

## **BIRSE PARISH DEER MANAGEMENT GROUP**

### **Report on Deer Management 2012-13<sup>1</sup>**

#### **Introduction**

The purpose of this report is to provide background information for the meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> April between Ballogie, Finzean and Birse Estates and BCT.

The purpose of the meeting is to discuss the red and roe deer culls in 2012-13, the target culls for 2013-14 and the arrangements for cooperating over local deer management in 2013-14.

The overall cull in 2012-13 of 549 deer (315 red, 234 roe) was a very positive achievement. The main conclusion of this report is that the cull needs to be at least that level every year.

This yearly report is longer than it should normally need to be, to help give particular focus to the discussions at the 23<sup>rd</sup> April meeting.

#### **CONTENTS**

Part 1	<u>Background Information</u>
1.1	DMG, DMP, DMUs
1.2	Notes on Deer during Year
Part 2	<u>Description of Cull 2012-13</u>
2.1	Overall Cull Totals
2.2	Red Deer Cull
2.3	Roe Deer Cull
2.4	Additional Information
Part 3	<u>Commentary on Cull 2012-13</u>
3.1	Red Deer
3.2	Roe Deer
3.3	Targets
3.4	Capacity
Part 4	<u>Arrangements for 2013-14</u>
4.1	Birse Parish DMP
4.2	Forest Plan DMPs
4.3	Annual Meetings
4.4	Data Collection
4.5	Group Arrangements
Part 5	<u>Summary List of Suggestions</u>

---

<sup>1</sup> Written by Robin Callander, BCT

## **PART 1 - Background Information**

### **1.1 DMG, DMP, DMUs**

The Birse Parish Deer Management Group (BP DMG) is an informal group involving all the properties over 100 ha in Birse parish. The members are Ballogie, Finzean and Birse Estates, Birse Community Trust (BCT), Balfour Estate and the Shannel.

The DMG is currently implementing the Birse Parish Deer Management Plan (DMP) 2009-14. Birse parish includes the Balnacraig / Carlogie area for the purposes of the DMG and has an overall area of approximately 13,382 hectares or 33,000 acres.

The DMG area is divided into Deer Management Units (DMUs). The number of DMUs used was increased from 12 to 20 for 2012-13 by incorporating Ballogie Estate's own subdivisions and subdividing three other DMUs to better reflect the different areas involved.

The DMU boundaries are shown on the attached map with the three zones to which the DMUs are allocated depending on their character (low ground, forest, hill). There are:-

- 4 hill DMUs covering 5,546 ha or c.40% of the DMG area and averaging c.1,400 ha each;
- 8 forest DMUs covering 3,929 ha or c.30% of the DMG area and averaging c.500 ha each;
- 8 low ground DMUs covering 3,907 ha or c.30% of the DMG area and averaging c.500 ha

### **1.2 Notes on Deer during Year**

Early in 2012-13, there were two prominent issues due to the damage being caused by red deer to agricultural land. These were in the Shannel / Craigbeg and Newmill / Balfour areas, both areas where there have been longstanding concerns about the numbers of red deer. In the first incident at Birkenhill there was very serious damage by marauding red deer, with a combination of the deer and bad weather destroying the tenant's barley crop. In the second at Newmill, the tenant brought in a controller with a license from SNH to shoot near a Schedule 1 bird species, nest site, to limit the damage by deer in his fields.

The rut started around the normal local time of the second / third week of September, continuing into early October. It was an active rut in terms of the amount of roaring coming from the various locations involved. During the rut, several small groups of stags came across the Birse Hill from Glen Tanar and through the Commonly Pinewoods to the hinds on Finzean at the head of the Aven. There were generally no hinds on the south side of the Forest of Birse, only 2-3 groups of young stags. There was also a fairly large number of stags in the Bogieshiel / Balfour / Newmill area, with the stags breaking up the big groups of hind there so that there were many small groups rutting.

The condition of the stags and hinds was good in terms of average weights. However, the hinds seemed difficult to find in November / December and while that improved after the first snow, the snow through March was a major obstacle to reaching the deer and further limited the hind cull. At that time, red deer came into the neaps in Glencat. Snow prevented access to the hill to participate in the annual EGDGMG count.

At the end of 2012-13, there remained relatively large numbers of red deer in four main areas:

- (a) the Birse Forest / Balfour / Bogieshiel DMUs (16,18,19,5), which are often in relatively large and mobile groups.;
- (b) the Shannel / Craigbeg / Slewdrum DMUs (7,8,9), with these deer also moving into the Craigmores and Carlogie DMUs (6,20);
- (c) the Finzean West Woods / Arntilly DMUs (1,4), with deer coming across into Arntilly;
- (d) the Peter Hill DMU (12), with a group of perhaps around 120 in the Glen Aven area still.

With roe deer during 2012-13, while there were some good bucks, average weights were low due to the generally high density of the roe population. The does were alright to find until the first snow came, after which they tended not to come out of the woods. The prolonged snow then meant that there was little opportunity to cull does before the end of the year on 31<sup>st</sup> March.

## PART 2 - DESCRIPTION OF DEER CULL

### 2.1 Total Cull

During 2012-13, the total cull in the Birse Parish DMG area was 315 red deer and 234 roe deer and therefore an overall total 549 deer.

Table 1 below shows that these totals are all the highest since 2004-05 and 2005-06, which were the two years following the start of the first DMP for 2004-09.

The table also shows that the ratio of the total culls of red and roe deer has continued to be approximately 60:40 since 2004-05, which was when roe statistics first started to be shared.

*Table 1: Total Culls of Red and Roe Deer*

	RED	ROE	Total Cull	Red : Roe %
2004-05	415	267	682	61 : 39
2005-06	340	245	585	58 : 42
2006-07	246	184	430	57 : 43
2007-08	191	133	324	59 : 41
2008-09	276	150	426	65 : 35
2009-10	260	212	472	55 : 45
2010-11	304	152	456	67 : 33
2011-12	226	171	397	57 : 43
2012-13	315	234	549	57 : 43
2013-14				

On the following page:-

Table 2 shows the total culls of red and roe deer by DMG members and that the positive cull totals for 2012-13 resulted from most properties maintaining or increasing their cull of each species.

Table 3 shows the distribution of the total red and roe culls between the three DMU zones and the density of the total cull in each zone.

Table 4, which excludes the cull figures from the four large open hill DMUs, shows the density of cull by members on the Low Ground and Forest DMUs for which they are responsible.

Table 2: Total Culls of Red and Roe Deer by DMG Member

RED DEER	DMUs	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
Ballogie Estate	3,4,5,6,13,14,20	98	90	83	
BCT	2,8,18	54	47	63	
Finzean Estate	1,9,10,11,12	109	46	56	
Birse Estate	15,16,17	37	41	66	
Shannel	7	0	0	41	
Balfour Estate	19	6	2	6	
<b>Totals</b>		<b>304</b>	<b>226</b>	<b>315</b>	

ROE DEER	DMUs	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
Ballogie Estate	3,4,5,6,13,14,20	63	89	92	
BCT	2,8,18	14	45	82	
Finzean Estate	1,9,10,11,12	58	31	51	
Birse Estate	15,16,17	17	6	9	
Shannel	7	0	0	0	
Balfour Estate	19	0	0	0	
<b>Totals</b>		<b>152</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>234</b>	

Table 3: Red and Roe Deer Culls by DMU Zone

DMU Zone	Area (ha)	Red	Cull/100h a	Roe	Cull/100h a	Total Cull	Cull / 100 ha
Low Ground	3,907	126	3.1	76	1.9	202	5.0
Forest	3,929	165	4.2	139	3.5	304	7.7
Hill	5,546	24	0.4	19	0.3	43	0.7
<b>Totals</b>	<b>13,382</b>	<b>315</b>	<b>2.3</b>	<b>234</b>	<b>1.7</b>	<b>549</b>	<b>4.4</b>

Table 4: Red and Roe Culls by DMG Members in Low Ground and Forest Zones

Excl. Hill DMUs	Area (ha)	Red Cull	Roe Cull	Total Cull	Av. Cull / 100 ha
Ballogie Est.	2567	72	82	154	6.0
Finzean Est.	2545	45	47	92	3.6
Birse Est.	1370	64	4	68	4.6
BCT	936	63	82	145	15.5
Shannel	225	41	0	41	18.2

Balfour Est.	193	6	0	6	3.1
<b>Totals</b>	<b>7836</b>	<b>291</b>	<b>215</b>	<b>506</b>	<b>6.4</b>

## 2.2 Red Deer Cull

Table 5 below shows the distribution of the 2012-13 red deer cull by DMU. As can be seen in Table 3, the percentage of the red deer cull in the different DMU Zones was Low Ground 39%, Forest 53% and Hill 8%.

Table 6 on the following page shows the 2012-13 red deer cull by DMG member set in a table covering 2004-13. A notable contribution in 2012-13 was the 41 red deer culled on the Shannel, as the first red deer culled there in many years.

Table 6 shows that whether more stags or hinds/others are shot varies year to year, while the average annual stag and hind culls over the 9 year period are 140 and 145 respectively.

*Table 5 Birse Parish DMG Red Deer Cull 2012-13 by DMU*

Deer Mgt Units	Hectares	Red Deer Cull 2012-13				Cull/100 ha
		Stags	Hinds	Calves	Total	
1 Finzean West Woods	872	12	9	0	<b>21</b>	2.4
2 Commonty Pinewoods	528	23	5	3	<b>31</b>	5.9
3 Lamahip	401	6	1	0	<b>7</b>	1.7
4 Arntilly	405	13	5	5	<b>23</b>	5.7
5 Bogieshiel	434	5	4	4	<b>13</b>	3.0
6 Craigmore & Midstrath	713	8	6	5	<b>19</b>	2.7
7 Shannel & Coulnacraig	225	20	21	0	<b>41</b>	18.2
8 Slewdrum Forest	168	2	0	0	<b>2</b>	1.2
9 Craigbeg Plantation	93	0	0	0	<b>0</b>	0
10 Finzean East	1008	8	6	1	<b>15</b>	1.5
11 Easter Clune	572	7	2	0	<b>9</b>	1.6
12 Peter Hill	1433	9	2	0	<b>11</b>	0.8
13 Whitehill & Glaspits	1189	0	0	0	<b>0</b>	0
14 Mudlee Bracks	1264	11	0	0	<b>11</b>	0.9
15 Birse Hill	1660	2	0	0	<b>2</b>	0.1
16 Birse Forest	856	16	16	2	<b>34</b>	4.0
17 Birse Low Ground	514	19	7	4	<b>30</b>	4.9
18 Balfour Forest	240	13	14	3	<b>30</b>	12.5
19 Balfour Estate	193	3	3	0	<b>6</b>	3.1
20 Carlogie	614	6	4	0	<b>10</b>	1.6
<b>Totals</b>	<b>13,382</b>	<b>183</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>315</b>	<b>2.3</b>



Table 6: Birse Parish DMG Red Deer Culls 2004-13

	Ballogie Estate			Finzean Estate			Birse Estate			Birse Community Trust			Shannel + Balfour Estate <sup>2</sup>			Parish Totals		
	Stags	Hinds+	Total	Stags	Hinds+	Total	Stags	Hinds+	Total	Stags	Hinds+	Total	Stags	Hinds+	Total	Stags	Hinds+	Total
2004/05	72	102	<b>174</b>	53	104	<b>157</b>	27	21	<b>48</b>	18	8	<b>26</b>	3	7	<b>10</b>	173	242	<b>415</b>
2005/06	44	74	<b>118</b>	46	57	<b>103</b>	49	13	<b>62</b>	17	38	<b>55</b>	0	2	<b>2</b>	156	184	<b>340</b>
2006/07	45	82	<b>127</b>	37	30	<b>67</b>	17	6	<b>23</b>	15	13	<b>28</b>	0	1	<b>1</b>	114	132	<b>246</b>
2007/08	67	33	<b>100</b>	22	19	<b>41</b>	25	0	<b>25</b>	15	10	<b>25</b>	0	0	<b>0</b>	129	62	<b>191</b>
2008/09	57	43	<b>100</b>	35	31	<b>66</b>	68	11	<b>79</b>	12	19	<b>31</b>	0	0	<b>0</b>	172	104	<b>276</b>
2009/10	34	39	<b>73</b>	29	27	<b>56</b>	49	28	<b>77</b>	9	45	<b>54</b>	0	0	<b>0</b>	121	139	<b>260</b>
2010/11	45	53	<b>98</b>	32	77	<b>109</b>	13	24	<b>37</b>	9	45	<b>54</b>	0	6	<b>6</b>	99	205	<b>304</b>
2011/12	53	37	<b>90</b>	18	28	<b>46</b>	20	21	<b>41</b>	19	28	<b>47</b>	2	0	<b>2</b>	112	114	<b>226</b>
2012/13	49	34	<b>83</b>	36	20	<b>56</b>	37	29	<b>66</b>	38	25	<b>63</b>	23	24	<b>47</b>	183	132	<b>315</b>
2013/14																		

<sup>2</sup> The only culls from the Shannel are 20 stags and 21 hinds + others in 2012-13

## 2.3 Roe Deer Cull

Table 7 below shows the distribution of the 2012-13 roe deer cull by DMU. As can be seen in Table 3 earlier, the percentage of the roe cull in the different DMU Zones was Low Ground 33%, Forest 59% and Hill 8%.

Table 8 on the following page shows the 2012-13 roe deer cull by DMG member set in a table covering 2004-13. A notable contribution in 2012-13 was the 54 roe deer culled in Balfour Forest.

Table 8 shows that more does/others than bucks have been shot each year, with the average annual buck and doe culls over the 9 year period being 72 and 122 respectively.

*Table 7 Birse Parish DMG Roe Deer Cull 2012-13 by DMU*

Deer Mgt Units	Hectares	Roe Deer Cull 2012-13				Cull/100 ha
		Bucks	Does	Kids	Total	
1 Finzean West Woods	872	11	17	0	<b>28</b>	3.2
2 Comonty Pinewoods	528	6	6	4	<b>16</b>	3.0
3 Lamahip	401	5	3	3	<b>11</b>	2.7
4 Arntilly	405	6	7	0	<b>13</b>	3.2
5 Bogieshiel	434	11	6	0	<b>17</b>	3.9
6 Craigmore & Midstrath	713	7	12	6	<b>25</b>	3.5
7 Shannel & Coulnacraig	225	0	0	0	<b>0</b>	0
8 Slewdrum Forest	168	7	5	0	<b>12</b>	7.1
9 Craigbeg Plantation	93	0	0	0	<b>0</b>	0
10 Finzean East	1008	5	6	1	<b>12</b>	1.2
11 Easter Clune	572	4	3	0	<b>7</b>	1.2
12 Peter Hill	1433	1	3	0	<b>4</b>	0.3
13 Whitehill & Glaspits	1189	1	3	2	<b>6</b>	0.5
14 Mudlee Bracks	1264	3	1	0	<b>4</b>	0.3
15 Birse Hill	1660	5	0	0	<b>5</b>	0.3
16 Birse Forest	856	0	0	0	<b>0</b>	0
17 Birse Low Ground	514	0	2	2	<b>4</b>	0.8
18 Balfour Forest	240	17	22	15	<b>54</b>	22.5
19 Balfour Estate	193	0	0	0	<b>0</b>	0
20 Carlogie	614	6	9	1	<b>16</b>	2.6
<b>Totals</b>	<b>13,382</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>234</b>	<b>1.7</b>



Table 6: Birse Parish DMG Roe Deer Culls 2004-13

	Ballogie Estate			Finzean Estate			Birse Estate			Birse Community Trust			Shannel + Balfour Estate <sup>3</sup>			Parish Totals		
	Bucks	Does+	Total	Bucks	Does+	Total	Bucks	Does+	Total	Bucks	Does+	Total	Bucks	Does+	Total	Bucks	Does+	Total
2004/05	36	102	<b>136</b>	13	10	<b>23</b>	7	70	<b>77</b>	8	19	<b>27</b>	0	2	<b>2</b>	64	203	<b>267</b>
2005/06	34	100	<b>134</b>	21	17	<b>38</b>	13	30	<b>43</b>	10	20	<b>30</b>	0	0	<b>0</b>	78	167	<b>245</b>
2006/07	27	58	<b>85</b>	10	14	<b>24</b>	13	42	<b>55</b>	10	10	<b>20</b>	0	0	<b>0</b>	60	124	<b>184</b>
2007/08	29	40	<b>69</b>	17	22	<b>39</b>	2	1	<b>3</b>	5	16	<b>21</b>	1	0	<b>1</b>	54	79	<b>133</b>
2008/09	28	49	<b>77</b>	17	15	<b>32</b>	9	22	<b>31</b>	2	8	<b>10</b>	0	0	<b>1</b>	56	94	<b>150</b>
2009/10	43	47	<b>90</b>	19	23	<b>42</b>	11	35	<b>46</b>	17	16	<b>33</b>	1	0	<b>0</b>	91	121	<b>212</b>
2010/11	30	33	<b>63</b>	21	37	<b>58</b>	14	3	<b>17</b>	4	10	<b>14</b>	0	0	<b>0</b>	69	83	<b>152</b>
2011/12	38	51	<b>89</b>	18	13	<b>31</b>	6	0	<b>6</b>	16	29	<b>45</b>	0	0	<b>0</b>	78	93	<b>171</b>
2012/13	39	53	<b>92</b>	21	30	<b>51</b>	5	4	<b>9</b>	30	52	<b>82</b>	0	0	<b>0</b>	95	139	<b>234</b>
2013/14																		

<sup>3</sup> There are no recorded roe culls from the Shannel over the period.

## **2.4 Additional Information**

### Authorisations

The information supplied by Ballogie, Finzean and BCT showed that:

- 68 red deer or 27% of their cull was shot out of season and 26 roe or 12% of their cull
  - over 70% of the deer shot out of season were male
- 24 red deer or 10% of their cull was by night shooting and 40 roe or 18% of their cull
  - over 70% of the deer culled by night shooting were female.

### Weights

The weights of the deer are taken as the clean carcass weight – no gralloch, head or legs.

#### (a) Red

It is considered that the average weight of a stag in the parish might be 50-60 kg, with heavier ones 70-80 kg and some very large stags bigger than that.

The average weights reported for stags by Ballogie, Finzean and BCT were 56, 51 and 65 kg, with top weights of 90, 90 and 105 kg respectively.

It is considered average hinds might be 40-50 kg, with Ballogie, Finzean and BCT's averages 45, 36 and 51 kg and top weights 56, 50 and 82 kg.

#### (b) Roe

An average weight for a buck is considered 15-18 kg and for a doe 15-16 kg.

The Ballogie, Finzean and BCT average weights for bucks were 12, 16 and 13 kg, with top weights of 18, 20 and 19 kg.

For does, the average weights were 11, 16 and 11 kg and top weights 18, 20 and 20 kg.

## Part 3 - Commentary on Cull

### 3.1 Red Deer

- 1 The cull of 310 red deer was a positive achievement, with the contribution from the Shannel being a particularly helpful development.
- 2 The position with the red deer in the four Open Hill DMUs, covering 40% of the DMG area, might be considered relatively well contained. The Birse Hill (15) continues to be kept clear of red deer, while the small population or groups of red deer on the south side of the Forest of Birse (13,14) are culled to prevent any build up. The main issue is the group in the Aven as a legacy of the fencing on Glen Dye, in terms of its current size and difficulty of culling.
- 3 A particular local concern in the Forest of Birse area is the risk of serious damage by red deer to the thousands of native broadleaves planted by BCT there, which will remain vulnerable to red deer for some years yet.
- 4 In the Forest and Low Ground DMUs, there is widespread empirical evidence that the numbers of red deer continue to be too high. This evidence includes damage to trees and natural regeneration, heavy tracking, the density of droppings in some areas, the continuing threat to agricultural interests and the size of the groups of deer that continue to be seen.
- 5 This evidence indicates that the culls over recent years have not been enough to adequately control the red deer in these areas. The risk is that without a sufficient and sustained cull year to year, the damage is prolonged and the effort that does go into the cull each year undermined.
- 6 All the indications are that a total cull of 300 or more red deer, as in 2012-13, is required in 2013-14 and potentially the immediate following years.
- 7 The aim is that red deer should become increasingly scarce in the Low Ground DMUs and be taken when they are encountered as part of the roe cull in these areas. Thus, the average red deer cull per 100 ha in the Low Ground should be maintained and increased, with the aim that it would fall over time if adequate culls are being achieved in the Forest DMUs.
- 8 A sustained effort is required to control the red deer in and around the Forest DMUs, with a particular focus on hinds when the opportunities arise. The serious impact of these deer on forestry interests will continue to become more significant locally, as more areas of post war planting start to be re-structured.
- 9 A cull of over 300 red deer was achieved in 2010-11 and 2012-13 and would be achieved again in 2013-14 if each member maintains or increases the level of their 2012-13 cull. For example, if the targets in Table 6 were 100 / 70 / 70 / 70 / 40 respectively, the overall target would be a cull of 350.
- 10 It is suggested therefore for 2013-14 that:
 

*ONE – it is agreed that each member will aim to maintain or increase their red deer cull from 2012-13, within the collective target of a cull of over 300 red deer in 2013-14.*

### 3.2 Roe Deer

- 1 The cull of 234 roe deer was a positive achievement relative to recent years, with the 54 roe culled in Balfour Forest a notable contribution to the total. However, the level of roe cull in some DMUs was very low and the evidence indicates that the overall cull is low for the area.

- 2 While the cull of 54 from Balfour (240ha) is indicative of a high population, as are low average weights, there is also extensive empirical evidence of the damage by roe in preventing and suppressing regeneration and damaging planted trees. They also appear the most frequent road strike locally and impact on local gardens.
- 3 The anticipated roe densities used by the Group in the DMP are 5-10 / 100 ha for the hill and 10-20 /100 ha in the forest and low ground zones. These figures were researched at the time of the 2004-09 DMP and remain a sound basis for planning. On the basis of these figures, it might be expected that a minimum sustainable cull would be 5 / 100 ha on the hill and 10 / 100 ha in the other areas.
- 4 The roe cull rates per DMU in 2012-13 in Table 7 show that all were below even 5 / 100 ha, except in Balfour and Slewdrum Forests. A cull of 5 /100 ha in the low ground and forest zones would give a cull of 373 roe. While this is 50% higher than the 2012-13, it might be considered a realistic level. There are some areas where relatively large numbers of roe were being culled annually, where few have been shot in recent years. If these areas increased again and others maintain or slightly increase their roe culls, a more realistic cull would be achieved. For example, if the targets in Table 8 were 120 / 70 / 70 / 80 / 10 respectively, the overall target would be a cull of 350.
- 5 It is suggested therefore for 2013-14 that:  
*TWO – it is agreed that each member will aim to maintain or increase their roe deer cull from 2012-13, within the collective target of a cull of over 300 roe deer in 2013-14.*
- 6 The traditional focus of local deer management focus has been the red deer, but the economic and environmental impact of roe deer has become of increasing significance. It might also be considered surprising that the local cull is always 60:40 red:roe. It would be logical to expect that there would be more roe to cull and that it should be 60:40 roe:red.
- 7 The roe are much easier to cull and extract, have more valuable venison and the potential for trophy heads. They might be also be recognised as important to the operation of the red cull, in the sense of stalkers returning with a roe if not a red, particularly when it is often difficult to go looking specifically for red.

### 3.3 Targets

- 1 The targets set by members for 2012-13 were generally met or exceeded. With the red and roe targets for their DMUs in 2013-14, it is important that members set targets which are realistic in terms of the aim of reducing the current high populations of deer locally
- 2 In this context, targets should not be seen as an 'aspiration' but minimum cull levels to be achieved, even if more effort may be required than might have been anticipated. Other factors may, of course, still frustrate achieving a cull target, as with the prolonged snow cover this year.
- 3 The fact that red and roe deer populations do well in the forest and low ground zones of the parish is understandable, given the high percentage of woodland cover and varied habitat. A local cull of at least 500-600 deer a year is a major wildlife operation.
- 4 While anticipated densities can help guide the roe cull, there is no reasonable basis on which to calculate red culls except the empirical on the ground evidence. However, it is considered that the red population is relatively self-contained, given the area covered by the DMG and the fairly limited movement into the area from any direction, except in exceptional circumstances (eg. Glen Dye fencing in Glen Aven).

### 3.4 Capacity

- 1 Enough stalkers outings need to take place to reach a target and at current population levels, there appears a fairly straightforward correlation between the cull effort and the cull achieved.
- 2 The experience of George Ritchie in Balfour Forest, with 84 deer off 240 ha in less than 9 months, might be considered a demonstration that deer are there to be shot. He averaged over a deer per visit, despite blank days. His average time per visit / cull was very roughly 3 hours or so, which matches the calculations by Ballogie around ten years ago.
- 3 These types of figures provide a reasonable basis for members to plan the amount of stalking time required to meet targets, though circumstances vary area to area.
- 4 The overall cull of 549 deer was achieved by 12 stalkers, attributing any client culls to the accompanying stalker and counting Alf Sorensen's cull (15 deer) as one stalker.
- 5 Six of these stalkers accounted for over 85% of the cull and culled over 40 deer each. Four shot 40-80 deer each and two stalkers over 100 each.<sup>4</sup> The other 6 were responsible for under 20 deer each.
- 6 The composition of those carrying out the cull in the parish has been evolving to some extent, with some additional stalkers contributing. In 2012-13, two new participants in the parish cull, George Ritchie (Newmill, Balfour Forest, Slewdrum) and Jim Stevenson (Shannel), contributed a cull of 145 deer or 25% of the total cull of 549.

## Part 4 - Arrangements for 2013-14

### 4.1 Birse Parish DMP

- 1 There has been a long history of cooperation between the local estates over deer management and more recently this has also involved BCT. Over time, the local arrangements for coordinated local deer management have evolved to become more focused – from the estates sharing statistics with the EGDMG in the 1990s, to the Kincardine & Birse DMP 2004-09 and then the current Birse Parish DMP 2009-14.
- 2 The BP DMP provides a helpful framework for local discussions, while also providing a useful context within which members can set individual Forest Plan DMPs. A reasonable standard of DMP for local deer management, such as the BP DMP, is also good to have within the wider debate about the role of DMGs in sustainable deer management.
- 3 The BP DMP ends in a year's time and in anticipation of that, it is suggested that:
 

*THREE - it is agreed that a new DMP should be developed so that it can be considered and adopted in a year's time in April 2014.*

*FOUR - it is agreed that the next DMP should retain the same short format as the current DMP, but only be for three years rather than five, so that it remains a more up to date document.*

### 4.2 Forest Plan DMPs

- 1 The development of Forest Plan DMPs by individual members is an important factor to take into account in local deer management planning.

---

<sup>4</sup> The division of the Birse Estate cull between stalkers is still to be confirmed

- 2 It is note that, while Balfour Estate has dedicated woodlands and no Forest Plan (FP), Ballogie has had a FP DMP since 2005 and will soon be reviewing this; that BCT has had FP DMPs for each of the three Forests it manages since 2011; that Finzean has had FP DMP since 2012 and that Birse Estate aims to have a FP DMP soon.
- 3 Some or all of these FP DMPs may already be or may become supported by public funding through the SRDP, further adding to members' interests in achieving adequate levels of deer control. As noted earlier, this interest is expected to increase as forest re-structuring is undertaken by more members.
- 4 It is suggested that:  
*FIVE – it is agreed that members will make their individual FP DMPs available to other members, so that they can be taken into account in local discussions and in drafting a new BP DMP.*

#### 4.3 Annual Meetings

- 1 The BP DMP is based on two local meetings a year, spring and autumn. The spring meeting should be in April (/May) each year and should be a 'senior managers' meeting as planned this year, to consider the previous cull and plan for the coming year.
- 2 The autumn meeting in late October / early November should involve local stalkers with SNH and neighbours also invited (Glen Tanar, Glen Dye, FCS). This meeting also provides an opportunity to discuss other topics (for example, grouse / caper seasons).
- 3 It is suggested that:-  
*SIX – it is agreed to arrange a meeting in November and to hold another senior managers meeting next April, with the meeting to be hosted by Ballogie again if willing.*

#### 4.4 Data Collection

- 1 It is important that the April DMG meeting has adequate information upon which to base discussions, including the cull statistics for each DMU and each property.
- 2 Authorisations from SNH are an important factor in understanding and implementing local deer management. Therefore, for 2012-13, information was collected for the DMG on the numbers and sex of red and roe deer culled out of season and by night shooting. This is information that members are already supplying to SNH if they have an authorisation.
- 3 In 2012-13, information was also collected on average and top carcase weights as indicators of the condition of the deer. Again this is information already collected individually. The generally low average weights of roe deer due to the high population has already been noted and improving average weights over time might be seen as progress in managing the population.
- 4 Red deer average weights might also be expected to increase over time as part of the longstanding transition from a predominantly hill population to one living in the forest environment all year. Top weights will highlight the sizes deer are reaching with, for example, some large stags already occurring in the parish.
- 5 It is suggested that:  
*SEVEN – it is agreed that figures will be collected and circulated for culling under authorisation, as well as average adults carcase weights and top weights for each species.*
- 6 All the figures from the deer cull only convey so much about each year and this report includes 'Notes on Deer during the Year' (1.2) for the first time at DMG level. Until now the only shared reports on deer over the year have been between Ballogie and BCT, as part of

the context to deer management on the North Hill of the Forest of Birse Commonty. This year's Notes are based on a draft by Peter Littlejohn.

- 7 A report each year about factors such as deer movements, their condition, the rut, any mortality, weather, et al., both helps explain the cull that year and provides a record which helps distinguish years when considering topics during the period of a DMP or earlier.
- 8 It is suggested that:  
*EIGHT – it is agreed to aim next year to circulate a report on deer movement, weather conditions and related factors over the year, with the annual cull figures.*
9. There would also be benefits in an interim cull update to 31<sup>st</sup> December, as the midway point in the main culling period Oct-Dec.- Jan.-March. Such an update to monitor progress with the cull need only be by species and sex for each member / property, rather than broken down by DMU.
- 10 It is suggested that:  
*NINE – it is agreed that interim cull totals to 31<sup>st</sup> December will be collected and circulated to members as part of monitoring the progress of the culls.*
- 9 The cull records currently held for Birse Parish cover red deer since 1995-96 and roe from 2004-05. This information represents a valuable resource for local deer management. At present, BCT holds the records and updates them annually. However, this arrangement would be significantly improved if the information was adequately organised as a database.

#### **4.5 Group Arrangements**

- 10 It is suggested that:  
*TEN – it is agreed to ask Ballogie Estate if it would be willing to take on, meantime at least, managing the DMG's cull records as distinct DMG database.*
- 11 The collection and collation of cull data in April, updating the DMG database, circulating the results as a short report and also collecting and circulating an interim cull update to 31<sup>st</sup> December, should be seen as defined tasks to be carried out on behalf of the Group. Similarly, the administration involved in organising the April and November meetings.
- 12 It is suggested that:  
*ELEVEN – it is agreed to ask Ballogie Estate if it would be willing to provide, meantime at least, the secretariat to carry out the Group's administration.*
- 13 Carrying out such tasks on behalf of the Group costs time and money. It would be reasonable for members / properties with a FP DMP and potentially public funding for deer management, to consider making a financial contribution by way a subscription towards the Group's costs.
14. It is suggested that:  
*TWELVE – it is agreed to discuss the four parties at the 23<sup>rd</sup> April meeting making equal financial contributions by way a subscription to help cover the Group's costs.*

## Part 5 - Summary List of Suggestions

ONE – it is agreed that each member will aim to maintain or increase their red deer cull from 2012-13, within the collective target of a cull of over 300 red deer in 2013-14.

TWO – it is agreed that each member will aim to maintain or increase their roe deer cull from 2012-13, within the collective target of a cull of over 300 roe deer in 2013-14.

THREE - it is agreed that new DMP should be developed so that it can be considered and adopted in a year's time in April 2014.

FOUR - it is agreed that the next DMP should retain the same short format as the current DMP, but only be for three rather than five years, so that it remains a more up to date document.

FIVE – it is agreed that members will make their individual FP DMPs available to other members, so that they can be taken into account in local discussions and in drafting a new BP DMP.

SIX – it is agreed to arrange a meeting in November and to hold another senior managers meeting next April, with the meeting to be hosted by Ballogie again if willing.

SEVEN – it is agreed that figures will be collected and circulated for culling under authorisation, as well as average adults carcase weights and top weights for each species.

EIGHT – it is agreed to aim next year to circulate a report on deer movement, weather conditions and related factors over the year, with the annual cull figures.

NINE – it is agreed that interim cull totals to 31<sup>st</sup> December will be collected and circulated to members as part of monitoring the progress of the culls.

TEN – it is agreed to ask Ballogie Estate if it would be willing to take on, meantime at least, managing the DMG's cull records as distinct DMG database.

ELEVEN – it is agreed to ask Ballogie Estate if it would be willing to provide, meantime at least, the secretariat to carry out the Group's administration.

TWELVE – it is agreed to discuss the four parties at the 23<sup>rd</sup> April meeting making equal financial contributions by way a subscription to help cover the Group's costs.

---