



**ASSOCIATION OF DEER MANAGEMENT GROUPS**

**Regional Meeting**

**Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> June 2018**

**Kingsmills Hotel, Inverness**

**MINUTES**

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**In Attendance:**

Richard Cooke  
 Finlay Clark  
 Alistair Gibson  
 Colin Maclean  
 Linzi Seivwright  
 Tom Turnbull

Executive Committee  
 Secretary  
 Executive Committee  
 Executive Committee  
 ADMG  
 Executive Committee

David Allison  
 James Baillie  
 Pieter Bakker  
 Ken Bowlit  
 Chris Cartwright  
 Tom Chetwynd  
 Sophie Clark  
 Sinclair Coghill  
 Mike Cottam  
 Richard Curzon  
 Angus Davidson  
 Holly Deary  
 Eric Downie  
 Donald Fraser  
 Angus Kelly  
 Tamara Lawton  
 Phil Lloyd  
 Brian Lyall  
 Roddy MacAskill  
 Duncan MacDonald  
 Anson MacAuslan  
 Helen McIntyre  
 Seamus MacNally  
 Ewen Macpherson  
 Mark Pattinson  
 Gordon Robertson  
 Lorraine Servant  
 Lyndsay Sharp (LKS)

NWS DMG / WS DMG  
 Glenshiel Estate  
 NW Sutherland DMG  
 West Ross DMG  
 South Skye DMG  
 SW Ross & East Sutherland DMGs  
 Gualin  
 SNH  
 Cairngorms & Speyside/S. Deeside, North Angus DMGs  
 South West Ross  
 Glenelg DMG  
 SNH  
 Glencarron  
 SNH  
 Strathconon DMG  
 SNH  
 Ardverikie Estate  
 Badenoch Estate pm only  
 Highland, Hill & Habitat Solutions  
 South Skye DMG  
 Northern DMG pm only  
 Inveraray & Tyndrum DMG pm only  
 Gairloch Conservation Unit  
 Lochalsh DMG  
 Lochalsh DMG  
 Easter Ross DMG  
 SNH  
 Mid West DMG

Duncan Shaw  
 Michael Shelly  
 Frank Spencer-Nairn  
 Norman Stoddart  
 Bruce Taylor  
 Graeme Taylor  
 Iain Thomson  
 Thomas Watson  
 Mark White  
 Rob Whitson

Gualin  
 FES  
 Glen Strathfarrar DMG  
 Garrogie Estate  
 West Lochaber DMG  
 SNH  
 Sallachy Estate  
 Attadale Estate  
 Glencassley Estate  
 Badanloch

**Apologies:**

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

Executive Committee  
 Executive Committee  
 Executive Committee  
 Executive Committee  
 Executive Committee  
 Executive Committee

Alistair Bruce  
 Nicola Colquhoun  
 Angus Davidson  
 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  
 Balquhiddar DMG  
 Glenelg 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><b>Apologies</b>          Recorded above.</p>	
2.	<p><b>Report on ADMG Regional Meeting held 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2017</b>          No matters arising.</p>	
3.	<p><b>Chairman's Report</b>  <b>2019 Review</b> - 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</p>	

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 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

	<p>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 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><b>Meetings and Committees</b> - 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><b>4.</b></p>	<p><b>Administrative Report</b></p> <p><b>Management Accounts to 31<sup>st</sup> May 2018.</b> Financial year runs from 1<sup>st</sup> July 2017 to 30<sup>th</sup> 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><b>5.</b></p>	<p><b>Future work plan</b></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. (<a href="http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2017/08/3435">http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2017/08/3435</a>)</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><b>SNH Update</b></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><b>Publications</b></p> <p>The next newsletter would be published in advance of Scone.</p>	
8.	<p><b>2018 Events programme</b></p> <p>Scone, Friday 29<sup>th</sup> June to Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> July 2018.</p> <p>Moy, Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> and Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> August 2018.</p>	
9.	<p><b>DMG Updates</b></p> <p><b>KB West Ross DMG</b> - hold quarterly meetings. Engagement is good. The deer population model has been further developed. HIA coverage is good and data is being collated. The Group will undertake a health check. A strategic review of woodland potential was to be carried out with FES/FCS. Native Woodland Survey review of herbivore impacts will aim to better understand impacts. A peatland action plan and restoration was being carried out with a number of individual projects on-going.</p>	

**AG West Lochaber DMG** - There had been a count during the Spring of 2018 with good counts across the Group. Results were as expected but a few more deer were counted in the west end of the Group. HIA of woodland had been completed while HIA of open hill was on-going. Winter mortality had been average and not catastrophic. The Group will undertake a health check.

**AD Glenelg DMG** - HIA monitoring was on-going. SNH funding. Peatland survey in progress. Population models. Woodland impact training planned for 2019. The Group will undertake a health check.

**TC South West Ross DMG** - A DMP and cull management plan was in place. The Group held 4 meetings annually with good representation from stalkers and owners. The Group will undertake a health check. A public meeting was planned for the Autumn. The DMG's website was up-to-date.

**GR West Sutherland** - A Group scale plan was being written. The Assynt Peninsula sub group plan was available on-line. Native Woodland plans were being considered. Mortality rates had been variable but high in some areas. Deer present in the village were a challenge in Lochinver. Living Landscape Scheme. Lovat venison project. The Group will undertake a health check. SNH were thanked for their involvement.

**PB NW Sutherland** - A new DMG Secretary had been appointed. More support was requested from SNH. A health check had been confirmed and results from HIA were being pulled together.

**TC East Sutherland** - The Group's 4<sup>th</sup> DMP was in progress and there had been a count in 2017. A reduction cull was on-going. The number of annual meetings was to increase to 4 and HIA coverage was good. FOI request on designated sites. Woodland Creation Scheme which resulted in DVC. In future DMGs should be statutory consultees. (ADMG to take up with FCS). Peatland restoration administered on an Estate scale basis

**TC Northern** - attended meetings. Working plan and population modelling was on-going. The Group was receiving secretarial support through ADMG on a temporary basis. TC was confident that progress will be made.

**SM Gairloch Conservation Unit** - The Group was on target for 2019. A recent fire on Diabeg Estate had caused significant damage with 20,000 acres of forestry burnt. The Group will undertake a health check.

**AK Strathconon DMG** - LS was continuing to work with the Group. HIA was on-going with 3 years of data. Mortality had been variable. Woodland opportunity plan. MSP attendance requested. Spring count carried out (on-foot). The Group will undertake a health check. Peatland restoration on an individual Estate basis on-going.

**FSN Glen Strathfarrar DMG** - The hind cull had been achieved with members cooperating to complete cull. Mortality was fairly high. HIA was on-going. The Group will undertake a health check.

**LS Affric & Kintail DMG** - SNH's CEO, Francesca Osowska had attended a positive meeting of the DMG. Peatland restoration application in progress. A woodland survey was being carried out. Around 100 children from 3 local primary schools had attended open days. The Renewable Energy Forum can support this type of activity. The Group is now referring to the Deer Management Plan as a "Land Management Plan".

	<p><b>LKS Mid-West DMG</b> - The Group had met in April. HIA was being carried out over the whole area with the assistance of Cathy Mayne. Woodlands in 2019. CM to carry out review of data. The Group would carry out a health check. Public events held at Ardverkie Estate had been poorly attended.</p> <p><b>DM South Skye DMG</b> - The Group had been formed around 3 years. Two new members, JMT and RPID had recently joined. A DMP should be completed by the end of 2018. The Group was working well with Chris Cartwright recently appointed the new Chair. HIA training was on-going and aim was to implement HIA across the Group.</p> <p><b>EM Lochalsh DMG</b> - The Group was looking at deer migration on to South Ross DMG. HIA was in its 3<sup>rd</sup> year. The DMG had experienced a tough winter and a deer count had revealed 13% recruitment. Mortality had been high. Local councillors had been invited to DMG meetings, but attendance had been poor.</p> <p><b>MS FES - Aberdeenshire forestry blocks</b> There was poor extraction and culling opportunities. Fecundity was very high. Forest deer were moving on to arable land. On-going development of groups and counts.</p> <p><b>TT Inveraray &amp; Tyndrum</b> - The Group would carry out a health check. A Peatland Survey was being carried out. Year 1 of HIA had been completed. This year commercial woodland covered 30% and restock was on-going. SNH were very supportive with agreeing population modelling. The Chairman had set up working parties to share the workload. A professional Secretary had been employed and subscriptions had doubled to cover the Secretary and other works. Leadership of Groups is critical.</p> <p><b>TT Cowal Deer Working Group</b> - comprises 60% commercial woodland coverage. FCS agreement secured to formulate DMP, now being written by LS.</p> <p><b>TT Balquhiddier</b> - Culls were high in some parts of the DMG. Sub area meetings had proved useful.</p> <p><b>Glenelg and Strathtay</b> - were supported by a consultant.</p> <p><b>Breadalbane DMG</b> - The Section 7 had been removed and HIA training was on-going.</p> <p><b>MC Cairngorms &amp; Speyside DG</b> - The Group would carry out a health check. Conservation interests dominate the Group objectives. Habitat impacts were well measured. 3 deer / sq km in high areas. 16,500 Ha of woodland. 80% HIA coverage. Peatland Action officer to be appointed. Historic data being reviewed.</p> <p><b>MC South Deeside / North Angus</b> - All members were currently undertaking HIA. DMP was good and annual counts were undertaken. The DMP was modified to reflect increased hind culls. Group increased hind culls without being asked by SNH. Professionally run and well governed Group. Woodland problem identified. Joint collaboration with neighbouring Groups is being worked on as a solution. Additional Group areas available for expansion. The Group would carry out a health check.</p>	
	<p><b>Questions</b></p> <p>TC confirmed that copies of the Muirburn Code would be circulated. There would be a link in e-SCOPE.</p>	
	<p>There being no other business the Chairman thanked all those in attendance and closed the meeting.</p>	



DRAFT