

BRANCH NEWS

North Eastern England Branch

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Professor Rory Putman has been appointed as our new BDS Chairman at the Society's AGM in Edinburgh. I support his appointment because I believe that he has a refreshing and challenging outlook on how the BDS should develop. It is my wish that this Branch lends active support to his Chairmanship in the work that we do.

The message from the Board is that the BDS must be inclusive to any person with an interest in deer, whether they be deer stalkers or not. The BDS must become the "Go-To" resource for expert knowledge on deer. The Board intends that the BDS shall offer its members new opportunities through the development of its proprietary web portal. Members need to develop new skills beyond DSC1 and DSC2 and the BDS must assist them in this by the development of new training opportunities. Data is important for future deer management. Therefore, the BDS Deer Survey will be enhanced to show deer density as well as presence. Members will be encouraged to become more involved with the BDS by providing data on deer.

*My message to you is that recreational deerstalkers will continue to be important to the BDS and to the wider deer management sector. However, they must improve their skills by learning to gather and to use relevant information about deer in order to plan their management. They must also learn to collaborate with other stakeholders and in new ways. Some recreational stalkers won't change their ways. They can expect to go by the wayside. **Adaptive deer stalkers and deer managers** are the ones that we are interested in. You will see this reflected in our programme of Branch events to come.*

Christopher Roy-Toole Branch Chairman

Strategic issues arising from the National AGM

The Branch was represented at the National AGM and drove the discussion from the floor. David Stewart raised three questions for the BDS Board. Firstly, what will the BDS do to support the long term future of the Deer Initiative? Secondly, what is the BDS doing to help develop a policy and strategy for lowland deer in Scotland and to raise the profile of lowland deer managers with the Scottish Government? Thirdly, what will the BDS do to encourage and assist deer stalkers to gather and share field data and to store and use it? We felt that some of the Board's responses were more helpful than others and so we look forward to seeing a clear policy statement on all these matters.

New appointment to the Branch Committee

*We welcome **Glen Graham** to our committee. Glen is the Wildlife Ranger at the National Trust estate at Wallington Hall. His previous experience, especially in the management of certain types of Invasive Non-Native Species, will be of very considerable benefit to us in our future projects. I am very much encouraged by our recent successes in recruitment to the Branch Committee.*

Royal Forestry Society

Good deer management requires effective communication and collaboration between the Stalker and the Forester at all relevant stages of the plan. So I commend Stephen Hyde for establishing this important contact with the Royal Forestry Society. Members of the Committee will be attending an RFS site visit very soon. Then we plan to offer a joint event later in the year. I trust that this will be the start of a long and fruitful collaboration between our two organisations.

Survey of Branch Members

From July to September 2018, the committee will asking members to participate in a survey to give us the information and the ideas that we need to provide events. Please respond when you see the survey opportunity.

Members Evening at Kirkley Hall**Date to be confirmed**

Proof of firearms competency is important now and may become increasingly important in future. Members have been active in identifying potential rifle range sites for Branch use. But ranges must be paid for and maintained. So we are offering an opportunity to members to discuss the question of range acquisition. Members can also express their views on any other topic concerning membership, the development of the Branch, or the current and future shape of the BDS.

Muntjac Conference**Friday 21st September 2018**

The Branch will host an evening event to discuss Muntjac deer in the North East of England, their habitat, behaviour, impacts and future management. The event is open to BDS members and their guests and there will be a cost to entry. Graham Downing and David Stewart are our invited speakers from the BDS. We have secured an interesting venue near Scotch Corner. Organisation is under way and you will be given more details as this progresses. Please note the date and give this event your best support.

St. Johns Chapel Show**Saturday 25th August 2018**

The Branch will have a stand at the St. Johns Chapel Show. This is one of the smaller shows, but has been very pleasant to attend in past years. At last year's Wolsingham Show, we had a very successful stand themed around Deer Stalking. This year, to appeal to a wider audience, we want to run a stand themed around Deer Research and Conservation. Antlered heads are always useful and we also would like quality photographs of deer in habitat. If you have any other material that you think would be useful then contact the Committee. Extra volunteers for this one day event are also welcome.

Shot Site Inspection UKDTR**Date and venue to be fixed**

*The ability to locate a wounded deer for final dispatch and recovery is greatly aided by the ability to identify traces from the body of the deer which have been left at the shot site. UK Deer Track and Recovery have very kindly agreed to provide a demonstration of these skills for our members. For this demonstration, we require FAC-approved land with private access or restricted access on the day of the event. Please contact the Committee if you have suitable land to offer and await further announcements. **No live deer will be used or harmed in this demonstration.***

Contact the Branch Committee:**c.roy-toole@bdsbranches.org.uk**