



ASSOCIATION OF DEER MANAGEMENT GROUPS

Regional Meeting

Wednesday 21st November 2018

Kingsmills Hotel, Inverness

MINUTES

In Attendance:

Tom Turnbull
Finlay Clark
Tom Chetwynd
Victor Clements
James Duncan Millar
Ian Fergusson
Donald Fraser
Willie Fraser
Alistair Gibson
Robbie Kernahern
Ewen Macpherson
Colin McClean
Dick Playfair
Linzi Seivwright

Vice-Chairman
Secretary
Executive Committee
Executive Committee
Executive Committee
Executive Committee
Executive Committee
Executive Committee
Executive Committee
Executive Committee
Executive Committee
Executive Committee
Executive Committee

Tim Atkinson
James Baillie
James Bain
Pieter Bakker
Ken Bowlt
Mary Bowman
Chris Cartwright
Angus Campbell
David Campbell
Hugh Cheape
Jane Cheape
Sinclair Coghill
Alex Dunnings
Ian Fergusson
Roddie Feilden
Donald Fraser

Ben Alder Estate
Glenshiel Estate
Lochluishart Estate
Altnaharra Estate
West Ross DMG
SRUC Student
Clan Donald Lands Trust
SNH Board
Land Consultancy Services
Moidart DMG
Moidart DMG
SNH
Bidwells
FES
Mid-West DMG
SNH

Steven Fraser
John Hay
Calum Hogg
Fiona Holmes
William Lamont
Tamara Lawton
Brian Lyall
Roddie MacAskill
Helen MacIntyre
Ewen Maclean
Joanna Macpherson
Cathy Mayne
Finlay McCulloch
Alan McDonnell
Gillian Pattinson
Mark Pattinson
John Risby
Duncan Shaw
Lt Col Peter Sinclair-Knipe
Richard Smith
Graeme Taylor
Iain Thomson
Thomas Watson
Mark White
Rob Whitson
Tom Willis

Angus Davidson

Apologies

Richard Cooke
Leo Barclay
Col. Bill Bewsher
John Bruce
Lynda Campbell
Bob McIntosh
Robin Pakeman
Karen Ramoo
Randal Wilson

David Allison
John Crosthwaite-Eyre
Holly Deary
Jamie Gibbs
Michael Laing
Kirsty Macleod
Hugh Nicoll
Gordon Robertson
Alexander Roy
Frank Spencer Nairn
Gavin Strathdee

Glen Strathfarrar DMG
Mullanrdoch
Mid West DMG
Trees for Life
FES
SNH
ESDMG
Highland Hill & Associates
Northern DMG & Inveraray & Tyndrum DMG
Ardgour / ELS DMG
Lochalsh DMG
Ardnamurchan DMG & West Knoydart DMG
Braelangwell Estate
Trees for Life
Lochcarron Estate
Lochcarron Estate
FCS
Gualin Estate
Erchless Estate Struy
Glen Strathfarrar DMG
SNH
Sallachy Estate
Lochalsh DMG
Glencassley Estate
NRDMG
Upper Deeside & Donside DMG

Chairman
Executive Committee
Executive Committee
Executive Committee
Executive Committee
Executive Committee
Executive Committee
Executive Committee
Executive Committee

West Sutherland DMG
Camusrory
SNH
Dougarie Estate
Glenelg DMG
WS and NWS DMG
Inveraray & Tyndrum
Easter Ross DMG
Bucharn Farm
Glenstrathfarrar DMG
Strathdee Properties

Christian Nissen
 Bill Cowie
 Peter Keyser
 Joe Mallinson
 Col. Nicholas
 Peter Ord

Highland Game Limited
 Associate Member
 Associate Member
 Associate Member
 Associate Member
 Associate Member

1.	<p>Apologies Recorded above.</p>	
2.	<p>Minutes of Regional Meeting, held 13th August 2018, Loch Lomond were proposed by VC and confirmed by JDM as a true record of the meeting.</p>	
3.	<p>Chairman's Report</p> <p>Deer Working Group TT commented on the sad passing of Simon Pepper who had chaired the DWG and acknowledged his contribution to deer management. Andrew Barbour would chair the DWG going forward.</p> <p>SNH Assessments 2019 All assessments will be carried out by April 2019. LS and VC would update the meeting on progress and confirm what further work is required. (See 5. below).</p> <p>Code of Deer Management was currently under review. Consultation had closed on 25th October 2018.</p> <p>Public Consultation on Forestry Strategy for Scotland ADMG will submit a written response.</p> <p>Sporting Rates survey Responses were being analysed by Helen MacIntyre. There had been a good response rate, covering approx.1M acres. The 2011 survey had covered 1.3M acres.</p> <p>You Tube Three films on good practice are available, including carcass handling. In addition, information on Habitat Impact Assessment would be available shortly. .</p> <p>Sporting Rates 281 Sporting Estates were currently in appeals process.</p> <p>Review of Deer Code is currently on-going. The deadline is June 2019.</p> <p>Lowland Deer Panel Chaired by Peter Watson. Their report is expected by December 2018.</p> <p>Six new DMG areas / potential new members of ADMG were being set up.</p>	
4.	<p>Administration Report</p> <p>The Secretary reported that the Management Accounts to the end of October 2018 showed the Association to be in a healthy financial position. Against budgeted income of £42,525, £76,579 had been invoiced, resulting in a positive variance of £33,654. The annual income budget for 2018/19 being £116,550. The major overrun in positive variance related to membership subscriptions which had been invoiced earlier than budgeted. It was anticipated that the year end position would balance out and that the positive variance would decline as the year progressed. Expenditure was running some £26,281 behind budget. The year-to-date expenditure having been budgeted at £59,010 was running at £32,729. Major areas</p>	

	<p>of underspend included the Chairman's Honorarium and travel expenses, project expenses and DMG Health Check expenses. It was anticipated that all of these costs would reach budgeted figure as the year progressed and that the underspend would correct itself in due course.</p> <p>The overall positive variance against budget at present was £59,934. The Secretary reminded the audience that 2018 / 2019 was a unique year in relation to the ADMG finances in that there was a budgeted spend of £40,000 towards the DMG Health Checks which was a major investment in the DMG system and designed to put DMGs into the best possible position to meet the challenges of the 2019 DMG Review. The Secretary reported that ADMG currently hold £108,006 as cash in the bank. There were no questions in relation to the financial statement.</p>	
5.	<p>SNH Assessment and DMG Health Checks LS confirmed that there had been good progress with 44 out of 45 DMGs having undertaken a Health Check. National targets had been set and SNH have set criteria which will be reported against.</p> <p>VC had carried out most Health Checks. Information is being collated by ADMG. The broad picture shows more Groups are moving forward with compliance and green categories and away from amber and red.</p> <p>Both website information and working plans needed to be kept up to date.</p> <p>Habitat Impact Assessment is key and much data has been collected. This now needs to be interpreted and statistics used to form the basis for Deer Management Plans.</p> <p>Native Woodland expansion is also a requirement and LS stressed the need to understand what woodland expansion is taking place.</p> <p>Economic information / budgets</p> <p>VC confirmed that he and LS had tried to be as tough as reasonably could be expected when carrying out Health Checks. Mike Cottam, Cathy Mayne and Colin Mclean had done further reviews and had provided a good level of consistency. Many Groups that had been in the lower half of scoring had reacted well. Much activity had been stimulated by the Health Checks. Many Groups were reviewing how they run their Group, including how the Group is chaired and administered. The process has given rise to good information. This will be analysed fully and used to ensure that the review process is one which holds no surprises to any DMG, SNH or ADMG.</p> <p>A DMG Secretary commented that they had done their best to articulate the financial benefits of contributions of DMGs,</p> <p>It was suggested that the ADMG may consider holding a workshop at the AGM in February 2019 to target areas which are most unclear in terms of what is expected from DMGs and economic contributions may well be a topic.</p> <p>AG from West Grampian DMG commented that HIA for west coast green hill areas is less quantifiable and requested guidance from SNH. DF from SNH confirmed that Best Practice Guidance was available. Woodland survey work is more difficult and work on assessment was on-going.</p> <p>Cathy Mayne from West Knoydart DMG commented that the cost of deer management was not insignificant including the administration of DMGs. Work previously done voluntarily was now a professional cost. CM asked what was the cost of deer management nationally, pointing out that the voluntary system comes at</p>	

	<p>a cost. DMGs, DMPs and deer counts all incur costs. What was the cost of assessments?</p> <p><i>A letter to DMG Chairs and Secretaries will be circulated to acknowledge and thank DMGs for their considerable efforts and to confirm that the cost of running DMGs should be recorded as best as possible.</i></p> <p>Sporting Rates FC and RW</p> <p>Venison Strategy Beyond the Glen – DP reported on the Venison Sector Summit prompted by Fergus Ewing. The resulting strategy addressed UK venison market trends. Information is scant and more knowledge was needed. It was intended to appoint a market specialist in years 2 and 3 to assess and cultivate the market place.</p> <p>Community based larders / chillers Further research on husbandry and expertise was on-going. Deer farming is a requirement to meet shortfalls as market pressures fluctuate depending on wild cull volumes, and NZ production and exports had softened.</p> <p>EU Protected Geographical Indicators (PGI) Status for UK food names may or may not continue after Brexit. Protected food names will remain important. 32 responses on PGI application with only 2 objections. A second round of consultation is expected by the end of 2018.</p> <p>Food Standards Scotland Three programmes on carcass handling were available on DVD and available to DMGs. There was also a pdf presentation available on-line “Understanding Carcass Contamination” that can also be provided as a powerpoint DP can provide details.</p> <p>A meat hygiene module was also being developed to present to DMGs. Please contact DP with any comments or questions on venison.</p>	
6.	<p>SNH update DF confirmed that preparation for the 2019 Review was on-going. The report for the Cabinet Secretary would be completed by October 2019 and would compare progress with the 2016 Report. It is thought that the Deer Working Group and Lowland Deer Panel would probably both report in 2019 and would include direct comparisons to the 2016 Report.</p> <p>The 2019 Report should contain no surprises and the DMG Health Checks were considered very important and helpful.</p> <p>Section 7 Agreements There is a focus on S7 Agreements especially with regard to habitat, cull targets and population management.</p> <p>More resources are being channelled towards poorer performing DMGs, new DMGs and engagement is being promoted. Increased coverage across Scotland is important.</p> <p>Lowland Deer Panel will report in December 2018. Central Scotland management regimes also being reviewed.</p> <p>Reported culls of all species in 2017/18 were the highest recorded with 75,000 deer culled. Population reduction had been planned and delivered. SNH acknowledged concern surrounding the reduction of deer numbers and confirmed that changes in deer cull numbers should be approached in a considered way.</p> <p>DF was asked for details of the reporting procedure.</p>	

	<p>SWARD was currently being reviewed in terms of technical delivery. An update was expected in January 2019. Best Practice route is the likely outcome and managing expectations is important.</p> <p>LS commented that DMGs should not wait for SWARD to make cull and management decisions.</p> <p>Health Check feedback from SNH was an excellent way of preparing for 2019. The progress of the 45 DMGs that had undergone a Health Checks were significant and important in a national context and boded well for 2019.</p>	
7.	<p>PR report and publications DP</p> <p>The next newsletter will be published in February 2019.</p> <p>Following GDPR the database had 100 less subscribers.</p> <p>DMRT – PR side of deer management. Islay huntress debate was on-going and how DMGs / ADMG should respond.</p> <p>Contraception versus cull discussion on-going.</p> <p>DP asked DMGs to please keep their website entries up to speed. If anyone encountered issues please contact DP, VC or LS. It is important that meeting minutes and Deer Management Plans are available and up-to-date.</p>	
8.	<p>DMG Reports</p> <p>West Lochaber DMG (AG) HIA was being carried out. A Health Check had been carried out and the Group was happy with the result. The Group's AGM would take place on 7th December 2018. Burning problematic, public engagement, and other challenges.</p> <p>Northern DMG (HM) A new Executive Committee had been set up. The DMG had received results from Health Check.</p> <p>Inveraray & Tyndrum (HM) HIA results were now being co-ordinated. Peatland project on-going. Larder visits for FES. Health Check had been beneficial.</p> <p>North Ross DMG (RW) VC had carried out the DMG's Health Check and a number of areas for improvement were being addressed. AGM had been held recently and the DMP was to be re-written. Extreme winter mortality and stag cull had been impacted. Hinds were few in some areas. Peatland restoration, HIA and planting was on-going. The DMG contained two areas subject to Section 7s. Sinclair Coghill, SNH, had been very helpful at Ben Wyvis. Helicopter count was planned for this winter / spring. An interim meeting was planned in January to reassess culls and objectives.</p> <p>Mid-West DMG (RF) The Group's AGM had been held in October. Given scale of winter mortality, a sampling system was a key part of planning. HIA training day in Spring. 2019 review meeting would take place during the last week of February 2019. Winters were challenging and cull levels were variable across the Group. Re-wilding was becoming a live issue for some DMGs and DMPs and it was important that DMGs continued to cooperate. Important to recognise that collaboration is key and conflict should be avoided. Good information is required for planning.</p> <p>East Sutherland DMG (TC) The Group held 4 meetings per annum. Population modelling was in place. DVC issues following forestry scheme development. Peatland restoration on-going as was woodland expansion.</p>	

South West Ross DMG (TC) The Group held 4 meetings per annum. Deer extended into croft land on coast. Community meetings held.

North West Sutherland DMG (TC) *managed for* through single-ownership. SNH chaired meeting and an extensive review was on-going. TC and VC were supporting the Group.

West Sutherland DMG (TC) A potential split of the group being considered. Sub-dividing would capture deer movements better under the administrative structure of the Group. High mortality, poor hind condition. Health Checks identified both strong and weak areas.

All four Groups were adhering to DMPs and using external resources. Good progress was being made in advance of 2019.

South East Sutherland (TC) The Group was not yet ready to join ADMG.

Moidart (HC) The Group had included Police and Fire Services. Wildfires were an issue. Winter mortality feared in 2018. A count had been undertaken and numbers were better than expected and stable. Variation of DMP and model undertaking reduction in stag and increase in hind culls. Health Check had been undertaken and much had been learned from the process. HIA training had been undertaken. Woodland picture at odds with Native Woodland Survey. The Group had participated in the Moredun Deer Health project. Peatland restoration.

Lochalsh DMG (EM) AGM held a month ago. Health check had been carried out and progress was on-going. HIA carried out over 3 years. Heavy mortality and population modelling *requires review*.

West Ross DMG (KB) A Health Check had been undertaken and the Group was happy with support received. Focus was required in some areas. Working Action Plan to add to DMP to focus on priority actions. Scottish Wild Venison membership was encouraged. New / reporting member of Group. Meetings were now focused on actions. There was a focus on Fannich Hills SAC Section 7. Population currently below target. Ben Stallach – SNH to appoint contractor to work with the Estate.

Natural Woodlands accepted methodology was difficult and support was required. Majority of members have added to woodlands. Collaborative work through Forestry Collaboration fund. Application now submitted. Group members will make individual decisions. Carbon Capture feasibility study on-going and supported by SNH.

HIA was mostly mapped and recorded. Public access – all details available on Heading to Scottish Hills website except for 3 members. Population modelling work on-going and data was urgently required. Mortality had been very high and mortality and recruitment data was required to ensure confidence in the population model and plan.

Upper Deeside and Donside DMG (TW) The AGM had been held last week. HIA was being undertaken. Positive Health Check experience reported and work was on-going. Carbon sequestration review. Helicopter count planned for 2019. A Spring meeting was planned to review the Health Check report.

West Knoydart DMG (CM) reported 4 new members.

Ardnamurchan DMG (CM) challenges were on-going.

South Perthshire (JDM) A helicopter count was carried out in February 2018 *showing a 20% increase in population prompting a 25% culling rate. Cull back 20% with very late rut. Hind condition was normal but a decision had been taken to reduce the hind population.* Health Check experience had been good and had

	<p>identified boundary and population issues. Birnam Deer Forum had been helpful. Targets had been set on previous deer culls which were very high.</p> <p>Gairloch Conservation Unit (SM) The Group's AGM had taken place in October. The Health Check review had been good. HIA is on track and Cathy Mayne is supporting the Group. NNR member skewed stag numbers.</p>	
<p>9.</p>	<p>Forestry Commission – Cooperation Grant – John Risby</p> <p>JR reported positive achievements over 25 years. 20,000 Ha had been planted in 20 years. The focus for the last 5 years had been on designated woodland sites. Much had been achieved, but there was much still to do.</p> <p>Grant information. Aim for 3,600 Ha over 5 years and funding towards deer fencing including high cost deer fences. 23,000 Ha of new planting across Scotland with a high percentage of native new planting in the Highlands. Grants for natural regeneration of 300 Ha plus fencing, 499 stems per Ha.</p> <p>£46M budget: £36M for new planting. Less money available for managing native woodlands.</p> <p>Cooperation Grant – groups of owners to manage native woodlands, to look jointly at what woodlands should be provided. £10,000 per application with a minimum of 40 owners required. Ground <i>truthing</i> critical and opportunity for assessment. One approval for Affric on-going. SNH would welcome the process.</p> <p>Caledonian Pinewood Recovery Fiona Holmes</p> <p>84 Caledonian Pinewoods form key sites and are considered the best examples. Designated sites are under some pressure and SNH is keen to see progress.</p> <p>Aims:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To protect and enhance pinewoods; • Access ecological health and future resilience; • Understand barriers and influence funding; • Work with owners and managers; <p>What are the barriers? Hosted by Trees for Life. Partners include the Woodland Trust, FCS, SNH, SLE. There is project funding for two years together with funds from charitable trusts and other sources.</p> <p>Assessment entails a site visit, walk-over, report, options, future work, challenges. The assessment is free.</p> <p>Further information can be obtained by contacting Fiona Holmes at Trees for Life or from the Trees for Life website at:</p> <p>https://treesforlife.org.uk/work/about-us/who-we-are/</p>	
<p>10.</p>	<p>AOB</p> <p>SQWV DP confirmed that free larder assessments are available. DP confirmed that a press release would be made regarding Part 1 of the Moredun Report on the deer health project. 1,097 faecal samples had been analysed of which 3 had tested positive for E coli. Letters had been sent to all those who had participated in the project together with the results from the samples they had provided. DP urged all to continue to follow best practice. Strict hygiene processes should be undertaken.</p>	

Part two of the report is due to be finalised in April 2019 with Part three anticipated for release in the Summer of 2019.

There being no further matters, the Chairman thanked all those in attendance and closed the meeting.