



East Loch Shiel Deer
Management Group
Spring 2023 Report



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East Loch Shiel

Deer Management Group Report – Spring 2023

ELS meetings 93.

This report is a supplement to the ELSDMG Deer Management Plan

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. ¹
- Our twice yearly DMG business meetings are well attended by our members and/or their representatives.
- DMG reports, emails, Action Plan updates, and Website updates also help to update and inform our members, stakeholders, public, &etc.
- FLS Drimnatorran and Glenhurich Land Management Plans: - During late 2022 and early 2023 FLS invited representations during the consultation periods for the Drimnatorran and Glenhurich Land Management Plans. The chair responded on behalf of the group and members were given the opportunity to make their own representations.
- The draft Drimnatorran Forest and Glenhurich Land Management Plans (LMPs) are with Scottish Forestry awaiting approval. FLS are uncertain of the timescales for approval. However, both LMPs are located on the LMP consultation page on the FLS website within the West section: Land management plan consultations - Forestry and Land Scotland. Once approved, the LMPs will sit in the Active LMP page on the FLS website.
- ELSDMG is updating its external communications list. If you wish to receive communications that may be relevant to your interests, please confirm your email address for the DMG to use by writing to this email eastlochshielchair@gmail.com and briefly say why you are interested in deer management for this area. You may opt out at any time by writing to this email address. ELSDMG will only use your email address for DMG business and this will not be passed on or sold to other organizations or persons.
- S Coghill, our Wildlife Management Officer (WMO) has retired from NatureScot. We wish him all the best for his future and thank him for his contribution to our Deer Management Group. Meanwhile we await the appointment of our fourth WMO in a period a little over 4 years.

Deer Management

- Deer management in East Loch Shiel provides employment for, and benefits from, a team of skilled deer managers and controllers.
- Many local businesses, enterprises, and people are also reliant on the income, employment and the diverse benefits generated from and around deer management, providing for both primary and secondary employment.
- East Loch Shiel DMG deer managers are producing excellent, quality assured, healthy, low-fat venison.

Deer Counts: -

- Due to remoteness of much of our area foot counts are not considered practical or effective. Aerial counts are considered the only viable alternative for counting our open hill range.
- Local Mortality Assessments and sample Recruitment Counts are carried out by members late Spring in East Loch Shiel.

Deer Population: -

- Our Appendix 15 – Population Model and Targets summary is published on the East Loch Shiel section of the ADMG website. ¹
- With inputs from density and recruitment counts, from mortality assessments and culls our Population Model is updated each year.
- Overall, the East Loch Shiel deer density is being maintained within the proposed target that is recommended in the DWG report for Scottish Government.
- The Group culling effort continued throughout the last year. Where necessary culls have been concentrated to prevent higher impacts.

Disease risks - a reminder: -

- Notifiable diseases are detailed in the BPG Health and Welfare section which can be found at the following link <https://www.bestpracticeguides.org.uk/health-welfare/>
- Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) information is detailed in the BPG Health and Welfare section which can be found at the following link <https://www.bestpracticeguides.org.uk/health-welfare/>
- The British Deer Society (BDS) has a more detailed section regarding Chronic Wasting Disease on this link [Chronic Wasting Disease \(CWD\) - The British Deer Society \(bds.org.uk\)](https://www.bds.org.uk/Chronic-Wasting-Disease-(CWD)-The-British-Deer-Society-(bds.org.uk)) which also contains this link to their CWD leaflet [Chronic-Wasting-Disease-Leaflet-2-final-final-12-March-2021-BRANDED.pdf \(bds.org.uk\)](https://www.bds.org.uk/Chronic-Wasting-Disease-Leaflet-2-final-final-12-March-2021-BRANDED.pdf) This leaflet should be issued to all guests in advance of their arrival.
- Deer managers are reminded to be aware of the risks of Lime Disease and to raise awareness with visitors and guests. The Ticks and Lime Disease leaflet should be available to visitors and guests. [1 tick-lyme-disease-infosheet-20170810.pdf \(windows.net\)](https://www.windows.net/1-tick-lyme-disease-infosheet-20170810.pdf)

HIA: -

- Our Appendix 13 - HIA Log summary is published on the East Loch Shiel section of the ADMG website. ¹
- 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 and 2023. This is still to be finalised, rolled out and training given.

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 2023.
- 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.

Land Management, Climate Change Mitigation, and Energy Security

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.

Designated Woodlands: -

- Conaglen has progressed the actions of their latest woodland management plan with the installation of six new woodland enclosures in their designated sites, which amount to a further 200ha+ of enclosed designated woodland area established by Spring 2023. This Long-Term Woodland Plan remains the focus of the designated woodlands on Conaglen.
- In another positive move from a SSSI position for the DMG, FLS advise of two new woodland enclosures at Callop being created during 2023. The larger block is inside the designated Ardgour Pinewoods SSSI area and the new fence will close a clear-felled previously commercial area. Initially they hope to get good natural native tree regen away in both but will review after a couple of years and consider some possible enrichment planting of native species if required. These 2 new enclosures are going to be far easier fence lines to construct and more importantly, far easier to keep deer proof and maintain. Both these new enclosures will be entirely on FLS ground.
- These Conaglen and FLS woodland developments contribute further to the significant net ecological and environmental gains already achieved in ELS

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, most of which is contained in the NatureScot Claish Moss and the FLS Longrigg, 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 CO² into the atmosphere whereas river hydro produces less than 13 KG of CO² per MWh. ²
- These hydro installations allow for coal fired stations to run on reduced capacity or be turned off leading to a reduction of CO² 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 CO² 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 CO² 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 CO² emissions for East Loch Shiel.

ADMG

- ADMG are keeping us well updated via their **E-Scope** news-letters. You can subscribe to **E-Scope**, if you have not already done so, on the ADMG website. ¹

References: -

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

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