

# **BALQUHIDDER DEER MANAGEMENT GROUP**

## **Part 1: Deer Management Working Plan 2016 - 2021**

Updated May 2019

## Preface

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Balquhiddier Deer Management Group (BqDMG) DMP was updated by a small working group of BqDMG members and incorporating staff from Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) and Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park Authority (LLTNPA) in 2016.

This update is very much driven by the Scottish Parliament's Rural Affairs Climate Change and Environment Committee (RACCE) enquiry into deer management and also by The Land Reform (Scotland) Bill.

In August 2014, BqDMG carried out an assessment against the DMG Benchmark & Public Interest Objectives. As a result of this assessment BqDMG aimed to bring the 2011 DMP up to date to show we are a 'fit for purpose' group working in a collaborative manner and with the aim of highlighting how we are currently delivering on some aspects of the identified Public Interests but to also agree a suite of actions to ensure we are assisting to deliver the range of Public Interests in the Scottish Governments strategy "Scotland's Wild Deer: A National Approach".

The main aspects of this plan are to

- Encourage open dialogue and understanding of deer management within the BqDMG, not just between members, but also the wider public.
- Ensure an agreed habitat monitoring protocol is undertaken by all members
- Ensure that cull targets are set in an open and transparent manner using the most up to date information available.

In 2017, the BqDMG took the decision to engage a paid Secretary to undertake the administrative responsibilities of the Group. One of their main roles is to ensure that the Deer Management Plan is up-to-date. In February 2018, the DMP has been re-designed to be more easily updated and will be reviewed on an annual basis or as required, with a systematic review taking place at the end of the five year period.

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## 1. Introduction

The Balquhiddier Deer Management Plan (DMP) consists of three main parts:

- **Part 1: Deer Management Working Plan:** The Working Plan sets out the most up to date information on culls, counts and population targets as well as specific actions the Deer Management Group (DMG) will undertake throughout the life of the plan. The Working Plan will be reviewed at least annually, with a systematic review of the whole plan taking place at the end of the five year period.
- **Part 2: Deer Management Plan Information:** This sets out background information and details the Public Interest relating to Deer Management in the local area. Information on individual management units is also contained here.
- **Part 3: Group Operation:** This section contains information relating to the Operation and Functioning of the DMG.

## 2. Group Objectives & Targets

The purpose of the Balquhiddier Deer Management Group is to manage deer on a collective basis, in accordance with Scottish Government's 20 year vision for sustainable deer management - Scotland's Wild Deer: A National Approach (2015), the Code of Practice on Deer Management (2012), and in a manner that integrates different land-use objectives, recognising that compromises over objectives may be required where conflict occurs.

The overall purpose of this Working Plan is to provide:

- The necessary up-to-date information to assist the DMG in making informed, collective management decisions at a landscape level;
- An agreed set of actions to ensure that deer management in the local area will be delivered according to the targets set out and agreed in the Deer Management Plan;
- An agreed pattern of collaborative arrangements to try and ensure that the actions are implemented and their effectiveness monitored.

### 3. Counts

The table below shows the count data for Red Deer on the Open Range.

Year	Stags	Hinds	Calves	Total	Density (deer/km <sup>2</sup> )	% BqDMG Area Covered
2000	553	1373	472	2398	10.2	82%
2002	516	1341	357	2214	7.8	93%
2010	644	1185	398	2227	4.9	93%
2015	619	1157	396	2172	5.1	96% <sup>1</sup>
2017	642	1069	402	2113	6.6	85% <sup>1</sup>
2018	444	1017	405	1886	6.8	77%
2019	984	2051	608	3643	13.9	94%
2020						
2021						

### 4. Culls

The table below shows the Red Deer culls for the Open Range – the maps are in the [Appendix – Count Maps](#).

Year	Stags	Hinds	Calves	Total
2007-2008	182	209	53	444
2008-2009	146	216	68	430
2009-2010	201	381	93	675
2010-2011	175	262	63	500
2011-2012	243	239	73	555
2012-2013	367	377	135	879
2013-2014	256	314	112	682
2014-2015	271	319	177	767
2015-2016	208	230	78	516
2016-2017	182	189	40	411
2017-2018	275	330	124	729
2018-2019	232	395	155	782
2019-2020				
2020-2021				

<sup>1</sup> Both the 2015 & 2017 count, included all FCS Loch Katrine 9,614 ha – both north (4,846ha) and south (4,768ha) – FCS South Katrine is not within the BqDMG.

The table below shows the Red Deer culls in Woodland.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Stags</b>	<b>Hinds</b>	<b>Calves</b>	<b>Total</b>
2007-2008	151	156	114	421
2008-2009	114	152	109	375
2009-2010	64	102	35	201
2010-2011	18	22	10	50
2011-2012	125	164	97	386
2012-2013	214	204	140	558
2013-2014	213	261	145	619
2014-2015	183	183	88	454
2015-2016	126	78	48	252
2016-2017	191	125	93	409
2017-2018	281	206	135	622
2018-2019	191	159	94	444
2019-2020				
2020-2021				

The table below shows the Roe Deer culls for the Group.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Stags</b>	<b>Hinds</b>	<b>Calves</b>	<b>Total</b>
2006-2007	39	39	20	98
2007-2008	47	48	31	126
2008-2009	33	71	32	136
2009-2010	46	92	31	169
2010-2011	27	31	12	70
2011-2012	61	87	29	177
2012-2013	67	46	23	136
2013-2014	35	58	16	109
2014-2015	44	68	28	140
2015-2016	-	-	-	-
2016-2017	26	22	8	56
2017-2018 <sup>2</sup>	119	167	75	391
2018-2019	87	101	76	264
2019-2020				
2020-2021				

<sup>2</sup> This elevated cull number is due to improved data collation rather than an increase in cull effort.

## 5. Population Models

BqDMG will use information gathered from habitat monitoring, counts and cull reporting to agree and set culls on an annual basis. Generally, open range DMGs are able to apply simple models to their population based on deer counts and subsequent culls. However, given the level of open woodland within BqDMG, another layer of complexity is added as it is difficult to estimate the deer population resident within the woodlands. We do know that during the late summer/ rut, woodland deer, particularly stags, do wander onto the open range and no doubt contribute a proportion of the overall stag cull of the open range. The woodland stags that are culled on the open hill during the rut are likely benefitting all properties as a greater stag cull is being permitted from these marauding woodland deer than the open range population should technically allow.

This following population model, which will be updated annually, has been set using current average open-range cull figure, excluding count and cull data from woodland properties.

### **POPULATION MODEL – TO FOLLOW**

It is generally accepted that for BqDMG standard population modelling is not feasible. This is due mainly to the heavy afforestation of the Group area and the inability over the years to correlate the cull figures with the number of deer thought to be on the ground.

However there is still a requirement for the setting of cull targets that deliver the overall population targets that provide objectives to be met. This is covered in further detail in Section 2.1 in Part 2.

## 6. Group Action Plan

### 1. Operational Actions

	Action	Timescale	Person/ organisation responsible and method	2019 Update
1.1.	<b>Area and boundaries</b>	End of December	All members to provide info	Current boundaries are felt to be effective and sensible for managing deer at a suitable scale. Maps have been updated with correct boundary information and locations of deer fences. As part of SNH HIA grant secretary to have GIS training.
1.2.	<b>Membership</b>	Ongoing	Appropriate Members	Group to continue to engage with all property owners to encourage membership of group. Most neighbouring DMGs represented at meetings.
1.3.	<b>Meetings</b>	Bi-annual	All members	Maintain current frequency of meetings and continue to encourage full attendance.
		Ongoing	Secretary	Ensure required information - culls/ count / holding data/ livestock stocking rates etc. is provided to group at least 1 week in advance of meeting.
		ASAP	Chair and Vice-Chair	Set up Exec Group to help to coordinate activity
1.4.	<b>Constitution &amp; Finances</b>	Ongoing	Secretary	Constitution in place. A budget was produced for 2018/19, the reasons for building up a buffer were discussed in the Autumn 2018 meeting – it was decided that the Subs would be left at the current level.
1.5.	<b>Deer Management Plans</b>	Ongoing	Secretary	DMP is updated when information is available and when objectives change. Secretary has had GIS training to maps can be updated as required going forward. Continue to engage with local stakeholders, such as local CCs and LLTNPA.



		Ongoing	All Members	Effective contribution is probably more patchy than attendance suggests which suggests the requirement for an Exec Group and Working groups to tackle individual issues. Chair and Vice-Chair to discuss.
1.6.	<b>Code of Practice on Deer Management</b>	Ongoing	All Members	Members encouraged to follow Deer Code.
1.7.	<b>ADMG Principles of Collaboration</b>	Ongoing	All members	Members encouraged to "Collaboration ~ Communication ~ Compromise"
1.8.	<b>Best Practice</b>	Ongoing	All Members	Members encouraged to follow BPG.
1.9.	<b>Data and Evidence gathering- Deer counts</b>	April 2019	SNH/ FES/ All Members	Members to follow Count Protocol as set out in Part 3 of DMP. Foot Count carried out on 20th and 23rd Feb 2018 SNH to fund helicopter count in Winter 2018/19
		Annually	All Members	Continue to improve foot count coverage.
		Annually	All Members	Improve reporting of Recruitment and mortality counts.
		Annually	Woodland Members	Need to support woodland properties in using other census methods to provide a wider/ clearer picture of population. Standard population model not considered to be appropriate for this group, as unknown number of deer in woodland.
1.10.	<b>Data and evidence gathering- Culls</b>	Annually	All members	Continue to set (June meeting) and implement culls based on discussions over individual objectives and public interest objectives.
		Monthly	All members	Monthly Cull returns to be sent in promptly to Secretary. These will then be disseminated around DMG members.
		Annually	Relevant Members	Authorisations should be communicated to Secretary - Glen Finglas and FES both has applied for OOS & Night shooting Authorisations.

1.11.	<b>Data and evidence gathering-Habitat Monitoring</b>	Ongoing	Some members doing HIA	Members to inform if other means of population assessments are being used and provide information as required or consider whether population assessment is relative to their property.
		June 2019	FES	Paul Bekier has offered to draft a strategy for determining occupancy within woodland areas.
		Spring 2019	SNH/ Secretary	Upland HIAs training day to be arranged as required.
		Every 2 years	All Members	Members encouraged to carry out HIAs on a regular cycle - 2 years - as per the HIA Monitoring Protocol.
		Every 2 years	All Members	Members already carrying out HIAs are encouraged to share their results with the DMG.
1.12.	<b>Competence</b>	Ongoing	All Members	Annual Audit of Competence undertaken to ensure good recording of training.
1.13.	<b>Training</b>	Ongoing	All Members	Training Policy been added to DMP Part 3 and all members are encouraged to follow it. Training Courses have been discussed and Members are to contact the Secretary if there is a training requirement.
1.14.	<b>Venison Marketing</b>	Ongoing	All Members	Secretary has listed which members have SQWV status. 10 out of the 23 properties actively manage deer have their own SQWV larder or use an SQWV assured larder (as with the WTS using FES).
1.15.	<b>Communications</b>	Ongoing	All Members	As well as meeting minutes and updates to the DMP, a Communications Policy has been written and published on the website. Members to provide early communication of the intention to apply for authorisations.

## 2. Public Interest Action

	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Person/organisation responsible and method.</b>	<b>2019 Update</b>
2.1.	Actions to develop mechanisms to manage deer	April 2019	SNH/ Chair, Vice-Chair & Sec	Participated in ADMG Health Check prior to SNH assessment in April 2019
		Spring 2019	Chair, Vice-Chair & Sec	Investigate whether an Exec and Working Groups should be set up
		Annually	Secretary	DMP updated on an annual basis and upload to website
2.2.	Actions for the delivery of designated features into Favourable Condition.	Annually	Secretary	Designated site data up to date.
		Annually	Relevant Members	Members actively working with SNH to improve condition of designated features. Edinchip have increased their cull efforts on the lower ground and SNH are to re-assess the condition of the designated features Spring 2019.
2.3.	Actions to manage deer to retain existing native woodland cover and improve woodland condition in the medium to long term.	Annually	All Members	Members asked to look at maps created by secretary which show levels of NWSS herbivore impacts and asked to ground truth them to enable discussions based on current data condition  Actions will come out of above analysis by members.
2.4.	Actions to demonstrate DMG contribution to the Scottish Government woodland expansion target of 25% woodland cover.	Annually	All Members	Members have been asked as part of the annual audit whether they are planning any new woodland creation. There are a couple of properties that are intending to plant 2019/20. Info about new woodland creation to be sent to the Secretary – preferably in the form of shape files. BqDMG will work with land

				managers and agencies to identify and facilitate more woodland creation using the SRDP grant system and have discussions at meetings to consider population movements.
2.5.	Actions to monitor and manage deer impacts in the wider countryside.	Autumn 2018	Secretary	The £1,800 HIA grant from SNH was used to collate HIA data that has been collected to date and provide training for the Secretary for the mapping and analysis of that data.
		October 2018	Secretary	HIA protocol has been developed and is in Part 3 of DMP.
		Spring 2019	Interested Members	Members attended the training days organised at Inverlochlarig and Montrose Estate for Upland HIAs and representatives from the DMG attended the Woodland HIA day at Glenfalloch. The NPA are keen to host another woodland training day in Spring 2019
		June 2019	All Members	HIA targets need to set? All properties to aim for moderate to low impacts???
		Annually	Secretary	DMP will be updated as HIA info is submitted to Group.
2.6.	Actions to improve Scotland's ability to store carbon by maintaining or improving ecosystem health.	Annually	All Members	Members to inform Group about any peatland projects and woodland projects that they are planning. Glen Finglas and Edinchip are applying for Peatland ACTION this spring with help from LLTNPA
2.7.	Actions to reduce or mitigate the risk of establishment of non-native species.	Annually	All Members	Members reminded to follow agreed protocol if INNS are encountered
		Annually	Relevant Members	Goat Sub-Group has not met recently as culling is being carried out by relevant members.

2.8.	Actions to protect designated historic and cultural features from being damaged by deer e.g. by trampling.	ASAP	All Members	Secretary mapping fencing for DMG area. Secretary has drafted a map of the fences within the DMG for which information was received. It is not complete and needs updating. Members to send info to Secretary to that map can be finished.
2.9.	Actions to contribute to delivering higher standards of competence in deer management.			Annual Audit of Competence completed and plan updated accordingly. 21 out of 23 properties where deer are actively managed have personnel or access to personal with DMQ1 as a minimum.
2.10.	Actions to Identify and promote opportunities contributing to public health and wellbeing.	Spring 2019	SNH	DVC issues at Lochearnhead have been resolved by open discussions with members involved and an increased cull effort and fencing repairs in that area – this has also lead to an improvement in the designated wood at Edinchip. SNH to carry out survey in Spring 2019.
		Jan 2019	Secretary	Will Diamond has provided us with an up-to-date list of DVCs in the area & has provided DVC Reporting Template which is on the website.
		Jan 2019	Secretary	Shared carcass handling and processing videos on website.
		Jan 2019	Secretary	Secretary to circulate updates at spring & autumn meetings regarding notifiable diseases, such as CWD. Info on CWD & Lyme's Disease to be added to website and to Part 3 of DMP.

		Annually	All Members	<p>HFTSH up to date.</p> <p>Members to contact secretary if information needs updating.</p> <p>Secretary updated plan with information about the number of DMG Members that are in the local Mountain Rescue teams (6 people)</p> <p>Members asked to engaged with the public in a positive way when out stalking.</p>
2.11.	Actions to maximise economic benefits associated with deer.	Annually	All Members	DMP will be updated as required.
2.12.	Actions to minimise the economic costs of deer, and ensure deer management is cost-effective.	Annually	All Members	DMP will be updated as required.
2.13.	Actions to ensure effective communication on deer management issues.	Annually	All Members	Engagement with local community through website and emailing local representatives. Secretary to email CC and update DMP with current CC Chairs.
2.14.	Actions to ensure deer welfare is taken fully into account at individual animal and population level.	Annually	All Members	<p>Members are reminded to follow BPG and to implement welfare actions to ensure highest regard at all times.</p> <p>Cull and mortality data to be recorded and utilised to help inform discussions.</p>

### 3. Monitoring & Review Schedule

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Who?</b>	<b>Year 1 2016- 2017</b>	<b>Year 2 2017- 2018</b>	<b>Year 3 2018- 2019</b>	<b>Year 4 2019- 2020</b>	<b>Year 5 2020- 2021</b>
Foot Count	DMG Members	Spring	Spring	Spring	Spring	Spring
Habitat Training	DMG Members	Spring	Spring			
Habitat Monitoring	DMG Members	Spring	Spring	Spring	Spring	Spring
Set & Agree Culls	DMG Members	June	June	June	June	June
Collate DMG Information & Review Working Plan Actions	DMG Secretary	Annually	Annually	Annually	Annually	Review DMP – Spring

Balquhiddel Deer Management Group

## **Appendix - Count Maps**

The maps are held digitally on the BqDMG website

<http://balquhiddelmg.deer-management.co.uk/>



## Acronyms and Abbreviations

ADMG	Association of Deer Management Groups
BqDMG	Balquhider Deer Management Group
CC	Community Councils
DCS	Deer Commission for Scotland
DMG	Deer Management Group
DMP	Deer Management Plan
FCS	Forestry Commission Scotland
GTF	Great Trossachs Forest
HFTSH	Heading for the Scottish Hills
INNS	Invasive Non-native Species
ITDMG	Inveraray & Tyndrum Deer Management Group
LLTNP	Loch Lomond & Trossachs National Park
LLTNPA	Loch Lomond & Trossachs National Park Authority
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NSA	National Scenic Area
NWSS	Native Woodland Survey of Scotland
OOS	Out of Season
PACEC	Public & Corporate Economic Consultants
RACCE	Rural, Affairs, Climate Change and Environment Committee
RAFE	Rural Affairs, Food & Environment Research
RTA	Road Traffic Accident
SAC	Special Areas of Conservation
SNH	Scottish Natural Heritage
SPDMG	South Perthshire Deer Management Group
SQWV	Scottish Quality Wild Venison
SRDP	Scottish Rural Development Programme
SSSI	Sites of Special Scientific Interest