

Sustainable deer management in Scotland



The Challenge

Effective exchange of knowledge will aid delivery of targeted, informed and sustainable deer management. This work supports that by analysing existing wild deer research and identifying specific evidence gaps to address five priority areas: effective deer management planning; healthy ecosystems; lowland and urban deer; economic and community development; and training and wild deer welfare.

Policy Implication

There are evidence gaps relating to sustainable deer management and knowledge transfer. A lack of data on local patterns are an ongoing barrier, particularly in lowland/countryside areas. There is a need to understand the effectiveness of existing collaborative structures and specific knowledge transfer challenges which relate to incentivising and involving stakeholders in lowland and urban areas, and to ensure that decision making incorporates multiple perspectives. Stakeholders also recognised a need for gaining more clarity on the vision for wild deer management at the UK and Scotland level.

Research

Knowledge gaps were identified by gathering stakeholder views at workshops, through an online survey of researchers and policy makers, and an evidence review. Workshops included four with regional stakeholders, one with trainers' and one with researchers and policy makers. The uptake of research by stakeholders was also examined through an on-line survey of researchers and policy makers.

Results

1. Understanding different stakeholder perspectives and cultures should underpin conflict management and the governance of deer management groups.
2. Understanding of herbivore impacts and interactions across a range of temporal and spatial scales are needed. This should be related to ecosystem services.
3. Research gaps for lowland and urban deer management were broadly similar to those in the uplands, but knowledge transfer was a bigger barrier than knowledge gaps.
4. Socio-economic impacts, venison supply chain and diversification, and cost-benefit analysis on alternative deer management models are poorly understood. The UK and Scottish vision for deer management should be defined.
5. Data driven management processes, as well as further professionalisation of deer management through better training provision, were key cross-cutting issues.

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About

The Land Economy, Environment and Society (LEES) Research Group is one of the largest groupings of economists and social scientists working in the rural, agricultural and land based sectors in the UK. Our vision is to be recognised as one of the leading centres for agricultural and wider rural economic and social research globally, benefiting the land use sector, the environment and rural communities.

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