

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
Philip Dean, Corroul, Deputy Chairman
Finlay Clark, RTA / Bidwells, Secretary
Lyndsay Sharp, RTA, Bidwells
Jim Beattie, RTA
Jamie Hendry, RTA, Killiechonate
Andrew Thomson, RTA Killiechonate
George Loudon, RTA, Mamore
Cameron Loudon, RTA, Mamore
Rupert Sebag-Montefiori, Corroul Chairman
Donald Rowantree, Corroul
Alistair Christie, BH Sporting LLP, Ben Alder
Ross Dakers, Ben Alder
Iain McDonald, Ben Alder
John MacKenzie, Ben Alder
Rob Whitson, Ardverikie
Andrew Feilden, Ardverikie
Roddie Feilden, Ardverikie
Dougie Langlands, Ardverikie
Nathan Windle, Ardverikie
George Eveleigh, Cruach
Malcolm McCorquodale, Dunan
Ian Sutherland, Dunan
Colin Lavin, FCS
Cathy Mayne, SNH
Graeme Taylor, SNH
Fran Lockhart, JMT
Sarah Lewis, JMT

Apologies

Malcolm Pearson, Cruach
Lisbet Rausing, Corroul
John Jackson, FCS
Dave Thomson
Nick Baikie, BH Sporting LLP, Ben Alder

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2 Minutes of AGM – 21 October 2013

2.1 There was agreement by all that the minutes were true and accurate record of the meeting on 21 October 2013.

3 Matters Arising

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

4 2013/14 Cull

Estate	MWAHE 2013/14 Cull			
	Stags	Hinds	Calves	Other spp.
Ardverikie	100	180	41	0
Camusericht	66	35	15	2
Ben Alder	50	100	21	0
Dalwhinnie Woodland	3	2	1	0
Dalwhinnie	12	20	8	0
Dunan	49	30	11	0
Mamore	16	120	39	0
Killiechonate	63	110	29	4
Cruach	34	36	26	0
Corrour	130	120	39	10
Ben Nevis - JMT	11	18	4	0
FCS	50	21	13	57
Total	584	792	247	73

5 2014 Stag Cull

Ardverikie: 110, average weight 14st 4lb, dry season, good traditional rut with stags completely run. Last week of season stags were a good bit lighter. Noticeable numbers of walkers around.

Camusericht: 65, average weight 14st,

Ben Alder: 52, average weight 13st 7lb, good rut over last 2-3 weeks; this brought the average weight down. Only 2 days were lost to bad weather

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Dalwhinnie: 5 stags in the woods and 11 hill stags, at the end, weights dropped right away. Found that walkers were coming down into corries and just where you didn't want them to be. A lot of good stags making it difficult to find something shootable.

Dunan: 53, average weight 14st1lb, stags in good condition, rut slow to start but last couple of weeks were good.

Mamore: 20, average weight 14st3lb, didn't find too many walkers about. Good traditional rut.

Killiechonate: 62, weights good early on in the season. 18 of these stags were shot within the SAC area. Top weight was 20st 3lb.

Cruach: 31, average weight 13st 6lb, weights were good early on.

Corrour: 110, average weight 13st11lb, heaviest stag was 18st3lb, a lot of good heads and the dry weather was a pleasure.

FCS: will continue to shoot stags out of season.

Ben Nevis: 3 stags.

6 Natural Mortality

Ardverikie: 6 stags, 7/8 hinds, 6 calves. It was a wet winter, but nothing unusual in terms of mortality.

Cammusericht: nothing to report

Ben Alder: 7 stags, 7 hinds 3 calves

Dalwhinnie: 2 stags, 3 hinds, 9 calves

Dunan: 9 hinds, 8 calves

Mamore: 3 hinds, 2 calves. Found an increase in road collision deaths. George receives the call outs from the police. Mostly Roe deer.

Killiechonate: 2 stags, 6 hinds, 5 calves

Cruach: 6 stags, 2 hinds, 2 calves

Corrour: 4 stags, 1 hind, 2 calves

FCS: not available

Ben Nevis: 1 hind, 2 calves

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7 Proposed Hind Cull (2014/15)

Ardverikie: 200 though won't be any less than 180.

Cammusericht: 50

Ben Alder: 100

Dalwhinnie: between 15 & 20 and whatever is in the woods.

Dunan: 40

Mamore: 30-50, shot a lot last year so this is a good bit less than last year.

Killiechonate: 120

Cruach: 35

Corrour: 140

FCS: 30

Ben Nevis: 20

8 Deer Counts

8.1 The last deer count by helicopter took place in 2011 and the one before that in 2006. It was discussed whether there should be a count again. Given that helicopter counts are expensive, it was concluded that to also keep on the 5 year rotation the next helicopter count should take place in 2016.

8.2 It may be possible for SNH to assist with the funding as the group have two SAC designated areas. which would support SRDP may also be an funding option with the costs of a helicopter count.

9 MWAHE Deer Management Plan – SNH Review

9.1 Graeme Taylor and Cathy Mayne recently met with Finlay Clark to review the MWAHE's Deer Management Plan against ADMGs benchmark and SNH's objectives for delivering Public Interest.

9.2 Driven by the Rural Affairs Committee, every DMG requires to have an effective DMP in place by 2016 and for DMGs to demonstrate their contribution to the public interest.

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9.3	There are 14 objectives in delivering the public interest. Graeme summarised that there are areas where the group has this covered well in their DMP but there are also areas where this is not the case. It may be that members of the group are undertaking this individually and all that is required is the collation of these actions into the groups DMP. Though there are public interest objectives which will require greater consideration by the group.	
9.4	SNH has funding available to DMG's in order to assist them with delivering on this wider remit. It was advised that an early application for funding would be positively received. Finlay Clark added that the group is well placed to move forward following this review. The difficult discussions have already taken place and much of the required work is the collation of information into the existing DMP.	
9.5	Philip Dean suggested that the sub-group which existed for the recent DMP review should reconvene to take this forward. Bidwells will organise for this group to meet before the end of the year.	
10	Ben Nevis SAC & Ben Alder SAC	
10.1	Cathy Mayne circulated a list of the designated features within the MWAHE are which can be impacted upon by deer. There is a lot of green and overall the story is good. Cathy Mayne said there is a need internally within SNH to identify exactly what is assured management.	
10.2	Within the MWAHE are there is approximately 110,000ha of blanket bog. This equates to between 13% and 16% of the MWAHE area. Funding is available for blanket bog management. Blanket bog is adversely affected by deer impacts and is slow to recover.	
10.3	Cathy Mayne has also asked the GIS team to identify areas within the MWAHE with potential for native woodland expansion. Excluding designated areas, 5000ha has potential for native woodland expansion. SNH have an outstanding action on Rhododendron Management. Cathy Mayne is of the opinion that there has to be support of tackling Rhododendron across all areas and not just within designated areas, otherwise the outcomes will be short lived.	
11	SNH Report	
11.1	SNH are currently revising the document Wild Deer & National Approach with the expectation of completing by early 2015. Graeme Taylor commented that he would be surprised if competency was made compulsory in the upcoming review of current voluntary system. The next wild deer best practise event will be in April 2015.	
12	Reports from ADMG	
12.1	On the back of the review of Deer Management by the RACCE (Rural Affairs, Climate Change and Environment) committee, the ADMG has been focusing its efforts on ensuring as many as possible DMGs comply with the Governments requests. This has included drafting and re-drafting the DMP Benchmark, drafting an example constitution and updating the information collected by the PACEC report originally undertaken in 2006. Finlay Clark encouraged everyone to complete the questionnaire as soon as possible.	

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12.2 Further information on the RACCE and deer Management can be found at :
<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/CurrentCommittees/72729.aspx>

12.3 Further information on ADMG can be found on their website <http://www.deer-management.co.uk> and under the section publications the PACEC questionnaire can be found.

12.4 Further information on Land Reform can be found at
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/About/Review/land-reform> and
<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/CurrentCommittees/29881.aspx>
under the section on Land Reform.

12.5 The next regional ADMG meeting will be at 11am on Wednesday 3rd December at the Kingsmill Hotel in Inverness.

13 Cairngorm National Park Authority

13.1 Alistair Christie will provide an update on this for the next meeting.

14 Venison Market

14.1 Prices appear to have gone down for everyone in the group. The typical price is in the £2.10 - £2.30/kg range.

15 Date of next meeting

15.1 The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 21 October 2015.

16 Election of Office Bearers

16.1 The Chairrman Hamish McCorquodale confirmed that he is happy for anyone else to take on the position but also said he will continue if no-one steps forward. Finlay Clark also confirmed that he is happy for anyone else to take on the position of secretary. It was agreed by all that the current arrangement will continue.

17 AOCB

17.1 Colin Lavin made everyone aware that their policy: Deer Management on the National Forest Estate is available. He also said that they have recently purchased land within the MWAHE area. This landholding previously was not a member of the group. The area is currently grazed by sheep but FCS are looking into increasing native woodland across the landholding.

17.2 Andrew Feilden said he was in discussion with Richard Cooke, ADMG about organising a meeting / forum group between stalkers which would take place out with the season to allow stalkers to discuss current topics.