

Minutes

BIDWELLS

Client: Mid West Association of Highland Estates
Project: Annual General Meeting
Venue: Strathmashie Lunch Hut, Laggan
Date: 22 October 2012
Present: See below

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Distribution: All present

Description	Action
<p>Present</p> <p>Hamish McCorquodale, Dunan, Chairman Philip Dean, Corroul, Deputy Chairman Finlay Clark, RTA / Bidwells, Secretary Lyndsay Sharp, RTA, Bidwells Jim Beattie, RTA Sandy Walker, RTA, Killiechonate Jamie Hendry, RTA, Killiechonate George Loudon, RTA, Mamore Cameron Loudon, RTA, Mamore Donald Rowantree, Corroul Patrick Thomson, Ben Alder Ian Crichton, Ben Alder Ross Dakers, Ben Alder Iain McDonald, Ben Alder Andrew Baird, Ben Alder Andrew Feilden, Ardverikie Rob Whitson, Ardverikie Dougie Langlands, Ardverikie Lester Standen, JMT George Eveleigh, Cruach Ian Sutherland, Dunan</p> <p>In Attendance</p> <p>Iain Hope, SNH</p> <p>1. Apologies</p> <p>Malcolm Pearson, Cruach Mrs Schwarzenback, Ben Alder Lisbet Rausing, Corroul Colin Lavin, FCS Linzi Seivewright, SNH Duncan Richardson,</p>	

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Hamish McCorquodale welcomed George Eveleigh as the new stalker at Cruach.

The chairman outlined that the purpose of the afternoon's meeting was to discuss the renewal of the DMP and that a small working group has been formed. This consists of Hamish McCorquodale, Finlay Clark, Philip Dean, Rob Whitson and Patrick Thompson.

2. Minutes of AGM – 21 October 2011

These were proposed as an accurate record of the meeting of 21 October 2011 by Finlay Clark and seconded by Patrick Thompson.

3. Matters Arising

No matters were arising which would not be covered in the agenda.

4. 2011/12 hind cull

Lyndsay Sharp handed out copies of the records held on culls and it was requested that if there are any inaccuracies, people should inform Lyndsay Sharp.

5. 2012 Stag Cull

Ardverikie – 104

Commented that it was a fairly typical season.

Camusericht – 50

15 less than last year

Ben Alder – 50

28 were shot in the SAC and 15 in the buffer areas of the SAC. It was noted that there was a shortage of older mature stags and also a shortage of hinds

Dalwhinnie - 8

Dunan – 53

Slow start, though stags were in good condition and an average weight of 13st.

Mamore – 35

Commented that it was a quick rut during the 1 week in October. They are likely shoot another 40 out of season.

Killiechonate – 65

16 stags were shot in the SAC, average weight of 13.5st and age of 8.7

Cruach – 34

This is up on last years cull by 11 stags, average weight was 13.7st.

Corrou – 180

This is down by 40 on last years cull. 36 were shot in SAC buffer with the heaviest stag recorded at 17st. and an average of 13.7st.

JMT – 0

No stags have been culled in season though it is proposed some will be culled out of season.

FCS – To be confirmed

The proposed stag culls for 2013 were also discussed and Estates gave an indication of their likely culls for 2013;

Ardverikie – 110
Camusericht – 55
Ben Alder – 55
Dalwhinnie - 10, will assess yearly
Dunan – 50
Mamore – 120, will assess nearer time
Killiechonate – 65
Cruach – 35
Corrou – 190
JMT – 10
FCS – ?

6. Natural Mortality

Ardverikie – 10 Stags, 10 Hinds
Camusericht – none
Ben Alder – 7 Stags, 1 Hind and 10 Calves
Dalwhinnie - 2 Stags, 1 Calf
Dunan – 5 Hinds, 1 Calf
Mamore – none
Killiechonate – none
Cruach – none
Corrou – 2 Stags, 1 Hinds & 2 Calves
JMT – none
FCS – ?

7. Proposed Hind Cull 2012/13

Each Estate gave an estimate of their proposed cull for 2012/13.

Ardverikie – Approximately 200, will assess as they go.
Camusericht – 30
Ben Alder – 70-90
Dalwhinnie – 10-12
Dunan – 40-50
Mamore –100-130

Killiechonate – 100
Cruach – 35
Corrour – 350
JMT – 40 - 60
FCS – ?

It was commented that Corroure's plan to cull 350 hinds seemed a lot and there were concerns that hinds would be drawn in from the neighbouring Estates. It was pointed out that overall, within the group high numbers of deer have been shot before without affecting the overall population of the group. Corroure are intending on reducing their culls over the coming years.

8. Deer Count 2012/13

There are no plans for a helicopter count of the whole area this coming year and SNH indicated that it would be a few years before a helicopter count was carried out again. Ian Hope said that SNH are intending to carry out a helicopter deer count of the Ben Nevis and Ben Alder SAC in summer 2013. It was clarified that SNH will also cover the buffer areas to the SACs though this will be limited to what one helicopter can cover per day on each SAC.

George Loudon asked if there are any plans by SNH to carry out habitat monitoring as this gives a better understanding of the impacts of deer on the ground rather than counting actual populations of deer. Ian Hope said that habitat monitoring is more costly than helicopter counts but said that repeat surveys will be carried out on the SACs within the next year or two.

Finlay Clark commented that there is already noticeable habitat change with the ever increasing coverage of bracken. This will become less manageable as it takes greater hold over the coming years and may reach the point of non-recovery if action is not taken on how it can be managed.

9. MWAHE Deer Management Plan

It was agreed that the sub-group would meet during the second week of December to discuss the Deer Management Plan detail. Lyndsay Sharp will discuss population models with Ian Hope for the group in advance of the December meeting.

10. Ben Nevis SAC and Ben Alder SAC

Ian Hope welcomed the group's adaptive approach to deer management planning and acknowledged that deer management measures had been implemented with the intention of improving habitat condition in the the SACs. The management of deer in the SAC areas is integral within the draft Deer Management Plan.

The Ben Alder Group was to meet following the helicopter count scheduled for the summer. As this never went ahead the group are still to meet. This is planned for after the summer deer count in 2013.

11. SNH Report

The WANE Act, together with SNH's balancing duties and the Code of Practice, mean that SNH has to take account of socio-economic interests. For example this means that the socio-economic importance of deer has to be taken into account before SNH can issue an authorisation for deer control.

12. Reports from ADMG

Finlay Clark added that the WANE Act also place more emphasis on Deer Management Groups to consider economics and sustainability.

The next regional meeting will be held at the Kingsmill hotel in Inverness on 27th November. The ADMG managed Scone Gamefair for one day at before it was cancelled. The Executive members were in attendance at Moy Gamefair.

Paul Wheelhouse is the new minister with the responsibilities for the Environment and Climate Change. It has been discussed that the ADMG should invite him out to a day stalking to ensure he has an understanding of the industry.

Finlay Clark thanked the Mid-west group for their support over the years. In return Hamish McCorquodale thanked Finlay Clark for his support and representation on the ADMG committee.

13. Cairngorm National Park Authority – Deer Advisory Group

Patrick Thompson provided an update. The outcome from various meetings has resulted in the approval of an access poster in relation to stalking. This has been approved for use within the National Park. A copy of the poster will be distributed with the minutes.

14. Venison Market

The Estates in Rannoch have managed to negotiate an enhanced price for their venison with Highland Game. This is an ungraded price which remains constant through out the season. Everyone requires a chiller but does not have to be assured.

Andrew Feilden asked what would be involved in doing our own butchery and direct sales. Philip Dean said it requires a big marketing and set up cost, plus there is a threshold of 300 carcasses for a requirement of veterinary

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inspections. This adds further costs.

15. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be Monday 21 October 2012 at Strathmashie.

16. Election of Office Bearers

Hamish McCorquodale asked if anyone wants to stand for position of Chair or Secretary. Everyone is happy with current arrangement and the office bearers will continue for a further year.

Patrick Thompson was thanked for hosting the meeting.

17. AOCB

There was no further business to be discussed.
