



East Loch Shiel Deer  
Management Group  
Autumn 2022 Report



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# East Loch Shiel

## Deer Management Group Report – Autumn 2022

November 2022.

This report is a supplement to the ELSDMG Action Plan – Working Document

**Our members continue to deliver on the Public Interest and Sustainable Deer Management.**

### Deer Management Plan (DMP) & Business

- Our current DMP & DMG business documents are publicly available, published on the East Loch Shiel DMG section of the ADMG website. <sup>1</sup>
- We held our AGM and a normal DMG business meeting in April this year which was well attended.
- DMG reports, emails, Action Plan updates, and Website updates also help to update and inform our members, stakeholders, public, &etc.

Rather than repeating them here, please refer to our previous Group emails including: -

- Collaborative venison marketing,
- Scottish Venison videos,
- ESCOPE subscription,
- Best Practice Guides,
- CWD,
- CWD Visitors template,
- Field Guide to Disease & Conditions of Deer,
- Lyme disease,
- Code of Practice on Deer Management,
- ADMG Principles of Collaboration,
- African Swine Fever,
- Scottish Deer Health Survey,
- Outcome of the Nature Scot (SNH) DMG Assessment,
- Group Reports.

As well as other general group communications between officers, and group members.

### Deer Management

Training Competence and Employment: -

- East Loch Shiel benefits from a team of skilled deer managers and controllers. A log of Group wide training, skills, certification &etc. is maintained and updated periodically.
- Members training needs are considered and reviewed periodically with collaborative support offered as appropriate.
- Many local businesses, enterprises, and people are reliant on the income, employment and the diverse benefits generated from and around deer management, providing for both primary and secondary employment.
- At the last review, deer management in East Loch Shiel provided for 8 full time and 9 seasonal or part time jobs plus opportunity for a full time HNC/HND trainee. A further 7 full time and 32 part time people are engaged with and reliant on secondary employment relating to the open range sporting deer management, helping support other local industries and enterprises, often leading to many other often less tangible but no less important economic and social benefits.

Counts: -

- The East Loch Shiel DMG open range members had fully funded helicopter counts in 2002, 2010 and 2016.
- With recognition of an estimated >30,000 kg's of GHG emissions and >£40,000 costs per count the DMG avoids helicopter counts more frequently than every 6 to 8 years as they are unlikely to provide any new data of consequence.
- NatureScot advised of a move away from helicopter counts citing carbon footprint and budgetary concerns.
- These were followed at 3-year intervals by NatureScot fully funded helicopter counts of the whole East Loch Shiel DMG area in 2019 and 2022.

Population Models: -

- With inputs from density and recruitment counts, from mortality assessments and culls our Population Models have been very accurate with less than 3% variation on forecast density.
- Overall, the East Loch Shiel deer density is and has been maintained within the proposed target that is recommended in the DWG report for Scottish Government to consider.

Culls: -

- The Group culling effort continued throughout the last year and the overall cull targets were met or exceeded. Where necessary culls have been concentrated to prevent higher impacts.
- Members indicate that this year's cull targets will be met.

Lead free ammunition: -

- A ban on lead ammunition is likely to be implemented within the next 5 years or so.
- Meanwhile the National Game Dealers' Association has announced that its members will no longer be accepting lead-shot game from July 2022.
- Many stalkers have chosen to change voluntarily and this helps with the public perception of the venison product leading to greater acceptance from customers for our product.
- A number of our deer controllers are already using non-toxic ammunition. It makes sense as your lead ammunition is used up to replace with non-lead alternatives.
- The difficulties arise with using up stocks of lead ammunition, non-toxic ammo supply issues, calibre issues, all of which are exacerbated by guests bringing their own rifles and ammo.

Venison Production and Collaborative Marketing: -

- East Loch Shiel DMG deer managers are producing excellent, quality assured, healthy, low-fat venison.
- Venison marketing was covered in various emails throughout summer.
- Members are supplying both/either Ardgay Game and/or Highland Game this season for venison sales allowing a comparison of service, etc. as the season progresses.

Deer condition: -

- Nett recruitment this year was high and observed mortality at normal levels. Reports of stags culled this season suggest the deer will be in good condition going into the winter.

FLS review of Glenhurich Land Management Plan: -

- With FLS advising of the Glenhurich Land Management Plan being reviewed the Chairman has written to FLS, requesting that the DMG may be given opportunity to provide meaningful input during the preparation of the review of the plan. FLS responds: - *'The LMP will be placed in the consultation section of the FLS website for about a month before being submitted to Scottish Forestry for approval. I will let you know when that occurs,'*

- Without the opportunity to provide meaningful input the Chairman then wrote to FLS again, explaining in more detail our concerns and the implications regarding the failing forestry fences hoping that our concerns may be considered.

### **Land Management, Climate Change Mitigation, and Energy Security**

#### HIA: -

- A comprehensive HIA Log - Appendix 13 - HIA LOG is published on the East Loch Shiel section of the ADMG website, <sup>1</sup> which details our HIA and ongoing programme.
- Overall, the HIA data shows our open range deer and large herbivore impacts are within our group targets with changes in management practices having resulted in the overall large herbivore pressure/impact being significantly reduced.
- SNH advised in July 2017 that the BPG HIA Guides are under review and will change. No information has been given yet as to any detail nor even a date indicated by which the changes may be published leading to delay with our forward planning.
- SNH advised in 2017 that a Woodland Monitoring method and training suitable for use by deer managers is under development. Some progress is reported in this regard by NatureScot and FLS with field trials of WHIAlite in 2022. This is still to be finalised, rolled out and training given.

#### Woodlands: -

- With over 12,800 HA the Scottish Government target of 25% woodland cover is exceeded. Some 8300 is commercial forestry. Over 4500 HA are native woodland areas, some of which are mature/ancient whilst some are newly planted with further areas under consideration.
- Collectively the East Loch Shiel woodlands contribute to the strategic national forest estate growing essential timber, whilst at the same time absorbing carbon from the atmosphere and providing important bio-diversity with a patchwork of different habitats for wildlife, flora and fauna.

#### Collaborative Woodland Project progress: -

- The collaborative woodland project and preliminary proposals were reported on at the November 2019 DMG meeting, at which a presentation was given highlighting the aims, methods, and background to the collaborative proposals.
- Proposals for suitable areas were developed in conjunction with Scottish Forestry with these proposals consulted on extensively through last year.
- The Conaglen long-term Designated Woodland Management Plan has been approved by Scottish Forestry.
- Conaglen is now progressing the first actions of this latest woodland management plan commencing with six new woodland enclosures in their designated sites, which will amount to a further 200ha+ of enclosed designated woodland area by March 2023.
- This approved 40-year Designated Woodland Management Plan remains the focus of the designated woodland operations in the EWG area.

#### Peatland preservation and restoration: -

- The local peatland officer at Lochaber Fisheries Trust will advise on potential peatland restoration works and any possible funding contributions.
- With just over 3% of the ELSDMG area identified as Blanket Bog and Peatland there may be limited opportunity for peatland restoration.
- With most of our open range being heather moor and grassland significant emphasis is placed therefore on preservation of our soils.

Low Carbon Hydro Power: -

- East Loch Shiel DMG members have a number of Hydro Electricity Generation Schemes installed providing clean, secure energy for the nation with a combined installed capacity of over 4.63 MWh. On average these will produce around 16,000 MWh of electricity a year allowing a similar reduction in coal fired generation.
- Each MWh of electricity produced in coal fired generation produces around 874 KG of CO<sup>2</sup> into the atmosphere whereas river hydro produces less than 13 KG of CO<sup>2</sup> per MWh. <sup>2</sup>
- These hydro installations allow for coal fired stations to run on reduced capacity or be turned off leading to a reduction of CO<sup>2</sup> emissions of over 14,200 tonnes a year. With our river hydro producing just 200 tonnes annually the nett reduction is over 14,000 tonnes of CO<sup>2</sup> no longer being released to the atmosphere each year.
- The Sunart Community scheme adds a further estimated 423 MWh of electricity output leading to a further reduction of 364 tonnes of CO<sup>2</sup> no longer being released to the atmosphere each year.

Low carbon heating and hot water: -

- ELSDMG members bio-fuel, air and ground source heat pumps with a combined installed capacity exceeding 0.28 MWh are supplying heating and hot water as an alternative to coal, gas, or oil and are leading to further significant reductions of CO<sup>2</sup> emissions for East Loch Shiel.

**ADMG**

- ADMG are keeping us well updated via their **E-Scope** news-letters. I urge you all to keep abreast of their current news etc. You can subscribe to **E-Scope**, if you have not already done so, on the ADMG website. <sup>1</sup>

**References: -**

<sup>1</sup> [ADMG | Association of Deer Management Groups | ADMG \(deer-management.co.uk\)](http://www.admg.co.uk)

<sup>2</sup> [Carbon Footprint of Electricity Generation \(parliament.uk\)](http://www.parliament.uk)