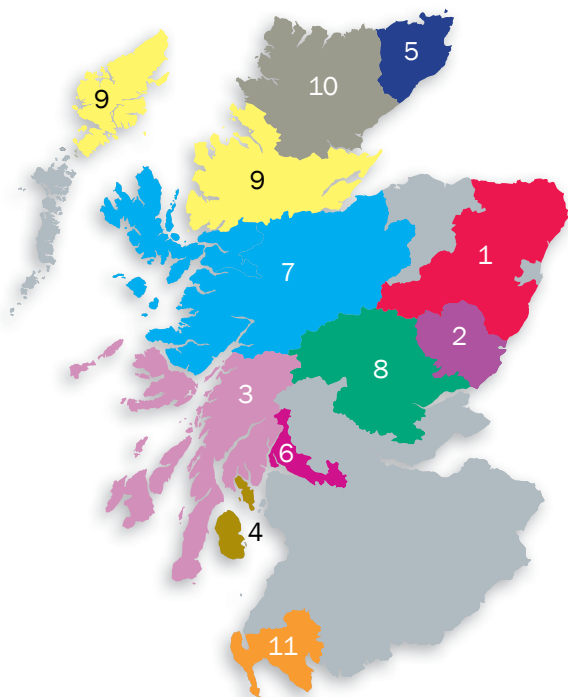


ADMG – Knight Frank 2012 STAG SEASON REVIEW



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The Association of Deer Management Groups is the representative body for deer forest owners and deer managers in Scotland. www.deer-management.co.uk

Front cover: Spying, Black Corries
Back cover: Black Corries

All photography by Glyn Satterley, www.glynsatterley.com



The reports received for 2012, despite the weather, highlight the season as one of the best in recent years. If the beasts are in good fettle that's a good thing - without that then the whole sector has no foundation.

While we have read in the media about a very few areas where deer numbers still require some adjustment, or where different estates or interests within the same Deer Management Group find it hard to agree a compromise regarding the way forward, on the ground there appear to be fewer problems and a significant move towards consensus management. We are sure that this is as a consequence of the Wildlife and Natural Environment Scotland Act that placed a duty on all those with deer on their ground to manage them sustainably whilst continuing to allow them to do so under the voluntary principle.

With the Act came the Code of Deer Management, and an ongoing campaign to improve general competence levels of those who shoot deer. This too is moving in the right direction; the standard of DSC Level 1 was agreed as the benchmark, although it is hoped that many deer managers and stalkers will aim higher, and figures suggest that uptake is good ahead of a review by Government in 2014.

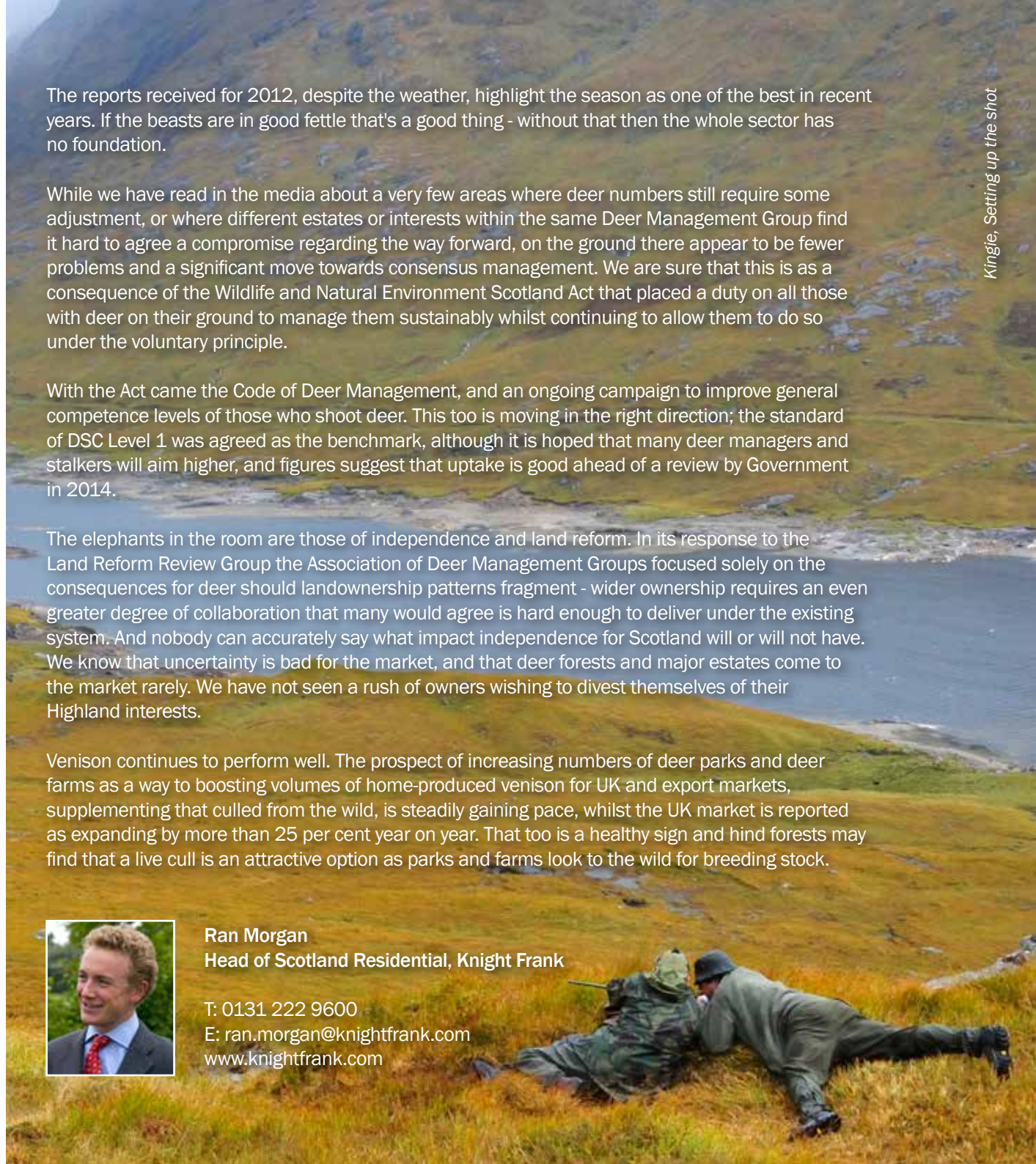
The elephants in the room are those of independence and land reform. In its response to the Land Reform Review Group the Association of Deer Management Groups focused solely on the consequences for deer should landownership patterns fragment - wider ownership requires an even greater degree of collaboration that many would agree is hard enough to deliver under the existing system. And nobody can accurately say what impact independence for Scotland will or will not have. We know that uncertainty is bad for the market, and that deer forests and major estates come to the market rarely. We have not seen a rush of owners wishing to divest themselves of their Highland interests.

Venison continues to perform well. The prospect of increasing numbers of deer parks and deer farms as a way to boosting volumes of home-produced venison for UK and export markets, supplementing that culled from the wild, is steadily gaining pace, whilst the UK market is reported as expanding by more than 25 per cent year on year. That too is a healthy sign and hind forests may find that a live cull is an attractive option as parks and farms look to the wild for breeding stock.



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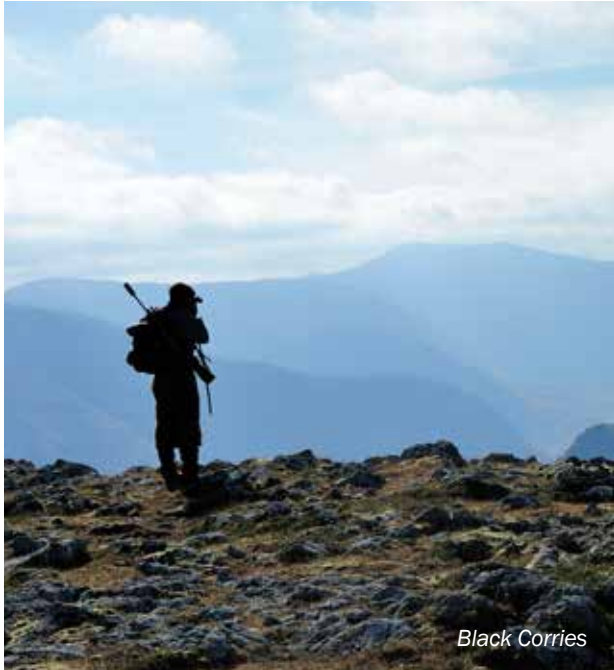


2012 SCOTTISH STAG REVIEW

Tony Jackson

High-quality deer and good weather made the 2012 season the best in several years.

What a pleasure to be able to report a red deer stalking season in Scotland that far exceeds recent ones in terms of the condition of the deer and quality of heads. Almost every forest reported that stags were in good to excellent condition, many carrying fat almost to the end of the rut, while one forest noted that such was the quality of animals that it was difficult to find a suitable cull stag. For once, reports of disturbance by hillwalkers appeared to be reduced, though one forest reported that a stalk was spoiled by paragliders swooping low over the deer.



Black Corries

Aberdeenshire

The rut commenced about the third week in September on most forests, though the first roar was heard on the fifth at Glen Tanar. Peter Fraser, headstalker at Glen Callater, Invercauld Estate, confirmed stags with exceptionally good heads and also remarked on the amount of grass on the hill. Weather conditions were good and stalkers never returned home wet. Mar Estate headstalker Ian Campbell reported deer in very good condition throughout September, though quickly losing condition in early October. He noted many good heads and heavier stags than for the past few years, while there also appeared to be more calves than usual.

Angus

Sadly, at Invermark, headstalker Fred Taylor died and Andy Malcolm has been deputising in this role. A total of 60 stags were shot. The weight of the heaviest stag was 16st 10 lb. The condition of stags was good, and though the rut commenced early, it seemed to stall before becoming strong at the beginning of October, which involved much roaring and fighting. Three stags were found gored to death.

Argyll

Every one of the forests that submitted reports noted that the condition of stags was good to very good – several reported a light tick burden. On most forests the stags did not break out until the end of September, with peak activity around 10 October.

Niall Rowantree, headstalker at Ardnamurchan and Glenborrodale, noted that stags cleaned early, with some out of velvet by 3 August. No days were lost to bad weather. Simon Boulton at Ardtornish reported the best weather he can remember and good heads seen. Headstalker Davy Thomas at Black Corries commented on “a fantastic season and good weather.” Dunlossit Trustees headstalker Donald MacPhee reported one third of 40 stags shot were nine years old and over – one was 16 years old. At Glen Strae, a middle-aged stag with nine points was shot. Properly proportioned and fat, he was, however only two-thirds the size he should have been. Larder weight was 59kg. Lochbuie headstalker Anthony Dod reported deer numbers down, because there were few travelling stags in the area.



Black Corries

Arran

Dougarie headstalker Alastair Chalmers reported a late and short, sharp rut, but with deer in excellent condition. Some 24 stags were taken; the heaviest was 20st 1lb.

Caithness

At both Braemore and Langwell (The Welbeck Estates Co Ltd) headstalkers JH Miller and JJ Bain reported that deer were generally exceptionally good and that the rut started quickly in mid-September and finished abruptly, being all but over by the first week in October. Sandside Estate headstalker Alan Sandison noted the condition of deer was generally good but weather conditions wet and windy.



Spying, Black Corries

Estate	Owner	Tenant	Stalker	Stags Shot	Average Weight	Heaviest	SQWV Member
ABERDEENSHIRE							
Ballogie	Ballogie Estate Enterprises	N/a	Peter Littlejohn	54	08-00*	14-02*	Q
Glenmuick Estate	Sir Andrew Walker Okeover	N/a	A B Taylor	46	14-02	16-09	-
Glen Tanar	Michael Bruce	N/a	Colin McClean	73	14-05*	16-10*	Q
Invercauld - Baddoch	Invercauld Trust	N/a	P Fraser	22	14-03	15-08	Q
Invercauld - Glen Callater	Invercauld Trust	N/a	P Fraser	44	14-01	18-08	Q
Mar Estate	Proprietors of Mar Estate	N/a	Ian Campbell	34	14-05	18-03	Q
Mar Lodge	National Trust for Scotland	N/a	Chris Murphy	85	14-00	18-08	Q
ANGUS							
Glen Isla	Major J P O Gibb	N/a	Nicholas Gibb	12	15-00	17-03	-
Invermark	Lord Dalhousie	N/a	Fred Taylor	60	13-08	16-10	Q
Tulchan of Glenisla	Dr Florian Kuehnle	N/a	W H Mearns	100	13-08	18-08	Q
ARGYLL							
Ardchattan Estate	Sarah Troughton	N/a	Bruce Campbell	13	09-14*	14-00*	-
Ardnamurchan and Glenborrodale	Ardnamurchan Estates	N/a	Niall A Rowantree	77	16-04	29-10	-
Ardtalla	Sir John Mactaggart	N/a	Callum Sharp	49	15-13	20-05	-
Ardtornish	Ardtornish Estate Co Ltd	N/a	Simon Boulton	41	15-09	22-00	-
Argyll Estates	His Grace the Duke of Argyll	N/a	Tom Kirsop	127	09-08*	24-03	-
Auch	Exor of late ARP Besterman	West Highland Hunting	Niall Rowantree	10	14-10	17-01	-
Black Corries	Black Corries Estate Management Ltd	N/a	Davy Thomas	42	13-06	17-05	Q
Blackmount	P Fleming	N/a	A Macdonald	-	13-12	19-07	Q
Dalness	Mr T McAlpine	N/a	V Walker	7	14-00	14-13	-
Dunlossit	Dunlossit Trustees Ltd	N/a	Donald James Macphee	40	14-05	19-10	Q
Glen Strae	R D Schuster	N/a	Mark Brown	24	13-07	18-09	-
Glenetive	P Fleming	N/a	Mark Shone	24	14-06	18-03	Q
Glenforsa	Trustees of Glenforsa Estate	N/a	Graham Waugh	25	15-00*	20-01*	Q
Kinlocheteacuis	Dr and Mrs P Lawson	N/a	Iain Thornber	9	13-08	16-10	-
Laggan Estate	Laggan Properties Ltd	N/a	Neil Park	28	14-03	19-07	-
Laudale Estate	K Falconer	N/a	Neil Roberts	36	15-00	22-00	Q
Lochbuie, Mull	JJ, PR and RL Corbett	N/a	Anthony Dod	35	14-00	17-03	-
Strone	Tom Turnbull	N/a	Tom Turnbull	-	14-02	20-03	-
ARRAN AND BUTE							
Dougarie	S C Gibbs	Various	Alastair Chalmers	24	14-09	20-01	Q
Sannox	Charles Fforde	N/a	James A Mckinnon	44	15-00	22-08	Q
CAITHNESS							
Braemore	The Welbeck Estates Co Ltd	N/a	J H Miller	24	14-01*	17-00*	-
Langwell	The Welbeck Estates Co Ltd	N/a	J J Bain	38	15-01*	20-00*	-
Sandside	G Minter	N/a	Alan Sandison	4	13-07	14-01	-

Estate	Owner	Tenant	Stalker	Stags Shot	Average Weight	Heaviest	SQWV Member
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Dunbartonshire

The first roar at Garabal was heard on 15 September and the condition of the 18 stags shot was very good. Headstalker was Ove Wolff Madsen (from Denmark).

Inverness-shire

Some 23 forests reported that the condition of the deer ranged from good to very good and excellent. The rut varied greatly, with some forests reporting stags breaking out in middle to late September and finishing around the middle of October. At Achnacarry North Forest a fairly white hind was observed, while at Ardnish some of the best heads for years were seen as well as hinds with a good number of strong calves at foot. The best average weight for many years was recorded at Coignafearn though it was desperately wet during the season. At Glen Dessary, a number of the guests ended the day with an evening's wild boar stalking, while at Glenfinnan Estate the heaviest stag ever shot there (21st 6lb) was taken on 1 September. He was holding 1 hind!

There was a scarcity of mature stags at Kingie, which experienced a wet season. Headstalker John Cameron noted that a hind was seen chewing a stag's antlers while it was lying down – the chewing marks were visible when the stag was later shot. There was atrocious weather at Mamore and quite a few blank days as a result. Nevis Estate headstalker Robert Grant reported a red stag sniffing a sika calf before being driven off by a sika spiker.

DUNBARTONSHIRE							
Garabal	Tuwo Daugard A/S	N/a	Ove Wolff Madsen	18	10-13*	13-03*	-
Stuckandoin	Otto Christensen	N/a	Colin Stark	15	-	-	-
INVERNESS-SHIRE							
Achdaliu	West Highland Woodlands	N/a	Alan Currie	38	14-05	20-04	Q
Achnacarry North	D A Cameron of Lochiel	Achnacarry Sporting and Country Pursuits	Alex Macdonald	66	14-07	18-10	Q
Achnacarry South Forest	D A Cameron of Lochiel	Achnacarry Sporting and Country Pursuits	John Morrison	44	14-03	21-01	Q
Ardgour	E MacLean	J Guthrie	Ross MacLean/Iain Laing	36	14-02	21-03	-
Ardnish	Colin Stewart Sandeman	West Highland Hunting	Niall Rowantree	10	14-01	20-01	-
Ardverikie	Ardverikie Estate Ltd	N/a	D Langlands	120	14-04	18-07	Q
Barisdale	R and J Gordon	N/a	Craig Harbison	29	14-08*	19-05	Q
Ben Alder	Ben Alder Estate Ltd	N/a	Ian Crichton	50	14-03	17-05	-
Braulen	Glenavon Estate Ltd	N/a	Richard Smith	130	14-06	19-10	Q
Camusrory	The Hon Rupert Soames and Mr Robert Crosthwaite-Eyre	N/a	Robert Cooper	18	15-01	18-10	-
Coignafearn	Coignafearn Estate	Various	Sandy Dey	204	15-03	20-06 (x2)	Q
Conaglen	J Guthrie	N/a	Ross MacLean	52	14-02	19-10	-
Corrour	Corrour Lands Ltd	N/a	Donald Rowantree	190	13-08	19-06	-
Culachy	Culachy Estate Management Ltd	N/a	Scott Bremner	45	14-02	17-04	Q
Dalwhinnie	Ben Alder Estate Ltd	N/a	Iain MacDonald	8	14-03	16-02	-
Dell	Jeremy Finnis	N/a	Colin Barclay	15	11-06*	12-12*	-
Dunachton	J Forbes-Leith	N/a	Andrew Drummond	23	12-11	14-02	-
East Monar	D C R Allen	N/a	Stephen Potter	28	13-06	17-00	-
East Quoich	C Siva-Jothy	N/a	Rhuairidh Campbell	40	15-06	18-12	Q
Fassfern	West Highland Woodlands	N/a	Alan Currie	23	-	17-06	Q
Glenaladale	Ronald Cheape	N/a	David McCauley	20	13-07	17-00	-
Glenavon	Glenavon Estate Ltd	N/a	Richard Greenlaw	35	14-00	18-06	Q
Glenbanchor	Glenbanchor Estate	N/a	Jim Grant	40	14-01	17-10	Q
Glen Dessary	Sir Patrick Grant of Dalvey Bt	N/a	Sir Patrick Grant	35	14-05	17-00	-
Glendoe	Messrs G and R Vernon	N/a	Jonathan Carslaw	43	13-12	16-12	-
Glenfinnan	I Leith	N/a	Alistair H Gibson	27	14-10	21-06	-
Glenmazeran	The Englefield Estate	N/a	Jimmy Irvine	25	13-12	17-05	-
Glenquoich	Duncan Gordon	N/a	Lea McNally	35	15-05	19-10	Q
Glen Roy NNR	Scottish Natural Heritage	N/a	-	5	12-03	13-01	-

Perthshire

All stags were in good to excellent condition, as were hinds with strong calves at foot. Ronnie Hepburn, headstalker at Atholl (Clunes) summed it up: "Tremendous condition, probably the best I have ever seen the stags." However, the weather seems to have been a mixture of wet weather, some fine days and westerly winds. The rut started on many forests around the third week of September but ended on, or around, the second week of October. Auchlyne and Suie headstalker Ian Dingwall reported that on one day, at 2000ft, a red squirrel ran towards the party, ran up the stalker's leg then scuttled off! At Dalnaspidal, a stag was shot tangled in rope, with one of its antlers, shed in the spring, still attached to the rope. Two stalks were spoiled at South Chesthill and Inverinain by a paraglider passing low over the deer and spooking them.



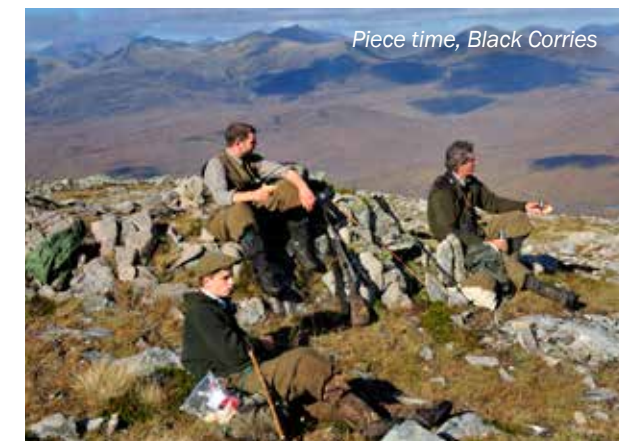
Estate	Owner	Tenant	Stalker	Stags Shot	Average Weight	Heaviest	SQWV Member
Glenshero	Rio Tinto Alcan Estates	Various	Bruce Hendry	119	13-06	17-13	Q
Glenshiel	Burton Property Trust	N/a	Colin Campbell	20	11-11	14-02	-
Kilchoan	Eric Delwart	N/a	Iain Biggart	33	14-06	19-08	-
Killiechonan Forest	Rio Tinto Alcan Estates	Various	A Walker	65	13-05	18-12	Q
Kingairloch and Glensanda	Susan Larson	N/a	Michael Skelly	50	14-07	20-00	Q
Kingie	I & H Brown Ltd	N/a	John Cameron	22	14-08	17-12	#
Kinloch Hourm	Henry Birkbeck	N/a	Donald Cameron	13	14-00	16-00	-
Knoydart Estate	Knoydart Foundation	N/a	Jim Brown	46	14-02	18-08	-
Lochailort Estate	T Leslie	N/a	Archie Gillies	24	14-10	18-10	Q
Mamore	Rio Tinto Alcan Estates	Various	George Loudon	35	13-05	16-03	Q
Nevis Estate	Not given	N/a	Robert Grant	5	08-03*	10-02*	-
North Morar	Ian Bond	N/a	-	40	-	-	-
Pitmain Estate	Pitmain Estate Ltd	N/a	Graham Mabon	13	13-05	14-09	-
Roshven Hill	J A P Forbes	N/a	Not given	7	11-08	-	-
PERTHSHIRE							
Atholl - Clunes	Bruar Trust	Various	Ronnie Hepburn	69	13-11	17-09	Q
Atholl - Dalnamein	Bruar Trust	N/a	Benjamin Rhodes	51	13-12	17-06	Q
Atholl - Forest Lodge	Atholl Estates	Various	Richard Fraser	108	14-00	18-10	Q
Atholl - Glen Bruar	Bruar Trust	Various	Dominic Morrogh-Bernard	30	13-00	17-09	Q
Atholl - West Hand	Atholl Estates	N/a	Graeme Cumming	51	13-11	17-02	Q
Auchleeks	Nial Mackinlay	N/a	Bob Pirie	30	13-01	15-04	Q
Auchlyne & Suie	Mrs Emma Patterson	Various	Ian Dingwall	36	13-10	19-13	Q
Boreland	Judge R A R Stroyan	N/a	Morven Frost	67	13-07	16-08	Q
Camusericht	Ben Alder Estate Ltd	N/a	Duncan Richardson	50	15-00	24-00	Q
Cashlie	W H Porter	N/a	Steven Martin	49	13-12	17-07	-
Corrieavarkie	Ben Alder Estate Ltd	N/a	Richard Macgregor	25	12-10	18-01	Q
Craiganour	Astel Ltd	Various	Kevin Grant	80	12-08	15-10	-
Dalnaspidal	Ben Alder Estate Ltd	N/a	Ian Kennedy	48	12-11	16-12	-
Dunalastair and Crossmount Estate	Ian de Sales La Terrière	N/a	Mark MacKenzie	33	12-06	13-10	-
Glenartney	Lady Jane Willoughby de Eresby	N/a	Peter Cramb	105	14-02	18-05	Q
Glenbeich	Mrs C Holcroft	N/a	John Murdock	31	11-09	16-10	-
Glenfalloch	David Lowes	N/a	Falcon Frost	43	14-03	19-07	Q
Glenlochay	Struan Robertson	N/a	James Barrie	50	12-10	17-10	-
Glenlyon Estate	Iain Wotherspoon	N/a	James Lambie	60	14-06	19-06	Q
Glenshee and Rhiedorrach	Invercauld Estate	G Van Cutsem	Liam Donald	76	14-11	18-05	Q
Glenturret Estate	Mr and Mrs Seldon, c/o Managed Estates	N/a	Mike Reddington	10	12-00	13-08	-
Innerhadden	Richard Barclay	N/a	Craig MacIntosh	30	12-08	16-02	Q
Innerwick	Mrs E Whewell	N/a	David Pirie	35	13-02	16-00	Q

Estate	Owner	Tenant	Stalker	Stags Shot	Average Weight	Heaviest	SQWV Member
Invergeldie	Priestley Family	N/a	Lee McManamon	55	11-09	20-09	-
Invermearan	Exor of late ARP Besterman	West Highland Hunting	Niall Rowantree	40	13-07	19-06	-
Innischoarach Estate	David C C Brown	N/a	Ewen Kennedy	50	14-08	19-08	Q
Lochs Estate	Lochs Estate c/o Managed Estates	N/a	Steven MacDonald	47	13-03	18-06	-
Lude Estate	D Gordon	N/a	Alastair Stephen	45	14-10	19-02	Q
Meggernie	Mrs B J Malim, c/o Managed Estates	N/a	Steven MacDonald	68	12-08	15-13	-
Monzie	Mrs C M M Crichton, c/o Managed Estates	N/a	Mike Reddington	5	12-02	14-00	-
North Chesthill	Alastair J Riddell	N/a	H Shearer	16	12-07	15-06	-
Remony	Remony Estate Partnership	N/a	Bruce Blackley	29	13-05	18-04	Q
South Chesthill and Inverinain	C A Ramsay Partnership	N/a	Hamish Rae	51	13-10	16-10	-
Straloch	Mrs M A Lascelles	Woodmill Shootings	Steve Wade	23	-	-	-
Talladh-a-Bhiethe	Van Well Family	N/a	Andrew Oliver	46	13-03	15-10	Q
Tarvie	J Colman	N/a	Jim Tod	23	-	-	-
ROSS-SHIRE AND ISLE OF LEWIS							
Achnashellach Estate	Capt Nicholas Wills	N/a	Christopher Mackenzie	21	13-05	16-08	-
Amisdale	Mr J H Richmond-Watson	N/a	Ewen Ballantyne	32	13-08	17-11	Q
Corriellair	I Brown & Sons	N/a	Johnny Matheson	18	-	-	-
Diabaig	Sir Paul Nicholson	N/a	Donnie Beaton	11	13-00	16-00	-
Druidraig	H I Macrae	N/a	Ian Culbertson	7	12-07*	14-04*	-
Eilanreach	Lord Dulverton	N/a	Alan Mackenzie	36	13-09	16-11	-
Eishken, Isle of Lewis	N Oppenheim	N/a	Chris McRae	86	12-00	14-04	-
Eilean Darach	N Crawford	N/a	Brian Fraser	15	14-00	16-00	-
Fannich	Fannich Estate Ltd	N/a	Ruari Matheson	35	14-04	17-08	-
Glencarron and Glenuaig	Alasdair Douglas	N/a	Brian Watson	32	9-10*	13-01*	-
Inverbroom	Inverbroom Estate Ltd	N/a	Stephen Gow	42	13-02	16-03	-
Inverpolly	David Davies	N/a	-	19	14-10	16-08	-
Keanchulish	David Bulmer	N/a	Marcus Munro, Arron Matheson	3	16-04	18-01	-
Kildermorie Estate	Ian A Duncan	N/a	Douglas I Russell	41	12-09	20-00	-
Kinlochdamph	Mark Adams	N/a	Duncan Macleod	14	12-05	16-11	-
Leckmelm	Donald Wynne	N/a	Donald Wynne	14	13-07	16-00	-
Letterewe	Alicia Van Vlissingen	N/a	Roddy Legge, Stephen Miller	33	-	16-05	-
Lochluichart	I H Leslie-Melville	Various	Glyn Robson	69	14-12	20-04	-
Lochrosque and Kinlochewe	Pat Wilson Farms	N/a	Ronnie Ross	63	13-06	16-04	Q
Strathbran	Seligman Family	N/a	David Bennett	19	13-07	18-01	-
Strathconon Estate	Kirkbi	Various	Angus Cameron	66	14-01	19-12	Q
Torridon Estate	National Trust for Scotland	N/a	Seamus Macnally	10	12-08	17-00	Q

Ross-shire

Every forest reported deer in outstanding condition at the beginning of the season as a result of the excellent summer. However, weight quickly dropped off towards the end of the season when stags were run. Several forests reported an earlier than usual rut. Ewen Ballantyne, headstalker at Arnisdale, noted “a good old-fashioned early rut with enough shootable stags to be found”, while Druidaig headstalker Ian Culbertson saw more deer, particularly hinds, than ever before though fewer grouse and more ravens and eagles. At Letterewe, though overall a good season, there was a shortage of mature shootable stags early in the season and a great deal of disturbance from hillwalkers.

Lochluichart Estate headstalker Glyn Roberts had a stag shot with a plastic bag wrapped round its head, while the heaviest stag ever recorded on the forest at 20st 4lb was shot. At Lochrosque and Kinlochewe Estate in the last week of the season, stalkers watched a sea eagle attack and try to lift a calf three times, but the animal managed to escape. At Torridon two stags taken were at least 15 years old, one an eight pointer, the other nine.



Sutherland

Nearly every forest reported deer in good to excellent condition. There appeared to be little consistency in the rut. On some forests it started in early September; on others later or not until October. The weather also varied from a dry, cool season, to wet days with southerly or westerly winds. At Shinness Estate it was stormy in October, with bad visibility on some days, but perfect weather on others. John Spence, headstalker at Strathmore, reported a shortage of mature stags and the hill disturbed by walkers. At Glencanisp and Drumrunie, stalker John Cullen watched a female eagle with two males in tow come soaring past his group. One male then locked talons with the female and came tumbling down, only breaking off when they saw the party.

Wigtownshire

Stair Estates noted that though deer were in reasonable condition considering the wet summer, they were poorer and lighter than average.



Spying from the Argo, Corrielaire

Estate	Owner	Tenant	Stalker	Stags Shot	Average Weight	Heaviest	SQWV Member
Tullich Estate	Hon Richard Curzon	T Chetwynd	-	3	15-03*	16-12*	-
SUTHERLAND							
Achentoul	Sir John Nutting QC Bt	Various	Duncan Bentley	37	16-02	20-06	-
Achnabourin	Ross Peters	N/a	Simon Peters	6	15-00	18-00	-
Alladale	Paul Lister	Various	Innes MacNeill	50	13-03	20-05	-
Badanloch	Badanloch Estate LLP	Various	Brian Lyall	32	15-01	24-04	-
Borrobol	Michael Wigan	N/a	John Macdonald	43	13-10	18-06	Q
Clebrig	A W Nicholson	Mrs P F Nicholson	A Robertson	16	16-00	21-00	Q
Corriemulzie	The Corriemulzie Trust	Various	Alasdair Mackenzie	74	14-00	18-02	Q
Croick	Croick Partnership	N/a	Alasdair Sutherland	25	17-00	20-00	-
Dalnessie	Ericht Farming Company	Various	Andrew Mackay	30	14-09	18-11	-
Glencalvie Estate	Glencalvie Estate	Various	Andrew Sutherland	74	13-13	16-11	-
Glencanisp and Drumrunie	Assynt Foundation	N/a	John Cullen	67	11-05*	14-00*	-
Inchnadamph	George Vestey	N/a	Craig Ross	40	14-02	20-02	-
Ledmore	David Bulmer	N/a	Marcus Munro, Arron Matheson	33	14-02	20-02	-
Loch Choire Estate	Lord Joicey, Hon Andrew Joicey, David Knowles, Duncan Leslie	Various	Neil Mackay	45	14-06*	17-06*	-
Loubcroy	Mr A Gospel	Various	Alasdair Mackenzie	24	14-04	15-10	Q
Merkland Estate	Robert Woods	N/a	Roddy Watt	50	14-04	18-07	-
Reay Forest	Grosvenor Estates	N/a	David Allison	148	14-04	18-06	Q
Rispond Estate	C and J-A Marsham	N/a	A Marsham	20	13-10	21-07	-
Shinness Estate	CGA Fletcher and Family	N/a	Derick Sutherland	3	-	-	-
Strathmore	Mrs Heather Gow	N/a	John Spence	26	14-09	19-10	Q
Syre Estate	Syre Estate	N/a	David Horsburgh	1	17-07	17-07	Q
WIGTOWNSHIRE							
Stair Estates	The Earl of Stair	N/a	Len Dey	15	10-02	15-12	-

* denotes larger weight

Q advised by respondent as member of Scottish Quality Wild Venison Scheme

- denotes non member of SQWV or information not given

denotes SQWV application pending at time of survey

More than 70 per cent of Scottish Wild Venison is produced under the SQWV scheme. Not all properties involved in the scheme contribute to the Stag Season Report. No returns from Forest Enterprise larders, which are all SQWV assured, are included in the report.

More information on the Scottish Quality Wild Venison Scheme can be obtained from:

Jonathan Whitehead Scheme Manager
T: 0131 335 6657 e: Jonathan.Whitehead@sfqc.co.uk

SQWV Assured game dealers/processors:

Ardgay Game
t: 01863 766 162
e: enquiries@ardgaygame.co.uk

Highland Game
t: 01382 827 088
e: cn@highlandgame.com

Yorkshire Game
t: 01748 810 212
e: r.townsend@yorkshiregame.co.uk



COMBINATION OF FACTORS WILL KEEP DEER FOREST MARKET FIRM THROUGH 2013



Ran Morgan

Head of Scotland Residential, Knight Frank.

Last year saw another relatively thin supply of deer forests for sale. There may be several reasons behind this, for example uncertainty regarding the referendum on Scottish independence in 2014 impacting on seller and buyer confidence, and the alternative opportunities provided by renewable energy encouraging owners to hold on and cash in on medium term income streams.

The lack of supply against good demand made for a solid market. Just seven deer forests that we were aware of were offered for sale in 2012, three of which saw deals agreed privately, and four offered on the open market, two of which have sales agreed. In all cases except one the buyers were based outwith Scotland.

The values per stag ranged from £30,000 to £50,000 depending on the size of the deer forest and numbers shot.

Scottish deer forests clearly represent a unique opportunity to English and foreign buyers who still see deer stalking and all that it offers as an undervalued activity.

Despite the perceived threats from independence, we still have a healthy book of buyers looking to invest in deer forests. The common request is for diversity in terms of amenity, but also increasingly in terms of income streams - renewable energy, tourism and forestry being key drivers.

In the current political climate, and with the recommendations of the Land Reform Review Group due in 2014, the presence of crofting tenure can cause concern, but is not necessarily a deal breaker for buyers, especially if an estate possesses other positive persuasive factors.

We expect the demand for deer forests to remain firm through 2013 and beyond - deer stalking is appealing to an ever wider audience, venison is appealing to a growing number of palates, and the weakening pound means UK property is looking more and more attractive to foreign investors.



GENERATION GAME

Dick Playfair meets **Alex MacDonald**, founder and director of Achnacarry Sporting & Country Pursuits.



Alex MacDonald can trace his family at Achnacarry back to his great grandfather, John Cameron, who was a stalker on the South Forest in the 1880s. His grandfather was stalker on Achdaliu, then moving to Achnacarry North Forest and into the newly built house at Ardechive, working to age 72. He died 16 years later. His father Hugh was born at Ardechive and started work as a fishing ghillie on Loch Arkaig, and ghillie on the North Forest, taking up the post of stalker at Glen Dessary in 1948, his first tenant being HRH the Duke of Luxembourg. He moved to the North Forest in the early 60s and retired in 1984. When Alex left school in Fort William in 1979 he worked under his father initially on Achnacarry South before taking over as stalker on the North Forest in 1985.

To use a well-worn cliché, stalking really is in his blood – and also the ‘terroir’, or its Scottish equivalent. Incidentally, Alex’s grandmother Louisa MacDonald was the first lady to run the Ben Nevis race in 1902 completing the course in 3 hours and 1 minute.

So, in talking to him you can readily understand his passion for these stunning hills and glens that have been in the continual stewardship of the Camerons of Lochiel down the centuries, lying just to the north of Spean Bridge and transected by Loch Arkaig into the Achnacarry North and South Forests. This is ground where commandos in training, and many a stalker, have practiced their skills and fieldcraft.

His love of everything about this area is so evident in his enthusiasm for it, and that must pay real dividends when he is out with clients and guests on the hill.

“Deer increased for the better on North Achnacarry,” says Alex, “but that was no surprise as we took 2000 sheep off the ground in 1991, and a further 1000 sheep off 10 years later bringing a more or less overnight change in the deer numbers.”

He says that deer and sheep are not easy neighbours, and sheep can keep the deer away – whether their smell or the disturbance and regular gathering that goes with them – so when the sheep went for good the deer came in.

The 2012 foot count on Achnacarry North showed just over 1600 head of deer, and a count on Achnacarry South this March showed just over 1400 head – numbers which are where Alex is comfortable that they should be.

There is a policy for developing good stags, and the Achnacarry Forest is rightly gaining a reputation for the quality of its beasts but he doesn’t make concessions for those wanting trophy stags. Says Alex: “We can all go out and shoot big heads, but that’s not always doing the job that needs to be done. I’ve been offered a lot by clients to shoot a particular stag, a young Royal for example, but that’s not the way we work.”

Alex was so confident in the potential at Achnacarry, with some extras added, that he approached the Lochiel family in 2010 with a novel proposal for the management of their deer forests. That saw the formation of Achnacarry Sporting & Country Pursuits, prompted also by one of the estate stalkers handing



in his notice, and recognizing that change was on the horizon.

“The Lochiel family” says Alex, “both agreed with and supported the proposal that the business I had set up with Simon Laird, a long time visitor to the estate with his father David, could lease the Achnacarry stalking for 15 years.

“We wanted to keep the name, and we were allowed to keep the distinctive tweed with its red and yellow.”

The new company now looks after all management, marketing and sporting lets, and is not looking back. He says: “In our first year we saw the hind business triple, and last season quadruple. Around 80 per cent of our hinds are let. Our stags were fully let for the 2013 season from January, with more guests booking ahead for 2014, including those disappointed at not being able to be accommodated this year.”

So who is coming? The UK and northern European markets are strong – Finland, Norway, Russia, and a number of valuable corporate lets, and repeat business. And being virtually booked to capacity has prompted a search for more ground to expand, and possibly compensate for the impact of a new 14,000 metre fence on Garry Gualach on land leased from the Forestry Commission.

But the business is not just stalking. Alex has secured valuable links with Inverlochy Castle, and a number of other top-end hotels, to provide wildlife and argo safaris, clay pigeon shooting, fishing, photographic stalking, and wildlife tours.

“There’s always a lot to see, but we don’t guarantee anything,” says Alex. “We feed the stags in winter, but we can also stalk into them with guests with cameras. There are ospreys, sea eagles, black game, and black throated divers. There’s also fishing for trout and pike, magnificent views, fabulous scenery.”

And there are more ideas – archery, stalks into targets of different types of deer, and wild boar, a number of which have already been shot on the estate.

You get the impression Alex doesn’t stand still for long.

“It wouldn’t be happening without the support of the Lochiel family, and without Simon on board. We have a very structured approach to what we do; always shirt and tie, vehicles always immaculate, excellent customer service is vital – that’s what the guests expect whether from Inverlochy or booked direct.

He says: “It’s the dream job – and when I’m out on the hill, I really feel that I’m at home, and where I belong.”

And given the family ties to Ardechive and Achnacarry that degree of sentiment is perfectly understandable.





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