

Meeting of Glenmoriston Deer Management Group held at Glenmoriston Millenium Hall, Invermoriston on Wednesday 29th November 2017 at 2.30pm

Present

Martin Girvan	DMG Chair. Ceannacroc
Doug Gilbert	Dundreggan, Trees for Life
Alan Common	Dundreggan, Trees for Life
Linzi Seivwright	DMG Secretary
Jimmy Gibb	Balmacaan
Sinclair Coghill	SNH
Wat Forbes	Corrimony
Mike Toms	Community Representative
Steven Miller	Achlain
Peter Baker	Achlain
Simon Mclaughlin	RSPB Corrimony
Russell Cooper	Forest Enterprise
Willie Fraser	Affric and Kintail DMG

1. Apologies

Lynda Campbell	DMG Treasurer, Corriclair
Steven Gray	Glenmoriston
Ian Reynard	Wester Guisachan
Alan McIntosh	Wester Guisachan
Nout Kwint	Corrimony
Alison McKnight	Consultant

The Chairman welcomed Achlain formally to the Group and introduced Peter Baker as the Agent for the Estate.

2. Draft Minutes of Meeting of held on 16th August 2017

Paper 2017/7a

The issue was again raised that Draft Minutes from November 2016 (Paper 2017/1a) had not fully captured the detail of the discussion relating to a report provided by the Chairman of Affric and Kintail. This matter was concluded under Agenda Item 12.

The minutes from the meeting on August 16th were approved by Mike Toms and seconded by Wat Forbes.

3. Matters Arising from Meeting held on March 15th 2017

Paper 2017/5b

Action	Who
3. LS to chase outstanding cull returns from W. Guisachan, Tomcrasky, Balnacarn and Hilton. Actioned	LS
3. Working plan to be put together including updated culls and revised population models in time for November meeting. Actioned – WP to be circulated.	LS
3. Cull figures for FE for 2015/16 be asked for and circulated. Revisions to boundaries also to be discussed at the next meeting. Actioned- Discussed under Item 8	LS & FE
6. LS to contact Ali McKnight to provide a proposal for DMG Habitat Impact Assessment to be agreed with SNH and discussed at November meeting. Discussed under Item 6.	LS & AM
10. LS to circulate Deer Health Survey samples. Actioned at meeting.	LS

4. Proposed Culls 2017/18 & Population Model

4.1 Cull Returns and Proposed Culls.

The Group updated stag cull returns, hinds culled to date and proposed culls (Table 1). Note FE figure has been put in as a single figure – a breakdown between properties will be provided in due course.

Table 1. DMG Cull Targets and Returns.

Property	Cull Target (Plan)			Actual 2017/18 (as of Nov 29th 2017)			Roe	Roe	Roe	Sika	Sika	Sika	Feral Pigs	Feral Pigs	Feral Pigs	Actual 2016/17 (as of March 2017)		
	Stags	Hinds	Calves	Stags	Hinds	Calves	Bucks	Does	Kids	Stags	Hinds	Calves	Males	Females	Juveniles	Stags	Hinds	Calves
Corriclair	20	50	As per cull	18	11	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	18	45	19
Ceannacroc	31	40	As per cull	31	18	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	31	36	14
Wester Guisachan	31	40	As per cull	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	14	22	6
Tomcrasky	31	19	As per cull	27	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	25	6	0
Balnacarn	7	1	As per cull	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0
Total	100	100	As per cull	59	24	4	0			0	0		0	0	0	73	64	20
Dunreggan	20	35	15	15	25	17	0	0	0	4	2	0	0	0	0	18	33	15
Hilton	5	0	As per cull	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
RSPB Corrimony	10	3	As per cull	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	7	7
Corrimony (Girvan)	10	7	As per cull	10	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	7	3
Glenmoriston	35	65	35	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	38	41	17
Balmacaan	35	40	As per cull	43	30	15	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	45	40	9
Total	115	150		72	57	32	0	0	0	4	2		0	0	0	112	128	51
Achlain	20	30	As per cull	14	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	15	8	5
NFE Portclair	0	0		115	0	0	14	0	0	32	0	0	0	0	0	148	119	73
NFE Alltsigh	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	6	3
NFE Dalreichart	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	3
NFE Bhlaraidh	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	7	5
Total Group	255	330		278	92	36	14	0	0	37	2	0	0	0	0	377	384	179

5. Out of Season Authorisations

Dunreggan reported that they would likely be applying for a Night Shooting Authorisation to shoot sika in blocks and in woodland as well as an OOS for sika, red and roe in enclosed woodland only.

Ceannacroc informed the Group that they may apply for a Night Shooting Authorisation to tackle hinds damaging silage bales.

Forest Enterprise indicated that they would be applying for both NSA and OOS.

6. DMG Training & Funding Update

Unfortunately due to communication issue, Ali McKnight has been unable to send a detailed quote for the HIA work but the amount quoted had been to cover 180 plots (3 sub areas).

The Group were asked who already could provide data, and RSPB indicated that they were carrying out extensive upland monitoring and would be willing to share those data with the Group. SM also offered to help the group with collating the data if required.

Dunreggan also indicated that they had woodland monitoring data which they would share with the Group and that they would be happy to be part of the wider group monitoring of upland habitats and would add additional points themselves if required.

The Group had a discussion about the best way forward in terms of dividing up points (and cost) across the Group. SNH indicated that there was a contribution of £1800 which was available to the Group to assist with Training, Preparation of the Survey and Data Analysis. SNH also indicated that despite the cost implication of this survey, the Group would be required to repeat every 3 to 5 years – not annually. It was emphasised that if the voluntary approach to deer management was to continue, it was the responsibility of land owners/managers to demonstrate that they are delivering sustainable deer management. By carrying out the Habitat monitoring in May, this would be a positive step in setting up a baseline which would be used to inform future management.

Achlain indicated that as a result of renewable energy surveys that would be taking place next year, they may only have a limited amount of plots that would be required across the remaining area of the estate.

The following course of action was agreed:

In addition to the Grant available from SNH, the Group agreed to explore possible sources of additional funding through the Windfarm Community Grants. **Action Point 1: MG.**

In the meantime, the Group agreed to go ahead with training in March subject to SNH funding (date to be agreed asap). **Action Point 2: GM/LS**

It was agreed that a detailed proposal would be circulated around the group with a breakdown of costs per property. **Action Point 3: LS/AM.**

It was agreed in principle, to carry out the full DMG survey in April/May (subject to conditions above).

SNH reminded the Group that members could be eligible for Moorland Management Options under the Agri-Environment Climate Scheme.

<https://www.ruralpayments.org/publicsite/futures/topics/all-schemes/agri-environment-climate-scheme/management-options-and-capital-items/moorland-management/>

LS to add Habitat Impact Maps to working plan **Action Point 4: LS**

7. Access Issues

Achlain indicated that an increasing number of people had been using the windfarm road for access. MG indicated that Corriclair and Ceannacroc had been working collaboratively to improve joint access to Munros. The Heading For the Scottish Hills website was being updated to improve communication to access takers and to ensure a collaborative approach to communication on access. **Action Point 5: MG**

<http://www.outdooraccess-scotland.com/Practical-guide/public/heading-for-the-scottish-hills>

9. Group Actions

The issue of feral pigs was raised and it was noted that the area of Aberarder has been experiencing increasing problems of damage. Graeme Taylor from SNH had been meeting with interested parties to try and resolve issues and so far 50 pigs had been shot. FE reported that so far 9 had been shot. It was discussed that in the Forest of Dean, it was estimated that 85% of the population needed to be culled in order just to stabilize the population that over 90% was required to reduce – highlighting the problems associated with population control once established. Pigs were particularly attracted to reseeded areas and posed a problem for deer fencing.

It was suggested that this Group could explore the issue in more detail and perhaps look to contributions from Windfarm Grants to try and assist. **Action Point 6: DMG Members**

9. Treasurer's Report

LS provided an update on current funds from LC.

- Current Balance: £33.58 in the bank as of 14/9/17.
- Income: £135.00 from Hilton
- Expenditure: £1223 (£1200 Secretariat, £23.00 Hall hire).

Secretary to circulate subs with minutes. **Action Point 7: LS**

10. SNH Update

SNH updated the Group on their "enhanced approach" following the SNH review and recommendations from the Minister in July 2017. SNH would be seeking to extend and strengthen current Section 7 Agreements. All DMG had been informed of their progress following the 2016 Assessment and a league table of DMGs had been circulated. SNH informed the Group that they would be due for another assessment in 2019 so it was essential to be able to demonstrate that the Group were delivering on the actions detailed in the Working Plan. Although the assessment in 2016 identified that the Group has some way to go, the updates to the plan and the introduction of a Working Plan for the Group should help address this and the Group should continue to maintain progress with delivering the DMP. In particular SNH would be looking to Groups to have implemented HIA across the DMG area.

11. ADMG Update

WF provided the Group with an update from ADMG. The Group were advised that ADMG is encouraging all Groups to ensure that they are delivering on their Deer Management Plans and to focus on implementing Habitat Impact Assessments. WF reported that he had been asked to give a presentation on behalf of Affric and Kintail DMG (alongside 2 other DMGs) on their progress to date at the recent meeting of the Deer Management Round Table. A common theme in all three presentations had been recognising the current challenges to managing deer in a changing political climate and the pressures of continuously being assessed. It was discussed that the outcome of the SNH Deer Review had put many Groups on the back foot.

WF also updated the Group on a Deer Panel that had recently been set up by the Environment Minister to explore some of the recommendations from the ECCLR Committee. The panel consists of Simon Pepper (Chair), Andrew Barbour, Jayne Glass with support from Robin Callander and Richard Cooke as an external advisor. The Group were being given 18 months to report to the Minister.

12. Affric and Kintail DMG Update

WF indicated that NTS has increased their hind cull this year to make up for the shortfall from last year. He indicated that some Group members would be taking part in Helicopter Assisted Cull Training in association with SNH. This would involve one days training safety, accessing/departing from helicopter and training in the use of specialist carcass extraction equipment. The second day would involve the use of a helicopter for the deployment of personnel to remote and inaccessible areas and the use of helicopter to extract carcasses. The operation would be focussed at the west end of the Group area where estates have been struggling to get hinds.

It was also mentioned that South Ross Liaison Group had indicated a need to meet to talk about deer movements within and between the 5 groups that make up the South Ross cluster.

13. Any Other Business

13.1 The issue regarding what should be included in minutes was raised and it was agreed that if individuals did not want an issue or a comment minuted, that this should be stated clearly.

13.2 Ceannacroc indicated that they were in the early stages of looking at 4 new woodland blocks of 24.9 ha.

Paper 2017/10 a & b Minutes & MA

13.3 The issue of increased poaching activity was raised. NTS had noted that 7 calves had been shot the previous week and there had been reports of activity on Loch Ness with lurchers.

13.4 Balmacaan indicated that it may increase the hind cull up to 50 hinds (plus calves).

14. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Group would be held in February in the Millenium Hall, Invermoriston (date to be agreed). It was agreed that afternoon meetings suited members better.

Paper 2017/10b Summary of Action Points

<i>Action</i>	<i>Who</i>
1. Explore possible sources of additional funding through the Windfarm Community Grants	MG
2. Group to go ahead with training in March subject to SNH funding (date to be agreed asap).	LS & DMG members
3. Detailed proposal to be circulated around the group with a breakdown of costs per property	LS & AM
4. Habitat Impact Maps added to working plan	LS
5. The Heading For the Scottish Hills website updated to improve communication to access takers and to ensure a collaborative approach to communication on access	MG
6. Group to explore the issue of feral pigs in more detail and perhaps look to contributions from Windfarm Grants to try and assist	DMG Members
7. Secretary to circulate annual subs	LS