

GLENELG PENINSULA DEER MANAGEMENT GROUP

Minutes of Meeting

14 October 2018

Held at the Glenelg Inn at 2.30pm

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

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from East Glenquoich. There was no representation by FCS.

2. Approval of Minutes

The minutes from the previous meeting were approved.

3. Matters Arising

Deer Signs – the deer sign at Cluanie is still not working, the secretary will continue to chase. **ACTION**

4. Deer

The following table shows the stag cull numbers to date with the proposed total in brackets along with the proposed hind cull, albeit this is a vague number at this stage.

	Stags	Hinds
Arnisdale	17 (25)	40
Bunloyne	-	-
Cluanie	4 (7)	20-25
Druidaig	2 (5)	6-8
East Glenquoich	4 (4)	20
Eileanreach	9 (15)	30-35
Glenquoich	23 (23)	40-50

Glenshiel	8 (18)	30
Kinlochhourn	2 (6)	15
Group Total	69 (103)	201-223
Corrielaire	9 (15)	30-35
FCS Ratagan & Bernera	-	-
Kintail	-	-

General comments from the Stalkers in connection with the stag season were that it had been a very difficult season with many of the stags in very poor condition following the hard winter. There is a severe lack of mature stags being witnessed by almost all Estates, a late rut was seeing groups of stags still together in mid October and many Estates were seeing hinds without any stags. Glenquoich had witnessed a large number of deer (c120) at the head of the glen but they were never seen again and nobody is aware of where they went. A number of stalkers commented that antlers are in poor condition suggesting malnutrition.

Comment with regards to the hinds is that they are in poor condition with a low number of calves being witnessed. Estates would have to see what was on the ground before they committed to shooting the above numbers.

SNH commented that a similar story was being heard across Scotland, there is a lack of rutting activity and lack of mature stags and hinds are not in good condition. AD Ltd reported that he has heard many similar stories. The chairman stated that he would not be holding the Estates to account for their proposed hind culls and that members should see how the season progresses.

5. Deer Management Plan

a) Angus Davidson Ltd

AD Ltd has been through the benchmarking process with Victor Clements which was a helpful exercise and highlighted a number of areas that we need to consider, the most important of which appears to be a dedicated group website which should include basic information which can be pulled from the Deer Management Plan along with minutes of meeting. The secretary has discussed this with Dick Playfair who deals with all media elements for the ADMG and he has suggested that the current website is suitable but it ought to have minutes of the meetings uploaded. Dick will speak to Victor about this at the next ADMG meeting. The cost to have a dedicated website is £120 per annum. A dedicated website would contain all the same information laid out in a different fashion.

ACTION

SC confirmed that SNH will be carrying out a further assessment of all groups plans in April/May 2019. Assessments will be carried out with SNH some estates have requested to be present as well, a date for the meeting will be arranged.

b) Population Model

AD Ltd still requires 2022 target hind numbers from some estates in order to finalise the population model. The secretary will email the necessary people to

seek their numbers. AD Ltd will adjust the mortality rate shown in the population model and use any updated heli-count data to inform the mortality percentage in order to improve the accuracy of the model. **ACTION**

c) Habitat Survey

The groups evidence on habitats is very strong. AD Ltd has entered information onto maps to show the pressure on the different areas. The group has 3 years' worth of data which is very good but SNH would like a higher number of sites per management unit. Some Estates still require to carry out the monitoring and SNH has agreed to send AD Ltd any data held by SNH from their server. AD Ltd will also circulate any GPS data he has for various Estates. **ACTION**

d) Peatland Restoration

AD Ltd will carry out this work by the end of March, he will contact stalkers after the stag season is complete. **ACTION**

e) Economic Questionnaire

AD Ltd will send the basic questionnaire to the secretary ML for circulation. **ACTION**

f) Woodland

Some Estates are looking at creating regeneration blocks. Glenquoich intend to enclose approximately 200 hectares in 3 separate blocks, AD Ltd will get maps from John Clegg & Co of these areas. Glensheil are looking at regeneration plots and a plan can be obtained through the factor. There are some clusters of woodland at Loch Hourn that have, in the past, been identified as declining and it has been agreed that a survey will be carried out on these particular areas in order to try and have any declining areas removed from records. **ACTION**

6. SNH Deer Count

SNH confirmed that the group ground would be counted this winter and it would include the entire peninsula (Forestry Commission, Department ground and crofting ground). It will be part of a larger SNH count program over the winter and timing will be dependent on weather and staff availability. SNH confirmed that it would be useful to have help from the various stalkers in order that marches can be identified. Cluanie and Arnisdale will co-ordinate the stalkers involvement, there are likely to be 2 helicopters and the entire cost will be incurred by SNH. **ACTION**

7. Local Community Engagement

Various members of the local community are invited to the May meeting, queries were raised as to whether or not we should invite someone from the local sheep club. In the past Councillor Campbell and local police officers have been invited. It was agreed that these parties should all be invited to the May meeting, AD Ltd will forward contacts for the Scallasaig Sheep Club. Glenquoich represents the local Community Council. The secretary will try to contact the owner of Bunloinn again to encourage their involvement in the group. **ACTION**

8. Finances

The bank balance is currently at a healthy level and will be reconsidered at the next meeting.

9. AOCB

a) Deer health

Glenquoich concerns over deer culls and questioned if other factors are at play. Suggestions were made to take samples to assess deer health which is something Cluanie carried out during the hind cull in 2017 to investigate trace elements. The reports determined the levels of Copper, Cobalt and Selenium and Cluanie tried to take a selection of hinds in different health to assess condition. Tests were carried out by taking a sample of the liver from each hind. Samples could be frozen and were sent in laboratory bags by the stalker to Conan Vets. The cost of each sample was £50.

Glenquoich commented that antler condition is very poor this year and having been talking with their New Zealand ghillie, who has an agricultural degree, he understands that phosphorus is important for calcium retention, phosphorus is usually washed out of vegetation and it could be that there is a lack of calcium in the ground due to the increased rainfall that we have seen in recent years. The stalker has also witnessed the cattle eating all cast antlers, presumably to benefit from the calcium.

b) Weather Data

AD Ltd will add Kinloch Hourn's weather data onto the Deer Management Plan.

ACTION

c) Sporting Rates

The secretary noted that the hearings for the deer forest sporting rates appeals was due to take place and advised that members who are appealing have open conversations to ensure they do not jeopardise each other's positions.

10. Date of Next Meeting

Monday 13th May 2019 to be held at Kintail Lodge Hotel (TBC) at 11am.