

**MINUTE OF THE EAST GRAMPIAN DEER MANAGEMENT GROUP SUB AREA 1  
AND SOUTH DEESIDE NORTH ANGUS DEER MANAGEMENT GROUP  
JOINT MEETING HELD AT BRIDGE OF CALLY VILLAGE HALL  
ON 19<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2018  
AT 5PM**

<b>PRESENT:</b>	Dougie Campbell, Strath Caulaidh
	Neale Taylor, SNH
	Iain Hope, SNH
	Colin McLean, Deer Consultancy Services
	Rob Mearns, Lednathie/Balintore
	Will Reid, Glencallater
	Deirdre Stewart, Galbraith
	Bruce Cooper, Glenprosen
	Jason Williamson, Glencally
	Nick Gibb, Glenisla House
	Major John Gibb, Glenisla House
	Michael Bruce, Chairman, South Deeside North Angus DMG
	Mike Cottam, Secretary, South Deeside North Angus DMG
	Jamie Gammel, Alrick
	Andrew Gammel, Auchavan
	James Davidson, Alrick
	Liam Donald, Invercauld/Rhiedorrach
	Angus MacNicol, Factor, Invercauld

<b>1.</b>	<b>WELCOME</b>
	<p>The welcome was provided by Bruce Cooper, Vice Chairman to East Grampian Deer Management Group Sub Area 1, and acting Chairman for this meeting.</p> <p>Attendance sheet circulated.</p> <p>Apologies received from the following: Wayne Johnston, Rhiedorrach Hugh Niven, Clova Richard Gledson, Balmoral Florian Kuhnle, Tulchan Kevin Peters, Forestry Commission</p>
<b>2.</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND</b>
	<p>Bruce Cooper provided an introduction to Dougie Campbell from Strathcaulaidh, and Colin McLean, both presenting at the meeting.</p>
<b>3.</b>	<b>UPDATE FROM STRATH CAULAI DH</b>
	<p>Dougie Campbell from Strat Caulaidh, produced his presentation and update on 2018 survey work to those present. Thereafter the following discussion ensued</p> <p>Major Gibb asked about the quality of stags across the hill. Michael Bruce asked what was the standard he was looking for. Major Gibb replied that he was going on the quality of heads. Michael Bruce quoted typical hill stags at 14stone, woodland stags 17stone.</p>

	Deer densities were also discussed by Michael Bruce in order to achieve favourable densities for the habitats involved. Seasonal densities differ. Michael Bruce raised varying recruitment rates, which we have had to use for population modelling for the EGDMGSA1.
	Major Gibb raised his concern that he would have no deer left under a heavier cull. Nick Gibb asked what density are we aiming at if the Section 7 target of 19 deer per square kilometre quoted is now obsolete. Dougie Campbell said that we need to consider the high recruitment and also bear in mind that reducing the density of the deer would also make the population more fecund. Dougie Campbell said that we need to carefully balance objectives. Nick Gibb said that he believed that there were folk present that would be happy if not another deer walked across their land. Nick asked about taking a European model and shooting all calves.
	James Gammell raised the fact of summer and winter densities upon the reserve areas. He said that public access has also had a major impact upon deer densities and movement. He said he felt it would be difficult to remedy the problem with public access in the long term.
<b>4.</b>	<b>UPDATE FROM DEER CONSULTANCY SERVICES</b>
	<p>Colin McLean of Deer Consultancy Services then presented. Colin outlined the context of why we are where we are, that being two crucial points:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The end of the Section 7 Agreement in November 2019. And</li> <li>2. The results of the 2018 winter count.</li> </ol> <p>Colin also raised the following points:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. SNH under pressure; the 2016 review criticised SNH for failing to protect designated areas.</li> <li>2. SNH rebranding in summer 2018, and the influences as to why this has been undertaken.</li> <li>3. Increasing population, so SNH under pressure again. Our best option is to react to this ourselves and cease this opportunity, reducing the risk of government intervention.</li> <li>4. We have learnt that where we model population for the EGDMGSA1 this did not work. Modelling was therefore carried out to include the South Deeside North Angus area. Establishing the starting population has been difficult to enable us to identify the target population, Colin said we cannot take the risk that the model may underestimate the population. Furthermore, we may possibly be under estimating recruitment, and possibly not being able to quantify accurately immigration and movement in and out of woodland. Recent cull data was used. Colin said that the Group needed to commit to a target cull, and exceed past efforts. Committing to the cull numbers thus proposed would help the Group to achieve the objectives of the Section 7 Agreement, but also help to avoid any error in underestimating elements of the model. Colin highlighted management operations by the Group in order to execute the cull, underpinned by good collaboration. Colin went on to explain the difficult issue of splitting an overall target between Group members. He reiterated the concept of zonal targets (mentioned earlier by Dougie Campbell). Colin reiterated the desire to mitigate the risk of further government intervention. He mentioned the Section 9, which would be where the government have the potential to recover costs in executing a cull. Colin said that these measures may seem draconian, but the option remains.</li> </ol>

Colin then opened the floor to questions.

**5. OPEN DISCUSSION**

Bruce Cooper asked about longer term modelling and sustained culls. Colin has not worked this far as yet. Bruce added that he hadn't agreed with the division of numbers for individual Estates as proposed by Colin. Bruce said that a cull of 1900 hinds needs to be achieved and it was agreed it could be if everyone gets on board. Stalkers need to be out daily and no ground should be left quiet. Deer will move once put under pressure and neighbours to be ready. All Estates represented at the meeting were then asked to provide their intended cull number for hinds this season. See spreadsheet attached.

Michael Bruce said that the South Deeside North Angus DMG target was for 11 deer per square kilometre. He has devolved Section 7 responsibilities to those directly involved in the South Deeside North Angus DMG. He reported that Group members immediately increased the cull on the back of the large population count in early 2018.

Nick Gibb asked that Tulchan inform their neighbours if they are shooting at partridges because it disturbs deer on the ground.

Nick Gibb also mentioned the need for a deer leap from a FC woodland block. Bruce suggested that he speak to Kevin Peters in this regard.

Bruce Cooper had done some work himself on apportioning cull targets to Group members. This had been based on the winter count. James Gammell also suggested doing the same exercising taking into account summer count data.

There was discussion, and general agreement upon zonal groups as follows;

- GlenCally & GlenIsla
- GlenShee, Tulchan & Auchavan
- GlenProsen, GlenHead, Lednathie and possibly Clova
- Callater and Bachnagairn

Andrew Gammell said that everyone should commit to front loading the effort on the hind cull, with the bulk of hinds culled before Christmas. There was a general feeling of agreement with this statement. Weekly reports are required on individual culls, and these can be circulated by the Secretary. It was agreed that we could aim to cull 2/3rds of the target before Christmas.

Some member Estates have got authorisation for out of season culling. James Davidson asked whether he could shoot hinds if was on the hill rather than take one stag. It make sense to take a number of hinds if he had the opportunity.

Bruce Cooper raised the aspect of deer catchers, which had been constructed at both Balnaboth and Auchavan. These had needed to be licenced for live capture.

Colin McLean again said that any division of a global number was going to be difficult, and his numbers had not intended to be a prescription for agreement, but at least prompt

discussion. Iain Hope said that from SNH they very much welcomed the discussion on the culls, but beyond that no administrative commitment had been made by the Group.

There was some discussion on how the strategic plan had worked for the Monadhliath DMG. They had created a steering group which met monthly. Monthly meetings could be attended by anybody in the Group if they were available.

Iain Hope suggested using the cull targets from today to make sure that that number was achieved before Christmas, and collectively assessing what shortfall there would be at that time, which would then be fulfilled after Christmas.