



# TEAM CULLING



## Aim

The effectiveness of a cull operation may be increased by several rifles and support staff working as a team. The purpose of this guide is to describe factors to be considered when planning and implementing a team culling operation, whilst ensuring that safety and deer welfare standards are maintained. For this guide a team is taken to be more than two stalkers operating in either forest or open range environments.

### Advantages

- ◆ Improves efficiency.
- ◆ Particularly useful to assist with large culls.

### Constraints

- ◆ Requires ability to recover and larder large numbers of carcasses.
- ◆ Deer behaviour and movement may change in response to repeated collaborative culling operations.
- ◆ Carcasses may be spread over a wider area.

### Most efficient where

- ◆ Weather and terrain combine to slow deer movement and increase the ability to predict how the deer will move.
- ◆ Rifles can move into position before the deer are aware of their presence.
- ◆ Rifles are positioned in areas which deer will move into.

## Planning

Pre-operation planning should take into account the fact that the culling, extraction and processing of large numbers of carcasses is likely to be time consuming and labour intensive.

- 1 Carry out a risk assessment.\*
- 2 Ensure compliance with relevant HSE Guidance\*\* e.g. working time & manual handling regulations.!
- 2 Ensure that specialist training has been provided in advance.
- 2 Ensure that all communications equipment has been checked and is fit for purpose.
- 2 Ensure that all team members have been equipped with the necessary protective clothing and equipment.
- 3 Determine or identify:
  - The number of deer using the area where the cull is required, seasonal or weather variations, and how deer are likely to behave when disturbed or moved from the area;
  - Suitable culling areas;
  - The most effective method of extraction, taking into consideration number of carcasses expected, distance and terrain;
  - Procedures to deal with the number of carcasses expected;\*\*\*
  - Whether helicopter support would be effective.\*\*\*\*

- 3** Consult with neighbours prior to carrying out a substantial cull.

## Communications

Communication is an essential component of any deer management activity involving a team and is particularly important in a culling operation.

- 2** Ensure all team members are equipped with radios operating on a dedicated channel. Hands free radios make communication more efficient.
- 2** Agree protocols for radio procedures before the start of any operation. Send, receive and acknowledge are essential steps. In addition team members should be clear on:
- Definition of terms to be used;
  - Commencing and ending the operation;
  - Moving position;
  - Methods of relaying;
  - Emergency procedures;
  - Channel allocation.

## Team requirements

- 2** Establish clear command and control structures, identify who will be responsible for the overall operation, who will co-ordinate operations, and who the rifle-team leaders are.
- 2** Ensure all team members are briefed on their role and the operational plan.
- 2** Ensure all team members understand and are able to follow procedures<sup>\*\*\*\*\*</sup> for:
- Radio communications (see Communications above);
  - Moving during the operation;
  - Dealing with wounded deer;
  - Carcass traceability;
  - Monitoring welfare;
  - Carcass extraction;
  - Contingencies including dealing with emergencies and severe weather;
  - Arrival in area of third parties not involved in the operation.

- 2** Ensure that the individual with overall responsibility for the operation is satisfied that all those participating are capable of fulfilling their role.
- 2** Ensure that there is communication between all team members.
- 2** As an aid to safety, high visibility jackets should be worn by stalkers to help identify stalkers' positions, particularly when the team size exceeds 4 people. The size of teams will be dictated by the nature of the ground but the effectiveness of the team is likely to decrease if the team size exceeds 12 rifles.
- 3** It is helpful if team members have knowledge of the ground and local deer movements.

## Moving deer to culling area

Under authorisation from DCS,<sup>\*\*\*\*\*</sup> deer may be legally moved using a vehicle to areas where they may be culled more efficiently or safely.‡

- 2** If using a vehicle to move deer, ensure that DCSG Driving Deer: Code of Practice is followed.

## Culling operation

- 2** Rifles move into position and only commence firing on instruction from the team leader.
- 2** Stalkers targeting a specific group of deer must be aware of the location of all the members of the team targeting that group and be aware of arcs of fire.
- 2** Any wounded animals are dealt with as a priority.
- 2** All culling must stop at the instruction of the stalker in charge; all must acknowledge this instruction.
- 3** Rifles to alert others when they cease firing.

\* See BPG Risk Assessment \*\* See BPG Health & Safety Principles \*\*\* See BPG Handling Exceptional Numbers of Carcasses \*\*\*\* See BPG Use of Helicopters: Support \*\*\*\*\* See BPG Reaction & Follow-Up, BPG Humane Dispatch, BPG Carcass Inspection, BPG Welfare Definition & Assessment, BPG Carcass Extraction \*\*\*\*\* See DCS Approvals & Authorisations

<sup>1</sup> Legislation: Health & Safety at Work etc Act 1974; Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999. Legislation available from the Office of Public Sector Information (OPSI) (publications are available online at [www.opsi.gov.uk](http://www.opsi.gov.uk) or can be obtained from the The Stationery Office (for address and contact details see BP Contacts). Further useful information also available on HSE's website: [www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk) or can be obtained from HSE Books (for address and contact details see BP Contacts) ‡Deer (Scotland) Act 1996