

BIRSE PARISH DEER MANAGEMENT GROUP

Record of Autumn Meeting on 5th November 2019

Members Present: Andrew Farquharson, Alf Sorensen, and Hedge Shand (Finzean Estate), Stuart Young and Robert Paterson (Birse Estate), Malcolm Nicol and Peter Littlejohn (Ballogie Estate), Doug Boyle and George Ritchie (BTCO), Jim Stevenson (Shannel), Jane Winton (Secretary & Farmers Rep)

Others Present: Colin McClean (Glen Tanar Estate), Iain Hope (SNH), Rachel Sedgewick and Derek Cowie (Glen Dye)

Apologies: Neil Adams (Balfour Estate), Eoghan Cameron (BCT).

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Andrew Farquharson (AF) welcomed all as Chair and noted the two apologies received. Two items were noted for Any Other Business.

2. BP DMG Papers

- 2.1 It was noted that the Record of BP DMG meeting on 13th November 2018 is available on BCT Website. It was agreed that BCT's new website should include BP DMG's plan, report and minutes of the 2 previous meetings, after these have been circulated and approved by the members.

3. Current Deer Management

3.1 Red Deer

It was noted that the DMG's interim cull to 30th September of 98 red deer was on target for this stage of the year. It was reported by all groups that there seems to be less red deer about and that they are still in smaller groups. There was less crop damage but still some trampled but not eaten. The deer seem to be in good condition but have less calves. It was noted that the rut on the hill had been good but in the forests it was short this year. Birse suggested the deer are disturbed by mountain bikes and so moving about more.

3.2 Roe Deer

It was noted that the DMG's interim roe cull total to 30th September of 161 was on target towards the DMG's agreed roe cull for the year, however Birse do not think they will meet their target due to many roe still dying from an unknown cause. It was reported that roe were still relatively abundant and in good quality.

3.3 Related Information

- (a) *Deer Fences:* It was noted that Glen Tanar are considering re-fencing the forest which marches with Birse Estate and used to be entirely fenced until the 90's. BCT / BTCO are due to complete a clearfell in Slewdrum in Autumn 2020 and will be considering fencing the area in 2021 and are still looking at the possibility of a fence in Balfour around the FCS clearfell area. It was noted that the deer fence maps would need to be updated and should be brought to the Spring meeting.
- (b) *Deer/Vehicle Collisions (DVCs):* It was noted that there had been some DVCs involving roe but no more than usual and that there is not a particular location at present in the DMG area where DVCs are a specific issue.

4 Brief Updates on Other Species

- 4.1 Red Grouse, Black Grouse and Capercaillie: It was thought that grouse had been affected by ticks and worms this year and it was noted that capercaillie sightings are low.
- 4.2 Raptors, Brown and Mountain Hares: The summary of raptor breeding in the Birse parish area has been provided for the year by the North East Scotland Raptor Study Group. It was noted that there is a healthy population of brown hares and The Shannel have brown hares again, first in thirty years. The white hares seem to be declining in number, may be due to the number of ticks. It was noted that Ballogie gather and treat their sheep every 6 weeks.
- 4.3 Other Species: It was noted that the number of badgers in the area still continue to increase and it was confirmed that there have been no signs of mink or grey squirrels.

5. Any Other Business

- 5.1 Interim Date: It was agreed to change the interim cull date from 30th September to 20th October in line with the deer stalking code of practice end of stag stalking season date.
- 5.2 Fire Plans: It was suggested that the group should have one inclusive fire plan for the whole area. This will be looked at and discussed further.