

**THE BDS  
2024 - 2030  
STRATEGY**



**Together for Deer**

# Foreword

By 2030, the UK's population is expected to rise to 69.2 million people. As a result, wild deer across the nation will continue facing threats to their welfare as humans encroach on their space. On top of the existing maze of fencing and entanglement hazards, they will need to navigate an ever growing and busier road network. They will also need to keep avoiding off-lead dogs and poachers, as well as unwarranted feeding, handling or similar.

Additionally, as efforts to reverse biodiversity loss and climate change ramp up, wild deer are now also facing significant changes being made to the ways in which they are managed. Whilst changes are absolutely necessary if we are to effectively tackle these crises, they must never come at the cost of existing ethical and welfare standards. Ideally, such changes should even enhance these standards and guide best practice worldwide.

**It is now more critical than ever to create healthy deer populations that face minimal threats to their welfare, and who are in balance with their environment, and support a more sustainable food sector. From now to 2030, the BDS will focus its role on inspiring a greater number and diversity of people, organisations and governmental bodies to come together to achieve this goal. Only by coming together, will we find solutions and truly make a difference for deer, people, biodiversity and climate change.**

# THE BDS

**The British Deer Society (BDS) is the only charity in the UK dedicated to wild deer.**

We are a small team of dedicated staff assisted by several thousand passionate members and supporters.

*“The BDS is there to stand up for wild deer”*





# OUR VISION

We envision a UK where wild deer

- are valued and respected
- face minimal threats to their welfare
- thrive in harmony with their environment
- support a more ethical, sustainable food sector.

# OUR MISSION

We educate and inspire everyone about deer.

We highlight the importance of evidence-based deer management.

We champion deer welfare relentlessly and place it at the heart of everything we do.

*“The BDS provide impartial, science-led information and advice on all things deer”*





## OUR CORE VALUES

**EVIDENCE-DRIVEN.** We use science, data and expertise to guide all that we do.

**COLLABORATIVE.** We encourage knowledge-sharing and build lasting partnerships.

**TRANSPARENT.** We are open and honest in all our actions and communications.

**INNOVATIVE.** We embrace creativity, flexibility, and continuous improvement to find new and effective ways to address challenges and create positive change.

**INCLUSIVE.** We have empathy and respect for others, and aim to engage with everyone.



# Our 2024 - 2030 Strategy: Together for Deer

This strategy is designed to help us inspire everyone to come together for deer. It will help us achieve our vision and mission by focusing our efforts in 3 key areas:  
Ethics & Welfare, Education & Training, Science & Research.



Ethics and welfare are placed first in the strategy as they underpin every aspect of our work.

**CHAMPION**

## **ETHICS & WELFARE**

Be the leading voice in preventing any needless suffering of deer from existing and potential hazards which have arisen from human activities.

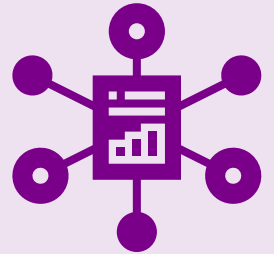




# AIM 1

## **Develop a modern ethics & welfare framework:**

Create a contemporary wild deer ethics and welfare framework rooted in informed science, apply it to all our activities, and promote it widely.



# AIM 2

## **Advocate for deer welfare:**

Expand our advocacy efforts on deer welfare when relevant policies, legislation, or guidance are reviewed. Broaden public and sector awareness of deer welfare issues and risks and explain why they should care.



# AIM 3

## **Defend deer welfare:**

Vigorously defend deer welfare using evidence and effective communication, addressing public misinformation and stigmatization of deer as pests.





## AIM 4

### **Enhance support services:**

Increase technical team capacity and extend reach of free support and advice services.

Ensure prompt and high-quality assistance.



## AIM 5

### **Promote innovation in welfare:**

Actively seek innovative solutions to reduce deer welfare issues and risks.



A man with a white beard and glasses, wearing a tan cap and a bright orange and black patterned jacket, holds a large deer antler. He is surrounded by a group of children in various jackets (pink, blue, grey) in an outdoor setting with trees and a building with columns in the background. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting daytime.

**CHAMPION**

## **EDUCATION & TRAINING**

Be the leading provider of unbiased information, advice, educational resources, and training in deer and deer management.

# AIM 1

## **Expand educational resources:**

Create the most extensive, freely accessible digital learning resource centre related to deer, deer welfare, and deer management.



# AIM 2

## **Broaden education activities:**

Expand our range of in-person educational events nationwide, with a focus on engaging schools and youth, and those with limited access to the countryside. Develop an introduction to deer and land management programme for schools.



# AIM 3

## **Enhance engagement and broaden community:**

Expand our reach and impact within our existing community of members and supporters, while continuing to grow and diversify our community.

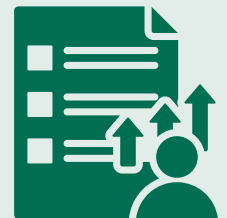




## AIM 4

### **Deliver top quality training and career development courses for the sector:**

Continue to provide and develop the highest quality, most ethically focused and most comprehensive range of deer management training and skill development courses in the deer and land management sectors.





## AIM 5

### **Broaden reach of training to related sectors:**

Diversify and expand our existing range of online and in-person training and skill development courses so they appeal to a wider range of people, interest groups, ages, and experience levels. Focus will be placed on those who work or study in sectors closely related to deer and land management.



A photograph of a stag with large, velvet-covered antlers standing in a forest. The stag is positioned on the right side of the frame, facing left. The forest floor is covered with brown ferns and moss. The background shows tall trees with green leaves, suggesting a healthy forest environment. The lighting is natural, with sunlight filtering through the trees.

**CHAMPION**

## SCIENCE & RESEARCH

Be the leading body for monitoring & research that provides informed, effective solutions for protecting deer welfare & managing their populations at local & national levels.



# AIM 1

## **Enhance research and monitoring:**

Conduct, support, and commission monitoring and applied research projects that support and expand the UK knowledge base in the following focus areas:

- deer welfare
- deer populations
- the humane and effective management of deer
- the positive and negative impacts of deer on their surrounding environment

Research topics in similar areas will be considered, especially innovative topics.

The development and expansion of our existing citizen science research will be a key element of this work.





## AIM 2

### **Disseminate global research:**

Regularly review and communicate worldwide research on deer, their welfare, and management.



## AIM 3

### **Scientific conferences:**

Launch and host a UK and Ireland scientific conference on deer and deer management. Participate in global conferences as opportunities arise.



## AIM 4

### **Develop a public data portal:**

Become the central portal for public reporting about deer and run regular citizen science surveys across the UK.



# AIM 5

## Expand impact through partnerships:

Ensure that BDS data, research, and monitoring contribute to addressing national and global social, economic, environmental, and climate issues.



# Conclusion

In embracing the ambitious strategy, "Together for Deer," the BDS charts a path towards a harmonious coexistence between wild deer and their environment. With a vision of treasured, thriving deer facing reduced threats to welfare, and a mission rooted in education, evidence-based management, and welfare advocacy, we embark on a journey that builds on our body of work and reflects our commitment to the wellbeing of these magnificent creatures.

**With a renewed focus on Ethics and Welfare, Education and Training, and Science and Research, we invite everyone who cares for wild deer to join us on this transformative journey.**

**Together, we can shape a more sustainable future where deer, people and biodiversity all thrive alongside each other.**





Learn more: [bds.org.uk](https://www.bds.org.uk)

# Photography credits and descriptions

In order of appearance:

Roe deer doe with two kids by Ysbrand Cosijn; Red stag by Michelle Coyle; Roe kid in the woods by Stephen Smith; Roe buck in barley by Deborah Heath, Water deer lying in a frosty field by Dovydas Vicius; Muntjac doe walking through stubble by Nick Lane; Roe buck jumping a fence by Michael Rusling; 2 photographs of Morris Charlton teaching children about deer with support from Countryside Learning; A BDS deer management training course at Sky Park Farm; A drone conducting a deer survey by Ben & Katie Harrower of BH Wildlife Consultancy; Sika stag by Nick Rout; Wildlife watching with binoculars by Kenneth Schulze; Fallow deer by MikeLane45; Red stag in the rain by Stephen Smith; Red stag silhouettes - edited from an original image taken by Jochen Langbein (Langbein Wildlife and 'The Deer Year' Group).

