

BREADALBANE DEER MANAGEMENT GROUP

MINUTES

Spring Meeting
Friday 17th April 2015
at 2.00pm
at The Molteno Hall

1 Welcome

Present were:

Emma Paterson (*Auchlyne, Chair*), James Scott (*SNH*), Ian Dingwall, John Sinclair & George Coyne (*Auchlyne*), Robert Dalglish & David Pirie (*Innerwick*), Alan Cory-Wright (*Auchessan*), Steven Macdonald, Alex Jamieson & John Sinclair (*Meggernie/ Lochs*), Ian La Sales de Terriere (*Crossmount*), Calum Gillies (*Dalchosnie/ Kynachan*), Iain Wotherspoon, Ally McNaughton (*Glen Lyon Estate*), John McNulty (*FE*), Alistair Riddell (*North Chesthill*), Andrew Warwick (*NTS*), Lord Pearson (*Coire Carie*), Morven Frost (*Boreland*), Mike Daniels (*John Muir Trust*), Leo Barclay (*Innerhadden*), John Holland (*SRUC Kirkton & Auchtertyre*), Hamish Rae (*South Chesthill & Inverinian*) Victor Clements (*Secretary*)

2 Apologies

Gen & Charlie Ramsay, Gareth Taylor (*South Chesthill*), David Brown (*Innischoarach*), Colin Buchan (*Garth*), Tim Fison (*HPCLT*), Liz Auty (*JMT*), Lochy Porter (*Cashlie*), Richard Barclay (*Innerhadden*), Graeme Anderson (*Kiltyrie*), Duncan Richardson (*Coire Carie*) James Duncan Millar (*ADMG*).

3 Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes were taken as read. Proposed by Iain Wotherspoon and seconded by Alastair Riddell.

4 Matters Arising

Attempts had been made to encourage Finnart back in to the Group.

VC had circulated a contact list to Group members.

5 Election of office bearers

Richard Barclay and Emma Paterson were re-elected as Chair and Vice- Chair.

RB had indicated that he would stand down as Chair next year.

VC would be retained as secretary/ treasurer.

6 **Accounts & Budget 2015-16**

Current balance was £7111.10. FE were now paying their subs to Group again, instead of paying ADMG directly. This has resulted in a £1000 net contribution to the Group, giving us an overall surplus of £1514 last year. We therefore currently had a healthy bank balance.

Retaining the current £10 per stag subscription would give us an £8658 balance at the end of the next financial year. This would potentially allow us to commission a new upgraded Deer Management Plan and still leave us with approx one year of ADMG subscription as a buffer.

The accounts were proposed by Leo Barclay, seconded by Iain Wotherspoon.

7 **Reviewing the 2014-15 season**

North Chesthill

Stags had been good. More difficult to achieve hind cull. PKC had helped with access issues and this had allowed the estate to deliver a much more satisfactory season.

Innerwick

Significant lack of hinds on the ground now.

Glen Lyon Estate

Significant increase in access pressure, and some problems arising from this. Stags had been good. Hinds disappeared off ground after December. Appeared to be wintering on Garth.

Crossmount

Lack of suitable stags, but hind cull had been good.

Auchessan

High mortality in calves. (James Scott of SNH noted that calving % had been low last year as well)

Dalchosnie/ Kynachan

Very short rut. Fewer hinds appeared to be in calf.

Meggernie/ Lochs

Long hind season, lot of hinds in poor condition. Mortality did not appear to be too bad this year.

NTS

Low stag nos. Deer numbers seemed to be increasing on boundary with Boreland. Difficult to access that area.

Boreland

Rut slow to start but OK in the end. More hinds on the ground than usual.

Forest Enterprise

Culling seemed to be following usual pattern. Nothing significantly different to report.

Auchlyne

Stag and hin season seemed to be OK, but deer lost condition in later part of winter. The Glen Lochay fences may now be causing some disruption to stag movements in the area.

South Cheshill & Inverinian

Stag season slow to start. Hinds only appeared at end of season. More issues with walkers this year.

Coire Carie

Lot of days with no deer at all. Did not achieve hind cull. Hinds appear to be wintering further to the east. More stags no wintering on Coire Carie. Issues with stray sheep on the ground, and lost a number of stalks because of this.

SRUC Kirkton & Auchtertyre

Deer control on low ground/ forestry only. Nos approx the same as in recent years.

8 Section 7 agreement

2014-15 Cull

The cull achieved was fairly well in line with expectation, with the North Group exceeding their target again.

Helicopter Count

The count had went relatively smoothly, although a small number of counted groups were removed as it was felt that these had been double- counted between successive days.

The count data is still provisional. SNH are currently short staffed, but all Group members will be circulated with a paper copy of the count map, as well as a PDF map and associated summary report. The Group deer count has decreased from 12,901 in 2008 to 8592 in 2015. This number is a bit higher than target. The emphasis going forwards will be on fine-tuning, as there are a number of small pockets of higher numbers within the Group boundary.

HIA Assessments

This data has not yet received final verification, but the broad consensus is that the alpine habitats have been moving in to the favourable condition categories. There is fairly clear evidence that grassland habitats are becoming over grown, although SNH maintain that they are robust enough to deal with this. The various flush and tall herb communities have all moved forwards over the period of the Section 7 agreement.

Going Forwards

There was a discussion about whether we should be looking to go in to another Section 7 agreement, or to suggest some form of looser partnership approach. The current arrangement provides invaluable resources for counting and habitat monitoring. For example, SNH estimate that a proper foot count of Breadalbane would require 120 man- days, not that much less than the cost of a helicopter count.

Richard Barclay will be asked to write to Group members listing the options available, and to include his own recommendation.

9 Recruitment counting 2015

A widespread and accurate recruitment count is essential this year to upgrade the population model, especially as calf mortality appears to have been high. A small difference to recruitment can have a much larger effect on the model. Recruitment counting should take place last week of April/ first week of May, with all figures collated per property and returned to Group secretary.

10 New Deer Management Plan

The Group require to upgrade their current DMP, to take account of what has been delivered since 2009, to inform management going forwards, and to include a number of public interest actions. SNH would pay for up to 50% of the costs of an upgraded plan.

A small steering group is to be convened to take this forwards, and to determine whether a tendering process is required or not. Richard Barclay to action.

11 Health & Safety

There were no incidents discussed.

12 Wider Deer Management Issues

SNH Update

SNH are setting up a panel to look at authorizations and how the present system is working.

They are currently recruiting a new member of staff to help support their deer work, to replace Linzi Seivwright who has recently left SNH.

ADMG Comment

Upgrading management plans is the main focus for ADMG, along with the various land reform proposals. Group members who have not yet filled in the PACEC report are encouraged to do so.

13 Next meeting

The next meeting would be Friday 23rd October 2015, 2pm at the Molteno Hall.

14 AOCB

AJR reported an article in the current edition of Deer magazine looking at deer movements and access pressure on North Chesthill, co-ordinated by Justin Irvine of the James Hutton Institute. He hoped to now move on to a secondary monitoring project in the same area.

Leo Barclay proposed a vote of thanks to the Chair.