



4.	Population Model and Culls	Paper 2
	<p>DMG members were asked to check on the first page that stag cull and hind cull numbers correct. DMG members were also asked to check targets. Question was asked about the level of sporting cull required by each estate. Mar Lodge: 120 planned cull on moorland zone but doesn't include stags from the regen zone. Total for DMG was 275 stags sporting target.</p> <p>There was a discussion about cull targets and it was noted that the moorland population is being managed for sport but that the regen zone numbers cannot be accurately predicted and is separate- numbers will depend on conditions and what is going on round about. LS explained that the target population is derived from the target annual stag harvest (which will determine the hind population required) modified if required to meet the conservation objectives of the Group. Cull targets will always be informed on an ongoing basis using the HIA data – targets are then adjusted accordingly. Modelling is an ongoing process that needs updated continually updated and altered on the basis of changing objectives and HIA results. LS explained that it is evident from the model that the population is not enclosed. The partial count from the Spring counted more deer than the model had predicted – even excluding Glenavon which was not counted. Therefore, the model is not entirely reliable, it can only go so far and the Group needs to rely more heavily on good accurate counting. Model suggests that the Group is heading towards a sustainable cull for stags but as the Group gets closer to the target population, need more accurate information. Need also information on changes in deer distribution. It is also important that Group members are realistic in terms of stag harvest aspirations. It was agreed that although deer densities figures are well below the CNPA suggested figures, it was important to report accurately on figures, particularly against the target population for 2022 which should deliver a sustainable stag harvest.</p> <p>The 2020 count was discussed, and it was noted that the number counted was higher than predicted. What would be useful would be to have a complete count in Spring 2021 which would help inform the model. DMG agreed to a complete count in Feb 2021 (when snow on the ground). Glenavon will try and do a joint heli count with Invercauld Home Beat. Glenavon explained that sometimes conditions make it impossible to count. AM to liaise with RG/MB to coordinate.</p> <p>The Group had a discussion about the use of mortality and recruitment figures in the modelling and LS emphasised the need to have as accurate information on these reported by the stalkers and the value of being able to conduct complete counts as accurately as possible to be able to fine-tune figures moving forward.</p>	<p><b>AP 4: DMG</b></p> <p><b>AP5: AM &amp; RG/MB</b></p>
5.	Working Plan - Outstanding Actions	Paper 2
	<p>LS talked through the highlighted actions from the working plan distributed in advance. Key things in terms of Benchmark were included as Agenda Items. The only other thing that needed agreement was to complete the HIA next spring (both Blanket Bog and Dwarf Shrub Heath). There was an opportunity to end up with a complete picture – tying it in with an update from NatureScot on Designated Sites from Nature Scot and the results of a complete count – this would collectively put the Group in a very strong position for the refresh of the plan.</p> <p>In terms of Public Interest Actions, linked to headings in the assessment. LS had contacted people about deer movements. Designated sites- would be useful to get an update from NatureScot with regards to status condition of features to feed into the refresh of the plan. NS indicated that SCM was</p>	<p><b>AP 6: DMG</b></p> <p><b>AP 7: NS</b></p>

	<p>currently being reviewed internally and there was uncertainty with what might happen in the future with monitoring of designated sites.</p> <p>Visitor Surveys – it was discussed that the opportunity had been missed to include a question in the last CNPA triennial visitor survey which had just been done. Will try and get a question in the next one.</p> <p>The group discussed hind targets and members agreed that the proposed targets were still being aimed for. Members agreed to let AM and LS know if there was likely to be any material change to hind targets as the season goes on. LS indicated that she would be feeding the figure back to ADMG who would be collating figures nationally to ensure there is capacity to deal with anticipated culls. Mar Estate indicated that they would be looking to market hinds locally in the event of game dealers being unable to take any more. Mar Lodge indicated that they had been contacted by their Game Dealer looking for carcasses so there didn't seem to be an issue currently. All Game Dealers seemed to still be taking carcasses.</p>	
<b>6.</b>	<b>Mapping</b>	
	<p>LS presented a very basic map of deer movements that she had collated so far in talking to several estates. LS would continue to improve the map based on further discussion with each Estate. The intention is to build up layers of mapped data for the Group including access routes and woodland.</p> <p>Mar reported that predominantly due to a north wind – there was a significant movement of deer particularly on Dalchora- Mar could have shot many more stags. However, in September stalking was rendered impossible due to the numbers of people on the ground – 50 different parties in one outing. AM reported that figures collated by the CNPA suggested that from 15<sup>th</sup> July to the end of October numbers coming into the National Park were well over a million and possibly nearer two million. Mar Lodge had masses more people than normal but were predictable – so it had been easy to predict where people wouldn't be for stalking.</p>	<b>AP 8: LS</b>
<b>7.</b>	<b>Habitat Impact Assessment</b>	
	<p>Blanket Bog monitoring on Homebeat, Corndavon and Baddoch had all been completed this year with assistance from CNPA. Mar Estate to check if BB had been completed also. LS to put together a matrix of what habitats have been done when and Group to put a plan together for Spring 2021. MC indicated that from CNPA perspective he hoped that conversations might have gone beyond densities and that it was important that DMG has good data on habitat impacts.</p>	<b>AP 9: LS</b>
<b>8.</b>	<b>Venison Update and ADMG Update</b>	
	<p>This item was also discussed under Agenda Item 5. LS urged people to look at the full report from the Scottish Venison Partnership report on the ADMG website. A campaign was being planned to encourage more people to eat venison.</p> <p>LS emphasised that a virtual meeting had been held on the 19<sup>th</sup> November 2020 and that all the presentations (including one from the Land Commission on Rural Land Use Partnerships) were available online on the ADMG website.</p> <p>LS also indicated that ADMG would be carrying out a piece of work to help inform the development of the next round of funding streams. LS would be looking for feedback from members as to the challenges of previous schemes and to identify the aspirations of owners where future funding could assist. ADMG were having ongoing discussions with Scottish</p>	

	<p>Government about impact of Covid on the industry and to try to identify possible risks, particularly with venison and meeting hind culls this year.</p> <p>AM indicated his view that recent environmental grant schemes had been too bureaucratic and formulaic and so the outcomes were rarely met. Also that the upfront costs can be quite high in the competitive schemes where there is no guarantee of success – a lot of work had previously been put into an AECS scheme for example but this had then been turned down by NS.</p> <p>There was a discussion about the Chair of ADMG and the role of Regional reps. MC indicated that Colin Maclean was the main rep and MC subs for him as and when required. Regional reps are voted en bloc at AGMs. It was agreed that between MC and LS, ADMG representation was covered and that there was no need for additional representation.</p>	
<b>9.</b>	<b>Review of Deer Management Plan- SOR</b>	<b>Paper 4</b>
	<p>AM explained the Idea was to review the DMP, which was coming to the end of its life, in a light touch way – refresh rather than full review. LS had prepared a brief spec of what would be involved (paper 4). The question was asked about how this would dove-tail with the proposed change to the constitution (later in the Agenda). It was agreed that the plan could refer to the possible need to evolve to a Land Management Plan in the future but that it would remain as a DMP for the time being.</p> <p>MC indicated that there were things happening with deer management groups in the Park, consistent with what LS had presented at the ADMG meeting. 5 or 6 years ago DMGs were expected to deliver the public interest but no one really understood what that meant at the time until SNG came up with the 14 different headline areas to consider. SG has now declared a Climate Emergency and a Biodiversity Loss emergency so it now clearer what is expected. Now a significant number of DMGs considering restructuring themselves into land management groups. Change is being considered and momentum is building for groups to progress in this way over the next year or so. Much more about land management and impacts on all habitats from all herbivores – a much more holistic approach than plans at the moment. AM indicated that the proposal to be discussed to change the constitution was in line with this but very much an evolution rather than a big-bang. [and in terms of timing, other DMPs had been held back from progressing- not sure what this means]. AM indicated that it was important that the Group kept momentum and that we are currently at a good stage to review the deer management element but that perhaps spring next year would be too early to develop a dramatic new land management plan as such, which would take more time and thought to produce. The Group agreed with the proposed way forward regarding a new constitution but there was discussion about the extent to which the group should lead moving forward or whether it should wait to be led. A few members felt that it was important to see clearly what would be expected in the future before making a change.</p> <p>DMG agreed with the proposal for a refresh as outlined in the paper. Group to consider procurement of the plan refresh. As first step LS was asked in the first instance to come forward with a costing for the work which will be circulated to the Group to consider and discuss. In terms of timing, it was proposed to have a draft for the spring 2021 meeting as a realistic target and to have it up and running for next season.</p>	<b>AP 10: LS</b>
<b>10.</b>	<b>Financial Position</b>	<b>Paper 5</b>
	<p>The current financial position of the group was discussed which identified a couple of anomalies going back to year 2018/19 in which no subscriptions had been raised. This had implication for ADMG subscriptions which were</p>	

	<p>effectively being paid in arrears and there was also an outstanding invoice from the previous Secretariat which hadn't been budgeted for and which had only been received in early November 2020.</p> <p>Following discussion, it was agreed that AM, MN and LS would set up a working group meeting to discuss and come up with a way to resolve the previous Secretariat's invoice and will report back to the Group. The Group to pay extra this year to catch up on ADMG subscriptions only.</p> <p>The Group also discussed the draft budget for 2021/22. It was agreed that a new budget would be proposed and agreed in March 2021 at the AGM. It was noted that FLS pay the ADMG subscription directly to ADMG so their subscription covers only the administration cost. It was also noted that the Group has revised the way that subscriptions were derived (area basis, total cull, and two ways of splitting the admin fee - an average of all).</p>	
<b>11.</b>	<b>NatureScot and CNPA Updates</b>	
	<p>IH updated the Group on the uncertainty with regards to the future of deer management. Scottish Government is due to respond to the Deer Working Group report by the end of the year -will be important to find out what SG and NatureScot thinks which will have a bearing on the type of advice the Group might get in the future from the Agencies and how the Group might respond. NatureScot working closely with ADMG and Scottish Venison Partnership to understand what the current thinking is. Not clear at this stage what the plans will be for future Site Condition Monitoring but hopefully these will be shared soon. There is a deer count planned for next week of Mar Lodge and NS looking to help but no plan at this stage for a national programme over the next year but this will be shared as and when it has been agreed.</p> <p>MC reported that the CNPA was waiting on the SG's response to Werrity and DWG reports to see what direction Scottish Government gives. CNPA making an ambitious bid to National Lottery Heritage Horizons for ambitious work across the Park for projects in access, support to businesses and big conservation projects – but also a deer management element. To be submitted by the end of the year – 10 projects bidding for funds but should know by Feb/March 2021. From funds that may come, CNPA has decided that it wants to support the DMGs in the south of the Park in a movement toward more land management planning activity going forward but a lot of the detail and whether it is acceptable to member needs to be discussed. Funds would go towards an element of developing plans as well as support for delivery. MC was asked to keep Group appraised of developments. It was recognised that there was some overlap with the Moorland Management Groups.</p>	
<b>12.</b>	<b>Communications</b>	<b>Papers 6</b>
<b>12.1</b>	<b>Website and PR:</b> Discussed under 12.2. Changes added to be added website	<b>AP 11: LS</b>
<b>12.2</b>	<p><b>Change to Constitution.</b> It was proposed the change would be in two ways, firstly to change the name and secondly to amend the objectives of the Group. Following discussion the proposals were agreed, subject to a need to proceed with caution. It was also agreed that the new additional objectives of the Group would be changed to “to promote collaboration which supports the wider environmentally.....”</p> <p>An additional comment was made that given the likely need for increased resources moving forward, the current fee structures being linked to the cull disadvantaged some and if the constitution is to be adopted it would be incumbent on the Group to revisit the fee structure again. The Chair</p>	

12.3	<p>indicated that if there was to be an increase in resources then it would be important to identify how much of this was linked to deer management activity and only fair to review the fee structure. The Chair also emphasised that the Group would still be a Deer Management Group but that the change would send signal that willing to collaborate things other than deer - so we wouldn't be 'losing' the deer side of things. The point was also made that with the development of new groups there was a need to amalgamate where possible and avoid overlap and duplication.</p> <p>IH mentioned that there currently isn't much guidance from NS about how DMPs and Constitutions might look moving forward and whether or not Groups should be going down this line but all the signs were pointing in the direction that the Group were currently taking.</p> <p><b>Draft Annual Report:</b> The Group agreed to look at the Draft and come back to LS with any comments by Tuesday 24 November 2020. When finalised, the report then t be circulated to community councils.</p>	AP 12:LS
13.	<b>AOB</b>	
	<p>MC updated the Group on a project being conducted at Edinburgh University – looking for anyone involved in roe deer management to get involved. The leaflet has all the details. Members to contact the researcher directly but to let LS know if they are taking forward.</p> <p>MN suggested that including Edinglassie as a member would make sense moving forward in the context of a land management group. LS to invite them to the next meeting.</p>	AP 13:LS
14.	<b>Date and Time of Next Meeting</b>	
	It was proposed to hold the AGM on March 17 <sup>th</sup> 2021 at 2pm with the DMG meeting to follow.	

**Summary of Action Points from Meeting on 19 November 2020**

AP	Actions from June 30 <sup>th</sup>	
1.	MC to check for woodland information from CNPA	MC
2.	MC and LS to liaise on HIA for next Spring.	MC & LS
3.	Meeting to be arranged at Auchnerran.	AS & LS
4.	Complete count to be undertaken in Spring 2021	DMG Members
5.	AM to liaise with Glenavon to undertake a coordinate count.	AM & RG/MB
6.	Complete Blanket Bog and Dwarf Shrub Heath HIA Spring 2021.	DMG Members
7.	Update on feature status on Designated Sites.	NatureScot
8.	Complete deer movements map	LS
9.	Complete a matrix of all HIA monitoring to date	LS
10.	Produce detailed costings for plan refresh for Chair to circulate.	LS
11.	Website to be updated with changes to constitution.	LS
12.	LS to circulate a copy of the Report to the Community Councils.	LS
13.	LS to contact Edingassie to invite them to the next meeting and to discuss becoming members of the Group.	LS