

BIRSE PARISH DEER MANAGEMENT GROUP

Record of Autumn Meeting on 11th November 2021

Members Present: Andrew Farquharson, Hedge Shand (Finzean Estate), Catriona Mackison, Robert Paterson, Drew Paterson (Birse Estate), Malcolm Nicol, Peter Littlejohn, Calum Robertson (Ballogie Estate), Toby Rider (BTCo), Toni Watt, Alison Bell (BCT), Jim Stevenson (Shannel), Edward Brooksbank (Balfour), Jane Winton (Secretary & Farmers Rep).

Others Present: Iain Hope (NatureScot), Michael Bruce (Glen Tanar & SGWG Chairman), David Murray (Scottish Fire Officer), Dan Newcombe (Strutt & Parker), Derek Calder (Dunecht Estate).

Apologies: Alf Sorenson (Finzean Estate), Stuart Young (Birse Estate), George Ritchie (BTCo), Cara Thomson (Balfour Estate).

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Andrew Farquharson (AF) welcomed all as Chair. Apologies were noted and four items were noted for Any Other Business.

2. Fire Control

- 2.1 A draft map of Birse Parish which was previously circulated was reviewed with a fire officer present. It was decided that the map should show OS grid in the background and be versatile to other map formats. PPE requirements are covered in Forest Industry Firefighting booklet 803 and volunteers should have mandatory training as for Muirburn.

3. BP DMG Papers

- 3.1 It was noted that the Record of the last autumn meeting on 3rd November 2020 is available on BCT Website.

4. Current Deer Management

4.1 Red Deer

It was noted that the DMG's interim cull to 20th October of 146 red deer was a good number for this stage of the year. Birse Estate are still seeing a lot less deer due to lots more mountain bikers using the forests and hills. It was noted that the rut had been very poor this year and that the deer look to be in good condition.

4.2 Roe Deer

It was noted that the DMG's interim roe cull total to 20th October of 123 was below target towards the DMG's agreed roe cull for the year. Birse Estate reported losing about 90% of hill roe during snow but numbers still seem to be steady elsewhere.

4.3 Related Information

- (a) *Deer Fences:* MB distributed a map showing the proposed new deer fence on Glen Tanar and repair to the existing fence and stated that they will continue to control deer outside the fenced area.
- (b) *Deer/Vehicle Collisions (DVCs):* It was noted that there had been more DVCs involving roe and more roe than usual spotted on the roads.

5 Brief Updates on Other Species

- 5.1 Red Grouse, Black Grouse and Capercaillie: The grouse numbers remained low this year, but it was noted that Finzean has good sightings of capercaillie this year and have diverted the public away from a lek.
- 5.2 Raptors, Brown and Mountain Hares: It was noted that the raptors report should be due out any day and that there are lots more red kites in the area and also a healthy population of brown hares and a good population of mountain hares. The rabbit population is very low due to disease and raptors.
- 5.3 Other Species: It was confirmed that there have been no signs of mink or grey squirrels, but badgers seem to be increasing and ground nesting birds decreasing. There are also more sightings of pine martins.

6. Any Other Business

- 6.1 Deer Count: It was noted that NatureScot are to carry out an open range deer count in 2022 preferably when there is snow on the ground. Peter Littlejohn agreed to coordinate this for Birse Parish as he did at last count in 2017.
 - 6.2 Annual Report: It was suggested to make the BP DMG Annual Report more reachable to the wider public.
 - 6.3 DMG's: It was noted that Kincardine O'Neil, Sluie, Raemoir and Cullerlie are looking to set up a DMG.
 - 6.4 Shooting: Discussion took place about the use of lead-free ammunition and thermal vision becoming legal but at moment nothing is confirmed as both would need to go through parliament.
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