

Deer Census – Helicopter Counts

Date published: 21 November, 2023

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.

Aim

The aim of this item is to benefit upland and moorland habitat by counting wild deer numbers and recording their locations.

This assessment will provide baseline information on which to base management decisions, or can be undertaken at three to five year intervals to check the effectiveness of management works already undertaken.

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

Eligibility

Rough grazing land, which forms part of a deer range that 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 [Upland Habitat Impact Assessment for Deer Management](#) item.

Application requirements

You must prepare and submit a deer census plan to NatureScot for approval.

This plan must include a 1:50,000 map showing the proposed areas to be assessed, justification for the area being counted and details of the classifications to be assessed (stags, hinds and calves).



[Deer Management Plan \(including Deer Census\) \(MS Word, Size: 70.7 kB\)](#)

doc_external_url: <https://www.ruralpayments.org/media/resources/AECS-2024-Guidance---Revised-Deer-Management-Plan-Template---22-Jan-2024-FINAL.docx> [Plan template]

Requirements

- you must provide NatureScot with a report of the count that includes deer density and a 1:50,000 map showing the area counted
- you must maintain a diary

Payment

Payment will be made on an actual cost basis, upon completion of the work and approval of the report by NatureScot. For actual cost capital items, quotes are required. You must follow the Actual costs quotation guidance at the Quotes section of the [Further requirements for applicants page](#).

Payment will be restricted to a maximum of £60 per 100 hectares where the count has taken place.

Inspections

Your report will be reviewed by NatureScot, who will confirm whether it is up to standard. There is no in-field verification.

Additional guidance

[Supporting guidance is available for this item.](#)

Recent changes

Section	Change
Application requirements	Updated Deer Management Plan template

Previous versions

[Previous versions of this page](#)

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