

# Research & Surveys



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GWCT National Gamebag Census & Tracking Mammals Partnership

## Fallow deer *Dama dama*

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Taxonomy: Class: Mammalia; Order: Artiodactyla; Family: Cervidae

### Description

The fallow deer went extinct in Britain during the last Ice Age, and was re-established by the Normans for hunting in the 11th century. Typically its coat is fawn with white spotting, but white varieties also occur, as do black ones. The male has palmate antlers cast in April-June. The fallow deer prefers mature broad-leaved or mixed woodlands. Bucks may be shot from 1 August to 30 April, does from 1 November to 31 March.

Further information:  
[Forestry Commission website](#).



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## Conservation status and legislation

Status:

UK: Native

World: Least Concern ([IUCN Red List](#))

Legislation:

[Agriculture Act 1947](#)

[Agriculture \(Scotland\) Act 1948](#)

[Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981, Schedule 7](#)

[Wildlife \(Northern Ireland\) Order 1985, Schedule 6, 10](#)

[Deer Act 1991](#)

[Wild Mammals \(Protection\) Act 1996](#)

[Deer \(Scotland\) Act 1996](#)

[Protection of Wild Mammals \(Scotland\) Act 2002](#)

## Distribution and abundance

The fallow deer is widespread across England and Wales, including Anglesey. In Scotland it occurs in isolated pockets, mainly in Perthshire and Stirlingshire, as well as on the islands of Islay, Mull, Lambay and Scarba. It also occurs across much of Ireland, although a scarcity of records means that this is not apparent from the map.

Estimates of fallow deer abundance (numbers of individuals in the spring) across the UK, from Harris et al. (1995):

United Kingdom	100,000
England	95,000
Scotland	4,000

Fallow deer © Peter Thompson

[Hunting Act 2004](#)

[Animal Welfare Act 2006](#)

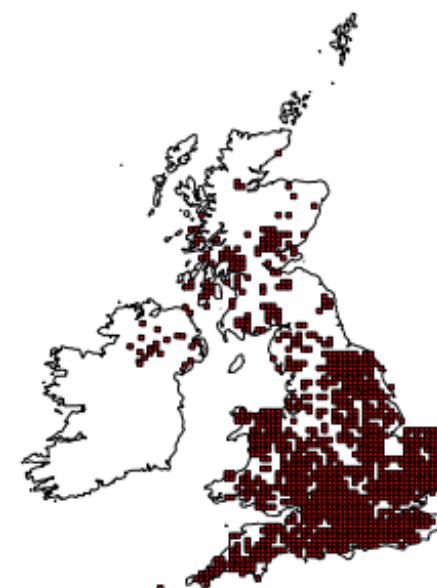
[Regulatory Reform \(Deer\) \(England and Wales\) Order 2007](#)

[Welfare of Animals Act Northern Ireland 2011](#)

[Wildlife and Natural Environment \(Scotland\) Act 2011](#)

[Bern Convention, Appendix III](#)

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Mammal bags - comprehensive overviews >>

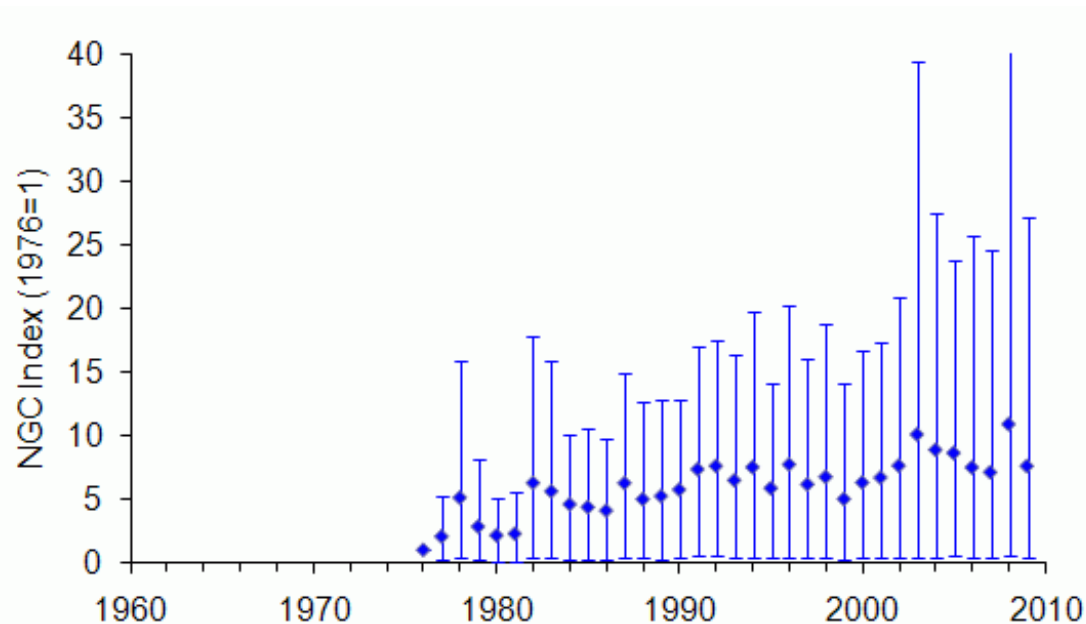
Wales	1,000
N Ireland	no estimate

Source [National Biodiversity Network](#) and its data providers who bear no responsibility for interpretation of the 10x10-km grid map

## Recent trends from the National Gamebag Census

**United Kingdom** | England | Scotland | Wales | N Ireland

Index of bag density from 1976 to 2009 (see [statistical methods](#) and [interpretational considerations](#)). Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.



Too few sites provided records to evaluate trends before 1976. After a brief initial increase after 1976, the UK bag index has remained approximately stable between 1982 and 2009. The period of increase corresponded to a period of range expansion that slowed after the 1990s (see [maps](#)).

Change in fallow deer bags over time, with 95% confidence limits (see [statistical methods](#)):

Country	Sites	Start year	End year	Change (%) 1961-2009	Change (%) 1984-2009	Change (%) 1995-2009
				370	84	30

United Kingdom	150	1976	2009	370 -21 to 1051	84 -7 to 338	30 -23 to 141
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\* significant at  $P < 0.05$

## Environmental zones

Change in fallow deer bags over time, with 95% confidence limits (see [statistical methods](#)):

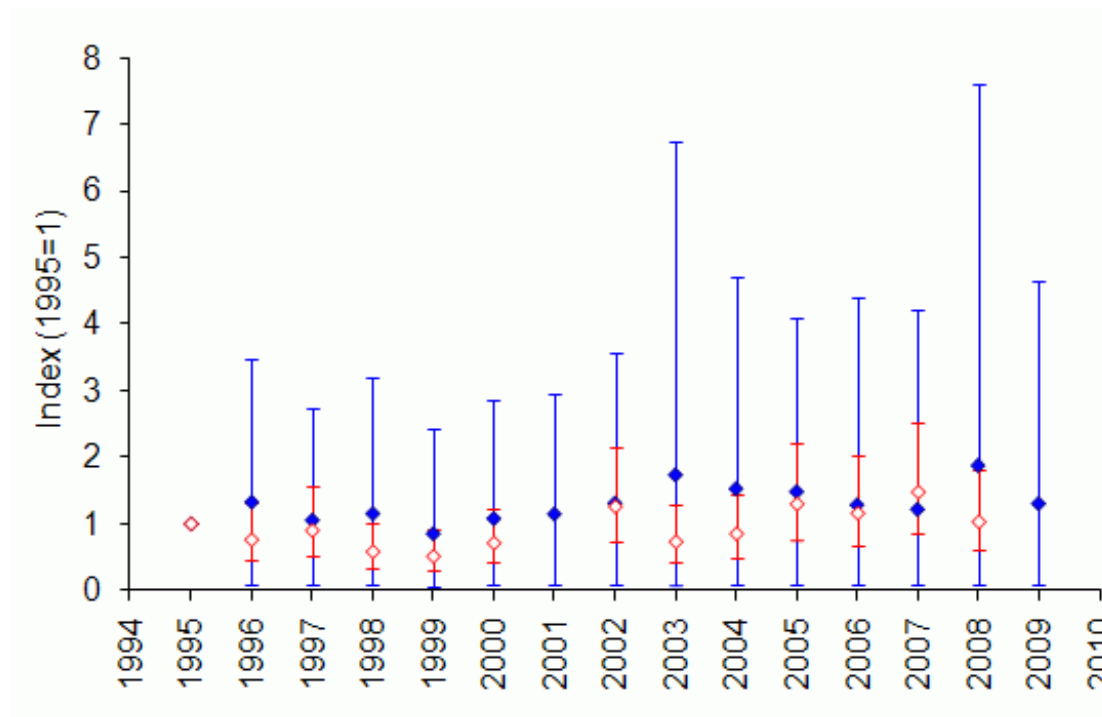
Environmental zone	Sites	Start year	End year	Change (%) 1961-2009	Change (%) 1984-2009	Change (%) 1995-2009
Easterly lowlands (England/Wales)	108	1976	2009	105 -45 to 623	48 -10 to 275	23 -32 to 141
Westerly lowlands (England/Wales)	15	1995	2009	no data	no data	20 -64 to 156
Uplands (England/Wales)	Too few sites					
Lowlands (Scotland)	Too few sites					
Intermediate uplands/islands (Scotland)	Too few sites					
True uplands (Scotland)	Too few sites					

\* significant at  $P < 0.05$

## Comparison with BBS mammal data

Since 1995, data on fallow deer abundance have been collected under the [Breeding Bird Survey](#) (BBS) organised by the British Trust for Ornithology. Below, the UK trend from the NGC is compared to the one from the BBS (from 1995 onwards).

NGC index of bag density (blue) and BBS index of abundance (red), from 1995 to 2009. Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.



The BBS records are limited to England and show no significant change. For all years, the BBS confidence intervals are completely or almost completely within the NGC confidence intervals, indicating good agreement between the two index series.

## Long-term trend from the National Gamebag Census

There are too few bag records of fallow deer to produce a trend starting before 1976.

## References and further reading

- Battersby, J. (2005). UK Mammals: Species Status and Population Trends. Joint Nature Conservation Committee/Tracking Mammals Partnership, Peterborough ([JNCC download page](#)).
- Chapman, D. & Chapman, N.G. (1975). Fallow Deer: Their History, Distribution and Biology. Terence Dalton, Lavenham.
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- Harris,S. & Yalden,D.W. (2008). Mammals of the British Isles: Handbook, 4th edition. Mammal Society, Southampton.
- Langbein,J. & Chapman,N.G. (2002). Fallow Deer. Mammal Society & British Deer Society, Southampton & Fordingbridge.

This report should be cited as: Aebischer,N.J., Davey,P.D. & Kingdon,N.G. (2011). National Gamebag Census: Mammal Trends to 2009. Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust, Fordingbridge (<http://www.gwct.org.uk/ngcmammals>).

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