

# Minutes for Lochalsh Deer Management Group Meeting

## held via Zoom on Wednesday 10th June 2020

Present: Ewen Macpherson - Chair, Russell Cooper, Susan Jones, Chris MacKenzie, Freddie Macpherson, Donald MacKenzie, Thomas Watson, Nicholas Wills, Sinclair Coghill, Alec Cormack, Joanna Macpherson - Secretary

1. **Apologies:** Angus Macpherson, Andrew Slaughter & Soren Hojlund
2. **Approval of minutes** from 6th December 2019 -
  1. Ewen pointed out an inaccurate description for point no 8 ie it should read 2020/21 cull targets.
3. **Chairman's Report** - He appreciated that both Nicholas Wills and Freddie Macpherson could join the meeting thanks to Zoom
  1. The future of stalking this year was still unclear
  2. He reminded all about need to move on from lead shot
  3. He asked Sinclair to update the group.
4. **SNH Report** -
  1. The last helicopter count had been in 2016 and Covid 19 had stopped the planned one for 2020 - Sinclair confirmed the next helicopter count was now planned as a priority for South Ross & Knoydart in 2021
  2. Lower carbon use is to be encouraged so longer term, there won't be helicopter surveys but possibly drones will be used or there will have to be more foot counts
  3. Ammunition must be changed from lead to copper or lead-free. Copper is not stable at 243 grams, may have to be lowered to 75 or 85 g.
  4. Guidance about best practice - allowed to shoot deer to protect agriculture or forestry. Leisure allowed within 5 miles. Accompanied stalking not allowed, still waiting for update for future
  5. Venison prices very low at present. Highland Game is not open for business yet, the challenge of social distancing when processing the meat. Simpsons is open.

Russell Cooper invited to comment from FLS:

1. Contract for venison sales with Highland Game but not open yet
2. Speculation about low prices for roe 65-85 p, red £1.10 - £1.50

### 5. Updating Deer Management Plan

1. Susan pointed out end of cycle for first Deer Management Plan
2. She will update hind cull from last year and the new counts that have been held
3. Add a summary of qualifications achieved
4. Attempt a recruitment calculation based on Sinclair's population model

### 7. 2020 Hind Actual Cull Figures

	Hinds	Calves
Inverinate beat	90	37
Killilan beat	110	45
West Benula	<u>105</u>	<u>42</u>
Total Inverinate	305	124
Achnashellach	30	
Attadale	50	
Arineckaig	<u>5</u>	
Total	235	

Russell has kindly provided the following figures:

Achnashellach South	8 red stags	6 hinds	2 calves
	2 roe stags	1 roe	3 roe calves
	8 red sika		

Not part of Lochalsh Deer Management Group, fyi:  
(South Strome  
17 red stags, 10 hinds 6 calves  
10 roe stags 11 roe 4 calves  
6 sika stags)

#### 8. 2020 Spring Count

	<b>Stags</b>	<b>Hinds</b>	<b>Calves</b>
Inverinate - Spot counts - numbers appear stable			
Attadale - Foot count			
South Achnashellach Foot count	118	298	57
, mid-April	19% recruitment		

#### 8. 2020/21 Planned Stag & Hind Cull targets

	<b>Stags</b>	<b>Hinds</b>
Inverinate	145	310
Attadale		

#### 9. Treasurer's Report

Ready to send out once cull figures received, plus website hosting & Susan's fees

#### 10. AOB

Sinclair raised two more issues:

1. The Deer Working Group Report was published at the end of December but the Scottish Government still has not responded due to other events.
2. He reminded everyone that a maintenance cull was required and due to relatively high calving rates, it was important to reduce hind numbers.
3. Thomas raised the question of whether the seasons for shooting would be changed - still waiting to hear.
4. Cull return forms from SNH had not been received by anyone so Sinclair would look into it as everyone currently working from home

Date of next meeting will be in December **To be confirmed**