

ADMG Benchmark Assessment- Moidart Deer Management Group	Notes	Correcting Actions required
Operation of Group		
Area and boundaries		
Identify the appropriate boundaries for the group to operate in.	Group boundaries coherent and in public domain. Area enclosed by Atlantic Ocean, River Shiel, Loch Shiel, Loch Eilt and Loch Ailort. Some cross over at A830 and at Sheil river.	Keep boundaries under review with reference to any changing deer movements.
Define appropriate sub populations where applicable	Eilean Shona and Shona Beag	Compile audit of sub-populations for MDMG 2017
Membership		
All property owners within a deer range should be members of a DMG, including private and public land owners; also, where possible, agricultural occupiers, foresters, crofters and others on adjoining land where deer may be present. In some cases this may extend to householders with private gardens.	Good membership from land holders and public agencies such as FES.	Chairman in contact with Eilean Shona and John Macauley. Community Councils to receive copies of the group Minutes.
Meetings		
DMGs should meet regularly. Two formal meetings per year is the norm but more frequent interaction between members, between meetings, should be encouraged.	2 meetings per year is normal and regular communication by email	None.
For effective collaborative management to take place it is important that all DMG Members should attend every meeting or be represented by someone authorised to make appropriate decisions on their behalf.	All owners and managers represented.	Ensure those who represent landholdings can make decisions.
In addition to landholding Members, including public sector owners, public agencies such as SNH and Forestry Commission Scotland should be in attendance and other relevant authorities such as Police Scotland may be invited to attend DMG meetings.	SNH/FES attend, Fire Liaison Officer invited, Police Scotland notified	Invite Police Scotland when input required.
Meetings should operate to an agenda and be accurately minute. Attendees should be encouraged to participate and agreed actions and decisions should be recorded.	Meetings have agenda and minutes	Add clear action points to minute.
Group can demonstrate a capacity to deal with issues between meetings as they arise, and to provide an ongoing source of communication and advice as required.	Chair and Secretary have a regular communication with MDMG regarding issues arising between meetings	Continue with this approach.
Constitution & Finances		
All DMGs should have a Constitution which defines the area of the Group, sets out its purpose, its operating principles, membership and procedures, in addition to providing for appointing office bearers, voting, raising subscriptions and maintaining financial records	MDMG has a written constitution that has been circulated and agreed	None.
Good management and budgeting of finances	DMG has its own bank account.	None.
Deer Management Plans		
All DMGs should have an up to date, effective and forward looking Deer Management Plan (DMP).	MDMG has an up-to-date, effective and forward looking Deer Management Plan, assembled 2011 - 2015 and regularly circulated in draft	Review and update plan over 2015 - 2020 to deliver on changing environmental circumstances and the public interest.

The DMP should record all the land management objectives within the DMG area.	The DMP records all the land management objectives within the DMG area.	Review and update plan over 2015 - 2020 to deliver on changing environmental circumstances and the public interest.
Where applicable, the plan should include a rolling 5 year population model	The plan includes a rolling 5 year population model, 2015 -2020	DMG data to be added to population model when gathered. Check owners understand implications of target populations and culls!
Appropriate use of maps to illustrate relevant detail.	Maps used to illustrate relevant detail.	None.
The DMP should identify the public interest aspects of deer management	Full coverage of designated sites, cultural and historical features & woodland to support public interest needs.	Review and update 2015 - 2020 in line with public interest needs.
DMP should make appropriate reference to other species of deer within the DMG area, and provide a level of detail proportionate to this interest.	DMP includes formal and agreed policies on management of roe & sika	Report sightings/culls of sika to DMG.
It should include a list of actions that deliver the collective objectives of DMG Members as well as public interest objectives. These actions should be updated annually	DMP includes list of actions to deliver DMG members' and public interest objectives.	Use ongoing MDMG assessment to identify changing public interests and revise plan accordingly.
It is important that all DMG Members should play a full part in the planning process and in the implementation of agreed actions	All members included in draft and DMP, potential for more engagement from some members. Chair has taken into account views and concerns of non members.	All landholders to continue to be engaged the delivery of the plan including continued environmental monitoring.
The DMP may identify potential conflicts and how they can be prevented or addressed to ensure an equitable approach to the shared deer population.	Principles of Collaboration included in DMP. Conflict surrounding illegal taking of deer resolved by DMG.	Every reasonable step is taken to reconcile members' interests.
Relevant local interests should be consulted on new DMPs and advised of any changes as they come forward.	Draft circulated to stakeholders including community councils and wider stakeholders via Slattach.co.uk	Additional stakeholders to be identified?
Code of Practice on Deer Management		
The Code should be endorsed by all DMGs and referenced in both the Constitution and Deer Management Plan of every Group. The terms of the Code should be delivered through the Group Deer Management Plan.	The Code is endorsed by MDMG members, referenced in the DMP and included in the constitution.	Future changes to the Code to be adopted.
ADMG Principles of Collaboration		
The Principles of Collaboration should be incorporated into all DMG Constitutions and Deer Management Plans.	The Principles of Collaboration are incorporated into the DMP	None.
Best Practice		
All deer management should be carried out in accordance with Best Practice.	MDMG subscribes to Best Practice and members carry out deer management in accordance with it	Ensuring adherence to WDBP.
All Deer Management Plans should reference and follow WDBP which will continue to evolve.	WDBP referenced in plan.	Chair to disseminate Best Practice information and attend any relevant training sessions.
Data and Evidence gathering- Deer counts		
Accurate deer counting forms the basis of population modelling. An ethos that reflects this should be in evidence	Deer count carried out biannually with annual counting kept under review. Population modelling carried out for deer population figure and cull targets.	Ongoing input on population modelling from SNH, group to update with their own information.
As publicly funded aerial counts are now exceptional, DMGs should aim to carry out a regular well planned coordinated foot count of the whole open range deer population. The norm is to count annually.	Deer counting carried out by DMG every 1 to 2 years and kept under annual review. SNH counts a periodic exercise to confirm group counts.	Continue with this approach, consider sharing resources formally with West Lochaber.
Recruitment and mortality counts are also essential for population modelling.	Mortality agenda item at meetings & included in population model.	Continue to collect data and interpret.

Other census methods may be required in some circumstances, e.g. dung counting in woodland or other concealing habitats or on adjoining open ground.	FES carry out dung counts/HIA.	Potential for additional monitoring of Loch Sheil woods under SRDP.
Data and evidence gathering- Culls		
All DMGs should agree a target deer population or density which meets the collective requirements of Members without detriment to the public interest.	Population target and density established through modelling and MDMG consensus, and included in plan	Population model annually reviewed and target deer population adjusted taking into account all monitoring data.
The cull should be apportioned among Members to deliver the objectives of the DMP and individual management objectives while maintaining the agreed target population and favourable environmental condition.	Culls discussed and set at MDMG meetings set against discussions on environmental conditions	Cull to be reviewed annually at MDMG meetings.
The Group cull target should be reviewed and, if necessary, adjusted annually.	The Group cull target is reviewed annually	Cull target will be adjusted in light of habitat / population model information.
Data and evidence gathering- Habitat Monitoring		
DMGs should carry out habitat monitoring. Habitat Impact Assessments (HIA) measure progress towards agreed habitat condition targets on both designated sites and the wider deer range.	Training completed in 2013, Moidart DMG has carried out HIA on SNH plot locations in 2015. Onward HIA program in DMP.	Continue programme of habitat monitoring as per DMP.
HIAs should be carried out on a systematic and regular basis. A three year cycle is the norm but many find annual monitoring useful.	Moidart DMG has agreed to three year cycle and some annual monitoring of plots	Results of monitoring and assessments to be an agenda item at Moidart DMG meetings.
Data is required on other herbivores present and their impact on the habitat.	Cattle dung identified at some HIA sites	Contact SGRPID, E Macpherson Oban Office to confirm sheep/cattle numbers.
DMPs should include a section on habitat monitoring methods and procedures and record annual results so as to measure change and record trends.	Habitat monitoring methods and procedures, and 2015 results, included in DMP	Future habitat monitoring results, with 2015 results, used to measure habitat change.
Competence		
It is recommended that in addition to DSC 1 deer managers should also attain DSC 2 or equivalent.	Most DMG members at DSC 1	Audit MDMG competence levels.
Deer managers supplying venison for public consumption are required to certify carcasses as fit for human consumption to demonstrate due diligence. "Trained Hunter" status is required for carcass certification.	Some deer managers hold DSC 1 and therefore meet trained hunter certification requirements.	Check group uptake, log progress and promote in plan.
Training		
All DMGs should have a training policy and incorporate it in the DMP	MDMG training policy included in DMP	Skills and training audit to be undertaken and updates logged.
All DMG Members or those acting on their behalf should undergo the necessary training to demonstrate Competence.	Competence criteria included in DMP	DSC 2 to be recommended as minimum to owners/managers.
The training policy should promote and record continuing professional development through Best Practice Guidance.	MDMG Training Policy promotes and records CPD through Best Practice Guidance	Completed training to be logged.
Venison Marketing		
Membership of the Scottish Quality Wild Venison scheme is recommended by ADMG.	Some members working towards this scheme.	Members to be encouraged to take this up where viable.
There is evidence of collaborative venison production within the Group	Some collaboration on sale of venison	Potential MDMG venison production scheme options to be considered.

Communications		
DMGs should include a Communications Policy in their DMP. External communication should be directed at parties not directly involved but with an interest in deer management including individuals, local bodies such as community councils, local authorities, local media and other specialist interests.	Communications Policy in DMP & Chair leads on communications locally.	Ongoing review of stakeholders.
An annual communication programme suitable to local circumstances is advised. This might include a DMG website or a page on www.deer-management.co.uk , an annual Newsletter, annual open meeting, or attending local meetings by invitation.	MDMG has a web page on www.deer-management.co.uk/dmgs/deer-management-groups/deer-management-group map/moidart-dmg and MDMG activities communicated via www.glenaladale.co.uk	Websites to be updated when necessary.
A Deer Management Plan should be accessible and publicly available, and local consultation during its development is advised.	Scottish Fire and rescue Services (Highland West) and Police Scotland consulted & Moidart DMP made available at www.glenaladale.co.uk	Website to be updated when necessary and consultation carried out as stakeholder group changes.
Delivery of objective is good, in line with benchmark		
Delivery of objective is only partial/ variable in quality		
Group is not delivering this element		

Deer Management Plans - Delivering Public Interest

		In DMP (y/n) Agreed WMO/ DMG scoring prior to Ops Mgr QA	What DMG doing now? This is about current outputs (From date of audit)(Narrative)	What will DMG do in the future? This is the detail for the DMP: set targets where appropriate (Narrative)	QA - Ops Manager - Chris Donald - 24 June 2016
Actions 1 to 14					
1. ACTIONS to develop mechanisms to manage deer	Carry out an assessment of effectiveness against the Benchmark	Y	Carried out 06 Feb 2015 & May 2016	Group to review annually.	As evidenced
	Develop a series of actions to be implemented and assign roles	Y	Actions identified in plan- Deer count, HIA, submission of larder records and dialogue with community, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service and Police Scotland by land holders and managers and MDMG	Review annually.	As evidenced
	Produce and publish a forward-looking, effective deer management plan which includes public interest elements relevant to local circumstances. Plan should include an agreed action-plan to clarify roles and monitor progress against objectives. Minutes of DMG meetings should be publicly available.	Y	DMP completed 2015-16: includes objectives, targets, action plan for continued monitoring	Revision in May 2016 in light of stakeholder responses Feb-May 2016.	As evidenced
	Summary : Agree a colour for current delivery of the Action (red, amber, green) and detail what is going to happen to deliver future actions		Group has completed 2x assessments and a DMP containing relevant actions as identified.	Review progress annually and update plan accordingly.	As evidenced
2. ACTIONS for the delivery of designated features into Favourable Condition.	Identify designated features, the reported condition and herbivore pressures affecting designated sites in the DMG area.	Y	Designated features identified in detail. Sites are of varying condition.	Update DMP with data from SNH's Sitelink system (May 2016) or when status of sites change.	as evidenced
	Identify and agree actions to manage herbivore impacts affecting the favourable condition of designated features.	Y	Population modelling used to establish culls. Glenaladale, Glenuig and Kinlochmoidart and Loch Sheil Forestry Plans to establish use of fencing.	Update DMP with any agreed actions under new LTFP and SCM to be included.	as evidenced
	Monitor progress and review actions to manage herbivore impacts affecting favourable condition.	Y	Group HIA included in plan, woodland monitoring carried out by SNH.	Now included in DMG agenda and actions to be agreed to manage herbivore impacts.	as evidenced
	Summary : Agree a colour for current delivery of the Action (red, amber, green) and detail what is going to happen to deliver future actions		Detail of site condition and issues in plan. Some management detail regarding open ground, woodland management via SRDP and this is as yet undeveloped.	Update plan with new management actions forthcoming under any SRDP applications. Add habitat monitoring detail.	as evidenced
3. ACTIONS to manage deer to retain existing native woodland cover and improve woodland condition in the medium to long term.	Establish overall extent of woodland and determine what proportion is existing native woodland.	Y	1883Ha of woodland on Moidart 1512Ha of which is native woodland. C85% More detail be taken from LTFP's when created.	NWSS data included.	as evidenced
	Determine current condition of native woodland.	Y	Some detail of highest impacts in text.	Use NWSS data for non designated woods-add this to draft plan to better understand where impacts are highest	as evidenced
	Identify actions to retain and improve native woodland condition and deliver DMG woodland management objectives.	Y	Native Woodland management carried out at landholding level, woodland Plans due for completion 2016. Herbivore impacts discussed at DMG. 400Ha WGS scheme (N 30001242) improving existing woodland on Kinlochmoidart. 500Ha fenced on Glenuig under WGS scheme	Where NW identified as in poor condition under high pressure group will consider actions to improve including SRDP. Included in DMG agenda.	as evidenced
	Monitor progress and review actions to manage herbivore impacts.	P	Monitoring/management being carried out and is linked to cull targets and population modelling 2015-2020.	Where issues with NW condition are identified group will consider woodland HIA.	as evidenced
	Summary : Agree a colour for current delivery of the Action (red, amber, green) and detail what is going to happen to deliver future actions		Good understanding of native woodland condition and extent due to SNH site based work with individual owners. Some owners delivering non designated native woodland management. There is as yet not a collective management strategy for group.	Plan updated to include any future management for non designated native woodland as a group.	as evidenced
4. ACTIONS to demonstrate DMG contribution to the Scottish Government	Identify and quantify extent of recent woodland establishment (through SRDP (last 20 years) and through other schemes).	Y	Woodland expansion under schemes 1990-2013 was 1382.2Ha. Currently c12% woodland cover.	Use FCS/SNH data in map form to show recent progress.	as evidenced
	Identify and quantify opportunities and priorities for woodland expansion over the next 5-10 years.	Y	40Ha on Kinlochmoidart. Limited options for future development due to eagle SPA and limitations on planting on woodland SAC's.	Discuss at group level, log any schemes planned wrt limitations (designations).	as evidenced

woodland expansion target of 25% woodland cover.	Consider at a population level the implication of increased woodland on deer densities and distribution across the DMG.	N	Cull targets and population model will be reassessed, current 40Ha may not have much impact. Any fencing under LTFP's will be discussed at DMG.	Detail any new schemes in DMP, consider implications for deer management.	as evidenced
	Implement actions to deliver the DMG woodland expansion proposals and review progress.	N	Not currently in plan, currently several properties creating woodland under LTFP's.	Detail any future developments in plan.	as evidenced
	Summary : Agree a colour for current delivery of the Action (red, amber, green) and detail what is going to happen to deliver future actions		Good progress individually, not logged as a group. Implications under new LTFP's for deer discussed at meetings.	Detail recent progress in plan, detail future options/limitations and consequences.	as evidenced
5. ACTIONS to monitor and manage deer impacts in the wider countryside.	Identify habitat resource by broad type.	Y	Mapped and contained within DMP.	Update in line with any changes in habitat resource	as evidenced
	Identify required impact targets for habitat types.	N	Heavily grazed areas identified via HIA round 1. Impact targets discussed as part of cull setting.	Re-assess after round 2 HIA and create agreed targets.	as evidenced
	Identify a sustainable level of grazing and trampling for each of these habitat types.	Y	Target deer population density of 10.9/sqkm.	Review after round 2 HIA taking into account areas where deer and domestic stock mix, with obligation to revisit cull targets.	as evidenced
	Identify where different levels of grazing may be required and prioritise accordingly.	N	To be established in Woodland Plans 2016 and after HIA round 2.	Consider impact/cull implications after round 2 and creation of impact targets.	as evidenced
	Conduct herbivore impact assessments , and assess these against acceptable impact ranges. Identify and implement actions to attain impacts within the range.	Y	Training complete, 1st round of HIA complete	Create impact targets for DMG area.	as evidenced
	Regularly review information to measure progress and adapt management when necessary.	Y	Embedded in DMP 2015-2020.	HIA will be on a 2-3 years basis, management will be revised on receipt of further data.	as evidenced
	Summary : Agree a colour for current delivery of the Action (red, amber, green) and detail what is going to happen to deliver future actions		Training complete, round 1 HIA complete. No targets assigned yet.	Complete 2 round assessments for all properties, create targets and review management regularly.	as evidenced
6. ACTIONS to improve Scotland's ability to store carbon by maintaining or improving ecosystem health.	Quantify the extent of the carbon-sensitive habitats within the DMG range.	Y	Carbon rich soils and peat land maps included in DMP.	Changes to extent of carbon-rich habitat to be monitored.	as evidenced
	Conduct herbivore impact assessments , and assess these against acceptable impact ranges for these sensitive habitats. Identify and implement actions to attain impacts within the range.	Y	Blanket bog HIA undertaken as part of DMP.	Further rounds of HIA to be carried out on carbon-sensitive habitats, targets to be assigned.	as evidenced
	Identify opportunities for the creation/ restoration of peat lands	N	Pearland restoration opportunities under review.	As a group review options under peat land restoration project/SRDP.	as evidenced
	Contribute as appropriate to River Basin Management Planning	Y	SAC River Moidart managed by Kinlochmoidart	Contribute to Argyll and Lochaber sub group as required. Access via SEPA website.	as evidenced
	Summary : Agree a colour for current delivery of the Action (red, amber, green) and detail what is going to happen to deliver future actions		Environmental monitoring carried out, peat land restoration under consideration.	Very limited opportunities for Peatland restoration, keep under monitoring and add to agenda periodically.	as evidenced
7. ACTIONS to reduce or mitigate the risk of establishment of invasive non-native species	Manage invasive non-native species (e.g. muntjac) to prevent their establishment and spread e.g. report sightings of muntjac to SNH	Y	Non-native species currently not present DMG agreement on sika control	Report INNS to DMG/SNH.	as evidenced
	Agree on local management of other non-natives which may be utilised as a resource e.g. sika, fallow, goats, to reduce their spread and negative impacts.	Y	MDMG agreement on management of Sika, Wild pig management added to DMG agenda.	Presence/ management of pigs raised/discussed at DMG meetings. Report sightings/culls to SNH.	as evidenced
	Summary : Agree a colour for current delivery of the Action (red, amber, green) and detail what is going to happen to deliver future actions		DMG agreement on species management	Formalise in DMP, it is likely that the group will face resident wild pigs populations within the next year.	as evidenced
8. ACTIONS to protect designated historic and cultural features from being damaged by deer e.g. by trampling.	Identify any historic or cultural features that may be impacted by deer and undertake deer management to retain these features	Y	Cultural history detailed in plan.	Contact The Highland Council/Historic Scotland to discuss any issues arising deer damage.	as evidenced
	Consider the implications of fencing on the landscape with due regard to the Joint Agency Guidance on Fencing.	Y	Included in DMP.	To be considered if additional fencing proposed as part of Woodland Plans.	as evidenced
	Summary : Agree a colour for current delivery of the Action (red, amber, green) and detail what is going to happen to deliver future actions		Detailed in DMP.	Continue to deliver on this aspect of public interest via completed plan.	as evidenced

9. ACTIONS to contribute to delivering higher standards of competence in deer management.	Undertake a skills and training assessment to establish current skill levels applicable to deer management within the DMG	Y	Agenda item in 2016	Skills and training assessment outcome in DMP update 2016.	as evidenced
	Identify training and development needs / requirements of DMG members including opportunities for Continuous Professional Development (i.e. in relation to Best Practice)	Y	Training Policy in DMP.	On MDMG Agenda 2016	as evidenced
	Ensure all those who actively manage deer are "competent" according to current standard	P	Principles and practicalities of "competence" in plan.	Assessment of competence on MDMG Agenda 2016	as evidenced
	Promote and facilitate the uptake of formal and CPD training opportunities for those participating in deer management.	Y	Further training opportunities identified with UHI.	On MDMG Agenda 2016	as evidenced
	Summary : Agree a colour for current delivery of the Action (red, amber, green) and detail what is going to happen to deliver future actions		Some work done to scope out the issue as part of DMP, needs further work. Previously considered individually by property	Group will review uptake of training/ competence , skills and training policy will be added to plan. Where possible group will drive improvements/minimum standards.	as evidenced
10. ACTIONS to identify and promote opportunities contributing to public health and wellbeing.	Identify and quantify public safety issues associated with deer within the DMG area. e.g. DVCs, airports etc.	Y	DVCs monitored A830 and forwarded to deercollisions.co.uk	Continued monitoring of DVCs in collaboration with SNH	as evidenced
	Identify actions with landowners, Local Authority, DMG to reduce or mitigate public safety risk and monitor effectiveness of actions.	Y	DVCs on A830 (DVC hotspot in 2001-10) are logged.	Initiate discussion with West Lochaber DMG to explore solutions to mitigate risk	as evidenced
	Identify means of ensuring food safety is maintained in carcass handling and venison processing and compliance with BPG in relation to meat hygiene	Y	All carcasses sold comply with food safety standards. Most stalkers trained hunter status.	All stalkers to obtain trained hunter status	as evidenced
	Ensure deer managers are familiar with notifiable diseases, that a system for recording is in place and all deer managers are familiar with course of action to take.	Y	Deer managers familiar with notifiable diseases, such as foot-and-mouth (FMD), tuberculosis (Bovine TB) and chronic wasting disease (CWD/TSE), and have specific experience from UK occurrences of epizootic diseases as in the FMD outbreaks of 1967, 2001, 2007. FMD was part of MDMG business in 2001 and 2007 when biosecurity measures were kept in place for a year and awareness of potential transmission pathways publicised.	Draw up Risk Assessment for MDMG concerning outbreak / transmission of notifiable diseases and outline programme of training for infection and disease recognition, measures to limit spread, notification procedures, and recording and reporting. This will be included in the DMP in 2016-17. Training to recognise infection and disease and notification procedures is encouraged as part of professional training as in DMQ 1 and 2.	as evidenced
	Ensure that appropriate bio security measures are enacted when visitors from areas where CWD is present are involved with deer management activities	Y	DMG member awareness via https://www.gov.uk/guidance/chronic-wasting-disease and provision for appropriate biosecurity maintained.	Continue to keep MDMG members updated on measures.	as evidenced
	Identify opportunities to raise awareness of the risks associated with Lyme's Disease.	Y	Long standing awareness of Lyme's Disease and information and public awareness updates circulated.	Information on seasonal risks circulated.	as evidenced
	Identify main access and recreational activity within the DMG area and assess how this fits with deer management activity.	Y	Kayaking, hill walking, camping and orienteering. Agenda point at DMG meetings. Activities rarely interfere with each other and access to the Moidart hills is welcomed. Information on deer management activity provided on noticeboards at access points and at www.slatach.co.uk/mdmg . Wildfire incidents have caused habitat destruction including natural woodlands	MDMG to continue fire patrols in April and May.	as evidenced
	Identify actions to mitigate any effects of public access and recreation activities during peak periods of deer culling e.g. use of Hill phones and web sites	Y	Hill walkers informed on deer management activities through MDMG notice boards located at access points. Also website is used.	Seasonal fire patrols to continue seasonally, website to be updated seasonally and relevant information logged	as evidenced
	Facilitate public access and promote positive communication between visiting public and wildlife managers.	Y	Public Access is welcomed	Liaise with Kayak Shack at Glenfinnan and continue provision of access for Loch Eil Outward bound Centre. Update website	as evidenced
Summary : Agree a colour for current delivery of the Action (red, amber, green) and detail what is going to happen to deliver future actions		Good progress on DVC related issues via work with SNH. Access and disease notification delivered by MDMG	Formalise DVC monitoring work, updated disease control and access aspects of this work. Note sections in revised DMP.	as evidenced	
	Identify and quantify the main sources of revenue related to deer (sport, tourism etc.).	Y	Stalking rental and accommodation, venison sales. Annual revenue £16,000-	To be reviewed annually.	as evidenced
	Identify and quantify deer related employment. Identify opportunities to increase and improve prospects throughout the DMG;	Y	5 full time employees, 8 part time employees. Opportunities for part time employment on fencing, building work and training	To be reviewed annually.	as evidenced

11. ACTIONS to maximise economic benefits associated with deer	Identify opportunities to add value to products from deer management (SQWV, venison branding)	Y	Opportunities to sell venison to local hotels and private outlets discussed at MDMG meetings and information regularly exchanged. Sale of venison normally undertaken. Premium on local product.	Options for collaborative venison production/ processing/sale in the DMG area to be reviewed annually.	as evidenced
	Explore options for larder sharing, infrastructure improvement and carcass collection to ensure maximum benefit from venison production whilst reducing carbon costs.	Y	This has been regularly discussed at MDMG meetings, properties still operating individually with reference to collection. Larders are located on MDMG area periphery so carbon costs hard to reduce. Glenaladale larder is public facility for the community out of season. Single larder at Mingarry for 4 landholdings	Will continue to be reviewed when any larder improvements take place.	as evidenced
	Summary : Agree a colour for current delivery of the Action (red, amber, green) and detail what is going to happen to deliver future actions		Options available to maximise income always discussed at DMG meetings. If collaboration is clearly advantageous and carbon efficient, it will be adopted.	Produce an agreed statement that builds in updating and actions as required according to ADMG practice.	as evidenced
12. ACTIONS to minimise the economic costs of deer, and ensure deer management is cost-effective	Identify and quantify capital investment in deer management related infrastructure.	Y	Vehicles (ATVs and boats), larders and chills, rifles, fencing, accommodation. Annual capital expenditure £27,000-	Repair and update infrastructure as necessary. This is an ongoing process	as evidenced
	Identify where deer are impacting on other land uses and include all relevant stakeholders to assist the group in understanding costs of deer within the DMG (e.g. woodland, agriculture, DVCs)	Y	DVCs recorded, Woodland Plans to include fencing proposals. All stakeholders included (community councils, FCS, Police Scotland)	Expand this aspect to address any concerns regarding impacts on other issues.	as evidenced
	Where there are management changes, assess the likely economic impacts across the DMG	Y	Drynie Hill at Kinlochmoidart WGS 31242. Management change drawing in additional investment	Where additional changes occur, economic impact to be assessed.	as evidenced
	Formulate a strategy to minimise the negative economic impacts in an equitable way.	P	Cull targets set to take account of all stakeholder interests. Woodland Plans to address browsing of woodland. DMG Chair to undertake to canvas opinion of common grazings	Population modelling to be altered in line with results from LTFPs and Chair's canvassing.	as evidenced
	Summary : Agree a colour for current delivery of the Action (red, amber, green) and detail what is going to happen to deliver future actions		Efficiency measured in terms of public interest. Investment far outweighs income, as deer welfare and efficiency are the priorities	Risk Assessment to be carried out 2016-2017.	as evidenced
13. ACTIONS to ensure effective communication on deer management issues.	Provide regular opportunity for wider community and public agency engagement in planning and communications.	Y	Public agencies are invited to attend meetings and public interest issues are regularly discussed. DMP has been circulated to Community Councils for comment.	Continue with community and public agency collaboration.	as evidenced
	Identify and implement actions to address community issues on deer or deer management activity.	Y	Community has always had an opportunity to approach chair to discuss issues informally. Issues surrounding marauding deer addressed by deer managers.	Where community issues are raised via draft plan chair will seek to review current practices and amend to resolve the issue where possible.	as evidenced
	Support and promote wider opportunities for further education on deer.	P	Opportunities for further education at landholder level (e.g. http://www.ayrstalk.co.uk) carry out DSC1/2 training.	MDMG will discuss links with schools and further education at MDMG meeting in August 2016	as evidenced
	Summary : Agree a colour for current delivery of the Action (red, amber, green) and detail what is going to happen to deliver future actions		No formal communications plan or program, local informal contact through chair and members.	Formalise community contact routes with members and ensure they are delivered, detail agreement in plan.	as evidenced
14. ACTIONS to ensure deer welfare is taken fully into account at individual animal and population level.	Agree, collate and review data available within the DMG which might be used as a proxy for deer health/welfare i.e. recruitment, winter mortality, larder weights etc.	P	Recruitment figures in DMP. Winter mortality recorded and discussed, major determinant for cull targets. Included in population modelling. Larder weights recorded by deer managers.	Include mortality information in population model, MDMG to agree mortality transects and recording.	as evidenced
	Take reasonable actions to ensure that deer culling operations safeguard welfare; for culled and surviving animals (e.g. for example by following BPG)	Y	All deer culling operations are carried out in line with WDBP.	Continue to promote WDPB	as evidenced
	Take reasonable actions to ensure that the welfare of surviving populations is safeguarded (e.g. provision and access to food and shelter)	Y	Woodland shelter available, feeding carried out in adverse winter conditions.	Continue to assess cull targets in line with winter mortality data.	as evidenced
	Periodically review information on actions to safeguard welfare, identify and implement changes as required.	Y	On MDMG Agenda principally through setting of population targets and cull targets.	Will be reviewed on an ongoing basis as part of deer plan.	as evidenced
	Summary : Agree a colour for current delivery of the Action (red, amber, green) and detail what is going to happen to deliver future actions		Welfare discussed at length at meetings, some data gathered and shared as a response to deer count data and mortality.	Formalisation of mortality data collection, continued assessment of cull targets according to evidence.	as evidenced
	Delivery of objective is good, in line with actions				
	Delivery of objective is only partial/ variable in quality				
	Group is not delivering this element				

**Text and Tables:**

Hugh Cheape
Ronald Cheape
John MacDonald.

Contributions from:

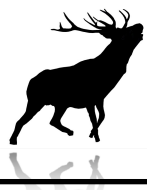
Jane Cheape
Colin Lees Millais
Alistair Forbes
Suzanne Stevens
Nino Stewart
Robert Clegg
Tim Leslie
David McCauley
Archie Gilles
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Colin Surman
Iain MacAskill.

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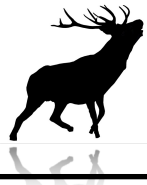
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**APPENDIX 1**

CONSTITUTION. Moidart Deer Management Group

1. Name
The name of the organisation shall be the Moidart Deer Management Group [MDMG].
2. Aim
The aim of the Group is to manage Deer in the interests of landscape, habitats and community in accordance with the MDMG Deer Management Plan and the *Code of Practice on Deer Management*.
3. Area
The area covered by the MDMG is the peninsular district of Moidart, between the A830 trunk road to the north, Loch Ailort, the Sound of Arisaig and the sea to the west, and Loch Shiel to the south and east.
4. Membership
The members of the MDMG will be landholders or their authorised representatives within the MDMG Area as well as corporate landholders, public sector and voluntary bodies involved in the management or oversight of land and community within Moidart. Representatives from relevant groups and public bodies with an active interest or role in the district may be co-opted to the Group or invited to attend meetings.
5. Management
Members of the MDMG agree to support the efficient and purposeful running of the Group by attending meetings, by supplying information required for its administration, by collaborating with other members and relevant interests as required for the effective realisation of the Group's aims and by carrying forward actions and principles of management as agreed in the Deer Management Plan. The MDMG endorses the 'Principles of Collaboration' as essential for maintaining consensus on deer management.
6. Officers
Office bearers will comprise Chair, Vice Chair (if required), Secretary and Treasurer (though these administrative positions may be combined). Office bearers shall be elected annually at the Group AGM.
7. Meetings
The Group will meet twice annually or more frequently as may be necessary. An Annual General Meeting shall be held at such a place, date and time as the Group shall decide. A Minute will be taken of all Meetings and circulated to members. A voting majority is defined as two-thirds of the Membership of the Group (see below).
8. Finance
The Group will be self-financing and subscriptions sufficient to cover operating expenses agreed by the Group. The Group will operate a Bank Account and all financial transactions will be made on this Account. Authorised signatories will include the Secretary/Treasurer and Chair or Vice Chair.
9. Amendments
Members will have a duty to negotiate and seek agreement over proposed amendments to the Constitution.
10. Dissolution
The MDMG will agree to its Dissolution in circumstances whereby the purposes of the Deer Management Plan or the *Code of Practice on Deer Management* are achieved or substantially changed.



**Moidart Deer Management Group
Minutes of Meeting
Slatach, Glenfinnan, Tuesday 16 August 2011**

Present: Hugh Cheape, *Chairman*, Jane Cheape, *Glenaladale*, Ronald Cheape, *Glenaladale*, David McCauley, *Glenaladale*, Patrick Lees-Millais, *Glenmoidart*, Bill Rosier, *Glenmoidart*, Archie Gillies, *Lochailort*, Nino Stewart, *Kinlochmoidart*, Kenneth Morrison, *Acharacle*, Ronald Rose, *SNH/ADMG*, Corrina Mertens, *SNH*, Robert Clegg, *Glenuig*, Suzanne Stevens, *Loch Shiel*, Gordon Shankland, *Loch Shiel*, John MacDonald, *Glenuig*, Eilean Shona, *Ardmolich Forest*, Fergie MacDonald, *Glenuig*, Eilean Shona, *Ardmolich Forest*, Kevin Peace, *Forestry Commission Scotland*, Colin Surman, *Roshven*, Alistair Forbes, *Roshven Hill*.

Welcome: The Chairman opened the Meeting and welcomed those attending. He thanked them for ensuring such a full attendance for the Group. He introduced Richard Cooke, Chairman, Association of Deer Management Groups [ADMG], who had kindly agreed to attend the Meeting. The Chairman intimated that Agenda item 5 would be addressed by Richard Cooke and would be moved towards the end of the Meeting.

Apologies: apologies were received from Tim Leslie, Lochailort, and John Jackson, FCS.

Minutes: the Minutes of the last MDMG Meeting on Tuesday 12 August 2010 had been circulated and were tabled, a minor misprint identified and the Minutes accepted as a true record without further comment.

Deer Cull: all members reported a satisfactory cull and cull numbers were comparable to preceding seasons with minor differences only. Comments were offered on weather conditions, timing of the rut, relatively higher or lower weights, evidence of mature and shootable beasts etc. Richard Cooke asked the Meeting if there were particular causes of deer deaths that might significantly add to the cull returns. It was the opinion of the Meeting that poaching or the shooting of marauding stags were negligible but that road and railway-line deaths were in significant numbers (though never formally recorded).

Deer Count: the Chairman reported on the MDMG Deer Count and recorded the thanks of the Group to David McCauley, Archie Gillies and Gordon Shankland for organising and carrying out the Count. Carried out on 28-30 March and 7 April, 619 Stags, 1,320 Hinds and 435 Calves were recorded. A team of up to 15 individuals was involved, working about 40 man-days. The cost was £1,750. This cost was incurred from there not being enough people in the Group to carry it out or support being available from neighbouring groups. Reciprocation among neighbours for help in deer counting no longer works readily. The Chairman suggested that, in the light of such costs, the Deer Count might be held every second year. The principle of regular counting was unanimously supported on the basis of the old adage: 'If you can't measure it, you can't manage it'. The question was put for the option of organising a count by helicopter, although the feeling of the Meeting was that this was not to compare like with like and that a 'foot count' by individuals who knew the ground could not be bettered. Discussion focussed on the imbalance between hind and stag numbers, concerns for a further fall in stag numbers by 13% since 2009, calving ratios, a shortage of mature stags, availability of good grazing and a gratifying absence of significant/observable winter and spring mortality. Archie Gillies recommended that account be taken of the railway-line kill of about 25 hinds and calves.

Start of Season and marketing: information was shared on likely starting dates for the stag season. In relation to optimising marketing, Simpsons are offering £1.90/kilo and would consider a premium price if the Group or part of it dealt with them. Members of the Group already with Yorkshire Game reported a price of £2.25/kilo. Prices and premiums offered would be monitored and the information shared. The Meeting recognised the importance of 'quality assurance'.

ADMG & the Code of Deer Management: Richard Cooke congratulated the Group on the level of attendance and an apparent lack of 'conflict', or specific conflicts of interest. He described the opportunities of the voluntary principle (as opposed to statutory intervention) under the Wildlife and Natural Environment Act, and the importance of deer management groups 'proving themselves' within a 5-year review period. Ronald Rose spoke on the preparation of a 'Deer Management Plan', the defining of objectives, 'best practice' in deer management and habitat impact assessment. The Group accepted the need for a Deer Management Plan and agreed to draft a plan with advice from SNH and ADMG.

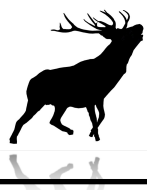
Fires and Access: the Chairman reported a serious hill fire on Glenaladale on 30 April – 1 May, caused by canoeists. The response of the Fire Service was highly effective, considering the difficulty of the circumstances and huge pressure on their resources due to numerous hill fires raging at the time. The Chief



Fire Officer had been thanked by letter and close communication with the Fire Services was considered crucial. Richard Cooke recommended a letter to the National Access Forum and it was agreed that this be sent.

AOB: there was a brief discussion on the importance of sharing day-to-day information for planning deer counting. It was agreed that it was always difficult to grasp the 'windows of opportunity' which were rare and fleeting.

Date of next meeting: it was proposed that the MDMG should meet in April/May to progress a Deer Management Plan . A date will be agreed nearer the time. The Chairman thanked all for their attendance and the Meeting closed.



APPENDIX 2

Historical perspectives on landscape ecology.

Historically, Moidart was the original 'estate' or territory of MacDonald of Clanranald, a 'dynasty' descended from a son of John, Lord of the Isles, and holding their lands under the terms of a Great Seal charter of Robert II. Successive phases or eras are recalled by historians, such as the 'Lordship of the Isles' of the 14th and 15th centuries, and have left their mark more or less clearly on the landscape. Monuments such as the medieval stronghold of Castle Tioram and the 'war memorial' of the Glenfinnan Monument are self-evident but many levels of an historical and hierarchical society are traceable in the Moidart landscape. The peninsula was devastated by the Jacobite Wars when its political and religious affiliations drew the 'scorched-earth' campaign of a government determined to eradicate Gaelic society's support for the exiled Stewart dynasty. This has also been interpreted by historians as 'ethnic cleansing' and 'genocide' when seen as a further phase of the long-term policy of British governments to eradicate the Gaelic language and culture. This has particular poignancy for Moidart as the birthplace and home of Alexander MacDonald – *Alasdair Mac Mhaighstir Alasdair* – universally recognised as the greatest of all Gaelic poets.

The close of the Jacobite Wars following the 1745 Rising (whose year-long campaign had been instigated in Moidart) signalled the end of a kin-based social structure whose sense of belonging and local identity recalls a balanced and benign management regime which still has lessons for us today, for example, in the practice of transhumance and the care of woodlands. The Gaelic community of Moidart husbanded the soil, sea and natural resources on which the human population was critically dependent. Though seemingly distant history, it is noteworthy that the Clanranald regime embraced issues of environmental significance in the scrupulous management and regulation of grazings and woodlands and a deep-seated philosophy of 'stewardship'; this in turn was rooted in the traditional concept that the 'health' of the landscape, its woods, flocks and crops, was a reflection of the just and benign rule of the king or chieftain. Detailed insights into early management systems are rare and the hierarchical nature of society meant that the popular voice is largely (but not entirely) absent from the record. Some early detail survives in a 'Judicial Rental' taken by government in Moidart in 1718, following the Jacobite Rising of 1715. Twenty-one townships are recorded, paying rent in cash (in Merks and £s Scots) and in kind in the form of butter, cheese and sheep, indicating a populous countryside and a local economy based largely on animal husbandry (NAS GD201).

In the late 18th century, Moidart was a country of black cattle, drovers, farmers and fishermen but within a generation, the fundamental switch to sheep husbandry began with the creation of extensive sheep 'runs'. The Clanranald estate was fragmented in the early 19th century and was acquired by tacksmen and incomers. Present day landholdings in the Moidart peninsula derive therefore, in terms of their extent and legal status, principally from the break-up of the Clanranald estate in the early 19th century. The removal of sheep began in phases from the late 19th century when sporting tenancies were introduced, but the demands of wartime economies in the 20th century led to re-stocking to levels the damage from which is still evident. This was one factor behind Dr Fraser Darling's characterisation of the West Highland landmass as 'a devastated terrain' (Fraser Darling 1955, viii).

All accounts of the area, which begin to proliferate in the early 19th century, consistently describe Moidart as 'remote', a view forming from the earlier absence of public roads and growing predilection for 'wild places'. Awareness and understanding of Moidart depended on the printed literature which had been generated outside West Highland society – from the outside looking in – and might be said to fall far short of adequate. The tendency towards a 'romantic' characterisation of wilderness or a 'last wild place' is perpetuated in modern literature for tourism and in popular 'science', for example, in Mike Tomkies' claim for his anonymous 'Wilderness' (located in Moidart) as 'one of the largest uninhabited areas left in the British Isles' (Tomkies 1984). For a constructive and holistic exchange of views and forward-looking and effective management of endangered habitats, such attitudes are unhelpful.



APPENDIX 3

ADMG PRINCIPLES OF COLLABORATION

We:

- acknowledge what we have in common – a shared commitment to a sustainable and economically viable Scottish countryside;
- make a commitment to work together to achieve and maintain that;
- accept that we have a diversity of management objectives and respect each other's objectives;
- undertake to communicate openly with all relevant parties;
- commit to negotiate and, where necessary, to compromise in order to accommodate the reasonable land management requirements of neighbours;
- where there are areas of disagreement we undertake to work together to resolve them. Collaboration is essential to meet the standards set by the Code of Practice for Deer Management.

Association of Deer Management Groups
2013

APPENDIX 4

Bracken

Pteridium aquilinum or bracken is conspicuous as ground cover in Moidart and has rendered many lower areas of hill ground useless for grazing. Where bracken has become the dominant species, ground flora and tree regeneration is clearly reduced or prevented and natural grazing lost. Though a scourge, it is not such an obvious scourge as in other Highland areas to the south and east, in parts of Argyll (with about one quarter of all the bracken in Scotland) and West Perthshire. Opinion holds that bracken has spread although it is not yet possible to date this accurately. Given that it marks out many areas of formerly cultivated inbye land and 'lazy beds', this distribution suggests that the abandonment of cultivation and depopulation have been factors in its encroachment. Transhumance and managed-grazing cattle husbandry may have been factors in limiting bracken, as inversely a preponderance of sheep may have allowed its spread. Bracken formerly played a role in the economy of Moidart and areas of bracken may have been husbanded to supply local needs; place-names such as *Raithneach* (NM 880814) and *Allt Raineachan* (NM 823823) may preserve a memory of this. Bracken was used as a roofing material and as animal bedding. It was standard practice to harvest bracken in autumn for bedding and to compost bracken with dung for fertiliser.



APPENDIX 5

Woodland History

The Moidart woods have a long history of woodland continuity and are ancient in origin. There is evidence for a wealth of timber in the Lochaber area from early times, including the oft-quoted account of Columba sending his people from the Monastery of Iona to cut oak from the area of the Shiel estuary in Moidart. Oral tradition in Moidart included accounts of the building of sea-going galleys on Loch Shielside (whose timbers required the best possible mature oak and pine) and of once dense forests burnt down by avenging forces (either supernatural or Viking). The occurrence of the naming elements *doire* and *coille* indicates the existence of native woodland at very early dates and also offers toponymic distinctions between different types of wood such as discrete oakwoods (*doire*) and more continuous mixed afforestation (*coille*).

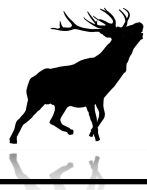
There are few areas of the West Highlands containing such extensive areas of native woodland that are relatively free of the intrusion of conifer planting, road construction or other destructive land-use practices. The situation contrasts sharply with the southern shore of Loch Shiel which has been converted to monoculture conifer plantation and accessed by industrial-scale roadways.

The woods are represented on all known maps since the mid 18th century Roy Survey (1747-1755), and earlier maps such as Blaeu (*Atlas Novum* 1654) show the area round Glenfinnan to be well wooded in the early 17th century. The First Edition of the OS map surveyed in 1873 shows the woodland distribution to be similar to that of the present day. The distribution of woodland in Moidart part-reflects settlement patterns in earlier times, as recorded in the Roy Survey, in abundant settlement place-names and in physical remains in the landscape. Where woodland is sparse or discontinuous therefore, there may be evidence of buildings, cultivation, pasture and some use of localised timber resources. Gaps in the woods may be attributable to settlement clearance in the 17th and earlier centuries. A good example of supposed 'woodland attrition' is at NM 883788 where a farm recorded in the 17th century lay in a gap in the woodland with a 'corridor' running uphill from loch shore to summer shieling. The random use of timber (even for fuel) however was stringently controlled or prohibited by baron court regulation and the terms of leases. Certainly up to the mid 18th century Moidart woodland was protected by Clanranald's 'Wood Keepers' – *Buachaillean Fiodha* - and by retaining it directly under the chief's control.

APPENDIX 6

Mosses and liverworts in Moidart

'Atlantic bryophytes' form a group of mosses and liverworts that occur mainly in oceanic, western areas of Europe and along the Atlantic seaboard. The British Isles are the richest part of Europe for Atlantic bryophytes and the west coast is the richest part of the British Isles, with concentrations in the West of Ireland, in North Wales and the Lake District and in the West of Scotland. Most species of Atlantic bryophytes are confined to the west and some are not recorded outside this area where woodlands generally form the richest habitats. Atlantic bryophytes grow mainly on rocks, rocky banks and trees, preferring the shaded aspect and acidic substrata of old woodland. They are better represented where there has been little or no disturbance to the tree canopy. A particularly rich part of the Highland area for bryophyte flora in woods seems to be from Morvern north to Morar, and especially the woods around Loch Arienas, Loch Sunart, Kentra Bay, Loch Moidart, Loch Shiel, Loch Beoraid and Loch Morar. Throughout, there is an abundance of favourable bryophyte species habitats and woods of international importance for this reason. Particularly notable, for example, are species such as *Plagiochila atlantica* and other strictly Atlantic bryophytes which are relatively abundant while being rare to excessively rare on a world scale. Woodland inventories allow us to understand the significance of 'Ancient Woodland' and the Moidart woods fulfil the necessary criteria in climate, aspect, altitude and recorded history of continuous tree cover for their protection and preservation.



APPENDIX 7

Macro-Lepidoptera

Moidart is a breeding ground of the Chequered Skipper, a Priority Species in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan [UKBAP]. It was recorded as extinct in England in 1976, and it is considered that the entire native population now occurs on the mainland of the West of Scotland, in Lochaber and North Argyll. It is associated with the edges or open spaces in damp woodland dominated by the caterpillar's main food-plant, purple moor-grass. In warm weather, the butterflies are extremely active and have a swift, darting flight.

Other rare species which are now found in Moidart are the Marsh Fritillary and Purple Hairstreak, beside the occurrence of nationally more common species such as the Common Blue, Small Tortoiseshell, the Meadow Brown and Small Heath.

APPENDIX 8

Golden Eagle, 1895.

'It is rarer here than the Sea Eagle, but I have seen it occasionally, once flying near the coast of Ardnamurchan, pursued by Sea Gulls, and another time perched on a rock at Ardnish. We once found the remains of one in a steel trap lying on the seashore. It had probably been caught in the Island of Rum, and had flown away with the trap till it fell exhausted into the sea, and was washed ashore on the coast. The Eagle flies low in pursuit of its prey, as the Goshawk does; not pouncing like the Peregrine, but picking up its prey as it floats along. It is probably too heavy to do otherwise. A friend of mine saw one skimming along a hillside and swooping up a lamb in its claws as it went. When we first came here [Roshven] there was an old deserted nest, said to be that of the Golden Eagle, on a high cleft of a bare sea-beaten rock at the Point of Ardnish. It consisted of a great mass of coarse sticks and heather stalks. It has now entirely disappeared, and has never been replaced. Eagles have been known to attack and destroy Red Deer.'
(Blackburn 1895, 11-12.)

APPENDIX 9

A' dol na theine ... The hills in flames

A devastating fire was started by canoeists on the north shore of Loch Shiel on the morning of Saturday 30 April [2011]. Those who started the fire 'phoned 999 and watched in disbelief as the fire raced up the hill. In a short time the pall of smoke was seen by others and reported from over five miles away at the head of the Loch. The Fire Brigade from the Highlands and Islands Fire and Rescue Service was very quick to act and was transported by boat from each end of the loch to the scene of the fire. They worked in difficult circumstances of steep and broken ground miles from the public road network. The two fire crews pulled out as night fell and were back on site shortly after five o' clock on the Sunday morning. The fire burnt for more than 36 hours and was finally brought under control by the evening of Sunday 1 May. The fire consumed about five square miles of ground and burnt through six woodland 'exclosures' for native species established by SNH and scorched two blocks of commercial forestry. The less evident damage to ground conditions and ecology and to animal, bird and insect life is hard to quantify from such a scorched earth assault.

Between about 29 April and 5 May 2011, Highland hill fires were national news and the Fire Service had to deal with more than 70 major fires in the West Highlands. At times it seemed as though West Lochaber was ablaze with other serious fires at Ardnish and Acharacle. Typically at this time of year and in this district, there was a high fire risk with the winter die-back of rank grass leaving a thick layer of dead vegetation which is highly combustible. Much of the lower hill ground assumes a bleached appearance and this particular character was always recognised in local lore as producing a form of 'white grass', called *fionn-dairneach* in Moidart Gaelic.

Local knowledge recognises the high fire risk and pressure on resources, both public and private, from increasing access. Risk is easier to assess in the areas where land and roads come together but the worst fires in the Glenfinnan area in recent years have been in the roadless Moidart and on the north side of Loch Shiel. At least one Press report blamed this on uncontrolled (and illegal) muirburn while other blamed canoeists (see *Oban Times* 5 May 2011). Both the 2008 and 2011 devastating and extensive hill fires were caused by canoeists in the spells of very dry spring weather, and it emerged that the Scottish Canoe Association's advice is to burn rubbish and toilet paper in the interests of environmental care – the cause of this year's fire. The convergence of Easter and two holiday weekends in succession brought unprecedented canoe traffic on Loch Shiel and extreme heat and fickle winds meant that fire was almost inevitable. We know the dangers; the public must be warned. Glenfinnan, July 2011.
[submitted on request to Scottish Fire & Rescue Service, August 2011].



APPENDIX 10

Training Policy

The MDMG maintains a training policy

- to achieve the best environmental, economic and social outcome for all involved;
- to promote and undertake training as part of positive management;
- to achieve basic professional skills such as DSC 1 and DSC 2 and familiarity with, for example, the British Deer Society's Training Manual for Deer Stalkers BDS 2013 and with any updating of the professional literature;
- to raise standards of competence and professionalism in line with the Public Interest and national expectations;
- to encourage the development of skills and promote and record Continuous Professional Development;
- to monitor skills and identify training needs in the context of update legislation and policy;
- to identify training requirements and match training opportunities to them, for example, in the short and refresher courses currently offered by West Highland College UHI;
- to measure progress against the Code of Practice on Deer Management and the Wild Deer Best Practice Guide and identifying training needs as response to national requirements;
- to achieve the highest possible standards of deer management and of planning and the management of deer as national asset.