

Undertaking a recruitment count

A recruitment count is done to determine the surviving calves as a proportion of hinds at the end of winter.

This should be completed in late April or early May, as by this time, most deer that were going to die, have. Additionally, there are likely to be more days with good visibility and day length is extending.

These counts don't need to be co-ordinated in the same way as a foot count as stalkers are only counting a sample of the population.

Ideally, the stalker should set out to cover as large a proportion of their hind stock as possible to give as accurate an impression of recruitment as can be achieved. The stalker should at least cover some of the low ground and high ground to get a representative sample.

Count and record each group of deer and classify the group into stags, hinds and calves.

Example

Estate: Glenbogle

Group	Location	Stags	Hinds	Calves	Total
1	Behind lodge	15	8	2	25
2	1 st ridge	2	18	4	24
3	Little Corrie	3	17	3	23
4	Main ridge	1	5	1	7
5	Main Corrie	4	54	16	74
6	Little ridge	2	13	2	17
7	Low corrie	3	10	3	16
8	Big burn	23	7	2	32
Total		53	132	33	218

Recruitment Rate = $(33/132) \times 100 = 25\%$

Problems:

- The later this is done, the greater the likelihood that a good calf might be classified as a yearling and equally a poor yearling classified as a calf.
- Inevitably some areas will be missed but by collating the information on a group wide basis, there should be enough information to use for planning

When reporting recruitment data to your DMG, stalkers should also give the actual data (eg numbers of hinds and calves) and not just the % recruitment as collating overall recruitment rates is not possible if different estates are returning different % figures for unknown numbers of hinds.

It is also important for DMGs to recognise the variation in recruitment rates within their areas, and not just to assume an overall figure as there may well be smaller sub areas where the data vary significantly from the average and which may require a different management approach.