Output: An estimate of numbers of deer shot that do not go through game dealers ('domestic consumption')

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1 Background:

As outlined in the Unified Data project rationale, DCS seeks to maximise the data collected from culling wild deer in order to:

- Provide full traceability for disease monitoring and quality assurance purposes
- Assist in their sustainable management
- Explore whether data can assist in the monitoring of the competence of practitioners.

All systems of cull data recording are prone to under-reporting, such as non-submission of returns or inaccurate returns or records. In relation to deer carcass data the area of greatest potential under-reporting is that of 'domestic consumption' i.e. where carcasses are eaten at home or distributed to friends as opposed to sold to (and therefore legally required to be recorded through) a game dealer.

2 Method:

There are currently two main routes for estimating domestic consumption:

- comparison of Cull returns with Venison dealer records (see 'A Report on limitations of data currently collected')
- surveys of stalkers

Table 1 provides a comparison of the last ten years Cull and Venison dealer data. This gives an overall estimate of **16%** of carcasses consumed domestically. Limitations on this method are:

- unknown carcases consumed domestically for which no Cull return is submitted
- incompleteness of Venison records due to reasons outlined in 'A Report on limitations of data currently collected' (Dealers opting not to voluntarily submit records to DCS, complex chain between producers, collection centres, dealers and dealers based in England not covered by Deer (Scotland) Act 1996)

As part of the BASC stalker survey in 2004[1], stalkers were asked about the percentage of deer that they sent to a game dealer. This gives an overall estimate of **38.5%** of carcasses consumed domestically for stalkers in Scotland. Limitations on this method are:

- small sample size
- uncertainty that it represents all stalkers in Scotland – particularly in relation to potential biases (such as recreational stalkers being more likely to consume a higher percentage of carcases)

3 Implications and options:

The main implication from the above analysis is that an estimated 16 – 38% of carcases (depending on species and region shot in) may be subject to domestic consumption as opposed to being supplied to a game dealer. In any unified data system developed, one mechanism for recording carcases consumed as opposed to sold will be through returns or surveys of those culling deer. An alternative would be a requirement to obtain a tag prior to shooting any deer and to submit a return for each tag used.

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Project: Unified Data (UD 1.1.2)

Table 1 Comparison of Cull returns and Venison dealer records

CULL RETURNS										
species	**1996/97**	**1997/98**	**1998/99**	**1999/2000**	**2000/01**	**2001/02**	**2002/03**	**2003/04**	**2004/05**	**2005/06**
Red	53,950	59,894	71,536	70,962	66,931	67,282	57,363	61,957	68,610	63,568
Roe	23,794	27,307	29,068	30,222	26,214	29,392	31,117	32,913	32,264	33,542
Sika	3,429	4,515	5,010	5,308	3,863	4,515	4,192	3,900	4,773	5,093
Fallow	548	569	691	878	1,025	1,195	1,172	1,645	1,199	1,634

VENISON RETURNS										
Red	52,157	51,353	61,687	62,070	54,449	58,649	46,404	43,224	53,741	39,549
Roe	34,151	30,510	30,163	28,996	23,303	24,726	28,683	26,057	25,914	22,800
Sika	3,175	2,740	2,979	2,992	3,969	3,420	2,815	2,856	2,820	2,996
Fallow	970	643	748	757	973	803	927	717	661	983

DIFFERENCE (%)										
Red	3	14	14	13	19	13	19	30	22	38
Roe	-44	-12	-4	4	11	16	8	21	20	32
Sika	7	39	41	44	-3	24	33	27	41	41
Fallow	-77	-13	-8	14	5	33	21	56	45	40

species	**Ten year average % difference**
Red	18
Roe	5
Sika	29
Fallow	12
All	**16**

Table 2 Carcases going to game dealers from BASC stalker survey

2003/2004			
species	**Stalkers**	**Deer shot**	**% Game dealer**
Red	87	806	85
Roe	88	691	38
average			61.5