

Dunkeld Deer Management Forum 2020 Report



Dunkeld Deer Management Forum

2020 Report

- **Statement of Purpose:**

The aims of the Dunkeld Deer Management Forum (DDMF) are:

- To collaborate as responsible professionals in meeting obligations to local and national interests.
- To manage the four-local species of deer sustainably, in compliance with the Deer Code.

This involves a collective effort to:

- Share, gather and make available relevant data on deer and any concerns re numbers or distribution.
- Exercise our rights with consideration to each other and the needs of the wider community.
- Maintain open and active communication with all stakeholder interests and be accountable to them.

In achieving these the DDMF wish that a sustainable and healthy deer population is maintained at acceptable levels and that the natural environment is improved by our actions within the DDMF range.

The Dunkeld Deer Management Forum has currently 26 represented stakeholders, covering some 110 square kilometres centred around Dunkeld.

The interests of the stakeholders in our range are very diverse.

Commercial Forestry

Community Council

Farming

National Trust for Scotland

Sporting Estates

Safety - Police Scotland

Wildlife Tourism

Scottish Natural Heritage

Commercial Tourism Interests

A balance needs to be established to ensure that the natural environment can be improved while managing to support the diversity of our stakeholders. Engagement with the DDMF is key to achieving our aims, if you have any input which we can utilise please address to the secretary at ddmfsecretary@aol.com.

- **Legislation**

Currently in Scotland there are various legislative requirements for landowners to control deer densities on their land. Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) promotes, cares for and improves Scotland's natural heritage. SNH have powers to ensure that the natural heritage is improved and continue to work with government, various organisations and private individuals to reach their 2025 plan. SNH also support the DDMF with professional advice and support.

www.nature.scot/about-snh/our-work.

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- **The Public Interest.**

- **Stakeholders Current Status and Risk Assessment.**

All 26 stakeholders have carried out a “current status” assessment and identified key areas of concern. These have been risk assessed and where required an action plan is in place.

On an annual basis, all stakeholders will review their status and determine if their plans are improving the current position.

Of 51 risk assessments taken for the 2019 to 2020 period, 1 is Red (immediate action is required), 20 are Amber (a plan is in place to rectify the issue) and 31 are Green (status quo is maintained). This is an improvement in last year’s risk assessment performance.

The one red is relating to deer in the village of Dunkeld and residents concerns raised at the community council meetings. The ambers that are still current are relating to general browse levels.

The objective for the DDMF is to work towards and attain Green in all stakeholder assessments, this will be measured on an annual basis so that effective performance can be demonstrated.

- **Health & Safety and Deer Welfare.**

Safety is a key priority for the DDMF. Training providers and contact details for advice on deer matters will be made available through the DDMF via the secretary at ddmfsecretary@aol.com.

Any queries with respect to deer management or formal Deer Management Qualifications (DMQ) can be addressed via the secretary at ddmfsecretary@aol.com.

The highest standards in deer welfare and culling activity are expected within the DDMF range. www.bestpracticeguides.org.uk.

Tick attachments are a critical risk to human health, although ticks are not as active in winter conditions the awareness to potential transmission of Lymes Disease is important and it is the intention of the Dunkeld Deer Management Forum to highlight the risks to people active in the outdoors. A tick awareness article will be published locally in the spring.

More info can be found @:

<https://scotland.forestry.gov.uk/managing/work-on-scotlands-national-forest-estate/health-safety-wellbeing/lyme-disease-and-tick-awareness>

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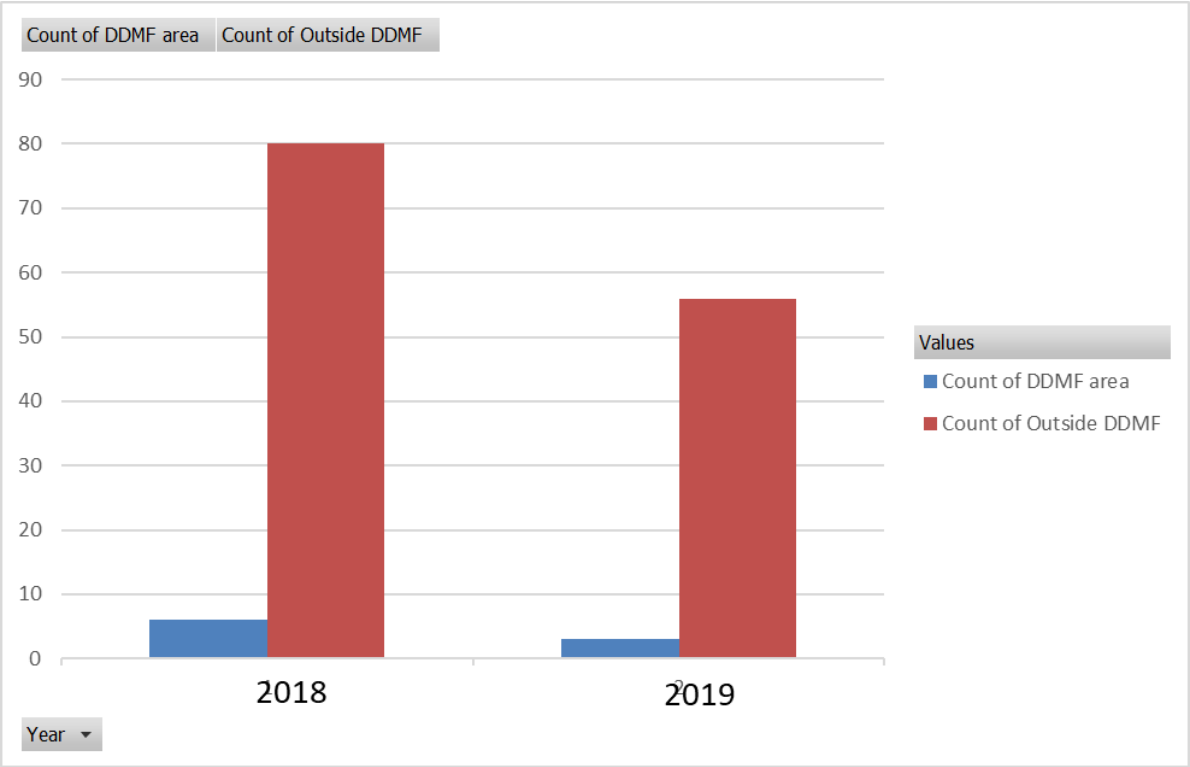
- Road Traffic Collisions**

Deer vehicle collisions are monitored by both recorded traffic collisions and carcass uplifts by Perth and Kinross Council. This year there has been a reduction in both reported collisions and carcass uplifts.

Trunk Roads

Year	Number carcasses uplifted A 9 trunk	Number carcasses uplifted Scotland trunk roads
2014	12	243
2015	13	267
2016	8	194
2017	18	204
2018	15	91
2019	6	Not yet available

Carcass uplifts on all other roads in Perth and Kinross over and above Trunk Roads



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The A9 duelling is ongoing and may be a factor in the reduction in deer collisions due to both works activity and reduced speed limits. The new A9 road sections have deer protection designed in, continued monitoring will determine if this is effective.

There are identified times of year when deer related traffic incidents increase due to a change in the animal's movements. Awareness of this is important for vehicle users and signage on trunk roads will indicate these periods.

Peak periods recorded for traffic collisions or carcass uplifts in the Dunkeld area being, April to May and August to October; extra awareness in these periods is key to reducing incidents. Key times for deer activity are dawn and dusk, please be aware.

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- **Deer Population Control and Dynamic.**

- **Deer Cull Plan.**

Deer density and population assessment in the Dunkeld area is a key measure for determining a plan of action. There are many methods which can be utilised, each with their own associated costs. The DDMF are currently using cull figures against impacts recorded within the risk assessments gathered annually. The intention is to supplement this with Herbivore Impact Assessments carried out by individual stakeholders within the individual estate Deer Management Plan.

	Fallow	Roe	Red	Total Cull
2017 Cull Totals	608	186	66	860
2018 Cull Totals	981	290	82	1353
2019 Cull Totals	912	411	159	1482
2020 Cull Proposed	978	363	120	1461

- **Cull Density**

The cull density is a key measure as to effectiveness of deer management, this cull density if applied consistently will allow the DDMF to establish the actual density of deer within our range and allow us to manage the population to a level acceptable to all stakeholders. Another key reduction target is to focus on female animals during the cull, current performance is circa 60 % female.

Detailed cull returns are essential, a comprehensive cull return demonstrates the professional and effective actions that land managers within the Forum range are taking to manage the environment within their control.

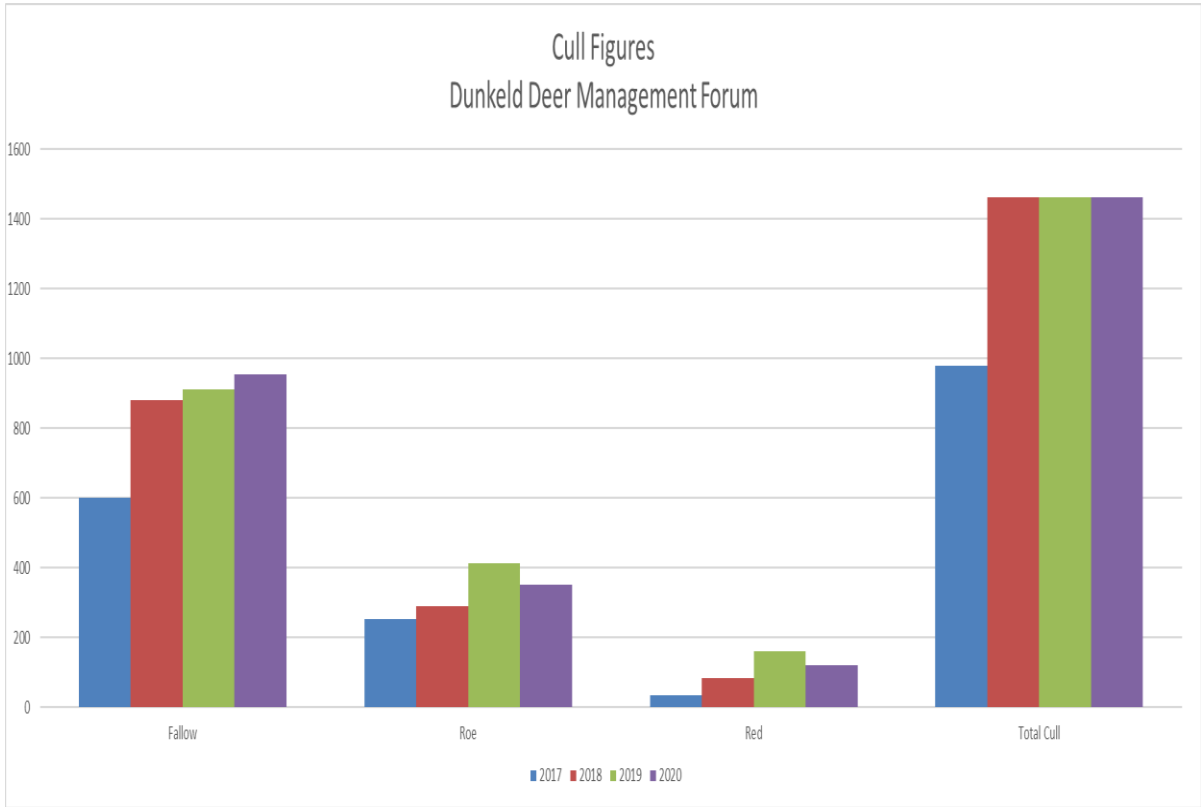
One square kilometre is equivalent of 244 acres.

Achieved Cull Density 2017 (110 sq km)	8 animals per Sq Km
Achieved Cull Density 2018 (110 sq km)	12 animals per Sq Km
Achieved Cull Density 2019 (110 sq km)	15 animals per Sq Km
Target Cull Density 2020 (110 sq km)	15 animals per Sq Km

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The variance in cull density across our range is significant, this can be due to species type, land type and effort, but as an indicator it gives a common goal to achieve within individual Deer Management Plans. At this cull rate it will take 5 years to achieve a tolerable deer density.

- Cull Numbers**

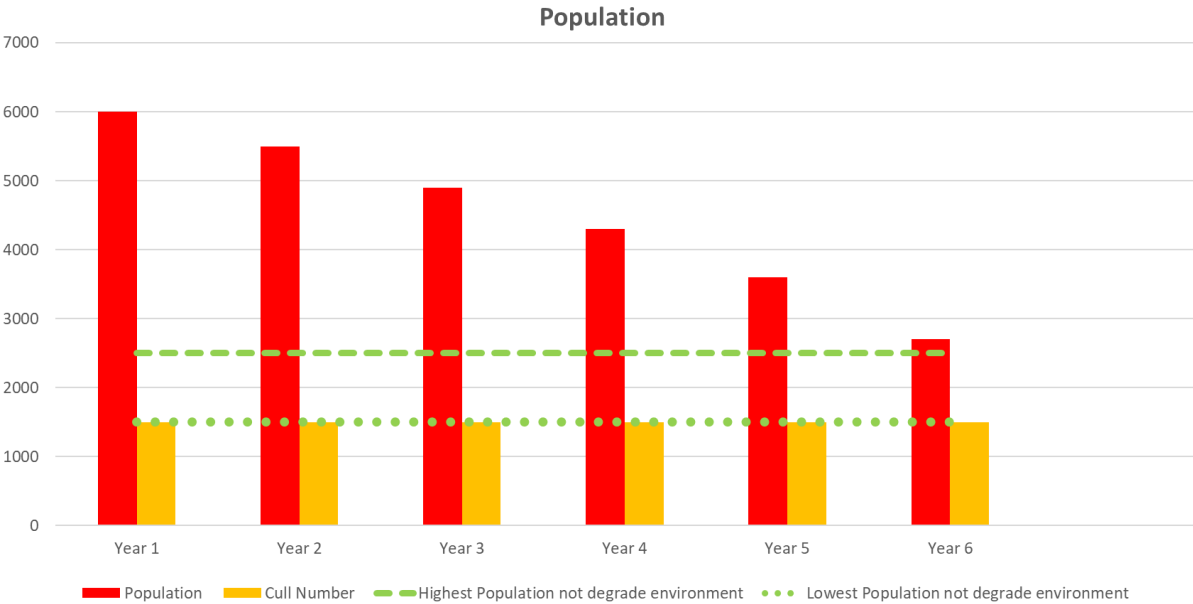


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- **Population Dynamic**

As the deer density decreases, effort will need to increase to maintain the cull level. The animal weights and condition will increase. The achieved cull number trend is still increasing for fallow deer which will improve the overall condition of the animals.

The population fluctuates across the range with the seasons, food availability and cull pressure and throughout the year with a peak June July and decreasing over the year to the post winter population, therefore an accurate “number” is difficult to accurately determine without major expense and also estimations.



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- **Deer Management Planning**

The Dunkeld Deer Management Forum requires a Deer Management Plan, although we are a non-funded forum and not a formal Deer Management Group, we have been advised to create a Plan which can guide and inform both Scottish Natural Heritage of progress and the land holding members of overall objectives.

The land type and issues associated with deer and the general public are more aligned to the Lowlands rather than open hill range. We intend to progress along the same principals as the Lowland Deer Network, which is a network of deer groups managing wild deer in a lowland environment and on the urban fringes.

Our Deer Management Plan will be unique in that we have a significant population of Fallow Deer and Roe deer with a smaller population of Red Deer within our range. Currently we report to Scottish Natural Heritage 70% of the total Fallow cull for Scotland, although there are some significant herds in other parts of Scotland currently not under reported management.

The purpose of the DDMF Deer Management Plan is to provide an overriding plan which will sit above each land holdings own individual estate Deer Management Plan. The specific estate Deer Management plans are unique to each land holding, depending on deer density of each species. The outcomes required by the estate and their own forestry plans or domestic stock holdings will be key to the aims and objectives of the individual plans.

The continued support of existing landowners and stakeholders is essential in demonstrating to Scottish Natural Heritage, whom are responsible for legal compliance, that a collaborative approach to Deer Management within our range is improving the native woodlands and that safety of road users and welfare of the deer is integral within our plans.

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