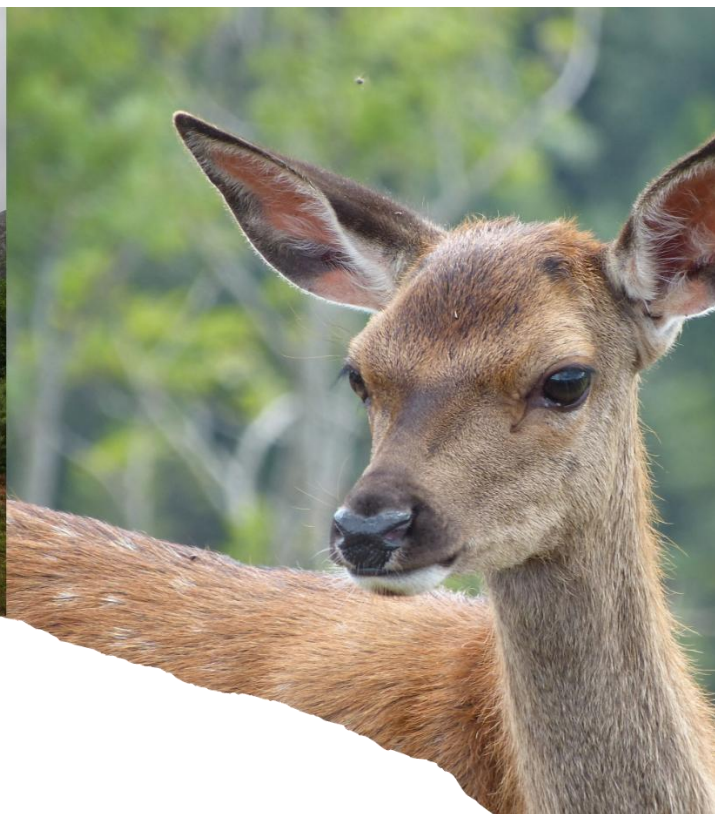




Glen Strathfarrar

Deer Management Group

Deer Management Plan

2026 -2031

DMG Chairman: Frank Spencer Nairn

DMG Secretary: Bidwells

Email:

Prepared by:

Dr Linzi Seivwright BSc CF Phd

www.caorann.com

linzi@caorann.com



Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank all estate owners, managers and stalkers for valuable input, support and useful comments on the document.

The author is also grateful to NatureScot for their advice and useful discussion.

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Funding

This plan has been completed entirely through private funding.

Foreword By Frank Spencer-Nairn, DMG Chair

The 4th Glen Strathfarrar Deer Management Plan, 2026 – 2031

The wild Red Deer of the Scottish hills are a mobile shared natural resource; they are not aware of the lines we have drawn on maps and call estate boundaries. Whilst co-operation between estates will always have been an option, collaborative deer management had its origins in the 1960s and has gradually become the norm. South Ross was one of the first Deer Management Groups to be formed. As it grew, it split into five more manageable units; the Glen Strathfarrar Deer Management Group (GSDMG) is one of these. Neighbouring groups co-operate and annually all five get together for a liaison meeting. Each DMG is also a member of the Association of Deer Management Groups (ADMG).

This is now our 4th five-year Deer Management Plan (DMP). Whilst it is an important management tool for ourselves, it has also become part of the way deer management is being made more transparent and accessible. Over the last twenty years, this Group has demonstrated a successful track record in managing deer effectively on a voluntary and sustainable basis at a landscape scale for the benefit of the deer and the environment. Our DMG area is well known for its special scenic beauty, including the historically important stands of Caledonian Pinewood. We are proud of the successful natural regeneration of native woodland which was first started 50 years ago by this Group.

The eleven different main landowners take deer management very seriously and are acutely aware of our responsibilities; we are passionate about the land we manage and our rare and precious natural heritage. The Group will continue to build on its environmental and socio-economic achievements, working collaboratively and in partnership with each other, wider stakeholders and the local community.

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Summary of Actions to Be Undertaken By 2031

Action		Management Actions to Be Undertaken
1	Population Targets	Members will undertake culls required to work towards the agreed DMG red deer population target of no more than 5,105 red deer representing a reduction from 15.9 deer per km² to 11.7 deer per km² .
2	Population Census	Deer population census of the Group areas will be conducted by Helicopter in 2026 to assess progress towards the population target.
3	Population Models	The population model will be adjusted annually to include actual culls and count information and will be used to set the cull required by the Group to achieve the population target. The Group will work collaboratively to achieve the required DMG cull determined by the population model.
4	Cull Reporting	Members will provide interim culls reports throughout the hind season to aid collaborative working. A complete cull return of all deer species and feral pigs will be provided by members for the Spring meeting.
5	Strathglass SAC Upland Habitats	Relevant properties will aim for an overall reduction in deer on Strathglass SAC from 14.1 deer per km² to 8 deer km² by 2029 , concentrating in the areas of higher impacts, and contributing to ecological restoration objectives.
6	Strathglass SAC Upland Habitats	Repeat monitoring of the SAC will be undertaken by NatureScot in 2029 to assess changes in impacts delivered through a reduction cull.
7	Strathglass SAC Upland Habitats	Members will explore opportunities for summer grazing of cattle to optimise their ecological benefits.
8	Strathglass SAC Woodland Habitats	All woodland SAC features are underpinned by SSSI designations and actions are detailed below.
9	Monar Forest SSSI	East Monar and West Monar Estates will continue to manage deer numbers at a level that will maintain current condition.
10	Laitrie Burn SSSI	The Native Pinewood feature on Glen Cannich Estate has been fenced under a Woodland Grazing Scheme and is already showing signs of recovery. The Estate will maintain fences to prevent incursions.

11	Glen Strathfarrar SSSI	• Struy, Culligran and Braulen have all undertaken fencing under various historic schemes to protect the Native Pinewood. • Recent monitoring by Struy Estate of unfenced pinewoods has shown high impacts despite concentrating culls in the site. Struy Estate and Culligran will continue to work together to minimise the movement of deer into the vulnerable Rough Wood area. • A reduction cull of over 5 deer per km² on Braulen will help reduce pressure on unfenced pinewood areas.
12	Peatland	The agreed reduction of deer numbers across the DMG of 4 deer per km ² will help reduce pressure on blanket bog. Members will aim to ensure that carbon rich habitats are maintained in a healthy condition, identifying opportunities to restore degraded peatland.
13	Peatland Impact Monitoring	Members will monitor the condition of peatland and impacts of herbivores through Blanket Bog Habitat Impact Assessment.
14	Native Woodland Expansion & Restoration	Members will carry out monitoring of native woodland condition and deer impacts and use this to inform woodland management.
15	Woodland Creation	DMG members will update the Group on plans for further woodland expansion, including the use of fencing.
16	Habitat Monitoring	DMG members will carry out monitoring of dwarf shrub heath habitat to assess the impact of deer on habitats and wider ecosystem health. Results will be used to inform deer management.
17	Conservation of protected and vulnerable species	DMG members will undertake activities secure the conservation of protected and vulnerable species within the SPA and SAC.
18	Wider Biodiversity	Wider habitats will benefit from an agreed reduction of 4 deer per km ² across the DMG area and an agreed target reduction from 14.6 deer km ² to 9.4 deer km ² across the wider landscape (including Glen Strathfarrar, Affric & Kintail, Strathconon and Lochalsh DMGs).
19	INNS	Members will report sightings and undertake culls of sika, fallow, muntjac and feral pigs to prevent their spread.

20	Safeguarding Deer Welfare	The DMG will continue to promote and encourage the safeguarding of deer welfare both at the scale of the individual animal and at a population scale through the following actions: • Carrying out all deer management activity to Wild Deer Best Practice Guidance industry standards; • Requiring the undertaking of deer management training, continual professional development and industry recognised qualifications; • Ensuring that the natural habitat supports good welfare through the provision of adequate habitat and shelter; • Ensuring that any land management operations take into consideration possible effects on deer movements or the availability of shelter; • Ensuring that the necessary precautions and checks are undertaken to prevent the spread of diseases including Chronic Wasting Disease; • Monitoring and report on levels of winter mortality as well as any other significant health issues encountered.
21	Training and CPD	DMG will aim to organise CPD and training opportunities for DMG members.
22	Client Stalking	DMG will monitor sustainable harvest of stags for let stalking.
23	Venison	Members to consider membership of SQWV and to contribute to a healthy, sustainable venison market through securing high standards of food safety and deer welfare.
24	Public Safety	Members to identify, raise awareness and where possible minimise the local health and safety risks including incidents of Deer Vehicle Collisions and risks associated with Lyme Disease.
25	Access	Members to keep Heading for the Scottish Hills website updated, promoting responsible Access and the following of the Scottish Outdoor Access Code.
26	Educational Opportunities	Members to provide opportunities for young people and the wider community to learn about the benefits and opportunities associated with the management of deer and the wider rural landscape.
27	Local Community Engagement	Group to continue to actively engage with local community through the Community Council, events and promotion of good news stories.
28	Collaboration	The DMG will meet twice a year and will include representation from all properties as well as representatives from NatureScot, neighbouring groups representatives and members of the local community. The DMP will be published on the DMG website and the Working Plan reviewed and updated annually.
29	South Ross Liaison Group	Representatives of the Group will attend the annual South Ross Liaison Group meeting to secure effective landscape scale management of deer across five deer management groups.
30	The Common Ground Forum	Group will sign up to The Common Ground Accord.

1.Introduction

1.1 Glen Strathfarrar Deer Management Plan

The aim of this **Deer Management Plan (DMP)** is to:

- Deliver the vision and objectives of **Glen Strathfarrar Deer Management Group** in relation to deer and their management, building on the achievements of the previous DMP which ran from 2016 to 2024 (*Table 1*)
- Agree a set of **collaborative** and **sustainable** deer management actions to deliver the plans objectives by 2031;
- Implement monitoring protocols (habitat monitoring, population census and cull reporting) to measure change and support adaptive management.

This plan is a **refresh of the previous 2016 Deer Management Plan**¹. As much of the information contained in the previous plan is still relevant, this plan will build on the outcomes of the previous plan and will identify specific actions and targets to be delivered by **2031**. These will be reviewed on an annual basis. The DMP will take account of the land management interests and objectives of the Group members, as well as current Scottish Government recommendations² and the wider public interest. A live **Working Plan** will be updated on an annual basis, bringing together the most up to date information to help inform the future management of the DMG Members.

1.2 Sustainable Deer Management and the Public Interest

Wild native deer are an integral part of Scotland's biodiversity. Their sustainable management underpins many of the land management objectives undertaken across Scotland, contributing to a wide range of benefits. The benefits of **sustainable deer management** include:

- Securing the health of the environment to mitigate against climate change and to promote biodiversity restoration,
- Supporting economic resilience of fragile rural economies,

¹ [Glen Strathfarrar Deer Management Plan 2016 -2021](#)

² [Scotland's Biodiversity Strategy](#)

- Enhancing the health and wellbeing of people,
- Safeguarding of deer welfare and,
- Providing a natural food source.

1.2 Wider Deer Management Context

“Integrating land use for multiple benefits and managing conflicts in the uplands remains one of Scotland’s biggest challenges” - State of Nature Report, 2019.

The uplands of Scotland are important not just for their historical and cultural significance; the natural heritage they support is nationally and internationally recognised³. Typified by a mosaic of carbon rich peatlands, moorland habitats and woodland, Scotland’s iconic upland landscape reflects centuries of human management and a legacy of Government policy.

Today, management of the uplands still underpins the socio-economic fabric of much of Scotland’s fragile rural economy. However, in the face of a climate emergency and biodiversity loss, the way we use land in the uplands is being seen as a critical contributing factor in responding to these crises⁴. The Scottish Government has set out ambitious strategies and targets including a reduction in carbon emissions to meet Net Zero by 2045⁵, a Biodiversity Strategy⁶ that will seek to prevent biodiversity loss by 2030 and restore biodiversity by 2045, as well as Scotland’s Green New Deal⁷ which sets out measures to create green jobs and accelerate a just transition to net-zero.

Deer management has long since played an important role in the management of the uplands but it is changing. Set against the context of climate change and global biodiversity loss, the Scottish Government has set out a clear overarching direction of travel to reduce deer numbers across Scotland. Whilst the deer management community has a key role in delivering Scotland’s priorities of woodland expansion, carbon sequestration and habitat health, it is important that any changes

³ [Scottish Government. 2014. Scotland’s Environment.](#)

⁴ [Scottish Government. 2021. Land use - getting the best from our land: Strategy 2021 to 2026](#)

⁵ [Climate Change \(Emissions Reduction Targets\) \(Scotland\) Act 2019](#)

⁶ [Scottish Government. 2022. Biodiversity Strategy to 2045: tackling the nature emergency.](#)

⁷ [Scottish Government. 2020. Scotland’s green recovery.](#)

must also support a healthy and vibrant rural economy, securing sustainable deer management for the long-term. This will help ensure that future changes will be beneficial for not just the environment, but also for deer and people.

Since the late 1960's, Deer Management Groups have provided voluntary collaborative mechanisms to manage increasingly diverse land management objectives at landscape scale across the upland red deer range and today these group cover around 3m ha of the upland deer range⁸.

1.3 Glen Strathfarrar Deer Management Group

“At the heart of this strategy is collaboration” - Biodiversity Strategy to 2045: Tackling the Nature Emergency.

Located in the Highlands, Glen Strathfarrar Deer Management Group (GSDMG) lies to the north and west of the A831 and Strathglass and to the west of Beauly - taking in the northern side of Glen Cannich as well the whole of Glen Strathfarrar (*see Figure 1*).

The DMG extends to 45,116 however not all of this area is open to deer and the current count area is **43,452** ha. The management area is effectively bounded to the south by Loch Mullardoch, from where a continuous deer fence runs east along the River Cannich, then along the River Glass above the A831 road, then on the eastern boundary the fence continues from Farley in the south through Fairburn in the north. This fence essentially prevents any loss of deer from hill to farm land in Strathglass or on to Glen Affric nature reserve. To the north the boundary follows the line of the old county boundary between Inverness-shire and Ross-shire for some distance, then deviates to take in most of the catchment area around Loch Monar, before finally heading south back to the head of Glen Cannich.

The Group area consists of 11 management units (*Figure 1 and Table 2*) that make up the open Red Deer range. Deer movement is largely unconstrained between properties throughout the open range of the group.

⁸ [ADMG. 2019. Scotland's Upland Deer Management.](#)

Originally part of South Ross DMG which was formed in the 1960's, South Ross DMG was divided into smaller management areas in 2012. Whilst now recognised as a group in its own right, GSDMG still maintains on-going communication with neighbouring Deer Management Groups (Lochalsh to the west, Strathconnon to the North and Affric & Kintail to the south) to ensure a landscape collaborative approach to deer management (*See Section 2.5*).

Figure 1: Glen Strathfarrar DMG

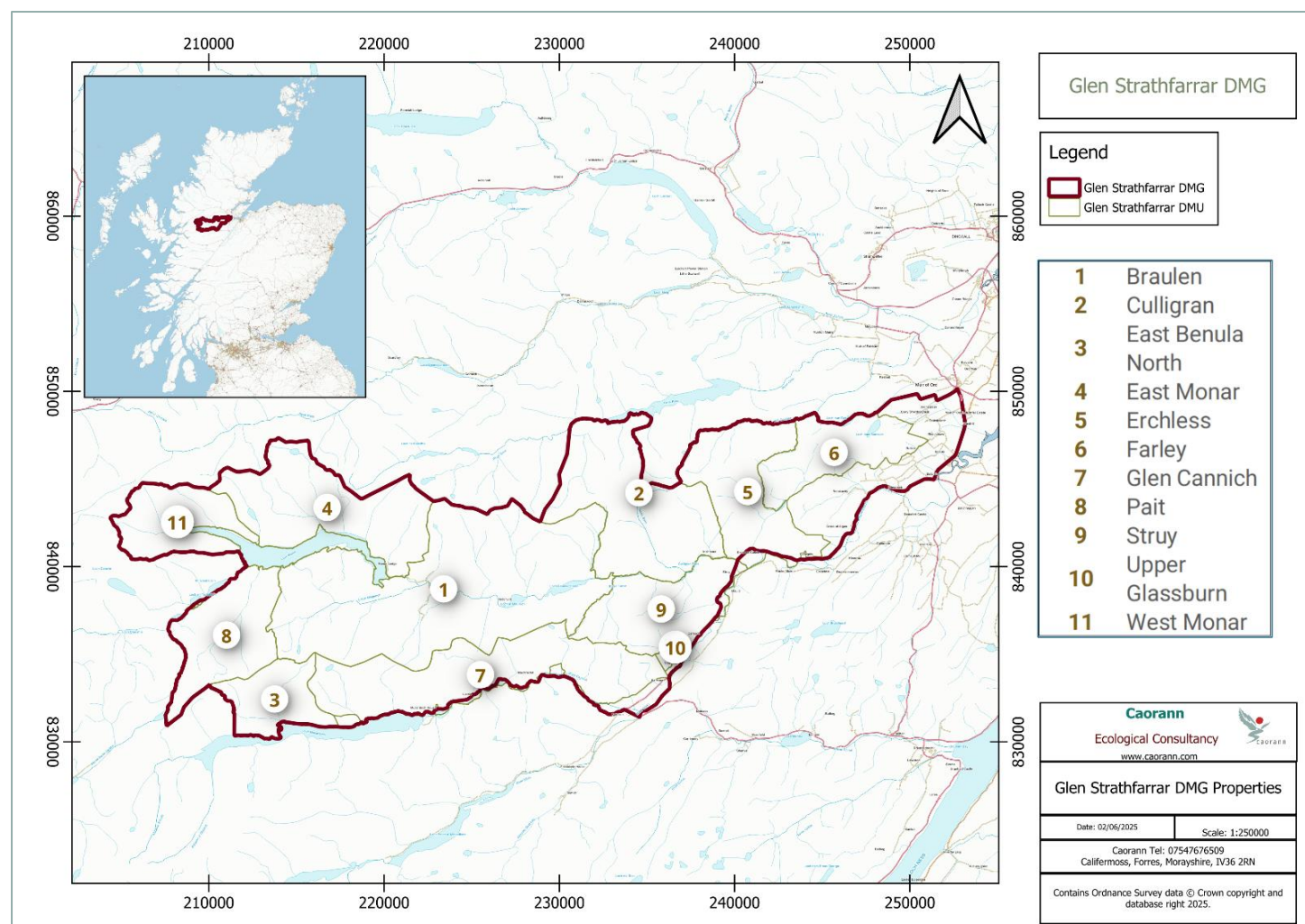


Table 1: Glen Strathfarrar DMG Properties

Property	Area (ha)	Management Objectives
1 Braulen	12,023	• The Estate combines conservation objectives with the sustainable economic harvest of deer. • Further woodland exclosures may be considered to bring Glen Strathfarrar site into Favourable Recovering Condition. At the scale of 50 ha plantations - unlikely to affect deer. • Culls will continue to be targeted in the Affric-Cannich Hills SSSI where impacts are highest and concentrated within and around woodland areas to reduce impacts on unfenced areas. • Habitat Impact Assessments will continue to be carried out on the upland features of the SAC. This will help inform future management. • The Estate will continue to collaborate with neighbours to reduce impacts on Designated Sites.
2 Culligran	5,452	• The Estate is primarily focussed on conservation but with additional land uses of agriculture (including a deer farm), tourism, stalking and fishing. A new 700KW Hydro-scheme was completed on the Neaty Burn in 2014 which has had little impact on deer and provided a new access road to assist with deer management. • To continue conservation objectives and maintain the rolling programme of regeneration of the native pine and deciduous woodland. • The Estate has established an informal partnership with Trees for Life to assist with this programme following the de-notification of the NNR.
3 East Benula North	1,884	• The main priority for the Estate is to deliver conservation objectives along with the sustainable harvest of stags. • The estate will continue to focus culls in areas of highest impact within the Affric-Cannich Hills SSSI and to maintain the hind numbers at a maximum total population of 160. • To continue to cull collaboratively with neighbouring estates.
4 East Monar	4,864	• The Estate is combines conservation objectives with stalking and renewable energy (a new Hydro-scheme was recently completed). • The aim is to optimise conservation and economic potential of the Estate whilst delivering the wider Public Interest • To balance deer management to keep the SSSI in Favourable Condition whilst maintaining a sustainable annual harvest of stags.

5	Erchless	3,669	• The Estate will continue combine conservation objectives with the aim of maintaining a sustainable commercial harvest of deer. • In addition, the Estate will continue to undertake a shoot on site policy for all red, sika and roe deer within commercial forestry and enclosed native woodlands, throughout the year. • The Estate are introducing a herd of approx. 20 -30 hill cattle to the open hill for a 10-year period, using no fence technology. • Erchless will also be undertaking an environmental / ecological baseline survey across the estate this Spring and this will be updated annually together with HIA monitoring undertaken by the Estate.
6	Farley	2,563	• The Estate combines forestry interests with a non-commercial gamebird shooting enterprise. • The estates deer management policy is to encourage a resident stock of hinds to attract stags in season whilst managing deer in the interests of welfare.
7	Glen Cannich	5,741	• A main priority for the Estate is conservation but with additional land uses of agriculture, tourism, renewable energy and stalking. • Estate is managed with East Benula North. • Deer Management objectives are to work collaboratively with the DMG and NatureScot to avoid deterioration of the SAC habitats whilst ensuring that the deer resource is maintained in line with the DMG Deer Management Plan. • The Estate has its own deer management plan which details its objectives. • Management objectives are to continue a rolling programme of enclosures of the Liattrie Burn SSSI over a 100 year period under a long-term management agreement with SNH as well as woodland expansion projects at Invercannich (30 ha), Caraidh (9 ha) and Mullardoch (8.4 ha). • To continue to carry out Habitat Impact Assessment on the upland features of the SAC to help inform future management.
8	Pait	3,189	• Pait and West Monar are run as a single management enterprise • Management objectives are to balance deer management to deliver conservation objectives and a sustainable annual harvest of stags. • Using the count data from 2026 Pait will manage hind numbers accordingly and in collaboration with neighbouring estates, particularly East Benula.

9	Struy	3,256	Recognising the exceptional environmental attributes on the Estate, management objectives are: • To manage the Estate in such a way as to balance the often conflicting needs of nature conservation, deer management, public access and other commercial activities. • To work with NatureScot, Scottish Forestry and other interested parties in the good management of the native woodlands and other rare species on the Estate. • To adopt a policy of deer management which will facilitate the regeneration of native forestry, whilst maintaining a deer population compatible with requirements of the local Deer Management Group. • To operate the Estate as close to financial viability as possible, so ensuring its viability as a long term investment and securing the future of at least one full time employee. To ensure that visitor use of the Estate for scientific and recreational purposes is compatible with other management objectives, whilst safeguarding rights of way and traditionally used routes.
10	Upper Glassburn	67	• Management objectives are to secure the conservation objectives for native woodland working in partnership with Affric Highland.
11	West Monar	2,408	• Pait and West Monar are run as a single management enterprise • Management objectives are to balance deer management to deliver conservation objectives and a sustainable annual harvest of stags. • On West Monar, the aim is to maintain the current “Favourable” status of Monar Forest SSSI. The summit heaths are the most outstanding feature – dominated by woolly hair-moss with abundant cushion alpine plants and a variety of other species
Total		45,116	

1.4 Land Management Activities

Combinations of land use objectives and priorities vary from property to property throughout the Deer Management Group area but as a whole Conservation is a common and strongly shared focus of all. Activities undertaken or facilitated by Group members range include:

- Biodiversity restoration through the management of Designated Sites and wider ecosystems. Rare small cow-wheat (*Melampyrum sylvaticum*) present in the DMG area.

- Mitigating climate change by improving the health of carbon-rich habitats through peatland restoration and natural regeneration of woodland and scrub.
- Livestock production (sheep, cattle and farmed deer) and food production (venison).
- Timber production.
- Contributing to the rural economy through deer stalking, salmon & trout fishing & game shooting activities.
- Enabling access for all through a network of paths and tracks.
- Providing educational experiences for schools, researchers through school visits, the Glen Urquhart Hill to Grill programme and conservation Groups
- DNA profiling of salmon populations in the river.
- Provision of visitor facilities including self-catering accommodation and car parks.
- Supporting ecosystem function and natural capital benefits: helping contribute to clean water and flood prevention measures.
- Research (eg UHI Post Graduate, Schools, Government)- 5 years intensive Forest Research project on the lappet moth

These activities provide a range of direct and indirect substantial public benefits to the area. Underpinning all these activities is balancing the sustainability of three elements: **environment, economy and local community**.

1.5 Group Vision & Objectives

The **vision** of the Group is to continue to manage deer in **collaborative** and **sustainable** way, recognising the objectives of individual ownerships and the wider community (*Figure 2*). Members support and fully endorse the long-term vision for deer populations and their management in accordance with the following:

- "Scotland's Wild Deer – A National Approach"⁹
- Code of Practice on Deer Management¹⁰
- Wild Deer Best Practice Guidance¹¹

⁹ [Scotland's Wild Deer: A National Approach](#)

¹⁰ [Code of Practice on Deer Management](#)

¹¹ [Wild Deer Best Practice](#)

Figure 2: Deer Management Vision



The Group has eight main objectives set out in **Table 2**.

Table 2: Group Objectives

	Objectives
Deer Management	To manage the shared deer population sustainably, to achieve environmental, social and economic land management objectives across the landscape, safeguarding deer welfare throughout.
Designated Sites	To endeavour to maintain designated habitats in no worse than their current condition and to enhance and restore those habitats that are assessed as being in less than 'favourable condition'.
Carbon Rich Soils	To identify opportunities to safeguard and restore valuable carbon rich habitats and provide regular updates on peatland restoration activity.
Woodlands, Upland Habitats and Wider Biodiversity	To support healthy ecosystems and biodiversity restoration at landscape scale through the cumulative effects of conservation grazing management of habitats and the sustainable management of deer.
Invasive Non-Native Species	To reduce the further spread of invasive non-native species.
Deer Welfare	To safeguard deer welfare.
Securing Sustainable Deer Management for the Future	To ensure that deer management contributes to the local rural economy providing income, investment, employment & education opportunities and helping to develop skilled and qualified deer managers for the future.
Collaborative Deer Management	To secure landscape scale sustainable deer management through collaboration at landscape scale.

2. Deer Management

2.1 Red Deer Numbers

Since 2003, the open-range red deer population has been counted frequently (*Table 3*). Red deer numbers have fluctuated since 2003 but the count in 2026 was the lowest counted since 2003 (*Figure 3 and Table 3*). The stag population has remained broadly stable since 2003 with a drop in 2026.

Figure 3: Red Deer Helicopter Counts (2003 -2026)

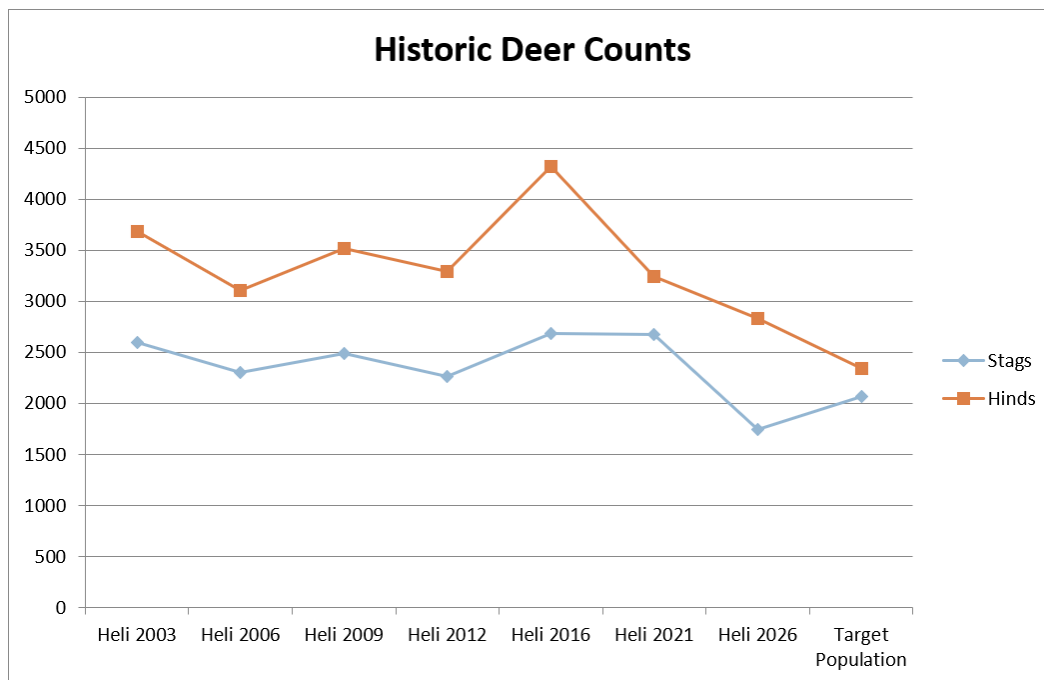


Table 3: Red Deer Populations 2003 -2026

Helicopter Census	Year	Stags	Hinds	Calves	Total	Density
Heli 2003	2003	2596	3682	1243	7521	17.3
Heli 2006	2006	2300	3105	939	6344	14.6
Heli 2009	2009	2488	3519	925	6932	16.0
Heli 2012	2012	2260	3291	936	6487	15.0
Heli 2016	2016	2686	4320	1217	8223	18.7
Heli 2021	2021	2675	3247	1014	6936	16.0
Heli 2026	2026	1748	2830	834	5412	12.5
Target Population	2030	2065	2345	683	5093	11.7

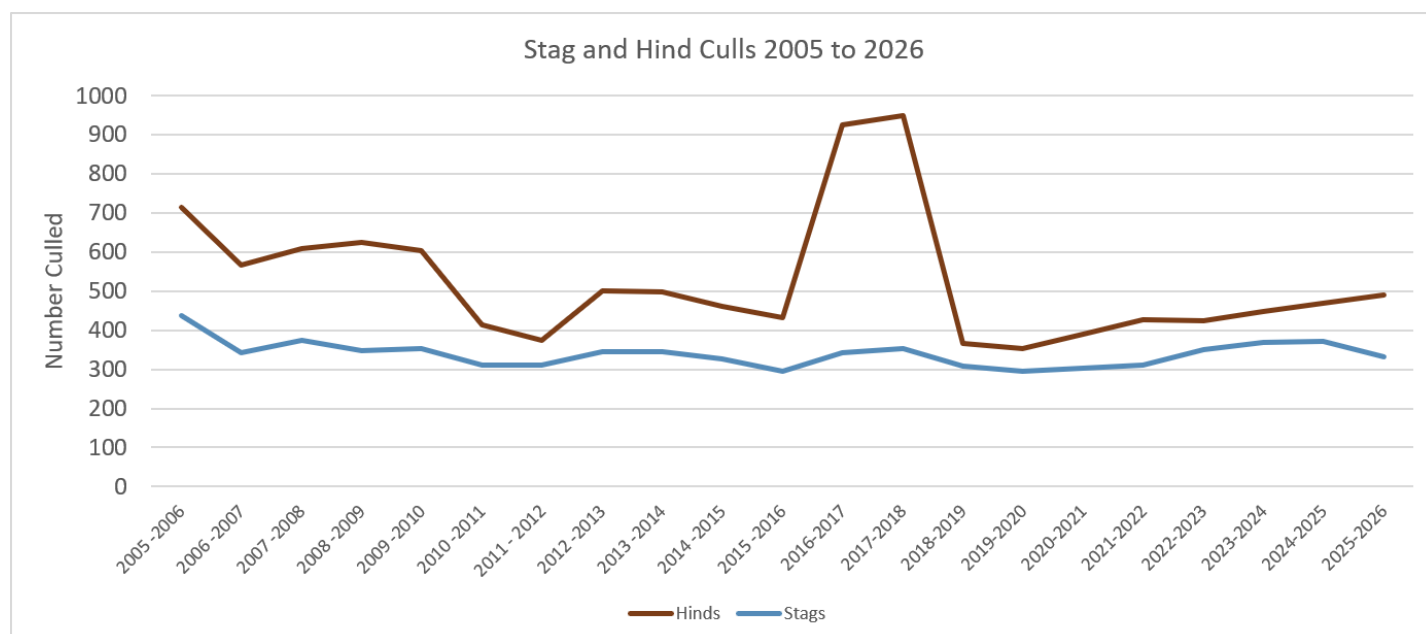
2.2 Historic Deer Culls

Culls for individual properties are discussed and agreed in advance and are informed by counts, the population model as well as information relating to the distribution and general health of the herd. The Group are consistent in carrying out and reporting agreed culls, with stalkers tending to focus culls in areas where required. Red deer cull data for the last 20 years is shown below (*Table 4 & Figure 4*).

Table 4: Historic Deer Culls 1980 to 2026

Culls	Total for DMG			
	Stags	Hinds	Calves	Total
2005 -2006	438	714	164	1316
2006 -2007	343	567	128	1038
2007 -2008	374	609	169	1152
2008 -2009	349	624	164	1137
2009 -2010	354	604	192	1150
2010 -2011	311	414	124	849
2011 - 2012	311	373	88	772
2012 -2013	345	502	138	985
2013 -2014	346	499	155	1000
2014 -2015	326	462	154	942
2015 -2016	294	432	117	843
2016 -2017	342	925	267	1534
2017 -2018	352	949	314	1615
2018 -2019	308	367	96	771
2019 -2020	294	354	77	725
2020 -2021	304	390	172	866
2021 -2022	310	426	113	849
2022 -2023	350	425	122	897
2023 -2024	369	449	128	946
2024 -2025	372	470	128	970
2025 -2026	332	490	150	972

Figure 4: Historic Deer Culls 1980 to 2026



2.3 Deer Distribution and Movements

Through the use of deer fencing, red deer movements are largely restricted to open upland ground. A strategic fence running from Glen Cannich to Beaully largely prevents open range red deer from encroaching onto Strathglass agricultural land, into surrounding forestry or from crossing the main Beaully to Cannich Road. Regular inspections of fences and repairs are undertaken where necessary.

Given that most deer management units within the red deer open range wish to continue to utilise deer as a resource, determining the overwintering areas of stags will be an important element of this plan. The results of helicopter deer counts and discussions with deer managers will enable this analysis. Whilst overwintering areas provide essential shelter for deer generally, there is a risk of increased localised impacts to natural heritage as well as agricultural and woodland interests through temporal concentrations of deer.

2.4 Grazing Management of Other Herbivores

The main species of deer grazing the moorland are red deer (*Cervus elaphus*) with some roe deer (*Capreolus capreolus*) starting to increase in number. Sika Deer (*Cervus Nippon*) are also resident in the wider Deer Management Group and are occasional visitors to open ground. Populations of feral goats are established on some western properties. Current Habitat Impact Assessment methodology being undertaken by the Group will take into account the impact of other herbivores.

2.5 Target Populations

Ongoing management of the open range red deer herd involves setting population targets that take into account the ecological needs of a range of habitats across the landscape (**Sections 3, 4 & 5**) and deer welfare (**See Section 7**), as well as the economic costs and benefits derived from the sustainable harvest of stags and hinds (**See Section 8**).

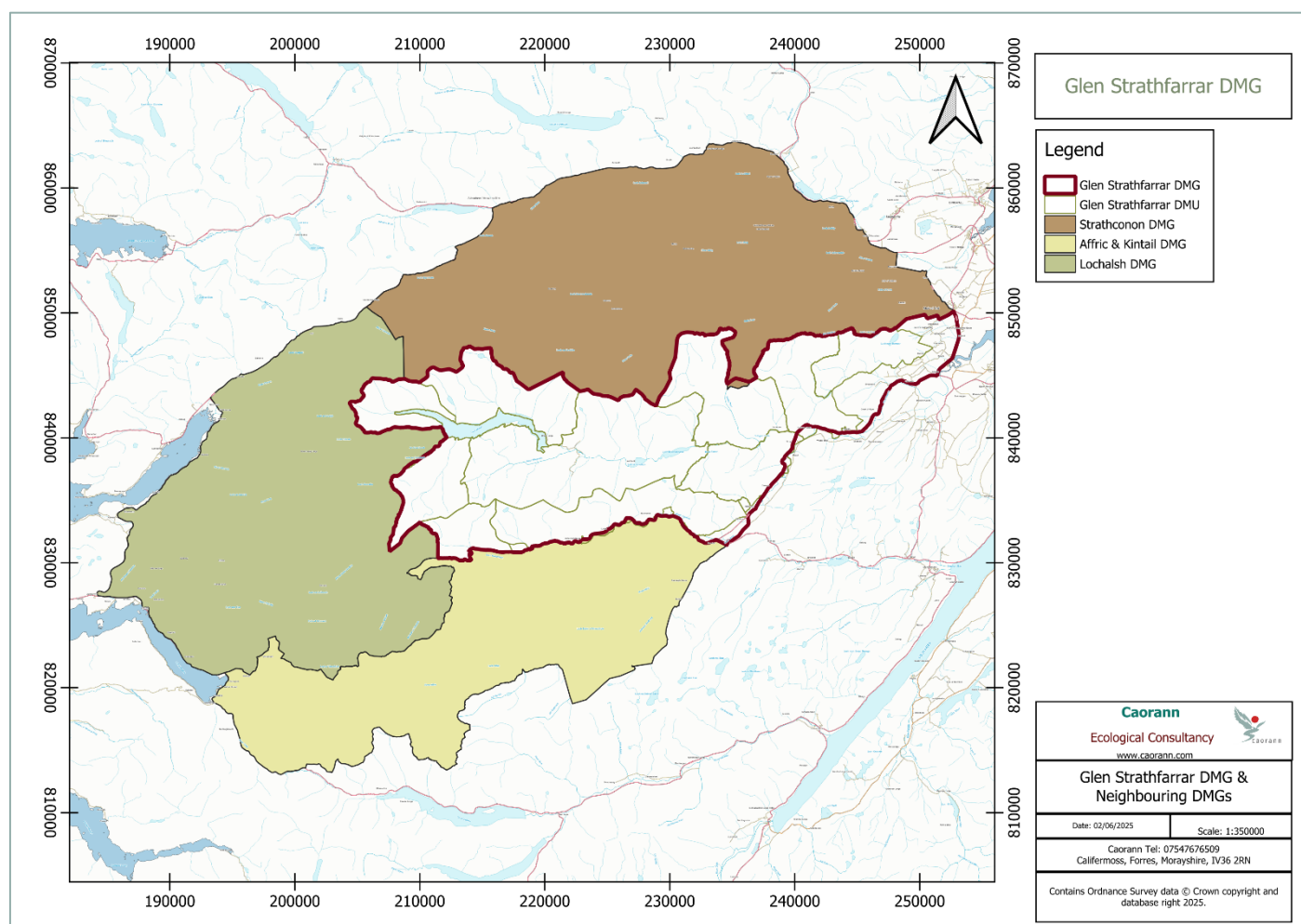
Table 4 also sets out the agreed approach being undertaken across four neighbouring DMGs within the South Ross area (Figure 6). Members will undertake culls to achieve the agreed DMG red deer population target of no more than **5,105 red deer** representing a reduction from **15.9** deer per km² to **11.7** deer per km². To increase the value of collaborative working, this working plan includes a summary of population targets agreed in consultation with individual properties for Glen Strathfarrar DMG, Affric & Kintail Land Management Group and Lochalsh DMG and to be agreed with Strathconon DMG. This approach is the first of its kind and should enable a truly landscape

scale approach to deer management securing a landscape population density of **9.4 deer per km²** across four Groups and **150,700 ha** of the South Ross red deer range (**Table 5 & Figure 5**).

Table 5: Population Targets

DMG	Area (Km2)	2021 Helicopter Count					2026 Helicopter Count					2030 Target Densities				
		2021 Stags	2021 Hinds	2021 Calves	2021 Total	2021 Density	2026 Stags	2026 Hinds	2026 Calves	2026 Total	2026 Density	2030 Stags	2030 Hinds	2030 Calves	2030 Total	2030 Density
Strathglass SAC	200.52	826	1125	358	2309	11.5	557	1701	562	2820	14.1	483	910	273	1666	8.3
SAC Properties	477.76	2319	3381	1077	6777	14.2	1743	3487	1172	6402	13.4	1659	2532	729	4920	10.3
Glen Strathfarrar DMG	434.52	2673	3234	1010	6917	15.9	1748	2830	834	5412	12.5	2051	2365	689	5105	11.7
Affric & Kintail LMG	220.89	928	1193	427	2548	11.5	1036	1577	521	3134	14.2	615	635	222	1472	6.7
Lochalsh DMG	437.1	1697	3146	1108	5951	13.6	2199	3575	1374	7148	16.4	1607	2220	646	4473	10.2
Strathconon DMG (ex Glenmarskie)	414.68	2187	3434	989	6610	15.9	1433	1853	724	4010	9.7	1335	1340	469	3144	7.6
GSF, A&K and Lochalsh DMGs	1092.51	5298	7573	2545	15416	14.1	4983	7982	2729	15694	14.4	4273	5220	1557	11050	10.1
GSF, A&K, SC & Lochalsh DMGs	1507.19	7485	11007	3534	22026	14.6	6416	9835	3453	19704	13.1	5608	6560	2026	14194	9.4

Figure 5: Glen Strathfarrar DMG & Neighbouring DMGs



2.6 Population Models

A live population model setting out the required culls for the Group will be updated following the Helicopter Count scheduled for Spring 2026 and thereafter on an annual basis to work towards the Group population target. The Group will work collaboratively to meet annual culls, concentrating efforts across marches.

2.7 Opportunities and Constraints

Opportunities: Deer are a keystone species and play an important role in the ecology of the DMG area. The careful management of deer will not only benefit wider ecosystem health and function but will benefit the deer themselves. The sensitive grazing of cattle grazing will complement the deer management actions by contributing to the ecosystem, providing a range of benefits through creation of habitat mosaics, breaking up of the ground to promote floral species diversity and through nutrient enrichment from dunging, which in turn supports a range of invertebrates and birds. Delivery of the Deer Management Plan will deliver a range of benefits not just to the DMG area but also wider public benefits.

Constraints: Overgrazing by deer and cattle as well as issues of poaching of the ground presents a significant constraint to achieving the wider vision of the Group. Out with fenced exclosures, deer browsing can prevent successful tree regeneration by limiting new seedling recruitment and can impact on the species composition of wider habitats. As a free-ranging species, red deer population are highly mobile and will be drawn to areas of better habitat quality and where shelter is provided. The efforts of the Group to deliver population targets will depend on the pressure of the surrounding deer population. The Group recognises therefore that a wholly collaborative approach is required to managing red deer at a landscape level and is committed to working with neighbouring DMGs in the South Ross area.

2.8 Actions to be Undertaken

Action		Management Actions to Be Undertaken
1	Population Targets	Members will undertake culls required to work towards the agreed DMG red deer population target of no more than 5,105 red deer representing a reduction from 15.9 deer per km ² to 11.7 deer per km ² .
2	Population Census	Deer population census of the Group areas will be conducted by Helicopter in 2026 to assess progress towards the population target.
3	Population Models	The population model will be adjusted annually to include actual culls and count information and will be used to set the cull required by the Group to achieve the population target. The Group will work collaboratively to achieve the required DMG cull determined by the population model.
4	Cull Reporting	Members will provide interim culls reports throughout the hind season to aid collaborative working. A complete cull return of all deer species and feral pigs will be provided by members for the Spring meeting.



3. Designated Sites

3.1 Extent of Designated Sites

The Glen Strathfarrar area as a whole has high conservation importance and is very heavily designated, containing a number of high profile sites of national importance. Deer management is potentially relevant to many of these.

Much of the area to the southeast (11,306 ha) falls within the **Strathglass Complex Special Area of Conservation (SAC)**. A total of 14,823 ha has been designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) covering 4 sites (*Table 6 & Figure 5*):

- **Affric-Cannich Hills SSSI**
- **Liatric Burn SSSI**
- **Glen Strathfarrar SSSI**
- **Monar Forest SSSI**

The DMG area is within a National Scenic Area and part of the DMG falls within the Affric to Strathconon SPA which is an area of 50419 ha designated for Golden Eagles deemed to be in Favourable Maintained condition in 2010 (*Figure 7*) . Much of the Group area is also covered by a Wild Land area, identified in 2014 to support Scottish Planning Policy. They are the most extensive areas where high wildness can be found and include remote mountains and moorland, isolated sections of coast and uninhabited islands. The eastern part of Glen Strathfarrar was also previously recognised as a National Nature Reserve although in the recent review of NNRs and their status, it was de-declared in November 2006. The purpose of the NNR was the recognition of the stand of Caledonian pinewood which is of National importance.

Table 6: Designated Sites & Properties

Des	Site	BRAULEN	CULLIGRAN	EAST BENULA NORTH	EAST MONAR	ERCHLESS	FARLEY	GLEN CANNICH	PAIT	STRUY	UPPER GLASSBURN	WEST MONAR
SAC	Strathglass Complex	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓		
SSSI	Affric - Cannich Hills	✓		✓				✓	✓			
SSSI	Glen Strathfarrar	✓	✓							✓		
SSSI	Liatrie Burn							✓				
SSSI	Monar Forest				✓							✓
SPA	Glen Affric to Strathconon	✓	✓					✓		✓		

Figure 6: Designated Sites: SAC & SSSIs

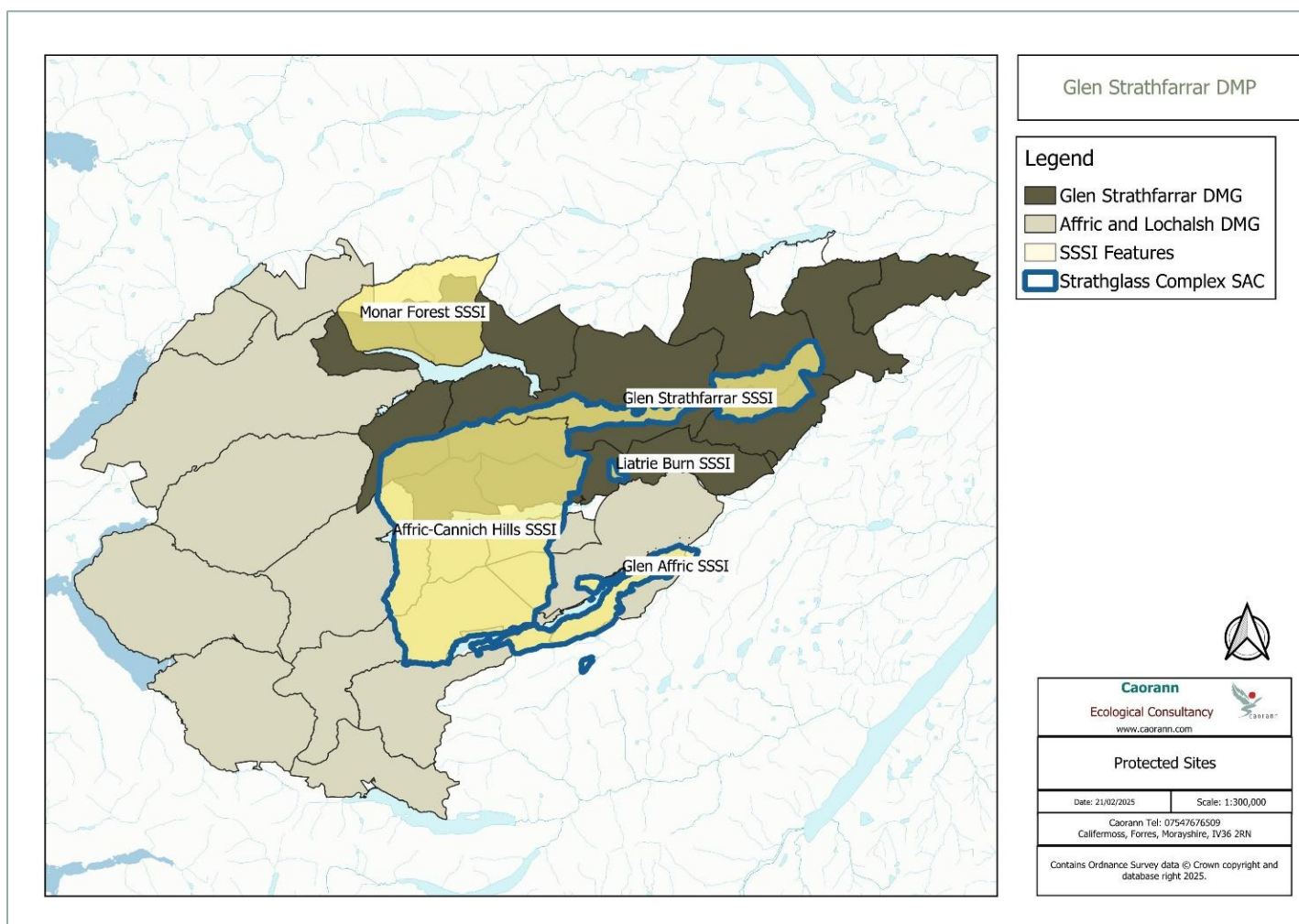
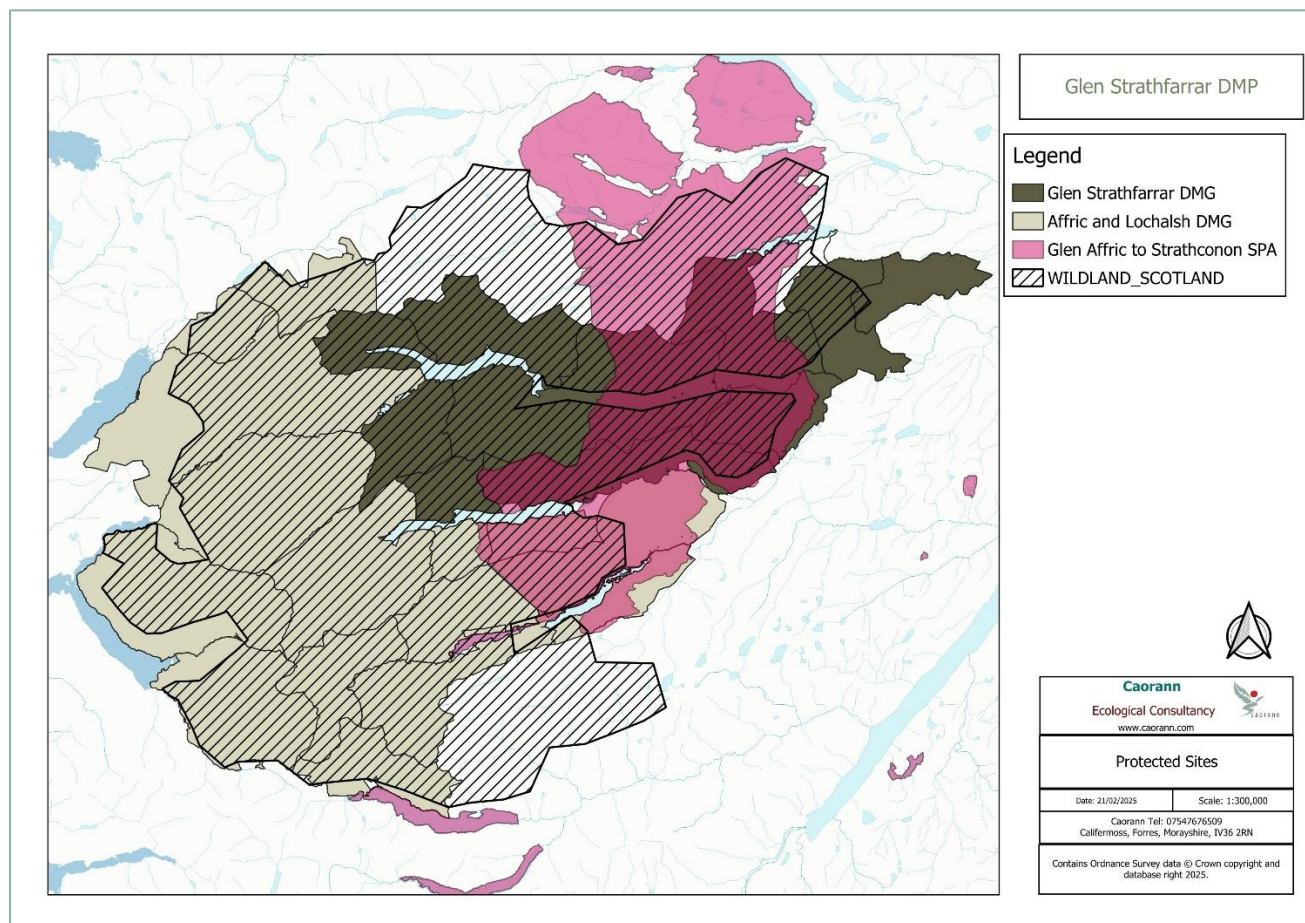


Figure 7: Designated Sites: SPA and Wildland



3.2 Designated Site Condition

Table 7 sets out the current condition of all features within the DMG area.

- Woodland Features:** The Native pinewood & Caledonian forest features across the DMG remain in unfavourable condition although management actions to address deer impacts are actively being undertaken by all properties either through fencing or deer reductions. Mountain willow scrub is also in unfavourable condition.
- Upland Features:** Upland Assemblage, Heath (Alpine, Dry and Wet), Tall herb communities and Blanket Bog features are still in Unfavourable Condition despite an overall reduction in deer numbers from 2016 to 2021. Further analysis however using count data has shown that deer numbers have stayed broadly the same over the Strathglass SAC (**Table 8**).

Table 7: Current Feature Condition of Designated Sites

Des	Site	Feature	Date Assessed	Assessed Condition
SSSI	Affric - Cannich Hills	Native pinewood	1 Mar 2012	Unfavourable No change
SSSI	Affric - Cannich Hills	Upland assemblage	2 June 2020	Unfavourable Recovering
SSSI	Glen Strathfarrar	Native pinewood	10 Sept 2009	Unfavourable No change
SSSI	Glen Strathfarrar	Vascular plant assemblage	25 Mar 2016	Favorable Declining
SSSI	Glen Strathfarrar	Lichen assemblage	30 July 2013	Favourable Maintained
SSSI	Glen Strathfarrar	Dragonfly assemblage	19 Oct 2017	Favourable Maintained
SSSI	Glen Strathfarrar	Breeding bird assemblage	3 July 2009	Favourable Maintained
SSSI	Liatric Burn	Native pinewood	10 Sept 2009	Unfavourable No change
SSSI	Monar Forest	Upland assemblage	15 Oct 2015	Favourable Maintained
SAC	Strathglass Complex	Bog woodland	2 Aug 2017	Favourable Maintained
SAC	Strathglass Complex	Caledonian forest	4 July 2014	Unfavourable No change
SAC	Strathglass Complex	Dry heaths	28 Feb 2020	Unfavourable Recovering
SAC	Strathglass Complex	Wet heathland with cross-leaved heath	18 Mar 2020	Unfavourable Recovering
SAC	Strathglass Complex	Plants in crevices on base-rich rocks	28 Feb 2020	Favourable Maintained
SAC	Strathglass Complex	Tall herb communities	28 Feb 2020	Favourable Recovered
SAC	Strathglass Complex	Plants in crevices on acid rocks	28 Feb 2020	Favourable Maintained
SAC	Strathglass Complex	Acidic scree	28 Feb 2020	Favourable Maintained
SAC	Strathglass Complex	Alpine and subalpine heaths	2 Jun 2020	Unfavourable Recovering
SAC	Strathglass Complex	Montane acid grasslands	28 Feb 2020	Favourable Maintained
SAC	Strathglass Complex	Mountain willow scrub	18 Mar 2020	Unfavourable Recovering
SAC	Strathglass Complex	Blanket bog	28 Feb 2020	Unfavourable Recovering
SAC	Strathglass Complex	Clear-water lakes or lochs	31 Mar 2005	Favourable Maintained
SAC	Strathglass Complex	Otter (Lutra lutra)	16 July 2015	Favourable Maintained
SPA	Glen Affric to Strathconon	Golden eagle (Aquila chrysaetos), breeding	29 Oct 2012	Favourable Maintained
SSSI	Affric - Cannich Hills	Moine	17 Oct 2012	Favourable Maintained
SSSI	Glen Affric	Native pinewood	17 Nov 2011	Favourable Maintained
SSSI	Glen Affric	Lichen assemblage	22 Jul 2013	Favourable Maintained
SSSI	Glen Affric	Dragonfly assemblage	8 Apr 2014	Favourable Maintained
SSSI	Glen Affric	Breeding bird assemblage	31 Mar 2002	Favourable Maintained

Table 8: Changes in Deer Numbers on the Strathglass SAC

DMG	Area (Km2)	2021 Helicopter Count					2026 Helicopter Count					2030 Target Densities					
		2021 Stags	2021 Hinds	2021 Calves	2021 Total	2021 Density	2026 Stags	2026 Hinds	2026 Calves	2026 Total	2026 Density	2030 Stags	2030 Hinds	2030 Calves	2030 Total	2030 Density	2030 Hind Density
Strathglass SAC	200.52	826	1125	358	2309	11.5	557	1701	562	2820	14.1	483	910	273	1666	8.3	4.5
SAC Properties	477.76	2319	3381	1077	6777	14.2	1743	3487	1172	6402	13.4	1659	2532	729	4920	10.3	5.3

3.3 Opportunities and Constraints

- **Opportunities:** GSDMG area is of national interest for nature conservation, encompassing a number of designated sites of national and international importance. The Group has an opportunity to ensure that all designated sites on the property are brought into favourable condition
- **Constraints:** Deer overgrazing and trampling are one of the threats to many of the features currently protected across many of the properties within the Group area.

3.4 Actions to be Undertaken

Action		Management Actions to Be Undertaken
5	Strathglass SAC Upland Habitats	Relevant properties will aim for an overall reduction in deer on Strathglass SAC from 14.1 deer per km² to 8 deer km² by 2029 , concentrating in the areas of higher impacts, and contributing to ecological restoration objectives.
6	Strathglass SAC Upland Habitats	Repeat monitoring of the SAC will be undertaken by NatureScot in 2029 to assess changes in impacts delivered through a reduction cull.
7	Strathglass SAC Upland Habitats	Members will explore opportunities for summer grazing of cattle to optimise their ecological benefits.
8	Strathglass SAC Woodland Habitats	All woodland SAC features are underpinned by SSSI designations and actions are detailed below.
9	Monar Forest SSSI	East Monar and West Monar Estates will continue to manage deer numbers at a level that will maintain current condition.
10	Laitrie Burn SSSI	The Native Pinewood feature on Glen Cannich Estate has been fenced under a Woodland Grazing Scheme and is already showing signs of recovery. The Estate will maintain fences to prevent incursions.
11	Glen Strathfarrar SSSI	• Struy, Culligran and Braulen have all undertaken fencing under various historic schemes to protect the Native Pinewood. • Recent monitoring by Struy Estate of unfenced pinewoods has shown high impacts despite concentrating culls in the site. Struy Estate and Culligran will continue to work together to minimise the movement of deer into the vulnerable Rough Wood area. • A reduction cull of over 5 deer per km² on Braulen will help reduce pressure on unfenced pinewood areas.

4. Carbon Rich Soils

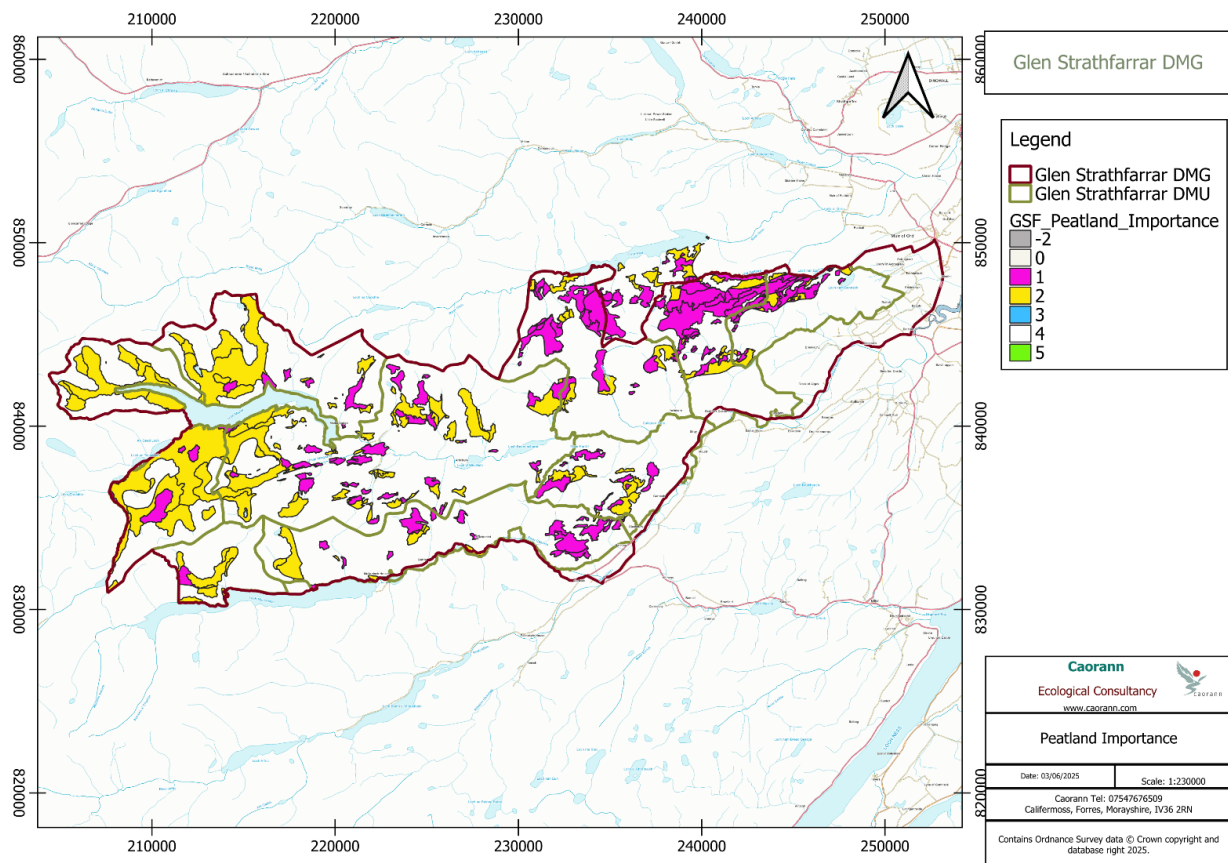
4.1 Extent of Carbon Rich Soils

Carbon rich soils and peatland areas provide multiple benefits, e.g. good water quality, biodiversity and climate change mitigation as soil carbon stores and through [carbon sequestration](#). Soils are the main terrestrial store of carbon in Scotland and peatlands hold most of our carbon store (53%). Within the DMG area, there is **4,412 ha** of Category 1 peatland (*Tables 9 & 10, Figure 8*).

Table 9: Area of Peatland Importance

Peatland Importance Category							
	-2	0	1	2	3	4	5
Area ha	331	21771	4412	7290	1467	2645	7201

Figure 8: Peatland Importance



4.2 Peatland Condition

Most of the Category 1 Peatland is located to the north east of the Group. Estates will undertake monitoring to assess the condition of peatland and blanket bog. 670 ha of peatland on Pait Estate is being considered for restoration.

4.3 Opportunities and Constraints

- **Opportunities:** Group members will consider the potential for investment in restoring degraded peatland. Restoration of damaged peat either through ditch-blocking or reprofiling can provide considerable public benefit in helping to regulate run-off, prevent erosion and improve water quality.
- **Constraints:** Trampling and overgrazing by deer can damage sensitive habitats such as peatland.

4.4 Actions to be Undertaken

Action		Management Actions to Be Undertaken
12	Peatland	The agreed reduction of deer numbers across the DMG of 4 deer per km ² will help reduce pressure on blanket bog. Members will aim to ensure that carbon rich habitats are maintained in a healthy condition, identifying opportunities to restore degraded peatland.
13	Peatland Impact Monitoring	Members will monitor the condition of peatland and impacts of herbivores through Blanket Bog Habitat Impact Assessment.

5. Woodlands, Upland Habitats and Wider Biodiversity

5.1 Extent of Woodland

Twin crises of climate change and biodiversity loss have heightened the need for urgent action to improve the resilience of Scotland's woods and forests, along with the need to contribute to lowering the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. Coniferous and broadleaved woodlands are important habitats within the Glen Strathfarrar DMG area and account for **21%** of the land area (**3,401 ha** according to the National Forest Inventory Scotland (*Table 11 & Figure 9*). Group members have been addressing the need for woodland restoration and creation for some time (*Figure 10*) and over the last 5 years have created an additional 450 ha of new woodland.

Figure 6 shows the buffer zone around existing woodland which could act as a seed source for further regeneration with the Primary Zone (light green) 200m from an existing seed source and the Secondary Zone (pale yellow) 500m from seed source. This can be used to identify areas of potential habitat connectivity.

Table 11: Summary of National Forest Inventory Data

NFI Category	Assumed	Broadleaved	Conifer	Felled	Ground	Young	Low Density	Total
Area ha	1,071	1,088	1,586	686	10	269	19	4,729

5.2 Woodland Condition

The Native Woodland Survey of Scotland (NWSS) was published in 2014. This mapped 311,153 ha of non-designated native woodland in Scotland, reported condition and highlighted herbivore impacts which threatened their medium to long term condition. Of the 3,026 ha 58% percent of the herbivore impacts from NWSS were considered to fall in the Low to Medium impact category (Table 12).

Table 12: Native Woodland Survey for Scotland Herbivore Impacts for DMG

NWSS Herbivore Impact	Low	Medium	High	Very High
Area ha	340	1,426	468	791
% Impact	11%	47%	15%	26%

Figure 9: National Forest Inventory Scotland

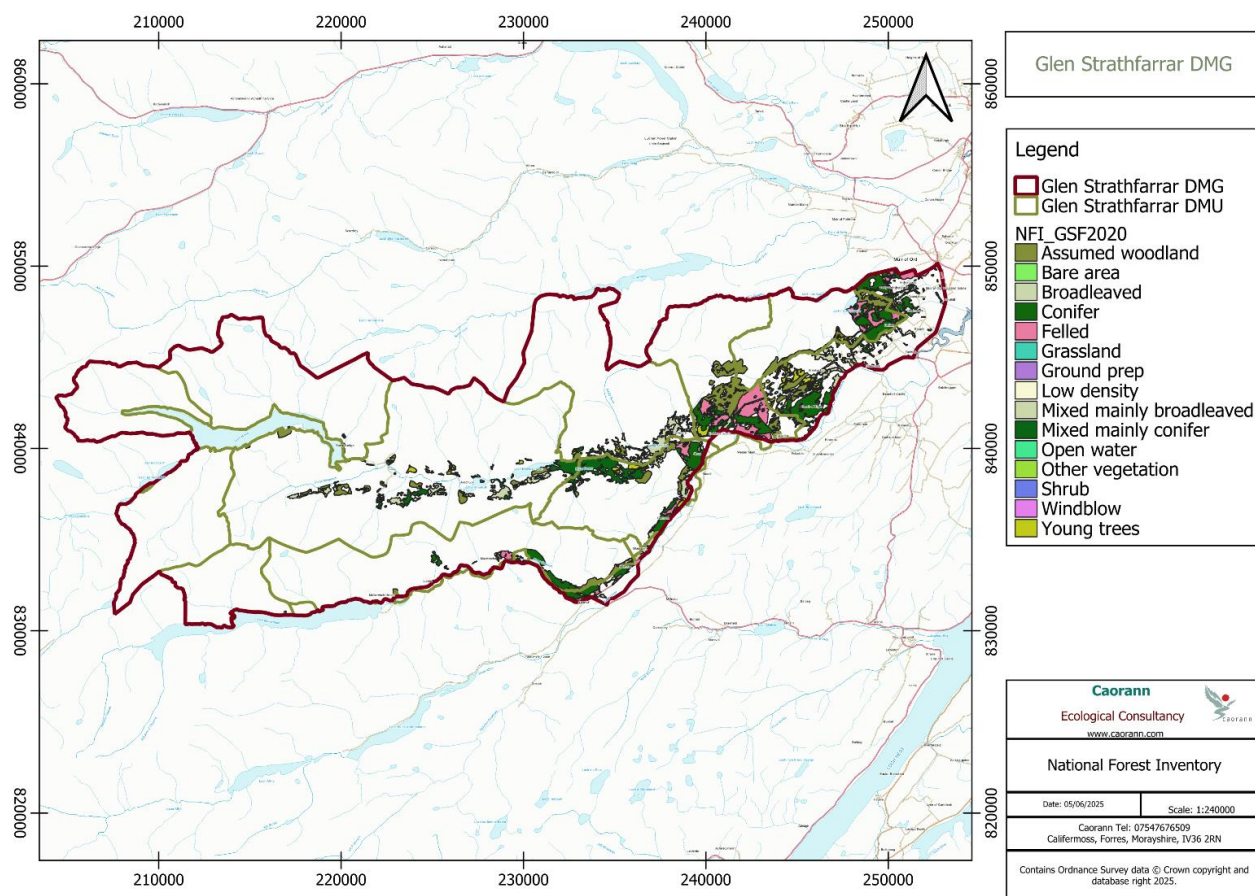
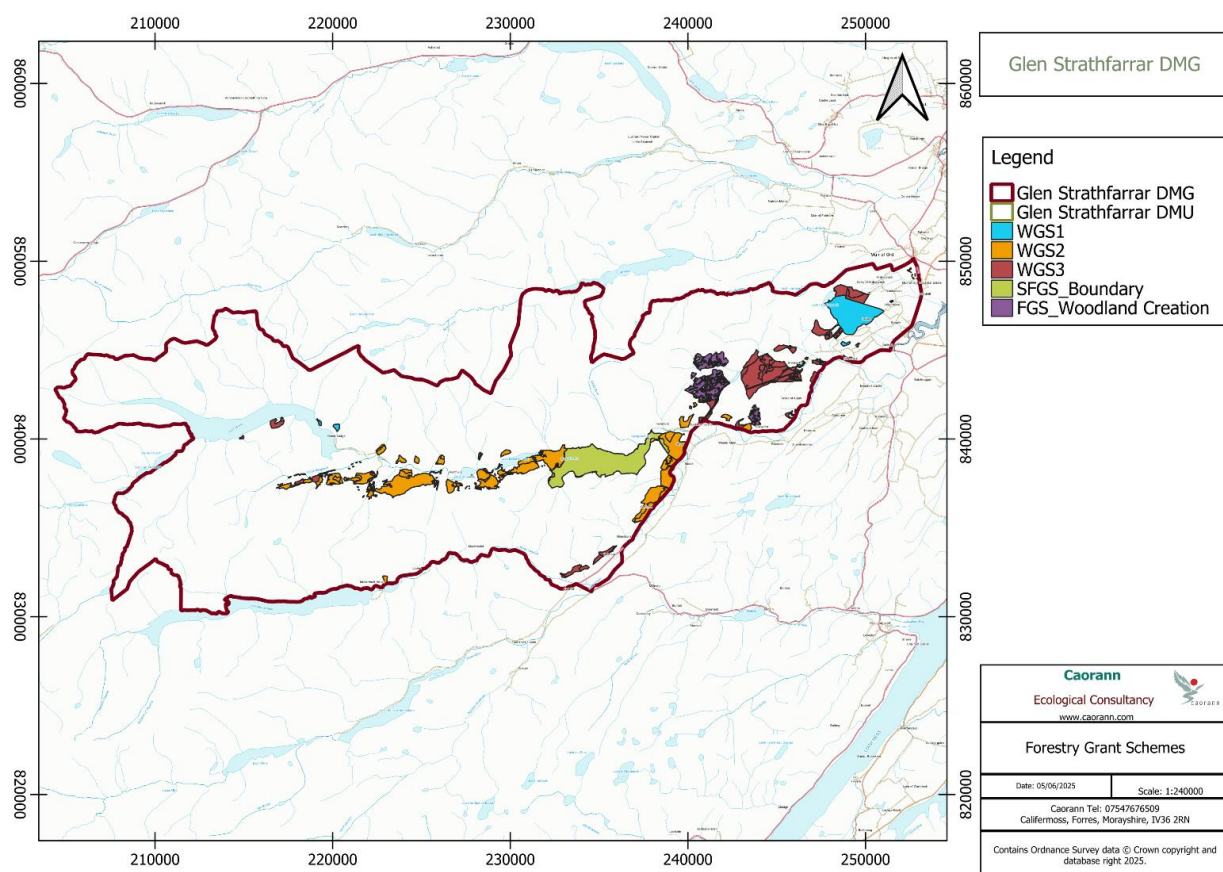


Figure 10: Woodland Forestry Grant Schemes





5.3 Extent of Upland Habitats

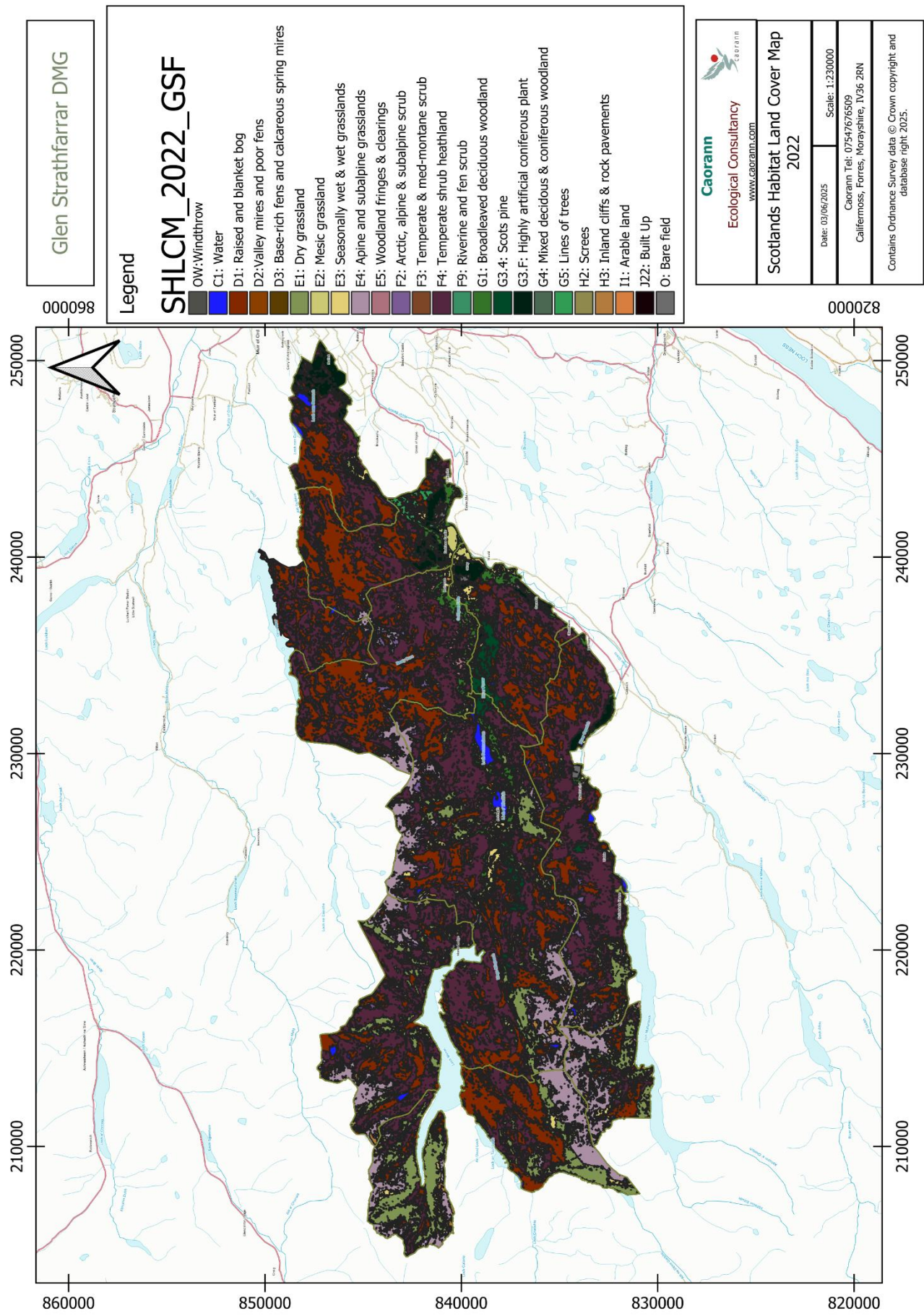
The composition of vegetation has been detailed in previous DMPs. The Space Intelligence habitat mapping layer¹² (Scotland Habitat and Land cover Map, 2022) provides detailed information across 23 EUNIS Habitat types (*Table 13 and Figure 11*).

Table 13: Scotland's Habitat Land Cover Map 2022

No	Code	Scotlands Habitat Land cover Map (EUNIS)	Total (ha)
1	c	Inland surface standing and running waters	412
2	D1	Raised and blanket bogs	11255
3	D2	Valley mires, poor fens and transition mires.	46
4	D4	Base-rich fens and calcareous spring mires	0
5	E1	Dry grasslands	4555
6	E2	Mesic grasslands	201
7	E3	Seasonally wet and wet grasslands	1549
8	E4	Alpine and subalpine grasslands	4222
9	E5	Woodland fringes and clearings and tall forb stands	518
10	F2	Arctic, alpine and subalpine scrub	919
11	F3	Temperate and mediterranean- montane scrub	11
12	F4	Temperate shrub heathland	17285
13	F9	Riverine and fen scrubs	0
14	G1	Broadleaved deciduous woodland	1345
15	G3.4	Scots pine	605
16	G3.F	Highly artificial coniferous plantation	1010
17	G4	Mixed deciduous & coniferous woodland	82
18	G5	Lines of trees	181
19	H2	Scree	162
20	H3	Cliffs and rock pavements	531
21	I1	Arable land	7
22	J	Built up	19
23	O	Bare field	177
24	OW	Other	25
Total			45116

¹² <https://www.data.gov.uk/dataset/911c87c4-a0d3-4bb8-9089-f7657980113e/scotland-habitat-and-land-cover-map-2020>

Figure 11: Scotland Habitat and Landcover Map 2022



5.4 Condition of Upland Habitats

Research has shown that the activities of deer and other free-grazing herbivores are not distributed evenly across the landscape. The distribution and availability of key resources such as shelter, access to water as well as the quality and quantity of preferred vegetation types will all influence where, when and how the landscape is utilised. Distribution may also be influenced by other factors such as human activity through disturbance, live-stock grazing or exclusion from preferred habitats. This uneven pattern of distribution results in localised impacts on resources and this can have consequences (both positive and negative), both for the population as a whole and the wider ecosystem.

The management of impacts is a key consideration for deer managers. The concentration and distribution of impacts has been found to be strongly linked to the relative distribution and availability of preferred and non-preferred habitat types. Effective deer management decisions to manage or reduce impacts will therefore have to consider more than just the overall population size and take full account of a range of factors in determining the appropriate stocking density for any given landscape. And the full range of herbivores contribution from other herbivores

Different habitats may require different levels of grazing e.g woodland regeneration without fencing may require densities of less than 4 deer per km² whereas upland features such as acid grassland, semi-improved grassland and dwarf shrub heath may withstand grazing at higher densities, which will be informed by habitat monitoring.

The available open range for Red Deer throughout the Group area amounts to approximately **43,452** ha. Red deer (with some cattle grazing in summer) provide the main grazing impact over much of the hill ground. Sheep numbers have been greatly reduced over the last 20 - 30 years (from well in excess of 2700) and there are two established populations of feral goats. Roe Deer are also widespread but at lower density and mainly limited to woodland. Sika Deer have been seen and shot occasionally over recent years, but they are not considered to be established within the Group area.

In the case of Glen Strathfarrar DMG, the main impacts caused by deer are:

- Trampling and Grazing impacts on Designated Sites contributing to unfavourable condition of some of the site features;
- Impacts on wider conservation objectives of Group members to see habitats recovering, natural tree regeneration occurring and riparian woodland expansion.

5.5 Riparian Woodland and Atlantic Salmon

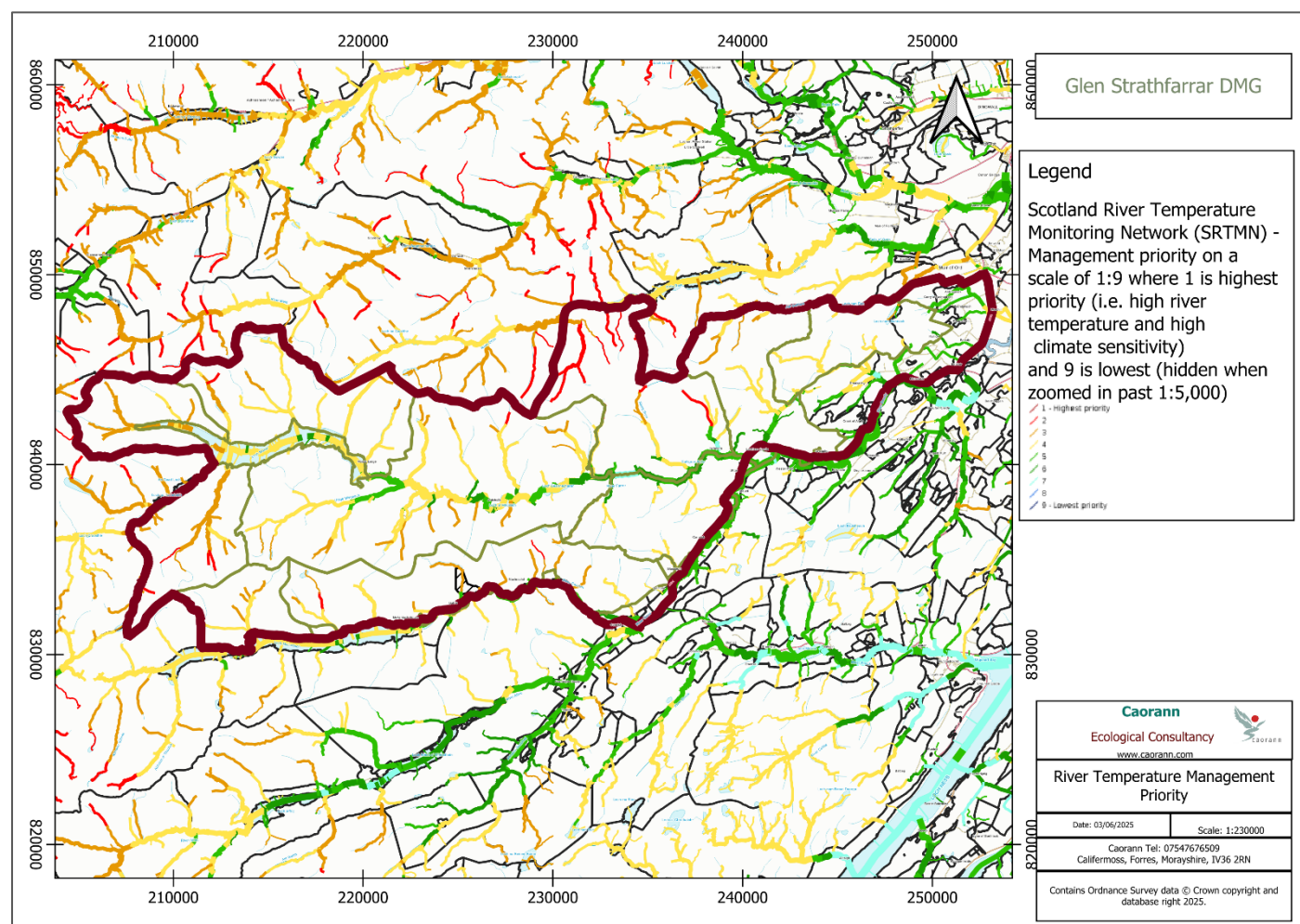
Wild salmon are in crisis, with a decline of 70% in just 25 years. There are many factors affecting the survival of the iconic Atlantic salmon (*Salmo salar*), on their return journey from spawning grounds to sea. One critical factor is river temperature. Adapted to live in relatively cool water, salmon prosper when temperatures are in the teens but struggle much above 20°C. Where river temperatures exceed 23°C this can cause thermal stress and behavioural change. At 33°C salmon can no longer survive, even for a few minutes.

During the summer of 2018, it is estimated that around 70% of rivers in Scotland experienced temperatures over 23°C. UK climate change projections provided by the Met Office indicate that summers like these could occur every other year by 2050, increasing concerns over the future of salmon in Scotland. Maximum summer river temperatures can be reduced by increasing the amount of water in the river channel, or reducing the amount of sunlight reaching the water surface. The amount of sunlight reaching the river surface can be reduced by riparian planting; shading the river channel with trees located on river banks. Scotland has around 108,000 km of rivers, of which only 35% are protected by any substantial tree cover.

It is therefore important that riparian tree planting is prioritised to areas where it can have greatest benefits for river temperature, specifically, where rivers are (1) hottest (2) most sensitive to climate change ([see SRTMN Predictions](#)) and (3) can be effectively cooled by riparian woodland. These three individual criteria can be combined with an equal weight to provide a single riparian

woodland prioritisation score that looks to maximise the benefits of riparian tree planting for protecting Scotland's rivers from the adverse effects of climate change¹³ (**Figure 12**).

Figure 12: Management Priority for Riparian Woodland (SRTMN Data)



It can be seen from the data that the rivers in the Strathfarrar DMG area are considered to be a very high priority (**Figure 12**) and therefore grazing management actions to create and restore new riparian woodland as well as actions to restore degraded peatland will be extremely beneficial in helping to mitigate the effects of climate change. It should be noted however, that much of the south banks in Strathfarrar and Glen Cannich are already well wooded in terms of riparian woodland, more-so on the lower reaches but still a significant proportion of the whole. Although technically out-with the deer management area, on Struy approximately 12 ha of riparian woodland planting has already been undertaken over the last 10 years in Strathglass.

¹³ Shilland, E.M., Proudlock, P., Shilland, J.D., Monteith, D.T., Millidine, K., Jackson, F.L., & Malcolm I.A. (2021) UK Upland Water Monitoring Network (UKUWMN) Rivers Summary Data. DOI: 10.7489/12387-2

5.6 Wider Biodiversity

Glen Strathfarrar DMG area is rich in biodiversity with a vast array of plant, insect, bird and animal life which has been detailed in previous plans. A key consideration for the DMG is addressing biodiversity loss and group members are actively committed to actively identifying opportunities to restore biodiversity including undertaking Agri Environment Climate Schemes for Moorland Management and Conservation Grazing. In delivering a sustainable approach to conservation grazing management of deer and livestock across the DMG, the Group will continue to benefit a range of key species.

5.7 Action to be Undertaken

Action		Management Actions to Be Undertaken
14	Native Woodland Expansion & Restoration	Members will carry out monitoring of native woodland condition and deer impacts and use this to inform woodland management.
15	Woodland Creation	DMG members will update the Group on plans for further woodland expansion, including the use of fencing.
16	Habitat Monitoring	DMG members will carry out monitoring of dwarf shrub heath habitat to assess the impact of deer on habitats and wider ecosystem health. Results will be used to inform deer management.
17	Conservation of protected and vulnerable species	DMG members will undertake activities to secure the conservation of protected and vulnerable species within the SPA, SAC and wider area.
18	Wider Biodiversity	Wider habitats will benefit from an agreed reduction of 4 deer per km ² across the DMG area and an agreed reduction from 14.6 deer km ² to 9.4 deer km ² across the wider landscape (including Glen Strathfarrar, Affric & Kintail, Strathconon and Lochalsh DMGs).

6. Invasive Non-Native Species

6.1 Invasive Non-Native Species

Invasive non-native species (INNS) are one of the top five threats to global biodiversity, costing the economy nearly £1.9 billion a year, and can even harm our health. Once established, they can be extremely costly and difficult to control. As part of the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy, a priority action is to ensure pathways for the introduction and spread of INNS are managed to prevent or reduce their rate of introduction and establishment and prevent further damage to ecosystems.

6.2 Opportunities and Constraints

- **Opportunities:** Sika deer and feral pigs are resident in the Group but an opportunity exists to prevent their spread.
- **Constraints:** As a woodland species, both sika and feral pigs will have the potential to migrate into areas of expanding woodland cover. Undertaking management to prevent their establishment could become more difficult and challenging.

6.3 Actions to be Undertaken

Action		Management Actions to Be Undertaken
19	INNS	Members will report sightings and undertake culls of sika, fallow, muntjac and feral pigs to prevent their spread.

7. Deer Welfare

7.1 Deer Welfare

The definition of welfare in relation to wild deer is ‘concern for their physical and psychological well-being. This definition can be applied to both the individual animal and population level. Wild Deer Best Practice Guidance¹⁴ states that with increasing intervention (e.g. fencing, feeding, culling) comes increasing responsibility for their welfare.

- Fencing is a management tool that is used extensively throughout the DMG. The exclusion or prevention of deer movements to areas of natural areas of shelter in winter through the erection of exclosures or use of strategic fenced may pose a threat to welfare. Similarly, in areas where fencing is no longer required it can be removed to open up areas of natural shelter which will be attractive to deer.
- Supplementary feeding of deer is undertaken across the DMG.
- Members already monitor and report any significant levels of winter mortality to the Group, as well as any significant health issues encountered.

7.5 Chronic Wasting Disease

Chronic wasting disease (CWD) is a highly contagious and fatal transmissible spongiform encephalopathy (TSE) disease that affects deer. It has had devastating effects on many populations of wild and farmed deer in the USA and Canada and has been confirmed in Norway. It is not known to affect humans. There is no evidence of TSEs in deer in the UK but if it were to become established in the wild deer population it would have major consequences for deer welfare and the UK deer industry. Chronic wasting disease is a notifiable disease and suspected cases must be reported to an Animal and Plant Health Office (APHA)¹⁵ office immediately. Failure to do is an offence. For information on how to spot CWD see <https://www.gov.uk/chronic-wasting-disease>

¹⁴ <http://bestpracticeguides.org.uk/>

¹⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/chronic-wasting-disease>

7.9 Opportunities and Constraints

- **Opportunities:** Wider ecological restoration will ensure that deer will have an important role as an integral part of the ecosystem which will ultimately benefit the health of the population.
- **Constraints:** All deer management must be carried out to the highest standards possible to safeguard deer welfare.

7.10 Actions to Be Undertaken

Action	Management Actions to Be Undertaken
20	Safeguarding Deer Welfare The DMG will continue to promote and encourage the safeguarding of deer welfare both at the scale of the individual animal and at a population scale through the following actions: • Carrying out all deer management activity to Wild Deer Best Practice Guidance industry standards; • Requiring the undertaking of deer management training, continual professional development and industry recognised qualifications; • Ensuring that the natural habitat supports good welfare through the provision of adequate habitat and shelter; • Ensuring that any land management operations take into consideration possible effects on deer movements or the availability of shelter; • Ensuring that the necessary precautions and checks are undertaken to prevent the spread of diseases including Chronic Wasting Disease; • Monitoring and report on levels of winter mortality as well as any other significant health issues encountered.



8. Securing Sustainable Deer Management for the Future

8.1 Socio Economics

Wild deer are considered a resource and can play an important role in promoting and sustaining economic activity, especially in rural areas where they can contribute to businesses, particularly stalking, tourism and food production. Deer are also of great social and cultural value to Scotland. As one of Scotland's top iconic wildlife species they provide a range of benefits, for example through their contribution to tourism and people's enjoyment of the outdoors. Venison is also a healthy meat enjoyed by many. However, they can also create costs to other land-use objectives and have a negative impact on other economic activities including agriculture and forestry. Deer Vehicle Collisions may also incur an economic as well as social cost. Deer can also lead to health and safety risks e.g. road traffic accidents and deer related disease such as Lyme disease.

The properties within the DMG have a range of land management objectives. Common to all, is the need to balance strong conservation objectives whilst maximising the potential value of deer as a resource – through stalking, tourism and venison production. The DMG will continue to be an important contributor to the rural economy, securing employment, bringing investment into local communities and providing additional benefits through the provision of sustainable food. The Glen Strathfarrar area is a popular tourist destination, and wildlife tourism and provision of accommodation in particular are important to the DMG properties as well as the local economy as a whole. Deer, as one of Scotland's top iconic species, are an important element of this.

- An average of 780 adult venison carcasses are produced annually.
- There are **12 full-time** deer management employees with an additional **7 part-time** seasonal employees associated with deer management. In addition, estate activities (tourism, administration, housekeeping, livestock) support an addition **7 full-time** and **14 part-time** jobs.

- Currently around **300 stags** are let for stalking. Direct income from commercial stalking and the sale of venison is worth **£270K** annually with the Group producing around **95 tonnes** of venison annually.
- Glen Strathfarrar attracts tourists through the letting of stalking which also supports local accommodation providers.
- All properties use local services in the surrounding area - such as shops, fuel, hotels and B&Bs, local tradesmen.
- All properties have access to larder and chill facilities.

8.2 Deer Management Competence

The DMG recognises the importance of delivering high standards of competence in deer management. As well as adopting a Training Policy, the Group will continue to promote and offer formal training opportunities, continuous professional development activities and will ensure Wild Deer Best Practice guidance is followed.

8.3 Public Safety & Engagement

Members of the Deer Management Group will continue to promote and encourage effective communication on deer management issues both within the DMG and throughout the wider community in order to promote better awareness and education of deer and deer management.

- Tick awareness already discussed with estates and staff on all estates.
- Tick information provided for holiday cottage visitors.
- DMG collectively signed up to principles of Best Practice which provides guidance on safeguarding public safety and food safety.

8.4 Public Access

There are several popular Munros and Corbetts listed in Table 2 on the Heading For The Scottish Hills website¹⁶. Many of these summits are difficult to access from the Glen Cannich/ Glen Strathfarrar side, however a private ferry boat service runs throughout the summer months on Loch Mullardoch to enable easier access to some of the more inaccessible summits and ridges in the western part of the DMG. In addition to the opportunities for climbing and walking the 17 miles of private road up Glen Strathfarrar is proving a huge attraction for cyclists.

8.5 Education Opportunities

Members of the Group actively promote and encourage effective communication on deer management issues throughout the wider community in order to promote better awareness and education of deer and deer management. Glen Cannich Estate hosts a Hill to Grill event for 30-40 S2 pupils from Glen Urquhart High School annually. Glen Cannich, Glen Strathfarrar and Strathglass are used extensively by Aigas Field Centre for educational trips. Culligran hosts an annual fun run for the local primary school.

8.6 Opportunities and Constraints

- **Opportunities:** Wild deer are considered a resource and can play an important role in promoting and sustaining economic activity, especially in rural areas where they can contribute to businesses, particularly tourism and food production. Deer management will continue to play an important socio-economic role in supporting fragile rural communities in the Group area by providing an important source of local full-time and seasonal employment, healthy and sustainable food in the form of venison, income from tourism and stalking and educational opportunities particularly for young people.
- **Constraints:** As deer numbers are reduced across the Group area to deliver the public interest on climate change and biodiversity benefits, management could become more

¹⁶ [Heading for the Scottish Hills](#)

resource-intensive to maintain lower numbers with a reduced source of income for Estates with potentially less stalking opportunities and a reduction in the income derived from venison. Deer management already comes at significant cost to Estates but with reduced income, consideration will have to be given as to how sustainable deer management might be supported in the future through Government incentives and support for further diversification into new enterprises.

8.7 Actions to be Undertaken

Action		Management Actions to Be Undertaken
21	Training and CPD	DMG to organise an annual CPD and training opportunity for DMG members.
22	Client Stalking	DMG to continue to monitor sustainable harvest of stags for let stalking and to investigate opportunities for cross-property letting of stalking. Opportunities to collectively market stalking also to be explored.
23	Venison	Members to consider membership of SQWV and contributing to a healthy, sustainable venison market through securing high standards of food safety and deer welfare.
24	Public Safety	Members to identify, raise awareness and where possible minimise the local health and safety risks including incidents of Deer Vehicle Collisions and risks associated with Lyme Disease.
25	Access	Members to keep Heading for the Scottish Hills website updated, promoting responsible Access and the following of the Scottish Outdoor Access Code.
26	Educational Opportunities	Members to provide opportunities for young people and the wider community to learn about the benefits and opportunities associated with the management of deer and the wider rural landscape.
27	Local Community Engagement	Group to continue to actively engage with local community through the Community Council, events and promotion of good news stories.

9. Collaborative Deer Management

9.1 Collaboration at Landscape Scale

To manage deer populations effectively and sustainably at a landscape scale, a **collaborative approach** is required and the need to negotiate and compromise may be necessary. This requires a Groups to be functioning effectively, to be inclusive and to operate in the spirit of openness and transparency. Effective collaborative deer management also requires **effective communication** not just within the Deer Management Group but throughout the wider community in order to promote better cooperation, understanding and awareness of deer and deer management.

The operating principles of the Group are set out in the document Glen Strathfarrar DMG Group Operation¹⁷ available on the Group Website¹⁸.

9.2 Communication and the Common Ground Accord

The DMG **promotes collaboration** by supporting the Association of Deer Management Group's *Principles of Collaboration*¹⁹ and the recent work of the Common Ground Forum who developed *Our Common Ground Accord*²⁰ (Figure xx)

Figure : The Common Ground Accord

Our Common Ground Accord

In relation to upland deer management in Scotland

We commit ourselves to:

- Identify the common purpose
- Respect our diversity of objectives
- Keep an open mind
- Listen to understand
- Engage honestly

¹⁷ [Glen Strathfarrar DMG Group Operation.](#)

¹⁸ <https://glenstrathfarrardmg.deer-management.co.uk/>

¹⁹ [ADMG Principles of Collaboration](#)

²⁰ [The Common Ground Forum](#)

9.3 Opportunities and Constraints

- **Opportunities:** Having been undertaking collaborative, landscape scale deer management since the 1960's, Glen Strathfarrar DMG has long recognised the value and benefits to be derived from effective collaboration. GSDMG is just one of five DMGs within the wider South Ross area and will continue to engage in the annual liaison meeting and to collaborate with neighbouring Groups providing a truly landscape scale approach to effective management (see **Section 2.5**).
- **Constraints:** Without effective collaboration, the deer management approach being undertaken by the Group to reduce deer numbers could lead to net-immigration of deer from across the wider area onto sensitive areas, which impacts on the objectives of the Group.

Action		Management Actions to Be Undertaken
28	Collaboration	The DMG will meet twice a year and will include representation from all properties as well as representatives from NatureScot, neighbouring groups representatives and members of the local community. The DMP will be published on the DMG website and the Working Plan reviewed and updated annually.
29	South Ross Liaison Group	Representatives of the Group will attend the annual South Ross Liaison Group meeting to secure effective landscape scale management of deer across five deer management groups.
30	The Common Ground Forum	Group will sign up to The Common Ground Accord.

10. Monitoring and Review Schedule

Table 21 sets out the schedule for deer management activities from 2025 to 2031.

Table 21: Schedule of deer management activities

Actions	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
Delivery of Sustainable Deer Management through DMP Actions.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Management undertaken to deliver a target density of 8 deer per km2 on Strathglass SAC to reduce grazing and trampling pressure	✓	✓	✓			
Monitoring of Strathglass SAC					✓	
Management undertaken to deliver a deer reduction of 4 deer per km2 across the Group area to reach a target density of 11.7 deer per km2 (5,105 deer) by 2030.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Helicopter population census with NatureScot		✓				
Habitat Monitoring Woodland, Dwarf Shrub Heath & Blanket Bog Habitats		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Review Habitat Results and adjust management accordingly			✓	✓	✓	✓
Review Population Model, Set & Agree Culls	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Collate Information & Update Plan Actions	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

10. References

1. [Glen Strathfarrar Deer Management Plan 2016 - 2021. L Seivwright.](https://glenstrathfarrardmg.deer-management.co.uk/) Available on the DMG Website (<https://glenstrathfarrardmg.deer-management.co.uk/>)
2. Glen Strathfarrar Deer Management Plan. R. Putman
3. Glen Strathfarrar Deer Management Plan.
4. *River Temperature Data: Shilland, E.M., Proudlock, P., Shilland, J.D., Monteith, D.T., Millidine, K., Jackson, F.L. & Malcolm I.A.(2021) UK Upland Water Monitoring Network*