

## Eastern Moors Red Deer

### Date of revision January 2018

The National Trust and the RSPB, who together form the Eastern Moors Partnership, are working to transform the already stunning landscape of the Eastern Moors to make it even richer in wildlife and better for people who enjoy this special place. The Eastern Moors is known for its gritstone crags, stone circles, open moors, woodlands and meadows, animated by wildlife such as curlew, golden ringed dragonflies, adders and red deer.

Red deer have become one of the iconic features of the area; a great symbol of the wild and open nature of the site. Not only are they special to people who come to see them, they carry out an important job delivering grazing alongside cattle to keep tree colonisation of the moors in check: a natural process of maintaining the open areas of moorland alongside woodland.

The deer themselves are wild animals and move across a wider landscape than Big Moor itself. We have been observing them grow to an established healthy herd that will be here for future generations to enjoy. Over the years, with the moorland recovering and plenty of re-growth in plants such as heather and bilberry, we have had sufficient space for the number of deer living on the moors. When in balance with the surrounding habitats red deer and healthy habitats can happily coexist. Large herbivores like red deer forming a part of a balanced eco system.

Over the years by monitoring the deer in the Big Moor area alongside the vegetation, the moor is able to sustain healthy vegetation growth when deer numbers are around 150 animals and no more than 200. When we have higher numbers than these, along with the benefits of having deer on the moors, there are also less desirable effects: namely limiting the recovery of moorland plants, and reducing the regeneration of young trees in the woodlands and meadows adjacent to the moor.

If left unchecked the deer numbers will grow to a point where the deer themselves over utilise the resources on the moors and have to spread further afield to find food and shelter, reducing the amount of wildlife the moors can support. Nature's own way of preventing this would be to control the herd size with large predators, such as wolves. As these animals are now missing from UK ecosystems, the choice to keep deer numbers at balanced levels, which benefits both the deer themselves and the habitat they live in, falls to us.

We want to ensure that the deer are healthy, the moorlands and woodlands are in good condition, and all these features can be enjoyed by the public. To achieve this we do undertake deer management on occasion. This is decided on a year by year basis when needed. For the latest situation please contact the team at Barbrook Cottage.

This is carried out by professionals in deer management working with the Eastern Moors team in a sensitive and respectful way to both deer and other wildlife on site, with minimal disruption to how the public enjoy the moors.

The long-term aim is to maintain and enjoy a site rich in wildlife, of which the deer are a vital part.

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