

# Sustainable Management of Forests – Species Conservation – Reducing Deer Impact

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Updates to last version

- addition of scoring criteria

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## 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 5–10 deer per square kilometre.

Funding is also available to help limit habitat impacts by deer so that woodland managers have a choice over the range of conifer or broadleaved species to regenerate without resorting to deer fencing.

## 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](#)

You must have a Deer Management Plan approved by Forestry Commission Scotland from 2015 onwards. It must show that regeneration of soft conifer or broadleaved species will take place if you successfully carry out deer culls.

The Deer Management Plan must include either:

- an accurate assessment of woodland deer population density and have a clear plan agreed to reduce deer densities to 5–10 per square kilometre within three years of the initial grant award, or
- five years of previous records that show you have been successful at deer control

You should include cull records and habitat assessments to show that there is little or no annual damage

There must be a planned commitment to keep damage to acceptable levels.

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 Improvements Grant – Planning](#)

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.

#### **Other eligibility criteria**

At least 40–45 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 dung and 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.

Deer fencing must only be used for forest perimeters to control movements of deer overall, but not for individual sites within the woodland.

The Deer Management Plan must therefore show that regeneration in a fenceless environment is achievable and sustainable.

Deer culling or deer fencing must not obstruct or hinder public access.

Your proposal must show the timing of any fence removal.

## [Supporting information](#)

To help us assess your proposal, you must provide us with supporting information.

From 2015 onwards you must provide an Forestry Commission Scotland approved Deer Management Plan.

You can find a template and details on what this must contain by looking at the [Woodland Improvement Grant – Planning](#) option.

If you have an existing Deer Management Plan you must ensure that it meets the requirements stated above under the eligibility criteria and it must be approved by Forestry Commission Scotland.

## 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](#)

### [Sustainable Management of Forests – Reducing Deer Impact damage assessment monitoring forms](#)

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](#)

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