

GLENELG PENINSULA DEER MANAGEMENT GROUP

Minutes of Meeting

6 June 2018

Held at Eilanreach Lodge at 11.00am

In the Chair	Julian Richmond-Watson
Secretary	Michael Laing
Present	Arnisdale Glenquoich Glenshiel Eilanreach East Glenquoich Druidaig Angus Davidson Ltd Kinloch Hourn Cluanie FCS SNH Paddy Micklejohn

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Corriclair, Cllr Campbell, Kate Forbes MSP.

2. Approval of Minutes

The minutes from the previous meeting were approved.

3. Matters Arising

The secretary has been liaising with the council over the repair of the deer signs and will continue to push for completion. **ACTION**

The peatland restoration survey grant funding has been awarded and AD Ltd is in the process of pulling the survey together. **ACTION**

AD Ltd has created a questionnaire to determine the economic benefit the group estates provide. AD Ltd will send this to the Chairman and Secretary for approval prior to circulation. **ACTION**

4. Stag and Hind Cull 2017/18

	Stags	Hinds	Calves
Arnisdale	40	68	25
Bunloyne	-	-	-
Cluanie	5	20	6
Druidaig	4	4	2
East Glenquoich	5	20	15
Eileanreach	42	54	6
Glenquoich	32	49	21
Glenshiel	25	43	7
Kinlochhourn	11	15	2
Group Total	164	273	84
Corrielaire	-	-	-
FCS Ratagan & Bernera	80	53	22
Kintail	-	-	-

The stag cull has increased from 144 in 2017 to 164.

The hind cull has increased from 220 in 2017/18 which represented 9% of hind numbers using our 2015 count (2,401 hinds), to 273 which represents 11.3% of our hind numbers using the 2015 count.

16 more calves were shot this season compared to the previous.

5. Hind Cull 2017/18 (included above)

6. Deer

a) Recruitment Counts

The following recruitment counts have been recorded.

	2017	2018
Arnisdale	36%	17%
Bunloyne	-	-
Cluanie	48%	21%
Druidaig	27%	30%
East Glenquoich	42%	12.8%
Eileanreach	27%	16%
Glenquoich	48%	8.5%
Glenshiel	42%	17%
Kinlochhourn	58%	33%*
Group Average	41%	19.4%
Corrielaire	-	-
FCS Ratagan & Bernera	-	-
Kintail	-	-

The 2018 recruitment count was expected to be lower than 2017 after one of the longest and hardest winters we have experienced in recent years. The 5 year average for group recruitment is 24.4%.

**The Kinlochhourn count was carried out on a small sample and may not be entirely accurate. The stalker has only been on the ground for a short period of time.*

b) Condition

Deer are still in a weak and poor condition after the prolonged cold weather and the general consensus is that many of the young deer from 2017 have been lost. There have been a high number of nobbers seen dead on the hill. The hinds are generally in poor condition and dried up much earlier than in warmer years. The stags are beginning to improve.

c) Losses and Leakage

FCS noted that a high number of deer have been witnessed on crofting ground between Gleann Beag and Scallasaig, he commented that numbers are not controlled but any that enter the forestry are shot. FCS do not erect deer fences against agricultural ground. Eilanreach requested that the ground be counted to determine numbers. AD Ltd would like to incorporate the area into the DMP. Eilanreach has some sporting rights over the area and will meet with the owner of Scallasaig Lodge who also holds sporting rights to discuss management. LD Ltd will provide contact details for SNH returns and the group. **ACTION**

FCS noted that whilst the majority of the Eilanreach tree felling operations are now complete, lorry drivers had been seen leaving gates open on a number of occasions and deer had been seen passing through the open gates.

Glenshiel is aware of leakage of deer off their ground around the new fence onto the Forestry Commission ground. Glenshiel is looking to carry out more fencing but doesn't expect to be able to entirely control the deer. **ACTION**

d) Roadkill Figures

Cluanie noted that 5 stags, 6 hinds and 5 calves had been killed on the road at Cluanie. Glenshiel noted that 5 stags had been killed on the road at Glenshiel.

e) Simpson Larder visit

The visit had been a success with estates represented well. All members are happy with the service provided by Simpsons. Glenquoich pointed out that it was stressed during the visit that only meat fit for human consumption ought to be sent to the game dealer and Stalkers must be careful. Arnisdale noted that contamination from gut shots is a major concern.

7. Proposed Stage Cull 2018 Season

	Proposed Stag Cull 2017
Arnisdale	40
Bunloyne	-
Cluanie	5
Druidaig	4
East Glenquoich	5
Eileanreach	42
Glenquoich	32
Glenshiel	24
Kinlochhourn	11
Group Total	163
Corriclair	-
FCS Ratagan & Bernera	-
Kintail	-

8. Deer Management Plan

a) Angus Davidson Ltd update

AD Ltd is kindly representing the group at the ADMG meeting in Inverness on the 7th June. At the meeting the parameters of the 2019 SNH DMP assessment will be discussed and AD Ltd will report to the group on the priorities which we must incorporate into the group DMP. The ADMG have offered help to assess the DMP and this has been accepted.

The population model needs refining before it is presented and AD Ltd asked for assistance with this. Currently losses and leakages are calculated at 6%, general consensus is that this is too low. AD Ltd will re-evaluate and take into account mortality but also needs to understand desired deer numbers for each estate. AD Ltd will contact stalkers individually. **ACTION**

Once the population model has been improved it can be submitted to the group page on the ADMG website.

Habitat survey data is being pulled together for the plan currently. The stalkers have either completed or are in the process of completing the habitat survey for 2018 which is the third time the exercise has been carried out since 2012. Once data has been collected Stalkers should send it to the secretary. Glenquoich noted that a best practice leaflet is being produced which will help for assessment at East Glenquoich, Glenquoich and Kinlochhourn. SNH will liaise with these estates to provide assistance as necessary. **STALKERS ACTION**

SNH is concerned by the lack of woodland assessment in the DMP and the lack of stags and feels that consideration needs to be given to culling policies.

b) Paddy Mieklejohn

Paddy Mieklejohn kindly joined the group to share his experience of deer management.

Paddy highlighted that deer management is the control of a population in a given area to allow deer to perform to their full potential and he noted that we have three tools to allow this to happen, culling, counting and analysing.

Paddy gave an account of his experience of deer management and referred to his paper 'Highland Red Deer Stocking Density' which had been circulated in advance of the meeting. In particular Paddy pointed out that after recruitment and losses, hind numbers grow by 16% annually and therefore, culls must be at least 16% of hind numbers in order to maintain a stable population. Any hind that is shot over and above the 16% threshold makes room for one more stag. The evidence that Paddy has collected over the years highlights the importance of having a stag to hind ratio of 1:1. The above noted paper and Paddy's 'Eureka Papers', circulated during the meeting, will be distributed with the minutes. **ACTION**

9. Local Community Engagement

Cllr Campbell and Kate Forbes MSP were invited to the meeting but neither could attend.

10. Finances

The bank balance at the 6th of June 2018 was reported to be adequate.

11. A. O. C. B.

Nothing to note.

12. Date of Next Meeting

Sunday 14th October 2018 to be held at Kintail Lodge Hotel at 2.30pm