Technical Appendix 7.3: Deer Management Plan

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7.3.1 Introduction

7.3.1.1 This Deer Management Plan includes measures to avoid potential adverse impacts on designated sites and surrounding areas of woodland from deer species, particular red deer *Cervus elaphus*, and takes into account deer management on neighbouring land and the operational development to ensure the objectives are complimentary, particularly with the North Ross Deer Management Group (NRDMG) Deer Management Plan[1].

7.3.1.2 The Deer Management Plan covers the area of Novar 1 Wind Farm, whereas the wider estate and neighbouring lands are covered by the NRDMG, which covers an area of approximately 115,693 ha. The plans apply an integrated approach to managing deer that maintains population numbers for sporting activities while ensuring long-term sustainability.

7.3.1.3 The Proposed Development covers an area of approximately 315 ha and sits within the larger land ownership of Novar Estate within the NRDMG area. Access to the Site is also taken through Novar Estate. Novar is an active sporting estate with renewable energy interests in the form of hydroelectric and wind farm developments.

7.3.1.4 Although considered not to result in any significant effects on the designated site, the Proposed Development lies within 3 km of Ben Wyvis Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and therefore warrants consideration of the potential deer activity changes, particularly the temporary displacement of red deer *Cervus elaphus* from the Proposed Development into the wider area beyond the Site that includes the SAC.

7.3.1.5 This Deer Management Plan has been completed following best practice guidance from NatureScot[2].

7.3.2 Baseline

Deer Population Information

7.3.2.1 The total number of red deer recorded on Novar Estate through helicopter count in 2019 was 73, a density of 0.9 deer/km^2. Historic cull returns[3] are provided in Table 7.3.1.

Table 7.3.1: Red Deer Historic Cull Returns for Novar Estate

Year	Stags	Hinds	Calves	Totals
2016/2017	0	0	0	0
2017/2018	4	0	0	4
2018/2019	4	6	5	15

7.3.3 Potential Impacts

7.3.3.1 Decommissioning of the existing Novar 1 Wind Farm and construction of the repowered wind farm could lead to the localised, short-term and temporary displacement of deer from the Site. The impacts would likely only occur across the Turbine Array area and a limited extent beyond, leaving most of the Novar Estate area undisturbed. The impact would occur during daytime working hours and would cease following the completion of decommissioning/construction activities each day.

7.3.3.2 There are multiple factors that considered collectively, would suggest potential displacement beyond Novar Estate, i.e. as far as the SAC would be unlikely, including:

- Construction activities would be localised rather than comprising the entirety of the Proposed Development. Any displacement is therefore unlikely to be wide scale in nature, allowing much of the Site and immediate environs to still be available to deer;
- Due to the physical barriers of Loch Glass and the Abhainn Toll a' Choin and the Alness rivers, it is unlikely that disturbed deer would displace in the direction of Ben Wyvis SAC. A parcel of lower-lying ground land east of Loch Glass and west of the Site may act as a more suitable refuge for disturbed deer; and
- Deer are habituated to the presence of an active wind farm and the associated activity, such as vehicle movements and human presence. It therefore cannot be assumed that all activities would be equally disturbing to deer across the Site.

7.3.3.3 Management and maintenance of the Proposed Development during the operational phase in the medium-term is not considered to lead to significant deer displacement as personnel activity would be low, vehicle speed limits would be controlled, and deer are considered to have high habituation to operational levels of human activity due to the presence of the Novar 1 Wind Farm. Deer are also not stalked from vehicles. Deer quickly adapt to activities that pose no threat and are likely to remain on the Site during operation.

7.3.3.4 In the longer-term, decommissioning of the Proposed Development, through dismantling and removal of turbines and other infrastructure and habitat reinstatement, is likely to lead to a similar displacement effect as that experienced during construction activities.

7.3.4 Deer Management

7.3.4.1 The monitoring of deer movement and counts would continue to be undertaken by estate staff as part of their overall duties and the information provided would be used to manage cull levels. Engagement with neighbours on the surrounding estates through the NRDMG would also continue to ensure deer management measures are complementary and collaborative.

Minimising Deer Disturbance and Mortality

7.3.4.2 Measures to reduce the disturbance and potential mortality of deer would be undertaken during construction of the Proposed Development. The following measures are proposed:

- Follow general guidance as provided in the NRDMG[1];
- Restrict construction traffic to the construction Site boundary;

[1] North Ross Deer Management Group (NRDMG), (2019), Group Deer Management Plan 2019-2014. URL: https://nrossdmg.deer-management.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/NRDMG-Strategy-Doc-April19.pdf [Accessed 26/01/2026]

[2] NatureScot, (2026), Managing Deer. URL: https://www.nature.scot/professional-advice/land-and-sea-management/managing-wildlife/managing-deer [Accessed: 26/01/2026]

[3] North Ross Deer Management Group (NRDMG), (2019), Group Deer Management Plan 2019-2014, Appendix 10: Count and cull data. URL: https://nrossdmg.deer-management.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/A10-Count-Cull-Data.pdf [Accessed: 26/01/2026]

- Minimise deer vehicle collisions and disturbance by restricting speed limits to 15 mph within the Site; and
- Utilise deer fencing[4] to contain deer from moving in specific directions or strategically remove existing deer fencing within Novar Estate to provide additional areas for deer that they previously were not given access to.

Cull Plan

7.3.4.3 There is not a specific cull target set for the Site as the red, roe and sika deer in season are generally culled only as and when needed/where an opportunity presents itself. Final annual cull targets for the Proposed Development would be in line with the NRDMG and agreed with relevant stakeholders, including Novar Estate. The overall aim would be to work towards a target of no more than 10-12 deer/km^2.

7.3.5 Conclusion

7.3.5.1 Novar Estate, within which the Proposed Development is situated, has an extremely low density of deer, likely more than ten times lower than the target density for the overall NRDMG area. As such, even if there were to be short term displacement of deer from the Site during decommissioning of Novar 1 Wind Farm and construction of the repowered wind farm, it is considered unlikely to result in unsustainably high density elsewhere in the wider area.

7.3.5.2 Even though it is unlikely given the low density of deer present, there are also natural landscape barriers in the form of Loch Glass and the River Glass to any displaced deer moving in a westerly direction towards Ben Wyvis SAC where high deer numbers could impact adversely on the sensitive habitats present.

7.3.5.3 Culling can be undertaken on-Site should it be necessary, however given the low density at present, no intensive efforts to reduce the numbers are currently required.

[4] NatureScot, (2026), Wild Deer Best Practice Guidance. URL: https://bestpracticeguides.scot/guides/ [Accessed: 26/01/2026]