



ASSOCIATION OF DEER MANAGEMENT GROUPS

Regional Meeting

Wednesday 6th June 2018

Birnam Arts & Conference Centre

MINUTES

In Attendance:

Richard Cooke
Finlay Clark
James Adamson
Col. Bewsher
Paul Bekier
Tom Chetwynd
Julian Clarke
Victor Clements
Holly Deary
James Duncan Millar
Bob McIntosh
John Morison
Linzi Seivwright
Tom Turnbull

Chairman
Secretary
Executive Committee
Executive Committee
Executive Committee
Executive Committee
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Executive Committee

Michael Aldridge
Leif Brag
Jocelyn Carnegie
Angus Cheape
Charlie Connell
Steven Fox
Donald Fraser
Morven Frost
Quintin Lyle
David Mosgrove
Iain Robertson
Ron Smith
Susanna Thomson

Glenartney DMG
Tilhill Forestry
South Perthshire DMG
Mull DMG
Colquhalzie
East Loch Shiel and Morvern DMGs
SNH
Breadalbane DMG
Balquhidder DMG
East Loch Shiel DMG
MoD
South Perthshire DMG
Black Mount DMG

Stephen Wade
 Alix Whitaker
 Tom Willis

Woodmill Shootings
 South Perthshire DMG
 Upper Deeside and Donside DMG

Apologies:

Lynda Campbell
 Andrew Gordon
 Colin Maclean
 Robin Pakeman
 Dick Playfair
 Karen Ramoo
 Randal Wilson

Executive Committee
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Alistair Bruce
 Nicola Colquhoun
 Roddie Feilden
 Martin Girvan
 Shaun Macdonald
 Kirsty MacLeod
 Angus Macpherson
 Joanna Macpherson
 Cathy Mayne
 Hugh Nicol
 Martin Robb
 Donald Rowantree
 Stephen Smith
 Maurice van Dedem

Glen Spean Estate
 Balquhidder DMG
 Mid-West DMG
 Glenmoriston DMG
 SWR DMG
 W Sutherland DMG
 Biallid
 Lochalsh DMG
 Ardnamurchan DMG
 Inverary & Tyndrum DMG
 South Perthshire DMG
 Corroul
 Glen Spean Estate
 Fannich Estate

1.	<p>Apologies Recorded above.</p>	
2.	<p>Report on ADMG Regional Meeting held 23rd November 2017 No matters arising.</p>	
3.	<p>Chairman's Report 2019 Review - The 2016 Review was an unhappy experience for ADMG and almost everyone else involved. Critical that the 2019 Review process and scope is clearly understood and that there are no surprises. A series of meetings between SNH and ADMG to develop a detailed specification for the 2019 Review have taken place and the scope of the Review is now almost fully agreed. 44 DMGs to be assessed with 3 to 4 new Groups which will not be subject to full assessment. The Chairman reported that DMGs have made excellent progress in the last few years and there is no obvious strong sense of resentment from DMGs with reference to the demands placed upon them. HIA has been embraced by most DMGS and deer managers understand the value. That said, no other sector has been subjected to such detailed scrutiny. This afternoon will look at practical implications of the 2019 Review. The ADMG Project Fund will be used to carry out health checks and offered</p>	

to all DMGs providing each with two days of consultants' time to carry out a pre-assessment health check. DMGs will be measured against the 101 ADMG Benchmark and SNH public interest criteria to highlight areas which need to be worked on before the 2019 SNH Review next April and May. Where possible ADMG will approve the DMG's favoured Consultant. ADMG will copy all DMGs with the document appointing Consultants to ensure the scope of the exercise is understood by the DMGs.

New DMGs now formed or emerging include potentially two in Aberdeenshire, Cowal and Dunkeld. The area covered by DMGs is expanding.

The Chairman reported that the Cabinet Secretary has set up the Deer Working Group, chaired by Dr Simon Pepper, to review the system of deer management with a remit to recommend a system which can deliver deer management in the public interest. RMJC has been appointed as an external contributor in a non-remunerated personal capacity but does not attend meetings and his only input is when questioned. ADMG will need to be active politically in the lead up to 2019 which will be a very busy year.

Sporting Rates – One of the few of the 62 Land Reform Review Group recommendations taken forward into the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2017. Historically, Sporting Rates were abandoned due to the cost of collection and inequitable nature of assessment. Some 55,000 landholdings required assessment but only a fraction have received a notice to date. Advice continues to be to appeal but opportunity now closed for the original tranche of assessments. SBBS may not continue to be available and those below the threshold of £15,000 should have appealed the assessment. The original 1854 legislation has been correctly applied by Assessors. Woodland is the most expensive rateable value at £5 per Ha which has created anomalies and challenges to those involved in forest management. Winston Churchill has carried out a very effective campaign on the inequitable nature of the assessment at Ministerial level. The Scottish Government has issued Guidance to Councils, that Empty Property Relief should be applied for, albeit it is discretionary as to whether Councils apply the relief available. It is very difficult to fully understand what the outcome will be. Appeal process will dictate the likely outcomes, but this will take months if not years. The disincentive to maintain culls appears counterproductive.

Venison – Food Standards Scotland (FSS) very focussed on processor practices, and chain of production. Local Authorities inconsistent in inspections required and licensing deer larders. The EU derogation for small quantities sold locally does not require meat inspection and is a potential loophole for bad practice. DMQ and Trained Hunter Status indicates a proactive industry. Col. Bewsher, Chairman of Scottish Quality Wild venison, noted that Food Standards Scotland had reported some significant and "wilful" non-compliance by some Game Dealers. FSS are determined to "clean up" the sector. FSS meeting held in March to address the Game Dealers and provide a clear vision of the way forward. Recreational deer stalkers are concerned that FSS may make culling and processing more difficult. Individual producers must take great care and full responsibility for presenting safe carcasses to the Game Dealer.

Col. Bewsher confirmed that FSS involvement should not be taken out of context. The venison industry is a very successful product and FSS are currently focussing on processors. Those who are involved in processing must comply with the regulations. Carcasses sold are in the human food chain and must be presented to food sector standards so far as possible for a wild species. Producers must ensure

	<p>that they sell to dealers and others who comply fully. Producers should tell Game Dealer if you feel you have a substandard carcass and not present unfit carcasses. We should protect our valuable product. Three films have been produced and will be presented at Scone Game Fair on minimising the risk of contamination and storage. The Rural Affairs Cabinet Secretary has launched a campaign intended to double the venison contribution to the Scottish Economy by 2030 and has called for farmed venison to expand to meet growing demand as the wild cull is at its peak.</p> <p>RMJC commented that Moredun Research was likely to be concluded by the end of 2018. Moredun had undertaken research on deer health in several project areas including E-Coli O157, Cryptosporidium and Chronic Wasting Disease. E-coli O157 is present in livestock throughout the UK.</p> <p>Meetings and Committees - The Chairman confirmed attended meetings: Moorland Forum, National Access Forum, SQWV, SCSTG. As Vice Chairman, Tom Turnbull will take over representation of ADMG on various committees.</p>	
<p>4.</p>	<p>Administrative Report</p> <p>Management Accounts to 31st May 2018. Financial year runs from 1st July 2017 to 30th June 2018.</p> <p>The Secretary reported that, against a year to date income budget of £110,357 the Association had invoiced and recovered £117,853. This comprised £104,111 of subscriptions, just over £2,000 of associate membership subscriptions, the remainder being made up from donations, lunch recoveries, newsletter advertising, miscellaneous and bank interest. With one month of the financial year to run, the annual income budget of £117,244 was likely to be slightly exceeded. Expenditure to date amounts to £62,210 with the only expense running over budget being website maintenance which was some £912 ahead of projected spend. Bad debts of £569 had been written off.</p> <p>Taking account of Project Fund donations in 2017, the Association held £126,540 in the bank. The Secretary anticipated a project spend of approximately £40,000 on the DMG health checks during 2018.</p>	
<p>5.</p>	<p>Future work plan</p> <p>The Chairman summarised future work for ADMG which included working with SNH towards the 2019 Review, the DMGs Health Check programme as well as Sporting Rates.</p> <p>In response to a question - the 2017 Barclay Report recommended that SBBS should be reviewed. It is possible that this could result in Sporting Rates not being eligible. (http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2017/08/3435)</p> <p>Dick Playfair confirmed PGI status for Wild Scotland Venison has been applied for.</p> <p>Knight Frank is to sponsor a survey of sporting values, e.g. prices per let stag/hind etc. Please complete the questionnaire which will arrive with copies of SCOPE magazine.</p>	

	<p>Rob Whitson reported 50% reduction for Empty Property Relief for 3 months; 10% reduction for Empty Property Relief for 9 months – Highland Regional Council. This will be fed back through Katy Dickson, Head of Policy at SLE.</p>	
6.	<p>SNH Update</p> <p>Donald Fraser reported on behalf of SNH. Many Groups had made good progress but in some Groups, progress was nominal and insufficient. The roles of DMG Chairs and Secretaries were important and Groups tended only to make satisfactory progress where there was good leadership. It was important for ADMG and SNH to work together to support DMGs.</p> <p>The Deer Working Group chaired by Dr Simon Pepper is expected to report to the Cabinet Secretary in the Spring of 2019. The DWG is charged with reviewing the current structures governing deer management and whether they are capable of delivering in the public interest.</p> <p>SNH have a range of powers to encourage / force noncompliant DMG members to engage. Currently five Section 7 Agreements were in place, some may be restructured and there is a possibility of some new ones. The Chairman added that the number of S7s was a point of criticism by the ECCLR Committee in the 2016 Review and it is good that the number has been reduced but a worry that there may be some new ones, SNH having been urged to use their powers.</p> <p>There had been a delay of a year in South Ross DMG's count and Monadhliath DMG's count. Both Groups were keen to see these done.</p> <p>The Chairman said that ADMG continued to work closely with SNH and he hopes there will be no surprises in the outcome and process of the 2019 Review.</p> <p>The SWARD database review is on-going with SILVA – Forestry Management. SWARD is unlikely to be available by the end of 2018.</p>	
7.	<p>Publications</p> <p>The next newsletter would be published in advance of Scone.</p>	
8.	<p>2018 Events programme</p> <p>Scone, Friday 29th June to Sunday 1st July 2018.</p> <p>Moy, Friday 3rd and Saturday 4th August 2018.</p>	
9.	<p>DMG Updates</p> <p>West Sutherland DMG - was making good progress, made possible by the wider group being split into 4 subgroups. The Group would undertake a health check.</p> <p>TC NW Sutherland DMG - The DMG encompassed two large landholdings and was working well. The Group would undertake a health check.</p> <p>Northern DMG - Progress had been slower but the Group was now moving in the correct direction. The Group would undertake a health check.</p> <p>SW Ross DMG - making good progress.</p> <p>SF Morvern DMG - had instructed a consultant and HIA was progressing. DMG Meeting was well attended. Habitat training on-going. Cull targets would be set in July following a helicopter count during the winter of 2018. Woodlands feature in the</p>	

DMG and a survey was being undertaken by SNH. The DMP was written in 2015 by Rory Putnam - before the 2016 Review. The Group would undertake a health check.

SF East Loch Shiel - The DMP is available on-line. Some HIA was progressing. The base-line would be 2018 using self-analysis data. There had been no consultant involvement. East Loch Shiel would undertake a health check. There had been a helicopter count in 2016. Culls would be set in July following mortality assessment. There were concerns surrounding the loss of deer into woodlands. SNH were carrying out a woodland survey.

CC Monadhlaiths DMG - encompasses 42 Estates. Culls exceeded 1,115 target stags at 1,200 actual stags and 2,500 target hinds at 2,600 actual hinds. Calf cull exceeded and a two year under cull had now caught up. A helicopter count had not been carried out. There had been a high mortality rate and poor calf survival. Peatland restoration work was in progress. Landscape cover surveyed for areas suitable for peatland restoration. Snow cover reduced. A phase 2 plan would follow. Training was planned for 18th June and a site visit to Farr / Glenmorven peatland restoration. Grazing pressure low enough not to require fencing. No burning for 10 years.

ST Black Mount DMG - The Group would undertake a health check. 90% of area included in HIA. An ecologist would pull the data together. A (foot) count was on-going. The mortality rate was not too bad. Landowner attendance and participation was good along with professional coverage.

TW Upper Deeside and Donside - DMG meeting was well attended. HIA training on-going. The Group would undertake a health check. The AGM and public meeting took place in April 2018. The Group had two new members, RSPB and FCS.

FC Mid-West DMG - Attendance was good, The Group would undertake a health check. Cull targets had been increased and the DMP was being followed. HIA had 90% coverage over the DMG area.

LB Cowal Working Group - moving to restart Cowal DMG. There were challenges but these were not unsurmountable. Red deer culls were increasing, roe deer damage was reducing and was more local. 5/100 Ha being shot and cull steady at that. The population was changing from roe to red. Red deer were now on Bute and a DMP had been drafted. Many more deer were now being shot on Bute. There were designated sites on Bute, but progress was being made.

IR MOD - DMP drafted and progress though slow was being made

RC South Deeside / North Angus DMG - The DMP was complete and HIA had 100% coverage. The deer cull target had been exceeded. The Group would undertake a health check. The mortality rate had been high but not catastrophic.

LS Affric/Kintail DMG Francesca Osowska (CEO, SNH) had visited the Group. A peatland feasibility study was on-going. An education day had been held for primary school children exploring energy, flora and wildflowers.

LS Knoydart/West Knoydart now split including deer population and model. HIA was undertaken in 2016.

Uist DMG - DMP delivery was on-going.

Glenmoriston DMG - A consultant had been employed to carry out HIA.

RS South Perthshire DMG - Strong focus on sika and action being taken through DMPs as well as feral pigs. Significant roe deer numbers culled within the red deer range.

<p>There being no other business the Chairman thanked all those in attendance and closed the meeting.</p>	
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