

THORNE MOORS VERTEBRATES REPORT 2005

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RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN VERTEBRATES RECORDING

Some time ago, following discussion within the Thorne & Hatfield Moors Conservation Forum, it was considered that greater survey effort should be encouraged on the herptiles of these moorlands. For Thorne Moors, the only relevant recent published item was a note on the newts by Martin Limbert and Bryan P. Wainwright, which appeared during 2003 in the Forum journal, *Thorne & Hatfield Moors Papers*. As a result of the discussion, the new momentum extended to the drafting of a similar note on the anurans and an allied paper on the fish fauna of the area. However, this interest subsequently evolved into a full review of the fish and all herptiles, which appeared as a *THMCF Technical Report* in 2004, written by ML, BPW and Steve Hiner. During the work on this, a companion review of the mammals of Thorne Moors was also deemed worthwhile and timely. This was compiled by ML, being published - again as a *THMCF Technical Report* - in 2005.

During 2004, BPW relinquished his unofficial post as Thorne Moors vertebrates recorder (alongside the reptiles recorder, SH), prior to leaving for South America. His duties had mainly comprised the production of a yearly bird report, printed by English Nature. The recording baton was grasped by ML, who decided that a full review of vertebrates recording was overdue. This resolved into five aspects:

1. The production of a published annual report covering all vertebrate groups, not just birds. The first *Thorne Moors Vertebrates Report* embraced 2004, and appeared under the *aegis* of the THMCF. That for 2005 is necessarily produced independently.
2. A compilation of a summary of all existing records of fish and herptiles (21 spp.), plus a short associated history of recording and a bibliography. This was already newly available as *THMCF Technical Report* No. 13, amounting to 36 pages.
3. As 2, covering all mammals (37 spp.). This now forms *THMCF Technical Report* No. 15. It comprises 49 pages, plus an unpublished supplement (three pages) giving the entire Badger script, which was not published in full for security reasons.
4. As 2, covering all birds (230 spp.).
5. The creation of a map of place-names used for vertebrates recording on and about Thorne Moors since 1966. This is now issued with the *Thorne Moors Vertebrates Report 2005*, and lists upwards of 160 names.¹

Thus, during 2004-05 four of the five identified components of the review of Thorne Moors vertebrates were completed, but leaving the largest, a summary of the birds, as a future target. Inevitably, this latter will be a significantly larger task, involving very many records for four times more species than there are of other Thorne vertebrates. For any future overall documentation of the vertebrate fauna of Thorne Moors, there is now a firm and accessible basis of knowledge for the mammals and cold-blooded species, allowing emphasis to be transferred to the avifauna. To this end, collation of ornithological data will commence in 2007, and will probably be a protracted exercise. In addition to bird records and allusions extending back to the eighteenth century, modern recording and research commenced in 1966, and has been continuous since then, giving a mass of data for a period now extending over 40 years.

¹ Note – an on-line, continually updated version of this map is available at <http://www.thmcf.org/maps/Thorne/index.html>

VERTEBRATES RECORDING

1. Parameters of conservation. Thorne Moors lies within the Humberhead Levels Natural Area, and the peatland and contiguous wetlands comprise the Thorne Moors Site of Special Scientific Interest. The moorland forms a component of the Humberhead Peatlands National Nature Reserve, managed by Natural England and (in the North Lincolnshire section *q.v.*) the Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust. The NNR has international designations to recognize its conservation importance.

2. Recording area. For vertebrates documentation, the Thorne Moors recording area is deliberately interpreted somewhat loosely. It comprises the whole of the peatland, contiguous unfarmed areas, the Thorne Colliery curtilage, and peripheral farmland and drains. The limit to the north is defined as the line of the old Axholme Joint Railway. Otherwise, a field width or so is a practical rule-of-thumb.

3. Place-names. In broad terms, the name Thorne Moors is used to embrace both the peatland and the other areas under study. The surviving peat is divided by parish limits, the parish names being Thorne Waste, Snaith & Cowick Moor, Rawcliffe Moor, Goole Moor and Crowle Moor. Thorne Waste (except now the Yorkshire Triangle) lies in South Yorkshire, and the other parishes lie in East Yorkshire, except Crowle Moor and the Yorkshire Triangle, which are in North Lincolnshire. That part of Goole Moor situated north of Rawcliffe Moor is designated as 'Northern Goole Moor' for recording purposes. Within the parish framework, numerous place-names are employed for vertebrates recording. These names have been derived, since 1966, from Ordnance Survey maps, the former peat industry, NCC/English Nature and local birders. A place-names map has recently been compiled, and is issued with this report.

4. Current sources of nomenclature and species sequence. In this report, English and scientific names and sequence of species accord (where appropriate) with the following:

Beebee, T.J.C. and R.A. Griffiths (2000) *Amphibians and Reptiles. A Natural History of the British Herpetofauna*. The New Naturalist No. 87. London: HarperCollins Publishers.

The British Birds List of Birds of the Western Palearctic; see www.britishbirds.co.uk/bblist.htm (accessed 31st January 2006).

Arnold, H.R. (1993) *Atlas of mammals in Britain*. Institute of Terrestrial Ecology Research Publication No. 6. London: HMSO.

In addition, botanical nomenclature and sequence follow:

Stace, C. (1997) *New Flora of the British Isles*. Second edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

5. Descriptions. For nationally rare avian taxa, descriptions and visual evidence should be made available in accordance with the requirements of the British Birds Rarities Committee. At county level, material should be prepared in compliance with the lists issued by the Yorkshire Naturalists' Union Ornithological Section Reports Committee or the Lincolnshire Bird Club, as appropriate. Advice and blank forms can be made available upon request.

6. Rare breeding birds. In addition to Natural England, records of rare breeding birds are made available to the county organizations, and *via* them to the Rare Breeding Birds Panel. Records may also be accessed by *bona fide* specialist study groups.

7. Daily counts. In the species accounts which follow, there are references to "daily counts" and "counts". It is emphasized that these are not full site counts, but counts made by an individual observer or group on a particular date. It is possible to have more than one count on a single date, when the highest will be used if they cannot be united. The recording area is very large, and site totals are difficult to establish with certainty, except for the scarcer species. However, for some wetland birds, it is possible to visit the most likely places to count these species, thus attaining a relatively accurate moorland total for them. It is acknowledged that such reported daily counts may sometimes be regarded as vague, but they are broadly comparable over a period of years.

VERTEBRATES RECORDING IN 2005

1. Statistics for 2005. During the year, two species of amphibian, three species of reptile, 128 species of bird and 11 species of mammal were reliably reported from Thorne Moors. There were no additions to the existing lists, although rarely reported species like Red Kite, Kittiwake and Firecrest were met with. There were also some useful breeding records, the most outstanding being a Common Quail with chicks. The overall number of records fell again. My own fieldwork was limited in 2005, especially in the second half of the year. Unfortunately, this pattern was more generally repeated, with coverage of the autumn bird migration being very inadequate.

2. Publications, reports, etc. The following references appeared during 2004-05, using vertebrates data concerning Thorne Moors, but not necessarily relevant to those years. Published references to noteworthy species as news items are not detailed (unless accompanied by an image), nor are those references in which the site allusion is merely incidental or very minor:

- Anon. [2005] *Breeding Nightjar Survey - 2005 - Humberhead Peatlands NNR, SAC, SSSI, SPA (Thorne, Goole and Crowle Moors)*. Unpublished report by Middleton Consultancy, Barnsley.
- Brown, A. and P. Grice (2005) *Birds in England*. London: T. & A.D. Poyser.
[Occasional allusions].
- Cocker, M. and R. Mabey (2005) *Birds Britannica*. London: Chatto & Windus.
[Bluethroat and Common Starling].
- Hazard, D. (2005) Report of the Doncaster Ringing Group. *Doncaster Bird Report 2001*: 69-76.
[Includes a Black-headed Gull recovery from Thorne Moors].
- Limbert, M. (2005) *Thorne Moors Vertebrates Report 2004*. Doncaster: Thorne & Hatfield Moors Conservation Forum.
- Limbert, M. (2005) The Mammals of Thorne Moors. *THMCF Technical Report No. 15*.
- Limbert, M. (2005) *Birds' Egg Collections and Local Ornithology: A Case-study*. Leeds: Peregrine Books.
[Much Thorne Moors material via the J.H. Verhees Collection].
- Wainwright, B.P. (2005) Thorne Moors 2001. *Doncaster Bird Report 2001*: 77-80.
- Wilson, R. (2004) *Breeding Nightjar Survey - 2004 Humberhead Peatlands - Thorne, Goole and Crowle Moors SSSI for English Nature (Humber to Pennines Team)*. Unpublished report by White Young Green Environmental Limited, Leeds.

AMPHIBIANS

Common Frog *Rana temporaria*.. An immature was present at Ink1e Moor Pond on 1st July (CW).

Common Toad *Bufo bufo*. An immature was uncovered on 7th February during work on the base for a wind turbine at English Nature's depot at Will Pits Scrape (SH).

REPTILES

Viviparous or Common Lizard *Lacerta vivipara*. There were occasional (but sometimes vague) records of singles spanning 3rd March (Rhododendron Path) and 26th September ('Middle Moor'), with other locations including Collis' Tram, Elmhirst Tram, Will Pits Scrape and the Viewing Platform. Larger counts were obtained from the Southern Canals, with June totals of 2 along canal 6 (western side) on 27th and 4 along canal 5 the next day. The highest count was c.5, seemingly all juveniles, along Northern Tram on 29th August.

Grass or Ringed Snake *Natrix natrix*. One was seen along the colliery road on 22nd April (WHP).

Adder or Northern Viper *Vipera berus*. Recorded from 8th March, always singly, and with few records after 8th August. Locations were the Whaley Balk/Rhododendron Path area, Green Belt area (including map reference c.SE714163), the Paraffin Cuttings, the Viewing Platform, the site of

Blue Bridge, and the track along Swinefleet Line Dyke. This latter was the locality of the last, a male on the significantly late date of 11th October (SH).

BIRDS

Mute Swan *Cygnus olor*. The single record was of 2 at Will Pits Scrape, which departed to the east, on 19th November.

Bewick's Swan *C. columbianus*. Eight were at Will Pits Scrape on 14th October (SH).

Whooper Swan *C. cygnus*. Reported on three dates: 7th February (28 at the flooded workings), 16th April (16+ north) and 14th October (4 east).

Pink-footed Goose *Anser brachyrhynchus*. There was movement on 1st January, involving skeins of 26 (west), 72 (south-west), c.100 (north-west), 51 (west), 69 (west), 110+ (west) and 100+ (south), giving a total of 528+. The only other record in the early months concerned 2 at the flooded workings on 22nd April. Remaining records were obtained from Will Pits Scrape in mid-October. On 14th, 50 were with 100+ Greylag Geese, eventually flying off south-east, and 1 was with 300+ Greylags the next day.

Greylag Goose *A. anser*. The first of the year appeared on 13th March, when 2 pairs were at Will Pits Scrape and what may have been a different 4 flew over the Moors. There were also 4 on 1st April, and then subsequent records to 19th November, when 20 were at Will Pits Scrape. Few counts exceeded 40+, but on 20th September a "large group" was at Will Pits Scrape, and this location held up to 300+ in October (on 7th/15th). Two adults and 7 juveniles were at the flooded workings on 25th June, but with only 6 juveniles the next day, and there were no other indications of breeding. The waters named were the only ones attracting Greylags. Of 6 seen on 12th May, one had dilute plumage.

Greater Canada Goose *Branta canadensis*. At Will Pits Scrape, there was 1 on 28th May and 23+ on 15th October.

Common Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*. Reported on 1st January (3), 13th March (1), 25th March (2), and from 16th April-28th May. Counts during this latter period reached 7, plus 10 on 28th May. Most birds were seen at the flooded workings, but occasionally at Will Pits Scrape.

Eurasian Wigeon *Anas penelope*. Only seen in October, beginning with c.50 at Will Pits Scrape on 7th, 1 there on 15th, and 2 at the flooded workings on 30th.

Gadwall *A. strepera*. Eight were at the flooded workings on 1st January. Subsequently encountered only in the first half of the year, commencing with a pair on 25th March. Peak counts occurred in May, with 10+ on 2nd and 6+ on 5th. Mainly a denizen of the flooded workings, but also present at Will Pits Scrape and Green Belt Scrape. On 12th May, a pair was flushed from Mill Drain.

Eurasian Teal *A. crecca*. Daily counts were generally lower than in recent years, with few exceeding 23. Apart from 100+ on 1st January, the maxima occurred in September-October. These peaked at 300+ in September (21st) and c.400 in October (30th). Breeding was proved, with 2 females accompanied by young on 20th July. Eurasian Teal were pursued unsuccessfully by a male Peregrine Falcon on 2nd October.

Mallard *A. platyrhynchos*. Few significant counts were submitted, with the highest during September-December. These reached 280+ in September (21st), 300+ in October (15th) and c.200 in December (10th).

Pintail *A. acuta*. The flooded workings held 2 males and 2 females on 21st September, 22+ on 14th October, and 2 males and 8 females the next day.

Shoveler *A. clypeata*. The flooded workings held 2 males and 1 female on 1st January. On 12th February, 6 males and 2 females were at the flooded workings, with a further male on Goole Moor. These workings, Will Pits Scrape and Green Belt Scrape attracted Shovelers from 25th March, with occasional birds in flight elsewhere. Daily totals exceeded 6 in May (10+ on three dates), August (25 on 18th), October (15+ on 15th) and December (15+ on 10th). Four adults and a brood of 3 young were seen at the flooded workings on 26th June (AS).

Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*. In January, records were obtained on 1st (2 males and 1 female at the flooded workings) and 31st (4 at Will Pits Scrape). These were followed by 2 males and 1 female at the flooded workings on 13th March. Subsequent records were restricted to April-May, beginning with 12+ at the flooded workings on 1st April. These workings and Will Pits Scrape were the only locations reported, with maxima of 4 males and 1 female at the former on 12th May, and 4 pairs at the latter on 2nd May. In this month, the day's total on 2nd was 10 birds, and there was a combined count of 7 males on 12th.

Ruddy Duck *Oxyura jamaicensis*. The only pre-April record was a male at the flooded workings on 25th March. Reported regularly from 1st April at Will Pits Scrape and the flooded workings, with the first female (at the flooded workings) on 16th April. May details included a combined total of 8 males and 2 females on 5th, the respective yearly maxima for each sex. Evidence of breeding involved a female with 4 young at Will Pits Scrape on 24th July, which proved to be the last date of the year.

Red-legged Partridge *Alectoris rufa*. On 13th May, a single was seen between Red House Farm and Top Moor Farm.

Grey Partridge *Perdix perdix*. There were few records, with none of them remarkable except along Will Pits Tram. Here, an adult and 2 immatures occurred on 24th July, and the year's maximum, of 4, was obtained on 20th September.

Common Quail *Coturnix coturnix*. On 24th July, an adult and at least 5-6 recently hatched chicks were encountered along a track at map reference SE735164 (PH). A notable addition to the breeding list.

Common Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus*. Daily counts reached 22+ (29th August). Breeding proved.

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*. Records were obtained from the Paraffin Cuttings (singles), Will Pits Scrape (singles), and the flooded workings (maximum 4), beginning on 25th March. Of these three waters, only at the latter workings were records obtained after May. These included the maximum (4 on 18th August), the only evidence of breeding (2 adults and 1 juvenile on 26th June), and the latest (3 on 27th September). An additional site was Bell's Pond, where singles occurred on 15th October and 10th December.

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*. Singles were at Will Pits Scrape on 1st January and 20th May.

Black-necked Grebe *P. nigricollis*. The first were single grebes at Will Pits Scrape on 29th March and several dates in April. Two were present at the flooded workings from 16th April. Here, there were then 4+ on 2nd May, on which date there were also 3 at Will Pits Scrape (WHP, KB). Subsequent May records included maximum counts of adults at Will Pits Scrape of 3 on 5th/10th/14th, 4 on 20th/28th, and 6 on 12th (ML). On 17th May, a pair had a small juvenile at this water (RB). At the flooded workings, May totals decreased to 2 on 20th and 1 on 24th. Here, records in June-July occasionally involved 1 bird, but with 2 on 28th June/3rd July, and 3 on 26th July, with the final grebe here on 2nd August. At Will Pits Scrape, June sightings included 3 on 2nd and 2 adults and 2 juveniles on 25th (WHP). Here in July, records were obtained on 3rd (2 adults), 7th (2 adults and 1 juvenile), 21st (2 adults and 2 juveniles), 26th (3 adults and 2 juveniles), and 30th (2 adults and 2 juveniles). Two adults and a "fully grown" juvenile were observed on 2nd

August, with further records during the month of 1 adult and the juvenile on 9th/12th/19th. Interchange of adults between Will Pits Scrape and the flooded workings is likely, with the largest daily count combining both areas being 7 on 2nd May, and with the highest total at one water being 6 at Will Pits Scrape on 12th May. However, there is evidence of only 1 pair hatching young, at Will Pits Scrape, and of these latter, only 1 was apparently reared. In addition, an adult at Will Pits Scrape on 24th July was in almost full winter plumage (PH). In view of its advanced moult, perhaps this grebe was a transient failed or non-breeder.

Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*. Passing birds were seen on 2nd May (2 east), 28th May (3 east), 27th September (1 west) and 15th October (1 north).

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*. Occasionally flew over the moorland edge or adjacent fields, or was flushed from peripheral drains. There were no records during May-late August.

Red Kite *Milvus milvus*. One reportedly flew over Crowle Moor on 19th June (*per Bird Watching*).

Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*. Individuals variously described as females, 'creamcrowns', immatures and 'brown' birds were recorded on 1st January (1 immature) and 13th March-7th November, usually singly, but 2 on dates during July-September, on 2nd/14th October and 7th November. In addition, there were *c.*5 on 30th August and 3 on 13th October. Single males appeared from 22nd April-20th May, on 24th June, and from 21st September-13th October. A pair was displaying over Will Pits Scrape on 22nd April (WHP).

Hen Harrier *C. cyaneus*. On 1st January, sightings involved a 'ringtail' and then a male over Mill Drain Marsh, with the latter landing there at 15.05hrs (to roost?). The only other records until October were singles on 31st January and 9th September. There were October records from 2nd, of singles except 2 on 29th. All sightings were of 'ringtails' except the male on 1st January and another on 27th October.

Eurasian Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*. Recorded throughout the year except June-July, involving up to 3 birds, these latter on dates in March and on 1st April. March records also included a pair over Green Belt on 13th/18th. On 26th June, 1 carried prey into Will Pits.

Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo*. Singles passed overhead on 25th March, 21st April, 2nd May, 18th August, 22nd September, 27th September and 2nd October. They occasionally attracted the attentions of Carrion Crows, and of a Marsh Harrier on 18th August.

Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*. Daily totals exceeded 3 on dates in August-November, maximum 6 on 21st August.

Merlin *F. columbarius*. Reported only on 18th August, when 2 males were over the flooded workings and the Shoulder o' Mutton, with 1 later perched at the flooded workings east of Mill Drain Marsh.

Hobby *F. subbuteo*. Extreme dates were 27th April-13th September, except for 1 on 27th October (RA). Almost always reported singly. However, there were 2 on 29th April/26th June and occasionally in July, plus 3 on 2nd/13th May and *c.*5 on 30th August. All specified birds were adults, except a first-year on 26th June and an immature on 19th August.

Peregrine Falcon *F. peregrinus*. A female was seen on 13th March, attempting to catch a Carrion Crow. There were also occasional records of a male in the early months, last date 10th May, when it successfully captured a Blackbird. A male was also seen on 24th June (SH). Subsequently, recorded in August on 18th (adult male), 21st (adult male stooping after a Common Snipe), 22nd (adult and immature males) and 30th (2 adults and 1 immature). Single adult and immature males occurred on 22nd September. A few days later, on 27th, the adult male was watched mobbing an immature Marsh Harrier. The immature male was encountered again on 2nd October, when unsuccessfully

hunting Eurasian Teal. Records in late October involved an adult male and (on 27th) both immature and adult females. The male was then infrequently present to the end of the year.

Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus*. Recorded irregularly and singly, except for 2 on 25th March, 18th August and 19th November. There were no records between 2nd May-18th August, on which latter date 2 at the flooded workings called frequently and gave good views. Reports were scattered, and comprised Durham's Garden, Green Belt Scrape, the Canals, 'Middle Moor', the Viewing Platform, Will Pits Scrape and the flooded workings.

Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*. No counts exceeded 10. Breeding proved.

Common Coot *Fulica atra*. Reported from the flooded workings and Will Pits Scrape during March-May. In the latter month, maxima were 3 at Will Pits Scrape (2nd) and 5 at the flooded workings (12th/15th).

Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*. On 27th April 1 was at the flooded workings, with a second on 14th May which departed eastwards.

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*. A pair bred, being present from 16th April. Four eggs were laid, which had hatched by 25th May. Two juveniles and an adult were seen in June to 23rd, the last date. One was at the flooded workings on 9th May, possibly an off-duty parent.

Ringed Plover *C. hiaticula*. Six flew north over Fisons' Road North on 12th May. Others were present at the flooded workings on 24th July (1), 18th August (6), 21st September-1st October (maximum 5, on 21st-22nd/27th), and 7th/15th October (singles).

European Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria*. There were up to 3 overhead on three dates in March/October, and c.200 in fields at Tween Bridge Moor on 19th November.

Grey Plover *P. squatarola*. The flooded workings attracted singles on 2nd May and 15th October.

Northern Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*. Recorded throughout the year except November-December. At the flooded workings, resident from 25th March-15th October, with 8+ on the first date and 60+ on the last. Here, May counts reached 10 on 12th (including the Shoulder o' Mutton area). During August-October, they exceeded 60+ in August on 18th (c.590) and 21st (c.545). In addition, on 21st September, 700+ flew over fields east of Crowle Moor.

Little Stint *Calidris minuta*. Three were present at the flooded workings on 21st September.

Dunlin *C. alpina*. Observed on 12 dates during July-October, with one exception all being from the flooded workings. The first were 7 on 24th July. August records were obtained on 18th (8), 19th (6) and 28th (1). In September, the relevant dates were 21st (11), 22nd (17), 27th (c.40 flushed by a male Eurasian Sparrowhawk) and 30th (30+ heading north). There were 24 on 1st October, then 1 on 7th and 4 on 14th-15th.

Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*. At the flooded workings in August there were 4 on 18th, 2 on 19th, and 1 disturbed by a Marsh Harrier on 21st.

Jack Snipe *Lymnocyptes minimus*. One was flushed near the Viewing Platform on 14th October.

Common Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*. Most reports came from the flooded workings, with no counts in the early months exceeding 4 (on 1st April). May-July records involved a 'chipping' bird at the Northern Canals on 2nd May, 1 at the Shoulder o' Mutton on 9th May, 1 'drumming' in the Canals area on 26th June, and occasional singles at the flooded workings in July. There were several August records, maximum 5 at the flooded workings on 18th and 10 in the Mill Drain Marsh-flooded workings area on 21st. A male Peregrine Falcon stooped after a Common Snipe on this latter date. At these workings in September, 1-2 were eclipsed by 10 panicked by Marsh

Harriers on 20th. October counts reached 14 on 6th, then with fewer records to the end of the year, peaking at 6+ on 15th October.

Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola*. Occasional singles were flushed in January, March, October and November. In addition, breeding was proved at Cassons, with 3 juveniles on 26th July (RA).
2004: Also noted from the Southern Canals on two dates in July.

Eurasian Curlew *Numenius arquata*. Present during the period 25th March-23rd May, with 2 birds noted. In addition, 1 was at the flooded workings on 18th August, 1 flew south on 21st August, and 1 headed north on 15th October.

Common Redshank *Tringa totanus*. Only reported on two dates. On 16th April, 1 was at the flooded workings. On 25th June, 1 was at the flooded workings, with this or another at Will Pits Scrape.

Greenshank *T. nebularia*. The flooded workings attracted singles, on 3rd May and in August occasionally from 18th. Also 4 on 9th September. The last of the year passed south-west on 27th September.

Green Sandpiper *T. ochropus*. Noted 24th July-21st September, mostly 1 or 2 at the flooded workings and Green Belt Scrape. One was at Jones' Cable on 18th/21st August, 4 were flushed from Green Belt Scrape on the latter date, and 4 were in the Northern Canals area on 9th September.

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*. The flooded workings attracted singles on 5th May and 24th July.

Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*. Spring counts of breeding birds at Will Pits Scrape reached 216+ on 13th March, c.400 on 1st April, c.600 on 16th April, and c.500 on 2nd May. On the latter date, sitting birds were observed, their nests formed on tussocks of Soft-rush *Juncus effusus*. Chicks were apparent from 20th May, with 200+ young on 25th June. At the flooded workings, after 160+ on 13th March, there were 200+ on 1st April, 400+ on 16th April, and c.300 on 13th May. Nesting birds were again evident from 2nd May, with c.60 chicks on 28th May.

Common Gull *Larus canus*. Very few reported, all overhead, with none notified from May-November. The maximum was 4 on two dates in March.

Lesser Black-backed Gull *L. fuscus*. Recorded mostly during April-September at the flooded workings, sometimes grounded, maxima being up to 60+ in May (on 20th), with counts in other months not exceeding 10 except 24 on 27th September. On 29th August, 25+ trickled south-west over Crowle Moor. The latest record was 10 at the flooded workings on 14th October.

Herring Gull *L. argentatus*. None documented during June-August. Occasionally flushed at the flooded workings in May (maximum 4 on 2nd), and here in October-November counts reached 20+ on three dates.

Great Black-backed Gull *L. marinus*. As with the preceding species, none was reported during June-July, and in August only on 18th (3 west). In the first half of the year, counts at the flooded workings infrequently reached 14 (on 16th April), and there were c.50 at Green Belt Scrape on 14th May. The flooded workings attracted up to c.80 in October (on 14th), but only 10 in November-December.

Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla*. On 1st April, an adult flew off east from Will Pits Scrape (WHP).

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*. On 2nd May 1 flew east over Green Belt, as did another south on 25th.

Rock Dove *Columba livia*. Records of feral birds at Thorne Colliery included c.30 on buildings on 12th May.

Stock Dove *C. oenas*. Not many reported, involving 1-3 in April-May, August-September and December. Also, c.20 flew off north-east from the Long Meadow area on 15th October.

Wood Pigeon *C. palumbus*. No significant counts. Breeding proved.

Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*. Present at Priory Farm and Top Moor Farm-Red House Farm. One along Will Pits Tram on 24th July was presumably one of these latter. On 12th May, 1 flew over Green Belt Scrape and Fisons' Road, and then returned over the same route. On 18th August, a total of 5 along Jones' Cable in the morning had increased to 7 later in the day.

Turtle Dove *S. turtur*. Seen and heard between 2nd May-18th August, with counts of 1 or 2, except in May on 12th (3) and 28th (4+), and in June on 26th (4).

Common Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus*. Again scarce, from 16th April, with no daily counts beyond 3, apart from 5 on 12th May and 4 on 10th June. The only later record involved an immature in a ploughed field alongside Jones' Cable on 21st August.

Tawny Owl *Strix aluco*. Heard on Crowle Moor in January/August, and at Will Pits in May-June.

Long-eared Owl *Asio otus*. It is likely that 8 pairs were present in the breeding season (Middleton Consultancy, RA). The only juvenile seen was at Cassons on 14th July.

Short-eared Owl *A. flammeus*. One hunted over Mill Drain Marsh on 1st January.

European Nightjar *Caprimulgus europaeus*. Recorded from 20th May, with a breeding census by Middleton Consultancy documenting 44 territorial males.

Common Swift *Apus apus*. "Several" were seen on 27th April, with numbers in May hard to count, but sometimes 100+ were visible over the flooded workings, and c.200 on 13th. There were no late summer/autumn records.

Common Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*. Singles were at Bell's Pond on 15th/30th October and 19th November.

Green Woodpecker *Picus viridis*. Daily counts of 1 or 2 were exceeded by 3+ on 19th November. Breeding was likely at Will Pits.

Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major*. Daily counts of 1 or 2 were bettered on two dates. Willows *Salix* in Will Pits contained two separate nest holes with juveniles on 2nd June, and 5+ were encountered on 19th November.

Wood Lark *Lullula arborea*. A pair was evident at Thorne Colliery during 13th March-20th May.

Sky Lark *Alauda arvensis*. Present in most months, with the peak in the early part of the year being 13 on 12th May. There were no records of note in the later months, with a September/October maximum of only 8 (on 20th September), and few reports of (minimal) passage.

Sand Martin *Riparia riparia*. Records commenced on 16th April, and continued in May, but no total exceeded 3. Also noted in August-September, including 5 south on 22nd September, the last date.

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*. Seen between 22nd April (1) and 1st October (5+), with several counts of 15-20 in May/August. September figures included c.60 east over the Viewing Platform on 22nd, and 7 south on 27th.

House Martin *Delichon urbicum*. Occasionally recorded in May (from 9th). On 29th August, 40+ were on and about Crowle Moor, especially at Long Acres, a presumed breeding site.

Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis*. Noted from 2nd May-26th June. Three males were logged on Crowle Moor, where a nest was found on 14th June. Elsewhere, 2 males sang at Cassons/Limberlost Tram, 1 male at Green Belt, a further male along Eastern Boundary Tram, with the last at the junction of Middle Moor Tram and Pony Bridge Tram.

Meadow Pipit *A. pratensis*. Daily counts in the first half of the year peaked at c.20 on 12th May. Described as "numerous" on 20th September, with 38+ at the flooded workings the next day, and "small parties flying over" on 7th October.

Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava*. After 1 on 2nd May, there were occasional records of 1-3 until September. In addition, a group of 18 flew over Fisons' Road on 18th August. In September, there were 20+ in the Shoulder o' Mutton area on 9th, and occasional singles subsequently until 6 on 20th, the last of the year.

Pied Wagtail *M. alba*. No counts exceeded 8, but the species was described as "numerous" on 24th July.

Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*. The only totals exceeding 25 were 45+ on 2nd May and 33 (29 in song) on 26th June. Breeding proved.

Dunnock *Prunella modularis*. The largest count was 5+ on 19th November. Breeding proved.

Robin *Erithacus rubecula*. Records were unexceptional. Breeding proved.

Common Nightingale *Luscinia megarhynchos*. On 27th April, 2 sang at Will Pits. Further records from here during May included 3 males on 15th. A nest of 4 young was found on 2nd June. On 14th, the family was still in the area, and some song was heard that evening. In the area of Green Belt-Rhododendron Path, 2 sang on 2nd May, and 1 thereafter. A calling adult here on 23rd June indicated young about (RB). On 2nd May, 1 also sang at Cassons.

Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra*. A male was at Pony Bridge Marsh on 2nd May, and a single was along Mill Drain on 10th June. Records in August began with an immature along Fisons' Road on 18th. On 21st, 2 were in the 'Middle Moor'-Southern Canals area and 2 at Green Belt. At the latter location, there were also 2 on 22nd September.

Common Stonechat *S. torquatus*. Almost all records were obtained in the Mill Drain-Fisons' Road area alongside the flooded workings, and occasionally at Green Belt Scrape. There was an isolated early total of 3 males and 1 female on 1st January. The next date was 13th March, when 2 males and 1 female were seen. There was then a more-or-less continuous presence here until early November, centred on 2 breeding pairs. One pair was visible in April; and 2 pairs in May, both of which were observed taking food to nestlings/fledglings. A male along Shearburn & Pitts Drain at the flooded workings on 12th May was probably an additional bird, as 3 males were seen on 14th. Both of the pairs probably had second broods in June, with 1 pair definitely feeding nestlings on 23rd. Records continued during July-September, including 2 immatures apparent (sometimes with an adult pair) in August-September. Away from this area, a female was at 'Middle Moor' on 21st August, and a pair was at the Viewing Platform on 22nd September. The summer location still attracted Stonechats in October, maxima being 2 males and 1 female on 1st/27th and 6 on 6th. Finally, in November there was a pair on 1st/7th.

Northern Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe*. A female was present on Thorne Colliery spoilheap from 21st-29th April. In May, 1 was on Crowle Moor on 9th and a male was at the flooded workings on 12th. In September, 1 was between Top Moor Farm and Red House Farm on 13th, with 1 at the flooded workings on 21st-22nd, described as an immature on the latter date.

Blackbird *Turdus merula*. No counts exceeded 10+, except 30+ on 19th November. One fell prey to a male Peregrine Falcon on 10th May.

Fieldfare *T. pilaris*. Noted (and significant maxima bracketed) in January (59 on Inkle Moor on 1st), February, March (50+ at Inkle Moor Pond on 19th), October (from 16th), November (100+ on 19th) and December (60+ on 30th).

Song Thrush *T. philomelos*. Daily counts exceeded 2 on a solitary date, 2nd May, when a combined figure of 6+ was obtained at Durham's Garden and Will Pits.

Redwing *T. iliacus*. Occasional during January-March. Recorded latterly from 14th October. In this month, 560+ flew north-west on 15th, with up to c.80 on other dates. November totals reached 60+ on 19th, but with no subsequent count over 10+ to the end of the year.

Mistle Thrush *T. viscivorus*. Only encountered in the Thorne Colliery-colliery road area, with 1-2 in April-May, November-December. A nest with 4 eggs was located in a tree along the road on 1st April.

Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella naevia*. Extreme dates were 16th April-7th July. 'Reeling' males were heard in April-May at Durham's Garden, Thorne Colliery spoilheap and Whaley Balk. Others were at Pony Bridge Marsh/Swinefleet Warping Drain (2 on 2nd May, 1 subsequently), along Fisons' Road (April-June, including 3 on 5th May), and along Shearburn & Pitts Drain at the flooded workings (1 on 12th May). The last of the year, on 7th July, involved a calling adult along Fisons' Road, suggesting young in the vicinity (RB).

2004: During the European Nightjar survey, 4+ 'reeling' males were encountered, especially in the Southern Canals area.

Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*. Reported from 21st April (1) to 18th August (2), with May counts reaching 33+ on 2nd and 20 on 12th.

Reed Warbler *A. scirpaceus*. Extreme dates were 2nd May-24th July. Singing males were reported from Green Belt Scrape, Fisons' Road, the main canal, Swinefleet Warping Drain and the Will Pits Scrape area, but with little indication of numbers.

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*. After 2 on 16th April, counts in May reached 18+ on 2nd and 10+ on 28th. June totals peaked at 10 on 26th. Breeding proved, but with no records after August.

Garden Warbler *S. borin*. The first was singing at Will Pits on 27th April, with May counts of 3 on 2nd and 4 on 12th. Breeding proved on Crowle Moor.

Lesser Whitethroat *S. curruca*. Typically scarce, with single males in April (near Thorne Colliery on 27th), May (at Durham's Garden on 2nd), and June (at Will Pits on 2nd).

Common Whitethroat *S. communis*. Noted from 27th April, with 22+ on 2nd May, 26 on 26th June, and the last on 21st August (10). Breeding proved.

Common Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*. Mainly recorded during 23rd March-22nd September, with up to 15+ in April/June, and a maximum in May of 22+ (on 2nd). Recorded on four October dates, namely 1st (4), 7th (1), and 15th-16th (2).

Willow Warbler *Ph. trochilus*. One was singing at Durham's Garden on 25th March, with the next on 1st April. High counts were 50+ on 16th April and 100+ on 2nd May. Breeding proved, but with no records after August.

Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*. Odd singles to 1st April, and recorded again from 1st October. Towards the end of the year, monthly maxima were 18+ (15th October), 36+ (19th November) and 20+ (10th December).

Firecrest *R. ignicapilla*. A male was along the canal towpath (Canals) on 1st April (WHP).

Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus*. The only count of note was 30+ on 10th December.

Blue Tit *Cyanistes caeruleus*. The largest count was 20+ on 19th November. Bred in a hole in a dead Elder *Sambucus nigra* on the moor edge south of Durham's Garden.

Great Tit *Parus major*. The highest count was 8 on 19th November and 30th December. In May, a pair was nest-building in a hollow metal signpost along the colliery road, and fledged young were seen in a nestbox on Crowle Moor.

Willow Tit *Poecile montanus*. Occasional totals of 3 were eclipsed by 6 on 20th September. Breeding proved.

Eurasian Treecreeper *Certhia familiaris*. Singles were at Will Pits on 1st January/6th February, at Durham's Garden on 1st October, and in Woodpecker Wood on 19th November.

Eurasian Jay *Garrulus glandarius*. No counts exceeded 2, with the exception of 3 on 26th June and 5+ on 19th November.

Magpie *Pica pica*. On 30th September, 30+ were encountered at the Paraffin Cuttings and in the Thorne Colliery area. No other totals exceeded 9.

Western Jackdaw *Corvus monedula*. Noted overhead on 9th May (2 over Crowle Moor), 16th October (1 north), and 10th December (1 over the Canals).

Rook *C. frugilegus*. Seven flew north over the flooded workings on 13th March.

Carrion Crow *C. corone*. Few records of note, but with 73 on 1st January, c.50 on 30th August, and in September 83 on 22nd and 200+ on 30th. One evaded a female Peregrine Falcon on 13th March.

Common Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*. First recorded on 2nd May (15 in a paddock near the colliery road) and 25th June (12 over the Shoulder o' Mutton). On 21st August, 14 were along Jones' Cable, with groups of 5 and 4 over the flooded workings and 'Middle Moor' respectively. Finally, 3 flew over Crowle Moor on 29th August.

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*. Present around Railway Cottages at Creyke's Crossing, including c.20 on 30th August. A female was along the colliery road on 2nd May.

Common Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*. There were no counts over 20+, including roosting birds. Bred in a Hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna* near Thorne Colliery.

Brambling *F. montifringilla*. Present at Durham's Garden in the second half of October, with 10+ on 15th but only a single bird by 30th.

Greenfinch *Carduelis chloris*. No counts exceeded 10+.

Goldfinch *C. carduelis*. Daily counts reached 14, but described as "numerous" on 20th September.

Siskin *C. spinus*. On 24th July, 7 fed in birch *Betula* at Will Pits Scrape. The next were on 21st August (2 along Collis' Tram and 6 at Green Belt) and 22nd September (1 north over the Viewing Platform). There were two October records, the first being at Durham's Garden on 1st. On 7th, a misty day, a flock of c.200 small finches alighted briefly at Will Pits. Those individuals seen clearly were all Siskins, and the flight calls were of Siskins, except that redpoll was heard amongst them (PH).

Linnet *C. cannabina*. Daily counts of up to 17 in May/August were eclipsed by 31 on 1st January and 30+ on 20th September. Breeding proved.

Lesser Redpoll *C. cabaret*. Present during the breeding season, especially in the 'Middle Moor' area. The only counts in double figures were 20+ on 15th October, followed by 40+ in Pony Bridge Wood on 19th November.

Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*. Daily counts did not exceed 4. Bred in a Rhododendron *Rhododendron ponticum*.

Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella*. No counts exceeded 6 except on 19th November (5 at Durham's Garden and 10 at Elmhirst). Nest-building was observed on 31st May.

Reed Bunting *E. schoeniclus*. Daily counts in excess of 10 were obtained on 2nd/12th May (13), 26th June (29 males and 3 females), 20th September (20+), 7th October (25+), and 19th November (25+).

MAMMALS

Mole *Talpa europaea*. The only evidence for this species beyond molesigns was a dead animal at Will Pits on 7th October.

Rabbit *Oryctolagus cuniculus*. Recorded from Jones' Cable, Thorne Colliery spoilheap, the track past the Colliery to Whaley Balk, along Fisons' Road at Will Pits, Elmhirst, and the eastern margin of Crowle Moor. The records spanned April-October, with counts reaching 6 on 12th May and 7th October.

Brown Hare *Lepus capensis*. Reported on only four dates, in April-May and July-August, from the Will Pits area and Crowle Moor. All sightings were of lone animals.

Grey Squirrel *Sciurus carolinensis*. Singles were at Durham's Garden on 15th-16th October, with 1 also in Woodpecker Wood on the former date.

Water Vole *Arvicola terrestris*. The only notified record was 1 in a drain at Will Pits (probably Shearburn & Pitts Drain) on 9th May.

Fox *Vulpes vulpes*. Recorded in March-April, August-September and December, from Jones' Cable, 'Middle Moor' and Will Pits, mostly the latter.

Stoat *Mustela erminea*. Singles were evident at Will Pits on 6th May and at Elmhirst on 16th October.

Weasel *M. nivalis*. In October, singles were at Will Pits on 7th and at Durham's Garden on 15th.

Badger *Meles meles*. Present.

Red Deer *Cervus elaphus*. All records are listed:

4th January: 7+ at Will Pits.

4th March: Shed antlers (6 and 7 points) were found along Swinefleet Warming Drain at Will Pits.

2nd May: 3 at Will Pits.

15th May: 12 at Bank Top.

26th September: 2 stags bellowing at 'Middle Moor'.

2nd October: A "superb stag" at Will Pits.

7th October: A stag (six-pointer) along Will Pits Tram.

27th December: 5 hinds at Will Pits.

Roe Deer *Capreolus capreolus*. In the period to the end of April, there were occasional sightings in the Long Meadow-Paraffin Cuttings area, Durham's Garden, Mill Drain Marsh, along Fisons' Road and at Will Pits. Each record involved 2 or 3 deer. Records increased in May, from Long Meadow, Durham's Garden, Thorne Colliery spoilheap, Eastern Boundary Tram, Fisons' Road, Will Pits and Northern Tram. All were singles or 2 - often antlered - except for 3 along Fisons' Road on 12th. Further reports to the end of September concerned 1-2 at Will Pits, along Fisons' Road, and at the flooded workings. Subsequently, to the close of the year, available records concerned 2 at Durham's Garden on 15th October, 8 here and at Elmhirst on 12th December, and 3 does at Will Pits on 27th December.

LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

The following is a list of observers who contributed to the systematic lists of species (with apologies for any omissions). Thanks are offered to all who have submitted 2005 records.

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Middleton Consultancy (A. Cawthraw, D. Little, P. Middleton, D. Pearce).

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REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION

Black-necked Grebe

Since 1998, Black-necked Grebes have occurred on Thorne Moors, with confirmed breeding from 2001. All records are requested of this species, giving as much information as possible, including behavioural data.

Red Deer

In recent decades, Red Deer have been encountered on Thorne Moors since the 1960s, and there has been a continuous presence from 1994. The maximum count on and around Thorne Moors was obtained in 2004, when 35 head were seen on one date, presumably representing a large percentage of all Red Deer resident on that day. It is believed that the change in status of this species is largely allied to the regional growth of deer farming, with resultant deer at large in the countryside. In the Thorne Moors area, Red Deer may now be watched in fields and on the moorland, especially in the Will Pits area. All records of Red Deer, past and present, are being collated for population monitoring and possible future analysis. Accordingly, as much detail as possible is required when documenting Red Deer.

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PLACE-NAMES USED FOR VERTEBRATES RECORDING ON AND ABOUT THORNE MOORS SINCE 1966

With the *Thorne Moors Vertebrates Report 2005*, a map is issued, entitled *Place-names used for Vertebrates Recording on and about Thorne Moors since 1966*. These are the names employed in the *Report*, as appropriate, and to avoid confusion, it is urged that all recorders use these names when communicating records for future *Reports*. It is inevitable that there will be deficiencies in the map, as there are, for example, relatively few names on Goole Moor. In addition, changes will arise as habitats develop and are managed. However, the map has to be seen as a practical response to a perceived need, attempting to make the names which exist more widely appreciated, and to obtain a degree of uniformity in vertebrates recording.