

Birse Parish Deer Management Group (BP DMG)

REPORT ON DEER MANAGEMENT 2014-15

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BIRSE PARISH DEER MANAGEMENT GROUP

Report on Deer Management 2014-15¹

Introduction

The Birse Parish Deer Management Group (BP DMG) involves all the properties over 100 ha within the DMG area. The members are Ballogie, Finzean and Birse Estates, Birse Community Trust (BCT), Balfour Estate and the Shannel.

The DMG area covers the civil parish of Birse and the adjoining Carlogie area, as outlined on the map on the next page. The DMG area is approximately 13,382 hectares or 33,000 acres.

The DMG is currently implementing the Birse Parish Deer Management Plan 2014-17. The production of this annual cull report is a part of the Plan. The purpose of the report is to inform BP DMG discussions about:

- (a) the DMG's red and roe deer culls in the previous year (2014-15);
- (b) the DMG's red and roe deer cull targets in the coming year (2015-16)

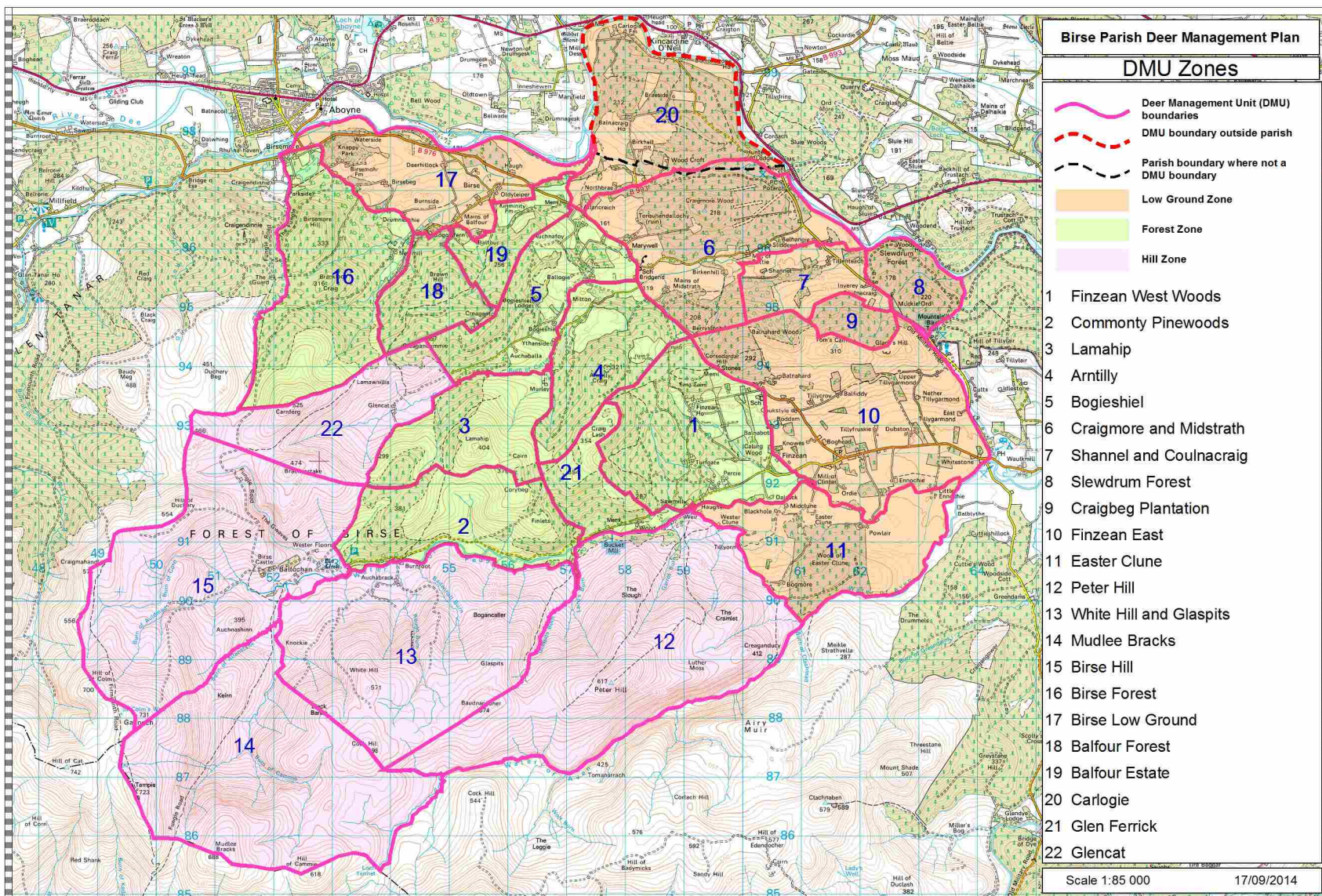
The Deer Management Plan, annual reports on 2012-13 and 2013-14, and other BP DMG papers are on the Birse Community Trust website at:

<http://www.birsecommunitytrust.org.uk/Local%20Notice%20Board/rep4Other.html>

The DMG area is divided into 22 Deer Management Units (DMUs), as shown on the map on the next page. The DMUs are allocated to one of three zones, depending on their character (low ground, forest, hill). There are:-

- 5 hill DMUs covering 5,546 ha (c.40% of DMG area)(average c.1,100 ha ea.)
- 9 forest DMUs covering 3,929 ha (c.30% of DMG area)(average c.450 ha ea)
- 8 low ground DMUs covering 3,907 ha (c.30% of DMG area)(av. c.500 ha ea)

¹ Written by Robin Callander, BCT



PART ONE - DESCRIPTION OF THE CULL IN 2014-15

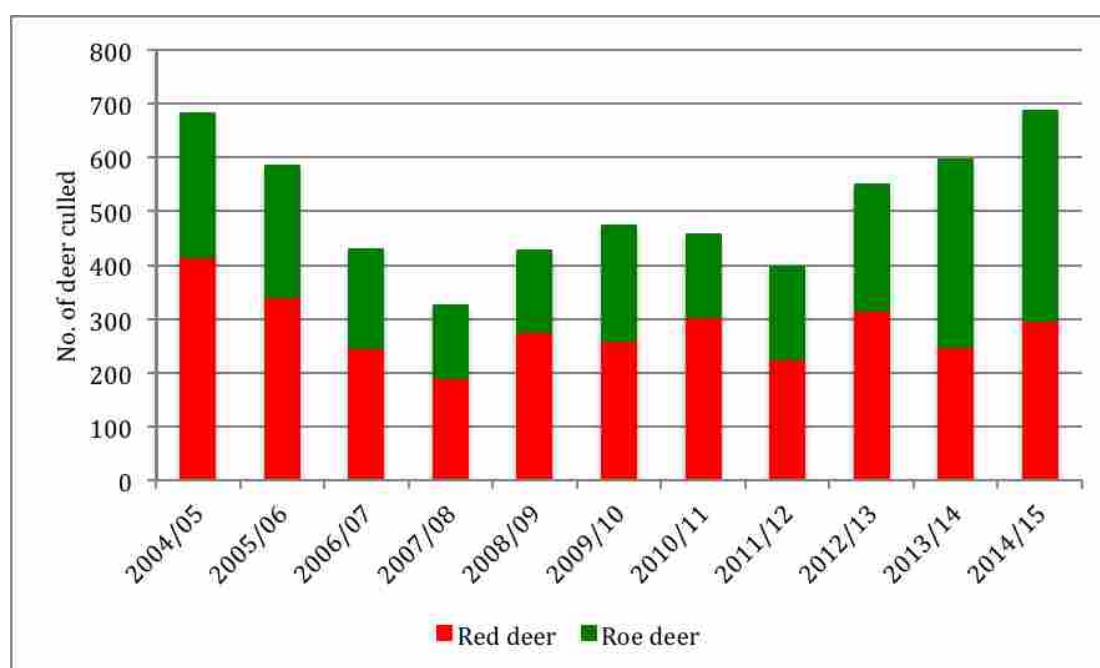
1 Overall Total Culls

The total red and roe culls in the DMG area in 2014-15 are shown in Table 1 and Figure 1 below. The contributions of the six DMG Members to the total red and roe culls are shown in Table 2 on the next page. Fig.2 then shows the patterns of the annual culls by the four main DMG Members.

Table 1: Total Culls of Red and Roe Deer

	RED	ROE	Total Cull	Red : Roe %
2004-05	415	267	682	61 : 39
2005-06	340	245	585	58 : 42
2006-07	246	184	430	57 : 43
2007-08	191	133	324	59 : 41
2008-09	276	150	426	65 : 35
2009-10	260	212	472	55 : 45
2010-11	304	152	456	67 : 33
2011-12	226	171	397	57 : 43
2012-13	315	234	549	57 : 43
2013-14	248	347	595	42 : 58
2014-15	300	390	690	43 : 57

Figure 1: Total Culls of Red and Roe Deer



**Birse Parish Deer Management Group
(BP DMG)**

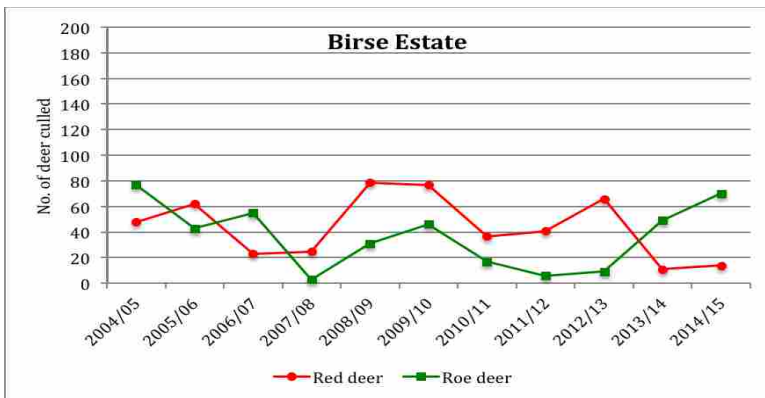
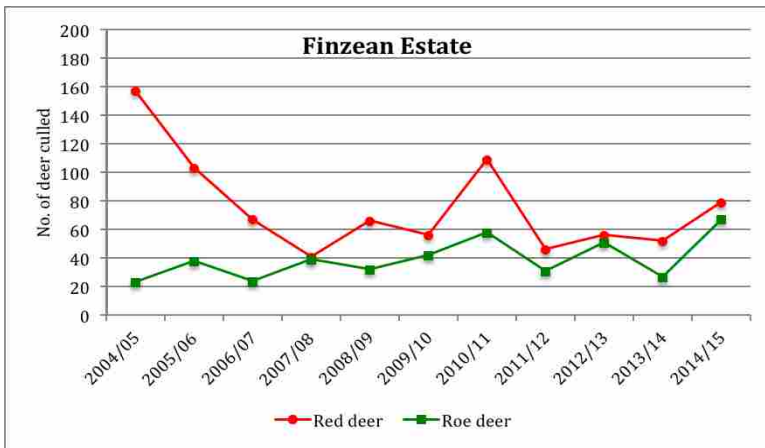
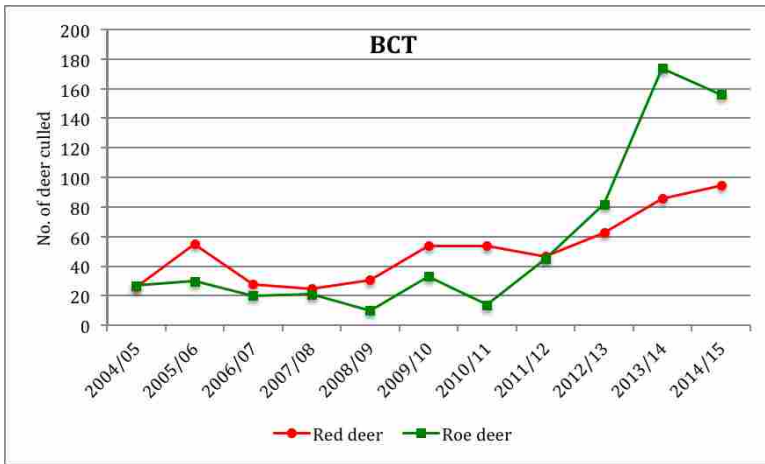
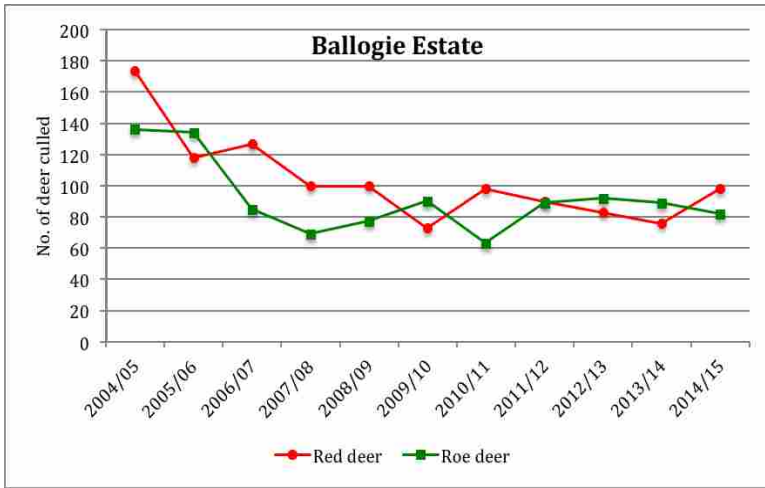
Table 2 Red and Roe Deer Cull Totals 2004/05 - 2014/15 ²

	Ballogie Estate (DMUs 3,4,5,6,13,14,20) ³ 5,020 ha			Finzean Estate (DMUs 1,9,10,11,12,21) 3,978 ha			Birse Estate (DMUs 15,16,17,22) 3,039 ha			BCT (DMUs 2,8,18) 936 ha			Shannel+Balfour Est. (DMUs 7 +-19) 419 ha			BP DMG Area (DMUs 1-22) 13,382 ha		
<i>Year</i>	<i>Red</i>	<i>Roe</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Red</i>	<i>Roe</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Red</i>	<i>Roe</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Red</i>	<i>Roe</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Red</i>	<i>Roe</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Red</i>	<i>Roe</i>	<i>Total</i>
2004/05	174	136	310	157	23	180	48	77	125	26	27	53	10	2	12	415	267	682
2005/06	118	134	252	103	38	141	62	43	105	55	30	85	2	0	2	340	245	585
2006/07	127	85	212	67	24	91	23	55	88	28	20	48	1	0	1	246	184	430
2007/08	100	69	169	41	39	80	25	3	28	25	21	46	0	1	1	191	133	324
2008/09	100	77	177	66	32	98	79	31	110	31	10	41	0	0	0	276	150	426
2009/10	73	90	163	56	42	98	77	46	123	54	33	87	0	1	1	260	212	472
2010/11	98	63	161	109	58	167	37	17	54	54	14	68	6	0	6	304	152	456
2011/12	90	89	179	46	31	77	41	6	47	47	45	92	2	0	2	226	171	397
2012/13	83	92	175	56	51	107	66	9	75	63	82	145	47	0	47	315	234	549
2013/14	76	89	165	52	27	79	11	49	60	86	174	260	23	8	31	248	347	595
2014/15	98	82	180	79	67	146	17	70	87	95	156	251	11	15	26	300	390	690
<i>10 yr av</i>	96	87	183	67	41	108	44	33	77	54	69	103	9	3	12	270	222	492
<i>5 yr av.</i>	89	83	172	68	47	115	34	30	64	69	94	163	18	4	22	278	259	537

² In October 2014/15, a male Sika deer was also shot on Ballogie Estate

³ These totals do not include the cull carried out by Ballogie Estate in DMU 2, the Commonly Pinewoods, which is included in the BCT totals

Fig. 2 Red and Roe Deer Culls by main Group Members 2004-15



2 Red Deer Cull

Table 3 below shows the distribution of the 2014-15 red deer cull by Deer Management Unit (DMU)

Table 4 on the following page shows the red deer culls by DMG members for the period 2004-15.

Table 3 Birse Parish DMG Red Deer Cull by DMU 2014-15 (brackets = (2012/13)(2013/14))

Deer Mgt Units	Hectares	Red Deer Cull 2014-15				Cull/100 ha	Zone
		Stags	Hinds	Calves	Total		
1 Finzean West Woods	654	7	0	0	7	(2.4) (1.3) 1.1	F
2 Commonty Pinewoods	528	17	7	5	29	(5.9) (4.5) 5.5	F
3 Lamahip	401	16	3	3	22	(1.7) (4.2) 5.5	F
4 Arntilly	405	7	9	4	20	(5.7) (4.0) 4.9	F
5 Bogieshiel	434	7	3	2	12	(3.0) (1.8) 2.8	F
6 Craigmore & Midstrath	713	8	9	5	22	(2.7) (2.5) 3.1	L
7 Shannel & Coulnacraig	226	2	3	2	7	(18)(9.3) 3.1	L
8 Slewdrum Forest	168	14	17	3	34	(1.2)(17) 20.2	L
9 Craigbeg Plantation	94	1	3	0	4	(0) (17.2) 4.2	L
10 Finzean East	1007	2	6	0	8	(1.5) (0.6) 0.8	L
11 Easter Clune	572	12	1	0	13	(1.6) (0.7) 2.3	L
12 Peter Hill	1433	12	23	12	47	(0.8) (1.0) 3.3	H
13 Whitehill & Glaspits	1189	6	2	1	9	(0) (0.2) 0.8	H
14 Mudlee Bracks	1264	3	0	0	3	(0.9) (0.5) 0.2	H
15 Birse Hill	1293	4	0	0	4	(0.1) (0.2) 0.3	H
16 Birse Forest	736	5	3	0	8	(4.0) (0.2) 1.1	F
17 Birse Low Ground	514	2	3	0	5	(4.9) (1.0) 1.0	L
18 Balfour Forest	240	12	16	4	32	(12)(13) 13.3	F
19 Balfour Estate	193	2	1	1	4	(3.1) (1.0) 2.1	F
20 Carlogie	614	4	5	1	10	(1.6) (1.5) 1.6	L
21 Glen Ferrick	218	0	0	0	0	0	F
22 Glencat	486	0	0	0	0	0	H
Totals	13,382	143	114	33	300	(2.3) (1.9) 2.2	

Table 4: Birse Parish DMG Red Deer Culls 2004-15

	Ballogie Estate			Finzean Estate			Birse Estate			Birse Community Trust			Shannel + Balfour Estate ⁴			Parish Totals		
	Stags	Hinds+	Total	Stags	Hinds+	Total	Stags	Hinds+	Total	Stags	Hinds+	Total	Stags	Hinds+	Total	Stags	Hinds+	Total
2004/05	72	102	174	53	104	157	27	21	48	18	8	26	3	7	10	173	242	415
2005/06	44	74	118	46	57	103	49	13	62	17	38	55	0	2	2	156	184	340
2006/07	45	82	127	37	30	67	17	6	23	15	13	28	0	1	1	114	132	246
2007/08	67	33	100	22	19	41	25	0	25	15	10	25	0	0	0	129	62	191
2008/09	57	43	100	35	31	66	68	11	79	12	19	31	0	0	0	172	104	276
2009/10	34	39	73	29	27	56	49	28	77	9	45	54	0	0	0	121	139	260
2010/11	45	53	98	32	77	109	13	24	37	9	45	54	0	6	6	99	205	304
2011/12	53	37	90	18	28	46	20	21	41	19	28	47	2	0	2	112	114	226
2012/13	49	34	83	36	20	56	37	29	66	38	25	63	23	24	47	183	132	315
2013/14	49	27	76	29	23	52	4	7	11	33	53	86	9	14	23	124	124	248
2014/15	51	47	98	34	45	79	11	6	17	43	52	95	4	7	11	143	147	300

⁴ No red deer were culled on the Shannel until 2012-13, when 20 stags and 21 hinds/calves were shot.
 In 2013-14, the Shannel cull was 9 stags and 12 hinds/calves
 In 2014-15, the Shannel cull was 2 stags, 5 hinds/calves

3 Roe Deer Cull

Table 5 below shows the distribution of the 2014-15 roe deer cull by Deer Management Unit.

Table 6 on the next page shows the red deer culls by DMG members for the period 2004-15.

Table 5 Birse Parish DMG Roe Deer Cull 2014-15 by DMU (brackets = (2012/13)(2013/14))

Deer Mgt Units	Hectares	Roe Deer Cull 2013-14				Cull/100 ha	Zone
		Bucks	Does	Kids	Total		
1 Finzean West Woods	654	12	6	0	18	(3.2) (1.6) 2.8	F
2 Commonty Pinewoods	528	10	17	1	28	(3.0) (6.1) 5.3	F
3 Lamahip	401	6	6	0	12	(2.7) (4.7) 3.0	F
4 Arntilly	405	2	10	1	13	(3.2) (2.0) 3.2	F
5 Bogieshiel	434	7	4	0	11	(3.9) (2.8) 2.5	F
6 Craigmore & Midstrath	713	9	11	0	20	(3.5) (2.7) 2.8	L
7 Shannel & Coulnacraig	226	6	1	0	7	(0) (2.2) 3.1	L
8 Slewdrum Forest	168	22	28	18	68	(7.1)(32) 40.1	L
9 Craigbeg Plantation	94	0	0	0	0	(0) (0) 0	L
10 Finzean East	1007	5	15	0	20	(1.2) (0.6) 2.0	L
11 Easter Clune	572	5	6	0	11	(1.2) (1.0) 1.9	L
12 Peter Hill	1433	6	10	0	16	(0.3) (0.1) 1.1	H
13 Whitehill & Glaspits	1189	4	0	0	4	(0.5) (0.4) 0.3	H
14 Mudlee Bracks	1264	1	0	0	1	(0.3) (0.3) 0.1	H
15 Birse Hill	1293	10	28	0	38	(0.3) (1.6) 2.9	H
16 Birse Forest	736	2	19	0	21	(0) (0.6) 1.9	F
17 Birse Low Ground	514	8	2	0	10	(0.8) (3.3) 1.9	L
18 Balfour Forest	240	22	26	12	60	(23)(37) 25.0	F
19 Balfour Estate	193	5	3	0	8	(0) (1.6) 4.1	F
20 Carlogie	614	5	15	1	21	(2.6) (3.6) 3.4	L
21 Glen Ferrick	218	2	0	0	2	0.9	F
22 Glencat	486	0	1	0	1	0.2	H
Totals	13,382	149	208	33	390	(1.7) (2.6) 2.9	

Table 6: Birse Parish DMG Roe Deer Culls 2004-15

	Ballogie Estate			Finzean Estate			Birse Estate			Birse Community Trust			Shannel + Balfour Estate ⁵			Parish Totals		
	Bucks	Does+	Total	Bucks	Does+	Total	Bucks	Does+	Total	Bucks	Does+	Total	Bucks	Does+	Total	Bucks	Does+	Total
2004/05	36	102	136	13	10	23	7	70	77	8	19	27	0	2	2	64	203	267
2005/06	34	100	134	21	17	38	13	30	43	10	20	30	0	0	0	78	167	245
2006/07	27	58	85	10	14	24	13	42	55	10	10	20	0	0	0	60	124	184
2007/08	29	40	69	17	22	39	2	1	3	5	16	21	1	0	1	54	79	133
2008/09	28	49	77	17	15	32	9	22	31	2	8	10	0	0	0	56	94	150
2009/10	43	47	90	19	23	42	11	35	46	17	16	33	1	0	1	91	121	212
2010/11	30	33	63	21	37	58	14	3	17	4	10	14	0	0	0	69	83	152
2011/12	38	51	89	18	13	31	6	0	6	16	29	45	0	0	0	78	93	171
2012/13	39	53	92	21	30	51	5	4	9	30	52	82	0	0	0	95	139	234
2013/14	61	28	89	19	8	27	18	31	49	75	99	174	5	3	8	178	169	347
2014/15	34	48	82	30	37	67	20	50	70	54	102	156	11	4	15	149	241	390

⁵ There are no recorded roe culls from the Shannel until 2013-14, when the cull was 3 bucks and 2 does/others. For 2014-15, see Table 5

4. Cull Totals by Deer Management Zone

Table 7 Total Deer Cull by Deer Management Zone				
	Low Ground 3,907 ha (29%)	Forest 3929 ha (29%)	Hill 5,546 ha (42%)	Total 13,382 ha (100%)
2012/13	202 (39%) (5.0 /100ha)	304 (53%) (7.7 /100ha)	43 (8%) (0.7 /100ha)	549 (100 %) (4.1 /100ha)
2013/14	237 (44%) (6.1 /100ha)	294 (45%) (7.5 /100ha)	64 (11%) (1.2 /100ha)	595 (100%) (4.4 /100ha)
2014/15	260 (38%) (6.6 /100ha)	307 (44%) (7.8 /100ha)	123 (18%) (2.2 /100ha)	690 (100%) (5.1 /100ha)

Table 8 Red Deer Cull by Deer Management Zone				
	Low Ground 3,907 ha (29%)	Forest 3929 ha (29%)	Hill 5,546 ha (42%)	Total 13,382 ha (100%)
2012/13	126 (40%) (3.1 /100ha)	165 (52%) (4.2 /100ha)	24 (8%) (0.4 /100ha)	315 (100%) (2.4/100ha)
2013/14	108 (44%) (2.8 /100ha)	113 (45%) (2.9 /100ha)	27 (11%) (0.5 /100ha)	248 (100%) (1.9 /100ha)
2014/15	103 (34%) (2.6 /100ha)	134 (45%) (3.4 /100ha)	63 (21%) (1.1 /100ha)	300 (100%) (2.2 /100ha)

Table 9 Roe Deer Cull by Deer Management Zone				
	Low Ground 3,907 ha (29%)	Forest 3929 ha (29%)	Hill 5,546 ha (42%)	Total 13,382 ha (100%)
2012/13	76 (33%) (1.9 /100ha)	139 (59%) (3.5 /100ha)	19 (8%) (0.3 /100ha)	234 (100%) (1.7/100ha)
2013/14	129 (37%) (3.3 /100ha)	181 (52%) (4.6 /100ha)	37 (11%) 0.7 (/100ha)	347 (100%) (2.6 /100ha)
2014/15	157 (40%) (4.0 /100ha)	173 (44%) (4.4 /100ha)	60 (16%) (1.1 /100ha)	390 (100%) (2.9 /100ha)

5. Interim Cull Totals

Table 10 Birse Parish DMG Cull in 2014-15 by Period of Year (brackets = previous year)				
Period to	Red Cull	Roe Cull	Cull in Period	% of Total Cull
30th Sept.	58	125	(233) 183	(39%) 27%
31st Dec.	144	126	(155) 270	(26%) 39%
31st March	98	139	(207) 237	(35%) 34%
Totals	300	390	(595) 690	100%

6 SNH Authorisations

Information from 4 main Group members. No authorisations on Balfour Estate or Shannel.

Table 11 Out of Season						
	Red		Roe		Both Spp. O/S	
	No.	% Cull	No.	% Cull	% Male	% Female
2012/13	68	22%	26	11%	70%	30%
2013/14	92	37%	46	13%	49%	51%
2014/15	73	25%	28	7%	60%	40%

Table 12 Night Shooting						
	Red		Roe		Both Spp. N/S	
	No.	% Cull	No.	% Cull	% Male	% Female
2012/13	24	8%	40	17%	30%	70%
2013/14	49	20%	70	20%	43%	57%
2014/15	53	18%	83	21%	27%	73%

7 Carcase Weights (clean carcase weight – no gralloch).

(a) Red

It is considered that the average weight of a stag in the parish might be 50-60 kg, with heavier ones 70-80 kg and some very large stags bigger than that.

The average weights reported for stags by Ballogie, Finzean and BCT (Balfour/Slewdrum) were 54, 55 and 68 / 76 kg, with top weights of 90, 85 and 93 / 118 kg respectively.

It is considered average hinds might be 40-50 kg, with Ballogie, Finzean and BCT's average weights 45, 38 and 48 / 54 kg and top weights 60, 50 and 75 / 73 kg.

(b) Roe

An average weight for a buck is considered 15-18 kg and for a doe 15-16 kg.

The Ballogie, Finzean and BCT (Balfour / Slewdrum) average weights for bucks were 12, 14 and 14 / 15 kg, with top weights of 17, 18 and 18 / 19 kg.

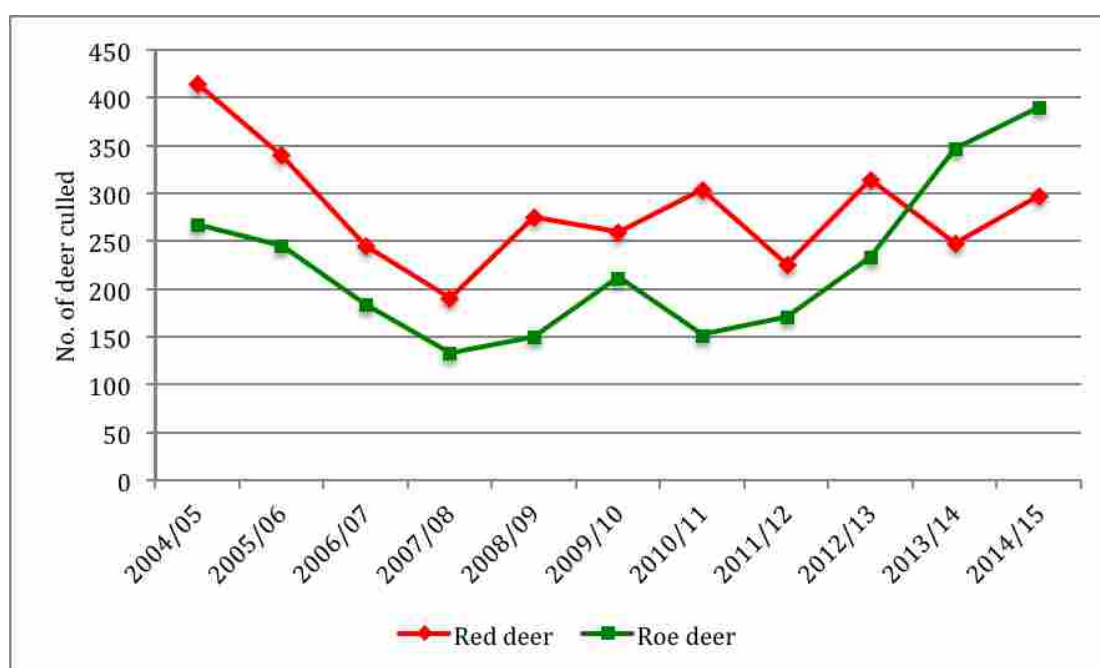
For does, the average weights were 10, 12 and 12 / 13 kg and top weights 16, 20 and 19 / 18.5 kg.

PART TWO - TARGETS FOR THE CULL IN 2015-16

8 REVIEW OF CULL IN 2014-15

- 1 The BP DMG has made significant progress in the last three years in both its administrative arrangements and the implementation of its target culls. The cull in 2014-15 maintained that progress.
- 2 The details of the cull in 2014-15 are set out in the tables and figures in Part One. The results in Table 1 show that the Group met its targets of over 250 red deer and over 350 roe deer, with total culls of 300 red deer and 390 roe deer. There was also the first ever sika deer recorded in the DMG area, with the young male shot on Ballogie in October 2014.
- 3 The overall cull of 690 red and roe deer is the highest total cull in Table 1, just above the total of 682 ten years ago. The respective patterns of the annual cull totals for red and roe deer over the last 11 years are shown in Fig.3 below.
- 4 In 2014-15, each of the DMG's six members carried out a cull of both species, with red deer culled in 20 of the DMG's 22 Deer Management Units (DMUs) and roe deer in 21 of the 22.
- 5 The progress made by the BP DMG over recent years means it is now in a better position than previously, to determine and deliver appropriate cull targets for each species in the next two year's of the Group's current Deer Management Plan 2014-17.
- 6 As set out later in this paper after considering the differing positions with red and roe deer, the Group's aim for the current year is to consolidate the cull levels in 2014-15, with similar target culls for 2015-16 of over 300 red and over 350 roe.
- 7 The Group's annual cull targets are agreed between the four full members, who are responsible for implementing the targets. The two associate members (DMUs 7 and 19) decide their own respective cull targets and make a useful contribution to the Group's overall annual cull.

Figure 3 Total Culls of Red and Roe Deer in BP DMG Area 2004-15



9 RED DEER CULL TARGETS 2015-16

9.1 Past Year

- 1 There was a traditional rut in 2014-15, with a number of main ruts and a significant amount of stag movement. The winter was unusually open with little or no significant snow cover, except on the higher hills in the south west of the DMG area. This helped with the cull.
- 2 The open hill count in the DMG area on 23rd March recorded 143 red deer as follows:-
Birse 20 stags, 2 hinds; *Ballogie* 2 stags, 6 hinds/calves *Finzean* 24 stags, 89 hinds/calves
- 3 The cull of 300 red deer in 2014-15 was an increase of 52 on the previous year and brought the level of the cull back up in the 'ups and downs' of the cull pattern shown in Fig.3. The sex ratio of the cull remained approximately 1:1 (stags 140; hinds & calves 147).
- 4 The cull included further progress in reducing the numbers of red deer in the Carlogie and Craigmore areas, as well as two successful operations against the deer in the Aven, with culls of 16 and 17. However, another operation drew a blank and it is considered that the cull in the Peter Hill DMU may have been less than the recruitment in the Aven area last year.
- 5 In the rest of the DMG area, there continued to be significant numbers of red deer. For example:-
 - Groups of 20-30+ red deer were seen during the year in various areas (Balfour Forest, Bogieshiel, Murley, Finzean West Woods, Shannel,...). There also appears to be a build up of red deer numbers in the Murley / Finzean West Woods / C. Pinewoods / Lamahip area.
 - Red deer are also continuing to come into farm crops. On some farms this was less than in recent years (Birsebeg, Drumneachie, Tillygarmond,...), but in some cases there were increases (Murley, Glencat...). In Glencat, for the first time in some years, stags were repeatedly returning to neaps, building up to 30-40.
 - The pressure of red deer in Balfour and Slewdrum Forests has not reduced. The cull in these Forests provides an indicator of this, because of the consistency of effort and focused approach. The red deer culls in the Forests were 33+28 in 2013-14, and 32+34 in 2014-15.
- 6 The scale of the build up of red deer numbers north of the Dee in the Sluie area also became more explicit during the year. There were, for example, the c.100 red deer reported crossing the North Deeside Road in December and other sightings of c.50 grazing fields beside the road. There also appears to be increasing deer movement across the Dee into and through Slewdrum.

9.2 Overall Target Cull for Red Deer in 2015-16

- 7 After the cull of 300 red deer in 2014-15, the evidence on the ground and the Group's experience both indicate that a cull of 300 or more red deer is needed again this year and potentially next, if there is to be any prospect of headway in reducing the relatively high number of red deer in the DMG area.
- 8 The need to tackle the number of red deer in the area is a significant issue for the DMG and one that the DMG has made its priority. The Group has therefore agreed that its target cull for 2015-16 should be a minimum cull of 300 red deer.
- 9 As shown in Fig.3 above, the DMG's red deer cull has gone up and down in alternative years for the last 9 years. The Group is aiming to break that pattern in 2015-16 with an 'expected cull' of around 350 red deer.

9.3 Main Areas

- 10 As in previous years, the distribution of red deer in the DMG area can be discussed in terms of half a dozen main areas involving the 22 DMUs (numbers are given in brackets below).

Carlogie (20): There has been a continuing reduction of the red deer in the Carlogie area to 'single figures'. The benefit of the Cattie fence means there is also a reducing number of deer in the Craigmore area (6), with most of them at the Midstrath end. The reduction of red deer in 20 and 6 is planned to continue.

Aven / Easter Clune (10,11): The red deer cull in these areas increased from 19 to 60. However, as the count reflected, a large number remain and most of them are hinds. It is anticipated that there will be further combined operations by stalkers in 2015-16, to try to have a major impact on this population.

Finzean West Woods / Murley / ... (1,21,2,3,4): There seems a build up of red deer in the Murley Woods and West Woods, with increased numbers in the Commonty Pinewoods / Lamahip areas. This general area also includes the western part of Finzean East (10).

Balfour / Birse (16,17,18,19): There were 47 red deer culled in these four areas, compared to 42 in 2013-14, and the numbers using the areas do not appear to have been reduced or at least, significantly reduced. Bogieshiel (5), while not experiencing the same level of red deer numbers, can be considered part of this general area, with groups of 20+ occasionally crossing into it.

Shannel / Craigbeg / Slewdrum (7,8,9): While groups of c.20 were seen during the year on the Shannel, less red deer were reported there than in previous years. Fewer signs were also seen in Craigbeg. However, there was no reduction in the pressure in Slewdrum. It is anticipated that during the coming year, the new leaseholder of Craigbeg will start to re-structure the plantation. This should improve deer control opportunities.

Open Hill (13,14,15,22): There continues to be significant red deer movement within / across these areas and on-going attention is required to prevent any build up.

9.4 Allocating the Overall Red Deer Cull Target

11 The Group's overall target is a cull in 2015-16 of at least 300-350 red deer. This target will be considered to have been achieved if that number of red deer are culled, independent of where they are shot in the DMG area. The current issues over the numbers of red deer mean that achieving that overall target is the priority.

(a) DMUs

12 In the current situation, the setting of appropriate Group targets at an individual DMU level remains difficult. This is because of the present extent of red deer movement between DMUs, the apparent annual movement of red deer into the DMG area and the general uncertainty about overall red deer numbers across the area. The Group's approach is therefore to allocate contributions towards the total cull between members, with members judging the respective culls towards their total from the DMUs for which they are responsible.

13 However, the Group considers that it is also helpful to monitor the cull information for individual DMUs in terms of the cull rates / 100 ha, and to develop expectations for what appropriate, minimum indicative cull rates might be currently for different DMUs, or different types of DMUs in terms of the three DMU zones.

14 The Group has therefore adopted indicative cull rates for the DMUs in each zone. These rates are 0.5-1.0 red deer /100 ha in the hill zone, 2-3 red deer / 100 ha in the low ground zone and 3-5 red deer /100 ha in the forest zone.

15 In 2014-15, these rates were matched or exceeded in 2 of the 5 hill DMUs, 5 of the 8 low ground DMUs and 4 of the 9 Forest DMUs. Thus, in 2014-15, 11 of the 22 DMUs matched or exceeded the adopted indicative red deer cull rates per zone. The Group will continue to monitor these levels in 2015-16, anticipating some increase.

16 The smaller size of some of the low ground and forest DMUs (c.400-500 ha) means that culling one or two extra red deer compared to 2014-15, would bring further DMUs up to their

indicative levels. However, the low ground DMUs are also more variable in character than those in the other zones. In some of these DMUs, achieving a falling red deer cull rate will be a sign of progress (eg Carlogie).

(b) Members

- 17 The local issues over red deer numbers need to be addressed and the main members of Group are committed to achieving the overall cull target. These members therefore each adopt a target for the minimum number of red deer that they plan to cull in 2015-16.
- 18 In adopting these targets, members recognise that cull targets are only achieved if there is sufficient stalking effort. However, the Group also recognises both that the level of movement of red deer between DMUs can mean targets can not be met in some areas, and that other unanticipated factors can also limit planned culls. The sharing of Interim Cull totals after 30th September and 31st December each year, allows cull targets and effort to be adjusted as appropriate by or between members, to try to ensure that the Group's overall minimum cull target is met and exceeded.
- 19 Figure 4 below shows the red deer cull over the last 11 years by the main Group members. In the graph, the Ballogie culls do not include the cull carried out by Ballogie in the Commony Pinewoods (2), which is attributed to BCT in BP DMG statistics.
- 20 Table 13 below shows the red deer cull targets agreed between the main Group members at the DMG's spring meeting on 6th May 2015.

Fig.4 The Pattern of the Red Deer Cull by the four main DMG Members 2004-2015

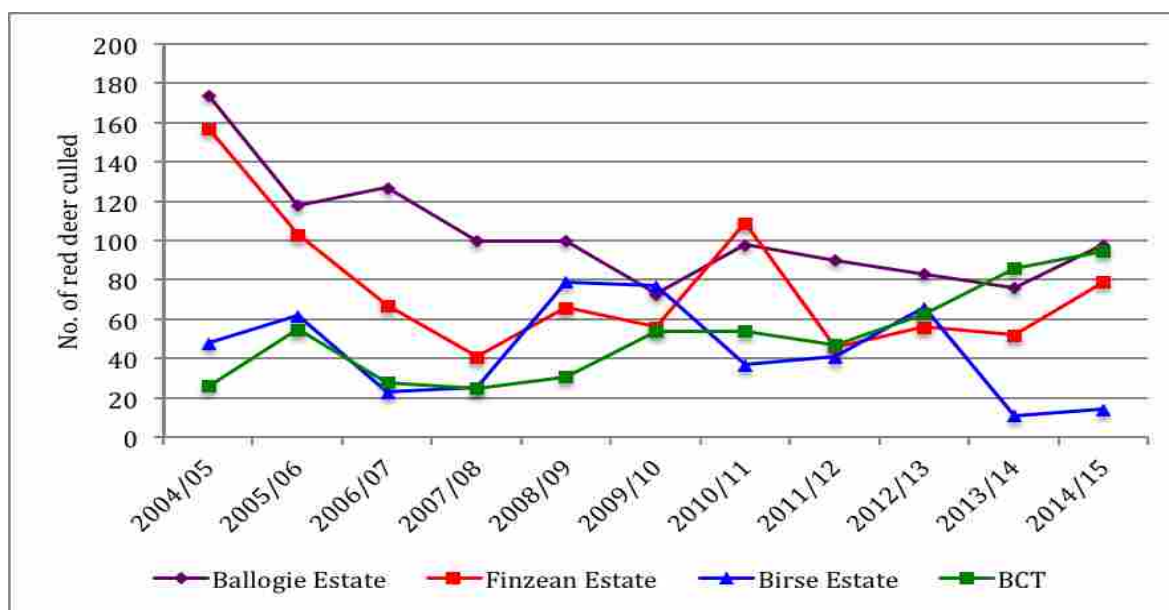


Table 13 Minimum Red Deer Target Culls 2015-16.

Member	Red Cull 2014-15	Min. Target 2015-16
Ballogie	98	100
BCT	95	80
Finzean	79	80
Birse	14	40
Total	286	300

10. ROE DEER CULL TARGETS 2015-16

10.1 Overall Target for Roe Cull in 2015-16

- 1 In contrast to the position with red deer, the Group has made significant progress in the last three years with improving the roe deer cull in the DMG area. The Group met its 2014-15 roe deer cull target of over 350 with a total cull of 390, following the cull of 347 in 2013-14.
- 2 The Group tends to cull more does than bucks, and this was notably so in 2014-15. The culling of a doe rather than a buck makes clear sense in trying to control the population, but it is anticipated that improved culls will move the sex ratio of the cull closer to 1:1 over time.
- 3 The DMP area is a highly productive environment for roe deer and the evidence from both the Group's experience and research literature suggest that the DMG area could readily sustain a roe cull of 350 or more every year.
- 4 The Group's agreed target is therefore for a minimum roe cull of 350 in 2015-16 and the following year of the current DMP. It is also agreed that there should be an 'expected cull' of around 400 as in 2014-15.
- 5 The Group's overall target of at least 350-400 roe deer will have been achieved if that number are culled, independent of where they are shot in the DMG area.

10.2 Allocating the Overall Target

(a) DMUs

- 6 The Group divides responsibility for meeting the target cull levels between the main members. However, the Group also recognises the value of monitoring roe deer culls at the individual DMU level, as part of developing a more systematic approach to managing the roe deer population in the DMG area.
- 7 Compared to the position with red deer, the roe deer in the DMG area are a relatively 'distinct population' to manage. This is due to the extent to which the DMG's boundaries are defined by the River Dee and the hills in the south-west of the area.
- 8 The Group has adopted a set of indicative cull rates for roe, which are seen as an indicative, appropriate minimum cull level in the DMUs in each type of zone (hill; low ground, forest). These rates are intended to be indicative, rather than target rates.
- 9 These indicative cull rates are 1 roe /100 ha in hill DMUs, 3 roe / 100 ha in low ground DMUs and 5 roe / 100 ha in the forest DMUs. If the cull rate in each DMU matched its indicative minimum cull level exactly, the Group's total roe cull would be c.360. The Group's total roe cull in 2014-15 was 390.
- 10 Considering the roe culls over the last three years, the indicative rates were only achieved in 4 out of the 20 DMUs in each of the first two years. However, in 2014-15, there was an improvement, with the rates being achieved in 7 of the 22 DMUs (2 of 5 hill; 3 of 8 low ground; 3 of 9 forest). The average roe cull rate / 100 ha for the DMUs in two of the three zones, also exceeded the indicative cull rate for the zone's DMUs.
- 11 The DMG will continue to monitor the number of DMUs reaching these indicative cull rates in 2015-16.

(b) Members

- 12 Figure 5 on the next page shows the annual culls by the main members over the last eleven years. Before the Group cull totals of 347 and 390 in the last two years, the highest Group

total was 267 in 2004/05. The reduction in BCT's roe cull in 2014-15 is expected to continue in 2015-16 following the high levels of roe cull in Slewdrum and Balfour Forests over the last 2-3 years.

- 13 Table 14 below shows the roe deer cull targets agreed between the main Group members at the DMG's spring meeting on 6th May 2015.

Fig.5 The Pattern of the Roe Deer Cull by the four main DMG Members 2004-2015

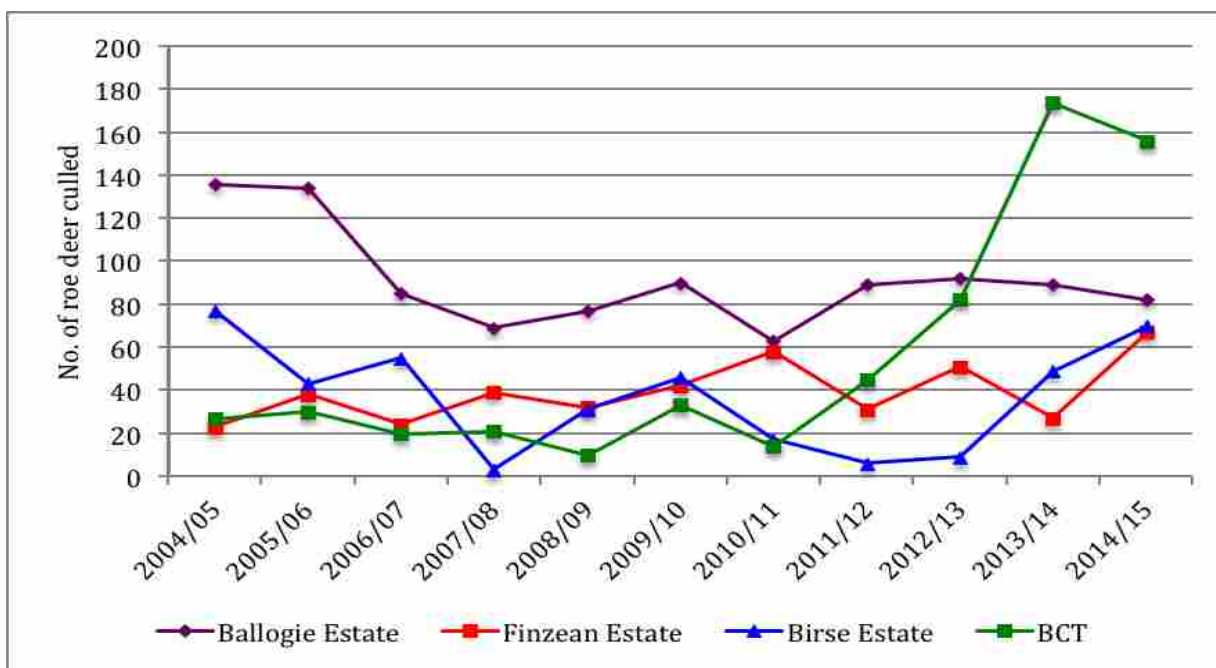


Table 14 Minimum Roe Deer Target Culls 2015-16.

Member	Roe Cull 2014-15	Min. Target 2015-16	(Indicative DMU Cull)
Ballogie	82	100	(124)
BCT	156	110	(44)
Finzean	67	75	(108)
Birse	70	65	(69)
Total	375	350	(345)

10.3 Roe Deer Management

- 14 The main members of the DMG each have a strong, local, economic self interest in managing roe deer effectively in the DMG area. There are also important local environmental and social reasons for achieving this.
- 15 The more defined framework that the Group is developing for its roe deer management is summarised in Table 15 on the next page.

Table 15 Monitoring the BP DMG's Roe Deer Management Aims

Roe Deer Management Aims	2014-15
1 Each member of the DMG carries out an annual roe cull	6 out of 6
2 Annual roe deer cull is carried out in each of the DMG's DMUs	21 out of 22
3 A minimum annual DMG cull of 350 roe (2.6/100 ha) is carried out	390 (2.9/100ha)
4 DMUs have indicative cull rates based on three management zones	22 out of 22
5 The average cull /100 ha in each zone is its indicative rate or more	2 out of 3
6 The annual cull in more DMUs is their indicative cull rate or more	7 out of 22
7 Annual cull moving towards an approx. 1:1 sex ratio over time (3 yr. av)	1 : 1.3*

* The data used in this average 3 year cull ratio is bucks to others (does + juveniles), so includes male kids culled.

11. OVERALL CULL TARGETS

- 1 Table 16 below summaries the proposed minimum cull targets for the Group and its main members. This represents repeating last year's cull with a few more red and more or less the same number of roe. The challenge in 2015-16 is to achieve consistency in the level of the culls, rather than necessarily achieving significant increases.

Table 16 Minimum Red and Roe Deer Target Culls 2015-16

Member	Min. Red 2015-16	Min. Roe 2015-16	Min. Target 2015-16
<i>Ballogie</i>	100	100	200
<i>BCT</i>	80	110	170
<i>Finzean</i>	80	75	155
<i>Birse</i>	40	65	105
<i>Total</i>	300	350	650

- 2 For the reasons outline in sections 3 and 4 on red and roe targets, there seems no reason to anticipate as things stand at present, that the numbers of deer that should be shot annually in the DMG area is going to reduce.
- 3 The Group considers therefore that a cull of 650 deer a year (300+ red; 350+ roe) should be viewed as the Group's normal baseline cull. It is also considered that, even if the numbers of red deer locally started to be reduced so that the target for them was lowered to 250+, the DMG area would be able to support an increased, sustainable annual cull of 400+ roe.
- 4 Culling 650+ deer a year, as in the 2014-15 cull, requires significant hunting skill and physical effort. Last year's cull involved the same 13 stalkers as the 2013-14 cull, with a further two stalkers contributing for the first time on Birse Estate.⁶
- 5 As far as the DMG is aware, the actual culling of each deer shot is being carried out by stalkers to high standards in terms of the law, safety, animal welfare and venison handling.
- 6 The challenge for managers is to try to ensure that the management of the cull is also at an appropriately high standard, in terms of the availability of the necessary people and resources to achieve at least the minimum red and roe target culls.
- 7 As has already been quoted from last year's Deer Report: "The capacity to achieve targets is a key challenge. Enough stalkers outings need to take place to reach a target".

⁶ On Ballogie and Finzean Estates, part of their cull is shot by clients. On Ballogie Estate, these culls are attributed to the accompanying estate stalker. On Finzean Estate, culls by Alf Sorensen's clients with his own stalkers are attributed to him and he is counted as one stalker in the Group total.