**West Grampian Deer Management Group – Owners Meeting**

**18th April 2019**

Present: William Manning – Dirnanean

David Heathcote Amory - Glenfernate

Rosanna Fraser - Fealar (Bidwells)

Sir Michael Nairn - Pitcarmick

Maggie Lascelles - Straloch

Will Holt - Straloch

Duncan Gordon - Lude

Alastair Gemmell - Dalnarcardoch (Savills)

Rory Stormont Darling - Balvarran

In Attendance:

Julian Clarke - Secretary (Atholl)

Mike Cottam - CNPA

Apologies:

Sarah Troughton - Atholl

Andrew Gordon - Lude

Jim Todd - Tarvie

Hugo-Holland Bosworth - Ashintully

1. **Hind Culls - review**

Lude – numbers of deer not seen until end of season

Pitcarmick – numbers of red deer seen increase into 200 hinds on Pitcarmick / Tulliemet / Reimore

Straloch – small numbers – tough season

Glenfernate – fewer hinds than normal (especially BaG) – late numbers on the eastern side,

Dalmunzie -not a huge amount showing.

Dalnacardoch – Similar story on hinds to everyone else.

Dirnanean – lots of hinds showing and could have shot more.

Atholl - Fewer deer being seen, although its acknowledged the deer are likely to be somewhere

Fealar – carrying stags rather than hinds

Invercauld – lots of hinds at beginning of season – got numbers fairly quickly.

**All to provide recruitment counts and mortality asap**

**JC to ask Iain Hope if we can get details for the estates that are missing.**

Impacts of Gaick and Glenfeshie felt on Estates to the North of the group– data showing where these deer are shot to be requested from Wildland Ltd

**(SNH viewpoint) – what would their view be on the numbers culled? JC to ask Iain Hope**

1. **Hind Culls 2019/20**

Hind culls – similar to previous years – slight reduction on hind numbers at North end – increased cull at the south end

Circulate updated sheet showing proposed cull levels – to try and achieve.

Pitcarmick end – could increase the numbers to 100?

Estates not within the area – how are these numbers shown.

JC to speak to SNH – which areas are they? Dalnagairn / Soilizaire / Balnaeikelly / FCS

Urrard – Duncan to get numbers and report back

Finegand – Rory to chase

FCS – JC to speak to Kindrogan (Kevin Peters)

Boundary to review and get numbers with SNH (Statutory cull returns)

1. **DMG Health check:**

Proposed for 7th May with Iain Hope to review the 2016 report.

Look at the previous check and then update the areas where they are red.

Habitat Impact Assessment – has been updated and shown on the website.

Blanket Bog to be mapped (Mike to provide a price for scoping and circulate to the group).

Training Plan – produce a summary of what is within the group and upload to website

Website – concern expressed on quality of the websites – to be discussed with Iain Hope at next meeting. Mike to provide a price for undertaking this work.

1. **Deer Count**

Deer Count – needs to be done once a year on foot (white ground count – to be co-ordinated by RSD and JC).

A five year count by helicopter (funded by the DMG) or drone count should be done.

(Drone counting speak to ADMG – Duncan Gordon to proceed with Sourcing further info)

Costing for the 5 yearly count by helicopter to be sourced – and then worked into a DMG budget. Last helicopter count was done in 2017, so next should be scheduled for 2022

All felt that we needed to ensure we had accurate count numbers to make full use of population model.

1. **Forestry Proposals**

Spittal Hill proposal (with FCS) – to be done in 2019.

Glenfernate – felling commercial timber and replacing with native species (same areas)

Straloch – AECS – Forest of Clunie Scheme

Balvarran – a small 3ha restructuring scheme planned

Areas of the new planting would be a benefit to the group. All estates to consider what they may be able to implement

1. **Sporting Rates**

A brief discussion on Sporting rates was had with the estates present. A summary of where some of the estates is below:

Dalnarcardoch – reviewing

Lude – reviewing

Glenfernate – reviewing

Fealar – reviewing

Atholl – reviewing

Comparables are key to what value the assessor has been rating them – key to check what your website says.

1. **AOCB**

Recruitment – should be looked at and included within the plans / minutes etc

Secreatrial role – JC confirmed that Atholl would assist, but did not have the time to put into being the full time secretary for the group. Agreed that JC and RSD will pull together a brief (job spec) and then circulate to group for further input.

But all agreed that the group should move to a paid secretary, who has the time to implement / chase all group members for the information required.

Next meeting – proposed dates by Google Poll – likely to be October 2019