

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

The 25th annual late winter deer count took place on **Sunday 1st March 2015**. Over 60 people participated this year, including several newcomers who joined more experienced counters to cover the usual 44 main and 7 sub-compartments on the Quantock Hills and selected blocks of surrounding lower lying land. Visibility was excellent with bright sunshine from soon after dawn, a chilly breeze on the hills but no rain, making for excellent counting conditions.

After exclusion of any probable duplicate sightings where deer were noted to move between blocks, a total of **563** different **red deer** were recorded on the day. This represents an increase of about 10% on the previous year and makes it the highest count since 2010. The majority of the increase noted this and the previous year, however remains restricted to the northern part of the Hills, with fewer seen on the day in the central area, and just 9 red deer observed in counting blocks lying southeast of Lydeard Hill. As always it is important to note that in this one-off annual count we do not presume to record the entire Quantock red deer population, as some deer within the count area are likely to be missed in concealing cover, and some stags tend to move further off the hills from late winter onwards. The main value of this annual exercise lies in it being undertaken in the same manner year on year, to confirm minimum numbers of red deer remaining, and to serve as an index of long term population trends (see graph overleaf).

While the count is primarily designed to focus on Red deer, other deer seen on the day included 63 roe (of which at least 18 were bucks). No fallow, sika or muntjac deer were seen.

We would like to extend our thanks to all the volunteers - including 10 newcomers - who turned out at the crack of dawn to assist, as well as to all Quantock landholders for their continued co-operation with this count, and to the Quantock Hills AONB service and The Deer Initiative for logistic and financial support,
Jochen Langbein, Rebekah West and Owen Jones (Quantock Deer Count Organisers).

Quantock Deer Count - Summary of deer seen 1 March 2015

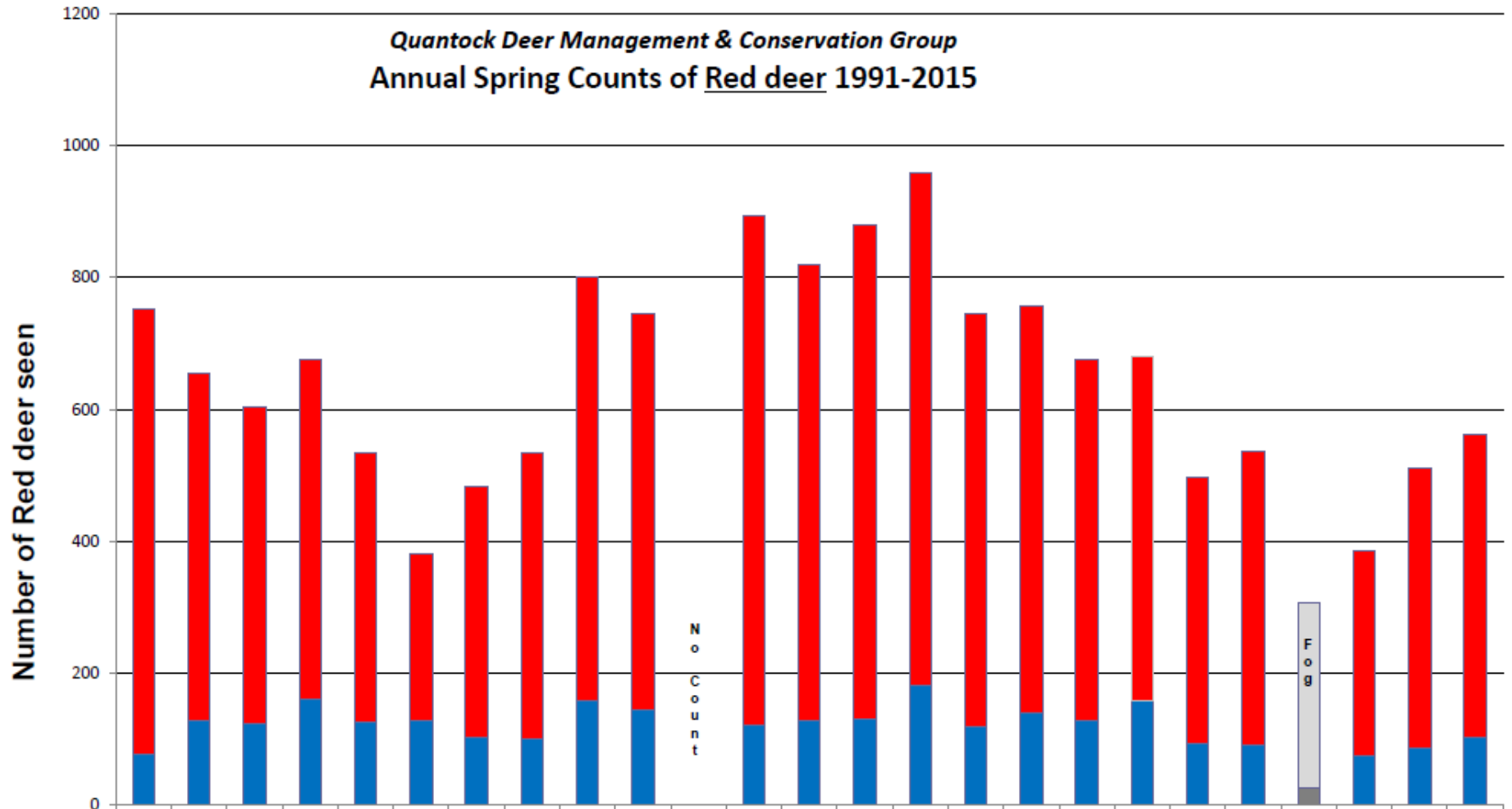
Red Deer	Hinds & Calves (of both sexes)	Prickets	Young Stags	Older Stags (> 4 yr old)		Roe Deer	Fallow Deer	Muntjac Deer
563:	460	37	54	12		63	0	0

Comparison of Red deer March 2014 with 4-year average by section:

Year 2015			Average 2011 – 2014		
Total	Hinds & Followers	Prickets & Stags	Total	Hinds & Followers	Prickets & Stags
563	460	103	478	395	84
A: North (all count blocks lying north of the Crowcombe to Overstowey road)					
416	344	72	307	250	57
B: Central: (South of Overstowey Road to Great Wood / West Bagborough & including Aisholt Common, and Crowcombe Heathfield)					
138	107	31	158	133	25
C: South-East (all areas south-east of Lydeard Hill - includes Cothelstone Hill, Broomfield Hill, Wind Down & King's Cliff)					
9	9	0	16	15	2

(Figures for 2012 excluded from average, as count that year affected by dense fog)

Quantock Deer Management & Conservation Group
Annual Spring Counts of Red deer 1991-2015



	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
■ 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
■ 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
Total	753	655	604	676	535	381	482	534	802	745	xxx	893	819	881	958	745	758	675	680	498	537	306	386	511	563