

ADMG will have good story to tell when Government Deer Management Review takes place in 2016



Richard Cooke, Chairman, ADMG

All readers of Scope will be very much aware of the efforts being made at Deer Management Group level to demonstrate the effectiveness of voluntary deer

management. All the current Groups have been assessed by SNH and are at various stages of developing Deer Management Plans (DMPs). I am confident that we will have a good story to tell when the much-heralded Scottish Government review of deer management takes place in 2016. In the meantime ADMG has given an interim report on progress to the Rural Affairs, Environment and Climate Change Committee following its request for an update. This report is online on the Committee web pages. This report shows that significant progress is being made, despite the delayed launch of grant support for writing and updating Deer Management Plans. That progress has been noted in the Minister's foreword to the updated WDNA, albeit the sector might have been further encouraged by more enthusiasm for its considerable work and commitment to date.

All DMGs should recently have received copies of Wild Deer – A National Approach (WDNA). This is the Government's 20 year policy document for deer management. It was first published in 2009 and has now been brought up to date by SNH in consultation with relevant interests, ADMG included. WDNA in effect sets the context for all deer management going forward and of particular note is the increased emphasis in this second version on the public interest aspects of deer management.

Another matter of importance is that SNH is to set up an independent review of the use of Authorisations for out of season and night shooting in terms of the 1996 Deer (Scotland) Act and Wildlife & Natural Environment (Scotland)



Act. This will be welcome as various concerns have been raised and a joint working group has been set up by ADMG and the Lowland Deer Network to bring together views and submit comments to the review panel.

Finally, as the summer approaches, I much look forward to seeing members at Scone and Moy. There is much to talk about in relation to the current process of rapid change in the deer sector, not to mention the politics of the day and the Land Reform Bill which is expected to be published by then. There is plenty to discuss.

That said, we have a varied mix of contributions in this issue, with our regular contributor Iain Thornber looking back at deer management in the 19th century, BDS Scottish Council Chairman John Bruce explaining in the first of two articles the deer management system in Germany where he has some experience, and Ian Urquhart, Chairman of Johnstons of Elgin who is compiling a new, up-to-date record of estate tweeds.

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Delivering public interest from deer management



Ian Ross, Chairman, Scottish Natural Heritage

Hopefully the term and concept of delivering the public interest is something that deer managers throughout Scotland are now very familiar with. It is something which I highlighted when speaking at the ADMG AGM in February and I know that SNH staff have been providing significant support to DMG Chairs, secretaries and members in helping to identify what public interests are currently being delivered by DMGs and where further progress can be made.

Whilst Deer Management as a topic has come under significant scrutiny from the Rural Affairs Committee in recent months and will retain a certain amount of focus as the Land Reform Bill progresses through the Parliamentary process, there is no doubt that deer are just part of a much bigger conversation arising from Holyrood about how Scotland's land is managed.

The DMG assessment process, which 44 DMGs have been through, has I believe, focussed minds on the different aspects of public interest which are derived from deer management. Scotland's Wild Deer – A National Approach (WDNA), which has recently been refreshed and the Code of Practice on Deer Management (Code) have helped form the basis of these assessments. The very useful information gleaned from this process provides a good baseline from which to demonstrate and measure the step change that the Scottish Government is seeking from DMGs. This will be important when SNH and ADMG are asked to contribute to the RACCE review in 2016.

I do not underestimate the work that is involved in taking forward the actions which have been identified through this process though, which include; developing more effective and inclusive ways of working; demonstrable delivery of wider environmental benefits by managing deer impacts on designated sites, the wider countryside and our important woodland habitats; clarifying the contributions made to social aspects of health and wellbeing such as responsible access provision; securing the welfare of deer and reducing the likelihood of road traffic accidents. Associated with these challenges though, is an opportunity for land owners and managers to demonstrate both awareness and delivery of public interest and good in the way they work.

My understanding is that most DMGs are now in the process of preparing and producing DMPs in a form that takes full account of the ADMG Benchmark and public interest. Making these plans available, ensuring local communities are given an opportunity to engage and increasing the transparency of deer management is the clear expectation.

At the time of writing, whilst a lot of work has been done in preparing for the production of plans only a small number of DMPs have been completed. For our part SNH will continue to support the work that is being done, but the emphasis is very much on DMGs to demonstrate the equitable balance between public and private interests that is required, and that deer management can be effectively integrated with other land uses so that the voluntary system can provide the basis for a modern approach to the management of Scotland's common deer resource.

Scotland's Wild Deer – A National Approach (WDNA)

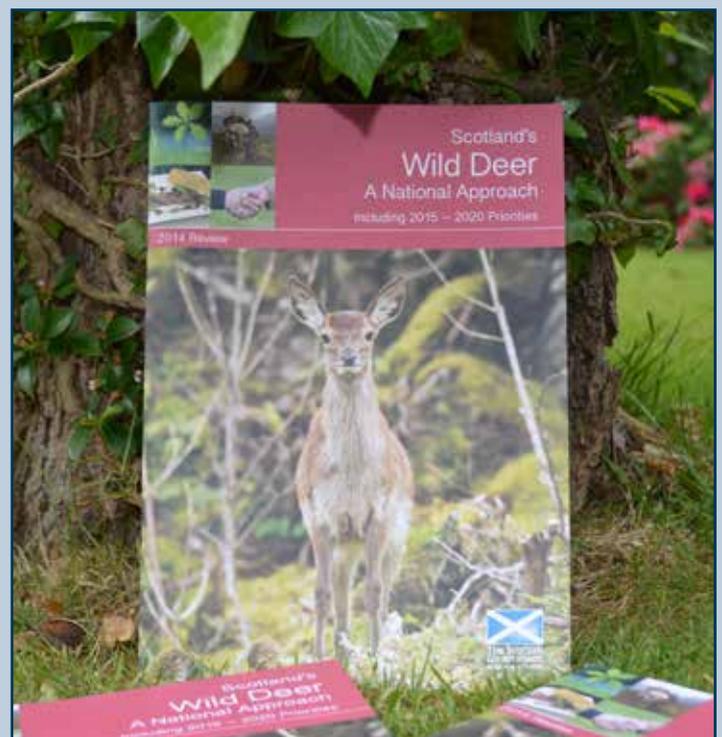
All deer managers should be familiar with the new, updated 20 year vision for wild deer management in Scotland. It is relevant to all deer species and all types of land ownership and management. It also is important for all organisations and individuals that have an interest in deer management at whatever level.

WDNA will be delivered by increasing collaboration among land use interests and the Scottish Government – those include individuals, businesses, recreational and community bodies and organisations across the private, voluntary and public sectors. It is supported by the Code of Practice on Deer Management, introduced in 2012, that describes the 'responsibility' to 'manage deer sustainably'.

Deer management is under increasing public and political scrutiny, says the introduction to the Review, and as a consequence there are a number of important new challenges to be addressed.

This 5 year review of WDNA looks ahead to 2020. An accompanying action plan is currently in preparation.

The updated document is available either in hard copy or online from SNH.



Is 'the public interest' becoming more important than the interests of the deer?



Dick Playfair

This is not the ideal time to be writing this particular political commentary. The Land Reform Bill will be introduced within a week of my writing this, and by the time this is printed so the Bill will be too. I am also

conscious of the words of Ian Ross on the adjoining page, so on this occasion these are my personal observations rather than those of ADMG.

In the last few days and weeks I have heard several different opinions as to how the progress in deer management as expected by Scottish Government is developing – and there has been considerable progress in the last 12 months. At Scone last year ADMG launched its Benchmark. Work had begun on this before the RACCE Committee enquiry, and it was necessary to prepare for the planned review of deer management in 2016. If there was to be some type of assessment of how Deer Management Groups were performing then a set of criteria would be needed against which that assessment could take place.

Some 44 DMGs have now been assessed and are improving how they operate where such improvement is necessary. The RACCE Committee has sharpened up that process – indeed the Committee recently requested an interim report which is in the public domain on the Scottish Parliament website <http://bit.ly/1Fo8XEh> (abbreviated link), no doubt under the land reform pages.

A number of DMGs are writing new Deer Management Plans (DMPs); others are revisiting their DMP to ensure that they come up to scratch; others, who thought they had a finished Plan are being advised to have them professionally assessed to ensure they are 'fit for purpose'. And public interest is seemingly becoming the determining factor – not the interest of the environment, or the economy, or the deer, but the interest of the public.

Likewise, with communication, DMGs have been advised to be more open and transparent, and many are aspiring to this. The web is the obvious solution and the more information ADMG and DMGs can make available through this medium then the less questions a curious public, and a number of very busy but equally curious politicians, are likely to have; either the information will be available for them online or at least there will be a point of contact through which to access it. But DMGs are not public companies and certain information has to be reported, but not all. For a system that is voluntary it is already, surprising to some, severely constrained by regulation and red tape. DMGs are not businesses making profit; they are there to do a job now demanded by Holyrood and Europe, and yet the level of scrutiny to which these voluntary, collaborative bodies are being subjected is in danger of coming close to FIFA!

It has been described as 'mission creep' – give a little and they want a little bit more. The big question has to be why, and the answer probably lies in the same place as the rationale for the removal of the exemption for payment of sporting rates. Land reform is the driver.

The Land Reform Bill will almost certainly propose the end of the exemption from business rates for "shootings and deer forests". On the one hand you have to think that that makes sense – businesses pay business rates and why should such enterprises not – apart from the fact that farming and forestry, arguably more structured as businesses than many 'shootings and deer forests', will remain exempt.



We were advised by a Bill team member that 'sporting rates' is a colloquial term. They are not defined in statute – the plan is simply to lift the exemption put in place in 1995. But arguably the deer world was very different then, and much has changed. There is a Code, a vision, and deer management actions are determined to take into account the environment, the economy, the public interest, and not least, the deer. Not that they didn't before, but now they should (or must). Those who have deer on their land have a responsibility to manage them sustainably.

And where deer of any species are managed (ie culled) then that property would be assessed for business rates. Everyone who might have deer on their ground and be required to cull them at some point (whether for management, for protection of crops, or public safety) would therefore in theory be liable. However, as most 'sporting' properties are a mix of deer and game shooting that will make assessment more complex. They would also have to be assessed on 'hypothetical' rental value, and such evidence will be hard to source. Salmon fishings will remain exempt.

All properties would have to be assessed, albeit many would be deemed exempt as falling under the small business threshold – but they will require assessment to claim exemption. But here is the crux. Is all deer management a business? If you have deer on your ground and 'rent' the control of those deer to a third party is that a business? If you don't rent out that control but do it yourself as a necessity to comply with law, Code or the public interest, is that a business? If you don't have deer on your ground now but did last year how are your hypothetical rates likely to be set?

The risk seems that we will be in danger of applying an antiquated system to a process that has moved on and modernised. The term 'sporting' is fast becoming redundant. It would be ironic if its last vestige was in the 'colloquial' description of a tax that was not fit for purpose.

And finally, where would the proceeds from these rates be applied? The First Minister suggested they would increase the Scottish Land Fund from £3 million to £10 million. That is unlikely as they will be collected by 32 local authorities that will determine how the money is spent. What is likely however is that central grants to local authorities will be cut given this new income source and any Government savings will be applied to increase the land fund for more communities to buy land which will then require to be assessed, like everyone else, for sporting rates.

We will all be wiser on sight of the Bill and, as it goes through Stage 2 and 3 similar arguments will no doubt be played out. What is crucial is, that among the future discussions, the interests of the deer are not forgotten.

The German Hunting System

John Bruce

As deer management continues under the spotlight in Scotland and a further period of transition, comparisons are often made with how wild deer are managed elsewhere in Europe. John Bruce of the British Deer Society takes an in-depth look at the German system in the first of two feature articles.

The huntable area of Germany is 320,900 sq km, and 338,580 German hunters are registered to hunt; this represents 90 per cent of the German area and 0.4 per cent of the population of nearly 90 million persons. German hunting law is based on the federal hunting law (*Bundesjagdgesetz*) in its version of 29 September 1976, which has been derived from the initial laws set out by Hermann Goring in 1934. As an outline law, it is completed by the laws of the 16 States or *Länder* and their application dispositions.

The land ownership situation in Germany, and some other countries, is that the laws of inheritance follow the laws that Napoleon implemented, in that land shall be divided between inheritors upon death; in the short space of time that has elapsed since it was implemented in 1804 the landownership pattern, farmland, woodland and any other land, has become fragmented to a staggering degree, to the extent that farms or estates as a collection of contiguous fields cannot usually exist. Land parcels have been subdivided possibly six times since 1804 - so a 10ha field then is now potentially at least 64 land parcels of 0.15ha each, or just 1500 sq metres on average, and that is if only two children per family inherit; where there have been more children, then more divisions.

This results in a landscape so divided that no-one can rule, except the *Jagdgenossenschaft* (hunting cooperative), which

is the association of the landowners within an administrative district, so everyone who owns small land parcels must yield their hunting rights for centralised management and control.

In a typical *revier*, hunting lease area of about 700 ha, held on lease from the commune, there may be 1400 hunting rights owners. This requires a significant investment in bureaucracy to manage the districts' many *reviers* legal requirements as well as the actual game management.

In Germany, the hunting rights belongs to the landowner, but he cannot implement them or hunt unless he has undertaken and passed a Hunting Test, *Jagerprüfung*, and obtained his Hunting Licence, *Jagdschein*. Once he has obtained his *Jagdschein* he is entitled to obtain his firearm certificate, *Waffenbesitzkarte*, then he can either hunt his own land or join a syndicate to hunt a *revier*, a leased area. The two guiding principles of hunting practise are the *Reviersystem*, (*Revier*, or hunting estate system), and the *Pflicht zur Hege*, (the game management duty of the hunting right owner).

The *Revier* system differs from the licence system applying in other countries in that hunting is only allowed in certain areas, (*Jagdbezirke*). Private hunting territories, (*Eigenjagdbezirke*), must have a minimum area of at least 75 unbroken ha and shared hunting territories, (*gemeinschaftliche Jagdbezirke*, pooling together several smaller territories within one administrative district), must have 150 ha. These minimum areas can be increased by the *Länder* - the governments of the 16 independent states in Germany.

In a private hunting territory the hunting rights belong to the landowner, if he has a hunting permit and his agricultural, forestry or fish farming area amounts to at least 75 unbroken ha. He can retain the right to hunt his own land.



Wild boar in the snow. Photo: J Bruce

The German Hunting System (continued)



In shared hunting territories, (which are all hunting areas that don't have the size of a private hunting territory and that are located within the administrative boundaries of a district), the hunting right belongs to the *Jagdgenossenschaft* (hunting cooperative), which is the association of all the landowners. As a general rule, the hunting cooperative leases out the hunting right. There is often a pattern of four or five *revier* to every village, and as German demography is the most ordered in Europe this forms a regular and contiguous pattern across the state.

Hunting rights can be leased to third parties, subject to a limit of 1000 ha, (2000ha in mountain areas), per leaseholder. To obtain a *Revier*, (hunting lease), leaseholders/ tenants must have a German annual hunting licence and must have held such a licence for the past three years.

Game management (*Hege*) aims to maintain varied and healthy game populations at levels compatible with landscape and agricultural conditions, ensuring requirements for game survival are met and preventing hindrance to agricultural, forestry and fish farming use of the area, notably game damage.

There are distinctions made between areas/*reviers* which support *Neidewild*, small game only, (roe deer, fur and feathered game and pests), and those that support, albeit infrequently, *Hochwild*, or large/high game, (including red, fallow and sika deer, and also wild boar, mouflon and chamois). This manifests itself in the *revier* system when leases will be longer - 12 years for *Hochwild*, or 9 for *Neidewild*, and dramatically more expensive, at about €10/ha with additionally higher game damage claims, for which the hunter must pay in addition to the rent. In some years

the damages will amount to more than the rent especially when wild boar decimate agricultural crops and especially when they "root up" established grassland where damages can equate to €10,000 per hectare.

For some time the State attempted to increase control of hunting activities by additionally setting up an administration system that determined what the cull of every species should be, and which every *revier* was expected to undertake. Recently the truth about performance and expectations has been admitted and this top down system has been more or less completely abandoned, except in areas of Habitat Designation.

The internal administration of a syndicate has several dynamics; they must have a nominated leader who takes responsibility for the administration of the syndicate in that he can sign the lease and other contracts on behalf of the group, and additionally, there must be in place a syndicate contract whereby everyone becomes "jointly & severally" responsible for costs, damages and liabilities, notably the rent and game damage to crops. This contract is inspected by the administration and should it become defective there are legal processes to manage the land and game and to recover outstanding dues and costs. The result is a degree of cross compliance that, in the main, endows rights to all parties and covers most eventualities, it does not however necessarily mean that the behaviour of the participants is any safer, or, that game management is any better than what is found anywhere else in the world, indeed due to the fragmentation of the land the inter-territory hunter behaviour, rivalry, is often detrimental to game management, but, more on that in episode 2.

Source; Deutscher Jagdschutz-Verband e.V, (DJV) 2003



Old notes from a well-known Argyll deer forest

Iain Thornber

A great many accounts have been written about deer stalking in the last century and a half but very few, to my mind, are as good as *Deer Stalking by Donald Cameron of Lochiel* published by Longmans, Green and Co, London, New York and Bombay in their *Fur, Feather and Fin Series* in 1896.

Lochiel (1835-1905) was regarded as the best stalker of his time in the Highlands and a leading authority on deer and their management which led to his appointment as a member of two powerful government bodies, the 1892 Deer Forest Commission and the House of Commons Select Committee on the Game Laws (1872-73). His comments on deer management are timeless and as sensible and practical now as they were when they were written.

In the lead up to the production of *Deer Stalking*, Lochiel, who was also the 24th Chief of Clan Cameron, Lord Lieutenant, Conservative MP for Inverness-shire and a native Gaelic speaker, wrote to many of his fellow Scottish lairds asking them a variety of questions in much the same way as Kenneth G Whitehead did for his monumental work, *The Deer Stalking Grounds of Great Britain and Ireland* (1960). One recipient was Gavin, 7th Earl of Breadalbane (1851-1922) who owned 400,000 acres stretching from Aberfeldy in the east to the Islands of Luing and Seil off the west coast of Argyll. Breadalbane's response has survived and provides a valuable insight into the running of a great deer forest in the days before stags became the political scapegoat of land reformers and conservationists. I am indebted to the present Donald Cameron of Lochiel for giving me access to his family papers and for permission to quote the following:

Notes on Blackmount and deer stalking by the Earl of Breadalbane, Taymouth Castle, Aberfeldy, Perthshire. 16 December 1895

"Yes, the Black Mount was injured and the deer very much scattered through the amount of driving when Lord Dudley had it. The first year we were there, there were very few good beasts on the ground; all we shot were miserable small and old beasts. This continued for two or three years. They were improving rapidly until the winter before last, when very large numbers of deer died through the continued wet - mostly deer with good heads. To give you some idea of the number that must have died, I may mention that we picked up over 140 really good heads.

"We do not 'drive'. I have had only one or two small drives when I have had Royalties visiting me, but only then.

"We have a 'Sanctuary'. I allow no shooting in it whatever, and the deer are moved out of it occasionally by a man walking through it. No stalking ever takes place in the Sanctuary. I only once shot a deer in it myself. Of course sometimes a wounded deer may go through it, but this has only happened twice or thrice altogether.

"I reckon the season from the 1st of September to the 12th of October. Some years I have had to stop as early as the 9th or 10th, while this year I shot a stag on the 15th which was not at all run.



Donald Cameron of Lochiel

"I do not allow milch hinds to be shot on any account. They used to shoot very large numbers of hinds on Blackmount, but now we only kill from 35 to 40 in the year (only enough to give away - the foresters each get 2, and others in the district get a certain quantity) as the amount of newly cleared ground round about us draws away a large number of our hinds.

"No we have not introduced German or Park Deer. I have taken some deer from the woods here (at Taymouth) and turned them out at Blackmount. I think they have done well. Mr Platt, who has a neighbouring forest, has turned out some Wapiti, but as this has been the first year they have been on the hill I cannot say whether they have crossed with the wild deer or not.



Rannoch Moor

Old notes from a well-known Argyll deer forest (continued)

"I have fed the deer in extreme cases, but I do not believe in feeding artificially, as my experience has been from what I have seen that red deer being fed invariably means that the ones you wish to get the food, namely, the poor and weak ones, do not get a chance, being driven away by the strong beasts which do not so much require the feeding. I have used locust beans and Indian corn. I have given hay at Taymouth, but I believe Indian corn to be the best feeding - at least, they seem to like it best."

The following are a few rules and customs at the Blackmount.

"No one is allowed to stalk a beat except the forester in charge. Each forester is obliged to keep to his own beat (as I consider it extremely injurious for foresters to take gentlemen wandering on ground where there may be another rifle), and it also unnecessarily disturbs the ground. No two rifles go out on the same beat on the one day. No beat is stalked two days running. (Of course in cases of a wounded stag this rule cannot be carried out, where the beast is looked for the next day).

"The foresters look after the ground, stalks his own beats in the season and also does any fishing with sportsmen that may be required; he is supposed to keep the bridle paths, gates, etc. in order on his own beats, and to trap vermin.

"I do not know whether this information may be of any use to you or not, but I may mention that my Blackmount men are allowed two cows and followers, one stirk and the keep of a pony. I do not give either the foresters or the ghillies whisky when out on the hill, but give them money allowance instead. I find this rule is much followed in the forests of Aberdeenshire. The forester gets £40 [we assume wages not whisky money!] a year and a suit of clothes.

"One drawback is that the men complain of the difficulty of getting sufficient wintering for their beasts without going a long way for it. To illustrate what I mean, I may mention that the hotel-keeper at Kingshouse gets his hay on the flat between Blackmount Lodge and Inveroran Hotel, a distance of about ten miles from his place. Some of the foresters pick up little bits of wintering here and there on their beats.

"There are no deer hounds on the forest. I consider them very mischievous. Each forester is allowed to keep a collie,



the dog being my property and he being paid for its keep. These dogs are broken to sheep and will track a wounded stag. The number of rifles that we usually send out each day during the season is five, that is - two from Blackmount House, two from the Lodge at Glenkinglass and one from a Lodge in Glen Etive. The rifles take it turn about to go and stay at the outside lodges for a night or two. Sometimes an extra rifle goes out from the Blackmount House, but I consider five enough for the forest regularly.

"There has been a custom in the Blackmount to give a stag annually to each of the tenant farmers adjoining the forest, I do not know how this rule originated.

"The majority of the deer are shot with .450 rifles. One or two of the guests this year brought .500 and .400. One or two also brought the .303 but so far as I could ascertain none of these were taken out. In my opinion the .450 is by far the best rifle for deerstalking, a double hammerless. I consider that the hammerless is preferable, as they come easier out of the cover. I always carry my rifle cartridges and my own lunch in ordinary 'sponge bags' with the result that I have never got either damped no matter how wet a day it was."

It is reassuring that, despite the changes in such details as firearms, the general principals of good deer forest management remain much as they were over a century ago. The changes that are of real concern are the development of meddlesome conservationist bodies which bear no responsibility for the consequence of their actions, and of a narrow political agenda which may well lead to the extinction of the only conceivable means of delivering management in the interests of the deer and the land.

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Producing an up to date record of Estate Tweeds

Ian Urquhart, Chairman, Johnstons of Elgin

Johnstons of Elgin hold the Royal Warrant of Appointment to his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales for the supply of Estate Tweed.

The origins of estate tweeds can be found in the changes that happened following the defeat of the Jacobite uprising, led by Bonnie Prince Charlie at Culloden, on 16th April 1746. The tweeds are regarded as a part of Scottish social history.

The Act of Prohibition passed after the '45 rebellion (1745) had forbidden men and boys throughout Scotland to wear tartan and Highland clothes and also to carry arms. In the last half of the 18th century economic circumstances changed enormously and agricultural reforms meant that land could support a much larger population. Changes in agriculture meant that more sheep were grazed. This led to changes in the way land was managed as larger areas were required for the sheep. Black cattle continued to be exported from Scotland with prices remaining high throughout the Napoleonic wars. Farming was important and the Royal Highland and Agricultural Society of Scotland was founded in 1784. The Society is highly regarded for the Royal Highland Show held at Inverclyde each June.

Industry was brought to the Highlands with a mill built at Spinningdale. This competed with mills in the Borders and Yorkshire. Johnstons were established in Elgin in 1797.

In the mid 1800's the Highlands grew in popularity enhanced by their adoption by Queen Victoria and Prince Albert. In 1848 Prince Albert bought the estate of Balmoral and the foundation stone of Balmoral Castle was laid in 1853. One of the first things Prince Albert did was to design The Balmoral Tweed for use by all stalkers and ghillies on the estate. The tweed is one of the first true estate tweeds, of very dark blue design with white sprinkled with Crimson.



It gives a grey overall appearance and imitates very closely the texture and effect of the Granite Mountains around Balmoral. It was designed to provide camouflage while stalking in the Aberdeenshire hills.

Grouse shooting and deer stalking became popular. Stalking and salmon fishing brought wealth to the Highlands. The sport brought employment in the glens. Deer stalking, salmon fishing and grouse shooting required professionals who could initiate the amateur into the craft of forest, moor, loch and river and it became the custom to dress all of the workers on an estate in one pattern of tweed. The tweed acted as camouflage but was extremely durable. It was also worn by the Laird, Factor and owning family. Today, tweed has many diverse uses, including being used as upholstery fabric.

Many small mills were involved in making estate tweeds. However, Johnstons of Elgin is the only original weaver to survive and thrive.

When designing estate tweed it was common for a number of sample designs to be created. These would be taken up the hill on the estate and the Laird would look at these, sometimes through a telescope, to see which tweed blended in best with the landscape. The late Lord Lovat related how his grandfather had pointed out to his wife that the colours on the far shore of Loch Morar, sands, heather, bracken, bluebells and birches blended together to make one beautiful colour effect. From this blend was created the original Lovat mixture.

Broadly speaking, the designs fall into four groups. The first uses variations of the Shepherds Check which is also known as 'Gun Club'. The second uses variations of the 'Glenurquhart', the third is based on tartan type designs while the fourth uses a number of plain grounds with or without over checks and form the group from which camouflage uniform evolved.

The first mixture was the Lovat which was first made by Johnstons of Elgin on 26th September 1845. At about this time the Hodden Grey tweed was designed by Lord Elcho.



Balmoral estate tweed at the Scottish Game Fair in 2013

Producing an up to date record of Estate Tweeds (continued)

He was raising the London Scottish Regiment at the time and thought it wrong that soldiers should be clad in so conspicuous a colour as scarlet. Lord Elcho clothed the regiment in a cloth which blended white and claret-brown. This produced an effect similar to the red-brown soil of East Lothian.

This Elcho mixture was the origin of the khaki worn by the British army and so Lord Elcho can claim his uniform as the beginning of all camouflage uniforms of the armies of the world.

Today Johnstons have mills in Elgin and in Hawick. Estate Tweeds are an important part of the business but they now lead the world in cashmere and fine woollens, sourcing the finest raw fibres available. They introduced cashmere to the UK, the first supply delivered in 1851. Over the years Johnstons have expanded their business and mills, now employing 900 people.

Johnstons of Elgin were pioneers in the weaving of estate tweeds in the mid-1800s and in 1968 and 1995 Edward S and Edward P Harrison (Ned) published books recording estate tweeds.

The Harrison family have owned Johnstons since 1920. Ned's son-in-law, Ian Urquhart, Chairman of Johnstons and author of this article with his daughter Jenny, a Director, are updating the book. Johnstons think it is vital to record as many estate tweeds as possible as they are an important aspect of Scotland's social history. Ian and Jenny have written to many estates asking for updated information.

If any estate, with an estate tweed has not been contacted Ian and Jenny would be grateful if they could get in touch as soon as possible writing to:

**Johnstons of Elgin,
Newmill, Elgin,
Moray
IV30 4AF**

**E: i.urquhart@johnstonscashmere.com
T: 01343 554 000**



Scottish Quality Wild Venison Quality Assurance Scheme

Jonathan Whitehead

SQWV Ltd (Scottish Quality Wild Venison Ltd) is an independent company that exists to maintain, develop and promote Quality Assurance Standards throughout the wild venison industry.

There are many reasons why a landowner might cull deer on his or her property. These can include the sporting aspect, maintaining the environment and habitat on their land, and helping manage a healthy population of deer.

However there is one factor that almost all will have in common which is that the venison is being supplied into the human food chain. Whether the annual cull is large or small there is a responsibility to ensure that the venison reaches the consumer in the best possible condition.

The SQWV scheme only relates to 'wild' venison. This means managed populations of deer living in forests, hills and parkland under conditions of freedom i.e. living naturally.

SQWV is a dynamic Scheme, with standards that will alter in response to consumer, trade and legislative concerns and

requirements. Standards are reviewed annually and members are kept fully informed of any changes in the standards and conditions that may affect them.

How the Assurance schemes work

There are two sections to the scheme. The SQWV Stalking and Carcase Handling Assurance Scheme covers all the stages between wild deer being stalked and shot through to the storage of skin on carcasses that have been gralloched and are awaiting collection by the game dealer or processor.

Where larders are being used for the skinning of game and cutting of carcasses into meat, these should join the SQWV Primary Processor Scheme. Game Dealers or Game Processing Plants are also assured under the Primary Processing Scheme.

Although the Schemes are owned by Scottish Quality Wild Venison Ltd, the assessment of the businesses applying for Assured status has been contracted out to Acoura qualified independent inspectors.

Members of the Stalking and Carcase Handling Scheme are inspected at intervals between 12 and 18 months. Members of the Primary Processing Scheme are seen between 6 and 18 months.

Scottish Quality Wild Venison Quality Assurance Scheme (continued)

The SQWV standards

These include stalking, carcase handling and processing of venison. They demonstrate good industry practice and should be readily achievable by the vast majority of the industry. They are assessed by independent assessors working with SFQC.

- Deer management and control
- Stalking proficiency
- Larder management
- Carcase inspection
- Processing- transport, dressing, cutting, packaging and labelling
- Product specification
- Hygiene standards
- Traceability

Producer members are assessed every 12-18 months depending on the nature of any problems identified at their previous assessment. Processor members are assessed every 6 to 12 months. If they are also BRC members, assessment interval is extended to between 12 and 18 months.

Food Safety

The Producer scheme requires that all stalkers have a minimum of DMQ-DSC 1 or equivalent and have also achieved, or are working towards DSC 2 Accreditation. These qualifications ensure that they have sufficient training to understand the requirements of Regulations (EC) 852/2004 & 853/2004.

The Stalker will record any abnormalities observed both ante and post mortem for each carcase on a Trained Hunter Declaration which is signed by them. The carcasses are stored in a temperature controlled environment firstly in the estate larders & chillers and then transported to the Processor. On arrival at the processing plant the carcasses are inspected by MHIs and OV's before being approved as suitable for human consumption.

Membership of the schemes

There are 115 members of the Producer scheme. Of these just over two thirds are Private Estates. The remainder of the membership is made up of organisations including the Forestry Commission, National Trust for Scotland, SNH and the RSPB.

Around 40,000 deer were culled by the membership in the last complete season. The majority will have been Red, but some Roe and Fallow will also be included in the figures. This amounts to around 70 per cent of the wild deer culled in Scotland. There are three members of the SQWV processors scheme and they will handle most of the assured carcasses. While there is no requirement for them to handle solely assured carcasses, they are required to have verifiable traceability procedures in place so that assured and non-assured venison can be identified at all times through their plants.



Conclusion

We all want food that is safe and tastes good but many of us now want more information about what we eat - for example where it has come from; how it has been produced; that the environment is taken care of; how food has been processed; and in the case of eating out, information about the restaurant. As a result of the assessments and checks made throughout the food chain on members of the SQWV Assurance schemes consumers know more about the venison they purchase and consume.

If you would like more information or are interested in joining the scheme please contact Jonathan Whitehead at **0131 335 6657** or jonathan.whitehead@sfqc.co.uk



Deer Farm and Park Demonstration Project into second year



Dick Playfair

The Deer Farm and Park Demonstration Project is now into its second year, with days already held at Clathic Farm, Crieff, Perthshire on Tuesday 12 May and at

Gledpark, Borgue, Dumfries & Galloway on 16 June. The programme returns to Clathic for a further day on 28 July.

Clathic is the home of Jamie and Miranda Landale. A 210 acre unit, they bought the property in 2003. At that point the majority of the farm was severely neglected and overrun with nettles, thistles and bracken. Jamie Landale says:

"It was in a desperate state. The farm comprised pasture hill and woodland, but totally run down, the stock fencing in really bad repair, and a major challenge to bring it back to some sort of working condition. There were a few grazing licences bringing in a few hundred pounds a year. We thought about cattle and sheep but ultimately saw deer as being a good alternative, not least because there were a number of wild deer coming onto the ground through the winter, and it seemed to provide good natural habitat for them." In September 2011, following a programme of spraying and clearing the dense ground cover, the first of the deer arrived, bought from a farm in Inverness-shire, to be supplemented in 2012 by the live capture of 26 of mixed age and sex from the surrounding countryside. Clathic provides an excellent example of how deer can be attracted into an enclosure voluntarily and after a period of time the gate is then shut behind them.

The herd has grown further with more hinds and a breeding stag bought from Strathdon Deer (last year's demonstration unit), a further live capture exercise resulting in 41 animals, and the purchase of further hinds and another stag from Woburn Park. The herd now numbers just short of 170 – 4 stags, 9 yearling stags, 81 hinds, 21 yearling hinds and 53 calves. Jamie Landale says: "We have a good mix of stock from the wild and their progeny, coupled with bought-in farm stock, and two good stags with good bloodlines. Our programme of wild capture is completed and an objective now is steady improvement in the quality of the herd both in relation to venison production and the onward sale of breeding hinds.



Viewing the deer in the top paddock at Clathic



An attentive audience for one of the presentations

"Deer have been a logical option for us. We went into this venture without any notion that we would be eligible for subsidy and drew up our forecasts and budgets accordingly. Now that we are eligible for some support that will bring a welcome bonus that we can re-invest in improvement and also recoup some of the capital costs. My inclination was to just get on and spend what was required on fencing, the larder, spraying the bracken and weeds, and buying stock, and we now have 210 acres that contribute to the cost of the enterprise. Those acres are also in significantly better condition than they were at the outset, and our grazing is also improving with some help from reseeding with grass and clover, and repair of winter damage.

"We now have a situation where our deer are content, and the wild deer outside are trying to get in, albeit we have no plans for further wild capture."

At Clathic animals are field shot, and various routes to market have been tried for the venison including a major game dealer, farmers markets and private sale. With the new deer abattoir now open at Downfield, Fife that now provides a further option.

Says Jamie Landale: "We are now starting to see the benefits. Deer suit the ground here; the market is buoyant, but most importantly deer fit with the way we want to operate. Our long term goal remains for the deer enterprise to be self sustaining."

More information about the Deer Farm and Park Demonstration Project at <http://deerfarmdemoproject.scottish-venison.info/>

The Deer Farm Demonstration Project is a partnership project between Scotland Food and Drink, NFU Scotland, SFQC Ltd and The Scottish Venison Partnership. The funding is being made available through the SRDP Skills Development Scheme which is jointly funded by The Scottish Government and the European Union.

The new 'Heading for the Scottish Hills' web service

Mark Wrightham, Policy and Advice Manager,
Recreation and Access, Scottish Natural Heritage

The Scottish Outdoor Access Code advises land managers to provide information about stalking during the red deer stag season and, in turn, advises hillwalkers to take reasonable steps to find out where stalking is taking place. The SNH Heading for the Scottish Hills service aims to facilitate this process and has now been operating for several years, gradually expanding to include around 80 estates - mostly in the Central Highlands and Cairngorms. The service has been welcomed by both walkers and stalkers, but experience has also highlighted some key issues which need to be addressed to allow the service to continue and to reach its full potential. In particular, the system needs to work on mobile devices, be easier for land managers and SNH to maintain, and be easier to extend to a wider area. SNH has therefore worked with ADMG, the Mountaineering Council of Scotland and other key bodies to address these issues, and a new HFTSH service will be launched in early July on the Scottish Outdoor Access Code website.

Simplicity is the watchword for the new service, which will be based on eight regional tables that can provide stalking information for all of the Munros and Corbetts, and other popular hills. These tables will focus on useful information that will not need regular updating, such as the approximate duration of stag stalking and days of the week when stalking does not take place. This information can also include any routes to the summits that are "always OK" - which is particularly helpful to hillwalkers and may eliminate the need for further enquiries or discussion with estate staff. Users can be referred to other sources, such as estate websites, recorded phone messages or local signs, for more specific information about stalking on particular days if this is available.

We have transferred information into the new system from estates that participated in the old service, and are now gathering the necessary information from 'new' estates who would like to take part. In order to give hillwalkers a wider overview of where potential disturbance is most likely, we are also keen to include estates where there are no concerns of this type - including land managed by public bodies or NGOs. These will normally be covered by standard messages stating that there are "no stalking issues".

The new HFTSH service can help deer managers to address the current challenge to provide greater benefits to the public interest. At a basic level, the service can help estates to provide positive advice to hillwalkers in line with the Scottish Outdoor Access Code. For estates which feel able to do this, it might also be possible to go further and demonstrate extra public interest benefits by undertaking to carry out stalking around public access - which could be promoted on HFTSH through a "no stalking issues" message.

Whatever the approach taken on your estate, please get in touch with us if you would like to take part in the new service. We have set up a dedicated e-mailbox for enquiries at hftsh@snh.gov.uk and can provide further guidance and a short proforma to help you provide the necessary information. The current deer management planning process provides an opportunity for DMGs to consider this in a more co-ordinated way across their wider area. It could therefore make sense to include this topic on the agenda for a future meeting of your DMG, when SNH Wildlife Management Officers will be on hand, if needed, to help discuss and develop HFTSH messages. And finally, look out for the new service when it goes online at:

<http://www.outdooraccess-scotland.com/hftsh>

Photo: SNH



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