

Quantock Deer Management and Conservation Group

www.quantockdeergroup.co.uk



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

The 27th annual end of winter deer count took place on **Sunday 5th March 2017**. A total of 56 volunteers set out before first light in heavy rain, which fortunately cleared just before 7am to give reasonable counting conditions. The usual 44 main counting blocks plus several sub-divisions on the Quantock Hills and selected areas of surrounding land were covered.

After exclusion of probable duplicate sightings; e.g. deer noted to move between blocks during the count, **571** different **red deer** were recorded. Despite the poor weather early on this overall figure for red deer is almost the same as the total recorded in the previous year (578). Numbers of stags (excluding prickets) seen were somewhat lower [2017: 43 young stags and 16 older stags (>4yrs); compared to 66 young and 16 older stags in 2016].

Red deer sightings in count blocks lying south and southeast of Lydeard Hill (7) were again very low. Numbers in 'Central' region (157) were a recent average, while over-two thirds of all red deer sightings were again seen in the 'North' section, showing a small increase there over last year. As always it is important to note that in this annual one-day count we do not presume to see the entire Quantock red deer population, as some will be missed in concealing cover and a proportion of the stags tend to move further off the hills by late winter. The greatest value of the count lies in it being done in the same way year on year, to provide long term trends (see graph overleaf), minimum numbers remaining and a guide to deer distribution.

Whilst the count is designed primarily to record red deer, 124 Roe (incl. at least 23 bucks), and 3 muntjac deer (Holford Coombe) were also reported. As these are the first reports of muntjac in the 'North' section, we'd be grateful if all helpers could keep an eye out for them and let us know of any other sightings & photos of muntjac in the count area over the next twelve months.

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 Deer Initiative and Quantock Hills AONB service for logistic and financial support.

Jochen Langbein, Owen Jones and Andy Stevenson (Quantock Deer Count Organisers).

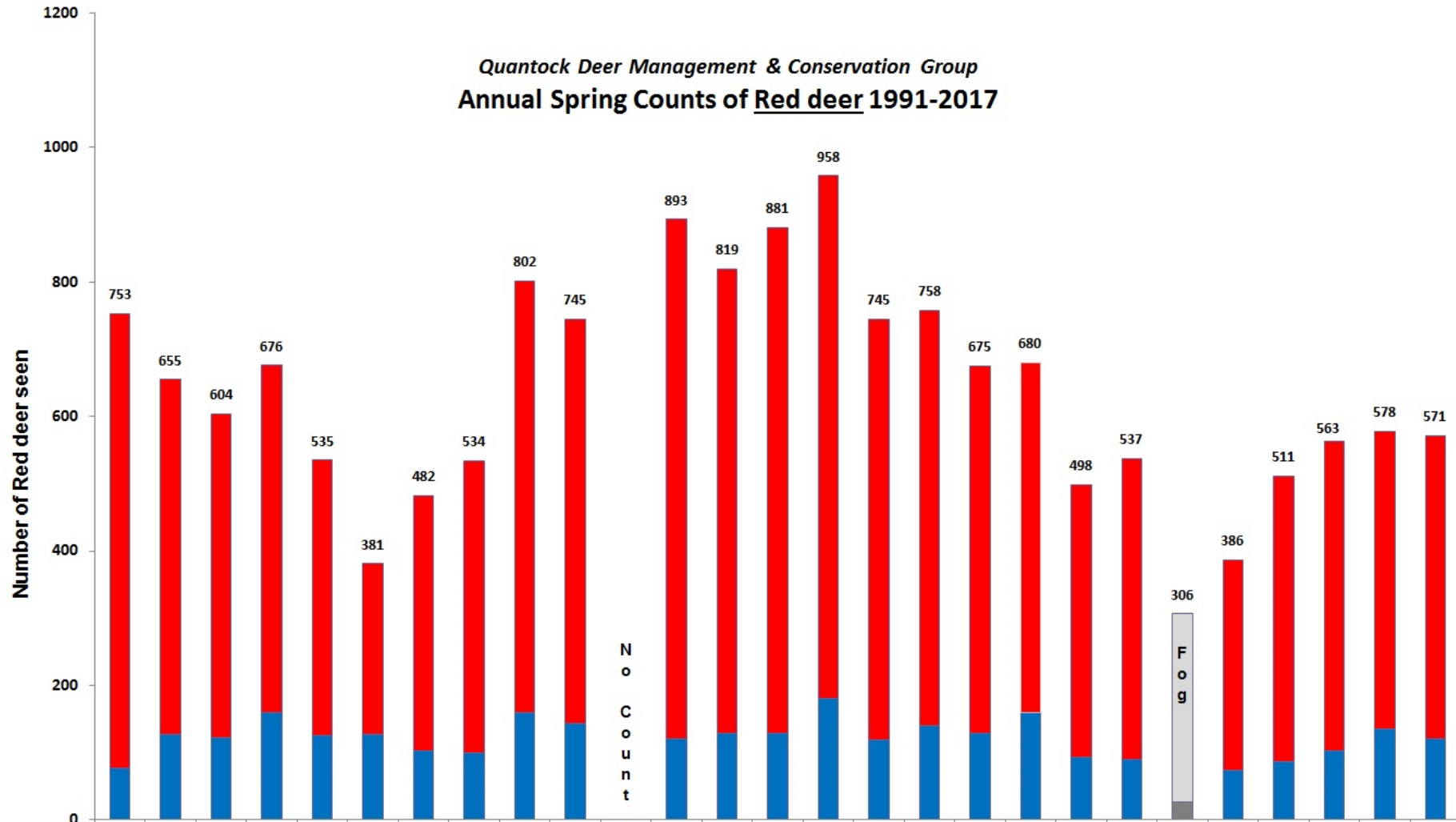
Quantock Deer Count - Summary of deer counted 5 March 2017

Red Deer	Hinds & Calves (of both sexes)	Prickets	Young Stags	Older Stags (> 4 yr old)		Roe Deer	Fallow Deer	Muntjac Deer
571:	450	62	43	16		124	0	3

Comparison of Red deer counted March 2017 with 4-year average by section:

Year 2017			Average 2012 – 2016		
Total	Hinds & Followers	Prickets & Stags	Total	Hinds & Followers	Prickets & Stags
571	450	121	510	410	100
A: North (all count blocks lying north of the Crowcombe to Overstowey road)					
407	338	69	341	276	65
B: Central: (South of Crowcombe to Overstowey Road to Lydeard Hill, incl. Great Wood, Aisholt Common, West Bagborough & Crowcombe Heathfield)					
157	109	48	157	123	34
C: South-East (all areas south-east of Lydeard Hill – incl. Cothelstone, Broomfield to Kings Cliff.					
7	3	4	14	13	1

**Quantock Deer Management & Conservation Group
Annual Spring Counts of Red deer 1991-2017**



	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	2017
■ 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	450
■ 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	121
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	571

(for further background, areas covered and history of the count see <http://quantockdeergroup.co.uk/QuCountHistory.html>)