

## Upper Deeside and Donside Deer Management Group

Meeting on Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> April 2018 3pm

### Present

Angus McNicol	AM	Invercauld (Chairman)
Capt Mark Nicolson	MMN	Mar Estate
Tom Willis	TW	Mar Estate (Savills - Secretary)
Dr Linzi Seivwright	LS	Caorann (Consultant)
David Frew	DF	Mar Lodge
Chris Murphy	CM	Mar Lodge
Richard Gledson	RG	Delnadamph
Adrian Walker	AW	Allargue
Will Reid	WR	Invercauld
Andrew Salvesen	AS	Dinnet
Arthur Fernie	AF	Mar Estate
Iain Hope	IH	SNH
Fiona Cruickshank	FC	SNH
Mike Cottam	MC	CNPA
Stuart Jennings	SJ	RSPB Crannach

### Apologies

Robin Leslie Melville	RLM	Candacraig
Rory Galloway	RRG	Savills
Neil Brown	NB	Allargue
Edward Humphrey	EH	Dinnet
Ben Carter	BC	Invercauld Home Beat (Highlands Hospitality)
Clive Meikle	CM – GA	Glenavon (Bidwells)
Richard Greenlaw	RG – GA	Glenavon

## MINUTES – KEILOCH MEETING

### 1. Introductions

The Group welcomed Stuart Jennings of RSPB Crannach Reserve. Secretary confirmed that FCS Area Land Agent for Cambus O' May had been contacted and would be sent a reminder regarding joining the Group. **ACTION POINT SECRETARY**. (FCS since joined).

### 2. Minutes of the last meeting

Minutes approved by the Group.

### 3. Draft Annual Report 2017/18

2016/17 Draft Annual Report complete. SNH to change the name on available maps.

Members due to submit input into the 2017/18 Annual Report by the end of May 2018. **ACTION POINT ALL MEMBERS.**

AS in possession of SNH SSSI survey to be passed to the Consultant. **ACTION POINT AS.**

#### **4. Working Plan**

Population Model is indicating significant movement of deer between neighbouring properties. Deer foot count carried out 03/03/18.

Section 3.9 designated sites to be updated including Ladder Hills (Glenlivet, Allargue and Edinglassie affected).

Secretary to contact AW after the meeting regarding the issue. **ACTION POINT SECRETARY.**

DMG to help identify and assist with the issue. **ACTION POINT CHAIR AND SECRETARY.**

SNH can provide a list of the estates. **ACTION POINT IH.**

Group to consider the best way to coordinate communications with the neighbouring group in the east. **ACTION POINT SECRETARY.**

IH updated group on two early stage DMG's being set up with working group including Carbrach and Glenfiddich. Reduction cull will have a displacing effect as well as a reducing effect.

#### **5. Woodland Management**

Mar Lodge update – DF Report - regen zone everything on track. 600 ha increase in area in 2016 although deer densities remain very low. Whole of regen now in an FCS scheme. Geldie and Glen Dee turned into new fenced and planted areas. Barrier fence is still working well. Nothing significant planned fencing wise planned that would impact the Group at present.

ECAF no longer available although LS confirmed that another grant equivalent to ECAF may be available – the Forestry Co-operation Fund. Secretary to circulate LS background information on the Forestry Co-operation Fund. **ACTION POINT CONSULTANT & SECRETARY.**

Mar Estate – LTFP now in place and Estate will be conducting woodland management as per the plan.

#### **6. Habitat Impact Assessment implementation**

HIA results from monitoring which is to be undertaken over the coming weeks by Members and passed to the Secretary and Consultant. **ACTION POINT ALL.**

Allargue and Delnadamph have already done 5 dwarf shrub heath and 5 blanket bog sites.

Mar Estate happy to proceed and do not need more training.

LS to speak to Adam Smith about Dinnet Moor. **ACTION POINT CONSULTANT.**

RSPB happy for plots to be done at Crannach. **ACTION POINT RSPB.**

Consultant to analyse ahead of next meeting.

SNH £1,800 grant funding received for HIA.

Mar Lodge are carrying out HIA on a 5 year cycle (2020 next). This has been agreed with SNH. Mar Lodge are to use their portion of the £1,800 to go towards incorporating their own data within the DMP. **ACTION POINT DF.**

LS to create maps with SNH co-ordinates and provide to Members who request them. **ACTION POINT CONSULTANT.**

## **7. Training and support**

An appetite was noted for first aid courses, Secretary to liaise with Members as appropriate. **ACTION POINT SECRETARY.** It was noted that there is already collaboration between Members occurring via the Machinery Ring. CNPA Grants were discussed although it was noted that that scheme is no longer in operation although could be revived by CNPA in the future.

Scottish Quality Wild Venison (SQWV) have offered to carry out a free larder check if desired. **OPTIONAL ACTION POINT MEMBERS.**

It was noted that several Members are selling their venison through Highland Game. It was noted that Invercauld were approaching Simpson Game. Invercauld offered for Members to join in collaboration if desired. **OPTIONAL ACTION POINT MEMBERS.**

## **8. Final deer culls**

Please see appendix at end of minute.

Winter mortality – to be collected by Secretary preferably by end of April and passed to consultant for review and discussion at next meeting.

## **9. Deer count**

Recruitment rate is currently looking like 41% which may be too high. Consultant to double check statistics. **ACTION POINT CONSULTANT.**

SNH to provide date of site condition monitoring of designated sites that could be overlaid on a habitat model by the Group. Information generally publically available although it can take some time. Generally large sample sizes e.g. Cairngorms SAC. Based on an approach that is broad brush and is considered of limited value. Often it is intended to lead up to more detailed HIA monitoring. SNH habitat monitoring data was noted as potentially of use to the Group. MC to follow up. **ACTION POINT MC.**

There was discussion on whether SNH would accept that the Group has gone far enough on designated sites and the target to bring them back to 'Favourable Recovering' where possible. It was noted that if an agreed management plan was in place, this could be sufficient to demonstrate acceptable progress towards achieving 'Favourable Recovering' status. **ACTION POINT ALL.**

Fiona Cruickshank and Linzi Sievwright to liaise after meeting to identify whether features are improving or not on each SSSI within the UDD DMG. **ACTION POINT FC & LS.**

## **10. Deer Population Model**

Observation of recruitment accuracy noted as it is a function of many factors including; neighbouring properties, present but uncounted deer and errors in counting.

Model to develop patterns between observation and the model over time. One technique is modelling between deer counts. Helicopter counts were noted as potentially having a 20% margin of error.

Deer population was modelled between 2013-2017 and hind population was very close, although the stag population was higher than predicted.

It was noted that deer were thought to be coming in to Invercauld and Mar Lodge from Glenavon area to the north, Mar Lodge and Invercauld to report back at the next meeting. Mar Lodge Quoich based on spring 2018 count, numbers were up. Age of the stags culled was queried. Counts to be shared with the neighbouring group. **ACTION POINT CHAIR AND SECRETARY**

IH raised that modelling is more meaningful when done on an appropriate geographical area.

Calves ratio male: female to be collected where possible. Consultant to be informed of a difference from 50/50. **ACTION POINT STALKERS.**

### **11. Funding Position**

Budget ADMG to be apportioned for actual deer culls and revised invoices to be circulated by Secretary. **ACTION POINT SECRETARY.**

All new members to be allocated into the '5% Bracket' which will reduce i.e. to c4%. **ACTION POINT SECRETARY.**

Revised budget to be done before next meeting. **ACTION POINT SECRETARY.**

### **12. AOCB**

Group in agreement to take up ADMG's offer of a free mock assessment. Linzi Seivwright is to be the designated ADMG contractor. **ACTION POINT CHAIR, SECRETARY & CONSULTANT.**

Chair noted that there had nationally been issues with the standard of game larders and this is an issue all members should be aware of.



## MINUTES – PUBLIC MEETING

Castleton Hall, Braemar

5.30pm

### Invited

Aberdeenshire Council  
Ballater and Crathie Community Council  
Braemar Community Council  
Cromar Community Council  
Donside Community Council  
NFU Scotland  
Police Scotland  
Cairngorms and Speyside DMG  
West Grampian DMG  
Scottish Gamekeepers Association  
Grampian Moorland Group  
Cairngorms National Park Authority  
Association of Deer Management Groups

### Attending

David (Braemar hydro)  
Peter Fraser (SGA)  
Donside Community Council  
Sahaila Rao  
Alasdair Colquhoun (Braemar Community Council)  
Tommy Brodie (NFU)  
Steven Robertson (Police Scotland)  
Angus McNicol (Upper Deeside & Donside DMG Chair)  
Tom Willis (Upper Deeside and Donside DMG Secretary)  
Linzi Seivwright (Caorann – DMG Consultant)  
David Frew (Mar Lodge)  
Arthur Fernie (Mar Estate)

1. Welcome and introduction – Angus McNicol (Chair)
2. The Group, it's Members, Range and Operations – Tom Willis (Secretary)
  - All relevant information such as the DMP documents, members, minutes, annual reports are loaded onto the DMG website <http://egrampiandmg.deer-management.co.uk/sub-area-5/>
  - The DMG is amenable to be contacted at any time for all deer related issues. The best point of contact is the Chair or Secretary.
3. A presentation on the background of the group, Public Interest relating to deer management, deer management planning and how the Group delivers it's DMP.

- Wild deer are a resource that needs to be managed for the best Public Interest with consideration of issues such as;
  - Environmental benefits
  - Economic benefits
  - Negative impacts
  - Deer welfare
- Deer management is a constantly evolving process. It is carried out on a landscape scale which include maintaining the shared deer population and Group objectives, designations, native and other woodlands etc.
- The Group is currently carrying out habitat impact assessment to assist with this process to inform management decisions.
- The Group connects with the local population both at meetings such as the and by activities such as hosting school and other activity groups.
- Members of the Group are carrying out peatland restoration on areas of degraded peatland.

#### 4. Questions and answers from the floor

##### **How far away is the Group from achieving its target population?**

*The Group is looking at negative deer impacts and ensuring the deer resource is sustainable from an environmental and economic perspective. It is not usually about overall density and considerations are often very localised.*

##### **Does the Group consider that the average deer density is being pulled down because of areas within the Group that are devoid of deer such as Mar Lodge?**

*The Group considers habitat monitoring the methodology to identify and resolve negative deer impacts and feeds this data into its population modelling exercises. Different land holdings within the Group have different individual objectives which can test the model slightly and the model is continually reviewed to take account of this.*

##### **Do Police Scotland and others in the room believe RTA's are at a higher, normal or lower level than usual over the recent months?**

*Police Scotland note that a deer RTA is not a reportable incident by law although they do attend a number of them when called by members of the public. Police Scotland will continue to review this and revert to the office bearers if required.*



**Braemar has an iconic reputation for deer. However, deer within the village are not as common as they used to be. Why does the Group think this is the case?**

*The fencing at Morrone his thought to have been a key reason for this.*

**With the Section 7 Agreement at Mar Lodge ending, what are the next steps?**

*It is notable that the Mar Lodge Section 7 Agreement is the only Section 7 to have ever been ended because it had achieved its objectives. Mar Lodge's management objectives have not changed and remain focussed on producing sporting stags whilst delivering habitat objectives and areas of natural regeneration. Ending the Section 7 because the objectives were achieved is a much more comfortable position to be in.*

The Group thanks all those present for attending the meeting.