

**MINUTES OF THE EAST GRAMPIAN DEER MANAGEMENT GROUP SUB AREA 1
MEETING HELD IN GLENISLA VILLAGE HALL
ON MONDAY 30th OCTOBER 2017 AT 9.30AM**

PRESENT: Florian Kuhnle – In the Chair
Deirdre Stewart – Secretary

Kevin Peters (FCS)
Ian Robertson
Adam Spokes
James Davidson
Iain Hope (SNH)
Shona Smith (SNH)
Major Gibb
Andrew Gammell
Liam Donald
Angus McNicoll

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Barclay Dougall, Bruce Cooper, Andrew Ogilvy-Wedderburn, Nicolas Gibb, Jason Williamson and Jamie Gammell.

2. MINUTES FROM LAST MEETING

Minutes from the meeting held at Glenisla Hotel on Monday 19th June 2017 were agreed, containing issues to be discussed at today's meeting.

3 POPULATION MODELLING

Culls

Stag Numbers

Deirdre Stewart ran through final stag cull figures provided by Group Members. These were as follows:

Estate	Proposed Stag Cull for Season 2017	Actual Cull
Glenshee	60	108
Tulchan	58	60
Alrick	20	29
Achavan	0	0
Glencally and Fergus	40	55
Glenisla House	25	25
Scottish Water – Glenhead	0	0
Glenprosen and Balnaboth	25	28
Lednathie and Ballintore	20	44
Pearsie	0	0
Auldallan	3	0
Airlie West	15	12
South Clova	40	No return as yet
SNH Coire Fee	15	9
Drumdearg	3	1
Forestry Commission Glenisla/Glenmarkie	30	25
Harran Plantation	0	33
Total	354	429

Feedback from the Group Members for the stag season was as follows:

Kevin Peters reported that with better fencing on forestry blocks, fewer bigger mature stags were being shot, with more younger stags culled.

James Davidson reported that stags stayed low down this season on Mount Blair. Most stags encountered were roaming stags, not held with hinds. Heaviest stag culled 19st 3lbs. Lightest stag 8st 7lbs. No hinds held on the ground.

Major Gibb reported a very active rut, heaviest stag 19st 7lbs. No hinds held on the ground. Average stag weight 14st 8lbs, average points 8.5.

SNH reported a very mild season for Corrie Fee, with a lot of roe on the ground.

Liam Donald reported the rut at normal time in Glenshee, with no struggle to achieve numbers. 10 stags shot over 19st.

Andrew Gammell nothing to report as nothing shot on Auchavan.

Florian reported that for Tulchan they did not have so many stags. Little movement from stags coming in from the south/Mount Blair. Rut showed normal timing.

The question was raised as to why so many stags had remained on Mount Blair. James Davidson reported that he did not shoot hard at stags during the spring. There were the normal amount of stags held on the ground post-winter (200 – 230), with 50 – 60 stags remaining on the Mount all season. Andrew Gammell felt that Mount Blair was more unique in that walkers tend not to move deer off the Mount.

Proposed Hind Numbers

Estate	Proposed Hind Cull for 2017/2018
Glenshee	150
Tulchan	150
Alrick	15
Achavan	0
Glencally and Fergus	60
Glenisla House	15
Scottish Water – Glenhead	??
Glenprosen and Balnaboth	100
Lednathie and Balintore	40
South Clova	50
SNH Coire Fee	20
Drumdearg	3
Forestry Commission Glenisla/Glenmarkie	200 (enclosed)
Total	800

Deirdre Stewart agreed to provide Colin McLean with stag cull figures to allow Colin to enter these into the population model. Angus McNicoll added that there was a South Deeside North Angus Deer Group meeting the following day and that he would feed Sub Area 1 information to those present.

Deirdre undertook to ask Group members regularly for an update on hind cull, which she will do via e-mail, commencing Monday 13th Nov.

4. DEER MANAGEMENT PLAN ACTION POINTS

(Referring to Point 5 on the Summary of Actions):

There was some discussion on participation in Group Matters by land holdings particularly to the South. These will be actively pursued where possible.

(Referring to Point 6 on the Summary of Actions):

The Group welcomed attendance at the meeting from Adam Spokes from Fountain Forestry, representing the landowner for the Harran plantation. Adam provided an update on present circumstances;

The main interest for the owner is timber.

Some thinning was carried out in 2017. A Long Term Forest Plan is being prepared for the woodland, upon which the Group would wish to be consulted. Following any harvesting, restocking of the plantation will be dependent upon deer fencing being erected if economically feasible. Therefore fencing would be erected when deer are absent from the site. To enable fencing to be erected to protect everyone's interests, collaboration with neighbours will be essential. Deirdre undertook to put Adam in touch with Glen Prosen Estate.

Adam confirmed that they have a sporting tenant, whose lease is renewed on an annual basis, commencing in April each year.

(Referring to Points 11 and 17 on the Summary of Actions):

Deirdre raised the subject of the letter that was circulated earlier in the week from Leo Barclay regarding free assessments being offered for membership of the Scottish Quality Wild Venison Scheme, encouraging this where practical.

Qualifications were updated where necessary.

(Referring to Point 12 on the Summary of Actions):

It was agreed that Bruce Cooper be asked to coordinate a foot count in the winter (as carried out in early 2017), for the Group members. This should be done in conjunction with Colin McLean who coordinates the winter East Grampian count.

(Referring to Point 21 on the Summary of Actions):

'Members who are not currently in the Caenlochan Habitat Survey Area will initiate a habitat monitoring scheme which will be compatible with SNH Best Practice Guidance'

Deadline for this work was Sep 2017. See (5) below.

(Referring to Point 26 on the Summary of Actions):

SNH to provide copy of Caenlochan HIA data for 2015.

(Referring to Point 28 on the Summary of Actions):

All cull and count data to be provided to SDNA Group for population modelling.

5. HABITAT IMPACT AND ASSESSMENT WORK

SNH to circulate the Caenlochan SAC and Glencallater SSSI HIA Report from 2015.

SNH to also provide the random plots for assessment work as generated in 2014, to the Group.

Iain Hope stressed that the location of plots was extremely important. Although the plots had been randomly generated, originally by SNH, there is some scepticism as to how good these are in practice. Discussion ensued as to how best the Group undertake Habitat Impact Assessment works, either collectively or individually.

SNH are to undertake Survey work on the Caenlochan SAC in 2018, but methodology for this is not yet finalised.

The Group expressed their desire to understand what is expected of them in terms of the Habitat Assessment work, which the Group held a training day for back in August. Group members could simply follow Best Practice Guidelines, but feel vulnerable that without clear advice on the methodology of habitat assessment work, their work has the potential to be disregarded in the future. The Group are willing to undertake work with clear direction, and be accountable for this data and its influence on deer management.

Deirdre has offered to hold and map the data collected for Group Members.

Iain Hope went on to also elaborate on the Habitat Impact Assessment process in the context of the next review of DMG and DMP progress, expected in 2019. It is unclear as to what the main focus of this review will be; the Deer Act, Public Interest, or the same SNH and ADMG Benchmarks as used in previous assessments.

Kevin Peters suggested that we ask ADMG what their advice has been to other Deer Management Groups. It is clear that due consideration of the Assessment process is required prior to work being undertaken in spring 2018.

6. ACCOUNTS/BUDGET UPDATE

Deirdre Stewart updated those present, reporting that all existing invoices have been paid in full, including Galbraith secretarial services and Colin McLean at Deer Consultancy Services. There are only some minor invoices outstanding to be paid by Group Members.

Work is still required to the Group website.

7. SCOTTISH WATER/GLENHEAD AND GLENDAMPH

The tenancy of sporting rights at Glenhead and Glendampn has been awarded to Glenprosen Estate by Landlords Scottish Water. It may be prudent that a meeting be held between representatives from Harran Plantation, Scottish Water and Glenprosen Estate.

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was some discussion on sporting rates for Group Members. Deirdre reminded those present that they would need to apply to the Small Business Bonus Scheme to secure the reliefs available.

Kevin Peters also asked for any information on recent sightings of feral pigs, none reported apart from two that Kevin had shot.