**ARRAN DEER MANAGEMENT GROUP**

Minutes of Group Meeting held at the Wineport on Friday 26th October 2018

1. **Attendance & Apologies**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name (Organisation)** | **Present** | **Apology** | **Name (Organisation)** | **Present** | **Apology** |
| Mr. J. Gibbs (Chairman) | Y |  | Mr. S. Hague (D.Est) | Y |  |
| Mr. C.J.G. Fforde (Sec) | Y |  | Mr. J. McKinnon (Sx.Est) | Y |  |
| Mr. N Wright (A. Est) | Y |  | Mr. J. Hammond (SNH) | Y |  |
| Mr. A. Walker (FCS) | Y |  | Mr.G. Walker (SNH) | Y |  |
| Mr . R Logan (FCS) |  | Y | Ms. N. Ward (SNH) | Y |  |
| R McMaster (NFU) |  | Y | Mr K Bone |  | Y |
| Ms. K. Sampson (NTS) | Y |  | Mr D Boscowan |  | Y |
| Mr P Maclean (NTS) |  | Y | Mr M Ross |  | Y |
|  |  |  | Dr J Newman - Minutes (DE) | Y |  |

1. **Approval of Minutes of Last Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 4th May 2018 were approved as circulated.

1. **Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising from the previous Minutes

1. **Review of 2018 Stag Season**

The Group's combined stag cull for the year was as follows:-

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Stags | | | | | | Hinds | | | | | | Calves | | | | | |
|  | Open Hill | | Agric land | | Wood land | | Open Hill | | Agric land | | Wood land | | Open Hill | | Agric land | | Wood land | |
|  | In | Out | In | Out | In | Out | In | Out | In | Out | In | Out | In | Out | In | Out | In | Out |
| Arran | 64 |  | 23 |  | 2 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| NTS | 10 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Dougarie | 22 |  |  |  | 6 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| FCS |  |  |  |  | 64 |  |  |  |  |  |  | 3 |  |  |  |  | 4 |  |
| Totals | **96** | | **95** | | | |  | |  | | | |  | |  | | | |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | Arran Estate | |  | NTS | |  | Dougarie | |  | FCS | |
|  |  | Hill | Other |  | Hill | Other |  | Hill | Other |  | Hill | Other |
| Stags | Average age | 7.5 | 2 |  | 9 |  |  | 8 | 6 |  |  |  |
| Oldest | 16 | 5 |  | 13 |  |  | 14 | 9 |  |  |  |
| Av. Weight | 89.5 | 77 |  | 91 |  |  | 112 | 90 |  |  |  |
| Heaviest | 142 | 164 |  | 105 |  |  | 119 | 106 |  |  |  |

Hill weights are not recorded by FCS.

The general consensus is that deer numbers are down across Scotland. All agreed to stick to the current quotas as it is felt there is sufficient resilience in the beasts that are left. It was also noted that there appear to be a lot of ‘late’ calves.

Further discussion ensued around gates being left open and the movement of deer. Kate Sampson is to explore funding options for a self closing gate in Glen Rosa.

1. **Hind Cull Targets for 2018/2019**

The group agreed the hind targets to remain as per minutes of 4th May.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Hinds |
| Arran Estate | 130 - 140 plus calves |
| NTS | Included above |
| Dougarie Estate | 25 plus calves |

1. **Deer Management Plan & Benchmarking**

The deer management plan is a live document and requires review.

Feedback from Victor Clements suggests that the group in general is a good example, however the information on the website and communications published would benefit from improvement.

Consideration may also be given to changing the name to ‘Land Management Group’ to incorporate a wider remit for land management and include other stakeholders. It was noted that K Bone and D Boscowan have already been invited to the group.

It was agreed that the group needs to look at what gaps are missing however many of the agricultural and access representatives are already round the table.

A long discussion followed about working with the high school and where the group could promote land and deer management to maintain habitats. RHET already have some initiatives ongoing and would also have a regional representative.

The aim is for Arran Deer management to incorporate the whole island including the South Arran Deer Control group.

**Action 6-1: J Hammond to identify regional RHET coordinator.**

**Action 6-2: C Fforde to identify contact for Arran High School.**

**Action 6-3: J Gibbs / C Fforde / G Walker / K Sampson / A Walker all to review DMG plan and send changes to J Gibbs for update.**

**Action 6-4: J Gibbs to upload updated DMG document to website.**

1. **Habitat Impact Assessment**

Sannox has completed a further 30 squares, NTS 35 and Dougarie 10. All the information has been sent to Dr. Linzi Sievewright for collation.

The plan is to do more assessments in March or April next year on heaths.

**Action 7-1: J Gibbs to chase up impact assessment results and interpretation with L Sievewright.**

1. **SNH Update**

Health check has been done on Deer Management Plan and the DMG is to be reassessed next spring. If plan updated prior to that the group will be in a good position. SNH think it is sensible to consider wider land management.

G Walker noted that there may be some funding for new signage to inform the public in the countryside. There could be options for educating the public on deer management to be included on any signage along with flora and other fauna.

1. **Forestry Commission Scotland Update**

Assessment has been done for the numbers of deer however they are still awaiting the results. The FCS is undergoing some reorganisation and Arran will become part of the South of Scotland region. This will not affect any work on Arran.

From 1st April 2019 the control of the FCS will be under the Scottish Government and the name will be changed to Forestry Land Scotland.

1. **National Trust Update**

The Glen Rosa fencing project is slightly delayed and could take until August 2019 to complete. Efforts are being made to fence by Christmas as restrictions between the end of December to August for bird nesting are in place.

Funding is secure for further peatland restoration on Glen Shant. This is a large area and work will be ongoing until the end of February.

1. **Appointment of other representatives**

K Bone and D Boscowan have both accepted invites to the group. The group is not actively looking for additional members but if anyone thinks of someone they feel should be included to bring the name to the next meeting.

1. **DMG Finances**

There is £2285 in the bank including the SNH grant for which an invoice is expected for the habitat monitoring. Bidwells also need paying for the Association of DMGs subscription. This leaves a shortfall.

Discussion followed regarding the value of inviting members and then immediately asking for subscriptions. Consideration to be given to associate member status or a period of grace.

**Action 12-1: C Fforde to confirm ADMG subs payments**

**Action12-2: J Gibbs / C Fforde to review subscriptions required to cover costs.**

1. **AOB**

The number of deer in the south area was raised based on the stag cull numbers. A Walker said they were still waiting for the assessment results.

However it could be that numbers are high and the cull is insufficient in controlling the herd.

1. **Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Arran DMG will take place on Friday 3rd May 2019.

**Action Summary 26th October 2018**

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Action 6-2: C Fforde to identify contact for Arran High School.

Action 6-3: J Gibbs / C Fforde / G Walker / K Sampson / A Walker all to review DMG plan and send changes to J Gibbs for update.

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