

Feature

Knowing the law for deer

Alan Barrell, vice-chair of the NGO Deer Branch, answers a question posed recently.

WHAT WOULD YOU RECOMMEND AS A RELIABLE SOURCE FOR THE LAW IN RELATION TO DEER AND DEER MANAGEMENT?

FOLLOWING A LITTLE RESEARCH, MY THOUGHTS are that most of the books and manuals written on deer and deer management or stalking have at least one chapter on the relevant law and the responsibilities of the deer manager. They are usually very well written and accurate when published, but one of the inherent problems is that the law changes from time to time to meet the developing demands of society and the subject under review. We have seen this in the deer world by the changes to open seasons, permitted calibres for small species, etc, introduced by The Deer Regulatory Reform Order 2007 and latterly the adoption of EU legislation, which has increased the minimum ages at which we can purchase firearms and ammunition from 17 to 18 years. In UK law ignorance is no defence. It is up to us to ensure that we know that what we are doing is in accordance with the legislation on the subject. It follows that the material we use for our research on deer

management, or for that matter any other activity we are involved in, must be accurate and current. Using old books to research the law is dangerous; it may have changed since the book was published! So where would I go to research the subject?

The most thumbed reference book I have on my shelf is *Deer: Law and Liabilities* (2nd Edition) by Charlie Parkes and John Thornley. This is a great paperback which puts much of the legal jargon into plain English. It is easy to use being divided into sensibly headed chapters. Virtually every aspect of the law in relation to deer and our responsibilities when managing or stalking deer is covered. It is also very reasonably priced.

Another excellent publication is The British Deer Society's *Training Manual for Deer Stalkers*. This not only provides up-to-date legislation, but all the material necessary for those studying for the DMQ Level 1 assessments. It has the advantage that it is periodically updated

and the BDS will currently replace old versions with a new up-to-date manual on receipt of just £15 and the cover of your old manual.

From February 2011, the NGO's Deer Branch we will be offering Level 1 courses in a partnership with BDS. If you are thinking of enrolling for a course,

please contact me to discuss it before

you buy one of these manuals; we may be able to offer it at a reduced rate as part of the training package, through our partnership with BDS.

A recent newcomer to my library is *The Best Practice Guide* published by the Deer Initiative. This series of 128 guides is under constant development so is current and has the advantage of being completely free if downloaded from the internet. It sets out to establish best practice for all aspects of deer management in England and Wales and really is a superb piece of work, written in clear, concise English with ample full colour illustrations. For those of you who have not got internet access or would simply prefer a hard copy, the complete set can be purchased in its large ring binder.

WHERE TO BUY

Deer: Law and Liabilities is published by Quiller in Shrewsbury and available direct from them at www.country-booksdirect.com, also available from The British Deer Society or your local bookshop by quoting ISBN 978-1-84689-047-5. Price £20.

Training Manual for Deer Stalkers can be ordered from The British Deer Society, The Walled Garden, Burgate Manor, Fordingbridge, Hampshire SP6 1EF. Tel. 01425 655434. Price £30.

Best Practice Guide by the Deer Initiative is downloadable free of charge at www.thedeerinitiative.co.uk/bestpractice. It is also available in hard copy ringbinder for £25 (plus P&P) from The British Deer Society (as above) or from Reeves UK Ltd, 14 Bishopstone, Aylesbury, Bucks HP17 8SR. Tel. 01296 748741.

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