

GLENELG PENINSULA DEER MANAGEMENT GROUP

Minutes of Meeting

9 May 2017

Held at Kintail Lodge Hotel at 11.00am

In the Chair	Julian Richmond-Watson
Secretary	Michael Laing
Present	Kinloch Hourn
	Glenshiel
	Glenquoich
	Corrielaire
	Arnisdale
	Eilanreach
	Cluanie
	FES
	SNH
	Angus Davidson Ltd

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Druidaig.

2. Approval of Minutes

The minutes from the previous meeting were approved.

3. Matters Arising

Glenshiel have now replaced the gate in question.

Tree Survey and Deer Larder visit – The Secretary will get confirmed numbers and arrange the tree survey and Simpson visit as soon as possible, the tree survey may have to be delayed until Spring 2018. **ACTION**

Invasive Species – Rhododendrons will be mapped with the tree survey and the group recognises the need to control goats but also note they are difficult to shoot due to their common proximity to roads and houses.

Deer Management Plan – Aspects of the Deer Management Plan were discussed in depth and these will be reported under the Deer Management Plan section of the minutes.

4. Stag and Hind Cull 2016/17

	Stags	Hinds	Calves
Arnisdale	33	65	26
Bunloyne	-	-	-
Cluanie	5	5	2
Druidaig	6	8	4
East Glenquoich	4	19	10
Eileanreach	33	43	5
Glenquoich	34	32	19
Glenshiel	17	30	1
Kinlochhourn	12	18	1
Group Total	144	220	68
Corriclair	-	45	19
FCS Ratagan & Bernera	98	79	54
Kintail	-	-	-

5. Deer

a) Recruitment Counts

The following recruitment counts have been recorded.

	Recruitment Count
Arnisdale	36%
Bunloyne	-
Cluanie	48%
Druidaig	27%
East Glenquoich	42%
Eileanreach	27%
Glenquoich	48%
Glenshiel	42%
Kinlochhourn	65%
Group Average	42%
Corriclair	-
FCS Ratagan & Bernera	-
Kintail	-

b) Condition

It was agreed that all of the deer are in good condition having had a relatively easy winter and there has been low mortality rates across the group area.

c) Losses and Leakage

Glenshiel continue to see leakage onto Kintail otherwise the group Estates are not concerned by losses or leakages.

d) Roadkill Figures

It was noted by the stalkers that roadkill figures are significantly lower than those recorded historically. The only Estates that reported any roadkills were; Cluanie with 5 stags, 4 hinds and 2 calves, and Glenshiel with 3 stags, no hinds or calves.

The flashing deer warning signs are not working, the Secretary will liaise with the Council to have them repaired and replaced. **ACTION**

6. Proposed Stage Cull 2017 Season

	Proposed Stag Cull 2017
Arnisdale	35
Bunloyne	-
Cluanie	7
Druidaig	8
East Glenquoich	5
Eileanreach	30
Glenquoich	35
Glenshiel	20
Kinlochhourn	15
Group Total	155
Corriclair	20
FCS Ratagan & Bernera	-
Kintail	-

7. Deer Management Plan

The Chairman highlighted some of the points from the recent SNH Deer Report. In general there is more onus on the owners to report and control deer numbers. SNH agreed with this point and advised members to look at the recent parliamentary debate. The Government is still listening to groups rather than enforcing culls. SNH suggested that there is an element of affordability in these discussions because the Government does not have the money to identify the problem areas and impose sanctions on those not conforming. The Chairman commented that he is keen to keep the group off the radar and avoid antagonising SNH and the Government, but in order to do this we must keep the deer numbers under control.

Corriclair suggested that habitat monitoring remains important, the group has been undertaking habitat monitoring every three years since 2012, but Glenquoich and Kinlochhourn are still waiting for some specific advice from SNH. SNH noted that the

onus will be on the owners to show if grazing is a problem. The next survey will be undertaken in 2018. The data for the previous surveys will be sent to Angus Davidson Ltd and the Secretary in order that it can be added as an appendix to the DMP. **ACTION**

AD Ltd highlighted that with recruitment counts at 27 to 28% and current hind and calf culls, the population is increasing quite significantly as shown in the population model. The Chairman supported this point and noted that we must not allow our population to increase. SNH mentioned that hinds will out compete stags for winter ground therefore it is important that hind numbers are kept in control. There has been a significantly higher recruitment count this year and as a result the population will increase over and above the model. It is imperative that Estates bear this in mind when are undertaking their culls. AD Ltd requested that members forward their desired stag cull to him to improve the effectiveness of the population model. **ACTION**

AD Ltd noted that the DMP falls short in respect of the public interest requirements, the group ought to bear in mind that woodland expansion and peatland management will become more important as the deer numbers are controlled, the Chairman supported this point and suggested Estates keep a photographic record of their woodlands.

AD Ltd suggested that it would be beneficial to get more positive points into the DMP with regards to the benefits of venison and also to highlight the costs of running a Highland Estate and the support to local economies they provide. To this extent AD Ltd will provide a template for Estates to record a summary of their expenses that can be presented as required to provide evidence to SNH if necessary. **ACTION**

8. Local Community Engagement

The group queried if it should be engaging with more local bodies or more members of the public. SNH noted that other DMG's have held open meetings for the general public and turnout has been mixed, it has taken an extensive amount of effort to arrange, SNH questions whether or not this is worthwhile. Glenquoich recently met with the local MSP, Kate Forbes who is keen to learn more about the Highland Estates. It was agreed that Councillor Campbell and Kate Forbes would be invited to the May 2018 meeting.

The Chairman suggested that next May, the group meet at 11am and the local Councillor and MSP are invited for 12.30pm along with any other locals that might wish to attend. Glenquoich suggested that it might be useful to hold the May 2018 meeting on an Estate so that the MSP and local Councillor can get more of an understanding of the estates. If anybody wishes to host this meeting perhaps suggestions could be made to the Secretary. **ACTION**

9. Finances

The Secretary reported the bank balance. Funds are adequate.

10. A. O. C. B.

Arnisdale queried when the next helicopter count would take place. SNH had previously been offering to carry out the count in 2018, SNH suggested that there would be helicopter counts planned for the future but it is unlikely that SNH would fully cover the costs of these flights. The Chairman requested that SNH schedule the next count for 2020 and noted that the group would be willing to make a contribution towards the count.

Glenquoich informed the group that he had recently met with the Environmental Minister (Roseanna Cunningham) and during that meeting it was suggested that no funding would be available for helicopter counts. She was not sympathetic towards assisting Estates in this matter. This point was discussed and it was recognised that if SNH are driving these counts then there ought to be some contribution from them.

11. Date of Next Meeting

Sunday 15th October 2017 at 3pm