

Quantock Deer Management and Conservation Group

www.quantockdeergroup.co.uk



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

The 28th annual end of winter deer count took place on **Friday 9th March 2018**, following cancellation due to extreme snow falls in days leading up to the initial scheduled date. Nevertheless 46 counters took part on the count day, and 4 covered the 3 blocks west of the A358 that weekend. Count conditions on the Friday were dry and visibility generally good.

After exclusion of probable duplicate sightings (e.g. deer noted to move between blocks during the count) **546** different **red deer** were recorded; a figure less than 5% down on the previous year (571). The proportion of stags (excluding prickets) was however rather low again compared to earlier years: 2016: 66 young stags / 16 older stags (>4yrs); 2017: 43 young stags / 16 older stags; 2018 : 43 young stags 13 older stags. Distribution of red deer among the count blocks in the North / Central / and South of the Quantocks were very broadly similar to other recent years (see Table below).

As always, it is important to note that for 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, 67 Roe (including at least 11 bucks) were also noted, but no muntjac or fallow sightings were reported. The true total of roe deer in the area is likely to lie far higher than those seen on the day.

Many thanks are due to all volunteers who participated, all Quantock landholders for their continued co-operation, and Quantock Hills AONB/FC rangers Andy Stevenson and Owen Jones for help with the organisation of the count this year. Having myself taken part in each of the past 25 years and led on its organisation over the past twenty, I have decided it is time to hand over the reins to others from next year. I would therefore like to take this opportunity to add my personal thanks to all past volunteers who have helped and supported me during this time.

Best regards, *Jochen Langbein*

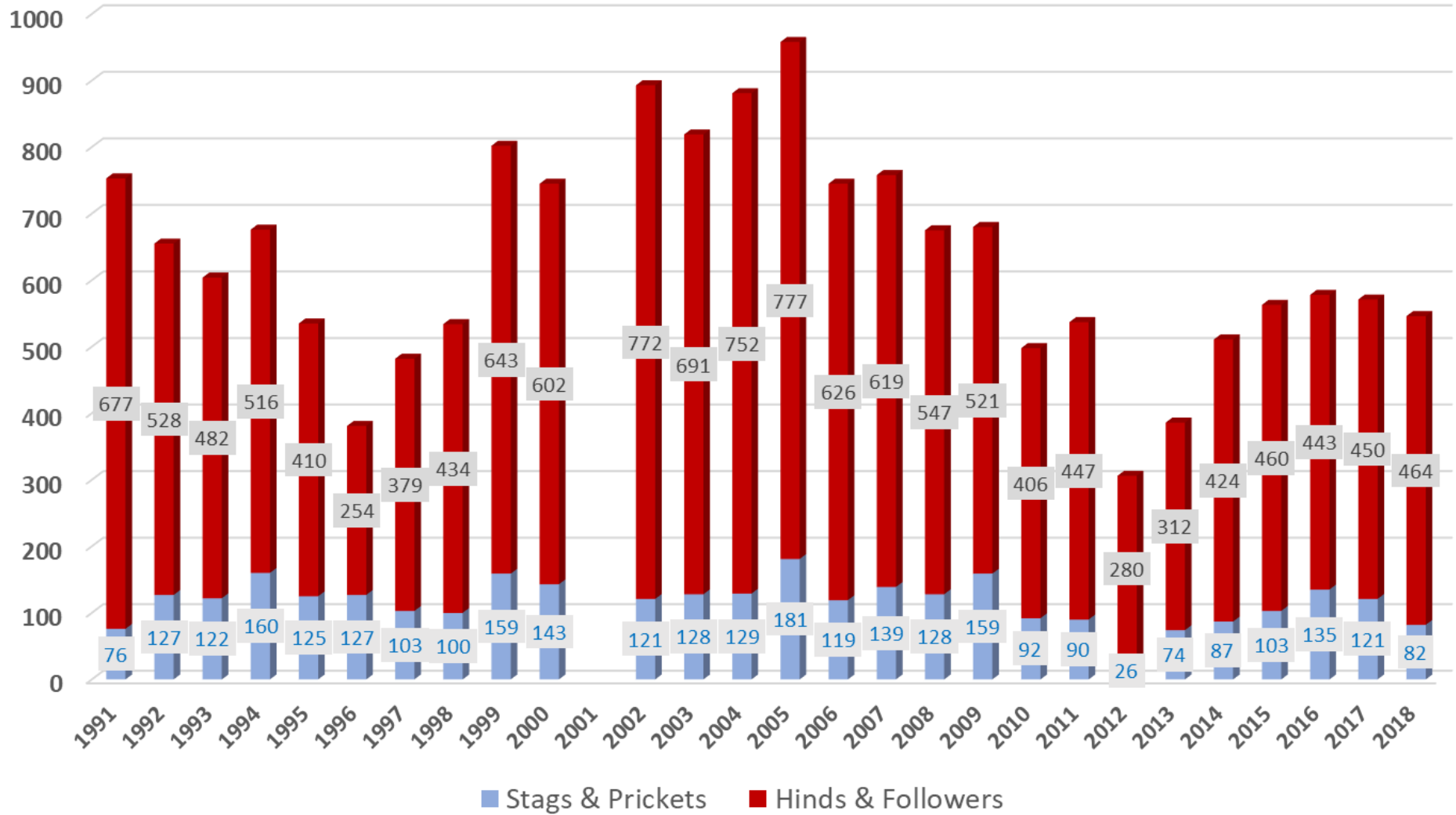
Quantock Deer Count - Summary of deer count 9 March 2018

Red Deer	Hinds & Calves (of both sexes)	Prickets	Young Stags	Older Stags (> 4 yr old)		Roe Deer	Fallow Deer	Muntjac Deer
546:	464	26	43	13		67	0	0

Comparison of Red deer counted March 2018 with 4-year average by region:

<u>Year 2018</u>			<u>Average 2014 – 2017</u>		
Total	Hinds & Followers	Prickets & Stags	Total	Hinds & Followers	Prickets & Stags
546	464	82	556	444	112
A: North (all count blocks lying north of the Crowcombe to Overstowey road)					
379	328	51	380	309	71
B: Central: (South of Crowcombe to Overstowey Road to Lydeard Hill, incl. Great Wood, Aisholt Common, West Bagborough & Crowcombe Heathfield)					
152	123	29	166	127	39
C: South-East (all areas south-east of Lydeard Hill – incl. Cothelstone, Broomfield to Kings Cliff.					
15	13	2	10	8	2

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Annual Spring Counts of Red deer 1991-2018



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