

ADMG Benchmark Assessment- West Knoydart Deer Management Group

Operation of Group

Area and boundaries

Identify the appropriate boundaries for the group to operate in.

Define appropriate sub populations where applicable

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.

Meetings

DMGs should meet regularly. Two formal meetings per year is the norm but more frequent interaction between members, between meetings, should be encouraged. 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.

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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.

Meetings should operate to an agenda and be accurately minuted. Attendees should be encouraged to participate and agreed actions and decisions should be recorded.

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.

Constitution & Finances

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

Good management and budgeting of finances

Deer Management Plans

All DMGs should have an up to date, effective and forward looking Deer Management Plan (DMP).

The DMP should record all the land management objectives within the DMG area.

Where applicable, the plan should include a rolling 5 year population model

Appropriate use of maps to illustrate relevant detail.

The DMP should identify the public interest aspects of deer management

DMP should make appropriate reference to other species of deer within the DMG area, and provide a level of detail proportionate to this interest.

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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

It is important that all DMG Members should play a full part in the planning process and in the implementation of agreed actions

The DMP may identify potential conflicts and how they can be prevented or addressed to ensure an equitable approach to the shared deer population. Relevant local interests should be consulted on new DMPs and advised of any changes as they come forward.

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.

ADMG Principles of Collaboration

The Principles of Collaboration should be incorporated into all DMG Constitutions and Deer Management Plans.

Best Practice

All deer management should be carried out in accordance with Best Practice.

All Deer Management Plans should reference and follow WDBP which will continue to evolve.

Data and Evidence gathering- Deer counts

Accurate deer counting forms the basis of population modelling. **An ethos that reflects this should be in evidence**

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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.

Recruitment and mortality counts are also essential for population modelling.

Other census methods may be required in some circumstances, eg dung counting in woodland or other concealing habitats or on adjoining open ground.

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.

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.

The Group cull target should be reviewed and, if necessary, adjusted annually.

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.

HIAs should be carried out on a systematic and regular basis. A three year cycle is the norm but many find annual monitoring useful.

Data is required on other herbivores present and their impact on the habitat.

DMPs should include a section on habitat monitoring methods and procedures and record annual results so as to measure change and record trends.

Competence

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It is recommended that in addition to DSC 1 deer managers should also attain DSC 2 or equivalent.

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.

Training

All DMGs should have a training policy and incorporate it in the DMP

All DMG Members or those acting on their behalf should undergo the necessary training to demonstrate Competence.

The training policy should promote and record continuing professional development through Best Practice Guidance.

Venison Marketing

Membership of the Scottish Quality Wild Venison scheme is recommended by ADMG.

There is evidence of collaborative venison production within the Group

Communications

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.

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.

A Deer Management Plan should be accessible **and publicly available**, and local consultation during its development is advised.

Change in Assessment Score

Delivery of objective is good, in line with benchmark

Delivery of objective is only partial/ variable in quality

Group is not delivering this element

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Notes

Correcting Actions required

Boundaries are well established and acknowledged. Geographical boundaries could make more sense if Barisdale and Camusrory were members.

Keep invitation open to Barisdale/Camusrory

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.

Wide stakeholder engagement. Including agri/community interests.

Keep invitations open to all interested in DMG

Meeting 4 times a year. Plus land management meetings.

n/a

Very good participation in Group. Most larger properties attend. Smaller properties correspond by email.

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<p>SNH attend, FCS not relevant. Knoydart forest trust lead contact with FCS. Forest trust also work with private members.</p>	<p>n/a</p>
<p>Meetings work well.</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>n/a</p>

<p>No Constitution, Framework document covers most points.</p>	<p>Consider revision of framework or creation of constitution.</p>
<p>Group does not operate as a financial entity</p>	<p>Consider whether group needs financial basis for example to accept funding.</p>

<p>Plan in draft</p>	<p>Complete by 2015</p>
<p>Included in draft</p>	<p>Final plan to include</p>
<p>Included in draft</p>	<p>Final plan to include</p>
<p>Included in draft</p>	<p>Need mapping software and training. Consider SNH purchase mapping licence and DMG use under licence?? Group keen to be involved in data/mapping DMG project.</p>
<p>Part in previous</p>	<p>To be included</p>
<p>Roe/red/sika included</p>	<p>n/a</p>

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Needs updated to include public interests	To be included
Included in draft	n/a
Includes ref in draft, population section in DMP illustrates potential areas of conflict.	n/a
Group business included in newsletter. Board reports to community.	n/a

In DMP but not in framework	Consider including in framework
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Not in DMP or Framework	Will be included in both.
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Yes in draft plan	To be included
Yes in draft plan	To be included

Group counts regularly, pop model needs finalised	Final pop model in plan
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Counts done regularly	Counting frequency detailed in final plan.
Partial. Mort discussed at meetings, recruitment done individually	Encourage wider uptake of recruitment counts in group for pop model
Low deer populations in new woodland, older plantations open to deer past damage stage.	Not considered a priority for all members

In draft DMP	Revise in DMP if required
Culls discussed between members to ensure objectives not impacted. Current culls are deemed acceptable to all.	Keep in agenda for meetings
In draft DMP	To be included

HIA training done at Kingie. Monitoring done individually by three members	Impacts targets needed, increase number of property's doing HIA.
Blanket bog/heath done annually. 40 plots plus JMT (need JMT number of plots in here)	Discuss ongoing assessment requirements, deliver better coverage over area if possible.
In draft DMP	Sheep/deer areas both monitored and differing impacts to be discussed in meetings.
In draft dmp	Section to be included within final DMP.

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Most at DSC 2	Needs put in plan
Believed to be good levels of skills within Group, although not verified as such.	Ascertain training levels among group members
No training policy at present.	Devise a brief training policy in plan
Good level of skills within Groups, but not quantified as such.	Ascertain training levels among group members
No training policy at present.	Devise a brief training policy in plan
Not SQWV Members- too costly. Use same dealer, no collective sales.	No plans to upgrade Potential for venison processing plant, to be discussed at DMG.
No communications policy as such/ No annual programme. Not promoted.	Brief communications policy required Will use Knoydart Foundation and Kilchoan websites for comms/promotion of DMP. Will use Knoydart Foundation and Kilchoan websites for comms/promotion of DMP.

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