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Forestry Commission Wales

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COETIROEDD  
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BETTER  
WOODLANDS  
FOR WALES

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i greu a gwella coetiroedd

Grants and support for creating  
and improving woodlands

# Deer Management Plan Template: for Individual Woods or Estates

## Guidance Note



# Section 1: Background information

## 1.1 Background

Use this section to compile all the basic information about the woodland such as the location, the main physical characteristics and any relevant historical information. You may want to record background information which is not immediately needed but may become important in the future.

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Date                                     |  |
| Owner/tenant                             |  |
| Agent/contact                            |  |
| Shooting tenant<br>Gamekeeper<br>Stalker |  |
| Plan written by                          |  |

## 1.2 Location

Mark the location of the woodland on a 1:50,000 or 1:25,000 scale map which shows key location features such as the boundary of the woodland, the boundary of the estate if appropriate, access point from the nearest road and if possible nearby features or settlements.

It may also be useful to note:

- The nearest town, village or landscape feature, e.g. 'Five miles south of Greendale, on the east side of the Green River valley.'
- The grid reference of the woodland or of the estate, as appropriate.
- The area of each woodland and/or the total area covered by the plan.

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Nearest town, village, or landscape feature |  |
| Grid reference                              |  |
| Total area of woodland                      |  |
| Total area of property                      |  |

## 1.3 Designations

Map-based nature conservation and landscape designation information, such as a Site of Special Scientific Interest, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or National Nature Reserve will be provided by Forestry Commission Wales (FCW).

*[Information to be provided to the Deer Initiative surveyor by FCW on a map]*

## 1.4 Rare and threatened species

It is important to note the presence of rare and threatened species on a property, as this may affect the approach to deer management. Through Local Record Centres and the Countryside Council of Wales, FCW can provide details of rare or threatened species found on or adjacent to a property.

*[Information to be provided to the Deer Initiative surveyor by FCW]*

## 1.5 Boundary factors

Note any outside factors that might affect deer management operations, such as public access, and how well or badly deer populations are managed on adjacent property.

## Section 2: Owner's objectives and long-term vision

The woodland owner's long-term vision and objectives are a crucial part of the overall Better Woodlands for Wales Management Plan and need to be clearly stated. You need to discuss these with the owner and/or their agent. Examples are given below.

### 2.1 Long-term vision

e.g. 'A healthy and viable deer population of roe and fallow deer that can be supported by the habitat without an adverse impact on agriculture/forestry crops and the nature conservation interest on the farm and within the surrounding area. The fallow population will be reduced from 2005 levels, while roe numbers will be allowed to remain at current levels. Tree regeneration and new planting will show no adverse effects from deer. Some stalking may be let and venison will be sold into local markets.'

### 2.2 Owner's objectives

These should be set for a five-year period and revised at five-yearly intervals thereafter or sooner if circumstances change. BWW Management Planners should ensure that the owner's deer management objectives are reflected in the overall BWW Management Plan. Examples of specific objectives are given in the table below:

| Aim                            | Yes | No | Specific objective  |
|--------------------------------|-----|----|---|
| Reduce damage                  |     |    | To reduce damage to native woodland ground flora and newly planted commercial crops so that there is no adverse impact within five years        |
| Mitigate against future damage |     |    | To develop and implement a deer management group (DMG) policy on public access, shared by neighbouring woodland owners                          |
| Maximise venison revenue       |     |    | To increase average carcass weights, specifying percentage increase and timescale to co-operate in the marketing of venison within the DMG area |
| Maximise sporting revenue      |     |    | To maintain or increase the employment of stalkers, setting out specific financial and employment targets                                       |

|                                  |  |  |  |
|----------------------------------|--|--|--|
| <b>Preserve small population</b> |  |  | To favour one species of deer rather than others, such as reducing roe numbers by 25% over three years |
|----------------------------------|--|--|--|

### Section 3: The current situation

This section is about collecting and summarising information about the woodland on which to base management decisions. In practice this will almost certainly be an ongoing process since some information will be easily available and some will not.

#### 3.1 Previous woodland management

It is useful to draw out how past management has shaped the woodland and led to its current condition. Ask the owner or their agent about any recent changes in overall goals, intensity of management or use of the woodland. You may want to give an outline of previous operations. The owner should be able to provide details of location, method and yield if any harvesting has been carried out, and any relevant documents.

#### 3.2 Existing and new species

The plan should reflect the existing and future deer population. Identify species currently present or likely to colonise within the next few years.

| Species | Not present | Present | Likely to be present | Comment |
|---------|-------------|---------|----------------------|---------|
| Red     |             |         |                      |         |
| Sika    |             |         |                      |         |
| Fallow  |             |         |                      |         |
| Roe     |             |         |                      |         |
| Muntjac |             |         |                      |         |
| CWD     |             |         |                      |         |

#### 3.3 Current impacts, target limits and monitoring

This is a key part of the Deer Management Plan. It links each feature identified in the overall BWW Management Plan to current impacts and target limits for deer damage and monitoring requirements. The woodland owner should help you set target limits based on management objectives.

Examples of current impacts, target limits and monitoring requirements are given in the table below:

| Feature<br><i>Stratify<br/>woodland<br/>types</i> | Type of damage           | Current impact  | Target limit  | Monitoring                                  |
|---|--------------------------|---|---|---|
| Upland oakwood                                    | Browsing                 | Browse line very apparent up to 1.5m                                | No browse line  | Annually by agent using walk-through survey |
|   | Fraying                  | 10% showing damage  | 2% showing damage   | Annually by agent using walk-through survey |
|   | Bark stripping           | 10% showing damage  | 2% showing damage   | Annually by agent using walk-through survey |
|   | Ground flora degradation | Severe – (>10% of ground area) native woodland ground flora present | Over 50% of ground area to have native woodland species present | Annually by agent using walk-through survey |
| Mixed conifer                                     | Browsing                 |   |   |   |
|   | Fraying etc              |   |   |   |

Where appropriate, insert photographs of deer damage here:

### 3.4 Monitoring plan

Please recommend future monitoring. Examples are given below:

| Monitoring activity | When?    | Who?           | Use of information    | Method              |
|---------------------|----------|----------------|-----------------------|---------------------|
| Bark stripping      | Annually | Agent stalker  | Help set cull targets | 10 x 5.6m plots     |
| Browsing damage     | Annually | Agent/ stalker | Help set cull targets | 6 x enclosure plots |

## Section 4: Deer management approaches

The DMP must take into account current management. If deer are present in the woodland and are being culled, yet the impacts are still unacceptable, then a change in regime may be required.

### 4.1 Cull data

Provide any available cull data, such as written records or reports and verbal information from stalkers and sporting tenants. At the very least, state whether deer are being shot.

#### 4.2 Other deer management methods

Outline any other non-lethal methods of deer management **currently** being used.

| Method of management | Sub-compartment |
|----------------------|-----------------|
| Fencing              |                 |
| Chemical             |                 |
| Other                |                 |

#### 4.3 Collaboration

Sometimes the most efficient way of managing deer populations is by collaboration with neighbouring landowners. Use this template to identify where this might be required.

If the woodland is in an area where there is already a DMG, but the owner is not part of the group, explain why.

#### 4.4 Cull strategy

Depending on the objectives it may be necessary to set a target cull for one or more species of deer. Set down cull data in table form for each species. The culling impact should also be recorded here, whether the objective is to maintain deer populations at the current level, reduce numbers, or allow populations to increase.

Best practice for deer management to reduce/stabilise populations should always be to cull more females than males. Any cull plan should reflect this.

| Season        | Males  |        | Females |        | Juveniles |        | Totals |        |
|---------------|--------|--------|---------|--------|-----------|--------|--------|--------|
|               | Target | Actual | Target  | Actual | Target    | Actual | Target | Actual |
|               |        |        |         |        |           |        |        |        |
|               |        |        |         |        |           |        |        |        |
|               |        |        |         |        |           |        |        |        |
|               |        |        |         |        |           |        |        |        |
| <b>Totals</b> |        |        |         |        |           |        |        |        |

#### 4.5 Comments on cull strategy

e.g. 'It is crucial to achieve the cull figures in the first two years, then reappraise.'

## Section 5: Operational issues

### 5.1 Recommended operations

The DMP should include a list of capital works, taking into account all the information provided. Outline both long and short-term operations, based on this rationale and agreed with the woodland owner and their agent.

Examples of the operational information required are given in the table below:

| Operation                                   | To be carried out within first five years | Sub-compartment | Marked on map? | Notes                                |
|---|---|-----------------|----------------|--------------------------------------|
| Establishment of deer management facilities | 2   | 1a & 3          | Yes            | Requires annual maintenance          |
| Fencing                                     | 500m                                      | all             | Yes            | 2m deer fences                       |
| Ride management                             | all                                       | all             | No             | Cut annually                         |
| Erection of high seats                      | 2   | 5 & 6           | Yes            | Removable – must be checked annually |
| Chemical protection                         |   |                 | No             |                                      |

### 5.2 Comments

|  |
|--|
|  |
|--|

### 5.3 Health and safety

You need to identify any health and safety issues relating to the planned deer management operations, such as culling and carcass handling, and record these in the plan. Examples are given in the table below:

| Risk   | Comments |
|--|----------|
| Use of high seats                                  |          |
| Safe use of firearms                               |          |
| Use of all-terrain vehicles for carcass extraction |          |
| Ticks and lyme disease                             |          |

### 5.4 Cost implications

In most woodland situations in Wales, deer management is likely to result in a net cost. Use the DMP to carry out a reconciliation of identifiable one-off and ongoing costs and income over the period of the plan. Examples of different cost items are given in the table below:

### 5.4.1 One-off costs

| Item  | Indicative cost   |
|---|---|
| High seats – aluminium, portable                | £320  |
| High seats - steel, semi-portable               | £190  |
| High seats - tower-type, permanent              | £500-800  |
| Ride-swiping                                    | £25 per 1000m <sup>2</sup>  |
| De-stumping of quad bike tracks and deer glades | ?   |
| Deer fencing - high-tensile steel               | Light - £5.50 per metre<br>Heavy - 5.50 per metre<br>Temporary - £4 per metre |
| Deer fencing - high-tensile plastic             | ?   |

### 5.4.2 Ongoing costs

| Item              | Indicative cost |
|-------------------|-----------------|
| Ride maintenance  |                 |
| Glade maintenance |                 |

## 5.5 Venison production

Please indicate what the owner wishes to do with the venison. For instance, is the plan to sell venison to a local game dealer, sell it through farm shops or for the woodland owner to keep it for their own use? You should also provide a list of local dealers and outlets where relevant.

### 5.5.1 Intended use of venison

### 5.5.2 Local dealers and outlets

## Section 6: Review of the plan

It is the responsibility of the owner and/or their agent to discuss and review the Deer Management Plan regularly. You should identify any aspects that will need to be subject to annual review e.g. cull targets (following damage assessment) and what data will need to be updated every year.