IN A RUT?

A DEER STRATEGY FOR LONDON

Urban fallow deer © Jamie Hall

Acknowledgements

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The opinions expressed in this Strategy reflect those of the advisory group that advised the Trust in its development.

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Executive summary

Many people will be familiar with herds of red and/or fallow deer living in Richmond, Bushy and Home Parks in south-west London, as well as smaller captive herds in some other London parks, such as Bedfords Park in Havering. Together with roe deer and muntjac, these species are living wild in London. Two other species, sika and water deer have been recorded just outside the Greater London boundary.

Deer have a strong social and cultural value in society but large and growing populations, particularly of fallow deer and muntjac, have the potential to cause ecological harm, compromise public safety and impact deer welfare if these populations and the impacts they cause aren't properly managed.

There are strategic ambitions to increase the amount of woodland and tree canopy cover across London, as well as increase the extent of species-rich grasslands and other valuable habitats. Much of this can be delivered in and around the Green Belt, where most – but not all – known populations of wild deer in London have been recorded. A large and increasing deer population may limit the ability to deliver these ambitions.

Measures to gather and evaluate data on wild deer and existing and potential damage they may cause in London are largely site-based, with little strategic oversight or co-ordination across land ownership and administrative boundaries. There is a need for a stronger, connected London-wide perspective on and approach to wild deer, so as to help inform appropriate steps that might need to be taken to help conserve healthy deer populations, and prevent wild deer from compromising woodland restoration and creation or otherwise becoming an unmanageable problem.

This Strategy starts that approach, and was developed by London Wildlife Trust to help progress two goals of the London Urban Forest Plan (2020).

Goal 1 of the London Urban Forest Plan (LUFP) has two key aims:

- **1a** Assess the threats of pests and diseases and climate change to London's urban forest.
- **1b** Develop a set of principles for managing London's urban forest to increase resilience and to combat the threats from pests and diseases and climate change.

This Strategy also supports the delivery of aspects of Goal 2 of the LUFP:

- **2c** Deliver a package of tailored woodland management training for urban forest managers in London.

Wild deer aren't considered pests within the context of Goal 1, they are recognised as potentially becoming a major threat to woodland condition, natural regeneration of trees and woods in parts of outer London and could compromise aims to expand and increase tree canopy across Greater London.

The Trust received funding through the DEFRA Trees Call for Action Fund (TCAF), administered by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, and managed by the Greater London Authority (GLA) for a programme of eight projects to progress aspects of the LUFP from 2021-24; this Strategy and a programme of deer data surveys and training was one of these projects.

Fallow deer in Epping Forest © Christian Moss

1. Introduction

Wild deer are increasingly making their presence known in London, and evidence suggests numbers are growing, their distribution is increasing, and their impacts on some valuable habitats are becoming more significant. However, the precise nature of this population growth, the factors driving it and its impact are not well understood.

There is long-standing expertise and experience in the management of the enclosed deer herds by The Royal Parks at Richmond, Bushy and Home Parks, and the management of wild deer by the City of London Corporation across much of Epping Forest. Outside of these sites (and other parks with smaller captive herds) any interventions to address existing and potential damage from wild deer through deterrence, dispersal or population management are largely the responsibility of individual land-owners with little strategic oversight or co-ordination across land ownership and administrative boundaries.

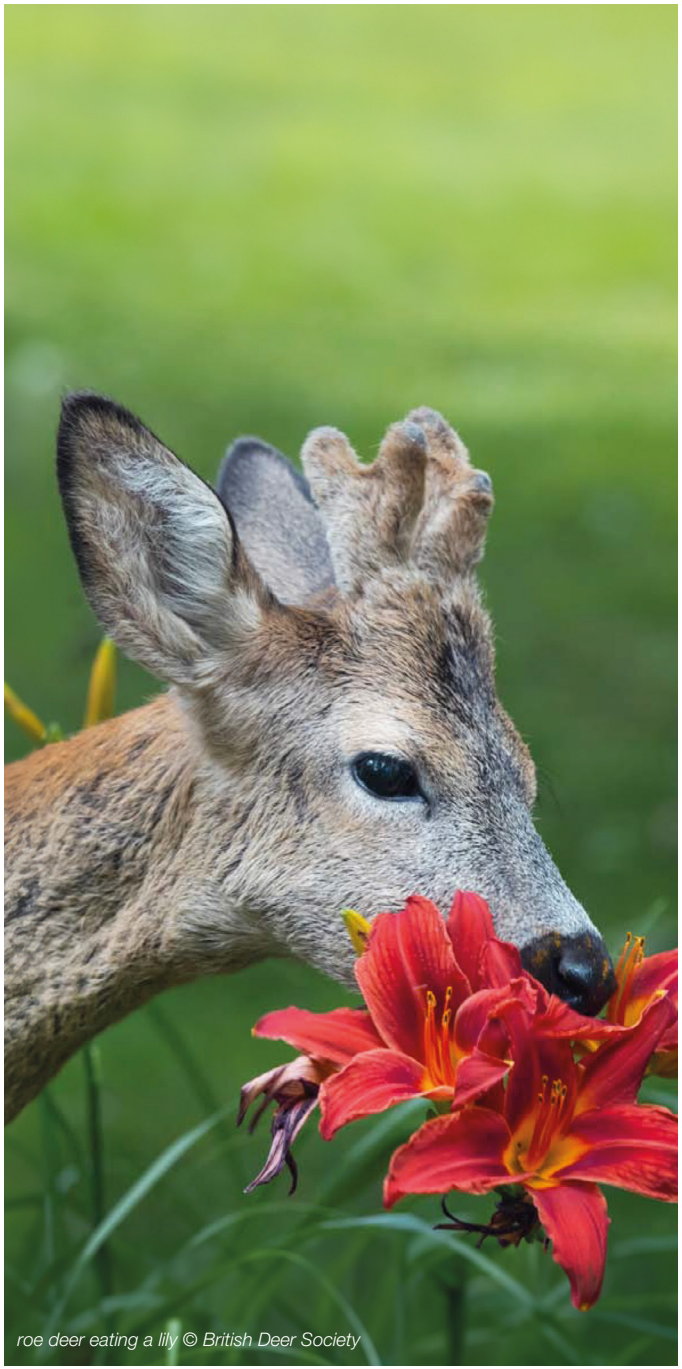
There are ambitious plans for conserving London's wild habitats and species through the London Local Nature Recovery Strategy (London LNRS). There are also plans and programmes in place to increase the amount of tree canopy cover and secure sustainable tree and woodland management through the London Urban Forest Plan (LUFP). These strategic ambitions are reflected and delivered at a borough level through various strategies, plans and projects, that when implemented will help London become greener, and more resilient to the impacts of a changing climate. In many parts of London, wild deer will play an important role in determining the success of these strategies and plans.

The presence of populations of wild deer in the capital is to be cherished. However the potential of populations growing at an unsustainable rate could compromise nature recovery ambitions in some places if this issue is not better understood and managed. Therefore, there is a need for a London-wide approach to wild deer so as to help landowners, land managers and ecologists to accommodate wild deer populations in their land management, and take the right steps to prevent them becoming an unmanageable problem. In tandem, there is the need to raise wider awareness about the need for the management of wild deer in parts of London.

This is not an issue unique to London. A number of other British cities are experiencing an increased presence of wild deer in woodlands, parks, and gardens. This reflects the situation in many other conurbations across temperate Europe, Asia and North America.

Deer in urban areas present many unique and complex challenges, and if we are to prevent growing numbers impacting on valuable habitats, and/or causing damage to people and property (through collisions with vehicles, for example), then actions need to be implemented in a strategic, proportionate, legal and safe way, based on robust evidence and best practice.

Critically, there is a lack of accurate data on wild deer numbers, their abundance, distribution and impacts across London. Systematic data on wild deer numbers is difficult to collect due to the mobility of the herds and individual deer, their nocturnal behaviour and the scarcity of dedicated surveying of deer within the capital. A start has been made to address this gap, but the collection of data about wild deer across London (and the city's fringes) is now a key priority for this Strategy.



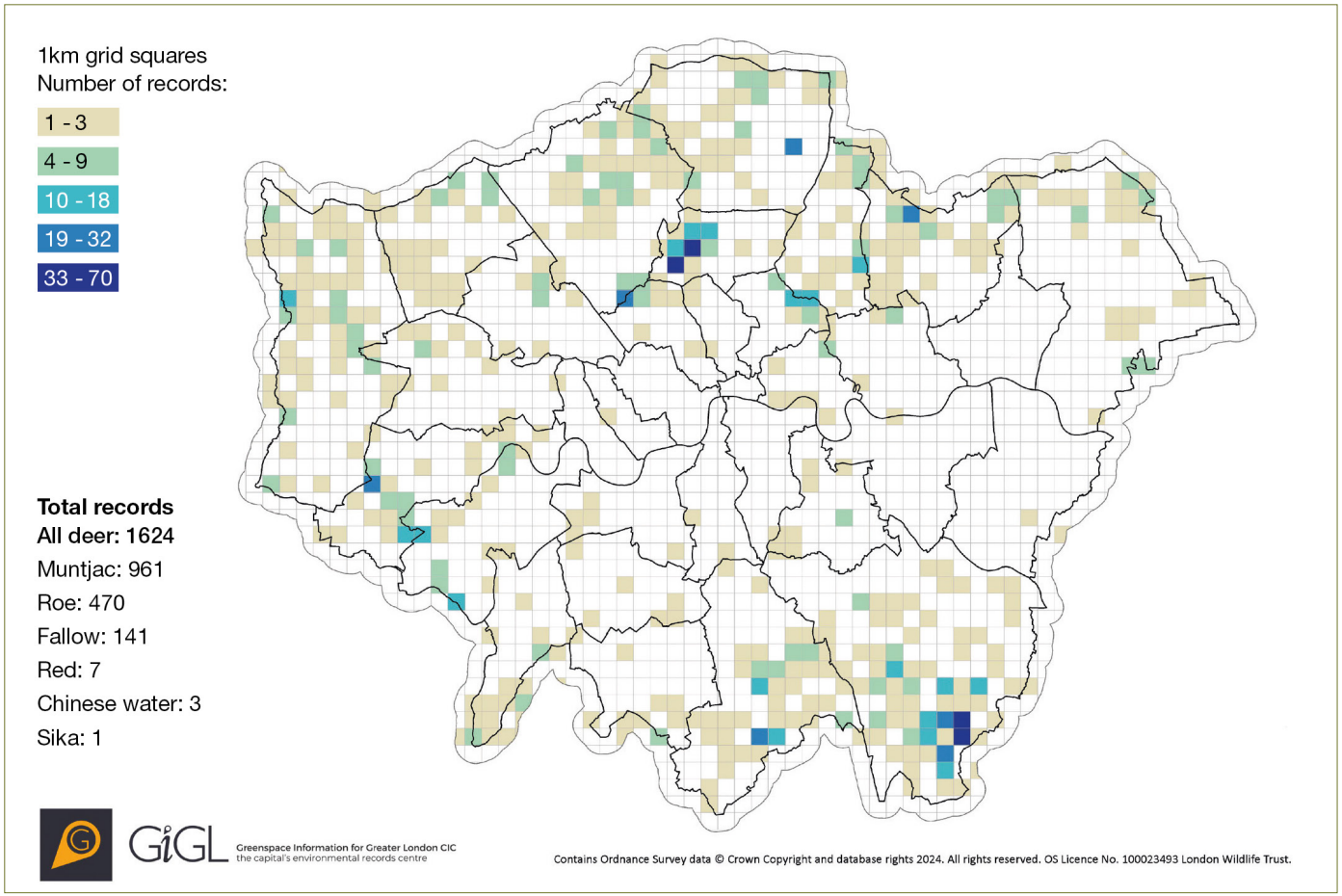
roe deer eating a lily © British Deer Society

The Strategy aims to understand and address the known and potential impacts of wild deer populations across London. It has been prepared under the auspices of the London Urban Forest Partnership. It has a four-year implementation timetable, and will be co-ordinated through a London Deer Forum, on which a range of stakeholders will be represented.

The Strategy is informed by best deer management practice adopted elsewhere, primarily in the rural environment. However, the situation within London is not fully understood and may require a different suite of practices given the urban and suburban context. At present there are no specifically urban wild deer strategies being implemented elsewhere in Britain, but the intention is that the actions set out here will help in the future development and implementation of urban deer management.

Delivering on the Strategy should secure a better understanding of the capacity of London's woodlands and other habitats to viably support herds of wild deer at sustainable levels. The success of the Strategy will depend on cross-boundary liaison between key landowners and stakeholders across Greater London and neighbouring districts in adjacent countries.

The Strategy **does not** cover London's captive deer herds enclosed in ancient deer parks, such as Richmond and Bushy Parks, or other captive deer collections or farms present in or near the capital. However, the popularity of these deer with the public is acknowledged, and measures to encourage appropriate interactions between deer and people are covered. In addition, the expertise of those responsible for these herds has assisted in the development of this strategy.



Distribution of deer records in Greater London, held by GiGL, 2024.

Records **exclude** red and fallow deer species in parks where deer are known to be captive and managed. Recording is dependent on survey effort, so absence of a record does not necessarily indicate absence of a species. Each record may represent a single individual or multiple deer, and some records in adjacent grids may be of the same animals.

London; definition, geography and policy

The Strategy covers the area of Greater London[1], formed of the 32 borough councils, the City of London Corporation, and the Greater London Authority (GLA), each with differing powers, policies and responsibilities. The nature of wild deer also implies that the area of interest stretches into the neighbouring counties of Essex, Kent, Surrey, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire.

The LUFP is one of a suite of the Mayor of London strategies that relate to the natural environment, including the London Environment Strategy (2018), the emerging London Green Infrastructure Framework, and preparing the London LNRS.

The Strategy is a 'tool' of the LUFP, published by the London Urban Forest Partnership, chaired by the Forestry Commission and hosted by the GLA.

[1] Where specific the term Greater London is applied in the Strategy, where more generic, the term London is used, with caveats where appropriate.

Red deer © BDS

Roe deer © Mark Hamblin/2020VISION

Fallow deer © BDS

Muntjac © BDS

Wild deer in London

Four of the six species of deer living wild in Britain are currently recorded in London; red, roe, fallow and muntjac. Red and roe deer are native, fallow deer were introduced to Britain in the 11th century, and muntjac introduced to private parks in Hertfordshire in the late 19th century, escaping into the wider countryside in the 1920s. Sika and (Chinese) water deer, introduced to Britain in the mid-19th century, have both been recorded near Greater London.

Each species has particular physical and behavioural characteristics that can determine the methods required to assess their presence, habitat preferences, potential impacts, and the means to manage their impacts if required. It also appears there are geographical differences in the distribution of each species across London, although the data may reflect recording biases. (See Appendices I and II).

Why are deer in London?

Aside from the deer introduced into and managed in historic deer parks and other captive herds, the presence of wild deer in London is largely a reflection of national trends. Although estimates of the total number of deer in Britain range from 750,000 to 2 million, there is a broad consensus that the numbers in Britain today are at a historical high. This is down to a mixture of interweaving factors, and include:

- changes to agriculture (e.g. planting of winter crops)
- increased woodland cover (through tree-planting and natural regeneration after abandonment)
- woodland management unintentionally favouring deer (restoration of coppicing for biodiversity objectives)
- trophy bias in deer hunting - targeting males rather than females
- absence of natural predators, such as lynx, wolf and brown bear, which have been extinct since the 17th century
- escapes and releases from parks and farms
- milder winters, reducing mortality
- increased adaptability of deer to suburban and urban areas and tolerance of human presence
- greater connectivity between green spaces in urban areas
- absence of co-ordinated management of deer and their impacts across fragmented land ownerships

Risks to deer in London

With four species now present in and around London, there is clearly a tolerance, if not some learned preference, of deer to an urban fringe and suburban context, and in some places they appear to be flourishing.

Urban areas present risks to deer and their welfare. Risks of vehicle collisions, and entanglement in and injury from fencing, are often greater than in rural areas. Lack of forage (during droughts), litter, and artificial feeding with inappropriate food can result in deteriorating health. Burgeoning populations of increasingly sedentary herds can lead to a reduced genetic exchange and thus less vigour within the herd. Increased disturbance, light and noise pollution may also affect them by increasing stress levels and affecting natural deer behaviour, including communication, courtship, movement and biological rhythms. Direct human interactions, through feeding deer in gardens or woodlands may generate a dependence and over-tolerance of people.

Killing and acts of cruelty towards deer also occur in and around towns and cities, probably at a greater proportion per capita than in rural areas. These can be both unintentional, such as dogs attacking and chasing deer, and intentional poaching of deer by people with dogs and/or guns for 'sport' and food. Some research suggests that killing of deer may be taking place in the absence of official control methods. The physical condition of many wild deer in urban areas is often poorer than that of rural deer populations.

At present the only officially recorded issue that wild deer face in London, are collisions with vehicles on the roads, especially those through Epping Forest.


© Stuart Morrison

Problems that wild deer cause

Deer selectively browse and graze vegetation. Leaves, bark, buds and saplings of trees and shrubs are eaten, and they will graze a range of other flowering plants, mostly associated with woodlands, scrub, orchards and hedgerows. Where deer numbers are high there can be a dramatic impact on these habitats; the 'shrub layer' can be destroyed and in extreme conditions, the 'field layer' too. This can dramatically reduce the structural diversity of these habitats with adverse consequences for a range of other wildlife, such as ground- and shrub-nesting birds, small mammals, and a range of invertebrates. In addition, nutrient and carbon cycling are impacted, as simplified understory structures are difficult to reverse and the woodland becomes more vulnerable to the impacts of plant diseases and climate change. The natural regeneration of young trees and shrubs can be reduced to negligible levels.

35% of Government woodland creation budgets are spent on deer fencing and tree shelters to prevent deer damage to young trees.

Efforts to create new woodlands in areas where deer numbers are high, require significant levels of protection from barriers, cages, and fencing to prevent deer from consuming the planted trees.

Deer are highly mobile, and will enter gardens and allotments to feed, especially if close to woodlands and other natural habitats. Deer will squeeze through and/or jump fences and walls in order to reach them.


© Forestry Commission


© Forestry Commission


© Forestry Commission

Tale of a wood impacted by deer.
Top to bottom: deer fencing removed, 18 months later, 6 years later

Urban fallow deer © Mark Bridger

By entering residential areas or crossing roads between areas of woodland, deer risk collision with vehicles with potentially fatal results for them and drivers. Deer vehicle collisions (DVCs) account for 400-1000 serious injuries to humans and roughly 20 fatalities each year, as a result of direct impacts with deer and attempts to swerve and avoid deer. However, not all injury road accidents are logged by police, meaning that this number could be closer to 1,300 road-related serious human injuries per year.

Wild deer can be vectors for transmission of some diseases that affect people and livestock, although there is little proven evidence that the presence of deer in urban areas is increasing pathogen transmission. However, it appears many people erroneously perceive deer to be responsible for the spread of Lyme disease into cities.

Attacks by wild deer are very rare in Britain; they are intolerant of people and will flee if people get close. However, during the rutting season, usually in autumn for red and fallow deer, stags are more likely to stand their ground or lash out if approached.

Deer vehicle collisions

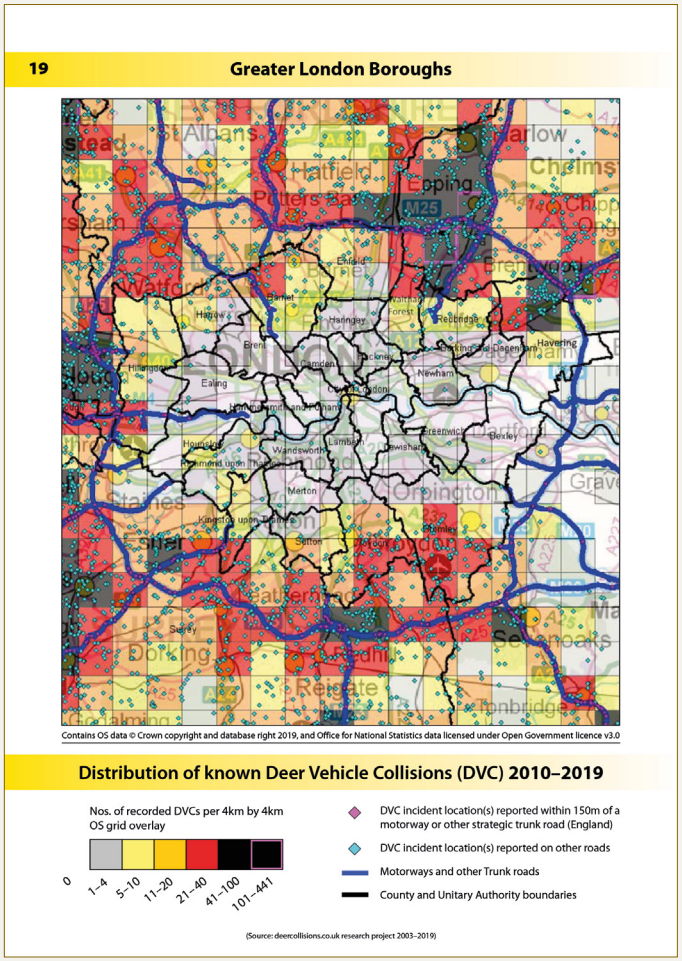
Road traffic accidents involving deer present a major problem in Britain as well as in many other countries in Europe. However, there is no system in the UK for central collation of road traffic accidents involving deer or other wildlife, and robust statistics on the scale of the problem remain unavailable.

A pilot survey commissioned by Highways England in 1997 based on retrospective data estimated that the number of deer killed annually in traffic collisions in Britain was already between 30,000 and 40,000. A fuller study commenced in 2003 which reaffirmed, by 2019, that the annual number of deer killed or injured on the country's roads likely exceeds 40,000 and is probably nearer to 74,000.

The Deer Aware programme, established in 2003, aims to advise drivers and record collisions to help identify where safety measures or management might need to be implemented. DVCs have been recorded on numerous roads in London since then, with particularly high frequencies on major roads through Epping Forest.

Deer related traffic accidents have a considerable impact:

- They present one of the main causes of mortality among wild deer, although a high proportion of deer hit by vehicles are not killed outright: many have to be put down at the roadside, while others die later of their injuries.
- Various studies suggest that deer populations of less than 7-8 deer per 100ha significantly reduce the number of DVCs.



Deer Aware: www.deeraware.com

Current action to monitor wild deer

There is currently no strategic oversight or leadership on the impacts of wild deer and their management across London. For understandable reasons, some authorities are addressing matters as they see fit in order to meet their statutory duties (e.g. City of London Corporation at Epping Forest). For others the impact of wild deer might seem negligible, or occasional and localised at worst, and rarely an issue of concern. In addition, the growth of wild deer populations in Greater London is a comparatively recent phenomenon, and outside some hotspots is largely invisible. The administrative complexities of governance and land ownership across London compound this situation.

There are examples of best practice and deep knowledge within organisations and private estates within or near London (e.g. City of London Corporation at Epping Forest, Forestry Commission, The Royal Parks), together with that developed by the British Deer Society, Woodland Trust and county Wildlife Trusts. Whilst this knowledge may be widespread across these groups it doesn't appear to be shared between key stakeholders managing land across London. This may reflect a lack of awareness of how prevalent wild deer are in some parts of the capital.

The land used by wild deer in London, unlike that of much of the wider countryside, is formed of relatively small and fragmented parcels, with often highly disparate land ownership, and, if public, usually subject to multiple uses.

The mixture of public and private is complex, and the difference in size, from private garden and parks to golf course and farmland can be significant. The scale and complexity of the issue in London is now increasingly recognised by the approaches of regulatory bodies, and the challenges surrounding urban deer are acknowledged as a national issue by the Forestry Commission and Government.

Legislative framework

Most of the relevant legislation is focused on the welfare and management of deer through culling under The Deer Act 1991. However, there are other legal matters that apply, including the Firearms Act 1968, Firearms Act 1982, Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981, as well as those pertaining to property rights, health & safety and planning.

A Deer Initiative review of urban deer management in 2009 highlighted a major issue being the legal status of urban deer control operations, and that *"all current options that are undertaken by the police or surrogates are in contravention of one or more sections of the Deer Acts."* The deer management work across Epping Forest and approaches to address the high numbers of fallow deer in Havering's Dagnam Park, highlight the considerable political and logistical efforts required to bring about effective management decisions. For example, it is important to note that the summary of a deer management strategy for Epping Forest noted:

"There are currently limited practicable or cost-effective options to manage wild deer in the absence of natural predators other than the use of legal, lethal control methods. There is significant peer-reviewed evidence that other methods of protection or population control are not only ineffective but can actually lead to negative animal-welfare outcomes and further detriment to habitats and public safety."
Deer Management Strategy Review for Epping Forest & Buffer Lands (The Deer Initiative, 2020)

Above: deer prevention fencing at Selsdon Wood lost under bramble

Muntjac buck © Deborah Heath

Constraints on management

The key constraints to effective management of wild deer in London include:

1. Paucity of accurate information on wild deer populations, including density, demographics, abundance, and population growth across London.
2. Lack of awareness of deer presence by many practitioners and landowners.
3. Land ownership patterns and poor liaison between landowners make co-ordinated management problematic.
4. The *ad-hoc* nature of responses to deer management reflecting a lack of recognition of the scale of the problem and a consequent lack of a standardised protocols and training.
5. No strategic 'ownership' of deer management across London.
6. Poor provision of, or lack of demand for, standardised training and best practice protocols, compounded by paucity of available resources.
7. Insufficient resources (monetary, skills, etc.) to implement management in a cost effective and sustainable way.
8. Deer legislation not recognising the issues involved in urban deer control, making lethal control difficult.
9. A lack of awareness by practitioners of the legislative constraints.
10. Public perceptions and attitudes to lethal control.

Rights and responsibilities

The legislation that frames rights and responsibilities can be complex to interpret. Wild deer are not owned by, and are not the responsibility of, the owner of the land on which they occur. However, a wild deer becomes the property of the landowner when *'reduced into possession'* (i.e. injured, killed or captured and therefore no longer able to roam free). This deer then becomes the property of the owner of the land on which it remains. For example, a deer killed in a road accident is the property of the owner of the highway, verge or land on which it falls. (*Best Practice Guides for Deer Legislation*, The Deer Initiative England and Wales, 2007).

The lack of clarity over responsibilities and 'ownership' compounds the complexity in implementing co-ordinated and effective management, more acutely so in the relatively fragmented land ownership character of London. An aim of this Strategy's further implementation is to disseminate this information and clarify it further in circumstances where situations become complex.

Foundations for the strategy

The publication of the LUFP and the successful bid to DEFRA's Trees Call for Action Fund (TCAF) in 2021 presented an opportunity to collate some data and develop a strategy for deer in London, pooling existing expertise and experience to identify the key priorities to gain and disseminate a better understanding of wild deer in the capital, and how best they might need to be managed in the future.

When the LUFP was published in 2020, the dataset for deer numbers and distribution in London was patchy at best. The TCAF funding enabled London Wildlife Trust to take three approaches to improve the distribution data of wild deer in London over 2021-24, by:

- Reinvigorating and promoting the Trust's deer sightings portal with GiGL (originally opened in 2013), to improve its usability for the wider public.
- Establishing a network of volunteer deer surveyors, who were trained to survey woodlands and other sites to detemine the absense or presence of deer, with some surveys targeted in and around gaps on the map.
- Circulating an online questionnaire to parks and woodland managers in London's local authorities to gain insights into their knowledge of deer and to find out what actions were being taken to assess impacts on the sites they manage.

Fallow deer footprints

2. Vision and Objectives

Red deer stags © Mathew Frith

2. Vision and Objectives

Fallow deer © Owen Llewelyn

Wild deer are an important and valued part of London's natural environment. However, their numbers have increased to the detriment of some woodlands, semi-natural habitats and associated wildlife. They should be monitored and managed in a way that contributes to nature's recovery, improves deer welfare, ensures people's safety and contributes to our understanding of deer behaviour in urban environments.

The contextual information set out in Part 1 provides the rationale for the preparation of this Strategy which has been developed by a working group of the London Urban Forest Partnership, together with additional experts.

Objectives and priorities to 2028:

- To improve the knowledge of wild deer distribution and abundance across Greater London to a point that can serve as a suitable baseline for future monitoring.
- To assess the impact caused by wild deer to London's woodlands, identifying high, medium and low risk areas across Greater London, and promote actions to reduce adverse impacts through deterrent, preventative and/or control interventions.
- To establish an effective means to centrally collect and manage deer data in London to be used to inform site management and strategic decisions.
- To promote best practice in the knowledge and management of wild deer in London to reduce adverse ecological impacts, reduce adverse human-deer interactions, and enhance deer welfare.
- To develop case studies and bespoke guidance to help ensure that landowners and managers are aware of the issues and options they have to reduce the adverse impacts of wild deer.
- To develop a media and communications framework to support actions this Strategy will progress.
- To identify, advocate for and help secure the resources to enable the above.

Exclosure plot at Dagnam Park © Cora Pfarre

- To support, where necessary, control of deer numbers on sites where it is deemed the only effective means to reduce their adverse impacts.
- To establish a London Deer Forum to co-ordinate and help disseminate the above.

Summary

The three main factors limiting effective wild deer management in London are recognised as:

- The need to fill gaps in data and research
- The need for awareness-raising amongst stakeholders to gain support and increase action
- The need for context specific understandings and responses

The establishment of a London Deer Forum to progress these and develop a policy framework for future effective wild deer management across London is the key step.

A London Deer Forum

The establishment of a London Deer Forumis necessary for the following reasons:

Stakeholder collaboration: to encourage cooperation among experts, local government, landowners and communities on deer-related issues.

Data collection and verification: to oversee the collation of wild deer records to inform the baseline of future strategic action.

Policy advocacy: to provide a platform for discussing and shaping wild deer management and practices and policies.

Public education: to raise awareness about the challenges and benefits of wild deer in London.

Strategic linkages: to provide strategic linkages to the LUFPp and the London LNRS.

Conflict resolution: to help mediate human-wildlife conflicts, like crop damage or traffic accidents.

Above: browsed coppice stool and woodland field layer
Below: stripped ivy

Above: fallow deer in Havering
Below: bark stripped by deer

3. Issues and Actions

Duck Wood, Harold Hill, 2023; once one of the best woods for bluebells in London

3. Issues and actions

Objective A

To improve understanding and knowledge of wild deer distribution and abundance in London.

ISSUE
Paucity of data

There has been a lack of accurate data of wild deer numbers, their abundance, distribution and impacts across London. Systematic data collection is difficult due to the mobility of herds and individual animals, the scarcity of dedicated recorders and the lack of an accessible and co-ordinated recording framework.

ACTIONS TO DATE
Plugging data gaps

At a local level a start has been made to address this gap; the collection of wild deer data across London is now a key priority for this Strategy utilising a range of surveying techniques.

At a national level deer distribution data is collected by the British Deer Society (BDS) and is carried out every three years through a network of stalkers and other surveyors. The BDS acknowledge that, until recently, their data from within Greater London had been relatively poor as most of their network don't survey here. However, by linking up with The Mammal Society's recording app *Mammal Mapper* this will likely improve the number and coverage of records being gathered. **BDS survey:** bds.org.uk/science-research/deer-surveys/deer-distribution-survey/

London Wildlife Trust launched its public deer sightings portal in 2013 run in conjunction with Greenspace information for Greater London (GiGL), and whilst this has passively received records of sightings since then, the Trust hasn't had the capacity to strongly promote it and assess how accurate it is and whether more it be made more useful. Unsurprisingly most records it has the easily seen captive herds in the Royal Parks and the deer in and around Epping Forest.

TCAF funding enabled the Trust to improve the current distribution data of wild deer in London over 2021-24 (see Appendix II). This data combined with the results of the latest BDS surveys Appendix I), indicate a greater coverage of London by the four species of wild deer present here. Whilst this is probably more a reflection of recorder effort, than that of a markedly significant growth of deer populations over the past four years, it suggests that the presence of wild deer across the capital is greater than previously understood.

What this data does not show is any detail of abundance and population profile or dynamics. Given the mobility of deer, sightings can be of the same individuals or same herds across adjacent or the same recording area. In addition, records have tended to focus on the animals themselves rather than on other signs of their presence; hoofprints, browse lines, hairs, faeces, etc.

The patchiness of data across London, and the need to improve on this doesn't prevent progress on other elements of the Strategy, indeed, these may all assist in capturing a more detailed assessment of deer demographics and their impacts.

PROPOSED NEXT STEPS

Action	Lead	Timeline
A1. Continue to promote the deer records portal	LWT/GIGL	ongoing
A2. Secure BDS triennial data for London	LWT/BDS/ GIGL	2026
A3. Explore in more detail what the contemporary records suggest, and report on areas of risk	London Deer Forum (LDF)	ongoing
A4. Continue surveying areas of probable/potential presence	LWT/LDF	ongoing
A5. Add deer presence indicators in TCAF Woodland Condition Self-assessment form and guidance	LWT	2024-25
A6. Identify potential use of drones and digital technologies to gain data in a more accurate and cost-effective manner	LWT/London LDF	2025-28

Testing the Woodland Condition Self-assessment tool

ISSUE
Lack of awareness by many practitioners and landowners

The preparation work of this Strategy has identified that the knowledge base is largely narrow and deep; a few organisations – Forestry Commission, City of London Corporation, The Royal Parks, British Deer Society, Woodland Trust – hold significant expertise and experience that can assist in the implementation of a co-ordinated approach to the management of wild deer in London. However, such is not generally appreciated by the majority of land-owners and managers across the capital, especially within local authorities.

Given land ownership and the proximity to people, as well as responsibilities for most of the road network in London, local authorities are likely to be at the forefront of having to respond to the impacts of an unmanaged wild deer population. Yet, at present the visibility of deer on their agendas is likely to be low.

Fraying

ACTIONS TO DATE
Raising awareness

The TCAF funding enabled LWT to convene an advisory group, that helped shape the Trust's approach to data gathering and the development of the Strategy. Two areas enacted were:

- Undertaking an on-line questionnaire to parks and woodland managers in London's local authorities to gain insights into their knowledge of deer in their respective boroughs and to find out what actions were being taken to assess them and/or their impacts on sites in their management.
- Holding on-line training sessions for 'Friends of' parks groups.

These identified that knowledge of the presence of deer in London and their potential impacts is relatively poor amongst a relevant professional demographic. Admittedly the sample size was small and further work will be required to raise awareness across all key stakeholders, at a regional, borough and neighbourhood level. This should prioritise areas where adverse impacts of wild deer are, or likely to be, the highest, i.e. mostly in the outer boroughs.

PROPOSED NEXT STEPS

Action	Lead	Timeline
A7. Implement a specific training programme for local authorities (officers/members), eNGOs and others	LWT/FC/ London Deer Forum	2025-28

Above: fallow footprint and fallow buck droppings
Below: damage to tree saplings by fallow deer, and muntjac prints pushing under fencing

Objective B

To assess the impact of wild deer on the condition of London's woodlands and associated habitats.

ISSUE
The scale, type and location of impacts across London is insufficient to inform strategic action

The presence of deer is acknowledged by some owners and managers of woodland, farms and parks, but there appears to be little evidence of this being shared and if so, to whom. Knowledge of the BDS and London Wildlife Trust surveys is patchy at best, and there is little reason for land-owners and land-managers to be aware that the deer on their site might be part of a wider population. Unless damage from deer is highly visible and significant there is little reason to believe that the presence of deer would be of any concern to others. The exception being the City of London Corporation at Epping Forest who have taken responsibility to coordinate action with other land-owners due to the extent of their land-ownership.

ACTIONS TO DATE
Impacts assessment

Much strategic understanding and guidance had been shared through The Deer Initiative (TDI), which works with a range of partners across government, academia and land managers to develop a broader understanding of the need for well evidenced, effective and humane deer management. Although TDI ceased to operate in 2020, its guidance has informed this strategy and actions elsewhere in London.

The TCAF funding enabled London Wildlife Trust to undertake an on-line questionnaire to parks and woodland managers in London's local authorities to gain insights into what actions were being taken to assess wild deer and/or their impacts on sites under their management. The responses reflected a lack of recognition of the scale of the problem and a consequent lack of a standardised protocols and training.

ISSUE
Complex land ownership compounding knowledge base and effective coordination

Compared to most other areas of the country, land ownership is highly fragmented in London. Even in areas where deer are more likely to be present land parcels of any particular owner are likely to be smaller, and often broken up across a wider area. In some boroughs land owned by the local authority is significant, in others this is not so. Fragmentation also applies to transport corridors through which some deer can move. Railway corridors are managed by Network Rail or Transport for London (TfL); roads, by local authorities, TfL or Highways England; and canals by the Canal & River Trust.

ACTIONS TO DATE
Land ownership assessment

This has not been prioritised, as the matters only really arise when deer management is attempted across more than one site, and specific relationships need to be developed. The Strategy aims to raise the issue over the first phase of its implementation through to 2028. Work on progressing the London Rewilding Taskforce's recommendations for large-scale nature recovery has resulted in a better understanding of land ownership in many of the outer London boroughs.

PROPOSED NEXT STEPS

Action	Lead	Timeline
B1. Assess high risk and potential high-risk areas for deer impacts, and identify land ownership patterns	LWT/GLA/ London Deer Forum	2025-28
B2. Develop a deer management awareness advocacy programme for landowners in high risk and potential high-risk areas	London Deer Forum	2025-28
B3. Identify and support key deer management advocates in local authorities and/or NGOs	London Deer Forum/ FC	2025-28

Hedgerow showing browsing damage

Objective C

To promote best practice in the management of wild deer in London.

ISSUE
No strategic leadership on deer management across London

Currently there is no strategic oversight of the management of wild deer across Greater London. For understandable reasons, some authorities are addressing the matter as they see fit in order to meet their statutory duties (e.g. City of London Corporation at Epping Forest). For others the impact of wild deer might seem negligible, or localised at worst, and rarely an issue of concern. In addition, the political and administrative relationships between local authorities within London and with adjacent local authorities are complex, and whilst there may be local collaboration at a number of specific locations there is generally no co-ordinated response.

With this in mind, the establishment of a London Deer Forum is a critical 'next step' to help provide the co-ordination, guidance and support for greater collaboration. This applies to the collection, analysis and dissemination of data, of best practice, of specific management advice, and where necessary, advocacy for the political support and resources to assist land managers to make tangible steps to the Strategy's vision.

PROPOSED NEXT STEPS

Action	Lead	Timeline
C1. Establish a London Deer Forum, as a specific group of the London Urban Forest Partnership	FC/ GLA	2025
C2. Prepare and implement an action plan for the London Deer Forum's first three years	FC/GLA/ London Deer Forum	2025-28
C3. Identify the resource requirements and secure them to sustain the London Deer Forum and its initial three year's actions	FC/London Deer Forum	2025-26

Fallow buck © Margaret Holland

ISSUE
Lack of a standardised protocols and training and insufficient resources (monetary, skills, etc.) to implement management in a cost effective and sustainable way

These matters are largely a reflection of the lack of awareness at a strategic level. Although there is a significant level of concern amongst some practitioners and landowners about the growing impact of deer there appears to be no or little demand for support, advice or training beyond this core group. In addition, there is little proactive promotion of existing advice and training. Through the TCAF funding London Wildlife Trust provided training for volunteers, but failed to secure strong supportand interest from many greenspace managers in local authorities.

ACTIONS TO DATE

Under the auspices of the London Urban Forest Partnership, London Wildlife Trust convened an advisory group in 2021 to help scope the parameters of a Strategy. Part-funded by TCAF, and informed both by the surveys the Trust undertook from 2019 and the expertise of an advisory group, the development of the Strategy identified the need for a co-ordinated strategic approach to wild deer in London. Given the focus of the Strategy on gaining a better evidence base of deer and their impacts, raising awareness amongst landowners and managers, and an acute awareness of public and political sensitivities of deer management, the need for an active and focused forum, linked to the Partnership has been recognised.

Action	Lead	Timeline
C4. Develop and implement a training programme for differing audiences	LWT/ London Deer Forum	2025-28
C5. Prepare and promote a best practice tool-kit, aimed at local authorities, NGOs, public and private owners likely to experience deer management issues	FC/LWT/ BDS/ London Deer Forum	2025-28
C6. Ensure deer protection measures are added as consideration in tree-planting and woodland creation grant programmes for London	GLA/FC	2025-28
C7. Develop links and maintain liaison with other practitioners managing wild deer urban areas to inform practice	FC/BDS/ London Deer Forum	2025-26
C8. Establish case studies on preventative measures to be hosted on LUFP webpages	London Deer Forum/ GLA	2025-27

Deer impact prevention methods are in place in some woodlands within London's outer boroughs. Fencing off vulnerable habitats from deer browsing through exclosures is a widely adopted management tool but those in place in many sites appear to be mostly low-cost (wooden post and netting) and unsustainable without on-going checks and maintenance (many collapse and become entangled by bramble). The costs for installing more robust metal deer fencing are significant, so are often targeted at smaller areas (or individual trees). They are not without problems in terms of visual intrusion and barriers to access in public open spaces, and as such often considered a low priority for local authorities.

Given the proposed increase in afforestation around London through tree planting and natural regeneration the adoption of tree guards and shelters will probably require assessment of their robustness and durability. Areas at high risk or potential high risk of impact from deer browsing should inform where and how tree-planting is implemented; an added factor to consider in such programmes.

Wooden exclosure protecting vulnerable habitat

Tree planting at Enfield Chase

Fallow deer in Havering © Belinda Bearman

ISSUE
Public perceptions and attitudes to management, including lethal control

Many of the British public have a strong fondness for deer, with increasing public interactions, especially in accessible deer parks (such as The Royal Parks of Richmond and Bushy, and Dagnam and Bedfords Parks in Havering). Experience from The Royal Parks demonstrates this can bring problems, particularly if dogs are in the mix, and accordingly they provide visible guidance and notices aimed at visitors to their parks, especially at rutting time (October to December).

The notion of killing deer for ecological and welfare reasons is understandably unpopular and is often treated with suspicion and sometimes outrage by many of the public. Even for the managed herds of The Royal Parks, annual culls, based on long- standing tradition and knowledge of the herds, is undertaken with sensitivity, and at a time when the public are excluded (primarily for safety reasons).

For wild deer, which are mobile and less well understood in terms of their condition, sex and age profiles, this issue becomes disproportionately more complex. Whilst positive public affection for deer can shift dramatically in the event of

human injury, property damage and/or disease transmission, any attempts to implement lethal forms of management are likely to be strongly resisted.

The experience at Dagnam Park has shown the time it had taken before the local community realised that the numbers of deer and their behaviour were causing a problem to the park (over 10 years), the community's preference for other methods of management (exclosures, translocation, contraception) over lethal control, and the understandable reluctance of elected members to 'cross the line'. Without the support and guidance that this Strategy aims to provide, such scenarios are more likely to be repeated, delaying interventions, and inadvertently contributing to a growing population of wild deer.

The premise of the need for a strategic approach to management brings about the necessary requirement of a communications and public relations strategy.

ACTIONS TO DATE

TCAF funding and input from the Advisory Group has enabled a greater understanding of the issue, not only from existing practice in The Royal Parks and the wider countryside, but also the issues faced at Dagnam Park, which was visited by the Advisory Group, and is featured as a case study (Appendix III).


Roe deer skeleton

ISSUE
Deer legislation does not recognise the issues involved in urban deer control, making lethal control difficult

Perhaps the most complex issue to tease out is the legislation that surrounds the responsibilities of wild deer when they are alive, injured, require dispatch (for welfare or management reasons), or dead, in particular The Deer Act, 1992.

This relates to the whom, the what, the how, and the where. For example, no-one is responsible for a wild deer unless it is on one's land and, as deer regularly move across different land-ownerships, no single land-owner is likely to take responsibility for co-ordinated deer management.

In addition, the current legislation is not attuned to the urban context, especially in relation to lethal control methods, the use of appropriate firearms within the proximity of people, and the disposal of a carcass following a vehicle collision, another injury or herd management.

Whilst guidance on interpreting the law on wild deer is available it is not easy to access, nor is it especially relevant to urban circumstances.

ACTIONS TO DATE

The TCAF funded training provided some highline information on the law, and the Strategy's Advisory Group has provided information and expertise.

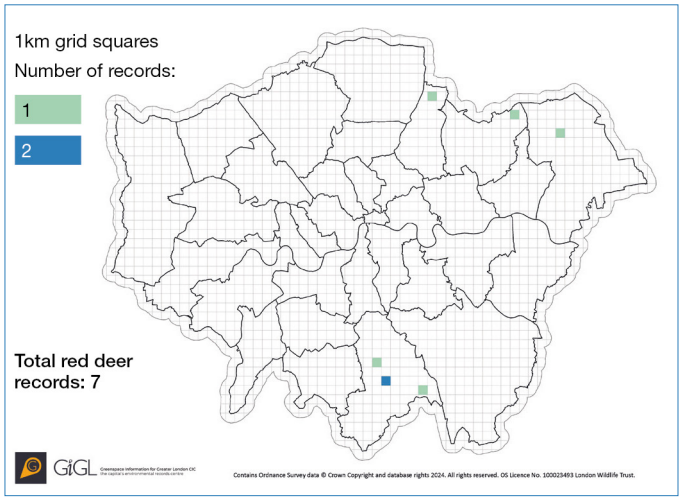
PROPOSED NEXT STEPS

Action	Lead	Timeline
C9. Develop a communications and public relations toolkit applicable to London, and promote through training and/or conference	FC/ London Deer Forum/LWT	2025-26
C10. Collate existing guidance and disseminate a 'wild deer and the law in London' guidance, as part of a best-practice toolkit	FC/BDS/ London Deer Forum	2025-26
C11. Design and implement a specific 'wild deer and the law' training module, to be delivered in specific or more generic training programmes (see also C4 & C5)	FC/BDS/ London Deer Forum	2025-27
C12. Establish case studies and FAQs on wild deer and the law in London (see also C7)	BDS/ London Deer Forum/ LWT	2025-28

Appendices

Roe deer buck © Soru Epoto

Appendix I:
Wild deer species recorded in London 2023 – 2024



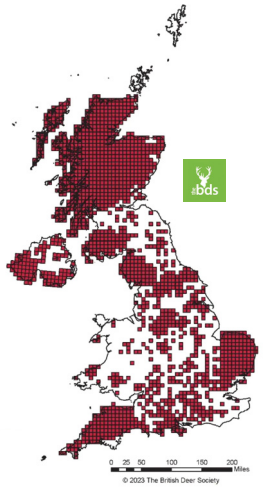
Red deer records in Greater London.
Records exclude those in parks where the deer are known to be captive and managed.

Red deer

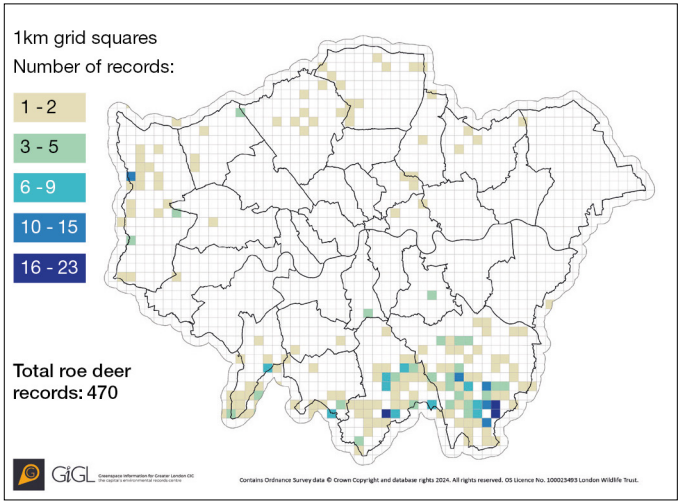
Red deer stag

Red deer hind

Habitat: Prefer forest and woodlands, but have adapted to live on open moorland.
Distribution: Scottish Highlands, southern Scotland, Lake District, East Anglia, northern England, Midlands, the New Forest, Sussex and south-west England.
Behaviour: In woodland, red deer are mostly solitary or live in small herds, largely active at dawn and dusk.
Breeding season: End of September to November is the main breeding season (rut).



Indicative distribution in 10 x 10km squares, 2023.



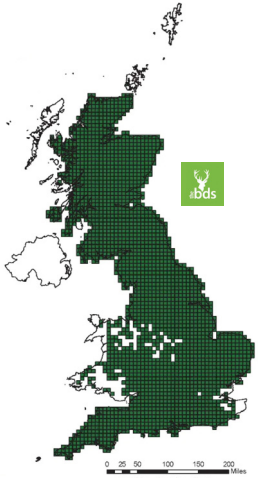
Roe deer records in Greater London.

Roe deer

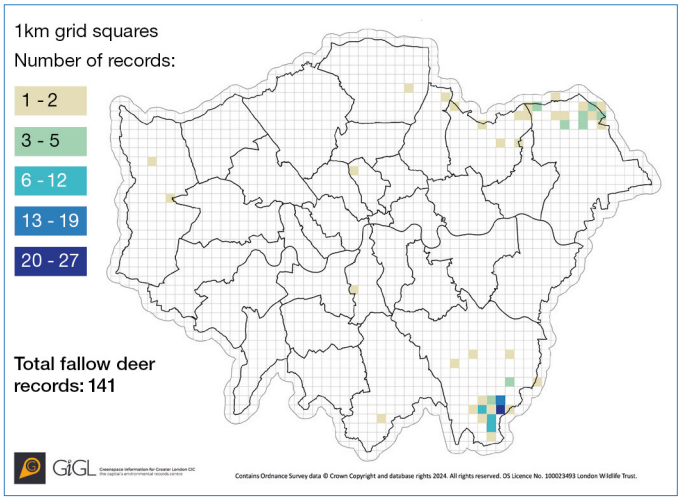
Roe buck

Roe doe

Habitat: Prefer woodland and forest but spend time in open fields.
Distribution: Throughout Britain, thinning out in parts of the Midlands and Kent.
Behaviour: Solitary, but group together in winter. Active 24 hours a day, though prefer to venture into open space at night. Males rut in breeding season; courtship between buck and doe involves chasing.
Breeding season: Mid-July to mid-August. Increasing in numbers in southern England.



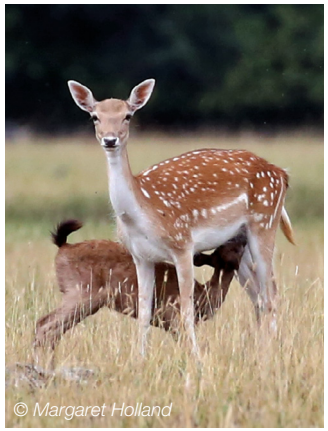
Indicative distribution in 10 x 10km squares, 2023.



Fallow deer records in Greater London.
Records exclude those in parks where the deer are known to be captive and managed.

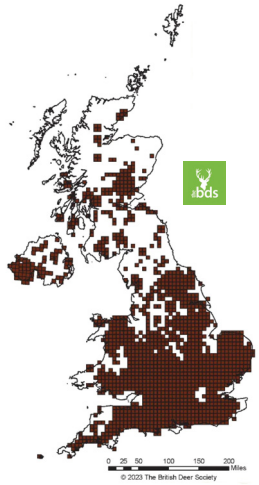
Fallow deer

Fallow buck

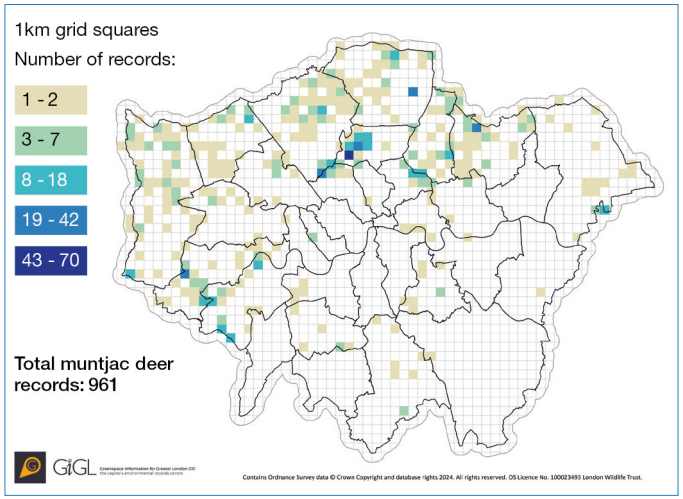


Fallow doe with fawn

Habitat: Deciduous woodland and thick, low-lying vegetation.
Distribution: Found throughout Britain, particularly in England, with numbers rising.
Behaviour: Fallow deer are social animals choosing to live in single sex or mixed groups. Groups often come together to form large temporary herds.
Breeding season: Late September to October.

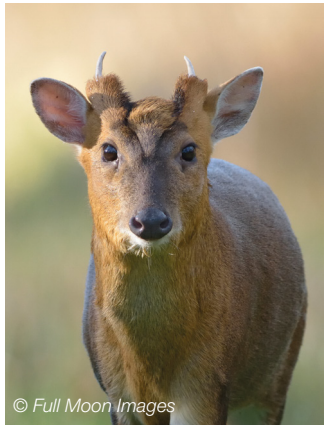


Indicative distribution in 10 x 10km squares, 2023.



Muntjac deer records in Greater London.

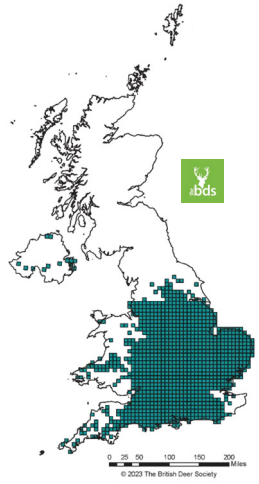
Muntjac



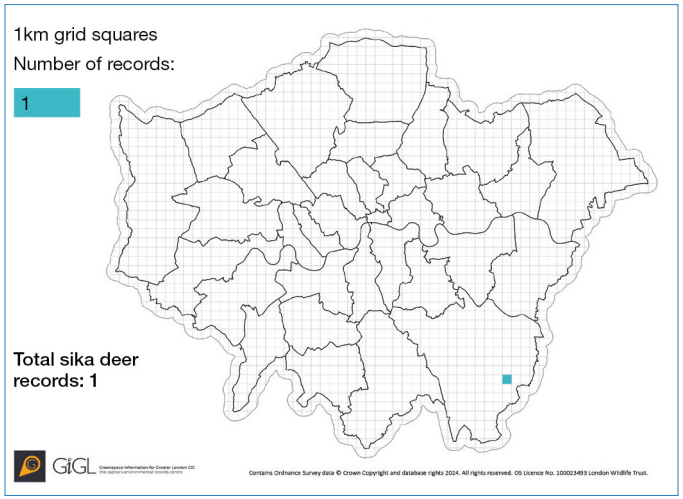
Muntjac buck

Muntjac doe

Habitat: Prefer woodlands but have adapted to live in urban areas and overgrown gardens.
Distribution: Abundant in England, particularly the east, increasing in both numbers and range.
Behaviour: Solitary or found in pairs, mostly active at dusk and dawn.
Breeding season: All year round, leading to rapid population growth.

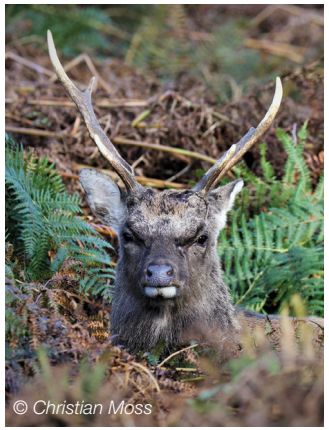


Indicative distribution in 10 x 10km squares, 2023.



Sika deer records in Greater London.
Given the location, this one record might be of a dark-coated (melanistic) form of fallow deer.

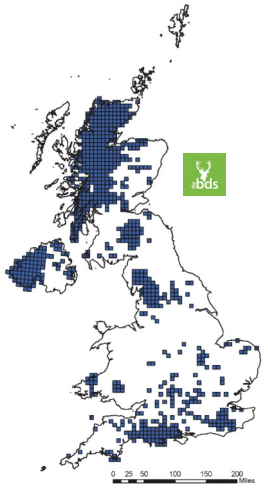
Sika deer



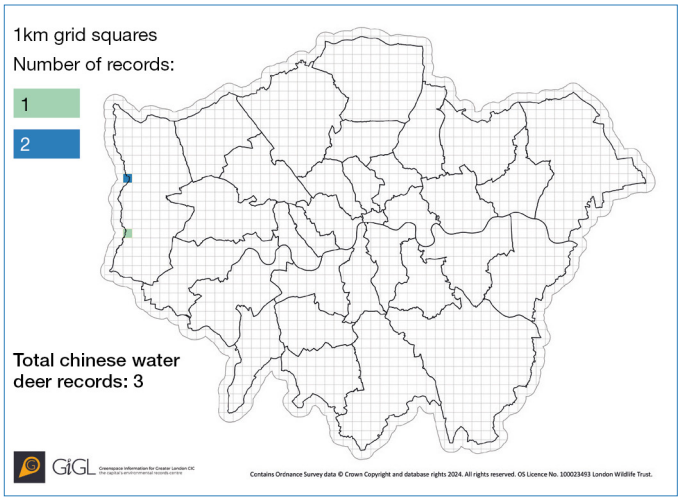
Sika stag

Sika hind

Habitat: Coniferous woodland and heathland on acidic soils.
Distribution: Northern Ireland, north-western Scotland, Lake District, patchy across southern England (inc Surrey and Sussex).
Behaviour: Live in single sex groups, coming together in autumn and winter. Males rut during breeding season. Active 24 hours, but more nocturnal in herds experiencing disturbance.
Breeding season: Autumn.



Indicative distribution in 10 x 10km squares, 2023.



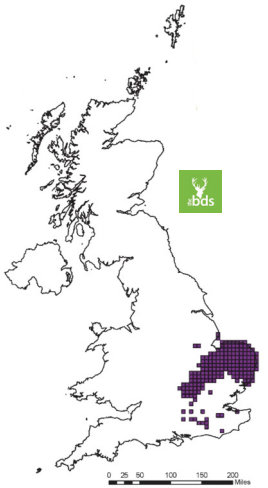
(Chinese) water deer records in Greater London.

(Chinese) water deer

(Chinese) water buck

(Chinese) water doe

Habitat: Wetlands - reedbeds, river shores, ditches and fens – fields and woodland.
Distribution: Mainly Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Norfolk, but spreading southwards..
Behaviour: Solitary except when mating but may form pairs or small groups at high density. Active 24 hours.
Breeding season: Mid-autumn.



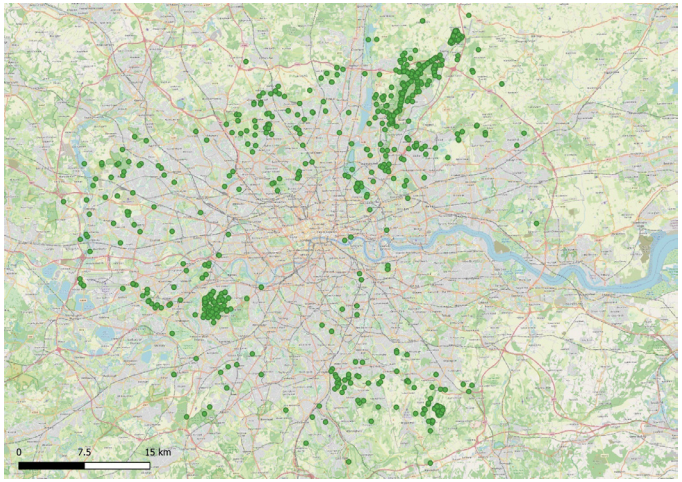
Indicative distribution in 10 x 10km squares, 2023.

Appendix II:
London Deer distribution records 2019 – 24

London Wildlife Trust surveys on behalf of London Urban Forest Partnership, TCAF programme

Before deer surveys started in 2021 a data search was undertaken; records were extracted from GiGL and filtered to keep those collected during 2019-21 – a total of 977 records – and added to 160 records of deer vehicle collisions (DVCs) collected in Epping Forest between 2019-21 (Figure 1).

Figure 1



*Record: refers to the sight of an individual, a group or herd, alive or dead (e.g. car collision), but also any sign (footprint, browsing, droppings, etc).

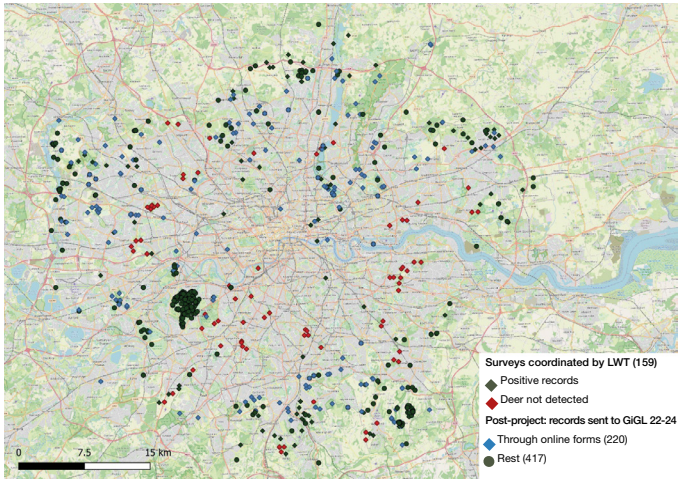
Between 2022 and 2024, a Google Form was distributed to site owners and managers asking about the known presence or absence of wild deer on their sites. 54 forms were filled and 129 records extracted.

Before the start of the survey season in 2022, a gap analysis was undertaken on all the records gathered. A list of sites was generated, prioritising those located where there were gaps of deer records but where the habitat seemed appropriate, and away from central London. The Trust made a call for volunteers to participate as surveyors in these areas; mostly woodlands and wilder areas of parks and grasslands. An event at Camley Street Natural Park launched the programme and explain the survey methodology, and two webinars were held for those unable to attend.

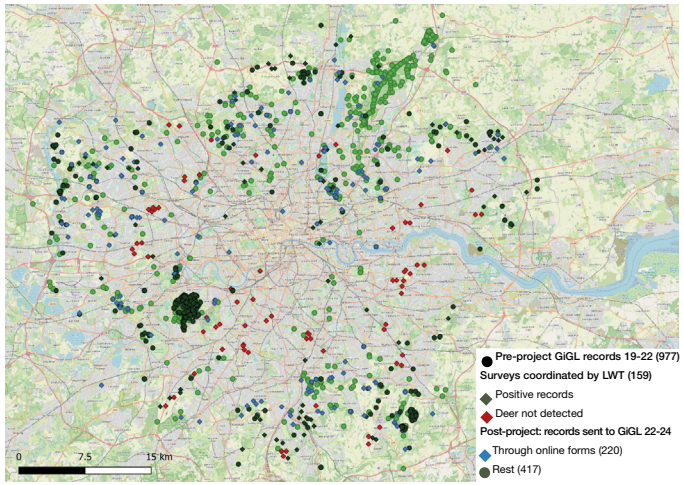
During the survey seasons of 2022-23 and '23-24, a total of 107 records were submitted by volunteers who actively surveyed one of the shortlisted sites. During the season of 2023-24 there was lower volunteer engagement than expected, so two surveyors were contracted to survey sites; they generated an additional 52 records.

LWT and GiGL established an online portal available for the general public to send occasional records. In total, 208 records were collected. 529 additional records were submitted to GiGL between 2021 and June 2024 through different platforms: iRecord, sent by local authority officers, etc.

Only data collected during the project, 2022 – June 24



Pre + post-project records, both positive and negative records

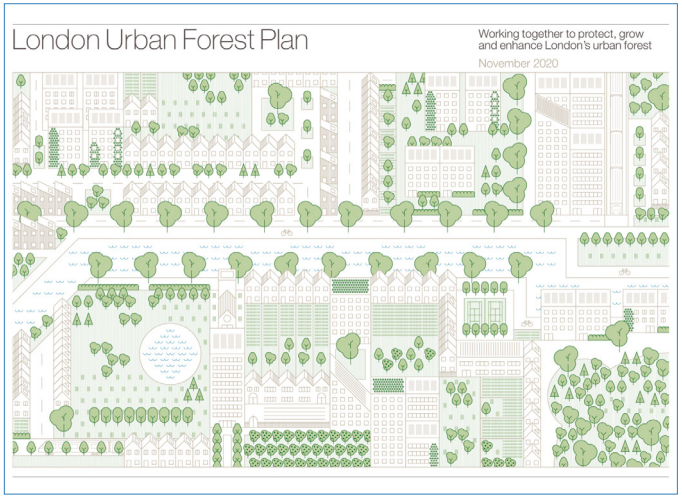


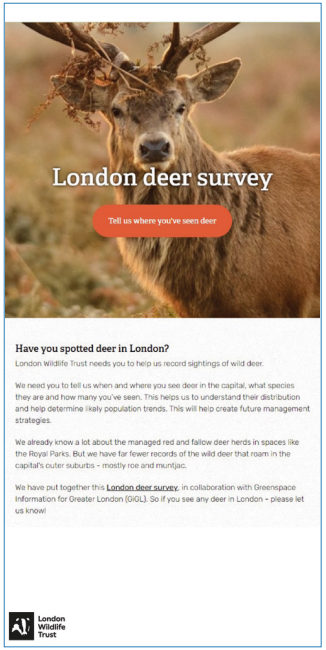
Note: this includes deer recorded from the managed herds at Bushy and Richmond Parks

Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs
Heritage Fund
Forestry Commission

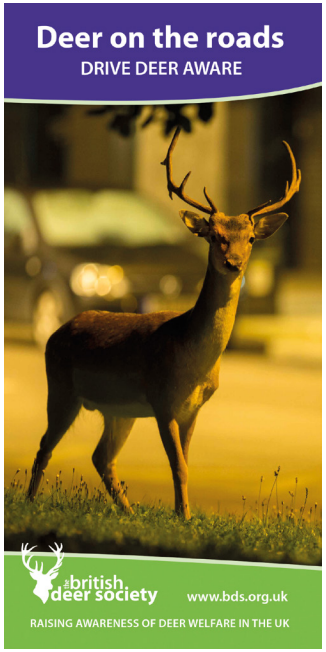
Appendix III:
Examples of deer management activity underway in London

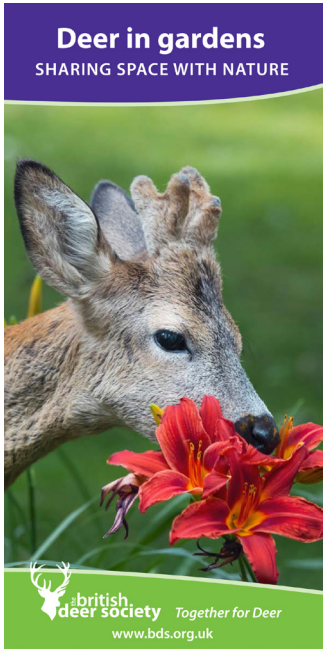
- *Epping Forest Deer Strategy* (2014) compiled by The Deer Initiative on behalf of the City of London Corporation, given pressures from growing deer numbers and increases in deer vehicle collisions, within the context of the legal duty to provide a forest for deer (see Case Study 2)
- The Royal Parks' long-standing management of the enclosed deer herds at Bushy and Richmond Parks, developing further expertise on the behaviour of deer (and people) amongst a growing public interest and desire to experience the animals up close.
- British Deer Society's three-yearly Deer Distribution surveys (most recently 2023) that identified the need to address a paucity of data from their surveyors close to or in London.
- London Wildlife Trust's deer survey portal, launched in 2013, encourages sightings from the public, with records held by GiGL. The TCAF funding enabled the Trust to further promote this and undertake site specific surveys and training over 2021-24.
- Site specific exclosures installed to prevent deer access in various managed woodlands, primarily in outer London boroughs, e.g. Croydon, Havering, Hillingdon.
- *London Urban Forest Plan* (2020) recognises that many of London's woodlands are under threat from various pests, diseases and invasive species (although deer aren't specifically referenced).
- The Forestry Commission's Deer Management Plan template and guide (2023) to help woodland managers meet the requirements of both the UK Forestry Standard and Forestry Commission grant schemes.
- The Woodland Trust's site plans within the M25 to deliver a deer management plan based on very high impact scores, particularly on sites with ash dieback.





A selection of guides from organisations the Deer Initiative, London Wildlife Trust and the British Deer Society





Case Study I:
Dagnam Park

Dagnam Park is a 140 hectare public park and Local Nature Reserve located in the north east of the London Borough of Havering. The park contains fields of acid grassland, mature hedgerows and the largest patch of ancient woodland within Havering. Dagnam Park has become a haven for free-roaming fallow deer escaping management efforts from surrounding land owners. To date, Havering Council has not implemented any form of active deer management within Dagnam Park and this has led to a population boom for the deer. During a 2024 deer census, over 800 fallow deer were recorded within the boundary of Dagnam Park – a stocking rate greater than Richmond Park which is seven times larger than Dagnam.

The large herd has had a significant impact on the park's ecology. Fields lack much floristic diversity, woodland regeneration is virtually non-existent and mature trees are stripped of bark. The degradation caused by overgrazing is now having an impact on the populations of other fauna within the park.

The fallow from Dagnam Park are spreading across the borough, crossing major roadways, entering housing estates and can now be found in most parks and open spaces within the north of the borough.

Case Study 2:
Epping Forest

Under the Epping Forest Act 1878, the Conservators of Epping Forest are responsible for preserving deer as 'objects of ornament' in the Forest. They must balance competing priorities: valuing deer as charismatic and iconic wildlife, meeting their statutory duty to manage deer as part of the Forest's character, and addressing the ecological challenges posed by high deer populations, which can threaten the integrity of the ancient wood pasture ecosystem. All within a green space that welcomes tens of millions of visits annually and remains open, unfenced, and accessible at all hours.

In Epping Forest, deer populations have risen significantly. During the early 20th century the number of fallow deer were estimated at between 125 to 250. In 2024 the deer count was recorded as a minimum of 800 fallow deer, nearly ten times the standard industry guidance.

A robust evidence base is needed to inform the Epping Forest and Buffer Lands deer management strategy. To provide this, deer are monitored using a variety of methods, including thermal imaging deer drone census surveys. The influence of deer grazing and browsing on habitats within Epping Forest are also measured, using standardised annual habitat deer impact and activity assessment surveys. Direct observation is supplemented by the installation of 30 2x2m deer exclusion plots.

An evidence-based approach enables the Conservators to more confidently navigate the complexities of deer management. Their next steps include updating the system for monitoring deer vehicle collisions, deepening collaboration with neighbouring landowners, and further developing a communication strategy to engage stakeholders and build public understanding on the importance of a sustainable deer population.

Case Study 3:
Gutteridge Wood

Gutteridge Wood, in Hillingdon, is a 27 hectare mixed deciduous woodland with both ancient and secondary characteristics and adjacent neutral grassland. It lies in the Yeading Valley, covering both sides of the Yeading Brook and along the Hillingdon Trail, a Public Right of Way. Managed by London Wildlife Trust on behalf of Hillingdon Council since the mid-1980s to conserve its biodiversity interest; the Wood is designated part of a statutory Local Nature Reserve, and forms part of a much larger 170 hectare Site of Metropolitan Importance for Nature Conservation.

The impacts of deer within the Wood were first referenced in management plans in 2015. Early signs included browsing damage of bluebells and regrowth from coppiced stumps. No deer sightings were recorded from the Wood or immediate environs at the time but faeces on site suggested that muntjac were present, or at least passing through. Nowadays, muntjac are frequently recorded, both in the Wood and in the adjacent fields. In response, the Trust erected two deer exclosures of roughly 2.5 hectares around freshly coppiced hazel coups to prevent browsing of the new shoots. These are installed immediately after coppicing and remain in plac for approximately two years, after which they are moved to the next coppiced area.

Due to budget constraints, the fencing was self-built using coppice hazel poles cut from the site, with plastic netting attached (see image above). As the Wood is a public open space and crossed by a public footpath, the enclosures were carefully located to minimise disturbance, and signage was installed to inform visitors of their purpose.

To date the exclosures have successfully prevented deer from browsing the protected area. However, the design limits access, making tasks like bramble clearance difficult. Bramble is known to overshade ground flora, like bluebells and bungle, and can entangle in the lower mesh of the netting. Whilst this doesn't compromise the fencing's effectiveness, it requires regular monitoring to prevent maintenance issues. To mitigate this, a 20cm high layer of dead-hedging is staked along the exterior skirt of the enclosure and regularly replenished.

Appendix IV:
Legislation relating to wild deer in England

Wild deer in England are governed primarily by the Deer Act 1991, which sets out legal protections focused on humane management, species conservation, and minimising human–deer conflicts. Key provisions include close seasons—periods during which it is illegal to take or kill deer—tailored to protect deer during sensitive life stages, such as breeding and antler growth.

The Act also bans cruel or unsafe methods of killing, including using traps, snares, poisons, air-guns, and certain firearms. Exemptions allow deer to be culled outside close seasons for reasons such as crop protection, disease control, or scientific and conservation purposes, often under licence from Natural England.

Additional legislation often interacts with deer management. The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 supports broader biodiversity protection, which can influence deer policies in sensitive habitats. The enhanced Biodiversity Duty for public bodies introduced through the Environment Act 2021 requires organisations to identify and progress actions they can take to conserve and enhance biodiversity, which could reasonably include activities to manage deer browsing pressure.

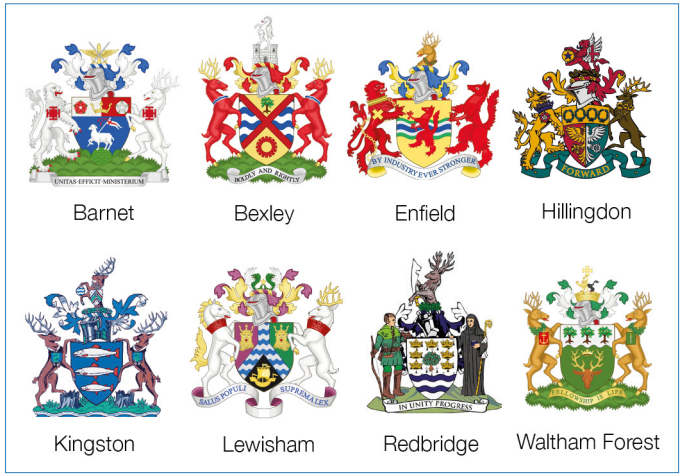
The Animal Welfare Act 2006 and, where relevant, the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986, ensure that any handling, capture, or culling is performed humanely. The Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996 also makes intentional acts of cruelty against deer illegal.

Appendix IV:
Deer in London; ecological and cultural context

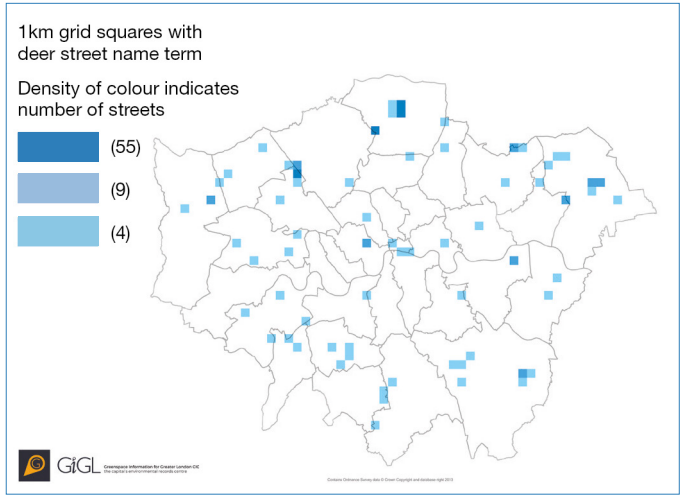
Deer, particularly the stag or hart, have appeared in heraldry for centuries. They were commonly associated with royalty and noble families, particularly those owning estates with forests or hunting grounds, as stags represented hunting and the nobility's dominion over these lands. The stag symbolises grace, speed, and nobility, and its portrayal on heraldic shields was intended to highlight the status and virtues of the family or entity it represented.

Deer were once abundant in royal forests surrounding London, which were used for hunting by the monarchy. This connection to royalty and nobility further reinforced the deer's association with strength, protection, and status in heraldic traditions. In the medieval and Tudor periods, deer were commonly featured in the heraldry of noble families that controlled hunting grounds or had close ties to the royal court.

During the Victorian era, as part of a broader initiative to formalise civic identities, many London boroughs were granted coats of arms. These new identities sought to elevate the status of local authorities and tie them to England's royal heritage. Incorporating symbols like the deer, which had a strong connection to royal parks and hunting, was a way to enhance the boroughs' historical and cultural legitimacy. The remnants of these hunting grounds still echo in London's street names, offering a lasting link to the city's regal past.



London boroughs with a deer in their Coat of Arms



Streets in Greater London with deer related names

Search of all Greater London thoroughfare names selected containing these following terms: Stag, Chase, Deer, Hart, Antler, Fawn, Doe, Hind, Musk, Venison, White tail, Buck, Roe or species names: Muntjac, Fallow deer, Roe deer, Red deer, Sika