

MINUTES OF MEETING
EAST LOCH ERICHT DEER MANAGEMENT GROUP
AUTUMN MEETING
SUNDAY 15 OCTOBER 2017
AT CRAIGANOUR LODGE

Attendance:

James Adamson (Secretary)	Kevin Simpson (Garbruach)
Richard MacGregor (Corrievarkie)	Niall Robertson (Dunalastair)
Nial Mackinlay (Auchleeks)	Bob Pirie (Auchleeks)
Tom Dodd (Craiganour)	Andy Chapman (Blairfettie)
Craig Burnett (Corrievarkie & Dalnaspidal)	Robert Matthews (Blairfettie)
Adrian van Well and Kees van Well (Talladh a Bheith)	Julian Clarke (Atholl)
	Ronnie Hepburn (Atholl)

ACTION

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from;

Alasdair Findlay (Drumochter), Robert La Terriere (Dunalastair), Donald Isles (Chairman Blair Atholl & Struan Community Council), Kevin Peters (Forestry Commission Scotland), Alastair Lyon (North Drumochter), Duncan Fox (North Drumochter), Iain Hope (SNH), Paul Wilson (Dalnaspidal), Johnathan Armitt (Dalnaspidal)

2. MATTERS ARISING OUT OF THE MEETING HELD ON 19th MAY 2017

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 2017 STAG CULL

The final in season stag cull figures were;

Estate	2017 Target	At meeting	Expected	Revised	Achieved	Variance
Atholl (West of A9)	10	4		4	4	-6
Auchleeks	30	22	8	30	30	0
Blairfettie	6	4	2	6	6	0
Corrievarkie	25	23	2	25	25	0
Craiganour	60	34	10	44	46	-14
Dalnaspidal	30	16	2	18	24	-6
Dunalastair	25	15	10	25	25	0
Garbruach	5	2	2	4	3	-2
North Drumochter	40	24	5	29	34	-6
FCS T-A-B						0
Talladh-a-Bheithe	45	39	10	49	50	5
Total	276	183	51	234	247	-29

The target stag cull based on the deer management plan is 335 stags excluding deer shot in fenced woodland (FCS). At the Spring meeting it was agreed to reduce the cull to reflect a perceived lack of deer on the ground and the cull was set at 276 with more to be shot if numbers allowed. The achieved cull (including the last week of the season after the meeting) was 247 stags, slightly more

than expected number tabled at the meeting, but still a shortfall of 26% on plan target.

There was discussion about the stag cull;

Auchleeks reported a reasonable season with lots of stags present at the date of the meeting. Good numbers of deer at the west end. Some issues with hill walkers disregarding signage and spooking deer.

Corrievarkie reported good stags from the beginning, probably with higher numbers than previous years.

Craiganour had been okay early on but was very quiet by the meeting. Henry Littlejohn had commented this was the lowest number of deer he had seen on the estate. There are few resident hinds and many of the stags are young.

Dalnaspidal reported a busy grouse season and little emphasis on stags, but with very few about anyway due to the disturbance from driving grouse.

Dunalastair busy to west with good number of deer, but much quieter on north.

Garbruch reported good numbers of hinds and good quality young stags.

North Drumochter reported by email. Few deer, very few mature shootable stags with young stags holding hinds or big stags, too good to shoot.

T-A-B reported good quality deer and favourable conditions for their ground.

Blairfettie currently had few stags although had been some early on. AC advised that he now had stalking across Blairfettie including the agricultural ground and the Kinaldy Wood. *Post meeting note - 4 stags in Kinaldy Wood, 4 stags in little wood/big wood and 8 stags on agricultural ground.*

The shortfall against the plan target was discussed however consensus was that stag numbers are currently very low and the achieved cull was reflective of the deer being seen whilst stalking.

4. DEER MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Secretary reiterated the importance of delivering the plan however it was becoming clear from the number of deer being seen and shot that the numbers in the five year plan were very optimistic without risking serious damage to the deer resource. The Secretary had already discussed with Iain Hope who could not attend the meeting, and as long as clear provision was made to monitor and review numbers, and react if more deer appeared, then SNH were generally content the Group was managing effectively.

5. DEER COUNT

The Secretary confirmed there would be an SNH led helicopter count in early 2018. Post meeting note: The Secretary spoke to Jimmy Irvine of SNH on 8 January who confirmed that the hope to count ELEDMG in January and he was in contact with Bob Pirie.

After discussion it was agreed a foot count should still be done of decent white ground conditions allowed.

Bob Pirie agreed to be count coordinator. This would benefit as if there was snow at Auchleeks there was likely to be snow across the range.

Iain Hope agreed that a pre-count meeting should be held again this year, date to be advised.

6. 2017/18 HIND CULL TARGETS

The target hind cull based on the deer management plan is 480 with 144 followers. Due to the low number of deer currently being seen and the low cull achieved in 2016 the property level figures

East Loch Ericht DMG

Website: elocherichtdmg.deer-management.co.uk

BP/Sec

were agreed as;

Estate	2017
Atholl (West of A9)	5
Auchleeks	50
Blairfettie	8
Corrievarkie	20
Craiganour	45
Dalnaspidal	80
Dunalastair	55
Garbruach	10
North Drumochter	40
FCS T-A-B	
Talladh-a-Bheithe	50
Total	363

On top of this the cull would target 109 followers (30% of hind cull).

This is 25% below the plan but is sensible based on the 2017 count. The Secretary welcomed the helicopter count as it would provide a good base assessment of the current population.

As part of the process Auchleeks and Dunalastair agreed to slightly higher numbers than normal to compensate for shortfalls at Craiganour and potentially Dalnaspidal and to reflect the numbers of deer being seen on these estates.

7. SNH/ADMG UPDATE

7.1 Most Estates had received their sporting rates assessment. The Secretary reported that a number of organisations and estates were lodging appeals and any members needing further advice should contact the Secretary.

All

8. AOCB

None tabled. There was discussion about the rifle shoot – it would be good to try and shoot again this year as it has not been held for three years. AvW again kindly offered permission to use the multi-land range at T-A-B. A note about the shoot will be circulated in April.

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

A Friday in May, either 4/11/18. Location and date TBC.

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