

The Deer Initiative

Deer, Habitats and Impacts Conference March 2007

Best Practice

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and*

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Best Practice Working Groups:

Core

Chair	Ian Forshaw
BASC	Alan McCormick
BDS	Andrew Wilson
DI	Jamie Cordery
FC/FE	Patrick Green & Charles Critchley
NGO	Dave Whitby
DEFRA	Charlie Wilson

The Core Group is expected to:

- review and agree the content of the guides,
- recommend topics for guides and assess the relative priority for production,
- attend working group meetings,
- contribute to the strategy development,
- “sign off” final versions of guides

Specifics Working Group

Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO)
Association of Game Dealers & Processors (AGDP)
Countryside Agency (CA)
County Landowners Association (CLA)
DEFRA
Deer Management Qualifications (DMQ)
English Nature (EN)
Food Standards Agency (FSA)
Forest Research (FR)
Forestry and Timber Association (FTA)

Union of Countryside Sports Workers
Game Conservancy (GC)
Health & Safety Executive (HSE)
Highways Agency (HA)
Humane Slaughter Association (HSA)
LANTRA
National Association of AONBs (NAAONB)
National Farmer's Union (NFU)
National Trust (NT)
Royal Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA)
State Veterinary Service (SVS)
Woodland Trust (WT)

Purpose of the project

The purpose of the project is to promote best practice in deer management in England and Wales and in doing so:

Make practitioners aware of the procedures that:

- are a legal requirement
- are required to safeguard public safety, food safety and animal welfare
- are required to carry out tasks effectively or might otherwise add value.

Working group tasks

- Find willing volunteers to sit on the group.
- Review Scottish Best Practice documentation to see what was relevant to England and Wales.
- Identify areas of possible collaboration with Scotland.
- Agree about design, update and copying of Guidance Notes.
- Identify the subject area of each guide and the boundaries of that subject area.
- Find willing volunteers to write the documents
- Provide writers with an indication of what would be required of them
- Provide advice on the scope and structure of the guides.
- Ensure that, pre-publication, each guide has the widest agreement on its content
- Ensure that documents are kept up to date.
- Set procedures for development and review of Guides.
- Produce a Promotion Strategy

Summary of Guide purpose

- We want practitioners to feel that if they follow the guidance they are acting humanely and responsibly.
- That the guides provide a rational and considered management based on best current information and expertise.
- The Guides provide support to those seeking qualifications.
- The Guides contribute to the transparency and accountability of deer managers both in the public and private sectors

So we have looked at the key tasks and the people involved but we need to ask:

What is Best Practice?

- "An industry accepted way of doing something that works."
- "A best practice is a by-product of a successful end-result"

What are the key attributes of Best Practice?

It should be:

- Developed by consensus
- Documented and Accessible
- Effective - lead to desired outcomes
- Efficient - benefits outweigh costs
- Adaptable and addresses contingencies
- Linked to standards such as current codes of practice, NOS, DSC 1+2 and to BP in Scotland
- In compliance with existing laws and regulations

Why have Best Practice Guides for wild deer?

- Specialist
- Technical - wide range of skills (naturalist /meat inspector/firearms expert/H+S officer
- Involved - can be very complex situations e.g. DVCs, urban deer
- Difficult to keep informed – represents a single source of information that is readily accessible and continually updated

Who are the guides for?

- Practitioners - Those involved in a direct way with wild deer whether through employment or recreationally (Deer stalkers, land managers, highways, veterinarians, educationalists.....
- to give confidence that they are acting humanely, responsibly and effectively; carrying out their activities in a rational and considered way

based on the best current information. Will, however inform public too (it is a public format) and hopefully give the public similar confidence without tying practitioner's hands.

What will the guides cover?

10 categories

- species ecology
- deer management
- culling
- meat hygiene
- disease
- firearms
- equipment
- records and survey
- legislation/health and safety/welfare
- assoc information

There will be 80+ guides:

Deer Specific legislation	Deer related legislation	Firearms legislation
Meat hygiene legislation	Culling out of season	Night shooting
Deer larders and the law	Risk assessment	Working with the Public
Deer related grant schemes	General deer Biology and Behavior	Ecology and Behaviour Red
Ecology and Behaviour Fallow	Ecology and Behaviour Sika	Ecology and Behaviour Roe
Ecology and Behaviour CWD	Ecology and Behaviour Muntjac	Identifying presence of deer
Deer Impacts	Census and survey	Deer Census
Deer Census - dung counts	Census - vantage point counts	Cohort analysis
Woodland impact survey	Age determination	Condition assessment
Determining reproductive status	Record keeping	Why manage deer?
Urban deer	Cull planning	Management objectives
Deer management Plan	Stalking letting	Deer Management Groups
Engaging deer mgt operatives	Supplementary feeding	Woodland design
Fencing	Tree guards	Capture and Handling
Lyme disease	Bovine TB	Foot and Mouth
Deer diseases and parasites	High seats	Collaborative culling
Stalking	Deer shooting	Animal selection
Shot Placement	Reaction and Follow up	Dealing with injured deer
Use of Dogs	Dealing with RTAs	Carcass handling
Gralloching	Extraction and transport	Carcass inspection
Supply of venison	Venison processing	Venison marketing
Larder design	Larder protocol	HACCP
Larder waste disposal	Trophy preparation	Firearms Safety
Rifles and Ammunition	Zeroing	Marksmanship
Transportation and storage	Shotguns	Deer Stalking Equipment
Optical Equipment	Communications	Training and Qualifications

Where can I find the guides?

On the DI website – www.thedeerinitiative.co.uk. The website has the advantage that it can be continually and easily updated. It is nowadays accessible to most people. Pdfs will be available for download.

Can I help?

- Contribute material
 - **as a writer/commentator.** Many writers have already been identified. Together with the Project Officer, writers are expected to produce a very close to final draft. That draft is then submitted to member organisations for comment, then is approved by the core group and published (it can be changed at any time)
 - Individuals can comment at any time through their organisations or via e-mail to DI.
 - **By supplying images.** Suitable images are always required. If you have any that you would like to contribute images they would be gratefully accepted. Many of the most useful images may not at first appear to be so. Any image that shows some detail of wild deer and their management could be of interest. High quality digital images are preferable but I suspect that there are huge numbers of suitable images on negative and slide, I can arrange to have these scanned. The images will only be used for the guides and they can be attributed to you if you wish.
- Make comments through:
 - member organisations
 - in person via DI e-mail

Future Projects

In Scotland the Best practice Project is committed to producing a hard copy folder of their guides.

In England and Wales the folder will be the subject of a separately funded project, the details of which are yet to be considered.

Under consideration is how the guides might lead to events designed to demonstrate, or train practitioners in, aspects of Best Practice.

Meat hygiene courses, deer larder demos and the TB sampling event which Andy Paterson will outline later are the type of events that are envisaged.

Speaker's biography

Jamie Cordery has been a professional stalker Sussex and Scotland and has 21 years training in wildlife management, specialising in deer (including running a full time deer course at Sparsholt College). He was a co founder of the DSC scheme and is Chair of the Quality Assurance Group for DMQ.

He has been DLO for the DI South East region since January 2006 and part of the job is as Best Practice project officer.