

There is a long history of conflict when it comes to deer management across the Cairngorms but with the designation of the area as a National Park in 2003, a wide range of interests have come together, culminating in the setting up of the Cairngorms Deer Advisory Group (CDAG) in 2006.

Deer management and indeed venison is an important part of the National Park's economy, its land use, culture and history so it is therefore extremely important that deer are managed sustainably and that all those with an interest in deer work hard to ensure that this happens.

Deer have to be managed for several reasons – they can cause damage to upland environments through overgrazing as well as cause problems on farmland where there are crops. However, they are also managed to be able to provide stalking for paying guests and to provide venison.

CDAG aims to promote better communication and understanding between all the organisations with an interest in deer and the management of deer in the Cairngorms National Park as well as act as an advisory body to the Cairngorms National Park Authority on deer and their management.

CDAG has a wide ranging membership with representatives from community councils, local deer management groups, deer welfare organisations, public bodies and landowners, as well as conservation, shooting and access/recreation interests.

One of CDAG's first tasks was to produce a Deer Framework for the National Park. This was finally published in 2011 and identifies the many different values that people place on deer and brings together all those with an interest in their management. Looking ahead, the Framework should provide a clear way forward for deer management in the Park, helping to reduce the conflicts of the past by ensuring that competing land management objectives can be resolved in the best interests of deer and the environment.

Other areas of work ongoing by CDAG include: promoting communication between all those with an interest in deer, maintaining an overview of the health, welfare and population densities of deer species in the Park, supporting deer managers and deer management groups across the Park as well as reviewing the effectiveness of deer management planning, co-ordinating and stimulating new research into deer and their management.

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