

Gairloch Conservation Unit

Part 1: Deer Management Plan Information



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Foreword

Beinn Eighe, the first National Nature Reserve, was bought in 1951 by the recently formed Nature Conservancy. For a few years it continued to be run on the lines of a traditional sporting estate. By the 1960's its managers were starting to formulate plans. In 1965 John Morton Boyd and Dick Balharry now in his third year as warden, realised that to achieve a plan for the reserve they must bring neighbouring estates on side. This led to the first deer group being formed in 1967 as the Gairloch Conservation Unit (GCU). It was intended to cover more than just deer management.

The first meeting was in February and had the support of the owners of Flowerdale, Diabaig, Grudie, Sheildaig, Torridon, Slattadale and of course Beinn Eighe. It also included several sporting tenants.

Within a few years other areas were copying this example. Now the whole of the Scottish Highlands have their group areas and meetings devoted to deer management.

Pressure for an increase in tree cover now highlights the problem of deer density, particularly when natural regeneration with no fencing is attempted. Undoubtedly a Deer Management Plan based on an up to date count is an essential tool in the control of a deer population – where cull targets can be based on known numbers.

Past figures show that culling levels have become very heavily concentrated in and around some of the areas intended for regeneration. It is clear that we have a clash of interests – a problem foreseen back in the 1960's by Morton Boyd. We no longer have his guidance but we do have his legacy – to aim for “the wise management of the deer forest as a whole”.

Well attended GCU meetings, a Deer Management Plan, deer counts and plenty of discussion can achieve agreement between our various interests but only if there is some give and take and significantly more “give” than “take”.

John Wills, Chairman of Gairloch Conservation Unit

Contents

1.1 Introduction.....	5
Figure 1: Group Location.....	5
Figure 2: Properties within Gairloch Conservation Unit	6
1.2 Deer Populations, Movements and Management	8
Figure 3: Monthly count data from Beinn Eighe for 2014 & 2015.....	8
Table 1: Group and Individual Property Culls.....	9
Figure 4: Historic Group Deer Culls.....	9
1.3 Actions to develop mechanisms to manage deer	10
1.4 Actions for the delivery of designated features into Favourable Condition	13
Table 2: Designated features and deer management units.....	13
Table 3: Scores for grazing and trampling impacts across habitats.....	15
Figure 5: Sites of Special Scientific Interest.....	17
Table 4: Designated Site Feature Condition (grey shading indicates Unfavourable condition not considered to be due to herbivores, orange shading indicates herbivores are contributing to Unfavourable status).....	18
1.5 Actions to manage deer to retain existing native woodland cover and improve.....	19
woodland condition.....	19
Table 5: Summary of Native Woodland Survey for Scotland Herbivore Impacts.....	19
Figure 6: Herbivore Impacts on Native Woodland (NWSS Data).....	21
1.6 Actions to demonstrate DMG contribution to the Scottish Government woodland expansion target of 25% woodland cover.....	22
Table 6: Summary of Woodland/Forestry Grant Schemes by Property.....	23
Figure 7: Woodland covered by Woodland or Forestry Grant Schemes	24
1.7 Actions to monitor and manage deer impacts in the wider countryside.....	25
Figure 8: Blanket bog & peatland and Heather moorland across the Group (Land Cover Scotland Data 88).....	25
1.8 Actions to improve Scotland’s ability to store carbon by maintaining or improving ecosystem health.....	27
1.9 Actions to reduce or mitigate the risk of establishment of invasive non-native species	29
1.10 Actions to protect designated historic and cultural features from being damaged by deer.....	30
1.11 Actions to contribute to delivering higher standards of competence in deer management.....	31
1.12 Actions to Identify and promote opportunities contributing to public health and wellbeing.....	32
1.13 Actions to maximise economic benefits associated with deer	35
1.14 Actions to minimise the economic costs of deer, and ensure deer management is cost-effective	37
1.15 Actions to ensure effective communication on deer management issues.....	39
1.16 Actions to ensure deer welfare is taken fully into account at individual animal and population level.....	40
1.17 Management Units: SNH Beinn Eighe	42

1.18 Management Units: Diabaig Estate..... 45

1.19. Management Units: Eisean Dubh 47

1.20 Management Units: FCS Slattadale..... 48

1.21 Management Units: Gairloch and Conon Estate 49

1.22 Management Units: Grudie and Talladale Estate..... 51

1.23 Management Units: NTS Torridon 53

1.24 References 55

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 Gairloch Conservation Unit

Located in Wester Ross in the North-West Highlands (Figure 1), Gairloch Conservation Unit (GCU) covers an area of approximately **42,600 ha** and lies largely in an area of land bordered by Loch Maree and Loch Gairloch to the north and east, and Glen Torridon and Loch Torridon to the south and west.

Figure 1: Group Location



1.1.2 Management Units

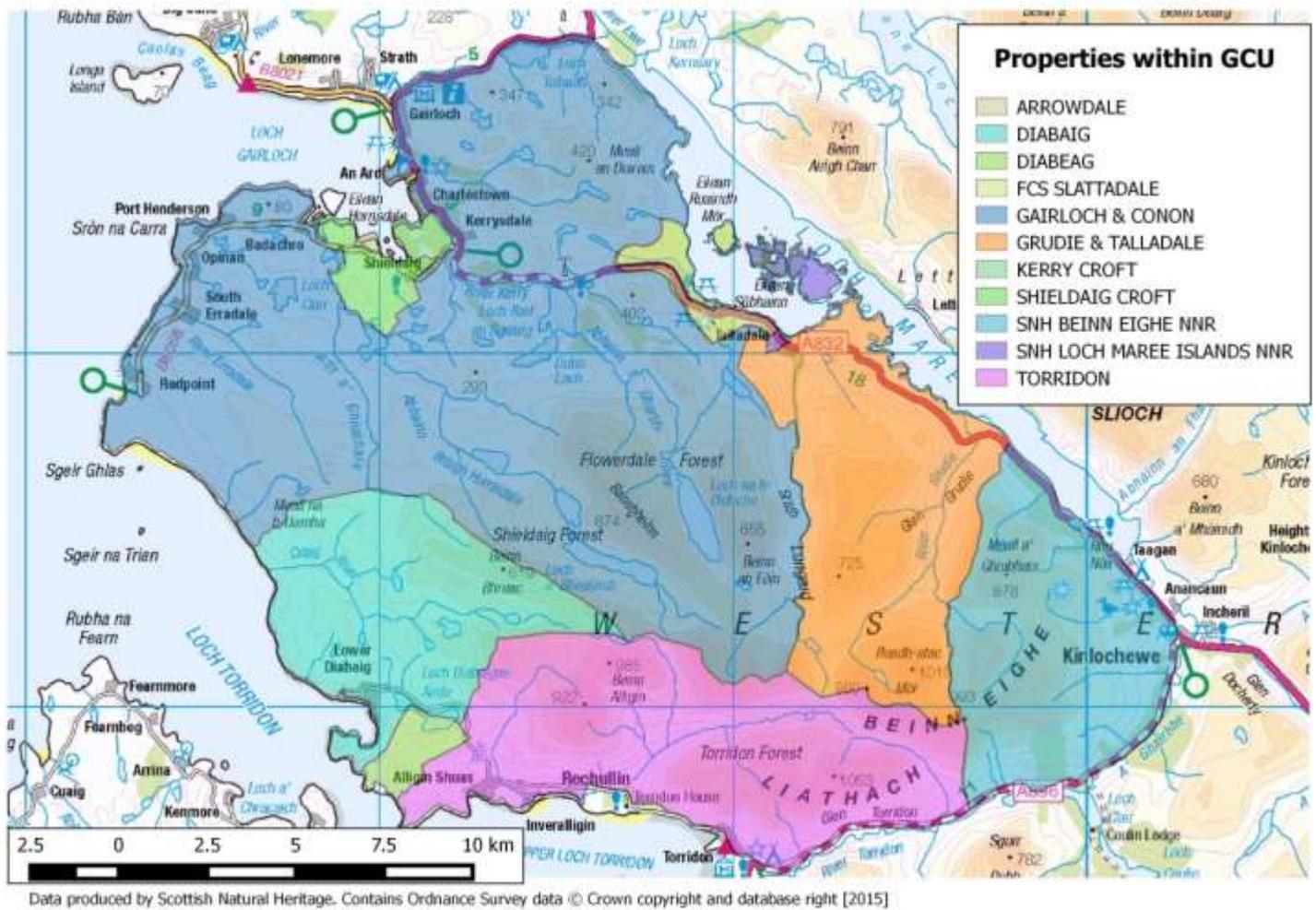
The Group is made up of 7 main management units (Figure 2).

- SNH Beinn Eighe National Nature Reserve and Loch Maree Islands (Scottish Natural Heritage)
- Diabaig Estate
- FCS Slattadale
- Gairloch and Conon (which includes the Flowerdale and Shildaig Forests)
- Grudie & Talladale Estate
- NTS Torridon Estate (The National Trust for Scotland)
- Eisean Dubh

There are some fenced areas of woodland on the lower ground but deer movement is largely unconstrained between properties throughout the open range of the group.

Combinations of land use objectives and priorities vary from property to property throughout the GCU management area but as a whole Conservation is a common and strongly shared focus of all. Further information on individual management units is contained in Sections 1.17 to 1.23 of the Plan.

Figure 2: Properties within Gairloch Conservation Unit



1.3 DMG Vision Statement

The vision of the Gairloch Conservation Unit is to maintain a healthy deer population at a density which recognises habitats in good condition, which maintains jobs and supports the local economy and which provides a range of positive benefits both to those living locally and to those visiting the area.

1.4 Sustainable Deer Management and the Public Interest

The management of Red Deer at a landscape population level as set out in the [Code of Practice on Deer Management](#) (The Deer Code) requires a collaborative approach. Deer are regarded as a natural resource and as such all those who manage them have a ‘responsibility’ to:

- manage deer as a resource sustainably;
- minimise negative deer impacts on public interest;
- safeguard deer welfare.

The deer management objectives of members of the GCU currently contribute to delivering a wide range of public benefits as set out in The Deer Code. This plan will demonstrate how the GCU is currently contributing to sustainable deer management and will identify further opportunities for the GCU to deliver the Public Interest.

1.5 The purpose of the DMP

The overall purpose of this Plan is to provide:

- An agreed framework for the management of wild deer in the area covered by the Group;
- An agreed set of actions;
- An agreed pattern of arrangements to ensure that the actions are implemented and their effectiveness monitored.

1.6 Deer Management Plan Structure

The DMP consists of three main parts:

- **Part 1: Deer Management Plan Information.** This sets out background information and details the Public Interest relating to Deer Management in the local area. Information on individual management units is also contained here. A systematic review of the whole plan will take place at the end of 5 years.
- **Part 2: Group Operation.** Contains information relating to the Operation and Functioning of the DMG.
- **Part 3: The Working Plan:** The Working Plan will be reviewed at least twice annually. The Working Plan sets out the most up to date information on culls, counts and population targets as well as a summary of the specific actions (detailed in Part 1) that the Deer Management Group will undertake throughout the life of the plan. This document will contain live population models which will be subject to continuous amendment.

1.7 Deer Management Plan Implementation

The plan will identify specific actions for the Group and targets to be delivered by 2021. These will be reviewed on an annual basis in the Working Plan.

The GCU will use information gathered from habitat monitoring, population census and cull reporting to agree and set culls on an annual basis. Each management unit is committed to implementing the necessary culls to achieve this although it is accepted that there may be specific geographical areas within the Group area where deer management requires to be focussed.

The Group are committed to working collaboratively to achieve and deliver the objectives of the plan and will meet regularly to discuss deer management and issues that arise in the local and wider area. This Plan will therefore take account of all land management interests as well as those of other Statutory Organisations and the wider public interest.

1.8 Deer Management Adoption and Consultation

This Deer Management Plan has been formally adopted by all the Members of the Group and will run from 2016 to 2021. It has been through a consultation process and a copy of the current DMP has been given to the local Community Councils.

1.2 Deer Populations, Movements and Management

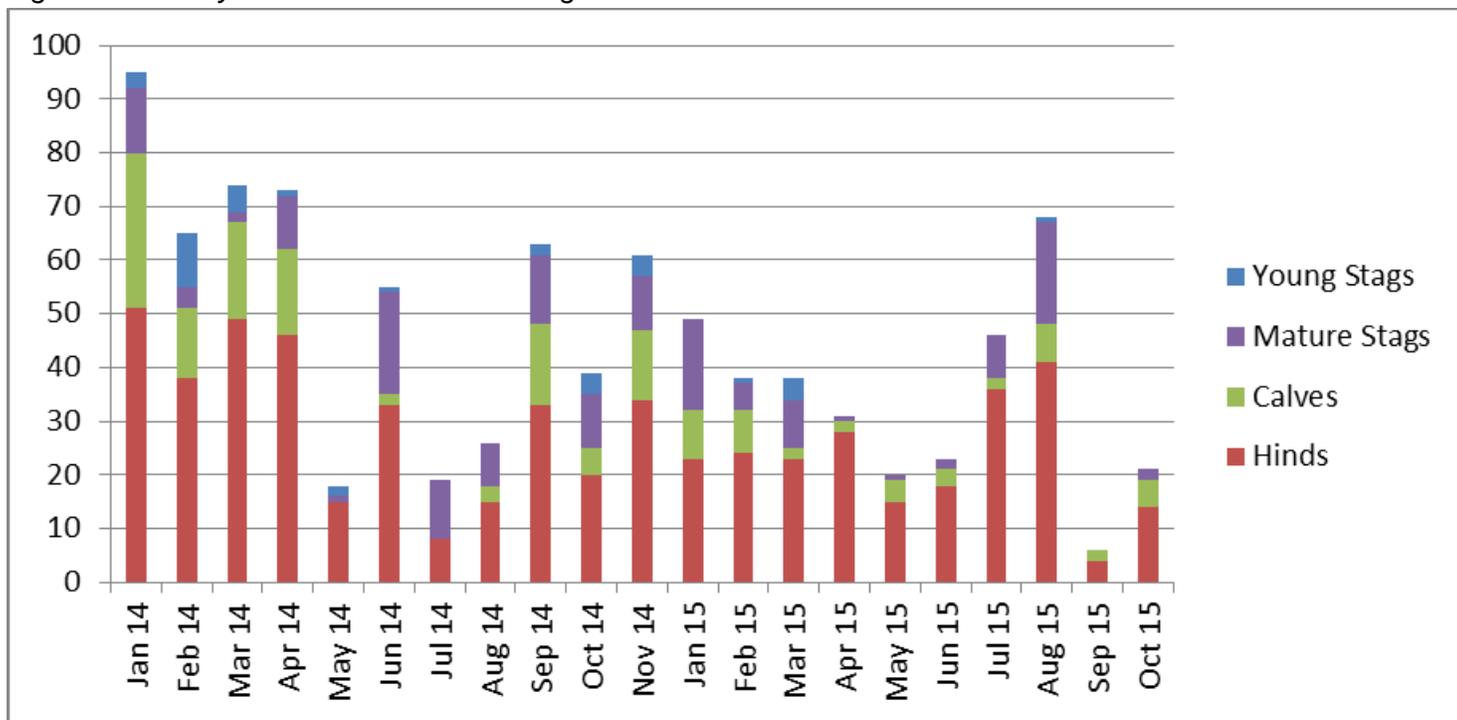
1.2.1 Deer Species

- **Red deer** (*Cervus elaphus*) are the main deer species found throughout the DMG area. The available range for Red Deer throughout the area amounts to approximately 42,600 ha. With sheep numbers having been greatly reduced over the last 20 - 30 years red deer provide the main grazing impact over much of the hill ground.
- **Roe deer** (*Capreolus capreolus*): Roe Deer are also widespread but at lower density and with a discrete, patchy distribution. The Group culls on average 16 deer annually across the DMG.
- **Sika deer** (*Cervus nippon*): Although Sika Deer have been regularly reported over recent years and a total of 9 culled in the last 10 years they are not considered to be established in the DMG area.
- **Fallow Deer** (*Dama dama*) are not present within this DMG.

1.2.2 Deer Populations

In order that culls can be set to achieve a target density that enables all objectives of the Group to be met, it is essential to be able to estimate the current deer population. The last full deer count of the whole GCU area was carried out some 20 years ago, although foot counts are conducted on a regular basis on Beinn Eighe.

Figure 3: Monthly count data from Beinn Eighe for 2014 & 2015.



1.2.3 Deer Movements

One of the main considerations for the Group is to determine temporal deer densities and changes in deer movements that may have occurred noticeably over the last few years as a result of fencing or changes in deer management activity.

Although it is considered that the deer population is largely geographically contained within the group area, there are a couple of areas where deer may move between neighbouring properties out with GCU. The Group

therefore maintains on-going communication with the neighbouring West Ross DMG to the north, in particular Heights of Kinlochewe and Letterewe Estates. To the south, it is recognised that there is some shared deer movement (predominantly stags) with the neighbouring Coulin Estate (part of South West Ross DMG).

The group therefore maintains active engagement with all neighbouring DMGs and estates in the area, ensuring a landscape collaborative approach to deer management.

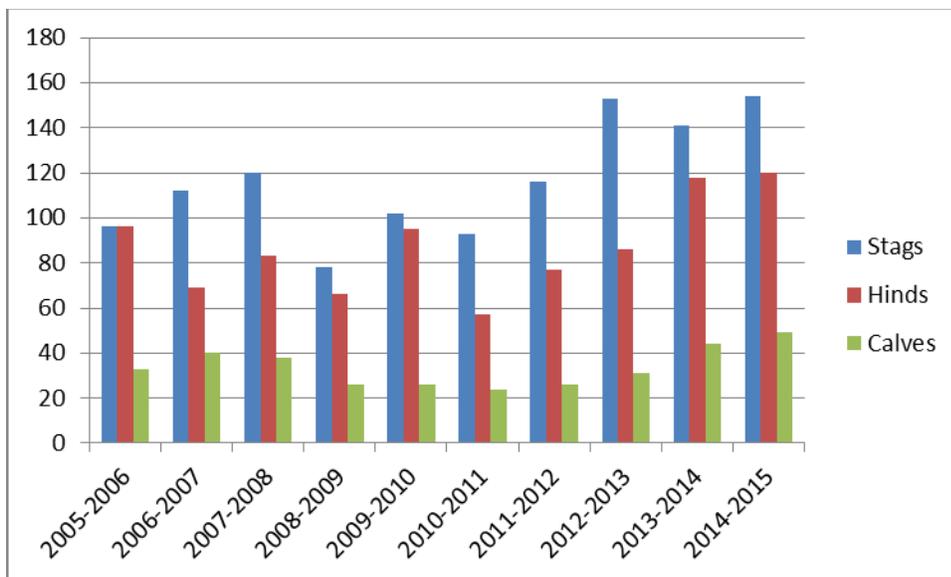
1.2.4 Deer Culls

Cull data has been recorded consistently for the last 10 years (Table 1 and Figure 4).

Table 1: Group and Individual Property Culls.

Year	Group				Grudie				Diabeg				Gairloch				Beinn Eighe				Torridon				Kerry Croft				Sheildaig				Arrowdale				Slattadale							
	S	H	C	T	S	H	C	T	S	H	C	T	S	H	C	T	S	H	C	T	S	H	C	T	S	H	C	T	S	H	C	T	S	H	C	T	S	H	C	T				
2005-2006	96	96	33	225	10	4	1	15	11	10	5	26	41	47	11	99	22	14	7	43	12	21	9	42	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2006-2007	112	69	40	221	13	3	2	18	11	10	3	24	40	26	13	79	27	10	11	48	15	20	11	46	0	0	0	0	6	0	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2007-2008	120	83	38	241	13	9	5	27	10	12	6	28	41	19	5	65	31	17	12	60	18	26	10	54	0	0	0	0	7	0	0	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2008-2009	78	66	26	170	14	5	3	22	6	12	4	22	22	5	0	27	21	20	9	50	15	24	10	49	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2009-2010	102	95	26	223	16	7	5	28	0	10	4	14	43	35	8	86	36	19	2	57	7	24	7	38	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2010-2011	93	57	24	174	10	0	0	10	12	12	0	24	13	0	0	13	46	23	14	83	12	22	10	44	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2011-2012	116	77	26	219	10	0	0	10	10	5	0	15	27	6	0	33	51	46	12	109	11	20	14	45	4	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2012-2013	153	86	31	270	20	2	0	22	11	9	3	23	31	29	0	60	74	23	13	110	15	22	15	52	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	2	3	4	4	11				
2013-2014	141	118	44	303	12	0	0	12	11	10	2	23	21	27	4	52	64	35	18	117	9	27	13	49	0	1	0	1	24	18	7	49	0	0	0	0	0	4	6	10				
2014-2015	154	120	49	323	17	0	0	17	0	20	1	21	26	32	9	67	95	44	23	162	16	24	16	56	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	2	11				

Figure 4: Historic Group Deer Culls



1.2.5 Other herbivores

Despite the prevalence of crofts within the Group area, grazing of the open hill rarely occurs and sheep grazing is largely confined to fenced Common Grazings.

There are populations of Wild Goats on and neighbouring the group which should be a consideration for regeneration schemes without deer fencing.

1.3 Actions to develop mechanisms to manage deer

1.3.1 Background

- To manage deer populations at a landscape scale a collaborative approach is required and the need to negotiate and compromise may be necessary.
- This requires a Deer Management Group to be functioning effectively, to be inclusive and to operate in the spirit of openness and transparency. The Association of Deer Management Groups (ADMG) has provided some guiding principles through the [ADMG Benchmark](#).
- Gairloch Conservation Unit (GCU) is a formally constituted Group (signed on 8th April 2015) and is made up of **7 main management units** in the area who are regularly represented at meetings. Management units are a mixture of public, private and NGO owned land and are managed for a wide range of objectives, however all properties share a common conservation objective. On several properties deer are managed as a resource, but other objectives include crofting and livestock production, forestry, nature conservation and tourism.
- Deer have the potential to impact (positively and negatively) on many of these objectives and collaborative deer management at a landscape level is essential. In order for the objectives of the whole Group to be met. To achieve an overall target population density that delivers sustainable deer management, it is essential to be able to estimate the current deer population. The last full helicopter count of the area was some 20 years ago therefore, population data for the whole group area is unavailable. However, Beinn Eighe have conducted foot counts regularly throughout the year and have recorded a population reduction from **12.5** to around **2** deer per km² from 2009 to 2015. The last two counts of Torridon in 2005 and 2009 showed a consistent population density of around **4.4** deer per km². A count on Gairloch in 1996 estimated a density of **2.5** deer per km².
- Not all properties have a requirement to harvest deer, but for those that do, in order to achieve an annual sustainable harvest of **70 stags**, a total population of around 1,300 deer would be required (a collective density of around **3 deer per km²** across the whole Group area).
- Future management will be informed through results of Habitat Monitoring carried out across the group as well as a whole Helicopter Deer Count (scheduled for winter 2016).

Although most Crofting interests are fenced in, there are a number of properties which may be represented at future meetings.

3.2 Plan Objectives

- The Deer Management Plan (DMP) should ensure that representation and Membership of the Deer Management Group enables integration of different land-uses at a local level.
- The planning process should also be consultative, transparent and open.

1.3.1 Current Delivery.

- The [Code of Practice on Deer Management](#) (The Deer Code) and Wild Deer Best Practice Guidance are fully endorsed by the DMG. The ADMG Principles of Collaboration have also been fully endorsed by the DMG (Part 2)
- Information about [Beinn Eighe NNR](#) is widely available. An agreed [Management Plan](#) is currently in place for Beinn Eighe which ran from 2009 to 2015. This was reviewed in 2015 and a new plan for 2015-2025 has been through full consultation and is now agreed.
- Information on [NTS Torridon](#) is available on the organisation's web site.
- Gairloch Conservation Unit has a [Web Site](#) which provides contact information for the DMG as well as a copy of the DMP, Minutes and Agendas. A summary of the group information can also be found on the [Association of Deer Management Groups](#) (ADMG) web site.
- GCU currently works in Partnership with Government Agencies (SNH & FCS) and the Local Community.
- All the deer management units in the area are members of GCU. Representatives of the Group also attend meetings of the neighbouring [West Ross](#) and [South-West Ross](#). This provides a mechanism for discussing landscape-wide deer management issues.
- Cull targets are reported on annually.
- GCU has a signed Constitution (April 8th 2015), meets bi-annually and Group Membership is encouraged to continue its practice of open discussion of cull levels at all meetings.

1.3.4 Targets to be delivered by 2021

Actions to develop mechanisms to manage deer	When?	Who?	How?
Final Plan and Minutes of Meetings will be made publicly available and published on DMG Website.	By Spring 2016 and ongoing	DMG Secretary	<i>DMG Website.</i>
Repeat DMG Assessment.	By Spring 2016 & ongoing	DMG Chair, Secretary & SNH	<i>Use baseline DMG Assessment carried out in 2014.</i>
Working plan will be reviewed and updated annually. Management actions will be adjusted and agreed accordingly. An annual report will be produced.	Annually	DMG Secretary and DMG Members	<i>Provision of data from DMG members in advance of and during Bi-annual meetings. Secretary will update Working Plan and produce an Annual Report to be published on the DMG Website.</i>
Culls will be delivered and reported on accurately. Cull targets will set and agreed based on information relating to habitat condition, population census, deer welfare and any other relevant information (i.e. where deer are impacting negatively on the Public Interest).	Annually	DMG Members	<i>Population models will be updated annually and cull targets set, agreed and delivered according.</i>
A helicopter count will be conducted in 2017.	Spring 2017	Secretary & DMG Members	<i>DMG will ensure adequate resources in place for helicopter count in 2017 (50% of cost) and liaise with neighbouring DMGs to coordinate count at the same time if possible. Group to consider ECAF funding application.</i>
Recruitment counts will be carried out annually.	Ideally first two weeks in April but by May.	DMG Members	<i>Stalkers will undertake sample counts of groups of deer recording stags, hinds and calves.</i>
Group will carry out a review of deer movements within the DMG and contribute to wider discussions on deer movements within the wider area	Autumn 2017	DMG Members	<i>Deer count data from 2017 will be reviewed by the DMG. DMG will liaise with West Ross DMG and South West Ross DMG to discuss deer movements. DMG boundaries will be reviewed and amended if necessary.</i>
Group will encourage representation at meetings of the local community as well as local agricultural/crofting interests.	Annually	DMG Chair. Gairloch Estate.	<i>Meeting dates and Agendas will be publicly available on DMG website and circulated to community councils in advance. DMG will identify and contact additional Crofting interests and Gairloch Estate will seek to ensure agricultural/crofting representation.</i>

1.4 Actions for the delivery of designated features into Favourable Condition

1.4.1 Background

- It is expected that DMGs will contribute to the Scottish Government target of achieving 80% of designated features in Favourable or Unfavourable Recovering condition by 2016 by facilitating the reduction of herbivore impacts where this is contributing to the unfavourable condition.
- The Group area is very heavily designated, containing a number of high profile sites of national importance (Table 2). Deer management is potentially relevant to many of these.
 - A total of **15,735 ha** (37% of the Group Area) is designated as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and **13,977 ha** (33%) as Site of Special Scientific Interest covering 6 sites (Figure1 below).
 - Loch Maree is designated as an Special Protection Area (SPA).
 - Much of the area falls within Wester Ross National Scenic Area (NSA).
 - Beinn Eighe and Loch Maree Islands is a National Nature Reserve, which extends partly onto Torridon
 - Part of Beinn Alligin on Torridon is a Geological Conservation Review.
 - Wester Ross Biosphere Reserve** —Formerly known as Beinn Eighe, the site, was designated in 1976 but has been extended in 2016. With the addition of 530,000ha, the site now includes Loch Maree, which is of international importance due to its black-throated diver population. Internationally recognized, (there are 669 in 120 countries) Biosphere reserves are areas comprising terrestrial, marine and coastal ecosystems. Each reserve promotes solutions reconciling the conservation of biodiversity with its sustainable use.

Table 2: Designated features and deer management units.

Management Unit	DMG Designations									
	Baosbheinn SSSI	Beinn Eighe SSSI	Coille Dhubh SSSI	Loch Maree SSSI	Loch Maree Complex SAC	Loch Maree SPA	Talladale Gorge SSSI	Torridon Forest SSSI	Beinn Eighe NNR	Wester Ross NSA
Diabeg										✓
Eisean Dubh										✓
FCS Slattadale				✓	✓	✓				✓
Gairloch	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
Grudie		✓			✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Kerry Croft (Arrowdale)			✓		✓					✓
NTS Torridon		✓			✓			✓	✓	✓
SNH Beinn Eighe		✓			✓				✓	✓
Shieldaig Croft			✓							

- The Loch Maree Complex Special Area of Conservation (SAC) ranges in altitude from sea-level to summit level and includes a wide range of important habitats for nature conservation including remnant native pinewoods and extensive montane habitats. The site is also designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).
- Of high international importance are Liverwort-rich Calluna-Vaccinium-Sphagnum heaths (in particular *Mastigophora woodsia-Herbertus aduncus hutchinsaiae* subcommunity) and snowbed vegetation. These habitats are widespread on middle to upper north facing slopes of Liathach and Beinn Eighe massifs and more local elsewhere, e.g. the Allt Toll a' Mhadaidh boulder-field. Wind-clipped heather heaths are also internationally important.

1.4.2 Plan Objectives

- The Deer Management Plan (DMP) will incorporate agreed management actions to manage deer impacts to delivering favourable condition on designated sites in the area. The DMG will monitor and review progress.

1.4.3 Current Status

- There are a total of 47 designated features within the Group area. Of these **85% are in Favourable/Favourable Recovering condition**. There are 7 in 'Unfavourable' condition but of these only 4 where herbivore impacts are potentially considered to be a contributing factor to the site condition (see Table 4).
- Site Condition Monitoring (SCM), which includes assessment of deer and their impacts, has been undertaken by SNH over the past decade on **Loch Maree Complex SAC** or parts of it. The most recent assessment of features (2006) indicated that **dry heath and wet heath** were in unfavourable condition. There are no sheep on site therefore all herbivore impacts are attributed solely to deer. The SAC covers Beinn Eighe, Grudie & Talladale and Torridon.
- Calcareous grassland and Dwarf shrub heath in Torridon Forest SSSI were also found to be in unfavourable condition.

1.4.4 Monitoring Results for Dry and Wet Heath on Loch Maree Complex SAC

- Assessment of Northern Atlantic wet heath found no trampling issues but browsing impacts on the east side of Uamh an Oir, on the south side of Liathach and on the southwest side of Allt Toll a' Mhadaidh in Coire Mhic Nobuil. Browsing was considered to be very localised both in this and a previous survey in 2003.
- European dry heath is found on steeper, more sheltered slopes e.g. on the slopes of Liathach, noertheast of the Glas-toll Lochain or on the lower, steep rocky slopes of Sail Mhor and Ruadh-stc Mor on Beinn Eighe. The assessment found high levels of grazing and trampling north of the Glas-toll Lochain (north side of Liathach), east side of Coire Ruadh-staca (north side of Beinn Eighe) and northwest side of Creag Dhubh (north side of Sgurr Dubh).
- Since the SCM two Habitat Impact Assessments have been carried out – O'Hanrahan (2007) and Strath Caulaidh Limited (2013).
- Impact levels are generally low across the whole site (Table 3) and most areas surveyed have either reached or are close to reaching the **target of 90% of grazing and trampling impacts within the Low or Low/Moderate impact class**.

Table 3: Scores for grazing and trampling impacts across habitats.

Estate	Area	Impacts in Low & Low Medium category (%) (Target = 90%)
Torridon	Land west of Abhainn Coire MhicNobail and including Beinn Alligin	89
Torridon	Liathach northern side	82
Torridon	South face of Liathach	94
SNH-Grudie	Coire Mhic Fhearchair and upper reaches of Glen Grudie	94
Coulin & Ben Damph	(Corrie of a Thousand Hills)	100
SNH	Not specified	Dry Heaths 80%, Low and Wet Heaths 86%

- Although many parts of the Loch Maree Complex SAC presently appear to have low or very low levels of deer occupancy (5-10 per km²) some parts of the site have markedly higher occupancy levels (15-30 per km² locally) and impacts are found to be concentrated in corries and other sheltered areas particularly on dry heaths.

1.4.5 Deer Management Actions

- Densities of deer on both Torridon and Beinn Eighe are relatively low, but where there are deer, they tend to congregate in some areas leading to local damage particularly in the northern corries on both of the two main hills – Liathach and Beinn Eighe. In order to meet habitat targets across the site, deer management will focus on those areas where deer (and associated impacts) are most concentrated.
- On Torridon the following deer management actions will be carried out:
 - Subject to future Habitat Impact Assessment results, the overall deer density will be reduced by 10% from 2009 figures to a target density of **4 deer per km²** by 2021 (55 stags, 200 hinds and calves).
 - Culls will be concentrated where practical (given difficulties with extraction) in the area west of Abhainn Coire MhicNobail (including Beinn Alligin) and the northern side of Liathach.
 - Culls will also be concentrated in the area north of Coire Caimhe and the Glas-toll, to prevent trampling along the bottom of steep slopes which are ideal for the formation of liverwort-rich heath– important because this is the most important international interest on this site.
- On Beinn Eighe, since the helicopter deer count in 2009, the deer population has been reduced to less than **2 deer per km²** which should be sufficient to meet Habitat Impact targets.

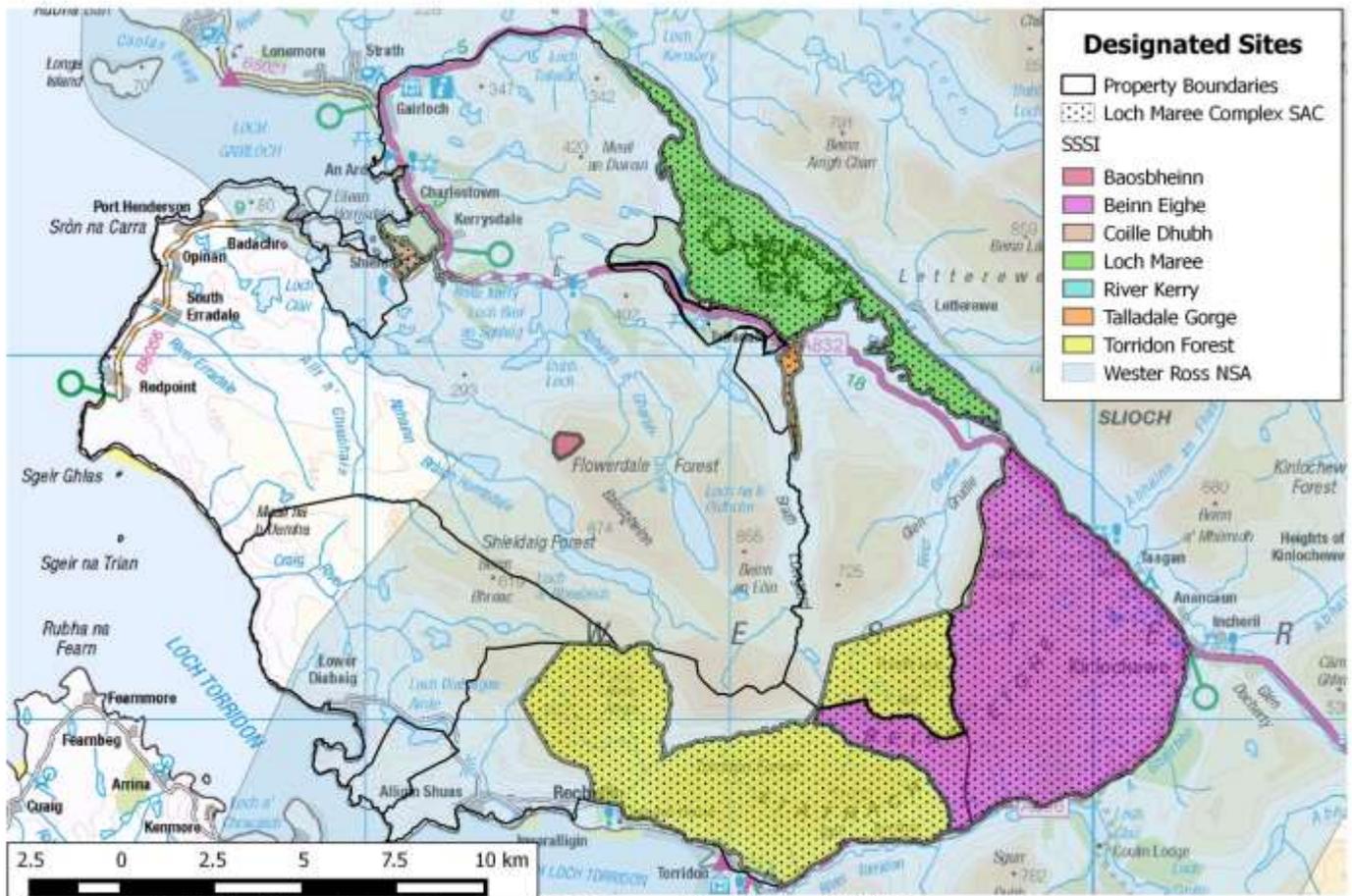
1.4.6 Future Monitoring

- A helicopter count in 2016 as well as a repeat Habitat Impact Assessment scheduled for 2016 will inform future deer management on the SAC.

1.4.7. Targets to be delivered by 2021

Actions for the delivery of designated features into Favourable Condition	When?	Who?	How?
<p>Loch Maree Complex SAC (including Beinn Eighe SSSI, Talladale Gorge SSSI, Coille Dhubh SSSI): Current action underway to maintain "Favourable" and "Unfavourable Recovering" Condition status of features according to management targets agreed with SNH. NTS, Beinn Eighe and Grudie to implement action to bring Dry Heaths and Wet Heathland features into "Unfavourable Recovering due to Management" status.</p>	<p>2017 and On-going</p>	<p>NTS Torrison, SNH Beinn Eighe, Grudie.</p>	<p><i>NTS to reduce the overall deer density by 10% from 2009 figures to a target density of 4 deer per km² by 2017 (55 stags, 200 hinds and calves). Culls will be concentrated where practical. SNH to maintain a population of less than 2 deer per km² which should be sufficient to meet Habitat Impact targets.</i></p>
<p>Torrison Forest SSSI: Current action being agreed to address "Unfavourable" Condition status of Subalpine Dry Heath and Subalpine Calcareous Grassland.</p>	<p>2017 and On-going</p>	<p>NTS Torrison</p>	<p><i>NTS to reduce the overall deer density by 10% from 2009 figures to a target density of 4 deer per km² by 2017 (55 stags, 200 hinds and calves). Culls will be concentrated where practical.</i></p>
<p>Management options to enhance the liverwort heath to be considered and adopted in the Beinn Eighe Reserve Habitat Management Plan</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>SNH Beinn Eighe</p>	<p><i>SNH will implement agreed management options to enhance the liverwort heath as detailed in the Reserve Habitat Management Plan</i></p>
<p>In areas where Designated Sites are believed to be under threat, to foster cooperation between neighbouring estates to manage deer numbers and densities as appropriate.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>All DMG Members</p>	<p><i>Deer managers will communicate on an on-going basis with regards to deer movements and identify opportunities for collaborative management.</i></p>
<p>Properties to continue to target deer management on sensitive areas to reduce localised impacts.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>DMG Members</p>	<p><i>Deer managers will use local knowledge to target deer management where required.</i></p>

Figure 5: Sites of Special Scientific Interest



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Table 4: Designated Site Feature Condition (grey shading indicates Unfavourable condition not considered to be due to herbivores, orange shading indicates herbivores are contributing to Unfavourable status)

Designation	Site	Feature	Reporting Condition
SSSI	Baosbheinn	Quaternary of Scotland	Favourable
SSSI	Beinn Eighe	Native pinewood	Unfavourable Recovering Due to Management
SSSI	Beinn Eighe	Vascular plant assemblage	Favourable
SSSI	Beinn Eighe	Bryophyte assemblage	Favourable
SSSI	Beinn Eighe	Cambrian	Favourable
SSSI	Beinn Eighe	Moine	Favourable
SSSI	Coille Dhubh	Upland oak woodland	Favourable
SSSI	Loch Maree	Native pinewood	Favourable
SSSI	Loch Maree	Oligotrophic loch	Favourable
SSSI	Loch Maree	Vascular plant assemblage	Favourable
SSSI	Loch Maree	Dragonfly assemblage	Favourable
SSSI	Loch Maree	Quaternary of Scotland	Favourable
SSSI	Loch Maree	Black-throated diver (<i>Gavia arctica</i>), breeding	Unfavourable
RAMSAR	Loch Maree	Oligotrophic loch	Favourable
SPA	Loch Maree	Black-throated diver (<i>Gavia arctica</i>), breeding	Unfavourable
SSSI	Loch Maree	Beetles	Favourable
SAC	Loch Maree Complex	Alder woodland on floodplains	Unfavourable
SAC	Loch Maree Complex	Western acidic oak woodland	Unfavourable Recovering Due to Management
SAC	Loch Maree Complex	Bog woodland	Favourable
SAC	Loch Maree Complex	Caledonian forest	Unfavourable Recovering Due to Management
SAC	Loch Maree Complex	Dry heaths	Unfavourable
SAC	Loch Maree Complex	Wet heathland with cross-leaved heath	Unfavourable
SAC	Loch Maree Complex	Plants in crevices on base-rich rocks	Favourable
SAC	Loch Maree Complex	Tall herb communities	Favourable
SAC	Loch Maree Complex	Plants in crevices on acid rocks	Favourable
SAC	Loch Maree Complex	Acidic scree	Favourable
SAC	Loch Maree Complex	Alpine and subalpine heaths	Favourable
SAC	Loch Maree Complex	Montane acid grasslands	Favourable
SAC	Loch Maree Complex	Blanket bog	Favourable
SAC	Loch Maree Complex	Depressions on peat substrates	Favourable
SAC	Loch Maree Complex	Clear-water lakes or lochs with aquatic vegetation and poor to moderate nutrient	Favourable
SAC	Loch Maree Complex	Otter (<i>Lutra lutra</i>)	Favourable
SSSI	Talladale Gorge	Upland oak woodland	Favourable
SSSI	Talladale Gorge	Native pinewood	Favourable
SSSI	Torrison Forest	Subalpine calcareous grassland	Unfavourable
SSSI	Torrison Forest	Subalpine dry heath	Unfavourable
SSSI	Torrison Forest	Mass movement	Favourable
SSSI	Torrison Forest	Alpine heath	Favourable
SSSI	Torrison Forest	Alpine moss heath and associated vegetation	Favourable
SSSI	Torrison Forest	Vascular plant assemblage	Favourable
SSSI	Torrison Forest	Sawflies, wasps and ants	Not Assessed
SSSI	Torrison Forest	Quaternary of Scotland	Favourable
SSSI	Torrison Forest	Spiders	To Be Denotified
SSSI	Torrison Forest	Beetles	Favourable
SSSI	Torrison Forest	Siliceous scree (includes boulder fields)	Favourable

1.5 Actions to manage deer to retain existing native woodland cover and improve woodland condition

1.5.1 Background

- Total area of native woodland in Scotland is 311,153 ha. The Native Woodland Survey of Scotland (NWSS) was published in 2014. This maps non-designated native woodland cover, reports condition and highlights herbivore impacts which threaten medium to long term condition of these important woodlands.
- [Wild Deer- A National Approach \(WDNA\)](#) and the [2020 Challenge for Scotland's Biodiversity](#) has set a national targets that 60% of native woodlands should be considered to be in "satisfactory condition" by 2020 and that approximately 10,000 ha of native woodland should be in satisfactory condition through Deer Management Plans.
- The NWSS has identified **1871 ha** of native woodland within the Group. This represents **0.6%** of the total area of native woodland in Scotland.

1.5.2 Plan Objectives

- DMG Members will implement management to reduce the proportion of native woodland area identified within the 'High' and 'Very High' categories of herbivore impact in order to contribute to targets set by Scottish Government Agencies.
- The DMP will identify all existing woodland and its condition and will consider actions for the next 5 years to ensure that the long term woodland objectives can be met.

1.5.3 Current Delivery.

- According to the survey, **92%** percent of the herbivore impacts from NWSS were considered to fall in the [Low to Medium impact](#) category within the DMG (Table 5).
- Approximately **11 ha** of native woodland thought to have Very High or High impacts identified on Grudie and Diabaig Estates has been deer fenced.
- An area of **35 ha** of native woodland thought to have High impacts from the survey was identified on Gairloch Estate. This woodland is unenclosed and currently provides important shelter for deer.
- Across the Group, an integrated approach to woodland restoration has resulted in **1000 ha** of near continuous native woodland in Wester Ross.

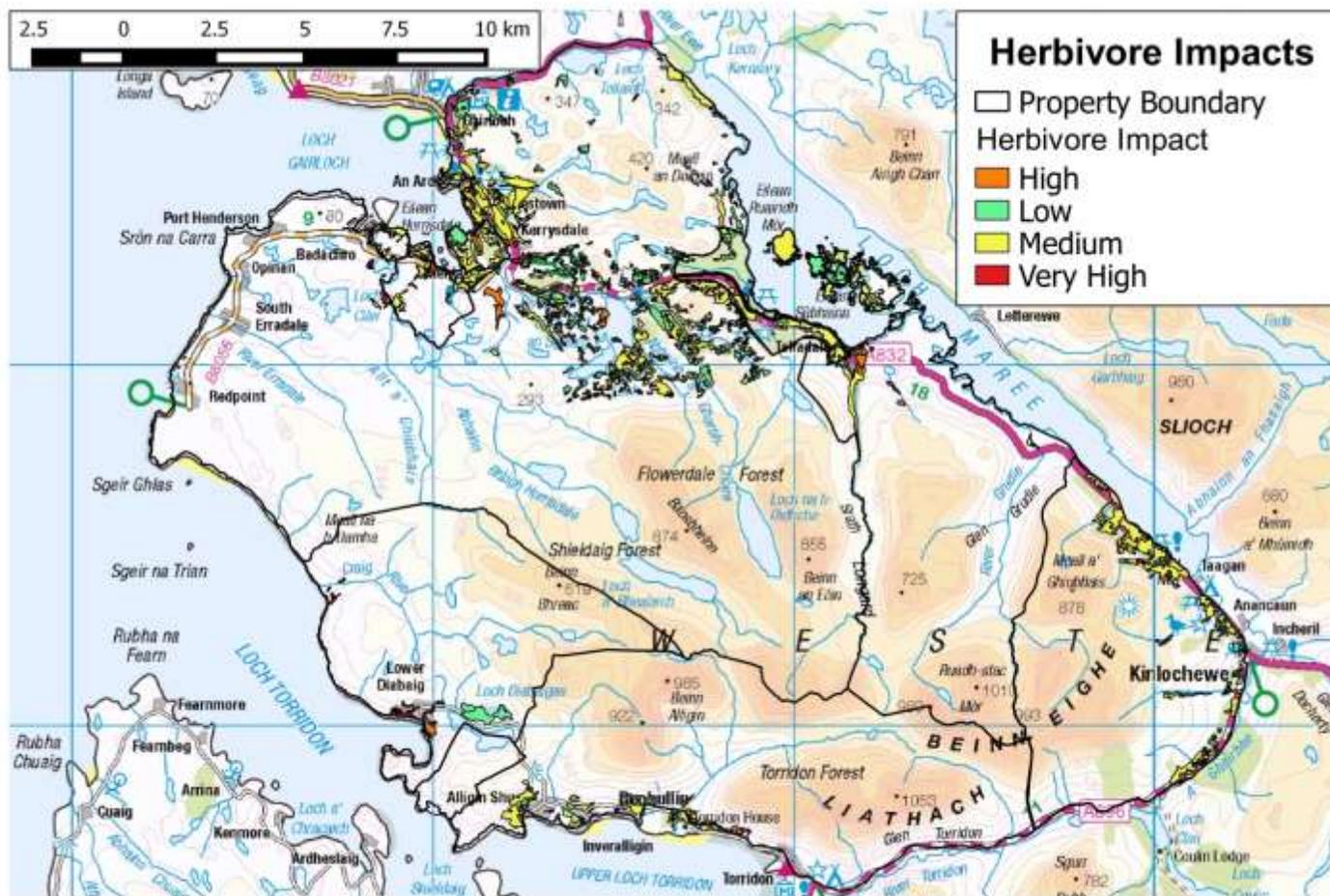
Table 5: Summary of Native Woodland Survey for Scotland Herbivore Impacts

Property	Native Woodland Survey Scotland Data				Total
	Very High	High	Medium	Low	
ARROWDALE			7.80		7.80
DIABAIG	13.79	13.46		40.72	67.97
FCS SLATTADALE		0.50	82.78	22.23	105.51
GAIRLOCH & CONON	15.20	34.93	587.93	297.93	936.00
GRUDIE & TALLADALE	4.22	21.03	36.01	3.89	65.15
KERRY CROFT		5.33	50.78	14.74	70.85
SHIELDAIG CROFT	1.76	14.28	99.30	5.64	120.99
SNH BEINN EIGHE NNR	2.56	2.75	226.66	29.52	261.49
SNH LOCH MAREE ISLANDS NNR	1.03	1.15	59.58	48.04	109.81
TORRIDON	3.86	16.65	88.78	16.52	125.80
Total	42.42	110.09	1239.62	479.24	1871.36

1.5.4 Targets to be delivered by 2021

Actions to manage deer to retain existing native woodland cover and improve woodland condition	When?	Who?	How?
SNH to maintain a population of less than 2 deer per km ² which should be sufficient to achieve good condition in its native woodlands.	By 2021	SNH Beinn Eighe	<i>SNH will use their own monitoring of herbivore impacts as well as woodland population census/utilisation methodology to inform on-going management.</i>
For properties with SRDP Natural Regeneration Schemes in place, provide evidence of woodland condition in the form of an appropriate survey report if available.	Year 3	DMG Members	<i>Woodland Survey reports.</i>
To use ECAF bid to undertake a review of native woodland condition in the Group area, consolidating existing survey reports and implementing woodland herbivore impacts assessment monitoring protocols where required. See monitoring Schedule in Working Plan.	Year 3	DMG Members & Consultant	<i>Subject to successful ECAF bid, delivery of DMG Native Woodland Review Report and recommended actions.</i>
To implement management to reduce negative impacts including use of Forestry Grant Schemes where practical and appropriate.	By 2021	DMG Members	<i>Monitoring results used to inform management actions. Entry into SRDP Schemes.</i>
An additional 25-30 ha of new woodland regeneration will be created and planting of woodland links between new and existing woodland.	By 2021	SNH Beinn Eighe	<i>SNH will identify areas and inform DMG of new woodland regeneration plans.</i>
Beinn Eighe will allow for 100 ha on natural regeneration woodland expansion onto dry and wet heath habitats.	By 2022	SNH Beinn Eighe	<i>SNH will identify areas and monitor woodland expansion.</i>

Figure 6: Herbivore Impacts on Native Woodland (NWSS Data)



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1.6 Actions to demonstrate DMG contribution to the Scottish Government woodland expansion target of 25% woodland cover.

1.6.1 Background

- Woodland and forest covers over 1.3 million ha in Scotland (around 16% of Scotland).
- The Scottish Government woodland expansion target of 25% woodland cover will require 10,000 ha of woodland per year to be created.
- The DMG network area covers some 3,249,442 ha with significant opportunity to contribute to the delivery of this target through identifying areas for further woodland creation and managing deer impacts to allow for successful establishment of new woodland. Priority should be given to expansion opportunities where this improves habitat networks. It is expected that DMGs will be proactive in contributing to this target.
- The Plan assumes that the state of deer fences remains constant. Members are encouraged to report any changes in fencing policies, particularly those which will affect the free movement of deer between estates.

1.6.2 Plan Objectives

- Plan will identify all new woodland in last 5 years (Rural Development Contracts) and beyond (WGS & SFGS) and any new proposals likely to be adopted during the life of the plan.
- Plan will consider future impact of woodland expansion and timetable for removal/erection of fences and possible expansion/reduction of deer range, where there may be changes in deer densities or movements as a result.

1.6.3 Current Delivery.

- Woodland habitat covers around **6210 ha** (National Forest Inventory Data) which represents around **15%** of the Group area. This includes both native woodland and commercial woodland.
- Over the last 15 years **5043 ha** of woodland has been newly created across the whole Group through Woodland/Forestry Grant schemes that cover over **8000 ha** (see Table 6 and Figure 7).
- In the next 5 years of the plan, a further **40 ha** will be further created with additional schemes being considered.
- 7Km of fence to be removed at Beinn Eighe by 2020.

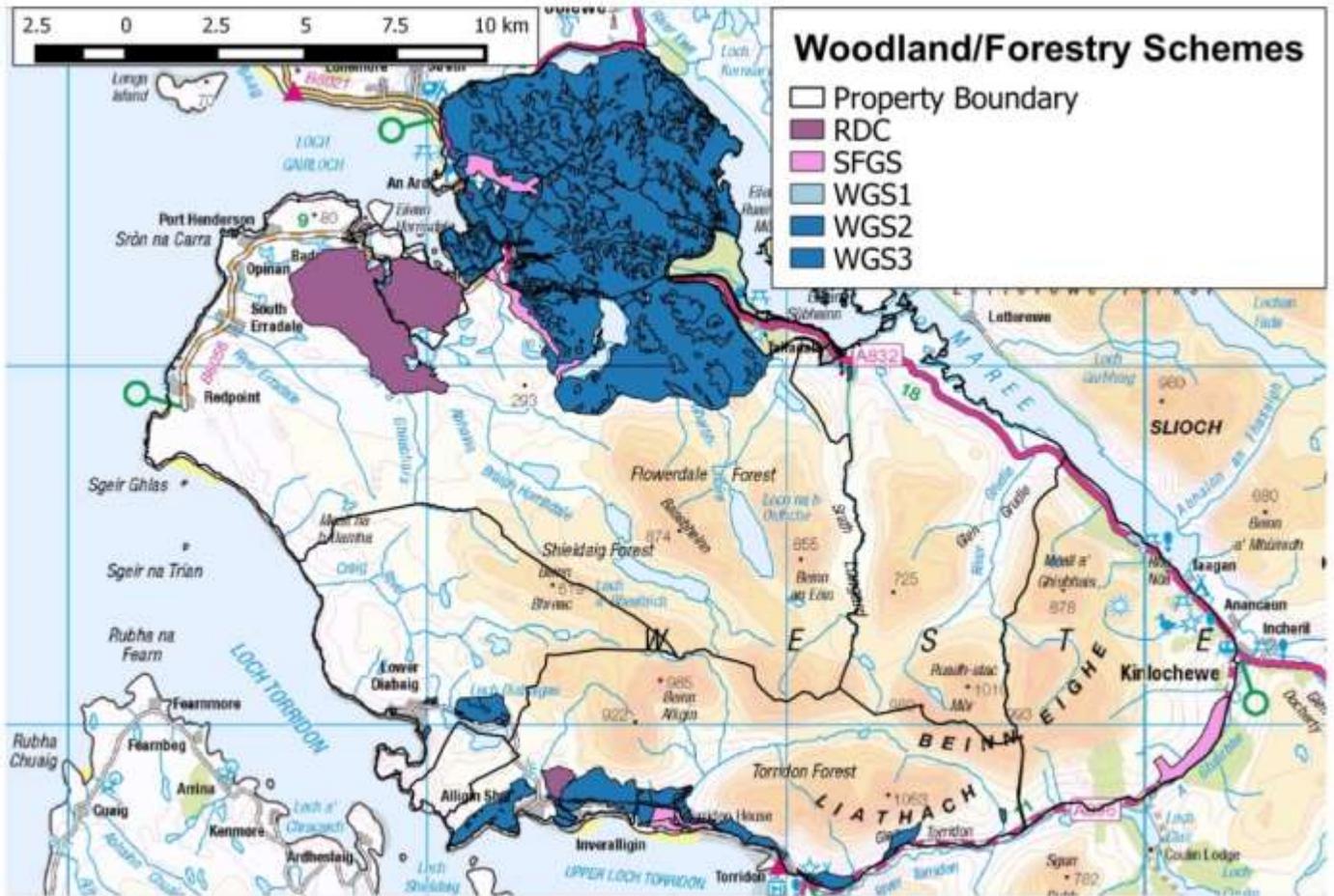
1.6.4 Targets to be delivered by 2021

Actions to demonstrate DMG contribution to the Scottish Government woodland expansion target of 25% woodland cover.	When?	Who?	How?
To inform the DMG about any future woodland proposals and incorporate in the DMP - taking account of potential implications for deer management.	Ongoing	DMG Members	<i>Members will circulate/present proposals to DMG for discussion.</i>
DMG to use ECAF bid carry out a strategic review of potential opportunities for new woodland schemes using the Scottish Government's Forestry Strategy. Review will consider need from a DMG perspective ie shelter provision for deer population at landscape scale.	Year 2	DMG Members & Consultant	<i>Subject to ECAF bid, delivery of DMG Woodland Expansion Report and recommended actions.</i>

Table 6: Summary of Woodland/Forestry Grant Schemes by Property

Scheme	Property	Approved for New Nat Regen	Approved for New Planting	Approved for Restocking and/or Management	Scheme Boundary
WGS2	COULIN	0.11			0.11
WGS3	DIABAIG	1.92	87.68		108.55
RDC	DIABAIG		2.21		
SFGS	GAIRLOCH & CONON				83.94
WGS1	GAIRLOCH & CONON		0.67		0.67
WGS2	GAIRLOCH & CONON	53.48	2.76	213.50	263.38
WGS3	GAIRLOCH & CONON	108.70	3476.77	10.67	6776.00
RDC	GAIRLOCH & CONON		301.68		
WGS3	GRUDIE & TALLADALE				5.87
WGS3	KERRY CROFT	0.00	42.27		201.41
SFGS	SHIELDAIG CROFT				97.38
WGS3	SHIELDAIG CROFT	45.56			125.47
RDC	SHIELDAIG CROFT		120.69		
WGS3	SNH BEINN EIGHE NNR			0.00	1.35
SFGS	TORRIDON				63.84
WGS1	TORRIDON		0.02	1.78	1.80
WGS2	TORRIDON	28.14		24.03	64.47
WGS3	TORRIDON	107.69	378.96		580.66
RDC	TORRIDON		33.59		
	Total	345.60	4447.30	249.99	8374.91

Figure 7: Woodland covered by Woodland or Forestry Grant Schemes



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1.7 Actions to monitor and manage deer impacts in the wider countryside.

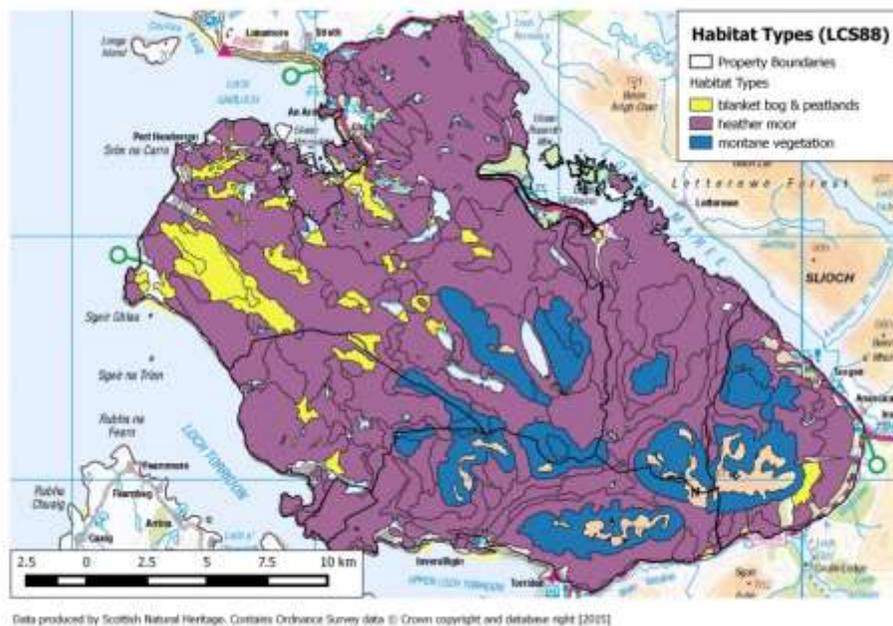
1.7.1 Background

- A summary table of the full extent of habitats per property across the DMG area is shown below in Table 7 (excluding woodland habitats).
- Blanket bog and peatland (which covers **2218 ha**) and heather moorland (dwarf shrub heath methodology) (covering over **28155 ha**) are two of the habitats that Scottish Natural Heritage have recommended upland deer managers monitor for herbivore grazing and trampling impacts (see Figure 6).
- The DMG will take responsibility for the monitoring of herbivore impacts on across the deer range and seek to manage these to contribute to wider ecosystem health.

Table 7: Habitat types by Property

	blanket bog & peatlands	heather moor	montane vegetation	coarse grassland	smooth grassland	improved grassland
DIABAIG	516	7086	915		11	67
FCS SLATTADALE		5				
GAIRLOCH & CONON	1376	7421	1164		45	285
GRUDIE & TALLADALE	11	7462	1910	11		23
KERRY CROFT		42				
SHIELDAIG CROFT	200	1991				8
SNH BEINN EIGHE NNR	115	1383	537			6
TORRIDON	1	2765	807		23	83
Totals (ha)	2218	28155	5333	11	79	472

Figure 8: Blanket bog & peatland and Heather moorland across the Group (Land Cover Scotland Data 88)



1.7.2 Plan Objectives

- Plan will seek to implement a programme of monitoring to assess herbivore impacts and manage those impacts within acceptable ranges ([MacDonald et al 1998¹](#)).
- As a guideline, on designated sites the targets set by SNH are for 90% of survey samples (overall impacts: grazing/browsing and trampling) to be in the range of Low to Moderate/Low. For woodland, a minimum of 60% of herbivore impacts to be in the Low, Moderate category.

1.7.3 Current Delivery.

- SNH Beinn Eighe and NTS Torridon have implemented an extensive programme of Habitat Impact Assessment. The last study was carried out in 2012: "Occupancy patterns and impacts of wild deer" (Strath Caulaidh, 2013)

1.7.4 Targets to be delivered by 2021

Actions to monitor and manage deer impacts in the wider countryside	When?	Who?	How?
Using revised BPG Guidance undergo training, set up plots and carry out a baseline habitat impact assessment (HIA) of the current grazing and trampling impacts on blanket bog & dwarf shrub heath.	May & June 2016/ 2017	DMG Members & Consultant	<i>Training to be conducted in May 2016. Subject to ECAF bid, Consultant will work with DMG to set up random plots and to provide assistance with data analysis and the production of a report.</i>
Members with existing habitat monitoring will share results with DMG where appropriate.	Ongoing	DMG Members	<i>Members will circulate monitoring results to DMG.</i>
Gairloch Estate to carry out monitoring of Blanket Bog	May & June 2016/ 2017	Gairloch Estate	<i>Training to be conducted in May 2016. Subject to ECAF bid, Consultant will work with Estate to set up random plots and to provide assistance with data analysis and the production of a report.</i>
Summary of habitat assessment results reported to DMG. DMG will implement a deer reduction programme to reduce deer impacts to improve overall habitat condition. Targets and management actions to be agreed.	Ongoing	DMG Members	<i>DMG will agree management decisions based on Habitat Impact Assessment Reports.</i>
Repeat HIA and management actions agreed.	May & June 2019	DMG Members	<i>Members will collect repeat monitoring data. Consultant will provide assistance with data analysis and the production of a report. Members will use report to inform management.</i>
Beinn Eighe will run or support at least 1 demonstration event to share best practice management for open habitats and woodland management in the absence of deer fences.	By 2021	SNH Beinn Eighe	<i>SNH will organise an event for members and other interested parties at an appropriate site.</i>

1.8 Actions to improve Scotland's ability to store carbon by maintaining or improving ecosystem health.

1.8.1 Background

- Carbon rich soils and peatland areas provide multiple benefits, e.g. good water quality, biodiversity and climate change mitigation as soil carbon stores and through [carbon sequestration](#). Soils are the main terrestrial store of carbon in Scotland and Peatlands hold most of our carbon store (53%).
- [Blanket bog](#) is a type of peatland found in the uplands covering some 1.8 million hectares, 23 % of our land area. Although Blanket bog is a rare habitat globally and is restricted to cool, wet, typically oceanic climates, Scotland holds a significant proportion of the European and world resource.
- Growing trees is another way to increase the natural carbon reservoir. Woodland and forest currently covers over 1.3 million ha in Scotland (around 16% of Scotland).
- In partnership with Government agencies, DMGs are expected to contribute to research and implement and deliver actions to deliver optimum habitat condition for carbon capture and storage.

1.8.2 Plan Objectives

The plan will aim to acknowledge all contributions to carbon storage through woodland and peatlands within Group area and detail actions to address any negative herbivore impacts.

1.8.3 Current Delivery.

- The Group manages over **6210 ha of woodland** and an area of over **2218 ha of peatlands**.
- The actions currently being undertaken by the DMG to retain existing native woodland and encourage woodland expansion have been detailed in Sections 5 and 6.
- Beinn Eighe removes tree and scrub regeneration when occurring on blanket bog habitat.
- The DMG has not yet been asked to contribute to River Basin Management Planning.

1.8.4 Targets to be delivered by 2021

Actions to improve Scotland's ability to store carbon by maintaining or improving ecosystem health.	When?	Who?	How?
Using revised BPG Guidance set up plots and carry out a baseline habitat impact assessment (HIA) of the current grazing and trampling impacts on blanket bog and native woodland.	As per monitoring schedule in the Working plan	DMG Members.	<i>As per Actions for woodland and managing impacts in the wider countryside. Members to provide existing survey reports or conduct baseline monitoring and reports.</i>
Potential areas for Peatland Restoration identified and options for Peatland restoration or management through the Peatland Action Fund promoted to DMG Members	By end 2016	DMG Members DMG Chair and Secretary	<i>Members to use Blanket Bog monitoring results as well as assistance from SNH to identify opportunities for Peatland Restoration.</i>
Beinn Eighe will continue to remove tree and scrub regeneration from blanket bog and montane habitats above 300m and rare sub-communities of dry and wet heath.	Ongoing	Beinn Eighe	<i>SNH will implement agreed management as detailed in the Reserve Habitat Management Plan</i>
Contribute to River Basin Management Planning as appropriate	By end of 2016 and ongoing	DMG Members	<i>Subject to ECAF bid, include a review of the potential for riparian woodland improvement e.g. practicalities, landscape assessment, water quality and fisheries benefit.</i>

1.9 Actions to reduce or mitigate the risk of establishment of invasive non-native species

1.9.1 Background

- Sika are not yet established in the Group.
- Numbers of Sika shot across the Group are relatively low. On Beinn Eighe a total of 29 Sika (mostly stags) have been shot since 1988.
- There are two small pockets of Feral Goats currently established within the DMG (2-3 in number) around Torridon House and Diabeg. Feral Goats are also established at Taagan at the top of Loch Maree adjacent to Beinn Eighe on the neighbouring DMG to the north.

1.9.2 Plan Objectives

- The plan will aim to reduce or mitigate the risk of establishment of invasive non-native species of deer (Sika and Muntjac).
- Plan to detail an agreed policy and actions required by GCU to monitor.
- To maintain existing populations of Feral Goats at existing levels, and prevent establishment/spread where not (taking into account welfare considerations). SNH management policy on this species is currently in development.

1.9.3 Current Delivery.

The DMG reports on any Sika culled or sighted currently.

1.9.4 Targets to be delivered by 2021

Actions to reduce or mitigate the risk of establishment of invasive non-native species	When?	Who?	How?
Muntjac Deer managed as per the Non-native Species Policy (Part 2 of plan).	Ongoing	DMG Members	<i>Members will contact local SNH Wildlife Management Officer immediately on suspected sighting of Muntjac.</i>
Sika Deer managed to prevent their establishment within the DMG area and managed as per the Non-Native Species Policy (Part 2 of plan).	Ongoing	DMG Members	<i>Where Sika Deer not currently established, Members will report sightings to DMG and will prevent their establishment shoot (within current legal restrictions).</i>
Feral Pigs managed according to Policy Guidelines currently being agreed by SNH.	Ongoing	DMG Members	<i>Members will report sightings of feral pigs within DMG area. Implement Feral Pig management policy once agreed by SNH. FES currently has a control policy for this species.</i>
Record invasive plants species and encourage their control.	Annually	DMG Members	<i>Members will inform DMG of invasive plant species at annual meetings and will report on control undertaken.</i>
Manage Feral goats according to agreed DMG policy (Part 2 of the Plan).	By end 2016	DMG Members	<i>Group agreed a policy for the management of Feral Goats in 2016. Members will maintain existing populations at current levels and prevent their establishment/spread where not (taking into consideration welfare issues).</i>

1.10 Actions to protect designated historic and cultural features from being damaged by deer.

1.10.1 Background

- Certain types of historic or culturally significant features may be impacted positively from deer and deer management activity through for example, grazing to keep sites exposed. Impacts may also be negative however, where deer may cause damage through trampling or by jumping over stone-work for example.
- Historic and cultural features within the landscape are important to the group and the group undertakes to protect these from negative impacts by deer. Red deer, because of their size and herding behaviour are the species with most potential to cause negative impacts to these sites. Highland Council Historic Environment Record holds over 1112 Records for the DMG area which can be viewed in a map based format at <http://her.highland.gov.uk/Map.aspx?clear=true>
- DMGs should contribute to conserving and enhancing the cultural and historic landscape e.g. ensure that trampling of sites is avoided particularly in the case of protected designated historic features.
- There are a range of archaeological features some of which appear on the [CANMORE](#) website. These include the likes of Shielings.
- Deer fencing, when properly planned for, constructed and maintained, can be an effective way of controlling deer to allow different land-uses to co-exist in close proximity, and to protect public safety. Deer fencing can however impact the landscape and public access. **Joint-Agency Guidance** has been developed to help land managers decide what is the best management option for their land <http://www.snh.gov.uk/land-and-sea/managing-wildlife/managing-deer/sites/fencing>.

1.10.2 Plan Objective

- Plan to consider deer management actions which contribute or impact on delivery of conserving and enhancing the local cultural and historic landscape.

1.10.3 Current Delivery.

- The DMG is currently unaware of any cultural or historic features that are being impacted on by deer
- Any woodland creation projects are currently required by Forestry Commission Scotland to carry out this assessment. Much of the DMG area lies within the Wester Ross National Scenic Areas and any existing fences will have been assessed for landscape impacts according to Joint Agency Guidance.

1.10.4 Targets to be delivered by 2021

Actions to protect designated historic and cultural features from being damaged by deer	When?	Who?	How?
Identify any features within DMG area that may be impacted on by deer.	By end of 2016	DMG Members	<i>DMG members to report at Autumn DMG meeting on features identified.</i>
If features identified, ensure the appropriate management is implemented and report to DMG.	Ongoing	DMG Members	<i>Verbal report/update to DMG.</i>
All future fencing proposals to follow Joint Agency Guidance.	Ongoing	DMG Members	<i>All new fencing proposals will be reported to DMG and Joint Agency Guidance on fencing followed.</i>
Assess fencing impacts across DMG with regards to the NSA.	By 2021	SNH and DMG Members	<i>SNH/DMG will provide a short report on the extent of fencing, associated impacts on the NSA and possible actions.</i>

1.11 Actions to contribute to delivering higher standards of competence in deer management.

1.11.1. Background

The DMG recognises the importance of delivering higher standards of competence in deer management through:

- promoting and offering opportunities for Members to take up formal training opportunities;
- facilitating continuous professional development activities;
- and ensuring Wild Deer Best Practice guidance is adopted in deer management activities throughout the Group area.

1.11.2. Plan Objectives

DMP to ascertain training levels among Group Members and to develop a training policy and programme.

1.11.3 Current Delivery.

- Of the 8 individuals involved in carrying out deer management within the Group, 5 have DSC (Level) 1 (with 1 undergoing training) and 5 have DSC Level 2.
- Most have some form of quad/argo and first aid training.
- On Gairloch Estate all those shooting on the property will have to be DSC 1 trained and committed to working towards DSC 2.
- On Beinn Eighe all staff involved in deer management have DSC 2.

1.11.4 Targets to be delivered by 2021

Actions to contribute to delivering higher standards of competence in deer management.	When?	Who?	How?
DMG will adopt the training policy statement (Part 2 of plan).	Spring 2016	DMG Members	<i>Adopted as part of DMP. All DMG members will be encouraged to achieve DSC level 1.</i>
Ascertain training levels among DMG Members and report on progress on an annual basis.	By Autumn 2016 & Annually	DMG Secretary and Members	<i>All members asked to provide an initial summary of staff qualifications to DMG Secretary. Verbal report at Spring meeting.</i>
Develop and implement a training programme to assist in the provision of training for DMG Members who lack the necessary qualification or for individuals who wish to enhance their skills.	Annually	DMG Chair and Secretary	<i>Annual training programme to be agreed at Spring meeting. Secretary to organise courses/events. Opportunities for CPD events to be explored by members.</i>

1.12 Actions to Identify and promote opportunities contributing to public health and wellbeing.

1.12.1 Background

- Deer are of great social and cultural value to Scotland. As one of Scotland's top iconic wildlife species they provide a range of benefits, for example through their contribution to tourism and people's enjoyment of the outdoors..
- Venison is also a healthy meat enjoyed by many. Ensuring food safety is an essential element of deer management. This can be safeguarded through following Wild Deer Best Practice Guidance, membership of Scottish Quality Assured Wild Venison (SQWV) Scheme and ensuring that all those managing deer are competent and have the necessary training and qualifications.
- Deer can, however, also lead to health and safety risks e.g. road traffic accidents and deer related disease such a Lyme disease.
- Chronic wasting disease (CWD) is a highly contagious and fatal transmissible spongiform encephalopathy (TSE) disease that affects deer. It has had devastating effects on many populations of wild and farmed deer in the USA, Canada and has recently been reported in Norway. It is not yet present in the UK.
- The DMG area is a popular tourist destination, and wildlife tourism in particular is important to the local economy as a whole. Deer, as one of Scotland's top iconic species, are an important element of this.
- The Group area is heavily utilised by visitors. The Visitor Centre at Beinn Eighe saw 56,741 visitors in the last 5 years and the annual number of visitors on the Reserve itself around 50,000 visitors.
- On Torridon, 18,000 visitors were recorded going to the mountains and the Visitor Centre sees around 5,000 visitors a year.
- Responsible access is encouraged and welcomed by all properties within the Group area.

1.12.2 Plan Objectives

- To identify and promote opportunities contributing to public health and wellbeing benefits associated with deer and deer management;
- To identify, raise awareness and where possible minimise the local health and safety risks by;
 - Identifying and increasing the opportunities for people to enjoy and benefit from deer;
 - Adhering to Best Practice, membership of SQWV and ensuring all those preparing and handling venison have the necessary training and qualifications.
 - Preventing the establishment of CWD.
 - Raising awareness of road safety issues associated with deer to reduce the risks of road traffic accidents (covered in Section 14);
 - Co-ordinating action to minimise deer-related human disease risks;
 - Promoting responsible Access and the Scottish Outdoor Access Code.

1.12.3 Current Delivery.

- Tick awareness already discussed with staff on all properties. Tick information provided for visitors through leaflets and the Visitor Centres.
- DMG is collectively signed up to a Training Policy and the principles of Best Practice which provides guidance on safeguarding public safety and food safety. At least 5 deer managers have DCS Level 1&2 and two properties have larders to SQWV standard.
- Members of the DMG are seeking to prevent the establishment of CWD through the CWD Policy (Part 2)
- Information on access is available on NTS and SNH websites and through the [HFTSH](#) Website.
- The GCU currently actively promotes positive deer management throughout the area through a series of initiatives and information provision.
- Beinn Eighe hosts educational events and guided walks together with Highland Council Ranger Service. Guided walks include red deer calving and stag roaring and rutting.
- Gairloch Estate is building a new chilled deer larder and venison processing unit in conjunction with the development of a small farmed herd of deer. Potential scope to look to other properties within the Group to locally source carcasses.
- NTS Torridon and SNH Beinn Eighe are both high profile tourist destinations and both have developed infrastructure and facilities for visitors. A newly revamped Visitor Centre was completed at Beinn Eighe and was operational from April 2015. SNH have invested £46,000 in 2012 on upgrading 500m of the mountain trail as well as regular path and trail maintenance.
- The Visitor Centre, Deer Park and Deer Museum at Torridon are due to be upgraded in the next 5 years.
- Both Beinn Eighe and Torridon offer opportunities for volunteers to assist with and develop skills in conservation management.
- Beinn Eighe supports a Thurso College student placement annually to develop skills in deer and wider land management.
- Occasional issues with deer going into the villages of Kinlochewe and Torridon.

12.4 Targets to be delivered by 2021

Actions to Identify and promote opportunities contributing to public health and wellbeing.	When?	Who?	How?
Provide information on access, CWD and health information about tick awareness to visitors/clients.	By end of 2016 and ongoing	DMG Secretary	<i>Secretary to circulate leaflets/literature at Spring/Autumn meetings for members to distribute. Information made available on DMG website.</i>
Complete relevant Access information for the Heading For the Scottish Hills initiative.	By end 2016	Secretary & Relevant DMG Members	<i>Secretary to liaise with DMG members to coordinate information to SNH and ensure information is kept up to date. Information on Access to be made available on DMG web site.</i>
Raise awareness of threats relating to Chronic Wasting Disease and sign up to CWD Biosecurity Policy (Part 3 of plan).	By end of 2016 and ongoing	DMG Members	<i>Members to raise awareness of CWD with Clients and Visitors from USA, Canada and Norway.</i>
Investigate opportunities for awareness raising/educational events for the local community.	Ongoing	DMG Members	<i>Members to discuss opportunities at Spring meeting. Open events to be advertised on DMG website.</i>

Provide opportunities for any concerns from the local community to be addressed. Ensure Community Council representation at meetings.	Ongoing	DMG Chair and Secretary	<i>Meeting dates and Agendas will be publically available on DMG website and circulated to community councils in advance. DMG Chair and Secretary contact details will be available on website. DMG to consider holding an annual public meeting.</i>
Explore opportunities for greater liaison/collaboration with organisations such as Scottish Mountaineering Club, Mountaineering Council for Scotland and the Ramblers Association.	By autumn 2016	DMG Chair and SMC Chair	<i>DMG and organisations to work together to improve information provision through social media.</i>
Beinn Eighe will support an annual programme for rural skills students, one work experience opportunity per year and a programme for volunteers.	Annually	Beinn Eighe	<i>SNH implement and will report progress to DMG.</i>
Ensure that all those involved in handling venison have the necessary training, qualifications and follow Best Practice. DMG to promote the SQWV scheme to members.	Ongoing	DMG Secretary	<i>Training Policy and Annual Training Programme to be agreed by DMG. SQWV to be promoted by DMG.</i>

1.13 Actions to maximise economic benefits associated with deer

1.13.1 Background

Wild deer are considered a resource and can play an important role in promoting and sustaining economic activity, especially in rural areas where they can contribute to businesses, particularly tourism and food production. The properties within the Group have a range of land management objectives. Common to all, is the need to balance deer management to deliver conservation objectives as well as economic opportunities on the open ground through the sustainable harvest of deer and grouse.

1.13.2 Plan Objectives

DMP to identify the economic interests of DMG members and identify opportunities to maximise these including employment, stalking, tourism and venison.

1.13.3 Current Delivery

- In order to achieve a sustainable harvest of **70 stags** mature stags for the Group, a total population of somewhere in the region of 1,300 deer would be required (a collective density of around **3 deer per km²** across the whole Group area).
- The income generated from letting of stag stalking plus the sale of venison carcasses provides an income in excess of around £50,000 annually.
- There are 7.5 full-time equivalent deer management employees associated with deer management activities.
- Across the Group there are 8 holiday let properties, two hotels, 1 bunk house and a basecamp on Torridon that sleeps 10.
- All properties use local services in the local surrounding area - such as shops, fuel, hotels and B&Bs, local tradesmen.
- Most properties have access to larders with chills and 2 are currently members of Scottish Quality Assured Wild Venison accreditation scheme.

1.13.4 Targets to be delivered by 2021

Actions to maximise economic benefits associated with deer	When?	Who?	How?
Investigate opportunities for membership of SQWV Quality Assurance Scheme.	By 2021	DMG Members	<i>On-going discussion at DMG meetings.</i>
Investigate opportunities for more effective collection of carcasses and negotiation of prices. DMG to investigate possible collaborative opportunities for the processing of venison/game. Members to seek opportunities to market venison locally.	Annually	DMG Members	<i>Discussion at Spring meeting. Chair & Secretary to negotiate with Game Dealers on DMG behalf. DMG to discuss opportunities associated with the development of venison processing facilities on Gairloch Estate.</i>
DMG Members to continue to monitor sustainable harvest of stags for let stalking and to investigate opportunities for cross-property letting of stalking. Opportunities to collectively market stalking also explored.	Spring 2017 and Annually.	Chair & DMG Members	<i>Population model used to monitor sustainable harvest of stags. Members discuss stalking requirements at Spring meeting. Deer movement meetings following the deer count in 2017 used to monitor deer movements/distribution across the Group.</i>

1.14 Actions to minimise the economic costs of deer, and ensure deer management is cost-effective

1.14.1 Background

Wild deer are considered a resource and can play an important role in promoting and sustaining economic activity. However they can also create costs to other land-use objectives and have a negative impact on other economic activities including agriculture and forestry. Deer Vehicle Collisions may also incur an economic as well as social cost.

1.14.2 Plan Objectives

- The DMP will seek to minimise the economic cost of deer through identifying issues and implementing management to reduce or mitigate deer impacts where this results in an economic cost.
- The plan will aim to identify where deer are having an economic cost particularly with regard to forestry and agricultural impacts.
- Incidents of Deer Vehicle Collisions (DVCs) will be monitored. Opportunities to work collaboratively to reduce these costs will be identified and actioned.
- The DMG will seek to identify and quantify the capital investment in deer management related infrastructure.

1.14.3 Current Delivery

- The Group is aware of particular black spots along the A832 and to a lesser degree the A896 where deer frequently cross the road. The Group assists The Highland Council with Road-side tree clearance to improve visibility for road safety purposes.
- 2km of roadside trees have been cleared by Beinn Eighe in the last 5 years.
- Grudie Estate clear vegetation on the A832 and use diversionary feeding to keep deer from the road.
- Night shooting and Out of Season Authorisations have been applied for in the past by members of the DMG to protect woodland.
- On Gairloch Estate, the loss of over-wintering ground for deer through deer fencing has changed deer movements and distribution locally. The Estate is monitoring the situation and addressing any issues that arise with regards to deer moving onto croft ground or accessing enclosed woodland through porous fencing.

An existing strategic fence on Kinlochewe Estate (West Ross DMG) to prevent deer movement between the Estate and SNH Beinn Eighe has been maintained to date through a management Agreement with SNH. Although this Agreement is due to end, the Estate has agreed to retain this fence and take on the maintenance of it.

1.14.4 Targets to be delivered by 2021

Actions to minimise the economic costs of deer, and ensure deer management is cost-effective	When?	Who?	How?
DMG to identify and quantify capital investment in deer management related infrastructure.	Spring 2017	DMG Members	<i>DMG will agree what information is to be captured and a survey of members will be carried out to ascertain amount of capital investment in deer management infrastructure.</i>
DMG to consider the future costs of maintaining fences and financial provision for repairs.	By end of 2016	DMG Members	<i>Those responsible for fences report on current condition and likely repair timetable. Maintain communication with neighbouring West Ross DMG regarding state of strategic fences.</i>
Ensure local agricultural/crofting interests are consulted on DMP and invited to/represented at DMG meetings.	Spring 2016	DMG Chairman and Secretary	<i>DMG Chair will correspond with relevant parties. Agriculture/Crofting issues to be part of the Agenda.</i>
Set up monitoring and reporting of DVCs through website, DMG meetings and local Police contact.	Spring 2016 and ongoing	DMG Secretary	<i>Members of the public asked to report DVCs to DMG Secretary on website. Members record and report DVCs to meetings.</i>
Implement actions to mitigate against DVC hotspots including localised deer management, use of signage, fencing etc.	Ongoing	DMG Members	<i>Where hot-spots occur, DMG to discuss appropriate actions at meetings.</i>
Report on out of season and night shooting authorisations.	Annually	DMG Members	<i>Members to inform DMG Chair/Secretary in advance of intention to apply for authorisations. Members to report numbers of deer culled under authorisation at meetings.</i>
Agree a framework to assess likely economic impacts of management changes across the DMG.	By end 2017	DMG Members	<i>Members to agree the information required to assess economic impacts and the time-scale involved.</i>

1.15 Actions to ensure effective communication on deer management issues

1.15.1 Background

- Effective collaborative deer management requires effective communication on deer management issues both within the Group, the DMG and throughout the wider community in order to promote better awareness and education of deer and deer management.
- The residents Kinlochewe occasionally have issues with deer within the village, particularly where they are encroaching on gardens.

1.15.2 Plan Objectives

- To ensure that the DMG is inclusive, open, transparent and that local issues have been addressed the DMP will include a Communications policy to encourage participation and collaboration and to communicate the public benefits being delivered through local deer management activity.
- The DMG Constitution will set out methods for conflict resolution.

1.15.3 Current Delivery.

- The Group has a [web site](#).
- The DMG works in partnership with SNH, FCS, the Local Community and wider stakeholders.
- A public meeting was held as part of the Consultation phase of the plan development.
- Contact details for the DMG are available to allow members of the public and local residents of Kinlochewe to report any issues.
- Stakeholders were consulted on the draft plan through a public web site and the local community were invited to attend a planning meeting. Relevant stakeholders were also identified and invited to consult.

1.15.4 Targets to be delivered by 2021

Actions to ensure effective communication on deer management issues	When?	Who?	How?
Final Plan and Minutes of Meetings will published on DMG Website.	Spring 2016	DMG Secretary	<i>DMG Website.</i>
DMG Constitution and ADMG Principles of Collaboration adopted (Part 3)	Spring 2016	DMG Members	<i>Adopted as part of DMP.</i>
Agree and adopt a DMG Communications Policy	Spring 2016	DMG Members	<i>Adopted as part of DMP.</i>

1.16 Actions to ensure deer welfare is taken fully into account at individual animal and population level

1.16.1 Background.

- The definition of welfare in relation to wild deer is 'concern for their physical and psychological well being'. This definition can be applied to both the individual animal and population level. [Wild Deer Best Practice Guidance](#) states that with increasing intervention (e.g. fencing, feeding, culling) comes increasing responsibility for their welfare.
- *Fencing*: This is a management tool that has been used extensively throughout the Group area. The exclusion or prevention of deer movements to areas of natural areas of shelter in winter through the erection of exclosures or use of strategic fenced may pose a threat to welfare. Similarly, areas where fencing is no longer required and can be removed, can open up areas of natural shelter which will be attractive to deer.
- *Supplementary Feeding*: Within the Group one member provides some level of diversionary winter feeding specifically for deer.
- *Winter Mortality*: Members of the Group already monitor and report any significant levels of winter mortality to the Group, as well as any significant health issues encountered. It is considered that mortality within the group is approx 6% for calves, and 2% hinds for hinds and stags. These figures will be used in population models for the Group in future, but will be varied depending on local knowledge and practical experience.

1.16.2. Plan Objectives

DMP will promote and safeguard deer welfare through effective planning and the undertaking of training for deer managers and the carrying out of deer management activity to [Wild Deer Best Practice Guidance](#) industry standards.

1.16.3 Current Delivery.

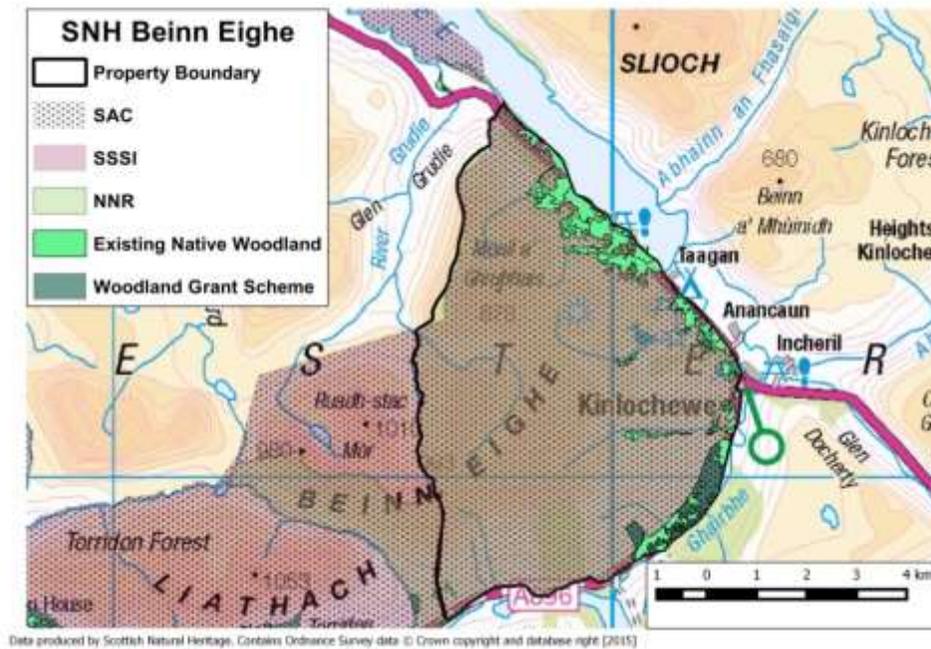
- On Gairloch Estate, the loss of over-wintering ground for deer through deer fencing has changed deer movements and distribution locally. The Estate is monitoring the situation with regards to deer welfare and addressing any issues that arise through deer impacting on croft land. The Estate will also consider opening up 1350 ha of woodland to address this in the next five years.
- Members of the Group currently monitor and report on levels of winter mortality as well as any other significant health issues encountered.
- Beinn Eighe has reduced deer fencing from 40km to 7 km and a further ring-fence will be removed in the next 5 years.

1.16.4. Targets to be delivered by 2021

Actions to ensure deer welfare is taken fully into account at individual animal and population level	When?	Who?	How?
Agree and adopt welfare policy (Part 2 of plan).	Spring 2016	DMG Members	<i>Implemented through every day Best Practice in deer management.</i>
Beinn Eighe will run or support at least 1 demonstration event to share best practice management for open habitats and woodland management in the absence of deer fences.	Autumn 2017	Beinn Eighe	<i>SNH will run at least one event to share Best Practice Management for open habitats and woodland management in the absence of deer fences.</i>
Provide information on welfare indicators annually. Baseline information established in year 1 of DMP and welfare indicators reported on annually. Any resulting management actions agreed and implemented by members.	Ongoing	DMG Members	<i>Deer managers to provide information on average larder weights and annual calf recruitment.</i>
Any new fencing in DMG area will consider welfare implications in design and extent and the appropriate management undertaken.	Ongoing	DMG Members	<i>New fencing proposals will be consulted with DMG.</i>
Monitoring and reporting of significant levels of winter mortality.	Ongoing	DMG Members	<i>Deer managers will provide information (details including date, numbers, sex, age & grid reference) on winter mortality.</i>
Carry out a review of fencing and wintering ground and identify opportunities to open up woodland to deer.	Year 2	DMG Members & Consultant	<i>Subject to ECAF bid, carry out as part of the delivery of the DMG Woodland Expansion Report and recommended actions.</i>

1.17 Management Units: SNH Beinn Eighe

Property	SNH Beinn Eighe
Area	4758 ha
Owner	Scottish Natural Heritage
Manager	Peter Duncan
Deer management	John Weir



Deer Counts						
Month	Mature Stags	Young Stags	Hinds	Calves	Total	Density (Deer per Km2)
Jan 14	12	3	51	29	95	2.00
Feb 14	4	10	38	13	65	1.37
Mar 14	2	5	49	18	74	1.56
Apr 14	10	1	46	16	73	1.53
May 14	1	2	15	0	18	0.38
Jun 14	19	1	33	2	55	1.16
Jul 14	11	0	8	0	19	0.40
Aug 14	8	0	15	3	26	0.55
Sep 14	13	2	33	15	63	1.32
Oct 14	10	4	20	5	39	0.82
Nov 14	10	4	34	13	61	1.28
Jan 15	17	0	23	9	49	1.03
Feb 15	5	1	24	8	38	0.80
Mar 15	9	4	23	2	38	0.80
Apr 15	1	0	28	2	31	0.65
May 15	1	0	15	4	20	0.42
Jun 15	2	0	18	3	23	0.48
Jul 15	8	0	36	2	46	0.97
Aug 15	19	1	41	7	68	1.43
Sep 15	0	0	4	2	6	0.13
Oct 15	2	0	14	5	21	0.44

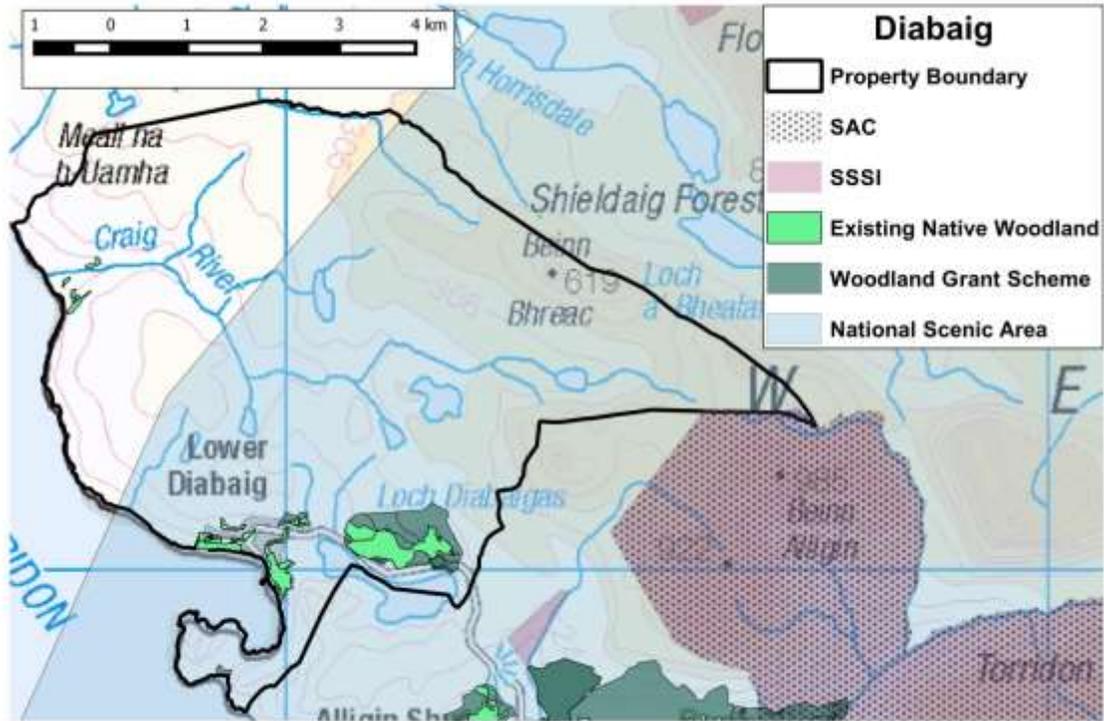
Deer Culls				
Year	Stags	Hinds	Calves	Total
2005 -2006	22	14	7	43
2006 -2007	27	10	11	48
2007 -2008	31	17	12	60
2008 -2009	21	20	9	50
2009 -2010	36	19	2	57
2010 -2011	46	23	14	83
2011 - 2012	51	46	12	109
2012 -2013	74	23	13	110
2013 -2014	64	35	18	117
2014 -2015	95	44	23	162
2015- 2016				

Background	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The whole of SNH Beinn Eighe and Loch Maree Islands is designated as a National Nature Reserve (NNR) and lies to the far east of the Group area. • The A832 and the A986 forms the eastern property boundary. • The property marches with Grudie & Talladale and Torridon to the west. • The property combines conservation objectives with recreational and access provision for the wider public. • Red and Roe deer species present. Occasional Sika.
Designated sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The property falls entirely within: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Wester Ross National Scenic Area; ○ Loch Maree Complex SAC; ○ Beinn Eighe SSSI; and ○ Beinn Eighe and Loch Maree Islands NNR.
Deer Management Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over last 5 years deer numbers have been reduced from 12.5 red deer km² to approximately 2 deer per km². • To undertake deer control as informed by transect monitoring, general surveillance and in response to road traffic risk. • To manage deer and associated impacts without the use of deer fencing.
Future Management Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand and enhance the quality of the native woodlands by improving the age structure, tree species diversity and connectivity with woodlands in the wider Wester Ross landscape, whilst maintaining the genetic integrity of the Scots pine and habitats for important woodland flora and fauna communities. • Enhance the quality of the heaths, bogs and montane habitats on the Reserve, maintaining their extent where they are not subject to woodland expansion, distribution and associated flora and fauna communities. • Pro-actively manage and maintain habitats for key species of the Reserve, particularly where this can improve species survival in the wider Wester Ross landscape and increases resilience to climate change. • To safeguard the special qualities of the Wester Ross landscape, cultural interests and the geological features of the Reserve. • Undertake and facilitate research, survey and monitoring particularly where this improves our understanding and knowledge of the Reserve and its management requirements. • Establish the Reserve as a gateway to Wester Ross by providing a welcoming, enjoyable and high quality visitor experience whereby 85% of visitors asked rate their experience as good or above. • Promote awareness and enthusiasm for nature, inspire learning and exploration in ways that help people connect with and value nature more. • Establish Beinn Eighe & Loch Maree Islands NNR as a key resource in the Highlands, where people contribute to its management and use it sustainably through demonstration and training, volunteering and recreation. • To manage the land and Reserve properties responsibly following best practice and in collaboration with our neighbours.
Woodland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 261.49 ha of native woodland – 98% of herbivore impacts within the low/low medium category. • Additional 25-30 ha of new woodland regeneration. • Additional 128 ha of native woodland creation through planting in last 5 years. • Planting of woodland links between new and existing woodland in next 5 years.
Land management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The property has a Habitat Management Plan in place. • 115 ha of Peatland. • Reserve Fire Plan in place.

Deer Impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal monitoring over a range of habitats is undertaken. • Open ground habitats last monitored in 2006 and all but dry heath and wet heath were in favourable condition (see Section 4). • Bog woodland at Tansley bog was monitored in 2008 (favourable condition). • 4 x 1km transects across woodland monitor deer densities and regeneration every 6 years. Pinewoods and oak woodland monitored in 2010 and 2008. • The property assists The Highland Council with Road-side tree clearance for road safety issues. 2km of roadside trees cleared in last five years.
Deer Distribution & Movements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in deer fencing from 40km to 7 km in last 10 years. The only remaining fence on the Reserve is now the ring-fence which was erected in 1987/88 and is now porous. This fence will be removed by 2020 and currently restricts movement of deer from neighbours to the north (Heights of Kinlochewe and Letterewe – both in West Ross DMG) and the ring fence will not be replaced. Possibility of stags and goats moving into Beinn Eighe at the end of Loch Maree. • Some movement of deer from Coulin (part of South West Ross DMG), Grudie & Talladale and Torridon. • Property works collaboratively with all neighbouring properties as well as the wider DMG and meets regularly.
Supplementary Feeding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None
Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beinn Eighe –Spidean Coire nan Clach (993m). • Information available on the Heading for the Scottish Hills Website. • Access encouraged.
Socio-Economics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 full-time posts associated with deer and other Reserve management activities • 2 Part time Visitor Centre attendants and 60% time of Admin. Assistant. South Highland Reserves Manager 50%. 1 Full time Reserve Manager – post vacant at present. • Beinn Eighe hosts educational events and guided walks together with Highland Council Ranger Service. Development of educational resources with teachers. • Infrastructure for visitors to area includes a Visitor Centre, car park and a network of maintained paths and trails. • As well as a new larder and chill the Reserve has installed an incinerator to deal with deer carcass waste, reducing annual waste disposal costs.
Invasive non-native species	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 75% of Lodgepole pine and sitka spruce cleared in 128 ha enclosure. • Monitoring for mink undertaken. • No sika established.
Additional information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Important species include rare mosses and lichens, mountain rock cress, creeping ladies tresses, creeping sibbaldia, rock whitebeam, water voles, otters, pine marten, golden eagles (nesting) and red throated divers (breeding).

1.18 Management Units: Diabaig Estate

Property	Diabaig Estate
Area	4104 ha
Owner	Trustees of Sir Edmund Bacon
Contact	Sir Paul Nicholson
Estate Personnel	Donnie Beaton



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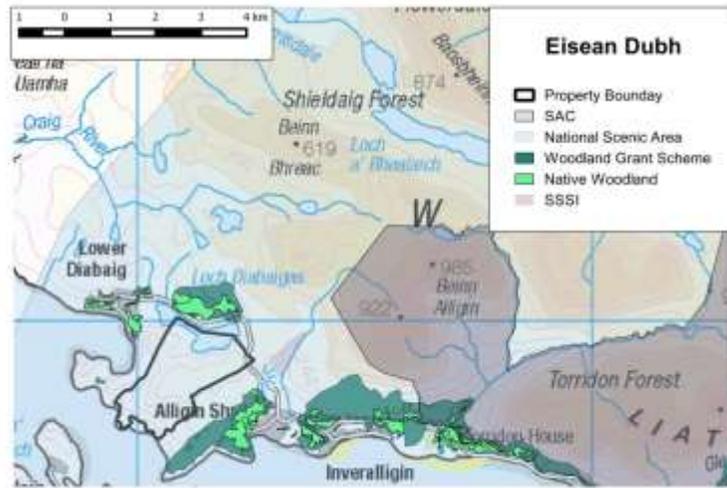
Deer Culls				
Year	Stags	Hinds	Calves	Total
2005 -2006	11	10	5	26
2006 -2007	11	10	3	24
2007 -2008	10	12	6	28
2008 -2009	6	12	4	22
2009 -2010	0	10	4	14
2010 -2011	12	12	0	24
2011 - 2012	10	5	0	15
2012 -2013	11	9	3	23
2013 -2014	11	10	2	23
2014 -2015	11	10	1	21
2015- 2016				

Background	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diabaig lies to the far-west of the Group area. • The Estate neighbours Gairloch Estate to the west and north and Torridon to the east. • To the south the Estate is bordered by Loch Torridon and the small crofting township of Diabaig. • The Estate combines conservation objectives with some limited crofting, agriculture the sustainable harvest of deer and some grouse. • Red and Roe deer species present. No resident Sika.
Designated sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Part of the property falls within Wester Ross National Scenic Area
Deer Management Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To manage the resident population of deer in balance with other objectives.
Future Management Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To optimise the conservation and economic opportunities on the estate whilst delivering wider public interest.
Woodland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 68 ha of native woodland. • 91.85 ha of woodland creation. • Area not deemed suitable or viable for commercial forestry plantations. • Upper Diabaig common grazings (248 ha) – crofter forestry scheme.
Land management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lower Diabaig Crofting Township – 14 let crofts • 80 ha in-by land (under Crofter’s control) • 1213 ha of hill ground covered by Lower Diabaig crofter’s common-grazings. • Approximately 516 ha of peatlands/blanket bog (23% of the group total). • No sheep but approx. 10 resident wild goats.
Deer Impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informal habitat monitoring undertaken.
Deer Distribution & Movements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forestry schemes in the area have blocked some winter access for deer to lower ground. • Deer numbers have remained static on the Estate. • Most deer movement with Gairloch Estate.
Supplementary Feeding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None
Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beinn Bhreac (619 ha) • No Munroes or Corbetts. • No access issues.
Socio-Economics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual harvest of 10 stags (not let). • 17 years ago fence was erected around the village so no issues with deer. • 1 part-time employee involved with deer management. • Maintenance of house provided by local services • Local shops and restaurants in Diabaig and Torridon used.

1.19. Management Units: Eisean Dubh

Property	Eisean Dubh
Area	345 ha
Owner	Mr and Mrs Tim Bowie
Estate Personnel/ Deer Management	Tim Bowie

Deer Culls				
Year	Stags	Hinds	Calves	Total
2014 -2015	1	0	0	1
2015- 2016				



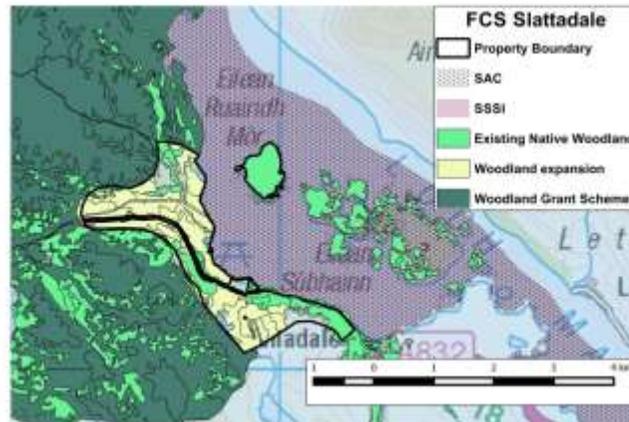
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Background	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The property combines conservation objectives with fishing and recreation. Red and occasional Roe present. Sika not established.
Designated sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None
Deer Management Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To balance deer management to deliver conservation and recreational objectives
Future Management Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To optimise the conservation opportunities on the estate through habitat restoration, woodland expansion particularly reducing bracken cover.
Woodland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None at present.. Previous woodland expansion schemes deemed unsuitable by FCS. Estate is prepared to fund smaller woodland schemes, but anything over 2 ha would require FCS approval.
Land management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No peatland on property. No Muirburn carried out. Wild goats occasionally but not resident.
Deer Impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None at present but habitat monitoring will be considered.
Deer Distribution & Movements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presently no restrictions to deer movements except fencing for Wester Alligrin Woodland but no real impediment. Estate has noticed a drop in the number of stags (& apparent size/maturity) seen in the past three or four seasons.
Supplementary Feeding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None
Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No access issues
Invasive non-native species	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bracken an issue. No sika seen or established.
Socio-economics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local shops and businesses used. Use of Diabaig Estate larder.

1.20 Management Units: FCS Slattadale

Property	FCS Slattadale
Area	436.88 ha
Owner	Forestry Commission Scotland
Contact	Russell Cooper

Deer Culls				
Year	Stags	Hinds	Calves	Total
2012 -2013	3	4	4	22
2013 -2014	4	6	0	95
2014 -2015	8	2	1	14
2015- 2016				

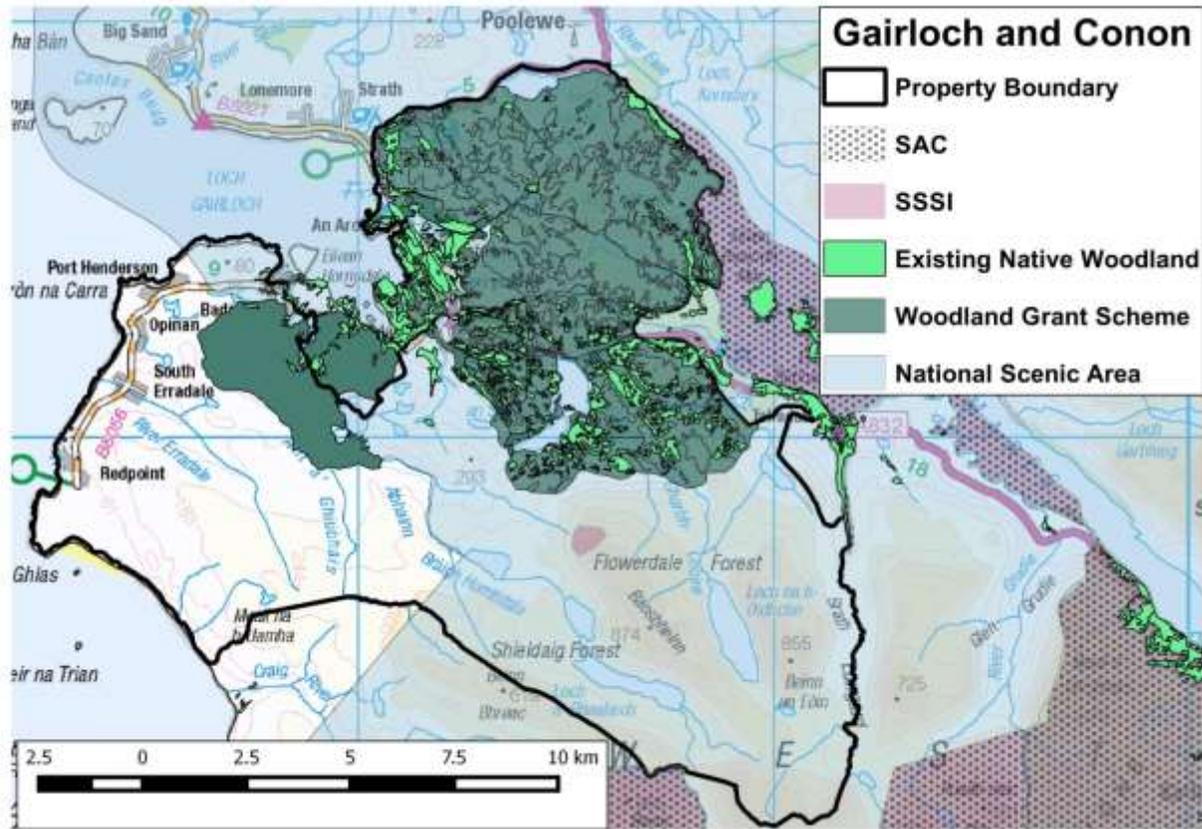


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Background	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FCS Slattadale lies to the north of the Group • The property is bounded by Loch Maree to the east. • The property is almost entirely bounded by the fenced woodland scheme on Gairloch with a small section of the property marching with Grudie & Talladale to the south. • Deer management is currently carried out by SNH Beinn Eighe staff.
Designated sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The property falls entirely within Wester Ross NSA. • FCS is also responsible for the island of Eilean Ruaridh Mor which falls within the Loch Maree SAC, SSSI and SPA.
Deer Management Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To minimise negative impacts of deer on woodland and conservation objectives within the enclosure.
Future Management Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To continue to work collaboratively with neighbours and the DMG to manage deer at a landscape level.
Woodland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mixed age conifer and broadleaf plantation with 105.51 ha of native woodland.
Deer Impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impacts on native woodland all considered low/medium. • Monitoring carried out on new planting.
Deer Distribution & Movements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The property is entirely deer fenced. Section shared with Grudie and Talladale was replaced in 2010. Fences are checked regularly. • A report of the fence condition will be produced in 2016 which will outline management required to make enclosure completely deer proof.
Supplementary Feeding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None
Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No access issues.

1.21 Management Units: Gairloch and Conon Estate

Property	Gairloch and Conon Estate
Area	19,234 ha (Open hill 14,384 ha & 4850 ha fenced woodland)
Tenant	Duncan Mackenzie
Deer Management Contact	Ronnie Buchan



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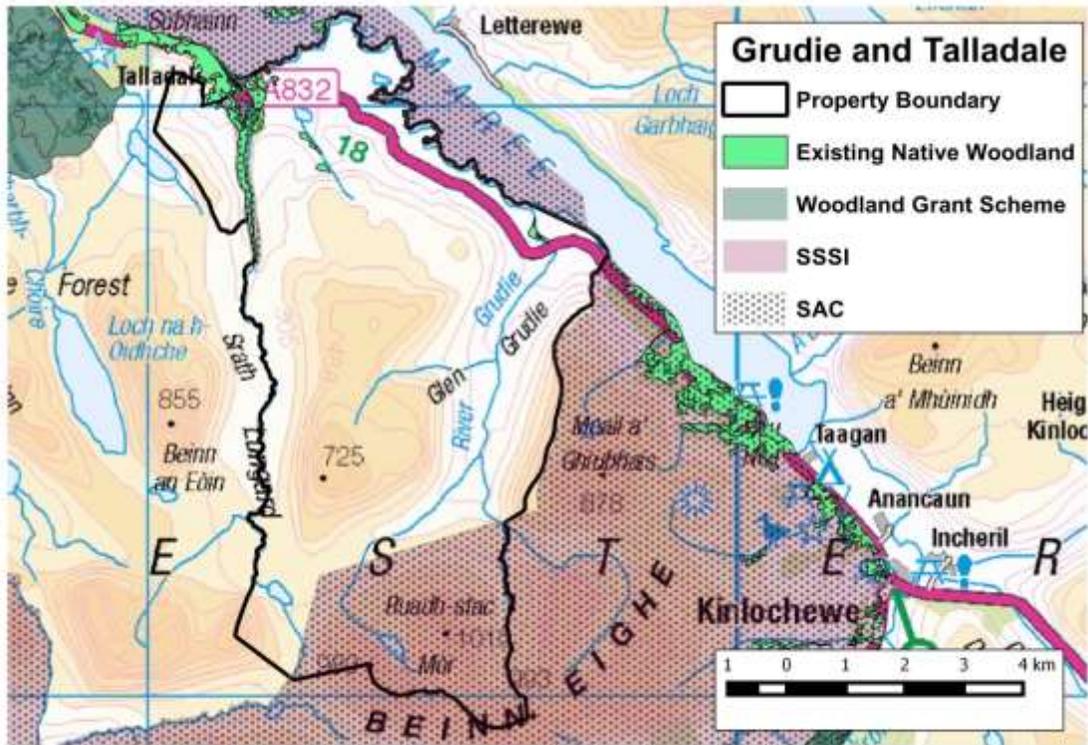
Deer Counts (Foot)					
	Stags	Hinds	Calves	Total	Density (km ²)
1996	116	266	99	481	2.5

Deer Culls				
Year	Stags	Hinds	Calves	Total
2005 -2006	41	47	11	99
2006 -2007	40	26	13	79
2007 -2008	41	19	5	65
2008 -2009	22	5	0	27
2009 -2010	43	35	8	86
2010 -2011	13	0	0	13
2011 - 2012	27	6	0	33
2012 -2013	31	29	0	60
2013 -2014	21	27	4	52
2014 -2015	26	32	9	67
2015- 2016				

Background	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gairloch Estate lies to the west of the Group area. • The Estate is bounded by Loch Gairloch to the west and to the north neighbours the properties of Big Sands and Inveran Estate (both part of West Ross DMG) and FCS Slattadale. • To the east the property neighbours Grudie and Talladale and to the south Torridon and Diabaig Estates. • The Estate combines conservation objectives with shooting, fishing, forestry, renewable energy (2 schemes: 1.3MW & 3.5MW) and crofting. • Red and Roe deer species with a few Sika.
Designated sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loch Maree Complex SAC • Coille Dhubh SSSI, Baobheinn SSSI (geological), Talladale Gorge SSSI • Loch Maree RAMSAR, SPA
Deer Management Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To balance deer management to deliver conservation objectives with economic opportunities on the open ground. • Specifically to increase the quality and value of deer as a sustainable resource over the whole Estate.
Future Management Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To seek opportunities to optimise the conservation and economic potential of the estate whilst delivering wider public interest. • Specifically to maintain the current Woodland Grant Scheme (WGS) and to investigate possible new renewable energy projects.
Woodland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long Term Forest Plan completed 2015. • 938.39 ha native woodland & 4850 ha woodland creation (Fenced Schemes).
Land management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peatlands 1376 ha. The Estate will consider implementing Habitat Monitoring. • Some Muirburn undertaken.
Deer Impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All designated sites on the Estate are in favourable condition. • Fences regularly checked and impacts in woodland monitored regularly. • Estate will apply for a 5(6) and 18(2) Authorisation to shoot deer if required. • Some deer impacts on local crofts but Estate in discussion with Grazing Clerk.
Supplementary Feeding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None
Deer Distribution & Movements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some deer movement with neighbours to the east and south. • The combined fence of the WGS and FCS Slattadale (which is completely deer fenced), largely prevents deer movement to the north. • The loss of over-wintering for deer through deer fencing has changed deer movements and distribution locally.
Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two main Corbetts: Baosbheinn (847m) and Beinn an Eoin (855m). • Mountains in middle of Estate heavily used but no access issues.
Socio-Economics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 full-time stalker, 1 part-time stalkers and 1 full-time ghillie/estate worker. • Stalker is an Accredited Witness. • The Estate owns two local hotels and 6 holiday cottages. Policy of local staff employment and use of local businesses/services including fencer, digger driver, path road maintenance, local shops and garage. • New larder/ venison processing unit to be completed and a small deer farm producing 50 -60 calves will be in place 2016. Currently 40% of carcasses processed but this will increase to 100%. Potential for future employment.

1.2.2 Management Units: Grudie and Talladale Estate

Property	Grudie and Talladale Estate
Area	5133 ha
Owner	PJH Wills
Deer Management Contact	John Wills



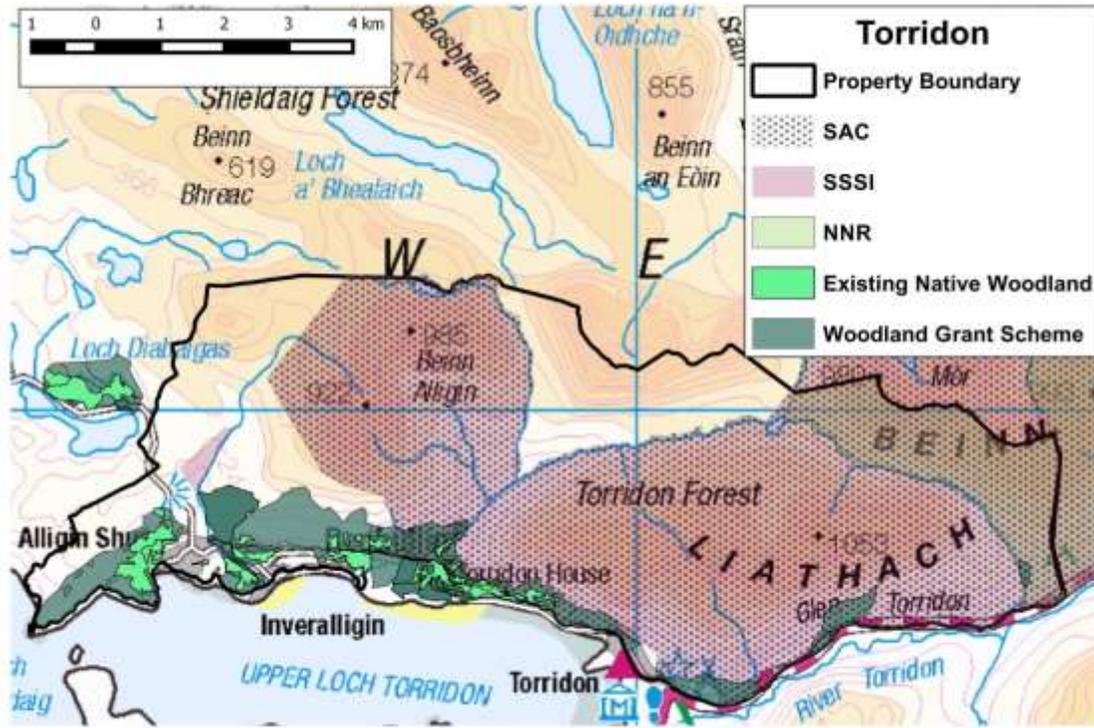
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Deer Culls				
Year	Stags	Hinds	Calves	Total
2005 -2006	10	4	1	15
2006 -2007	13	3	2	18
2007 -2008	13	9	5	27
2008 -2009	14	5	3	22
2009 -2010	16	7	5	28
2010 -2011	10	0	0	10
2011 - 2012	10	0	0	10
2012 -2013	20	2	0	22
2013 -2014	12	0	0	12
2014 -2015	17	0	0	17
2015- 2016				

Background	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grudie & Talladale Estate lies to the north-east of the Group area. • Loch Maree forms the property boundary to the north and the property marches with Beinn Eighe to the east. • The Estate marches with Torridon to the south and Gairloch to the west, with a very small boundary march with FCS Slattadale. • The Estate combines conservation objectives with the sustainable harvest of deer, some fishing, and hill-grazing. • Red and Roe deer species present with occasional Sika.
Designated sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loch Maree Complex SAC. • Torridon Forest SSSI. • Talladale Gorge SSSI. • The Estate falls entirely within the Wester Ross National Scenic Area.
Deer Management Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To balance deer management to deliver conservation objectives with economic opportunities on the open ground. • Estate doesn't normally shoot hinds (other than yeld or poor condition) but may consider in future.
Future Management Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To optimise the conservation and economic opportunities on the estate whilst delivering wider public interest. • A possible renewable energy hydro-scheme scheduled for completion in 2017.
Woodland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 65.15 ha native woodland. • 10.65 ha woodland creation (WGS Scheme). • May consider some smaller areas of woodland creation.
Land management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Muirburn conducted historically but not now. • Only 11 ha of possible peatland - No restoration work required. • Grazing for a few cattle on the open hill and 30 sheep confined to 40 acres.
Deer Impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Designated sites on the Estate in Favourable Condition. • Informal habitat monitoring undertaken.
Deer Distribution and Movements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hinds generally hefted and there is a resident group of young stags but stags appear in October that not recognised from August/September. • Joint fence between Estate and FCS Slattadale prevents movement of deer.
Supplementary Feeding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversionary feeding January to April to keep deer away from roadside which is unfenced.
Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main summits of Ruadh-stac Mor (1010m) & Sail Mhor are Munroes. Beinn an Chearchoil is a Corbett. • Stalking from End August to end September. • No access issues. • Paths have been upgraded by Ross-shire Footpath Trust but possible issue with erosion caused by walkers using alternative routes. • Information updated on the Heading for the Scottish Hills website.
Socio-Economics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 part-time assistant with deer management • Gorse and birch on A832 roadsides are cut back and diversionary feeding used to prevent Deer Vehicle Collisions. • Local trades used for occasional maintenance and local shops used.

1.23 Management Units: NTS Torridon

Property	NTS Torridon
Area	6384 ha
Owner	National Trust for Scotland
Manager	Alexander Bennett (abennett@nts.org.uk)
Estate Personnel/ Deer Management	Seamus MacNally (smacnally@nts.org.uk)
Website	National Trust for Scotland



	Deer Counts (Helicopter)				
	Stags	Hinds	Calves	Total	Density
2005	43	185	56	284	4.45
2009	42	182	54	278	4.35
2021*	60	150	45	255	4.0

*Target population to deliver SAC Habitat Targets

Deer Culls				
Year	Stags	Hinds	Calves	Total
2005 -2006	12	21	9	42
2006 -2007	15	20	11	46
2007 -2008	18	26	10	54
2008 -2009	15	24	10	49
2009 -2010	7	24	7	38
2010 -2011	12	22	10	44
2011 -2012	11	20	14	45
2012 -2013	15	22	15	52
2013 -2014	9	27	13	49
2014 -2015	16	24	16	56
2015- 2016				

Background	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Torridon lies to the southeast of the Group. • The property is bounded by the A896 and Upper Loch Torridon to the south. • To the west the property neighbours Beinn Eighe and Grudie and Gairloch to the north. The property marches with Diabaig Estates to the west. • The property combines conservation objectives with crofting & farming. • Red and Roe present. Sika not established.
Designated sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loch Maree Complex SAC (approx. 3830 ha). • Torridon Forest SSSI (approx. 3830 ha). • The property falls entirely within the Wester Ross National Scenic Area. • Part of Beinn Eighe NNR.
Deer Management Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To secure favourable condition of designated sites (within and adjacent to estate boundary) • Maintain balanced integration between agriculture, forestry, sporting interests & the natural heritage • Safeguard welfare of all deer species. • Conserve/Enhance Biodiversity Minimise costs associated with damage/negative impacts by wild deer. • Ensure that deer management is proactive and to an industry recognised standard (Best Practice) • Contribute to a safe and healthy environment for people • Property has its own deer management plan.
Future Management Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To reduce deer impacts to bring the SAC features into Favourable Condition (see Section 10) - specifically the European dry heaths (including internationally important Liverwort-rich Calluna-Vaccinium-Sphagnum heaths) and North Atlantic wet heaths.
Woodland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing native woodland 145 ha (fenced exclosures). • Woodland creation 640.04 ha through Crofter Forestry, Conservation Forestry (Millenium Forest for Scotland).
Land management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negligible Peatlands & Blanket Bog habitat. Mostly heather moorland and montane habitat. • No sheep on open ground. Common grazings are stock fenced. • 44 crofts.
Deer Impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring of habitats carried out on a regular basis. Last study "Occupancy patterns and impacts of wild deer" (Strath Caulaidh, 2013). • Densities of deer on Torridon are relatively low, but where there are deer, they tend to congregate in some areas leading to local damage particularly in the northern corries on Liathach. In order to meet habitat targets across the site, deer management will focus on those areas where deer (and associated impacts) are most concentrated (see Section 10) • Culls also concentrated on south facing slopes of Liathach to prevent deer coming into the village. • Possible vegetation management on Diabaig road to aid visibility and prevent Deer Vehicle Collisions. • An area of Very High/High Herbivore Impacts in native woodland east of Torridon House provides only shelter locally in winter for deer. Old transects showed woodland was browsed but getting away.
Deer Distribution and Movements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Property willing to participate in a collaborative approach to counts to across the group area. • Some movement of hinds and stags with Coulin. Little movement with Grudie

Supplementary Feeding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None
Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Five Munroes including Liathach (1,054m) which has seven tops and Beinn Alligin (985m) composed mainly of Torridonian sandstone dating back 750 million years. • Visitor centre (5,000 visitors a year) provides information on deer and deer management. • 18,000 visitors to mountains per year with car parks at Coire Dubh or from Coire Mhic Nobuil. • Information provided on the National Trust web site and the Heading for the Scottish Hills web site.
Socio-Economics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 full-time stalker, 1 full-time ghillie/estate worker. • Local trades and business supported. • Small deer park (29 deer) and visitor centre (incorporating the deer museum) to be renovated and expanded 2016. • Supply of venison to NTS restaurants. • 2 holiday cottages (sleep 10) and base camp (sleeps 10) - let all year round.
Invasive non-native species	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rhododendron an issue. No sika established.
Additional information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seamus MacNally has been Secretary of GCU for last 20 years. • Important species include plant colonies, rare mosses and lichens, blue hares, golden eagles (nesting) and ptarmigan.

1.24 References

Occupancy patterns and impacts of wild deer in the Loch Maree Complex SAC, Inverness-shire, UK. (January 2013). Joint report to National Trust for Scotland & Scottish Natural Heritage.

Conservation Assessment of Torridon Estate, Wester Ross. (June 2015). Ben & Alison Averis. June 2015. Condition Survey of Upland and Peatland Notified Features on Designated Sites May 2007. Brendan O'Hanrahan.