

ADMG Benchmark Assessment- West Knoydart Deer Management Group	Notes	Correcting Actions required
Operation of Group		
Area and boundaries		
Identify the appropriate boundaries for the group to operate in.	Boundaries are well established and acknowledged. Geographical boundaries could make more sense with reference to management of the shared deer herd if Barisdale and Camusrory were members. However as of 15/6/16 Barisdale/Camusrory have confirmed spring attendance at WKDMG for population management purposes.	Keep invitation open to Barisdale/Camusrory.
Define appropriate sub populations where applicable	Open hill/woodland count/cull figures separate. Group is effectively part larger Knoydart area in deer population terms.	No sub groups required within this DMG, this area in terms of deer population forms part of wider "Knoydart peninsula" population.
Membership		
All property owners within a deer range should be members of a DMG, including private and public land owners; also, where possible, agricultural occupiers, foresters, crofters and others on adjoining land where deer may be present. In some cases this may extend to householders with private gardens.	Wide stakeholder engagement. Including agri/community interests. Most properties are represented. Attendance at meetings variable, most owners/managers do attend. Group mostly able to make decisions on the day due to owner engagement/manager's given mandate. Barisdale/Camusrory to attend DMG as of June 16.	Need to continue to work at links with Knoydart DMG, however invitation to attend/join remains open to Barisdale/Camusrory (Deer Range).
Meetings		
DMGs should meet regularly. Two formal meetings per year is the norm but more frequent interaction between members, between meetings, should be encouraged.	3 or 4 meetings per year. Could regress to two should group workload reduce. Inclusiveness seen as important. Chair/Secretary proactive about communicating between group members between meetings. The group accept that Barisdale and Camusrory are part of the shared population model and have attempted to complete this with KDMG on that basis.	Probably no need for further meetings unless extraordinary circumstance. 4 meetings a year enough to progress DMP/HIA etc.
For effective collaborative management to take place it is important that all DMG Members should attend every meeting or be represented by someone authorised to make appropriate decisions on their behalf.	Very good participation in Group. Most properties attend. Chair makes clear when decisions are required and provide relevant information for decision making. Framework document helps decision making. Barisdale/camusrory will attend.	Chair/Sect to continue to work to try and attract smaller members such as Sgmadail. (These properties get minutes etc.) Chair to create "chairs report" annually.
In addition to landholding Members, including public sector owners, public agencies such as SNH and Forestry Commission Scotland should be in attendance and other relevant authorities such as Police Scotland may be invited to attend DMG meetings.	SNH attend, FCS not relevant. Knoydart forest trust lead contact with FCS. Forest trust also work with private members.	FCS invited when required (Discuss new SRDP Options)
Meetings should operate to an agenda and be accurately minuted. Attendees should be encouraged to participate and agreed actions and decisions should be recorded.	Agenda and minute produced for meetings including attendance etc. Chair extremely proactive in driving inclusive nature of meetings. Agenda/minutes are created with delivery of DMP in mind.	Actions and decisions to be recorded in minutes. Agenda will follow Public Interest Criteria review in order to mark progress.

<p>Group can demonstrate a capacity to deal with issues between meetings as they arise, and to provide an ongoing source of communication and advice as required.</p>	<p>Email contact to raise issues inter meetings. Sec deals with any issues arising. Capacity to meet at short notice due to resident managers.</p>	<p>Chair/Sec will need to continue to communicate between meetings.</p>
<p>Constitution & Finances</p>		
<p>All DMGs should have a Constitution which defines the area of the Group, sets out its purpose, its operating principles, membership and procedures, in addition to providing for appointing office bearers, voting, raising subscriptions and maintaining financial records</p>	<p>No Constitution, Framework document and code of conduct cover the majority points.</p>	<p>Group will need to ensure decisions making framework fit for purpose especially if other members join.</p>
<p>Good management and budgeting of finances</p>	<p>Group does not operate as a financial entity, group has decided that it will run on a zero budget and has no need for funding support.</p>	<p>Group has reconsidered this and now uses Knoydart Foundation as a cost centre for raising funds/paying accounts.</p>
<p>Deer Management Plans</p>		
<p>All DMGs should have an up to date, effective and forward looking Deer Management Plan (DMP).</p>	<p>New DMP identifies the majority of elements of ADMG benchmark. Very good coverage of public interests elements and actions progressed to take these forward. DMP has no set timescale but is updated quarterly in order to make it more responsive and open to any new requirements from SNH/PI.</p>	<p>Update plan quarterly.</p>
<p>The DMP should record all the land management objectives within the DMG area.</p>	<p>New DMP identifies membership objectives.</p>	<p>Review DMP in light of changes in management objectives quarterly. This will be especially relevant when Barisdale/Camusroory attend meetings.</p>
<p>Where applicable, the plan should include a rolling 5 year population model</p>	<p>New DMP includes a population model, this does not cover Barisdale and Camusroory despite the groups best efforts to engage these properties. A wider population model has been debated between W Knoydart/Knoydart. There is an agreement that SNH will facilitate the completion of this.</p>	<p>Population model completed with Barisdale/Camusroory when they engage.</p>
<p>Appropriate use of maps to illustrate relevant detail.</p>	<p>Mapping included in new DMP, hosted online.</p>	<p>Other aspects of the plan may benefit from mapping such as HIA results and will be incorporated when available</p>

The DMP should identify the public interest aspects of deer management	DMP lists the public interest criteria the group are currently delivering and sets out targets to enable delivery of others.	Information to be revised on a quarterly basis.
DMP should make appropriate reference to other species of deer within the DMG area, and provide a level of detail proportionate to this interest.	DMP covers species of deer present, clear objectives with reference to sika and red deer.	Updated DMP if balance of species present changes.
It should include a list of actions that deliver the collective objectives of DMG Members as well as public interest objectives. These actions should be updated annually	DMP contains a clear list of members objective which are weighted in order of importance, public interest criteria and actions to deliver on these are detailed in DMP. Actions are updated quarterly.	Actions from DMP identified and recorded within meeting minute.
It is important that all DMG Members should play a full part in the planning process and in the implementation of agreed actions	Planning process did this in terms of agreeing objectives for individuals as well as the group as a whole. All member and other interested stakeholders contacted. Requires updated with Barisdale/Camusroory.	Group will need to ensure that revisions/additions to the plan are communicated as the plan is updated quarterly. Potentially this will include upgrading to include Camusroory/Barisdale.
The DMP may identify potential conflicts and how they can be prevented or addressed to ensure an equitable approach to the shared deer population.	Includes ref in draft, population section in DMP illustrates potential areas of conflict. Chair plays an important role conflict resolution.	Framework document could be revised to include conflict resolution section (group undertaking by 2016)
Relevant local interests should be consulted on new DMPs and advised of any changes as they come forward.	Group business included in newsletter. Board reports to community. DMP is now hosted online and group seek ongoing input from stakeholders to the live plan. http://www.visitknoydart.co.uk/#!wkdmg/x1jop	None
Code of Practice on Deer Management		
The Code should be endorsed by all DMGs and referenced in both the Constitution and Deer Management Plan of every Group. The terms of the Code should be delivered through the Group Deer Management Plan.	Code of Practice is referenced in DMP and WKDMG framework document. 5) Ensure that deer management is carried out in line with the Code of Practice on Deer Management.	None
ADMG Principles of Collaboration		
The Principles of Collaboration should be incorporated into all DMG Constitutions and Deer Management Plans.	Whilst the ADMG Principles of Collaboration are not specifically referenced, the WKDMG code of conduct and framework document guides members behaviours in a comparable fashion.	Framework document will be revised to include conflict resolution section (group undertaking by 2016). Will provide assistance with regards to extended population management discussions.
Best Practice		
All deer management should be carried out in accordance with Best Practice.	Good broad agreement that this is important and a basis for the group. Many practitioners subscribers. In draft plan.	DMG/SNH will promote hard copy to members. Quantify subscription within the group.
All Deer Management Plans should reference and follow WDBP which will continue to evolve.	WDBP referenced in plan, group has taken into account the main requirements for planning of WDBP and included these in the plan.	Updated as WDBP evolves.
Data and Evidence gathering- Deer counts		
Accurate deer counting forms the basis of population modelling. An ethos that reflects this should be in evidence	Group counts regularly, pop model does not cover whole deer range.	Population model needs completed with the inclusion of Barisdale and Camusroory who are currently not part of the group.
As publicly funded aerial counts are now exceptional, DMGs should aim to carry out a regular well planned coordinated foot count of the whole open range deer population. The norm is to count annually.	Within DMP. Counts have been well resourced, regular and co-ordinated. The group has made efforts to include Barisdale and Camusroory.	Discuss the potential for a spring/summer count with SNH.
Recruitment and mortality counts are also essential for population modelling.	Partial. Mort counts at meetings, recruitment done individually	Encourage wider uptake of recruitment counts in group, follow up on this information and apply to population model.
Other census methods may be required in some circumstances, eg dung counting in woodland or other concealing habitats or on adjoining open ground.	Low deer populations in new woodland, older plantations open to deer past damage stage.	Not considered a priority for all members, monitoring may be carried out under KFT woodland plan.
Data and evidence gathering- Culls		

All DMGs should agree a target deer population or density which meets the collective requirements of Members without detriment to the public interest.	Deer population targets in draft DMP, these have been created with reference to the public interest. Monitoring of public interest criteria built into plan.	Revise population targets when new data is gathered.
The cull should be apportioned among Members to deliver the objectives of the DMP and individual management objectives while maintaining the agreed target population and favourable environmental condition.	Culls discussed between members to ensure objectives not impacted. Current culls are deemed acceptable to all.	Expectation that this will be achieved in the future - model requires to be produced and updated regularly.
The Group cull target should be reviewed and, if necessary, adjusted annually.	Group cull discussed and agreed annually. Population model forms part of decision making process.	These will be reviewed in light of cull/count/recruitment/mortality and habitat information.
Data and evidence gathering- Habitat Monitoring		
DMGs should carry out habitat monitoring. Habitat Impact Assessments (HIA) measure progress towards agreed habitat condition targets on both designated sites and the wider deer range.	Monitoring done individually by three members, results from these measured against set habitat targets.	Increase number of property's doing HIA.
HIAs should be carried out on a systematic and regular basis. A three year cycle is the norm but many find annual monitoring useful.	Blanket bog/heath done annually. 40 plots plus JMT (need JMT number of plots in here)	Deliver better coverage over area if possible.
Data is required on other herbivores present and their impact on the habitat.	Distribution of other herbivores included within plan. Sheep/deer/goats areas monitored and differing impacts to be discussed in meetings.	
DMPs should include a section on habitat monitoring methods and procedures and record annual results so as to measure change and record trends.	The DMP contains information on the planned habitat monitoring regime, the group is using the WDBP methodology.	Reviewed on annual basis.
Competence		
It is recommended that in addition to DSC 1 deer managers should also attain DSC 2 or equivalent.	Most of group stalkers are qualified to DMQ2. Group has ascertained training levels among group members.	Any further training can be set out in plan.
Deer managers supplying venison for public consumption are required to certify carcasses as fit for human consumption to demonstrate due diligence. "Trained Hunter" status is required for carcass certification.	100% coverage of DSC 1 which means 100% of carcasses signed of by Trained Hunter.	Ensure any new staff appointed have, or gain DSC 1 with Trained Hunter exemption.
Training		
All DMGs should have a training policy and incorporate it in the DMP	Group has training policy.	Monitor uptake of CPD.
All DMG Members or those acting on their behalf should undergo the necessary training to demonstrate Competence.	Good level of skills within group, quantified in DMP annex 2.9.	Monitor uptake of further training opportunities.
The training policy should promote and record continuing professional development through Best Practice Guidance.	Training policy promotes CPD/training beyond the scope of WDBP.	Identify funding opportunities to promote CPD / training.
Venison Marketing		
Membership of the Scottish Quality Wild Venison scheme is recommended by ADMG.	Not SQWV Members- too costly.	No plans to upgrade
There is evidence of collaborative venison production within the Group	Use same dealer, no collective sales.	Potential for venison processing plant, to be discussed at DMG.
Communications		

<p>DMGs should include a Communications Policy in their DMP. External communication should be directed at parties not directly involved but with an interest in deer management including individuals, local bodies such as community councils, local authorities, local media and other specialist interests.</p>	<p>Communications policy present in DMP. Details internal, local and virtual communications actions.</p>	<p>Update website/minutes/noticeboards as detailed in comms policy.</p>
<p><u>An annual communication programme suitable to local circumstances is advised. This might include a DMG website or a page on www.deer-management.co.uk, an annual Newsletter, annual open meeting, or attending local meetings by invitation.</u></p>	<p>All meetings are open to the public, DMP and minutes available online as are maps and other relevant information.</p>	<p>None</p>
<p>A Deer Management Plan should be accessible and publicly available, and local consultation during its development is advised.</p>	<p>Full local and regional distribution of DMP during drafting. DMP available online and locally for information purposes.</p>	<p>Ensure any further/ongoing comments received on plan are taken into account by the group. Log responses.</p>

<p>Delivery of objective is good, in line with benchmark</p>
<p>Delivery of objective is only partial/ variable in quality</p>
<p>Group is not delivering this element</p>