

# SGA Deer Vision

## The 10 years ahead

‘valuing Scotland’s national resource’



## The Scottish Gamekeepers Association

### **The Vision:**

1. By 2030, the SGA membership, as practitioners managing Scotland’s deer in all environments, will have helped to achieve sustainable deer management so as to contribute to:

- A high quality, resilient environment
- A more cost effective deer management approach for Scotland, enhanced local opportunity and greater provision of high quality, low carbon, food
- Enhanced social well-being

Wild deer management will be more inclusive than today, carried out by a wider range of local, trained managers assisted by clear objectives, communicated in plain English.

### **Principles:**

Wild deer of all species should be managed through their range in a way that:

- promotes deer welfare
- integrates deer management and other land use objectives
- uses proper two-way dialogue between public and private interests to achieve management objectives founded on shared knowledge, sourced externally of SNH where necessary
- uses appropriate timescales for delivery, underpinned by shared knowledge
- involves communication with relevant interests, including producers of the end venison product, in a manner easily understood

- Places value on the practical knowledge and input of experienced practitioners in the field and uses sound science to inform greater understanding

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### **Achieving a high quality, resilient environment**

The SGA Deer Vision outlines practical steps to

- Contribute to healthy ecosystems and to enhance biodiversity
- Manage designated sites using objective-focussed, site-by-site habitat assessments (sourced independently of SNH, where appropriate) to inform management activity
- Establish an all-herbivore approach to habitat assessment which includes deer, sheep, hares and rabbits, voles, goats, cattle and wild boar in order to target management activity appropriately
- Identify and prioritise emerging sites for assessment and management in areas not covered by deer management groups including state-owned land, council ground, town/urban green space
- Help qualify impacts of climate change and prioritise accordingly
- Minimise further spread of non-native deer species and wild boar
- Safeguard the welfare of all species of wild deer: achieved through a revision of current ‘first resort’ policies of night shooting and the reliance on out-of-season control licences. Seek clarity on the future use of night vision and thermal imaging equipment in deer control
- Conserve and enhance the distinct identity, diverse character and special qualities of Scotland’s landscapes, whilst cementing the cultural heritage value of working land

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### **Sustainable Economic Development**

The SGA Deer Vision outlines practical steps to

- Increase economic opportunities associated with wild deer by utilising skills of local, trained, recreational deer managers managing the resource in their communities through supervised pilot schemes
- (The SGA, through its membership, and partners will provide the skills, training, knowledge and competency required to deliver deer management as an integral part of Scotland’s natural resources)
- Minimise the economic costs attributable to wild deer by investing in community larders to encourage local management, the growth of domestic venison markets and associated employment and opportunities
- Explore modern deer fencing technology
- Open up more public land to local, trained recreational deer managers and review the cost effectiveness of pay-per-kill deer management on state-owned land
- Contribute to the social and economic development of communities by focusing on local management skills, competency training and the provision of high quality, healthy wild food within those communities
- Reduce further the need to import New Zealand venison for domestic consumption by appreciating better - and wisely using- Scotland’s undervalued national resource
- Safeguard and increase current employment associated with deer and their management

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### **Enhanced social well-being**

The SGA Deer Vision outlines practical steps to

- Contribute to a safe and healthy environment for people and deer through better road and verge design, speed controls and safe wildlife passes
- Increase participation in management of wild deer
- Increase tourism/photographic/educational opportunities for the public to enjoy and learn about deer and their environments, from high top, to city, to sea
- Promote venison as a national resource to be enjoyed by all
- Improve public education on all aspects of deer management

### **Contributing to all objectives**

The SGA Deer Vision outlines practical steps to

- Establish a shared, trusted knowledge base (including external, independent sources) to support local action which takes account of, and values, local knowledge
- Develop effective frameworks for sustainable deer management
- Raise awareness and understanding of wild deer of all species, their environment and their management

***In Summary, the SGA Deer Vision will mean:***

***enhanced biodiversity and environmental resilience, lower food miles, improved animal welfare, greater local employment and opportunity, more cost effective deer management for the Scottish tax payer and increased public awareness of the value of deer to Scotland's landscapes and communities.***

**About us:** The Scottish Gamekeepers Association represents deer management professionals who have culled close to a million deer of all species in Scotland in the last decade, in the highlands, lowlands, in forestry, on farmland, around towns and on the edges of our cities. These men and women have many centuries of knowledge and practical experience of how to manage deer in their environments. Their work spans over 7 million hectares. This is their vision of how they would like to see deer managed in Scotland.

Next: For an explanation of how we get there, please read: SGA Deer Vision Booklet