

GLENELG PENINSULA DEER MANAGEMENT GROUP

Minutes of Meeting 13 October 2024 Held at Cluanie Inn at 14:30

In the Chair	Julian Richmond-Watson (JRW)
Secretary	Michael Laing (ML)
Present	Arnisdale Glen Quoich Glenshiel Eilanreach East Glenquoich Druidaig Cluanie Kinloch Hourn Bunloinne Angus Davidson Ltd NatureScot

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Glenelg Community Council and FLS.

2. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of 9th May 2024 were approved.

3. Matters Arising

All matters will be covered through the course of the meeting.

4. Deer Management Plan

a) Deer Management Plan

A draft questionnaire to inform the DMP was circulated prior to the meeting. JRW requested that it seek to identify more of the positive work we have achieved. ADL has been through the DMP to determine what needs to be added. The DMP scored well in 2016 and we need to keep that momentum. Comments on the questionnaire were requested by the end of October.

Glen Quoich raised the topic of hill walkers impacting deer movement. There have been changes in deer behaviour witnessed at Quoich with deer holding in larger groups and staying on steeper ground. Glen Quoich believes deer are moved by walkers so often that they do not get a chance to lie and chew the cud which could be having an impact on their condition. ADL will consider walking routes in the DMP to assess areas which deer perhaps no longer use.

b) Habitat Monitoring and Woodland Creation

A training day for the new data gathering application was held in July. Roll out has since been challenging due to application support problems resulting in data gathering for 2024 being postponed until 2025. Estates plan to assess 10 plots every year in June/July.

Stalkers have uploaded some data and have been using the application on a test basis in order to learn the system for use in 2025. ADL will visit each Estate before June 2025 to ensure all data gatherers are prepared for recording data and will ensure that all the correct data points are loaded onto the system.

Historical data (excluding photographs) has been uploaded by ADL.

NatureScot noted that HIA plots need to be representative of the habitats each estate has.

5. Deer

Stag cull 2024 & Proposed Hind cull 2024/25

Estate	Stags Current (season total)	2024/25 Hind cull proposal
Arnisdale	27 (37)	40-50
Bunloinne	6 (8)	10
Cluanie	15 (15)	30-35
East Glenquoich	15 (20)	25
Druidraig	6 (6)	15
Eilanreach	23 (32)	60
Glenquoich	26 (30)	50-65
Glenshiel	30 (35)	50
Kinlochhourn	11 (20)	20+
Loch Hourn Head	8 (10)	Inc with GQ
Total	167 (213)	300-330+

A general discussion around deer, our population model and deer counting was held with the following comments made:

- Arnisdale noted that having shot so many hinds over previous years, there is a marked reduction of calves showing on Arnisdale;
- Stalkers noted that whilst recruitment was 23% this year, the subsequent conditions will have meant higher losses than in past years;
- Stag weights from the 2024 cull were generally lower than previous years;
- Glen Shiel queried the accuracy of our population model. Discussions in the room agreed that it is impossible to know without a count. Foot counts cannot be undertaken in the group due to a lack of trained personnel;
- NatureScot noted that we are not a priority group for a helicopter count due to the good working relationship we have within the group, the deer population model showing that we are reducing our density and because our

calculated density is relatively close to the target of 10 deer per square km. However, NatureScot will ask for a count to be scheduled for the group as soon as possible;

- The group queried the costs and efficacy of drone counting. NatureScot and Bunloinne noted that helicopter counts are better value over larger open ranges.

6. Local Community Engagement

The group tends to invite local community representatives to the May meeting and this is the intention for May 2025. The Glenelg Community Council was invited to the meeting but was unable to attend.

Any suggestions for local community engagement should be sent to ML. To date we have had the following suggestions:

- Angus MacDonald, Liberal Democrat MP;
- Cllr Biz Campbell;
- Tom Turnbull, Chairman of the ADMG;
- PC Gemma Jolly, Firearms Officer;
- Alan Maclean, Station Commander, Scottish Fire & Rescue;
- Alan McDonnell, Head of Nature Restoration, Trees for Life
- A representative of Scottish Land & Estates;
- A representative from the Scottish Land Commission.

7. Finances

The current bank balance is approximately Members will be required to deposit funds into the account to cover changes to the DMP. ML will liaise with JRW and members as required.

8. A.O.C.B

The following items were raised:

- There is concern over Deer Management Nature Restoration Orders (DMNRO's) whilst not in action yet, DMNRO's are being considered as a way to restore habitats over wider scale areas of ground. Deer managers have major concerns over them because they are subjective and not linked to any particular metrics. Bunloinne noted that ADMG are exploring options to challenge on the basis of ECHR;
- Glen Shiel asked about the proposals to change female deer seasons. NatureScot noted that the proposal remains to shorten the close season. All deer managers are concerned by the proposals due to the increased risk of pregnant hinds being culled and the risk of leaving orphaned calves;

Post meeting note: Richard Cooke, Iain Macgillivray and Glyn Satterley are considering a follow up book to Deer People and are looking for donations to help it happen. If anyone would like to donate, please can you either get in touch with Richard, or ML.

9. Date of Next Meeting

Thursday 8th May 2025 at 11am at Cluanie Inn, followed by lunch.