

## Meeting of Glenmoriston Deer Management Group at Glenmoriston Memorial Hall, Invermoriston on 4<sup>th</sup> December 2018 at 7pm

### Present

Martin Girvan	DMG Chair. Ceannacroc
Martin Girvan Jnr	Ceannacroc
Doug Gilbert	Dundreggan, Trees for Life
Callum Fraser	Dundreggan, Trees for Life
Allan Common	Dundreggan, Trees for Life
Alan McIntosh	Wester Guisachan
Jimmy Gibb	Balmacaan
Wat Forbes	Corrimony
Alex Dunnings	Achlain
Steven Miller	Achlain
Simon Mclaughlin	RSPB Corrimony
Andrew Marsham	Tomchrasky Forest
Steven Gray	Glenmoriston
Linzi Seivwright	DMG Secretary
Sinclair Coghill	SNH

### 1. Apologies

Lynda Campbell	DMG Treasurer, Corriclair
Ian Reynard	Wester Guisachan
Nout Kwint	Wester Guisachan
Willie Fraser	Affric and Kintail DMG
Mike Toms	Community Representative
Tom Girvan	Tomchrasky
Russell Cooper	Forest Enterprise

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

### 2 Draft Minutes of Meeting of held on 14<sup>th</sup> August

Paper: 2018/3a

The minutes from the meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> August were approved subject to the addition that RSPB were keen to share their own monitoring data with the consultant for inclusion in the HIA report.

### 3 Matters Arising from Meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> August

Paper: 2018/3b

Action	Who	Outcome
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	Ongoing
2. Contact details for other potential funding sources to be sent to LS	MG (Jnr)	Actioned
3. AM to revise Habitat Monitoring Quote and circulate to DMG	AM	Ongoing
4. Forward relevant information about use of drones to count deer to DMG	MG (Jnr)	Ongoing
5. RSPB to forward information regarding feasibility studies and completed peatland restoration work to LS.	SM	To be forwarded
6. Funding sources to be explored	LS	Covered under Item 4
7. Final data, reports and maps as well as numbers of individuals trained to be circulated by Ali McKnight and LS	LS/AM	Ongoing
8. LS to circulate SQWV contact details	LS	Actioned

4. Updated Working Plan

Paper: 2018/4

4.1 Cull Updates

The Group updated stag and hind culls to date (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 2018/19			Roe	Roe	Roe	Sika	Sika	Sika	Feral Pigs	Feral Pigs	Feral Pigs	Actual 2017/18 (as of 7th March)		
	Stags	Hinds	Calves	Stags	Hinds	Calves	Bucks	Does	Kids	Stags	Hinds	Calves	Males	Females	Juveniles	Stags	Hinds	Calves
Corriclair	20	50	As per cull				0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	18	63	28
Ceannacroc	31	50	As per cull	34	10	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	31	50	14
Wester Guisachan	20	40	As per cull	21	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	23	37	25
Tomcrasky	25	19	As per cull	23	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	25	27	19
Balmacarn	7	1	As per cull				0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	4	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>As per cull</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>60</b>
Dungreggan	25	40	20	18	19	6	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	15	35	23
Hilton	5	0	As per cull				0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
RSPB Corrimony	5	9	As per cull	4	5	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	7	2
Corrimony (Girvan)	9	7	As per cull	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	4	2
Glenmoriston	25	65	35	16	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	11	0	0	51	40	48
Balmacaan	40	40	As per cull	40	25	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	43	48	24
<b>Total</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>161</b>		<b>88</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>99</b>
Achlain	20	25	As per cull	14	6	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	14	26	9
NFE Portclair	115	0					0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	122	53	32
NFE Alltsigh	0	0					0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	4	4
NFE Dalcreichart	10	10					0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	6	4
NFE Bhlaraidh	0	0					0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	4	4
<b>Total Group</b>	<b>374</b>	<b>356</b>		<b>180</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>380</b>	<b>408</b>	<b>240</b>

4.2 Winter Mortality & Recruitment Counts

LS thanked those who had provided information prior to the meeting. Balmacaan reported that there was almost 0 recruitment last spring and that calving this summer was around 14%. Ceannacroc reported that there was about 5% recruitment in the spring with about 16 calves per 100 hinds born this summer. Achlain reported that recruitment last spring was around 8-9% with 18% this year.

4.3 Updated Population Models & Targets

LS had updated the population models to reflect the poor recruitment in the spring and the poor calving in summer 2018. LS explained that the detailed information on recruitment and mortality was really useful and would further update the population models accordingly based on information supplied at the meeting.

4.4 South Ross Count 2019

The Group discussed the uncertainty with deer numbers and the impact of the 2018 winter on recruitment and calving in 2019. It was discussed that other members of the wider South Ross area had already agreed to carry out a foot count in Spring 2019 to better understand the impact on the population. SNH were asked if a count could be brought forward but it was indicated that SNH only had resources to count every 5 years and that the next helicopter count had been scheduled for Winter 2020. The reason for the 3 year count schedule was due to the availability at that time of the ECAF Fund which had the provision for funding for a count built in. That Fund had subsequently been pulled due to auditing issues. Balmacaan indicated that the ground was too difficult to count on foot and some members offered to assist if more personnel were needed. In principle, the group agreed to count where possible in Spring 2019 – and this information would be used to set the culls for 2019/20.

**Action 1: DMG members**

Glenmoriston indicated that they hadn't yet started winter feeding but would get an idea of numbers. Glenmoriston also indicated that the correct area for the estate should be 4,065 ha which was different by 560 ha. This would affect the density figure moving forward. There was also a discussion about the need for the Group to consider the available range for deer. LS indicated that she would be attempting to map fence lines and available shelter with information from the Group.

**Action 2: LS**

Achlain indicated that they hadn't counted the whole of the Estate – just the windfarm area. They indicated that they would ask for figures from the Windfarm Company to pass to the DMG. There was discussion about whether the open range area in Sub-Area 4 would be counted in the count scheduled for 2020. Achlain indicated that all fences had been inspected and were secure. Further information is required on the range open to deer.

**Action 3: Achlain/LS**

## **4.5 Native Woodland Condition and Woodland Expansion – Forestry Cooperation Grant**

LS had asked the Group for information about the condition of native woodland as well as information on historic, current and proposed woodland schemes in order to update the working plan. It was explained that targets had been set for all DMGs to ensure that 60% of herbivore impacts in native woodland be in the Low or Medium impact class. In updating the plan (due to the increased area and new members) data from the Native Woodland Survey for Scotland had indicated that within the Group area impacts had been recorded at 42%. However, it was noted that the NWSS survey had been published in 2014 and the data had been collected over 7 years, so it was possible that woodland condition could have changed since the original survey. LS had looked at the coverage of Woodland Grant Schemes (Phase 3) over the Group area and this had identified that 408 ha of native woodland recorded as very High or High had been covered by a scheme. Assuming that impacts would have been reduced as part of the scheme, this brought the figure to 54%.

Glenmoriston indicated that since the plan had been developed, they had undertaken 150ha of new woodland schemes and 37ha had been completed in Wester Guisachan. Achlain indicated that they were currently working on schemes where fenced clearfell would be extended to the open ground. Balmacaan indicated that they were currently in discussion with FCS about opening up 5 blocks to deer which had been refused previously due to funding issues.

Glenmoriston provided an update on the SSSI and reported that they had provided GPS routes of fence lines and that a proposal had been put together. FCS were going to dig out historic information and get back to Glenmoriston's Forestry Agent but had yet to do so. It was clear that the juniper was being restored. SNH indicated that they would follow this up with FCS.

**Action 4: SNH.**

## **4.6 Habitat Impact Results and Actions**

The Chair updated the Group on progress with funding opportunities and that he, Martin Girvan Jr and LS had met with Angus Robertson to discuss a possible funding application to assist the Group with the Habitat Impact Assessment project. So far the data had been collected by the contractor but further work would be required to analyse the data and produce a report for the Group. It was hoped the funding might be available to the Group to complete the project. LS agreed to get an invoice from Ali McKnight for work completed to date and an estimate for the completion of the project. LS would then make the application which would not be decided until Spring 2019.

**Action 5: LS/ AM**

In the meantime, Ali McKnight had provided a verbal update to the group at the last meeting that most of the impacts had been low/moderate and it had been noted that the highest impacts had been concentrated in a couple of localised areas. It was agreed by the Group that once further information had been gathered on the Spring population from the count, this would be used along with an analysis of the range available to deer and the HIA results to inform decisions on population targets moving forwards.

## 4.7 Peatland Restoration

RSPB indicated that they had undertaken some restoration of peatland which had involved blocking about 1.5km of drains (about 40ha of peatland in total). They agreed to provide information to LS for inclusion in the working plan. In considering a possible peatland feasibility study for the Group, it was agreed that it would be useful for LS to undertake an analysis of the areas of deep peat within the Group area (using the peat-depth map) and to see which estates might be eligible.

**Action 6: LS**

## 4.8 Deer Vehicle Collisions

The Group reported no deer vehicle collisions but reported 4 involving feral pigs. AC had heard of 2 in last fortnight (1 adult and 1 half grown) and 2 had been reported near Achlain (both half-grown). SC suggested that the group could report incidences to a national website. Although the phone app was no longer available this could still be done on-line. It was noted that since the investment in fencing, DVC's had been reduced at Leveshie.

On the subject of feral pigs, the Group discussed the growing evidence of their spread. The following culls were reported: Ceanacroc -2, Glenmoriston -11, Achlain -2. It was reported that likely as a result of clear-felling activity at Bhlaraidh, there had been movement towards Dundreggan.

It was discussed that movement of pigs would unlikely be stopped by fences and that fences that separated FCS blocks from the main DMG area were becoming porous and therefore should be included in the Group area. Without Forest Enterprise present to discuss the issue it was agreed that MG would raise the issue with RC for discussion as an Agenda item at the next meeting.

**Action 7: MG/RC**

## 4.9 CWD and Lyme Disease

The Group discussed the ongoing need for vigilance in preventing the introduction of CWD to the UK. It was also reported that Swine Fever is spreading through western Europe and Belgium. There was nothing to report on Lyme Disease.

## 4.10 Venison Update

WF had recently attended a course on Larder Hygiene with North Highland College.

## 4.11 Economic Survey

The Group discussed the need for good information gathered at the DMG level on the costs/benefits of deer management to the Group. SG indicated that some economic information from estates had been gathered previously from the 12 Loch Ness rural communities. The group agreed to provide information as part of a survey that LS would be circulating. It was agreed that rather than a generic survey being sent to all, LS would ask for specific information from each estate.

**Action 8:DMG Members/ LS**

## 4.12 Deer Welfare -larder data

The group discussed the need to be able to demonstrate that welfare of the wider herd was being safeguarded and what information could be gathered to support this. The issue of cull weights was discussed. JG reported that stags this year, although had shown signs of fat, had shown a decrease in overall body weight by about a stone. It was suggested that the dry summer and late rut could have contributed to this. Forest Enterprise had reported that most of the hinds they had shot were pregnant but it was commented that this related to woodland deer and probably didn't reflect the situation in open range herd. DMG members were asked to keep a note of the number of pregnant hinds shot where possible.

**Action 9:DMG Members**

## 7. ADMG Health Check

Papers: 2018/5 & 6

LS reported on the outcome of the DMG Health Check which had been undertaken before the meeting in August in order to prepare the Group for the official SNH Assessment which would be carried out in Spring 2019.

LS had circulated by email copies of both the Assessment itself (which had 101 criteria) and also a summary of the Health Check which highlighted the strong and weak points of the Group.

Much of what had been discussed at the meeting and the updates to the Working Plan would ensure that the Group would be in the best position possible come the assessment. However, there were still some areas where more information was required and LS would be contacting individual estates in due course.

The issue about welfare was raised again in relation to the DMG health check which required groups to be able to demonstrate how welfare of the herd was being considered / safeguarded. LS expressed concern about the expectations on groups in the Assessment process and the need for clarity on what indicators would be used by SNH.

Once the HIA results had been completed, the group would have information on habitat impacts as well as information on available shelter. LS also requested that if individual estates kept their own information on body weights –it would be useful to provide averages for the last 5 years. There probably wouldn't be any benefit in the data being collated as a group as individual estates may have different culling policies, but it would be interesting to look at trends across individual estates. **Action 10: DMG Members**

It was discussed that the deer management plans had evolved to be much more like land management plans. It was also recognised that this provided an opportunity for the Group to be able to demonstrate what landowners had done and to make land ownership something that Society should value.

## 8. Funding Update

This was covered under item 4.6.

## 9. Access Issues

There were no access issues to discuss.

## 10. Training Update

The Group update LS on training and qualifications of deer managers:

Of the 13 deer managers within the Group area, 11 have DSC Level 1 and 7 have DSC Level 2.

## 11. Community Engagement

MT was not present to provide an update on the presentation for the Community but it was agreed that it would be useful to have a Community meeting. WF suggested that it might be good to change the venue to provide an opportunity for community members from another section of the DMG area to attend. It was agreed that the next meeting be held in Drumnadrochit. LS to organise a venue. **Action 11: LS**

## 12. Out of Season Authorisations

MG reported on an OOS for Ceannacroc which would be running until the end of the season. JG reported that a Night Shooting Authorisation has been applied for the farm at Shewglie. Dundreggan had OOS/Night Shooting Authorisations in place until the end of the season.

## **FOR NOTING**

### **13. Treasurer's Report**

The Treasurer was not present but had provided the following by email to the Secretary prior to the meeting. Note this was not discussed as an oversight.

<b>GLENMORISTON DEER MANAGEMENT GROUP</b>				
<b><u>INCOME/EXPENDITURE 2017/2018 - 01.11.17- 01.11.18</u></b>				
			£	£
Subscription income from members 2018				4,957.00
HIA Grant from SNH				1,800.00
				<b>6,757.00</b>
Expenditure	09.01.18	Hall expenditure (29.11.17)	20.50	
	07.03.18	ADMG Subscriptions 2017/18	3,100.40	
	07.03.18	Hall expenditure (07.03.18)	21.50	
	16.4.18	AMDG website hosting	120.00	
	22.8.18	Hall expenditure (14.08.18)	25.50	
	22.10.18	Secretariat expenditure	1,500.00	
				4,787.90
Surplus				<b>1,969.10</b>
<b>BANK POSITION</b>				
			£	
Bank opening	01.11.17	333.58		
Surplus		1,969.10		
Bank closing	01.11.18	<b>2,302.68</b>	(Statement 0008 dated 01.11.18)	

### **14. SNH Update**

Information relating to the 2019 DMG Assessment had already been discussed elsewhere in the meeting. SNH did provide an update on the progress of the Deer Working Group which is an independent group comprising Dr Andrew Barbour, Dr Jayne Glass and Robin Callander. The Group was expected to report to the Cabinet Secretary in April and it was likely that a report would be made public in June 2019.

### **15. ADMG Update**

LS reported on a Regional Meeting that had been held on the 21<sup>st</sup> November in Inverness which had been well attended with an update on Forestry matters from John Risby of FCS – who had updated the meeting on the situation with Grants and in particular the availability of the Forestry Cooperation Grant which was available to DMGs wishing to scope opportunities for woodland expansion or native woodland restoration.

### **16. Other DMG Update**

WF had asked that the Group be made aware that FE would be conducting counts over the winter in South Affric and Fasnakyle to help inform culls moving forwards. At the last meeting of Affric and Kintail meeting it had been agreed that it would be useful for a meeting to be held between Corriclair, W Guisachan and FE with the Chairs of both Groups present if possible. WF would be getting in touch to organise.

**17. Any Other Business** There was no other business discussed.

**18: Date and Time of Next Meeting.** LS to scope a venue in Drumnadrochit for an open meeting of the DMG (to be advertised) to be held at the end of March 2019.



## Paper 2018/7b Summary of Action Points

<i>Action</i>	<i>Who</i>
1. DMG to carry out a Spring count where possible.	<b>DMG Members</b>
2. LS to complete a map of fence lines and available shelter	<b>LS</b>
3. Achlain to provide information on deer counts and fences to LS	<b>Achlain</b>
4. SNH to follow up actions for the SSSI (Leveshie) with FCS (Cathering Wares)	<b>SNH</b>
5. HIA Funding application made to Community Windfarm fund	<b>LS</b>
6. LS to circulate a map of estates with Peatland in relation to a possible feasibility study	<b>LS</b>
7. The Chair to discuss fences with FE and include as an Agenda item at next meeting	<b>MG/RC</b>
8. LS to ask individual estates for specific information in coming months	<b>LS</b>
9. DMG members to keep records of whether hinds pregnant or not.	<b>LS</b>
10. Members to provide average weights for stags and hinds for last 5 years if possible.	<b>DMG Members</b>
11. LS to organise a date and venue for next meeting in Drumnadrochit and meeting to be advertised.	<b>LS</b>