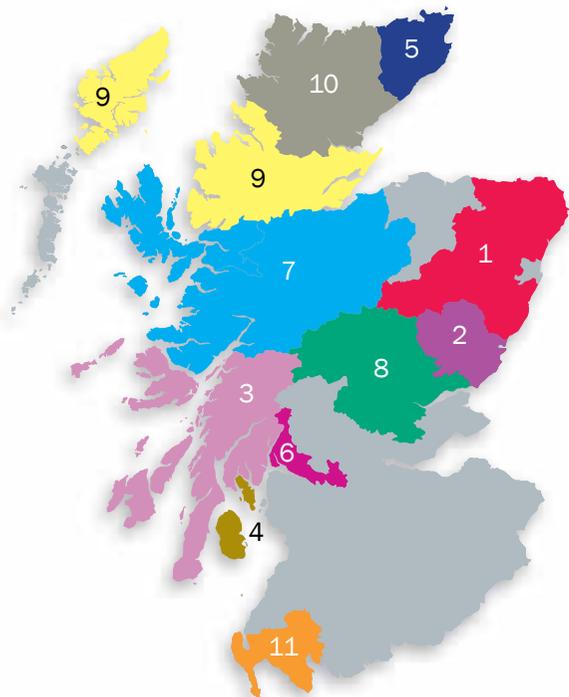


ADMG – Knight Frank 2014 STAG SEASON REVIEW



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The Association of Deer Management Groups is the representative body for deer forest owners and deer managers in Scotland. www.deer-management.co.uk

Front cover: Spying, Kingairloch

Photography by Glyn Satterley, www.glynsatterley.com



Whenever it is time to write my introduction to the Stag Review there is something hanging in the balance politically, and this year is no exception. Whilst the outcome of the Referendum has been decided for the time being the latest challenge to the deer sector has been inclusion in a further consultation on land reform that will result in a new Land Reform Bill being published by the Scottish Government in May.

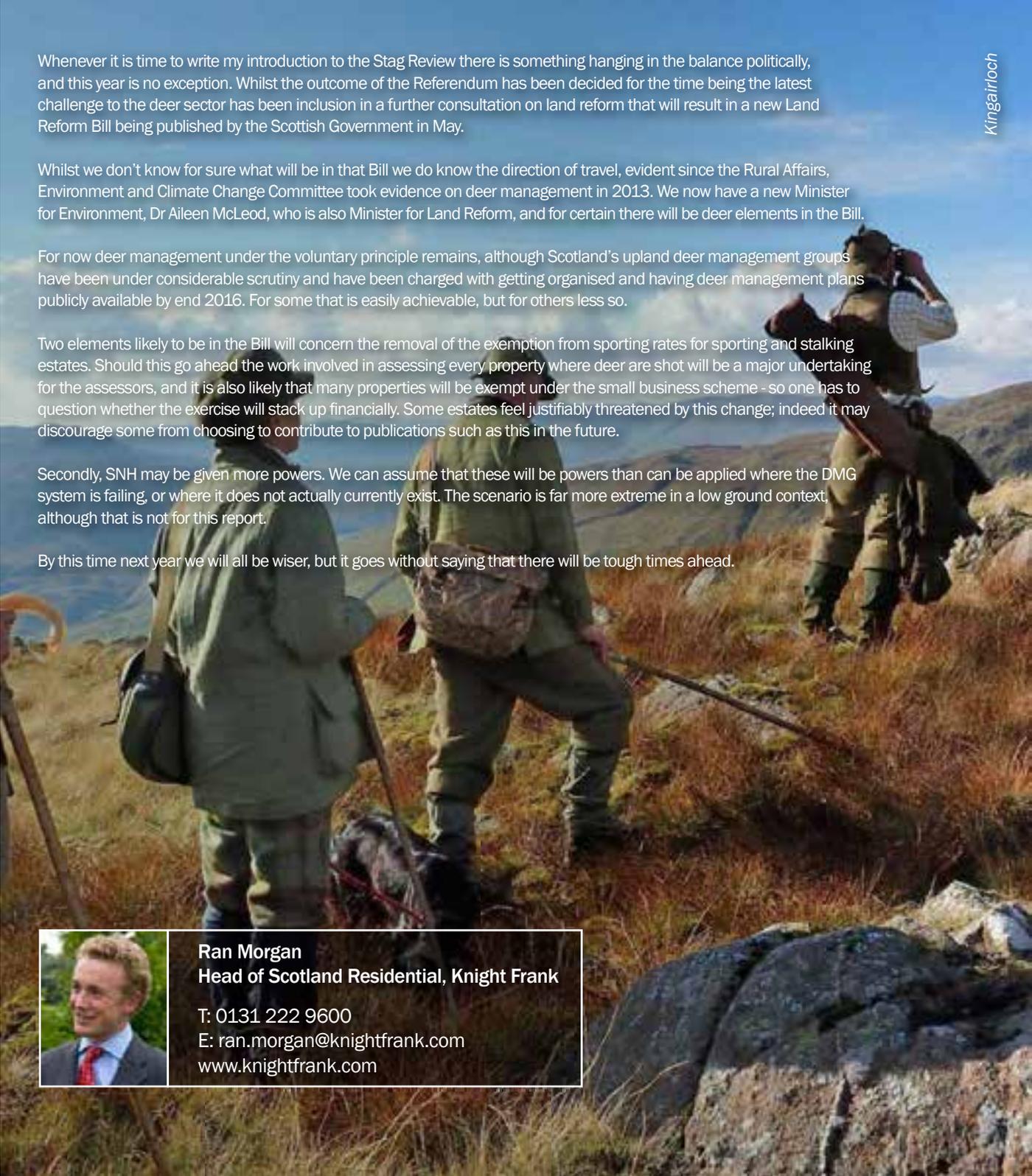
Whilst we don't know for sure what will be in that Bill we do know the direction of travel, evident since the Rural Affairs, Environment and Climate Change Committee took evidence on deer management in 2013. We now have a new Minister for Environment, Dr Aileen McLeod, who is also Minister for Land Reform, and for certain there will be deer elements in the Bill.

For now deer management under the voluntary principle remains, although Scotland's upland deer management groups have been under considerable scrutiny and have been charged with getting organised and having deer management plans publicly available by end 2016. For some that is easily achievable, but for others less so.

Two elements likely to be in the Bill will concern the removal of the exemption from sporting rates for sporting and stalking estates. Should this go ahead the work involved in assessing every property where deer are shot will be a major undertaking for the assessors, and it is also likely that many properties will be exempt under the small business scheme - so one has to question whether the exercise will stack up financially. Some estates feel justifiably threatened by this change; indeed it may discourage some from choosing to contribute to publications such as this in the future.

Secondly, SNH may be given more powers. We can assume that these will be powers that can be applied where the DMG system is failing, or where it does not actually currently exist. The scenario is far more extreme in a low ground context, although that is not for this report.

By this time next year we will all be wiser, but it goes without saying that there will be tough times ahead.



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2014 SCOTTISH STAG REVIEW

Tony Jackson

A season remarkable for clement weather and deer in good to fine condition throughout.

I cannot recall, in all the years I have been compiling the Scottish red stag review, a stalking season more distinguished for persistent fine, dry weather, not just in one or two favoured locations but, with only a few exceptions, prevailing through the greater part of the Scottish deer forests. September 2014 was notable for hot, dry, shirt-sleeve days, a weather pattern which persisted into October and few days were lost to rain or mist, while frost was seemingly unheard of! In fact, both the spring and summer had sustained good weather, a welcome change after a dreadful winter. Report after report noted that the deer were in good condition and carrying ample fat, but perhaps due to the dry summer, weights generally tended to be slightly, or significantly, down on previous years.

Several forests also reported a lack of mature stags and deer of all ages, and one noted that hinds were being held by young stags with no sign of a mature animal. As usual, there were reports of hill walkers and ramblers paying little attention to stalking advice and, as a result, some stalks had to be abandoned. On many forests although the first roar was heard in early September, the deer did not break out until late in that month or well into October, and in some cases the rut was short, sharp and quickly over, while in others it extended into November.

Aberdeenshire

At Mar Estate, the rut peaked in first week of October. Stags were in good condition and very fat, while the weather was excellent in September. A lot of disturbance from walkers in the glen was reported. There was a good rut at Ballogie Estate on the hill and in the forestry with the deer in very good order and the weather mild and wet at times. There was a full, active rut at Glen Tanar with much activity on the hill.

Angus

The rut started at end of September at Glenisla and went to end of October with deer in good condition, a very dry September, but very wet first week in October.

There was an early start to the rut at Invermark which stayed steady throughout, and the deer in very good condition. One client had a double MacNab! The rut began in mid-September at Tulchan of Glenisla and lasted for a month, reporting a mild, dry September.

Argyllshire

The rut was later than usual at Ardtalla but the deer in very good order and the best ever weather for the stag season. A heaviest stag of 27st 5lb was recorded. The rut only really came good during last 10 days of season at Ardtornish where there was very dry and warm weather and the deer in pretty good condition. It was a late but exciting start to the rut at Argyll Estates with deer in good condition thanks to dry spring and summer. Fewer stags were reported on ground at Glen Coe/Dalness but in very good order. The rut was slow to start at Glen Etive Estate and soon over with the deer in good condition. There were big stags holding hinds throughout the rut at Glenkinglass Estate where an exceptionally dry season, but scarcity of deer of all ages was reported. The rut slowly built up to a peak in middle of October at Glenstrae and then quickly ended with old, shootable stags a rare sight, and the weather very warm and dry. There was a late start to the rut at Kinlochteacuis, but deer were in good order and weather dry. A lack of mature stags was recorded at Laudale Estate until October when rut began - again very fine and dry weather. The rut started late at Lochbuie on the Isle of Mull. The deer were in good condition but no spectacular weights, and very good weather throughout the season.

Arran and Bute

The rut was well under way by September 25 at Sannox and the deer were in excellent condition with a heaviest stag of 25st. At Dougarie, the first roar was heard on September 18 and the rut continued to end of October. Likewise it was very warm, with no mist and the deer in excellent condition.

Caithness

There was a very short late rut at both Langwell and Braemore. Quite a few big stags had left hinds by October 10. The weather was dry and warm with a south wind.

Dumbartonshire

The rut later than usual at Garabal, with the weather warm and condition of deer normal.



Ardfin, Jura

Inverness-shire

A late rut was reported at Achdaliu and the average weight of stags was down a stone. At Achnacarry South the rut continued very late and stags were still roaring in the middle of November. It was the driest season in memory with only three wet days, the deer were in good condition but there were no high weights. Similar conditions were reported at Achnacarry North Forest with the deer fat but not heavy. It was a good rut with dry, warm days with east winds. The rut commenced on October 6 and lasted well into November at Ard gour Estate. Again, the deer were fat but not heavy. There was only one wet day in 10 weeks stalking! A good traditional rut featured at Ardverikie with dry weather and the deer in very good condition but weights down. There was a late start to the rut at Barisdale and both weather and the deer were good, though there was a lack of mature stags. Good weights were reported until the main rut at Ben Alder when they then reduced; the stags were in good condition, and only two days were lost to weather.

Most hinds had stags with them by September 19 at Braulen Estate and deer were in good condition with weights similar to previous years. It was a dry season and easterly winds in October. There was a full rut from October 5 at Cluanie & East Quoich with the weather dry with south-west winds and the deer in very good order. The rut varied from early on high ground to late on low ground at Coignafearn Estate and the deer reported in average condition. Stags started to be shot on July 1 and ended on September 15. Ross MacLean, head-stalker at Conaglen Estate noted that the rut began early October and lasted well into November where deer were fat but not heavy and the weather very good.

The stags were in good condition all season at Corrievarkie and no days were lost to weather. There was a very short rut at Culachy Estate with big stags only rutting for two weeks; nonetheless the deer were in good order and weather very mild. The deer were in good condition at Dunachton Estate but there were few stags about during the rut and there were hinds seen late in season with no mature stags.

At Garry Gualach it was a better rut than the previous year and the condition of stags could not have been better, although not weighing the way they should. The weather was dry and warm. It was a slow rut at Glenavon Estate with the deer in good condition, and mixed weather with south-east winds reported. The rut was slow to start at Glenbancher Estate and ended in the middle of October. There were plenty of mature stags at Glendoe Estate with overall good condition although weights were slightly down on previous year.

Estate	Owner	Tenant	Stalker	Stags Shot	Average Weight	Heaviest	SQWV Member
ABERDEENSHIRE							
Ballogie Estate	Malcolm Nicol	Various	Peter Littlejohn	36	14-12	17-05	Q
Glen Tanar	Michael Bruce	N/a	Colin McClean	72	14-13	23-11	Q
Glenmuick	Sir Andrew Walker Okeover	N/a	Ab Taylor	48	13-05	16-00	-
Mar Estate	Mar Estate Trust	N/a	Ian Campbell	41	14-04	19-01	Q
Mar Lodge Estate	National Trust for Scotland	N/a	Christopher Murphy	92	13-05	18-00	Q
ANGUS							
Glen Isla	Major J P O Gibb	N/a	Nicholas Gibb	23	14-06	19-04	-
Invermark	Lord Dalhousie	N/a	Garry MacLennan	93	12-09	18-13	Q
Tulchan of Glenisla	Dr Florian Kuehnle	N/a	W H Mearns	93	13-12	19-10	Q
ARGYLL							
Ardtalla	Sir John Mactaggart	N/a	Callum Sharp	49	15-09	27-05	-
Ardtornish	Ardtornish Estate Co Ltd	N/a	Simon Bout	46	15-07	19-09	-
Argyll Estates	His Grace the Duke of Argyll	N/a	Tom Kirsop	117	14-08	19-06	-
Black Corries	Black Corries Estate Management Ltd	N/a	Davy Thomas	45	13-04	19-05	Q
Black Mount	Philip Fleming	N/a	A Macdonald	95	13-12	-	Q
Glenstrae	R D Schuster	N/a	Mark Brown	12	13-00	18-04	-
Glen Coe/ Dalness	National Trust For Scotland	N/a	John Macdonald	16	14-06	17-02	- Q
Glen Etive	Philip Fleming	N/a	Mark Shone	20	14-10	19-09	-
Glenkinglass	Glenkinglass Estate Ltd	N/a	Alasdair Ross	16	13-05	-	-
Kinlochteacuis	Dr Peter Lawson	N/a	Iain Thomber	11	14-00	18-00	- Q
Laggan Estate, Isle of Islay	Laggan Properties Ltd	N/a	Neil Park	28	14-08	20-08	Q
Laudale Estate	Jonathan Turner	N/a	Neil Roberts	30	13-08	20-07	Q
Lochbuie, Isle of Mull	Corbett Family	N/a	Anthony Dod	32	13-11	19-00	-
ARRAN							
Dougarie	S C Gibbs	Various	David Anderson	28	15-00	24-07	Q
Sannox	Lady Jean Fforde	Charles Fforde	James A Mckinnon	44	15-04	25-02	-
CAITHNESS							
Braemore	The Welbeck Estates Co Ltd	Various	J H Miller	21	15-08	19-04	-
Langwell	The Welbeck Estates Co Ltd	Various	J J Bain	42	15-07	20-04	-
DUNBARTONSHIRE							
Garabal	Tuwo Daugard A/S	N/a	Ove Wolff Madsen	10	-	-	-
INVERNESS-SHIRE							
Achdaliu	West Highland Woodlands	N/a	Alan Currie	36	13-04	15-02	Q
Achnacarry North	D A Cameron of Lochiel	Achnacarry Sporting and Country Pursuits	Alex Macdonald	50	14-01	19-03	Q
Achnacarry South Forest	D A Cameron of Lochiel	Achnacarry Sporting and Country Pursuits	John Morrison	47	13-08	18-00	Q

Estate	Owner	Tenant	Stalker	Stags Shot	Average Weight	Heaviest	SQWV Member
Ardgour	E MacLean	J Guthrie	Ross MacLean/ David Mackenzie	36	13-05	19-05	Q
Ardnish	Peter Stewart-Sandeman	West Highland Hunting	Niall Rowantree	12	-	-	-
Ardverikie	Ardverikie Estate Ltd	N/a	D Langlands	110	14-04	19-06	Q
Barisdale	R and J Gordon	N/a	Graham Waugh	14	14-05	-	-
Ben Alder	Ben Alder Estate Ltd	N/a	Ross Dakers	52	13-07	18-00	-
Braulen	Andras Ltd	N/a	Richard Smith	129	14-06	19-00	Q
Cluanie & East Quoich	Christian Siva Jothy	N/a	Rhuaridh Campbell	38	14-11	18-04	Q
Coignafeam	Coignafeam Estate	N/a	Andrew Dempster	125	13-05	18-09	Q
Conaglen	J Guthrie	N/a	Ross MacLean	45	13-04	17-09	Q
Corrievarkie	Ben Alder Estate Ltd	N/a	Richard MacGregor	22	12-03	16-06	-
Culachy	Culachy Estate Management Ltd	N/a	Scott Bremner	47	14-04	20-00	Q
Dunachton	J Forbes-Leith	N/a	Andrew Drummond	28	10-10*	12-13*	-
East Monar	D C R Allen	N/a	Stephen Potter	24	12-07	15-00	-
Fassfern	West Highland Woodlands	N/a	Alan Currie	28	-	16-08	Q
Garry Gualach	Forest Enterprise	Achnacarry Sporting & Country Pursuits	Alex Macdonald	16	13-06	18-09	Q
Glenavon	Andras/Glenavon Estate	N/a	Richard Greenlaw	40	14-09	17-08	Q
Glenbanchor	Mr Bulgheroni, c/o Strutt & Parker	N/a	Jim Grant	38	14-01	21-02	-
Glen Dessary	Sir Patrick Grant	N/a	Fraser Mackay	18	14-10*	-	-
Glendoe	Hillhouse Estates Ltd	N/a	Jonathan Carslaw	43	13-07	17-02	Q
Glenfinnan	I Leith	N/a	Alistair H Gibson	25	14-13	17-09	-
Glenmazeran	The Englefield Estate Trust	N/a	Jimmy Irvine	26	10-03*	17-00*	-
Glenquoich	D W J Gordon	N/a	Lea McNally	28	14-13	17-06	Q
Glenshero, Sherramore	Rio Tinto Alcan Highland Estates, c/o Bidwells	Various	Bruce Hendry	117	13-03	16-12	Q
Glenshiel Estate	Burton Property Trust per Strutt & Parker	N/a	Colin Campbell	30	11-11*	13-08*	-
Kilchoan Estate	Eric Delwart	N/a	Iain W M Biggart	32	14-01	17-09	Q
Killiechonate	Rio Tinto Alcan Estates	N/a	Jamie Hendry	62	13-06	20-03	Q
Kingairloch Estate	Susan Larson and Angela Yeoman	N/a	Steven Brazendale	31	15-02	18-13	Q
Kingie	I & H Brown Ltd	N/a	John Cameron	9	14-03	16-05	Q
Kinlochhourn	Henry C Birkbeck	N/a	Donald Angus Cameron	13	13-03	15-12	-
Knoydart Estate	Knoydart Foundation	N/a	Jim Brown	90	13-09	18-08	-
Mamore	Alcan Highland Estates c/o Bidwells	Various	George Loudon	20	14-03	17-04	Q

At Glenfinnan the rut was short and fast in October only and the deer were rather thin; weather conditions, though, were fair. Warm weather made for a late start to the rut at Glenmazeran and the deer generally good condition. The rut commenced at the end of September at Glenshiel, with the deer in good condition. A slow start to the rut was reported at Glenquoich and most of the mature stags were with hinds early and young stags were moving everywhere in last week of season. Stags were in good condition, but some very young calves were noted.

At Kilchoan Estate the rut started in late September and was intense for only 10 days. The deer were in good condition although average weights were down. There was a late rut at Kingairloch Estate, but the deer were in excellent condition, and there were two superb weeks of weather at end of season. The first roar was heard on September 11 at Kingie where the deer were fat but not as heavy as usual, and the weather mostly dry. Mature stags were noted as being not very plentiful but in good condition at Kinlochhourn and some groups of hinds had young stags with them. The rut was late and short at Knoydart where the deer were poor early in season due to wet winter but they had improved by the end due to good lush growth in spring and summer – and the amazing weather!

At Mamore, the rut was all action in the first week of October, but over quickly with the deer in excellent condition and weather very good. At East Monar Estate the rut started at the end of September. The deer were in good condition at the start of rut, but lost a lot of weight. The weather was really good; there were some very good heads and more stags than previous year. The rut was very late at Roshven Hill and the condition of the deer was good, as too was the weather.

Perthshire

Keith Hall, head-stalker at Acharn Hill, reported a normal rut with deer in excellent condition and a low tick burden with very good weather and no days lost. It was the driest season for years at Atholl (Clunes) and the deer were in very good condition with the rut in full swing in the first week of October, as it was also at Auchleeks Estate where it lasted around three weeks. The condition of the deer was generally excellent and the weather very good - an exceptional summer. There were plenty of big mature stags at Auchlyne and Suie where the rut began in October. Deer were reported in good fat condition with still a number of bald-faced (white) deer on Suie. The first stag holding hinds at Boreland was noted on September 6. Mature stags were in good condition and fat, but the younger beasts were a bit lean. The estate enjoyed outstandingly good dry weather with east winds. There was a late rut at Camusericht with the deer in good order.

The rut lasted three weeks from end September at South Chesthill and Inverinan. It was very mild with east winds making stalking tricky. The deer were in good condition.

At North Chesthill the rut was normal and the deer in good condition. At Craiganour, the rut started in early October and the deer were in good, fat condition. It was very dry in September but then back to saturation underfoot. There was another late rut at Glenartney with the deer in the finest condition for years and dry, warm weather. The rut began early at Glenbeich but mature stags did not break out until the last 10 days. The deer were reported as in average to good condition, but weather too warm! There was a "stop and start" rut at Glenfalloch due to mild weather and one stag was shot with three antlers. It was an average rut at Glenfermate with the deer in good condition and fine weather. There was a late rut but with good numbers of big stags at Glenlyon Estate although several days and stalks were spoiled by walkers.

The rut gathered momentum from September 12 well into October at Innischoarach Estate and a number of good stags were seen holding 30 to 40 hinds. The deer were in good condition with ample fat. There was a traditional first week of October start to the rut at Logjealmond and the deer were in good condition. The deer were in reasonable condition at Remony where the weather was excellent although a few very light beasts were shot early on. The rut really got going in the second week of October at Talladh-a-Bheithe and the deer were in very good condition with the weather generally fine. Some heavy heads were recorded at Tarvie where the rut began on September 23, with dry weather and the deer in good condition.

Ross-shire and Isle of Lewis

The rut began at the end of September and was hard and fast at Achnashellach. The dry summer left deer with plenty of fat but no bulk and average weights were down a stone and a half. There was excellent weather throughout the rut. It was a stop and start rut from the end of September at Arnisdale Estate with good dry weather and the deer in fine condition. The rut began on September 23 at Coulin with good stags holding hinds. The first roar was heard on September 16 at Dundonnell Estate where there was very good weather although fewer stags were seen than in previous years at back end of the season. A sea eagle almost flew through a bothy window!

Deer were in excellent condition at Eishken Estate with a very long rut extending into October and some very hot days with no wind. Three hummels were shot.



Estate	Owner	Tenant	Stalker	Stags Shot	Average Weight	Heaviest	SQWV Member
Roshven Hill	J A P Forbes	N/a	Colin Surman	6	09-03*	11-00*	-
Struy	Struy Estate	N/a	Greg Fraser	25	13-03	15-10	-
PERTHSHIRE							
Acharn Hill	ANB Baillie-Hamilton	Keith Hall	Keith Hall	10	07-06*	10-10*	-
Atholl - Clunes	Bruar Trust	Various	Ronnie Hepburn	68	14-00	17-01	Q
Atholl - Dalnamein	Bruar Trust	N/a	Benjamin Rhodes	47	13-09	20-12	Q
Atholl - Forest Lodge	Blair Castle Estate Ltd	Various	Richard Fraser	106	14-03	18-00	Q
Atholl - West Hand	Blair Castle Estate Ltd	Various	Graeme Cumming	51	13-13	16-12	Q
Auchleeks	Nial Mackinlay	N/a	Bob Pirie	33	13-07	17-06	Q
Auchlyne & Suie	Mrs Emma Patterson	Various	Ian Dingwall	41	14-00	17-08	Q
Boreland	Judge R A R Stroyan	N/a	Morven Frost	68	14-02	19-02	Q
Camusericht	Ben Alder Estate Ltd	N/a	Duncan Richardson	65	14-00	-	-
Cashlie	L Porter	N/a	Steven Martin	37	13-11	17-07	-
Craiganour	Astel Ltd	Various	Kevin Grant	101	12-09	19-08	-
Dalmunzie	Winton Family	N/a	Steve Halliday	31	11-02*	13-10*	-
Dunan	Hamish McCorquodale	N/a	Ian Sutherland	53	14-01	20-04	Q
Fealar	Andrew Spearman	N/a	Calum Martin	53	-	-	Q
Glenartney	The Baroness Willoughby d'Eresby	N/a	Peter Cramb	110	14-05	18-07	Q
Glenbeich	Mrs C Holcroft	N/a	John Murdock	15	11-05	18-02	-
Glenfalloch Estate	Lowes Family	N/a	Falcon Frost	57	13-10	17-05	Q
Glenfermate	David H Amory	N/a	David Michie	140	11-07*	15-04*	-
Glenlyon Estate	Iain Witherspoon	N/a	Ali McNaughton	45	13-08*	18-08*	Q
Glenturret Estate	Mr and Mrs Seldon, c/o Managed Estates	N/a	Mike Reddington	12	10-13	16-07	-
Griffin Wind Farm	Scottish & Southern Energy	N/a	David Campbell	28	-	08-04*	-
Innischoarach Estate	David C C Brown	N/a	Ewen Kennedy	48	14-08	17-00	Q
Invergeldie	Mr R Priestley and Mrs S V Thorne, c/o Managed Estates	N/a	David Mills	27	14-10	19-01	-
Lochs Estate	Lochs Estate c/o Managed Estates	N/a	Steven MacDonald	43	14-01	16-07	-
Logjealmond	Mansfield Estates	N/a	Stewart McIntosh	15	15-07	20-07	-
Meggernie	Meggernie Estate c/o Managed Estates	N/a	Steven MacDonald	56	14-02	17-11	-
Monzie	Mrs C M M Crichton, c/o Managed Estates	Glenturret Estates Ltd	Mike Reddington	15	09-02	16-05	-
Murthly and Strathbraan Estates	Thomas Steuart Fotheringham	N/a	Fergus McGregor	9	12-02*	18-02*	Q
North Chesthill	Alastair J Riddell	N/a	David McKenzie	33	13-08	16-04	-
Remony	James Duncan Millar	N/a	Bruce Blackley	31	12-07	17-00	Q
South Chesthill and Inverinan	C A Ramsay Partnership	N/a	Hamish Rae	43	13-10	18-03	-

Estate	Owner	Tenant	Stalker	Stags Shot	Average Weight	Heaviest	SQW Member
Talladh-A-Bheithe	Aad, Marijke and Kees Van Well	N/a	Andrew Oliver	48	13-07	17-07	Q
Tarvie	J Colman	N/a	Jim Tod	31	14-00	16-00	-
ROSS-SHIRE AND ISLE OF LEWIS							
Achnashellach Estate	Capt Nicholas Wills	N/a	Christopher Mackenzie	31	12-01	18-03	Q
Amisdale	Mr J H Richmond-Watson	N/a	Ewen Ballantyne	40	13-09	17-04	Q
Corrielaire	I Brown & Sons	N/a	Johnny Matheson	17	-	-	-
Coulin	The Hon P R Smith	N/a	Neil Morrison	23	13-06	16-01	Q
Diabaig	Sir E Bacon Trustees	N/a	Donnie Beaton	9	13-02	15-00	Q
Dundonell	Sir Tim Rice	N/a	Alasdair Macdonald	31	-	19-13	-
Eisean Dubh	Mr and Mrs T Bowie	N/a	Tim Bowie	1	-	15-00	-
Eishken Estate	Mr N Oppenheim	Various	Chris Macrae	80	12-06	16-03	-
Glencarron and Glenuaig	Alasdair Douglas	N/a	Brian Watson, Eric Downie	40	13-05*	15-08*	-
Grudie and Talladale	John Wills	N/a	Donald Grant	17	13-07	15-07	-
Heights of Kinlochewe	David Lilley	N/a	N Kelman	34	14-04	18-09	-
Inverbroom	Inverbroom Estate Ltd	N/a	-	38	13-02	16-07	-
Inverpolly	David Davies	N/a	David Davies	20	13-11	15-08	-
Keanchulish	David Bulmer	N/a	Arran Matheson	8	14-06	17-08	-
Kildermorie Estate	Kildermorie Partnership	N/a	Dougie Russell, Craig McIntosh	40	12-03	18-08	-
Kinlochdamp	Mark Adams	N/a	Duncan Macleod	20	14-02	20-00	-
Lochluichart	Leslie-Melville Family	Lochluichart Estate	Jamie Stewart	77	14-08	21-05	Q
Lochrosque and Kinlochewe	Pat Wilson	N/a	Ronnie Ross	71	13-02	17-12	Q
Strathbran	Seligman Family	N/a	David Bennett.	23	13-00*	15-05*	-
Strathconon	Kirkbi Estates Ltd	Various	Angus Cameron	97	13-11	19-02	Q
Strathvaich Estate	Creasey and Daniels Families	N/a	Donald Macrae	76	14-03*	18-06*	-
SUTHERLAND							
Achentoul	Sir John Nutting QC Bt	Various	Duncan Bentley	41	15-04	21-04	-
Achnabourin	Ross Peters	N/a	Simon Peters	5	15-00	18-08	-
Alladale	Paul Lister	Various	Innes MacNeill	82	13-00	18-05	-
Badanloch	Badanloch Estate LLP c/o Strutt & Parker	Various	Brian Lyall	33	15-02	20-03	-
Borrobol	Michael Wigan	N/a	John Macdonald	42	14-01	17-12	-
Clebrig	A W Nicholson	N/a	Andrew Robertson	20	15-00	19-04	Q
Corriemulzie	Corriemulzie Estate Trust	Various	Alasdair Mackenzie	71	13-07	17-00	Q
Croick	Croick Partnership	N/a	Alasdair Sutherland	29	16-04	20-12	-
Dalnessie	Ericht Farming Company	Various	Andrew Mackay	30	14-04	17-08	-
Glencalvie Estate	Glencalvie Estate, per Bell Ingram	Various	Andrew Sutherland	64	13-12	19-11	-
Glencanisp and Drumrunie	Assynt Foundation	N/a	John Cullen	65	11-05*	18-13*	-

The rut commenced at the beginning of October at Glencarron and Glenuaig Forest with many mature stags seen and all deer in good condition but fewer calves than expected, and the weather described as generally glorious. Deer were in generally good condition at Grudie and Talladale with warm weather, but a slight drop in temperature brought on the rut on October 3. The rut began slightly later than usual at the beginning of October at Inverbroom Estate with deer in reasonable condition and, although the weather was fair at the start of the rut, it became generally wet. There was a very good rut at Keanchulish - the deer were very fat with good weights, although carrying a heavy tick burden. There were plenty of stags and excellent weather. There were rudiments of a rut at Kildermorie Estate and this was later than normal, the stags remaining in large bachelor groups throughout. The deer were in good condition after the mild winter and excellent summer, and it was almost too warm during the season with no frosts.

A late end-September start to the rut was reported at Kinlochdamp with stags in very good health and weights above average. There was dry and generally bright weather. The stags were also in very good condition with big heads at Lochluichart Estate where the weather was good and mild, but they never really broke out until the last two weeks of the season. At Lochrosque and Kinlochewe the rut got going at end of September and the deer were in very good order although weights were down. There was fine weather, but also more walkers than ever on the Fannich range and quite a few stalks were disturbed. There was a late start to the rut at Strathbran with the deer in very good condition. The first stag was heard roaring on September 1 at Strathvaich Estate but the rut only got going at end of the month. The deer were in very good condition and the weather was dry through the season.

Sutherland

The rut started well and continued well at Achentoul Estate and the deer were in very good condition. The fair weather produced mostly south winds. At Alladale, the rut was very good and over by October 10. The deer were in good condition but completely spent by the end of the rut. It was a dry season with very few wet days. A quick rut at Badanloch Estate was reported with stags back at the feed by October 18. The deer were in good condition and the weather was fairly mixed with a few calm days. It was a fairly normal rut at Borrobol with decent weather and stags in average to good condition. At Corriemulzie the first roar was heard on September 10 but the rut was slow to get under way. Deer body weights were not as good as usual due to late growth on the hill. The weather was very warm with east and southerly winds, and only two wet days.

At Dalnessie Estate the rut commenced at the end of September and was fast and furious. Stags were in very good condition with heavy fat cover. It was the warmest season at Dalnessie for 15 years reported head-stalker Andrew Mackay. The rut was slow to start at Glencalvie and not in full swing until the last week of September. Stags were in exceptional condition although weights were well down. The weather conditions were unusual with severe extremes.

The rut began on September 22 at Glencanisp and maintained a steady pace until the end of the season. After a good year and an early spring the deer were in good condition, although with a heavy ked and tick burden. It was particularly wet in October. The deer were in light condition at Inchnadamp Estate and the rut was late due to warm weather, continuing into November.

Head-stalker Arran Matheson reported a good rut, lasting four weeks at Ledmore, with many big quality stags with hinds and plenty of young stags coming through. The deer were in very good condition but carrying heavy burdens of ticks. It was excellent, warm weather. Stags were slow to break out at Loubcroy Estate, with the rut starting September 20, and the deer in fair condition. It was a good 'honest' rut at Reay Forest Estate, noted head stalker David Allison. One stag was very badly gored in the rut and later shot. The deer were carrying good fat cover, but weights were down, perhaps due to dry summer. Most stalking days were 'shirt and waistcoat' weather. A three-horned stag, weighing 17st 2lb was shot. All stalking took place in last week of season at Shinness Estate and the deer were in excellent condition, with the weather warm and sunny. It was a slow starting rut at Strathmore and very short of stags until it got going; the weather was very mixed, but generally pretty wet. The rut was also late at Syre/North Loch Naver, but the deer were in very good condition. It was dry, fine weather every day but there was a shortage of mature, shootable stags available.



Estate	Owner	Tenant	Stalker	Stags Shot	Average Weight	Heaviest	SQWV Member
Gualin	J A Nall-Cain	N/a	Duncan Shaw	6	13-00	14-08	-
Inchnadamp	George Vestey	N/a	Craig Ross	41	13-03	17-02	-
Ledmore	David Bulmer	N/a	Arran Matheson	24	14-02	20-08	-
Loubcroy	Mr A Gospill	Various	Alasdair Mackenzie	22	13-05	15-10	Q
Reay Forest	4th Duke of Westminster's Trustees	N/a	David Allison	191	13-08	17-07	Q
Shinness Estate	Chris Fletcher	N/a	Derick Sutherland	5	09-10*	11-06*	Q
Strathmore	Mrs Heather Gow	N/a	John Spence	20	13-12	16-04	Q
Syre/North Loch Naver	Syre Estate	N/a	David Horsburgh	8	15-07	20-02	Q
WIGTOWNSHIRE							
Stair Estates	The Earl of Stair	N/a	Len Dey	17	11-08*	21-10*	-

* reported as larder weight

Q advised by respondent as member of Scottish Quality Wild Venison Scheme

- denotes non member of SQWV or information not given

More than 70 per cent of Scottish Wild Venison is produced under the SQWV scheme. Not all properties involved in the scheme contribute to the Stag Season Report. No returns from Forest Enterprise larders, which are all SQWV assured, are included in the report.

More information on the Scottish Quality Wild Venison Scheme can be obtained from:

Jonathan Whitehead
T: 0131 335 6603 e: Jonathan.Whitehead@sfqc.co.uk

SQWV Assured game dealers/processors:

Ardgay Game
t: 01863 766 162
e: enquiries@ardgaygame.co.uk

Highland Game
t: 01382 827 088
e: cn@highlandgame.com

Yorkshire Game
t: 01748 810 212
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THE SCOTTISH ESTATES MARKET – THERE IS UNDERLYING AMBITION BUT CAUTION REMAINS



Ran Morgan, Head of Scotland Residential, Knight Frank

The market for Scottish estates has been fairly thin over the last 12 months. Buyers and sellers have had to adjust to uncertainty being the new norm, and consequently good properties coming to the market have been in short supply. Scotland's 2014 in-or-out independence referendum and the recent general election, with the complexities that brings of contrasting power bases and influences in Holyrood and Westminster, have led to a tendency to "sit tight and see what happens".

Indeed, in the last 12 months we have seen only four true sporting estates trade compared to the usual 10 to 15. In 2015 just two estates have traded so far. Buyers like simplicity and both these estates fit the bill - a reasonable amount of ground with manageable accommodation, relatively low management costs, and importantly no tenancy issues. Both have sold for an encouraging premium.

Renewable energy potential is a bonus but not a necessity, although it will help to drive prices. The more traditional estates have been harder work. Why? The reasons are fairly obvious:

there is less disposable income around, and the Scottish Government, whichever way you look at it, and indeed its Labour opposition, wants to make life more difficult than it is now for the owners of such places.

Imminent new land reform measures from the Scottish government do not lead to confidence in this particular sector. The same can also be said for the Scottish Affairs Committee enquiry and its proposals. It is not so much the detail of their agenda per se - rather the general sentiment that is causing caution.

That said, if you own your own ground, and if it is affected by only minimal third-party interests, then it would still attract considerable attention in the market.

With the election now decided we can at least hope for a degree of certainty in the policies of both in Westminster and Holyrood. The stock market and currency markets showed immediate encouragement from the election result, and we would hope that property will take similar heart, albeit the effect will take longer to filter through.



Jura in summer sunshine

STALKING AFFRIC AND KINTAIL – NO PLACE FOR VERTIGO



Dick Playfair meets Willie Fraser, the National Trust for Scotland's Property Manager/Senior Ranger for Kintail and Morvich, Chairman of Affric and Kintail DMG, and a member of the ADMG Executive Committee

Willie Fraser started working for the National Trust for Scotland in 1988 and has been employed by the Trust for more than 25 years. His job has always been hands on, more out on the hill than in the office – or also these days out in a kayak leading tours around the coast of Skye, the Hebrides and the Small Isles. By repute Kintail has some of the toughest stalking in Scotland so one must assume, with this and the kayaking, that Willie is in pretty good shape.

Born and brought up in north west Scotland, Willie hails originally from Applecross and went to Plockton High School. His interests have always been in the outdoors and his first work was shepherding on one of the NTS hill farms at Kintail coupled with some work as a ponyman. He says:

“I learned a lot of stalking skills from Dolan Macmillan and Alan Whitfield. Alan left Kintail to go and work on the Duke of Westminster's estate, which meant the opportunity to do the

winter hind cull subsequently came up at Kintail - over 19,000 acres and some of the steepest stalking ground in Scotland.

“Back in the day the hind cull was done by the NTS ranger and tenant farmer, and the Deer Commission for Scotland would send in a team to do the stag cull. I also learned a lot from their stalkers, Ian Mackay and Alan Corrigan - aspects like stag selection, field craft, and pony work. Another mentor of mine was an old stalker, Johnny Ross, who stayed on the farm, and his advice to me was ‘I'm 76 and I'm still learning – you're never too old to learn something new’. And how true that has turned out to be.”

In 1994 NTS purchased West Affric and this also came under Willie's management, but with it a set of new challenges – for example working with *Trees for Life*, woodland restoration, and leased stalking. There have been quite a few changes since the early days. Willie says:



A young Willie Fraser (right) aged 19 spying on Kintail



“When DCS did the stag cull there was a policy to shoot nothing over 8 points unless it was really old, and also no young stags, so it was a very traditional cull. Selection was important, and it was a good learning curve to be able to sort good stags from bad. However, woodland expansion and a greater emphasis on habitat management meant that we needed a reduction in the overall population and cull across the whole age range. We reduced our overall hefted deer population by about 300 to 550 but deer have always been regarded as a very important part of the Affric/Kintail experience.

“Also 25 years ago we did our counts on foot, but much greater accuracy is being achieved now with helicopters, and of course our ponies at Kintail have now retired. That has been really down to economics – an estate the size of Kintail required 2 ponymen, but now the work is done with drag ropes and ATVs. There has also been a big reduction of sheep on the estate, down from around 2000 to 800 now, allowing for an improvement in upland habitats across the properties.”

Access is of course a major part of what NTS is all about, and takes precedence over just about everything else on NTS ground. However, deer management and access have dovetailed well, and if anything wider access elsewhere has taken the pressure off Kintail. Willie says that now, as the cull is one of conservation rather than for big stags and big heads, priorities are different. There is very little commercial stalking at Kintail and West Affric.

“We have an understanding among those stalking here,” says Willie, “that if you shoot it you drag it. This makes it a very specific experience, and possibly appeals to the fitter end of the stalking market!” He remarks about the stalking guest with vertigo who really had chosen the wrong location!

One of Willie’s main strengths is that he is clearly able to see everyone’s point of view. He says:

“Coming into conservation from a traditional background I can appreciate and understand the priorities of NGOs, private estates, forestry interests and communities.

“This Group went into the recent DMG assessment process with its eyes wide open – we knew what to expect. Ours is a small and complex Group all having different management objectives. We have around six members, every issue results in some form of compromise, so as Chair if you can bring the Group to somewhere in the middle you are probably doing a reasonable job. In modern terms, we have tried to adopt a holistic, all-embracing approach. We are all learning from each other I hope.”

Since Willie has been with NTS there have been huge changes over the ways DMGs operate, and this latest round of modernisation he thinks is not before time.

Willie says: “In the past our DMG meetings provided the chance for a free coffee and to see the neighbours. Our agenda simply covered how many stags and hinds we needed to cull. Now we have much more formal meetings at Great Glen House, a Deer Management Plan to discuss and update and, importantly, deer are – for all of us - part of a much wider agenda.”



One last look - Ardfin, Jura

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