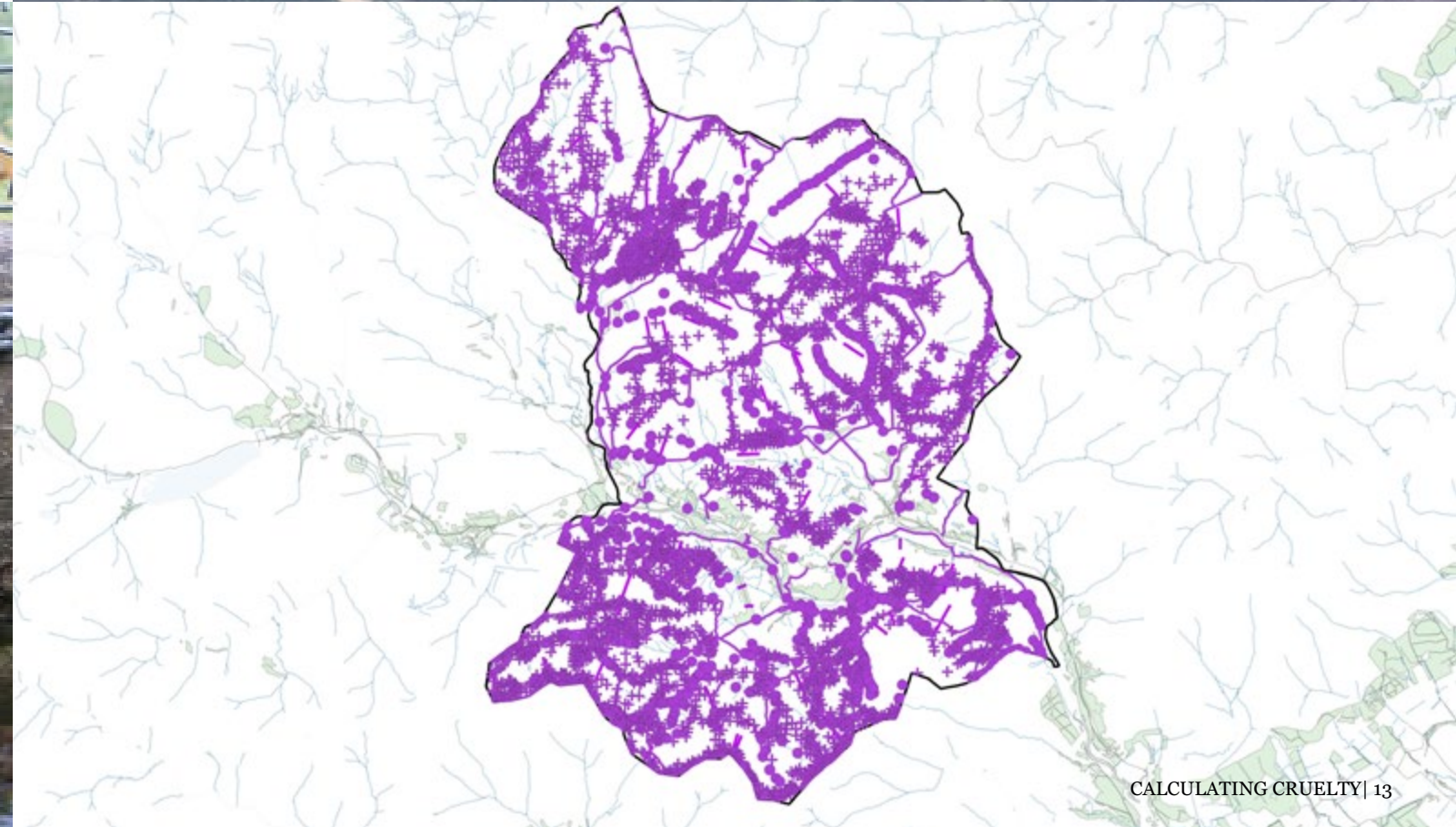
Millden Estate, Angus

Traps and Snares



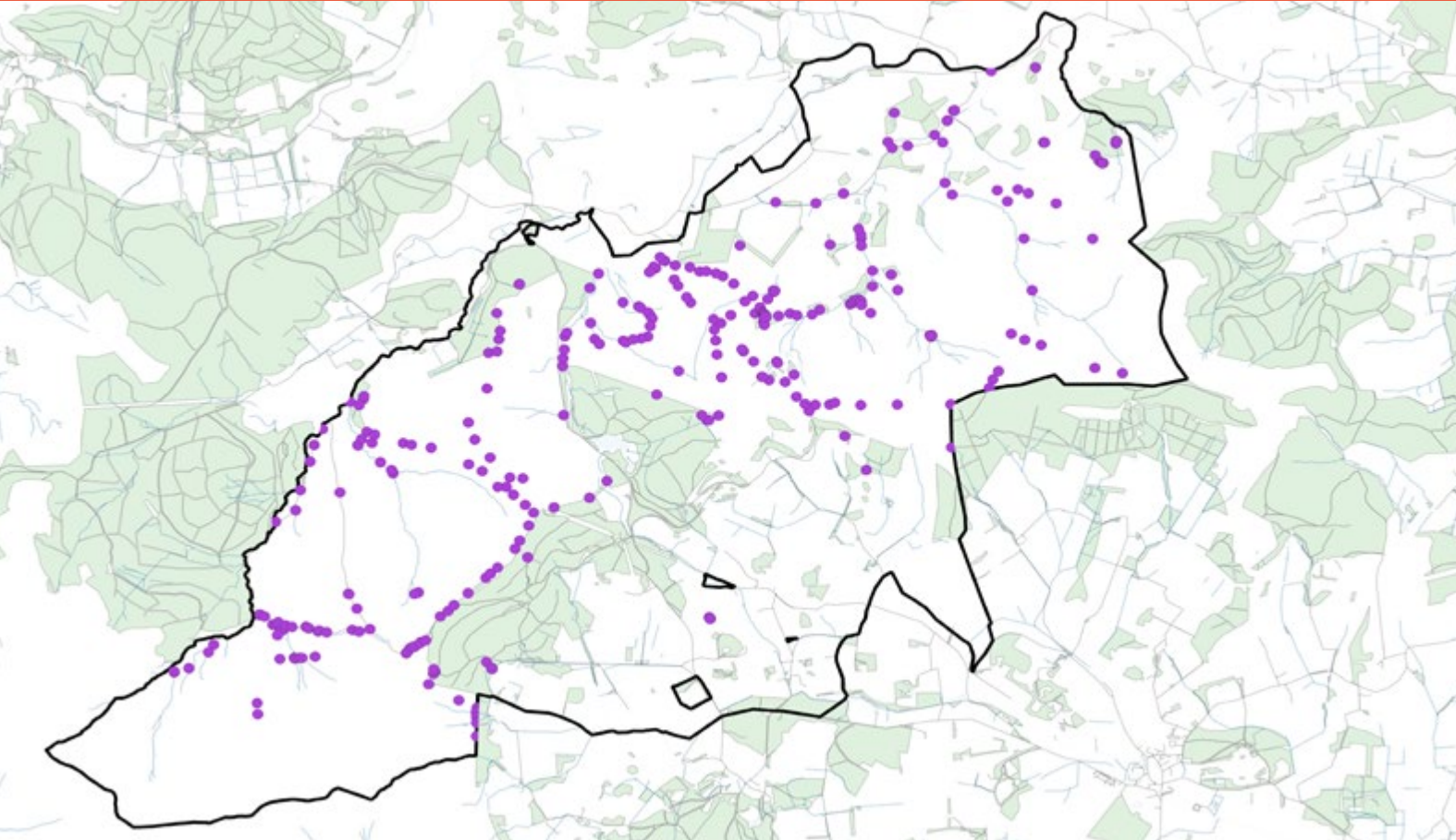
Millden Estate, Angus

All management activity



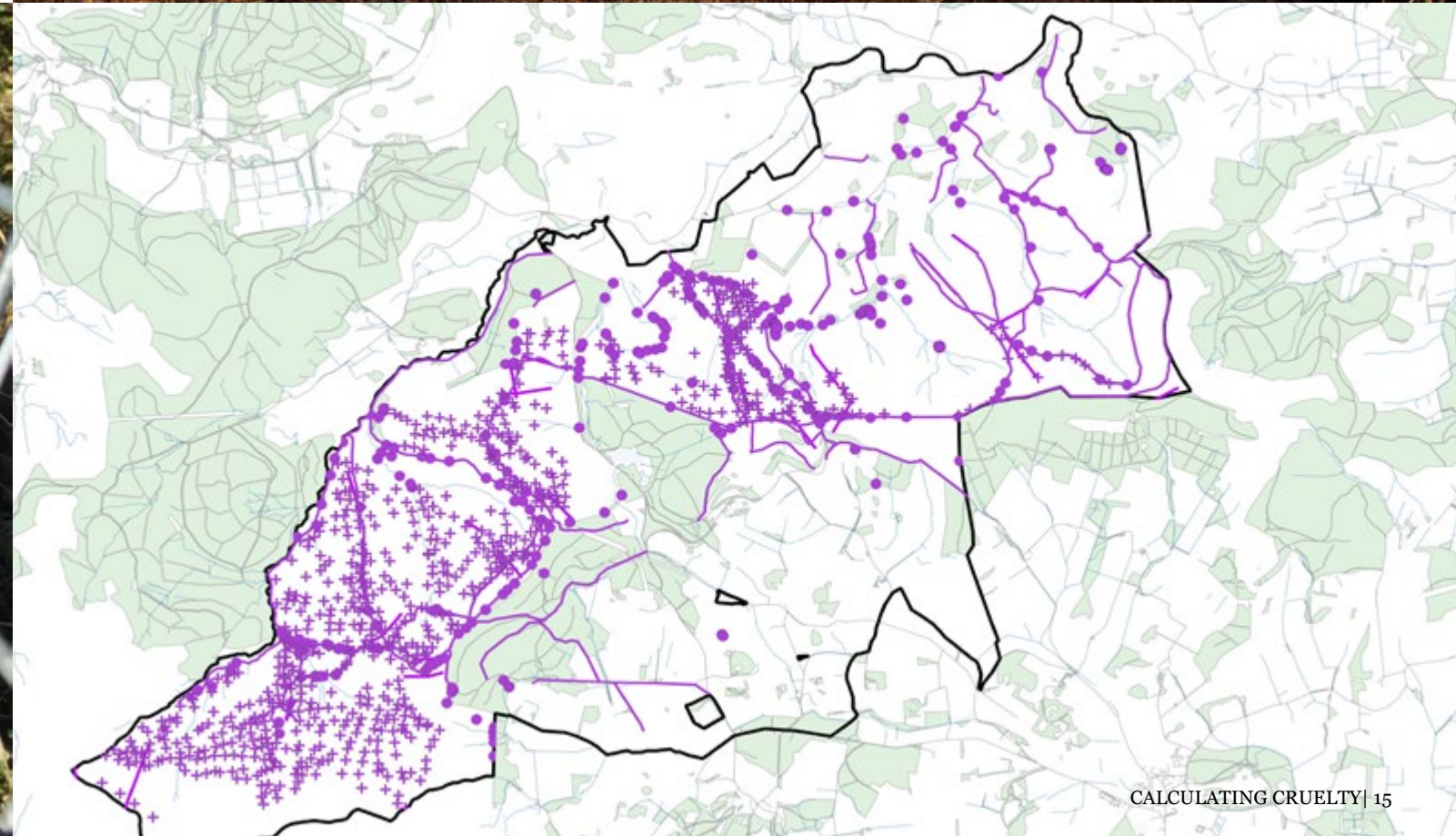
Tillypronie estate, Aberdeenshire

Traps and Snares



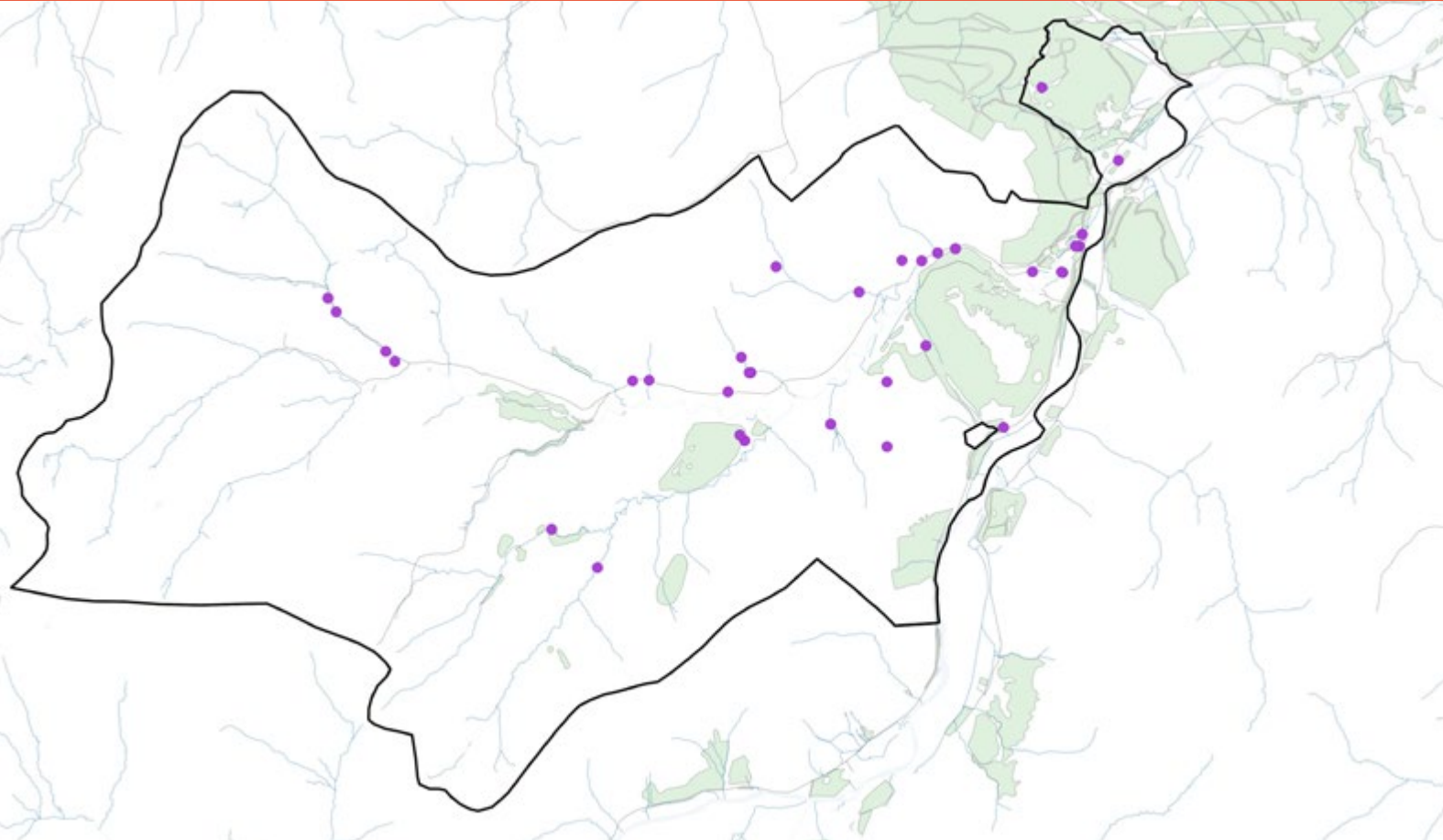
Tillypronie estate, Aberdeenshire

All management activities



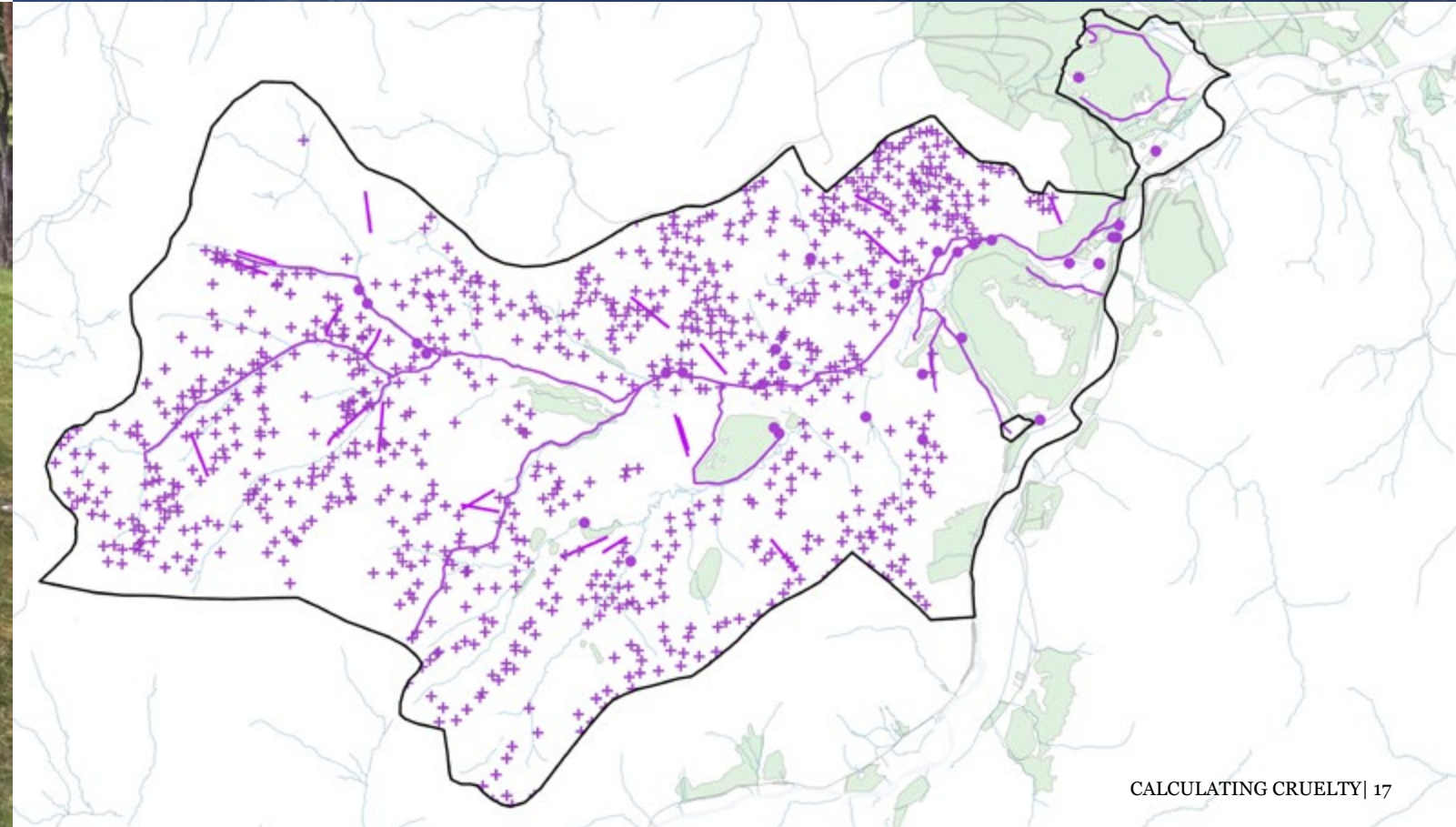
Glenmazeran estate, Inverness-shire

Traps and Snares



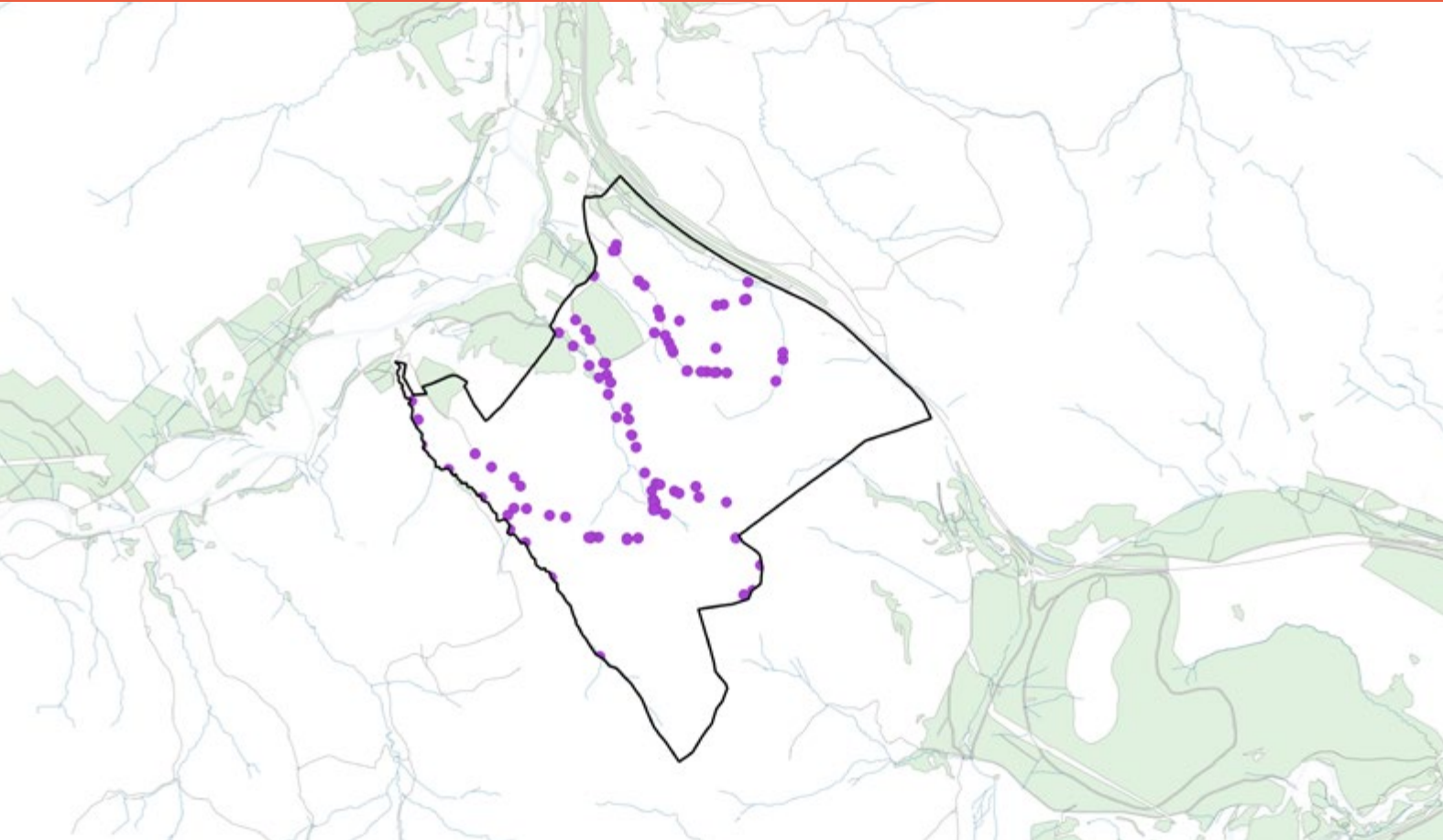
Glenmazeran estate, Inverness-shire

All management activities



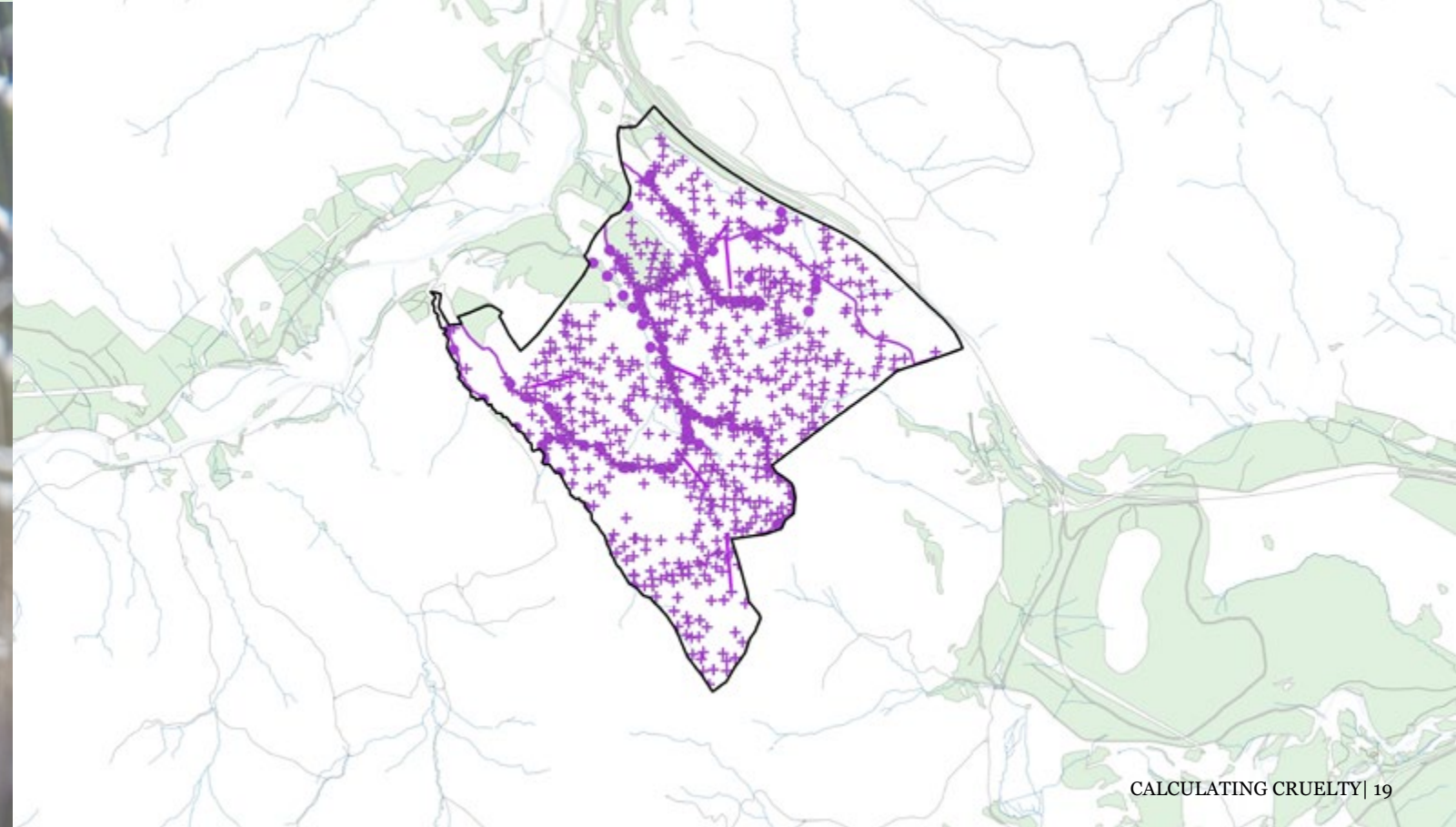
Easter Clunes, Inverness-shire

Traps and Snares



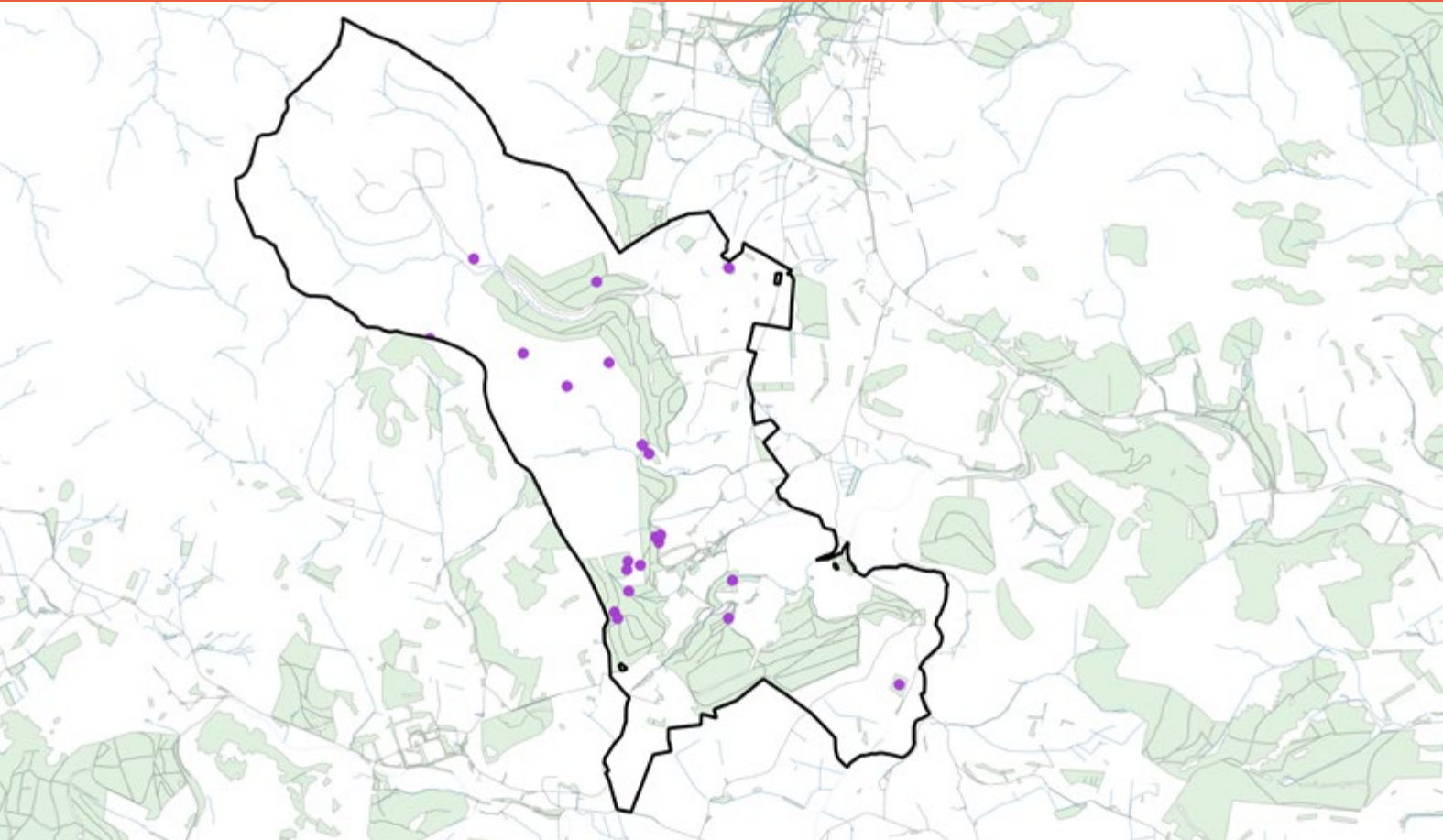
Easter Clunes, Inverness-shire

All management activities



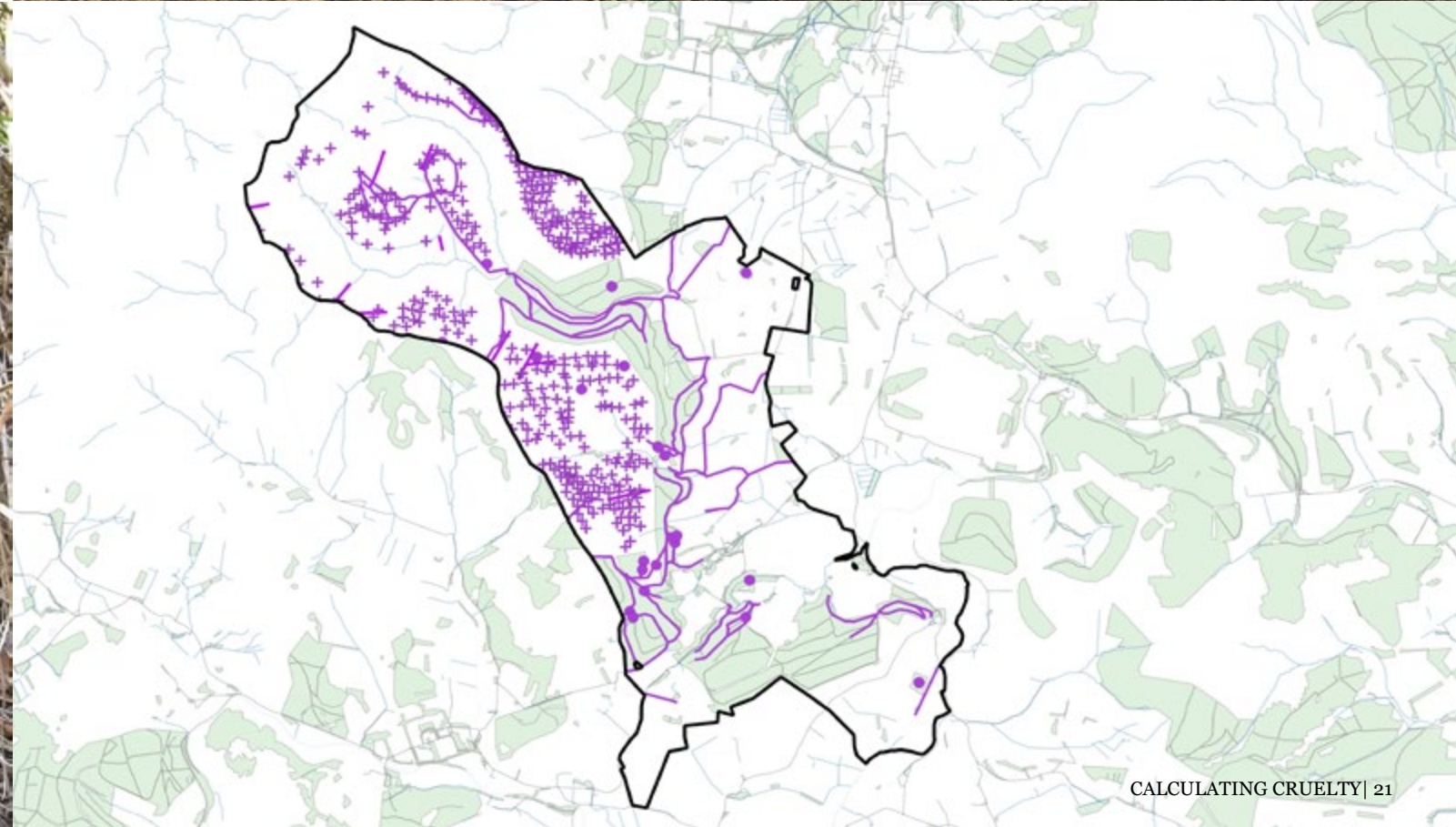
Kildrummy estate, Aberdeenshire

Traps and Snares



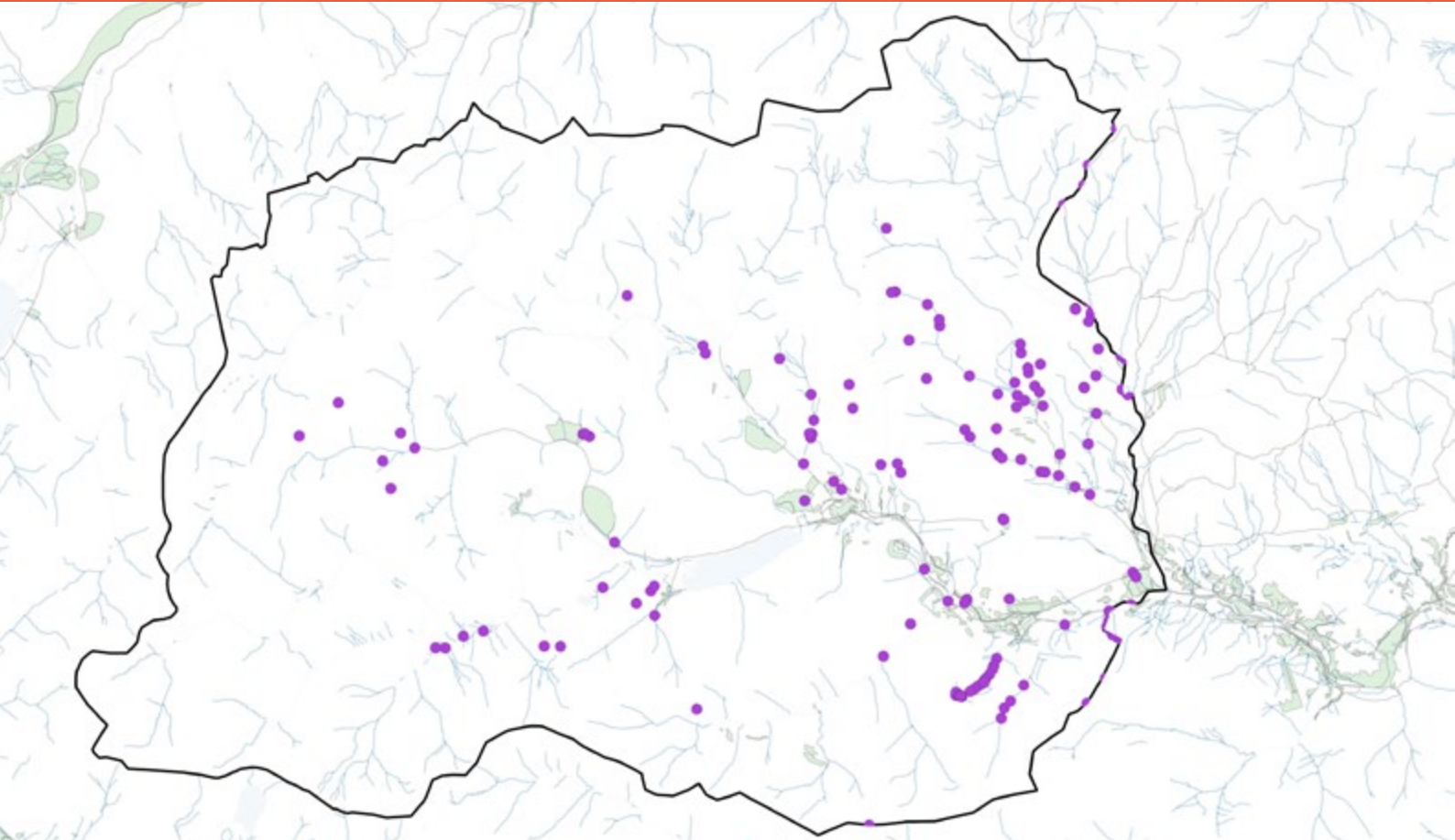
Kildrummy estate, Aberdeenshire

All management activities



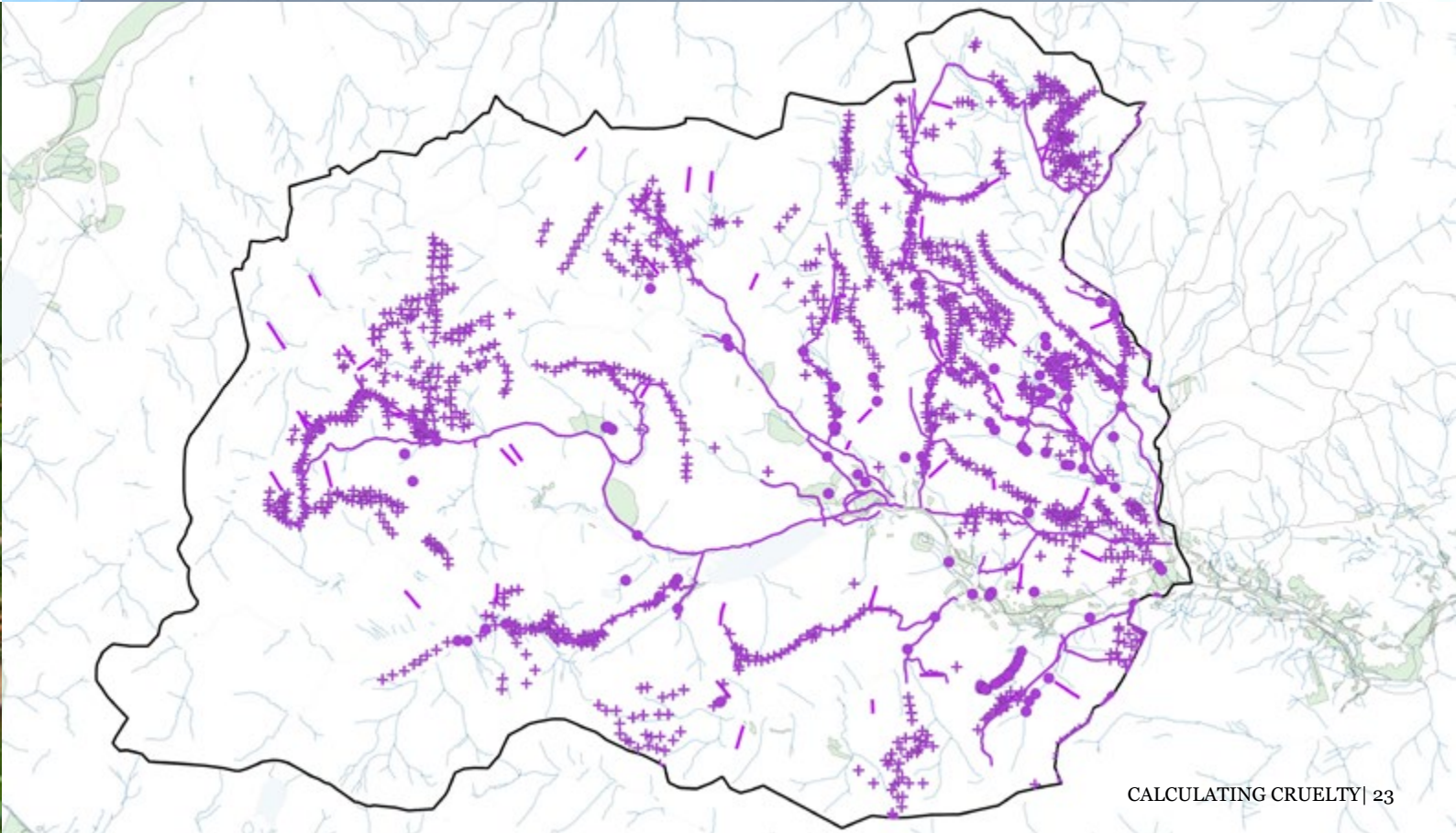
Invermark estate, Angus

Traps and Snares



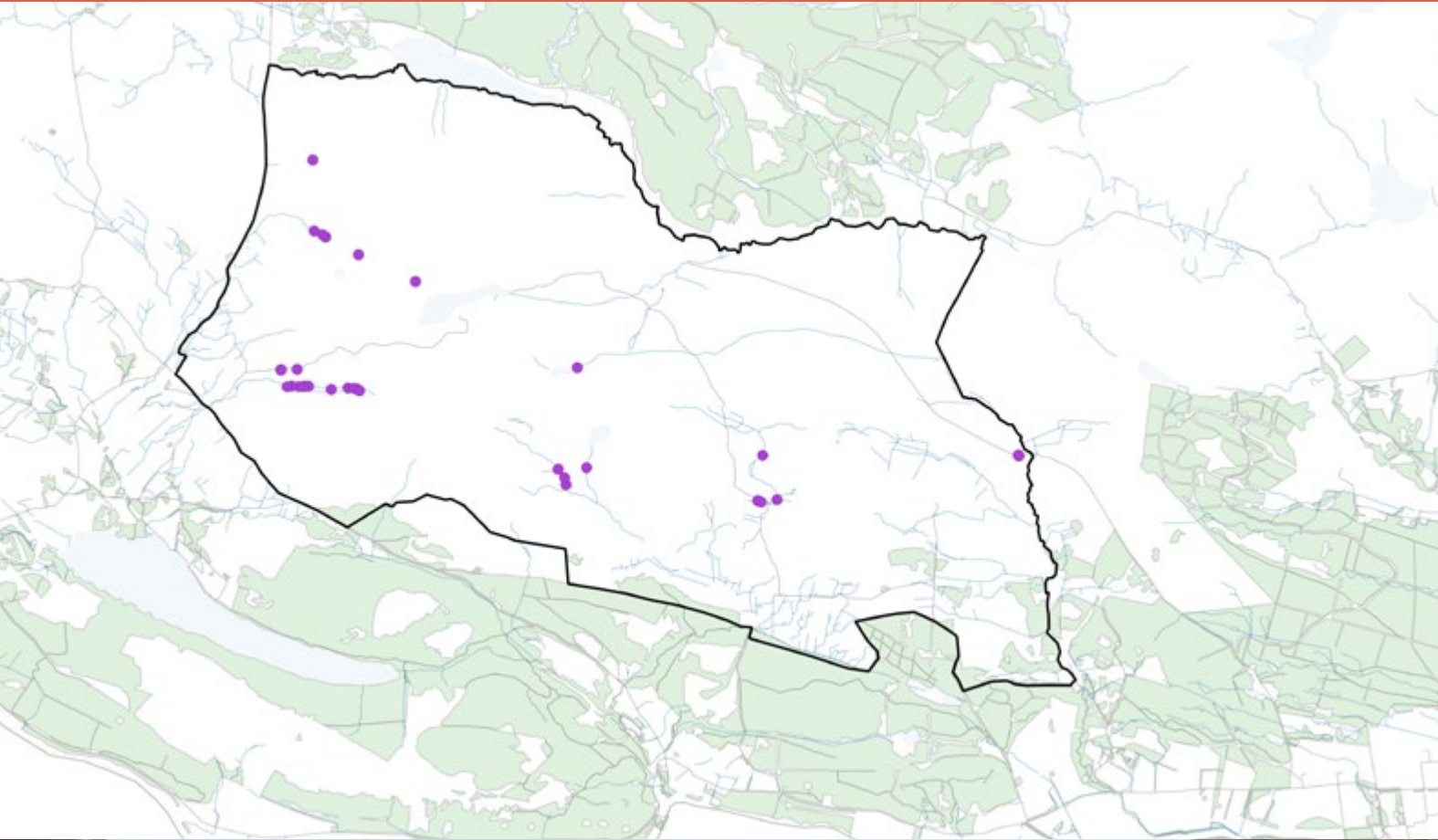
Invermark estate, Angus

All management activities



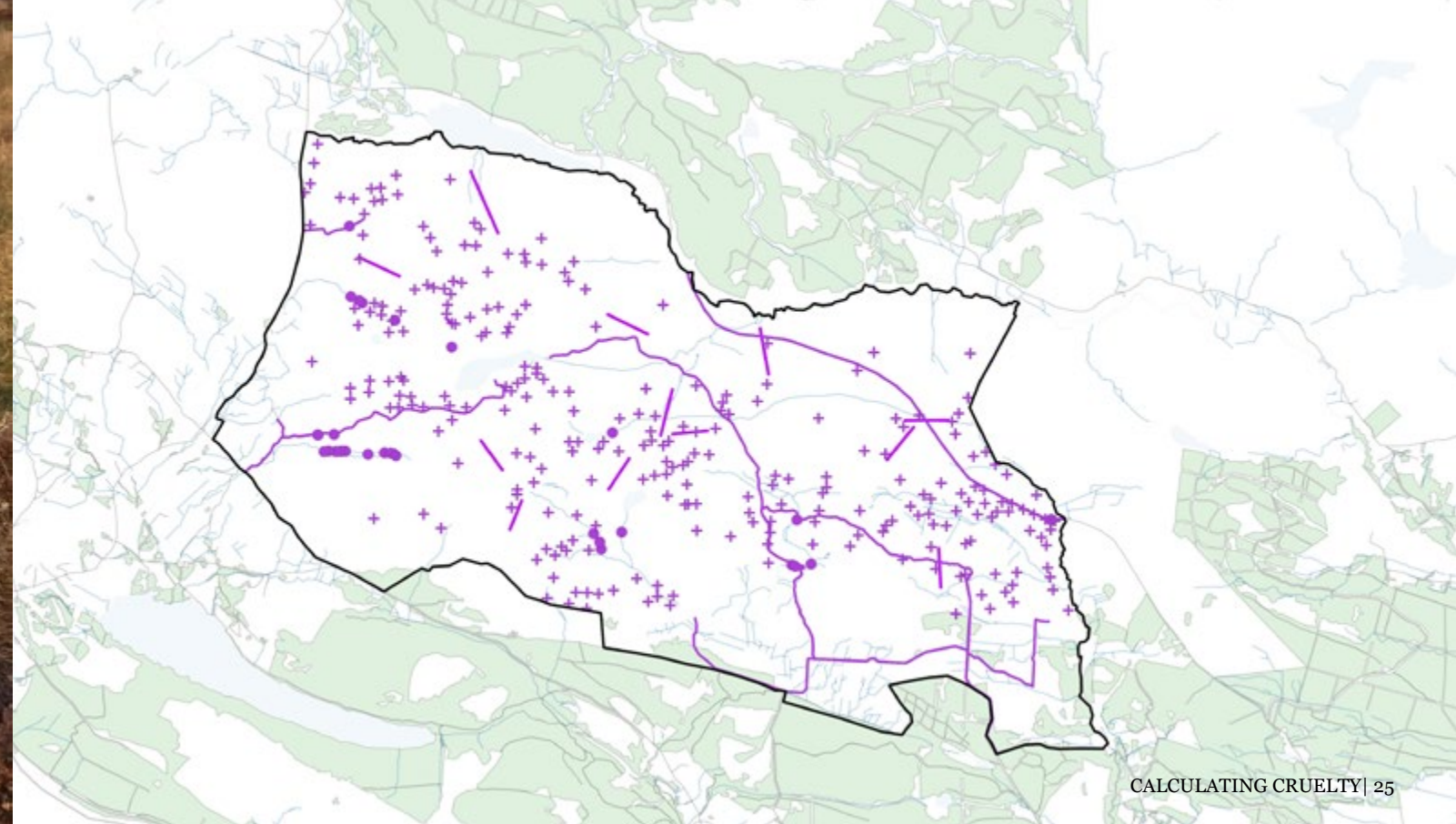
Skibo estate, Sutherland

Traps and Snares



Skibo estate, Sutherland

All management activities





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REVIVE

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