Open-range Deer Management

This is an old version of the page

Date published: 21 November, 2023

Date superseded: 30 January, 2025

For recent changes to this guidance, please see the bottom of the page .

Note: In January 2024, the Deer Management Plan inserted on the published date of this page has been replaced with an updated version

Note: In May 2024, the Claim requirements and Inspections sections were amended to show how to submit annual deer cull returns to Nature Scot.

Aim

The aim of this item is to benefit upland and moorland habitat, and their associated species by reducing grazing and / or trampling pressure from deer through additional culling over and above maintenance culls.

Reducing the deer population on designated sites will help ensure that the upland and moorland habitats are maintained or brought into favourable condition and continue to support a wide range of birds and other wildlife.

Where the deer population and / or the designated site extends across more than one ownership it may be a requirement to collaborate with neighbours.

Eligibility

Rough grazing land, which forms part of a deer range and which includes land designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest or European site and is in, or at risk of falling into, unfavourable condition due to grazing pressure from deer is eligible.

You must combine this option with the Moorland Management option.

Application requirements

You must prepare and submit to NatureScot for approval a deer management plan for the additional culling. Support will only be provided to reduce deer densities to levels agreed with NatureScot as appropriate for the site. The agreed cull target may be reviewed on an annual basis.

Deer Management Plan (MS Word, Size: 70.7 kB)
doc_external_url: https://www.ruralpaymentsandservices.org/media/resources/AECS-2024-Guidance---Revised-Deer-Management-Plan-Template---22-Jan-2024-FINAL.docx [Plan template]

Requirements

- you must reduce deer numbers by the agreed cull target (as detailed in your plan)
- you must keep all your venison receipts covering the period you have been undertaking this work and show them at inspection
- you must maintain a diary

Claim requirements

You must submit copies of your annual cull returns to Naturescot, covering the years you have been undertaking this work along with your claim. Please submit your returns online .

Payment

Payment will depend on the size of the reduction cull as follows:

Payment rate per hectare	Size of reduction cull
£0.80	At least two deer per 100 hectares
£1.20	At least three deer per 100 hectares
£1.60	At least four deer per 100 hectares
£2.00	At least five deer per 100 hectares

The basis of your claim will be your venison receipts. You must claim for the payment rate which reflects the numbers of deer for which you have venison receipts.

Inspections

The inspectors will check:

- the location and extent of the work
- you have reduced deer numbers by the agreed cull target (as detailed in your plan)
- you must submit copies of your annual cull returns to NatureScot, covering the years you have been undertaking this work along with your claim. Please submit your returns online .
- your venison receipts covering the period you have been undertaking this work and show them at inspection
- you have maintained a diary

Additional guidance

Supporting guidance is available for this item.

Recent changes

Section	Change
Application Requirements	Updated Deer Management Plan.

Previous versions

Previous versions of this page

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