

BRANCH NEWS

North Eastern England Branch

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A Message from the Branch Chairman

I have been very encouraged by the good attendance at our recent Optics event. Sound ideas were exchanged and some of these are set out in this newsletter. I also attended the recent *Sharing Good Practice Event on Upland Deer Management* in Perth. There, I met members of Scottish Natural Heritage, BDS Scotland and representatives from deer management groups to discuss their national strategy on Deer. Hopefully, actions like this might encourage dialogue between this Branch and our colleagues working on the other side of the Border. I also want to encourage a good working relationship between ourselves and The Deer Initiative. The two organisations share much in common and could share more in future. So I have now set up a channel of communication with them. Therefore, I encourage you to attend the upcoming Deer Initiative events in your wider area and to watch out for news of the Best Practice event to be arranged at Kielder. My next appearance will be at the Society's Annual General Meeting in Wales.

Christopher Roy-Toole

Deer Initiative *Gralloch and Larder Skills Event* on 20th May 2017

<https://data.thedeerinitiative.co.uk/civCRM/event/info?id=44&reset=1>

Locating wounded Deer

The stalker has an ethical duty to follow up a wounded beast and to humanely dispatch it. Sometimes the wounded beast cannot be located without a dog trained to follow a scent or a blood trail. The Branch wants to establish a register of tracking dogs and handlers who are available to assist members within the Branch Area. But first we need to decide the ground rules for service provision, arrangements for confidential handling of information and the possible vetting of users of the service. A members' survey will be sent out to confirm if Branch members are prepared to assist with a dog. In the meantime, please contact the Committee now if you have information or advice that would assist us in this project.

Thermal Imaging Equipment available in Branch?

'TI' offers benefits when conducting nocturnal deer counts to inform deer management plans. TI is more affordable than before. The Committee wants to make TI available to Branch members for counting and survey purposes. Group purchase by member contribution might be the best way forward. But first we need to study the market. Please contact the Committee if you are interested in group purchase and/or have information to share or can recommend an expert or trusted retailer to guide us in the options available. Demonstration events may be arranged.

Local supply chains for Venison

The Branch Chairman wants to establish a working party to examine ways to improve the venison local supply chain from the stalker to the consumer. There are other projects ongoing from which we might learn. But special consideration should be given to the feasibility of online computer technology to create 'virtual' networks in which supply can be matched to demand. Individual carcasses could be electronically 'tagged and tallied' to combat poaching and ensure meat quality. Other key issues include: the viability of 'middle man' collection and delivery services from estate to GHE, 'agreed in advance' pricing assessed against carcass damage and the evaluation of alternative business models including Cooperatives. Contact the Committee if you want to get involved in the working party or just have an opinion to offer.

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