

BIRSE PARISH DEER MANAGEMENT GROUP

Record of Autumn Meeting on 13th November 2018

Members Present: Stuart Young and Robert Paterson (Birse Estate), Malcolm Nicol, Peter Littlejohn and Calum Robertson (Ballogie Estate), Andrew Farquharson, Alf Sorensen, Hedge Shand and Paul Tanner (Finzean Estate), Eoghan Cameron (BCT), Doug Boyle (BTCO), James Stevenson (Shannel), Andrew Ward-Smith (Balfour), Jane Winton (Secretary)

Others Present: Colin McClean (Glen Tanar Estate), Iain Hope (SNH)

Apologies: Michael Skelly (FES), George Ritchie (BTCO).

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Stuart Young (SY) welcomed all as Chair and noted the two apologies received. One item was noted for Any Other Business.

2. BP DMG Papers

- 2.1 It was noted that the Record of BP DMG meeting on 26th October 2017 was previously agreed.

3. Current Deer Management

3.1 Red Deer

It was noted that the DMG's interim cull to 30th September of 94 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 now in smaller groups. There was less crop damage but this could be due to earlier harvest this year. The deer seem to be in poorer condition and have less calves. It was noted that there had been a poor rut in the DMG area this year.

3.2 Roe Deer

It was noted that the DMG's interim roe cull total to 30th September of 137, though lower than this time last year was still 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 dying from an unknown cause. It was reported that roe were still relatively abundant.

3.3 Related Information

- (a) *Deer Fences:* It was noted that BCT / BTCO are looking at the possibility of a fence in Balfour but this is still at very early stage.
- (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 black grouse numbers had dropped slightly. It was noted that there had been 4 capercaillie chicks seen in Finzean this year.
- 4.2 Raptors, Brown and Mountain Hares: The summary of raptor breeding in the Birse parish area has been provided for a fourth year by the North East Scotland Raptor

Study Group, is a very helpful. It was noted that there is a healthy population of brown hares and that white hares are numerous in the Forest of Birse.

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 DMG Health Check: It was noted that Victor Clements Health Check Report on the Deer Management Plan has been received and that the score was not as high as in previous years. All groups should analyse report and feedback with ideas and changes by end of the year and discuss further at Spring meeting.

5.2 Deer Tracking: Effective ways to track deer were discussed and could prove quite costly but should be looked at further.
