



ASSOCIATION OF DEER MANAGEMENT GROUPS

Regional Meeting

5th June 2019, Birnam

MINUTES

In Attendance:

Richard Cooke, Chairman
 Tom Turnbull, Vice-Chair
 Finlay Clark, Secretary

James Adamson
 Col. Bewsher
 Lynda Campbell
 Julian Clark
 Victor Clement
 Falcon Frost
 Bob McIntosh
 Dick Playfair
 Linzi Seivwright

Executive Committee
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 Executive Committee

Michael Aldridge
 Leif Brag
 John Bruce
 Mike Cottam
 Holly Deary
 Ian Fergusson
 Donald Fraser
 Alistair Gibson
 Andrew Gordon
 Michael Laing
 Peter Lawson
 Helen MacIntyre
 Andrew MacMaster
 Seamus MacNally
 Doug McAdam
 Hugh Nicol
 Iain Robertson

Glenartney DMG
 Tilhill Forestry
 BDS
 C&S and SDNA DMGs, CNPA
 SNH
 FLS
 SNH
 West Lochaber DMG
 West Grampian & Glenelg DMGs
 Glenelg DMG
 Morvern DMG
 Inveraray & Tyndrum DMG
 SNH
 Gairloch Conservation Unit
 WDBP / East Grampian SA1 (South Grampian DMG)
 Inveraray & Tyndrum DMG
 MoD

Lorraine Servant
 Andrew Templeton
 Deirdre Stewart
 David Wallace
 Hugh Rose

SNH
 South Perthshire DMG
 EG SA1 (South Grampian DMG)
 Glenartney DMG
 Associate Member

Apologies:

Leo Barclay
 James Duncan Millar
 Ewen Macpherson
 Colin McClean
 Karen Ramoo
 James Baillie

Executive Committee
 Executive Committee
 Executive Committee
 Executive Committee
 Executive Committee
 Glenshiel Estate

John Campbell-Smith
 Robbie Galloway
 Simon Laird
 Frank Spencer Nairn
 Robert Wills
 Peter Keyser
 Duncan Gordon
 Alexander Roy

Borders, Breadalbane and Northern DMGs
 Duchally
 Knoydart DMG
 Glenstrathfarrar DMG
 Eilanreach Estate
 Associate Member

1.	<p>Apologies Recorded above.</p>	
2.	<p>Minutes of the Regional Meeting held 21 November 2018 in Inverness Proposed by HM and seconded by VC as a true record of the meeting.</p>	
3.	<p>Matters Arising Code of Practice for Deer Management –SNH to report later in meeting; ADMG responded to the public consultation on Scotland’s Forestry Strategy; 3 You tube films on carcass handling now on-line; SWARD update from DF under SNH report later in the meeting; ADMG Communication Policy reviewed and the 2018 Annual Review, a new publication, was the result. Recognised that communication sometimes is not as far reaching as it should be, ie it does not reach all members of all DMGs. RMJC appealed to Secretaries to pass on information but also to make ADMG aware if they feel “out of the loop”. Scone and Moy remain an important part of face-to-face communication.</p>	
4.	<p>Chairman’s Update AGM 28th February and workshops in afternoon.</p>	

	<p>Assessments have now taken place and will feature in LS and SNH Report later in the meeting. The SNH Report is due with Scottish Government in September.</p> <p>The Deer Working Group (DWG) will also not now report to ScotGov until September.</p> <p>The Lowland Deer Panel has already reported. It found the lack of information and data challenging. SNH should use its powers to get information on all culls. RC has retired as LDNS Chair since 2011 and been replaced by Colin Shedden with John Bruce as Vice-Chair and Dick Playfair, Secretary.</p> <p>RC said that September will be the critical month when both SNH and DWG reports go to Govt. At this stage we have no sight of what proposals may emerge from DWG, but are hopeful of a reasonably favourable report of progress made since 2016 in the SNH review. ADMG will respond as appropriate once both papers are published and may be called again to give evidence to the ECCLR Committee later in the year or early in 2020.</p> <p>ADMG is planning to hold a parliamentary event in December 2019 (tbc) to speak directly to Ministers and MSPs. Stewart Stevenson, a member of the ECCLR Committee and former Environment Minister, has agreed to act as sponsor. The event will aim to inform and update parliamentarians on the considerable progress made by the red deer sector.</p> <p>ADMG has committed around £50k from the Project Fund to support the DMG Health Checks last Autumn and to provide Groups with consultant support during the recent SNH ADMG Assessments. Feedback is that this has been very helpful to Groups in identifying where further attention was needed to score well in the Assessments and ADMG considers this to have been money well invested in the sector. The main focus for ADMG during the rest of 2019 and into next year will now move to political lobbying and preparation for a likely ECCLR Committee enquiry. The next review will be in 2022 as now required in terms of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2016.</p>	
<p>5.</p>	<p>Financial Report</p> <p>Total income to end April 2019 £134,085 versus budget of £102,100. Membership subscriptions are currently running ahead of budget due to increased culls.</p> <p>Expenses are running largely to budget or below budget, albeit there are a number of outstanding expenses to come through. The expenditure outcome for 2018/19 will be close to budget at year end.</p> <p>The Secretary confirmed that he felt the 2018/19 budget will be close to being met. Cash in bank at date of meeting £109,308.</p>	
<p>6.</p>	<p>Deer Sector Review 2019 and feedback on DMG Assessments</p> <p>DF confirmed that the SNH report will be submitted to the Cabinet Secretary in September and will be published once accepted by her. It will focus on progress by deer sector over the past 3 years since 2016 Review. 49 Assessments had been undertaken. Engagement and progress by DMGs had generally been good.</p> <p>Analysis of the findings is currently on-going and will be incorporated into the SNH Review report to Ministers.</p> <p><i>Deer Code Review</i> – ongoing; there were 160 responses to the consultation paper. The review of the Deer Code will form a part of the SNH report to Ministers.</p>	

	<p>The <i>Lowland Deer Panel</i> has now reported and had made seven recommendations which largely focussed on collaboration and information gathering. Much less is known about deer management in the lowlands than in the area covered by the DMGs.</p> <p>SNH's regulatory powers are also being reviewed and will form part of the September Report.</p> <p>The <i>Deer Working Group</i> will report at the same time.</p> <p><i>SWARD</i> – This database project has been in development for some years and, following a review by IT specialists, the needs of the project are now better understood. This will now be taken forward within the ambit of the Best Practice Steering Group.</p> <p><i>Economic Impacts</i> – a paper has been produced by SNH and is under discussion with ADMG. This is seen as an important area, assessing the economic impacts of deer management particularly in the context of management change within DMGs.</p> <p><i>Section 7</i> – In 2016 there were nine Section 7 Agreements, four of which have since concluded and there are now five current live Section 7s, including:</p> <p>Caenlochan, the largest Section 7 area between Angus and Deeside. It is hoped to conclude this shortly with transfer of the target reduction culls in to the DMG Deer Management Plans.</p> <p>Beinn Dearg in North Ross where SNH is discussing expanding the area. Ben Wyvis S7 is also in North Ross.</p> <p>Inverpolly S7 is making progress and the Fannich Hills S7 Agreement has largely been implemented and is under review.</p> <p>In general, progress with the S7 areas is considered good by SNH.</p> <p>SNH was given additional powers under the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2016. Section 6 provides powers to require the preparation of a DMP and has been used in the lowlands and section 10 to require collaboration has been used at Flanders Moss. Section 8 has yet to be used but remains an option for SNH if a S7 Agreement cannot be achieved or fails.</p> <p>In summary the Chairman commented that the 2019 review has been focussed mainly on process and DMG function. Future assessments will be likely to focus on delivery.</p>	
7.	<p>Groups and feedback on Assessments</p> <p>West Grampian DMG - JC reported some difficulties during the Assessment negotiations but outcome satisfactory.</p> <p>Mull DMG – BB reported that the Assessment outcome was fair and satisfactory.</p> <p>West Lochaber DMG - AG reported a good and constructive assessment. Further work is required on population modelling; there is good collaboration; Prof Hugh Cheape is producing a paper on the Atlantic Oakwoods; wildfires along the west highland railway line are an ongoing issue, as are invasive species.</p> <p>Glenartney DMG – MA confirmed that the Group Assessment had been a fair and positive experience with good support from the consultant.</p> <p>Morvern DMG – PL reported a very positive Assessment process indicating good progress. The system is fair and constructive. Future assessments could perhaps be streamlined. Landholdings within or close to DMGs are not subject to the same scrutiny and a better system for greater inclusion is required. DF commented that</p>	

<p>there was no process for individual assessments. It was a challenge for DMGs to reach out to non-conformists, an unavoidable feature of the voluntary principle.</p> <p>Inveraray & Tyndrum DMG – HM reported a positive Assessment and the DMG is fairly happy with the outcome. HIA work had prompted much improvement and better engagement. The Group was working hard and is well supported by the SNH WMO.</p> <p>Glen Isla / Genshee DMG - DS reported positive progress in the Group which covers part of the Caenlochan S7 area. She commented that some of the Assessment questions are unclear.</p> <p>South Perthshire DMG - AT reported that the Review had been good and the overall tone very positive. The Group was looking to subdivide into possibly three subgroups.</p> <p>Cairngorms & Speyside DMG and North Deeside/South Angus DMG – MC reported that the C&S review had been good and constructive. The DMG is operating effectively, 80% of the range being focussed primarily on habitat management as primary objective. For ND/SA the Assessment had gone well. Consideration is being given to some boundary changes associated with Caenlochan S7 considerations.</p> <p>Glenelg DMG - ML reported good progress and generally happy with Group and Assessment. Good Crofter and Sheep Club engagement. Working Group set up within the Group.</p> <p>Gairloch Conservation Unit - SM reported a good Assessment with some HIA still to do.</p> <p>Balquhidder DMG – FF reported good progress and happy with Assessment score. HIA work on-going and strong support from SNH WMO.</p> <p>Northern DMG – HM reported that there was still work to do but progress is now good. Still a few reds in the Assessment to be addressed.</p> <p>East Loch Ericht DMG – JA reported that the count had produced unexplained and challenging stag numbers. Generally a good Assessment. Habitat targets need to be developed for Native Woodland assessments.</p> <p>Breadalbane DMG – VC happy with the process and outcome of the Group Assessment. HIA planning is good and carried out every second year. The population model needed to be looked at particularly having regard to the deer in woodlands.</p> <p>Cowal DMG - TT said that this is not yet a formalised DMG. It includes 130 different owners and is 60% commercial woodland cover. Population information is hard to get and counting with so much cover is problematic, as therefore is population modelling. However the focus is on progress.</p> <p>Black Mount DMG and Mid West Association – FC reported a positive Assessment experience and the outcome had been fair for both Groups. Other DMGs reporting included Arran, Islay, South Perthshire, all of which scored well. North West Sutherland reported a tough but fair assessment. East Loch Shiel reported very positive progress following much work.</p> <p>The Chair then asked consultants Linzi Seivwright and Victor Clements for an overview. They were agreed that there was a genuine improvement and preparation had been much more focussed albeit that there are still some inconsistencies. The</p>
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	<p>Assessments had generally been good albeit subjective for the WMO – as will always be the case.</p> <p>LS commented that the role of Chairman was very important and provided essential leadership and momentum to Groups. The next Review should find a way of recognising the outperformance displayed by some DMGs.</p> <p>In conclusion RC said that ADMG would produce a summary report on the overall Assessment process over the summer.</p>	
<p>8.</p>	<p>Ongoing Business</p> <p><i>Sporting Rates</i> – feedback was limited but it is believed that many properties have reached agreement with Assessors without formal appeal. It was suggested that Assessor should take account of DMG membership when negotiating allowances as had been provided for by the ADMG amendment to the legislation as taken forward by Mike Russell.</p> <p><i>Venison</i> – BB reported that the Venison Sector had been invited by Scottish Government to double production. The Scottish Venison strategy paper <i>Beyond The Glen</i> can be viewed at: https://foodanddrink.scot/resources/sector-strategies/beyond-the-glen-a-strategy-for-the-scottish-venison-sector-to-2030/</p> <p>The Scottish Venison Association (formerly Scottish Venison Partnership) has now agreed a structure and 10 year plan with a Constitution now approved by Scottish Government. SVA does not underestimate the challenge attached to bringing the Scottish Venison industry together but Scottish Government funding has been pledged by the Cabinet Secretary. The deer farming sector is equally engaged.</p> <p><i>ADMG Stalking Survey</i></p> <p>Details of the Stalking survey can be viewed at: http://www.deer-management.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/15971-Scope-Newsletter-A4-4pp-Pullout-210619-SCREEN.pdf</p> <p>In summary, 59 Estates participated; prices increased from 2011 to 2018; hind stalking values have increased by 80%, stags by 30%; increases are predominantly from Europe rather than the UK. The hope is that the price will increase and drive the industry upwards in selling this world class product. Full publication of the results will be in the Newsletter published for Scone Game Fair.</p> <p>.</p> <p>SCOPE & PR</p> <p>DP reported that the website had been completely updated and DMG information now represents huge asset and information source. ADMG and the DMGs are demonstrably public facing and transparent.</p> <p>Scope would be published in early July for the Game Fair, the 2018 Annual Review will be repeated and E-Scope is circulated monthly as a minimum and as required. Statistics indicate a 60% utilisation level for E-Scope.</p> <p>GDPR was still proving a challenge for circulation.</p> <p>The proposed Parliamentary event will be a major focus for 2019.</p> <p>DF reported the need to keep the website and pages surrounding individual DMGs up to date and RC stressed that this is critically important.</p>	

9.	<p>Events</p> <p>ADMG would have a stand at the Scone Game Fair 5-7 July. Presence also at Moy Game Fair.</p>	
10.	<p>AOCB</p> <p>JB acknowledged the efforts of the stalkers involved in achieving S7 results and culls.</p> <p>IF gave an update on FLS – 35,000 deer were culled by FLS in 2018/19. However leader damage across the board is up to 25%, well short of the 10% target and the increased culls reflect those increased damage statistics. FLS will continue to focus on DMG engagement and attendance. VC commented that more information from FLS would be welcomed. IF responded that there was a plan for information to be available nationally within a year.</p> <p><i>Best Practice</i> – DM (Chair of WDBP) said that the Steering Group is in a process of assessing the priorities; WDBP is valued by the sector but there is much to do to bring it up to speed and sector should fund internally where possible</p>	
11.	<p>Dates of next Meetings</p> <p>7 August Alladale 21 November Kingsmills</p>	