

Lowland Deer Panel briefing for LDNS AGM- May 2019

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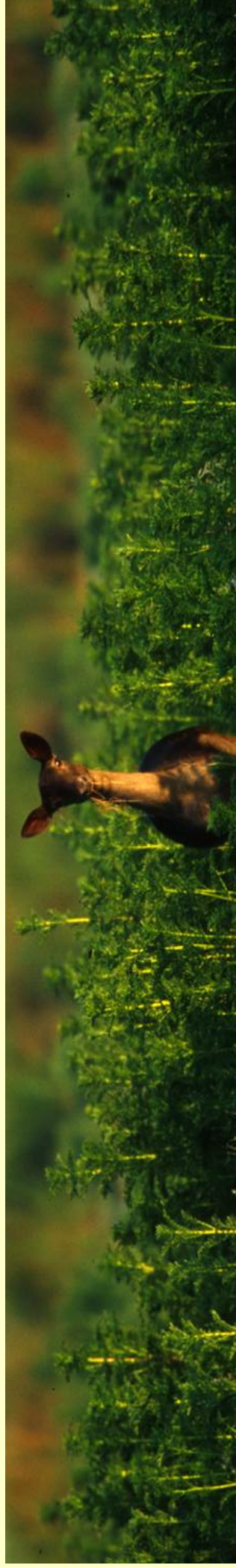
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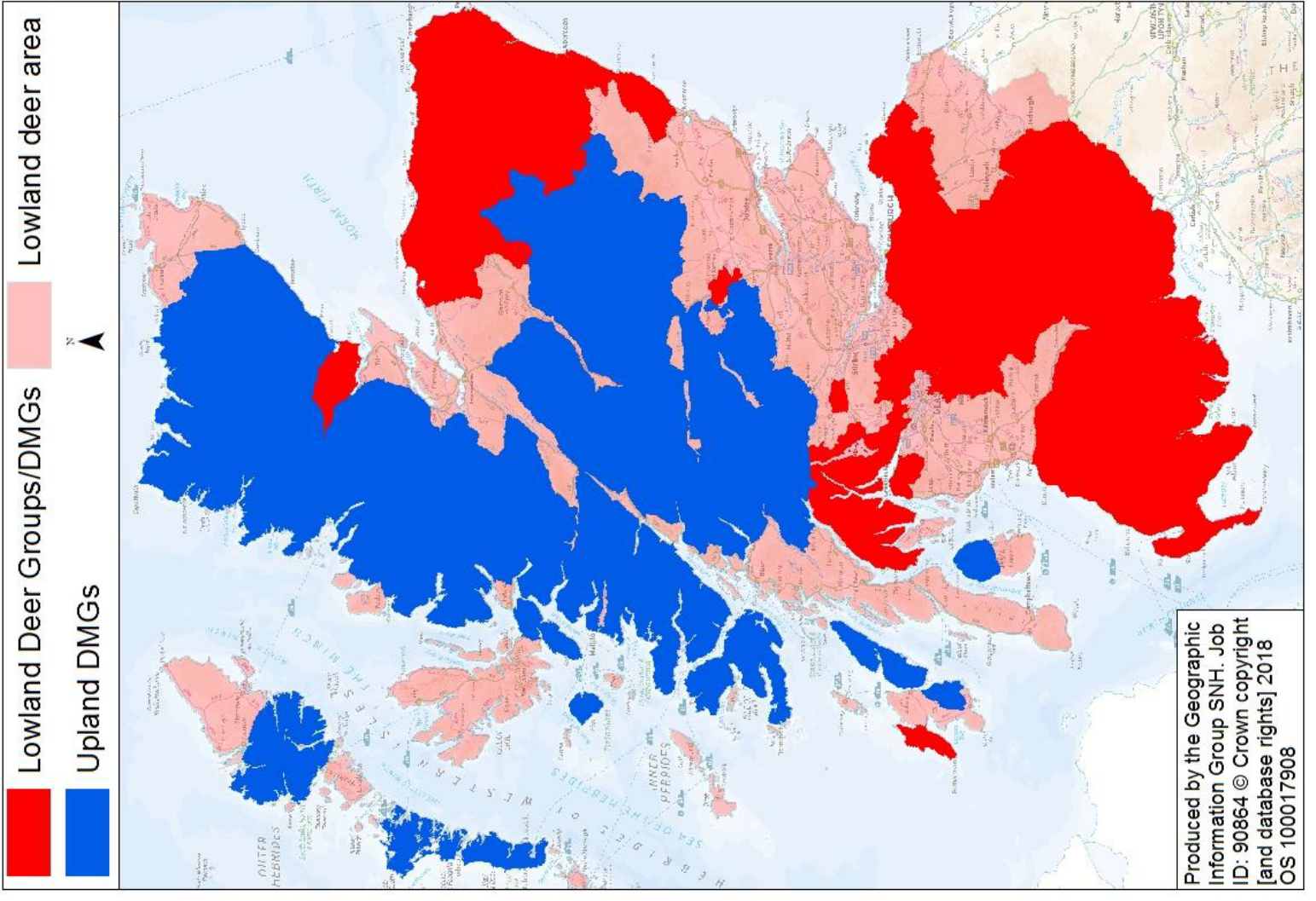


Remit

Five key questions:

- Do lowland deer managers need to collaborate to achieve sustainable deer management?
- If so, at what scale does this need to take place, and what is the most efficient and effective approach?
- What knowledge and information are needed to support this process and to determine whether the public interest is being met?
- What are the practical implications of public perceptions of deer and deer management in the lowlands?
- What further action could SNH take in the context of the existing legislative and policy framework?





Evidence

- An open invitation to contribute and a list of key questions to lowland deer stakeholders
- this list was also circulated to local authority deer management contacts and made available on the SNH website.
- an online survey based on the same list of key questions
- targeted discussion with groups of stakeholders at a panel meeting



Collaborative initiatives are constituted to varying degrees and fall into four general types depending on the main interests of their members:

- Groups led by commercial forestry interests, with members drawn from both public and private sectors (broadly Eskdale & Liddesdale, Borders Deer Groups, and Cowal Deer Working Group);
- Groups predominantly led by other land management interests, which have some similarities with upland DMGs (East Loch Lomond Land Management Forum and a developing group in South Sutherland);
- Groups with mixed membership, covering a range of landholdings with objectives of timber and/or agricultural production (Loch Lomond Islands, South Ayrshire & Wigtownshire and Galloway & Dumfriesshire Deer Groups, and Islay Rinn, Flanders, Dunkeld and Howe of Alford Forums), and;
- Groups led by deer stalkers who operate over defined areas, often with nominal local authority boundaries (Inverclyde & Dunbartonshire, North Lanarkshire, South Lanarkshire, West Lothian,

Headline Conclusions

- Diverse range of views
- Collaboration is needed – but differing views about the nature of cooperation
- Differing views on the scale at which cooperation should take place and how it should be achieved
- General agreement that the herding species should be managed in the same way in both the Uplands and the Lowlands
- Agreement that there was a dis-connect in the venison supply chain that acts as a disincentive for some recreational deer stalkers
- Concern amongst lack of engagement from Local Authorities.
- Concern amongst recreational stalkers about local access to the NFE
- Concern about the poor conversion rate from DSC1 to DSC2



Recommendations

Questions: Do lowland deer managers need to collaborate to achieve sustainable deer management, and; if so, at what scale does this need to take place, and what is the most efficient and effective approach?

Recommendations:

- The panel encourages the wider use of the current range of collaborative deer management approaches that are in place in the lowlands.
- The panel recognises that various approaches are appropriate depending on the habitat, species and landholding patterns, and recommends that the application of these approaches should be described in ‘Best Practice’ guidance.
- We would suggest that SNH support relevant stakeholder engagement fora, which include local authorities, NGOs and others, where specific issues are identified, to deliver local deer management planning, actions and solutions.



Recommendations

Question: What knowledge and information are needed to support this process, and to determine whether the public interest is being met?

Recommendation:

- The panel supports the findings of the recent report on *Lowland Deer Management: Assessing the Delivery of Public Interests* (McMorran *et al*, 2018), and encourages SNH to work more closely with other agencies to harmonise existing spatial data, and where possible fill gaps on culls, as well as collect stalker effort, through collaboration with hunting bodies. Combined with local expert knowledge on both deer numbers and habitat impacts, these data can be incorporated into an updated Impact Indicator Matrix (Putman *et al*, 2011) of public interests and could, in future, form a basis for multi-criteria decision support models.



Recommendations

Question: What are the practical implications of public perceptions of deer and deer management in the lowlands?

Recommendation:

- The Panel recommends that SNH should work more extensively with LAs and other stakeholders to provide guidance on the need for deer management and to make them aware of their obligations under the 'Deer Code', through education and direct help in deer management planning and implementation.



Recommendations

Question: What further action could SNH take in the context of the existing legislative and policy framework?

Recommendations:

- The panel recommends that SNH encourages the wide use of the Impact Indicator Matrix of public interests, and establishes a systematic approach to reviewing the evidence across the lowlands, in order to identify areas where a regulatory approach may be necessary (prioritising the herding species, but where appropriate also roe deer).
- SNH should support the provision of venison storage and processing facilities where lack of such facilities are a barrier to sustainable deer management and consider using such support as a lever for better reporting of cull returns by groups or individuals.



Other issues

- Concern amongst recreational stalkers about local access to the NFE
- Concern about the poor conversion rate from DSC1 to DSC2