

# Paper 2017/1a

## GLENMORISTON DMG MEETING at Glenmoriston Memorial Hall, Invermoriston on November 30<sup>th</sup> at 7pm

### Present

Martin Girvan	DMG Chair. Ceannacroc
Lynda Campbell	DMG Treasurer, Corrielaire
Linzi Seivwright	DMG Secretary
Doug Gilbert	Dundreggan, Trees for Life
Jimmy Gibb	Balmacaan
Willie Fraser	Chair Affric and Kintail
Sinclair Coghill	SNH
Wat Forbes	Corrimony
Alison McKnight	Consultant
Steven Miller	Achlain
Ian Reynard	Wester Guisachan

### 1. Apologies

Simon Mclaughlin	RSPB Corrimony
Mike Toms	Community Representative
Tom Girvan	Tomcrasky
Steven Gray	Glenmoriston
Russell Cooper	Forest Enterprise
Alan Common	Dundreggan, Trees for Life

**Alan Boulton.** The meeting began with the Chair sadly informing the Group that Alan Boulton had passed away following a battle with illness. Having worked with the Group for many years in developing Deer Management Plans, Alan was highly respected in his profession and would be missed. As a mark of respect, the Group held a minutes silence in memory.

**Welcome.** The Chair welcomed Steven Miller, the Stalker from Achlain to the meeting and hoped that he would be encouraged to attend in the future.

### 2. Draft Minutes of Meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> August 2016

The draft minutes were approved by Lynda Campbell and seconded by Doug Gilbert.

### 3. Matters Arising

<b>Action</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
3. <i>Group Boundaries to be discussed with Forest Enterprise.</i>	<i>LS to speak to Willie Lamont</i>	<b>Action ongoing</b>
4. <i>Invitation to Achlain to join Group</i>	<i>MG</i>	<i>Completed. Achlain representative present at meeting.</i>
4.1 <i>Plan used to set future Agendas</i>	<i>LS</i>	<i>Completed.</i>
4.2 <i>Draft plan wording updated</i>	<i>LS</i>	<i>Completed. Plan updated</i>
4.4 <i>DMG Assessment</i>	<i>LS</i>	<b>Ongoing. LS to recirculate Assessment &amp; Notes</b>
4.4 <i>DMG Assessment</i>	<i>LS/AM</i>	<b>Ongoing. Discussed under item 5.</b>
4.5 <i>DMP Sign Off</i>		<b>Ongoing. Discussed under Agenda Item 5.</b>
4.6 <i>Plan Consultation</i>	<i>MG/LS</i>	<b>Ongoing. DMG Chair to respond to RSPB Consultation Response</b>
4.8 <i>ECAF Funding Application</i>	<i>LS</i>	<b>Ongoing. ECAF fund not currently open.</b>
4.9 <i>Habitat Impact Assessments</i>	<i>LS</i>	<b>Ongoing. LS indicated she would recirculate the Habitat Impact Assessment</b>

## 4. Chairman's Report

**4.1 Regional Meeting of ADMG.** The Chair had attended the ADMG Regional Meeting held in Inverness. The main focus of the meeting had been the publication of the SNH Review on Deer Management (also covered under item 9. SNH Update) which had been requested by Minister for the Environment. One of the main issues discussed had been the presentation of deer densities across the DMGs which in some cases had been misrepresented in the report by the use of trend figures rather than actual count figures. James Hutton Institute had been contracted to produce a report of national count and cull figures but the report had not been completed and only certain information (trend figures) used in the SNH report. Certain DMGs had felt that this painted an unfair reflection of the situation on the ground. In the case of Glenmoriston, it had been noted that the overall figure for the whole of the South Ross deer count (which incorporates 5 DMGs) had been presented in the Report as greater than 15 deer per km<sup>2</sup> when in fact the overall figure for Glenmoriston DMG had been 9 deer per km<sup>2</sup> and this was the figure that was used to set culls in the DMP. ADMG had encouraged DMGs to look at the way their population densities had been presented and to contact SNH to highlight any anomalies if found. The Group agreed that they should respond to SNH (and copy in ADMG) regarding the presentation of the South Ross data emphasising that the Group had moved on and were using data relevant to the area.

**Action: LS/MG**

**4.2 SRDP Payments for Woodlands.** It was commented that Scottish Government were currently running 7 months late with payments but that these would start on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> December for Annual Payments/Contracts.

**5. Deer Management Plan.** There had been two actions from the previous meeting to update the DMP where possible following feedback from the Assessment and to pull together a Working Plan which would summarise all ongoing work in progress and actions. This work was still ongoing. The following actions were agreed with regards to the Plan and the Working plan:

**5.1** Main plan to be updated to incorporate notes from Assessment, including Communications Strategy and Welfare Policy. **Action: AM**

**5.2** List of future actions in the working plan to include possible future work such as information on woodland expansion opportunities, Repeat HIA results, opportunities for Peatland Restoration (only drainblocking currently included in SRDP), population model amended annually, historical features mapped, DVCs mapped, Public Access mapped.

**5.3** Working plan and a work schedule to be circulated to the Group before Christmas **Action: LS**

**5.4** Version control to be implemented on plan the newest version updated on the web and addition of page numbers. **Action: AM**

**5.5** Wording in constitution amended as follows and recirculated. **Action: LS**

- Financial information and need for auditor removed
- Remove "mandate" under 10.
- Change financial year to run from 1<sup>st</sup> Jan to 31<sup>st</sup> December.
- Meetings as follows: Two main meetings held in Spring/AGM and Autumn plus additional meetings as required e.g. to discuss ECAF.

It was flagged up that the Group should be considering costs and how the ongoing administration of the plan should be funded, especially future helicopter counts. The schedule would help plan for this. Regarding future counts, it was discussed that technological advances may mean that the use of drones/thermal imaging technology might be a way forward in the future.

## 6. Treasurers Report

Bank position - £630.66 in funds. It was noted that £800 plus £25 for hall costs had been paid to LS.

It was agreed that a list of expenditure for the coming year would be drawn up and then a Bill (to include Subscriptions for ADMG) circulated to members.

**Action LS/LC**

## 7. Stag Culls and Hind Cull Targets for 2016/17

These were discussed in the context of what had been proposed in the plan.

Property	Cull Target (Plan)		Actual 2016/17 (as of Nov)		
	Stags	Hinds & Calves	Stags	Hinds	Calves
Corriclair	20	50	18	10	3
Ceannacroc	31	50	31	0	0
Wester Guisachan	31	50	14	0	0
Tomcrasky	31	50	25	6	0
Balnacarn	7	1	3	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>
Dungreggan	25	50	15	20	0
Hilton	5	5	0	0	0
Corrimony	10	5	0	0	0
Corrimony (Girvan)	10	10	8	0	0
Glenmoriston	35	45	30	3	0
Balmacaan	35	45	45	27	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>5</b>

S Gray had indicated that he had had problems with the Windfarm construction meaning that deer weren't where they usually were on Glenmoriston. It was discussed that the deer were not with either Balmacaan or Dundreggan.

## 8. Out of Season Licences

Dundreggan indicated that they would be using Out of Season & Night Shooting for Sika and in the case of any incursions.

## 9. SNH Update.

It was noted that the Review of Authorisations conducted by SNH had been completed and published. The main findings of the review had been that more transparency should be built into the systems and that financial constraints can be a reason for Authorisations being sought.

SNH also updated the Group on the recent Review of Deer Management that had been sent to the Environment Minister and subsequently published on the 18<sup>th</sup> November. This has also been discussed under the Chairman's Report earlier in the meeting.

Others in the meeting commented that although the report was mostly factual it was indicated that not everyone may be in agreement with some of the main conclusions that had been summarised. Within the

report a review of the DMG Assessments had been carried out. The issue of the presentation of count data was again discussed and it was felt by some that it might have been helpful to have used detailed sub-group data to reflect the nuances on the ground as well as it seemingly being a retrograde step to focus so heavily on numbers and not habitat impacts, fuelling the general public perception of “high” deer numbers.

## **10. Any Other Business.**

**10.1** The issue of Sporting Rates was discussed and that owners would be receiving assessment documents soon. It was indicated that what individuals put in the assessment is important as Assessors will take what is written and it may be difficult to amend the assessment once a cost has been derived.

**10.2** The issue of the Affric and Kintail DMG Cull was discussed. The question was asked why Forest Enterprise had not reached their stag cull in season. WF (Chair of Affric and Kintail DMG) reported on the FE stag cull (63 stags culled out of a target of 100 agreed previously with the Group). At the Affric and Kintail meeting on 31<sup>st</sup> October, FE had indicated that South Affric cull had been difficult to get during the season and had indicated at that stage that there was a possibility that the Organisation may seek an Out of Season Application to shoot the remaining 37 stags. This had since been applied for to SNH but had as yet not been granted. The A&K Group had discussed with FE mitigation actions of trying to avoid shooting mature stags. WF also indicated that NTS had applied for an Out of Season Authorisation to shoot stags early in the season in 2016.

Wester Guisachan explained that as they sit on the march with FE, and given that they've been seeing a lack of stags on the ground, they would be happy to take a collaborative approach with FE and assist or come to an agreement if FE were finding it too hard.

WF indicated that he would be happy in principle to support this approach and offered to speak to FE in the first instance. WF reiterated that deer management is going through a period of change and it is possible that things will happen that not everyone is in agreement with, but that there were opportunities for people to work together which would require an element of trust. In the case of the Out of Season application from FE, it was recognised that it was a tall order to get 100 stags in season, so it perhaps wasn't unexpected that an Authorisation would be applied for. It was important to emphasise that the 100 stags had been part of an agreed target which was part of a working population model. It was also recognised that there were few stags in South Affric during the main season but that it was a wintering area for stags which was an ongoing cause for concern.

It was emphasised that the Group has been in discussion before about numbers of hinds within the Glenmoriston Group and that if the Group wished to keep wintering stags within the Group area, they should be considering their own management of hinds to ensure that there will be stags to shoot in future. The issue of the use of fencing was also discussed - it was noted that the Review of Deer Management had made reference to the use and cost of fencing (particularly in the context of the considerable cost to the public purse).

Following an offer from WF, Wester Guisachan agreed that there could be merit in attending the Affric and Kintail DMG meetings in future, given the shared deer population. WF agreed to add the Group to the circulation list and agreed to talk to FE.

**Action: WF**

## **10. Date of next meeting.**

The date of the next meeting will be **15<sup>th</sup> March 2017**, at the Memorial Hall at 7pm.

## Paper 2017/1b

Summary of Actions from meeting on **November 30<sup>th</sup>** at 7pm

<b>Action</b>	<b>Who</b>
<i>4.1 DMG to send written response to SNH regarding the use of South Ross deer count figures in the Deer Review</i>	LS
<i>5.1 Main plan updated</i>	AM
<i>5.3 Working plan put together and work schedule circulated to Group</i>	LS
<i>5.4 Version control and page numbers added</i>	AM
<i>5.5 Wording in Constitution amended</i>	LS
<i>6.0 List of expenditure drawn up and subscriptions issue to Group</i>	LS/AM
<i>9. Chair of Affric and Kintail to speak to Forest Enterprise and Wester Guisachan added to circulation list/DMG invitation to attend meetings.</i>	WF