

Deer Programme 2017-2018

In the 2017/18 season 122 fallow deer were culled, consisting of 10% males with abnormalities or injuries which had been caused by cars and fences, and 90% females of breeding age. This has been done with a large amount of support and interest from the general public on the Forest. The stalkers are working very well as a team, are getting to know local people in their stalking areas and are carrying out their stalking activities with great professionalism. The stalkers do carry ID cards which are attached on a lanyard and they will be getting issued with uniform for next season to make them more readily identifiable.

In regard to the venison, we have mainly been selling to the wholesale market, with occasional meat boxes to the public when required. We are currently working towards the meat being processed, packed and sold from the Visitor Centre in future, but this is currently dependent on the construction of a dedicated cutting room.

During the summer season, when stalking is not permitted, we will be concentrating on getting deer impact assessments completed and checking the enclosure plots are all still intact. There are twenty impact assessment routes; each one is 1km long and ends at an enclosure. This will give us a better idea of the effect deer are having on the Forest and allow us to monitor the effectiveness of the cull.

In the past nine months the Deer Programme has also taken on two work experience students from Plumpton College who are looking at a deer management career. This is going very well, and they will soon be great assets to the team. We have also been looking at gaining extra money through running deer management qualifications alongside the British Association for Shooting and Conservation (BASC), based in our Education Barn.

For further information contact:

Glen Poland

Deer Programme Coordinator

GlenPoland@ashdownforest.org

01342 823583 ext: 210