Supporting guidance for Upland Habitat Impact Assessment for Deer Management

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Note: In September 2023, references to Scottish Natural Heritage and Natura Sites have been updated to NatureScot and European Sites respectively.

This item supports land managers to undertake a habitat impact assessment (HIA) to inform their deer management plans.

Habitat impact assessment provides high quality information about herbivore impacts and herbivore distribution over open-range habitats within a deer range. Deer managers can use this information to identify where to focus their management effort to improve the condition of important habitats over the open range.

What needs to be done

Plan your habitat impact assessment with all owners and land managers within the deer range. The deer range should include land designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest or European site, which is in, or is at risk of falling into Unfavourable condition. Your assessment should be carried out using the methods laid out in 'A Guide to Upland Habitats Surveying Land Management Impacts'.

Consult NatureScot area staff to agree the habitats, area and methods to be employed before you submit your application. Make sure the habitat impact assessment is undertaken by individuals trained in the methodology. Supply a report of the habitat impact assessment findings and a map showing plot locations, their GPS co-ordinates and details of impacts recorded.

Habitat impact assessment plan

- map with OS backdrop showing
  - property boundaries
  - designated site boundaries
  - habitats
  - habitat impact assessment area
  - location of habitat impact assessment sample points
- a list of the proposed personnel to be used to complete habitat impact assessment
- a list of which habitats you plan to assess and why
- how you will present your data
- NatureScot area contact and approval

Relevant management options

- Moorland Management

Relevant capital items

- Deer Census – Helicopter Counts

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