

West Knoydart Deer Management Group
Minutes of meeting held at Inverie Village Hall
Monday 30th November 2015, 11.15

Present:

Iain Biggart, Jim Brown, Victor Clements, Peter Fletcher, Mike Kenny, Davie Newton (chair), Fred Rous, Lester Standen, Graeme Taylor, Grant Holroyd (last part).

1. **Apologies:** Eric Delwart, Ami Dow, Iain Wilson.
2. **Minutes of meeting** held on 23rd June 2015 were agreed.

3. Review of action points

Action point	Who by	Progress
Outline KF/JMT working relationship re culling at Li.	JB	Still to do
Minutes to be posted on KF website, with links from KE, JMT and poss. ADMG sites	JB	KF site still to be updated. JMT to post.
Keep display area folder up to date; minutes, etc	JB	Done, ongoing
Add count detail to density map	JB	Not done
Draft map of seasonal (summer/winter) stag/hind ranges	JB	Not done
Append KF Goat management plan to DMP	JB	Done
Update DMP detail and circulate for comments back by end July	JB/all	Done, no comments received.
Look to use new SNH GIS system for count/cull data processing when available	GT	System is still on trial
Habitat impact data display system	GT	Awaiting
Circulate notes from meeting with ED	DN	Still to do
Circulate habitat impact monitoring results	RM/IB	Still to do
Co-ordinate re. stag culling at Li & C.D.	LS/IB	Done
Arrange dates for VC visit mid July	VC/IB/LS	Done
Assist with finalising and presenting DMP	VC/IB	Ongoing

4. Stag season reports and hind cull updates

- Kilchoan – IB reported 32 stags culled, Average age 9.2 years and weight 14st-06lbs, with the heaviest being 17st-12lbs. Stags mostly good condition, rut late, difficult to find shoot-able stags early in season with often only one to go after on the day. 32 hinds and 14 calves culled to date, with a target of 90, but may reduce this to 75. Had found 11 natural mortalities so far this year, including the end of last winter.
- Foundation – JB and FR reported 66 stags culled, average age 9.9 years and weight 13st-13lbs, with the heaviest also being 17st-12lbs. Agreed that rut was late, with groups of mature stags still together at the end of September, few travelling stags and some stags still with the hinds throughout November. Stags had seemed light weight though generally in good condition, and a

higher proportion of middle aged stags taken than previously. However, average age and weights have come out as per normal. 25 hinds and 10 calves culled to date, out of an initial target of 70 which has since been increased to 80 to compensate for reduced JMT hind cull target. 21 natural mortalities had been found from last winter. 10 sheep had been gathered out of Coire Each by IW.

- Invergusein and Sgamadail – no reports but JB thought IW had about 8 stags, including 2 taken by KF on his land. Jamie Broadfoot is maintaining the Sgamadail woodland fence.
- JMT – LS reported a higher than usual cull of 84 stags, plus 2 from inside fences. The in-season cull had been maximised in order to try and prevent habitat damage later in the winter, which would previously have been dealt with as it became necessary. JMT are not applying for an Out of Season Authorisation because the application process had become too onerous to be worthwhile, considering the limitations and refusals received last year. The majority of carcasses had been left on the hill due to difficulties of extraction from remote locations. Some had haunches and loins recovered. The specific carcass outcome was not differentiated in the cull record and DN asked if this could be done in future. Also JMT have a night shooting license, primarily for roe, to protect tree seedlings at Li and have had 3 roe and 2 reds so far. They have reduced their hind cull target to about 20, due to their game dealer dropping the price, and KF will now take some extra to compensate and maintain the lower density zone.
- There followed some discussion:
 - IB thought that the KDMG members were now of a mind that JMT out of season shooting might be acceptable if it meant less stags had to be culled overall. DN and LS pointed out that this had always been made clear, ie less stags need to be culled as the individuals that are causing the habitat damage can be targeted in the winter.
 - The leaving of carcasses on the hill was thought to be unacceptable by some, as it is perceived as being wasteful. Others thought it provided valuable resources into the ecosystem. It was questioned what was different between culled animals, and natural mortalities being left out?
 - GT said that the neighbours who have issues with the situation should be present at this meeting so that resolutions can be found. It was confirmed that Barisdale and Camusrory have an open invitation to attend but to date have not done so, and that the whole peninsula was still thought to be the sensible management unit in terms of deer range.
 - Also noted that KDMG had invited WKDMG members to rejoin.
- Foot count is planned for as soon as possible after the end of the hind season .JB and IB both away mid-March, so aim to do before that if possible.

5. Deer Management Plan Update

JB confirmed that the main body of the plan was finished and no comments had been received back; so main parts still to do are maps and population model.

If JMT DMP is being updated, this also needs to be appended.

GT asked if it could be sent to him before Christmas, to give more time for feedback.

It may be necessary for an additional meeting between DN and the KDMG chair, along with SNH in order to formalise DMP relationships , before end of February.

6. Collaboration with Neighbours

A reminder to all that we need to keep up sharing information and activities.

JB said that a bit more communication from JMT would have been nice during the stag season, as he was not aware that they were planning to shoot so many stags, and that KF would probably have reduced their stag cull, had they known.

7. AOB

8. Proposed 2016 meeting dates

- Tuesday March 8th 2016
- Tuesday June 21st 2016
- Tuesday November 29th

Presentation by Victor Clements

- There is to be a Ministerial panel for review of closed seasons and out of season authorisation application process, between now and April. The implication of the review is that they will be looking at the criteria required for authorisations, but also want to ensure ability to limit damage and deer welfare are protected. Consideration is to be given to socio-economic criteria.
- The proposed KDMG DMP was outlined, along with some possible population model options for consideration.

Action Points

Outline KF/JMT working relationship re culling at Li.	JB
Minutes to be posted on JMT and poss. ADMG sites	JB/LS
Keep display area folder up to date; minutes, etc	JB
Add count detail to density map	JB
Draft map of seasonal (summer/winter) stag/hind ranges	JB
Woodland & fences maps	GH
Population model	JB/DN/GT
DMP to GT before Christmas	JB
Look to use new SNH GIS system for count/cull data processing when available	GT
Habitat impact data display system	GT
Circulate notes from meeting with ED	DN
Circulate habitat impact monitoring results	RM/IB
Assist with finalising and presenting DMP	VC/JB
Foot Count	IB/JB
Additional meeting before end Feb.	DN/GT
Re-affirm invitation of membership to Camusrory and Barisdale	DN
Differentiate carcasses not recovered	LS