

## JURA DEER MANAGEMENT GROUP

Minute of the meeting of Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> May 2023 at Tarbert Lodge.

**Present:** John Lithgow (Chairperson) - Inver Estate, Lord Astor – Tarbert Estate, William MacDonald - Ardfin Estate, Andrew Fletcher - Ardlussa Estate, Craig Rozga - Ruantallain Estate, Gordon Muir – Tarbert Estate, Scott Muir-Ardfin Estate, Kyle MacDonald – Tarbert Estate, Graham Hayes- Inver Estate, Ross Rozga - Forest Estate, Guy Morley – Ruantallain Estate, Donald Ewen Darroch (Secretary) and also present Andrew McCallum.

**Welcome:** The chair welcomed everyone.

**Apologies:** Ewan MacInnes - Ardlussa Estate, Rob Fletcher - Barnhill Estate, Rowan Lattimer- Ardlussa Estate, Sgt Maginnis – Police Scotland, Rhowan Rozga – Ardmenish Croft, Jamie Hammond – NatureScot, Lindsay Bury -Ruantallain Estate, Alexander George – Forest Estate, Cllr McFadzean and Cllr Redman of Argyll & Bute Council.

### **Minutes of 9th November 2022:**

These had been circulated previously by email and were deemed as accepted.

### **Deer Management Plan Information Paper:**

No need to update currently.

### **Deer Management Plan Group Operation Paper:**

No updates needed to the operation paper.

### **Estate Reports:**

- a. Deer Count. A full island count had been completed this spring. Stags 1762, hinds 2840, calves 1041. Giving a total of 5643. The previous full count in 2021 the total was 5285.
- b. Proposed cull for the coming season. No significant change from last year which was 285 stags, 308 hinds and 89 calves. Giving a total of 682. It is noted that Jura has a higher deer density than the official recommendation. Members feel that too much emphasis should not be put on this as the island herd is in good health and is recognised for its good quality carcasses. Ardlussa Estate has however had problems when trying to access public funding due to the Jura density being higher than 10 deer per square kilometre.
- c. Observed deer health. During the counts it was noted that animal condition was good with last year's calves having grown well. Low mortality noted.
- d. Deer Vehicle Collisions. One reported since the last meeting.
- e. Out of season authorisations. None.

### **Habitat Monitoring:**

No plots surveyed this year. As previously it was questioned by some members the justification of these surveys in a Jura context.

### **Training:**

Some members had attended a DSC course on Islay. No further courses known of at this time.

### **DMG Website:**

Apart from updating minutes there appears to be no reason to alter the content. Over the past year a few enquiries on deer issues have come via the web page.

**NatureScot Update:**

Nothing to report at this time.

**Finance & Division of Costs:**

Inver Estate are covering the low cost of the web site. No further costs currently.

**Matters outstanding from the previous meeting:**

Craighouse chill. Repairs had been undertaken over the course of the season. There was a suggestion that some form of alarm system would be useful for warning members that there was an issue. Due to the chill having broken some members lost venison carcasses. It was also suggested that the thermal link into the sea should be made more substantial this would help stop cable damage due to wave movement. It was also suggested that when Andy McCallum has a new chiller that could be used in emergencies.

Non-lead ammunition. If Highland Game are again collecting from Jura, they will expect all animals to have been shot with lead free ammunition. Although there is a feeling that copper is not as efficient as lead most estates are now using copper.

Venison. There has been no proposed price yet for this season, but it is expected to be similar to last season. It would appear that Highland Game are the only dealers interested in purchasing Jura venison. Andy McCallum told those present about his proposal for a small-scale venison processing unit. He hopes to be operating for a small number of carcasses by mid to late season. The group offered their support as the project moves forward over the coming seasons.

Association of Deer Management Groups. A copy of the Spring 2023 update had been received. Jura Deer Management Group are not members of the ADMG.

Managing the wildlife and landscape on Jura. There had been discussion between varying island groups about holding a public event in the spring. The intention being to help the public understand the various things estates are involved in. Time constraints did not, however allow this to happen but it could perhaps be again considered at some future date.

**Any Other Business:**

No items raised.

**Date of Next Meeting:**

Date to be agreed for November 2023.

The Chair thanked members for attending and closed the meeting.