

Quantock Deer Forum – 2014

Music Hall, Fyne Court, Broomfield 6th November



Quantock Deer Management and Conservation Group

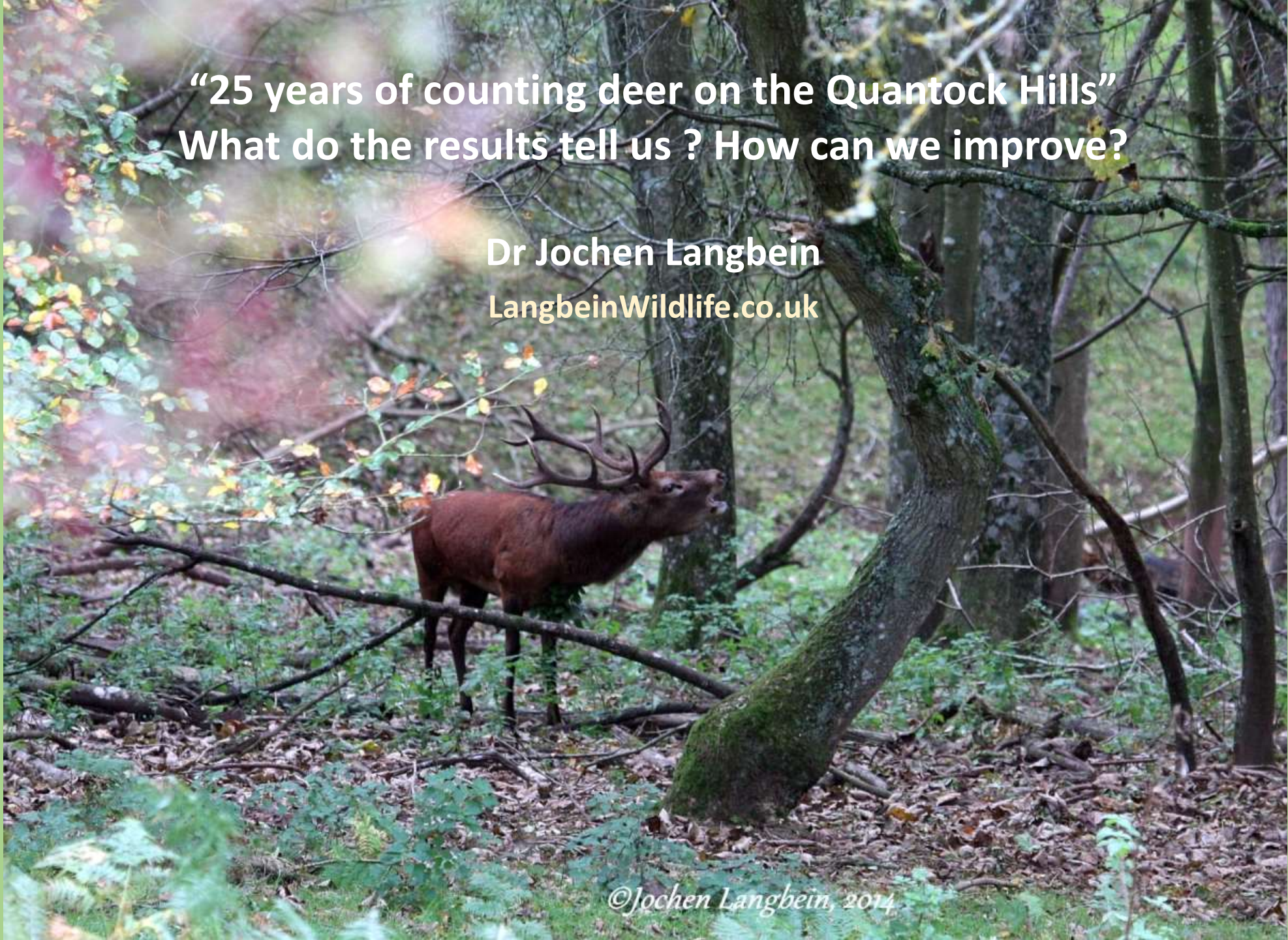


Quantock Hills
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty



**“25 years of counting deer on the Quantock Hills”
What do the results tell us ? How can we improve?**


Dr Jochen Langbein
LangbeinWildlife.co.uk



©Jochen Langbein, 2014

Timeline

- **1991** : Late winter Deer count set up by Eric Smith (FC Wildlife Ranger) on behalf of Quantock Deer Management & Conservation Group
- (1992: 1st large scale Exmoor wide count arranged by Jochen Langbein for NT, subsequently developed and expended by E&D Deer Management Society into annual count 1994-2014).
- **2001** : No QDM&CG deer count as result of Foot & Mouth access restrictions
- **2002 - 2011**: Quantock Count organisation taken on jointly by J Langbein and A Harris, with support of Quantock Hills AONB
- **2012 – 2014**: Following various job changes, assistance to JL with count organisation provided by first Tim Russell, and now Owen Jones and Rebekah West (Quantock Hills rangers)



Throughout that time the counts have relied on assistance of 40 – 60 volunteers counters each year, without whom these counts could not proceed.

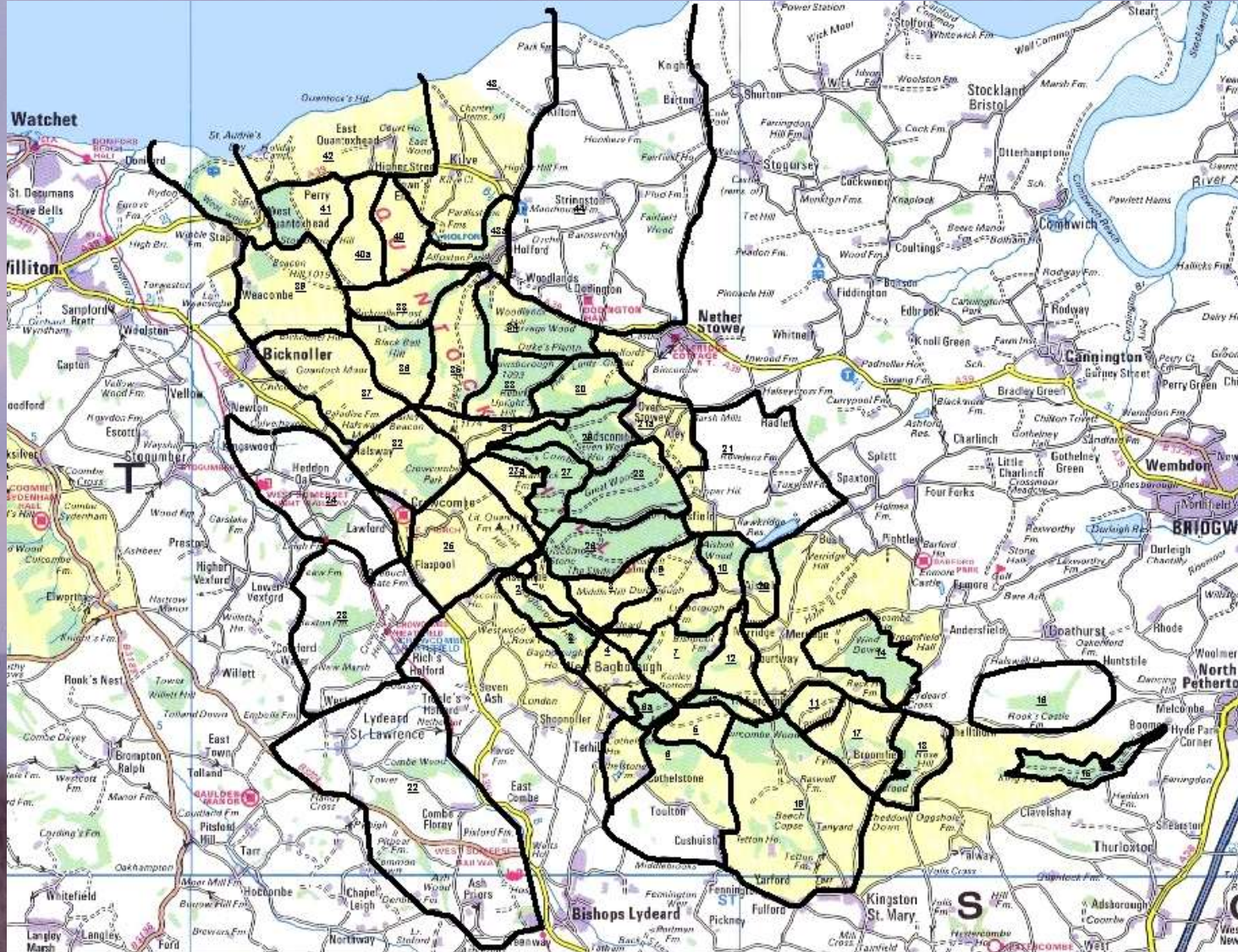
The counts have over the years been financially supported at differing times by Quantock Hills AONB, National Trust, Natural England and The Deer Initiative.

Photo J. Langbein

QDM&CG Deer Count:

44 main plus 5 sub-compartments are regularly included

Each surveyed by one or two counters for two hours from first light on a set day in late February or early March



Guidance on age-class allocations provided for new counters

Young Stags & prickets

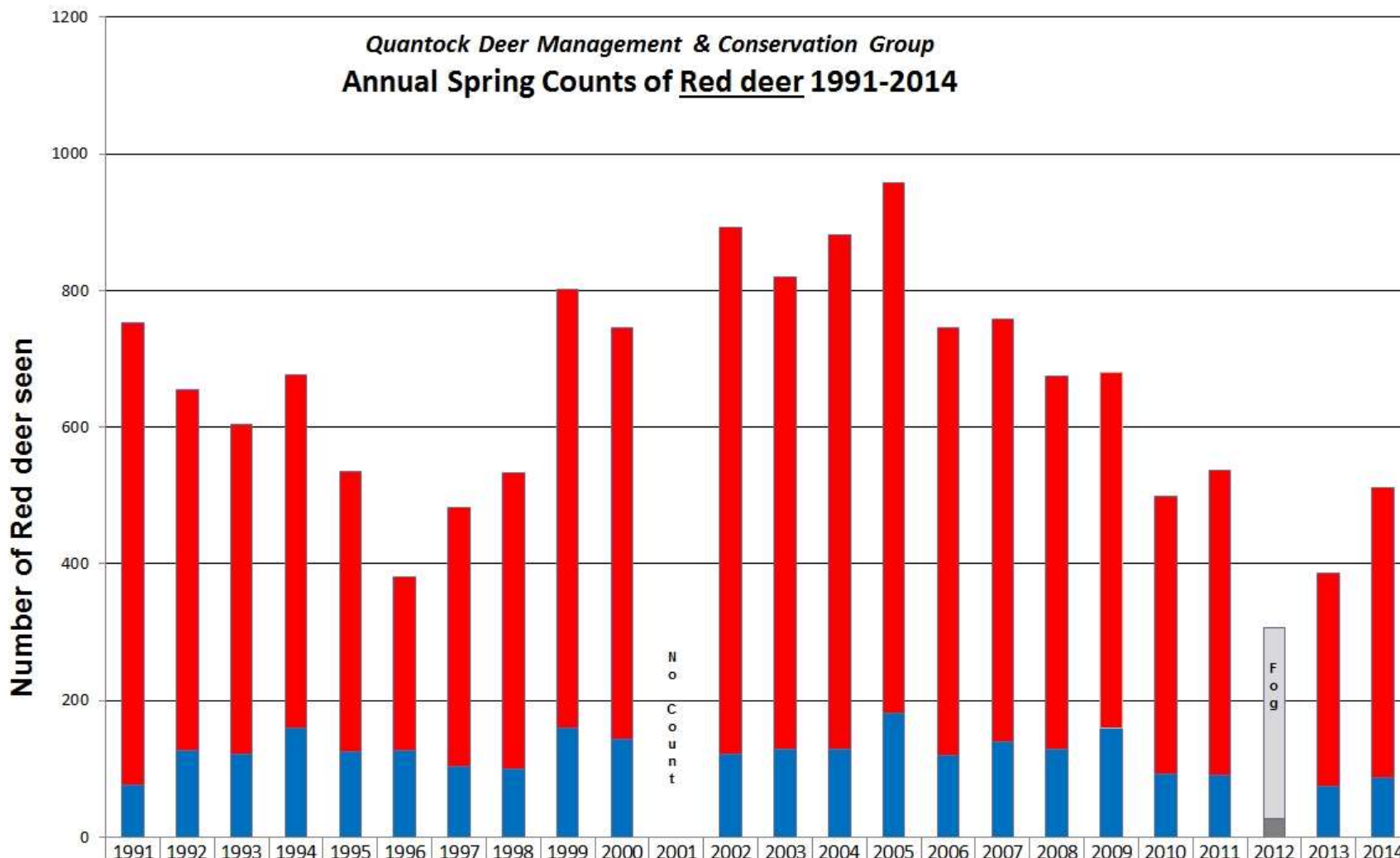


Mature Stags 4 years and older



Photos by Ross Campbell

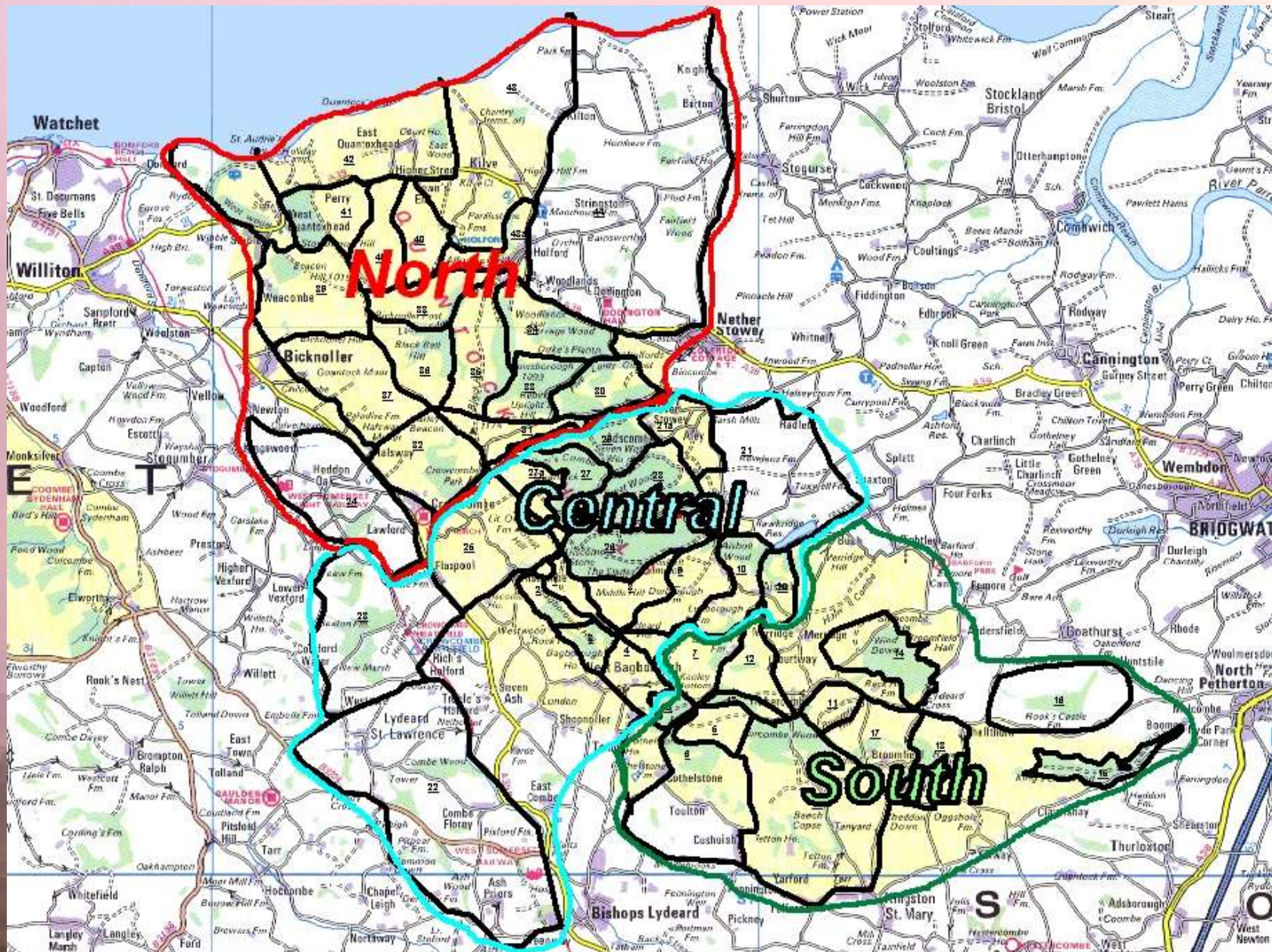
Quantock Deer Management & Conservation Group
Annual Spring Counts of Red deer 1991-2014



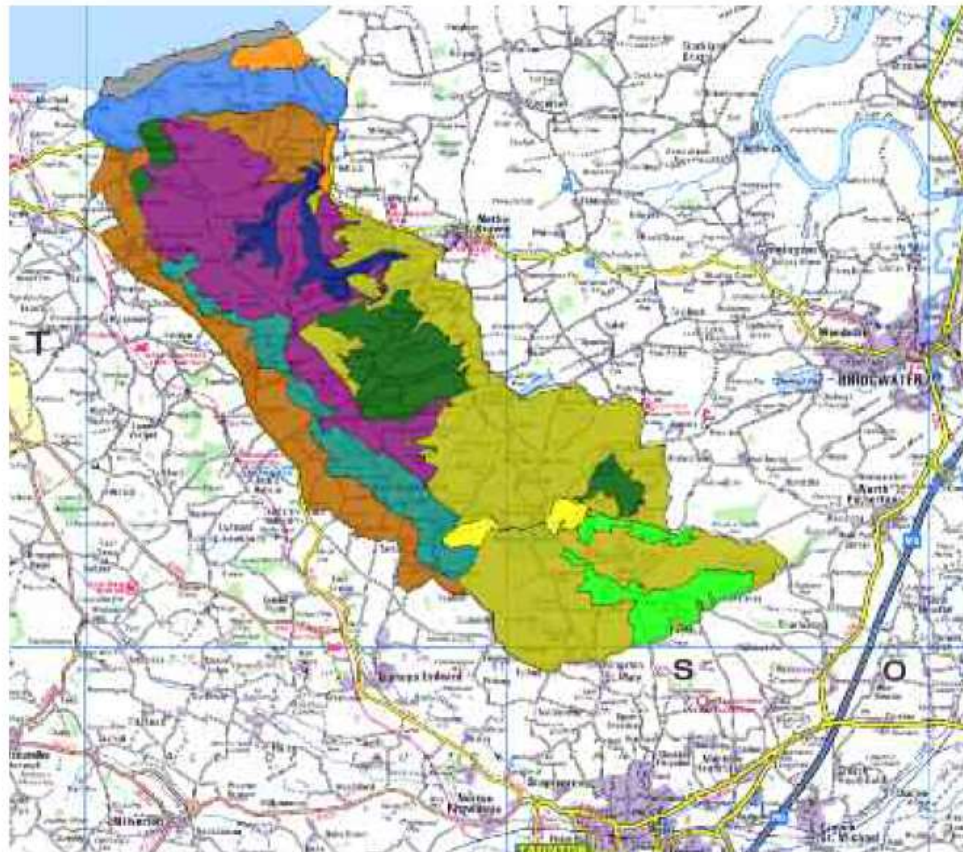
	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
■ Hinds&Calves	677	528	482	516	410	254	379	434	643	602		772	691	752	777	626	619	547	521	406	447	280	312	424
■ Stags&Prickets	76	127	122	160	125	127	103	100	159	143		121	128	129	181	119	139	128	159	92	90	26	74	87
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

Increasingly Deer missed during count in Miscanthus and cereal crop fields ?





Landscape Character Assessment Map

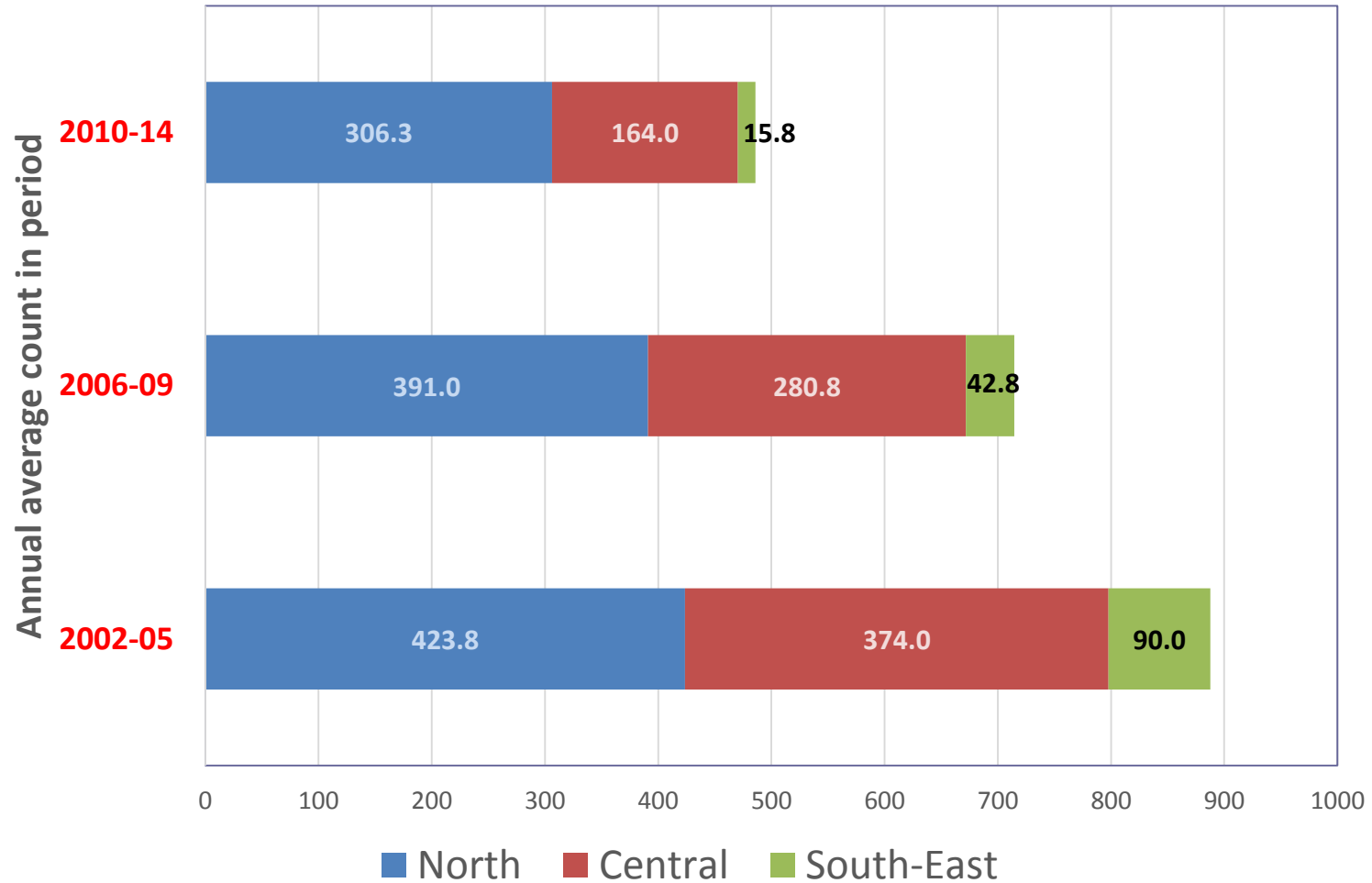


- Agricultural Fringe
- Agricultural Fringe and coast
- Farmed Foothills
- Farmed Hills with Woods/Combes
- Farmed Ridge and plateaux
- Forested Hills and Combes
- Heathland Summits and Combes
- Jurassic coast
- Open Southern Summits
- Upland Oakwoods
- Wooded escarpment

- Source: Quantock Hills AONB Draft Management Plan



Quantock Red deer count: Changes in average number and proportion of deer counted by region



Change in average annual %age of count made up by **Prickets and Stags**



In addition males calves may be expected to make up in the region of 15% of animals reported in counts for 'Hinds & Calves' .

Overall **Female** : **Male** sex ratio in late winter may thus be estimated to be near 2.5 : 1

Sightings of other deer species within Quantock Hills AONB

Roe: **Common**



©J Langbein

Fallow: **occasionally**



©J Langbein

Muntjac: **occasionally**



©J Langbein

Sika - **rarely**



©J Langbein

Main areas with occasional sightings of 'other deer'

aside from Red and Roe deer which are seen regularly throughout most of the area



How can we improve the count whilst also ensuring directly comparable results continue to be obtained in future years ?

- **Recruitment of new counters via buddy system ?**
- **Additional counts by alternative methods (e.g. thermal imaging / or aerial / drone counts ?)**
- **Project to directly assess the extent red deer use Miscanthus cover?**
- **Others suggestions**



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Many thanks to all the volunteers and countryside organisations who have assisted us with the Deer Count over the years and all landholders across the region for their continued support.

Photo competition: **Winning entries overleaf**



1st Deer Counter's annual Photo Competition 2014:

Winning Photo : *"Curious" – Red Stag on the Quantock Hills by Matthew Peaster*



© *MatthewPeaster.com*

1st Deer Counters annual Photo Competition 2014:
Runner Up : *Young Red Stag on Quantock Hills by David Pusill*



© *David Pusill*