

Deer Commission for Scotland
annual report 07-08

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Presented to the Scottish Parliament as required under
Section 2(2) of the Deer (Scotland) Act 1996

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Foreword by Chairman of the Deer Commission for Scotland, John Milne

The Deer Commission for Scotland (DCS) has made a significant contribution to meeting the strategic objectives of the Scottish Government to make Scotland a greener, smarter, safer, healthier and wealthier country in the past year.

Under the greener objective, DCS has continued its work on protected sites, designated for nature conservation under Natura legislation and as Sites of Special Scientific Interest, supporting efforts to bring them into favourable condition.

This work is being undertaken with other government agencies, with DCS chairing the group dealing with deer-related adverse impacts. DCS has also acted as the lead agency for eight new protected sites in 2007 and it is particularly pleasing that one of the Special Areas of Conservation, Inchnadamph, is no longer suffering adverse impacts of deer grazing and trampling. The site contains seven important habitat types and has been subject to a voluntary agreement between DCS and the local estate since 2003. The reduction in adverse impacts from deer is a successful conclusion to the agreement. It also significant that the habitats in Caenlochan Glen, that are part of the Caenlochan Special Area of Conservation, have shown no further deterioration from the baseline put in place in 2003. This is the result of a large reduction in the number of deer in the area although there is still need for a further reduction in deer numbers to satisfy the voluntary agreement between DCS and seven estates in the area.

Under the smarter objective, 74 guides to Best Practice have been developed and published by DCS and a group of organisations in the deer sector, including the Scottish Gamekeepers Association, the British Deer Society, the Association of Deer Management Groups, the British Association for Shooting and Conservation, Forestry Commission Scotland and LANTRA. This has been a major task and reflects well on the ability of the deer sector to work together to raise the standard of deer management in Scotland. The guides are available to subscribers in hard copy and are on the DCS web site. They were formally launched in July 2008. To demonstrate the features dealt with in the guides and to seek feedback on Best Practice, four demonstration days were held during the year. These were particularly successful and included one for students training to be stalkers and gamekeepers. The Deer Initiative has taken up the gauntlet in England and Wales, publishing a web-based series of guides, using where appropriate material developed in Scotland. It is pleasing to report that a Scottish initiative is being replicated in England and Wales.

Road traffic accidents associated with deer are the largest part of my correspondence from the public. The work that DCS has undertaken in the past few years to identify key sections of trunk roads with a high incidence of road accidents, associated with deer, has been completed and mitigation measures put in place in collaboration with local land managers and Transport Scotland. One of the key issues is increasing driver awareness of the likely presence of deer. Driver-activated signs, warning of the likely presence of deer, are being erected in key sections of trunk roads at present and this, with the other measures

referred to above, should contribute to making Scotland a safer and healthier country.

A consultation was held this year on a new draft Strategy for Wild Deer in Scotland. This will be a joint strategy with Scottish Natural Heritage, Forestry Commission Scotland and the Scottish Government which aims to meet the challenge of managing a wild deer population that interacts with many people in many different ways. I believe that the Strategy, which will be launched in the autumn of 2008, will protect Scotland's biodiversity and contribute to successful businesses and thriving communities to meet the wealthier and fairer objectives of the Scottish Government. An important feature in the development of the Strategy was the committed involvement of a group of stakeholders. They will have an important role to play in its implementation over the next five years. The Strategy also struck an important balance between the different aspects of sustainability with a strong

emphasis on socio-economic priorities. This will be a significant new challenge for the Scottish Government agencies to deliver.

The new Corporate Plan of DCS, agreed with the Scottish Government for the next three years, indicates how DCS will deliver the Strategy for Wild Deer and the other strategic objectives of the Scottish Government. The firm proposal to merge Scottish Natural Heritage and DCS, which was announced by the Scottish Government in January 2008 and confirmed by the Minister for Environment in April 2008, is scheduled for 2010, subject to the approval of the Scottish Parliament. It will be a stimulus for DCS to deliver on its Corporate Plan objectives. The Deer Commission for Scotland will work closely with SNH and the deer sector to ensure that the objectives for sustainable deer management outlined in the Strategy for Wild Deer are achieved in the coming years.





Oll Iain Milne Cathraiche

Annas a' bhliadhna a chaidh seachd tha Ùghdarras nam Fiadh an Alba (DCS) air cur gu mòr ri coileanadh amasan ro-innleachdail Riaghaltas na h-Alba airson Alba a dhèanamh nas uaine, nas glìce, nas sàbhailte, nas fallaine agus nas beartiche.

Fon amas Alba nas uaine, tha DCS air cumail a' dol le obair air làraich a tha fo dhìon agus air an sònrachadh airson glèidhteachas nàdair fo reachdas Natura agus mar Ionadan de Shuim Shònraichte Shaidheansail, a' toirt taic do dh'oidhirpean air an toirt gu ìre fhàbharach.

Tha an obair seo còmhla ri buidhnean riaghaltas eile, le DCS air ceann na buidhne a tha a' dèiligeadh ri droch bhuidhean air fèidh. B' e DCS cuideachd am prìomh bhuidheann airson ochd làraich ùra fo dhìon ann an 2007 agus thathar air leth toilichte nach eil Innis nan Damh, aon de na h-Ionadan Sònraichte Glèidhteachais, a-nis a' fulang droch bhuidhean bho fhèidh ag ionaltradh agus a' stampadh. Tha seachd seòrsa àrainn chudromach air an làrach agus tha aonta saor-thoileach air a bhith eadar DCS agus oighreachd na sgìre bho 2003. Tha an lùghdachadh air droch bhuidhean bho fhèidh a' toirt an aonta gu crìoch shoibheachail. Tha e cudromach cuideachd nach deach na h-àrainnean ann an Gleann Caenlochan, a tha nam pàirt de dh'Ionad Sònraichte Glèidhteachais Caenlochan, na bu mhiosa na a' bhun-loidhne a chaidh a stèidheachadh ann an 2003. Tha seo mar thoradh air lùghdachadh mòr anns an àireamh de fhèidh san sgìre ach feumar tuilleadh lùghdachaidh air àireamhan fèidh gus coinneachadh ris an aonta saor-thoileach eadar DCS agus seachd oighreachdan ionadail.

Fon amas Alba nas glìce, bha seachd 's a ceithir Stiùireadh mun Chleachdadh as Fheàrr air an deasachadh agus air am foillseachadh le DCS còmhla ri buidhnean ann an roinn nam fiadh, a' gabhail a-steach Comann Gheamairean na h-Alba, Comann Fèidh Bhreatainn, Comann Bhuidhnean Rianachd nam Fiadh, Comann Urchaireachd agus Glèidhteachais Bhreatainn, Coimisean nan Coilltean Alba agus LANTRA. B' e obair chudromach a bha seo agus tha e a' sealltainn cho comasach 's a tha roinn nam fiadh air co-obrachadh airson inbhe rianachd fèidh an Alba àrdachadh. Gheibhear na stiùiridhean ann an riochd clò-bhuailte no air làrach-lìn DCS. Chaidh an cur air bhog gu foirmeil san Iuchair 2008. Gus sealltainn dè na nithean ris a bheilear a' dèiligeadh sna stiùiridhean agus beachdan air ais a shireadh mun Chleachdadh as Fheàrr, chaidh ceithir làithean taisbeanaidh a chumail tron bhliadhna. Bha iad sin air leth soirbheachail agus bha fear dhiubh do dh'oileanaich a' trèanadh airson a bhith nan stalcairean agus geamairean. Tha Iomairt nam Fiadh air aghaidh a chur air Sasainn agus a' Chuimrigh, a' foillseachadh sreath de stiùiridhean air an eadar-lìon, a' cleachdadh stuth air a dheasachadh an Alba far am bi sin iomchaidh. Tha mi toilichte a ràdh gu bheil leithid iomairt na h-Alba a-nis ann an Sasainn agus a' Chuimrigh.

'S ann mu thubaistean rathaid co-cheangailte ri fèidh a tha a' chuid as motha den chonaltradh agam ris a' mhòr-shluagh. Tha an obair a tha DCS air a ghabhail os làimh anns na beagan bhliadhnan a dh'fhalbh airson comharrachadh nan earrannan de phrìomh rathaidean air a bheil mòran thubaistean rathaid co-cheangailte ri fèidh, air a crìochnachadh agus ceuman maothachaidh air an stèidheachadh còmhla ri manaidsearan

fearainn ionadail agus Còmhaidh Alba. 'S e aon de na prìomh chùisean gum bi barrachd mothachaidh aig dràibhearair air càit am faodadh na fèidh a bhith. Thathar a' cur suas soidhnichean a bhios a' nochdadh ro dhràibhearair le rabhadh gum faodadh fèidh a bhith mun cuairt air earrannan sònraichte de phrìomh rathaidean aig an àm seo agus bu chòir don seo, còmhla ri na ceuman eile air an tugadh iomradh roimhe, cuideachadh a' dèanamh Alba nas sàbhailte agus nas fallaine.

Chaidh co-chomhairle a chumail am-bliadhna air dreachd Ro-innleachd ùr airson Fèidh an Alba. 'S e co-iomairt a bhios an seo còmhla ri Dualchas Nàdair na h-Alba, Coimisean nan Coilltean Alba agus Riaghaltas na h-Alba a tha ag amas air coinneachadh ris an dùbhlán a bhith a' rianachd àireamhan fèidh aig a bheil ceangal ri iomadh duine ann an iomadh dòigh. Tha mi den bheachd gum bi an Ro-innleachd, a bhios air a chur air bhog ann am foghar 2008, a' dìon bith-iomadachd na h-Alba agus a' cur ri gnìomhachasan agus coimhearsnachdan soirbheachail gus coinneachadh ri amasan Riaghaltas na h-Alba airson Alba nas beartiche agus nas cothromaiche. Bha e cudromach do dheasachadh na Ro-innleachd gun robh buidheann de luchd-earrainn deònach pàirt a

ghabhail ann. Bidh pàirt cudromach aca ann a bhith ga buileachadh thar an ath chòig bliadhna. Rinn an Ro-innleachd cothromachadh cudromach cuideachd eadar na diofar roinnean seasmhachd le cudrom làidir air prìomhachasan sòisio-eaconamach. Bidh e na dhùbhlán mòr ùr do bhuidhnean Riaghaltas na h-Alba seo a choileanadh.

Tha Plana Corporra ùr DCS, a tha aontaichte le Riaghaltas na h-Alba airson an ath thrì bliadhna, a' comharrachadh ciamar a libhrigeas DCS an Ro-innleachd airson Fèidh agus na h-amasan ro-innleachdail eile aig Riaghaltas na h-Alba. Tha am moladh airson co-aonadh Dualchas Nàdair na h-Alba agus DCS, a chaidh ainmeachadh le Riaghaltas na h-Alba san Fhaoilleach 2008 agus a dhearbhadh le Ministear na h-Àrainneachd sa Ghiblean 2008, air clàr-ama 2010 ma gheibhear aonta Pàrlamaid na h-Alba. Bidh e na chuideachadh do DCS airson amasan a Phlana Chorporra a choileanadh. Bidh Ùghdarras nam Fiadh an Alba ag obair gu dlùth còmhla ri SNH agus roinn nam fiadh gus dèanamh cinnteach gum bi na h-amasan airson rianachd fèidh seasmhach a tha air am mìneachadh anns an Ro-innleachd airson Fèidh air an coileanadh anns na bliadhnan a tha romhainn.



section 2: Introduction by the Chief Executive



Nick Halfhide
Chief Executive

DCS' work in 2007-08 has highlighted how wild deer and their management are an important element to achieving all 5 strategic objectives set by Scottish Government. By being proactive and engaging with land managers to deliver action on the ground, DCS has encouraged economic growth through the sustainable management of Scotland's wild deer resource.

Through its work on the ground across Scotland, DCS has contributed to:

- a greener Scotland by helping to protect both designated sites and the wider countryside where deer are present, and promoting the welfare of wild deer.
- a wealthier and fairer Scotland by working to promote economic opportunities offered by wild deer and reducing the economic loss that they can cause to farming, forestry and important natural habitats.

- a safer and stronger Scotland by working to reduce road traffic accidents involving wild deer, promoting the highest standards of health and safety within the deer sector, and contributing to rural development across Scotland.

- a healthier Scotland by working to reduce the risk posed to human health by diseases involving wild deer, supporting hygienic meat production and consumption, and promoting healthy outdoor activities such as deer watching and stalking.

- a smarter Scotland by working to increase skill levels among deer managers through leading the development and implementation of Best Practice Guidance.

The following chapters highlight the major pieces of work conducted by DCS during 2007-08 that sought to enable the deer sector to utilise the wild deer resource in a way that can deliver a diverse, sustainable and successful country.

Nick Halfhide Ceannard

Tha obair DCS ann an 2007-08 air comharrachadh mar a tha fèidh agus rianachd nam fiadh na phàirt cudromach ann an coileanadh nan 5 amasan ro-innleachdail fa leth a shuidhich Riaghaltas na h-Alba. Tro bhith for-ghnìomhach agus a' co-obrachadh le manaidsearan fearainn gus an obair a libhrigeadh, tha DCS air fàs san eaconamaidh a bhrosnachadh tro rianachd seasmhach air stòras fèidh na h-Alba.

Tron obair phrathaigeach aca air feadh Alba, tha DCS air cur ri:

- Alba nas uaine tro bhith a' cuideachadh a' dìon làraich shònraichte agus an tuath san fharsaingeachd far a bheil fèidh mun cuairt, agus ag adhartachadh math nam fiadh.
- Alba nas beairtiche agus nas cothromaiche tro strì airson adhartachadh air na cothroman eaconamach bho fhèidh agus lùghdachadh air a' chall eaconamach a dh'fhaodas iad a dhèanamh air tuathanachas, coilltearachd agus àrainnean nàdarra cudromach.

- Alba nas sàbhailte agus nas làidire tro strì airson lùghdachadh thubaistean rathaid co-cheangailte ri fèidh, adhartachadh nan ìrean slàinte agus sàbhailteachd as àirde taobh a-staigh roinn nam fiadh, agus cur ri leasachadh dùthchail air feadh Alba.

- Alba nas fallaine tro strì airson lùghdachadh a' chunnairt do shlàinte dhaoine bho ghalaran co-cheangailte ri fèidh, toirt taic do dhòighean obrachaidh agus ithe feòla fallain, agus adhartachadh cur-seachadan a-muigh fallain mar coimhead agus stalcaireachd nam fiadh.

- Alba nas glìce tro strì airson meudachadh air ìrean sgìlean am measg mhanaidsearan fèidh le bhith air ceann leasachadh agus buileachadh Stiùireadh mun Chleachdadh as Fheàrr.

Tha na caibidilean a leanas a' comharrachadh nam prìomh ghnìomhan a rinn DCS ann an 2007-08 gus feuchainn ri cothrom a thoirt do roinn nam fiadh an stòras fèidh a chleachdadh ann an dòigh a libhrigeas dùthaich mheasgaichte, sheasmhach agus shoirbheachail.



section 3: Engaging with the Deer Sector

DCS strives for openness and understanding with the key deer sector stakeholders through regular liaison meetings and ensures engagement with those that have a wider interest in deer through the Deer Management Round Table.

DCS promotes engagement with all parts of Scotland and Scottish society.

DCS employs experienced and knowledgeable staff who ensure there are strong linkages between nationally set objectives and practical local delivery.

During 2007-08: DCS led the development and consultation on a new joint agency strategy to guide Scotland's approach to wild deer which is balanced, sensitive to local circumstances and benefits Scotland's wild deer, people and environment.

DCS held 41 meetings and events to engage with deer sector stakeholders.

Strategy for wild deer in Scotland

During 2007-08 DCS led on the drafting of a new Strategy for Wild Deer in Scotland. When completed, the Strategy will reflect the increasingly integrated approach to deer management and will replace the previous DCS Vision and Long-term Strategy published in 2000-01.

The draft Strategy has been produced through a collaborative approach with input from an Advisory Group representing the multi-faceted interests associated with deer management and a Steering Group comprising Scottish Natural Heritage, Forestry Commission Scotland and the Rural Directorate of the Scottish Government.

The draft Strategy, together with environment and socio-economic reports, were available for public consultation from November 2007 to the beginning of February 2008. During this period four public consultation meetings were held in Inverness, Perth, Peebles and Braemar. In total 88 responses to the consultations were

received. Thirty-five of these were from individuals, 52 from organisations and 1 represented an individual and an organisation.

An Analysis Report on the consultation responses was compiled that identified 20 headline messages that would be used to explore where changes could be made to the draft Strategy. The final Strategy will be presented to Ministers for their approval in autumn 2008.

This Strategy will provide a clear framework for delivering sustainable deer management in the 21st century in a way which is balanced, sensitive to local circumstances and benefits Scotland's wild deer, people and environment.

Liaison with Stakeholders

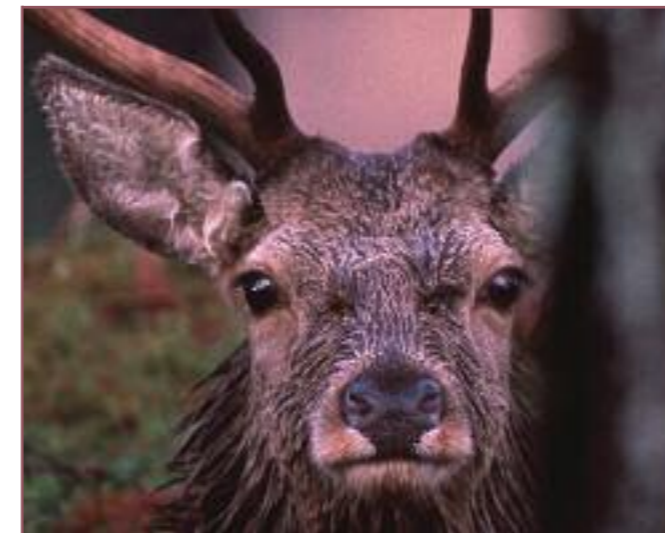
During 2007-08 DCS continued to meet on a regular basis with stakeholder organisations to share and discuss information and views about deer management. The following organisations met with DCS on at least a biannual basis:

- Association of Deer Management Groups
- British Association for Shooting and Conservation
- British Deer Society

- Deer Initiative (England and Wales)
- Forestry Commission Scotland
- Scottish Environment LINK
- Scottish Gamekeepers Association
- Scottish Natural Heritage.

The meetings highlighted issues and concerns, generated new ideas to be taken forward and showed where DCS needed to focus its attention or communicate more clearly. The issues raised throughout the year included the merger between DCS and SNH; managing grazing impacts on designated sites; interest and support for DCS' work to examine ways to improve deer welfare; ticks and Lyme disease; the interaction between deer management and countryside access for informal recreation; and the socio-economic impact of reduction culls on sites subject to control agreements.

The Deer Management Round Table met twice during the year and allowed a wider grouping of organisations with an interest in deer and deer management to meet and exchange views on how DCS and the deer sector can further progress the delivery of sustainable deer management.



section 4: Contributing to a Greener Scotland



Wild deer are a keystone species in many of Scotland's habitats.

During 2007-08:

DCS led a joint approach by Government bodies to contribute to the Scottish Government's target of having 95% of features on protected sites in favourable condition by 2010.

80% of designated features where deer are present are in favourable condition. The joint approach led by DCS ensured that 64% of the remaining 322 features that are not in favourable condition are being addressed.

DCS provided advice to 48 Deer Management Groups covering the majority of the open red deer range to help them deliver local proactive deer management on non-designated sites.

Improving biodiversity on designated sites

DCS chairs the deer inter-agency programme team which directs Scottish Government and Government Agency resources to natural heritage sites damaged by deer and other herbivores and which are most in need of attention in terms of conservation.

The team produced a work programme for 2007 and 2008 to deliver part of the Scottish Government's Nature Conservation targets. This work programme focused on sites which the team members collectively agreed were the highest priority for action in terms of conservation objectives, evidence gathered and available resources.

During 2007-08 a total of 19 new sites were added to the work programme across Scotland. This meant that 64% of the features in unfavourable condition and where herbivore grazing was considered to be an issue are now being actively addressed (see Annex 4 for a list of sites in the DCS work programme).

A series of detailed habitat impact assessments were conducted during 2007-08 in order to better understand and quantify the nature and extent of the grazing impacts on these sites. This included surveys of a range of plant communities at Breadalbane, Inchnadamph, Ardlair, Letterewe, Coulin, Caenlochan, Morrone Birk Woodlands, Kinveachy and Glenfeshie. Blaeberry monitoring and woodland profile surveys in Upper Deeside were also carried out.

In addition to the surveys, DCS conducted aerial census work during 2007-08 which covered over 500,000 hectares of deer range. Sites included in the census of deer included Breadalbane, North West Sutherland and North Ross. Results from the counts are presented in **table 1**.

Table 1 Open Range Counts Undertaken by DCS during 2007-08

	Date	Area (Ha)	Total Deer	Average Density Deer Counted (Deer per 100Ha)	Max. Density Deer Counted (Deer per 100Ha)
Caenlochan S7 area	Jul-07	25338	6308	24.9	
Caenlochan wider area	Jul-07	12100	1917	15.8	41.5
Monadhliath SAC	Jul-07	10671	2191	20.5	38.2
Drumochter Hills SAC	Jul-07	9347	2642	28.3	57.1
Mull	Dec-07	56578	6764	12.0	56.1
Glenfeshie S7 area	Jan-08	25019	1016	4.1	
Glenfeshie wider area	Jan-08	785	225	28.7	11.3
Drumrunie	Jan-08	4471	215	4.8	4.8
Caenlochan S7 area	Mar-08	25338	4903	19.4	
Caenlochan wider area	Mar-08	9570	2047	21.4	41.5
North West Sutherland	Mar-08	154828	8758	5.7	16.4
North Ross	Mar-08	125041	15101	12.1	39.8
Breadalbane	Mar-08	87081	13875	15.9	59.7
Inchnadamph	Mar-08	11154	1398	12.5	12.5

Inchnadamph

A significant milestone was reached at the Inchnadamph Special Area of Conservation in Sutherland during 2007-08.

In 2003 the 1,300-hectare site became part of a Section 7 Control Agreement after monitoring showed adverse impacts associated with grazing and trampling pressures from deer on protected habitat types.

Assynt Estate, through culling red deer hinds in particular, reduced the density from 25 deer

per square kilometre in 2004 to 18 deer per square kilometre in 2007/2008 to prevent damage to 7 habitat types for which the site qualifies as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

The habitat assessment, conducted in May 2007, showed significant signs of recovery within the site, signifying a positive conclusion to the Section 7 Control Agreement.

Discussions with the estate are ongoing about the future management of the site.

Caenlochan

In 2003, DCS signed a Control Agreement under Section 7 of the Deer (Scotland) Act 1996 with estates in the Caenlochan area to prevent damage to five specific habitat types in Caenlochan Glen.

Nine land-ownership units covering 25,000 hectares signed the 10-year agreement to prevent damage occurring to parts of the Caenlochan Special Area of Conservation and Site of Special Scientific Interest area. DCS conducts annual habitat monitoring within the Caenlochan Glen area to assess deer impacts.

Success was assessed against achieving target deer densities and preventing damage to key plant communities. Cull targets sought to reduce deer densities from a summer density of around 45 deer per square kilometre to between 9 and 19 deer per square kilometre by the third year of the agreement.

In 2005, the DCS Board agreed that the exceptional circumstances at Caenlochan required more immediate action and that DCS would assist a reduction cull from 2005 to

2007 to help achieve the target summer deer density.

DCS agreed cull targets with the estates to achieve target populations and densities for the control area over the two-year period, providing staff time and equipment to assist with the cull. The assistance concluded in February 2007.

In 2007-08, estate staff within the Control Agreement areas worked together towards achieving cull targets they had agreed in Section 7 Steering Group meetings. DCS provided some limited assistance as part of a training exercise, and culled 180 deer at the site.

A baseline habitat survey was conducted in 2003. Subsequent surveys have shown no further deterioration in the key plant communities from that 2003 baseline.

The Control Agreement runs until 2013 and DCS will continue to encourage the estates to reduce deer densities to agreed levels and successfully conclude the agreement.

section 5: Contributing to a Wealthier and Fairer Scotland



Authorisations to Take or Kill Wild Deer

DCS provides authorisations to individuals that give them legal permission to take or kill deer under circumstances where they would not normally have the right to do so. Different authorisations allow for different techniques in different circumstances and under different sections of the Deer (Scotland) Act 1996.

DCS is required to ensure that an individual who is controlling deer under an authorisation or approval is fit and competent to do so. DCS introduced a new system, the Fit and Competent Register, in order to establish a more robust means of ascertaining the fit and competent status of nominated controllers. Any controller now seeking to operate under an authorisation must be on the register.

As of 31st March 2008 DCS had a total of 643 nominated controllers on the Fit and Competent Register.

A recent study estimated that the management of wild deer supports 2,520 full time jobs in Scotland and contributes £105 million annually to the Scottish economy.

Wild deer can cause significant economic loss to agricultural crops and forestry, and to tourism through damage to the natural heritage, if they are not actively managed.

According to a study based on 2007 information, minimum venison exports to the EU for the period Oct-Dec amount to £1.2 million of revenue and result in a further £1.6 million revenue being injected into rural businesses and estates.

During 2007/08:

DCS issued 179 night-shooting and 63 out-of-season authorisations to protect agriculture, forestry and the natural heritage from serious damage by wild deer.

During the Foot and Mouth Disease outbreak DCS provided an information services to the deer sector ensuring losses and restrictions to income generated from stalking and export of venison were minimised.

DCS initiated work to examine the social and economic impact of large culls in order to better understand the challenges arising from the need to balance protection of the natural heritage with sustaining rural communities.



Authorisation type	No. issued 01/04/2006- 31/03/2007	No. issued 01/04/2007 31/03/2008
Section 18(2) Night shooting	165	179
Section 26(2) Out of season at request of occupier	42	01
Section 5(6) Out of season to protect unenclosed woodland, the natural heritage, or public safety	55	61
Section 5(7) Out-of-season for research purposes	0	1
Sections 10(2) & (4) Emergency powers	0 & 12	2 & 0
Total	274	243

Foot and Mouth Disease outbreak

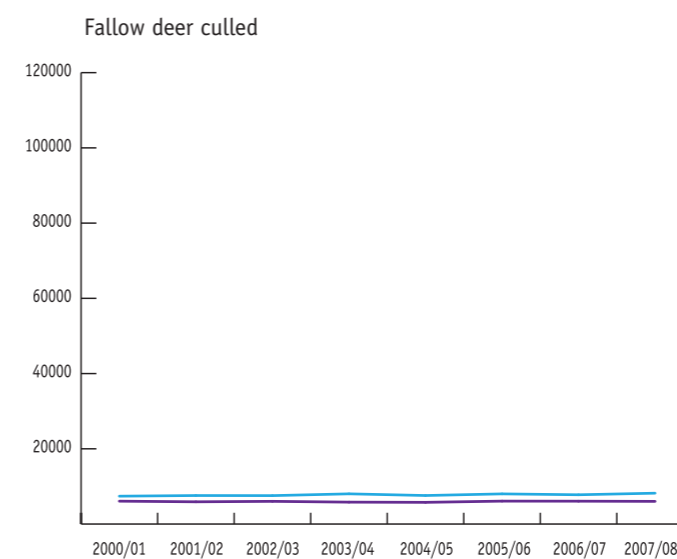
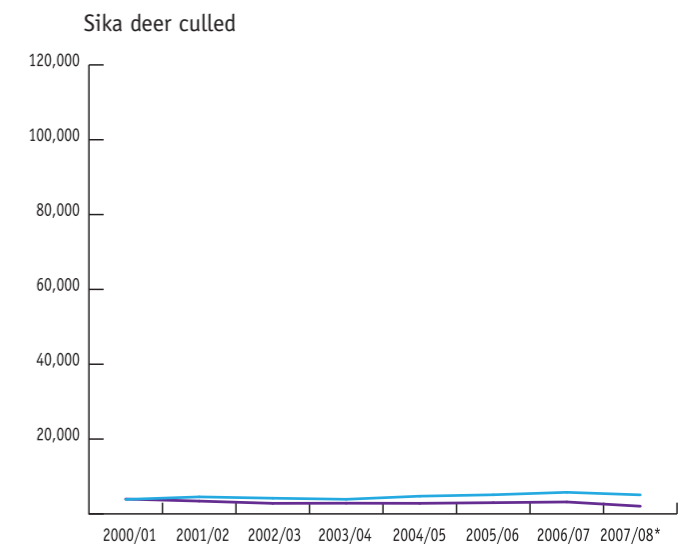
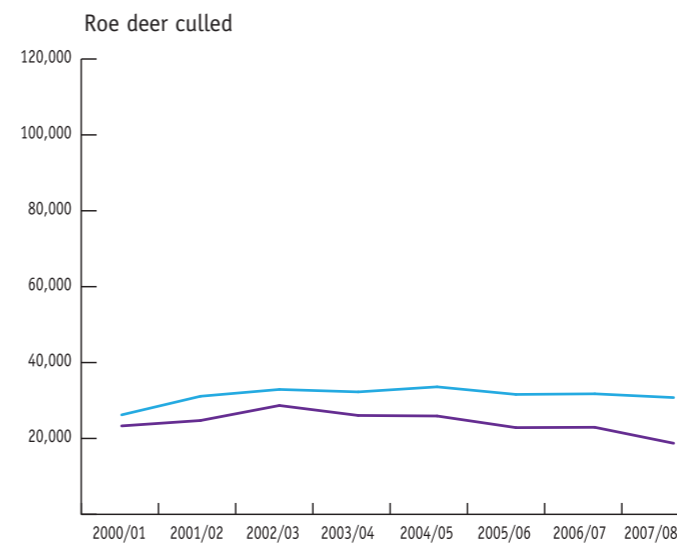
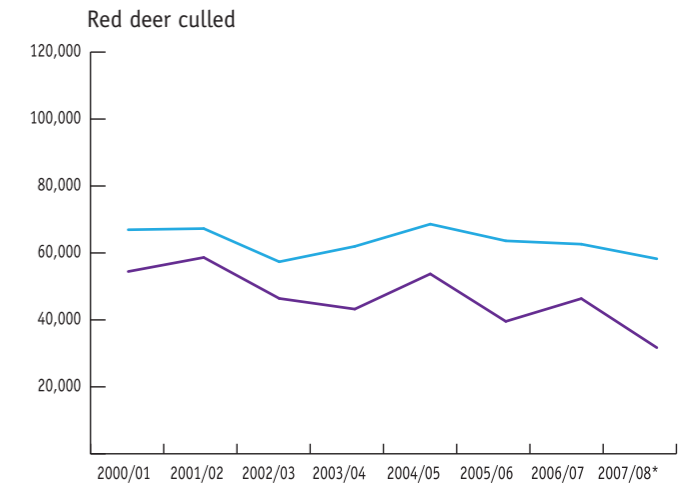
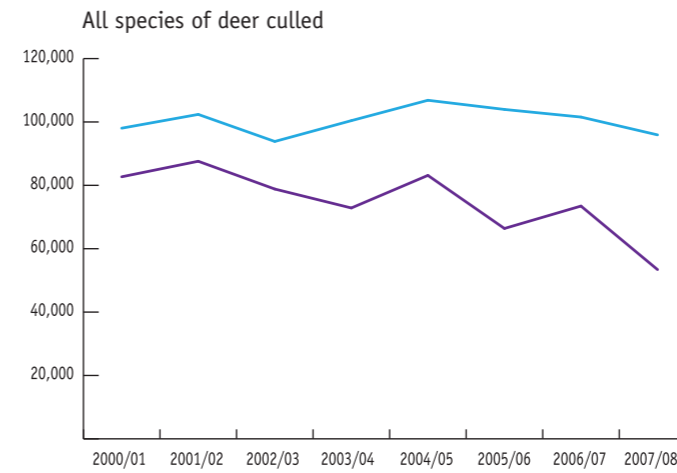
DCS acted as the focal point for the deer sector during the Foot and Mouth Disease outbreak ensuring that stakeholders were kept up to date with developments whilst liaising closely with the Animal Health in the Scottish Government. Of particular concern to the deer sector was the continued ban on venison exports to the EU despite the earlier lifting of beef exports. DCS coordinated and advised the deer sector in its efforts to lift the export ban which was finally achieved in December 07.

Socio-economic study

DCS initiated work to scope the social and economic impacts associated with large-scale reductions in red deer populations. The work seeks to describe what information is required to ensure an objective approach can be taken when considering the balance between protecting the natural heritage and sustaining rural communities. In particular the study considers the potential decline in:

- Sporting opportunities
- Income
- Capital value
- Employment
- Tourism

DCS will publish the findings of this research in 2008-09.



■ Cull return
■ Venison return

*2007-08 figures are subject to revision due to late returns

Cull and venison returns

Data on cull returns and venison returns, obtained by DCS, provides one means by which the revenue generated from utilising the wild deer resource can be assessed. The records also provide an index to the size, distribution and utilisation of the wild deer resource. The Cull Returns in particular provide a year-on-year indication of culling trends, and subsets of the information can be used to manage deer at a local level when combined with other population and management information.

The figures provided above show Statutory Cull and Venison Returns over the last five years up to 31st March 2007. The reporting of the Statutory Cull and Venison Returns are collated during the late spring/summer and figures for 2007-08 will appear on www.dcs.gov.uk

For
2 miles

section 6: Contributing to a Safer and Stronger Scotland



Around 8,500 deer-vehicle collisions occur in Scotland annually.

In Scotland it is estimated that the annual toll from accidents involving deer is 74 injuries to drivers and passengers. This is likely to include 1 to 2 fatalities and a further 16 people are likely to be seriously injured.

During 2007-08:

DCS ensured that mitigation measures were put in place on four trunk roads to reduce traffic accidents caused by wild deer.

Deer and road traffic accidents

During 2007-08 DCS continued to focus on sites associated with deer-related Road Traffic Accidents (RTAs), and undertook work to minimise the risk of collisions between deer and vehicles on Scotland's roads and increase awareness among road users of deer.

DCS with key partners, including landowners, land managers and road maintenance organisations, identified, implemented and monitored solutions on sites already identified.

In particular, work during 2007-08 focused on improving vegetation management on the A87 Invermoriston to Shiel Bridge road, the A82 road at Glencoe and the A835 road between Garve and Ullapool. Better vegetation management can reduce the risk of deer moving to the roadside to find food.

The appropriate positions on key trunk roads for the use of speed-activated road signs, which light up by the roadside in locations where the risk of deer-related RTAs is shown to be higher than other areas, were identified. The signs are scheduled to be installed later in 2008 and monitoring will take place to evaluate their effectiveness.

In the last 12 months DCS, with partners, has promoted the Deer Vehicle Collisions project which is a scheme monitoring and logging deer vehicle collisions across the UK. The work is co-ordinated and managed by the Deer Initiative and DCS provides part of the funding. It also assists in raising the profile of the Deer Vehicle Collisions project among deer managers and local communities through media campaigns, one of which took place in spring 2008.

section 7: Contributing to a Healthier Scotland



Venison

In 2007-08 DCS provided the secretariat for the Venison Working Group, a team of representatives from across the deer sector which meets on a regular basis to provide assistance and support for Scotland's primary venison producers. This includes assistance in meeting hygiene regulations, increasing the quality of venison handling and encouraging greater collaboration among Scotland's venison producers.

During 2007-08, the group focused efforts on assisting venison producers to respond to the EU consultation on animal by-products, and to understand and mitigate against the potential knock-on effects associated with an increase in processing costs on wider deer management.

Deer management provides health benefits through healthy outdoor activities such as deer watching and stalking.

The venison produced is a healthy low fat meat.

During 2007-08:

DCS worked with the venison industry to ensure the handling of the wild deer carcasses is of the highest standard.

section 8: Contributing to a Smarter Scotland



Practitioners who manage and cull deer require to have a broad set of skills ranging from firearms, food hygiene, habitat assessment to man management.

The deer sector has met the challenge of assuring these skills through the development of vocational qualifications and recognises the need to further improve the levels of skills and knowledge among both professional and recreational stalkers through both formal and informal training and education.

During 2007-08:

DCS explored with the deer sector new options for safeguarding deer welfare, public safety, and food safety.

DCS led a partnership with the deer sector and published 76 Best Practice Guides that set out the information, advice and skills required to ensure Scotland's wild deer resource is managed to the highest standards.

DCS with its partners in the deer sector staged four days of Best Practice Demonstration Events, one being dedicated to students from land-based colleges, that promoted discussion and demonstration skills required for modern deer management.

Welfare and competence in sustainable deer management

During 2007-08, DCS explored with the deer sector the welfare of wild deer and the competence of those shooting them as part of broadening the concept of sustainable deer management. DCS also examined ways to gather, share and use data more efficiently. This work is in part a response to the Consultation on the Close Seasons held in 2005, which highlighted that the current Close Seasons do not safeguard the welfare of all deer throughout the year.

This focus on welfare and competence is being developed through three inter-related projects:

- Responsibility of care for deer welfare
- Competence in relation to shooting wild deer
- Unified data system

Seventeen reports, commissioned by DCS from external consultants, were compiled. These reports gathered together background data and evidence from both an international and a Scottish perspective. The focus of the reports included identifying public perceptions with regard to wild deer welfare, approaches to measuring and monitoring competence used in other countries, and systems which are used to collect and collate data.

The issues and ideas emerging from these reports provided the basis for stakeholder engagement. In November 2007, DCS held a seminar to explore these issues and ideas in detail with over 90 individuals from across the deer sector. Building on the success of this seminar, further workshops and a seminar are planned in 2008-2009 to finalise advice on these issues to the Scottish Government.

Best practice guidance

Best practice guidance has been developed by Scotland's deer sector to provide the best information available on wild deer management in a format that is easy to access.

A set of 74 guides was completed by DCS in partnership with a Steering Group comprising the Association of Deer Management Groups, the British Association for Shooting and Conservation, the British Deer Society, Forestry Commission Scotland, LANTRA and the Scottish Gamekeepers Association. In addition, a wide range of professional and part-time deer managers, individual experts and organisations, such as SSPCA and the Health and Safety Executive, were involved in the development of the guides which were tested by users including students undertaking gamekeeper courses.

The guides provide clarity on the laws relating to deer management in Scotland as well as describing best practice across a wide range of deer management issues, and aim to provide guidance in three core areas – safeguarding

public safety, ensuring food safety and taking full account of deer welfare.

Printed copies of the guides were sent to subscribers in June 2008. Electronic copies are available to download free of charge from the Best Practice website - www.dcs.co.uk/BestPractice.

Best practice of demonstration events

DCS delivered four demonstration days over two events during 2007-08 in collaboration with the Steering Group organisations. The first took place at the Hushinish Peninsula on Harris on 14th July, with the second held at Glenfalloch near Loch Lomond from 25th to 27th October. A dedicated day for students at Glenfalloch attracted students from Elmwood College, North Highland College and Borders College.

The events in Harris and at Glenfalloch, together with those held in previous years, have attracted 850 practitioners and encouraged interaction, discussion and debate about Best Practice topics in development as well as demonstrating deer management issues.



section 9: Efficient Governance



DCS is committed to working efficiently, effectively and economically in ways that are open and accountable to the Scottish public, and which improve our service to customers.

DCS is working to reduce its use of resources, particularly its carbon footprint.

During 2007-08:

DCS managed its expenditure to within 0.67% of budget

DCS reduced transport-related carbon emissions by 12%

DCS played an active role in developing Scotland's Environmental and Rural Services

Resources

The Scottish Government provided DCS with a budget of £1,720,000. A further £143,500 was received from Scottish Natural Heritage towards the costs of additional work on nature conservation sites.

DCS expenditure for the financial year ending 31st March 2007 amounted to £1,864,722, an overspend of £1,222. This was well within the 2% expenditure target. An Abstract of Income and Expenditure for 2007-08 is presented in Annex 1.

Service improvement

During 2007-08, DCS worked closely with eight other organisations in Scotland's Environmental and Rural

Services to improve services to land managers across Scotland. As part of its contribution, DCS trained a number of Forest Enterprise staff to undertake inspections on DCS's behalf. This will provide a more local service to many land managers and reduce travel for DCS staff.

Openness and accountability

During 2007-08 DCS held four Board Meetings which were open to the public. These were held in Perthshire and Argyll, and two in Inverness.

Informal meetings were held in the evening following the Board Meetings in Argyll and in Perthshire. These gave members of the public an opportunity to meet DCS Board Members and staff to discuss policies and the

work of DCS in an informal setting, and to raise issues or concerns relating to deer management in Scotland.

Five requests for information under the Freedom of Information Scotland Act were received during the year and dealt with within the prescribed time period. These requests ranged from how DCS conducts deer counts to salaries of DCS staff.

Environmental performance

The DCS Environmental Policy against which targets were set for 2007-08 was agreed by the DCS Board in September 2006.

The targets were calculated as a proportion of the overall targets for Great Glen House based on the DCS staff accounting for 10% of all staff based in the building. As these were the first targets set for Great Glen House, they were based on estimates rather than baseline data. The challenge for the year ahead will be to critically review performance and ensure targets are meaningful while challenging for a multi-occupancy building.

Summary of Performance 2007-08: Performance related to DCS Travel:

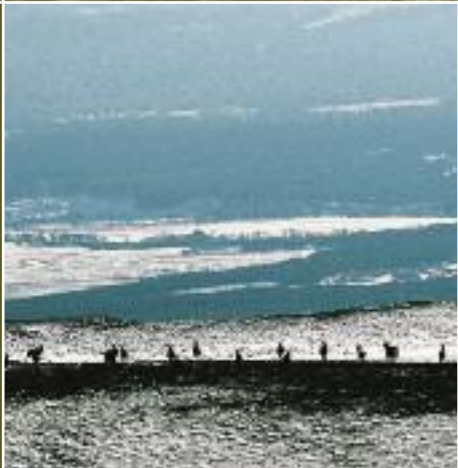
Targets	Achievements	Comments
Transport Emissions Reduce transport emissions by 5% from 06-07 to 07-08	Exceeded	DCS reduced carbon emissions in transport use by 12.5% (from 12,800 kg to 11,200 kg carbon).

Performance related to office based activities within Great Glen House:

The table below relates to DCS's performance as an occupier of a multi-occupancy building.

Targets	Achievements	Comments
Paper Use Annual consumption of 176 reams	Exceeded	Paper consumption was 37% lower than the target
Waste Annual figure of 30,000 litres	Exceeded	DCS exceeded the target for waste by more than 50%
Energy Use Annual consumption of 70,800 kW per hour	Not Fully Achieved	Actual consumption attributed to DCS was 111,897 kW per hour.
Recycling 90% of all waste is recycled	Not Fully Achieved	DCS recycled 60% of all its waste

section 10: The Year Ahead



DCS is committed to creating a more successful country where all of Scotland can flourish through increasing sustainable economic growth.

DCS has a full programme of delivery for 2008-09 and through regular reporting via Scotland Performs, DCS will demonstrate its contribution to this goal.

Highlights are provided below and a full list is available on our website at

http://www.dcs.gov.uk/info_documents.aspx

During 2008-09 DCS are going to:

Greener

- work with land managers and other agencies to bring sites designated for nature conservation across Scotland into favourable condition. DCS will lead on 7 new sites, conduct 6 major habitat surveys, and undertake 8 large scale red deer counts
- work with the Scottish Government to bring forward tighter regulations to protect the genetic purity of red deer on some of the west coast islands and make it harder to introduce new species to Scotland, especially Muntjac

- explore further the link between deer and climate change
- develop proposals with the deer sector so that those culling deer can demonstrate that they are safeguarding deer welfare, public safety and food hygiene at all times

Wealthier and Fairer

- develop plans to reduce the impact of increasing deer populations around Scotland's towns and cities
- promote venison, deer watching and other economic activities relating to wild deer;
- reduce damage to agricultural and forestry crops through authorising shooting out of season and at night where appropriate
- monitor the role of deer in diseases that threaten the livelihood of farmers, in particular Blue tongue and Foot and Mouth Disease
- publish research into the economic cost to local communities of large-scale deer culls

- update knowledge on the economic cost of deer damage to farming and forestry

Healthier

- promote the consumption of venison, including a reception at the Scottish Parliament with the Association of Deer Management Groups
- help raise the awareness of ticks and how to reduce cases of Lyme disease

Safer and Stronger

- launch a campaign in the spring and autumn to highlight the heightened danger of deer collisions on the roads at these times
- re-start the collection of data on deer vehicle collisions across Scotland
- complete implementation of methods to reduce deer vehicle collisions on the A835, A82, and A87 roads

Smarter

- launch and publicise the Best Practice Guides at the Scottish Game Fair at Scone in July
- develop the Best Practice Partnership to take forward the Best Practice initiative

- hold at least one Best Practice event in the autumn for practitioners and Scottish land-based colleges

In support of this delivery, and looking to the longer term, DCS will also:

- present a new national approach to managing Scotland's wild deer to Scottish Ministers
- conduct a review of legislation to support this new approach
- continue to support Deer Management Groups across Scotland and develop at least 4 case studies to consider how the local management of deer could be better organised
- set up sites and systems to provide long-term information on trends within deer populations across Scotland
- maintain an open, two-way discussion with all parts of the deer sector
- work through Scotland's Environmental and Rural Services to improve the delivery of services to all our customers
- work closely with Scottish Natural Heritage to prepare for the merger of the two organisations in 2010



annexes

ANNEX 1

Abstract of Income and Expenditure for Year Ended 31st March 2008.

Note: The following notes form an integral part of this abstract:

(1) The Scottish Government allocated the Deer Commission for Scotland a budget of £1,720,000 for the financial year ending 31st March 2008.

(2) Income received by the Deer Commission for Scotland is through the disposal of vehicles and equipment surplus to requirements and sale of Best Practice Guides.

(3) The Deer Commission for Scotland received £143,500 from Scottish Natural Heritage towards the costs of bringing additional sites into the Joint Working process.

(4) Accommodation costs were higher in 2007-08 than 2006-07 as the Deer Commission for Scotland continued to pay all charges relating to their former office premises at 'Knowsley'. This includes rates, security services, gardening costs and all costs relating

to the maintenance of the building. In addition, no accommodation costs in relation to Great Glen House were incurred prior to 1st April 2007.

(5) Costs of Administration were higher in 2007-08 than 2006-07 mainly due to contributions now required in relation to legal costs for the Deer Commission for Scotland's occupation of part of Great Glen House and the costs relating to the consultation on the 'Strategy for Wild Deer'.

(6) The higher costs in 2007-08 than 2006-07 reflect the higher costs of using helicopters to count deer on designated sites.

(7) Costs were higher in 2007-08 than 2006-07 in this area due to (a) training for field staff to maintain operational effectiveness and (b) the purchase of additional field staff equipment.

(8) The higher costs in 2007-08 were incurred in relation to the development of Best Practice Guides and work on the 'Next Steps' projects.



Totals	2007-08	2006-07
RECIEPT	£	£
Provision	(1) 1,708,760	1,674,416
Other Receipts	(2) 11,240	12,584
Allocation from Scottish Natural Heritage	(3) 143,500	
<i>Total</i>	<i>1,863,500</i>	<i>1,687,000</i>
PAYMENTS		
Salaries and Wages:		
Chairman (including Pension)	29,861	29,693
Members	43,750	43,750
Staff	777,899	750,338
<i>Total</i>	<i>851,510</i>	<i>823,781</i>
Travel and Subsistence		
Chairman and Members	12,144	12,139
Staff	40,670	40,792
<i>Total</i>	<i>52,814</i>	<i>52,931</i>
Other Operating Payments:		
Accommodation	(4) 129,623	71,123
Administration	(5) 161,622	128,586
Vehicle and Transport	(6) 281,876	202,770
Other	(7) 85,991	47,731
Research, Training and Development (includes development of Best Practice Guides and staging of Best Practice Demonstration events. Also includes the development of Next Steps projects	(8) 301,286	222,611
<i>Total</i>	<i>960,398</i>	<i>672,821</i>
GRAND TOTAL	1,864,722	1,549,533
Excess of Income over Payments (Payments Over Receipts)	-1,222	137,467



annexes

ANNEX 2

Board members as at 31st of March 2008:

Professor John Milne

Dr Andrew Barbour

Mr Andrew Hamilton

Dr Colin Shedden

Dr Peter Mayhew

Mr Simon Pepper

Professor Josephine Pemberton

Earl of Dalhousie

Mr Niall Rowantree

Advisors to Board

Sir Michael Strang-Steel

Professor Susan Walker

ANNEX 3

Staff as at 31st of March 2008 –

Alan Corrigan – Operations Manager

Alastair MacGugan – Director of Stakeholder Relations

Carol Taylor – Administrative Support Officer

Donald Fraser – Deer Officer

Eilidh Moir – Administrative Assistant

Erlend Barclay – Communications Officer

Graeme Macrae – Field Team Manager

Iain Hope – Deer Officer

James Hammond – Deer Officer

Jessica Findlay – Policy Officer

Kelly Matheson – Procurement Officer

Linzi Seivwright – Best Practice Project Officer

Moria Grant – Management Support Officer

Nick Halfhide – Chief Executive

Raymond Edwards – Head of Administration

Robbie Kernahan – Director of Deer Management

Sue Dymond – Technical Support Officer

Mary Crawford – Technical Support Officer

Laura Fenton – Technical Support Officer

Peter Kirk - Deer Officer

Claire McNeilly – Procurement Officer

Jimmy Irvine – Deer Support Officer

Graeme Taylor – Deer Support Officer

Craig Dickman – IT Support Officer

ANNEX 4

List of all designated sites in DCS work programme

Site Name	Year on programme	Site Name	Year on programme
North		Central	
Alladale	2005	Beinn A'Ghlo	2007
Ardllair-Letterewe	2006	Ben Alder and Anoch Beag	2007
Ardvar Woodlands	2006	Ben Nevis	2008
Beinn Dearg	2007	Cairngorms SAC (Includes Glenfeshie, Mar Lodge, Abernethy, Rothiemurchus & Glenavon)	2007
Ben Loyal	2005	Drumochter Hills	2005
Ben Wyvis	2007	Forest of Clunie	2003
Berriedale and Langwell Waters	2007	Kinveachy	2002
Coulin Pinewood	2006	Monadhliath	2002
Drumrunie	2001		
Flow Country	2004	South	
Foinaven and Stack Woods	2007	Carriber Glen	2007
Inchnadamph	2001		
and Ben More Assynt		West	
Loch Shiel Woods	2007	Ard Trilleachan	2006
North Harris	2006	Ardchylene	2006
Polly Estate and Eisg	2006	Ardmore Kildalton	2006
Brachaidh, Cam Loch - part of Inverpolly		& Calumkill Woodlands	
Rhidorroch Woods	2006	Arran Northern Mountains	2005
Rum	2002	Ben More Stob Binnein	2005
Strathglass Complex	2002	Breadalbane - including	2007
		Ben Heasgarnich, Meall na Ghaordie, Carn Gorm Meall Garbh, Ben Lawers.	
East		Doire Dhonn	2007
Caenlochan	2007	Glen Lochay Woods	2007
additional sites (Garbh Choire, Glen Callater, Cairnwell)		Kinuachdrach	2007
Cairngorms SAC	2007	Loch Lomond Islands	2007
(Includes Glenfeshie, Mar Lodge, Abernethy, Rothiemurchus & Glenavon)		- NNR (Inchlonaig)	
Kellas Oakwood	2007	Mugdock Wood	2007
Tore of Troupe	2007	Mull Oakwoods	2007
Upper Deeside including	2003	(Ben More Scarisdale and Loch Ba)	
Ballochbuie, Craig Clunie and Morrone Birkwood			