

# Rough guide to deer stalking and why some carcasses are left on the hill

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*This carcass of this red deer hind was left on the hill to feed wildlife and for nutrient recycling. She was in poor condition and not suitable for human consumption.*

- Deer populations need to be controlled and herds need to be kept in balance.
- They are seasonal and graze the habitat. We try to shoot them in season, we try to keep the herd healthy and get good meat out of it. Some people shoot out of season because it is easier but the meat is of poorer quality. There are seasons for reasons, to try and keep the herd healthy.
- We select which animals to shoot – old, thin, injured, if there are too many in an area, etc. Sometimes they are shot for crops/habitat protection.
- Each animal we remove reduces the fertility of the hills. It would be helpful to put bones back out on the hills.



*Note the longer greener grass around where the deer bones are, compared to surrounding areas.*



- Bones on knolls – birds sit on them and defecate. It is higher ground so easier for them to take off and they can see better from the top of knolls.

*Tadpoles feeding around a deer bone*

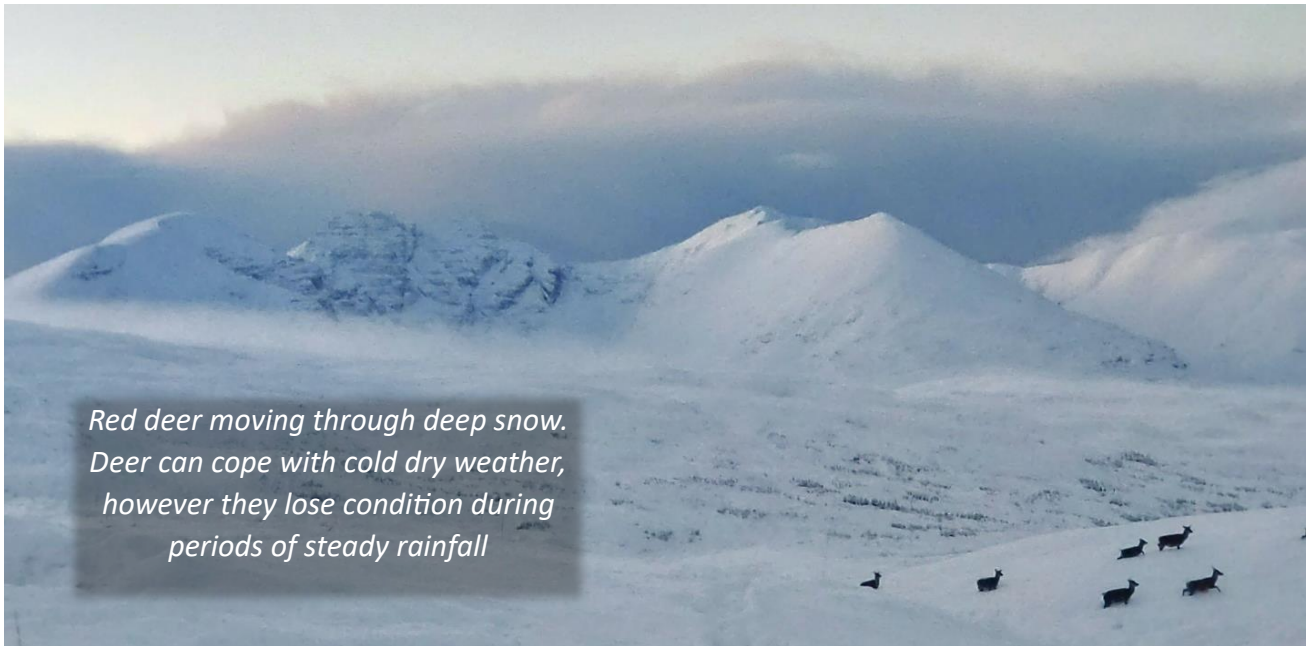
- Deer get a hard time in the press and with agencies. The agencies often shoot out of season.
- If the game dealers had a better process, they could cope with more carcasses in season, but they always seem to be full, especially in October. The whole system is full then.



*(left) This red deer stag was taken off the hill. It was in good condition for venison. Antlers are best left on the hill where they are eaten and recycled back into the ecosystem.*

- Deer counting is also an important part of the job, to know what you have and what you are going to be shooting.
- Different seasons will have different deer on the ground, some move in and some move out. Weather, wind direction, hill walkers, etc. all also have an impact on deer because the deer are free to move.





- Mother nature has two ways of getting nutrients up the hill - volcanoes are one and migratory fish is another. When fish die at spawning time, they get nutrients back on the hill and makes it more fertile. This in turn is feeding other things.
- It is important to try and keep a healthy balance.



- Forestry also has serious negative impacts. Ploughing the hills leads to water running off fast and it is washing away the acidic soil. This ruins the pH balance in the water which in turn affects the insects living in it. So, the food sources for fish and birds are poor.
- Deer bones are classed as industrial waste, so there are restrictions on putting bones back on the hills.