

West Knoydart Deer Management group
Minutes of meeting held at Inverie village hall
Friday 11th April 2014, 11.15 am

Present: Iain Biggart, Jim Brown, Peter Fletcher, Davie Newton (chair), Lewis Pate, Fred Rous, Lester Standen, Iain Wilson.

1. Apologies: Eric Delwart, Grant Holroyd, Jamie Lindsey, Tommy McManmon, Rick Rohde, Lorna Schofield, Graeme Taylor.

2. Minutes of meeting held on 26th November were agreed.

3. Review of action points

Action point	Who by	Progress
Information and invitation of membership to Doug Hawthorn	NT	NT not in contact
Carry out habitat monitoring, May 2014	All	Ready to go
Adjust natural mortality recording to only Red deer and on behalf of WKDMG rather than just KF.	LP	Done
Circulate data records and continue to add to/amend as necessary	DN	Add charts
Complete objectives scoring	All	To do
Finish compiling objectives spreadsheet and append to DMP	JB	To do
Draft statement of DMP purpose and circulate	JB	To do
Informal meeting to draft DMP	DN	To do
Add count detail to density map	JB	To do
Draft map of seasonal (summer/winter) stag/hind ranges	JB	To do
Look at feasibility of allocating culls by area	JB	To do
Deer Count	JB/IB/IW/LS	Done
Confirm meeting dates	JB/GT	To do

4. Review of 2013-14 season cull

See attached data sheet for totals. Nothing has been heard from UPM Tilhill regarding Sgamadail, but it is thought that nothing had been culled. JB reported hinds in good condition, with 5 having been over 9 stone. KF average age was 6 and weight (including yearlings) 8st 06lbs, with the heaviest 10st 09lbs. Calves were also in reasonable condition, averaging 4st 12lbs. JMT had not shot as many hinds as hoped, due to stags being culled in preference on ground where regen. is being encouraged. Inverguserain hinds had averaged 7st 09lbs, and 7 years old with calves at 3st 12lbs. A stag with a broken leg had been shot in December. Kilchoan hinds (excluding yearlings) averaged 8st 01lbs and calves 4st 05lbs. Cull had been slightly reduced due to expected heavy mortality. There was a discussion about the merits of increasing culling in such a situation. IB reported that the increased hind

population target of 600 relates to the economics of stalking lets, with 9 weeks hind stalking to be let per year.

5. Deer count, natural mortality and cull proposals for 2014-15

The count was carried out end of February/beginning of March, and details are on the attached data sheet. Overall the population is very similar to last year, but calf recruitment is reduced back to what would normally be expected at 37%. There will have been significant natural mortality since the count, due to the prolonged wet winter, particularly of calves and older beasts. Kilchoan reported 20 found dead (10 stags, 4 hinds and 6 calves) and KF 21 (13 stags, 2 hinds and 6 calves). A number have also now been reported by walkers via the sheet in the KF display room, including some on Camusrory.

2014/15 Proposals

KF : 90 stags, 100 hinds plus calves, plus any from woodland blocks.

JMT : 12 stags in season, and maybe a total of 50, will try to get more hinds next season.

Inverguserain : 8 stags, 8 hinds.

Kilchoan : 32 stags, and 80 to 90 hinds plus calves.

Airor grazings will cull any getting into woodland establishment.

6. Habitat monitoring 2014

KF plan to carry out from 5th to 9th May, with KFT doing woodland monitoring, and JMT also doing in May. LS will support Kilchoan who plan to expand on monitoring already started.

7. Deer Management Plan Development

Little progress. DN, LSt & JB to meet by end of May to draft.

8. AOB

- LS asked if Peter could be added to the email list. He also reported that they are realigning the deer fencing at Inbhir Dhorcail, to open up woods around the burn, and better protect vulnerable pines at the west end.
- IW reported that he will be deer fencing the parks on the Black Hills side of the Guserein, by upgrading existing stock fences between the two plantations.
- LS mentioned the RACCE committee review of deer management led by Rob Gibson MSP, and suggested that we should be looking to make sure we implement the recommendations. LS will summarise the review.
- There was discussion of the press articles carrying inaccurate population data (26% drop over 7 years) about KDMG. The source of this is the Scottish Parliament Information Centre (SPICE) data, and compares KDMG count data from 1996 (DCS) and 2003, which was not a full group count and so a much lower count. It was decided that we are too late to respond to the articles, but we could do more to present WKDMG data locally. For this purpose it would be useful to have graphs to demonstrate deer population

changes, long term for the 'Old Knoydart Estate' data, and WKDMG for as far back as we can.

Confirmed 2014 meeting dates

- Tuesday July 22nd
- Tuesday November 18th

Action Points

Information and invitation of membership to Doug Hawthorn	JB
Carry out habitat monitoring, May 2014	All
Circulate data records and continue to add to/amend as necessary	DN
Complete objectives scoring	All
Finish compiling objectives spreadsheet and append to DMP	JB
Draft statement of DMP purpose and circulate	JB
Informal meeting to draft DMP	DN/LSt/JB
Add count detail to density map	JB
Draft map of seasonal (summer/winter) stag/hind ranges	JB
Look at feasibility of allocating culls by area	JB
Add Peter to email list	JB
Summarise RACCE review recommendations	LSt
Prepare charts of population change	DN/JB