

Balquhiddar Deer Management Group

Balquhiddar Hall, 7.30pm, 6th June 2017

Paul Bekier, Malcolm Waliter, Alex fenton, Ian Dingwall, Malcolm McNaughton, Nicola Colquhoun, Emma Paterson, Philip Gordon, Laura Robertson PC200, Will Diamond PC879, Richard Eadington, Alan Sneddon, John Sinclair, Falcon Frost, Tom Turnbull, Jimmy Irvine, Mike Luti, Fraser Lamont, George Coyne, David Thow, Billy Ronald.

Agenda

1. Apologies

- David Lowes

2. Matters arising and minutes of the last meeting

- Minutes were passed. It was agreed that the minutes would be posted on the website rather than sending round from now on.

3. 2016/17 cull

- Falcon to circulate. Those estates that have not yet sent in figures to do so.

4. 2017 deer count / Falcon Frost

- 4.96/km² over group area according to group count
- 461 head more than last count (this takes into account estates that have not provided figures)
- Recruitment seemed to be in high 30s%
- May be opportunity for FC to count neighbouring lands in future counts
- FC will commit to group counts every two years (either by helicopter or foot)
- FC feels foot counts may be underestimating numbers
- SNH have a helicopter count pencilled in for 2018/19 that will cover whole group
- SNH helicopter count will be every 5/6 or 7 years depending on finances
- Group will continue to count every two years

5. Proposed 2017/18 deer culls

- FC produced figures showing high browsing impact outside of fence.
- FC announced they would have to significantly increase cull targets
- FC North Katrine currently sitting at around 20 deer/km². Target would be for around 7/km².
- The group had a lengthy discussion on the impacts of an increased FC cull.
- Jimmy Irvine to contact Blaircreich again.
- FC let neighbours know when cull targets have been confirmed.

6. DMG Deer Management Plan / ongoing discussion

- It was suggested that Scotgov is keeping a very close eye on Management Plan development
- It was stressed that the Management Plan should be a working document
- National park funding may be available in key areas
 - Habitat Monitoring
 - Designated sites
 - Improving native Woodland
- All properties urged to complete HIA
- Plans will be reassessed in 2019.

7. ADMG report

- Likely to be no statutory change at present
- A government working group has been set up to steer deer management
- Herbivore Impact Assessments will be key for proper management going forward
- There will be incentives for good management, and penalties for poor management.
- 42 of 44 deer groups have a Management Plan (37 available online)
- Feedback from above suggests that small cull operations will be exempt from business tax
- ADMG have increased subscription rates (£4/stag, £3/hind, £1 calf)

8. SNH report

- SNH have £8 million available for peat restoration projects
- With Ecoli issues in the past, SNH are advising that all providers get SWQV assured
- Tom Turnbull to feed back info about gut shot in regards to current best practice
- There have been 4 cases of CWD in Sweden so far. Members should refer to the British Deer Society website for the latest information and advice.
- SNH got ECAF funding which is available for HIAs
- Peat money is available for on the ground work.
- NP has employed a Peatland Project Officer, who will complete paperwork, surveys and applications

9. National Park report

- Peat money is available for on the ground work.
- NP has employed a Peatland Project Officer, who will complete paperwork, surveys and applications
- Falcon to be on Park Land Management Access group
- Focus will be switching to improving woodland habitat

10. AGM, Accounts and Election of Office Bearers

- ADMG invoiced £120 for web hosting
- Discussion on whether the group required a paid secretary. Tom to find associated costs.
- BDMG sub to increase to £40 annual

- Office bearers remain unchanged

11. Any other Business

- Large number of deer related road traffic accidents being reported.
- Will Diamond PC and Ian Dingwall to collaborate over above issue
- Jimmy suggested the group needed to think about setting up a sub group to deal with the issue of feral goats
- It was noted that there were still thought to be feral pigs in the area

- Laura Robertson is the new wildlife officer and is based at Callander
- LR handed out info about Rural Watch Scotland, which can help inform and stay informed about any crime in the area.
- LR will try to attend DMG meetings as possible

12. Date of next meeting

Date of next meeting is Tuesday 31st Oct, 7.30pm at Balquhiddier Hall