Sustainable Management of Forests – Species Conservation – Reducing Deer Impact

This is an old version of the page

This is an old version of the page

Date published: 14 January, 2016

Date superseded: 21 March, 2016

To see recent changes to this guidance, check the bottom of this page.

Table of Contents

Aim

Grant support

Application eligibility criteria

Supporting information

Scoring criteria

How to claim

Technical guidance

Recent changes

Previous versions

Download guidance

Aim

The aim of this option is to reduce deer impacts to a level that will allow the regeneration of unprotected soft conifer and broadleaved species at a landscape scale, to help diversify forests and improve their conservation value.

Grants are available to help reduce deer numbers or maintain them in the range of five to 10 deer per square kilometre.

Grant support

This is an annual grant to support the costs of labour for culling and monitoring deer populations.

The rate is £6 per hectare, per year for up to a maximum of five years.

We expect that some of your costs will be offset by venison sales.

Application eligibility criteria

Please check that you are eligible to apply for Forestry Grant Scheme funding before beginning your application.

Sustainable Management of Forests

You must have an approved Forest Plan for woodland areas of 100 hectares or more.

For woodland areas less than 100 hectares you must have an approved Management Plan or Forest Plan.

Long-term Forest Plan technical guidance

Management Plan

This option is available through either direct entry or following the Woodland Improvement Grant – Planning – Deer Management Plan option.

In either case, you must have a Deer Management Plan approved by Forestry Commission Scotland. It must show that regeneration of soft conifer or broadleaved species will take place if you successfully carry out deer culls.

For direct entry into this option, you must include damage assessments, from the past five years, to show that damage has been limited to 10 per cent across all conifer species and 25 per cent on broadleaved species [1]. Damage results on soft conifers and broadleaves will be of particular interest. There must be a planned commitment to keep damage to within these levels.

In the case of applications that have been submitted with an approved Woodland Improvement Grant Deer Management Plan, we expect that the effects of culling will show improvement in the levels of damage. There needs to be a commitment to get the damage levels down towards those indicated above during the five years of the contract.

Please read the supporting information below for the details you need to supply when applying for this option. Note that you must use the appropriate standard template to give this information.

New entrants or forest owners or managers who want to gather information about deer density should apply for the Deer Management Plan grant under the Woodland Improvements Grant – Planning option.

Woodland Improvement Grant – Planning – Deer Management Plan

If you have already surveyed the deer density, we would expect this to show a maximum average of 20 deer per square kilometre (summer density including recruitment) before you can apply for this option.

If the survey shows a density of higher than 20 deer per square kilometre at the start of the proposed Deer Management Plan period, you must reduce it to this level before you can apply for this option.

You will not be eligible for this option if you receive grant for deer control under the Sustainable Management of Forests – Native Woodlands or Sustainable Management of Forests – Low Impact Silvicultural Systems options, or a legacy grant scheme.

[1] The measure of damage percentages should be of the accumulated winter damage over the past year.

Other eligibility criteria

At least 40 to 45 per cent of the culls taken must be adult hinds or does over one-year-old to help reduce the population swiftly.

You must maintain auditable records of your damage assessments.

These records must contain a map of the surveyed areas with the recorded plots or transect lines involved including GPS reference points and a table detailing the findings of the survey.

The starting point of each survey block must be marked on the ground so that it can be revisited for survey verification.

Supporting information

From 2015 onwards you must provide a Forestry Commission Scotland approved Deer Management Plan to support this option.

If you have a Deer Management Plan as funded through the Woodland Improvement Grant – Planning – Deer Management Plan option then you will not need to supply any further supporting information. Your Sustainable Management of Forests – Reducing Deer Impact application will be assessed using the funded Deer Management Plan and your future cull returns will be compared to those set out in that plan.

If you have a Deer Management Plan that has not been funded through the Woodland Improvement Grant you must ensure that it contains all of the necessary information as per the Deer Management Plan and it must be approved by Forestry Commission Scotland. A general Deer Management Plan template is provided.

Rural Payments and Services - © Crown copyright

Deer Management Plan template (MS Word, Size: 601.1 kB)
doc_external_url: https://www.ruralpayments.org/media/resources/general-deer-management-plan-v2.doc

For direct entrants into this option, you will need to provide us with five years of damage assessments from your woodland and further supporting information. You must give the details as listed below using the template provided.

Sustainable Management of Forests – Reducing Deer Impact supporting information template (MS Word, Size: 436.2 kB)
doc_external_url: https://www.ruralpayments.org/media/resources/smf-deer-supp-info-template.doc

Details requested on the template include:

- summary details of the deer population you are controlling and the cull trend
- how your application is collaborative
- summary details on the submitted damage assessments
- maps that show the perimeter of the application area

Scoring criteria

To make sure we achieve the best value for money and to ensure we meet the scheme's objectives, we assess each application using scoring criteria. These criteria differ depending on the option.

We will set a minimum score that an application for any particular option must achieve to be considered for approval.

Threshold score = 2 points

Each option within your application must meet the threshold score to be considered for approval. In achieving the threshold score, your option must score against each criterion, except for additional benefit.

The scores will then be used as the basis for allocating funding on a competitive basis through the Forestry Grant Scheme clearing process.

Delivery of option priorities

1 POINT – for applications that meet the eligibility requirements but do not deliver any of the benefits detailed below.

3 POINTS – for applications that provide one or more of the following in addition to meeting the eligibility requirements:

- applications that are supported by a neighbouring landowner who also has an application for reducing deer impact. You must provide the case reference number of your neighbours application in your Deer Management Plan

Or

- applications that form part of a collaborative approach, or clearly demonstrate that it is seeking to control deer populations on a landscape scale

Or

- applications that aim to protect or improve the condition of ancient semi-natural woodland or Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWs), which are threatened by deer browsing

5 POINTS – for applications that meet one of the three-point criteria above and the criteria below:

- applications that seek to protect SSSI/SAC designated woodlands which are threatened by deer browsing. Your proposal must clearly describe the threat to the designated woodland feature

Supplementary point – additional benefit

1 POINT – will be awarded, as an additional point, where:

- applications are for diverse woodlands, where the total woodland area has no more than 60 per cent of a single species

How to claim

We will pay grants for up to five years for each year that your contract is covered by a Forest Plan or Management Plan. If your Forest Plan or Management Plan expires during the five years of your contract you must ensure that it is renewed in time to be able to continue making annual claims. We cannot pay your claim for any claim year that is not covered by a Forest Plan or Management Plan.

You must claim this grant on your Single Application Form.

You must submit evidence each year to enable payment.

This must include:

- a map showing the area that is being claimed and the stratified areas that have been surveyed
- your annual damage assessment survey results
- a map of the recorded plots within your stratified areas, and the starting points
- cull records for verification

General mapping guidance for the Forestry Grant Scheme

We will make checks to ensure you are carrying out the work agreed in the Deer Management Plan.

You must register with Deer Line to record your cull returns annually.

You must submit your evidence to your local Forestry Commission Scotland office between 1 December and 31 January. If we do not receive your evidence within this period we will not be able to pay your claim.

Technical guidance

- Long-term Forest Plan technical guidance
- Management Plan
- UK Forestry Standard
- Best practice guidance
- Information for deer managers
- Nearest Neighbour Method for Qualifying Wildlife Damage to Trees in Woodland

Recent changes

Section	Change	Previous text	New text
Supporting information	Deer Management Plan template [Word document added]		
	Sustainable Management of Forests – Reducing Deer Impact supporting information template [Word document added]		

Previous versions

Previous versions of this page

Download guidance

Click 'Download this page' to create a printable version of this guidance you can save or print out.