

**Written submission from Scottish Natural Heritage post Committee evidence session on 24 January 2017**

**Review of Deer Management**

I wanted to thank you and the Committee for providing us with the opportunity to give additional evidence on the issue of deer management. We are pleased that our report has stimulated interest in the topic, and in the discussions and scrutiny that the Committee evidence sessions have generated.

I would like to take this opportunity to clarify that members of our Scientific Advisory Committee are appointed by the SNH Board, through open recruitment from outwith SNH. As they are all external appointments, people employed by or associated with external universities or academic institutions. Although the SAC is chaired by an SNH Board member, their remit is to offer completely independent to SNH. Where additional specialist information is required we also have a larger Expert panel from whom we also seek independent advice.

The Committee asked for additional information on levels of staffing in support of deer management, and that is attached below.

We carry out practical deer management across many of the national nature reserves we own and manage, and I would like to invite you and the Committee to visit one of our sites to see how we are putting sustainable deer management into practice. The most suitable National Nature Reserve to visit would be either Creag Meagaidh, near Dalwhinnie or Flanders Moss, outside Stirling. I would be pleased to make any arrangements.

**Additional information on staffing levels in support of deer management**

**SNH**

SNH employs very few staff to solely undertake deer management work. However a large number undertake work on deer management as part of their job. The table below sets out the number of posts year by year, converted by a standard FTE divisor from the number of staff days recorded (or in the case of 2016/17 planned) on deer management tasks. Time spent on these tasks can be covered under a number of broad business plan headings/activity codes in staff job plans from which it hasn't always been possible to disaggregate work on deer. The asterisked figures for 2013/14 and 2014/15 are likely to be quite significant underestimates. The figures for 2015/16 and 2016/17 are the most robust.

This is in line with a previously published response to PQ **S5W-03616**

*Question: To ask the Scottish Government how many people have been employed by Scottish Natural Heritage to undertake deer management in each of the last five years?*

By way of context, SNH staff complement over the same period has declined by 20%, with a budget decline of approximately 30%.

	<b>Posts (FTE)</b>
<b>2012/13</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>2013/14</b>	<b>7 *</b>
<b>2014/15</b>	<b>6 *</b>
<b>2015/16</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>2016/17</b>	<b>12</b>

#### **Red Deer Commission (RDC)**

The last RDC Annual Report in 1995-96 listed 16 staff; 11 staff would be considered technical, policy and management staff and 5 providing administrative support.

#### **Deer Commission Scotland (DCS)**

The last DCS Annual Report in 2009 -10 listed a staff complement of 27 staff; 19 staff would be considered technical, policy and management staff and 8 administrative and IT support.

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**SNH**

**26 January 2017**