

Meeting of Glenmoriston Deer Management Group

Held at Craigmorie Centre, Drumnadrochit, IV63 6X on 26th March at 6pm

Present

Martin Girvan	DMG Chair. Ceannacroc
Martin Girvan Jnr	Ceannacroc
Lynda Campbell	DMG Treasurer, Corrielaire
Doug Gilbert	Dundreggan, Trees for Life
Alan McIntosh	Wester Guisachan
Jimmy Gibb	Balmacaan
Graham Wood	Dundreggan
Alex Dunnings	Achlain
Alex Grigg	Hilton/Guisachan
Linzi Seivwright	DMG Secretary
Sinclair Coghill	SNH
Willie Fraser	Affric and Kintail DMG
Mike Toms	Community Representative
Robbie Rowantree	Observer

1. Apologies

Allan Common	Dundreggan, Trees for Life
Ian Reynard	Wester Guisachan
Steven Miller	Achlain
Nout Kwint	Wester Guisachan
Tom Girvan	Tomchrasky
Russell Cooper	Forest Enterprise
Steven Gray	Glenmoriston
Watt Forbes	Corrimony
Simon Mclaughlin	RSPB Corrimony

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2 Draft Minutes of Meeting of held on 4th December

Paper: 2018/7a

The minutes were approved -proposed by M. Girvan and Seconded by M. Toms.

3 Matters Arising from Meeting held on 4th December

Paper: 2018/7b

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

4. Updated Working Plan

Paper: 2018/4

4.1 Cull Updates

Members provided final cull numbers at the meeting.

4.2 Winter Mortality & Recruitment Counts

LS thanked those who had provided information prior to the meeting. Ceanacroc had completed a recruitment count, counting 50 stags, 260 hinds and 59 calves (recruitment 23% compared to 37% in 2016). Dundreggan had counted quite a bit of variation between groups with recruitment between 20-50%. They reported that the condition of hinds was good with strong calves. Balmacaan reported that calving/recruitment rate was still poor - probably around 10-12% but that condition of hinds was good although few hinds in calf. W Guisachan reported that hinds generally poor but some good calves if few with recruitment around 15%.

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 on recruitment and mortality to be gathered by members in the Spring 2019.

Action 1: DMG members

4.4 South Ross Count 2019

SNH confirmed that the South Ross Count was still being considered for Winter 2019/20 and that it would likely take place between January and the end of March ideally with snow cover. SNH will be aiming for snow cover and the cost will be shared between SNH the group being divided by the time spent on each estate. SNH will check weather Achlain and Inverwick are to be counted also. There followed a discussion on the property that borders Achalin and it was agreed that it would make sense for the entire open range to be counted. The Chair to contact the Glen Garry group and see if they might be interested in collaborating.

Action 2: SNH & MG

4.5 Native Woodland Condition and Woodland Expansion – Forestry Cooperation Grant

WF provided an update to the Group on the progress that Affric and Kintail DMG had made with the Forestry Cooperation Grant project. The consultant had now completed the desk exercise and would be progressing discussion with individual owners and crofters to looking at existing woodland condition and identify where there may be opportunities for further schemes. Although the project can only recommend schemes and there is no obligation, the Forestry Commission are looking ideally for schemes to be progressed to application stage. The Group members were asked if anyone had an interest in progressing such a project through the Forestry grant but W Guisachan, Ceanacroc and Corriclair did not feel it would be appropriate for them at this stage.

4.6 Habitat Impact Assessment

The Group were informed that their application to the Beinnuan Community Wind Benefit Fund was currently being considered and that the Group was due to hear any day.

4.7 Peatland Restoration

The Peatland Action Fund was no longer providing funds for collaborative feasibility studies but would be considering applications on an estate by estate basis with a deadline for applications the 15th May. LS was still to provide a peat condition map for the DMG but this would be circulated in the working plan to see which estates might be eligible.

Action 3: LS

4.8 Deer Vehicle Collisions

The Group reported no deer vehicle collisions but reported 6 involving feral pigs and we now posing more of a risk than deer. LS agreed to send round a link to the Deer Vehicle Collisions web site. It was discussed that fences didn't really pose any challenge to pigs as they seemed to be able to get through old ones quite easily.

On the issue of fences, the question about whether the culls from Glen Urhuhart should be included in the Group area and it was noted that FLS (old Forest Enterprise) were still to come back to the meeting regarding the state of fences in the east of Group but as there was no one present from FLS, this would be added to the Agenda for the next meeting.

Action 4: 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

One estate reported that having had an inspection for SQWV, they would be unlikely to be progressing an application. There had been so far no requirement from the Game Dealer.

4.11 Economic Survey

LS would be completing this and updating the Working Plan.

Action 5: 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. LS would be asking members to provide information.

Action 6: DMG Members

5. ADMG Health Check

LS has been working to address the outstanding actions and issues raised in the Health Check in preparation for the DMG Assessment which was scheduled for 9th May.

6. Funding Update

This was covered under item 4.6.

7. Access Issues

There were no access issues to discuss. LS to check information up to date on the Heading for the Scottish Hills website and to produce an access map for the Group.

Action 7: LS

8. Training Update

LS indicated that she would be updating the training audit in the Working Plan. There were several members who may be interested in completing an emergency first aid at work course -MG agreed to find out more information.

Action 8: MG

9. Community Engagement

LS agreed to provide an interim report for publication on the Group web site to keep the community informed of progress with delivering the plan and to keep the community updated with information and relevant issues.

10. Out of Season Authorisations

MG reported on an OOS for Ceannacroc which would be running until the end of the season. Dundreggan had OOS/Night Shooting Authorisations in place until the end of the season and that they would likely be renewing this for Sika for next year.

FOR NOTING

11 Treasurer's Report

The issue of subscriptions was raised by the Treasurer and a draft breakdown of costs per estate were circulated to the Group. There was discussion about the fairest way to divide the costs of the HIA (subject to success of the Grant Application). LC agreed to send around an amended subscription breakdown and that she would ask AMcK if each member could settle their proportion of the HIA project with her.

Action 9: LC

12. SNH Update

Information relating to the 2019 DMG Assessment had already been discussed elsewhere in the meeting. Each DMG would be provided with a Draft Assessment a week in advance of the meeting and would have the opportunity to provide additional evidence to support the scoring which would be agreed at the meeting. SNH also provided 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 later in the year now and it was likely that a report would be made public in the Autumn..

13. ADMG Update

The main area of work for ADMG was currently in supporting DMGs through the assessment process and in urging all Groups to attain the highest scores they could as the whole Sector would be judged on the outcome. ADMG were also encouraging DMGs to ensure that the person who had done their plan or who had completed the Health Check be present at the assessment to support the Group and were offering each Group £250 towards the cost of this.

16. Other DMG Update

WF updated that Affric and Kintail DMG had successfully completed a Peatland Action Feasibility Report and were in the process of completing a woodland project. The hind cull in South Affric had been a total of 10 hinds.

17. Any Other Business The Group discussed the use of drones to count deer with Achlain having scoped the possibility of this with a company. Whilst the uses for counting were for the time-being limited, due to restrictions on the radius that they could fly – it was noted that they could have uses in peatland survey work and this was being trialled at Ceannacroc.

Mike Toms indicated that due to his new role in Feral Pig issues, he would sadly not have time to continue as the Community Rep. The Chair thanked him for his contribution over the years to the DMG. Graham Wood kindly agreed to continue on his involvement with the Group as Community Representative.

18: Date and Time of Next Meeting. The next meeting would be held at Glenmoriston Memorial Hall, Invermoriston on **Wednesday 14th August at 6pm.**

Paper 2019/1b Summary of Action Points

Action	Who
1. Members to provide recruitment information	DMG Members
2. SNH to check extent of count and MG to contact neighbouring estates to Achalin	SNH & MG
3. LS to circulate a map of Peatland in relation to a possible feasibility study	LS
4. The Chair to discuss fences with FE and include as an Agenda item at next meeting	RC & MG
5. Economic information to be completed for Group	LS
6. Members to provide larder information if possible	DMG Members
7. LS to produce Access Map	MG/RC
8. MG to check out First Aid Courses	MG
9. LC to circulate revised subscriptions and liaise with HIA Consultant	Lc