

## **SOUTH PERTSHIRE DEER MANAGEMENT GROUP**

### **Minutes of the 17<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting Held on Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> May 2011 at Fordie**

<b>Present:</b>	Martin Robb	Carroglen
	Michael Aldridge	Secretary
	Jamie Hammond	S.N.H.
	Ronnie Rose	S.N.H.
	James Duncan-Millar	Remony
	Mike Baillie-Hamilton	Kinnell & Cambusmore
	Daniel Parker	Abercairny
	Richard Barrie	Glenquaich
	Leif Brag	Griffin
	Jimmy Anderson	Lochearnside
	Andrew Templeton	Carroglen
	Vincent Brigode	Fordie
	Craig Ross	Invergeldie
	Mike Reddington	Glenturret
	Tim Holcroft	Glenbeich
	Isla Crighton	Monzie

<b>Apologies:</b>	Jack Whittaker	Auchnafree
	John Sinclair	Invergeldie & Glenturret
	W. Drummond-Moray	Abercairny
	Phil Low	Abercairny

#### **1. Minutes of the 16<sup>th</sup> A.G.M.**

The minutes of the 2010 meeting were accepted as a true record.

#### **2. Accounts for year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2010 and budget for the year to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011**

The group made a loss of £60.85 which was in line with the forecast deficit of £208. The reserves at the end of the year totalled £1,786.82. There is again no planned increase in ADMG subscription rates and it was agreed that the group rates should be left at the current level and reviewed in 2012. The forecast deficit for the year is £158

Both the accounts and budget were approved.

### **3. ADMG Matters**

James Duncan-Millar reported on current ADMG matters:-

Richard Cooke was appointed as the new ADMG Chairman at the AGM in February. His priority work with SNH and the Scottish Government in assessing the direction for the organisation and also to increase the emphasis on roe deer management on the low ground where both the issues and approach to management differ from the open hill.

Progress is being made with the online version of “Heading for the Scottish Hills” which will replace this publication and hill phone system. A successful trial was held during 2011.

The Venison Working Group has become the Scottish Venison Partnership. There is now an updated relationship between the Forestry Commission, Cairngorm National Park and Highland Game promoting venison. This involves a 1p levy which will be managed by game dealers. Demand for venison is high and there are concerns that supply may be affected by the drop in the overall population of red deer.

The Wildlife and Natural Environment Bill now has Royal assent and the draft code of practice for deer management is now out consultation. The industry has until 2014 to resolve concerns over training and professional standards. At the time of the meeting the identity of the new minister of Natural Environment was not known (now Stewart Stevenson). It is likely that the policies of the past 4/5 years will continue.

Ronnie Rose, who is employed by SNH has been assigned to ADMG to assist deer management groups. The Government supports the voluntary principle of deer management groups currently as the best practical option.

### **4. Scottish Natural Heritage – Wildlife Operations Unit**

Jamie Hammond reported as follows:-

The Best Practice Initiative continues and will now be known as “Wild Deer Best Practice”. The three day event at the beginning of the hind season will take place at Balmoral on 26<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> October.

The deer element of the Wildlife and Natural Environment Bill will be enacted during the Autumn. The term “serious” when referring to damage is being removed. Section 26(2) will be replaced by a general licence to allow the protection of forestry and enclosed improved agricultural land. The killing of females during the critical summer period will be excluded.

Section 10 which gives emergency powers for intervention, will now include welfare considerations. The justifications for night shooting will include public safety concerns. Section 25, which is the “catch all” provision now includes starvation.

The powers for SNH to deal with invasive non-native species will be increased, giving greater powers for the control of Munjac and tightening up the regulations over Sika and Fallow deer. It will be illegal to release these species outside their home range.

The issue of competence, as reported above, will be reviewed in three years. The Wildlife Operations Unit is also to take on the licensing of the control of other species.

## **5. Deer Counts and recommended culls**

The helicopter deer count organised by SNH took place on 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> December at short notice due to helicopter availability and weather.

It was considered by those involved to be a thorough count although woodland deer were not included. Working on a 10% margin of error, it is likely that the population within the area is greater than 5,000 deer.

Our own count in March was poor, being affected by bad weather conditions and the eastern sub-group counting one week later. There was discussion on the reasons for the difference between the group counts, which are consistently lower, and the helicopter count. There was general acceptance that the helicopter count was representative and therefore it is likely that significant numbers of deer are consistently not being counted - a fact which is re-inforced by the level of culls being inconsistent with the estimated population.

The chairman expressed his gratitude for the Government funded count taking place. There was discussion on how the group should make best use of the data. As far as the public interest is concerned there are no major issues currently affecting the group area. There are no major designated sites and issues such as road traffic accidents and welfare are not significant. Consideration should be given as to how the group might use the services of Ronnie Rose.

## **6. Cull Targets**

Cull targets are to be discussed and agreed within sub-groups. It was noted that winter mortality had not been significant and that last year's calving was considered to be good, notwithstanding the previous hard winter.

Next year's count will take place on the second Tuesday of March, i.e. Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> March 2012, unless postponed due to weather or ground conditions.

## **7. Any Other Business**

- i) ADMG has been involved in promoting best practice in tackling the wild fires, recommending communication with the Fire Service over burning and also offering the use of estate fire fighting expertise and equipment.
- ii) Office bearers  
Elections for the group's office bearers will be held next year.

## **8. Date of next meeting**

Western sub-group meeting – Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> August 2011, 4.00 p.m. at Glenbeich.