

Upper Deeside and Donside Deer Management Group

Minutes of Meeting

Held at Invercauld Keiloch, 13 November 2017

In attendance

Adam Smith (GWCT Auchnerran)
Adrian Walker (Allargue)
Andrew Salvesen (Dinnet)
Angus McNicol (Chair)
Arthur Fernie (Mar Estate)
Chris Murphy (Mar Lodge)
Clive Meikle (Glenavon)
David Frew (Mar Lodge)
Iain Hope (SNH)
Linzi Seivwright (Consultant)
Mark Nicolson (Mar Estate)
Michael Falconer (Invercauld Baddoch)
Rebecca Kimber-Danger (Invercauld Home Beat)
Richard Greenlaw (Glenavon)
Richard Thomas (Invercauld Home Beat)
Tom Willis (Secretary)

1. Welcome

Angus McNicol, in the Chair, welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Apologies

Edward Humphrey (Dinnet Estate)
Mike Cottam (CNPA)
Richard Gledson (Delnadamph)
Robin Leslie Melville (Candacraig)
Rosey Walker (Allargue)
Will Reid (Invercauld Baddoch)

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting

After correction of the date from 20th to 26 April 2017, the minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

4. Minutes of Previous Meeting - Matters Arising

Deer Culls

It was agreed that collection of hind culls throughout the season was not required as the stalkers were confident they would reach their cull targets. If a specific issue arose during the cull, it could then be raised.

The Secretary will update the spreadsheet with the Group stag culls and current anticipated hind culls and re-circulate. At the end of the season, a further spreadsheet will be circulated to include the actual achieved hind culls (Action – Secretary).

EGDMG

There was unanimous agreement to wind up the East Grampian Deer Management Group (EGDMG). **The Secretary will confirm this in writing on the Group's behalf to the EGDMG Secretary, Charlotte Gilfillan (Action – Secretary).**

It was noted that, for simplicity, Bell Ingram have agreed to only charge their outstanding fee to the tune of what remains in the EGDMG Bank Account, representing a discount.

Additional Members

It was raised that Dinnet Estate wished to participate in the Group, in part due to an increased deer impact following ingress of deer to their low ground, thought to be from Glen Tanar.

It was noted that the Secretary should also reissue the Group's invitation to Tillypronie to become a member to an alternative contact at the Estate.

The Secretary to update the circulation list and invite Dinnet Estate and Tillypronie Estate to become members (Action – Secretary).

Additional Attendees

It was suggested that an additional stakeholder session at the end of the management meetings could be a practical way of including wider participation. After discussion, it was agreed that instead the AGM would be held in a public space with a wide invitee list of public and other interest groups, and presentations included on the work of the DMG.

It was raised that uptake of attendance by other stakeholders may be limited, although it was agreed that it was important to invite all those thought to have a potential interest and encouraged to participate both at the AGM and also at other times through the year.

Iain Hope suggested looking into the matter of wider attendees more closely in order to maximise the benefit achieved for all parties concerned. He noted that other deer management groups have experienced good outcomes from community engagement.

It was mentioned that EGDMG previously had a role in stakeholder engagement which following its disbanding will no longer be present. It was agreed that the Group would take on this remit itself.

Agreed invitees would include representatives from the Community Councils within the Group's boundary. These are thought to be Braemar, Ballater and Tomintoul.

The Secretary and Chairman are to clarify this with Aberdeenshire Council (Action - Secretary/Chair). It was agreed that the Secretary would list the contact details for the Community Councils, the respective secretaries of

neighbouring deer management groups, and other potential invitees and the Chair would write a letter inviting them to attend the AGM and to liaise with the Group at other times during the year (Action – Secretary/Chair).

Other matters arising were dealt with as specific points under the agenda.

5. Draft Annual Report

The draft annual report for 2016/17 had been circulated with the meeting papers. It is designed to be an outward facing document, without getting into the detail of the fine workings of the Group. It is intended to provide an update and to indicate where progress had been made.

It was acknowledged that currently the draft summaries/résumés of each member related to the West Area of the Group could be expanded. **It was agreed the secretary would contact all members in the East Area to invite a submission (Action – Secretary).**

It was discussed why separate figures are collected for the East and West areas of the Group. It was noted that in terms of analysing deer numbers and culls, having the split can be useful so as to avoid distorting either area when undertaking some forms of analysis.

It was decided that reporting will be for the whole Group. East Area and West Area figures will be collected for the purposes of analysis.

It was emphasised it remains important to report as a whole when reporting deer data.

It was also noted that there is still a focus on deer numbers from Government. Understanding a clear picture of impacts was considered a preferable objective.

It was requested that SNH change the Group's name on any relevant maps, images and documents and ensure the correct name is used moving forwards (Action - Iain Hope).

It was noted that the helicopter counts undertaken in Spring 2017 show the work done throughout the Group to reduce deer numbers.

The boundary of the West Area and East Area of the Group was confirmed as the Corndavon fence.

It was confirmed that roe deer management will be considered and reported alongside the red deer management activities of the Group.

It was agreed that a comment about the fence and the East Area and West Area boundaries would be entered in the report. A comment about deer density will also be added (Action – Secretary).

After making the above amendments, the Secretary would recirculate the draft Annual Report for final comment. Once approved, he would then put a copy of the approved Annual Report on the website (Action – Secretary).

6. Working Plan

The Working Plan was reviewed, with updates on action items from this.

Mar Lodge Cross-DMG Working Group

David Frew confirmed Mar Lodge were no longer involved in this group.

Counts

Mar Lodge would undertake a helicopter count in February 2018. All members to undertake a foot count.

Chris Murphy to continue as Group foot count co-ordinator, liaising with Group members and Colin MacLean (Action – Chris Murphy).

Woodland Management

Any changes to woodland management to be passed to the Secretary by Members (Action – ALL)

ECAF funding is not available for woodland monitoring.

Invasive Species

One sika deer was shot on Invercauld Micras in 2017.

Historic Features

No current updates.

Training

Several members have undertaken habitat impact assessment training in 2017. A further training course is to be organised in 2018 for those Members still wishing to undertake training.

Secretary should be informed of any updates regarding training and will work with the Consultant to report this (Action – ALL).

Designated Sites

It was requested that a sentence be included to clarify that only those designated sites which are not in favourable condition have an update included in the Working Plan, which will be added by the Consultant. Those sites that remain favourable are listed in Part 1 of the Deer Management Plan.

Deer and Public Health

It was discussed that information regarding Deer Vehicle Collisions (DVC's) is not currently being fed back to the Group on an incident-by-incident basis. **Group Members are to endeavour to do this and the Secretary is to keep a central record of these incidents, to be reported at meetings (Action – All)**

It was mentioned that between Rhiedorrach and Braemar, it was a hot spot for DVC's.

It was agreed that the Working Plan would be updated with the information agreed at this meeting and will go on the website (Action - Secretary and Consultant).

7. Habitat Impact Assessment

Allargue currently has 10 sites that have been monitored. **Allargue and Delnadamph have combined efforts and undertaken some habitat impact assessment monitoring in 2017 and are to forward their results to the Consultant and Secretary (Action - Allargue and Delnadamph). Angus McNicol to provide HIA data to the Secretary for Invercauld (Action – Angus McNicol).**

It was agreed that a co-ordinated approach across the Group for habitat impact assessment would be better. **Secretary and Chairman to liaise with Members to assist this in 2018 when others are due to commence habitat monitoring (Action – Secretary).**

It was noted that habitat impact assessment is not just about deer. Other impacts whether they are from other herbivores or another cause should be identified and reported through habitat impact assessment.

Invercauld noted that they are currently using the 'Rory Putman Method', which involves an approach looking at the impacts across a wider area. It was noted that the Members who had undertaken training in 2017 had adopted the Best Practice Guidance approach, using SNH pre-determined quadrats. **The Consultant is to provide all Members with the co-ordinates for the SNH random sample plots on their units (Action – Linzi Seivwright).**

Mar Estate, Invercauld Baddoch, Glenavon, Mar Lodge, and Allargue have all been trained during 2017 in habitat impact assessment and plan to commence monitoring in 2018 if not already doing so. Dinnet Moor and Auchnerran plan to undertake training in 2018, any other Members who are interested can participate. **Secretary and Consultant to co-ordinate training where required (Action – Secretary/Linzi Seivwright).**

ADMG have announced the availability of up to £1,800 for deer management groups to apply for, which can be used for habitat monitoring. **It was agreed that the Consultant will put forward a quotation for undertaking analysis, that could be funded by this grant, of HIA data provided by Members (Action – Linzi Seivwright).**

8. Population Model

The Group's sporting stag cull is currently understood to be 255 stags per annum made up as follows:-

Mar	50
Mar Lodge	100
Invercauld Baddoch	30
Invercauld Home Beat	30
Corndavon	5
Glenavon	40

All Members to advise of any changes or additions to the above (Action – All)

A cull of 400 stags is currently shown in the current population model.

It was agreed that the sporting stag target is therefore met by the current population. Subject to the results of habitat monitoring, there is no proposal to change the target cull.

The recruitment rate from the spring 2017 helicopter count was 36%.

It was noted that there is currently heavy culling in the former EGDMG Sub Area 1 which appeared to have affected the early hind cull at Invercauld Baddoch.

SNH raised the point that population modelling is useful as a group but is sub optimal not to first model at a count area level. It was agreed that whilst this point was noted, continuing to expand the area analysed was impractical for the Group. It was agreed that the Group will continue to note what is going on in neighbouring groups and the wider count area, but continue to focus on maintaining it's own population model.

The Consultant will update population model and re-circulate (Action – Linzi Seivwright).

9. Actual Stag Culls and Current Estimated Hind Culls

Estate	Stags (actual)	Hinds (provisional)	Calves (provisional - 36%)
Mar Estate	46	100	36
Mar Lodge	346	110	40
Invercauld Baddoch	40	80	29
Invercauld Home	34	110	40
Invercauld Micras and Gairnshiel	0	0	0
Invercauld Corndavon	0	0	0
Allargue	2	4	1
Delnadamp	6	tbc	tbc
Dinnet (low ground)	13	20	7
Dinnet Moor	3	as many as possible	as many as possible
Glenavon	60	80-100	32-40
Candacraig	5	5	2

10. Accounts

The budget circulated with the meeting papers was approved.

The Secretary clarified that the debtors listed are forthcoming debtors and he is to raise subscription invoices to all Members in the next few weeks (Action – Secretary).

11. AOCB

The Consultant and Secretary to arrange distribution of the testing kits for Cryptosporidium and E-coli testing kits (Action – Secretary/Linzi Seivwright)

The Chair drew the meeting's attention to the letter from SNH dated 30 August 2017. This indicated SNH desired to 'take a more assertive leadership role' with regards to deer management.

The Chair drew the meeting's attention to a letter received from SQWV offering a free larder inspection. Any Member wishing to take this up to contact the Secretary for more details.

Date of Next Meeting - The next meeting would be held at 3pm on Tuesday 17 April 2017 at a venue to be confirmed. The AGM would be held in open forum at 5.30pm the same day.

There being no other business the meeting drew to a close.