



MEETING OF THE GAIROLOCH CONSERVATION UNIT DMG
<http://www.deer-management.co.uk>

Tuesday 8th May 2018, 10.00 am
SNH Field Station, Anancaun

- **Attendance**

John Wills	Grudie (Chair)
Sinclair Coghill	SNH Wildlife Ops
Doug Bartholomew	Beinn Eighe NNR
Donnie Beaton	Diabaig
Linzi Seivwright	Caorann
Russell Cooper	Slattadale (FES)
Jack Ward	Beinn Eighe NNR
Neil Morrison	Coulin Estate
Seamus MacNally	Torrison (NTS)
Dr Cathy Mayne	Mountain Environment Services

- **Apologies**

Tim Bowie, Eisean Dubh, near Diabaig
Duncan Mackenzie, Gairloch
Sir Paul Nicholson, Diabaig
Terry Doe, T & K Community Council

John had tried to contact Mr Mark Williams from the Cove – Inverasdale area, with the intention of asking him to consider becoming a member of the group, but had not managed to speak to him.

- ***Lyme Disease Study***

Fanny Olsthoorn and Corinne introduced themselves as presently studying Lyme Disease in relation to woodland planting and how this affects populations of mammals, birds, and ticks, in Wester Ross. Keen to meet land managers who will allow them access to their ground, over the next few months.

Awareness of ticks and their ability to give Lyme Disease, needs to be high in everyone's mind, as, Russell gave the frightening statistic that around half the folk working in deer management within FES, are affected by it.

- **Stag and hind culls 2017-18** (may be small variation from below)

Linzi produced a table of culls and figures for population and density.

[Cull from Dec 2017 Minutes](#)

	STAGS	HINDS so far	
NTS Torridon	9	25 (60)	
Grudie	17	(5)	
Gairloch	31	25 (40?)	
Diabaig	10	10 (15)	
Beinn Eighe NNR	43	11	
FES	1	6	
Eisean Dubh	1	(2)	
<i>Total</i>	<i>112</i>	<i>77 (62) = (139)</i>	

[Actual Cull 2017/18](#)

	STAGS	HINDS	Calves
NTS Torridon	10	38	22
Grudie	17	5	4
Gairloch	32	32	9
Diabaig	11	20	5
Beinn Eighe NNR	132	40	25
FES Slattadale	2	8	6
Eisean Dubh	1		
<i>Total</i>	<i>205</i>	<i>143</i>	<i>71</i>

The figures may need slight adjustment but they are enough to indicate hinds are on target, and the stags well over (by 100). [Hind cull lower than agreed on Torridon and Gairloch. Unclear whether collaborative culling on Diabeg/Torridon/Gairloch marches had happened. Impacts on Crofting areas and Torridon Forest SSSI unlikely to reduce as a result. Hind cull higher than expected on Beinn Eighe. Agreed to discuss culls at next meeting in October](#)

The bulk of the stags are taken on the NNR and Jack produced maps to show the hot-spots where they appear to be coming on to the ground. Some are from the Cromasaig area and therefore Coulin, and this is likely to be due to forest and hydro contractors failing to close the gates on the hill road. Many of the other stags seem to be coming across from Kinlochewe Estate and The Heights, again mainly due to gates left open.

- **Habitat monitoring**

From previous minutes:

30 to 60 plots have already been randomly generated for each estate for dwarf shrub heath, and blanket bog, which is important on Gairloch.

- **Linzi Seivwright**

Reminder that every DMG will be re-assessed next Spring (2019) to monitor progress.

In the meantime, the group needs to take stock of where it is, what has been done and what needs to be done, in regard to this assessment.

ADMG are willing to assist with this process and it is recommended to take advantage of this help.

The GCU has received £1800 from SNH to help complete the Habitat Impact Assessment process and it could be used to help pay for expert assistance in setting up plots and analysing the results found.

Dr Cathy Mayne is willing to assist the group achieve its aim, although busy with other work too. July seems a likely time for this, over about 5 days.

Statistically 30 plots per habitat are, ideally, the minimum that should be done per estate.

Beinn Eighe achieved their quota last year for wet heath and blanket bog.

Torridon hopes to complete its 30 plots this season. Between Torridon and Diabaig there will hopefully be enough data gathered, especially if some plots can also be done on Eisean Dubh.

Slattadale is covered by what FES do anyway as it is mostly woodland.

Grudie hope to complete 15 plots with assistance from Cathy, but the biggest issue is ensuring Gairloch complete 30 for blanket bog, and 30 for dwarf shrub heath. Cathy can potentially assist with 3 days input there, and co-operatively Beinn Eighe and Torridon staff will offer assistance too. It is vital to achieve all this if the future assessment is to be in the group's favour.

[Action Point: Chair/Secretary to secure involvement of Gairloch in HIA this year](#)

- **Sinclair Coghill**

Sinclair emphasised how important it is to achieve the Habitat Impact Monitoring.

The DMG's minutes should be accessible and therefore on the website, alongside the Plan. Linzi will help with the technicalities.

The Deer Working Group reports to Government next April and their recommendations are likely to shape how deer management will be regulated in the future.

The hind cull can be discussed at the October meeting.

Good idea to do some sample counts of hinds and calves, just now, to get some idea of increment.

Everyone involved with deer management on the ground should attain Trained Hunter status.

Discussion around Designated Sites within the Plan and Site Condition Monitoring.

Is there scope for further woodland expansion within the group, and is there a need to consider peatland restoration anywhere?

Food Hygiene course – recommended for all deer managers, by Food Standards Scotland and the Scottish Quality Wild Venison Scheme. A course could possibly be organised and run locally. Jack will contact Thurso College and get some possible dates.

Communications – are there any issues between deer and local communities that need to be highlighted?

- **AOB**

ADMG Health check – Chair and Secretary to meet with Linzi to go through the plan and any actions. Tuesday, **3rd July 2018**.

- **Date of next meeting**

The next meeting is planned for the **3rd October 2018**, a Wednesday, at 10.00am, at Anancaun. (Thanks to Beinn Eithe for continued use of their meeting room & coffee). Also thanks to Linzi and Cathy for HIA training after the meeting.