

Minutes of the Meeting of the WSDMG North Sub Group on 1st April 2019

Present: Alan Balfour, David Allison, and Roddy Watt.

The meeting was called to review the Deer Management Working Plan. Although the plan had been reviewed in the past no formal record was made.

There was no changes to 1.Introduction (although it was noted that Loch a Mhuillan ownership had transferred from Dr. Jean Balfour to David and Jenny Balfour as from March 2019) or 2. Group Objectives.

It was decided that the information in Table 1 Deer Count Information, Table 3 Sub Group Historic Culls e Table 4 Population Targets, Table 5 Populations on Individual Estates, Table 6 Population Model will be replaced with the Population, Cull and Mortality Spreadsheet.

Population targets for Hinds for 2020 remained the same except for Glencoul (down from 187 to 152), Glendhu (down from 261 to 221) and Kylestrome (down from 285 to 250). Total for Reay Forrest now 805 reduced from 916
The Merkland 2020 target for Stags was set at 210

Table 7 is to be deleted.

The next Deer count is scheduled for 2020

The following points were discussed and comments/actions are outlined below;

- 8.1 Completed in 2016 to be repeated in 2019
- 8.2 Completed Spring 2016 on going
- 8.3 Reviewed but not updated in 2018. Reviewed and updated in 2019
- 8.4 Completed
- 8.5 A helicopter count of deer is planned and budgeted for 2020. This may be delayed until 2021 if thought it was beneficial to carry out the count the same time as other Estates in the WSDMG. (It should be noted that there is CALLP financial for doing the count in 2021) Planned for 2020
- 8.6 Not done formally (some included in pop model) Plan to do in early May report the figures to AJB and Kirsty by 10th May - Recruitment counts
- 8.7 Reay Forest Estate represented by Neil Macdonald at Scourie Community Council. Sub group commits to go at least once a year.
- 8.8 On-going pre meeting at before the main meeting for structure
- 8.9 Not applicable – remove from Document
- 9.1 Reported Loch a’Mhuillin changed ownership. Extension of SSSI is currently with SNH. for decision. 2 Roe shot in 2018
- 9.2. Fence erected in summer 2018
- 9.3 On-going. Glencoul to be ‘walked through” in the next few weeks to assess the regeneration of vegetation etc following the erection of the fence. Monitoring will continue thereafter.
- 9.4 Good communication between estates - No issues
- 10.1 Await information from SNH

- 10.2 Loch More – data to be obtained by DA
- 10.3 Not Applicable – remove from Document
- 10.4 Forest schemes
 - Loch Ghirma, Crofters Scheme Scoure, Loch More, Achfary (re-stock and SRDP) All fenced Second time round taking longer at least 5 years before replanting
- 10.5 No new ones. Kinloch wood clear felled – restocked and fenced this year. 80 hectares. Regeneration of woodland at Stack and Glen Coul
- 10.6 Not Applicable –remove from document
- 11.1 Awaiting information from SNH
- 11.2 On-going- Funding available for Merkland 2016 and repeat 2020 Reay Forest 2018 HIA Aspire to do it together. Alastair Hedley – Scourie to consider doing one HIA -Data analysis 2016.
- 11.3 Information shared- To be updated at the meeting on the 23rd April.
- 11.4 Merkland update by end of June 2019. As discussed Merkland estate is aware of the higher impacts to the east of Glen Dhu and glen Coul. It was agreed that there will be targeting culling in these areas and made a concerted effort during the hinds on the Glen Dhu beat. The population model will also illustrate our desired population changes-targeting culling
- 11.5 On-going
- 11.6 Included in HIAs
- 11.7 The Sub Group undertook a strategic review of Peatland Restoration within our area. A restoration project – Swan lochs (above Loch More) have been approved and will be progressed at as soon as is feasible. Merkland are exploring the possibility of a project around Loch Garvaet but no decision has been made. There are no other areas being considered for Peatland Restoration.
- 11.8 Awaiting update from WSFT for restoration potential for Laxford catchment
- 12.1 Agreed policy to shoot on sight.
- 12.2 Agreed policy to shoot on sight.
- 12.3 Agreed policy to shoot on sight.
- 13.1 Knocking down of dykes nothing to report
- 14.1 Adopted in Spring 2016
- 14.2 In this sub group at there are 5 at Level one,4 at Level 2 and one working towards Level 2
- 14.3 As required
- 15.1 Signs being considered as attached. No instances to report. Ensure any leases refer to “ Best Practice Guidance - Health and Welfare.” Next stalkers meeting go thru and sign doc by end of April 2019
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- 15.3 KLB school coming on May 2019. Attending Hill to Grill event at Assynt March 2019
- 15.4 By attending Scourie Community Council
- 16.1 Reay Forest joined 2009 - Merkland not a member.
 - 16.2 The group considered collaboration but it was decided that the service that we received from the 2 game existing game dealers Ardgay Game and Fine Game.was satisfactory. Due to the location of the Estates

- option are limited and both dealers “pass through’ on a regular basis there was no reason to change the existing service.
- 16.3 This is being trialed by selling to some of the local business
 - 16.4 Will investigated whether this is feasible and beneficial
 - 16.5 See Population model
 - 16.6 Crofters are in the loop.
 - 16.7 Publicize to Communtiy Council and is put on the WSDMGwebsite.
 - 16.8 Check signage at Badna Bay and Kylesku Altered feeding area at Kylesku to try and take the deer away from the road. Diversionary feeding at Merkland
 - 16.9 None to report
 - 17.1 Crofters, SCC, Fishery Trusts, SWT No longer Draft
 - 17.2 Went on Website
 - 17.3 Completed
 - 17.4 Adopted
 - 18.1 Implemented
 - 18.2 Agreed monitor Hill weights averages for Stags, Hinds and Calves on-going. Have the last 2 seasons 17/18 18/19.
 - 18.3 Target reduction prior to fence erection
 - 18.4 Report of all winter mortality (take out significant) SNH annual return
- 19 No changes to the table except Habitat Monitoring Native Woodland Review to be moved from 2018-19 to 2019-20