

## Minutes of Lochalsh Deer Management Group, Thursday 28th April

Present: Joanna Macpherson - Chair, Linzi Sievwright, Tom Cameron - Area Mgr, North Region FLS, Alec Cormack, Sinclair Coghill, Russell Cooper, Willie Fraser - Chairman, Affric & Kintail DMG, Donald MacKenzie, Andrew Slaughter, David Sproule, Thomas Watson,

Apologies: Nick Wills, Chris MacKenzie, Angus Macpherson, Freddie Macpherson, Maree Todd MSP, Tom Turnbull

1. Minutes of previous Zoom meeting on 1st December approved, proposed by Alec Cormack seconded by Ewen Macpherson.  
JM apologises as she used wrong email address for Chris MacKenzie from Achnashellach so he never knew about the meeting

### 2. Chairman's Report & ADMG

AGM for ADMG emphasised importance of climate emergency. Scottish Government looking for a new Natural Environment Act to include a deer element rather than a separate new Deer Act to be passed in this session. Have accepted 92/99 of recommendations from the Deer Working Group. Impacts & outcomes very important.

### 3. NatureScot Report

Sinclair Coghill gave a summary, again emphasised the Scottish Government's concerns about the biodiversity crisis & climate emergency means it is looking for increased speed in Strategic Deer Board will be driving this forward, joining up all the government agencies. New Scottish Biodiversity Strategy - overarching targets - preventing biodiversity loss by 2030 (looking at upland habitats being low) and restoration by 2045.

Legislative change coming in Natural Environment Bill

Significant review of Wild Deer Strategy will be carried out - but after the above legislation introduced

Strategic priorities of climate emergency & biodiversity emergency

Deer & Green Recovery

Deer & Carbon

Deer & Public Safety

Deer & Impacts

Deer Strategy Round Table will continue to be conduit for engaging stakeholders

*Specifics:*

Trials of Image intensifying devices - concluded end of March, need parliamentary approval

Non Lead - shortage of copper ammunition - not yet required legally, requested by game dealers but lack of availability. Legislation will follow later.

Counting deer - still continuing but keen to reduce carbon footprint, 7% of NS's due to helicopter counts. Trialling drones, satellite imagery, AI to identify deer.

10 deer per km<sup>2</sup> recognised by Scottish Government but varies on local conditions, NatureScot recommends need to aim for that level. Lengthy discussion followed.

Herbivore impact assessments - emphasised essential to keep it recorded and up to date

### 4. Landscape Scale Deer Populations & Planning -Paper for discussion provided by Linzi Sievwright

Benefit of data collected since 2016 on a landscape scale to map information, to encourage discussion as about to revise & refresh deer management plan

Ensure when modelling predicted 6.1 but in reality 11.3 suggests from point of view of Affric - attempt by Strathfarrer Group to reduce hind numbers so pushed into other hot spots.

Maps provided indicates that a decrease in hinds encourages more stags move in, displaces and changes dynamic.

Main problems arise with stags being in wrong place at wrong time.

Problem large numbers of stags in South Affric, bring down numbers where too many hinds.

Need to work collectively in future

Important to bring down numbers across the SAC, bear in mind where culls going to be held, leads to increase deer elsewhere. Not just the SAC

Shared population across the area, need to plan collectively as a larger group.

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Willie Fraser emphasised need to work together for the bigger picture. Domino effect. Important to consult each other. Planning process needs to include every group, understand impact of culling strategy....Lochalsh needs to increase its cull.

Collective cull should be planned together

Meet after deer counts on the ground, suggest South Ross Liaison Group should meet  
Spot counts in winter are not accurate. Recruitment count late May

Starting count 2021 - Linzi suggests count up total planned cull, with overarching target density rather than just each local estate's planned cull. The key is the hinds. Agree to work together.

Meet after the stags with their intended cull figures for hinds, Linzi will feed it in before.

LDMG will meet at Inverinate. LS will liaise. Russell suggested the hind figures will be available before end of stags, to help get a clearer picture. General agreement forecast for 1 June with initial planned cull from individual estates to LS.

Not the final answer but beginning of the process.

SC emphasised need to focus on hind numbers

### 5. Final Stag & Hind Cull Figures 2021/22

03/05/2022	Total Open Range Cull				Attadale				Arineckaig				Achnashellach				Inverinate Total			
	Stags	Hinds	Calves	Total	S	H	C	T	S	H	C	T	S	H	C	T	S	H	C	T
2016-2017	221	445	209	875	69	87	49	205	12	6	6	24	8	32	14	54	132	320	140	592
2017-2018	271	636	295	1202	75	90	39	204	10	11	11	32	18	40	14	72	168	495	231	894
2018-2019	177	141	57	375	48	5	9	62	6	3	4	13	18	17	3	38	105	116	41	262
2019-2020	230	398	94	722	58	52	11	121	5	6	4	15	17	35	8	60	150	305	71	526
2020-2021	214	407	145	766	44	73	22	139	5	8	6	19	17	31	17	65	148	295	100	543
2021-2022	243	479	127	849	66	71	25	162	10	13	11	34	14	45	11	70	153	350	80	583

### 6. Treasurer's Report

Difficulties to get payments made as no cheques now, set up so people can pay directly to LS or ADMG due to fraud prevention measures.

### 7. AOB

Arineckaig early days. Tree planning early stages at Inverinate, for regeneration and new small areas of tree planting.

Tree planting planned at Attadale for next 3 years

No wild boar yet - in Glen Shiel

Feral goats being reduced

### 8. Next meeting - 11.00, Thursday 3rd November 2022 at Inverinate