



**An overview of the extent,
scale and cost of trophy
hunting in Great Britain**

1. Executive summary

Trophy hunting¹ is legal in Great Britain and this report reveals that trophy hunting is widespread, taking place in at least 23 counties² throughout Great Britain for a price. The 'sport' appears to be readily available to trophy hunters of all levels of experience, in many cases to novices without any prior practice or training.

It is very easy to book a trophy hunting opportunity³, requiring only a simple internet search and a few clicks of a mouse to secure a booking.

Trophy hunting in Great Britain principally targets six species of mainly wild roaming deer, although other species are also offered as targets including a rare species of non-native deer which only exists in captivity.

The cost of going trophy hunting in Great Britain ranges from as little as £60 up to at least £952.17⁴ plus the cost of the trophy⁵ and other additional costs, such as trophy preparation. On the face of it, trophy hunting in Great Britain appears to be a cheap alternative to big 'game' trophy hunting abroad and is even advertised as such by international hunting sites. However, there is a lack of price transparency from those that advertise trophy hunting in Great Britain and so it is possible that the figures identified by this report are understated.

This report found that some websites⁶ (including luxurious hunting consultancies or organisations or syndicates) do not disclose information on price or location; customers are invited to privately contact the provider for more information or pay to become a member for access to hidden trophy hunting opportunities. Consequently, whilst this report does show that trophy hunting is offered in at least 23 counties in Great Britain, it is possible that the pricing and location analysis in this report underestimates the scale and cost of it.

Overall, this report scratches the surface of the extent, scale and cost of a blood sport in Great Britain that goes largely unnoticed by the British public. The data collected:

- a. shows a lack of transparency within the trophy hunting industry in Great Britain; and
- b. raises questions about the laws or regulation in place to monitor the obvious interplay between trophy hunting and lethal wildlife management⁷ which leaves scope for trophy hunting to warp lethal wildlife management priorities.

'...customers are invited to privately contact the provider for more information or pay to become a member for access to hidden trophy hunting opportunities.'

¹ See Definitions.

² See Definitions.

³ See Definitions.

⁴ The minimum outing cost identified by this report is £60. The maximum outing cost identified by this report is £952.17.

⁵ See Definitions.

⁶ See Definitions.

⁷ See Definitions.



2. Introduction

Trophy hunting is an activity primarily associated with big 'game' hunting abroad, particularly in Africa for the 'Big Five'⁸.

Trophy hunting is available in Great Britain but it is not a topic that is widely represented⁹ within the media in Great Britain and it can be difficult to distinguish it from wildlife management. The difficulty of distinguishing between wildlife management and trophy hunting may be a reason behind the limited representation of trophy hunting in Great Britain the media.

There is a lack of natural, wild, apex predators in Great Britain and some believe that consequently certain species have grown significantly in number and distribution across Great Britain. For example, there are large populations of deer in Great Britain which allegedly can have adverse impacts on the environments they inhabit¹⁰. Lethal wildlife management is permitted in Great Britain as a means of population control.

There are several tactics employed by landowners and deer management¹¹ organisations to manage deer populations. These tactics include but are not limited to deer fencing¹², chemical repellents¹³, birth control¹⁴ and culling¹⁵. The culling of deer is a widely used tactic for deer populations throughout Great Britain.

Culling deer by stalking as a means of wildlife management is not specifically regulated by law within Great Britain, and consequently trophy hunting has the potential to warp wildlife management priorities. This report seeks to explore the scale and cost of trophy hunting available in Great Britain.



⁸ The 'Big Five' are commonly defined as lion, elephant, buffalo, leopard and rhinoceros

⁹ Based on a search across UK media sources between 2019 and 2022 for 'Trophy Hunting in the UK'. 'UK Trophy Hunting' and 'Trophy Hunting in Great Britain' which returned 13 results. Only 1 of these 13 results dealt with trophy hunting in Great Britain. The remainder related to trophy hunting abroad, specifically in Africa, and the import of trophies into the UK.

¹⁰ <https://www.bds.org.uk/information-advice/issues-with-deer/why-manage-deer/> (accessed 09/07/2021)

¹¹ Deer management is a form of Wildlife Management used to ensure deer populations remain healthy and in balance with their environment, <https://www.bds.org.uk/information-advice/issues-with-deer/why-manage-deer/> (accessed 14/02/2022).

¹² Fences deliberately constructed to be effective against deer.

¹³ Chemical repellents include: creosote, diesel soaked cloth strips and soap - The British Deer Society. Detering Deer. Available: <https://www.bds.org.uk/information-advice/issues-with-deer/detering-deer/> (accessed 19/07/2021)

¹⁴ There are various methods of birth control available for deer. Deer must be caught and treated.

¹⁵ Culling is selective killing as a means to maintain a deer population at an acceptable or agreed level, or reducing it to that level and holding it there. – The Deer Initiative. (2009). The Deer Initiative. Management Cull Planning, 1.

3. Definitions

Term	Meaning
County	A ceremonial county within England or council area within Scotland.
Outing	An individual stalk. The duration of an individual stalk for deer can range from three hours to all day and may be guided or unguided. Some trophy hunting opportunities offer multiple individual stalks as part of a package, for example, a one-day trophy hunting opportunity could offer a client the chance to venture out on three individual stalks during that one day.
Six target deer	red deer, roe deer, Chinese water deer, sika deer, muntjac deer and fallow deer.
Trophy	The whole or part of an animal kept and/or displayed. Typically, trophies are teeth, horns, antlers or heads.
Trophy hunting	A blood sport involving the killing of wild animals with lethal weapons for the purpose of obtaining part of the animal as a trophy.
Trophy hunting opportunity	The opportunity to stalk and kill a specific species of mammal in a specific location within Great Britain as advertised on a website ¹⁶ . For example, if a website offers a client the chance to stalk and kill red deer in Wiltshire and Somerset, that is two trophy hunting opportunities. Likewise, if a website offers a client the chance to stalk and kill roe deer and Chinese water deer in Suffolk, that is two trophy hunting opportunities. Different sexes of the same species are not counted as two separate trophy hunting opportunities, unless specifically advertised separately. Likewise, the different sizes of animal available for stalking, e.g. Bronze, Silver, Gold medal animals or four point animals, six point animals etc. are not counted as different trophy hunting opportunities although they may vary in price. A trophy hunting opportunity can comprise multiple stalks.
Website	A website which advertises trophy hunting opportunities, data from which was collected for this report.
Wildlife management	Lethal or non-lethal methods of species control that aim to find a balance between the needs of nature and the needs of people.

¹⁶ Different sexes of the same species were not counted as two separate Trophy Hunting Opportunities, unless specifically advertised separately. Likewise, the different sizes of animal available for stalking, e.g. Bronze, Silver, Gold medal animals or 4 point animals, 6 point animals etc. were not counted as different opportunities although they often varied in price.

4. Context

Hunting mammals in Great Britain both on horseback and using dogs was made illegal in 2005 by virtue of the Hunting Act 2004 subject to various exemptions. However, stalking mammals is still legal in Great Britain. Stalking consists of the pursuit of a mammal, for example a deer, on foot with the intention of shooting the mammal for meat, sport or population control.

Trophy hunting operates in Great Britain within a complex and patchwork legislative framework. There are various pieces of legislation setting out the laws around hunting and killing deer in Great Britain and whilst there are some restrictions placed on these activities, there are exceptions to those restrictions.

There are no laws specifically governing deer management in England and Wales. In Scotland, to an extent, Scottish Natural Heritage ("SNH") (now NatureScot) and Scottish Ministers do have powers to monitor deer management and those that partake in it.

The five key pieces of legislation which govern the stalking and killing of deer in Great Britain are:

1. Hunting Act 2004
2. Deer Act 1991
3. Deer (Scotland) Act 1996
4. Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996 (as amended)
5. Theft Act 1968.

The laws of particular relevance implemented by these pieces of legislation are as follows:



¹⁷ Section 1 Hunting Act 2004

¹⁸ Section 1(1), Deer Act 1991.

¹⁹ Section 1(3), Deer Act 1991

²⁰ Section 1(2), Deer Act 1991

²¹ Section 1(3), Deer Act 1991

²² Close seasons for deer hunting are designed to protect deer whilst they are breeding and whilst male deer antlers are growing. It is important that males are able to grow their antlers as they play an important role in sexual selection in the breeding season when males fight for access to females in the rut. There is no close season for muntjac deer as they breed throughout the year.

²³ Section 2(1), Deer Act 1991

²⁴ Section 3, Deer Act 1991

²⁵ Sections 6(2), 6(4), 8(3A) and 8(3D), Deer Act 1991

²⁶ Section 7(1), Deer Act 1991

²⁷ Section 6A, Deer (Scotland) Act 1996 (as amended)

²⁸ Section 7(1), Deer (Scotland) Act 1996 (as amended)

²⁹ Sections 17(1) – (2), Deer (Scotland) Act 1996 (as amended)

³⁰ Section 17(3), Deer (Scotland) Act 1996 (as amended)

³¹ Section 17A(1), Deer (Scotland) Act 1996 (as amended)

³² Section 18(1), Deer (Scotland) Act 1996 (as amended)

³³ Section 18(2), Deer (Scotland) Act 1996 (as amended)

³⁴ Section 25, Deer (Scotland) Act 1996 (as a (as amended)

³⁵ Section 26(1), Deer (Scotland) Act 1996

³⁶ Section 1, Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996

³⁷ Section 4(4) Theft Act 1968

Legislation	Provisions
Hunting Act 2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is an offence to hunt a wild mammal with dogs¹⁷.
Deer Act 1991	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is an offence for any person to go onto land without the consent of the relevant person to search for or pursue a deer in order to take, injure or kill it¹⁸, unless the person believed that they had the necessary permission.¹⁹ It is an offence, on land, to (or attempt to) take, kill or injure a deer (or search for or pursue a deer in order to take, kill or injure it), or to remove the carcass of a deer²⁰ unless the person believed that they had permission.²¹ There are²² 'close seasons' for certain species of deer (not including muntjac deer) and it is an offence to kill a deer during close season subject to specific caveats. The caveats are designed for deer farmers or people authorised by them so that they can kill deer during close season if the deer are marked with a clear identifier and are contained for meat, food, skins, other by-products or as breeding stock²³. It is an offence to take or kill a deer at night²⁴. It is an exception to both close season offences and night offences of killing a deer if it is either to prevent suffering, or for reasons of public health, public safety or the conservation of natural heritage. In relation to night offences, this exception extends to preventing damaging to property.²⁵ It is also an exception to the close season offence to attempt to kill a deer on cultivated land, pasture or enclosed woodland, if the occupier of such land authorizes it.²⁶
Deer (Scotland) Act 1996 (as amended)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SNH may give notice to owners and occupiers of land requiring them to prepare a deer management plan for approval.²⁷ If SNH is satisfied that deer or steps taken/not taken for the purposes of deer management have caused/are causing/are likely to cause specific types of damage or have become a danger/potential danger to public safety, it can form a preliminary view of what measures should be taken.²⁸ It is an offence to (without legal right or permission from the relevant person) willfully kill or injure deer on any land or to remove any deer carcass from any land.²⁹ It is also an offence to willfully kill or injure any deer otherwise than by shooting.³⁰ Scottish Ministers have the power to provide for the establishment and operation of a register of people competent to shoot deer in Scotland; to prohibit any person from shooting deer if they are not registered or supervised by a registered person; and require registered persons or owners or occupiers of land to submit cull returns to SNH.³¹ It is an offence to take or willfully kill or injure deer at night.³² A person is exempt from the killing or taking deer at night offence if SNH has authorised the relevant person in writing to take or kill and sell (or otherwise dispose of) deer on any land or woodland.³³ It is an exception to offences to prevent a deer from suffering.³⁴ A landowner can take, kill and sell or dispose of any deer if they believe that the deer may damage their property such as crops, pasture or foodstuffs.³⁵
Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is an offence to mutilate, kick, beat, nail or otherwise impale, stab, burn, stone, crush, drown, drag or asphyxiate any wild mammal (including deer) with the intention of creating unnecessary suffering³⁶. There are some caveats to this offence.
Theft Act 1968	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wild roaming animals (including deer) are regarded as 'property' but are not owned until they are 'reduced into possession' by being killed or captured or are in the process of being 'reduced into possession'.³⁷

Species	Sex	Close season (England and Wales)	Close season (Scotland)
Red deer and hybrids	Male	1 May - 31 Jul	21 Oct - 30 Jun
	Female	1 Apr - 31 Oct	16 Feb - 20 Oct
Fallow deer	Male	1 May - 31 July	1 May - 31 Jul
	Female	1 Apr - 31 Oct	16 Feb - 20 Oct
Sika deer and hybrids	Male	1 May - 31 Jul	21 Oct - 30 Jun
	Female	1 Apr - 31 Oct	16 Feb - 20 Oct
Roe deer	Male	1 Nov - 31 Mar	21 Oct - 31 Mar
	Female	1 Apr - 31 Oct	1 April - 20 Oct
Chinese water deer	Male	1 Apr - 31 Oct	No close season
	Female	1 Apr - 31 Oct	
Muntjac deer	Both	No close season	No close season

Table 1. The close season for hunting deer species in Great Britain. These close seasons are specific to England, Wales and Scotland. There are different close seasons for males and females.



5. Methodology

Data

In order to determine the scale of trophy hunting in Great Britain, basic internet searches³⁸ were conducted to identify a random sample set of websites advertising trophy hunting. Basic searches returned multiple results inviting quick bookings for trophy hunting opportunities, showing that trophy hunting is easily accessible in Great Britain and that there are plenty of opportunities to go trophy hunting in Great Britain. Data was then collected from these sample websites between May 2021 and May 2022.

In total, this report identified at least 23 websites advertising trophy hunting opportunities in Great Britain; the majority of which offered the opportunity to stalk and kill multiple species of deer of varying ages, sexes and sizes throughout the year. A few of these websites – www.bookyourhunt.com, www.goshooting.org.uk and www.gunsonpegs.com – are platforms which advertise numerous trophy hunting opportunities on behalf of various different providers ranging from individuals to companies.

Websites disclosed an inconsistent range of information about the trophy hunting opportunities available, the location and the cost. Consequently, in order to fairly extract and compare data collected from these websites, standardised definitions were established. These definitions are set out at Section 3³⁹.

The following variables were considered for each trophy hunting opportunity:

1. Location of the outing (s)⁴⁰ - county and country
2. The number of outings available as part of the trophy hunting opportunity
3. Target species
4. Characteristics of the species (e.g. sex, age, size) offered as part of the trophy hunting opportunity
5. The price of the overall trophy hunting opportunity
6. Price per outing
7. Trophy fee (the cost of a trophy)
8. Trophy descriptions (e.g. Bronze, Silver, Gold, 4 points, 6 points etc⁴¹)
9. The website's advertisement description
10. A link to each website.

Websites were aimed at a mixture of British and international clients: some advertisements' prices were stated on websites in Euros or US dollars and so clearly targeted European and American clients.



³⁸ These basic searches were carried out using the keywords "deer" and "stalking" and "UK".

³⁹ See Definitions

⁴⁰ See Definitions

⁴¹ Some trophy hunting providers priced trophies depending on their size, weight or appearance. In some cases, Websites described trophies by weight, points (number of points on a deer's antler) or medal standard. The British Association for Shooting and Conservation sets out general qualification guidelines for trophies: <https://basc.org.uk/deer-management/head-measuring/>

For the purposes of this report, it has been necessary to make assumptions to ensure consistency in the presentation of data. Where assumptions have been made, the most reasonable assumption has been selected in the circumstances. The following assumptions have been made:

Trophy

Generally, where a trophy hunting opportunity advertised on a website gave a price range for a particular size or quality of trophy, the lowest cost of that size or quality of trophy has been assumed as the relevant figure. For example, if a website stated the price of a trophy hunting opportunity as “£200-800 depending on quality”, then £200 was selected as the cost of the trophy hunting opportunity for the purposes of the pricing analysis. However, where the lowest figure within a range is ‘£0’, the highest price in the range has been assumed. For example, where the price of a trophy is £1.75 per gram and the range of trophy size is listed as 0-370 grams, this report assumes a trophy of 370g because a trophy size of 0 grams is not accurate.

Where the trophy hunting opportunity advertisement on a website explicitly gives a cost per trophy plus VAT, this report presents the cost of the trophy including VAT.

Location

Various trophy hunting opportunities were listed on the website www.bookyourhunt.com. Where a trophy hunting opportunity on this website has listed multiple locations under the heading ‘Hunt Territory’, the trophy hunting advertised has been assumed to be available in all listed locations. Where no locations are listed under the heading ‘Hunt Territory’, the location of the trophy hunting advertised by the listing has been assumed to be offered in the location marked on the digital map shown in the listing.

Trophy hunting opportunity versus management stalk

Only stalks which were not clearly wildlife management stalks were relied upon for the purposes of this report. Any website advertising trophy hunting opportunities which clearly stated the aim of the outing(s) was for deer management, and only cull deer⁴² would be shot, was not considered to be offering trophy hunting (and so a trophy hunting opportunity). Consequently data from such advertisements was noted but not relied upon by this report as trophy hunting opportunities. It is possible that these trophy hunting opportunities are not genuine deer management but without clear evidence of the contrary, this report has assumed that they are.

Outing

Trophy hunting opportunities as advertised spanned a range of a single day to multiple days and so in order to standardise prices, the price per outing was calculated rather than taking the price of the trophy hunting opportunity as advertised at face value.

Where a trophy hunting opportunity listing on a website did not specifically state that there were multiple outings on offer, the trophy hunting opportunity is treated as being for a single outing.

Where a trophy hunting opportunity listing advertises a single outing cost and a multiple outing cost (for example, in cases where a discount is offered for multiple outings), for the purposes of the pricing analysis in this report, the median outing cost has been relied upon.

Where the trophy hunting opportunity listing gave a cost per outing plus VAT, this report presents the outing cost including VAT.

Some websites – for example, The Capreolus Club and County Deer Stalking – advertised their trophy hunting opportunities as being exclusive of VAT, for example, ‘£155 + VAT’. In these instances, the VAT was added to the outing price presented for the purpose of this report. For websites that did not state whether the outing price advertised was inclusive or exclusive of VAT, this report relied on the figure presented as being inclusive of VAT.

⁴² A cull deer refers to a deer that has been selected to be culled as part of a wildlife management plan/strategy.

Averages

For the purposes of calculating the average pricing information, this report has calculated the mean.

Scope of Report

Northern Ireland was not included in this research. Therefore, this research refers to Great Britain, rather than the United Kingdom.

The majority of websites advertising trophy hunting opportunities in England stated the location of the trophy hunting opportunities as one of the 48

ceremonial counties of England. Therefore, for the purposes of the analysis of the scale of trophy hunting in England, the relevant ceremonial county was chosen as the relevant data, save for Yorkshire (which was considered to be one large county comprising North, South, West and East Riding of Yorkshire) and the Cotswolds⁴³. For websites advertising trophy hunting opportunities in Scotland, the relevant council areas out of the 32 council areas that make up Scotland were selected as the relevant data for the purposes of the analysis of the scale of trophy hunting in Scotland.



⁴³ The Cotswolds is a range of rolling hills that pass through the five Counties of Gloucestershire, Oxfordshire, Warwickshire, Wiltshire, and Worcestershire. Websites offering stalks which stated that the location of the Trophy Hunting Opportunities was 'the Cotswolds' without specifying exactly which County/Counties within the Cotswolds, were considered as just one Cotswold County chosen at random.

6. Types of stalking

This report identified four types of stalking opportunities:

1. Current trophy hunting opportunities
2. Current management stalk opportunities
3. Old, expired or inactive trophy hunting opportunities
4. Expired or inactive management stalk opportunities.

Trophy hunting opportunities were considered as "current" if, at the time data was collected, they were still on offer. For example, they were not listed for a date or date range which had already passed. Data was collected between June 2021 and February 2022.

Current trophy hunting opportunities

These trophy hunting opportunities were on websites which evidently advertised trophy hunting opportunities, clearly stating a price for stalking and killing an animal and a price for taking away a trophy which generally depended on the size of the animal. These stalks are not described as being 'management' stalks or 'culls' and do not refer to the deer available as part of the stalk advertised as 'cull' deer.

Reviews left online on websites for some of these trophy hunting opportunities included images of trophy hunters proudly displaying their trophies.

Current management stalk opportunities

These are advertisements on websites which are presented as though they are opportunities to stalk and kill deer as part of a sustainable deer management plan/strategy rather than opportunities to stalk and kill a deer of the hunter's choice for a trophy – a trophy hunting opportunity. For example, one website stated "Our strategy of selective culling ensures healthy, sustainable herds and so also provides quality trophy opportunities⁴⁴" which suggests that the trophies are a by-product of culling. Another stated "A limited number of trophy deer form part of our cull plan each year⁴⁵" which suggests the same. This report identified 109 current management stalk opportunities.

Generally, little information is available on the cost of the trophies on such websites. Typically, the price of the deer management Outing⁴⁶ on offer is used as a proxy, though this price is most likely cheaper than the overall cost of a deer management stalk with these organisations once the price of a trophy is added. These websites were not included within the location and cost analysis of trophy hunting opportunities.

It is possible that these Websites and the listings advertising stalking on them are in fact trophy hunting opportunities. However, this report errs on the side of caution taking at face value how these Websites describe themselves and the stalking opportunities advertised upon them.

Expired, old or inactive trophy hunting opportunities

Trophy hunting opportunities were considered "expired" when the date(s) for which the trophy hunting opportunities were listed had passed but there was reason to believe that the trophy hunting opportunities would be available again the following year on similar dates. For example, Christmas stalks in 2021 that are likely to be offered again in Christmas 2022.

Trophy hunting opportunities were considered 'old' when the date(s) for which the trophy hunting opportunities were listed had passed and there was no reason to believe that the trophy hunting opportunities would be available again.

Trophy hunting opportunities were considered 'inactive' when there were no dates of availability listed for the trophy hunting opportunity presently.

These trophy hunting opportunities were not included within the pricing and location analysis for the purposes of this report.

Were 'expired' trophy hunting opportunities to be included in the analysis of the scale of trophy hunting in Great Britain, they would add another 21 trophy hunting opportunities across Hampshire ranging in price per outing from £294 - £576 and trophy cost of £0 - £1,200. There would also be further trophy hunting opportunities in Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar, Cornwall, Fife & Perthshire, Herefordshire, Highlands, Norfolk, Oxfordshire, Perth and Kinross, Scottish Borders, Suffolk and Wiltshire.

⁴⁴ <https://hockhamdmg.co.uk/bongo.pl/deer.stalking/>

⁴⁵ <http://keithshighseats.co.uk/deer-management/>

⁴⁶ A management hunt would involve the stalking and shooting of selected cull deer as part of a cull plan. The cull deer selected would not then be taken as a trophy.

Expired or inactive management stalk opportunities

These are advertisements on websites which were presented as though they were opportunities to stalk and kill deer as part of a deer management plan yet the website in general clearly mentioned trophy hunting opportunities.

Management stalk opportunities were considered 'expired' when the date(s) for which the management stalk opportunities were listed had passed but there was reason to believe that the management stalk opportunities would be available again the following year on similar dates.

Management stalk opportunities were considered 'inactive' when there were no dates of availability listed for the management stalk opportunities presently.



7. Target species

Trophy hunting opportunities were identified for at least 11 different species of animal. The main species for which the majority of trophy hunting opportunities were advertised were deer, mainly the following six target deer⁴⁷ species which roam wild across certain areas of Great Britain, as well as within deer parks:

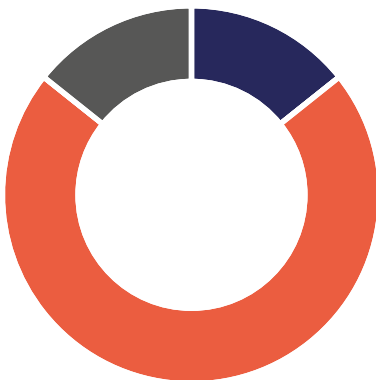
1. Red deer (native to Great Britain)
2. Roe deer (native to Great Britain)
3. Fallow deer (non-native to Great Britain);
4. Sika deer (non-native to Great Britain)
5. Muntjac deer (non-native to Great Britain)
6. Chinese water deer (non-native to Great Britain).

The majority of trophy hunting opportunities identified were for roe deer: 38 of 151 trophy hunting opportunities offered roe as an option to stalk. Conversely, only 10 trophy hunting opportunities offered sika deer as a target and so sika deer was the least advertised deer species for trophy hunting.

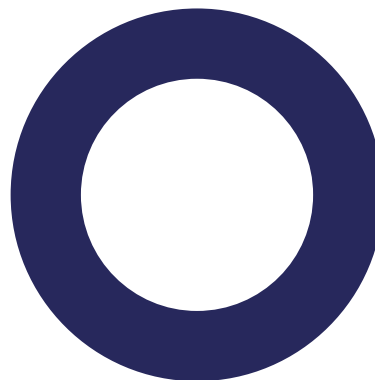
Key

■ Red	■ Muntjac
■ Fallow	■ Sika
■ Chinese	■ Unspecified
■ Roe	

Aberdeenshire



Argyll & Bute



Bedfordshire



⁴⁷ See Definitions.

Berkshire



Cambridgeshire



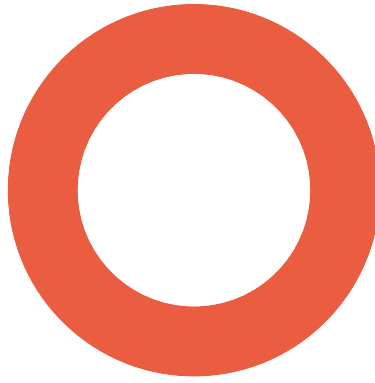
Cumbria



Dorset



Durham



Gloucestershire



Hampshire



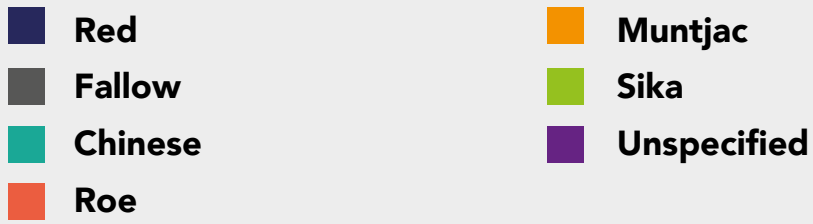
Hertfordshire



Highlands



Key



Kent



Norfolk



Northamptonshire



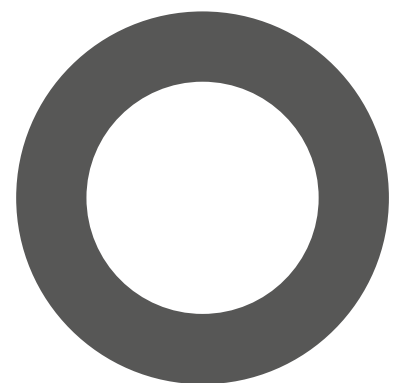
Oxfordshire



Scottish Borders



Shropshire



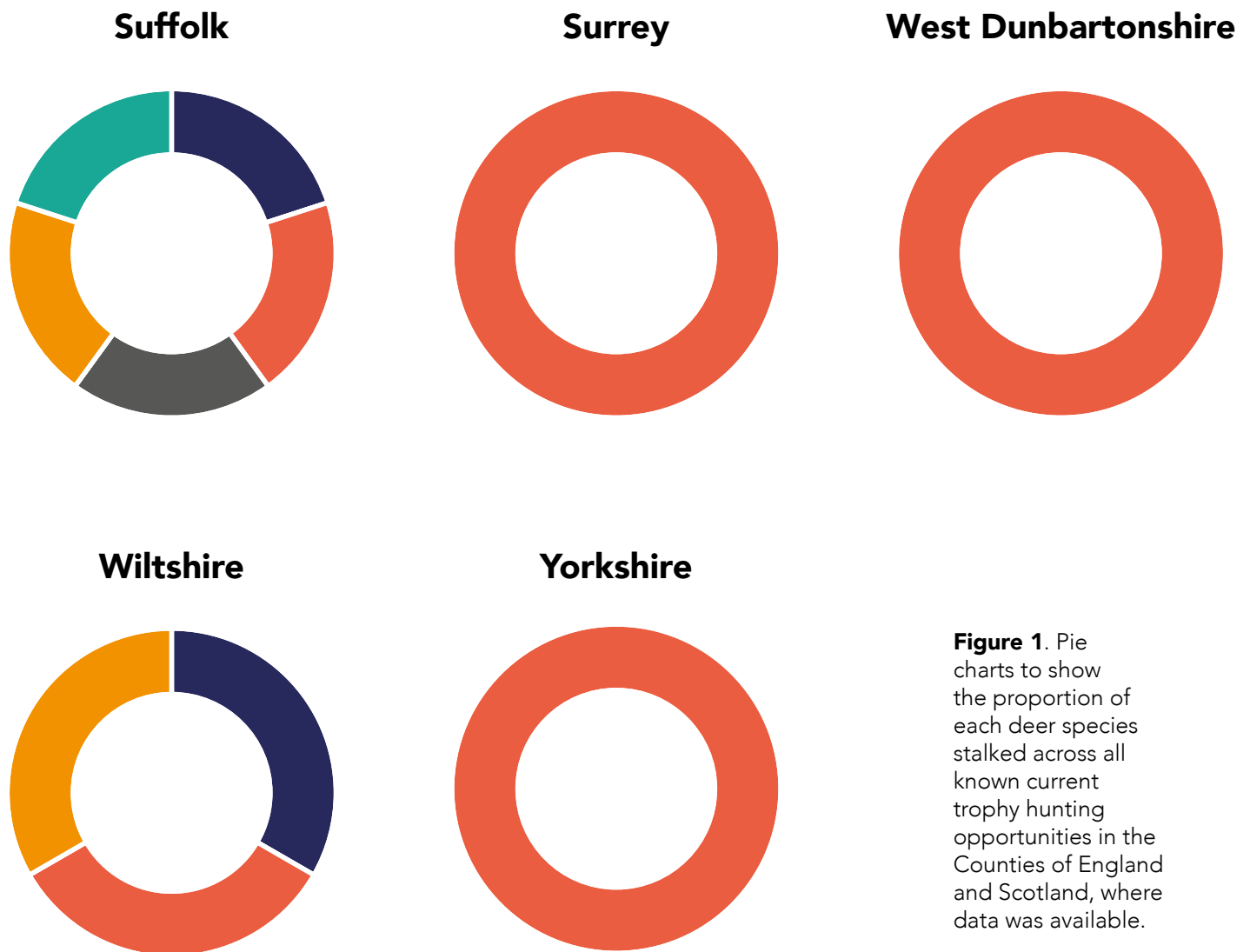


Figure 1. Pie charts to show the proportion of each deer species stalked across all known current trophy hunting opportunities in the Counties of England and Scotland, where data was available.

However, websites were identified which advertised trophy hunting opportunities for several other species. These other species included:

1. Père David's deer (a rare species which is extinct in the wild and now only survives in captivity)
2. Barasingha deer
3. Fox
4. Wild boar
5. Feral goat.

Little information was disclosed on websites offering the stalking of these other species. trophy hunting opportunities for feral goat and wild boar were generally presented as an 'add-on' to a main trophy hunting opportunity for deer. However, one website advertising a trophy hunting opportunity for wild boar in Cheshire priced a wild boar trophy at £300.

In total, there were four trophy hunting opportunities to stalk wild boar, six trophy hunting opportunities to stalk feral goat, one trophy hunting opportunity to stalk Père David's deer, one trophy hunting opportunity to hunt fox and one trophy hunting opportunity to stalk Barasingha deer.

It is noted that:

1. in 2018, the media reported an American trophy hunter visiting Scotland and killing feral goat, deer and a ram as part of a trophy hunt⁴⁸. This report has not identified any current trophy hunting opportunities for ram in Great Britain; and
2. in 2018, the media reported that overseas firms were offering trophy hunting trips to Great Britain to shoot deer, including Père David's deer in Bedfordshire⁴⁹.

⁴⁸ <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/us-huntress-larysa-switlyk-condemned-for-glorifying-in-shooting-of-scottish-goat-lrcj3nll2>

⁴⁹ <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2018/oct/13/price-list-shoot-rare-deer-trophy-hunting-woburn-abbey>



8. Scale of trophy hunting in Great Britain

This report identified 151 trophy hunting opportunities across at least 23 counties in England and Scotland.

The highest number of trophy hunting opportunities were offered in the Highlands closely followed by the Norfolk, Oxfordshire and Berkshire (Appendix 3 and Fig.2).

As per footnote 15, for the purposes of calculating the number of trophy hunting opportunities per County, different sexes of the same species were not counted as two separate trophy hunting opportunities, unless specifically advertised separately. Were we to consider sex, age and medal size (size of animal) as separate trophy hunting opportunities there would be a total of 377 possible animals to stalk as a result of the searches carried out for this report.

Trophy hunting opportunities per county

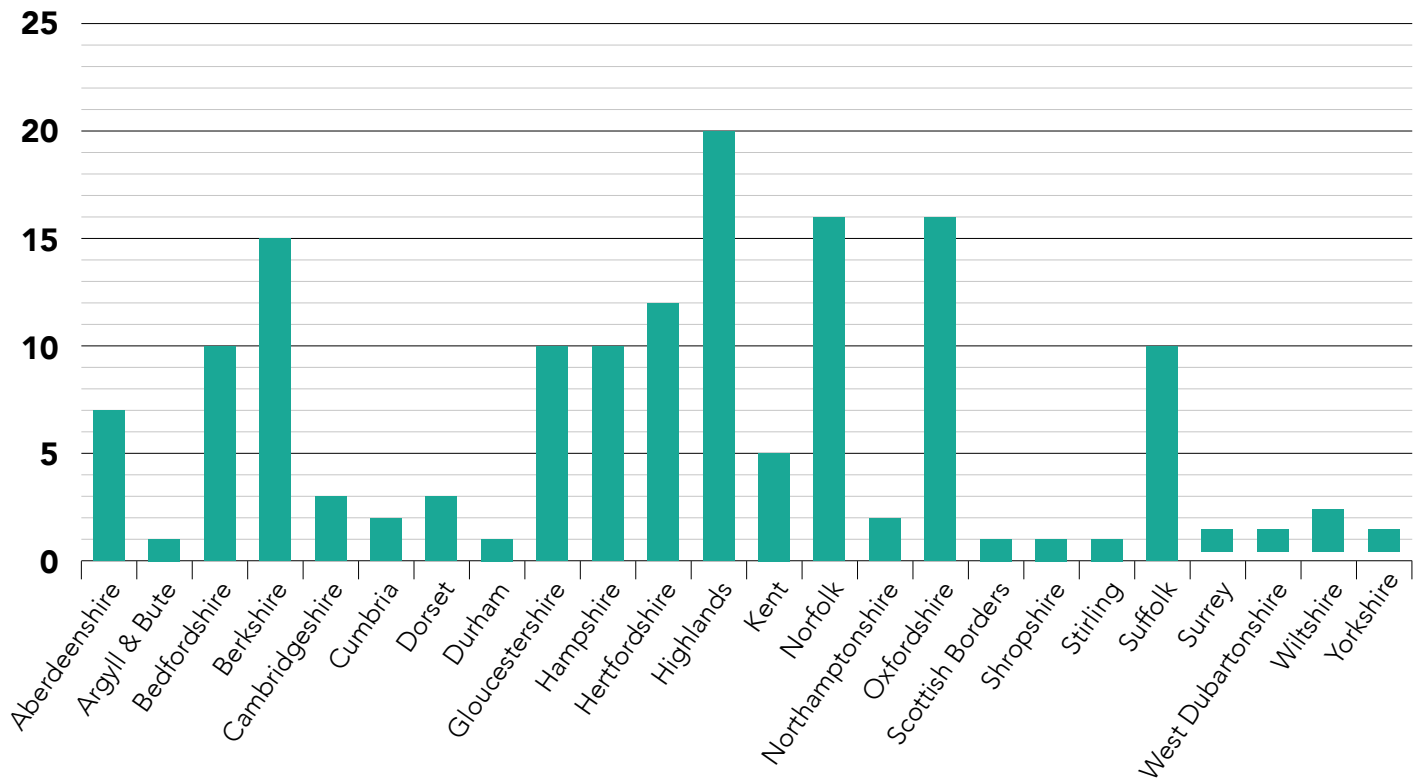


Figure 2. Bar chart showing the number of trophy hunting opportunities identified in the counties of England and Scotland.

9. Cost of trophy hunting in Great Britain

Based on the analysis of the 108 trophy hunting opportunities which disclosed costings, the average price per outing was £172.72 (see Table 2 below).

Trophy fees were generally an additional cost to the price of the outing, costing on average an additional £449.34. There is, however, a large discrepancy between the costs of outings.

For 15 of the 108 opportunities with pricing information, trophy fees were included in the overall price of the trophy hunting opportunity and were not additional.

43 of the 151 current trophy hunting opportunities identified by this report did not provide information on the cost of outings or trophies and so were not included in the pricing analysis.

The most expensive trophy hunting opportunity is to stalk red stag in the Scottish Highlands which costs £4,760.85⁵⁰ for five days of stalking plus an additional £2,800.28 for a red stag (with antlers with an excess of 14 points) trophy. This is part of a trophy hunting opportunity targeted at international (American) clients via a website called Hunt Nation where red stag stalking in England is presented as being a hunt for “the King’s deer”.

The cheapest trophy hunting opportunity advertised is £80, comprising a £80 outing cost which is for fallow deer in Shropshire with no additional cost for the trophy.

On average, the Highlands have the most expensive trophy hunting opportunities, with an average cost of £531.13 per outing (Figure 3).

Average cost of trophy hunting opportunity per county

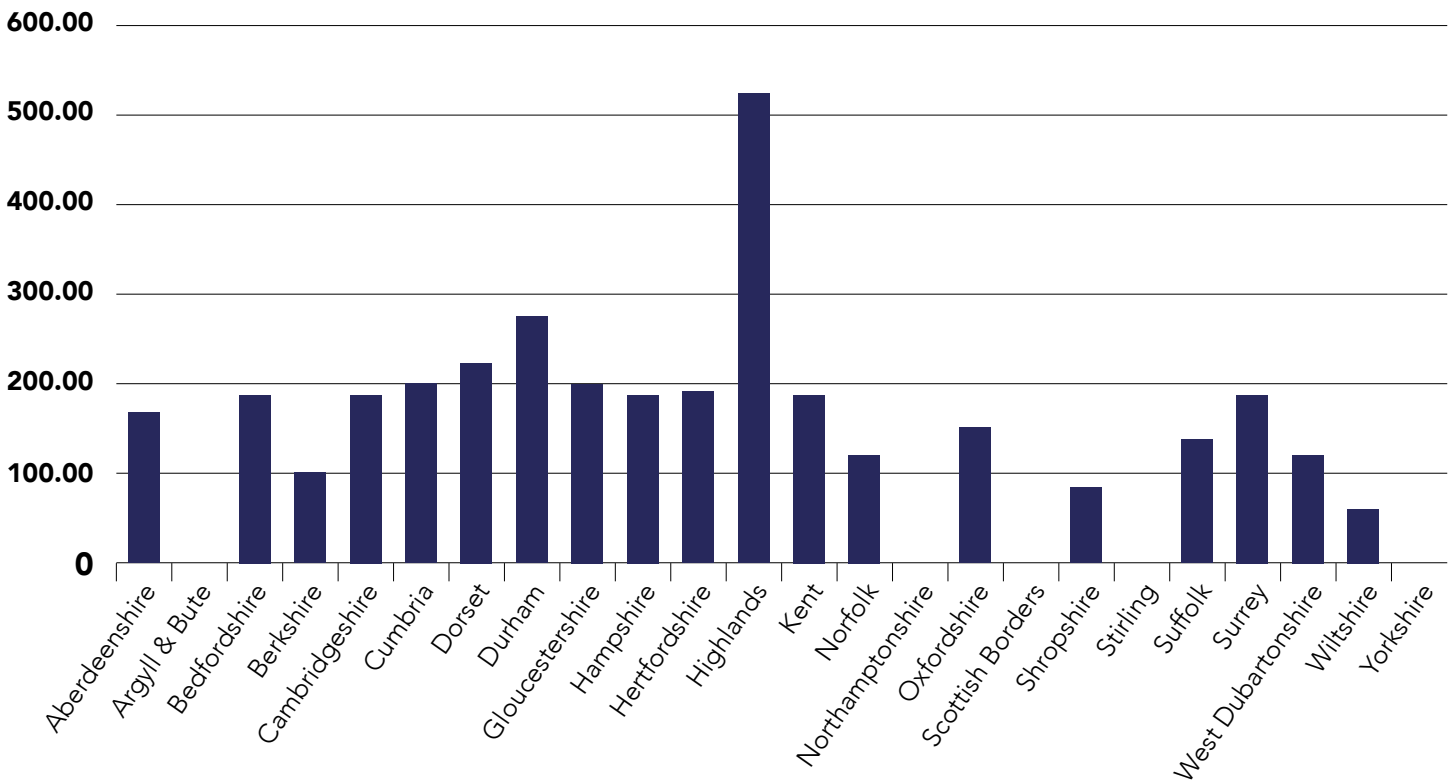


Figure 3. Bar chart to show the average price (£) of an outing as part of a trophy hunting opportunity associated with each county.

⁵⁰ The overall package costs £7,841.03, however this is for one hunter and their non-hunting partner. The price attributed to the hunter is £4,760.85.

Price (£)	Outing	Trophy	Overall (trophy plus outing)
Average	172.72	449.34	622.48
Minimum	60	0	80
Maximum	952.17	2800.28	3752.45

Table 2. Table to show the average prices and the price range of current trophy hunting opportunities and the associated costs.

On average, the most expensive deer to stalk on a trophy hunt according to the data collected by this report is sika deer, costing an average of £352.50 per outing. The cheapest deer to stalk on a trophy hunt according to the data collected by this report is muntjac deer with an average outing cost of £136.39.

Average cost of trophy hunting opportunity outing per deer species

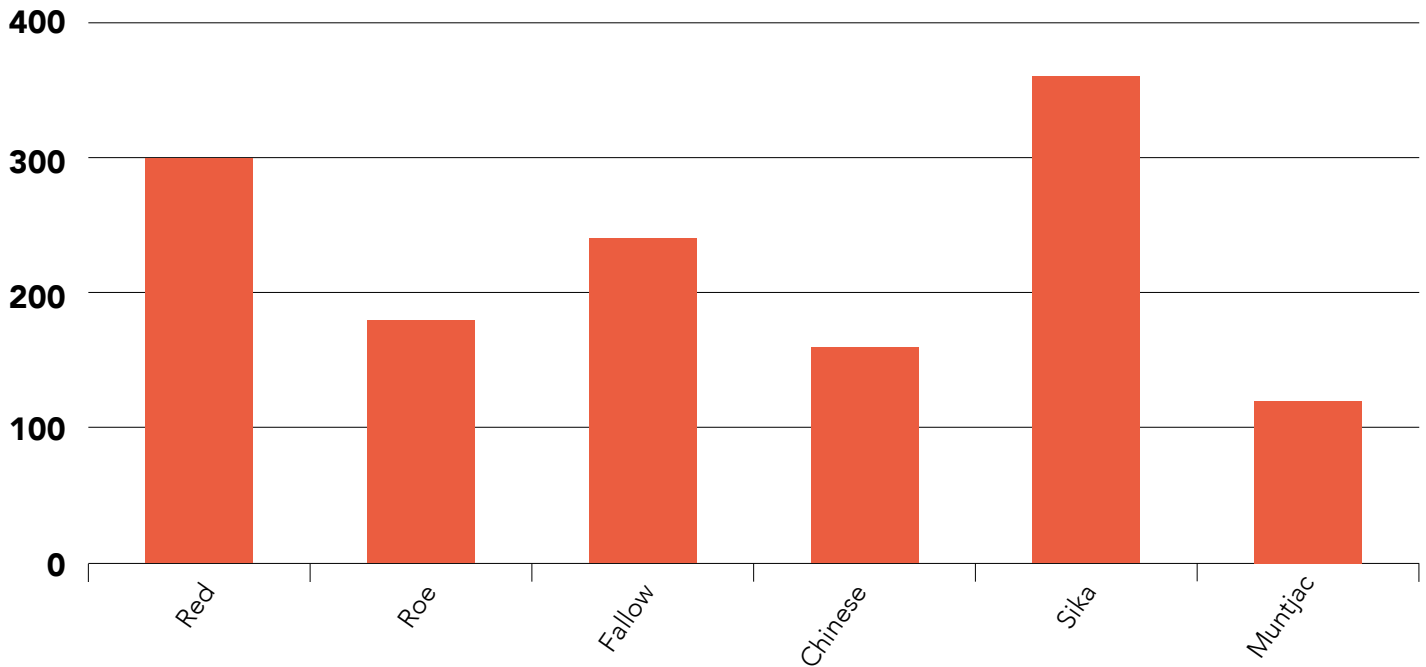


Figure 4. Bar chart to show the average price (£) of an outing as part of a trophy hunting opportunity associated with each of the six target deer species.

Shooting syndicates

Some of the data collected by this report was taken from the website for a shooting syndicate⁵¹. Shooting syndicates are able to get discounted hunts for their members. The rules and fees for shooting syndicates vary greatly. The London based Capreolus Club is a large stalking syndicate which is the official members club of County Deer Stalking. The club boasts access to more than 14,000 acres of countryside with membership costing over £1,000.00 per annum. Membership gets members access to:

"...nutritious, ethically sourced meat. Regular 'Stalk days & Themed Range days'. Priority booking of 'deer stalking outings' for all six of Great Britain's deer species, in a variety of locations around the south east over 14,000 acres of beautiful countryside. Assistance with Firearm applications, renewals and variations. Expert advice and support. Exclusive Great Britain Deer Stalking opportunities. Regular networking events. Access to a comprehensive portfolio of large game hunting around the world and access to unaccompanied 'Book and Go Deer Stalking' 365 days a year via the club's superb plus-scheme"

Despite the membership fee, organised shoots within the Capreolus Club hold an additional cost. The plus scheme allows members to book a trophy hunt just 24 hours in advance and offers unaccompanied access to 3,000 acres of the Capreolus Club's land. Along with exclusive access to estates the plus scheme also includes trophy fees, venison, advice and support from qualified experienced deer managers and deer stalking training. To be eligible for the plus scheme an individual must possess a firearms licence while the "suitability and experience for unaccompanied stalking is determined by the Club" however there is no explanation of what level of experience is required for solo stalking.



⁵¹ Shooting syndicates are formed when a person or group bids on the right to shoot on a piece of land. The cost of such a right is high and so generally shared between a group of people – syndicate members. Syndicate members are then able to stalk on and execute the cull plan for that area of land exclusively. The leases for these areas of land usually come from major forestry companies but can also be privately owned. It is unclear what qualifies somebody to purchase the right to stalk animals on a piece of land and the right is likely given to the highest bidder. Once a shooting syndicate has access to land it becomes their responsibility to regulate who is able to stalk on that land supervised or not and when.





10. Investigation findings

To provide further information on trophy hunting in the UK, investigations into companies that provided stalking opportunities were undertaken. Understanding that the involvement of novice hunters in trophy hunting inevitably raises welfare concerns, these investigations were taken specifically to understand whether novices with no experience of hunting would be permitted to stalk and shoot deer. The findings revealed varying standards between different organisations further highlighting the lack of regulation within this intersection between wildlife management and trophy hunting.

In total, 18 organisations responded to booking enquiries requesting information about a novice partaking in a stalking opportunity. Of these, five were willing to allow a person who had no previous experience using a gun to attempt to shoot a deer. They did not request that the novice have any training or practice prior to the stalking opportunity, indicating that they would simply be able to turn up and shoot. A further three were willing to take a novice shooting following a session at a firing range with no indication that a novice who demonstrated limited aptitude with a rifle would not be permitted to shoot at a deer.

Attitudes to animal welfare were also mixed. Some companies considered the welfare of the hunted animal and took steps to prevent or reduce the risk of suffering caused by inexperienced shots. Others, however, expressed limited concerns regarding a novice wounding a deer, with one stating that the shooter would need to pay for the animal if it was killed cleanly or left to "rot", demonstrating a willingness to enter a scenario that could result in a long and painful death for the hunted animal. Another provider, when asked if payment would depend on whether a shot and injured animal was recovered or not, explained they are usually recovered, but "tough s**t" if they are not.



11. Conclusion

Trophy hunting is readily accessible and widespread in Great Britain, offered in at least 23 counties. Prices start at as little as £60 meaning cost is not a barrier to the 'sport' trophy hunting in Great Britain mainly targets six deer species; however there are multiple opportunities to hunt wild boar, feral goats and other introduced species of deer, including the rare Père David's deer.

Websites advertising trophy hunting opportunities catered not only to experienced hunters but also to novices with no training or experience of stalking animals as long as a licensed guide accompanied them. However, the novice hunters are still permitted to shoot deer.

This was corroborated by investigations showing that many providers contacted for information expressing willingness to allow a complete novice to shoot a deer, without requesting they undertake any practice or training. Some providers expressed a cavalier attitude to animal welfare, and the participation of novice hunters in trophy hunting inevitably raises welfare concerns.

The British Deer Society funded a report titled 'Factors Associated with Shooting Accuracy and Wounding Rate of Four Managed Wild Deer Species in the UK, Based on Anonymous Field Records from Deer Stalkers'⁵² which was published in October 2014 and found that lack of shooting practice and basic (or no) stalker qualifications increased the probability of missing the target [deer].

This 2014 report also stated in its conclusions that:

- i. the "high rate of missed shots by Level 1 stalkers suggests that training for a Level 1 qualification should include additional firing practice under realistic field conditions"
- ii. "The intention is to bring these results to the attention of trainee and experienced stalkers by incorporating them into training courses, guidance notes and other information outlets. Increasing awareness in these ways should deliver improvements in shooting standards that ensure that when stalkers take a shot, they are killing the animal in a way that minimises suffering, thereby maximising deer welfare."

Generally, the trophy hunting industry in Great Britain appears to be deliberately opaque. Some websites do not clearly present advertisements as being for trophy hunting opportunities. Websites present advertisements:

- a. as simple deer stalking opportunity but give away that they are in fact trophy hunting opportunities upon further reading, for example, they show additional costs for trophies in the cost breakdown upon booking
- b. as wildlife management opportunities on the face of it but reveal themselves as trophy hunting opportunities upon further digging into the wider context of the organisation/provider offering them
- c. disclose limited information so that exact location and costings including trophy costings are contingent upon private contact between a potential client and the provider.

A number of supposed deer management organisations promote trophy hunting to an extent alongside their deer management activities.

Trophy hunting and wildlife management can undoubtedly be contradictory. Those who participate in trophy hunting are seeking trophies and clearly the bigger the trophy, the better the trophy. Genuine lethal wildlife management should permit only the killing of specific deer deemed to be necessary for the purposes of genuine deer management, which is not necessarily the deer that would provide the biggest trophies. This is contrary to pure trophy hunting which covets the biggest trophies. There do not appear to be any laws covering the interaction of trophy hunting with wildlife management and it is impossible to tell whether organisations that profess to be deer management organisations rather than organisations offering trophy hunting are not being tainted by clients' desires for big trophies. The lack of regulation could mean that there is the potential for trophy hunting to warp genuine wildlife management priorities.

⁵² <https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0109698>





12. References

Books and Articles

1. Unknown Author, 'The Big Five: Africa's Most Sought-After Trophy Animals' The New York Times, 10/08/2015
2. R.J. Fuller, R.M.A Gill, 'Ecological impacts of increasing numbers of deer in British woodland', Forestry: An International Journal of Forest Research, Volume 74, Issue 3, 2001, Pages 193-199, <https://doi.org/10.1093/forestry/74.3.193>
3. The Deer Initiative. (2009). The Deer Initiative. Management Cull Planning, 1.
14. Keith High Seats <<http://keithshighseats.co.uk/deer-management/>>(accessed 14/02/2022)
15. Book Your Hunt <www.bookyourhunt.com> (accessed 14/02/2022)
16. Go Shooting <www.goshooting.org.uk> (accessed 14/02/2022)
17. Guns on Pegs <www.gunsonpegs.com> (accessed 13/02/2022)
18. British Deer Society <<https://bds.org.uk/science-research/supported-projects-past-and-present/factors-associated-with-shooting-accuracy-and-wounding-rate/#:~:text=Overall%2C%2096%25%20of%20deer%20were,which%2093%25%20were%20killed%20outright>> (accessed 28/03/2022)

Websites

4. British Deer Society, 'Why manage deer?'. <https://www.bds.org.uk/information-advice/issues-with-deer/why-manage-deer/> (accessed 09/07/2021)
5. The British Deer Society. Deterring Deer. Available: <https://www.bds.org.uk/information-advice/issues-with-deer/deterring-deer/> (accessed 19/07/2021)
6. The Deer Act 1991 <<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1991/54/schedule/1>> (accessed 14/02/2022)
7. The Hunting Act 2004 <<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/37/contents>> (accessed 14/02/2022)
8. The Theft Act 1968 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1968/60/contents> (accessed 14/02/2022)
9. The Deer (Scotland) Act 1996 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/58/contents> (accessed 14/02/2022)
10. The Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/3/contents> (accessed 14/02/2022)
11. The International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation, 'About the TES', <<http://www.cic-wildlife.org/trophy-evaluation/about-the-tes/>> (accessed 14/02/2022)
12. Open OS Map - <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/GreatBritain/doc/open-government-licence/version/3/> (accessed 14/02/2022)
13. Hockham Deer Management Group <<https://hockhamdmg.co.uk/bongo.pl/deer.stalking./>> (accessed 14/02/2022)
19. PLOS ONE <https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0109698#pone.0109698-Anon1> (accessed 28/03/2022)



Get in touch

01483 524 250

supportercare@league.org.uk

league.org.uk

The League Against Cruel Sports. Registered charity in England and Wales (no. 1095234) and Scotland (no. SC045533). Registered in England and Wales as a company (no. 04037610). Registered office: New Sparling House, Holloway Hill, Godalming, GU7 1QZ, United Kingdom.

Follow us on social media



[@LeagueAgainstCruelSports](https://www.facebook.com/LeagueAgainstCruelSports)



[@LeagueACS](https://twitter.com/LeagueACS)



[@Leagueagainstcs](https://www.instagram.com/Leagueagainstcs)