

Here before the deer

Local resident Bob Soost remembers the days before the deer were introduced.

As a part time residence of Inverness from the late 1920's until 1941, I'm somewhat puzzled by persons who consider the fallow and axis deer as "historic" to the area. They certainly weren't part of the "viewing scene" in those times. From a few animals introduced from 1947 into the 50's for the purpose of being hunted, they have increased to hundreds in spite of being heavily culled at intervals from 1968 until 1984.

It was a real surprise to come upon some of the "white" forms of the fallow deer when I returned to the area in the early 1970's. Seeing the fallow deer in an Olema valley meadow or watching a herd of axis deer from Marshall Beach road is certainly a dramatic experience. However, these non-native species impact the native species and their habitats, either directly or indirectly. Beyond a certain point the impacts become irreversible. In the less than 60 years that they have been here their impacts on the vegetation are already apparent. One only has to look at other places in the world where these species have been present much longer to see how extensive the long-term damage can be.