

West Lochaber Deer Management Group

WEST LOCHABER DEER MANAGEMENT GROUP AGM

Friday 6th December 2015
10.30 – 13.15hrs
Glenfinnan House Hotel, Glenfinnan

Minute

Attendees:

Alistair Gibson – (DMG Chairman) (ADMG rep),
Glenfinnan
Bruce Taylor – (DMG Secretary & Treasurer), Fassfern
Robert Spence - Scamadale
James Coulston - Arisaig
Ian Leith and Jane Mitchell – Glenfinnan
Mrs Sandra De Ferranti, Meoble
Hugh MacLaren - Ranachan
Alan Currie – Fassfern/Achdaliu
Cathy Mayne - SNH
Graham Nairn – Annat/Achanellan/Glen Fada
John Morrison - Achnacarry Sporting
Alex MacDonald - Achnacarry south
Simon Laird - Achnacarry Sporting
Raymond Fraser – Meoble
John Jackson -FES
PC Angie Campbell (Strontian office) representing
Sergeant Campbell.

Apologies:

Pete MacLaren – (DMG Vice-chairman) Ranachan
Niall Rowantree – Ardnish
Iain Collier – Forestry Commission
John MacDonald – Scamadale
Mark Ferranti - Meoble, represented by Raymond
Fraser
Lynda Campbell, ADMG
John Tulloch - Fassfern/Achdaliu,
Mike Rhoden - Fassfern/Achdaliu
Craig Higgins - Glenfinnan
Graeme Taylor - SNH, represented by Cathy Mayne
Paolo Barardelli - Glen Mamie
Colin Lavin - FES represented by John Jackson

No.	Summary	Action
1	<p>Apologies and Introductions</p> <p>As recorded above.</p>	
2	<p>Election of Chairman and Office Bearers, and any co-options</p> <p>The committee remains as follows:</p> <p style="margin-left: 40px;">Alistair Gibson : Chairman Pete MacLaren : Vice-chairman Bruce Taylor : Secretary/Treasurer</p>	

<p>3</p>	<p>Wildlife Crime and Poaching</p> <p>13 reported deer accidents – more likely but not well reported as public not aware that it is a reportable accident. No poaching since last year's conviction. Telephone 101, Crimestoppers or local Fort William numbers 01397 709301 (front desk, FW Office) or 01967 402022 (Strontian) Vehicle registrations are stored on an intelligence database. Camera available. If no facilities in vehicle for transporting game then there is an issue. No wildlife crime officer but PC Angie Campbell interested in covering duty. PC David Sutherland covers South Lochaber to Shetland and Western Isles from Inverness office. It is therefore difficult to set up any wildlife crime related project but Rural Watch Scheme covers any rural crime via alert text. Allows local reporting of suspicious activity via text message rather than social media that is not used by police. Not just estate keepers but farmers estates, camp sites, hotels, pubs etc who can be alerted over a wider area. Covers missing people and travellers.</p> <p>Archie Gillies organises poacher patrol locally. Higher poaching activity around Christmas so now is the time to get the patrol going. Load spread between keepers on all estates.</p>																																																							
<p>4</p>	<p>Minutes of the last AGM and any Matters Arising</p> <p>Minutes proposed for acceptance by Ian Leith , seconded by Alistair Gibson</p> <p>No matters arising from the Minutes</p>																																																							
<p>5</p>	<p>Membership and Subscriptions, Email contact details</p> <p>A form was circulated around the attendance to update membership details.</p>																																																							
<p>6</p>	<p>Members Reports.</p> <p>i) 2015 Culls ii) Condition Report iii) Proposed Hind and Stag Cull for 2016</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="145 1429 1406 2085"> <thead> <tr> <th rowspan="2">Estate</th> <th colspan="3">Stags</th> <th colspan="2">Hinds</th> <th rowspan="2">Comments</th> </tr> <tr> <th>No.</th> <th>Av Wt(kg)</th> <th>Av Age</th> <th>Achieved</th> <th>Target Cull</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Glenfinnan</td> <td>25 (+5 in woods)</td> <td>95kg</td> <td>8</td> <td>14</td> <td>35-40</td> <td>Hinds, one over 60kg, age 4-5 yrs)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Forest Enterprise</td> <td>6 (+11 out of season)</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>9</td> <td></td> <td>Good condition 1 Roebuck 4 roe does</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Ranachan</td> <td>2</td> <td>85.7kg</td> <td></td> <td>1</td> <td></td> <td>Hind cull to reviewed due to high mortality</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Meoble</td> <td>24</td> <td>93.3 kg</td> <td>9</td> <td>8</td> <td>25</td> <td>Early start to season. Short of mature animals. Numbers down so 50% of normal hind cull proposed. Loss of stags to low ground where shot at Lettermore. Concern for future</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Achdaliu</td> <td>33</td> <td>88.9k g</td> <td>9.1</td> <td></td> <td>20</td> <td>Good condition. Lack of mature stags a concern. Hind cull reduced from 45 in previous year due to mortality.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Fassfern Forest</td> <td>52</td> <td>79.4 kg</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Estate	Stags			Hinds		Comments	No.	Av Wt(kg)	Av Age	Achieved	Target Cull	Glenfinnan	25 (+5 in woods)	95kg	8	14	35-40	Hinds, one over 60kg, age 4-5 yrs)	Forest Enterprise	6 (+11 out of season)			9		Good condition 1 Roebuck 4 roe does	Ranachan	2	85.7kg		1		Hind cull to reviewed due to high mortality	Meoble	24	93.3 kg	9	8	25	Early start to season. Short of mature animals. Numbers down so 50% of normal hind cull proposed. Loss of stags to low ground where shot at Lettermore. Concern for future	Achdaliu	33	88.9k g	9.1		20	Good condition. Lack of mature stags a concern. Hind cull reduced from 45 in previous year due to mortality.	Fassfern Forest	52	79.4 kg					
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	Achnacarry South Hill	43 (+ 5 in woods)	88.3 kg	11.1		30	Lack of stags, esp mature stags, so hard work and weight down. Reduces hind cull proposed due to low numbers. Mortality not as bad as 1999/2000 but not good.
	Glen Loy (Nairn)	14	95.9 kg			20	Deer scare and stag cull but condition very good. Good numbers of calves. Hind cull down due to high winter mortality
	Glen Mama	17 (+1 in woods)			0	12-15	Good condition of stags but a lot of young to middle aged.
	Scamadale	9 (+3 in woods)				11	
	Arisaig	12 (+ 5 in woods)	90.2 kg		6	20	1 Sika stag culled. Approx 20 stags out of season on golf course etc
7	<p>Count organisation for 2016</p> <p>Essential to new Deer Management Plan</p> <p>Noted that no count figures sent to Meoble on count but, as they try to cull 10% of population the figures are needed.</p> <p>Count disjointed due to season. Organised by Alastair Gibson. 12 men X 5 days required for count. It is a drain on resources and needs help. DMG needs good count for stock-take and is basis of cull target setting. Accurate count depends on good conditions in the middle of February. Achnacarry count after 16th February.</p> <p>No helicopter count proposed due to cost but SNH have the deer management group on their agenda to update historic data. Not priority for 2016/17 budget.</p> <p>Noted that mortality tends to be greatest in April and therefore missed in the count.</p> <p>Use of drones for counting is of limited value as it requires line of sight control (Civil Aviation Authority law) and can cover only a max of 1 sqKm.</p>						
8	<p>Venison Markets</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Glenfinnan Simpson game £2.20 per day no price for expected until January 2016. Joined SALSA as alternative to SQAV • Fassfern - Yorkshire Game. £2.20 per Kg. Good service. • Glen Loy - Simpson Game • Achnacarry - Highland Game providing good service at around £2.20 per Kg • FES - contracted to Highland Game. No uplift issues. <i>E. coli</i> scare recently so Foods Standards Agency becoming more interested and will follow from cull location to market. Supermarkets have gone onto hill to inspect. • G. Nairn - Simpson Game. Noted as slow payers. • Arisaig - Yorkshire Game • Ranachan - Simpson Game. 						
9	<p>ADMG - Report and Discussion</p> <p>Provided by Alistair Gibson as ADMG rep. Attended ADMG meeting at Mar Lodge in July and has represented to DMG at other meetings in Inverness and Birnam. Community Council meetings (4 councils) attended.</p>						

	Noted that SNH reporting back to Scottish Government on DMG progress in April 2016	
10	<p>SNH - Report and Discussion with focus on SNH/ADMG assessment of current performance against both the ADMG Benchmark and delivery of public objectives.</p> <p>Push on for DMGs to have Deer Management Plans by 2016 in accordance with benchmark and public interest. One completed DMP and two in draft received. Seven more expected shortly. WLDMG ahead of curve, marginally. 44 DMGs to report. Colin MacClean draft DMP should be acceptable but West Lochaber DMP being assessed by another SNH colleague due to potential conflict of interest. Delivery has been notably weak in past so SNH will do a follow up audit to demonstrate that DMG areas are active in delivering progress.</p>	
11	<p>Deer Management Plan</p> <p>Rural Affairs Committee August 2013 recommendations to Scottish Government as provided the threat to the Voluntary Principle by which DMGs set their own culls. This is what we are aiming to defend. Draft plan is out for comment to Community Councils, MSPs etc. . Noted ADMG portal available for web based consultation using link provided.</p> <p>Main issues:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Constitution – to update and widen to include public interest 2. Endorse a list of policy documents to demonstrate best practice and vision 3. Communications policy 4. Training/competency regarding DMC1, DMC2 and other qualifications ref skills required by keepers. 5. Data on mortality/recruitment/counts etc to produce a population model 6. Count and Habitats Assessment to give targets, justify deer populations and cull setting 7. Public interest - 14 actions eg deer on roads, native woodland protection, invasive species such as wild boar. Economic benefit of deer management- scope to improve on draft information to promote what is being done for public benefit. <p>A830 Road Traffic Accidents - Fassfern is a major location for deer on roads so deer fencing needs to be considered (28 deer collisions reported). Manage verges for improved visibility. In west the new road at Arisaig is mainly deer fenced but open crossing points are a source of RTAs. Railway losses of deer goes unreported. DMG needs to quantify more accurately esp as many losses are stags.</p> <p>Kinloid crofts left out of DMP but now have a lot of deer, Not able to contact owners so weakness in plan as the numbers need to be included in DMG cull. Suggested contact = Alistair Gillies at Scamadale.</p> <p>Sub- groups for East and West of DMG area? Considered not a good idea and Group generally against the split.</p> <p>Second draft of DMP will be produced with focus on actions. Eg deer being shot outwith estates, delivering favourable conditions on Designated Sites, areas of high deer impact identified as "red" by Native Woodland Survey of Scotland, population modelling.</p> <p>Environmental Collaborative Action Fund available to give funds for habitat assessments, DMPs, deer density assessments in woods (but not open hill).</p>	

12	<p>Constitution Being revised as part of DMP process.</p>	
13	<p>Any other business</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bank account opened with Clydesdale Bank for DMG. • Out of Season Licences - SNH legal requirement to make a return if asked. If not asked then cannot collect data. • Deer in forestry - should be open to accountability and included in cull record. 	
14	<p>Date of next meeting Post count meeting in April/May. Date to be advised. AGM - First Friday of December.</p>	