



Client: Mid-West Association of Highland Estates
Project: AGM
Venue: Strathmashie Lunch Hut
Our ref:
Date: 21 October 2014
Present:
Distribution:

Description

Action

1 Attendance & Apologies

Hamish McCorquodale, Dunan, Chairman
Finlay Clark, RTA / Bidwells, Secretary
Lyndsay Sharp, RTA, Bidwells
Jim Beattie, RTA
Jamie Hendry, RTA, Killiechonate
Sophie Clark, RTA, Killiechonate
Cameron Loudon, RTA, Mamore
Alistair Christie, BH Sporting LLP, Ben Alder
Ross Dakers, Ben Alder
Brian Smith, Camusericht
Roddie Feilden, Ardverikie
Nathan Windle, Ardverikie
Malcolm Pearson, Cruach
Malcolm Pearson, Cruach
Ian Sutherland, Dunan
Holly Deary, SNH
Fran Lockhart, JMT
Sarah Lewis, JMT

Apologies

John Jackson, FE
Colin Lavin, FE
Andrew Feilden, Ardverikie
Cathy Mayne, SNH
Graeme Taylor, SNH

2 Minutes of AGM – 21 October 2014

2.1 There was agreement by all that the minutes were true and accurate record of the meeting on 21 October 2014.

3 Matters Arising

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

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4 2014/15 Cull

RED DEER

Estate	In Season			Out of Season		Total
	Stags	Hinds	Calves	Stags	Hinds	
Adverikie	129	206	55	0	0	0
Camusericht	65	33	17	0	0	115
Ben Alder	52	100	37	0	0	189
Ben Alder Woodland	4	6	4	0	0	14
Dalwhinnie	11	20	10	0	0	41
Dunan		31?		0	0	0
Mamore	20	29	9	0	0	58
Killiechonate	64	105	40	0	0	209
Cruach	31	45	26	0	0	102
Corrour	113	132	76	7	0	328
Ben Nevis - JMT	3	23	4	7	3	40
FCS						0
Total	363	493	223	14	3	1096

SIKA DEER

Estate	In Season			Out of Season		Total
	Stags	Hinds	Calves	Stags	Hinds	
Adverikie	0	0	0	0	0	0
Camusericht	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ben Alder	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ben Alder Woodland	0	0	0	0	0	0
Dalwhinnie	0	0	0	0	0	0
Dunan	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mamore	0	0	0	0	0	0
Killiechonate	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cruach	0	0	0	0	0	0
Corrour	4	3	0	0	0	7
Ben Nevis - JMT	0	0	0	0	0	0
FCS						0
Total	4	3	0	0	0	7

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ROE DEER

Estate	In Season			Out of Season		Total
	Bucks	Does	Kids	Bucks	Hinds	
Adverikie	0	0	0	0	0	0
Camusericht	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ben Alder	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ben Alder Woodland	0	0	0	0	0	0
Dalwhinnie	0	0	0	0	0	0
Dunan	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mamore	0	0	0	0	0	0
Killiechonate	2	2	0	0	0	4
Cruach	0	0	0	0	0	0
Corrour	9	11	3	0	0	23
Ben Nevis - JMT	0	3	0	0	0	3
FCS						0
Total	11	16	3	0	0	30

5 2015 Stag Cull

Ardverikie: 106, average weight 14st 1lb

Camusericht: 41, average weight 13st 4lb

Ben Alder & Dalwhinnie: 31, average weight 15st 3lb

Dunan: 45, average weight 14st

Mamore: 17, average weight 14st 9lb

Killiechonate: 63, average weight 13st 11lb

Cruach: 38 stags

Corrour: 140, average weight is up. Will apply to shoot 20 out of season. There is a focus on reducing deer numbers along Loch Treigsidhe

FCS: no representation at meeting

Ben Nevis: 3 stags. JMT intend on applying for an out of season authorisation

6 Natural Mortality

Ardverikie: 18 stags (over double of last year's number), 5/6 hinds, 5/6 calves.

Camusericht: 5 stags, 9 hinds, 3 calves. Brian started in June at Camusericht therefore numbers are only what he has found since starting at Camusericht.

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Ben Alder (including woodland): 23 stags, 21 hinds 38 calves, Said there was likely to be that number again in the woodlands

Dunan: 6 stags, 31 hinds, 43 calves

Mamore: 76 total with fairly even spread around stags, hinds & calves. This is a huge increase on previous years.

Killiechonate: 16 stags, 9 hinds, 7 calves

Cruach: 5 stags, 70 hinds/calves

Corrour: 48 stags, 11 hind/calves.

FCS: no representation at the meeting

Ben Nevis: 1 hind, 3 calves

A request will be made to the Forestry Commission for their records of natural mortality, and culls for 2014/15.

7 Proposed Hind Cull (2015/16)

Ardverikie: 175 + calves

Camusericht: 40 + calves

Ben Alder & Dalwhinnie: 60 + calves including woodland

Dunan: 40 + calves

Mamore: 30 + calves

Killiechonate: 80 + calves

Cruach: 40 + calves

Corrour: 250 + calves. There will be a focus on Loch Treigside where the aspirational density is 5 deer/sq.km.

FCS: no representation at the meeting

Ben Nevis: 20 + calves

It was noted that some places (Ardverikie, Ben Alder, and Killiechonate) have reduced their cull numbers, however Corrour have increased their hind cull with a focus on reducing deer density on Loch Treigside. Given the high mortality rate there is no concern that the proposed cull rates will affect the group population.

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Finlay Clark pointed out that some other DMG groups have reduced their culls following the higher winter mortalities.

8 Deer Counts

8.1 The last deer count by helicopter took place in 2011 and the one before that in 2006. These have been funded by SNH. In order to keep on the five year cycle of counts by helicopter, the next count should take place in 2016.

8.2 However, SNH confirmed that there is no provision to cover the Mid-West area for the next few years. Holly Deary said SNH are looking to catch up on areas which have not been counted for a very long time and then long term, SNH will look to put in place a programme which covers all areas on a rolling basis. Recently the Mid-West group have done well with SNH funded counts.

8.3 Finlay Clark asked Holly Deary if there were any commitments to count the designated areas. As far as Holly is aware there are no plans in the near future for SNH to count the designated areas.

8.4 Following discussion, the general consensus was to try and maintain the five yearly cycles of helicopter counts. A couple of members said they can easily accurately count their ground by foot and questioned whether they would have to contribute to the costs of a helicopter count. To ensure accurate results foot counts would have to be done at the same time as helicopter counts but it was commented that it would be good to have the whole area covered by the same method of count to ensure comparability with previous year's counts.

8.5 It was concluded that a quotation should be obtained for counting in spring 2016 with an estimate of the cost distribution per member calculated. A decision will then be made on whether to proceed with a helicopter count in 2016. If a count does not go ahead it was felt that it would not be critical if the count was pushed back till 2017.

8.6 Holly Deary confirmed that though SNH would not be able to assist financially they would be able to offer the manpower and technical support with a deer count.

9 MWAHE Deer Management Plan

9.1 Lyndsay Sharp thanked all those who have completed the request for information. There are a couple outstanding and these people know who they are. Lyndsay requested that these are submitted as soon as possible.

9.2 The timescale for completion will to be to discuss the initial draft with Graeme Taylor in January with the aim of meeting with the group to sign off the new Deer Management Plan in February. It was discussed that this group meeting should be the same week as the ADMG AGM in February. Members who wish to attend the ADMG AGM will likely be in the area for that week. A date for the Deer Management Plan meeting will be set following confirmation of the ADMG AGM date, though this is likely to be the 17th or 18th February.

10 Ben Nevis SAC & Ben Alder SAC

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10.1 Holly Deary confirmed that results from the last Site Condition Monitoring were good for the Ben Alder SAC and there are no ongoing concerns. The Ben Alder Group have not met since 2014. Graeme Taylor is keen to arrange a meeting with Group members and will be in contact with members of that group about a date.	
10.2 The Ben Nevis Steering Group met in July and is scheduled to meet again in November. There are no issues with the majority of features though the pine trees are causing concern. The last monitoring shows that the seedlings are not regenerating well enough. The group are to look at addressing this issue at the next meeting.	
11 SNH Report	
11.1 In addition to the points already raised Holly Deary made the group aware of environmental funding under SRDP that may be of interest to the group. There is an emphasis on collaboration but there is an option for deer management and habitat assessment.	
12 Reports from ADMG	
12.1 ADMG have managed to secure the attendance of the Environment Minister, Dr. Aileen McLeod, at the forthcoming regional meeting at the Kingsmills Hotel, Inverness on the 9 th November. The meeting will commence at the earlier time of 10.45am. Finlay Clark said ADMG are keen to achieve a good turnout and are very pleased that the minister she will have the opportunity to hear at first-hand how much good work is being done at DMG level.	
12.2 The latest PACEC study is now closed and some highlights of results have been release. The release of the full report is expected prior to the 9 th November. A few summary point; three times as many respondents compared to the original 2006 study, 80% of respondents were a member of a DMG with 88% shooting deer for the reasons of habitat or forestry management.	
12.3 ADMG in conjunction with SNH have organised a training day in Birnam on the 25 th November for those involved in pulling together Deer Management Plans. This will focus on how to achieve the delivery of public interests and communication.	
12.4 Richard Cook recently gave evidence to the Rural affairs committee on the Land Reform Bill along with thSGA, SNH, and Scottish Land and Estates. The full recording of evidence is publically available and the latest e-scope provides a link. SNH were very supportive of Deer Management Groups. For the bill to become legislation there is a tight timescale of stages to go through with the ultimate deadline of the 24 March for the bill to be passed under the current parliament.	
12.5 The bill deals with a large breath of topics where concluding the detail in the final stages may prove tricky to achieve within the tight timescales. Sporting rates in some form is likely to appear. The government do have the aspiration to target the big landowners, however in reality rates cannot be applied across all land and classifications of business rather than a particular land owner type. Small business rates relief will mean many smaller estates will be exempt.	

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12.6 Malcom Pearson asked how many deer management groups existed and what area of land is covered by members within a Deer Management Group. Finlay confirmed that there forty five active deer management groups with two / three less active / engaging groups. Within our own group there are landowners who are not members and encouraging them to join us is difficult when they can see no benefit. Such members tend have agricultural or forestry aims where deer are seen as problematic rather than a resource.	
12.7 One mechanism being discussed within SNH / ADMG is to make membership of a DMG /management of deer a cross compliance issue. This would then apply to those who claim agricultural subsidies or forestry grants. Currently SNH have no powers on landowners to make them join a DMG.	
13 Cairngorm National Park Authority	
13.1 Alistair Christie confirmed that there is nothing to report. The item remains on the agenda. A couple of members just fall within the boundaries of the CNP.	
14 Venison Market	
14.1 The outbreak of e-coli from venison made the news with eleven cases reported. The suspect venison has been traced and been removed from the food chain.	
14.2 Prices appear to remain in the range of £2.10 - £2.30/kg. There was some discussion about the need for more collaboration within the group when setting up agreements for the season ahead. Corrour go through a tendering process periodically to keep the dealers on their toes. They have had a great service so far from a local smaller dealer. Those in the Rannoch Venison Group said they need to ensure a meeting takes place in the spring to discuss a more collaborative approach to organising collections.	
15 Date of next meeting	
15.1 The next AGM meeting will be held on Friday 21 October 2016. Though there will be a meeting in February to discuss the Deer Management Plan. The date of this meeting is to be confirmed.	
16 Election of Office Bearers	
16.1 The Chairman Hamish McCorquodale stood down from his position. Finlay Clark on behalf of the group thanked him for his many years' service and commitment to the group. Roddy Feilden was proposed as new Chair which was proposed by Philip Dean and seconded by Finlay Clark.	
16.2 Finlay Clark confirmed that Bidwells are happy to continue as secretary to the group however if anyone else would like to take on the role, Finlay is more than happy to give them the opportunity. All agreed on Finlay Clark / Bidwells continuing as secretary.	
17 AOCB	
17.1 The meeting closed at approximately 3.45pm.	