

West Sutherland Deer Management Group

East Sub Group

June Meeting

Venue Sallachy Lodge

Date 29th June 2018

MINUTES

Present : Mark White (MW), Craig Ross (CR), Bruce Blackelt (BB), Robbie Galloway (RG), Iain Thomson (IT)

Apologies : Chris Gordon

1. Plan Update

- SNH assessments 2019
- ADMG Health Check

The group decided that the ADMG health check is not required but we would ask SNH(Holly Deary) to have a look over the plan at the end of this year/beginning next to make sure that we were still on track.

1 Mortalities and Recruitment 2018

MW,CR and BB have recoded calf survival and this years recruitment when out at fox dens etc and it was agreed that RG and IT would use the average figure taken from the observations on the other properties. IT to update population model. The hard winter has resulted in high mortality and poor calf survival and low recruitment for this year. Population model has been updated to show this and a draft was shown at this meeting.

2 Habitat Monitoring

- Results
- Mapping
- Programme

IT produced printouts of the results from 2017 and 2018 habitat monitoring. It was clear that RG had a slightly different survey method than the rest of the group and he suggested that he would consider changing to the 'group method' for his next survey. The results across the group clearly show that there are low deer impacts on designated sites and wider habitat. IT produced two maps showing habitat monitoring plots and deer density and it was agreed that both would be used in the plan.

Programme for habitat monitoring is : Benmore 2019, Glencassley 2020, Duchally 2020, Sallachy 2019 (all DSH and Blanket bog) Inchnadamph 2019 (springs and Dwarf willow)

3 Cull 2018/19

Stag cull will remain as per plan with CR and BB perhaps reducing cull by 10 sags each. Hind cull will be decided after the stag season but will likely be reduced due to high winter mortalities. Population model will be updated after stag cull completed.

4 Helicopter Count 2019

All agreed to start organising 2019 sub group count. IT to get initial costings. IT will inform WSDMG.

5 Update on C-SA and Peninsula Sub groups

- deer movement fro ESG
- recent meetings

CR updated all on recent meetings with these other subgroups and outcome.

6 Communication with local groups CCs etc

CR is registered with local police as competent person available to deal with deer injured on the roads. Discussion on the lack of interest in the local community councils and best way to keep them informed without giving them hassle. Perhaps a single page plan update may work but this discussion is ongoing. We will look at how other groups deal with this issue.

7 Future of ESG

All agree that ESG should be prepared in the event that WSDMG folds and we have to become a full DMG rather than a subgroup. All agreed that this is perfectly feasible and ESG could do this very quickly if required.

8. Date of Next Meeting.

Next meeting will be held on the day of the WSDMG autumn meeting

8 A.O.C.B.

MW is planning approximately 200ha of new native woodland planting at Glencassley next season and will update with maps as soon as they are completed.

MW will speak to Mike Hassan about joining ESG.

CR will speak to Allan Wyatt about joining ESG