Sustainable Deer Management

Online Postgraduate module available as a standalone CPD course

Photo: Neil McIntyre

This postgraduate module offered by UHI covers a range of areas, including: the policy and institutional context for deer management in Scotland; deer ecology and behaviour (including population dynamics); deer management planning; and a review of the science behind deer management. Part of the MSc in Sustainable Mountain Development, this module is also available as a standalone module for those wishing to take the course as part of their continuing professional development (CPD).

The module reflects the growing demand for 'sustainable' deer management – uniting both the sporting elements of deer management and environmental or conservation-based approaches to deer management. We encourage professionals working in areas related to deer or general estate management across the UK and Ireland to enrol.

The course is delivered in an online, flexible learning format, including PDFs, web pages and video recordings. Students participate in debates about sustainable deer management on the course discussion board. It is an exciting opportunity for those wishing to learn about applied deer management in Scotland, and offers academic recognition for those already practising deer management.

To apply or find out more, please contact the Centre for Mountain Studies, Perth College UHI.

Email: info.cms.perth@uhi.ac.uk
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Web: www.perth.uhi.ac.uk/mountainstudies

University of the Highlands and Islands
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Online postgraduate module in Sustainable Deer Management
Starts 23 January 2023

This module can be taken as a standalone CPD course
UHI's postgraduate module in Sustainable Deer Management will run again in early 2023.

The module is available through the MSc in Sustainable Mountain Development, as well as being as a standalone module for those wishing to take the course as part of their continuing professional development (CPD).

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The course covers a range of areas, including:
- the policy and institutional context for deer management in Scotland;
- deer ecology and behaviour (including population dynamics);
- deer management planning; and
- a review of the science behind deer management.

The course is delivered in an online, flexible learning format, including PDFs, web pages and video recordings. Students participate in debates about deer management on the course discussions, as well as submitting two academic assignments (one essay and one report).

It is an exciting opportunity for those wishing to learn about applied deer management and offers academic recognition for those already practising sustainable deer management.

The module is taught by Dr Rosalind Bryce and will run from 23 January 2023 to early-May 2023.

2022/23 Fees
£560 (Scottish students), £669 (Rest of UK)

Entry Requirements
- Honours degree, or ordinary degree in a relevant subject
- Postgraduate diploma or professional qualification in a relevant subject
- Other qualifications will be considered if accompanied by a minimum of three years' relevant professional experience

Apply Online

Email info.cms.perth@uhi.ac.uk for further information

Sustainable Deer Management (SDM) - Module outline

Changes may be made to the module outline prior to the next delivery

12 lectures - starting 23 January 2023

Lecture 1 Background, wider context and drivers for SDM

- Introduction to general background for SDM in Scotland
- The wider sustainability agenda
- Public and private values in deer management
- Multifunctional land management (wider land use context for SDM) and ecosystem services agenda
- Explanation of ecosystem approach ecosystem services
- Implications of ecosystem approach for deer management
- Historical context and implications of changing landownership dynamics
- Implications of climate change
- Key criteria for sustainable deer management

Lecture 2 Social and economic dimensions of SDM

- Culture and tradition in deer management
- Importance of social values/public interest in deer management
- Socio-economic importance of deer management and stalking – benefits to rural economy/society
- Socio-economic impacts of deer and their management (management costs/road accidents/forestry and agricultural impacts)/stakeholder conflicts/access
- Maximising social and economic benefits and minimising costs: diversifying stalking markets; venison marketing and added value
- Deer welfare
- Disease control
- Community and stakeholder involvement in deer management decision making processes
- Role of awareness raising and education about deer management and stalking

Lecture 3 Policy and institutional framework for SDM

- Historical and current changes in the wider policy context for SDM
- Wider policy framework: General explanation of: Sustainable development policy/EU Habitats Directive, Common Agricultural Policy and other relevant areas.
- Scottish Policy: Discussion of relevance of National Performance Framework/Sustainable Development Strategy/Climate Change Act/land Use Strategy/Agricultural and Forestry Strategies/Scottish Biodiversity Strategy/Nature Conservation Act/Designated sites
- Deer focused policy and the institutional framework: Key aspects of the Deer (Scotland) Act (1996) and Wild Deer in Scotland a Long term Vision (DCS) and Scotland's Wild Deer a National Approach
- Joint Agency working Discussion of Joint agency working on fencing, designated sites etc.
- Code of Practice on Deer Management (key measures/implications)
- The changing institutional context for deer management
- Key future issues for deer management and policy in Scotland

Lecture 4 Deer biology, behaviour and distribution

- General deer biology
- Biology and distribution of main deer species in UK
- Red Deer and Roe deer: Biology, behaviour and distribution in Scotland and factors affecting biology/distribution
- Discussion of the hybridisation of sika and red deer
- Potential future impact of non-native deer species

Lecture 5 Deer Populations: Dynamics, performance and response to management

- Range, size and structure of red deer populations in Scotland, including population trends and drivers
- The key factors affecting performance and dynamics of deer populations; including impacts of population density on fecundity and mortality rates (results from long term population studies)
- Response of deer populations to management
- Using scientific data to model red deer population dynamics (for cull target setting)

Lecture 6 Red deer and upland ecosystems (the natural heritage)

- Description of the ecosystem context for red deer in the Scottish Highlands; the focus in this lecture will be on open ground habitats
- Habitat use and ecological function of deer in upland ecosystems
- Ecological impacts of deer in upland ecosystems
- Red deer impacts in the context of other grazing herbivores
- Conclusions and implications for management

Lectures 7 and 8 Deer, forestry and native woodlands

- Extent of forestry and native woodlands in the uplands and changes in management approaches
- Extent (increase) of deer populations in Scottish forests and woodlands
- Deer performance in woodlands
- Current and potential impacts of deer on forestry and woodlands
- Mechanisms by which deer impact on forests and woodlands
- Factors affecting severity of impacts
- Specific impacts on semi-natural native woodlands
- Specific impacts on (commercial/multifunctional) forestry
- Managing deer in a forestry and woodlands context: pros and cons of fencing and culling in semi-natural native woodlands; forest design for wildlife management; Costs of deer control (fencing and culling), economic costs of damage to timber resource

Lecture 9 Putting science into practice; principles and practice of SDM

- Estimating/monitoring deer populations - Comparison of count methods
- Assessing impacts of deer populations (Habitat Impact Assessments)
- Keeping records - cull records and setting cull targets
- Best practice in the use of fencing

- Personnel training/skills development
- Habitat manipulation (diversionary feeding/browse plots/substitution)
- SNH Best Practice Guidelines

Lecture 10 Deer management planning and deer management groups

- Different plan scales and the importance of a multi-scale approach (e.g. Region, Deer Management Group, Individual landowner, forest plantation/woodland)
- Focus and structure of Deer Management Plans
- Stakeholder engagement and conflict resolution
- Spatial elements (mapping) and costings
- Deer Management Plan case study examples
- Rationale for Deer Management Groups (DMGs)
- Operation/functioning of DMGs
- Strengths and weaknesses of DMGs and their future role

Lecture 11 International dimensions of deer management

- Case studies of deer management will be compared and contrasted in an international context
- Drawing lessons from different models of deer management

Lecture 12 Deer management and integrated land use

- Interaction of deer populations with different land uses
- Contrasting upland and lowland deer management
- Managing deer in urban areas
- Potential impact of land use change on deer population e.g. forest expansion, rewilding
- Future approaches to managing deer and making links to wider wildlife and ecosystem management

Updated 15/06/2022