

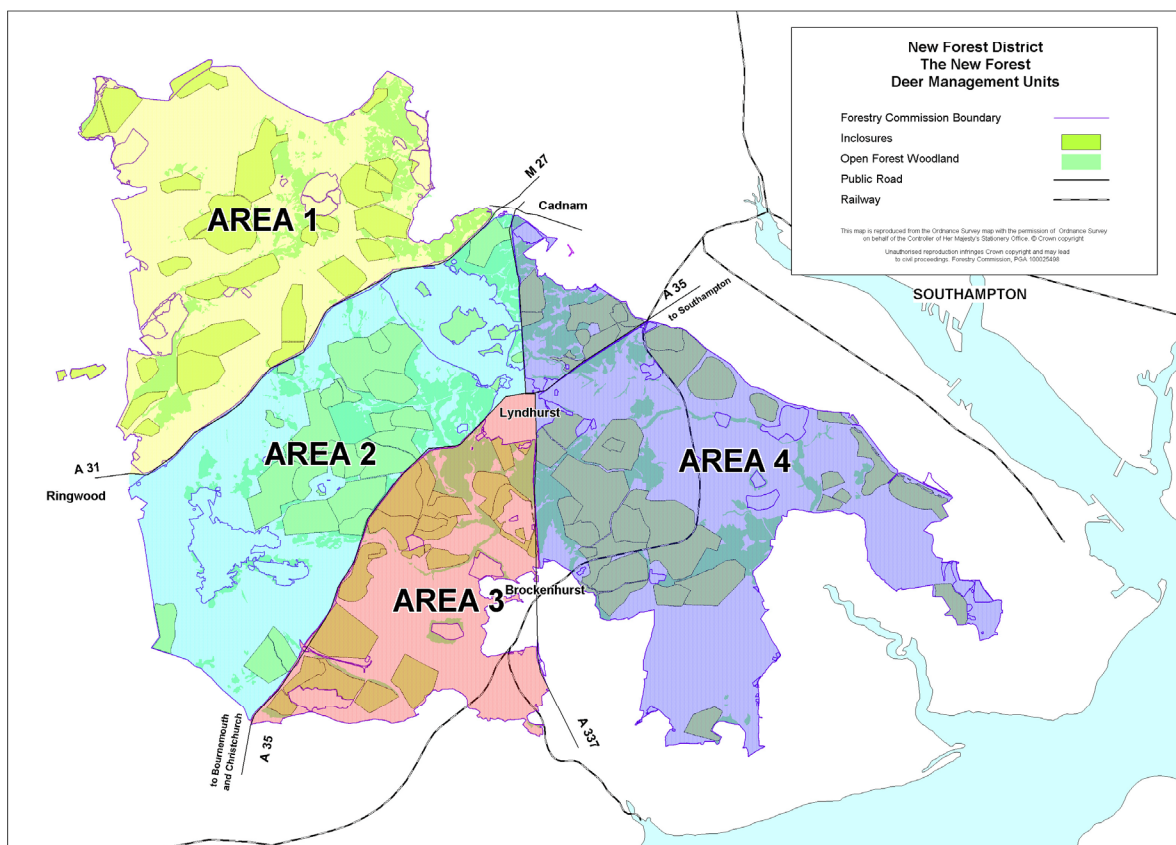
NEW FOREST DISTRICT DEER MANAGEMENT PLAN

Introduction

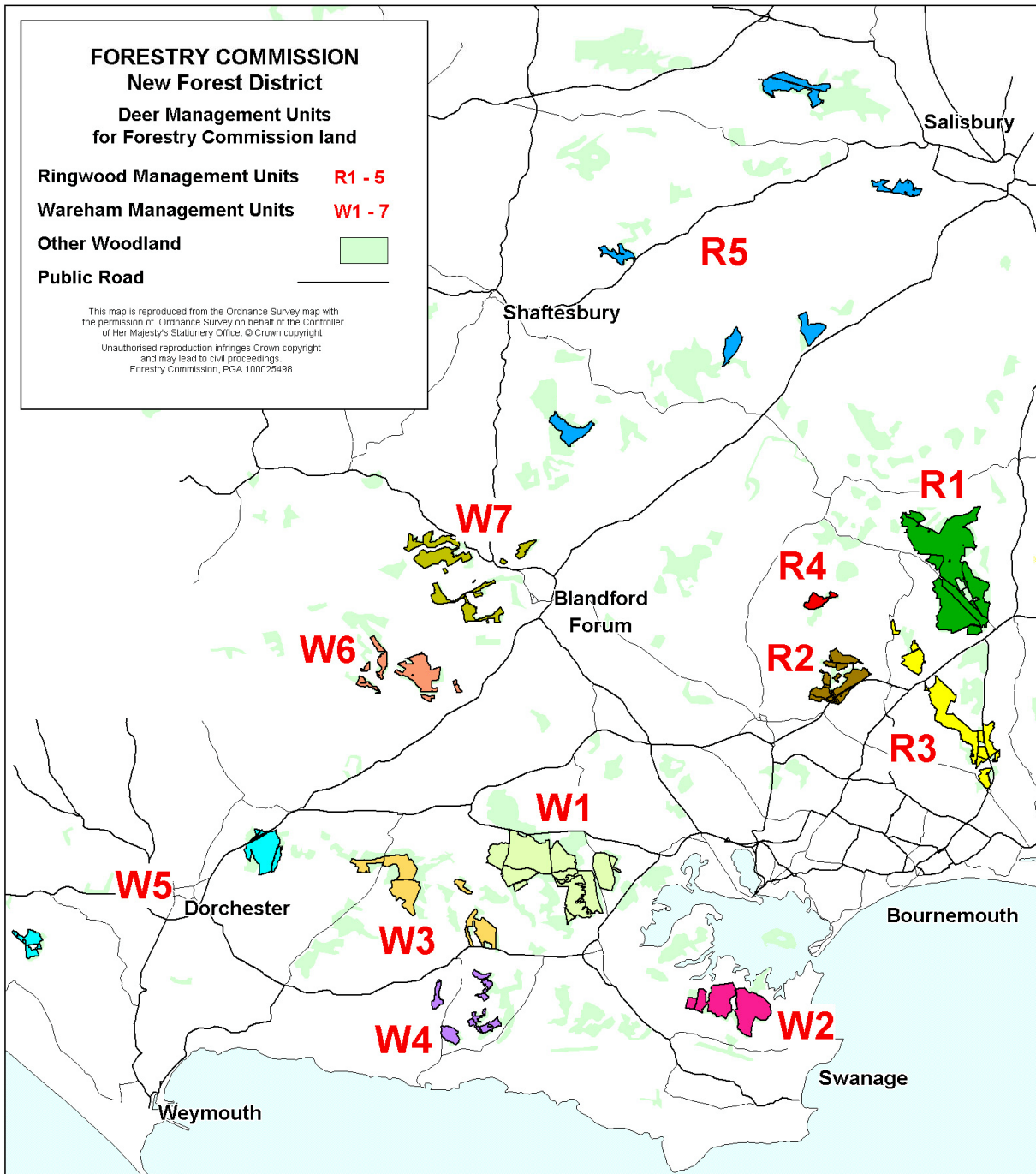
This section of the New Forest District Management plan lays out the Forest District's policy in relation to the management of deer. Where appropriate, particularly in the Crown Lands of the New Forest, our land will be divided into deer management units along major physical boundaries which present some restriction to regular deer movement. These units enable the effective management of sub-populations that can accommodate differing management objectives and priorities. Where any element of the plan relates only to one sub-section of the District then this will be stated in the text

Deer management on the Crown Lands has been guided by a report commissioned before the commencement of the previous management plan (Putman and Langbein 1999) and reviewed by a later report updating the situation (Langbein 2005). No such independent reports have been produced for Dorset or south Wiltshire but the same general guidelines will be followed.

Deer Management Units



- Area 1** The land lying to the north and west of the A 31 road
- Area 2** The land between the A 31 and A 35 roads
- Area 3** The land between the A 35 and A 337 roads
- Area 4** the land lying to the east of the A 337



Ringwood

- Area R 1** Ringwood Forest north, Ashley Heath and Somerley
- Area R 2** Uddens, Cannon Hill, Whitesheet, Bedborough and West Moors
- Area R 3** Hurn, Sopley, Pithouse and Ramsdown
- Area R 4** Horton Wood and Queens Copse
- Area R 5** Hare Warren, Grovely, Wardour, Ashmore, Stonedown and Vernditch

Wareham

- Area W 1** Wareham Forest and Gore Heath
- Area W 2** Wytch Heath, Rempstone Heath and Newton Heath
- Area W 3** Moreton Forest, Hethfelton Wood and Gallows Hill
- Area W 4** Coombe Wood, Burngate Wood, Home Farm, High Wood and Cole Wood
- Area W 5** Puddletown Forest and Hardy's Monument
- Area W 6** Milton Abbas and Whatcombe
- Area W 7** Broadley Wood, Field Grove, Hangings, Bonsley Wood, Shillingstone Hill, Norton Wood and France Down

Management Objectives

There are six species of deer found in the wild in the United Kingdom and all of these have been recorded at various times in the Forest District. Further detail about their current status can be found in the species accounts section of the Plan.

Deer, especially native species, are an important and valued component of the woodland ecosystem and are a valued part of our natural heritage.

The Government's aim for the management of deer in England is:

To maintain a well-managed and healthy deer population, which presents no threat to long term environmental, social, or economic sustainability, and to limit, as far as practical, further spread of recently introduced species.

Whilst it is recognised that too many deer can have a damaging effect on certain sensitive habitats and can restrict tree establishment on both restock sites and areas identified for natural regeneration, it is equally recognised that some habitats are improved and maintained by deer activity. With the general health of the deer an important consideration, management will seek to strike a balance whereby the environment can thrive together with a healthy deer population. As a result population densities may vary from place to place in response to anticipated environmental damage, to help create and maintain a diversity of habitats, to provide a variety of opportunities for the public to view deer and in response to other management objectives.

The plan relates principally to the four main deer species (Fallow, Roe, Sika and Red deer) that will be managed by the Forestry Commission. Whilst it is recognised they are not all native the issues surrounding introduced versus native species is complex, what is clear is that all species have a place on the FC estate. The Forest District will make every effort to limit the further spread of Muntjac and Chinese Water Deer, which are very much considered as undesirable exotics.

Throughout the implementation of the plan the Forestry Commission is committed to:

- **Conserving and enhancing native bio-diversity.**
- **Supporting and helping to co-ordinate collaborative working that facilitates the management of deer at a landscape scale.**
- **Raising public awareness**
- **Practising exemplary management of deer including the processing of venison.**

There is a range of documents that give further detail to the management of deer across the Forestry Commission estate or have been referred to in the completion of this plan; these are listed below. In the case of the New Forest and certain parts of Dorset which are covered by Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) management plans, the impact of deer on the protected environments is an issue which must be taken into account when setting population levels.

References

The sustainable management of wild deer populations in England: An Action Plan

Deer and their Management in the New Forest (R J Putman and J Langbein 1999)

Deer Management Plan for the New Forest 2000 – 2005

Internal Review of the Deer Management Plan (2000 – 2005) for the New Forest Crown Lands (M Noble 2005)

External Review of the Deer Management Plan 2000 – 2005 (J Langbein 2005)

Deer Management Plan for Dorset and south Wiltshire (2000 – 2005)

The Roe Deer of Cranbourne Chase

New Forest Roe Deer (John K Fawcett 2003)

History and Distribution of Deer in Dorset

Study on Genetics of Red and Sika

New Forest Meadow Grazing Plans

Forestry Commission Damage Assessment Methods

Forestry Commission's Wild Venison Standards: OGB5 Part

Forestry Commission Operational Guidance Note: OGB5 Deer Management

Forestry Commission Operational Guidance Note: OGB 14 Using Firearms

United Kingdom Woodland Assurance Scheme (UKWAS)

Dee Act (1991) HMSO; ISBN 010545915

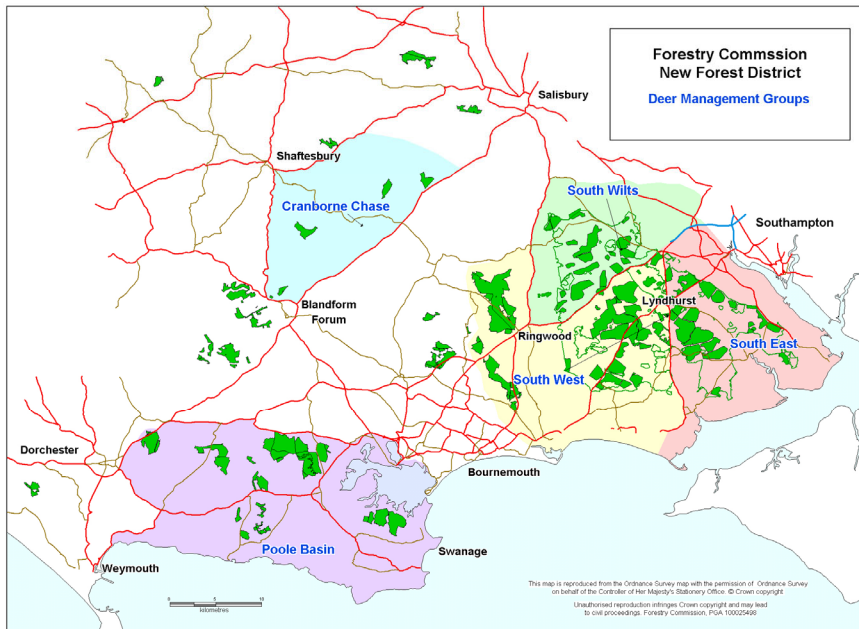
Stakeholder Engagement & Information

Deer Management Groups

Deer do not respect man made boundaries and consequently it is important that liaison should take place between landowners and managers throughout as much as possible of the range that the deer occupy. The Forestry Commission will support groups that aim to facilitate this communication and will provide a member of staff to represent its interests on each group where appropriate.

At present the following Deer Management Groups which incorporate Forestry Commission administered land are in existence:-

- South East Wilts
- New Forest South West
- New Forest South East
- Poole Basin
- Cranborne Chase



Consultation with Other Interested Parties

A group of stakeholders already consults with the Forestry Commission to guide the production of its Deer Management Plan on the Crown Lands. It is proposed that this arrangement should continue, with meetings organised on an annual basis. At present no such system operates across the wider Forest District.

Deer and the Public

The work of educating the public in matters relating to deer will continue to be delivered through a variety of mediums including:

- Ranger and Keeper lead education events, walks and talks.
- On site interpretative information and viewing areas at key locations including Bolderwood viewing platform, Ober Heath and Aldridgehill information panels and Queens Meadow hide.
- Press releases and publications.

Fallow Deer (*Dama dama*)

Fallow Deer are today very widely distributed throughout most counties of England, as well as parts of Scotland and Wales, with a total population estimated at over 100,000 head (Harris *et al.*, 1995). Regionally they are well represented with substantial herds throughout most parts of Hampshire, Dorset and Wiltshire. As such, fallow deer are not threatened in terms of their conservation. Nevertheless they are significantly important in terms of their historical importance and public interest as well as being very much part of the ecosystem. Fallow are traditionally regarded as a herding species that favours mature deciduous woodland with an established understorey. Whilst they may feed within the woodland cover, particularly at the time of the autumn mast crop, or over winter when the diet includes a greater proportion of woody browse, they are not in practice dependent on the woodland's food supplies. Fallow favour open land for feeding either on adjacent agricultural land or within woodland clearings, grassy rides and open forest habitats.



Crown Lands

Fallow can be found throughout the Crown Lands and are the most numerous of the species found there. Although not a native species they have been present since Norman times and have the longest continuous lineage of any of the deer species in the forest, indeed in the county. The current policy is to maintain a higher population of Fallow than for any other of the species.

The population level has varied considerably over the years from a recorded maximum of somewhere in excess of **9000** head in the year 1673 to a minimum of **200** in 1900. There is an unbroken set of data since the year 1960 and this indicates that the average annual visual census for the last 45 years is **1039**. Since the year 2000 a correction factor to the visual census has been applied. As an example, this shows that although the visual census for the year 2004 suggested a population of **1103** head, the corrected population for the year was in fact **1728** head; reflecting the fact that the 'visible' population as counted would not be capable of sustaining the known losses (over 700) that occurred during the following year without substantial decline in the next census.

The previous deer plan (2000 – 2005) proposed the reduction of the herd from around 2000 to a corrected census figure of between 1100 and 1300. Whilst this has not been achieved across the forest as a whole the reduction in the fallow herd compared to previous decades, combined with other management practices, has seen improvements to bio-diversity and tree regeneration within many of the Inclosures that were previously seen to be limited by over grazing. This coupled with the health of the deer and a population that is largely seen as being 'under control' has led to a modest relaxation in the target populations for three of the management areas. Only in Area 3, the smallest management area, are targets maintained at the previous level to accommodate higher numbers of red deer in this area.

The detailed breakdown is as follows :- (based on corrected census figures)

Area NF 1	300 - 350 head of which c. 80 should be adult and yearling males
Area NF 2	375 - 425 head of which c. 105 should be adult and yearling males
Area NF 3	250 - 300 head of which c. 80 should be adult and yearling males
Area NF 4	275 - 325 head of which c. 80 should be adult and yearling males

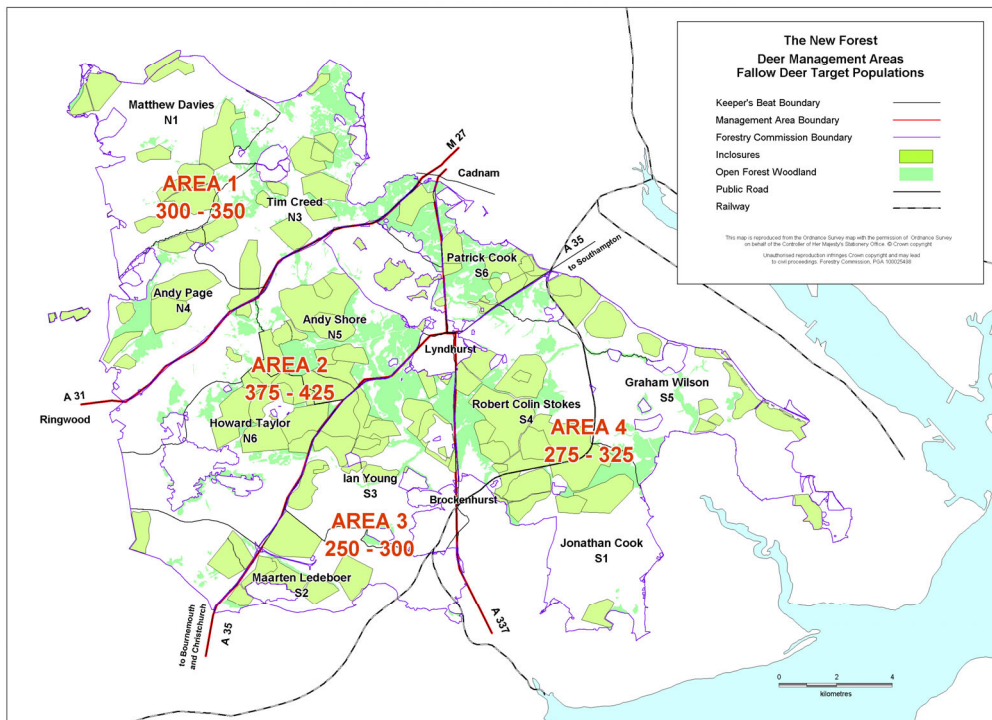
Total **1200 – 1400**

Management of the herd will need to take account of fluctuations in populations caused by seasonal immigration, emigration and mortality. It will be necessary to have sufficient flexibility to enable adjustment of cull targets to accommodate changing conditions, migration of deer and site-specific problems.

Higher deer numbers will be maintained around Queens Meadow and Bolderwood to cater for the desire of the general public to view deer in their natural surroundings. The fields at New Park will need to be considered in conjunction with Queens Meadow to ensure that an adequate number of good bucks remain in the New Park in relation to the does at Queens Meadow. Similarly a high proportion of quality mature bucks will be retained in the fields at Bolderwood where the herd will be fed seasonally to attract them to the public viewing area.

All four of the major colour varieties of Fallow deer are found in the New Forest. Head Keepers will ensure that a representative sample of each will be retained when planning culling operations.

Every effort will be made to reduce the numbers of Fallow deer on S1 beat to support the holding of a viable Sika population in this area.

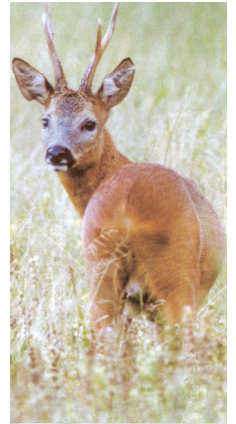


Status in Dorset and south Wiltshire

Fallow are concentrated around the woodlands of Cranborne Chase where they have been managed for several centuries for food and sport and are seldom seen outside this core area. Historic population records indicate that there were many more Fallow present on the Chase in days gone by and a figure in excess of **5,000** was quoted for 1816. The population today is believed to be in the hundreds. The Forestry Commission administers only a part of the woodland area (DMU R5) and management is made more difficult as the daily and seasonal movements of the deer are extensive. Consistent with our overall management aims every opportunity will be taken to cull Fallow within the legal season. Outside the 'core' area all Fallow will be culled to restrict the expansion of their range.

Roe Deer (*Capreolus capreolus*)

As one of the two truly native, albeit re-colonised, species of deer Roe have an important place in the Forest's ecosystem and are an important part of our native fauna. Population levels are dictated more by the suitability of habitat, herb rich and dense scrub layer, rather than overall forest cover. They are a browsing species living as individuals or small family groups favouring a diverse mix of scrub and grass habitat, often overlapping adjacent agricultural land, in preference to the open heathland and grazed pasture woodland. With limited home ranges compared to the other species their management requires a different approach that is far more site specific. Population densities vary considerably across the Forest District hence the need for management intervention is far more localised.



Crown Lands

Population numbers of Roe are notoriously difficult to assess and the direct visual census may miss a lot of animals. However by using a standard repeatable method over many years we have built up a body of useful, comparable data. This suggests that over the last 45 years, numbers have ranged widely from a minimum of **211** in the year 1960 to a maximum of **620** in the year 1970. In more recent years, numbers have increased steadily each year, from **265** in 1998 to **468** in 2005.

The previous deer plan (2000 – 2005) proposed no target cull for Roe in recognition of the high natural mortality on the Crown Lands but favoured targeted local control in response to anticipated damage to tree regeneration or other conservation interests. The plan proposed a forest wide cull should numbers rise above 400.

Recognising the native status of Roe, management will ensure that they are well represented in each of the four management areas. A minimum population of 400 head will be retained on the Crown Lands. In the event that census numbers should ever indicate that numbers have fallen to 400 [+/- 10% (360 – 440)] culling will be reduced to minimal levels and only as required for welfare reasons or to reduce unacceptable levels of damage in particular, very local, areas.

The policy to maintain 400 head across the forest will not prevent keeping lower densities in some Inclosures, or parts of, in order to protect young trees or maintain a diverse habitat. Culling practices will be agreed, and recorded, through liaison between the Head and Beat Keeper at the Inclosure level. Where appropriate other management practices, such as the positioning of willow fraying whips on restock sites, will be used to reduce damage to susceptible crops.

It is accepted that Roe populations will locally fluctuate in the future in response to habitat change. Management will tolerate increases in those Inclosures that become more favourable whilst recognising densities may drop elsewhere in response to Inclosures being thrown open to grazing stock. Where regeneration is prolific and the habitat suitable for sustaining higher densities of Roe, management will favour a restrained and graduated response in preference to heavy destabilising levels of culling.

Dorset and south Wiltshire

Milton Abbas in central Dorset (DMU W6) was the site of the initial reintroduction of Roe into southern England in the year 1800. Roe are now widely distributed throughout the area although population levels are noticeably lower in those woodlands with extensive areas of acid soils such as Ringwood and parts of Wareham. No overall population figures are available but culling levels will be based on the likelihood of environmental or crop damage occurring. Numbers of Roe culled annually since 1998 have averaged **250** (range **200 – 367**) per year.

Red Deer (*Cervus elaphus*)

As one of the two native species present in the Forest District, the maintenance of a viable population of Red deer is of considerable importance. Red have had a varied history here, with various extinction's and re-introductions going back over several hundred years. More recently, by the middle part of last century they were regarded as functionally extinct as a local breeding species until another introduction in 1962 kick-started the population back into life. Since then numbers have gradually increased until today when there is a satisfactory breeding population ranging from the Avon valley in the west to Brockenhurst in the east. Although there are ancient records from the year 1257 of Red deer being present in both Purbeck and Cranborne, there are no populations of Red deer on Forestry Commission land within these areas today.



Crown Lands

The previous deer plan (2000 – 2005) proposed maintaining a population around 100 head, which was largely achieved until the spring of 2005 when numbers increased significantly to 183. This was thought to be due to an increase in deer that were not normally resident on the forest remaining during the spring and summer; perhaps partly attributed to the change in management of New Park Farm combined with efforts to fence them off feeding grounds in private ownership. It is hoped that the establishment of deer lawns created during the previous plan will help to hold deer on the forest.

The main management focus will be to maintain a resident population in Area's 3 and 2, whilst discouraging the spread into Area's 4 and 1 where there is a potential for hybridisation with sika. The culling of red deer in Area 4 will be carefully considered in relation to the risk of hybridisation and other alternative options before any action is taken. There will be a presumption against culling red stags in Area 4, except in the rutting period between mid September to late November. Hinds will be taken as a matter of course in season to avoid the risk of hybridisation with sika.

Management will continue to seek to hold the resident population on the forest to avoid unacceptable damage on surrounding agricultural land by:

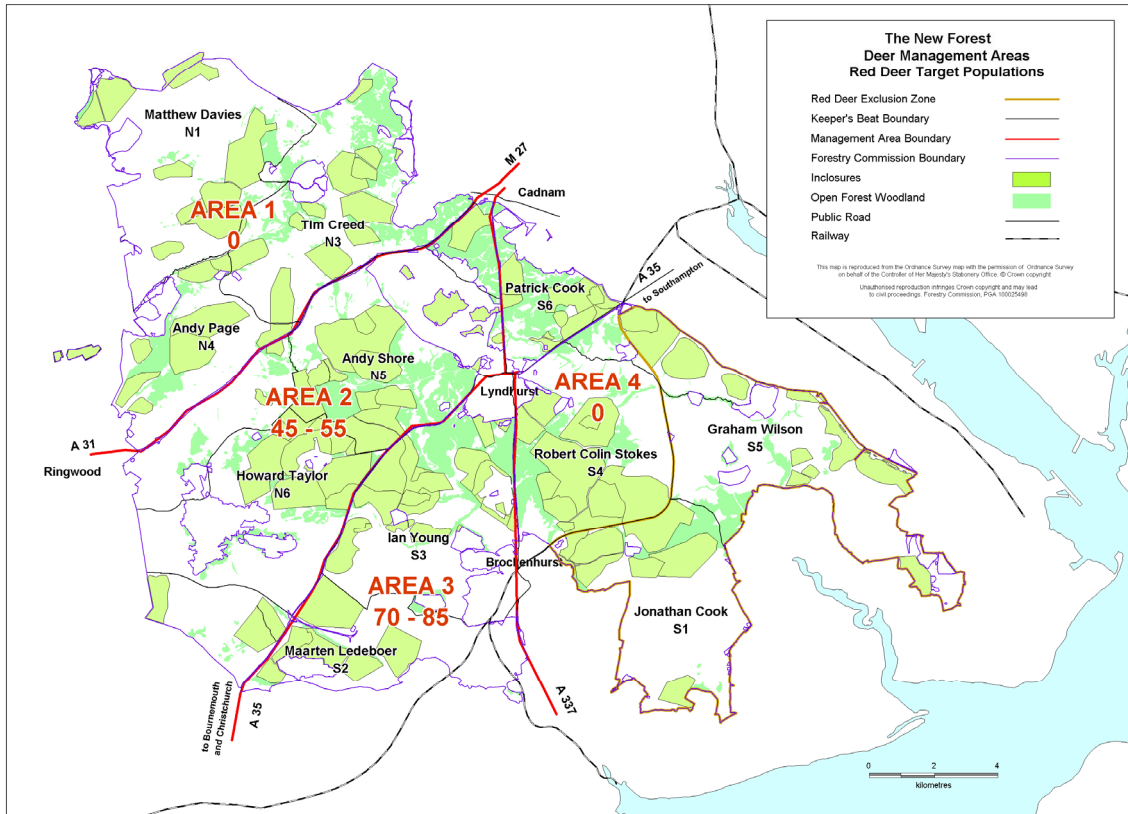
- Maintaining deer lawns in Poundhill, Aldridge Hill and Hurst Hill.
- Queens Meadow will continue to be managed to enhance the quality of the grazing
- Working in close liaison with Show Society on the management of New Park.
- Focusing on Harvestslade, Backley and Bratley as the core range for Area 2.
- Managing the public to avoid disturbance during the rut.

In the past many of the finest stags have been culled when damaging farmland and forestry interests off the Crown Lands. The Forestry Commissions policy of working with the DMG's to encourage more selective culling of the older stags will continue with the cull on the Crown lands focused on the hinds and surplus young males whilst maintaining a range of ages among older stags.

The overall maximum spring population level for the Crown Lands of the New Forest will be **180** head allocated as follows: -

Area NF 1	Nil
Area NF 2	45 - 55 hinds and calves plus 5 - 15 stags and yearling males
Area NF 3	70 - 85 hinds and calves plus 5 - 25 stags and yearling males
Area NF 4	Nil
Total	125 - 180

The wide target range for stag numbers is intended to accommodate the fact that in some years stags may not leave the Forest to their summer ranges until after the Spring count.



(Note: numbers refer to hinds & followers only)

Dorset and south Wiltshire

Occasion Red deer (usually stags) from the New Forest are found in woods on the eastern edge of DMU R3 (Hurn Forest). Large stags in that area may be an important part of the herd composition for the New Forest so culling will not be undertaken unless there is an environmental or social need.

Sika Deer (*Cervus nippon*)

Sika are not native to the UK and were introduced a little over 100 years ago on Brownsea Island (1896) and into the Beaulieu Estate (1900). There are two principal populations within the Forest District, one in the Poole basin and another in the SE corner of the New Forest. They are an accepted established species with the key issue surrounding Sika being the risk of hybridisation with the native Red deer. Sika favour a mix of heathland and coniferous woodland, typically using the forest cover by day as they are sensitive to human disturbance, and the open heath and agricultural land at night in search of suitable forage.

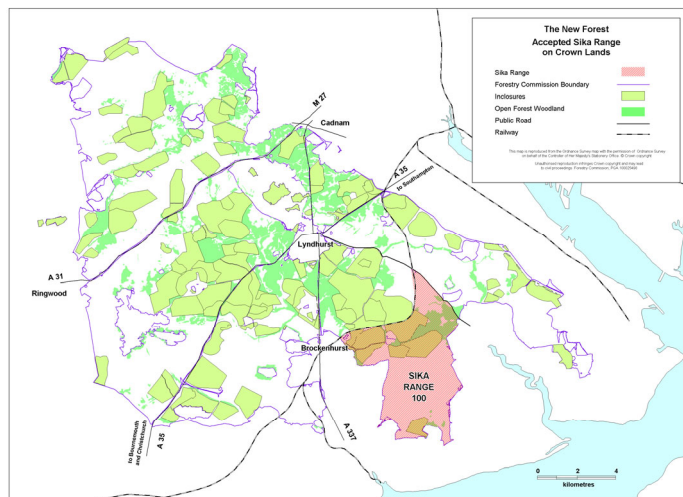


Crown Lands

Recent DNA analysis completed by Bournemouth University (Diaz et al., in press) indicates that the Sika population is one of the purest in the UK, indeed anywhere in Europe. Management focus will be to maintain a viable breeding population, in liaison with neighbouring estates, whilst maintaining the genetic integrity of the population through minimising any risk of hybridisation with neighbouring Red deer populations.

A Sika herd of no more than **100** head will be sustained on the Crown Lands and will be confined by culling to the area of S1 beat and that part of S5 south of the B3056 road. No Sika will be tolerated on any of the other three management areas on the Crown Lands and will be shot on sight in due season.

In recognition of the importance and the size of the population on the Crown Lands the Forestry Commission will work closely with the SE Deer Management Group in order to gain a better understanding of the overall population.



Dorset and south Wiltshire

The Poole basin herd extends over many land ownerships with some animals being found on Forestry Commission managed land. The FC spring visual census of the year 1990 recorded **651** animals and in the year 2002 the number was **260**. Within the FC managed land Sika populations have decreased however there is a considerable annual immigration from the high populations on adjoining private land.

The Poole Basin and Purbeck Sika (Management Areas W1– W5) will be maintained by culling. Elsewhere attempts will be made to prevent their establishment by shooting on sight in due season. The average cull for the last 4 years was **160** head (range **97 – 206**).

Muntjac and Chinese Water Deer (*Muntiacus reevesi* and *Hydropotes inermis*)

Both Muntjac and Chinese Water Deer are introduced species. Whilst there have only been occasional sightings of CWD in the New Forest, believed to have escaped from a local wildlife centre, Muntjac have been on the increase. Whilst not figuring in the annual census 8 animals have been killed since 1999.

Across the Forest District as a whole no Muntjac or Chinese Water Deer will be tolerated on the FC estate and every effort will be made to shoot any known to be present. On welfare grounds every effort will be made not to shoot females when they are believed to have dependent young.

Culling Policy

The current legal requirements as laid down in the Deer Act 1991 will be strictly adhered to. Forest District staff will work to Operational Guidance Booklet 5: Deer Management and strive to demonstrate exemplary management of the deer population, its control and the subsequent processing of the carcasses for venison.

However the following additional local arrangements will be applied: -

- 1) There will be a presumption against the culling of deer on the Crown Lands during the month of October to avoid unnecessary disturbance during the rutting period of the larger deer species and in recognition of the fact that there will be larger numbers of the public watching deer at this time of year.
- 2) When culling female deer during the early part of the season i.e. November, every effort will be made to cull any dependant young before culling the mother.

Deer Census Techniques

As a basis for managing deer, a prime requirement is knowledge of the population size or alternatively some other indirect measure that equates to this. An example of the latter would be an ongoing repeatable assessment that could be attributed to the long term impact of deer on their environment.

On the Crown Lands there are recorded data on visual censuses going back as far as 1670 and over the last 20 years some detailed analyses of population structure have been made. For this reason the technique of a direct visual census in the spring, combined with a calculated correction factor where appropriate will continue to be the prime method of assessing deer numbers on the Crown Lands.

Head Keepers will be responsible for co-ordinating the individual censuses between mid March and mid April. These will include some simultaneous counts within each management area using Keepers from additional areas and volunteers where appropriate. Head Keepers will inform the relevant DMG or key adjacent land managers of these days and encourage them to participate in a similar visual census.

For the larger species of deer (fallow, red and sika) every effort will be made to sex and age the deer. All species and sexes will be counted as accurately as possible but it is accepted there is a higher degree of accuracy for the male Fallow, Red and Sika than any other population category. An annual correction factor will therefore be calculated and applied as appropriate, taking into account the cull, other known losses sustained over the previous year and observed changes in the census.

Roe census will be conducted on a beat by beat and Inclosure by Inclosure basis with at least one census day dedicated to the sole recording of Roe without the distraction of counting the larger species.

In Dorset with a far more fragmented land and woodland ownership the assessment of deer populations by the Forestry Commission alone has not proved to be effective or have any degree of reliability on which to base an annual cull. There will be no formal spring census in Dorset however in certain situations visual counts will be undertaken as a level indicator and to support assessment of the wider population when a co-ordinated approach is agreed through the DMG's or key adjacent land owners. The use of Thermal Imagery has been used in the past and this will continue as a cross check to field observations in certain woodland blocks.

Calculation of the Annual Cull

Whilst annual cull targets will be used as a tool to manage deer consistently towards a target population in the New Forest it should be recognised that these targets are less important than the resultant condition of the habitat and the deer themselves. Head Keepers will draw on a range of information when setting cull targets; these may include:

- computer modelling of the population
- field observations
- stakeholder feedback
- damage assessments
- the health of the deer

The detailed method for projecting populations and setting cull targets on the Crown Lands is set out in guidance note 'Deer Population Projection and Cull Targets'.

In Dorset culling levels have been based on the Wildlife Rangers ongoing observations and knowledge as well as the results of past management and damage potential. This method has largely been successful, with no major resource commitment to a formal census.

Cull targets across the Forest District may be reviewed during the period of the cull as required.

Permit Stalking

Permit-based deer stalking will be carried out where appropriate and under the direct supervision of a qualified Wildlife Ranger or Keeper. The basis for the permit stalking will be furtherance of the approved Forestry Commission cull and the shooting of trophies will not be the main driver for the operation.

Venison Production

An important by-product of deer culling is the production of high quality venison. To ensure the maintenance of this high quality, all meat destined for human consumption will be handled to the highest possible standard following, as a minimum, the guidelines laid down by the Forestry Commission's Wild Venison Standards handbook.

The waste by-products of venison production will be disposed of by one of the methods described in the Wild Venison Standard handbook.

Health, Safety and Training

All staff involved in shooting deer on Forestry Commission managed land will be trained to nationally recognised standards as detailed in OGB5 (Deer Management) and OGB14 (Using Firearms)

The principal method of managing health and safety of staff and the public will be through the FC's risk assessment process that will identify the risks, controls and monitoring systems to be deployed across the FD.

Road Traffic Accidents and Other Deaths

The Forestry Commission's policy on responding to incidents where deer have been injured on public roads within the New Forest District is set out below. For clarity, the policy is separated for incidents within the New Forest area from those occurring in Dorset.

Within the New Forest Perambulation:

1. If the RTA occurs on a public road within the perambulation then the FC would accept responsibility for dealing with it.
2. Keepers issued with a full Firearms Authority Card may respond to a request to despatch an injured deer on private land within the perambulation **provided they have written consent from the landowner*** and conduct the operation in accordance with the current risk assessment for "Use of Firearms".

Outside the New Forest Perambulation:

3. If the RTA occurred outside the perambulation and was known to be dead then we would politely decline any request to attend and suggest that the District Council could deal with it.
4. If the RTA occurred outside the perambulation and was known to be injured, alive, and **still on the verge of the public highway**, then we would only attend at the request of the Police, and **only when within 2 miles** of the perambulation boundary. We would request Police presence at these incidents. In the spirit of joint co-operation with the Police, the FC will not charge for this work.
5. Any injured deer that has moved on to private land outside the perambulation **must not** be dealt with by Forestry Commission staff.

* Landowner Permission

A standard letter (adapted from OGB14 "Using Firearms" and copy attached) will be issued to Keepers. Before dealing with any injured deer on private land, the landowner must be asked to sign this letter and he/she be given a copy for his/her retention. For locations where Keepers have previous experience of dealing with these incidents, and in anticipation of future incidents, a signed letter can be obtained from the landowner in advance to cover a nominated period of time.

Incidents within Dorset

For land immediately adjacent to FC land:

6. If the RTA occurs on a public road adjacent to FC land then the FC would accept responsibility for dealing with it.

For land not adjacent to FC land:

7. If the RTA occurred on a public road away from FC land and was known to be dead then we would politely decline any request to attend and suggest that the District Council deal with it.

8. If the RTA occurred away from FC land and was known to be injured, alive, and **still on the verge of the public highway**, then we would only attend at the request of the Police, and
9. **only within a beat area agreed with the Police**. We would request Police presence at these incidents. In the spirit of joint co-operation with the Police, the FC will not charge for this work.
10. Any injured deer that has moved on to private land away from the public highway **must not** be dealt with by Forestry Commission staff.

Beat Areas will be agreed between the Wildlife Rangers and Wildlife Liaison Officer of the Dorset Constabulary.

Deer carcasses resulting from road accidents or otherwise found dead will not be allowed to enter the human food chain. However the importance of dead ungulates to the woodland ecosystem is such that advantage should be taken of these opportunities to provide a food source for the forest's major scavengers. Such carcasses can be left where found if the location is not too public or relocated to a more appropriate place within the forest.

Support will be given to the National Deer Collisions project administered by the Deer Initiative in recording all deer RTA's.

Monitoring

The main aim of the plan is to ensure that deer populations remain healthy and in balance with their environment. In the past too many monitoring schemes were proposed, resulting in varying degrees of success due to the inconsistency of application and lack of relevance to the impact of deer on the environment.

Future monitoring will focus on:

- **The health of the deer.**
- **The impact of deer on the environment**

The Health of the Deer will be monitored through:

1. Recording of cull information: Species, sex, age-class, weight, pregnancy etc.
2. Continuation of the spring census on the Crown Lands.

The Impact of deer on the environment will be monitored through:

1. Monitoring of Crop Damage in young plantations attributed to deer, using the 'nearest neighbour' method.
2. Monitoring of damage to natural regeneration attributed to deer. (The plan intends to use a technique currently being developed by Forest Research although it is untested in the Forest District at the present time)

In addition the Forestry Commission will draw on other information when reviewing this plan which will include:

- Field observations by FC staff (Ranger/Keeper diaries, beat reviews etc).
- Field observations from stakeholders (DMG's and other interested parties).
- Records of Pony trespass to Inclosures on the Crown Lands.
- Contrast in habitat development within and outside deer exclosure plots located on key sites.

Other information that maybe used to inform but has limited value in terms of direct impact associated with deer includes:

- Thermal imaging records for populations in Dorset woodlands.
- Fixed point photography to monitor habitat change.
- Butterfly transects.



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