

Deer Management Blickling Estate

A Delicate Balance: Caring for Our Woodlands, Respecting Our Deer

A deer grazing at the edge of a woodland is a peaceful image of British nature. Yet behind it lies a challenge, deer populations across the UK have risen to levels that threaten woodland health.

Without natural predators, numbers have grown unsustainably. Young trees, wildflowers, and undergrowth, the foundations of a thriving woodland, are often eaten before they can establish. In some areas, regeneration has almost stopped. This isn't the deer's fault, but it is a problem that needs addressing.

Why It Matters

Healthy woodlands rely on natural cycles of growth. When deer browse too heavily, new trees cannot replace old ones, nesting habitats disappear, and biodiversity declines. Over time, this affects everything from birds and insects to the deer themselves. Managing deer populations is not about punishment, it's about restoring balance so both woodlands, and in turn, wildlife can thrive.

Facing a Difficult Reality

The idea of culling animals is uncomfortable, and rightly so. It is never taken lightly. But avoiding action only worsens ecological damage. That's why organisations like ours work with ecologists and land managers to ensure deer control is humane, respectful, and based on science.

What's Happening at Blickling

In 2026, we are restarting deer management across the Blickling Estate. Surveys confirm that current numbers are too high for healthy woodland regeneration. Our approach is carefully planned and carried out by a trained professional.

We are also working with the Country Food Trust, a charity tackling food poverty, by donating venison from the estate. This ensures that the process not only benefits nature but also supports local communities with healthy, protein rich meals.

This is not about choosing trees over deer, it's about creating a future where both can flourish.

Andrew Brooks

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Countryside Manager