



To all deer count helpers and members of QDM&CG,

The annual late winter deer count in 2012 was severely affected by weather. The count had originally been scheduled for Sunday 4th March, but the decision was taken on the evening before to cancel, as persistent heavy rain was forecast to affect all count areas from before dawn and into mid-morning when counting would have been finished. The count was re-scheduled and took place with assistance of near 50 helpers on **Sunday 11th March 2012**, but on this day dense fog led to severely restricted visibility in the great majority of counting blocks, with the 18 count areas lying north of the Over Stowey to Crowcombe road being worst affected. Visibility was better in some but not all of the counting blocks lying further south; more significant numbers of deer sightings were obtained there approaching totals comparable to the previous year. However, there too reduced visibility did affect results, in many cases making sightings difficult to breakdown into hinds and stags. Overall fewer than 10 antlered stags (excluding prickets) were recorded on the day across the Quantocks, while by comparison over six fold that number of stags has been counted in most previous years. As such the results obtained for 2012 overall are **not considered comparable** to count results from past years. A breakdown of numbers seen during the count in different areas is nevertheless shown below.

The totals of 306 red deer and 33 roe deer recorded present the lowest count obtained over the past 20 years, but reflects foremost the foggy conditions on the day, with no conclusions possible from this basis as to whether numbers have increased or declined since last year. It is hoped that a better count will be obtained next year, and will most likely be scheduled at the end of February or first week in March. For up-dates as well as results from past counts please refer to the QDM&CG web-site at: www.quantockdeergroup.co.uk.

With thanks to everyone who turned out despite the fog to assist and to all landholders for their continued co-operation with the annual counts, *Jochen Langbein & Andy Harris*

Quantock Deer Count - Summary of deer seen 11 March 2012

Red Deer Total	Hinds & Calves (of both sexes)	Prickets	Young Stags	Older Stags (> 4 yr old)		Roe Deer Total	Muntjac Total
306:	280	17	9	0		33	0

Comparison of Red deer count March 2011 and 2012 by region:

<u>2011</u>			<u>2012</u>		
Total	Hinds & followers	Prickets & Stags	Total	Hinds & followers	Prickets & Stags

A: North (all count blocks lying north of the Crowcombe to Overstowey road)

350	284	66	(fog bound): 85	77	8
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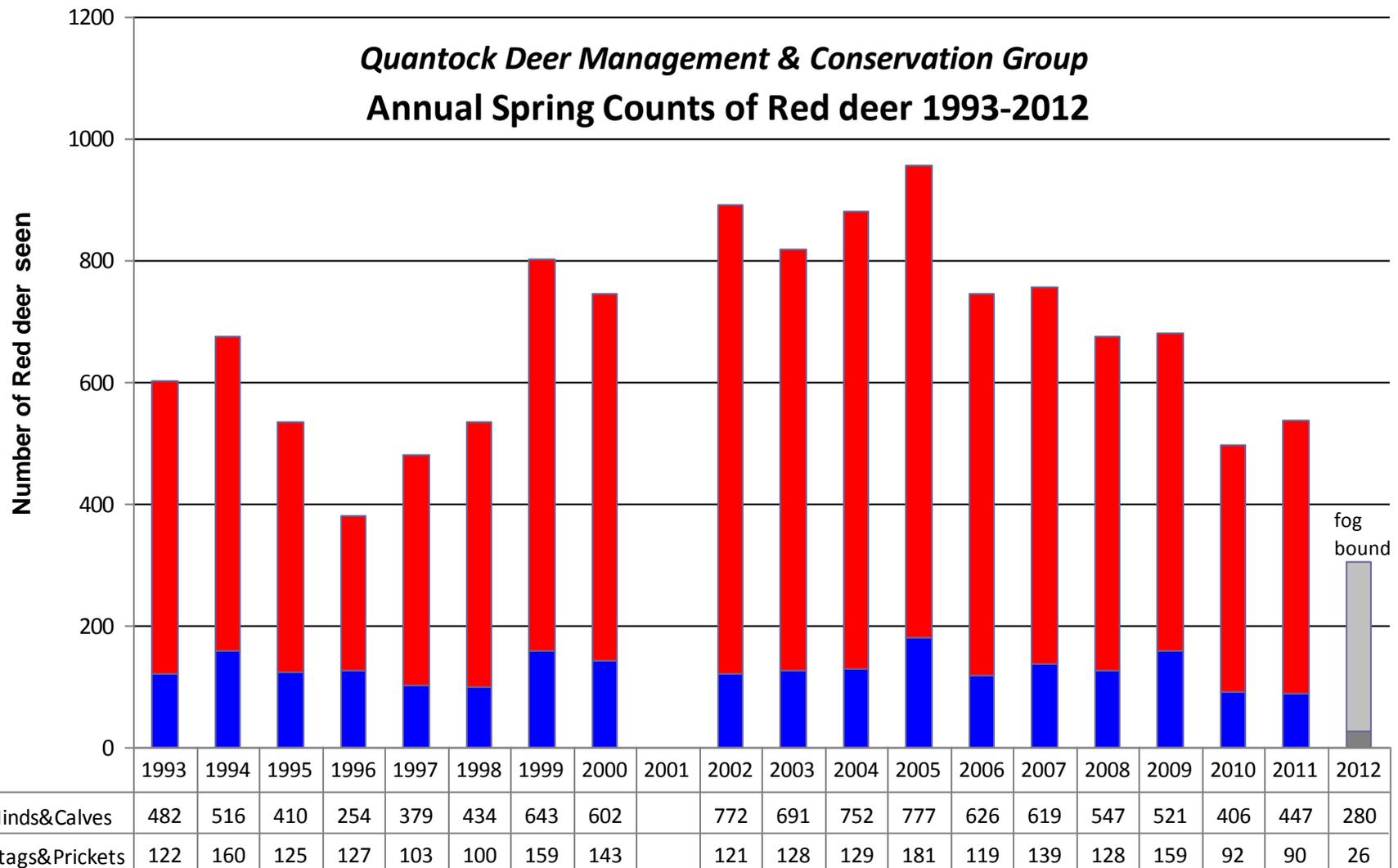
B: Central: (South of Overstowey Road to Great Wood / West Bagborough & including Aisholt Common, and Crowcombe Heathfield)

164	142	22	191	177	14
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C: South-East (all areas south-east of Lydeard Hill - includes Cothelstone Hill, Broomfield Hill, Wind Down & King's Cliff)

23	21	2	30	26	4
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Quantock Deer Management & Conservation Group
Annual Spring Counts of Red deer 1993-2012



Note – Visibility during the 2012 count was extensively affected by fog in the majority of counting blocks and as such results for this latest year are not comparable to previous years and likely to underestimate true numbers very significantly.