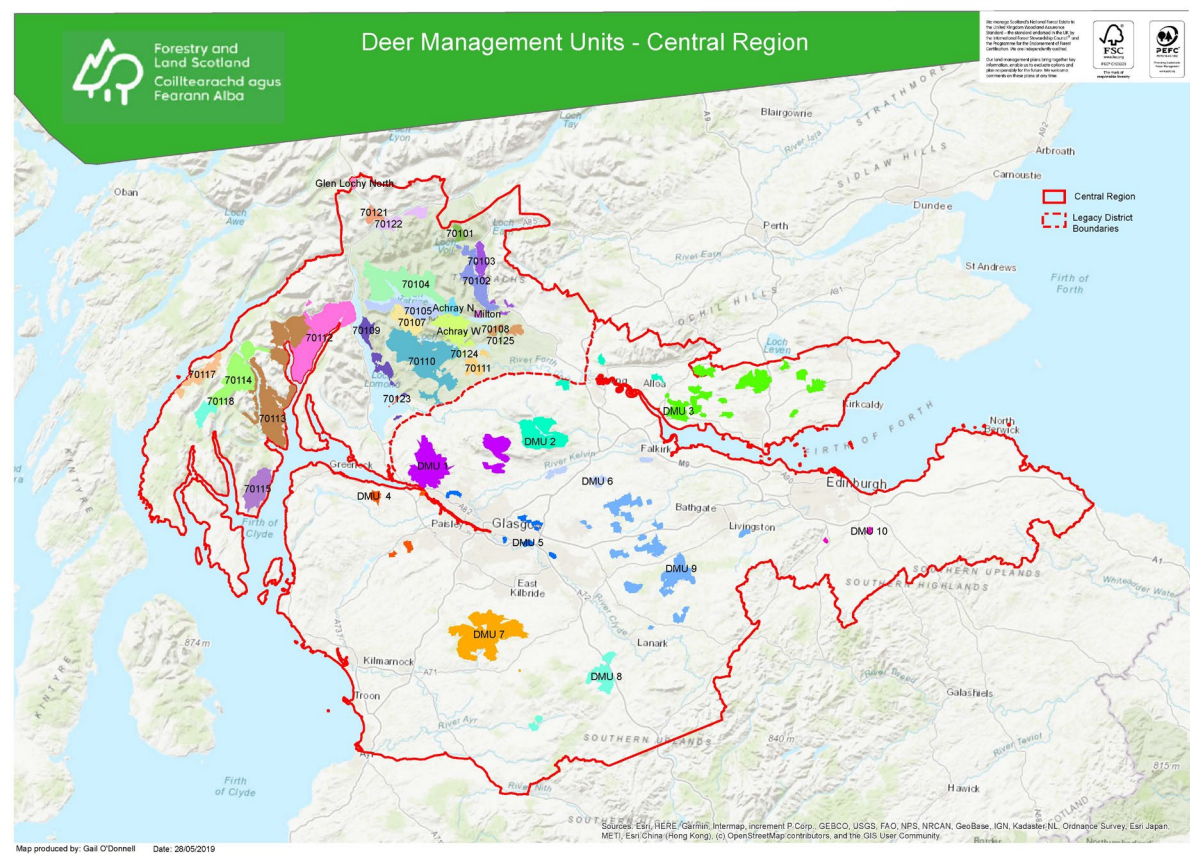




Forestry and
Land Scotland
Coilltearachd agus
Fearann Alba

Cowal & Trossachs Deer Management Plan

Central Region Boundary Map



Cowal & Trossachs area of Central Region:

In 2018 Cowal and Trossachs FD and Scottish Lowlands FD were amalgamated in to one Central Region. This deer management plan (DMP) will be relevant to Cowal & Trossachs (C&T) only which lies to the North and West of Central Region as shown on the map above. C&T is a mountainous area covering much of the Loch Lomond National Park an area known for its scenic beauty attracting large numbers of visitors each year. C&T covers an area of around 66000 hectares of which around 35000 is woodland with the remaining 31000 being open land and mountains and includes 22 Deer Management/ Wildlife management units as listed in the table below.

Deer Management Objectives

The main objective of deer management within Cowal and Trossachs area of Central Region is to manage deer populations at a level that is compatible with FLS environment and other management objectives. This means that we aim to prevent unacceptable damage to commercial tree crops and in key areas to maintain or enhance biodiversity and protect all designated sites. This will be done in a professional, humane, and cost effect way, ensuring the physical wellbeing of the remaining deer populations within the forest boundaries. Venison income will be optimized and opportunities to create revenue from recreational deer management permissions (RDMP) will be taken, but without compromising the over-riding issue of minimizing negative impacts by grazing herbivores. This strategy should be read in conjunction with OGB 5, OGB 5a and OGB14 Deer Management of the National Forest Estate, Wild Deer Best Practice and Scotland's Wild Deer a National Approach.

- Achieve less than 10% leader browsing damage on all P1 coupes.
- Ensure SDA year 1-5 meet the OGB 4 objectives. 2500 per hectare.
- Lower deer densities to 2-5 per km² to ensure the above objectives can be met sustainably.
- Ensure all designated sites are in favourable condition.
- See Appendix 1 showing what would happen if FLS were to stop culling deer.

How will our objective be achieved?

FLS use an information-based decision-making process to set its deer management operations with the facts received from varies internal and external reports and include,

- C&T NN report 2023 of 10% damage with a 3-year rolling average of 9%, (See appendix 2).
- Glenbranter forest blocks around 2 deer per km². (see Appendix 3)
- drone surveys showing deer densities are reducing (see Appendix 3)

- Over 50% of designated sites require further improvement to meet the objectives.
- Observations from staff and contractors.
- Helicopter surveys.
- Historic Culls
- FLS policy is to increase culling and reduce the need for deer fences.

With The above information considered FLS has set out its future cull plans in C&T as per Appendix 4, this is an overall population model for the entire C&T area and will help guide FLS to set culls.

C&T DMU’s & WMU’s

The table below shows a list of all DMU/WMU broken down into individual forest blocks, the resource responsible for the block and the year’s cull. Although the table outlines which FLS staff member will be responsible for wildlife management in each forest block FLS staff will be resourced with deer culling contractors to help achieve the set cull targets.

Cull Targets

DMU Name	DMU Number	Forest Block Name (SNH Control Areas)	Controller type	Centre GRID_REF	Enclosed Woodland (Y/N)	24/25
ARDGARTAN	70112	ARDGARTAN	Contract	NN229000	N	196
ARDGARTAN		COBBLER	Contract	NN274064	N	65
ARDGARTAN		CRUACH TAIRBET	Contract	NN317067	N	65
CORLARACH	70115	CORLARACH	Contract	NS137728	N	277
LOCH GOIL		DRUMSYNIE	Contract	NS176832	N	100
EAST LOCH ECK		GAIRLETTER	Contract	NS176832	N	141
EAST LOCH ECK		EAST LOCH ECK	Rainforest Ranger	NS155923	N	154
LOCH GOIL		LETTERMAY	Contract	NS182987	N	93
GLENBRANTER	70114	GLENBRANTER	A Clark/J Clark	NS109955	N	200
GLENBRANTER		MASSAN	J Clark/Rainforst Ranger	NS136858	N	75
GLENBRANTER		STRATH NAN LUB	A Clark/J Clark	NS131896	N	40
GLENBRANTER		BEN LAGGAN	J Clark		N	60
GLENBRANTER		PAPERCAVES	J Clark/Rainforest Ranger	NS134896	N	35
STRATHLACHLAN	70117	STRATHLACHLAN	J Clark	NS031953	N	120
STRATHLACHLAN		LEANACH	J Clark	NS060961	N	20
GLENDARUEL	70118	GLENDARUEL	Rainforest Ranger	NS013843	N	138
ACHRAY	70106	ACHRAY WEST	S Marshall	NN514042	N	150
ACHRAY		ACHRAY EAST	Contract		N	100
ACHRAY		ACHRAY NORTH	S Marshall		N	25
ACHRAY		MILTON	S Marshall	NN567068	N	10
CRANLARICH	70122	BENMORE	Contract	NN449264	Y	75
CRANLARICH		INVERARDRAN	Contract	NN395241	Y	50
EAST LOCH LOMOND	70109	BALMAHA	Contract	NS423911	N	15
EAST LOCH LOMOND		NTS	Contract	NN378001	N	5
EAST LOCH LOMOND		PTARMIGAN	Contract	NN349038	N	80
EAST LOCH LOMOND		ROWARDENNAN & SALLOCHY	Contract	NS369984	N	100
EAST LOCH LOMOND		ROSS PRIORY	Unstalkable	NS410867	Y	0
EAST LOCH LOMOND		STRATHCASHELL	Contract	NS402933	N	30
FLANDERS	70111	FLANDERS EAST	Contract	NN561967	N	50
FLANDERS		FLANDERS WEST	Contract	NS548956	N	25
FLANDERS		CARDROSS	Contract	NS578991	N	10
LEDARD	70107	LEDARD	New Trossachs Ranger	NN449040	N	100
LOCH ARD	70110	LOCH ARD	Contract	NS466991	N	589
NORTH KATRINE	70104	NORTH KATRINE	Contract	NN442127	N	429
SOUTH KATRINE	70105	SOUTH KATRINE & ARKLET	New Trossachs Ranger	NN450075	N	120
STRATHYRE EAST	70103	STRATHYRE EAST	A Wilbert	NN629084	N	90
STRATHYRE EAST		CALLANDER CRAGS	Contract	NN572178	N	15
STRATHYRE EAST		LENY BLOCK	A Wilbert	NN593092	Y	20
STRATHYRE WEST	70102	STRATHYRE WEST	A Wilbert	NN565126	N	200
STRATHYRE WEST		COILLEHALLAN	Contract	NN618070	N	10
LETTER	70108	LETTER	S Marshall	NN600038	N	50
LETTER		TORRIE	S Marshall	NN638038	N	50
LETTER		WESTER TORRIE (NP)	S Marshall	NN647039	N	7
KIRKTON		BALQUIDDER	A Wilbert	NN532211	Y	40
			TOTALS			4224
			Rangers			1704
			Contract			2520
RANGERS	24/25 Year					

Population Model

The population models have been built using historical cull data and recruitment data retrieved from the deer dashboard. This population model will help guide C&T over the coming years with culling setting targets to help ensure FLS objectives will be met whilst also ensuring the cull is sustainable. (See Appendix 4)

Deer Larders

It's vitally important to FLS to offset some of its DM expenses by maximizing its income from Venison. To do this the 4 deer larders in the region must be kept compliant at all times and meet FLS requirements to ensure we have enough larder capacity to deal with the culls that are set to meet objectives. See attached (Appendix 5) clearly outlining Central regions larder strategy.

Health and Safety

The safety of all staff and the public will be paramount in everything we do. The use of firearms, ATVs, lone working in remote often harsh locations and in all weathers, brings with it a number of hazards. By ensuring we have a well-trained, well-equipped workforce and by the use of risk assessment, safety checks and effective communication we will seek to minimise the risk to all.

Deer Species

C & T's woodlands are home to Red, Roe and Fallow. Red are the predominant species with Roe and then a small population of Fallow centered on east Loch Lomond. Sika have been seen and shot in small numbers. To try and prevent but certainly slow the spread of sika, they will be controlled rigorously, fully in keeping with the Nature Scot policy.

Deer Management Groups

Liaison with neighbours is essential to the cost-effective implementation of FLS deer management objectives. The C & T deer management team will be active participant in local deer management groups. Such groups provide a forum for explaining and gaining acceptance of FLS policy and for agreeing forms of mutually beneficial co-operation with regard to deer management matters. An open, honest approach will be taken with attempts made to promote a good understanding of the professional approach to deer management in our forests. FLS will seek opportunities to collaborate at a landscape scale where possible to enhance both its and the wider deer management sector's ability to deliver effective deer management. FLS in C&T currently have cross boundary culling agreement with Cashel estate and Glen Falloch estate as well as larder sharing agreement with the RSPB and Woodland Trust.

There are currently four DMGs active within the C & T boundaries – Flanders, Inveraray/Tyndrum, Balquhiddar and Glen Artney. The Cowal DMG is in the early stages of reforming.

Wildlife Rangers:

C & T currently employs six fulltime wildlife rangers (WR) and one apprentice WR. The WR are managed by 1 Wildlife Ranger Managers (WRM) the WRM in turn reports to the Area Wildlife Manager who is head of this function for the region.

Deer Management Permissions:

The Issuing of permits to cull deer, to suitably qualified permit holders, assists with overall deer control and with reducing costs. There are no permissions in operation in C & T. Careful consideration is given to this system ensuring that targets and acceptable damage levels are not compromised. Cull targets will be provided annually, and monthly progress monitored. The C&T considers its position frequently and as permissions come to a close. Permissions are managed in line with FLS policy.

Contract Deer Cullers:

Contract Deer Cullers are used as necessary to complement the directly employed WRs. All Contractors are selected after satisfying FLS of their competence via a competitive tender. This work is arduous and critical to the success of the impact reduction strategy and only very experienced contractors will be considered.

Out of Season Shooting

Out of season shooting is an essential tool in the protection of vulnerable tree crops and natural habitats. This is conducted either under the General License issued by NS for enclosed woodland or by 5(6) authorisation on application to NS for un-enclosed woodland. Decisions to shoot out of season will be made on an individual DMU/WMU basis, where it is believed that considerable damage would occur if this step were not taken. While male deer no longer have a closed season the culling of females out of season will be limited to the periods 1st of September –20th October and from the 16th February to the 31st March. When early out of season shooting of females is carried out any dependent young will be shot first.

Night shooting

This is permitted by the Deer (Scotland) Act 1996 as amended by the Wildlife and Natural Environment Act 2011 (WANE Act), under section 18(2) authorisations from NS. Applications for night shooting will only be made where damage would occur and where the use of all other legal means of control, including out of season shooting have been considered. Operational dates for night shooting will be kept under review and changed should circumstances dictate. All operations will conform to Best Practice Guidance and a copy of the guides will be held at the district office and issued to Wildlife Rangers, as necessary. No legislation now allows for the use of light intensifying rifles scopes to cull deer at night.

Fencing

FLS policy on deer fencing will be as per OGB5 and the Joint Agency Statement & Guidance on Deer Fencing. Boundary fences bordering deer range will be maintained where necessary. Neighbours will be expected to meet their legal obligations. Perimeter deer fencing should not be maintained for the sole benefit of a neighbour. Internal fences may be used to protect sizeable areas of vulnerable species or where opportunities to shoot are limited by high public usage. Internal fencing should be the exception rather than the rule.

Ranger Training

FLS seeks to maintain a highly skilled Wildlife Ranger force. All Wildlife Rangers are qualified to Deer Stalking Certificate 1 & 2. Annual Firearms Skills Testing and the Wildlife Ranger Self Checklist and WRMs 1, 2, 3, & 4 are carried out at the required intervals and are part of the resumption system. Additional training requirements are identified through the itrent and ilearn systems.

Nature Scot (NS)

Regular close liaison with NS and the regional NS Wildlife Officer will be a high priority with assistance being sought where problems exist. It will be vital that NS supports action on any contentious issues.

Waste Management

Animal waste at point of kill (gralloch) will be left on site taking account of OGB5a and avoiding watercourses, public paths etc. Animal by products from the deer larder will be disposed of via a licensed waste contractor using the FLS central contract. Disposal in an emergency for example if a larder chill breaks down and a large number of carcasses must be disposed of will be via the Approved Waste Contractor requesting an emergency uplift.

Future Actions.

- Monitor deer density in conjunction with NN Damage Assessment and SDA results.
- Liaise with Operational Staff over budgets and planning.
- Liaise with Operational staff throughout the crop rotation.
- Liaise with the Environment team regarding deer impacts on other habitats.
- To improve ATV access throughout the forest area to allow for efficient deer management.
- Liaise and collaborate with neighboring deer management groups, the national park authority, and other stakeholders to help ensure sustainable and collaborative deer management is achieved.

Review,

This DMP will be reviewed annually or as required should policies change.