

Upper Deeside and Donside Deer Management Group

Part 1: Deer Management Plan Information & Public Interest Actions



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1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 Upper Deeside and Donside Deer Management Group

The Upper Deeside and Donside Deer Management Group (hereafter referred to as “the Group”) is located in the north east of Scotland within the Regions of Aberdeenshire and Moray. The Group area extends to around **97,471ha** and falls entirely within the Cairngorms National Park. The Group extends from Candacraig in the North to the A93 in the South, Mar Lodge to the West and Dinnet to the East.

Figure 1: Group Location



It is one of five Sub-Groups that make up the wider East Grampians Deer Management Group (EGDMG). As a recognised Deer Management Group (DMG) in its own right, the Group still maintains on-going communication with the four other sub-groups within EGDMG as well as maintaining active communication with the neighbouring DMGs of [Cairngorms & Speyside](#) to the West and [West Grampians](#) to the South, where it is recognised that there is considerable deer movement between these three DMGs.

With active engagement with all neighbouring sub-groups and DMGs in the area, this ensures a landscape collaborative approach to deer management (Figure 2).

1.1.2 Management Units

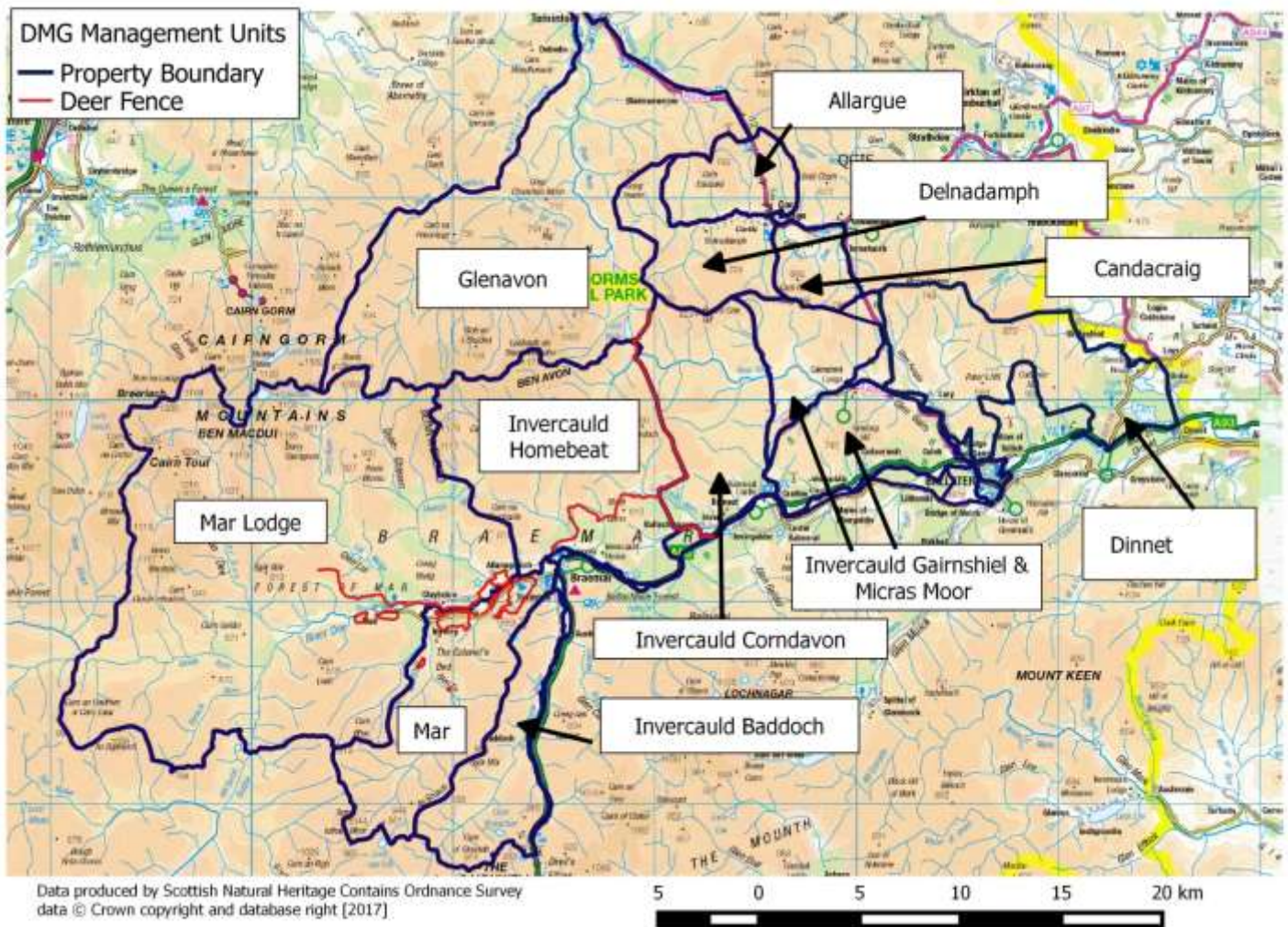
The Group is made up of 12 main management units (Figure 2).

- Allargue Estate
- Candacraig Estate
- Delnadamph Estate
- Dinnet Estate
- Glenavon Estate
- Invercauld Baddoch
- Invercauld Corndavon
- Invercauld Gairnshiel & Invercauld Micras (reported as one for the purposes of the plan)
- Invercauld Homebeat
- Mar Estate
- Mar Lodge Estate.

Traditionally the Group was made up of 3 main properties (Mar Estate, Mar Lodge and Invercauld Estate). Invercauld Estate is further broken down into 8 management units or Beats. Following a review of Group membership earlier in 2105, Glenavon Estate joined the Group due to the movement of deer between Glenavon and Invercauld Homebeat. Through this review the Group also recognised a need to increase the group boundary to the East to include the additional properties Allargue, Delnadamph, Candacraig and Dinnet Estates who also joined in 2015.

Combinations of land use objectives and priorities vary from property to property throughout the DMG management area but as a whole Conservation is a common and shared focus of all. Further information on individual management units is contained in Sections 17 to 27.

Figure 2: Individual Management Units of Upper Deeside and Donside DMG



1.1.3 Sustainable Deer Management and the Public Interest

The management of red deer at a landscape population level as set out in the [Code of Practice on Deer Management](#) (The Deer Code) requires a collaborative approach. Deer are regarded as a natural resource and as such all those who manage them have a 'responsibility' to:

- manage deer as a resource sustainably;
- minimise negative deer impacts on public interest;
- safeguard deer welfare.

The deer management objectives of members of the DMG currently contribute to delivering a wide range of public benefits as set out in The Deer Code and [The Deer Framework for the Cairngorms National Park](#). This plan will demonstrate how the DMG is currently contributing to sustainable deer management and will identify further opportunities for the DMG to deliver the Public Interest.

1.1.5 The purpose of the Deer Management Plan

The overall purpose of this Deer Management Plan (DMP) is to provide:

- An agreed framework for the management of wild deer in the area covered by the Group;
- An agreed set of actions;
- An agreed pattern of arrangements to ensure that the actions are implemented and their effectiveness monitored. **Monitoring is a key element for the Group as it allows changes to be responded to quickly and management adapted accordingly.**

1.1.6 Deer Management Plan Structure

The DMP consists of three main parts:

- **Part 1: Deer Management Plan Information and Public Interest Actions.** This sets out background information and details the Public Interest relating to Deer Management in the local area. This section also details the actions the Group have agreed to deliver over the life of the Plan. Information on individual management units is also contained here. A systematic review of the whole plan will take place at the end of the five year period.
- **Part 2: Group Operation.** This section contains information relating to the effective Operation and Functioning of the DMG.
- **Part 3: Working Plan:** The Working Plan will be reviewed at least annually. The Working Plan sets out the most up to date information on culls, counts and population targets as well as a summary of the specific actions (detailed in Part 1) that the Deer Management Group will undertake throughout the life of the plan This document will contain live population models which will be subject to continuous amendment.

1.1.7 Deer Management Plan Implementation

The plan will identify specific actions for the Group and targets to be delivered by 2021. These will be reviewed on an annual basis in the Working Plan. The DMG will use information gathered from habitat monitoring, population census and cull reporting to agree and set culls on an annual basis. Each management unit is committed to implementing the necessary culls to achieve this although it is accepted that there may be specific geographical areas within the Group area where deer management requires to be focussed.

The Group are committed to working collaboratively to achieve deliver the objectives of the plan and will meet regularly to discuss deer management and issues that arise in the local and wider area. This Plan will therefore take account all land management interests as well as those of other Statutory Organisations and the wider public interest.

1.1.8 Deer Management Adoption and Consultation

This Deer Management Plan has been formally adopted by all the Members of the Group and will run from 2016 to 2021. It has been through a consultation process and a copy of the current DMP has been given to the local Community Councils.

1.2 Deer Populations, Movements and Management

1.2.1 Deer Species

- Red deer (*Cervus elaphus*) are the main deer species found throughout the DMG area, and along with sheep provide the main grazing impact over much of the hill ground.
- Roe deer (*Capreolus capreolus*): There are populations of roe deer right through the area, both on the open hill and in woodland.
- There are no Fallow Deer (*Dama dama*) currently resident within the area.
- Sika deer (*Cervus nippon*) are not considered to be resident in the area.

1.2.4 Deer Populations and Movements

For the purposes of effective deer management, the Group has been divided into the following clusters of management units:

East Group Members

- Invercauld Corndavon
- Invercauld Gairnshiel & Invercauld Micras (reported as one for the purposes of the plan)
- Allargue Estate
- Candacraig Estate
- Delnadamph Estate
- Dinnet Estate

West Group Members

- Glenavon Estate
- Invercauld Baddoch
- Invercauld Homebeat
- Mar Estate
- Mar Lodge Estate.

Group (East): For those properties in the East cluster (Figure 3), the harvest of Red Grouse is a common land management objective and deer are managed in lower densities to support this. Deer movements have been largely restricted between the east and west of the Group due to the erection of a fence which prevents movement between the Home Beat and Corndavon beats of Invercauld Estate. Further fencing largely restricts movement of deer between Glenavon and the properties of Corndavon, Delnadamph and Allargue to the east. Therefore the decision was made to further group these properties together for data reporting purposes.

Group (West): There is free movement of deer between properties in the West of the Group area (Figure 3).

Wider Deer Movements: For Mar Lodge in the west of the Group, it is recognised that there is considerable movement of deer between neighbouring properties that currently sit out-with the Group to the west (Cairngorms & Speyside DMG) and to the south (West Grampians DMG) (Figure 3). There is movement of deer between Mar Lodge and Wildland Glenfeshie (Cairngorms & Speyside DMG). Hinds on the march with Atholl Estate (West Grampian DMG) will move south into Glen Tilt in bad weather. There is some movement of summering hinds with Mar Lodge and Glenferdate. There is likely also to be movement with Fealar Estate. Given the extent of deer movement between these properties which lie in three separate DMGs, a landscape approach to deer management is required (see Section 1.3 for more details).

1.2.5 Summary of Groups and Working Groups

There are currently 4 main “clusters” of individual properties that manage deer collaboratively across the wider landscape.

East Group Members

- Invercauld Corndavon
- Invercauld Gairnshiel & Invercauld Micras (reported as one for the purposes of the plan)
- Allargue Estate
- Candacraig Estate
- Delnadamph Estate
- Dinnet Estate

West Group Members

- Glenavon Estate
- Invercauld Baddoch
- Invercauld Homebeat
- Mar Estate
- Mar Lodge Estate.

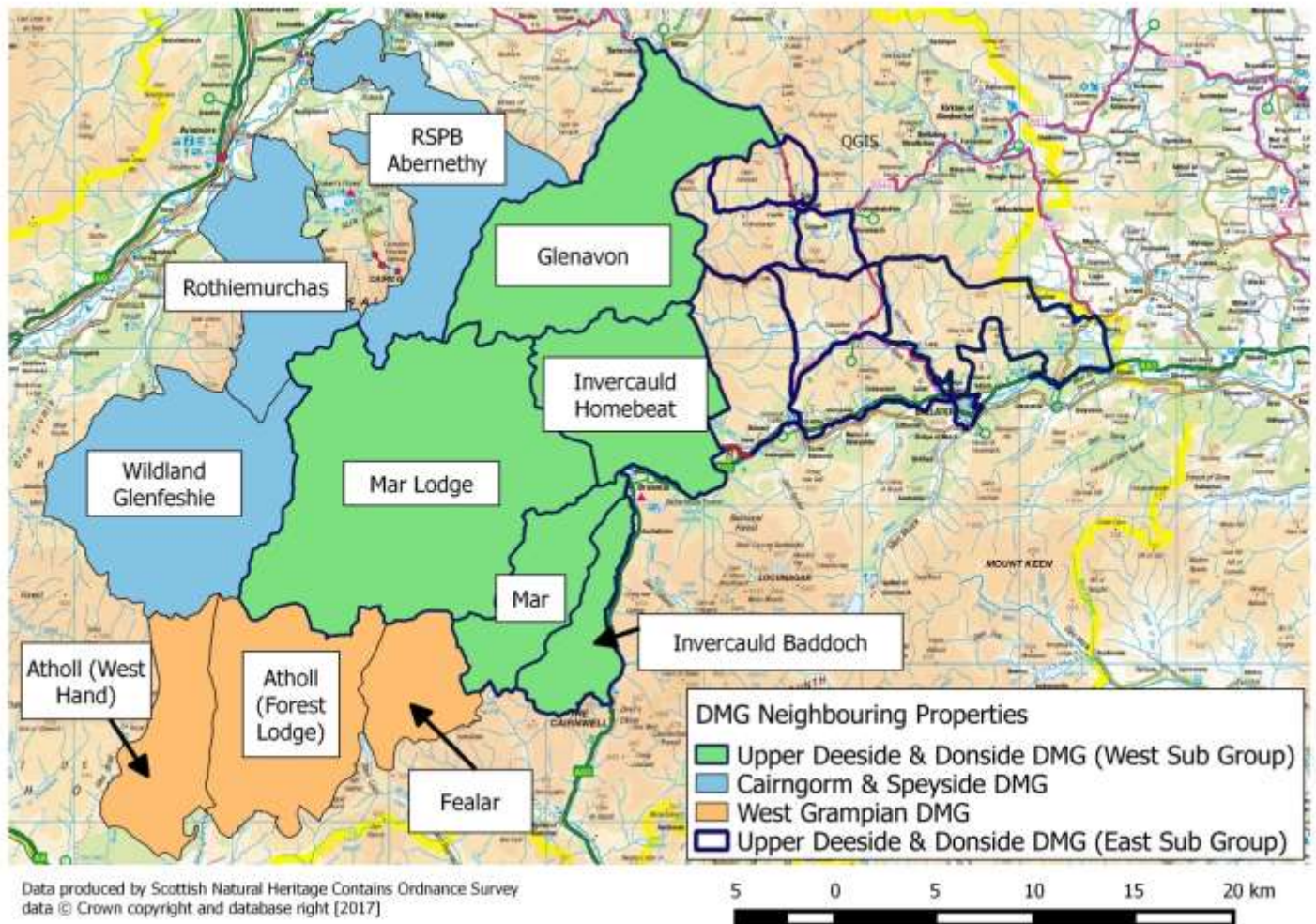
Cross-DMG Working Group Members

- Mar Lodge (Upper Deeside and Donside DMG)
- Atholl Estates (West Grampian DMG)
- Dalnacardoch (West Grampian DMG)
- Wildland Ltd (Cairngorms & Speyside DMG)
- Cairngorms National Park Authority
- Scottish Natural Heritage

Section 7 Steering Group members

- Mar Lodge (Upper Deeside and Donside DMG)
- Atholl Estates (West Grampian DMG)
- Fealar (West Grampian DMG)
- Wildland Ltd (Cairngorms & Speyside DMG)
- Abernethy (Cairngorms & Speyside)
- Rothiemurchas (Cairngorms & Speyside)
- Scottish Natural Heritage
- Forestry Commission Scotland

Figure 3: DMG and Neighbouring Properties



1.2.2 Deer Population Counts

In order that culls can be set to achieve a target density that enables all objectives of the Group to be met, it is essential to be able to estimate the current deer population (Figures 4, 5 and Table 1).

The last full helicopter Red Deer count of the whole DMG area was carried out in 2010 and estimated a total population of 5416 deer (5.7 deer per km²). A foot count was conducted in 2015 and estimated a population of 4162 deer within the West Area (6.2 deer per km²).

Table 1: Historic Count Figures (note Density is presented as deer per km²)

DMG	Year	West Area Totals					East Area Totals				
		Stags	Hinds	Calves	Total	Density	Stags	Hinds	Calves	Total	Density
All	1996	3323	3467	1036	7826	11.67	142	341	102	585	2.06
All	1998	2684	3673	1042	7399	11.03	122	354	103	579	2.04
All	2000	3011	3381	990	7382	11.00	7	49	14	70	0.25
All	2001	3628	3888	1226	8742	13.03	64	123	34	221	0.78
Partial	2002	1848	1765	497	4110	6.13	4	17	5	26	0.09
All	2003	3486	2980	936	7402	11.03	52	120	35	207	0.73
All	2004	3310	3026	994	7330	10.93	31	119	36	186	0.66
Heli	2005	3055	2822	890	6767	10.09	57	82	24	163	0.58
All	2006	2707	2673	804	6184	9.22	17	49	14	80	0.28
All	2007	2592	2864	910	6366	9.49	17	90	27	134	0.47
All	2008	1693	2364	815	4872	7.26	49	128	38	215	0.76
All	2009	1763	2517	608	4888	7.29	63	203	60	326	1.15
Heli	2010	2034	2158	634	4826	7.19	138	428	126	692	2.44
Partial	2010	2074	2203	694	4971	7.41	71	288	86	445	1.57
Partial	2011	1436	1745	729	3910	5.83	92	333	99	524	1.85
Partial	2012	1203	1580	464	3247	4.84	1	11	3	15	0.05
All	2013	2322	3118	1174	6614	9.86	22	69	21	112	0.40
Partial	2014	1283	1119	420	2822	4.21	71	63	19	153	0.54
Partial	2015	1816	1758	589	4163	6.21	0	0	0	0	0.00
Partial	2016	1866	1796	616	4278	6.38	24	31	7	62	0.22

The most recent helicopter count of the area known collectively as the West Grampians (Upper Deeside and Donside DMG, West Grampian DMG & Cairngorms & Speyside DMG) was in 2010. This count is due to be repeated at this scale in 2017 and will provide critical information for the future development and effective delivery of all three deer management plans.

Figure 4: West Group Counts.

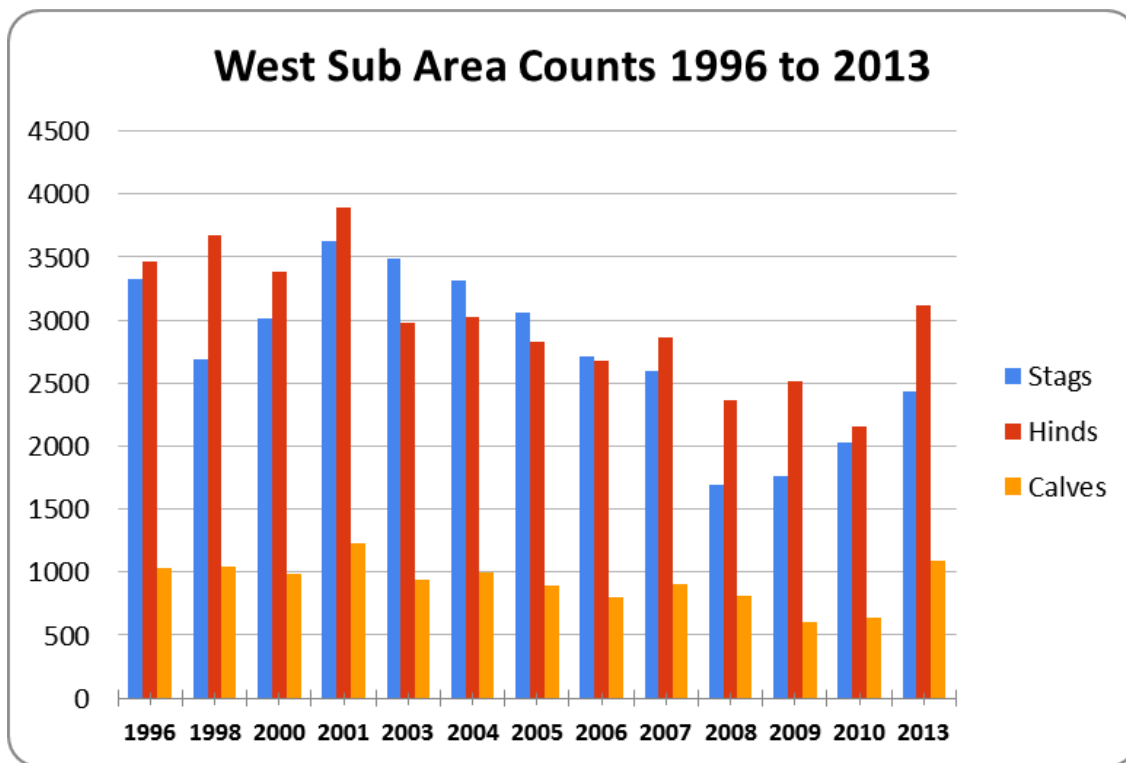
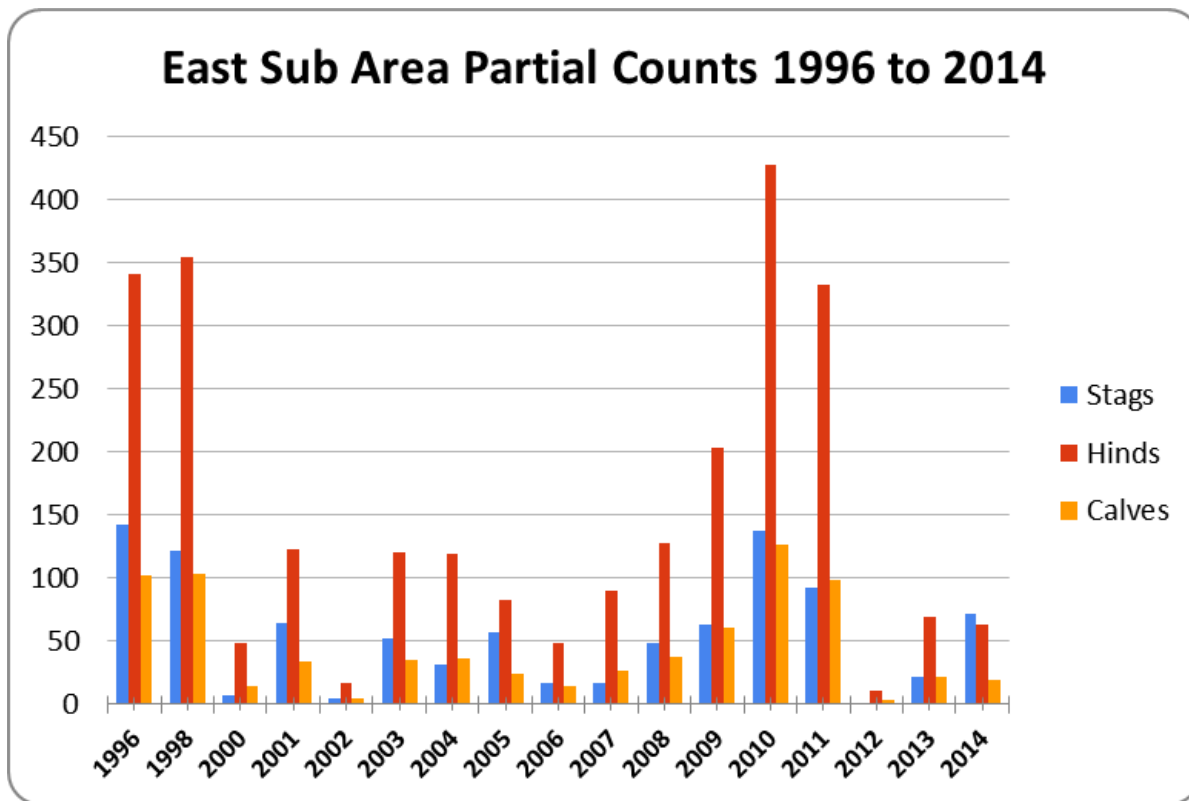


Figure 5: East Group Partial Counts (data incomplete so not comparable between years).



1.2.3 Deer Culls

Historic Red Deer cull data are shown in Figures 6 and 7.

Figure 6: Historic Deer Culls – Western Properties

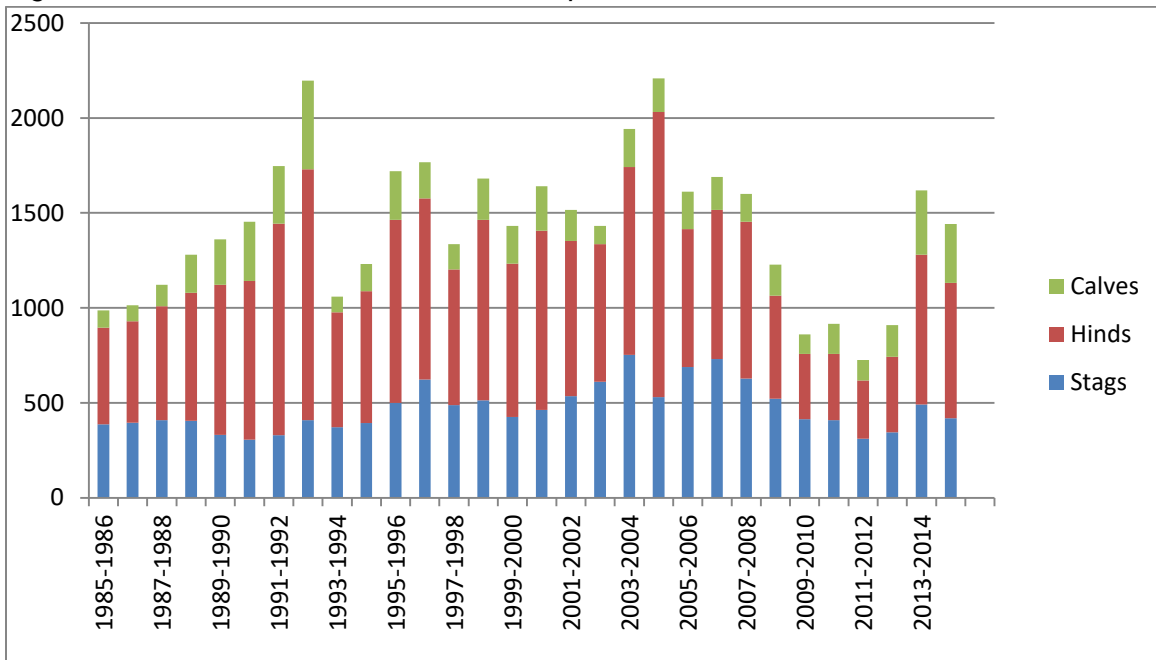
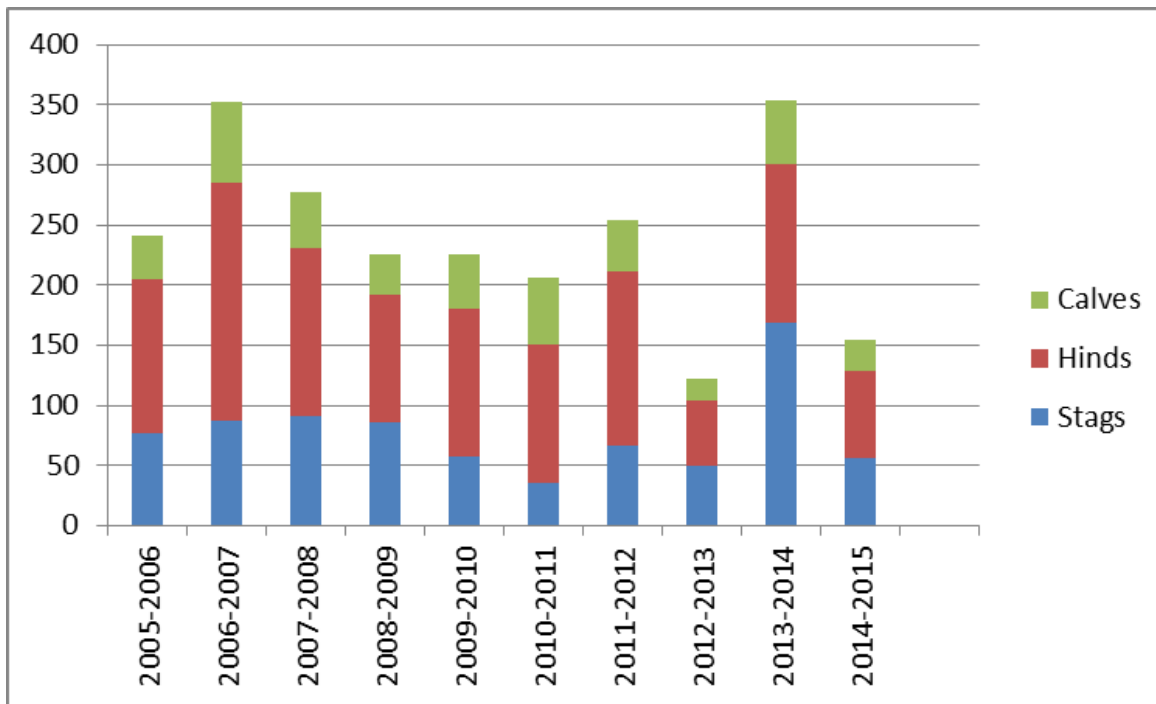
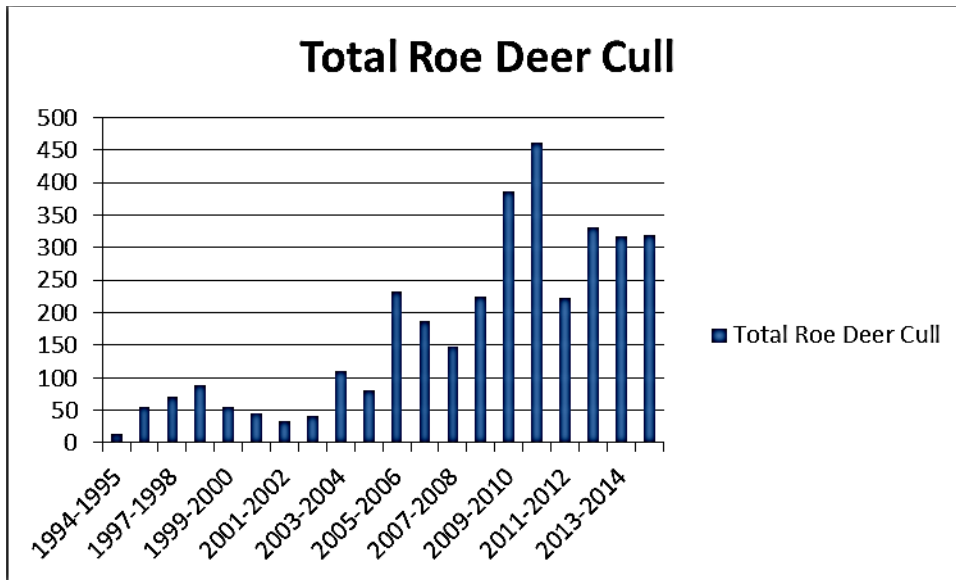


Figure 7: Historic Deer Culls – Eastern Properties



Roe deer for the last 10 years (Figure 8). The increase in culls after 2005 was due to an increase in the numbers of properties reporting culls. Since 2012, Roe culls have been fairly stable across the DMG.

Figure 8: Historic Roe Deer Culls for DMG



1.2.4 Other herbivores

The summering of sheep on the open ground is a common management practice across the Group on all but two properties – Mar Lodge Estate and Invercauld Homebeat (although some wintering does take place to the east of the Beat). Around 6200 sheep are summered across the Group. Current Habitat Impact Assessment methodology being undertaken by the Group will take into account the impact of other herbivores.

There are no feral goats within the DMG area. Many properties have reported a significant increase in Hare (Brown and Mountain) numbers recently.

1.3 Actions to develop mechanisms to manage deer

1.3.1 Background

- To manage deer populations at a landscape scale a collaborative approach is required and the need to negotiate and compromise may be necessary.
- This requires a Deer Management Group to be functioning effectively, to be inclusive and to operate in the spirit of openness and transparency. The Association of Deer Management Groups (ADMG) has provided some guiding principles through the [ADMG Benchmark](#).

1.3.2 Plan Objectives

- The Deer Management Plan (DMP) should ensure that representation and Membership of the Deer Management Group enables integration of different land-uses at a local level.
- The planning process should also be consultative, transparent and open.

1.3.3 Current Delivery

- The Group carried out a review of the Group Area and Membership in 2015 (See Section 1.1.2).
- All the main deer management units in the area are Members of the DMG, and regular meetings of all neighbouring DMGs, provide a mechanism for discussing landscape-wide deer management issues.
- Cull targets are set and reported on annually.
- The Group meets bi-annually and Group Membership is encouraged to continue its practice of open discussion of cull levels at all meetings.
- Recognising the need to develop a mechanism for more effective planning of deer management across DMGs, in December 2015, a cross-DMG meeting between Mar Lodge (Upper Deeside and Donside Group), Atholl Estates (West Grampians DMG) and Wildland Ltd (Cairngorms & Speyside DMG) was facilitated by the Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA). The meeting concluded that a collaborative approach between these parties was required to ensure the sustainable, effective management of the shared deer population. All three parties agreed in principle to participate in a forum where future management actions will be discussed and agreed on a regular basis.
- A Working Group (WG) (Figure 9) comprising Mar Lodge, Wildland Ltd, Atholl estates and Dalnacardoch met again in February 2016 and agreed to participate in practical collaborative deer management to:
 - Meet 4 times a year to discuss and agree cull targets based on a shared population model
 - Share cull and count information
 - Discuss the use of Out of Season/Night shooting with the WG in advance
 - Conduct a base-line foot count in February/March 2016 with a further helicopter count in late July 2016.
 - Wildland Ltd will also consider creating a buffer zone around the main woodland regeneration site, where a slightly higher density of deer may be tolerated (subject to woodland regeneration objectives being met).
 - The WG were also going to consider the inclusion of additional properties such a Fealar (West Grampian DMG).

- **Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA)** has offered to provide future assistance in reviewing DMG Boundaries and future ways of collaborative working. It has been proposed that the National Park Partnership Plan (2017-22) consultation which will run from 27th June 30th September 2016 be used a possible mechanism to develop discussion further. The Plan is the overall management plan for the Park, which is agreed by partners then submitted to Scottish Ministers for approval. Consultation will focus on 9 'big issues', one of which is about landscape scale collaboration, another specifically about deer and moorland management. The consultation will include a specific question about whether the partnership plan should set out more guidance on deer densities to deliver the public interest in the National Park, as well as questions about how best to support collaboration. This will provide a useful framework to take forward the discussion about deer management group structures/boundaries/co-ordination. It is proposed that representatives of each DMG to meet with SNH and CNPA to scope alternative options. A special CDAG (Cairngorms Deer Advisory Group) meeting would then focus on this and the partnership plan consultation.
- The Group has a website (<http://egrampiandmg.deer-management.co.uk>) .
- The DMG currently works in Partnership with Government Agencies (SNH & FCS) and the Local Community CNPA
- The Group has signed up to the ADMG Benchmark, the [Code of Practice on Deer Management](#) (The Deer Code) and [Wild Deer Best Practice Guidance](#).

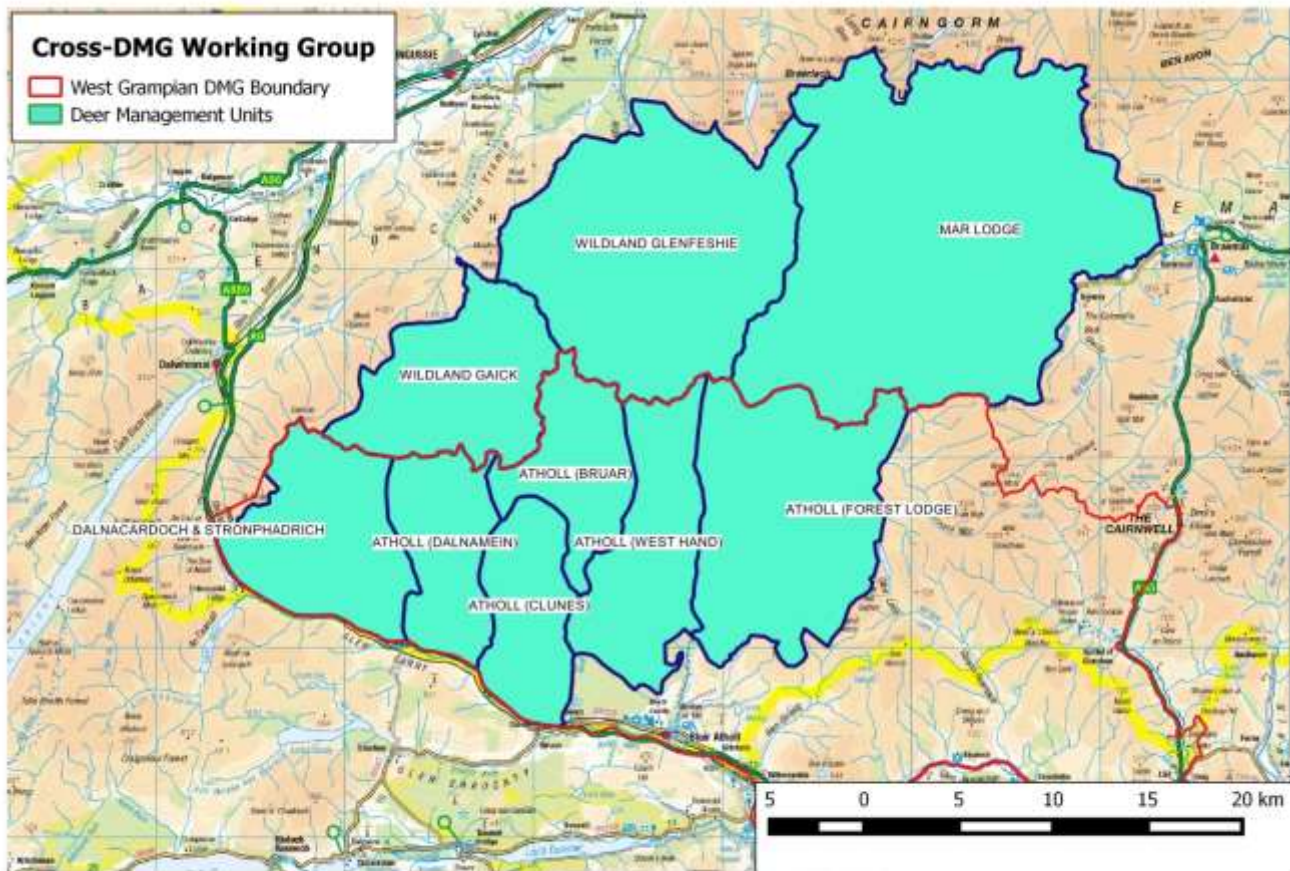
1.3.4 Targets to be delivered by 2021

Actions to develop mechanisms to manage deer	When?	Who?	How?
Final Plan and Minutes of Meetings will be made publically available and published on DMG Website.	By Summer 2016 and ongoing	DMG Secretary	<i>DMG Website.</i>
Repeat DMG Assessment.	By Summer 2016 and ongoing	DMG Chair and Secretary	<i>Use baseline DMG Assessment carried out in 2014.</i>
Working plan will be reviewed and updated annually. Management actions will be adjusted and agreed accordingly. An annual report will be produced.	Bi-annually	DMG Secretary and DMG Members	<i>Provision of data from DMG members in advance of and during meetings. Secretary will update Working Plan and produce an Annual Report to be published on the DMG Website.</i>

Review deer movements at a landscape level and define the most appropriate scale at which current population models should operate.	Ongoing	Upper Deeside and Donside, West Grampians and Cairngorms & Speyside DMGs	<i>Representatives of each DMG to meet with SNH and CNPA to scope alternative options by summer 2016 and meet with CDAG by end of 2016. Data from the deer count scheduled for 2017 to be used to discuss deer movements and to help define the most appropriate scale for population modelling to be effective.</i>
Culls will be delivered and reported on accurately. Cull targets will set and agreed based on information relating to habitat condition, population census, deer welfare and any other relevant information (i.e. where deer are impacting negatively on the Public Interest).	Bi-annually	DMG Members	<i>Population models (once agreed) will be updated and cull targets set, agreed and delivered according. If final culls likely to be different from target, identify reasons and discuss with Group at the earliest opportunity.</i>
Mar Lodge will participate in a cross-DMG working group (facilitated by CNPA).	WG will meet 4 times a year.	Mar Lodge, Atholl Estates, Dalnacardoch, Wildland Ltd, CNPA, SNH	<i>A working group of relevant properties from Cairngorms & Speyside DMG, West Grampians DMG and Upper Deeside and Donside DMG will meet 4 times a year to agree cull targets (based on a population model) and will contribute to providing accurate cull and count data on a regular basis. WGD MG & CNPA will continue to facilitate</i>
A helicopter count will be conducted in late July 2016 to coordinate with neighbours (Wildland Ltd), Atholl Estates and Dalnacardoch.	Late July 2016	Mar Lodge, Atholl Estates, Dalnacardoch, Wildland Ltd, CNPA, SNH	<i>All properties to agree count by spring 2016. West Grampians DMG to coordinate count. Possible funding contribution from CNPA (TBC). Mar Lodge to liaise with Fealar & Mar Estate to discuss incorporating these properties.</i>
Mar Lodge, Invercauld and Glenavon to facilitate and deliver collaborative deer management at a landscape scale.	On-going	Mar Lodge, Invercauld & Gleavon	<i>Mar Lodge, Invercauld and Glenavon will meet on an annual basis specifically to agree collaborative actions to assist in the delivery of Favourable Condition on the features of the cairngorms SAC.</i>
A helicopter count of the whole DMG will be conducted in 2017 and an aerial count will be repeated in Year 3.	Late Winter 2017 and 2020	Chair & DMG Members	<i>DMG will ensure adequate resources in place for repeat aerial count in 2020 and liaise with neighbouring DMGs to coordinate count at the same time if possible.</i>

Foot counts will be carried out annually in years with no aerial count.	Spring 2018, 2019, 2021	DMG Members & DMG Secretary	<i>Stalkers will undertake a coordinated foot count on the same day. Count coordinators will be nominated and DMG Secretary will collate figures.</i>
Group will carry out a review of deer movements within the DMG and contribute to wider discussions on deer movements within and across current DMG Boundaries.	Autumn 2017	DMG Members	<i>Deer count data from 2017 and 2020 will be reviewed by the DMG and by West Grampians DMG and Cairngorms & Speyside DMG. DMG boundaries will be reviewed and amended if necessary.</i>
Group will invite representation at meetings of the local community as well as local agricultural/woodland/conservation interests.	Annually	DMG Chair.	<i>Meeting dates and Agendas will be publically available on DMG website and circulated to community councils in advance.</i>
Group will ensure adequate resources are available to fund the administration and aspects of delivery of the DMP	Autumn 2016	DMG Chair and Secretary	<i>DMG will ensure adequate resources for the ongoing delivery of the plan through private funding and through a possible Environmental Cooperation Action Fund (ECAAF) application.</i>

Figure 9: Cross-DMG Working Group



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1.4 Actions for the delivery of designated features into Favourable Condition

1.4.1 Background

- It is expected that the DMG will contribute to the Scottish Government target of achieving 80% of designated features in Favourable or Unfavourable Recovering condition by 2016 by facilitating the reduction of herbivore impacts where this is contributing to the unfavourable condition.
- The Group is very heavily designated, containing a number of high profile sites of national importance. Most management units have at least one designation (Table 2).
- A total of **24363 ha** (25% of the Group) is designated as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and **27843 ha** (28%) as Site of Special Scientific Interest covering 11 sites (See Figure 10 below).
- More than half the Group also falls within the **Cairngorms, Cairngorms Massif and Muir of Dinnet Special Protection Area (SAC)**.
- **The Cairngorms SAC** is a large upland site in north-east Scotland which is of outstanding importance for its vegetation. It covers a large altitudinal range from 200-1309 metres and contains the full range of sub-montane and montane vegetation communities characteristic for the East Highlands, which is reflected in the fact that the site is designated for no fewer than 16 upland habitat features (see Table 1). The site includes the greatest area of arctic-alpine vegetation in Britain with extensive summit plateaux and many peaks above 1200 metres, including the second highest peak in Scotland, Ben Macdui at 1309 metres. The high altitude plateaux support the largest range of late-snow bed vegetation and associated moss-rich springs found anywhere in the UK. Other high altitude vegetation includes lichen-rich alpine heath on summit ridges, and montane acid grassland communities including extensive areas dominated by alpine rush heath with *Juncus trifidus*. The lower slopes support a range of different submontane heath communities and there are large areas of native pine forests. Blanket bog is extensive in many parts including valley floors and lower slopes, in corries, and plateaux at higher altitudes. The more base-rich soils found locally over limestone and Moine Schists, mainly at Inchroary and Glen Feshie, support more species-rich heaths, flushes and calcareous grasslands which contain a range of base-loving plants, many of which are rare.
- **The Cairngorm Mountains** are the second richest area in Britain for montane vascular plants, supporting 77 out of a possible 118 species. It is the richest area for acid tolerant montane plants in Britain. Rare vascular plant species include arctic and tufted saxifrages (*Saxifraga rivularis* and *S. cespitosa*), hare's foot sedge (*Carex lachenalii*) and alpine foxtail (*Alopecurus alpinus*). More than 110 species of mosses, lichens and liverworts have been recorded, several species of which are unknown elsewhere in Britain.
- There are three National Nature Reserve (NNR) designations within the Group: Cairngorms, Morrone Birkwoods and Muir of Dinnet.
- All of the DMG falls within the **Cairngorms National Park** and the DMG falls within two **National Scenic Areas (Cairngorms and Deeside & Lochnagar)**- see Figure 11.

Table 2: Designation and Management Units

Designation	Deer Management Units											
	Allargue	Candacraig	Delnadamph	Dinnet	Glen Avon	Invercauld Baddoch	Invercauld Corndavon	Invercauld Gairnsheil & Micras Moor	Invercauld Homebeat	Mar Estate	Mar Lodge	SNH Muir of Dinnet
Cairngorms SSSI											✓	
Cairngorms SPA					✓		✓		✓		✓	
Cairngorms SAC					✓				✓		✓	
Cairngorms NNR											✓	
Cairngorms Massif SPA						✓			✓	✓	✓	
Craig Leek SSSI									✓			
Crathie Wood SSSI								✓				
Deeside & Lochnagar NSA					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Eastern Cairngorms SSSI					✓				✓		✓	
Glen Ey Gorge SSSI										✓		
Inchrory SSSI					✓							
Ladder Hills SSSI/SAC	✓				✓							
Morrone Birkwood SSSI/SAC/NNR										✓		
Morven & Mullachdubh SSSI/SAC				✓								
Muir of Dinnet SSSI/ SAC/ RAMSAR/ SPA/ NNR				✓								✓
The Cairngorm Mountains NSA					✓				✓		✓	
The Maim SAC								✓				

1.4.2 Plan Objectives

- The Deer Management Plan (DMP) will incorporate agreed management actions to manage deer impacts to delivering favourable condition on designated sites in the area. The DMG will monitor and review progress.

1.4.3 Current Delivery

- There are a total of 133 designated features within the Group. Of these **84% are in Favourable/Not Assessed/Unfavourable Recovering due to Management condition** (Table 3).
- Currently, the following properties are in Management Agreements with SNH:
 - Mar Lodge (Section 7 Agreement and Management Agreement). *Mar Lodge will continue monitoring according to targets in the Section 7/Management Agreement.*
 - Mar Estate (SNH Management Agreement).
- The Mar Lodge Section 7 Agreement is due to expire in 2021. An SNH-led Steering Group met in Spring 2016 to discuss an early conclusion of the Agreement . (still in discussion0. The current Steering Group comprises SNH, FCS, Mar Lodge, Mar, Invercauld, Fealar, Atholl and Wildland Glenfeshie Estates. Should the Section 7 Agreement cease, ongoing discussion with all the relevant partners will continue through a combination of the Upper Deeside and Donside Group DMG, the Cross-DMG Working Group and through the current collaborative working practices between Mar Lodge, Invercauld and Glenavon.

- At a meeting of Mar Lodge, Glenavon and Invercauld in May 2016, the following actions were agreed:
 - Mar Lodge plan to undertake a count this July –if time and finances allow, they will try to count over the hill into Glenavon and Invercauld Home Beat to gain an understanding of the number of stags summering in the area where the 3 estates meet;
 - Mar Lodge to seek help from Invercauld Home beat to drive deer out of the Quoich rather than shoot where possible;
 - Mar Lodge to consider heavy thinning of compartment 2 at the Quoich to make this area less attractive to deer
 - Invercauld Home Beat to consider feeding stags cobs on trial basis this coming winter to try to hold stags more
 - Invercauld Home Beat to start doing recruitment counts to inform the population model.
 - In discussion with neighbours, Mar Lodge will continue the use of Out of Season Authorisations.
- The Home beat has already substantially reduced its population over the past few years in line with its own deer management plan and the keepers report a noticeable reduction on the ground in deer movement from the Home beat to the Quoich

1.4.4. Current Impacts

There are 21 features in 'Unfavourable' condition but of these there are 15 where herbivore impacts could potentially be considered to be a contributing factor to the site condition (Table 3). These are as follows.

- **Craig Leek SSSI.** Sufficient grazing is required to maintain the species-rich grassland and dwarf shrub heath habitats and also the flora and fauna that these habitats and rock habitats support.
- **Eastern Cairngorms SSSI** – A survey of the Bryophyte assemblage in July 2010, indicated there had been some loss of area of important, bryophyte-rich late snow-bed communities since 1989, likely caused by changes in the climate.
- **Inchrory SSSI:** Inchrory's calcicole habitats include the most extensive areas of species-rich calcareous grassland in north-east Scotland, along with springs and flushes, and juniper scrub. Areas of more acidic soils, associated with the typical granite bedrock of the Cairngorms, give rise to a more commonly found range of habitat types including heather moorland and blanket bog.
- **Ladder Hills (SSSI and SAC).** The most recent survey of the Sub-alpine dry heath, found it to be in unfavourable condition, due to burning on sensitive areas, principally sphagnum-rich heath, but also on steep slopes and in heather with uneven structure. The survey also recorded locally high levels of browsing (most likely hares) in blaeberry heaths.
- **Cairngorms SAC-** Herbivore impacts have been formally assessed twice within the last 10 years. The survey by **Maier** (2009) found that current herbivore impacts for features for much of the SAC were low or low to moderate and impact trends often Chronic low or Decreasing, though there were a few localised areas with higher impacts. Trampling impacts were often slightly higher than browsing impacts, especially for blanket bog. A repeat Habitat Impact Assessment of Upland Features carried out by **Headley in 2015** found that the majority of current aggregate herbivore impacts are Low with 67% of all the sample plots in this impact class. Only 9% of the sample plots have High or High/Moderate aggregate herbivore impacts across all four of the habitats/habitat groups assessed.

Compared to the previous Assessment, grazing impacts are generally higher than trampling impacts across all four of the habitats assessed, except for the Flushes where the grazing and trampling impacts were very similar. Red deer are primarily responsible for the trampling impacts on the Blanket bog habitat, but mountain hares are probably as important as red deer in terms of the browsing of the vegetation in this habitat for the majority of the Cairngorms SAC.

In the **2015 SAC Report**, 76% of plots showed no detectable overall change in aggregate herbivore impacts since 2008 with **detectable increases in grazing impact** and **detectable decreases** in trampling impacts. The significant increases in grazing impacts were mostly seen in the Blanket bog, Species-rich mat-grass grassland of upland areas and Dry grasslands or scrublands on chalk or limestone habitats. The trend indicators show that **herbivore impacts are stable in 83% of the 441 sample plots** that could be assigned to a trend category. Only 36 sample plots showed evidence that herbivore impacts were increasing, whilst 41 sample plots showed evidence that herbivore impacts were decreasing.

- **Glenavon/ Inchrory:** Recent SNH monitoring at Inchrory suggested that the calcareous grasslands may be now be undergrazed in places, although in the 2015 SAC report, there was a increase in grazing impact and consequently aggregate herbivore impacts across the four habitats/habitat groups. Although Species-rich mat-grass grasslands in upland areas and Dry grasslands and scrublands on chalk or limestone habitats need Moderate grazing levels to maintain the high botanical diversity seen in these grassland habitats, the Report indicated that grazing levels are probably too high in Glen Builg mostly as a result of the high densities of rabbits. There is, therefore, a need for the rabbit population to be controlled within Glen Builg down as far as Inchrory Lodge.
- Although the higher densities of herbivores, especially deer and sheep, in the Glen Avon management unit may have beneficial effects on the Species-rich grasslands and Dry grasslands they are having negative impacts, especially trampling impacts, on the Blanket bog and Flushes. Higher densities of red deer in Glen Avon to the west of Inchrory lodge and the presence of sheep and cattle within the Inchrory SSSI are all contributing to the trampling of some of the flushes.
- **Mar Lodge:** In 2008, on the Moine Bhealaidh there were large areas of bare eroding peat showing little sign of recovery. Only one plot was recorded here and this showed moderate to high trampling impacts and dung counts suggesting that herbivore impacts in this area were higher than for the lower level blanket bog elsewhere on Mar Lodge. In 2015, the vast majority of the sample plots within this management unit had Low grazing, trampling, dunging and aggregate herbivore impacts. The only High impact was for trampling in the single Blanket bog sample plot. The biggest change in herbivore impact within this management unit since 2008 has been a highly significant reduction in trampling impacts.
- **Invercauld Homebeat:** In 2009, while noticeable herbivore impacts were mostly scattered across the site there were two clusters of moderate to high or high impacts at Invercauld at Creag an Dail Bheag and in the Glen Quoich - Gleann an t-Slugain watershed likely due to regular deer movements through these parts of the site. Comparison of the 2008 data with the 2015 survey suggests that grazing impacts have on average increased significantly whilst trampling impacts have decreased significantly. Consequently there is no significant difference in the number of sample plots which show a detectable increase in aggregate herbivore impacts and those that show a detectable decrease in aggregate herbivore impacts

- **Overall where red deer numbers have been reduced significantly within the Cairngorms SAC the habitats have shown more detectable decreases than increases in various aspects of herbivore impact.** However, in these same areas some of the Species-rich mat-grass grassland of upland areas and Dry grasslands or scrublands on chalk or limestone habitat is losing its floristic diversity as a consequence of the very low grazing pressures.
- **Cairngorms SAC: Caledonian Forest Feature:** on NTS Mar Lodge, so far there has been positive, incremental growth in the average height of seedlings above the height of the dominant ground vegetation, with 75% of seedlings showing positive incremental growth. Results of NTS annual woodland regeneration monitoring are continually reviewed and used as a guide for the success of management on an annual basis. The target for annual browsing levels should be at 15% or less.

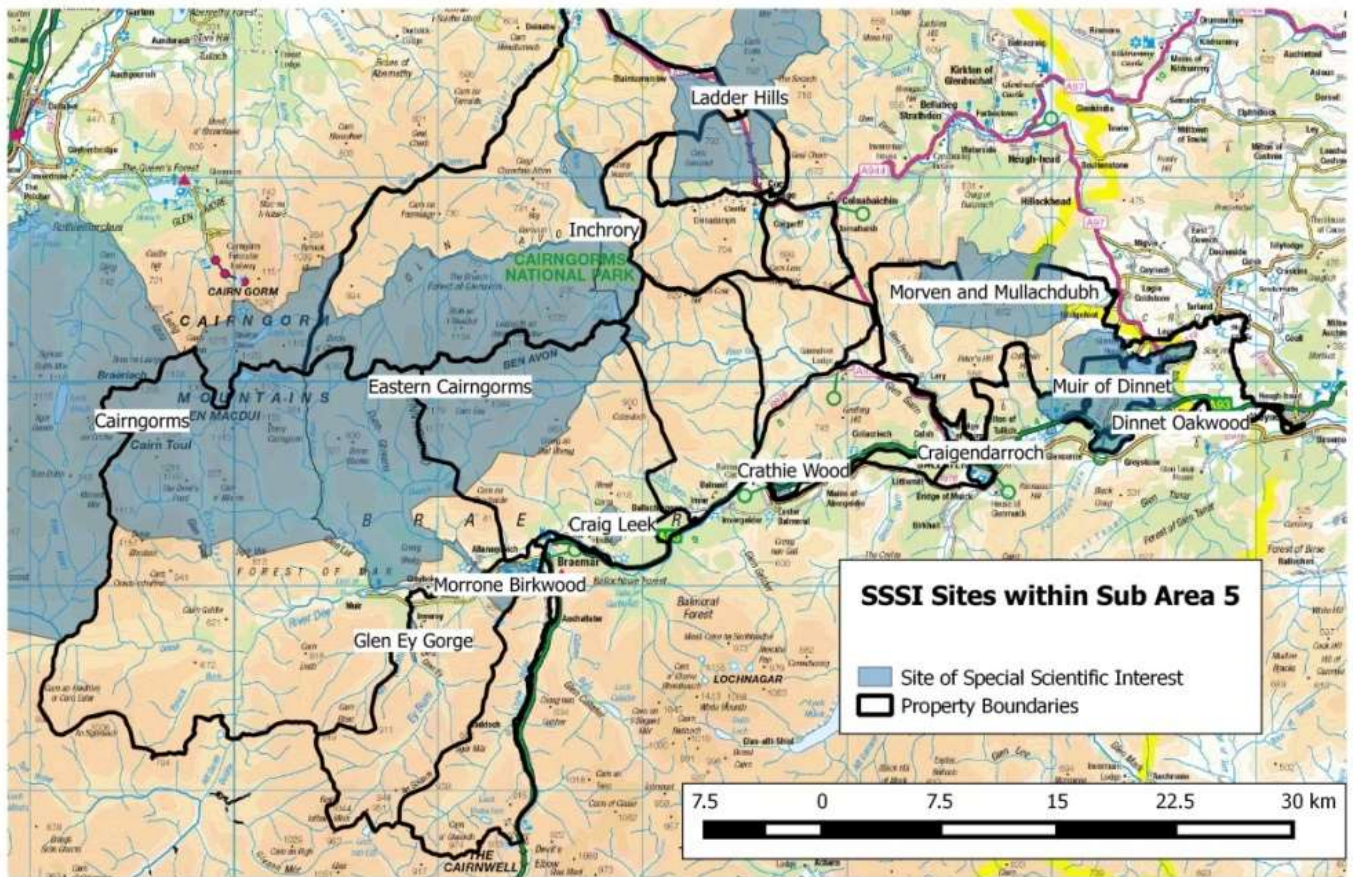
1.4.5 Targets to be delivered by 2021

Actions for the delivery of designated features into Favourable Condition	When?	Who?	How?
<p>Craig Leek SSSI: Upland Assemblage and Bryophyte Assemblage located within deer fence. Unfavourable condition not due to deer impacts. Extensive birch regeneration and bracken cover.</p>	2016 and Ongoing	Invercauld Homebeat	<p><i>SNH undertook scrub management in 2015 and is in discussion with Invercauld Estate about a management agreement to extend this work to improve the habitat for the Bryophyte Assemblage (likely to be in 'Unfavourable Recovering due to Management' condition through scrub management).</i></p>
<p>Eastern Cairngorms SSSI: Bryophyte Assemblage. Unfavourable condition not due to deer impacts. Loss of snow-bed communities caused by changes in climate.</p>	No Action Required	Invercauld Home Beat, Mar Lodge, Glenavon	<p><i>No action required.</i></p>
<p>Inchrory SSSI: Main issues on the site are special calcareous grasslands which are currently undergrazed and flushes which show slight signs of trampling (deer and sheep). Management to be implemented by the Estate.</p>	2016 and Ongoing	Glenavon	<p><i>Estate in discussion with SNH to agree grazing management of sheep on calcareous grassland. Possible use of Agri-Environment Grant Schemes through SRDP. Some of the trampling impacts may be due to movement of deer between the Estate and Invercauld- Homebeat. Estates to continue to discuss collaborative approach to deer management.</i></p>

<p>Ladder Hills SSSI: The main negative impacts on the Sub-alpine dry heath in the past have been due to muirburn on sensitive areas, principally sphagnum-rich heath, but also on steep slopes and in heather with uneven structure. High levels of localised browsing were also found on blaeberry heaths.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Glenavon & Allargue</p>	<p><i>Estates follow Muirburn Code of practice. Both Estates have relatively few deer but sheep grazing the open hill. Estates will consider implementing Habitat Impact Assessment on Dwarf Shrub Heath to monitor herbivore grazing impacts.</i></p>
<p>Cairngorms SAC: The main issues affecting the features are Muirburn on Heaths, undergrazing of calcareous grassland, trampling of Blanket Bog (particularly on the Moine Mhor (Glenfeshie) and Moine Bhealaidh (Mar Lodge) and</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Glenavon, Mar Lodge, Invercauld Homebeat.</p>	<p><i>Glenavon to continue burning according to the Muirburn Code. Wildland Ltd (Glenfeshie) and Mar Lodge have agreed to be part of a Working Group to implement a more collaborative approach to managing deer across Deer Management Groups which should reduce deer pressure on the Moine Mhor. NTS Mar Lodge already implements a programme of monitoring across its site on a range of habitats. Invercauld Homebeat will continue to work collaboratively in order to reduce pressure on designated features and on neighbouring Mar Lodge (to assist with reducing deer pressure on the Caledonian Forest feature.</i></p>

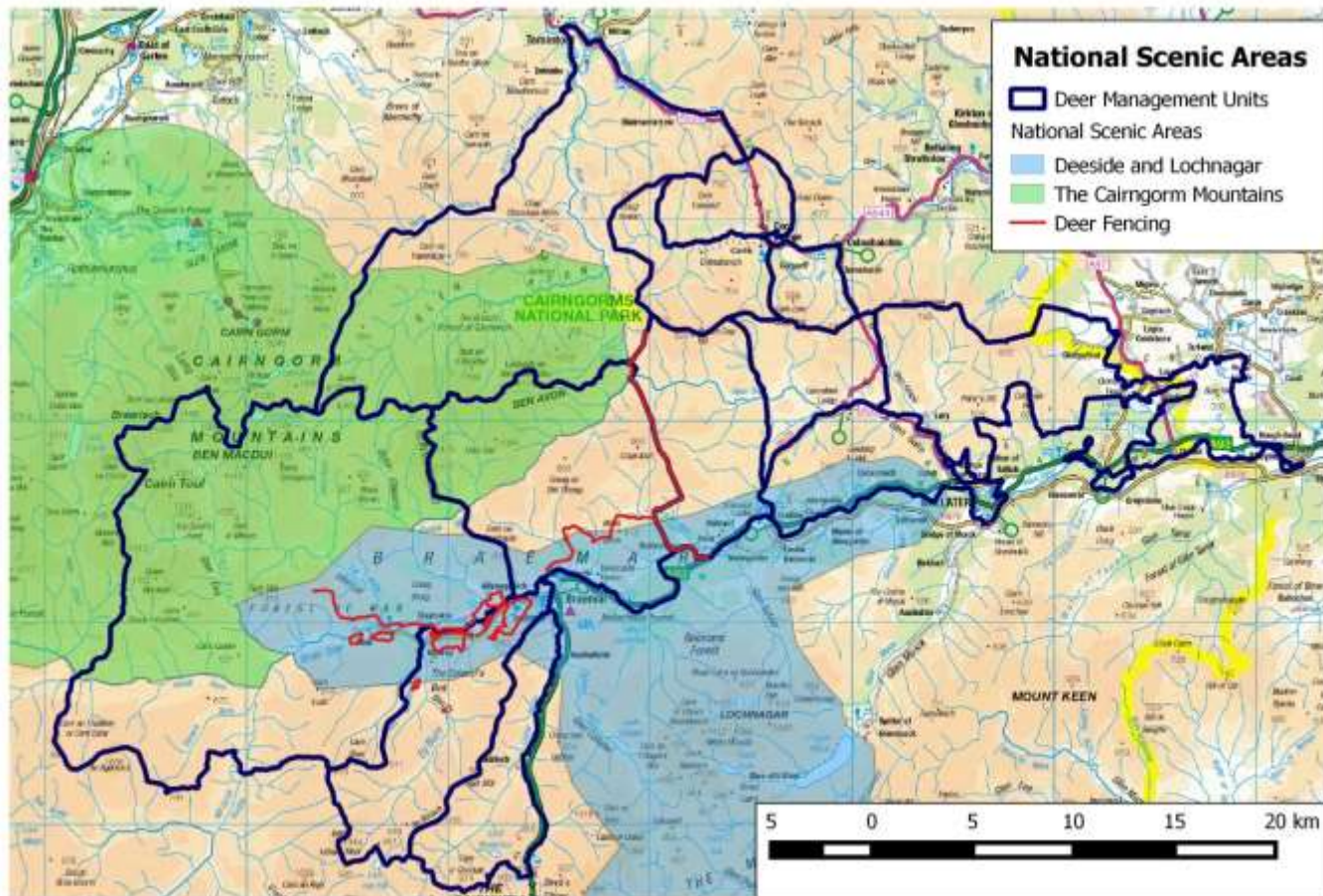
<p>Cairngorms SAC: Caledonian Forest feature. This feature is currently in 'Unfavourable Recovering due to Management' however, the feature remains vulnerable to deer impacts. Mar Lodge is currently in a 25 year management agreement with SNH, as well as the Section 7 Agreement (to expire 2021).</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Mar Lodge and members of the Section 7 Steering Group</p>	<p><i>NTS will continue to manage deer in collaboration with neighbours and with use of Out of Season Authorisations.</i></p> <p><i>NTS will continue monitoring according to targets in the Section 7/Management Agreement.</i></p> <p><i>Mar Lodge to undertake a count this July –if time and finances allow they will try to count over the hill into Glenavon and Invercauld Home Beat to gain an understanding of the number of stags summering in the area where the 3 estates meet;</i></p> <p><i>Mar Lodge to seek help from Invercauld Home beat to drive deer out of the Quoich rather than shoot where possible;</i></p> <p><i>Mar Lodge to consider heavy thinning of compartment 2 at the Quoich to make this area less attractive to deer</i></p> <p><i>Invercauld Home Beat to consider feeding stags cobs on trial basis this coming winter to try to hold stags more</i></p> <p><i>Invercauld Home Beat to start doing recruitment counts to inform the population model.</i></p> <p><i>The Section 7 Steering Group will meet in 2016 to discuss how to interpret the 2015 monitoring data then decide whether or not to end the Agreement.</i></p>
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Figure 10: Sites of Special Scientific Interest



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Figure 11. Cairngorms and Deeside & Lochnagar NSA



Data produced by Scottish Natural Heritage. Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right [2016]

Table 3: Designated Site Feature Condition

Condition	Site	Des	Feature
Favourable	Cairngorms	SSSI	Vascular plant assemblage
Favourable	Cairngorms	SSSI	Bryophyte assemblage
Favourable	Cairngorms	SSSI	Fungi assemblage
Favourable	Cairngorms	SSSI	Lichen assemblage
Favourable	Cairngorms	SSSI	Invertebrate assemblage
Favourable	Cairngorms	SSSI	Breeding bird assemblage
Favourable	Cairngorms	SSSI	Mineralogy of Scotland
Favourable	Cairngorms	SSSI	Quaternary of Scotland
Favourable	Cairngorms	SSSI	Fluvial Geomorphology of Scotland
Favourable	Cairngorms	SSSI	Dotterel (<i>Charadrius morinellus</i>), breeding
Favourable	Cairngorms	SSSI	Golden eagle (<i>Aquila chrysaetos</i>), breeding
Favourable	Cairngorms	SSSI	Ptarmigan (<i>Lagopus muta</i>), breeding
Favourable	Cairngorms	SSSI	Snow bunting (<i>Plectrophenax nivalis</i>), breeding
Favourable	Cairngorms	SPA	Capercaillie (<i>Tetrao urogallus</i>), breeding
Favourable	Cairngorms	SPA	Golden eagle (<i>Aquila chrysaetos</i>), breeding
Favourable	Cairngorms	SPA	Osprey (<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>), breeding
Favourable	Cairngorms	SPA	Peregrine (<i>Falco peregrinus</i>), breeding
Favourable	Cairngorms	SAC	Juniper on heaths or calcareous grasslands
Favourable	Cairngorms	SAC	Bog woodland
Favourable	Cairngorms	SAC	Tall herb communities
Favourable	Cairngorms	SAC	Plants in crevices on acid rocks
Favourable	Cairngorms	SAC	Acidic scree
Favourable	Cairngorms	SAC	Montane acid grasslands
Favourable	Cairngorms	SAC	Hard-water springs depositing lime
Favourable	Cairngorms	SAC	Very wet mires often identified by an unstable 'quaking' surface
Favourable	Cairngorms	SAC	Acid peat-stained lakes and ponds
Favourable	Cairngorms	SAC	Clear-water lakes or lochs with aquatic vegetation and poor to moderate nutrient levels
Favourable	Cairngorms	SAC	Green shield-moss (<i>Buxbaumia viridis</i>)
Not Assessed	Cairngorms	SSSI	Upland assemblage
Not Assessed	Cairngorms	SSSI	Dystrophic and oligotrophic lochs
Not Assessed	Cairngorms	SPA	Merlin (<i>Falco columbarius</i>), breeding
Not Assessed	Cairngorms	SPA	Scottish crossbill (<i>Loxia scotica</i>), breeding
Unfavourable	Cairngorms	SPA	Dotterel (<i>Charadrius morinellus</i>), breeding
Unfavourable	Cairngorms	SAC	Dry grasslands and scrublands on chalk or limestone
Unfavourable	Cairngorms	SAC	Species-rich grassland with mat-grass in upland areas
Unfavourable	Cairngorms	SAC	Dry heaths
Unfavourable	Cairngorms	SAC	Wet heathland with cross-leaved heath
Unfavourable	Cairngorms	SAC	Plants in crevices on base-rich rocks
Unfavourable	Cairngorms	SAC	Alpine and subalpine heaths
Unfavourable	Cairngorms	SAC	Mountain willow scrub
Unfavourable	Cairngorms	SAC	High-altitude plant communities associated with areas of water seepage
Unfavourable	Cairngorms	SAC	Blanket bog
Unfavourable	Cairngorms	SAC	Otter (<i>Lutra lutra</i>)
Unfavourable Recovering Due to Management	Cairngorms	SSSI	Native pinewood
Unfavourable Recovering Due to Management	Cairngorms	SAC	Caledonian forest
Favourable	Cairngorms Massif	SPA	Golden eagle (<i>Aquila chrysaetos</i>), breeding
Favourable	Craig Leek	SSSI	Native pinewood
Favourable	Craig Leek	SSSI	Subalpine calcareous grassland
Favourable	Craig Leek	SSSI	Vascular plant assemblage
Unfavourable	Craig Leek	SSSI	Upland assemblage

Unfavourable Recovering Due to Management	Craig Leek	SSSI	Bryophyte assemblage
Unfavourable Recovering Due to Management	Craig Leek	SSSI	Upland birch woodland
Favourable	Craigendarroch	SSSI	Upland oak woodland
Favourable	Crathie Wood	SSSI	Native pinewood
Favourable	Crathie Wood	SSSI	Upland birch woodland
Favourable	Crathie Wood	SSSI	Juniper scrub
Favourable	Crathie Wood	SSSI	Rocky slopes (includes inland cliff, rocky outcrops, chasmophytic vegetation)
Favourable	Crathie Wood	SSSI	Invertebrate assemblage
Favourable	Dinnet Oakwood	SSSI	Upland oak woodland
Favourable	Dinnet Oakwood	SAC	Western acidic oak woodland
Favourable	Eastern Cairngorms	SSSI	Dystrophic and oligotrophic lochs
Favourable	Eastern Cairngorms	SSSI	Vascular plant assemblage
Favourable	Eastern Cairngorms	SSSI	Breeding bird assemblage
Favourable	Eastern Cairngorms	SSSI	Fluvial Geomorphology of Scotland
Favourable	Eastern Cairngorms	SSSI	Arctic charr (<i>Salvelinus alpinus</i>)
Favourable	Eastern Cairngorms	SSSI	Invertebrate assemblage
Favourable	Eastern Cairngorms	SSSI	Quaternary of Scotland
Not Assessed	Eastern Cairngorms	SSSI	Upland assemblage
Not Assessed	Eastern Cairngorms	SSSI	Fungi assemblage
Not Assessed	Eastern Cairngorms	SSSI	Lichen assemblage
Unfavourable	Eastern Cairngorms	SSSI	Bryophyte assemblage
Unfavourable Recovering Due to Management	Eastern Cairngorms	SSSI	Native pinewood
Favourable	Glen Ey Gorge	SSSI	Dalradian
Favourable	Glen Ey Gorge	SSSI	Subalpine dry heath
Favourable	Glen Ey Gorge	SSSI	Tall herb ledge
Favourable	Inchrory	SSSI	Vascular plant assemblage
Favourable	Inchrory	SSSI	Quaternary of Scotland
Favourable	Inchrory	SSSI	Mountain whorl snail (<i>Vertigo alpestris</i>)
Not Assessed	Inchrory	SSSI	Northern brown argus (<i>Aricia artaxerxes</i>)
Unfavourable	Inchrory	SSSI	Upland assemblage
Favourable	Ladder Hills	SSSI	Alpine heath
Favourable	Ladder Hills	SSSI	Blanket bog
Favourable	Ladder Hills	SSSI	Mineralogy of Scotland
Favourable	Ladder Hills	SAC	Alpine and subalpine heaths
Favourable	Ladder Hills	SAC	Blanket bog
Unfavourable	Ladder Hills	SSSI	Subalpine dry heath
Unfavourable	Ladder Hills	SSSI	Upland assemblage
Unfavourable	Ladder Hills	SAC	Dry heaths
Favourable	Morrone Birkwood	SSSI	Bryophyte assemblage
Favourable	Morrone Birkwood	SSSI	Invertebrate assemblage
Favourable	Morrone Birkwood	SSSI	Alpine heath
Favourable	Morrone Birkwood	SSSI	Subalpine calcareous grassland
Favourable	Morrone Birkwood	SSSI	Spring-head, rill and flush
Favourable	Morrone Birkwood	SSSI	Subalpine flushes
Favourable	Morrone Birkwood	SSSI	Basin fen
Favourable	Morrone Birkwood	SSSI	Quaternary of Scotland
Favourable	Morrone Birkwood	SAC	Dry grasslands and scrublands on chalk or limestone
Favourable	Morrone Birkwood	SAC	Alpine and subalpine heaths
Favourable	Morrone Birkwood	SAC	Base-rich fens
Favourable	Morrone Birkwood	SAC	High-altitude plant communities associated with areas of water seepage
Favourable	Morrone Birkwood	SAC	Hard-water springs depositing lime
Not Assessed	Morrone Birkwood	SSSI	Rocky slopes (includes inland cliff, rocky outcrops, chasmophytic vegetation)
Not Assessed	Morrone Birkwood	SSSI	Fungi assemblage
Unfavourable	Morrone Birkwood	SAC	Geyer's whorl snail (<i>Vertigo geyeri</i>)
Unfavourable Recovering Due to Management	Morrone Birkwood	SSSI	Upland birch woodland

Unfavourable Recovering Due to Management	Morrone Birkwood	SSSI	Vascular plant assemblage
Unfavourable Recovering Due to Management	Morrone Birkwood	SSSI	Juniper scrub
Unfavourable Recovering Due to Management	Morrone Birkwood	SAC	Juniper on heaths or calcareous grasslands
Favourable	Morven and Mullachdubh	SSSI	Alpine heath
Favourable	Morven and Mullachdubh	SSSI	Moorland juniper
Favourable	Morven and Mullachdubh	SAC	Juniper on heaths or calcareous grasslands
Not Assessed	Morven and Mullachdubh	SSSI	Upland assemblage
Not Assessed	Morven and Mullachdubh	SSSI	Blanket bog
Not Assessed	Morven and Mullachdubh	SSSI	Vascular plant assemblage
Not Assessed	Morven and Mullachdubh	SSSI	Breeding bird assemblage
Favourable	Muir of Dinnet	SSSI	Lowland dry heath
Favourable	Muir of Dinnet	SSSI	Oligo-mesotrophic loch
Favourable	Muir of Dinnet	SSSI	Quaternary of Scotland
Favourable	Muir of Dinnet	SSSI	Lowland wet heath
Favourable	Muir of Dinnet	SSSI	Dragonfly assemblage
Favourable	Muir of Dinnet	SSSI	Invertebrate assemblage
Favourable	Muir of Dinnet	SAC	Degraded raised bog
Favourable	Muir of Dinnet	SAC	Clear-water lakes or lochs with aquatic vegetation and poor to moderate nutrient levels
Favourable	Muir of Dinnet	SAC	Otter (<i>Lutra lutra</i>)
Not Assessed	Muir of Dinnet	SSSI	Hydromorphological mire range
Unfavourable	Muir of Dinnet	SSSI	Greylag goose (<i>Anser anser</i>), non-breeding
Unfavourable	Muir of Dinnet	SPA	Waterfowl assemblage, non-breeding
Unfavourable	Muir of Dinnet	SPA	Greylag goose (<i>Anser anser</i>), non-breeding
Unfavourable	Muir of Dinnet	RAMSAR	Greylag goose (<i>Anser anser</i>), non-breeding
Unfavourable Recovering Due to Management	Muir of Dinnet	SSSI	Breeding bird assemblage
Unfavourable Recovering Due to Management	Muir of Dinnet	SAC	Dry heaths
Unfavourable Recovering Due to Management	Muir of Dinnet	SAC	Very wet mires often identified by an unstable 'quaking' surface
Unfavourable Recovering Due to Management	The Maim	SAC	Dry heaths

1.5 Actions to manage deer to retain existing native woodland cover and improve woodland condition in the medium to long term

1.5.1 Background

- Total area of native woodland in Scotland is 311,153 ha. The Native Woodland Survey of Scotland (NWSS) was published in 2014. This maps non-designated native woodland cover, reports condition and highlights herbivore impacts which threaten medium to long term condition of these important woodlands.
- [Wild Deer- A National Approach \(WDNA\)](#) and the [2020 Challenge for Scotland's Biodiversity](#) has set a national targets that 60% of native woodlands should be considered to be in "satisfactory condition" by 2020 and that approximately 10,000 ha of native woodland should be in satisfactory condition through Deer Management Plans.

1.5.2 Plan Objectives

- DMG Members will implement management to reduce the proportion of native woodland area identified within the 'High' and 'Very High' categories of herbivore impact in order to contribute to targets set by Scottish Government Agencies.
- The DMP will identify all existing woodland and its condition and will consider actions for the next 5 years to ensure that the long term woodland objectives can be met.

1.5.3 Current Delivery.

- A total of 5850 ha of woodland has been identified within the West Area of the Group (Table 4 and Figure
- The NWSS has identified **4255 ha** of native woodland within the Group. This represents **0.14%** of the total area of native woodland in Scotland.
- According to the survey, **84% percent of the herbivore impacts** from NWSS were considered to fall in the [Low to Medium impact](#) category within GSDMG (Table 5).
- A total of **129 ha** of native woodland thought to have Very High or High impacts from the survey was identified on Invercauld Corndavon. Over the last 5 years, deer numbers have been reduced to around **1 deer per km²** which is a figure where natural regeneration should occur.
- Invercauld Homebeat have also reduced the local population and will be conducting survey of woodland condition later this year.
- Approximately **122 ha** of native woodland thought to have Very High or High impacts was identified on Glenavon. However, this has been deer fenced within a wider 200 ha native woodland enclosure.
- Including these areas of reduced impacts, this brings the total of **Low/Medium Impacts to 3815 ha (90%)**.

Table 5: Woodland habitat (National Forest Inventory data)

Woodland type	Area (ha)	% of total West Sub-Area (ha)
Assumed woodland	1352	2.02%
Broadleaved	944	1.40%
Conifer	3146	4.70%
Felled	159	0.24%
Young trees	91	0.13%
Mixed mainly broadleaved	79	0.12%
Mixed mainly conifer	79	0.12%
Total	5850	8.72%

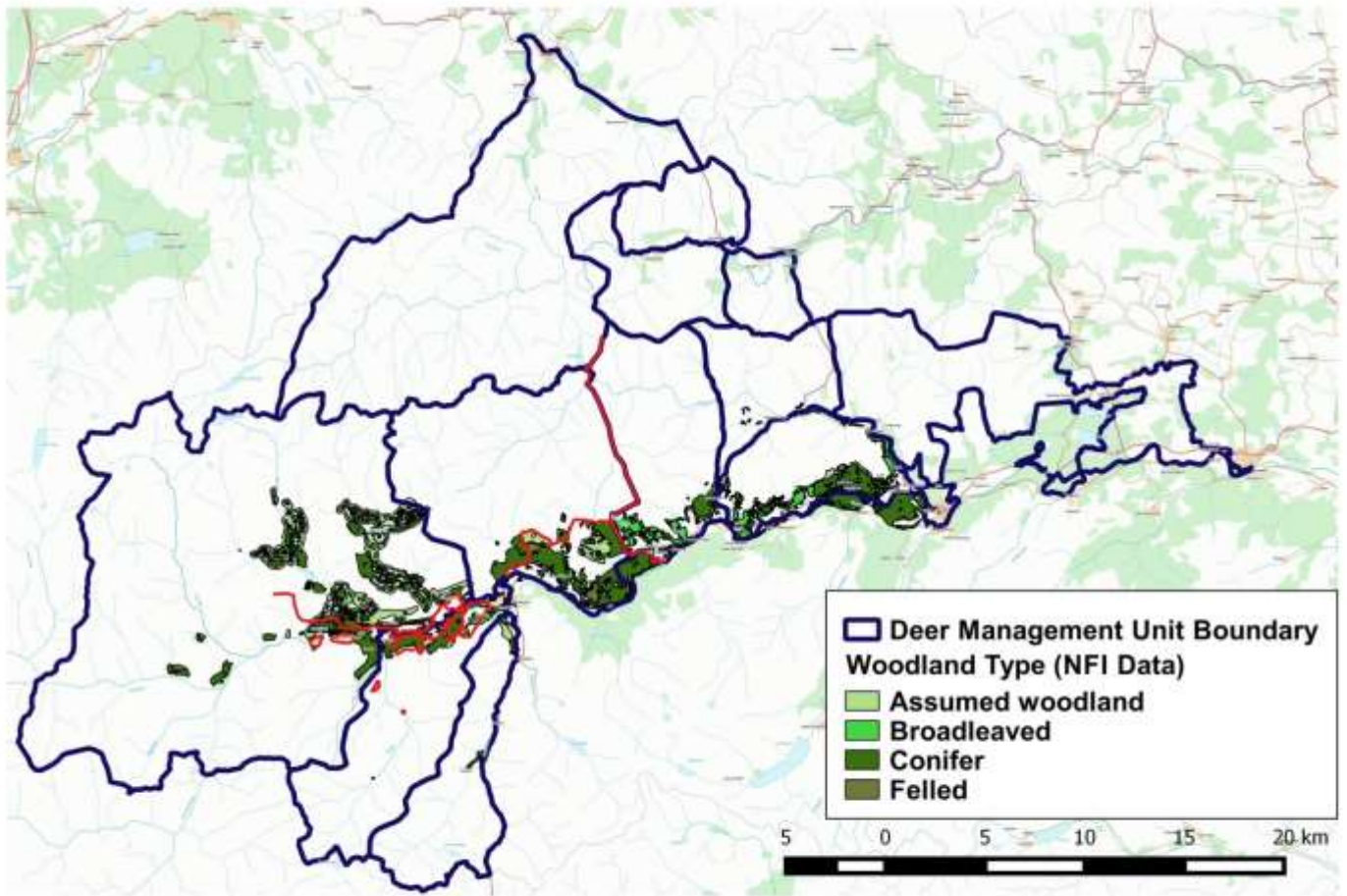
Table 5: Summary of Native Woodland Survey for Scotland Herbivore Impacts

	Impact (ha)			
	Very High	High	Medium	Low
Upper Deeside and Donside DMG	340	351	3399	165
Percentage of Total Woodland in Group	8%	8%	80%	4%

1.5.4 Targets to be delivered by 2021

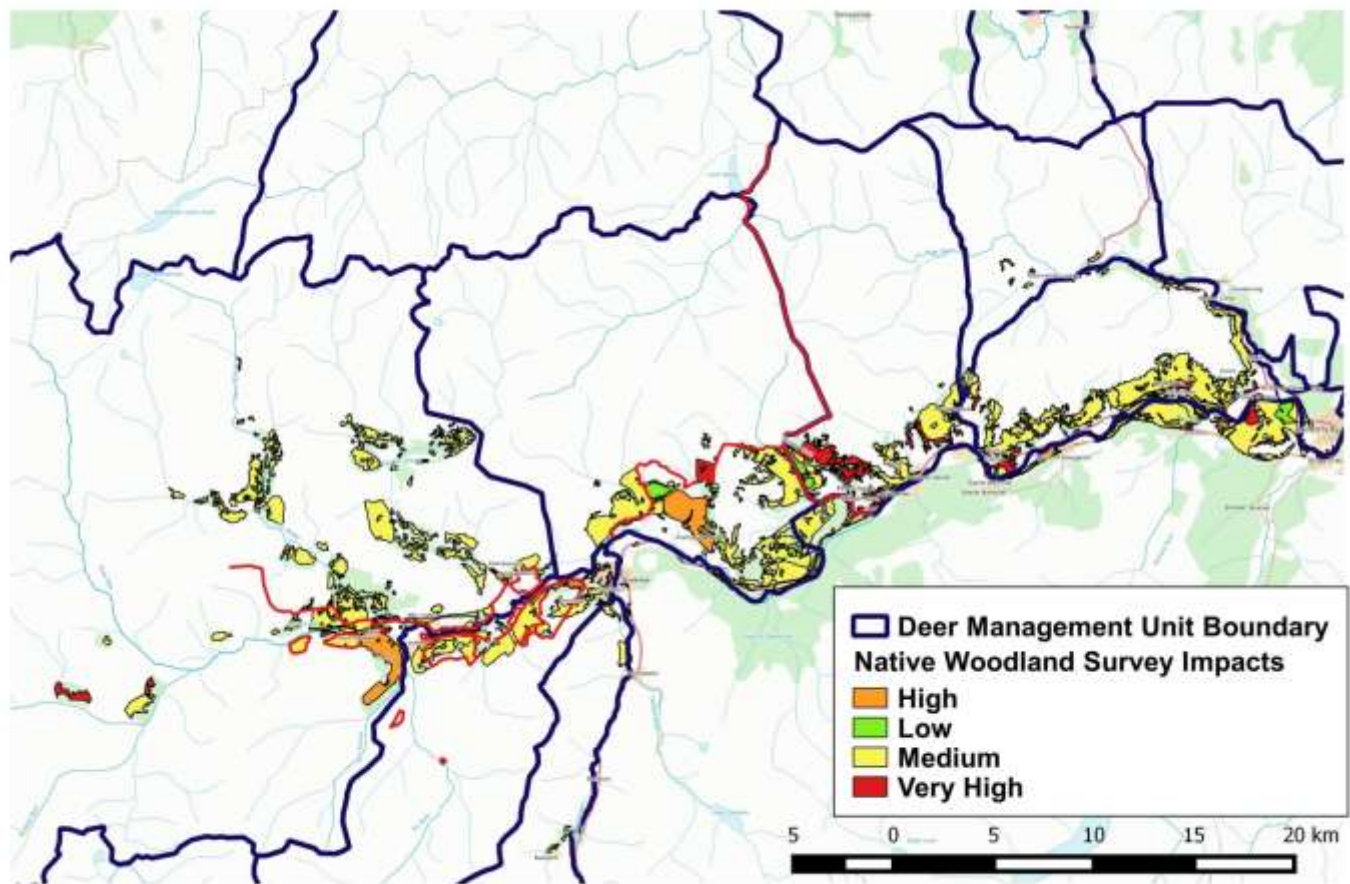
Actions to manage deer to retain existing native woodland cover and improve woodland condition	When?	Who?	How?
NTS will continue to manage deer impacts and carry out woodland management to achieve good condition in its native woodlands.	Ongoing	NTS Mar Lodge	<i>NTS will use their own monitoring of herbivore impacts as well as woodland population census/utilisation methodology to inform on-going management. Results of NTS annual woodland regeneration monitoring to be reviewed and used as a guide for the success of management on an annual basis. Annual browsing levels should be at 15% or less. Mar Lodge also to provide reports on Montane Scrub Survey Assessment.</i>
For properties with SRDP Natural Regeneration Schemes in place, provide evidence of woodland condition in the form of an appropriate survey report if available.	Year 3	DMG Members & Mar Lodge	<i>Woodland Survey reports.</i>
To use ECAF bid to undertake a review of native woodland condition in the Group area (including Riparian woodland), consolidating existing survey reports and implementing woodland herbivore impacts assessment monitoring protocols where required.	Year 3	DMG Members & Consultant	<i>Subject to successful ECAF bid, delivery of DMG Native Woodland Review Report and recommended actions.</i>
Continue to implement management to reduce negative impacts including use of Forestry Grant Schemes where practical and appropriate.	By 2021	DMG Members	<i>Monitoring results used to inform management actions. Entry into Forestry Grant Schemes.</i>

Figure 12: Main distribution of woodland in DMG area



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Figure 13: Distribution of herbivore impacts across Native Woodland (NWSS Data)



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1.6 Actions to demonstrate DMG contribution to the Scottish Government woodland expansion target of 25% woodland cover.

1.6.1 Background

- Woodland and forest covers over 1.3 million ha in Scotland (around 16% of Scotland).
- The Scottish Government woodland expansion target of 25% woodland cover will require 10,000 ha of woodland per year to be created.
- The DMG network area covers some 3,249,442 ha with significant opportunity to contribute to the delivery of this target through identifying areas for further woodland creation and managing deer impacts to allow for successful establishment of new woodland. Priority should be given to expansion opportunities where this improves habitat networks. It is expected that DMGs will be proactive in contributing to this target.
- The Plan assumes that the state of deer fences remains constant. Members are encouraged to report any changes in fencing policies, particularly those which will affect the free movement of deer between estates.
- The Cairngorms National Park Authority produced a map of priority areas for Pinewood expansion in the Cairngorms National Park (see Figure 14 below).

1.6.2 Plan Objectives

- Plan will identify all new woodland in last 5 years and beyond (WGS) and any new proposals likely to be adopted during the life of the plan.
- Plan will consider future impact of woodland expansion and timetable for removal/erection of fences and possible expansion/reduction of deer range, where there may be changes in deer densities or movements as a result.

1.6.3 Current Delivery.

- Woodland represents around **9%** of the West Group. This includes both native woodland and commercial woodland (see section 1.7).
- Over the last 15 years more than **1700 ha** of woodland has been newly created across the whole Group through Woodland/Forestry Grant schemes that have covered over **8000 ha** (Figure 15).
- In the next 5 years of the plan, a further **300 ha** will be further created with additional schemes being considered (see woodland proposals in individual property sections 1.17 to 1.28)
- An area of woodland (150 ha) was recently opened up to deer and a further **150 ha** of woodland will be opened up in the next five years.

1.6.4 Targets to be delivered by 2021

Actions to demonstrate DMG contribution to the Scottish Government woodland expansion target of 25% woodland cover.	When?	Who?	How?
To inform the DMG about any future woodland proposals and incorporate in the DMP - taking account of potential implications for deer management.	Ongoing	DMG Members	<i>Members will circulate/present proposals to DMG for discussion.</i>
DMG to use ECAF bid carry out a strategic review of potential opportunities for new woodland schemes using the Scottish Government's Forestry Strategy. Review will consider need from a DMG perspective ie shelter provision for deer population at landscape scale.	Year 2	DMG Members & Consultant	<i>Subject to ECAF bid, delivery of DMG Woodland Expansion Report and recommended actions.</i>

Figure 14: Indicative priority areas for Pinewood expansion in the Cairngorms National park

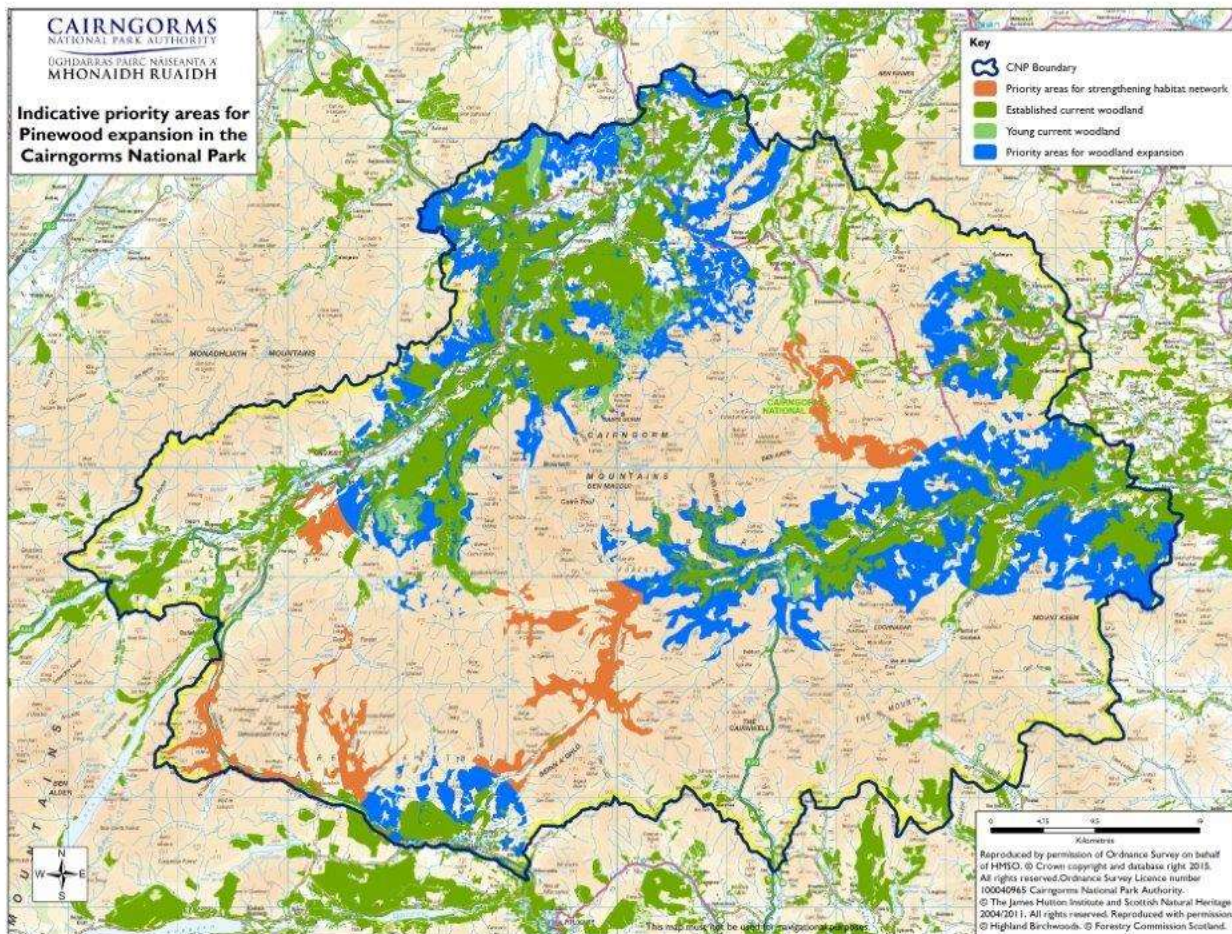
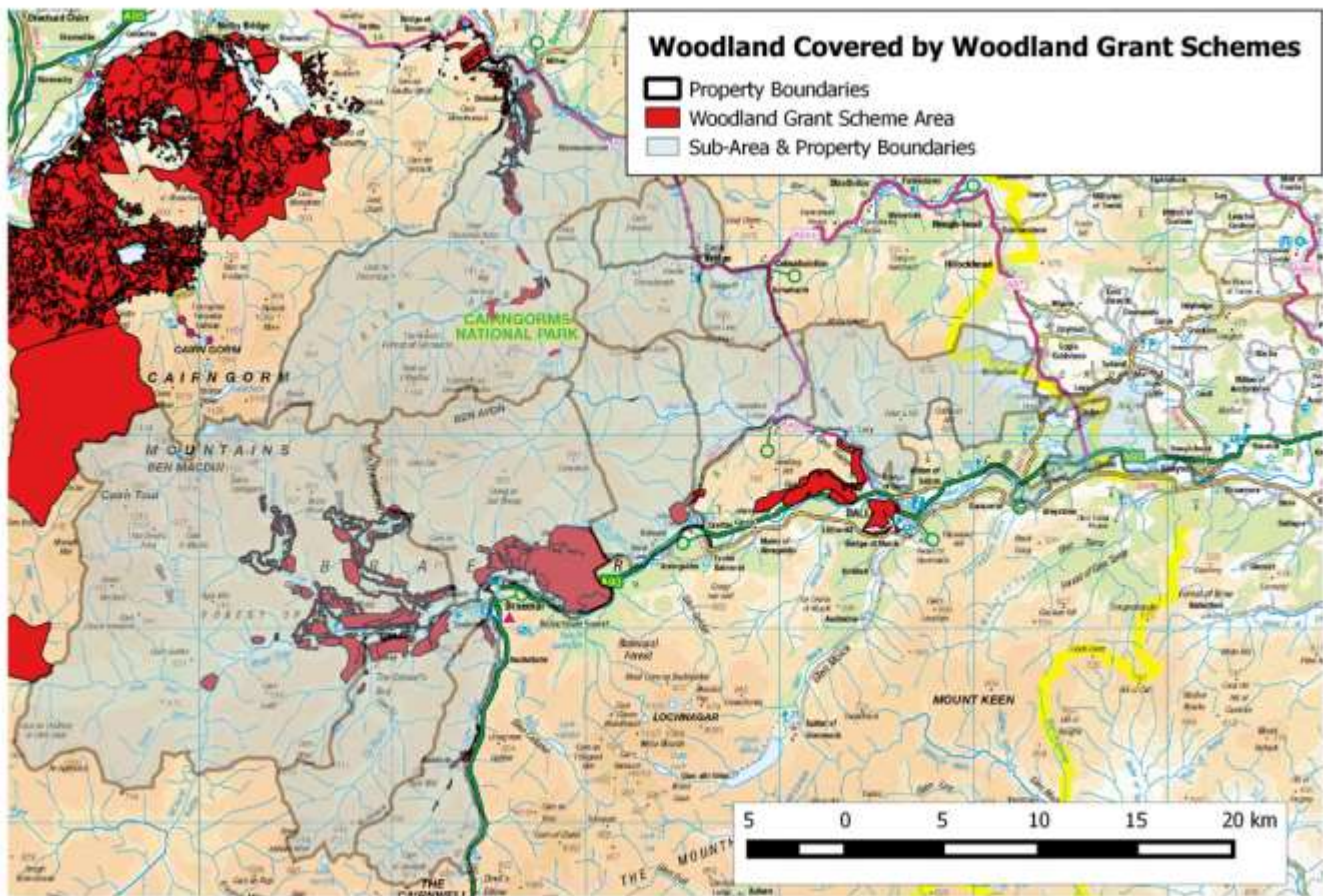


Figure 15: Woodland covered by Woodland or Forestry Grant Schemes



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1.7 Actions to monitor and manage deer impacts in the wider countryside.

1.7.1. Background

- Blanket bog and peatland (covers at least **11,868 ha**) and heather moorland (dwarf shrub heath methodology) (covering over **35,697 ha**) are two of the habitats that Scottish Natural Heritage have recommended upland deer managers monitor for herbivore grazing and trampling impacts (see Figure 16).
- The DMGs will take responsibility for the monitoring of herbivore impacts on across the deer range and seek to manage these to contribute to wider ecosystem health.

1.7.2 Plan Objectives

- Plan will seek to implement a programme of monitoring to assess herbivore impacts and manage those impacts within acceptable ranges ([MacDonald et al 1998¹](#)).
- As a guideline, on designated sites the targets set by SNH are for 90% of survey samples (overall impacts: grazing/browsing and trampling) to be in the range of Low to Moderate/Low. For woodland, a minimum of 60% of herbivore impacts to be in the Low, Moderate category. Targets will be adopted by DMG.

1.7.3 Current Delivery.

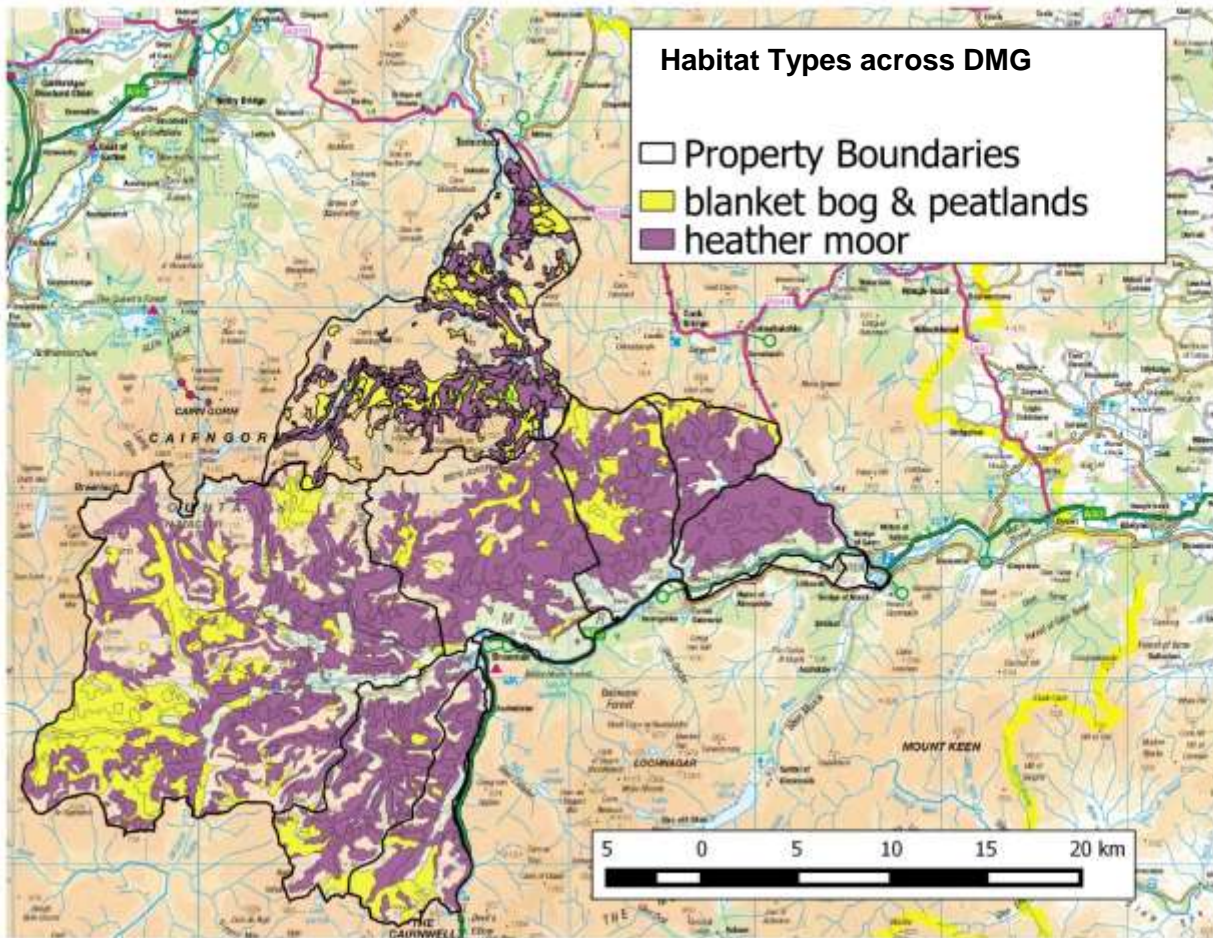
- Mar Lodge Estate has implemented an extensive programme of Habitat Impact Assessment.

1.7.4 Targets to be delivered by 2021

Actions to monitor and manage deer impacts in the wider countryside	When?	Who?	How?
Using revised BPG Guidance undergo training, set up plots and carry out a baseline habitat impact assessment (HIA) of the current grazing and trampling impacts on blanket bog & dwarf shrub heath.	May & June 2017	DMG Members & Consultant	<i>Group will implement HIA across the DMG. Subject to ECAF bid, Consultant will work with DMG to set up random plots and to provide assistance with data analysis and the production of a report. Invercauld will continue to carry out HIA using existing methodology in place.</i>

NTS to continue to implement habitat monitoring across wider habitats.	Ongoing	NTS Mar Lodge	<i>Over the next 5 years the Estate should maintain the following targets: Within the Regeneration Zone: 90% of sample locations on blanket bog habitat should have impacts in the range of Low to Moderate to Low. No impacts to be higher than M, 90% of sample locations on dry heath habitat should have impacts in the range of L to ML. No impacts higher than M, 90% of sample locations on wind-clipped heath should have impacts in the range of Low to Moderate to Low. No impacts higher than M, Within the Moorland Zone, the impacts recorded should be below those recorded in the 2010 HIA.</i>
Members with existing habitat monitoring will be encouraged to share results with DMG where appropriate.	Ongoing	DMG Members	<i>Members will circulate monitoring results to DMG.</i>
Summary of habitat assessment results reported to DMG. DMG will reduce deer impacts to improve overall habitat condition where required. Targets and management actions to be agreed.	Ongoing	DMG Members	<i>DMG will agree management decisions based on Habitat Impact Assessment Reports.</i>
Repeat HIA and management actions agreed.	May & June 2020	DMG Members	<i>Members will collect repeat monitoring data. Consultant will provide assistance with data analysis and the production of a report. Members will use report to inform management.</i>
NTS will implement projects relating to wider biodiversity benefits.	Ongoing	NTS Mar Lodge	<i>Management for key species: narrow headed wood ants and waders in Quoich floodplain. NTS to start monitoring for green shield moss (Cairngorms Nature) and continue with monitoring of black grouse, dotterel, ptarmigan, narrow-headed wood ants, water vole/mink, montane scrub, monitoring of twinflower field layer trial</i>

Figure 6: Blanket bog & peatland and Heather moorland across the Group (Land Cover Scotland Data 88)



1.8 Actions to improve Scotland's ability to store carbon by maintaining or improving ecosystem health.

1.8.1 Background

- Carbon rich soils and peatland areas provide multiple benefits, e.g. good water quality, biodiversity and climate change mitigation as soil carbon stores and through [carbon sequestration](#). Soils are the main terrestrial store of carbon in Scotland and Peatlands hold most of our carbon store (53%).
- [Blanket bog](#) is a type of peatland found in the uplands covering some 1.8 million hectares, 23 % of our land area. Although Blanket bog is a rare habitat globally and is restricted to cool, wet, typically oceanic climates, Scotland holds a significant proportion of the European and world resource.
- Growing trees is another way to increase the natural carbon reservoir. Woodland and forest currently covers over 1.3 million ha in Scotland (around 16% of Scotland).
- In partnership with Government agencies, DMGs are expected to contribute to research and implement and deliver actions to deliver optimum habitat condition for carbon capture and storage.
- The Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA) has a dedicated Peatland Restoration Officer.

1.8.2 Plan Objectives

The plan will aim to acknowledge all contributions to carbon storage through woodland and peatlands within Group area and detail actions to address any negative herbivore impacts.

1.8.3 Current Delivery.

- The Group manages over **4,255 ha of woodland** and an area of over **11,868 ha of peatlands**.
- The actions currently being undertaken by the DMG to retain existing native woodland and encourage woodland expansion have been detailed in Section 2.3 and 2.4
- Candacraig Estate is currently restoring **19,000m** of Peatland hags.
- Invercauld Baddoch has carried out Peatland Restoration work with CNPA and will carry out further work in the Glenshee area in the next 5 years.
- Mar Estate completed two major Peatland Restoration Schemes to re-profile and regrade gullies in 2015.
- Mar Lodge Estates has carried out extensive work filling moorland grips.
- The DMG has not yet been asked to contribute to River Basin Management Planning.

1.8.4 Targets to be delivered by 2021

Actions to improve Scotland's ability to store carbon by maintaining or improving ecosystem health.	When?	Who?	How?
Using revised BPG Guidance set up plots and carry out a baseline habitat impact assessment (HIA) of the current grazing and trampling impacts on blanket bog and native woodland.	As per monitoring schedule in the Working plan	DMG Members	<i>As per Actions for woodland and managing impacts in the wider countryside. Members to provide existing survey reports or conduct baseline monitoring and reports. Invercauld will continue to carry out HIA using existing methodology in place.</i>
Potential areas for Peatland Restoration identified and options for Peatland restoration or management considered. Mar Estate to consider working up further schemes.	By end 2016	DMG Members & Mar Estate	<i>Members to use Blanket Bog monitoring results as well as assistance from CNPA to identify opportunities for further Peatland Restoration. Mar Estate has further areas identified for restoration which it is currently exploring with CNPA</i>
Contribute to River Basin Management Planning as appropriate	Ongoing	NTS Mar Lodge	<i>NTS Mar Lodge will contribute to aims of Dee Catchment Partnership including helping to deliver the Dee floodplain restoration project and also Upper Dee Riparian Project. (Riparian Action Plan)</i>

1.9 Actions to reduce or mitigate the risk of establishment of invasive non-native species

1.9.1 Background

- Sika are not yet established in the Group.
- Rare occurrences of Sika have been noted within the wider Upper Deeside and Donside DMG area.
- Feral pigs or feral goats have not so far been sighted within the DMG area.

1.9.2 Plan Objectives

- The plan will aim to reduce or mitigate the risk of establishment of invasive non-native species of deer (Sika and Muntjac).
- Plan to highlight other invasive species such as Feral Pigs and Feral Goats .
- Plan to detail an agreed policy and actions required by DMG to monitor.

1.9.3 Current Delivery.

The DMG reports on any sightings or Sika culled currently.

1.9.4 Targets to be delivered by 2021

Actions to reduce or mitigate the risk of establishment of invasive non-native species	When?	Who?	How?
Muntjac Deer managed as per the Non-native Species Policy (Part 2 of plan).	Ongoing	DMG Members	<i>Members will contact local SNH Wildlife Management Officer immediately on suspected sighting of Muntjac.</i>
Sika Deer managed to prevent their establishment within the DMG area and managed as per the Non-Native Species Policy (Part 2 of plan).	Ongoing	DMG Members	<i>Where Sika Deer not currently established, Members will report sightings to DMG and will prevent their establishment by shooting on sight (within current legal restrictions).</i>
Record invasive plants species and encourage their control.	Annually	DMG Members	<i>Members will inform DMG of invasive plant species at annual meetings and will report on control undertaken.</i>
Feral Pigs managed according to Policy Guidelines currently being agreed by SNH.	Ongoing	DMG Members	<i>Members will report sightings of feral pigs and shoot on sight (subject to welfare considerations) within DMG area. Implement Feral Pig management policy adopted once agreed by SNH.</i>
Feral goat management policy to be agreed.	By end 2016	DMG Members	<i>Group will use meeting in Autumn to agree a policy for the management of Feral Goats should they ever become established.</i>

1.10 Actions to protect designated historic and cultural features from being damaged by deer e.g. by trampling.

1.10.1 Background

- Certain types of historic or culturally significant features may be impacted positively from deer and deer management activity through for example, grazing to keep sites exposed. Impacts may also be negative however, where deer may cause damage through trampling or by jumping over stone-work for example.
- DMGs should contribute to conserving and enhancing the cultural and historic landscape e.g. ensure that trampling of sites is avoided particularly in the case of protected designated historic features.
- There are a range of archaeological features some of which appear on the [CANMORE](#) website. These include the likes of Shielings.

1.10.2 Plan Objective

Plan to consider deer management actions which contribute or impact on delivery of conserving and enhancing the local cultural and historic landscape.

1.10.3 Current Delivery.

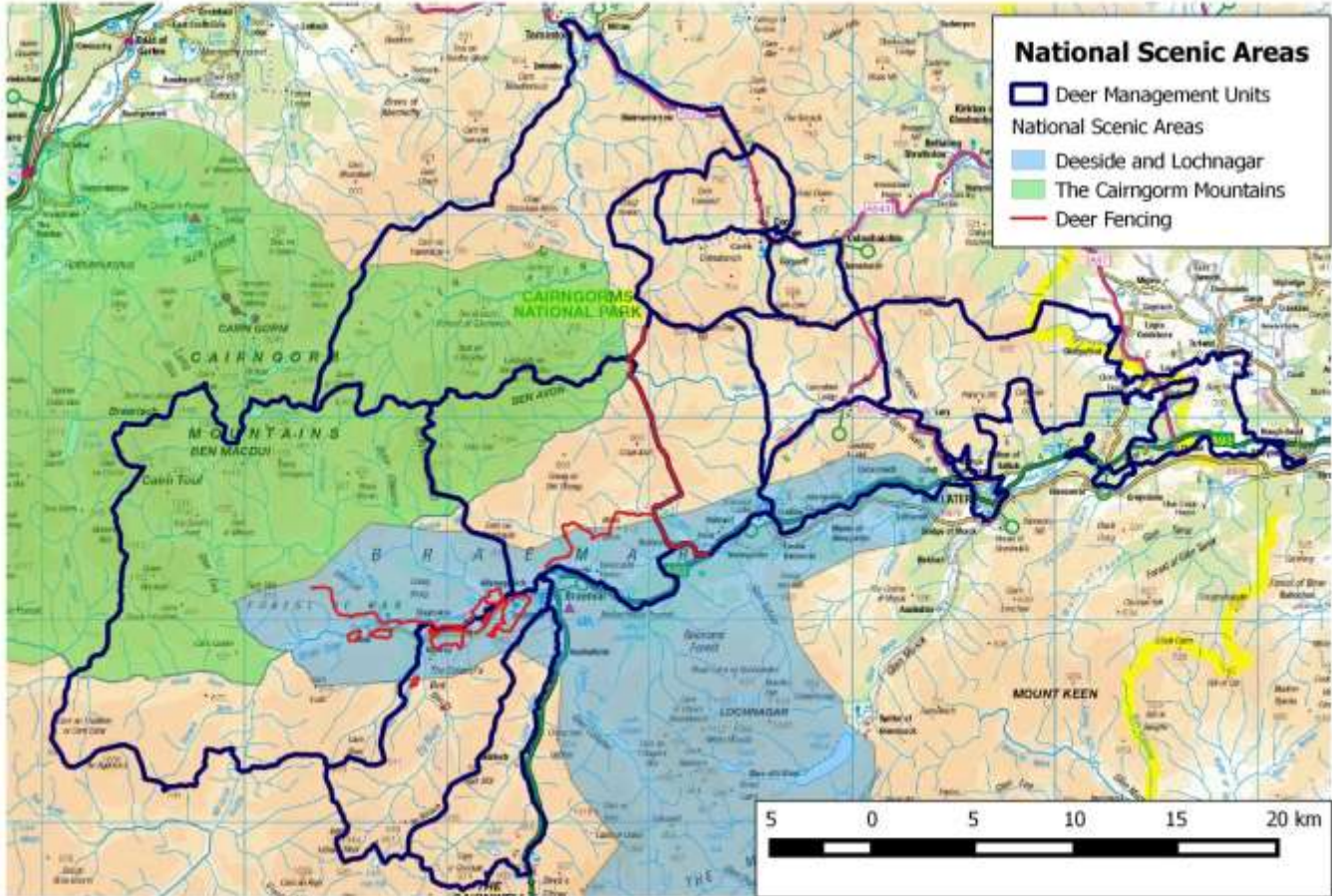
- The DMG falls within two National Scenic Areas (Figure 11). Current deer fences will have been assessed for landscape impacts according to [Joint Agency Guidance \(http://www.snh.gov.uk/land-and-sea/managing-wildlife/managing-deer/sites/fencing/\)](http://www.snh.gov.uk/land-and-sea/managing-wildlife/managing-deer/sites/fencing/).
- The DMG is currently unaware of any cultural or historic features that are being impacted on by deer other than the positive benefits through grazing on Scheduled Ancient Monuments within Mar Lodge Estate.
- Any woodland creation projects are currently required by Forestry Commission Scotland to carry out this assessment.

1.10.4 Targets to be delivered by 2021

Actions to protect designated historic and cultural features from being damaged by deer e.g. by trampling.	When?	Who?	How?
Identify any features within DMG area that may be impacted on by deer.	By end of 2016	DMG Members	<i>DMG members to report at Autumn DMG meeting on features identified.</i>
If features identified, ensure the appropriate management is implemented and report to DMG.	Ongoing	DMG Members	<i>Verbal report/update to DMG.</i>

All future fencing proposals (and subsequent woodland creation/regeneration) to consider impacts on National Scenic Areas follow Joint Agency Guidance	Ongoing	DMG Members	Any new fencing/woodland proposals will be discussed with the DMG and will consider impacts on National Scenic Areas and will follow Joint Agency Fencing Guidance .
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Figure 11: National Scenic Areas



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1.11 Actions to contribute to delivering higher standards of competence in deer management.

1.11.1. Background

The DMG recognises the importance of delivering higher standards of competence in deer management through:

- promoting and offering opportunities for Members to take up formal training opportunities;
- facilitating continuous professional development activities;
- and ensuring Wild Deer Best Practice guidance is adopted in deer management activities throughout the DMG.

1.11.2. Plan Objectives

DMP to ascertain training levels among Group Members and to develop a training policy and programme.

1.11.3 Current Delivery.

- Of the 32 full-time deer managers employed in deer management, 29 have DSC Level 1 (with 2 undergoing training), 23 have DSC Level 2.
- All have some form of quad/argo and first aid training.
- DMG have adopted the training policy statement (Part 3 of plan).

1.11.4 Targets to be delivered by 2021

Actions to contribute to delivering higher standards of competence in deer management.	When?	Who?	How?
Ascertain training levels among DMG Members. All deer managers to have DSC Level 1. All deer managers in the west of the Group to have DMQ 2 and for those in the east, every stalking party must have someone with Level 2 present. Members to report on progress on an annual basis.	Annually and by 2018.	DMG Secretary and Members	<i>All deer managers to undergo necessary training. All members will provide a verbal report at Spring meeting.</i>
Develop and implement a training programme to assist in the provision of training for DMG Members who lack the necessary qualification or for individuals who wish to enhance their skills.	Annually	DMG Chair and Secretary	<i>Annual training programme to be agreed at Spring meeting. Secretary to organise courses/events. Opportunities for CPD events to be explored by members.</i>

1.12 Actions to Identify and promote opportunities contributing to public health and wellbeing.

1.12.1 Background

- Deer are of great social and cultural value to Scotland. As one of Scotland's top iconic wildlife species they provide a range of benefits, for example through their contribution to tourism and people's enjoyment of the outdoors. Venison is also a healthy meat enjoyed by many.
- Deer can, however, also lead to health and safety risks e.g. road traffic accidents and deer related disease such as Lyme disease.
- Deeside is a popular tourist destination, and wildlife tourism in particular is important to the local economy as a whole. Deer, as one of Scotland's top iconic species, are an important element of this.
- The Group area is heavily utilised by visitors, with Mar Lodge Estate alone recording 10,000 cars to their car park. Responsible access is encouraged and welcomed by all properties within the Sub-Group area.

1.12.2 Plan Objectives

- To identify and promote opportunities contributing to public health and wellbeing benefits associated with deer and deer management;
- To identify, raise awareness and where possible minimise the local health and safety risks;
 - Identify and increase the opportunities for people to enjoy and benefit from deer;
 - DMG should raise awareness of road safety issues associated with deer to reduce the risks of road traffic accidents (covered in Section 14);
 - Co-ordinate action to minimise deer-related human disease risks;
 - Promote responsible Access and the following of the Scottish Outdoor Access Code.

1.12.3 Current Delivery.

- Tick awareness already discussed with estates and staff on all estates. Tick information provided for holiday cottage visitors.
- DMG is collectively signed up to principles of Best Practice which provides guidance on safeguarding public safety and food safety.
- Good information on access is available on the [HFTSH](#) Website.
- The DMG currently actively promotes positive deer management throughout the area through a series of initiatives and information provision:
Invercauld Estate has its own web site and provides information at two car parks.
- Mar Lodge Estate hosts educational events with schools as well as a Senior Schools Leadership Programme. It also provides training opportunities in deer management for College students (groups of 16 students at a time during the hind cull). Venison is provided to the local butcher and the Estate has a Community Action Plan.
- The whole Group area is promoted through the BBC Winterwatch series.
- Mar Estate has links with the local Community Council.
- **Moorland Partnership** – six estates (Mar, Mar Lodge, Invercauld, Balmoral, Glenavon and Glenlivet) are working together with CNPA to deliver a landscape scale approach to integrating moorland management objectives.

1.12.4 Targets to be delivered by 2021

Actions to Identify and promote opportunities contributing to public health and wellbeing.	When?	Who?	How?
Provide information on access, CWD and health information about tick awareness to visitors/clients.	By end of 2016 and ongoing	DMG Secretary	<i>Secretary to circulate leaflets/literature at Spring/Autumn meetings for members to distribute. Information made available on DMG website.</i>
Complete relevant Access information for the Heading For the Scottish Hills initiative.	By end 2016	Secretary & Relevant DMG Members	<i>Secretary to liaise with DMG members to coordinate information to SNH and ensure information is kept up to date. Information on Access to be made available on DMG website.</i>
Recognise the context of the Cairngorms National Park and seek to deliver the Cairngorms Outdoor Access Strategy & National Park Plan.	Ongoing	NTS Mar Lodge	<i>NTS has a Visitor Management Plan in place which will look at opportunities for the Estate to increase delivery of national and Cairngorms health, wellbeing and social inclusion objectives. NTS to complete audit of paths to identify any works required, and ensure existing paths are effectively managed and maintained.</i>
Raise awareness of threats relating to Chronic Wasting Disease and sign up to CWD Biosecurity Policy (Part 3 of plan).	By end of 2016 and ongoing	DMG Members	<i>Members to raise awareness of CWD with Clients and Visitors from USA, Canada and Norway.</i>
Investigate opportunities for awareness raising/educational events for the local community.	Ongoing	NTS Mar Lodge and DMG Members	<i>NTS will increase volunteer opportunities at the Estate, particularly by locals, young people and underrepresented groups (Locals defined as anyone who can travel to Mar lodge and back to volunteer, within a day trip). NTS will also produce a monthly newsletter for distribution and continue contributions to Braemar Buzzard. NTS will hold 5 Nature Club events and 25 guided walks annually. Ensure local Ranger Service includes deer as a topic in School Visits.</i>

<p>Provide opportunities for any concerns from the local community to be addressed. Ensure Community Council is offered the opportunity to attend meetings.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>DMG Chair and Secretary</p>	<p><i>Meeting dates and Agendas will be publically available on DMG website and circulated to community councils in advance. DMG Chair and Secretary contact details will be available on website. DMG to consider holding an annual public meeting. NTS will hold one well-publicised open day with local community each year to encourage involvement in estate management by community of users of the estate, esp. over plans for major developments (e.g. Derry Lodge).</i></p>
<p>Explore opportunities for greater liaison/collaboration with organisations such as Scottish Mountaineering Club, Mountaineering Council for Scotland, Ramblers Association etc.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>E Grampians DMG & DMG Chair</p>	<p><i>Wider East Grampians DMG and organisations to work together to improve information provision through the likes of social media.</i></p>
<p>Investigate opportunities to carry out a visitor survey to assess visitor perceptions of deer and land management and identify areas for action.</p>	<p>By 2018</p>	<p>NTS and DMG</p>	<p><i>DMG to scope questions to be included in Visitor Surveys conducted by NTS and local tourism initiatives.</i></p>
<p>Investigate opportunities for the public to see/view deer.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>All Members</p>	<p><i>Identify opportunities such as an annual event, to bring the public in closer contact with Deer.</i></p>

1.13 Actions to maximise economic benefits associated with deer

1.13.1 Background

Wild deer are considered a resource and can play an important role in promoting and sustaining economic activity, especially in rural areas where they can contribute to businesses, particularly tourism and food production. The properties within the Group have a range of land management objectives. Common to all, is the need to balance deer management to deliver conservation objectives as well as economic opportunities on the open ground through the sustainable harvest of deer and grouse.

1.13.2 Plan Objectives

DMP to identify the economic interests of DMG ownership and identify opportunities to maximise these including employment, stalking, tourism and venison.

1.13.3 Current Delivery

- In order to achieve a sustainable harvest of mature stags in the West of the Group, a total population of somewhere in the region of 4690 deer is required. This represents a density of **7 deer per km²**. The current population in the West of the Group at the last full count was around 6645 (10 deer per km²).
- The income generated from letting of stag stalking provides an income in excess of around £127,500 annually.
- The average sale of venison carcasses annually is likely to provide an additional further income of around £120,000.
- There are 32 full-time equivalent deer management employees with an additional 53 full-time equivalent employees associated with deer management activities (excluding those employed on grouse shooting days).
- Across the Group there are 10 holiday let properties, a caravan park and holiday rental accommodation for 70 people on Mar Lodge Estate.
- All properties use local services in the local surrounding area - such as shops, fuel, hotels and B&Bs, local tradesmen.
- Most properties have access to larders with chills and 8 are currently members of Scottish Quality Assured Wild Venison accreditation scheme.

1.13.4 Targets to be delivered by 2021

Actions to maximise economic benefits associated with deer	When?	Who?	How?
Investigate opportunities for membership of SQWV Quality Assurance Scheme.	By 2021	DMG Members	<i>On-going discussion at DMG meetings.</i>
Investigate opportunities for more effective collection of carcasses and negotiation of prices. DMG to investigate possible collaborative opportunities for the processing of venison/game. Members to seek opportunities to market venison locally.	Annually	DMG Members	<i>Discussion at Spring meeting. Chair & Secretary to negotiate with Game Dealers on DMG behalf.</i>
DMG Members to continue to monitor sustainable harvest of stags for let stalking and to investigate opportunities for cross-property letting of stalking. Opportunities to collectively market stalking also explored.	Spring 2016 and Annually.	Chair & DMG Members	<i>Population model used to monitor sustainable harvest of stags. Members discuss stalking requirements at Spring meeting. Deer movement meetings following the deer count in 2017 used to monitor stag movements/distribution across the Group.</i>
DMG to carry out an economic survey of deer management in the area, including an assessment of investment, employment, infrastructure etc.	By end 2017	Secretary & Relevant DMG Members	<i>Questionnaire will be developed and completed by members to produce a DMG report of Local Economic Implications of Deer Management.</i>

1.14 Actions to minimise the economic costs of deer, and ensure deer management is cost-effective

1.14.1 Background

- Wild deer are considered a resource and can play an important role in promoting and sustaining economic activity. However they can also create costs to other land-use objectives and have a negative impact on other economic activities including agriculture and forestry. Deer Vehicle Collisions may also incur an economic as well as social cost.

1.14.2 Plan Objectives

- The DMP will seek to minimise the economic cost of deer through identifying issues and implementing management to reduce or mitigate deer impacts where this results in an economic cost.
- The plan will aim to identify where deer are having an economic cost particularly with regard to forestry and agricultural impacts.
- Incidents of Deer Vehicle Collisions (DVCs) will be monitored. Opportunities to work collaboratively to reduce these costs will be identified and actioned.

1.14.3 Current Delivery

- There are particular spots along A93 between Braemar and the Ski Centre at Glenshee where deer frequently cross the road. Warning signage has been implemented.
- Night shooting and Out of Season Authorisations have been applied for in the past by members of the DMG to protect woodland.

1.14.4 Targets to be delivered by 2021

Actions to minimise the economic costs of deer, and ensure deer management is cost-effective	When?	Who?	How?
DMG to consider the future costs of maintaining fences and financial provision for repairs.	By end of 2016	DMG Members	<i>Those responsible for fences report on current condition and likely repair timetable.</i>
Ensure local agricultural/ forestry interests are consulted on DMP and are invited to/represented at DMG meetings.	Spring 2016	DMG Chairman and Secretary	<i>DMG Chair will correspond with relevant parties.</i>
Set up monitoring and reporting of DVCs through website, DMG meetings and local Police contact.	Spring 2016 and ongoing	DMG Secretary	<i>Members of the public asked to report DVCs to DMG Secretary on website. Members record and report DVCs to meetings.</i>
Implement actions to mitigate against DVC hotspots including localised deer management, use of signage, fencing etc.	Ongoing	DMG Members	<i>Where hot-spots occur, DMG to discuss appropriate actions at meetings.</i>
Report on out of season and night shooting authorisations.	Ongoing	DMG Members	<i>Members to inform DMG Chair/Secretary in advance of intention to apply for authorisations. Members to report numbers of deer culled under authorisation at meetings.</i>

1.15 Actions to ensure effective communication on deer management issues

1.15.1 Background

- Effective collaborative deer management requires effective communication on deer management issues both within the Group, the DMG and throughout the wider community in order to promote better awareness and education of deer and deer management.

1.15.2 Plan Objectives

- To ensure that the DMG is inclusive, open, transparent and that local issues have been addressed the DMP will include a Communications policy to encourage participation and collaboration and to communicate the public benefits being delivered through local deer management activity.
- DMG Constitution will set out methods for conflict resolution.

1.15.3 Current Delivery.

- DMG has a [web site](#).
- The DMG works in partnership with SNH, FCS, Cairngorms National Park Authority and the Local Community.

1.15.4 Targets to be delivered by 2021

Actions to ensure effective communication on deer management issues	When?	Who?	How?
Stakeholders consulted on draft plan.	Spring 2016	DMG Secretary	<i>Draft DMP made available on public website. Relevant stakeholders identified and invited to consult.</i>
Final Plan and Minutes of Meetings will be published on DMG Website.	Spring 2016	DMG Secretary	<i>DMG Website.</i>
DMG Constitution and ADMG Principles of Collaboration adopted (Part 2)	Spring 2016	DMG Members	<i>Adopted as part of DMP.</i>
Agree and adopt a DMG Communications Policy	Spring 2016	DMG Members	<i>Adopted as part of DMP.</i>
Ensure representation at wider Upper Deeside and Donside meetings and at meetings of neighbouring DMGs.	Ongoing	DMG Chair/Secretary	<i>Group Chair and Secretary will ensure representation at relevant meetings.</i>

1.16 Actions to ensure deer welfare is taken fully into account at individual animal and population level

1.16.1 Background.

- The definition of welfare in relation to wild deer is 'concern for their physical and psychological well being'. This definition can be applied to both the individual animal and population level. [Wild Deer Best Practice Guidance](#) states that with increasing intervention (e.g. fencing, feeding, culling) comes increasing responsibility for their welfare.
- *Fencing*: This is a management tool that has been used extensively throughout the Sub-Group area. The exclusion or prevention of deer movements to areas of natural areas of shelter in winter through the erection of exclosures or use of strategic fenced may pose a threat to welfare. Similarly, areas where fencing is no longer required and can be removed, can open up areas of natural shelter which will be attractive to deer.
- *Supplementary Feeding*: Within the Group some members provide some level of supplementary/diversionary winter feeding specifically for deer, and mainly for stags. This is mainly in the form of silage, hay and enriched feed-blocks.
- *Winter Mortality*: Members of the Group already monitor and report any significant levels of winter mortality to the Group, as well as any significant health issues encountered. It is considered that mortality within the group is approximately 6% for calves, and 2% hinds for hinds and stags. These figures will be used in population models for DMG, but will be varied depending on the location and practical experience.

1.16.2. Plan Objectives

DMP will promote and safeguard deer welfare through effective planning and the undertaking of training for deer managers and the carrying out of deer management activity to [Wild Deer Best Practice Guidance](#) industry standards.

1.16.3 Current Delivery.

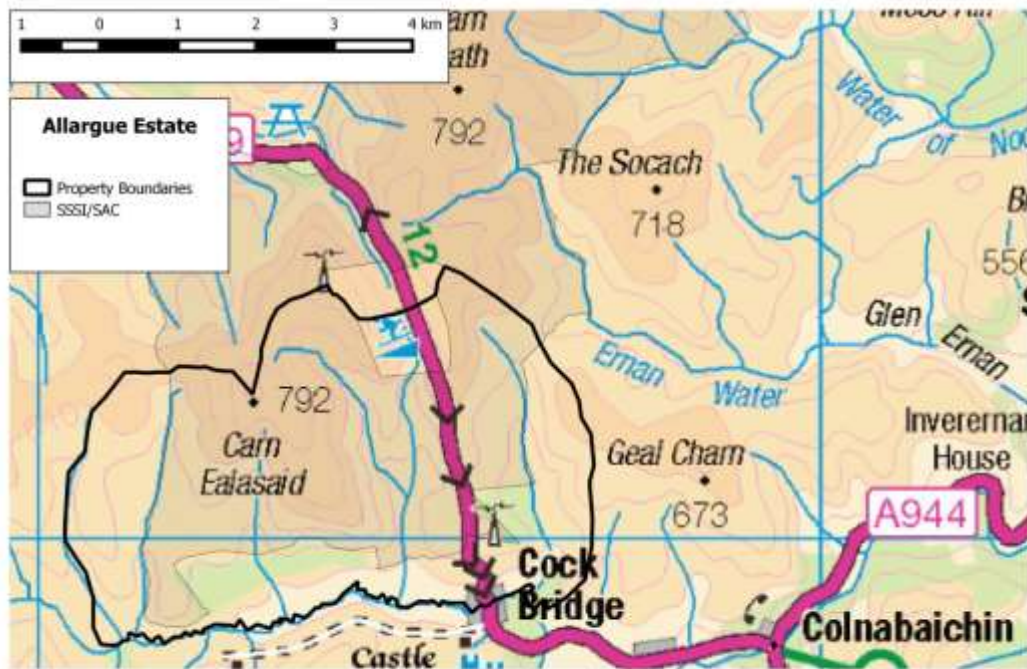
- Welfare Policy has been adopted by Group (Part 2).
- A total area of 150 ha of woodland has been opened up for deer across the Group.
- Welfare impacts of the strategic fence between Corndavon and Homebeat are monitored but there is considered to be no negative impacts caused by changes in deer movement.
- Members of the Group currently monitor and report on levels of winter mortality as well as any other significant health issues encountered.

1.16.4. Targets to be delivered by 2021

Actions to ensure deer welfare is taken fully into account at individual animal and population level	When?	Who?	How?
Consider opportunities for CPD/Training in relation to deer welfare.	Autumn 2017	DMG Members	<i>Wider DMG will run at least one event to share Best Practice Management.</i>
Provide information on welfare indicators annually. Baseline information established in year 1 of DMP and welfare indicators reported on annually. Any resulting management actions agreed and implemented by members.	Ongoing	DMG Members	<i>Deer managers to provide information on hind reproduction and average larder weights.</i>
Any new fencing in DMG area will consider welfare implications in design and extent and the appropriate management undertaken.	Ongoing	DMG Members	<i>New fencing proposals will be consulted with DMG.</i>
Monitoring and reporting of significant levels of winter mortality.	Ongoing	DMG Members	<i>Deer managers will provide information (figures & location) on winter mortality.</i>
Carry out a review of fencing and wintering ground and identify opportunities to open up woodland to deer.	Year 2	DMG Members & Consultant	<i>Subject to ECAF bid, carry out as part of the delivery of the DMG Woodland Expansion Report and recommended actions.</i>

1.17 Management Units: Allargue Estate

Property	Allargue Estate
Area	2300 ha
Owner	Mrs Rosemary Walker
Contact	Mr Adrian Walker
Estate Personnel	Mr Neil Brown



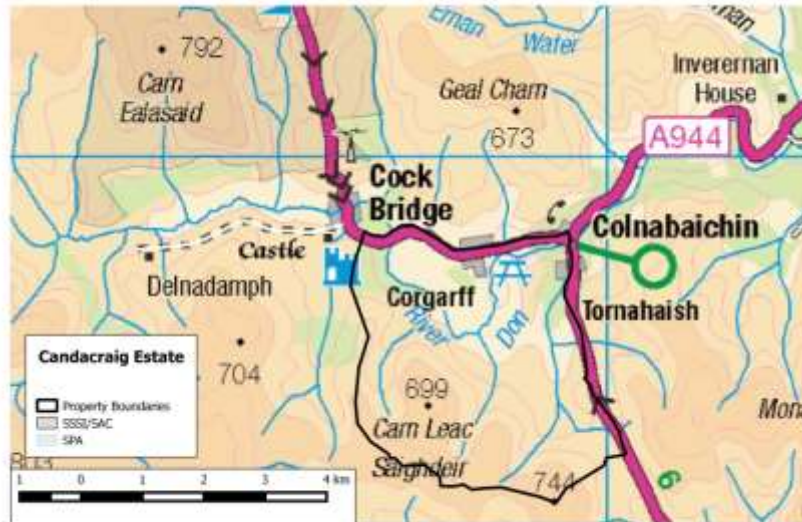
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Deer Culls				
Year	Stags	Hinds	Calves	Total
2005 -2006	27	36	14	77
2006 -2007	30	97	34	161
2007 -2008	52	69	17	138
2008 -2009	29	26	13	68
2009 -2010	22	23	15	60
2010 -2011	8	12	6	26
2011 - 2012	25	33	14	72
2012 -2013	5	18	6	29
2013 -2014	10	13	6	29
2014 -2015	13	10	8	31
2015- 2016				

Background	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allargue lies to the north-east of the Group. • The Estate neighbours Delnadamph to the west and south and Glenavon to the north (but a fence largely prevents deer movement between these properties). • The A939 splits the property but red deer only resident in the western part of the estate. • Until 2015, the Estate was part of Cabrich & Glenbuchat DMG, but deer movements make it more appropriate to be included as part of this Group. • The Estate combines conservation objectives with commercial activities including the sustainable harvest of grouse, sheep farming, forestry and holiday lets. • Red and Roe deer species present. No resident Sika.
Designated sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ladder Hills SAC/SSSI (1750 ha) falls partially in the Estate. • Cairngorms SAC and Cairngorms Eastern SSSI fall partially in the Estate. • The property falls within the Cairngorms Massif SPA.
Deer Management Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To manage the resident population of hinds (approximately 40) in balance with other objectives. • Formerly part of Cabrich & Glenbuchat DMG, the Estate is a new property to the Group and has not been included in deer counts to date.
Future Management Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To optimise the conservation and economic opportunities on the estate to improve the land and property whilst delivering wider public interest.
Woodland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approximately 200 ha of ex-Forestry Commission plantation and restructured planted native woodland. • 160 ha of woodland to be restructured with native woodland in the next 5 years. • Approximately 100 ha of woodland creation in last 10 years. • A further 50 ha of woodland will be created in the next 5 years with no requirement for compensatory cull. • A further 30 ha of woodland will be made available to deer.
Land management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approximately 250 ha of peatlands – no restoration work required. • Muirburn conducted – wider local Wildfire Plan in place. • Sheep grazing on lower parts of open hill. Hefted flock with additional seasonal grazing (300+ sheep) in compartments.
Deer Impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Too few deer to have impacts on designated sites. • Informal habitat monitoring undertaken.
Deer Distribution and Movements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There used to be some 300 resident hinds on the Estate which attracted a lot of stags during the rut. However these have been reduced to a small population of hinds (approx. 40) which have access to woodland shelter. • A deer fence prevents deer movement from Glenavon. • Stags visit during the rut from Delnadamph but generally disperse again.
Supplementary Feeding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None
Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carn Ealasaid (792m)
Socio-Economics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 full-time employees involved with deer management. • Additional people employed during let Grouse Shooting days • 2 holiday letting properties.

1.18 Management Units: Candacraig Estate

Property	Candacraig Estate
Area	5250 Ha
Owner	G.F & R.C Wallace
Manager	Robin Leslie Melville



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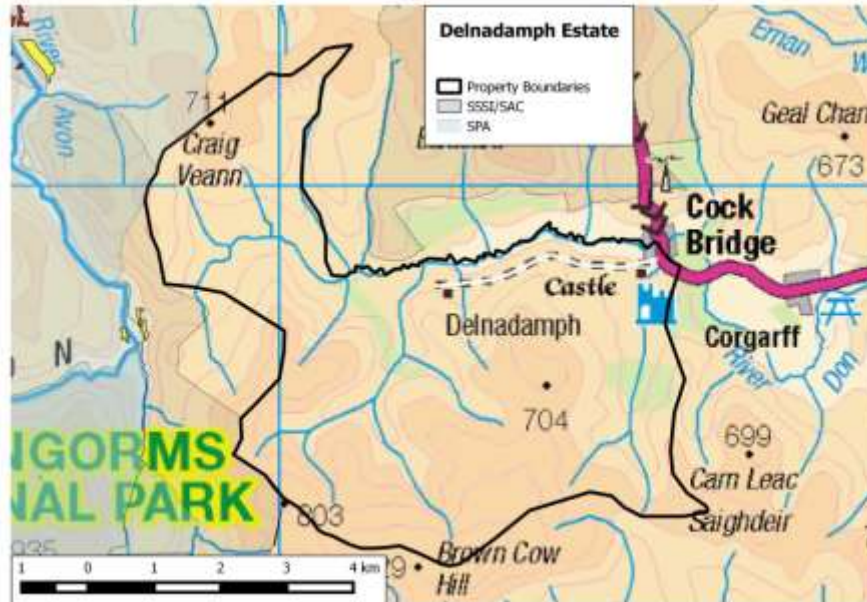
	Deer Counts				
	Stags	Hinds	Calves	Total	Density
1998	0	20	0	20	0.38
2001	0	2	0	2	0.04
2002	4	17	5	26	0.50
2003	5	2	0	7	0.13
2005	1	6	1	8	0.15
2010	0	2	0	2	0.04
2010	1	11	3	15	0.29
2012	1	11	3	15	0.29
2013	3	0	0	3	0.06

Year	Deer Culls			
	Stags	Hinds	Calves	Total
2005 -2006	23	6	7	36
2006 -2007	8	3	2	13
2007 -2008	13	2	2	17
2008 -2009	9	1	0	10
2009 -2010	0	0	0	0
2010 -2011	4	0	0	4
2011 - 2012	8	12	8	28
2012 -2013	0	5	5	10
2013 -2014	4	0	0	4
2014 -2015	9	5	0	14
2015- 2016				

Background	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Candacraig lies to the far east of the Group area. • The A939 forms the property boundary to the north and to the east. • The property marches with Delnadamph to the west and Invercauld (Gairnshiel) to the south. • Until 2015, the Estate was part of Cabrich & Glenbuchat DMG, but deer movements make it more appropriate to be included as part of this Group. • The Estate combines wider conservation objectives with commercial activities including farming, forestry, let property, shooting. • Red and Roe deer species present. No resident Sika.
Designated sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None
Deer Management Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To continue keep red deer numbers low enough to deliver conservation objectives with economic opportunities on the open ground. • To continue to manage roe deer to reduce the population. • Formerly part of Cabrich & Glenbuchat DMG, the Estate is a new property to the Group and has not been included in deer counts to date.
Future Management Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To balance public access with woodland stalking opportunities.
Woodland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 475 ha of native woodland – considered to be in good condition through informal visual assessment. Roe deer population controlled to maintain condition. • Possibly 10-15 ha of new woodland creation in next 5 years.
Land management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Estate currently restoring 19000m of Peatland hags. • Sheep, cattle, rabbits and hares (brown and mountain) all present. • Muirburn conducted – wider local Wildfire Plan in place.
Deer Impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informal habitat monitoring undertaken.
Deer Distribution and Movements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No resident red deer on the Estate.
Supplementary Feeding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None
Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carn Leac Saighdeir (699m). Open Access policy.
Socio-Economics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 full-time associated with deer and other estate management activities • Additional local part-time employment associated with Shooting • Accommodation shooting provided in local B&Bs and Hotels. Local gift shop and village shop all benefit from Estate activities.

1.19 Management Units: Delnadamph Estate

Property	Delnadamph Estate
Area	3184 ha
Owner	HM The Queen
Contact	Richard Gledson
Estate Personnel	Richard Gledson/ Davie Scrimgeour



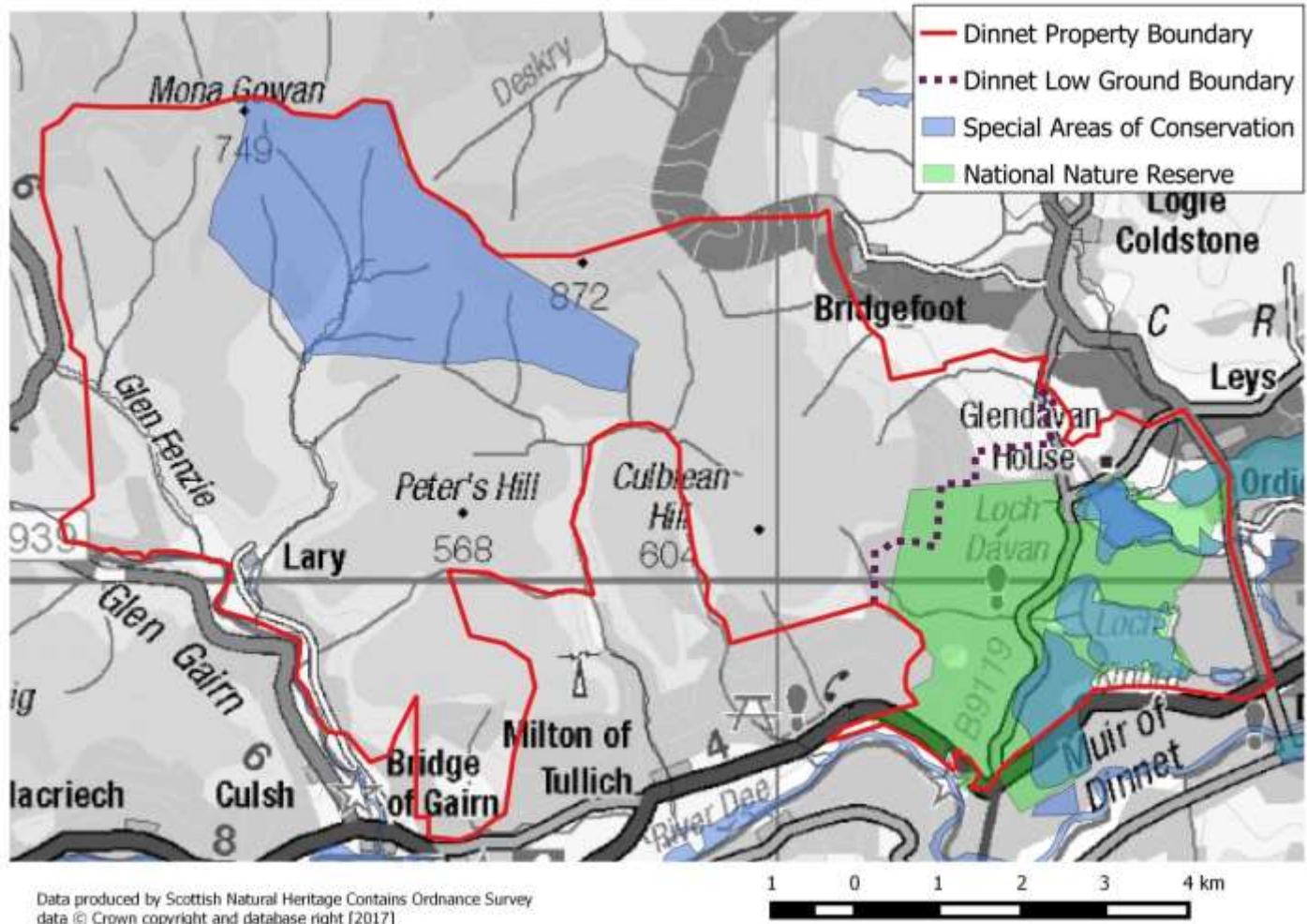
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Deer Culls				
Year	Stags	Hinds	Calves	Total
2005 -2006	13	50	15	78
2006 -2007	29	58	12	99
2007 -2008	20	27	6	53
2008 -2009	28	31	6	65
2009 -2010	15	52	16	83
2010 -2011	13	66	32	111
2011 - 2012	15	62	14	91
2012 -2013	11	9	2	22
2013 -2014	58	28	9	95
2014 -2015	9	3	2	14
2015- 2016				

Background	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delnadamp lies to the north-east of the Group. • The Estate neighbours Glenavon to the West (but a fence largely prevents deer movement between properties), Allargue to the north and the Corndavon and Gairnshiel Beats of Invercauld Estate to the south. Candacraig neighbours the property to the east. • Until 2015, the Estate was part of Cabrich & Glenbuchat DMG, but deer movements make it more appropriate to be included as part of this Group. • The Estate combines conservation objectives with the sustainable harvest of grouse. • Red and Roe deer species present. Sika not established.
Designated sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None
Deer Management Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To manage the deer population in balance with other Estate objectives. • Formerly part of Cabrich & Glenbuchat DMG, the Estate is a new property to the Group and has not been included in deer counts to date.
Future Management Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To agree a collaborative approach to local deer management with neighbours.
Woodland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Areas of clear-fell and established new replacement native woodland.
Land management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peatlands – no restoration work required. • Muirburn conducted – wider local Wildfire Plan in place. • Sheep management - around 150 ewes plus hogs and followers hefted on hill.
Deer Impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informal habitat monitoring undertaken.
Deer Distribution and Movements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over the last few years, the erection of fences in the surrounding area has changed deer densities and movements on the Estate. • There are no resident red deer hinds but a small group of stags on the Estate. • Main deer movements are with Corndavon which was fenced off from the Homebeat of Invercauld in 2012.
Supplementary Feeding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None
Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corbett – Brown Cow Hill (829m). No access issues.
Socio-Economics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 full-time employees involved with Estate management. • Additional people employed for estate maintenance, some fencing and during Grouse Shooting days

1.20 Management Units: Dinnet Estate

Property	Dinnet Estate
Area	6744 ha
Owner	Edward Humphrey
Tenant Dinnet High Ground	Andrew Salvesen
Contact	Andrew Salvesen

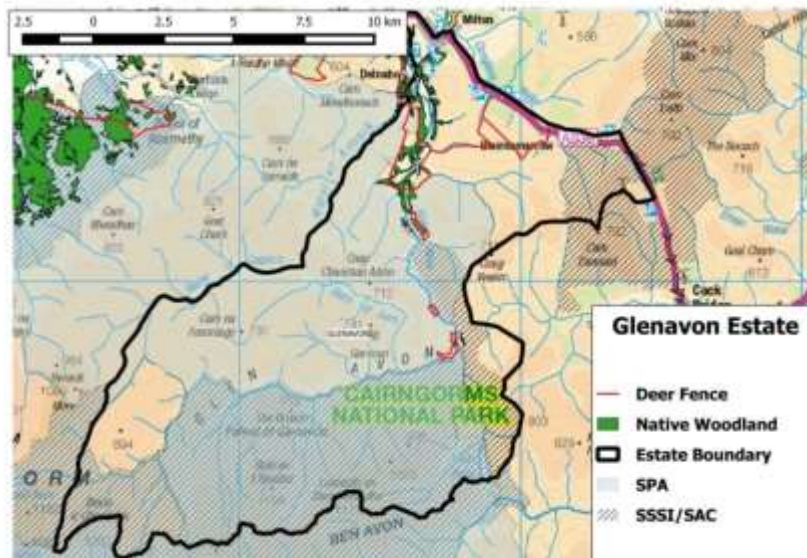


Deer Culls				
Year	Stags	Hinds	Calves	Total
2012 -2013	6	0	0	6
2013 -2014	1	0	0	1
2014 -2015	6	0	0	0
2015- 2016	0	0	0	0

Background	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dinnet lies to the far east of the Group. • The Estate neighbours the Gairnshiel and Micras Beats of Invercauld Estate to the west and Candacraig neighbours the property to the north. • To the south, the property marches FCS Kinord, The Crannach (RSPB) and Tullich Hill. • The Estate combines conservation objectives with agriculture and the sustainable harvest of grouse. • Red and Roe deer species present. Sika not established.
Designated sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Part of Muir of Dinnet NNR • Muir of Dinnet SSSI and Morven & Mullachdubh SSSI & SAC • Licence in place with SNH to shoot deer out of season and at night to protect Moorland Juniper.
Deer Management Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are so few red deer either resident or move onto the Estate that deer management activities are limited and participation in the DMG is really to provide wide ranging coverage of input into the local collaborative approach to deer management.
Future Management Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To keep the DMG informed of any changes in deer management policy.
Land management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moorland management for grouse production. • Agricultural tenancy. Sheep numbers on open-hill restricted.
Deer Impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designated sites are not deemed to be negatively impacted by deer.
Deer Distribution and Movements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some movement of deer from woodland during the summer onto the open hill.
Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No access issues.

1.21 Management Units: Glenavon Estate

Property	Glenavon Estate
Area	16996.80 ha
Owner	Glenavon Estate Ltd
Manager	Clive Meikle (Factor) Bidwells
Estate Personnel	Richard Greenlaw (Head Keeper)



Deer Counts					
Year	Stags	Hinds	Calves	Total	Density
1995	600	670	200	1470	8.65
1998	405	1020	251	1676	9.86
1999	729	791	216	1736	10.21
2000	697	812	306	1815	10.68
2001	934	456	181	1571	9.24
2002	830	556	256	1642	9.66
2003	859	654	242	1755	10.33
2004	708	726	206	1640	9.65
2005	507	623	175	1305	7.68
2005*	563	658	196	1417	8.34
2006	311	302	127	740	4.35
2007	296	374	121	791	4.65
2008	319	188	46	553	3.25
2009	349	329	95	773	4.55
2010*	434	561	167	1162	6.84
2013*	345	606	273	1224	7.20

*Helicopter Counts

Deer Culls				
Year	Stags	Hinds	Calves	Total
1995-1996	96	125	50	271
1996-1997	60	102	27	189
1997-1998	62	101	29	192
1998-1999	98	197	66	361
1999-2000	97	148	44	289
2000-2001	124	205	70	399
2001-2002	152	114	39	305
2002-2003	168	161	31	360
2003-2004	289	231	43	563
2004-2005	253	236	35	524
2005-2006	208	283	50	541
2006-2007	288	140	37	465
2007-2008	66	118	23	207
2008-2009	62	77	25	164
2009-2010	51	74	0	125
2010-2011	47	53	25	125
2011-2012	43	30	11	84
2012-2013	32	35	14	81
2013-2014	42	70	27	139
2014-2015	40	75	29	144

Background	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Glenavon lies to the north of the Group. • Delnabo, Dorback and Abernethy (all in Cairngorms & Speyside DMG) all neighbour the Estate on the western march. • To the south the Estate marches with Mar Lodge and Invercauld (Home Beat) • The A939 forms the property boundary to the north and to the east, the property marches with Delnadamp and Allargue Estates. • Until 2015, the Estate was part of Cairngorms & Speyside DMG, but deer movements make it more appropriate to be included as part of this Sub-Group. • The estate combines conservation objectives with commercial activities including farming, fishing and the sustainable harvest of deer & grouse. • Red and Roe deer species present.
Designated sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ladder Hills SAC/SSSI falls partially in the Estate. • Cairngorms SAC and Cairngorms Eastern SSSI fall partially in the Estate. • The property falls within the Cairngorms Massif SPA.
Deer Management Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To balance deer management to deliver conservation objectives with economic opportunities on the open ground.
Future Management Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To optimise the conservation and economic opportunities on the estate whilst delivering wider public interest.
Woodland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 500 ha native woodland. • 200ha is currently fenced and regenerating. • 50 ha is within the deer park –mature and declining • Remainder of woodland is part of regeneration woodland grant scheme in 1990's and now shows good variation in ages and species. • 174 ha woodland creation in last 10 years • Two woodland creation schemes to be undertaken in next 5 years: 8 ha (Blairnamarrow) + 26 ha (Birchfield) – no compensatory cull required.
Land management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Muirburn conducted –Wildfire Plan in place. • No peatland restoration work required. • 2500 Sheep. Increasing numbers of hares present. • Breeding pairs of Golden eagles, Peregrines, Water voles all present.
Deer Impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informal habitat monitoring undertaken.
Deer Distribution and Movements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The deer population is fairly resident and tends to stay within estate boundary 90% of the year. Deer well dispersed throughout the Estate. • Some movement of stags and hinds between Glenavon and Homebeat.
Supplementary Feeding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None
Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main summits of Beinn a' Chaorainn (1083m), Stob an t-Sluichd (1104m) and Leabaidh an Daimh Bhuidhe (1171m). No access issues. • Information updated on the Heading for the Scottish Hills website.
Socio-Economics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 full-time and 1 part-time employees involved with deer management. • 2 full-time and 1 part-time employees associated with other management • 50 people employed per day during let Grouse Shooting days • All accommodation for stalking and shooting provided in local B&Bs and Hotels

1.22 Management Units: Invercauld Estate - Baddoch

Property	Invercauld Estate - Baddoch
Area	4359 ha
Owner	Invercauld Estate
Manager	Angus McNicol
Estate Personnel/ Deer Management	Will Reid



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Deer Counts					
Year	Stags	Hinds	Calves	Total	Density
1996	261	435	130	826	18.95
1998	248	373	111	732	16.79
2000	319	394	118	831	19.06
2001	292	471	141	904	20.74
2002	0	0	0	0	0.00
2003	348	611	183	1142	26.20
2004	388	381	114	883	20.26
2005*	307	473	141	921	21.13
2006	413	532	159	1104	25.33
2007	329	432	129	890	20.42
2008	279	283	85	647	14.84
2009	282	489	146	917	21.04
2010*	216	502	150	868	19.91
2011	183	383	114	680	15.60
2012	153	132	39	324	7.43
2013	214	462	138	814	18.67
2014	0	0	0	0	0.00
2015	166	233	70	469	10.76

Deer Culls				
Year	Stags	Hinds	Calves	Total
1995-1996	6	81	21	108
1996-1997	61	80	21	162
1997-1998	45	58	19	122
1998-1999	38	76	27	141
1999-2000	7	35	11	53
2000-2001	36	63	24	123
2001-2002	30	67	23	120
2002-2003	25	64	7	96
2003-2004	26	70	8	104
2004-2005	0	0	0	0
2005-2006	25	62	28	115
2006-2007	30	120	35	185
2007-2008	57	74	25	156
2008-2009	45	77	14	136
2009-2010	26	50	14	90
2010-2011	24	102	62	188
2011-2012	21	61	19	101
2012-2013	21	90	36	147
2013-2014	22	113	45	180
2014-2015	25	90	52	167

*Helicopter Counts

Background	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baddoch is one of 8 Beats that make up Invercauld Estate and lies to the south of Braemar. • The A93 forms the Eastern boundary with the Beat of Glencallater (also Invercauld). To the West, the Beat marches with Mar Estate and to the South the Invercauld Beat of Rhiedorrach (which sits within West Grampians DMG). • The estate combines conservation objectives with commercial activities including the sustainable harvest of deer & grouse and sheep farming. • Mainly Red present. Sika not established.
Designated sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The property falls within the Cairngorms Massif SPA.
Deer Management Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To balance deer management to deliver conservation objectives with economic opportunities on the open ground.
Future Management Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To optimise the conservation and economic opportunities on the estate whilst delivering wider public interest.
Woodland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Native woodland (12 ha) (new plantation created within deer fenced exclosures). • Native pinewood scheme at Craig Clunie (800ha). • Possible further woodland expansion may be considered.
Land management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Muirburn conducted – wider local Wildfire Plan in place. • Peatland restoration work for the next 5 years being carried out around the Glenshee Ski Centre. • Some Peatland work carried out in conjunction with CNPA in 2015/16. • Approximately 500 sheep in summer months on the hill (note numbers of hares increasing).
Deer Impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informal habitat monitoring being continually undertaken.
Deer Distribution and Movements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little movement of deer with Mar Estate. • Some movement of deer between Baddoch and Callater Beats.
Supplementary Feeding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Haylage/silage/hay provided.
Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main summits of An Socach (938m), Sgor Mor (888m) and Carn a' Gheoidh (974m). • Information updated on the Heading for the Scottish Hills Website
Socio-Economics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 full-time employees involved with deer management. • 4.75 FTE additional employees associated with estate activities. • Local trades and suppliers used, including Braemar businesses, eg for the substantial upgrade of the main house in 2012.

1.23 Management Units: Invercauld Estate - Corndavon

Property	Invercauld Estate - Corndavon
Area	5580 ha
Owner	Invercauld Estate
Manager	Angus McNicol
Estate Personnel/ Deer Management	Angus McNicol/Ji m Davidson



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Deer Counts: Corndavon, Gairnshiel and Micras Combined					
Year	Stags	Hinds	Calves	Total	Density
1996	83	330	99	512	3.97
1998	86	334	103	523	4.05
2000	7	49	14	70	0.54
2001	31	115	34	180	1.40
2002	0	0	0	0	0.00
2003	47	118	35	200	1.55
2004	31	119	36	186	1.44
2005*	56	76	23	155	1.20
2006	17	49	14	80	0.62
2007	17	90	27	134	1.04
2008	49	128	38	215	1.67
2009	54	184	55	293	2.27
2010*	138	425	126	689	5.34
2011	92	333	99	524	4.06
2012	0	0	0	0	0.00
2013	19	69	21	109	0.85
2014	71	63	19	153	1.19
2015	0	0	0	0	0.00

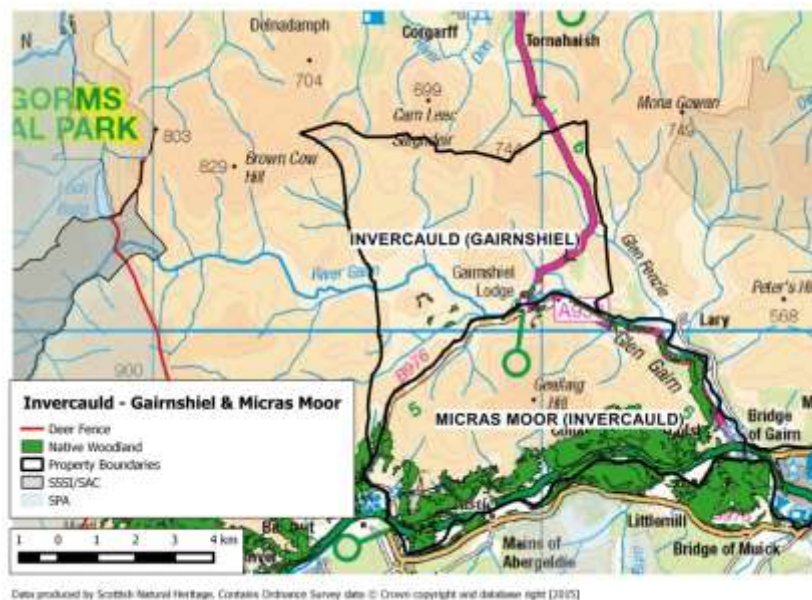
Deer Culls: Corndavon Only				
Year	Stags	Hinds	Calves	Total
2005-2006	14	36	0	50
2006-2007	10	20	10	40
2007-2008	6	42	21	69
2008-2009	5	10	5	20
2009-2010	15	45	15	75
2010-2011	5	33	18	56
2011-2012	12	31	7	50
2012-2013	22	22	5	49
2013-2014	87	91	39	217
2014-2015	22	49	15	86

*Helicopter Counts

Background	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corndavon is one of 8 Beats that make up Invercauld Estate. • The A93 forms the southern boundary. • The Beat is deer fenced off from Invercauld Homebeat to the west. • To the North, the Beat marches with Glenavon and Delnadamph and Gairnshiel & Micras to the East. • The Beat combines conservation objectives with commercial activities including the sustainable harvest of grouse, sheep grazing and the maintenance of some stalking opportunities. • Red and Roe present. Sika not established.
Designated sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A very small corner of the Beat (207 ha) falls in the Eastern Cairngorms SSSI.
Deer Management Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To balance deer management to deliver conservation objectives with economic opportunities on the open ground.
Future Management Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To optimise the conservation and economic opportunities on the estate whilst delivering wider public interest.
Woodland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regenerating Native Woodland (approx. 233 ha). • No new schemes planned for the life of the plan.
Land management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Muirburn conducted – wider local Wildfire Plan in place. • Peatland restoration work (seeding/gulley graduation) being considered with CNPA. • Approximately 915 sheep in summer months on the hill (note numbers of hares increasing).
Deer Impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informal habitat monitoring being continually undertaken.
Deer Distribution and Movements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Due to restriction on deer moving westwards due to the erection of a fence between Corndavon and Homebeat completed in 2012, movement of hinds and stags is largely North/South with Delnadamph and Allargue.
Supplementary Feeding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None
Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corbett – Brown Cow Hill (829m). No access issues
Socio-Economics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 full-time employees involved with deer management. • 4.75 FTE additional employees associated with estate activities. • Local trades and suppliers used, including Braemar businesses.

1.24 Management Units: Invercauld Estate - Gairnshiel and Micras

Property	Invercauld Estate – Gairnshiel & Micras
Area	6690 ha
Owner	Invercauld Estate
Manager	Angus McNicol
Estate Personnel/ Deer Management	Angus McNicol/ Hans MacKenzie-Wilson



Deer Counts: Corndavon, Gairnshiel and Micras Combined					
Year	Stags	Hinds	Calves	Total	Density
1996	83	330	99	512	3.97
1998	86	334	103	523	4.05
2000	7	49	14	70	0.54
2001	31	115	34	180	1.40
2002	0	0	0	0	0.00
2003	47	118	35	200	1.55
2004	31	119	36	186	1.44
2005*	56	76	23	155	1.20
2006	17	49	14	80	0.62
2007	17	90	27	134	1.04
2008	49	128	38	215	1.67
2009	54	184	55	293	2.27
2010*	138	425	126	689	5.34
2011	92	333	99	524	4.06
2012	0	0	0	0	0.00
2013	19	69	21	109	0.85
2014	71	63	19	153	1.19
2015	0	0	0	0	0.00

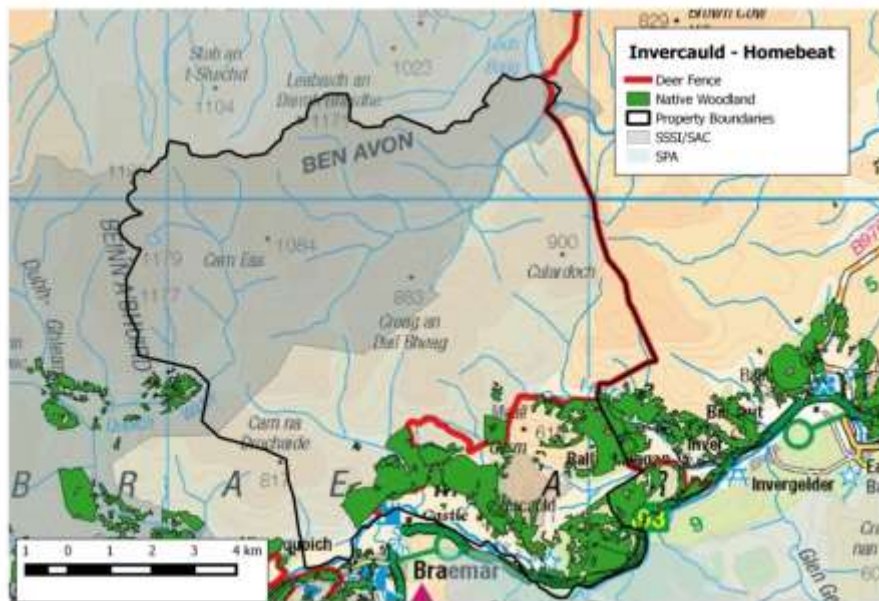
*Helicopter Counts

Deer Culls: Gairnshiel and Micras Only				
Year	Stags	Hinds	Calves	Total
2005-2006	0	0	0	0
2006-2007	10	20	9	39
2007-2008	0	0	0	0
2008-2009	15	38	10	63
2009-2010	5	3	0	8
2010-2011	6	3	0	9
2011-2012	7	6	0	13
2012-2013	6	0	0	6
2013-2014	8	0	0	8
2014-2015	3	6	0	9

Background	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gairnshiel and Micras are two of 8 Beats that make up Invercauld Estate and are reported on jointly as they share objectives. • The Beats lies towards the east of the Group. • The A93 forms the Southern boundary with the Beat of Invercauld Corndavon to the west. • To the east, the Beats march with Dinnet Estate and to the north. • Gairnshiel neighbours Delnadamp and Candacraig Estates. • The estate combines conservation objectives with commercial activities including the sustainable harvest of grouse and sheep farming. • Low density of Red deer present – mainly Roe. Sika not established.
Designated sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None.
Deer Management Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To balance deer management to deliver conservation objectives with economic opportunities on the open ground.
Future Management Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To maintain low densities of red deer to optimise the conservation and economic opportunities on the estate whilst delivering wider public interest.
Woodland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Native woodland (approx. 750 ha) –all open to deer but recovering and regenerating well. • Woodland creation –approximately 50 ha in last 10 years. • Possible opportunities for further woodland expansion to increase woodland edge to be investigated.
Land management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Muirburn conducted – wider local Wildfire Plan in place. • Opportunities for some Peatland work may be investigated with CNPA. • Approximately 1500 sheep in summer months on the hill (note numbers of hares increasing). • Estate has teamed up with RZS to assist with the Wildcat Programme.
Deer Impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informal habitat monitoring being continually undertaken.
Deer Distribution and Movements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very low densities of deer maintained across the two Beats.
Supplementary Feeding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None
Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No access issues.
Socio-Economics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 full-time employees involved with deer management. • 4.75 FTE additional employees associated with wider estate activities. • Local trades and suppliers used, mostly from Ballater. • Set up a Safety Awareness course with Braemar Mountain Rescue team. Could possibly roll out to Group members.

1.25 Management Units: Invercauld Estate - Homebeat

Property	Invercauld Estate - Homebeat
Area	10670 ha
Owner	Invercauld Estate
Manager	Angus McNicol
Estate Personnel/ Deer Management	Angus McNicol/ Jim Davidson



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Deer Counts					
Year	Stags	Hinds	Calves	Total	Density
1996	498	733	219	1450	13.98
1998	336	459	137	932	8.98
2000	316	457	137	910	8.77
2001	436	547	164	1147	11.06
2002	0	0	0	0	0.00
2003	469	425	127	1021	9.84
2004	527	555	166	1248	12.03
2005*	386	736	220	1342	12.93
2006	156	290	87	533	5.14
2007	186	329	98	613	5.91
2008	250	426	127	803	7.74
2009	137	356	106	599	5.77
2010*	122	340	101	563	5.43
2011	125	261	78	464	4.47
2012	0	0	0	0	0.00
2013	401	728	218	1347	12.98
2014	290	485	145	920	8.87
2015	284	416	124	824	7.94

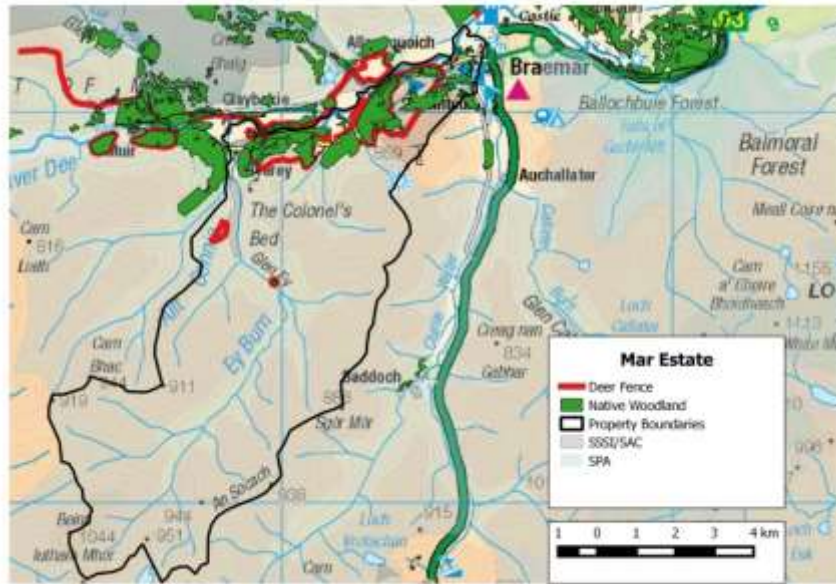
*Helicopter Counts

Deer Culls				
Year	Stags	Hinds	Calves	Total
1995-1996	14	69	31	114
1996-1997	109	170	43	322
1997-1998	62	100	29	191
1998-1999	56	120	36	212
1999-2000	65	106	54	225
2000-2001	55	112	40	207
2001-2002	51	106	33	190
2002-2003	45	80	19	144
2003-2004	57	120	20	197
2004-2005	62	192	34	288
2005-2006	127	120	53	300
2006-2007	143	143	30	316
2007-2008	59	57	20	136
2008-2009	35	99	37	171
2009-2010	50	71	42	163
2010-2011	50	26	6	82
2011-2012	61	25	12	98
2012-2013	43	64	42	149
2013-2014	30	222	96	348
2014-2015	60	205	71	336

Background	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homebeat is one of 8 Beats that make up Invercauld Estate and holds a central position within the Group. • To the west, the Beat marches with Mar Lodge Estate, Glenavon to the north, the Invercauld Beat of Corndavon to the east and the A93 marks the southern boundary. • The estate combines conservation objectives with commercial activities including the sustainable harvest of deer (Red and Roe deer) & grouse, agriculture and forestry in the low ground (deer fenced). • Red and Roe present. Sika not established.
Designated sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cairngorms and Cairngorms Massif SPAs. • Cairngorms SAC and Eastern Cairngorms SSSI.
Deer Management Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To balance deer management to deliver conservation objectives with economic opportunities on the open ground. • A Deer Management Plan exists for the Beat (Putman, 2012) which aims for a sustained Red deer population of 300 hinds and 250 stags. The Deer Management Plan is currently under on-going review.
Future Management Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To optimise the conservation and economic opportunities on the estate whilst delivering wider public interest.
Woodland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Native woodland (2000 ha including fenced, unfenced and farm woodlands). • Woodland creation (approximately 60 ha) plus large scale regeneration sites that have still to be mapped. • Possible further woodland (Native and Commercial) woodland expansion will be considered. The extent of this will depend on SNH, FC and Estate objectives but aspiration is to materially increase and ensure long-term woodland cover. • An area of 120 ha woodland may be made available to deer in the next 5 years.
Land management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Muirburn conducted – wider local Wildfire Plan in place. • Peatland restoration work around the Glenshee Ski Centre programmed for 2015/16 in conjunction with CNPA. • Some wintering of sheep to the East of the Beat although historically they covered more ground to the West of the Beat. • A Formal counting methodology for Hares is underway with GCWT and JHI. • Estate has teamed up with RZS to assist with the Wildcat Programme.
Deer Impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informal habitat monitoring being continually undertaken.
Deer Distribution and Movements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The erection of a fence in 2012 separates the Beat from neighbouring Corndavon preventing deer movement west. • Hinds are largely resident with some movement of stags with Mar Lodge.
Supplementary Feeding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of diversionary feeding of silage/hay and blocks to attract deer away from the Mar Lodge regeneration zones.
Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beinn a' Bhuid (1179m) & Carn Eas (1084m) are two of the highest peaks • Information updated on the Heading for the Scottish Hills Website. • Estate has its own web-site, two information boards at car parks as well as contributing to maps for walks for the public.
Socio-Economics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2.25 full-time employees involved with deer management. • 4.75 FTE additional employees associated with estate activities. • Caravan park and 3 holidays lets provided for Tourism. • Local trades and suppliers used, including Braemar businesses, eg for the substantial upgrade of the main house in 2012.

1.26 Management Units: Mar Estate

Property	Mar Estate
Area	6000 ha
Owner	Trustees of Mar Estate
Manager	Rory Galloway – Savills, Brechin
Deer Management Contact	Mark Nicolson



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Deer Counts					
Year	Stags	Hinds	Calves	Total	Density
1996	577	538	161	1276	21.48
1998	642	594	177	1413	23.79
2000	608	483	144	1235	20.79
2001	794	590	176	1560	26.26
2002	0	0	0	0	0.00
2003	616	284	85	985	16.58
2004	632	229	68	929	15.64
2005*	652	227	68	947	15.94
2006	588	272	81	941	15.84
2007	549	342	102	993	16.72
2008	381	496	148	1025	17.26
2009	416	252	75	743	12.51
2010*	477	381	114	972	16.36
2011	407	330	99	836	14.07
2012	398	361	108	867	14.60
2013	431	427	127	985	16.58
2014	0	0	0	0	0.00
2015	386	329	98	813	13.69

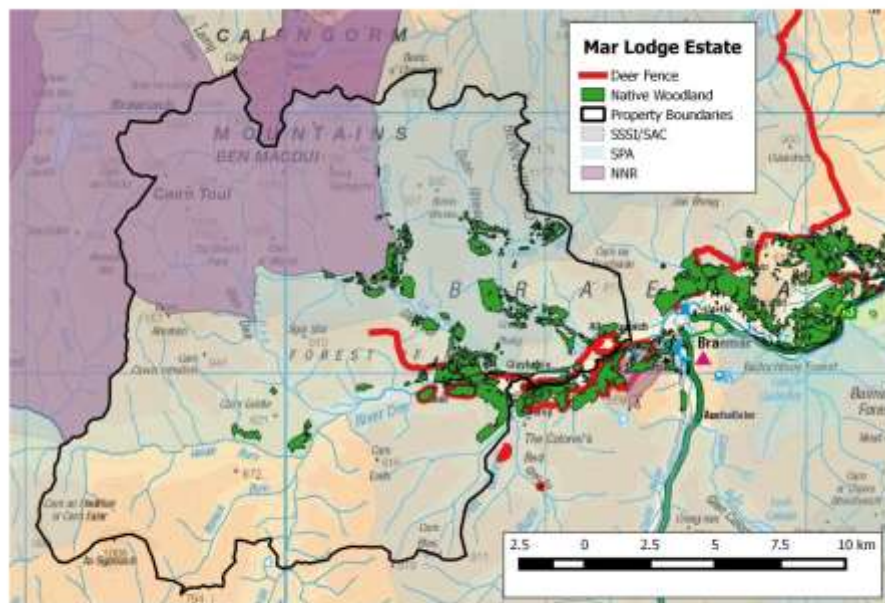
*Helicopter Counts

Deer Culls				
Year	Stags	Hinds	Calves	Total
1995-1996	54	173	57	284
1996-1997	60	112	34	206
1997-1998	51	126	26	203
1998-1999	87	140	26	253
1999-2000	55	100	36	191
2000-2001	56	109	35	200
2001-2002	70	103	29	202
2002-2003	55	61	14	130
2003-2004	56	60	30	146
2004-2005	61	61	6	128
2005-2006	61	33	7	101
2006-2007	53	33	7	93
2007-2008	52	60	5	117
2008-2009	8	6	6	20
2009-2010	50	56	9	115
2010-2011	44	51	9	104
2011-2012	38	65	20	123
2012-2013	34	83	14	131
2013-2014	41	106	20	147
2014-2015	41	110	30	181

Background	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mar Estate is located to the west of the Group. • The Estate marches with Mar Lodge Estate to the north-west and the Baddoch Beat of Invercauld to the east. • To the south, the Estate marches with Fealar Estate and the Invercauld Rhiedorrach Beat (both of which sit within the West Grampians DMG). • The estate combines conservation objectives with commercial activities including forestry and agriculture. • Red and Roe deer present. Sika not established.
Designated sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cairngorms Massif SPA. • Morrone Birkwood SAC/SSSI/NNR (Management Agreement with SNH started in 1973 and reviewed in 1993). • Glen Ey Gorge SSSI. • River Dee SAC.
Deer Management Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To balance deer management to deliver conservation objectives with economic opportunities on the open ground.
Future Management Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To optimise the conservation and economic opportunities on the estate whilst delivering wider public interest.
Woodland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Area of regeneration on the Cairngorm Clum plantation extended by approximately 2 ha. • Regeneration area around Altanour Lodge site fenced in July 2015 (2 ha). • 150 ha of woodland creation recently opened up to deer.
Land management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 major Peatland restoration schemes to reprofile and regrade gullies completed in 2015. • Estate may be interested in further schemes. • Muirburn conducted – wider local Wildfire Plan in place. • 300 summering sheep on hill. • Black grouse, Ptarmigan and Dotterel all present.
Deer Impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informal habitat monitoring being continually undertaken.
Deer Distribution and Movements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 300 – 400 stags overwinter on the Estate and disappear in June. • Resident population of around 450 hinds (in 1990 this used to be around 1000). • Some movement of stags with Mar Lodge but little deer movement with Baddoch.
Supplementary Feeding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None
Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main summits of An Socach (938m), Sgor Mor (888m), Carn Liath (816m), Carn Bhac (944m) plus many Corbetts. • Information provided on the Heading for the Scottish Hills website. • No access issues.
Socio-Economics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 full-time employees involved with deer management. • 5 part-time additional employees associated with tourism activities. • 5 holidays cottages (27 beds) • Local trades and suppliers used, including Braemar businesses. • Estate in communication with local Community Council.

1.27 Management Units: Mar Lodge Estate

Property	Mar Lodge Estate
Area	29,322 ha
Owner	The National Trust for Scotland
Manager	David Frew –Property Manager
Deer Management Contact	Chris Murphy –Head Stalker



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Deer Counts					
Year	Stags	Hinds	Calves	Total	Density
1996	1387	1091	326	2804	9.55
1998	1053	1227	366	2646	9.01
2000	1039	1256	375	2670	9.09
2001	1409	1468	439	3316	11.29
2002	1273	1426	426	3125	10.64
2003	1119	1204	360	2683	9.14
2004	933	1305	390	2628	8.95
2005*	851	732	219	1802	6.14
2006	842	853	271	1966	6.69
2007	1021	1138	406	2565	8.73
2008	472	857	328	1872	6.37
2009	632	1046	160	2232	7.60
2010*	900	747	223	1870	6.37
2011	721	771	438	1930	6.57
2012	571	575	179	1325	4.51
2013	1042	894	339	2275	7.75
2014	1063	613	226	1902	6.48
2015	1040	728	288	2056	7.00

*Helicopter Counts

Deer Culls				
Year	Stags	Hinds	Calves	Total
1995-1996	330	516	97	943
1996-1997	332	491	65	888
1997-1998	268	329	31	628
1998-1999	234	418	61	713
1999-2000	201	419	53	673
2000-2001	191	456	65	712
2001-2002	232	428	39	699
2002-2003	318	359	24	701
2003-2004	325	508	99	932
2004-2005	154	1012	102	1268
2005-2006	268	228	59	555
2006-2007	216	349	65	630
2007-2008	393	517	74	984
2008-2009	328	229	81	638
2009-2010	237	93	38	368
2010-2011	243	117	56	416
2011-2012	148	125	47	320
2012-2013	215	126	60	401
2013-2014	357	276	151	784
2014-2015	253	232	128	613

Background	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mar Lodge Estate is located to the west of the Group. • The Estate has multiple neighbouring properties with some varying degree of deer movement with them all: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To the west/north – Abernethy, Rothiemurchas and Wildland Glenfeshie (all within Cairngorms & Speyside DMG) ○ To the north/east – Glenavon, Invercauld Homebeat (all within Group) ○ To the south –Mar Estate (within Group), Fealar and Atholl Forest Lodge (all within West Grampians DMG). • Red and Roe deer present. Sika not established.
Designated sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cairngorms and Cairngorms Massif SPAs. • Cairngorms and Eastern Cairngorms SSSIs. • Cairngorms NNR .
Deer Management Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To balance deer management to deliver conservation objectives with economic opportunities through the sustainable harvest of deer on the open ground. • To maintain a population of 1650 deer (700 stags, 700 hinds, 250 calves) as per the Section 7 Agreement with SNH.
Future Management Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To optimise the conservation opportunities on the estate whilst delivering economic, access and enjoyment benefits along with the wider public interest. • To participate in cross-DMG collaborative deer management, particularly with Wildland Glenfeshie and Atholl Estates.
Woodland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 150 ha of woodland creation in last 10 years. • Extent of regeneration to be mapped in 2016. • Two fenced SRDP Schemes for woodland expansion (native broadleaf planting plus natural regeneration) to be completed in 2016. Glen Geldie (23.63 ha with 3.5km fence) and Glen Dee (5.6 ha with 1.8km fence). Proposed schemes small enough that no compensatory cull required.
Land management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peatland Restoration work – extensive work carried out with moorland grip already filled in. • No sheep on hill but have occasional stray sheep from elsewhere. • There are 7 Scheduled Ancient Monuments present including shieling settlements. No negative impacts from deer on structures but grazing by deer is a benefit. • Muirburn conducted – wider local Wildfire Plan in place.
Deer Impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal habitat monitoring being continually undertaken by the Estate. Last moorland Assessment carried out in 2015. • Annual monitoring of woodland – 16 x 1 km transects. • SNH Seedling Survey being carried out across Cairngorms late 2015. • Estate could provide Habitat Assessment training opportunities for the DMG.
Deer Distribution and Movements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is recognised that there is considerable movement between the Estate and its immediate neighbours. • Although the Estate is a sole-signatory in a Section 7 Agreement, a wider cross-DMG Section 7 Steering Group is currently in place made up of SNH, FCS, Mar Estate, Invercauld, Fealar, Atholl, Wildland Glenfeshie. from Cairngorms & Speyside, West Grampians and the Group DMGs - who are committed to managing deer collectively and collaboratively. • An open-ended strategic deer fence was erected in 2013 (5km) which acts to deter movement of deer into the Regeneration Zone. A further 13km of deer fencing has been removed. • Estate used to summer large numbers of stags but not there in 2015.
Supplementary Feeding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None

Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15 Munroes including the main summits of Cairn Toul (1291m), Braeriach (1295m) and Ben Macdui (1309m). • Information provided on the Heading for the Scottish Hills website. • No access issues – Estate has around 100,000 visiting cars through car parking facilities. • Estate has Ranger Service. •
Socio-Economics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 full-time and 3 part-time employees involved with deer management. • 14 full-time and 10 seasonal employees associated with other Estate activities. • Tourist accommodation for 70 on site. Weddings for up to 150 people on site require additional local accommodation in B&Bs and Hotels. • Estate provides some commercial walked-up grouse shooting opportunities. • Most shooting clients stay in local hotels and B&Bs. • Local trades and suppliers used, including Braemar businesses. • Estate hosts educational events with schools as well as a Senior Schools Leadership Programme. • Training opportunities in deer management provided for Colleges (groups of 16 students at a time during the hind cull). • Venison provided to the local butcher. • Estate has a Community Action Plan. • Whole area promoted through BBC Winterwatch.

1.28 References

Headley, A. (2015) A repeat assessment of herbivore impacts on notified upland features within the Cairngorms Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

Maier, R. (2009) An assessment of herbivore impacts on notified upland features within the Cairngorms Special Area of Conservation (SAC). Scottish Natural Heritage, Commissioned Report No.