



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

The 26th annual late winter deer count took place on **Sunday 6th March 2016**. A total of 54 counters between them covered the usual 44 main and 7 subsidiary count blocks located on the Quantock Hills and selected areas of surrounding land. Visibility was good from dawn with a bright sunrise and only light cloud providing excellent counting conditions throughout the morning.

After exclusion of probable duplicate sightings of deer noted to move between count blocks, **578** different **red deer** were recorded on the day. While the overall figure for red deer is very close to last year (563), a small improvement was noted in the proportion of prickets and adults stags, although the number of old stags (16) seen and estimated to be over four years old remains quite low. An increased though still small number of red deer (22) were seen in the counting blocks lying south and southeast of Lydeard Hill where fewer than ten reds had been recorded in some recent years. Numbers of red deer in the 'Central' area showed a small increase, with by converse a small reduction of numbers seen in the 'North' section where highest numbers nevertheless continue to be recorded. As always it is important to note that in this annual one-off count we do not presume to record the entire Quantock red deer population, as some deer will be missed in concealing cover within the count area, and not least some stags tend to move further off the hills by late winter. The main value of this count lies in it being undertaken in the same manner year on year, to serve as an index of long term population trends and distribution (see graph overleaf).

Although the count is primarily designed to record red deer, other deer recorded included 69 Roe (incl. at least 19 bucks), and one Fallow buck spotted within a stag group off the Hills.

We would like to extend our thanks as ever to all the volunteer counters. Many thanks also to all Quantock landholders for continued co-operation with the deer count, and to the Quantock Hills AONB service and The Deer Initiative for logistic and financial support.

Jochen Langbein and Rebekah West (Quantock Deer Count Organisers).

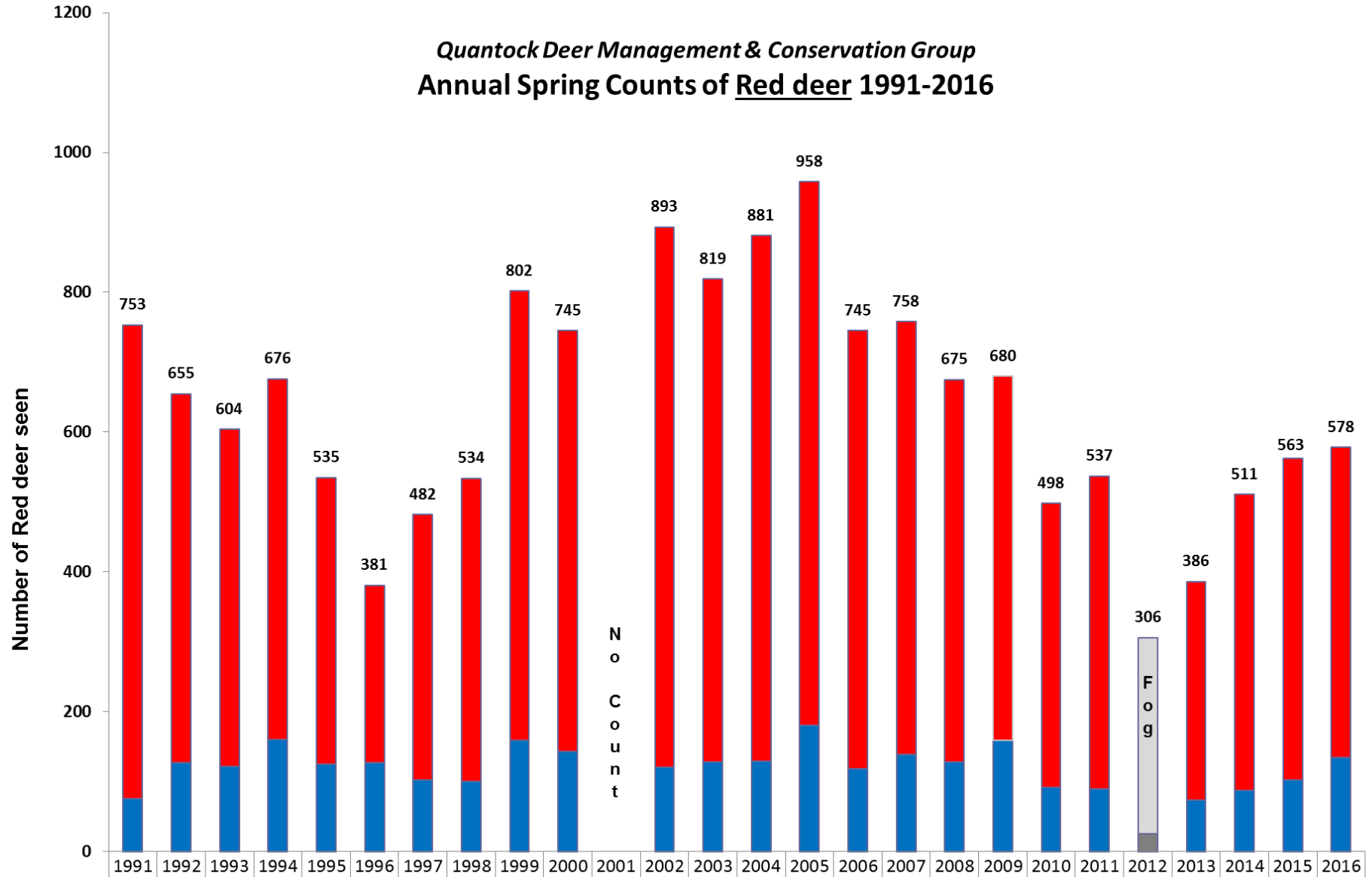
Quantock Deer Count - Summary of deer seen 6 March 2016

Red Deer	Hinds & Calves (of both sexes)	Prickets	Young Stags	Older Stags (> 4 yr old)	Roe Deer	Fallow Deer	Muntjac Deer
578:	443	53	66	16	69	1	0

Comparison of Red deer March 2016 with 3-year average by section:

Year 2016			Average 2012 – 2015		
Total	Hinds & Followers	Prickets & Stags	Total	Hinds & Followers	Prickets & Stags
578	443	135	487	399	88
A: North (all count blocks lying north of the Crowcombe to Overstowey road)					
377	294	83	329	270	59
B: Central: (South of Overstowey Road to Great Wood / West Bagborough & including Aisholt Common, and Crowcombe Heathfield)					
179	129	50	150	121	29
C: South-East (all areas south-east of Lydeard Hill - includes Cothelstone Hill, Broomfield Hill, Wind Down & King's Cliff)					
22	20	2	12	11	1

**Quantock Deer Management & Conservation Group
Annual Spring Counts of Red deer 1991-2016**



	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
■ Hinds&Calves	677	528	482	516	410	254	379	434	643	602		772	691	752	777	626	619	547	521	406	447	280	312	424	460	443
■ Stags&Prickets	76	127	122	160	125	127	103	100	159	143		121	128	129	181	119	139	128	159	92	90	26	74	87	103	135
Total	753	655	604	676	535	381	482	534	802	745	0	893	819	881	958	745	758	675	680	498	537	306	386	511	563	578