

GLENELG PENINSULA DEER MANAGEMENT GROUP

Minutes of Meeting 11 May 2022 Held at Cluanie Inn at 11am

In the Chair Julian Richmond-Watson (JRW)
Secretary Michael Laing (ML)
Present Arnisdale
 Cluanie
 Glen Quoich
 East Glenquoich
 Glenshiel
 Kinloch Hourn
 Bunloyne
 Corriellair
 Corrory Farm
 Angus Davidson Ltd
 ADMG
 FLS
 NatureScot
 Police Scotland (FEO)
 S.F.R.S

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Beolary, Druidaig, Community Council, Scallasaig, NTS Kintail and Eilanreach.

2. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of 9th October 2022 were approved.

3. Matters Arising

All matters will be covered through the course of the meeting.

4. Stag & Hind culls 2022/23

The years cull is recorded as:

Estate	Stags	Hinds	Calves
Arnisdale	34	60	11
Bunloinne	4	6	3
Cluanie	15	35	14
East Glenquoich	36	16	9
Eilanreach	35	71	5
Glenquoich	39	50	16
Glenshiel	31	52	16

Kinlochhourn	19	46	14
Open range total	213	336	88
Loch Hourn Head	5	3	2
Druidaig	6	10	4
Eilanreach Woods	2		
Scallasaig	9	14	8
FLS	37	25	20
Peninsula total	267	385	120

5. Deer

a) Recruitment Counts

Estate	Percentage
Arnisdale	34
Cluanie	28
East Glenquoich	25
Druidaig	25
Eilanreach	25
Glenquoich	39
Glenshiel	24
Kinlochhourn	26
Average	28.3

The Group all-time recruitment average is 24.9% and the 5 year average is 22.8%. The population model predicts a 25% recruitment so the hind cull will need to be marginally adjusted to reflect the increased recruitment.

b) Condition

The general consensus was that with the fair spring, the deer are in good condition.

c) Losses/Leakage/Road kills

Leakage from Shiel to Kintail was reported as being at a normal level. 4 stags were killed on the road at Shiel. 3 stags, 3 hinds and 4 calves were killed on the road at Cluanie.

d) Game Dealer

Simpson Game have been in touch with the Group. Last year was challenging with van issues but the Group have improved their reporting processes for which Simpson Game are grateful. There is now a new van in the fleet and new staff members are being employed to support pickups. Simpson Game request that stalkers continue to message/whatsapp/call with as much information as possible on deer numbers in chillers.

6. Deer Management Plan

a) DMP update

AD Ltd reported that the Group has been operating very well with constant counts and recruitment calculations. A higher recruitment this year requires changes to the cull.

AD Ltd queried if ADMG have a DMP template which Glenelg could benefit from, ADMG responded that we have a good plan and that we should update it to keep it current. We should also continue to monitor our habitat and have the data available to present.

ACTION

The Chair noted that the Group would benefit from a count and would require a substantial contribution from NatureScot to be able to carry out a count.

b) Population Model update

The population model has been updated and is attached for information. It is important that we continue to cull more than our recruitment to ensure our density continues to reduce towards 10 deer per sq km. The model predicts that we will reach this target by spring 2027.

The counts have usually been undertaken with snow present which pushes the deer to lower altitude which in turn suggests, in the model, that most deer are on lower lying estates, however, during cull periods, often the deer have climbed to higher altitudes. Since the deer move with weather changes, we must be flexible with which Estates are culling and individual targets.

c) Habitat Monitoring

The Group has recorded HIA every three years since 2012 and AD Ltd are working on the data to be able to present it. Queries were raised over whether or not NatureScot have ever looked at our HIA data. NatureScot to confirm.

ACTION

With the cost of deer counts increasing, HIA data is increasingly important and we must continue to collect data. Going forward, those gathering data should seek to do so digitally to assist Angus Davidson Ltd in presenting the data. AD Ltd provide data gatherers with a smartphone app to assist.

ACTION ALL

The Group agreed that it would be counterproductive to monitor open woodland since all agree that woodland not protected by deer fences will be under pressure, but given the amount of recent and planned woodland schemes, the Group feel that new woodland creation is sufficient.

7. ADMG Update

Thanks to ADMG for attending the meeting to meet members and update the group on ADMG work. ADMG and the team have been very busy with a variety of matters and an update on all of their work is attached.

The topic of most interest to many deer managers is the proposed deer density in Scotland. Whilst there is no rationale for the figure of 10 deer per sq km, ADMG noted that NatureScot are aware of groups with more deer than 10 per sq km and they are applying pressure where necessary. The Scottish Government are looking to regulate to be able to enforce this number!

8. Local Community Engagement

A number of local community representatives were invited to the meeting and the Group were delighted to welcome the local Firearms and Explosives Officer with Police Scotland and Scottish Fire & Rescue Service. Unfortunately local Councillor the local Community Council were unable to attend.

FEO noted that legislation is likely to change to allow .243 calibres to be used on Red Deer with copper ammunition. FEO is available to help with any variations required if stalkers are changing weapons. FEO asked if the variation process is likely to be taken online – FEO suggested this is unlikely in the near future.

SFRS asked if they can assist in any way. SFRS can get boots on the ground quickly and have machinery strategically placed around the Highlands to fight fires as necessary. SFRS suggested it would be good to get SFRS personnel out to more remote places to prepare them in the event of an incident. RC queried who we should notify prior to undertaking muirburn – SFRS confirmed we should contact the local control area, which is Dundee on 01382 835804.

ADMG queried if there is concern over the increased fuel burden as more and more sheep are removed from the hills, combined by lower deer densities. SFRS stated that there is concern around this but the bigger concern is around people being careless.

9. Finances

The group bank account has sufficient funds at present.

10. AOCB

- a) SRN – The Government are pursuing lots of new telephone masts through the Scottish Rural Network programme and members are likely to have been contacted by operators looking to build masts in remote places. There are a number of concerns around this including aesthetics and carbon impacts and members should seek advice from a telecoms expert if they are concerned by the impacts.

- b) NatureScot updated the Group on proposals to make night vision and thermal shooting legal, along with the changes to close seasons (removal for male, shorter for female). Glen Quoich queried why this was necessary and asked if it was to reduce the burden on providing authorisations. The Group noted that the welfare issues are very concerning.

11. Date of Next Meeting

Sunday 15th October 2023 at 14:30 at Cluanie Inn.