

MINUTES OF MEETING
EAST LOCH ERICHT DEER MANAGEMENT GROUP
SPRING MEETING
FRIDAY 6 MAY 2016
AT CRAIGANOUR LODGE

Attendance:

James Adamson (Secretary) Julian Clarke (Atholl) Iain Hope (SNH) Richard MacGregor (Corrievarkie) Andrew Oliver (Talladh a Bheithe) Alasdair Findlay (Drumochter) Robert La Terriere (Dunalastair) Tom Dodd (Craiganour)	Bob Pirie (Auchleeks) Craig Burnett (Corrievarkie & Dalnaspidal) Kevin Simpson (Garbruach) Ronnie Hepburn (Atholl) Benjamin Rhodes (Atholl) Mark Fawcett (Dalnaspidal) Niall Robertson (Dunalastair)
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ACTION

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Andy Chapman (Blairfettie), Nial Mackinlay (Auchleeks), Adrian van Well (Talladh a Bheith), Kees van Well (Talladh a Bheith), Donald Isles (Chairman Blair Atholl & Struan Community Council), Kevin Peters (Forestry Commission Scotland).

2. MATTERS ARISING OUT OF THE MEETING HELD ON 11th OCTOBER 2015

- 2.1 It was agreed that all matters arising would be taken in the coming agenda and the Minutes were adopted as a true record of the meeting.

3. REVIEW OF THE 2015/16 HIND CULL

The final in season hind cull figures were;

Estate	Target	Achieved	Expected
Atholl (West of A9)	30	8	-22
Auchleeks	45	48	+3
Blairfettie	8	0	-8
Corrievarkie	20	20	60
Craiganour	65	65	0
Dalnaspidal	150	48	-102
Dunalastair	30	36	+6
Garbruach	15	14	-1
North Drumochter	80	83	+3
FCS T-A-B		5	+5
Talladh-a-Bheithe	55	50	-5
Total	498	377	-121

130 calves were shot in addition and a further 2 hinds shot out of season. The total of 377 hinds is 24% below the target and was principally due to the low number returned at Dalnaspidal. Dalnaspidal is in year two of a three year reduction cull to facilitate heather regeneration. Nick Baikie had indicated in early January that they were going to be short due to a lack of deer on the ground with a foot count in February showing only 125 deer against an average of 574 taken from

the last five Group wide counts. At this stage it is unclear where these deer have gone and the situation will be monitored.

Atholl reported few hinds on them in the winter. The fence to the Auchlennie Pinewood was repaired after the end of the season and there are now deer enclosed in the wood, but the number is unknown.

Auchleeks reported reasonable numbers of deer and no issue achieving numbers.

Blairfettie had shot no hinds over the winter. There are reports of more deer on Struan Point now, possibly coming through Auchanruie Wood and up from the south with movement being noted during late evenings in this area.

Corrievarkie reported seeing slightly less deer than historically.

Craiganour had plenty of deer about, but not distributed throughout the estate.

Dunalastair reports lots of hinds at the West end. There is a big herd on the land known as McLaren's and this is specifically addressed in the deer management plan.

Garbruach has noticed an increase in hinds, possibly displacement from Dalnaspidal, and will probably increase the hind cull next winter.

North Drumochter reported having about 350 hinds, but less than normal near Dalnaspidal.

T-A-B reported lower numbers on Loch Ericht side and are not sure where they have gone.

4. DEER MANAGEMENT PLAN DISCUSSION

The Secretary reported that the draft plan had been circulated for consultation in March and a summary of the consultation responses circulated with the agenda for this meeting. The responses had been largely positive but would require a few minor alterations to the plan to allow completion.

There was general discussion about the consultation points and draft plan. In terms of specific points it was agreed;

- The Group would monitor opportunities for new woodland creation and although not a DMG remit, would facilitate proposals where possible. R L-T mentioned that Dunalastair are considering another 100ha scheme.
- The importance of deer counting was reaffirmed. A default count date would be agreed at each October meeting on which a foot count would be made to avoid the scenario of lack of good snow meaning the count was simply deferred until it was too late. This would be a late-March date. The Secretary also urged stalkers to carry out ad hoc counts of their own ground and submit information to the Group on an 'as and when' basis.
- SNH had raised an issue about the timing of future surveys. It was agreed that the proposal to repeat the James Hutton survey in 2024 would remain, but the plan would acknowledge that the timing of surveys would be periodically reviewed.
- It was agreed that more use would be made of cull data and a new record sheet would be drawn up.
- SNH had requested a summary action table which will be prepared giving specific actions and timescales.

It was agreed by all present that subject to making the changes discussed that the plan could be finalised and the new plan was adopted by unanimous vote.

Sec.

5. 2016 Stag Cull Targets

The target stag cull is based on the new deer management plan target of 330 for the current year and was agreed as follows;

Estate	2016 Target
Atholl (West of A9)	10
Auchleeks	30
Blairfettie	6
Corrievarkie	35
Craiganour	70
Dalnaspidal	40
Dunalastair	25
Garbruach	6
North Drumochter	50
FCS T-A-B	0
Talladh-a-Bheithe	45
Total	317

Atholl indicated some would be shot in the Auchlennie Wood which were not included in their target number and there were normally around 20 shot out of season so it was agreed 317 was an appropriate base cull. This represents slight reduction from the 10 year average which is 347 (in season) but this is in line with the plan objective to stabilise stag numbers, but to maintain the overall cull intensity through higher hind cull numbers.

6. DEER COUNT

There had not been good even snow conditions across the Group and no count was held in 2016. Richard MacGregor agreed to continue as the co-ordinator.

IH confirmed some SNH resource could be available to assist ground counts, probably extra personnel if needed.

Some recruitment counts were collected;

Garbruach; 33%

Corrievarkie; 47 hinds 14 calves = 30% and 35 hinds 3 calves = 9%

T-A-B; 90 hinds 21 calves = 23%

Please submit any further recruitment count data.

All

7. SNH/ADMG UPDATE

SNH

- i. New plan 'ticks the boxes' as far as IH are concerned. Must be implemented successfully. Can view other plans on various websites and SNH would welcome feedback on any plan.
- ii. DMG Assessment – repeat assessment due over next two months. IH considers there is no doubt there has been an overall improvement in DMGs as a result of the management planning process. SNH will then report back to Govt. In terms of ELEDMG the assessment will feed into the designated site process and review the need for a control agreement. At the moment there is no control agreement in place as recent management has been deemed appropriate.
- iii. Various pieces of work are also ongoing that will feed back into Govt including SNH review of authorisations and research work on the national red deer population (statistical).
- iv. Chronic Wasting Disease – had been detected in wild reindeer in Norway and situation was being monitored.

ADMG

East Loch Ericht DMG

Website: elocherichtdmg.deer-management.co.uk

- i. E-Coli. For those not at the AGM the Secretary outlined the threat of controls on venison sales should another E-coli outbreak occur. Although the source was not absolutely pinned down the dealer (Highland Game) was cleared of fault and praised for their food hygiene standards. The bacteria are a surface contaminant widely present and commonly killed by the cooking process. The source of infection was processed meat (meatballs or burgers) where the surface contaminates were mixed through the product and had not been killed by adequate cooking thus causing the infection (i.e. don't eat rare burgers). Best Practice guidance will be reviewed but current advice is to (a) take care during carcass extraction not to drag through dirt or faeces, (b) use minimal water on carcasses (don't wash clean ones) as this can spread bacteria around and (c) throw away any carcass with stomach or faecal contamination, i.e. gut shot.

8. AOCB

Banking Mandate

The Secretary confirmed a new Treasurers Account had been opened with Bank of Scotland to avoid the banking charges that are being levied on the Business Current Account. The Secretary had tried to close the old account which was no longer required, but BoS said that Secretary was not mandated to do this. The procedure required was to pass a resolution at a meeting of the Group changing an old signatory for the Secretary who could then close the old account – the following resolution was therefore put to the Group;

“At the meeting of the organisation held on 6th May 2016 it was agreed in accordance with the constitution and rules that;

Jonathan Henson is to be removed as a signatory for the above account held with the Bank of Scotland

James Adamson is to be added as a signatory for the above account held with the Bank of Scotland.”

The resolution was universally approved by those present and the letter of resolution signed by Alastair Findlay.

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Sunday 9 October, location probably Craiganour.

Distribution;
ELEDMG Members
Iain Hope, SNH
ADMG
Community Council
Website
File