



ASSOCIATION OF DEER MANAGEMENT GROUPS

Regional Meeting

**at Birnam Arts & Conference Centre, Station Road, Birnam, by Dunkeld, PH8 0DS
on Tuesday, 6th June 2017 from 11:00 to 13:00**

MINUTES

In Attendance

Richard Cooke
 Finlay Clark
 Col. Bewsher
 John Bruce
 Lynda Campbell
 Julian Clarke
 Victor Clements
 Holly Deary
 James Duncan Millar
 Donald Fraser
 Stephen Gibbs
 Alistair Gibson
 Andrew Gordon
 Dick Playfair
 Linzi Seivwright
 Tom Turnbull
 Randal Wilson

Chairman
 Secretary
 Executive Committee
 Executive Committee
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 Executive Committee

Mike Baillie-Hamilton
 Tom Chetwynd
 Crispian Cook
 Richard Curzon
 Falcon Frost
 Duncan Gordon
 Elizabeth Hay
 John Hay
 Andy Jacobs
 Harry Jameson

West Lochaber DMG
 East Sutherland DMG
 North Ross DMG
 Tullich – SW Ross DMG
 Inveraray & Tyndrum and Balquhiddar DMGs
 Lude / Glen Quoich
 Mullardoch
 Mullardoch
 SSE
 SIMEC / Liberty for Gupta Highland Estates

<p>3.</p>	<p>Chairman’s Report</p> <p>The industry awaits the outcome of the Cabinet Secretary’s report on the ECCLR Committee recommendations following the SNH Report on Deer Management. It is anticipated that SNH will be tasked with exercising its full range of statutory powers and to be pro-active in directing and managing the poorest performing DMGs throughout Scotland. It is likely that recommendations will fall short of SNH being tasked with cull setting throughout DMGs, albeit SNH already plays a role in advising on cull setting at DMG level particularly for designated sites.</p> <p>The Chairman had calculated that for SNH to undertake management of the deer sector to the standard which they apply to the eleven Section 7 areas throughout Scotland would cost Scottish Government in the region of 15 million pounds. There is however a recognition within Scottish Government that local circumstances require local solutions and that a ‘one size fits all’ approach is not appropriate.</p> <p>It is likely that an independently chaired working group will be a key recommendation made by the Cabinet Secretary, and it is critical that ADMG ensures that the working group is set a remit and scope which is consistent with industry developments and continued support of the DMGs. ADMG will continue to implement its progressive work programme for 2017. This includes a Birnam Seminar to focus on delivery of deer management plans, highlighting the importance of habitat impact assessments during 2018, and peatland restoration and public benefit delivery from 2018 and beyond. The further development of SWARD remains a critical component of ADMG’s work. It should also be noted that the Code of Deer Management will be reviewed again in 2019 by SNH.</p> <p>The Chairman confirmed the continued role of the ADMG on the national access forum (where ADMG is newly represented by Frank Spencer-Nairn); the Moorland Forum; Scottish Country Sports Tourism Group; Wild Deer Practice Best Steering Group; Deer Management round table; Moredun. There had also been meetings with both Cabinet Secretaries and SNH throughout the evidence sessions to the ECCLR meeting.</p> <p>Following the Chairman’s report, Donald Rowantree (Corrour) highlighted the importance of cull setting within DMGs. Richard Curzon, Tullich, asked about Sporting Rates. The Chairman confirmed that assessors had been given a six months’ extension to issue rateable values.</p>	
<p>4.</p>	<p>Administrative Report, Management Accounts to 31st May 2017</p> <p>The Secretary presented the management accounts of the Association to the end of May 2017. The financial year runs from 1st July to 30th June and we are therefore in the final month of trading in the financial year of 2016/2017. The Secretary reported that the Association was likely to meet budget and current income totals £120,717 versus a budget of £110,782. A total of £35,150 had been contributed by donors towards projects and on-going work undertaken by ADMG. There were no areas of under recovery causing concern. The Secretary said that expenditure to date totalled £67,388 against the ytd budget spend of £93,265. There are a number of areas where project expenses and honorariums have yet to be drawn down and it was anticipated that the spend would be close to the full year budget of £111,670. Current cash reserves total £98,505.</p>	

<p>5.</p>	<p>Current Matters</p> <p>(a) Parliamentary deer sector review (see Chairman’s Report above);</p> <p>(b) Implementing Deer Management Plans</p> <p>The Chairman emphasised the need for DMGs to now implement DMPs with a key focus in 2017 being habitat impact assessments on upland features and in 2018, woodlands and peat, the Code of Deer Management will be reviewed again in 2019 and all Groups will be re-assessed by SNH.</p> <p>(c) Habitat Impact Assessments (HIAs)</p> <p>ADMG will shortly be writing to all Groups to enquire as to what support is required by DMGs to implement HIAs across their areas. SNH have confirmed there could be funding available to assist with HIA training and both SNH and ADMG require a clear view of the training needed over all the DMGs. The Chairman emphasised the importance of Habitat Impact Assessment and the need for all DMGs to get started as soon as possible as these will be a key criteria in the 2019 Assessments.</p> <p>(d) ADMG Work Programme</p> <p>The most important area of work for ADMG will be the Cabinet Secretary’s report on the ECCLR Committee’s recommendations and to ensure implementation over the next two years. ADMG will continue its day-to-day work with DMGs and to make representation at the highest level within Scottish Government as well as continuing to participate on the various bodies where ADMG is represented, including National Access Forum; Moorland Forum; Scottish Country Sports Tourism Group; Wild Deer Best Practice Steering Group; Deer Management Round table etc; as well as engaging with other NGOs and wider stakeholder groups.</p> <p>(e) Birnam Seminar</p> <p>The Birnam Seminar will be held on 17th June 2017 and will focus upon the Cabinet Secretary’s conclusions following the recent Parliamentary Review of deer management; also on habitat assessment, peatland restoration; and woodland expansion.</p> <p>(f) Wild Deer Health Status Survey</p> <p>Dick Playfair explained that a Food Standards Scotland survey of wild deer health status is to be carried out with a particular focus on E. Coli 0157. The project is now out to tender. The survey will focus on sampling on the hill and in larders; also in the lowlands. It is hoped that the Survey will be helpful in highlighting public benefit, good working practices and industry standards.</p> <p>John Bruce gave a short update on Chronic Wasting Disease which covered the position in the US where CWD is regarded as being out of control. In Scandinavia, five infected animals have been identified from a cull of tens of thousands of animals, including three reindeer from one source. The Norwegian situation concerning the reindeer has been dealt with by a complete cull of the infected reindeer herd with no repopulation being permitted for five years. No CWD is present in the UK at present, albeit reindeer have been transported into the UK from outwith proven infected areas. Research is ongoing. The Chairman thanked John Bruce for his comprehensive update and commended BDS for taking the lead role in CWD.</p>	
<p>6.</p>	<p>SNH Update</p> <p>Donald Fraser gave an update in advance of the Cabinet Secretary’s recommendations following the ECCLR Report. It is expected that SNH will have an</p>	

	<p>enhanced work programme including the use of its full powers through Sections 7 and 8 and including Section 6A, requiring the development of Deer Management Plans in areas where there are no current plans. It is also anticipated that Section 4 Panels will be established in relation to Lowland issues. Poorer performing DMGs are to be given priority and it is likely that SNH will be able to continue contributing 50% to the development of some DMPs. Donald Fraser commented that two DMGs had been successful in obtaining ECAF funding through application and that, although the future of ECAF is as yet uncertain SNH were committed to providing support to those and other DMGs. He also confirmed that a project which looks at the deliverability and technical aspects of SWARD would be funded by SNH. Donald Fraser confirmed there was up to £170k of unspent ECAF money and this would be made available for areas such as Best Practice and more specifically where support is required at DMG level.</p>	
<p>7.</p>	<p>DMG reports and local issues</p> <p>West Ross DMG: Randal Wilson confirmed that the Group is now enacting DMP actions relating to for example, responsible access, woodlands, culls, habitat impact assessments, and peatlands. The Group meets four times a year, plus the AGM. Randal explained that the Group was structured in such a way as to share the workload.</p> <p>South Perthshire DMG: Jamie Duncan Millar confirmed that South Perthshire has thirty six members and three sub-groups. In many instances, deer are not the prime focus albeit habitat monitoring and habitat impact assessment is ongoing and the Group are committed to delivering the current DMP. The Group is currently trying to get all stalkers trained to DSC levels 1 and 2.</p> <p>Mull DMG: Bill Bewsher explained that the October meeting of the Mull DMG would be an important meeting on the future effectiveness of the Group. Bill Bewsher invited RC to attend in October. The Chairman confirmed that he would if he could.</p> <p>West Lochaber DMG: Alistair Gibson reported good progress including a native woodland survey and positive engagement with the community council including engagement with Lochaber High School and Loch Eil Outward Bound.</p> <p>Inveraray & Tyndrum DMG: Tom Turnbull reported a recent deer count which was in line with previous counts, contrary to the numbers quoted in the SNH Deer Report; also that Habitat Impact Assessments were ongoing.</p> <p>East Sutherland DMG: Robbie Rowantree confirmed that the Group had challenges in relation to SSSI, SPA and SACs. The current action plan is ongoing based on a good recent helicopter count. There were some membership challenges and also some very high densities of deer.</p> <p>Breadalbane DMG: Victor Clements reported that the Section 7 Agreement in Breadalbane had now come to an end. He also reported that the boundaries of the DMG were expanding as more members joined. Victor Clements reported that a habitat impact assessment steering group had been set up and would be driving forward this important piece of work.</p> <p>West Grampian DMG: Julian Clarke reported that deer numbers over the west Grampians were now at 11 deer per square km, albeit with some higher densities in some areas. Habitat impact assessments were ongoing and cover is good.</p> <p>Mid West Association: Donald Rowantree confirmed that a recent helicopter count, carried out at the expense of the DMG and not funded in anyway by SNH, was found to be good and the Group were undertaking population modelling over the next three to five years given the increased fecundity of hinds over the past three seasons.</p>	

Habitat Impact Assessments over the Group area are well established with most estates now having captured data.

Balquhiddier DMG: Mike Luti confirmed counts in 2015 and 2016 which indicate densities of 6 to 8 per square km. Two thirds of members are undertaking HIA training and the Group has two recently joined new members. Mike Luti said that they receive strong support from their SNH Wildlife Management Officer and have good community engagement. He also reported that Falcon Frost now sits on the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park Committee.

Monadhliaths DMG: Drew McFarlane-Slack stated that cull targets for 2017 had been a challenge but that most had worked hard to achieve as good a result as possible. The Group intended to carry out a helicopter count in early 2018 and the Group would also be pushing forward with a woodland expansion plan application through the Peatland Action scheme.

Knoydart DMG: Lynda Campbell reported that Linzi Seivwright had been appointed Secretary to the Group and was assisting with delivery of the DMP as a priority. HIAs are ongoing throughout the Group.

Glenmoriston DMG: Lynda Campbell said that the Group now meets two or three times annually and that she was confident that the Group would now make good progress.

Glenelg DMG: Duncan Gordon reported that two meetings per annum were now scheduled and good support and guidance was being received from Sinclair Coghill of SNH. HIAs were ongoing as was more habitat training. Calf recruitment had been strong. Duncan Gordon also confirmed that Kate Forbes MSP had been invited for a day on the hill.

Affric & Kintail and Strathconon and Glenstrathfarrar DMGs (formerly South Ross sub-groups). Linzi Seivwright said that both DMGs were making good progress towards delivering DMPs. Community engagement was a strong feature. HIAs were ongoing.

North Ross DMG: Crispian Cook reported that progress on action points was slower than hoped for due to ECAF funding not being available. There were two Section 7 Agreements currently under negotiation and a habitat impact assessment workshop had been held.

South West Ross DMG: Richard Curzon reported that the DMP was now being implemented and that there was strong community engagement.

Easter Ross DMG: Gordon Robertson confirmed the DMP was now written. A newsletter was in production and the Group was generally making good progress.

West Sutherland DMG: Gordon Robertson confirmed the Plan was written and provides for 500 hectares of woodland expansion. Good community engagement with an Ullapool High School project currently being developed.

East Grampian DMG: Richard Cooke confirmed that the former East Grampian DMG had now divided into five sub-groups and that the process of setting up the individual groups was ongoing.

Black Mount DMG: Finlay Clark confirmed that the Group had met in the Spring and would meet again in August 2017. HIAs were ongoing including training for some Group members. The DMP would be reviewed and updated following the meeting in August.

8.	<p>AOB</p> <p>John Hay of the Mountaineering Council of Scotland commented that engagement with the access and recreation community required to be stronger and suggested inviting the President to have a day on the hill.</p> <p>The Chairman confirmed that ADMG would look to engage in a more forward looking social media campaign directed at engagement with stakeholder groups, access organisations in particular.</p>	
9.	<p>Date of next meetings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15th August 2017, EC & Regional Meetings, Glenfinnan • 23rd November 2017, EC & Regional Meetings, Kingsmills, Inverness 	
10.	<p>There being no further business the Chairman closed the Meeting.</p>	