



# Scotland's Wild Deer

## A National Approach

Including 2015 – 2020 Priorities

2014 Review



The Scottish Government  
Riaghaltas na h-Alba

# Scotland's Wild Deer

## A National Approach

Including 2015 – 2020 Priorities

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**Dr Aileen McLeod**  
Minister for Environment, Climate  
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# Foreword

Scotland's Wild Deer bring benefits to a wide range of people. They support jobs, are part of Scotland's biodiversity and provide us with healthy meat and recreational and sporting opportunities. Wild deer have a special hold on the public and are the animal most frequently associated with Scotland.

It is therefore no wonder that how deer are managed in Scotland elicits strong feelings. What is clear, and I trust agreed among all those involved in deer management, is that a healthy, diverse and robust environment is critical. Healthy ecosystems and access to the services they provide, form the foundation upon which Scotland's rural and urban communities can thrive.

This 2014 Review of Scotland's Wild Deer: A National Approach (WDNA) builds on the achievements since 2008. Many have worked together to deliver a range of actions to promote wild venison, provide opportunities for people to see deer and protect special natural habitats. However, there is still much to do and the challenge to maximise the benefits from our land continues.

Wild deer do have a negative impact on the natural environment, in certain places, as well as wider impacts on forestry and agriculture. The Native Woodland Survey of Scotland (2006–2012) showed that inappropriate deer numbers are preventing woodlands from thriving. This impacts on the role these woodlands can play in our climate change responses. Inappropriate wild deer numbers are also preventing the recovery of a number of protected, vulnerable species and sites. I acknowledge the improvements that have been delivered so far, but deer managers must look to reduce these negative impacts further and enhance the provision of wider public benefits.

The Scottish Government will continue to put healthy ecosystems and access and enjoyment of our countryside at the forefront of land use. Scotland's landscapes are internationally renowned and attract tourists and economic investment from far and wide. How deer are managed will contribute to the Scottish Government's vision for a strong relationship between the people of Scotland and the land of Scotland. I believe this contribution should and can be a positive one. I continue to support the voluntary approach to wild deer management but wish there to be no doubt that clear expectations have been placed on deer and land managers to deliver an enhanced range of public interests alongside their private objectives.

I acknowledge the private investment which goes into deer management. Deer Management Groups and deer management planning have come a long way but the pace of change needs to quicken. This WDNA sets out where the challenges and priorities for the next five years lie. It sets out how those involved in deer management can adopt higher standards of deer management planning and delivery.

This WDNA provides those who utilise Scotland's wild deer resource with the opportunity to show how deer management can contribute to the Scottish Land Use Strategy, to any future Land Reform policies and proposals and to support a wide range of benefits from Scotland's land. It is the responsibility of all those involved with and who have an interest in deer to deliver the WDNA. Actions on the ground will be co-ordinated through the WDNA Action Plans. I look forward to receiving updates, through these Action Plans, on how the challenges within WDNA are being met.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Aileen McLeod'.

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# 1 : Introduction



## 1.1 What is Scotland's Wild Deer: A National Approach?

Scotland's Wild Deer: A National Approach (WDNA) is a 20 year vision for wild deer management. Launched in November 2008 it was developed and is being delivered by private and public bodies working together. WDNA is relevant to all species of wild deer in Scotland and all types of land ownership and land management; from the uplands to towns and cities. It is relevant to all organisations and individuals who have an interest in deer and their management.

Wild deer are an asset to Scotland. They play an important role in our rural economy, provide us with healthy food and recreational opportunities and are integral to Scotland's ecosystems. Red and roe deer are commonly regarded as "iconic" animals. When not managed well, however, deer can impact negatively on the natural heritage, forestry, agriculture and public safety.

Wild deer are managed throughout Scotland by a wide range of land management interests including individuals, businesses, recreational and community bodies and organisations across private, voluntary and public sectors. All these groups have a role to play in delivering the long-term vision described in WDNA. The Code of Practice on Deer Management, introduced in 2012, describes the 'responsibility' to 'manage deer sustainably'<sup>1</sup>. Ongoing delivery of WDNA will rely on increasing collaboration among land use interests and the Scottish Government.

There has been a recent increase in debate about deer management. There is a growing desire for deer management to deliver wider public benefits and to ensure the negative impacts on the natural heritage, along with wider economic costs, are minimised. Deer management is under increasing public and political scrutiny. The Review recognises this, and sets out the challenges that need to be addressed to meet this expectation. This is part of a wider change in land use policy in Scotland that acknowledges that ecosystem health is at the heart of a healthy and diverse economy and key to delivering the Government's long term goals.

This first five-year Review of WDNA prioritises actions for sustainable deer management in Scotland for 2015–2020.

## 1.2 Wild Deer in Scotland

There are four species of wild deer in Scotland: roe, red, sika and fallow. A fifth species, muntjac, has been reported but has not been confirmed as being resident in Scotland. Roe deer and red deer are native species; they colonised Scotland naturally after the end of the last glaciation around 10,000 years ago and wild populations have survived in Scotland since then. Sika and fallow deer have both become established following introduction. See Wild Deer Best Practice Guides for further information on their ecology: WDBP Guide – red deer ecology, WDBP Guide – roe deer ecology, WDBP Guide – fallow deer ecology, WDBP Guide – sika deer ecology<sup>2</sup>.

The total population of wild deer in Scotland is not known as assessing national populations is an inaccurate science. The most recent population counts give national estimates of 360,000–400,000 red deer, 200,000–350,000 roe deer, 25,000 sika and 8,000 fallow<sup>3</sup>. Land managers in Scotland use local deer counts to inform management decisions at a local level. The focus should remain 'on the impacts of deer rather than their absolute numbers'<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Code of Practice on Deer Management, SNH, January 2012

<sup>2</sup> [www.bestpracticeguides.org.uk/guides/ecology-intro](http://www.bestpracticeguides.org.uk/guides/ecology-intro)

<sup>3</sup> SNH Evidence to the Rural Affairs, Climate Change and Environment Committee, November 2013

<sup>4</sup> Letter from Paul Wheelhouse, Minister for Environment and Climate Change to the Rural Affairs, Environment and Climate Change Committee 05/03/14



### 1.3 Managing Wild Deer

The legal framework for wild deer management derives from Scots law, under which deer belong to no-one until they are killed or captured. The right to shoot deer cannot normally be separated from the ownership of land. Deer management is carried out by land managers on a range of land holding types, including estates, farms, amenity parks and crofts and through recreational stalking.

Wild deer should be managed to meet a wide range of objectives. These are made up of individual land manager's private interests and public interests as captured in policy and legislation. 'Private and public interests are often interdependent but in some circumstance they can come into conflict. Whilst investment in deer management provides jobs and supports local communities, maintenance of high deer populations to support demand for stalking may lead to negative effects e.g. environmental damage'<sup>5</sup>.

Whilst public and private interests can be mutually supportive, managing conflicting objectives is one of the key challenges that land managers and government will need to address. A more open, collaborative approach to deer management is an important way to deliver more integrated and balanced outcomes.

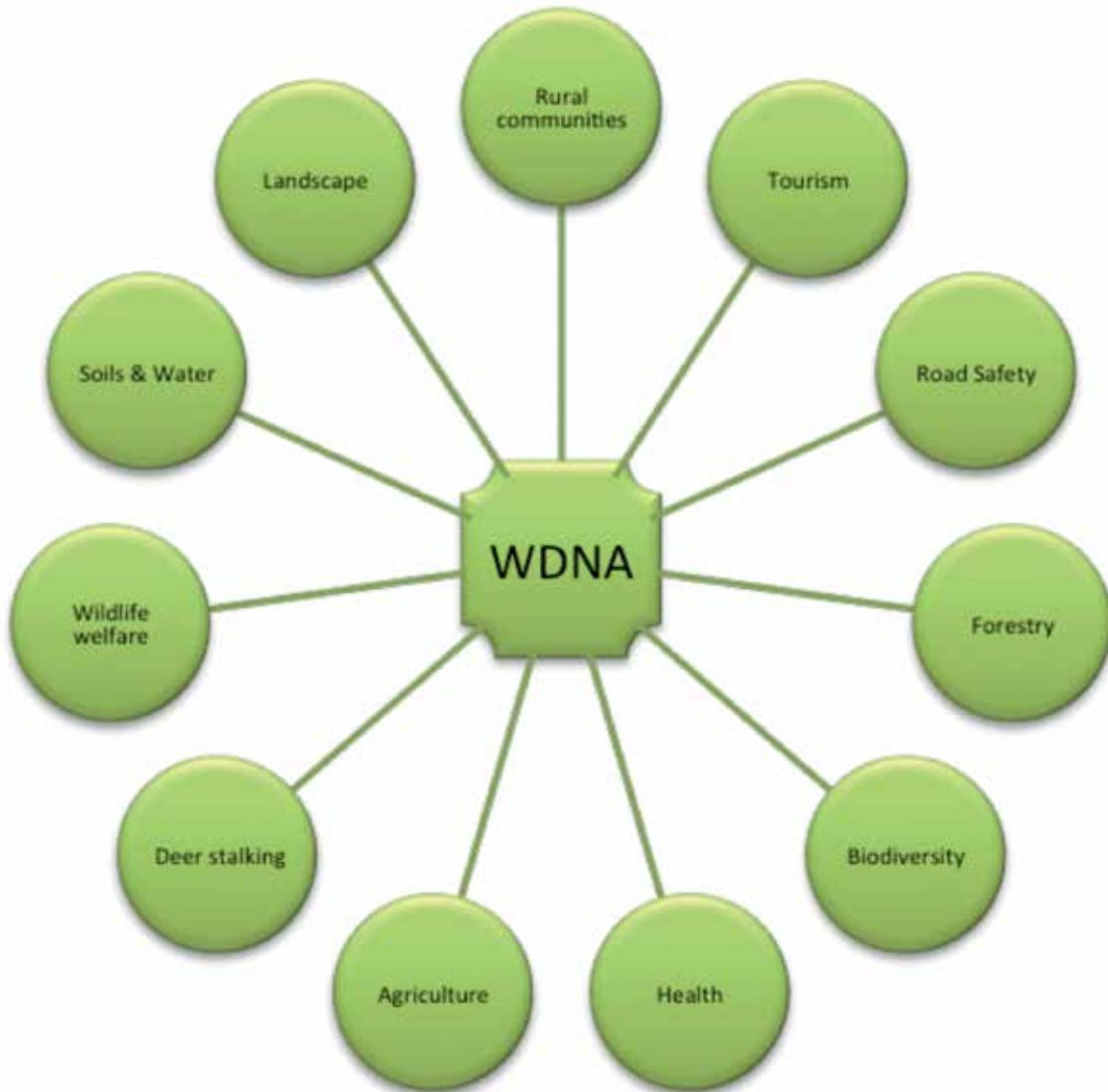


Diagram showing the private and public interests represented through WDNA

<sup>5</sup> SNH Code of Practice on Deer Management 2012



## 1.4 Healthy Ecosystems and Deer

Ecosystems are soils, plants, water, wildlife, land and air functioning together. Healthy ecosystems exist at different scales from an individual pond up to a forest or an ocean. In the uplands a 'deer range', as an ecosystem, can extend from the bottom of a glen to the top of a mountain ridge. In an urban context, woodland, bordered by houses, is an ecosystem. Both are characterised by interdependent processes.

Deer are a key part of an ecosystem. Healthy ecosystems bring multiple benefits to land, people, nature and to the deer themselves. Healthy ecosystems provide services like wild food, flood protection, clean water and valued landscapes. Deer contribute to and have an impact on these services. To maximise these benefits land managers should take into account the relationship between deer and the land they live upon. They also take account of the range of benefits people get from deer and the land, both direct (e.g. stalking and venison) and indirect (e.g. tourism and wildlife watching). Those who benefit from the land and who influence it should be involved in the decisions about how it should be managed. Given the wider impacts that deer management can have it is important that land managers engage with other interested parties so there is broader input to management decisions.

Deer contribute to ecosystem services by being a source of wild food (the annual value of venison sales is approximately £2million<sup>6</sup>) and provide inspiration for people to get outdoors as a part of wildlife tourism. They also provide stalking opportunities (a survey<sup>7</sup> carried out by the Association of Deer Management Groups suggested that the annual value to the Scottish economy of deer stalking was estimated as £105 million for 2005). Deer can also impact negatively on these services by damaging woodlands (in 2013, assessments concluded that 23% of protected features in the red deer range were in unfavourable condition<sup>8</sup>) and soils. Deer can also impact negatively on the role of riparian woodland in stabilising river banks and regulating the temperature of rivers and burns for fish, and reducing the role of peat soils in storing carbon. Some aspects of deer management, such as fences and hill tracks, can adversely affect valued landscapes and peoples' enjoyment of these places.

The WDNA vision seeks to achieve the best combination of benefits for the economy, environment and people, while acknowledging that healthy ecosystems underpin sustainable economic growth. This balance will vary at a local level and land management priorities can come into conflict. Where resolving tensions between priorities at a local level is not possible and Government involvement is needed, this intervention will prioritise maintaining healthy ecosystems.

This revised WDNA focuses on taking account of how ecosystems work and the services that ecosystems provide to people so that those that manage land and deer can build on the benefits and minimise the costs across a range of public and private interests.

<sup>6</sup> SPICe briefing on deer management 2013

<sup>7</sup> The Value of Shooting, PACEC Report 2006

<sup>8</sup> SNH evidence to the RACCE Committee 2013

## 1.5 What's New?

There have been significant changes to policy and regulation since the launch of WDNA in 2008. Fundamental changes were introduced to deer management through the Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act 2011. The Code of Practice on Deer Management (Deer Code), developed by SNH in consultation with relevant interests, came into effect in 2012. The Deer Code allocates deer management responsibilities and recognises the public interest in deer management. Regulatory actions have been further clarified and simplified.

Changes to the way we view, use and manage deer and the land are likely to continue over the next five years. Diminished resources, greater recognition of the contribution made by nature to Scotland's economy and a stronger focus on climate change will undoubtedly bring new challenges. Deer management, through its place in delivering better integrated land use, will play a pivotal role in society's response to these challenges.

This diagram shows the broad relationship between integrated land use, WDNA, Deer Code, Wild Deer Best Practice and people who work to deliver collaborative deer management in Scotland.

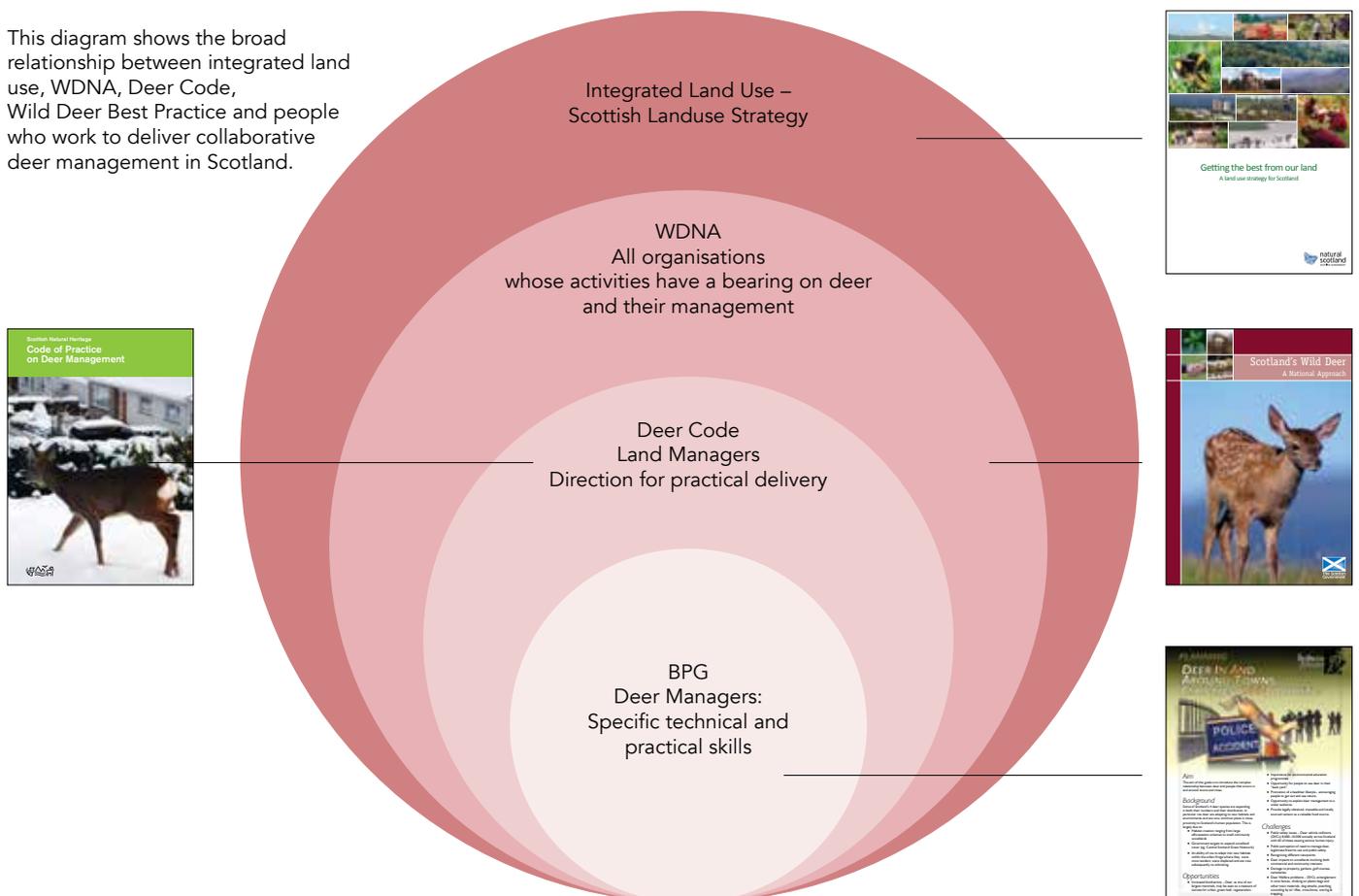


Diagram: Showing the relationship between the Scottish Land Use Strategy, WDNA, the Deer Code and Wild Deer Best Practice Guidance (BPG)

In March 2011, the Scottish Government set out its vision for getting the best from Scotland's land resources in its Land Use Strategy, an over-arching framework for all land use policies. It sets out ten principles for Sustainable Land Use (See Annex 1) that should inform land use choices across Scotland.

The following list identifies other relevant new policy, strategy and legislation since WDNA was first published. Further details are available in Annex 2.

**The Climate Change (Scotland) Act** introduced in 2009 committing Scotland to reducing its greenhouse gases by 80% by 2050. Associated with this are:

- Low Carbon Scotland 2010–2022;
- Woodland Expansion – 10,000 hectares per year 2012–2022;
- Scottish Land Use Strategy (see Annex 1 for the principles).

**The Scottish Government Economic Strategy** was launched in 2011 setting out principles to help make Scotland more successful through sustainable economic growth.

**2020 Challenge for Scotland's Biodiversity** was published in 2013 and sets out a target of restoring 15% of degraded ecosystems.

In addition the Scottish Government has 'mainstreamed the needs of **Rural Scotland** into all its policies'.

A review of deer management by the Scottish Parliament Rural Affairs, Climate Change and Environment Committee (RACCE) in 2013/14 drew further attention to deer management and the impacts of deer on the natural heritage. The Minister agreed "...that deer populations are having an impact on Scotland's natural heritage in certain areas. We need to take steps to minimise these impacts, with SNH collaborating with land managers to facilitate improvement, and deploying formal intervention powers where this is necessary"<sup>9</sup>. He recognised the need to improve understanding of the implications of different approaches to deer management on local and rural jobs and communities. The Minister further recognised that "the pace of change has been too slow, in terms of Deer Management Groups developing and implementing deer management plans. I agree that the end of 2016 would be a suitable juncture to consider progress and look to take action if the current voluntary system has not produced a step change in the delivery of effective deer management"<sup>10</sup>.

The 2014 WDNA seeks to address these challenges through developing a set of priorities for 2015–2020. These priorities will involve all organisations with a contribution to make or an interest in deer and their management – from tourism operators, to country sports providers, local authorities, public agencies, environmental and community groups – working together to maximise both public and private benefits.

<sup>9</sup> Letter from Paul Wheelhouse, Minister for Environment and Climate Change to the Rural Affairs, Environment and Climate Change Committee 05/03/14

<sup>10</sup> Ibid



## 2 : The Vision



We manage wild deer to achieve the best combination of benefits for the economy, environment, people and communities for now and for future generations.

### **By 2030:**

**There will be widespread understanding and achievement of sustainable deer management.**

- Deer will be valued as part of Scotland's natural heritage, in balance with their habitats and will contribute to a **high quality, robust and adaptable environment**;
- Deer will be a resource for diverse **sustainable economic development** with adverse impacts on other land being minimised;
- Deer management will promote **social well-being** through enjoyment of the outdoors and healthy lifestyles.

**Wild deer will be managed in an inclusive way with knowledge used to underpin all decisions.**

# 3 : Achieving the Vision

## 3.1 Guiding Principles

Deer are managed to meet a wide range of objectives, some of which will conflict in some places and at some times. These principles set out a way of working which should guide all those involved in deer management planning and implementation.

Wild deer should be managed in a way that:

### 1. Integrates deer management with other land-use objectives by:

- Identifying the range of land-use objectives;
- Building on opportunities and addressing challenges to achieve different land-use objectives;
- Recognising that the appropriate balance between sustainable economics, the environment and social well-being will vary depending on local circumstances;
- Encouraging mutual understanding, trust and collaboration.



**2. Uses collaboration to achieve management objectives by:**

- Identifying who is needed to achieve management objectives;
- Sharing effort and resources to achieve objectives in the most effective way.

**3. Uses a geographical scale and timescale best suited to achieving the management objectives by:**

- Identifying the geographical scale at which a range of objectives are most likely to be achieved;
- Identifying the appropriate timescales in which to achieve and integrate different objectives.

**4. Engages and communicates with all relevant interests by:**

- Identifying stakeholders relevant to local circumstances, including community interests;
- Actively considering the objectives of all stakeholders;
- Providing opportunities for all stakeholders to inform management planning and be informed about deer management.

**5. Uses sound science and the best available evidence and knowledge by:**

- Using feedback and research to inform management;
- Sharing and disseminating information among all relevant interests.

**6. Promotes deer welfare by:**

- Applying best practice in deer management at all times to ensure the welfare of deer is safeguarded.

## 3.2 WDNA Objectives: The Public Interest in Deer Management

Having deer as part of Scotland's natural heritage is a public interest. Deer also have positive and negative impacts on other public interests. The public interest in deer management is grouped under the following three broad outcomes taken from the WDNA Vision:

- A high quality, robust and adaptable environment
- Sustainable economic development
- Social well-being

### Contributing to a high quality, robust and adaptable environment

The following public interests seek to ensure that Scotland continues to have populations of wild deer valued and managed as an integral part of its ecosystems.

#### a) **Contribute to healthy ecosystems and conserve and enhance biodiversity in the wider countryside**

Wild deer will be managed as a part of ecosystems, with their impacts on and role within water catchments, soil structure and habitats taken into consideration in management planning.

Biodiversity objectives will be an integral part of deer management planning. The appropriate levels of grazing and trampling by deer



(alongside livestock and other herbivores) will be identified as part of the management of Scotland's ecosystems. Healthy ecosystems provide the foundations for assuring both public and private gain. Opportunities will be taken to enhance the positive effects of deer on biodiversity and, where they contribute to the loss of biodiversity, action will be taken to reduce their negative impacts.

### **b) Secure the favourable condition status of Scotland's sites designated for nature**

The management of wild deer along with other grazers has a key role to play in meeting Government conservation targets. The management of wild deer can contribute to securing the favourable condition of Scotland's sites designated for nature conservation. Action will be taken to establish and maintain appropriate levels of grazing.

### **c) Help tackle and adapt to the effects of Climate Change**

The contribution of carbon-rich soils and vegetation cover, including woodland, to the storage and sequestration of carbon is significant. Herbivores can affect the ability of ecosystems to adapt to climate change by influencing their diversity and connectivity. For example heavy browsing causes loss and fragmentation of woodlands through lack of regeneration of trees and shrubs.

Grazing, trampling and browsing effects by wild deer (alongside livestock and other herbivores) will be managed to maintain an appropriate vegetation cover, both in relation to peat and woodlands.

Our understanding of the robustness, or otherwise, of habitats, including soils and water courses will be improved in the face of changing land use, grazing and climate change.



**d) Minimise further spread of non-native deer species in Scotland**

Action will be taken to prevent the release and subsequent establishment of non-native deer species, in particular muntjac, in Scotland. This will align with the Code of Practice on Non-Native Species. Sika are already established across many parts of mainland Scotland and are likely to continue to spread. Whilst some land managers view sika as an economic opportunity, others see them as a threat due to the significant damage they can cause to forestry and woodland. Hybridisation with red deer is known to occur in some areas. Where there is local agreement, their spread and the damage they cause will be minimised through active management.

**e) Safeguard the welfare of all species of wild deer**

Deer welfare will be considered in all management interventions. Further work will be carried out to identify how best to assess the welfare status of both individual and groups of deer. Opportunities will be taken to engage the public in developing understanding of wild deer management and deer welfare.

**f) Conserve and enhance the cultural and historic environment and the distinct identity, diverse character and special qualities of Scotland's landscapes**

Deer management will contribute positively to the appearance and condition of the landscape. Deer management will also contribute to the cultural and historic environment (and people's enjoyment of it) through managing grazing and trampling impacts.



## Contributing to sustainable economic development

The following objectives seek to ensure that deer management contributes to successful rural businesses and the socio-economic development of communities.

### a) **Increase the economic opportunities associated with wild deer**

There is a range of opportunities to add value to deer-related products and activities, and to broaden the economic benefits associated with the deer resource. These include further developing the markets for stalking, photography and wildlife watching and the further development and appropriate branding of venison products. More broadly the value of wild deer to Scotland's tourism industry will be better articulated and used.

### b) **Minimise economic costs attributable to wild deer**

Although a potential asset in their own right, wild deer can cause economic loss to other land use activities, particularly agriculture and forestry. Wild deer will be managed as part of an integrated approach to land use in order to minimise the negative impacts on other economic activities.

### c) **Provide the skills and knowledge required to manage deer as an integral part of Scotland's natural resources**

Education and training will be further developed and a culture of continuing personal and professional development will be promoted for all those involved in deer management.

### d) **Contribute to the economic development of communities**

Deer management provides jobs in remote rural areas and those involved make a contribution to the skills, knowledge and capacity of communities. The employment and tourism opportunities associated with deer will be further developed.



## Contributing to social well-being

The following objectives for deer management will contribute to the well-being of the people of Scotland.

### a) **Contribute to a safe and healthy environment for people**

Road safety risks associated with deer populations and increasing traffic volumes in both rural and urban environments require co-ordinated action between local communities, transport managers and deer management interests. Deer management needs to be considered in smaller scale projects as well as large scale infrastructure developments such as the project to dual the A9.

A range of health and safety risks are associated with deer management and will be addressed through training and raising awareness. Human disease risks (e.g. TB and Lyme disease) will require monitoring and co-ordinated approaches to management and public awareness.

### b) **Increase participation in management and enjoyment of wild deer**

Opportunities will be developed to broaden participation in and enjoyment of wild deer, through encouraging new entrants into deer management and stalking, and enabling people to find out more about wild deer, enjoy seeing them and ultimately understand more about deer and their management. Engagement in deer management planning by local communities will be encouraged. Responsible outdoor access will be encouraged through provision of accurate and up-to-date information on stalking activity and provision of information such as where wild deer are likely to be seen. Deer will continue to contribute to the promotion of Scotland's history and cultural arts.

### c) **Manage the impacts of wild deer in and around communities**

Wild deer are present in and around many rural communities and urban areas. The road safety risks and impacts of deer on green spaces, including public areas and gardens, will be actively managed through co-operation between community and land management interests.

### d) **Promote venison as a healthy food**

The benefits of venison as part of 'healthy eating' strategies will be promoted, supported by work on its supply and economic value.



## Contributing to all objectives

The objectives below interact with the environment, social and economic objectives:

### a) **Establish a shared, trusted and high quality knowledge base associated with wild deer to support local action**

There are many sources of data and research associated with wild deer. These will continue to be developed and applied to ensure deer management decisions are underpinned by sound science and good knowledge. Efforts will be taken to co-ordinate and disseminate this knowledge as widely as possible. There will be a focus on developing shared knowledge to encourage local action.

### b) **Develop effective frameworks for sustainable deer management**

Groups (e.g. Deer Management Groups), networks (e.g. Lowland Deer Network Scotland) and other deer partnerships and fora play a core role in enabling and supporting deer management through collaboration. These different approaches to working together will continue to be developed, strengthened and increased.

### c) **Raise awareness and understanding of wild deer and their management**

Raising awareness of the need for deer management in a variety of forms should lead to more meaningful and informed public debate which in turn should have a positive effect on deer management. Opportunities to raise awareness will be developed.



# 4 : Delivering the Vision

## 4.1 What's been delivered so far?

More than 200 actions have been delivered by over 20 organisations over the past 5 years. These actions include initiating a national Eat Scottish Venison Day, looking after Scotland's protected natural heritage sites, publishing the Code of Practice on Deer Management, developing the capacity of Deer Management Groups and establishing the Lowland Deer Network Scotland. However, some aspects of the WDNA vision have been less well represented. Gaps have been recorded against delivery of some of the Key Actions including protection of woodland, bogs and carbon-rich soils in order to enhance carbon storage and agreeing a common understanding of welfare. Further analysis of these gaps and achievements is set out in 'The WDNA progress and gaps in delivery 2008–2013'<sup>11</sup>.

## 4.2 Who delivers WDNA?

Wild deer are managed throughout Scotland by a wide range of organisations, businesses and individuals across the private, voluntary, and public sectors. All these bodies have a role to play in achieving the WDNA 20 year vision.

Delivery of WDNA from 2015 onwards will rely on further collaboration and a shared responsibility amongst and between land management interests and the Scottish Government.

## 4.3 How is WDNA delivered?

WDNA is delivered through the **WDNA Action Plans**<sup>12</sup>. The WDNA Action Plans are co-ordinated by the WDNA Steering Group (see 4.4) with input and advice from stakeholders across the deer sector. Each Plan spans 3 years with detailed actions for the first year and outline actions for the following 2 years. These plans are available on the SNH and other contributor websites.

The 2014 Review has reinforced the importance of the WDNA Action Plans. They provide a demonstration of co-ordinated effort across the deer sector. The role of the WDNA Steering Group has also been expanded to leading and co-ordinating these Action Plans.

Since 2012 deer management has also been guided by the Code of Practice on Deer Management. This is based on the WDNA objectives and sets out what land managers must, should and are encouraged to do in relation to deer and their management.

<sup>11</sup> See [www.snh.gov.uk/land-and-sea/managing-wildlife/managing-deer/wdna](http://www.snh.gov.uk/land-and-sea/managing-wildlife/managing-deer/wdna)

<sup>12</sup> See [www.snh.gov.uk/land-and-sea/managing-wildlife/managing-deer/wdna](http://www.snh.gov.uk/land-and-sea/managing-wildlife/managing-deer/wdna)

## 4.4 How is progress measured?

**Progress in achieving the WDNA Vision is measured in two ways:**

- Through a set of WDNA trend indicators on the environment, economy and society as they relate to deer;
- Annual progress reports on actions co-ordinated through the WDNA Action Plans.

These actions and indicators provide an insight into the contribution to the public interest made by those managing deer. They also provide an indication of the impacts of these actions on the wider environment, economy and society.

The set of indicators have been developed collaboratively by all partners. For some of the indicators, in particular the economic ones, data has proved difficult to collate. Developing these has been included as a priority for the next 5 years. The indicators are listed under the relevant sections in the Priorities in 4.6.

Both the progress reports and trends suggested by the indicators have fed into this first review of WDNA by helping to identify priorities. The WDNA Steering Group will have an important role in evaluating the reasons for any actions which haven't progressed in future Action Plans. While in some cases changes to the state of the environment, economy or society are actively sought, there may also be unforeseen effects, and changes resulting from external influences which may require adjustments to deer management policy as a result. Implementation of WDNA will be responsive to these potential changes and any changes will be reported in the annual progress report. This joint approach to evaluation and interpretation will help ensure it is objective and thorough. The most recent WDNA indicator report is available on the WDNA web page<sup>13</sup>.

## 4.5 WDNA, 2014 Review

The 2014 Review was co-ordinated by the WDNA Steering Group, comprised of representatives from Forestry Commission Scotland, Scottish Natural Heritage, the National Parks and Scottish Government. Input from stakeholders was provided through the Deer Management Round Table, representing a wide group of organisations with an interest in deer management and smaller group discussions. These groups met a number of times and provided input into the five-year priorities and the structure of the revised version.

## 4.6 Priorities for 2015 – 2020

This 2014 Review of WDNA recognises that healthy ecosystems deliver social, economic and environmental benefits. For example, good quality soils support the growth of plants which in turn provide food and shelter for deer and other animals which then help sustain local and national businesses. Government advice, support and intervention will be directed at achieving the best combination of benefits for the economy, environment and people. In circumstances where it is difficult to achieve this balance Government will prioritise healthy ecosystems.

<sup>13</sup> [www.snh.gov.uk/land-and-sea/managing-wildlife/managing-deer/wdna](http://www.snh.gov.uk/land-and-sea/managing-wildlife/managing-deer/wdna)

The high level priorities for 2015–2020 are set out below:

### **Collaboration and Effective Deer Management Planning and Implementation**

- Build on work to develop conflict management tools;
- Ensure robust deer management planning;
- Promote and implement the Code of Practice on Deer Management;
- Raise awareness of the need for effective deer management;
- Establish a shared, trusted and high quality knowledge base associated with wild deer.

### **Healthy Ecosystems**

- Contribute to the 2020 Challenge for Scotland's Biodiversity;
- Carry out work to mitigate against, reduce and adapt to the effects of Climate Change;
- Contribute to achieving Favourable Condition status for designated features;
- Differentiate between herbivore impacts.

### **Lowland and Urban Deer**

- Improve understanding of deer population dynamics;
- Develop different options for deer management planning;
- Co-ordinate, make available and use current data on lowland and urban deer;
- Understand public perception of urban and lowland deer.

### **Economic and Community Development**

- Encourage diverse economic opportunities associated with wild deer;
- Understand the costs and benefits of deer management;
- Develop appreciation and understanding between access and deer management;
- Build on work to address deer vehicle collisions and human disease risks;
- Improve understanding of deer impacts on agriculture and forestry.

### **Training and Wild Deer Welfare**

- Ensure a strong skill base in deer management;
- Understand, promote and deliver wild deer welfare.

The following section sets out what needs to be done during the period 2015–2020. The WDNA Action Plans will set out the detail, including who will be responsible for their delivery. They should be a focus for collective effort and resources in making progress towards the long-term vision for wild deer. They build on the significant work already carried out by all those involved in deer management.

## Collaboration and effective deer management planning and implementation<sup>14</sup>

### Challenges:

- **Build on work to develop conflict management tools:** Finding ways to reconcile differences in land management objectives and motivations continues to be challenging;
- **Ensure robust deer management planning and implementation:** One of the challenges is to achieve and demonstrate a 'step change in the delivery of effective deer management' by the end of 2016;
- **Promote and implement the Deer Code:** The Deer Code came into existence at the beginning of 2012. The challenge is to ensure that everyone who should know about the Deer Code does and that it is followed by all relevant parties;
- **Raise awareness of the need for effective deer management:** Social and media perceptions about wild deer are varied. Increasing knowledge and understanding among all involved in deer management and the wider public will help address this;
- **Establish a shared, trusted and high quality knowledge base associated with wild deer:** Wild deer have been the focus of much research. However this is not always easy to put into practice. We need to do more to develop knowledge which is collectively owned, supported and trusted and ensure this is used to inform local action.

### What needs to be done?

#### Build on work to develop conflict management tools

- Develop conflict management support for:
  - Open range red deer;
  - Woodland expansion;
  - Complex pattern of low ground landholdings.

#### Ensure robust deer management planning and implementation

- Improve representation and membership of Deer Management Groups at a local level;

<sup>14</sup> All of these will contribute to the WDNA cross cutting objectives.

- Ensure the deer management planning process is consultative, transparent and open;
- Ensure the deer management planning process is integrated into wider land use and delivers multiple public interests;
- Revise, adopt and implement the Joint Agency Fencing Guidelines;
- Enhance the support available to Deer Management Groups to help develop, implement and monitor delivery of Deer Management Plans.

### **Promote and implement the Deer Code**

- Implement the Deer Code;
- Promote the Deer Code and the 'responsibility' to manage deer;
- Support Wild Deer Best Practice Guidance.

### **Raise awareness of the need for effective deer management**

- Increase public understanding of the need for and the benefits of deer management.

### **Establish a shared, trusted and high quality knowledge base associated with wild deer**

- Develop an accessible and shared database that provides information for local deer management;
- Develop knowledge exchange opportunities on deer research to enable local application;
- Link the Conservation and Gamekeeping Higher National Diplomas.

## **Indicators**

- The number of Deer Management Groups implementing an effective Deer Management Plan as set out in the Deer Management Group self-assessment;
- The number of Deer Management Groups assessed as functioning effectively against the DMG Benchmark;
- The percentage of responses to the Scottish Nature Omnibus who associate deer with Scotland;
- The percentage of people responding to the Scottish Nature Omnibus who have concerns about deer.

## Healthy ecosystems<sup>15</sup>

### Challenges:

- **Contribute to the 2020 Challenge for Scotland's Biodiversity:** Agreeing and achieving the appropriate levels of grazing to enhance the role of deer within ecosystems and reduce their negative impacts across different habitats and ecosystems remains a challenge. The Scottish Government wants to see more research and understanding of the impacts of deer outwith designated sites;
- **Carry out work to mitigate against, reduce and adapt to the effects of Climate Change:** Ensure opportunities to meet national targets for woodland expansion are assisted by collaborative deer management in the lowlands and uplands. There is also a need to continue work on protecting peatlands;
- **Contribute to achieving Favourable Condition Status for designated features:** Grazing and trampling by wild deer and other grazers need to be further reduced in some areas to help deliver Government objectives by maintaining designated sites in favourable condition;
- **Differentiate between herbivore impacts:** Distinguishing damage between different species can be difficult. In addition, understanding the response of habitats to changes in grazing pressure from different herbivores needs to be better understood if target/ideal densities are to have any meaning.

### What needs to be done?

#### Contribute to the 2020 Challenge for Scotland's Biodiversity

- Contribute to ensuring 60% of Scotland's native woodland is in satisfactory condition by 2020<sup>16</sup>;
- Identify where deer management can contribute to increasing the connectivity, diversity and quality of habitat networks;
- Develop surveillance mechanisms to capture data on deer population densities and trends, and monitor their relationship with habitat condition outside designated sites;
- Ensure deer management plans look to deliver low or medium negative deer impacts across habitats or in exceptional circumstances explain why higher impacts may need to be tolerated;
- Prevent the escape and establishment of non-native deer species, especially muntjac, through the implementation of the Invasive Non-Native Species Code;
- Minimise the further spread of Sika on the mainland through active local management and maintain the integrity of the red deer refugia.

<sup>15</sup> All of these will contribute to the WDNA Objectives under 'a high quality, robust and adaptable environment'.

<sup>16</sup> Derived from the Native Woodlands Survey of Scotland and the Scottish Biodiversity 2020 challenge of restoring 15% of degraded ecosystems

## Carry out work to mitigate against, reduce and adapt to the effects of Climate Change

- Increase the contribution made by local deer management to delivering the woodland expansion target (10,000 hectares of new woodland each year<sup>17</sup>);
- Prevent degradation of peatland to enhance carbon storage and control soil carbon loss in carbon rich soil;
- Contribute to woodland restructuring and restocking;
- Contribute to the establishment of riparian woodland;
- Improve understanding of the impacts of deer/herbivores on peatland in the context of other factors e.g. weather;
- Improve understanding of the carbon footprint of deer management;
- Provide guidance and advice to ensure that the carbon footprint of deer management is reduced.

## Contribute to achieving Favourable Condition Status for designated features

- Ensure that deer management measures are in place to support delivery of 80% of designated features in favourable or unfavourable recovering condition by end of March 2016<sup>18</sup> and meet other Government targets up to 2020.

## Differentiate between herbivore impacts

- Improve methodologies to differentiate between the grazing impacts of different herbivores.

## Indicators

- The number of deer species in the wild in Scotland and their distribution;
- Percentage of designated features where the herbivore targets included in Site Condition Monitoring are being met;
- Percentage of designated woodlands where the herbivore targets included in Site Condition Monitoring are being met;
- Percentage of native woodlands that are in satisfactory condition;
- Assessment of the size, shape, quality and connectivity of habitat networks.

<sup>17</sup> Woodland Expansion Target 2012–2022 from the Scottish Government's 'Low Carbon Scotland: Meeting the Emissions Reduction Targets 2010-2022'

<sup>18</sup> SNH Delivering Favourable Condition Project

## Lowland and urban deer<sup>19</sup>

### Challenges:

- **Improve understanding of deer population dynamics:** The lack of information on the rate of change of populations, distribution and the relationship between this and increasing habitat networks needs to be addressed;
- **Develop a range of options for deer management planning:** The fragmented pattern of land ownership in the low ground and urban deer range does not lend itself well to the open range Deer Management Group model. The practical need to collaborate also varies considerably;
- **Co-ordinate, make available and use current data on lowland and urban deer:** Information on deer and deer management isn't always used strategically, making it difficult to target resources. Data on deer impacts e.g. deer vehicle collisions, favourable condition, wildlife crime or Native Woodland Survey needs to be accessible and co-ordinated;
- **Understand public perception of urban and lowland deer:** There is a need to establish to what extent the public understand and support deer management. If there is a lack of understanding and/ or support, this will need to be addressed.



<sup>19</sup> This section will contribute primarily to the objective to 'Manage the impacts of deer in and around communities'

## What needs to be done?

### Improve understanding of deer population dynamics

- Understand the population dynamics of lowland deer, in particular the rate of expansion in relation to increasing habitat networks.

### Develop a range of options for lowland and urban deer management planning

- Ensure that Local Authorities identified as having high deer impacts have adopted a deer management plan;
- Implement a training and education programme, through Lowland Deer Network Scotland (LDNS), for practitioners in the low ground;
- Work with LDNS to explore options for effective deer management in the low ground;
- Identify and assess the effectiveness of different management models in and around towns.

### Co-ordinate, make available and use current data on lowland and urban deer

- Improve the co-ordination of data sets to facilitate analysis and gain a better understanding of deer impacts;
- Develop an understanding of the role of deer on expanding woodland/forestry in urban areas.

### Understand public perception of urban and lowland deer

- Support delivery of wider community education on deer and deer management in the low ground;
- Promote understanding and articulate the benefits of deer in and around towns.

## Indicators

- Number of Local Authorities implementing effective Deer Management Plans;
- Delivery of Lowland Deer Network Scotland project plan;
- Public perceptions (of deer in and around towns);
- Implementation of training and education programmes.

## Economic and community development<sup>20</sup>

### Challenges:

- **Encourage diverse economic opportunities:** Build on existing work to widen out the economic opportunities associated with wild deer. This might include different ways to package and market venison and new wildlife tourism initiatives;
- **Understand costs and benefits of deer management:** The Rural Affairs, Climate Change and Environment Committee requested that Government assess the impact of different deer management approaches on local jobs and on rural communities. There is also a need to address the lack of data which can be used to assess when damage of an economic nature is occurring due to deer;
- **Build on work to address deer vehicle collisions and human disease risks:** Build on the existing understanding of the causes of deer vehicle collisions and plan, mitigate and focus effort on addressing these. Build on work to understand and address any risks to human health associated with wild deer and their management;
- **Develop appreciation and understanding between access and deer management:** Develop an appreciation and understanding between those involved in deer management and those providing and enjoying access and recreational activities to reduce conflict and enhance opportunities and experiences;
- **Improve understanding of deer impacts on agriculture and forestry:** Develop a wider understanding of the interactions between agriculture, forestry and deer management.

### What needs to be done?

#### Encourage diverse economic opportunities

- Extend the coverage of the Scottish Quality Wild Venison scheme and encourage locally produced venison for local sales;
- Diversify the range of deer related products and associated marketing;
- Identify different ways to manage a sporting resource which supports environmental and biodiversity objectives;
- Provide more opportunities for people to go outdoors and enjoy deer;
- Increase the number of opportunities for all relevant interested parties, including communities, to engage with deer management planning;
- Provide information to local communities and tourism businesses on wild deer and their management;
- Value and recognise cultural connections associated with wild deer;

<sup>20</sup> These will contribute to the WDNA objectives under sustainable economic development and social well-being

- Include venison as a regular part of menus in the public sector;
- Support the work of the Scottish Venison Partnership and Scotland's Natural Larder.

### **Understand the costs and benefits of deer management**

- Improve understanding of how ecosystem services are delivered through deer management and the benefits of these;
- Establish methods to assess economic activity in deer management and apply these methods to assess the economic impact of proposed future management;
- Establish criteria to assess when damage to the public interest of an economic nature is occurring;
- Establish the local-scale costs and benefits of differing deer management models;
- Establish the number of Full Time Equivalent jobs associated with using wild deer.

### **Build on work to address deer vehicle collisions and human disease risks**

- Raise awareness of road safety issues associated with deer to reduce the risks of road traffic collisions involving wild deer;
- Co-ordinate action to minimise deer-related human disease risks.

### **Develop appreciation and understanding between access and deer management**

- Promote greater consideration between those exercising the rights to responsible access and those undertaking deer management in line with the principles of the Scottish Outdoor Access Code;
- Increase awareness of the interactions of all species of wild deer with access and recreation in urban, woodland and open land settings.

### **Improve understanding of deer impacts on agriculture and forestry**

- Examine the capacity to effectively manage deer impacts in woodlands and forests through competent and cost-effective deer management actions;
- Develop a better understanding of the interactions of deer on other land uses, including agriculture and forestry.

## Indicators

- Number of reported deer poaching incidents;
- Number of FTE in employment in the deer sector;
- Value of venison to the Scottish economy;
- Value of deer stalking to the Scottish Economy;
- Number of deer related road traffic collisions.



## Training and wild deer welfare<sup>21</sup>

### Challenges:

- **Ensure a strong skill base in deer management:** There is a need to ensure sufficient capacity to manage wild deer, especially in the lowlands. Continuing to develop a culture of on-going professional and personal development will help with this;
- **Understand, promote and deliver wild deer welfare:** Welfare is still not well understood when used in relation to wild deer. Existing work will be built on to increase understanding of practical deer welfare.

### What needs to be done?

#### Ensure a strong skill base in deer management

- Attract newcomers into the deer sector;
- Facilitate, through continual professional and personal development, raised skills and awareness of deer management.

#### Understand, promote and deliver wild deer welfare

- Articulate the welfare responsibility associated with managing wild deer;
- Ensure that the competence of those shooting deer safeguards deer welfare;
- Consider deer welfare in all management planning and activities affecting wild deer;
- Monitor disease risks and the effects of climate change on deer welfare.

### Indicators

- Number of people achieving a deer related qualification;
- Number of reported wild deer welfare incidents.

<sup>21</sup> These will contribute to the WDNA objectives under sustainable economic development and social well-being



# 5 : Tools for delivery

A range of tools are available to assist with delivering Scotland's Wild Deer: A National Approach. These tools will be targeted to deliver Government priorities. These currently include:

**Communication and engagement:** Effective communication and engagement with relevant interests is fundamental to the successful delivery of WDNA. All those involved have a role to play in ensuring continued improvements in knowledge and understanding.

**Advice, guidance and training:** There is a range of existing advice, guidance and training to help guide the detailed delivery of WDNA, including the Code of Practice on Deer Management and the Wild Deer Best Practice Guides.

**Financial support:** Deer management is supported from a range of public and private sources including the Scottish Rural Development Programme.

**Regulation:** Government has powers of regulation to act as a backstop in safeguarding the public interest in deer management. Many of these are set out in the Deer (Scotland) Act 1996 (as amended).

**Publicly owned land:** The Scottish Government owns large tracts of land in Scotland including the national forest estate, managed by Forestry Commission Scotland, as well as significant holdings managed by Scottish Natural Heritage. These should serve as exemplars of sustainable management, including appropriate deer management and research.

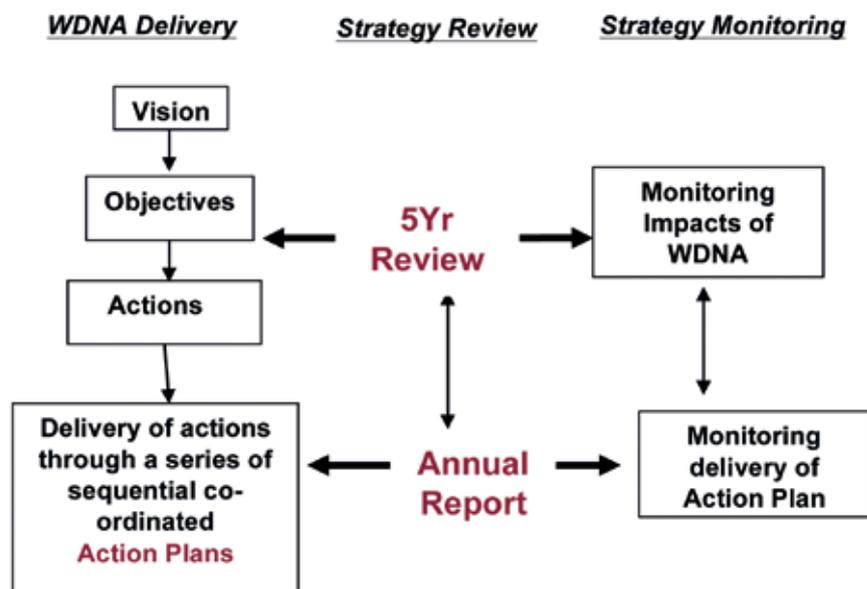




# 6 : Monitoring, Reporting and Reviewing

## 6.1 Monitoring

Diagram: Delivering, Monitoring and Review Process



**There are two strands to monitoring the strategy:**

a) **Monitoring the delivery:** the extent to which the objectives of the strategy are achieved. Targets for detailed actions will be set through successive WDNA Action Plans and reported annually;

b) **Monitoring the impacts:** the effects that implementing WDNA has on the environment, the economy and society. A collection of indicators will build a picture of trends and progress and will be reported bi-annually.

## 6.2 Indicators

A set of indicators, reflecting the trends in the state of the environment, economy and society as they relate to wild deer, have been developed and are available on the SNH website.

These indicators will continue to be refined so that they contribute to the wider picture of ecosystem health, and increase our understanding of deer numbers and their relationship with habitat condition at a local and regional level. This work, alongside wider monitoring of ecosystem service provision and economic benefits, will provide a good overall assessment of the contribution that deer make to the well-being of Scotland.

## 6.3 Review

WDNA will be reviewed on a rolling five year timetable. It is anticipated that the vision and objectives should provide a relatively stable long-term context. In contrast, the Priorities are likely to be reviewed more fully at each five year review. In some cases, the issue may have been addressed and no longer be a priority, or other priorities may have emerged during the review.

Where appropriate, if there are likely to be any significant changes made to WDNA during the five years review, these changes will undergo further Socio-Economic Assessment, Strategic Environmental Assessment [as required under the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005] and Equality and Diversification Assessment.

## 6.4 Annual Reporting

The WDNA Steering Group will lead the production of an annual progress report. This will be incorporated into the WDNA Action Plans and will be posted on the Steering Group member's and other contributor websites.

While in some cases changes to the state of the environment, economy or society are actively sought, there may also be unforeseen effects, and changes resulting from external influences which may require adjustments to deer management policy as a result. Implementation of WDNA will be responsive to these potential changes and any changes will be reported in the annual progress report.



# Glossary

**Appropriate Vegetation Cover:** the particular species type and species diversity which is required in any given area in order to achieve agreed habitat and management objectives.

**Biodiversity:** the variety of all living organisms.

**Browsing:** feeding on the woody parts of plants.

**Carbon Sequestration:** provision of absorption and long-term storage of carbon e.g. in trees, vegetation and soils.

**Deer Management:** refers to a range of actions including protecting deer; using them as a resource for sport or meat; culling them to manage their numbers and their effect on habitats or to limit their spread; and safeguarding their health and welfare. It does not always mean lethal intervention or culling and may include the use of fencing to exclude them from specific areas, promoting deer or educating others about them.

**Designated Nature Conservation Sites:** sites which have been designated by Government to protect their 'special features'. These special features represent the most important parts of natural heritage.

**Ecology:** inter-relationships between animals, plants, land, water, and air in an area.

**Ecosystem:** the non-living and living aspects of an environment functioning together. An ecosystem is made up of plants and animals, water, rocks and soils, and the natural processes that connect them together. An ecosystem can be anything from a pond or a forest to a river catchment, an island, an ocean or even the globe, where what happens in one part can affect other parts.

**Ecosystem Approach:** recognises that our health and prosperity is intimately connected to the health of nature. It means working for a healthy environment for the benefit of both Scotland's people and Scotland's nature. In the mostly widely-used definition, from the Convention on Biological Diversity, an ecosystem approach is: 'a strategy for the integrated management of land, water and living resources that promotes conservation and sustainable use in an equitable way, and which recognises that people with their cultural and varied social needs are an integral part of ecosystems.'

**Ecosystem Health:** an ecosystem is healthy when all the components are functioning together in a productive and sustainable manner.

**Ecosystem Services:** functions and products from nature that can be turned into goods with varying degrees of human input e.g. naturally managed flood plains, drinking water, and wild food.

**Favourable Condition:** objectives are set for each 'special feature'. These objectives describe the state these features are in. e.g. population size (for species) or area covered by a particular plant species (for habitats) which need to be met for the feature to be defined as in 'favourable condition'.

**Habitat Networks:** habitats which are linked together to create a wider, more sustainable and interconnected pattern of habitats. They take into account the size, shape, isolation and quality of habitats as well as the permeability of species movement across the land between habitat patches. Most habitat-types can be considered, including grassland, heathland, wetlands and woodland.

**Landscape Character:** a distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements in the landscape that makes one landscape different from another. Natura Sites: protected areas established to protect habitats or species under the EU's Birds Directive (Special Protection Areas or SPAs) and the Habitats Directive (Special Areas of Conservation or SACs).

**Natural Processes:** the inherent dynamics which characterise particular habitats (e.g. the role of colonising species within the process of woodland establishment).

**Refugia:** used in the context of 'red deer refugia', this refers to specific Scottish islands on which the aim is to maintain and protect the genetic integrity of the resident red deer populations through preventing the colonisation of other non-resident deer. Red deer refugia were consolidated through The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (Keeping and Release and Notification Requirements) (Scotland) Order 2012. This order makes it an offence to release any species of the genus *Cervus* (which includes Sika deer) onto specified Scottish islands.

**Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs):** a national suite of nature conservation sites protected as examples of the UK's flora, fauna, geological or physiographical features.

**Social Well-being:** people's quality of life. This could include access to social facilities and services, community cohesion, physical and mental wellbeing.

**Special Features:** specific flora or fauna which because of their national or international importance have led to a site being designated for their protection.

**Stakeholders:** individuals or their representative organisations that have responsibilities towards, and an interest in, the success of an activity or organisation.

**Strategic Environmental Assessment:** a statutory process to ensure that the significant potential environmental effects of plans, policies and programmes are identified, assessed, consulted on, mitigated and monitored.

**Sustainable Development:** development that enables all people throughout the world to satisfy their basic needs and enjoy a better quality of life without compromising the quality of life of future generations.

**Trampling:** to stand or move about heavily on something causing damage.

**Wild Deer Range:** the limits of the geographical distribution of a species or group of deer e.g. the open hill range of red deer.

# Annex 1

## Principles for Sustainable Land Use<sup>22</sup>

The Principles below are in line with the principles of sustainable development. They also reflect Government policies on the priorities which should inform land use choices across Scotland. We expect that they will be used by public bodies when making plans and taking significant decisions affecting the use of land. We also strongly encourage individuals, businesses and organisations that have significant land management responsibilities to have regard to them.

- a) Opportunities for land use to deliver multiple benefits should be encouraged.
- b) Regulation should continue to protect essential public interests whilst placing as light a burden on businesses as is consistent with achieving its purpose. Incentives should be efficient and cost-effective.
- c) Where land is highly suitable for a primary use (for example food production, flood management, water catchment management and carbon storage) this value should be recognised in decision-making.
- d) Land use decisions should be informed by an understanding of the functioning of the ecosystems which they affect in order to maintain the benefits of the ecosystem services which they provide.
- e) Landscape change should be managed positively and sympathetically, considering the implications of change at a scale appropriate to the landscape in question, given that all Scotland's landscapes are important to our sense of identity and to our individual and social wellbeing.
- f) Land-use decisions should be informed by an understanding of the opportunities and threats brought about by the changing climate. Greenhouse gas emissions associated with land use should be reduced and land should continue to contribute to delivering climate change adaptation and mitigation objectives.
- g) Where land has ceased to fulfil a useful function because it is derelict or vacant, this represents a significant loss of economic potential and amenity for the community concerned. It should be a priority to examine options for restoring all such land to economically, socially or environmentally productive uses.
- h) Outdoor recreation opportunities and public access to land should be encouraged, along with the provision of accessible green space close to where people live, given their importance for health and well-being.

<sup>22</sup> The Scottish Land Use Strategy 2011

- i) People should have opportunities to contribute to debates and decisions about land use and management decisions which affect their lives and their future.
- j) Opportunities to broaden our understanding of the links between land use and daily living should be encouraged.

# Annex 2

## Strategic and Policy Context:

### Ecosystem Services

Ecosystem Services focus on the benefits that the natural environment supplies or supports. There are four types of ecosystem services: supporting services (e.g. soil formation, pollination), provisioning services (e.g. food, water, and timber), regulating services (e.g. absorbing carbon from the atmosphere) and cultural services (e.g. recreation and tourism).

### Ecosystem Approach (from the SNH policy statement)

An Ecosystem Approach provides a way of valuing nature's services so that nature can continue to sustain Scotland's health and prosperity now and into the future. Adopting an Ecosystem Approach recognises there are often uncertainties in aspects of land and wildlife management and that this demands an adaptive approach.

An ecosystem approach recognises that our health and prosperity is intimately connected to the health of nature. It means working for a healthy environment for the benefit of both Scotland's people and Scotland's nature. It means putting the benefits that ecosystems give at the centre of our approach to nature. It helps us to recognise that our actions today can affect future generations.

### 2020 Challenge for Scotland's Biodiversity

The 2020 Challenge sets out how Scotland will meet its Biodiversity obligations. The principal aim of the 2020 Challenge is for Scotland to halt biodiversity loss.

#### **The 2020 Challenge for Scotland's Biodiversity aims to:**

- Protect and restore biodiversity on land and in our seas, and to support healthier ecosystems;
- Connect people with the natural world, for their health and well-being and to involve them more in decisions about their environment;
- Maximise the benefits for Scotland of a diverse natural environment and the services it provides, contributing to sustainable economic growth.

## Scottish Forest Strategy (including the Woodland Expansion Target)

The Scottish Forest Strategy (SFS) is a framework for taking forestry forward into the future. It is built around a number of key themes and objectives. The SFS is delivered through a series of rolling implementation plans. The main one of these is the Woodland Expansion Target – which aims to increase the woodland cover of Scotland from 17% to 25% by 2025. This target is also embedded in the Climate Change Act implementation activities.

## Scottish Government Economic Strategy 2011

The Purpose of the Scottish Government is 'to make Scotland a more successful country, with opportunities for all to flourish, through increasing sustainable economic growth'<sup>23</sup>. There are 6 strategic priorities:

- Supportive Business Environment;
- Transition to a Low Carbon Economy;
- Learning, Skills and Well-being;
- Infrastructure Development and Place;
- Effective Government;
- Equity.

## Scotland's Rural Policy: 'our rural future' 2011

The Scottish Government's intention is to make the most of rural Scotland's vital contribution to the nation's sustainable economic growth.



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ISBN 978-1-7891-362-6  
APS1K2015