**Minutes for Lochalsh Deer Management Group Meeting**

**held at Attadale, 2.00 pm, Friday 6th December**

Present: Ewen Macpherson - Chair, Susan Jones, Andrew Slaughter, Chris MacKenzie, Alec Cormack, Joanna Macpherson - Secretary, Ross MacMillan, Thomas Watson, Soren Hojlund, Tom Chetwynd,

Sinclair Coghill for part of meeting

1. **Apologies**: Angus Macpherson, Freddie Macpherson, Nick Wills, Donald MacKenzie, Russell Cooper, Biz Campbell, David Sproule, William Nicholson and the police were unable to send a representative
2. **Approval of minutes** from 14th June -
	1. Ewen pointed out inaccuracies on 2019/20 cull targets for Inverinate hinds - Andrew has provided correct numbers which are a minimum of 300 ie 100 + for each beat.
	2. Still work in progress on Land Management Objectives of group: EAM, Susan & JM
3. **Forestry Co-operation option** - presentation was given by Tom Chetwynd.
	1. Scottish Forestry is supporting this and will pay up to £10,000 towards a DMG’s assessment. A scoping exercise so opportunity to examine what may be possible by looking at the landscape scale of woodland includes various opportunities.
	2. The scoping exercise will be paid for and then each individual landowner can progress according to their own requirements, can apply for funding and so on.
	3. Opportunities include expansion of woodland, deal with rhododendrons etc - + more
	4. Copy of slides attached at end of minutes.
4. **Chairman’s Report** - Points raised at November ADMG meeting in Inverness include
	1. Ian Ferguson, Deer Management Officer at Forestry & Land Scotland explained budget will be cut by 10% over the next two years. The planned cull of all species will be increased by 10% up to 40,000
	2. E-coli research showed there was low percentage of occurrence but everyone must remain vigilant
	3. Best Practice is being revived and encouraged
	4. Lead ammo is bound to be banned over time - Tom C. mentioned that Waitrose will not be selling game if shot with lead from 2020
	5. Essential to keep LDMG website up to date
	6. Emphasised that carbon sequestration will be a priority in future.
5. **SNH Report** - Sinclair listed four reports that can be read on the SNH website
	1. [Assessing Progress in Deer Management - SNH report to Scottish Government](http://bit.ly/2L7HcNQ)
	2. SNH Research Report 1158 - [Deer-Vehicle Collision (DVC) data collection and analysis](https://www.nature.scot/snh-research-report-1158-deer-vehicle-collision-dvc-data-collection-and-analysis-2016-2018)  2016 - 2018
	3. SNH Research Report 1149 - [Updating the estimates of national trends and regional](https://www.nature.scot/snh-research-report-1149-updating-estimates-national-trends-and-regional-differences-red-deer)  differences in red deer densities on open-hill ground in Scotland
	4. SNH also has a new report on Lowland Deer Densities - all reports available online to download
6. **Updating Deer Management Plan**
	1. Population modelling still a challenge and it was agreed plan would be updated online after the proposed helicopter count early in 2020 and completion of 2019/20 hind cull.
	2. Inverinate forestry plan is a work in progress at present. Regret at Achnashellach that tree planting is preferred over regeneration for political reasons. At Attadale further progress will be made in 2020/21 at Uisge Dubh sustainable forestry fencing and planting
	3. Peatland Restoration opportunities less on West Coast - Sinclair offered services of Ndurie Abah, the Peatland Restoration officer based at Kinlochewe to investigate whether there is any potential within the group.
	4. Competence update - all Inverinate staff have achieved Level 2 Deer Stalking Certificate Stage 2; Argo & ATV recently completed at Attadale and soon to be done at Inverinate. Chris will join either Inverinate or South West Ross DMG. Thomas W. still needs to do Deer Stalking Certificate Level 2
	5. Deer Welfare - Tom C. mentioned number of ScotRail Deer incidents

7. **2019 Stag Actual Cull Figures**

Inverinate beat 37 plus 2 sika

 Killilan beat 60

 West Benula 53

 Inverinate 150

 Achnashellach 30

 Attadale 50

 Arineckaig 5

 Total 235

 Ross did not have the South Strome Forestry & Land Scotland figures but Russell has since kindly provided the following figures:

 South Strome 10 stags, 4 hinds and 3 calves

 Achnashellach South 6 stags 5 hinds & a calf

8. **2019/20 Planned Stag & Hind Cull targets**

 Agreed to leave these until after the helicopter count.

9. **Treasurer’s Report**

The helicopter costs would be allocated according to the time spent in the air counting each estate

 Invoices for 2019 membership ready to go out which will also include shared cost of LDMG website hosting

10. **No AOB** but Tom Chetwynd added a Footnote to warn all that currently the **Trophy Hunting Consultation** is being carried out with strong possibility that no stags heads, antlers or anything will be allowed to be exported:

 [Call for Evidence on the scale and impacts of the import and export of hunting trophies](https://consult.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-management/call-for-evidence-trophy-hunting/)

Closes 25 Jan 2020 Opened 2 Nov 2019

**Additional information available:** slide presentation from Tom Chetwynd on Forestry Co-operation is attached in email

Date of next meeting early to mdi-June **To be confirmed**