

Morvern Deer Management Spring Meeting
3rd April 2018 Kingairloch House
MINUTES APPROVED AT MEETING HELD 16TH JULY 2018

Attendance: Peter Lawson (Chairman) Kinlochteacuis, Steve Fox (Vice Chairman), Carnoch, Iain Thornber (Glensanda), John Jackson (Forestry Commission), Matt Wilson (Oronsay), Simon Boulton (Ardtornish), Robert Lintott (Kingairloch), Susan Larson (Kingairloch), Katrina Lintott (Kingairloch), Alasdair Firth (Morvern Community Woodlands) Derek Lewis (Drimnin), Mark Foxwell (SWT: Rahoy Hills Wildlife Reserve), Tony McInnes (Ardtornish), Ian Collier (Forestry Commission), Angus Davidson (Angus Davidson Ltd), Lorraine Servant (SNH), Graeme Taylor (SNH), Douglas Weir (Morvern Community Trust), Bruce Taylor (Scottish Woodlands)

Apologies: Neil Roberts (Laudale), Bill Rosier (Rahoy), John MacDonald (Killundine Estate/Drimnin Estate), Lynda Campbell (ADMG), Richard Cooke (ADMG)

Minutes Secretary and ADMG website:

Katrina Lintott will take the minutes today. Approved Spring 2017 DMG minutes are on the ADMG website and Approved Amended Autumn 2017 minutes will also be added onto the ADMG website. Agreed that the only other information that needed to be on website was the Deer Management Plan and this is also listed on the website.

Minutes of last meeting and matters arising:

Changes:

Lorraine Servant stipulated the changes to what she said about East Loch Shiel DMG - noted

Ian Collier- It should be ash dieback, not ash drop-noted

Iain Thornber: Didn't mean that all meetings should be held in Lochaline Hall, he suggested Ardgor/Strontian hall. Wanted to stress that that the expectation is that one meeting should be open to the public.

Robert Lintott: mentioned that this meeting was advertised in the Lochaline village shop.

Peter Lawson: Aside from advertising the meeting, what more could be done to encourage public? As a group we are welcoming to the public. Agreed that meetings will be held around group members with one meeting being held in the Lochaline village hall.

Deer Count

Figures from heli count are provisional. Thank you to SNH for funding the count for the whole area and the support from stalkers was appreciated.

3-4 helicopters were used. Good visibility. High tops had cloud cover which helped minimize movement of deer groups over the boundaries. Didn't count heavily wooded areas such as Glencripsdale. Graeme Taylor will be going over the figures to finalize numbers (likely to be a month).

Peter Lawson: Suggested that a meeting in July to go over final count numbers, mortality numbers and to go over cull plans for estates.

Bill Rosier: commented by e mail that he had counted on foot before the heli

count and felt numbers were a lot lower on Rahoy than what was counted in the heli-count. Graeme has spoken with Bill and Rahoy is now planning on upping their cull next season.

John Macdonald: Killundine felt the numbers on the heli count were quite low compared to what he has seen.

Estates should plan to carry out foot count in 2019.

SNH woodland update -Graeme Taylor

There is an investigation going ahead of herbivore impact which will affect Morvern SSSI areas. A contractor (Dr Alasdair Headly) has been appointed and it will take three weeks to complete. Landowners will be notified before work commences. Results should be available in September.

Deer Management Plan

Flagged up 4-6 sub group areas. In the July meeting these subgroups will work together to work out a cull plan. These were drawn onto a map and Tony McInnes will scan and email back to Peter Lawson for future discussion.

Members' reports and discussion

Below are the comments made on the Hind Cull:

Killundine:

Deer Condition: Yeld hinds in average condition. Milk hinds and yearlings in poor condition. Milk hinds drying up early. Calves in reasonable condition, however several found late in the season motherless having died with the conditions.

Comments on poaching: None. No deer found from natural mortality. However several were culled late in the season that would certainly have succumbed to the conditions. General comments: Hill: average age hinds- 5 years. Average weight (cleaned) 34.5Kg. Fecundity rate 46.1%

Drimnin:

Deer Condition: Generally poor condition overall with calves, yearlings and milk hinds being the worst. Yeld hinds held out reasonably well.

Comments on poaching: None. No deer found from natural mortality. However several animals were culled late in the season that would have succumbed to the conditions. General comments: average age 5.6 years. Average cleaned weight 31.4Kg. Fecundity rate 30.7%

Ardtornish: Condition has gone down rapidly towards the end of the season. Lost quite a few calves, likely to lose more.

Kingairloch: Have found quite a few deaths (ten). Hinds in poor condition towards the end. Out of the 45 hinds, 23 were pregnant.

Glensanda: Weights are down, expecting casualties.

Rahoy SWT- A number of winter mortalities

Oronsay: No cull took place due to illness

SNH Glencripisdale: Higher than normal cull.

Forestry Commission: Population assessment done. Conditions were good. No mortality aware of. Fences are more or less tight, there is an area joining Drimnin where the fence is porous, they are addressing it.

Carnoch: Getting poor by the end of the season. Concerned about mortality rates post season. No poaching observed. Whilst most of the hind cull was inside enclosed woodland as fences are porous and generally seasons observed.

Kinlochteacuis: Hinds losing condition towards the end of the Season, higher than normal winter mortality noted since end of the season. No poaching.

Estate Cull Records

Estate	Open Hill		Enclosed		Other	Open	Enclosed	Total
	Hinds	Calves	Hinds	Calves				
Killlindine	26	15	6	4		41		10
Drimmin	13	6	8	4	E Stags -out of season	3	19	17
					E Roe Doe	1		
					E Roe Kinds	1		
Forestry Commission			63	20	E Stags -out of season	90		232
					E Roe Bucks	23		
					E Roe Does	24		
					E Roe Kinds	12		
Rahoy	12	5					17	
Kingairloch	45	24					69	
Kinlochteacuis	14	3					17	
Ardornish	100	38	3	3	E Stags-out of season	7	138	14
					E Roe Doe	1		
Glensanda	16	10					26	
Carnoch	1		17	8	H Stag- out of season	1	2	26
					E stag-out of season	1		
SNH Glencrispisdale	23	16					39	
Laudale	51	26					77	
Glencrispisdale	22	13			E Stags out of season	10	35	12
					E Roe Bucks	1		
					E Roe Doe	1		
Total	323	156	97	39		176	480	311

Estate Audit Update

All Estates to prepare a new audit sheet as soon as possible and send to Steve Fox. STEVE FOX will recirculate the audit sheet to be used. The new layout of the estate audit form will be added to the DMP.

Deer Exclusion Zones

All estates wrote on an OS map their deer excluded zones. This was given to Tony Innes and Ardtornish will be compiling a map of the whole area. Aim to input all fences eventually.

Cull return sheets

Angus Davidson is going to let the group know what information is required so he can get to work on analyzing the data. Culled deer can either be plotted on a map or a GPS point can be used. **Those who haven't passed their cull records to Susan, please get this done ASAP as she will send these onto Angus.**

Estates that have provided their cull data was passed to Angus at the meeting. Eventually, maps can be drawn up showing where the cull areas are taking place which will then be overlaid over the habitat analysis.

John Jackson commented that with new legislation on traceability, we will have to pinpoint exactly where animals are culled anyhow.

Habitat Assessments

Angus has had annual reports and has had from Graeme Taylor the suggested HIA points by SNH for the group. Following the meeting, Susan gave Angus the plots already being monitored by group members. Monitoring should then be done every 3-4 years. Ardtornish is monitoring 120 plots, Carnoch 22, Kingairloch 6, Kinlochteacuis 4. Best practice says 30/30 of both blanket bog and dwarf shrub on each estate-HOWEVER not all estates have blanket bog. Angus will review the number of plots that are being monitored by the group and let us know where/if more needs to be analysed.

Alasdair Firth; Asked if there are any woodlands currently being monitored? Graeme Taylor said currently only open range sites are required to be monitored but there is an expectation that woodland areas will have to be monitored.

Data analysis forms- likelihood is that the forms will be changing. However the forms that have been used in the past will work for comparing against when the new forms are brought out.

There needs to be some form of recording system for non compliant landowners

SNH Business

At the ADMG meeting, it was stated that a re-audit will be taking place in April 2019. There was the baseline done in 2014 and another one done in 2016. In all, there will be 101 criteria that the group will be assessed against. In the main, the criteria will be the same that was in 2016.

The group must progress with: Population management (count/cull), habitat

assessment, openness and transparency, environment criteria (woodland/peat land) and updating public interest. Between the ADMG and SNH there is an expectation and the group should hear back from the ADMG.

At the ADMG meeting, Richard Cooke invited groups to have an interim assessment- **the group will speak to Lynda about how we are doing against the criteria.**

Sporting Rates

All members have lodged appeals. SNH have spoken with the government and has asked that for groups that are compliant, could they be exempt. They have not been successful in obtaining their own exemption.

All members are very worried about the rates as it will cause so many issues. The fact that deer larders have been clobbered is ridiculous. If the rates are passed onto guests, it will turn into an expensive sport and what will then happen to the deer?

The group decided to write to Ms Cunningham to voice their concerns.

Training

Argo training is available in July provided by John Jones Training. Four people, about £140/person at Kinlochteacuis. Date suggested 17th July 2017 confirm place with Susan Larson.

Quad, Tractor and First aid courses will be taking place at Kingairloch, members are welcome to join. Contact Susan Larson.

AOB

Iain Thornber: Food standards Scotland are on the warpath and will be doing spot check inspections on deer larders. If there is ANY contamination from the rumen, carcasses must not be taken into the larder. No washing.

Members were encouraged to watch Youtube videos showing the best practice.

Once we have the final heli count numbers, SNH will comment on the numbers.

Meeting to be held on the 16th July at 2pm at Kinlochteacuis.. All members are invited and from that meeting we will act on the findings and work out cull requirements going forward.

Ardtronish have sold 30 stags for next season. It is likely that some of the number will be taken from woodland numbers.

Laudale, Kingairloch and Glensanda raised issue with Ardtornish sheep being on their estates. Ardtornish are doing their best to gather.

Next meeting Dates:

Wednesday 31/10/2018- Lochaline- agreed-

Tuesday 23rd April 2019- Venue TBC

POSTSCRIPT: Letter sent via e mail to Ms Cunningham, Audit Sheet attached, Draft Sub Groups Map attached