

Deer Commission for Scotland

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BY EMAIL ONLY

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Dear Mr Crawford

Freedom of Information request – Red Deer counts in Dumfries and Galloway

Thank you for your enquiry regarding red deer counts in the Dumfries and Galloway area. The Deer Commission for Scotland, previously the Red Deer Commission, have not carried out any red deer census work within this area directly.

However we have been able to obtain the following information for you from the Forestry Commission Scotland, who have carried out some census work within the Galloway Forest district area over the last 50 years.

In Galloway, prior to large-scale afforestation in 1954, the red deer population was assessed by Fraser Darling as ~ 415 animals. The large expansion of woodland cover, together with the corresponding reduction in grazing by domestic stock, increased both the quantity and quality of habitat available to indigenous deer species. This increase in available habitat allowed red and roe deer to dramatically expand both their range and population size throughout the unit. By 1964 the red deer population was estimated at 1500. This had risen to 2600 by 1974 and then 3700 by 1984. The latest estimate on the population, using dung counting in 1999, suggested a red deer population of 4500 animals across the 97,000 Ha Galloway forest district.

The count estimates in 1954, '64, '74 and '84 appear to have been achieved using a Vantage point count method and supplemented further by using population modelling.

If you have any further enquiries or comments then please do not hesitate to contact me at james.hammond@dcsc.gov.uk or call the DCS Stirling office on 01786 446282.

Yours Sincerely

Jamie Hammond

Deer Officer (South)