

# GLENELG PENINSULA DEER MANAGEMENT GROUP

## Minutes of Meeting

9<sup>th</sup> May 2024

Held at Cluanie Inn at 11am

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

### 1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr Campbell, Bunloinne, Beolary, Beolary.

### 2. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of 15<sup>th</sup> October 2023 were approved with one minor change. The minutes should have read that goat and pig numbers are increasing in section six.

### 3. Matters Arising

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

### 4. Stag & Hind culls 2023/24

The years cull is recorded as:

Estate	Stags	Hinds	Calves
Arnisdale	44	70	24
Bunloinne	8	8	2
Cluanie	15	35	12
East Glenquoich	36	21	6
Eilanreach	30	60	7
Glenquoich	34	57	24
Glenshiel	33	60	30
Kinlochhourn	19	45	20

<b>Open range total</b>	<b>219</b>	<b>356</b>	<b>125</b>
Loch Hourn Head	4	16	6
Druidaig	6	15	3
Eilanreach Woods			
Scallasaig	3		
FLS	43	34	24
<b>Peninsula total</b>	<b>275</b>	<b>421</b>	<b>158</b>

## 5. Deer

### a) Recruitment Counts

<b>Estate</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Arnisdale	36
Cluanie	17
East Glenquoich	23
Druidaig	25
Eilanreach	22
Glenquoich	24
Glenshiel	16
Kinlochhourn	21
Bunloinne	27
<b>Average</b>	<b>23</b>

The Group all-time recruitment average is 24.8% and the 5 year average is 22.7%. The population model will need to be updated to reflect this years count.

NatureScot noted that on the east coast in Angus, recruitment counts are in the region of 40% to 50%. The group accepted that conditions are extremely different on the west coast with more exposed ground, much higher rainfall and a later growing season combined with a higher proportion of grass which doesn't retain any winter goodness for the deer. These factors drastically impact recruitment numbers, particularly in the spring. Arnisdale commented that he has worked on both coasts and has experienced these differing conditions.

### b) Condition

The general consensus is that with the poor weather we have had, the hinds are in poor condition. Calf weight has been reducing over the winter and early spring.

ADL queried if there were many empty hinds, Arnisdale noted that most of the hinds shot were empty but this was largely as a result of the quality of the hinds being targeting.

### c) Losses/Leakage/Road kills

The following mortality was reported:

- Glenquoich – 14 stags (plus 1 road kill), 3 hinds, 5 calves;
- Cluanie – 3 stags, 5 hinds, 3 calves (all road kill). Hill mortality not counted but evidence suggests slightly higher than usual;
- Eilanreach – 1 stag, 2 hinds, 1 calf. Number in line with previous years;
- Kinloch Hourn – 1 stag, 2 hinds, 4 calves;

## 6. Deer Management Plan

### a) DMP

There was general discussion over various topics surrounding the DMP with advice being sought from NatureScot and responses from group members.

NatureScot ran through a number of points for the group to consider:

1. The Biodiversity Strategy is looking for biodiversity improvements, the status quo is not acceptable;
2. The Glenelg 2021 HIA report shows some good result but also some poorer areas;
3. Historically the group has carried out woodland creation but we need to keep improving with further creation;
4. We must consider all areas of carbon including both woodland and peatland;
5. Woodland creation funding is changing and there is likely to be less money for fencing so lower deer numbers will be required;
6. It can be seen at this time of year that heather is flourishing in areas protected by deer fences;
7. The Nature Restoration Fund can provide finance for biodiversity based projects;

Members had various comments in response to NatureScot and on the DMP in general:

8. The group notes it has been collecting habitat data for a number of years and queried the quality of our data and how it has been used. JRW questioned if what we are currently doing is useful. NatureScot confirmed that it is;
9. JRW noted that all members should look at any possible woodland creation on their land;
10. Glen Quoich noted that there are significant challenges in being successful with FGS applications which reduces uptake;
11. Glen Quoich advised that we should work with SSE to provide space for compensatory planting required for the new power line;
12. ADL commented that SSE are receptive to working with Estates and given that public money is reducing, Estate should make the most of other opportunities;
13. It was agreed we must be clear on the public interest we are delivering. ADL to provide a questionnaire for Estate to compile this information.

#### **AD ACTION**

14. Glen Quoich questioned the biodiversity benefit of mature heather in the Glenelg region because it grows tall and woody, blocking light to the ground

and then dies back. Is this positive? NatureScot commented that a mosaic of habitats supports more species and suggested that in some situations, herbivore pressure on heather needs to be increased, the Nature Restoration Fund can help;

15. Glen Quoich queried the increased fire risk created by more trees and heather. NatureScot accepts there is a higher risk and noted that fire plans need to be put in place;

An action plan on the Deer Management Plan was agreed:

- The working group should be reinstated;
- Questionnaire to be created to understand Estate aims;
- The group must agree what it wishes to achieve over the next 5 years;
- We need to agree a strategy on HIA data collection in respect of the number of plots (see below);
- The DMP should be updated by spring 2025.

#### **b) Population Model update**

The population model continues to be updated with each seasons numbers. The group continues to progress towards their desired deer density.

It was agreed by the group and NatureScot that a helicopter count is required. NatureScot noted that since we are renewing our DMP, the group should get support from NatureScot to achieve this. ML to keep in touch with NatureScot.

**ML ACTION**

#### **c) Habitat Monitoring**

A training day is due to be held in June/July to ensure all data is fed into ADL electronically. Data gathering is due to be undertaken summer 2024.

ADL will arrange the licence for all users.

**AD ACTION**

The group needs to consider if it would be better to do 10 plots each year in order to achieve 30 plots over a three year period with a high level survey completed by an external consultant every five years.

Glen Quoich queried where our data goes and who reviews it. NatureScot confirmed that it goes into a central system that anyone in NatureScot can review.

### **7. Local Community Engagement**

Local community members are routinely invited to the May meeting, including Police Scotland, Fire Service, Local Councillor, Glen Garry Community Council. NatureScot confirmed the group is doing as much as it can but we should seek feedback from the community when our DMP has been updated.

### **8. Finances**

JRW noted that whilst the subscriptions keep the group running in its current form, more funds will be required to update the DMP.

AD to provide a quote for work required over the next year to update the DMP.

**AD ACTION**

## **9. AOCB**

- a) Venison Support Scheme. NatureScot updated the group on the Cairngorm National Park venison scheme that is being trialled and explained that NatureScot are examining the options to expand this scheme for all female deer shot in Scotland.
- b) Community Council member updated the group on the Common Ground Forum that was held at Glen Quoich. 70 stalkers attended where there were a variety of workshops. The event was a great success and a further event is being planned for the Autumn.

## **10. Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be held at the Cluanie Inn on the 13<sup>th</sup> October 2024 at 14:30