



DEER ALLIANCE

HUNTER COMPETENCE ASSESSMENT PROGRAMME

DEERFIELD, WALSH TOWN, BALLYMURPHY, BORRIS, CO. CARLOW, R95 VX6 1
T: 086 1927 845 E: DEERALLIANCE@GMAIL.COM WWW.DEERALLIANCE.IE

HCAP 2025 TRAINING SYLLABUS, APPROVED BY NPWS

(AGENDA FOR TRAINING WORKSHOPS, SUPPORTED BY THIRTY HOURS SELF-STUDY OF DEER ALLIANCE STALKER TRAINING MANUAL AND SUBSEQUENT RANGE TEST LEADING TO FULL CERTIFICATION).

BASIC DEER BIOLOGY

- Species recognition, species distribution (Red, Sika, Fallow, Muntjac)
- Species habits & habitat (Red, Sika, Fallow, Muntjac)
- Life cycle of deer
- The Rut
- Pregnancy and birth
- Vocalisation, hearing, powers of scent
- Antler growth
- Aging deer & tooth eruption and wear
- Coat change and colouration
- Scent glands – identification, use and purpose

PRINCIPLES OF DEER MANAGEMENT

- Aims and objectives.
- Current problems facing deer in Ireland.
- Methods of population assessment
- Breeding capacity and size of cull
- Planning the cull; cull selection
- Shooting calendar & shooting plan
- Record keeping.

- Public Relations

DEER IMPACTS

- Impacts of Deer on forestry, Agriculture and Nature Conservation
- Habitats - damage recognition and damage limitation.

DEER HUNTING & THE LAW

- Wildlife Act 1976 (as amended)
- Relevant Regulations and SIs under the Wildlife Act
- Relevant Sections of Birds and Natural Habitats Regulations
- Coillte licence requirements & regulations
- Firearms legislation 1925 – 2000
- Control of Dogs Act 1986
- Occupiers Liability Act 1995

FIREARMS SAFETY AND OTHER HEALTH & SAFETY ISSUES

- Safe storage and transportation of firearms and ammunition including legal requirements
- Hunting Area Risk Assessment
- Background to shot.
- Loading & unloading
- Negotiating obstacles
- Barrel obstructions & misfires
- Shooting positions
- Non-Firearms risks, knives, dragging carcasses, terrain issues, weather

FIREARMS, BALLISTICS AND ZEROING

- Choice of rifle and ammunition
- Ballistics (internal, external, terminal)
- Rifle Care, cleaning and maintenance
- ‘Scope mounts, slings, bipods etc.
- Zeroing your rifle

CARCASS HANDLING & DISEASE RECOGNITION

- Bleeding & evisceration
- Carcass examination & disease recognition including Anthrax, Bluetongue, Bovine Tuberculosis, Brucellosis, Foot & Mouth Disease, Warble Fly Infestation
- Notifiable diseases
- Game Meat Directive and other food meat legislation relevant to deer
- Carcass preparation, venison joints etc.

DEER STALKING AIDS AND TECHNIQUES

- Use of High Seat
- Binoculars and other optics
- Fieldcraft
- Clothing
- Knives
- Use of Dogs
- Aiming Points
- Reaction to the shot
- Dealing with a wounded animal

GENERAL

- Sporting rights etc.
- The Firearms Certificate
- The Deer Hunting Licence
- Introduction to HAMS
- About the Deer Management Strategy Group (DMSG)
- Farm Relief Services – Contract for Development of DMSG Deer Management Strategy (DMUs)
- Working within a DMU
- Writing a Deer Management Plan
- How to Prepare a Hunting Area Risk Assessment
- Humane Dispatch of Injured Deer
- Night Shooting including use of Thermal Imaging Devices

(Reviewed and updated August 2025)