

Meeting of Glenmoriston Deer Management Group at Glenmoriston Memorial Hall, Invermoriston on 14th August 2018 at 7pm

Present

Martin Girvan	DMG Chair. Ceannacroc
Martin Girvan Jnr	Ceannacroc
Lynda Campbell	DMG Treasurer, Corriclair
Doug Gilbert	Dundreggan, Trees for Life
Callum Fraser	Dundreggan, Trees for Life
Allan Common	Dundreggan, Trees for Life
Graham Wood	Dundreggan, Trees for Life
Alan McIntosh	Wester Guisachan
Mike Toms	Community Representative
Jimmy Gibb	Balmacaan
Wat Forbes	Corrimony
Alex Dunnings	Achlain
Steven Miller	Achlain
Clive Meikle	Achlain
Simon Mclaughlin	RSPB Corrimony
Andrew Marsham	Tomchrasky Forest
Edward Poore	Balnacarn
Tom Girvan	Tomchrasky
Russell Cooper	Forest Enterprise
Steven Gray	Glenmoriston
Linzi Seivwright	DMG Secretary
Sinclair Coghill	SNH
Alison McKnight	Consultant

1. Apologies

Ian Reynard	Wester Guisachan
Nout Kwint	Wester Guisachan
Rory McLeod	
Willie Fraser	Affric and Kintail DMG

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2 Draft Minutes of Meeting of held on 7th March

Paper: 2018/1a

WF asked that the Minutes reflected the AGM having taken place with a break in the minutes to reflect the newly elected committee. The minutes from the meeting on 7th March were approved by Lynda Campbell and seconded by Simon Mclaughlin.

Action	Who
1. FE/FCS to provide groups with available data on Peatlands, HIA and woodland expansion. LS had received maps from RC and would circulate to Group.	RC
2. The Heading For the Scottish Hills website updated to improve communication to access takers and to ensure a collaborative approach to communication on access. This had been actioned by MG.	MG
3. MT to prepare a presentation for the local community. Estates and LS to provide photos and information. MT asked Group members for around 6 photos from each property to illustrate a talk - these were asked to be sent to LS or to MT directly. Action Point 1	MT, DMG members and LS
4. Undertake review of Working Plan in preparation for 2019 Assessment. This had been completed and the Health Check undertaken with the Chair prior to the meeting. Results of the HC would be sent to members.	MG & LS
5. Check whether Leveshie Woods SSSI requires to be monitored. AM had discussed this with Glenmoriston Estate.	LS & AM
6. & 7. Funding sources to be explored. LS was still awaiting a response from Blue Energy as to when Funding might be opened. Another possible source of funding from Sorabus was raised by Martin Girvan Jnr and he would forward details to LS. Action Point 2	LS/MG & LC
8. Final costings/quote from Ali McKnight to be circulated to Group with a deadline for response. AM agreed to forward final costings for the Habitat Work undertaken in light of some changes to the original work plan. Action Point 3	LS/AM

4. Updated Working Plan

Paper: 2018/2

4.1 Cull Updates

The Group updated proposed stag and hind cull targets (Table 1). The upper value of proposed culls has been used in the table.

Table 1. DMG Cull Targets and Returns.

Property	Cull Target (Plan)			Actual 2017/18 (as of 7th March)			Roe	Roe	Roe	Sika	Sika	Sika	Feral Pigs	Feral Pigs	Feral Pigs	Actual 2016/17		
	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	63	28	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	18	45	19
Ceannacroc	31	50	As per cull	31	50	14	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	31	36	14
Wester Guisachan	20	40	As per cull	23	37	25	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	14	22	6
Tomcrasky	25	19	As per cull	25	27	19	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	25	6	0
Balnacarn	7	1	As per cull	1	4	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0
Total	100	110	As per cull	80	118	60	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	73	64	20
Dunreggan	25	40	20	15	35	23	0	0	0	5	8	4	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	5	9	As per cull	4	7	2	7	4	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	7	7
Corrimony (Girvan)	9	7	As per cull	10	4	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	7	3
Glenmoriston	25	65	35	51	40	48	0	0	0	5	1	4	0	0	0	38	41	17
Balmacaan	40	40	As per cull	43	48	24	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	45	40	9
Total	109	161		123	134	99	7	4	5	10	9	8	0	0	0	112	128	51
Achlain	20	25	As per cull	14	26	9	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	15	8	5
NFE Portclair	115	0		122	53	32	16	4	3	33	3	13	2	2	3	148	119	73
NFE Alltsigh	0	0		4	4	4	0	2	3	20	13	5	0	0	0	3	6	3
NFE Dalreichart	10	10		10	6	4	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	7	3
NFE Bhlaraidh	0	0		9	4	4	1	3	1	9	7	4	1	0	0	8	7	5
Total Group	374	356		380	408	240	24	13	12	75	34	30	3	2	3	377	384	179

RC was asked about culls in South Affric in the neighbouring DMG and he reported that 43 stags had been culled to date.

4.2 Population Models and South Ross Count

LS indicated that the population models for Sub-Areas 1, 2 & 3 would be updated following the meeting and recirculated to the group.

It was emphasised that the population models were only as good as the information available. Unfortunately as the South Ross count had now been postponed to 2020, the Group was advised to provide the Secretary with as much information as possible particularly relating to recruitment counts and winter mortality, as these influenced the population models greatly.

The Group discussed the possible use of drone technology to carry out counts. MG (Jnr) indicated that he would find out more about this from a company he know was looking to develop technology in this area and would forward any relevant information to the DMG.

Action Point 4.

4.3 Peatland Restoration Update

AM had contacted Andrew McBride (Peatland Officer in SNH) to discuss possible funding opportunities. It was suggested that a feasibility study followed by a detailed action plan could possibly be funded in future if funding becomes available again. The Group agreed in principle that this was something that they would like to consider and that AM had approval from the Group to progress interest in this should the application window become available before the meeting in the Spring.

SM indicated that the RSPB had conducted a survey of peatlands and had carried out some restoration work. Details to be sent to LS for inclusion in the working plan.

Action Point 5.

4.4 Native woodland condition

SG provided an update on Leveshie Woods SSSI. Forestry consultants had been approached with regards to the SSSI and wheels were in motion carry out the necessary work. There was also discussion underway with FCS with regards to 140ha native woodland planting scheme.

LS updated the Group on he availability of the Forestry Cooperation Grant which had replaced the ECAF scheme in the old SRDP. This funding would cover the cost of up to 40 days of consultant time to carry out a Survey of existing and potential woodland opportunities within a DMG area. This could be used to look at native woodlands, woodland expansion opportunities as well as providing information about the availability of shelter and status of fencing within the group area. The group discussed the potential impact of feral pigs on fences and indicated that increases in fences becoming porous were leading to increases in deer accessing exclosures. LS to look into funding for the Group.

Action Point 6.

4.5 2019 Assessment

This was discussed under matters arising.

5. DMG Habitat Training & Survey

AM provided an update to the Group on the Training and work undertaken to date. The final plots had been finished on the previous Saturday and fieldwork completed. As discussed under matters arising, AM indicated that she would come up with final costings once the data had been uploaded and analysed. Unfortunately the time taken per plot had been significantly underestimated due to the location of some of the random plots and their inaccessibility which had led to increased costs in carrying out the work. Whilst AM appreciated that she had provided a quote in good faith, she hoped that the DMG may consider covering some of the shortfall once the final costings had been calculated. With regards to the training, the majority of estates had been trained and those who had not been available on the day – AM had talked

through the methodology on the phone. Given the expectation that in future estate staff will be expected to repeat sampling of the plots in 3 years time, it was agreed that refresher training would be required.

AM confirmed that she had done the minimum number of plots required for each population model for the three main population models. RSPB indicated that they were keen to share their own monitoring data with AM for inclusion in the report. There had been a total of 212 plots in total but Achlain and FE had indicated that they had collected their own data and would forward this to AM – as was the case for Wester Guisachan, RSPB and Dundreggan. This left 152 plots that AM had done over 9 estates. Where possible AM had resampled the plots set up by Alan Boulton but there were about a third of plots that could not be relocated so new plots were set up. She also indicated that due to being late in starting the assessment whilst waiting on the outcome of the Funding Application (which in the end had been unsuccessful) – carrying out the work in August had been more difficult and therefore time consuming due to the need to be able to distinguish last year's browsing from this year's growth.

AM emphasised that she had used the Best Practice approach which should be able to identify macro changes over time. This placed impacts in the crude categories of Low, Med and High. There were also some plots with no impacts at all.

AM indicated that the initial results had shown the following:

Habitat	Low	Med	High	Zero
Dwarf Shrub Heath	38	15	3	4

The Group discussed the purpose of the HIA and it was explained that through looking at the impact of browsing, it was possible to flag up at an early stage where the habitat might be likely to deteriorate over time and therefore provide information about where management might need to be adjusted.

AM agreed to circulate data, maps and reports to the group (as well as the numbers of individuals trained) and that the Group would take on the responsibility for monitoring from there. The information would be linked to the population models in order to encourage the Group to set future population targets.

Action Point 7.

The question was asked of Dundreggan and RSPB that if their own monitoring showed high impacts, would they cull deer in response. Both responded that they would use habitat monitoring to inform culls moving forward. AM was asked about her general impression of the habitat condition and this years browsing levels. She responded that most of the recent impacts fell in the Low/Med categories and this was consistent with her overall impression of browsing and there was evidence in places of habitat recovering however, the heather had shown signs of heavy browsing in the past.

6. Funding Update

The issue of funding was discussed and it was reported that an application to SSE Invermoriston Community Windfarm for funding for HIA had been turned.

A further source of funding was being explored with Blue Energy.

Funding had been received from SNH who were making direct contributions to all DMGs of £1800 to go towards training and data analysis.

8. Access Issues

There were no access issues raised by the Group. MG indicated that the Heading For the Scottish Hills website had been updated to improve communication to access takers and to ensure a collaborative approach to communication on access

9. Training Update

TFL indicated that they had taken on a new trainee Calum Fraser. AC and MT also indicated they regularly gave talks to volunteer groups about deer management. SQWV was discussed and LS to circulate contact details for the scheme which was offering free larder inspections.

Action Point 8

10. Community Engagement

In light of the actions captured in the working plan, it was recognised that the Group could show good examples of local community engagement.

On the issue of DVCs historically there had been a numbers of hotspots within the group area but since collaboration with FCS had increased with regards to a boundary fence, numbers of incidences had decreased.

11. Out of Season Authorisations

Ceannacroc informed the Group that had a Night Shooting Authorisation to tackle hinds damaging silage bales. Dundreggan reported that they had applied 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 as per last year. This would be used until the end of March.

12. Treasurer's Report

LC provided an update on current funds

- Current Balance: £3828.18 in the bank including £1800 funding from SNH.
- Expenditure : £21.50 Hall hire, £120 web hosting and £3140 for Subs to ADMG.
- There would be an invoice from the Secretary to come.

13. SNH Update

SNH informed the Group that they would be due for another assessment in 2019 which would be held between 1st April to end May so it was essential to be able to demonstrate that the Group were delivering on the actions detailed in the Working Plan. The assessment will include all 101 criteria as with previous assessments but will focus in on 35 key areas for delivery, including Designated Sites, woodlands, peatlands and wider habitat impacts.

14. ADMG Update

There would be a Regional Meeting of ADMG to be held at the National Park offices in Balloch on 13th August with a site visit to Flanders Moss afterwards as well as a Regional Meeting to be held in Inverness on 21st November.

ADMG were conducting a survey of Sporting Rents and people were being encouraged to respond by the end of October.

People were being encouraged to ensure that staking information on the Heading for The Scottish Hills website is current and updated where required.

Nominations for Board members for SNH were currently being sought.

15. Other DMG Update

There wasn't anyone available from other DMGs to report.

16. Any Other Business

There was a brief discussion about Sporting Rates and interest in the number of appeals that had been made. It was noted that a date for appeals hearing in Inverness had been set as 4th December.

AM wished to thank all those involved in the Habitat Work and wished to acknowledge the support of everyone who had helped, including LS.

Paper 2018/3b Summary of Action Points

<i>Action</i>	<i>Who</i>
1. Group members to provide photos from each property to illustrate a talk - these were asked to be sent to LS or to MT directly.	DMG Members
2. Contact details for other potential funding sources to be sent to LS	MG (Jnr)
3. AM to revise Habitat Monitoring Quote and circulate to DMG	AM
4. Forward relevant information about use of drones to count deer to DMG	MG (Jnr)
5. RSPB to forward information regarding feasibility studies and completed peatland restoration work to LS.	SM
6. Funding sources to be explored	LS
7. Final data, reports and maps as well as numbers of individuals trained to be circulated by Ali McKnight and LS	LS/AM
8. LS to circulate SQWV contact details	LS