

Deer Management Groups

advice and support in England

Introduction

In general, we know that wild deer in England and Wales are both spreading and increasing. In some areas there is already significant impact of many varieties from economic, through environmental to human interest. In addition there are many regions that still provide suitable habitat but which have yet to be colonised. The challenge is to understand the population dynamics and the effects, agree in all cases what demonstrates a suitable balance, and then manage deer to that end.

The Deer Initiative (DI) is a broad partnership of statutory and voluntary bodies, and private interests, aiming to “*ensure the delivery of a sustainable, well-managed wild deer population in England*”. The DI advocates a properly planned approach to deer management and endorses the use of Deer Management Groups (DMGs) to co-ordinate deer management efforts across landholding boundaries within natural deer ranges.

In general terms a DMG is a group of landowners and managers who agree a common deer management aim and where necessary, execute a deer management plan.

The Nature of a Deer Management Group

There is no “standard” DMG model that applies universally. Effective working of each Group will depend on many variables, not least the degree of enthusiasm displayed by the landowners and managers concerned and the species and distribution of the deer themselves. Landowners’ attitudes will vary but, as a starting point, all should agree on the need to maintain deer numbers in balance with their environment.

The boundaries of each DMG should be based on the range of the deer to be managed. The size will vary by species, but may be influenced by the obvious identifiable [if not impenetrable] barriers to deer movement such as rivers, motorways or major landforms.



*For more information please
contact the Deer Initiative:*

Main Office

PO Box 2196
Wrexham LL14 6YH
Tel: 0870 774 3677
Fax: 0870 774 3688
E-mail: info@thedeerinitiative.co.uk

Central Region - David Jam

Deer Liaison Officer

P O Box 2196
Wrexham
LL14 6YH
Tel: 0870 774 3677 Fax: 0870 774 3688
Mobile: 07966 966 390
E-mail: central@thedeerinitiative.co.uk

Southern Region - Robert Underhill

Deer Liaison Officer

Estate Office, Longford Castle
Salisbury
Wiltshire SP5 4ED
Tel: 01722 411974 Fax: 01722 412646
Mobile: 07971 955434
E-mail: southern@thedeerinitiative.co.uk

Eastern Region - David Hooton

Deer Liaison Officer

PO Box 465
Bury St Edmunds
IP28 6XD
Tel: 01842 890798 Fax: 01842 890759
Mobile: 07970 141512
E-mail: eastern@thedeerinitiative.co.uk

Wales - Jackie Brinton

PO Box 39
Brecon
Powys LD3 8WD
Tel: 01874 636148 Fax: 01874 636840
Mobile: 07768 983087
E-mail: wales@thedeerinitiative.co.uk

South West Region - Norman Healy

Deer Liaison Officer

PO Box 67
Exeter EX6 8WT
Tel: 01626 891364 Fax: 0870 774 3688
Mobile: 07966 966389
E-mail: southwest@thedeerinitiative.co.uk

Northern Region - Peter Watson

Deer Liaison Officer

PO Box 2196
Wrexham LL14 6YH
Tel: 0870 774 3677
Fax: 0870 774 3688
E-mail: northern@thedeerinitiative.co.uk

**Please visit our website at:
www.thedeerinitiative.co.uk**

Setting Up a Deer Management Group

The pre-requisite to setting up a DMG is to gather together a group of landowners and/or land managers who are willing to co-operate towards common objectives in managing deer which roam across their land. Having identified such a group, and enthusiastic organiser with the skill and means to communicate effectively should be chosen to co-ordinate the effort.

To be most effective, the Group must be made up of land owners/managers or representatives who are able to take decisions on behalf of the principal stakeholder. The initial need is to obtain sufficient deer management advice and knowledge of deer numbers, distribution and impact, to be able to develop a deer management plan, matched to the aspirations and aims of the landowners and land managers. This expertise may come from within the group but may also have to be sought independently. It would be normal for the group to meet initially to discuss the whole concept before developing a detailed plan. Thereafter meetings should take place at least annually to review progress and agree any changes that are required to the deer management plan.

Deer Management Advice

Advice on deer management and establishing DMGs may come from many sources. However, if the expertise is not available locally the DI can provide objective advice through dedicated DI Deer Liaison Officers or through accredited representatives of the DI Partner Organisations. Seeking advice early is recommended.

Deer Initiative Support

Apart from the advice mentioned above, the DI may also provide other support, including a modest start-up grant, should this be required. It is expected that established DMGs should reach financial self-sufficiency rapidly. General support is not, however, exclusive to new DMGs, and requests for help from existing DMGs will be considered equally on merit. Bids for assistance may be made directly to the DI at the contact address given on this Advice Note. It is expected that bids will include the following

- details of the proposed or existing DMG, including the major contacts and significant land holdings
- an expansion of the background and nature of the assistance required
- a location map at a scale of 1:50K, showing overall boundaries
- any letters of support, particularly from the Forestry Commission Conservator and from the local branches of the CLA and NFU

Activities eligible for support are not restrictive and could include:

- gathering and exchange of information (e.g. deer census, determination of land ownership, surveys of environmental impact, advisory visits)
- communications costs (e.g. administration, meetings)
- awareness raising (eg seminars, leaflets)

The Deer Initiative receives financial support from the partnership, the principal sponsors being the Forestry Commission, English Nature and the Highways Agency.