

Minutes for Lochalsh Deer Management Group Meeting

held via Zoom on Wednesday December 2nd December 2020

Present: Ewen Macpherson - Chair, Nick Wills, Chris MacKenzie, Alec Cormack, Joanna Macpherson - Secretary, Thomas Watson, Soren Hojlund, Russell Cooper, Sinclair Coghill, Tom Turnbull, Vice Chair of ADMG

1. **Apologies:** Susan Jones, Andrew Slaughter, Angus Macpherson, Donald MacKenzie. Invitations were also sent out to our MSP and MP, and local councillors and others but no reply
2. **Approval of minutes** from 10th June -
 1. Ewen pointed out Sinclair had corrected term to roe bucks in previous minutes
 2. Chris pointed out inaccuracies on 2019/20 cull results for Achnashellach South, it should read 35 Hinds and 6 calves.
3. **Chairman's Report** - Points raised at November ADMG Zoom meeting included
 1. Interesting presentation by Linzi Sievewright about future of land management available on ADMG website
 2. Emphasised the need for the hind cull to be carried out
 3. Have to be aware of political change continuing and the part deer management must play in that
 4. Use of copper ammunition necessary if selling meat into game dealers
 5. Still waiting for response from Deer Working Group
4. **ADMG Report** - Tom Turnbull summarised priorities for coming year
 1. Results of survey of members, 34 responded and from those 95% had been affected due to Covid, both letting stalking and letting accommodation. Over £1.1 million lost
 2. Scottish Venison Association working to get Venison promoted to counter sales collapse to the hospitality industry; the possibility of sales locally
 3. Hind Cull very necessary
 4. Climate emergency focussing minds on forestry and the need for deer management groups to work collaboratively
 5. The new Regional Landuse Management groups will be large scale and deer management groups should play their part in that
 6. Peat regeneration will be continue to play a vital role for carbon sequestration
5. **SNH Report** - Sinclair confirmed Tom had covered several subjects he also planned to mention:
 1. He stressed the need not only to create the Deer Management Plan but also to deliver it
 2. Hind cull must be done effectively
 3. Climate change brings other demands, more meetings via Zoom to save on carbon loss and after this year no more helicopter counts
 4. Research being done by xx into potential for deer counts by either drone or even satellite imagery
 5. Emphasised need for Green Recovery and reversing habitat loss with native woodland and peat restoration
 6. Discussion followed about copper ammunition and confirmation that all those present were already using copper
6. **FLS** - Russell explained there was a new stalker Kieran Coulson who was taking his Certificate Stage 2 qualification
 1. He and Ross McMillan were culling in Achnashellach South

6. **Update on Deer Management Plan** - Susan was unable to attend but the update is available on ADMG website

7. **2020 Stag Actual Cull Figures**

Inverinate beat	42	Sika bucks 6
Killilan beat	56	
West Benula	<u>50</u>	
Inverinate	148	
Achnashellach	17	
Attadale	44	
Arineckaig	<u>5</u>	
Total	214	

8. **2020/21 Current Hind Cull positions with targets**

	Current	Total target
Inverinate	40	250-300
Achnashellach	18	25
Attadale	20	70
Arineckaig	<u>1</u>	<u>6</u>
	79	350-400

9. **2021/22 Planned Stag & Hind Cull targets*** - *we didn't actually discuss this btw*
Agreed to leave these until after the helicopter count.

10. **Venison Sales**

Inverinate have changed to Simpsons as their game dealer. Having organised a Game Licence, Attadale is selling locally to the Kyle Butcher and other locals if they want it

11. **Treasurer's Report**

Alec thanked everyone for paying promptly. Only one outstanding. Members are now paying into Attadale Estate account so BACS can be used. It also includes website hosting and update done to deer management plan

12. **AOB**

Chris reported successful replacement of a deer fence working with Russell of FLS

Habitat Impact assessments will have to be done again in Spring 2021 - Sinclair warned there were some revisions due to the Best Practice Guide but we should be informed when it's available.

Soren reminded those reporting to please ensure that they record the **full** grid references as he needs all the details to plot them on the maps.

Just after the meeting, Gearoid Murphy, the Peatland Action Officer for the Peatland Action project got in touch and will investigate the opportunities at Attadale initially from satellite pictures and then on the ground. He's stayed in Ben Dronaig Bothy

Date of next meeting early June **To be confirmed**