

**Strathconon Deer Management Group
Meeting**

2/02/2017

at

Strathconon House, Strathconon

Minutes Approved on the 27 June 2017

1. Attendees

Name	Estate / Organisation
Charles Aylesford	Chairman - Little Scatwell
Angus Kelly	Secretary
Linzi Seivwright	Caorann (DMP consultant)
Troels Bavnhøj	Strathconon
Mike Watt	Little Scatwell
Glyn Robson	Lochluichart
Murdoch MacLean	Strathconon
Colin Hendry	Strathconon
Callum Stewart	Strathconon
Heidi Bavnhøj	Strathconon
Frank Spencer Nairn	Culligran

2. Apologies

2.1. Apologies from Finlay Clark, Douglas Orr & Colin Blyth, Derick MacAskill, Alasdair Douglas, Peter Hingston, and Jamie Stewart.

3. Approval of minutes of meeting held on

3.1. Minutes were approved and no comments from attendees.

4. Matters arising from previous minutes

4.1. Proposed that minutes will be assumed approved once send by email and no comments within 4 weeks. Thereafter minutes will be Approved and ready for public availability.

4.2. Contact to be made with the Marybank, Scatwell and Strathconon Community Council to get a contact who can be provided the minutes and invited to attend DMG meetings. Agreed that a member of the DMG should attend the next Community Council meeting.

UPDATE: Invitation sent for next meeting.

5. Cull Update

	Stags	Hinds	Calves	Comments
Strathconon & Scardroy	104	367	156	Looking to achieve 400 hinds.
Ledgowan				Not provided.
Little Scatwell	24	46	21	2 sika hinds. Looking to achieve a hind cull of 50 however no seeing the hinds on open ground
Lochluichart (Glenmarkie)	?	40	20	Very tough stag season. Hind numbers to increase
Glencarron				Not provided.
Fairburn	?	130	40	Target of 100 set.

- 5.1. Members observed that hinds were staying on the higher ground due to favourable weather and that the stags were keeping in groups. The Group discussed the numbers seen across the members, commenting that it was viewed that the numbers were positive for the stags seen but difficult conditions faced by all during the hind season.
- 5.2. Mike Wats commented that very young stags were grouping on Scatwell.

6. Deer Management Plan

- 6.1. The Chair invited LS to provide the Group an update to the working plan. LS confirmed that all three parts of the plan have been online since late November, though subject to amendment.
- 6.2. LS and AMK provided feedback from the SNH review meeting held on the 25 June 2016 and the outcomes, noting that we were able to demonstrate progress against the group Actions. This resulted in Action being moved from red to amber and amber to green. LS emphasised that that members should view this as working plan which is updated annually during the lifetime of this current DMP, and collectively working to address the Actions. The Group discussed the priority of engaging and receiving feedback from stakeholders.
- 6.3. It was noted that the cull/count figures for Lochluichart will be recorded along with the section 7 agreement but this will not form part of the figures used for the Deer Management Plan.
- 6.4. The Group considered the merit of increasing the agenda items so that we could increase collaborative working and challenge the members to engage in delivering the public interest. Next Agenda to have additional items for discussion.
- 6.5. It was also agreed that the members would provide Cull and Count information in advance of meetings so that this could be circulated and also incorporated in the working plan updates.
- 6.6. The Group was tasked to consider counts for Spring 2017, with a helicopter count in 2018.

- 6.7. The Chair noted that setting DMG meetings need to improve and the Group should be more consistent with meetings. It was discussed and agreed that 3 per annum should be achievable in Spring, Summer and Autumn.

7. Habitat Assessment

- 7.1. It was agreed that all members will complete Habitat Assessment in 2017, and allow a benchmark for the Group going forward, noting that for some members this will be the first year of data collection while other members have been collecting data for some time.
- 7.2. LS reiterated her support for members to implement a habitat monitoring regime, and AMK commented that SNH training days were widely advertised for members to attend.
- 7.3. GR confirmed that 30 transects would be covered in the assessment on Lochluichart (Glenmarkie), and the same number by MK on Scatwell.
- 7.4. The Group went on to discuss methodology and best practice.

8. Public Consultation Date

- 8.1. It was agreed that a Public Consultation be arranged for April with an invitation made to local MSP Gail Ross and MSP Edward Mountain, along with other stakeholders and community Groups.
UPDATE: Unfortunately, after several attempts and dealing with Ms Ross's team a date was not achieved in April. Group to discuss date for July.

9. Any Other Business

- 9.1. ADMG:
 - 9.1.1. LS gave a summary of AMDG activities in regards to SNH review of the DMP and the ADMG evidence given to the Scottish Parliament's Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform (ECCLR) Committee on 13 December 2016. The Group discussed the negative comments that appeared in the Review and all agreed did not assist in promoting the good practices within deer management. It was agreed that the focus on deer numbers within the review was ill advised by the James Hutton Institute and appeared at odds to the habitat management the Group will put in place to look at Deer impacts which are more important than numbers, and should be considered in a local context

10. Date of next meeting

- 10.1. TBC.