

# GLENELG PENINSULA DEER MANAGEMENT GROUP

## Minutes of Meeting 15 October 2023 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 Druidraig Cluanie Kinloch Hourn Glen Garry Community Council Local Councillor Angus Davidson Ltd NatureScot Police Scotland (FEO)

### 1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Beolary, Bunloinne, Kingie & Corriclair.

### 2. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of 11<sup>th</sup> May 2023 were approved.

### 3. Matters Arising

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

### 4. Deer Management Plan

The population model, altered to account for 2023 recruitment, was considered and discussions were held over the level of the hind cull this season. It was noted that the population model continues to show a reduction in deer densities and the group continues to move towards a density of 10 deer per sq km. However, without a deer count the numbers cannot be verified.

NatureScot noted that they are most interested in habitat but are looking closely at any groups with deer densities over 10 deer per sq km.

Cluanie noted that the weather in May and June was relatively good which helped deer health but since June, the conditions have been very poor and it is therefore likely that there will be early winter losses as conditions get harder.

Arnisdale commented that Estates ought to try to cull the same number of hinds as last season and should monitor hind numbers closely, if increases are experienced, culls should be adjusted. Close attention will have to be paid to 2024 recruitment numbers.

Some members suggested they would struggle to cull as many hinds as last year due to the lack of numbers on the ground.

Count, cull and area data needs to be added to the plan for Loch Hourn Head.

**ACTION**

### **Habitat Monitoring**

AD Ltd (ADL) have produced the first draft of the habitat report which was circulated at the meeting. Any comments should be passed to ML.

The report shows data collected since 2010 which confirms that the ground conditions are generally favourable but estates need to carry out more plots per estate, currently each estate surveys 10 points, increasing to 15 would be beneficial.

Collating the paper results is a very time consuming exercise for ADL and all estates agreed to collate digitally in future. ADL's system can be used on Android or Apple but if Estates do not have a compatible devices, there are rugged devices that can be purchased. Please contact ML if you need advice. The Working Group will work with ADL to organise a training session on the devices.

**ACTION**

NatureScot commented that grassland is least susceptible to overgrazing and that open woodland would be more beneficial to monitor. Glen Quoich noted that at Glen Quoich they have 50 cows through the summer and there are no signs of over grazing. Glen Quoich queried how estates predominantly covered in grass were meant to assess habitat since NS have removed the guidance on grassland monitoring. Glen Quoich & NatureScot to liaise

**ACTION**

It was agreed by the group that open woodland in an environment like the Glenelg DMG is always going to be heavily grazed

## **5. Deer**

### **Stag cull 2023 & Proposed Hind cull 2023/24**

<b>Estate</b>	<b>Stags Current (season total)</b>	<b>2023/24 Hind cull proposal</b>
Arnisdale	34 (44)	60
Bunloinne	6 (10)	10
Cluanie	15 (15)	35

East Glenquoich	29 (35)	15
Druidaig	2 (8)	15
Eilanreach	24 (30)	55
Glenquoich	31 (31)	50
Glenshiel	25 (30)	40
Kinlochhourn	16 (21)	45
Loch Hourn Head	2 (5)	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>184 (229)</b>	<b>335</b>

## 6. Local Community Engagement

Our local councillor noted that goat numbers are increasing with more being seen in the village and they continue to be a problem to some people in the community. FEO also noted that the police are aware of an increase in pig numbers and offered any help as required.

Community Council informed the group of the Common Ground Forum ([www.thecommongroundforum.scot](http://www.thecommongroundforum.scot)) who are committed to a collaborative approach to deer management. Part of this involves training and a course is being run at Glen Quoich on the 8<sup>th</sup> March 2024.

**ACTION**

## 7. Finances

The group has a small balance in the bank account and subscriptions will be sent as normal in December. Loch Hourn Head will also be sent a subscription invoice as a result of joining the group.

Kinloch Hourn queried if a surplus bank balance is being created to pay for a group helicopter count in the future. JRW commented that due to the costs of a helicopter count, this is not currently planned.

ML will circulate a financial summary to owners once subscriptions have been received.

**ML ACTION**

## 8. A.O.C.B

Glen Quoich asked which members were using copper bullets. Some members will change when they are required to do so by the game dealers – Simpson Game will continue to accept lead shot deer until the Foods Standards Agency outlaw it. East Glen Quoich (Winchester) & Glen Quoich (Sako) have both been using copper for some time and find that it works well.

NatureScot noted that the changes to regulations reducing minimum bullet weight is due to be passed. At the same time control using night vision and thermal will be passed. Night licences still require authorisation. The closed season for stags has

now been removed. Arnisdale informed the group that Simpson Game will still collect stags shot after the 20<sup>th</sup> October but they are difficult to sell on.

ML updated the group on Scottish Rural Network (phone masts) matters and reminded owners to take advice as necessary.

**9. Date of Next Meeting**

Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> May 2024 at 11am at Cluanie Inn, followed by lunch.