

## **Upper Deeside and Donside Deer Management Group**

### **Minutes of Meeting**

**held at Keiloch, Invercauld**

**20<sup>th</sup> April 2017**

#### **Attendees**

Mark Nicolson – Mar Estate  
Roddy d’Anyers Willis – Savills (outgoing Chair)  
David Frew – Mar Lodge  
Angus McNicol – Gairnshiel, Home Beat and Baddoch (incoming Chair)  
Richard Gledson - Delnadamp  
Adrian Walker - Allargue  
Rebecca Kimber Danger - Corndavon  
Andrew Salvesen – Dinnet Moor  
Chris Murphy – Mar Lodge  
Dr Linzi Sievwright – Consultant  
Richard Greenlaw - Glenavon  
Neil Brown - Allargue

#### **Apologies**

Iain Hope - SNH  
Clive Meikle – Bidwells (Glenavon)  
Tom Willis – Savills (secretary)  
Will Reid - Baddoch  
Arthur Fernie – Mar Estate

#### **Minutes of last meeting**

- Minutes of last meeting approved.

#### **Election of office bearers**

- Chairman - Angus McNicol suggested by RDW and proposed by MMN. Group in agreement to appoint Angus.
- Secretary – controlled from Invercauld Office. Group in agreement to appoint Tom Willis as secretary.

#### **Working plan**

- All cull returns and count date received. Draft to be updated post meeting.
- Working Plan to facilitate group being as proactive as possible and plan what to do next, primarily relating to culls and Public Interest.

#### **Count**

- Density West 8.51 per sq km (2013 9.86 per sq km) – reduction seen mostly in the hinds.
- Density East 0.34 per sq km

#### **Culls**

- West 345 stags, 470 hinds, 231 calves (similar to 2016, although some reduction in hind cull across group)
- Corrected Home Beat stag cull to 27.

- Roe cull – better reporting on roe cull since previous years.

### Annual Report

- Proposed to be uploaded online to show general group data rather than individual estate data.
- AS – reporting accurate roe cull returns can be challenging where they are incomplete through unavailability of data.
- 1<sup>st</sup> April – 31<sup>st</sup> March – cull reporting season (inc all cull methods and time periods)
- LS – difficult to get data on deer shot out of season, only a legal requirement to provide information if SNH asked for it.
- Population model – caution required due to deer movement between DMG's. Not surprising if neighbouring DMG's with high deer densities results in net immigration into the group.
- **LS to circulate Annual Report for review before it goes on the internet.**

### Cull proposals

- If landholdings have a very clear target density, these can be submitted and collated on a group level. The aim is to achieve a deer population that will achieve everyone's objectives.
- Population model to be used to calculate path to get to the desired density.
- Reduction cull decisions to be considered – i.e. 5 year long term reduction, 2 year short term reduction.

### Mar Lodge Section 7

- To be concluded early as far as reasonably practical.
- Steering group welcomed SNH and NTS approval to end the S7.
- NTS section of DMP will need to be re-written in part to reflect this development.
- Although Mar Lodge S7 lifted – monitoring will continue to be scrutinised.

### Population modelling

- Population model predicted 7.4 per sq km deer density.
- Biggest increase from prediction in 2017 count was in stag numbers.
- Decide the groups sporting cull first, then do the habitat monitoring and decide the cull required for the habitat requirements.
- Group density of 1,800 deer (6.5 per sq km) for a sporting cull of 250 stags.
- Stalkers to count calves and do sample counts.
- Recruitment ranges from 13% to 40% over the range of the group.
- Calving rates can be underestimated – 40% calving rate suggested as realistic.
- Sample counts should not take into account ages, should be based on number of adults with young.
- Home Beat 2017 count data did not reflect the numbers expected through the population model in the 2014 DMP, 100 additional stags present.
- Might take a while for a heavy reduction of hind numbers, could lead to an ingress of stags coming into the territory.

### Issues arising regarding deer movement

- Does deer fencing in the Angus Glens lead to higher deer numbers further up the wider DMG?
- **Better means of communication required during the hind cull between different stalkers and members (keep a close monitoring during the season). Secretary to request hind cull regularly during the latter part of the season.**
- Storm Frank fence repairs – has that had an impact on deer numbers?
- St Andrews Braemar fence was also down.

## Proposed culls (Update)

- Mar stags 45, hinds 100, calves 30 (as previous)
- Mar Lodge stags 180, hinds 150 on sporting area, (as previous)
- Home Beat stags 30, hinds to go up to 120 from 100
- Baddoch stags 30, 60 hinds
- Glenavon goes up to stags 50, hinds up to 90, 55 calves
- Habitat monitoring to add another layer in the discussions re culls.

## Habitat Impact Methodology

- North Geldie to be re-designated from moorland to regen.
- **Members to provide an update on any management practices planned or recently undertaken.**
- Woodland expansion grants are currently favourable in the area.
- **SNH plot coordinates to be circulated by Linzi.**
- **LS offered to put a habitat map together for the group.**
- Delnadamp are doing 5 blanket bog and 5 dry heath quadrants.
- Although high deer density estates will need to do more monitoring, the cost is not prohibitive compared to low density estates and allows for a complete picture.
- Sheep impacts should also be considered.
- Already happening on Home Beat and Corndavon on Invercauld and Mar Lodge.
- Dinnet (SNH) already doing a different set of monitoring on sheep impacts and SSSI's as part of their management.
- Sheep monitoring could be added into habitat monitoring.
- Hare impacts could be added?
- If a member has already been monitoring their own plots, does the methodology need to be changed – if the system is already in place and consistent then it may be acceptable.

## New members

- **Tillypronie considered for membership**
- Glenbuchat not to be currently invited

## EGDMG Update

- MMN confirmed the functions of EGDMG over and above sub group level (constitution, bank account) are now dealt with on sub group level. Wider representation/transparency on an EGDMG level not sought by other sub groups.
- Foot counts to continue.
- MMN proposed UDDDMG to continue in it's current form independently of EGDMG, agreed by the group.
- **MMN to update Bell Ingram.**

## CNPA Update

- Plan just come out.
- Still looking for a density below 10 per km<sup>2</sup>

## SNH Update

- Land Reform Group supporting Link recommendations that SNH to approve culls and propose more general powers to SNH.
- Funding queried re who funds the cost of SNH increased involvement.
- Steering group may be formed.

## **AOB**

- Website functionality to serve to update public about the activities and progress of the group. To be considered as an extra as all data is currently sitting on EGDMG Website.
- It was suggested it would be easier to do foot counts in the middle of the week to cover 2 day counts at short notice.
- Ground conditions can differ across the group on counting days but in the interest of continuing the counting trends established in EGDMG, they should continue.
- **Group members to continue to liaise with Colin Maclean regarding counting conditions on the ground when a count looks likely.**
- **MMN – to invite a representative from Braemar and produce a list of EGDMG invitees of relevance.**

Next meeting – date TBC