

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

The annual late winter deer count took place on **Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> March 2013**. A total of 55 helpers participated, spread out as in previous years across all of the usual counting blocks covering the Quantock Hills as well as selected blocks of surrounding lower lying land. Visibility from dawn was fair to good in all areas throughout the 2.5 hour duration of the count, temperatures were just above freezing and a cold breeze helped to keep away any significant fog.

A total of **386** different **red deer** were recorded on the day. This is the lowest count of red deer obtained across the region under good counting conditions since 1996, the only other figure below 400 being the rather unreliable, fog-bound count in March 2012. As in past years - it is important to note that the count is never likely to record the entire Quantock red deer herd, as some of those present within the count area are always likely to be missed in concealing cover, and some others tend to move further off the hills from late winter onwards. The main value of this count undertaken in the same way year on year lies in identifying minimum numbers that remain and to serve as an index of long term population trends. The further reduction noted during 2013 compared to results in previous years is in line with the continuing downward trend apparent ever since 2006 (see graph overleaf), and for the first time suggests red deer numbers to have fallen back to below half the totals (of well over 800) that were commonly recorded each year in the period between 2002 to 2005.

While the count is primarily designed to focus on Red deer, other deer noted on the day included 44 roe deer and interestingly 3 fallow deer (not inside the AONB, but within 1 mile east of the A358). No muntjac deer were seen on the day.

With huge thanks to everyone who turned out at dawn to assist and to all landholders across the region for their continued co-operation with this annual count,

*Jochen Langbein & Tim Russell (Deer count organizers; for further info see group web-site)*

**Quantock Deer Count - Summary of deer seen 10 March 2013**

<b>Red Deer</b>	Hinds&Calves (of both sexes)	Prickets	Young Stags	Older Stags ( > 4 yr old)		<b>Roe Deer</b>	<b>Fallow Deer</b>	<b>Muntjac Deer</b>
<b>386:</b>	312	27	38	9		<b>44</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>

**Comparison of Red deer count March 2011 and March 2013 by region:**

*(Count in 2012 not comparable due to dense fog)*

<u>2011</u>			<u>2013</u>		
Total	Hinds & followers	Prickets & Stags	Total	Hinds & followers	Prickets & Stags

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

<b>350</b>	<b>284</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>208</b>	<b>42</b>
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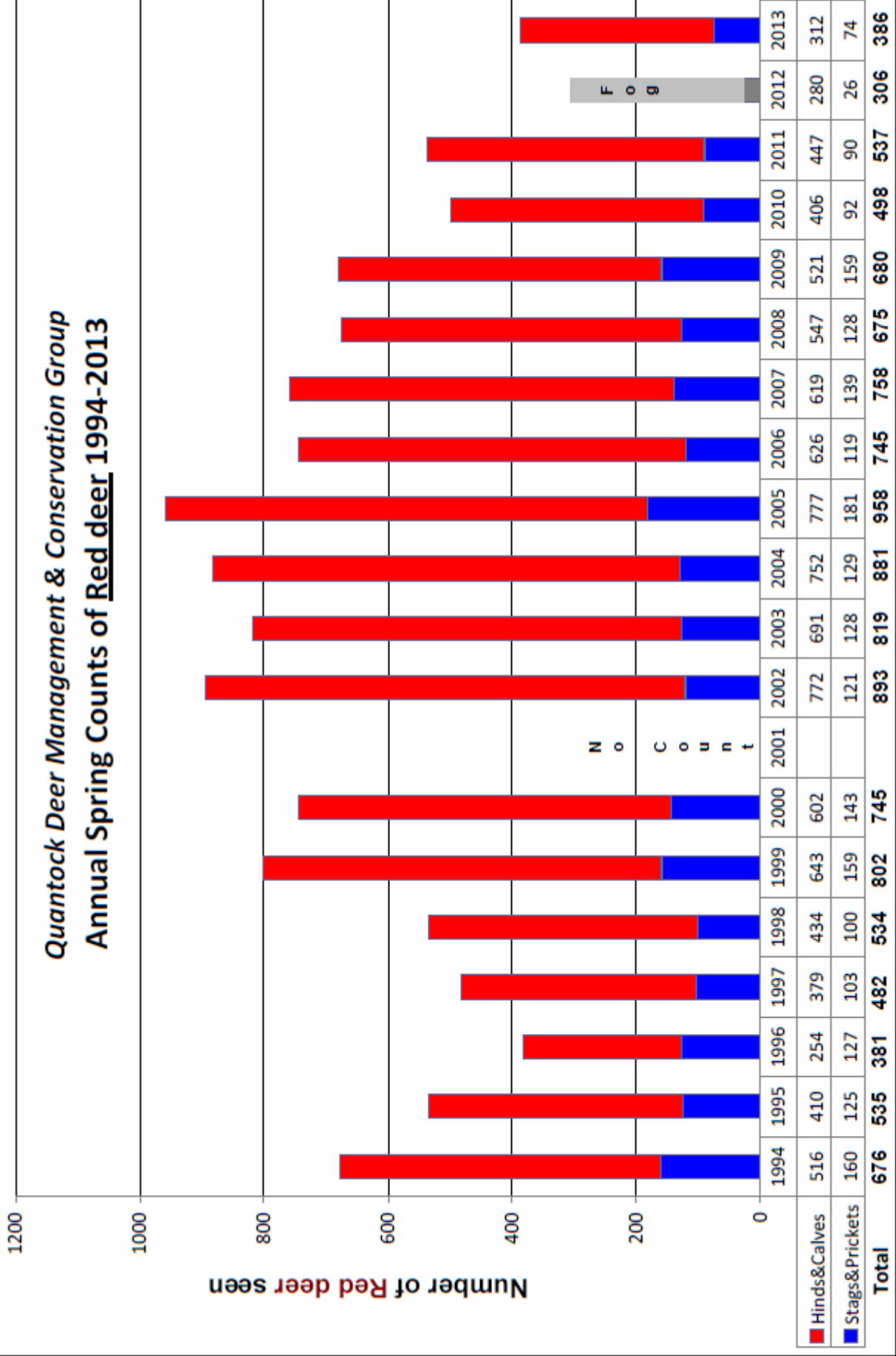
**B: Central:** (South of Overstowey Road to Great Wood / West Bagborough & including Aisholt Common, and Crowcombe Heathfield)

<b>164</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>30</b>
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**C: South-East** (all areas south-east of Lydeard Hill - includes Cothelstone Hill, Broomfield Hill, Wind Down & King's Cliff)

<b>23</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>3</b>
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**Quantock Deer Management & Conservation Group  
Annual Spring Counts of Red deer 1994-2013**



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