

# WILD DEER MANAGEMENT

## Policy:

Recognising the increasing threat that wild deer pose to forestry and other land uses in Ireland, the issue for Coillte is to develop and implement a planned, integrated and collaborative approach to deer management on its forest estate in order that populations of all wild deer species can be regulated at levels which will maintain biodiversity and range condition, and enable the sustainable achievement of all land-use objectives.

- Coillte accept the presence of wild deer on much of its forest estate as inevitable and undertake to implement a planned, integrated and collaborative approach to their management.
- In developing and implementing appropriate deer management strategies, Coillte will endeavour to balance its primary objectives of preventing damaging impacts, public safety and animal welfare with the requirements of conservation and the management of a valuable biological resource. Where possible Coillte aims to achieve this through collaboration with local land owners/managers and other stakeholders.
- Coillte regards achieving a balance between deer densities and their environment, as the principle strategy for minimising the damaging effects of wild deer. In areas where deer compromise forest management objectives, appropriate layout and design techniques will be incorporated in all planning processes to reduce damage and facilitate deer control.
- Coillte will support the development of a National Strategy and Initiative for the management of wild deer.
- Deer management planning on Coillte's forest estate will be centrally coordinated and firmly based on accurate baseline information relating to deer distribution, abundance, population dynamics and impact levels.
- Coillte is committed to ensuring that the highest possible standards are maintained by all persons engaged in the management of wild deer on its forest estate and that all relevant legislation, directives, codes of practice and licence conditions are adhered to, and all National Training Standards or skills or competences deemed appropriate, are attained.
- Coillte consider the use of fencing and other physical protection methods as effective short-term solutions for the protection of small areas of vulnerable crops. Deer control through culling will be undertaken on Coillte's forest estate when required. All such culling operations will be undertaken strictly in compliance with all relevant legislation, directives, guidelines and codes of practice, and having the highest regard for public

safety and animal welfare. Such methods must comply with all relevant standards and only used in conjunction with measures to control deer numbers.

- Many of Coillte's forest properties are valued for sporting purposes by recreational deer hunters. In line with Coillte's recreation policy, Coillte will continue to facilitate recreational hunting under licence, on areas of its forest estate deemed suitable for this activity. Recreational hunting will only be permitted where it is **not** considered to compromise public safety, the safety of forest workers, contractors or other forest users, and where it does **not** obstruct the achievement of Coillte's deer and/or forest management objectives. Only persons who have satisfied the required standards of skills or competences will be considered to undertake this licensed activity.
- To fully utilise the commercial potential of sporting interests and other non-timber revenue associated with deer management, in particular licensed recreational hunting, client stalking and venison sales.
- Coillte own most, but not all of the sporting rights on their forest estate. Where sporting rights are legitimately held by third parties, Coillte expect that all such rights are exercised in a responsible and collaborative manner having due regard for, Coillte's management objectives, the requirements of the Company's certification standard, and at all times ensuring that Coillte is fully indemnified from any claims or actions arising from the exercise of such rights. Where such right holders fail to prevent damaging impacts from deer and other mammals to Coillte's crops and / or those of its neighbours, it is Coillte's intention to initiate immediate damage control measures and / or to seek reimbursement for any costs incurred.
- Coillte is adamantly opposed to, and will take all necessary measures to prevent and redress, any deliberate introductions/release programs of deer on it forest estate.
- Coillte is opposed to, and will take all reasonable measures to prevent, and redress any unauthorised killing / taking or "poaching" of wild deer from its lands.