

THORNE MOORS VERTEBRATES REPORT 2007

Compiled by Martin Limbert

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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. However, in this report all the land belonging to Top House and Priory Farms is included, extending to the edge of Snaith & Cowick Moor.

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 were included on the place-names map issued with the *Thorne Moors Vertebrates Report 2005*.

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 5th February 2008).

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 2007

1. Number of records submitted. Again, the number of records of vertebrates communicated was relatively low, preventing the production of a full annual survey. Therefore, for some species only significant records are detailed here, and not all species are mentioned.

2. Statistics for 2007. During the year, one species of amphibian, three species of reptile, 128 species of bird (two subject to acceptance at county level), and 14 species of mammal, were reported from Thorne Moors. Any amphibian record is notable, and that of a Common Frog is only the fourth of that species in the last 10 years. Adder data include the earliest ever, on 2nd February, and the largest day count since 1971, with 25 on 26th March. Grass Snake records increased, with sightings on five dates, plus one example relocated from Moorends on a sixth. Amongst the birds, Common Goldeneye, Common Quail, Great Crested and Black-necked Grebes, Little Egret, Avocet, Little Gull and Lesser Spotted Woodpecker were all locally notable. A Black Kite and Rough-legged Buzzard await adjudication. Some waders were conspicuous only by their absence, like Dunlin *Calidris alpina* and Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*. A crop of interesting breeding records during 2007 included Gadwall, Shoveler, Ruddy Duck, Black-necked Grebe, Hobby, Common Stonechat and Lesser Whitethroat. There were also other records of interest, for example a constant presence of Marsh Harriers, a flock of 13 Grey Plovers, a November Whinchat and two large flocks of Rooks. Conversely, some breeding birds continue to struggle, species as varied as Red-legged Partridge, Common Snipe and Common Nightingale. Amongst the mammals, reports of Water Shrew, Water Vole and Badger were encouraging.

3. Publications, reports, etc. The following references appeared during 2007, using vertebrates data concerning Thorne Moors, but not necessarily relevant to that year. 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:

- 'Bill Teale' (2007) Aerobatic experts' high-speed chase. *Yorkshire Post*. 30th June, page D13. [Includes a photograph captioned "A hobby [in flight] at Thorne Moors"].
- Doncaster Biodiversity Action Partnership (2007) *Lowland Raised Mire (LRM) Habitat Action Plan*. Doncaster Local Biodiversity Action Plan January 2007. Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council, Doncaster.
http://www.doncaster.gov.uk/Images/HAP%20-%20Lowland%20Raised%20Mire_tcm2-39795.pdf
- Hiner, S. (2007) *The Humberhead Peatlands National Nature Reserve Reptile Report 2006*. Unpublished report to Natural England.
- Limbert, M. (compiler) (2007) *Thorne Moors Vertebrates Report 2006*. Privately published, Doncaster.
- Limbert, M. (2007) Where to see Nightingales in Yorkshire. *Yorkshire Birding* **16**: 30-33. [Not the author's title!].
- Middleton, P. (2007) 2007 Nightjar Survey of the Humberhead Peatlands National Nature Reserve. *Yorkshire Birding* **16**: 39-40.
- Oates, F. (2007) Night Bird. *Yorkshire Birding* **16**: 41-42. [European Nightjar].
- Wall, C. (2007) Effects of deer on epiphytic bryophytes. *Thorne Moors Vertebrates Report 2006*:11.

AMPHIBIANS

Common Frog *Rana temporaria*. On 20th September, an immature was along Mervyn's Tram.

REPTILES

Viviparous or Common Lizard *Lacerta vivipara*. The first were on 26th March, a male at the northern edge of Limberlost Wood and a second along Limberlost Tram (both SE7213). There was a single April record, one near the Entrance Bridge beyond Whaley Balk (SE7116) on 18th. Subsequently, a male was at the northern end of the first canal (Southern Canals) on 30th May, followed by one along Angle Drain (in SE7314) on 5th June. There were several sightings from the areas of Middle Moor Tram and the Viewing Platform in August, plus on 29th young lizards at the Southern Canals (3) and 'Middle Moor' (1).

Grass or Ringed Snake *Natrix natrix*. A relatively good year for sightings, the first seen coiled with an Adder west of Green Belt (SE715162) on 26th March. Three were reported in June, on 4th (crossing Fisons' Road at Will Pits), 5th (northern edge of Goole Moor, SE7417) and 13th (Bank Top). On 2nd August, a 35cm long specimen was relocated from Marshland Road, Moorends, to land next to Thorne Colliery (CAH). The last of the year was an immature specimen on a boardwalk along the Rhododendron Path on 3rd October.

Adder or Northern Viper *Vipera berus*. The first sightings were obtained in February, beginning on 2nd when a male was along Blackwater Dyke near Will Pits (BH). This is the earliest recorded date, and raises the possibility of a January record sometime. In the area west of Green Belt, there were 2 males on 26th February, and 15 males and 1 female on 26th March. One of these males was coiled with a Grass Snake. Elsewhere on 26th March, 3 males were seen between the Entrance Bridge and the eastern end of the Rhododendron Path, and 4 others were in the Angle Drain area (SE738148, 740147). Additionally, there were single males on the northern side of Limberlost Wood (SE730133) and along Pony Bridge Tram (SE737141). These raised the day's tally to 24 males and 1 female (SH). On 25th March, 6 were basking (group of three and three singles), but without location. April records were obtained on 2nd (3 along the Rhododendron Path), 6th (1 female near the Entrance Bridge and a sloughed skin at Green Belt), 7th (2 'dancing' males and a female at Green Belt Scrape), and 18th (single males along the Rhododendron Path and east of Green Belt). In May, 1-2 male Adders were seen on occasion at Green Belt Scrape. June records emanated from 3rd (1 male crossing Fisons' Road at Will Pits), 5th (single males along the Rhododendron Path and on the northern edge of Goole Moor, SE739178) and 28th (1 along the Rhododendron Path). On 3rd July, a male was on flattened Common Reed *Phragmites australis* in Pony Bridge Wood, digesting prey. Finally, on 13th August, 1 was along Northern Tram and another was on a footpath in the Yorkshire Triangle.

BIRDS

Mute Swan *Cygnus olor*. After 3 at Green Belt Scrape on 18th February, an adult and an immature were at the flooded workings on 6th April, and 4 headed east on 19th December.

Whooper Swan *C. cygnus*. On 25th March c.120 passed north over Moss Terrace, with 26 next day at the flooded workings. On 9th November, 3 adults and 2 immatures were grounded at the flooded workings for 30 minutes.

Pink-footed Goose *Anser brachyrhynchus*. On 14th January, 6 circled low over Will Pits Scrape and then flew north-west towards the flooded workings. The only other record from the early part of the year involved 72 north on 6th April. A number of skeins were recorded in September from 18th to the month end, mostly heading north-east, east or south-east, the largest being 48 which headed east on 30th. However, the largest day count was 77 (a total of 68 east and 9 west) on 18th. The last were in November, commencing with 37 east on 4th. A low-flying skein of c.210 arrived at the flooded workings near Middle Moor Tram on 9th, but left after 10 minutes.

Greylag Goose *A. anser*. On 14th January 27 flew overhead, and 5 were at Green Belt Scrape on 18th February. In March, 6 were at Will Pits Scrape on 5th, with 20 there on 10th. Counts in April-May and July regularly reached 6, including three pairs on occasion, one of which was at the Paraffin Cuttings on 20th April. The exception was 92 north on 15th April, in addition to 6 on the moors that day. The August maximum was 18 on 15th. On 27th September, 96 passed west, with others, possibly parts of the same skein, later in the day. On 29th, c.170 were at Will Pits Scrape. No other totals in that month exceeded 40. On 5th October 40+ were at Will Pits Scrape, with other counts in that month of 28-30, grounded and in flight. Totals in November were unremarkable, except on 11th/17th when 500+ were at Will Pits Scrape (RJS). Occasional in December, maximum 5 on two dates.

Greater Canada Goose *Branta canadensis*. At Will Pits Scrape, there was 1 on 3rd May and c.130 on 10th August. Here and at the flooded workings in September, up to 7 were seen, including 1 flying south with 26 Pink-feet on 26th.

Common Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*. In January, 1 flew overhead and 3 were at Will Pits Scrape on 1st, and 2 were at the flooded workings on 19th. Other early dates were 4th February (3), 18th February (a single flew west), and 10th March (4 at Will Pits Scrape). There were up to 6 in April-May, except for 12+ overhead on 6th April. Records of 1-2 were obtained throughout June, when also 8 occurred on Rawcliffe Moor on 19th. Occasional singles were seen to 27th August, and 1 flew over on 17th November.

Eurasian Wigeon *Anas penelope*. Single males were at Will Pits Scrape on 1st January and at the flooded workings on 18th February. Also occasionally encountered in the latter area in late March, 1-2 except 15 on 29th. One was at the Shoulder o' Mutton on 10th August, and the species was present at Will Pits Scrape in September from 18th (6 males and 2 females). A single male was seen on 30th December.

Gadwall *A. strepera*. Recorded from February-June, up to 6 except 17+ on 18th February. These included paired birds, especially but not exclusively at Will Pits Scrape. Records from July to October rarely reached 5 birds, but included a female and 6 young at the flooded workings on 5th August, giving a day total of 16 adults and 6 young. Later records were infrequent and usually of 1-3, but 8 were logged at the flooded workings on 30th December.

Eurasian Teal *A. crecca*. Counts over 100 comprised 120+ on 27th/29th August, up to 208+ in the second half of September (maximum on 20th), and 100+ on 11th November. Breeding proved.

Mallard *A. platyrhynchos*. Counts reached 200+ on dates in January, August-October and December. This level was exceeded in September (250+ on 26th), and again in October when up to c.400 were estimated (maximum on 5th). A white bird on 3rd May. Breeding proved.

Pintail *A. acuta*. The only record outwith September came from March, when 4 were at the flooded workings on 29th. In the former month, at these workings and Will Pits Scrape, up to 15 were present during 18th-26th, with 2 on 27th.

Shoveler *A. clypeata*. Occasional during January-March, maximum 2 males and 1 female on 18th February. There were 4 pairs at the flooded workings on 2nd April, with other April figures reaching 9 (including 3 pairs) on 20th. The maximum in May was 8 (7 males) on 23rd. Breeding was proved on 20th May, when a female had 10 young at flooded workings close to the Shoulder o' Mutton. Monthly maxima in the last five months of the year were achieved on 27th August (12), September-October (10 on several dates), 9th November (9) and 30th December (4).

Tufted Duck *A. fuligula*. Two males and 6 females were at Will Pits Scrape on 1st January. Present at the flooded workings and Will Pits Scrape in February, with maxima of 3 pairs on 18th and 5 on 26th. Counts at these same waters in April reached 14 (8 males) on 15th. The May peak was 10 males and 2 females on 23rd, though up to 4 females were seen on other dates in May. There were fewer counts subsequently, until 5th October, with a maximum of 5, except 15 at Will Pits Scrape on 29th September.

Common Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*. A male and female were flushed at the flooded workings by a Marsh Harrier on 27th August.

Goosander *Mergus merganser*. A pair was at Will Pits Scrape on 26th March, with a male at the same location on 30th December.

Ruddy Duck *Oxyura jamaicensis*. The first were 2 males and 1 female at Will Pits Scrape on 6th April. Two males were at the Shoulder o' Mutton on 3rd May. On 11th May, a female was at Will Pits Scrape and a male at the flooded workings. On 15th May, single males were at the flooded workings and Will Pits Scrape, followed later in the month by a pair at the flooded workings on 20th and a male at Will Pits Scrape on 23rd. At the latter location, single males appeared subsequently, but with 2 males on 10th August and 2 males and 1 female at the end of the month. There were occasional sightings at the same water throughout September, including a pair and a juvenile on 26th, and 2 males and 1 female on 29th. In October at Will Pits Scrape, on 5th there were 2 males and 1 female, with the males again to 21st.

Red-legged Partridge *Alectoris rufa*. Two were along Swinefleet Warping Drain north of Bank Top on 26th April.

Grey Partridge *Perdix perdix*. In May, present on 11th near Bank Top. On 20th, 1 was near the Viewing Platform and 3 were along Fisons' Road North. Finally in May, 2 were along Fisons' Road opposite Top Moor Farm on 24th. Two at Bank Top on 3rd August. Several family parties and occasional juveniles were seen in surrounding farmland and on the western and north-western moorland fringes during August-early September, and 7 were in a field near the Moorends Works ruin on 26th December.

Common Quail *Coturnix coturnix*. Two males called from a crop close to Top House on 3rd May (JH).

Common Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus*. No counts exceeded 16, on 26th December. Breeding proved.

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*. Present at the flooded workings from 26th March-30th September, with no daily totals over 3, and a preponderance of 'whinneying' birds in the Shoulder o' Mutton area. Also at Will Pits Scrape until 10th July, where 'whinneying' birds were also present.

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*. A pair was at Will Pits Scrape on 1st May.

Black-necked Grebe *P. nigricollis*. All records were from Will Pits Scrape. In April, there was a pair from 6th (RW, RJS), with display observed from 17th (PH, ML, AP); also 3 birds on 18th (SH). There were up to 4 in May, and display was again noted (PH, ML, CW *et al.*), but with few subsequent records. However, these included an adult carrying a juvenile on 11th June (RB), the year's only evidence of breeding. Beyond June, the last were adult grebes on 10th/17th July (RB, PH).

Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*. There were sightings on six dates: 5th August (6 north-east then south), 5th September (1 at Will Pits Scrape), 26th September (2 at Will Pits Scrape), 27th September (1 west), 11th November (1 at Will Pits Scrape) and 17th November (1 south).

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*. On 20th May, five headed west over Blacktoft Sands (*Yorkshire Birding*) and then south over Thorne Moors, landing at flooded workings on Goole Moor (RJS). The third moorland record.

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*. Singles were occasionally at the flooded workings in May, with others during the year on the moor edges or overhead.

Black Kite *Milvus migrans*. One was reported over Crowle Moor on 3rd June (*British Birds, Lincolnshire Bird News*). A potential first, subject to acceptance by the LBC.

Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*. Constantly present throughout the year, with a bewildering array of records of individuals described as females, 'creamcrowns', immatures, juveniles and brown birds. There were far fewer males. In the following summary, the figures given represent a minimum record, though all details of males are given. In January, 3 present included 1 male. However, in February there were 4 but no male. Three occurred in March-April, but with a male only on dates in the latter month. Four in May included 1 male. A male was also present in June, giving a minimum monthly total of 3 harriers, 1 of the females taking a young Black-headed Gull at the Will Pits Scrape colony on 28th. There were 2 in July, and at least 1 female and 2 juveniles in August. September was the best month, having birds described as an adult female, a second-year female, 3 other immatures and an adult male. The latter was mobbed by a Common Buzzard on 18th and itself mobbed a 'ringtail' Hen Harrier on 30th. October yielded a 'creamcrown', a second-year female and an immature male. Four in November included an adult male, and 4 in December included a second-year male and an adult male. On several dates, Marsh Harriers and Peregrine Falcons were watched sparring with each other.

Hen Harrier *C. cyaneus*. One male was present in January, with a 'ringtail' also on 5th. 'Ringtails' then occurred on 18th February and 2nd March, and again during the period from 20th September, with interaction between a 'ringtail' and a male Marsh Harrier on 30th September. The 'ringtail' on 18th February had a yellow tag on its left wing. This identifies that the harrier was ringed and tagged in North Yorkshire, Durham, Northumberland or Cumbria, though only in the latter two counties have such birds been tagged in the last 10 years. It may be significant to note that at about the same time as the Thorne bird, a similarly tagged 'ringtail' occurred at Wroot, to the south, and at Blacktoft Sands. This bird had been marked near Langholm (Dumfries-shire), just over the Cumbrian border on the Langholm estate (D. Sowter *in litt.*).

Eurasian Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*. Five circled over the former Swinefleet Works on 6th September. Otherwise, 1-3 were recorded in all months except February and June.

Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo*. A "very pale bird" was over the flooded workings on 6th April, with 1 high over Green Belt on 20th May. Three records in September began with 3 soaring birds on 11th, followed by 1 mobbing a Marsh Harrier on 18th and an adult over Green Belt on 30th.

Rough-legged Buzzard *B. lagopus*. After 1 was flushed from Will Pits on 26th September (RJS), what was assumed to be the same bird was in the Goole Moor-Goole Fields area on 30th September and 2nd October (JWJ). Subject to acceptance by the YNU OS Reports Committee.

Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus* Records included occasional juveniles in August.

Merlin *F. columbarius*. A female attended a finch roost at Green Belt on 11th November, and a female was on ice at the flooded workings on 19th December. One was perched at Mill Drain Marsh on 30th December.

Hobby *F. subbuteo*. The first was a single bird on 25th April, with up to 3 in early May, 1 of them mobbed by Northern Lapwings on 3rd. On 11th May there were 4, and on 20th a pair displayed over 'Middle Moor' and Mill Drain Marsh. June totals reached 4 on 28th. In July, counts peaked at 6 on 24th, and included 2 adults and 3 juveniles catching insects over Will Pits on 30th. One mobbed a juvenile Marsh Harrier on 3rd. Records in August were fewer, but included a first-year and an adult on 5th, an adult and 2 juveniles catching dragonflies over Goole Moor on 22nd, and an adult up to 27th. Finally, odd singles occurred in September to at least 11th. During the year, breeding was confirmed in the northern part of Thorne Moors. Also bred 2-3 miles to the east of Thorne Moors.

Peregrine Falcon *F. peregrinus*. Singles occurred intermittently in January, on 10th/12th March, and occasionally during 7th June-13th July, the bird on the latter date being recorded as a male. There were more frequent records in September, comprising an adult female and an immature, plus a male during 26th-30th. Records obtained October-December were irregular, but involved a female on occasion, and a male on at least 4th November and 30th December. There was interaction with Marsh Harriers on several occasions.

Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus*. Occasionally heard at the flooded workings in May and August-September.

Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*. Breeding proved.

Common Coot *Fulica atra*. A "few" at Will Pits Scrape on 5th March were the first. Counts at this water in April-May reached 5 on occasion. There were also up to 3 at the flooded workings.

Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*. In April, 1 flew south on 15th and 1 was over Shearburn & Pitts Drain on 28th. One was heard at the Shoulder o' Mutton on 15th May, and 1 was at Will Pitts Scrape on 4th June.

Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*. On 25th April, 2 were photographed feeding at the flooded workings, and later flew off north-east (RW). Also 1 at the flooded workings on 28th April (PH).

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*. Two were at the flooded workings from 6th April-4th June.

Ringed Plover *C. hiaticula*. On 20th April, 2 pairs were at the flooded workings. A single bird was in the Creyke's area on 2nd May. On 27th September at the flooded workings, 8 flew west and 1 south.

European Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria*. Occasional over the moors from 27th August, maximum 7 north-east on 29th September. Also present on Goole Fields, with counts of 100+ in February and November, and 200+ on 25th October. Near Top House, c.150 were seen on 24th September.

Grey Plover *P. squatarola*. Two called as they flew north-east over the flooded workings on 29th September; one was heard later in the same area. Next day, 13 headed west over the flooded workings (RJS).

Northern Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*. There were few records in the early months, though 100+ flew over the Shoulder o' Mutton on 14th January, and a total of 73 passed overhead on 18th February. At the flooded workings there were 22 on 15th April, and 6 were on flooded peat west of Will Pits on 17th. Six were displaying at the flooded workings from 26th April and during May. On 10th August, 60+ alighted at Will Pits Scrape. On 27th August, there were c.80 over the flooded workings. On 20th September, 237+ comprised 155+ overhead and 82 at Will Pits Scrape. On 29th

September, c.100 headed north-east, and next day 200+ were overhead and 77 down at the flooded workings. Other notable counts of up to c.50 were eclipsed by c.100 between Will Pits Scrape and the Shoulder o' Mutton on 5th October. A small southerly passage on 22nd November totalled c.90 birds throughout the day, and 33 were reported overhead on 26th December. Breeding occurred near Creyke's Crossing.

Common Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*. There were occasional records of birds 'chipping' and 'drumming' in May-June, especially at Mill Drain Marsh but including adjacent 'Middle Moor'. On 11th June, 4 birds were seen in display flights at Mill Drain Marsh and 'drumming' was heard there. Daily counts in September and the first half of October - including birds flying south and west - sometimes reached 23, but with 58 at the flooded workings on 30th September.

Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola*. Records were scattered through the year, but were mostly obtained in January, April and November-December. All were of singles except 3 on Snaith & Cowick Moor on 3rd January, and 2 at Will Pits on 16th January, 30th April (roding) and 29th November.

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*. One called as it was flushed at the Shoulder o' Mutton on 3rd May. On 11th May, five flew low to the south-east over the flooded workings.

Eurasian Curlew *N. arquata*. Individuals were present from 6th April-20th May, with 2 on 28th April. Subsequently, in August occasional birds called or passed overhead between 16th-29th, and another was heard on 30th September.

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*. There were odd scattered singles in September, plus 2 on 26th; and 1 on Goole Moor on 10th December.

Common Redshank *T. totanus*. Present at the flooded workings on 15th April (1), 25th April (2), throughout May (2) and on 15th June (1). Additionally, two at the Shoulder o' Mutton on 28th April were "very agitated", suggesting territoriality.

Common Gull *Larus canus*. Seen overhead January-April and September-December, with others grounded in the same period, usually - but not always - in adjacent fields. The maximum counts were of up to 9 at Green Belt Scrape in November.

Lesser Black-backed Gull *L. fuscus*. Occasional at and over the flooded workings, especially in April-May and August. The latter month attracted 29 at the flooded workings on 5th. Others in fields to the south and south-west of the moors in late summer and autumn included 32 on 20th September. No count of transient birds exceeded 26 west on 10th July, except 182 WSW in the morning of 29th August.

Herring Gull *L. argentatus*. One hundred and seventeen were reported on 26th December.

Great Black-backed Gull *L. marinus*. Few records received, with counts of passing birds occasionally reaching 19, plus 38 west and 5 north-east on 30th December.

Little Gull *Hydrocoleus minutus*. Recorded at the flooded workings. The dates were 15th April (1 adult in summer plumage in the morning, single first-summer and second-summer in the afternoon) (RJS, ML), mid-May (date unavailable, 2 first-summer) (PH) and 20th May (3 first-summer) (RJS).

Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*. The early year maximum was 53 on floodwater adjacent to Jones' Cable and 47 over the moors, both on 14th January. In April from 17th, c.100 were at Will Pits Scrape and c.400 at the flooded workings. The maximum at Will Pits Scrape was 200+ on 24th May, and breeding was successful here. On 12th June, c.250 were at the flooded workings, where nesting also occurred. Totals in fields to the south and south-west of the moors in late summer and autumn reached 261+ on 27th August. Other counts towards the end of the year peaked at 92 at Green Belt Scrape on 4th November.

Stock Dove *Columba oenas*. Twenty in a field near Long Acres on 5th March was notable.

Wood Pigeon *C. palumbus*. On 30th December, 1000+ were over the southern moor edge.

Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*. Up to 6 were at Top Moor Farm in late April-May, with 2 there in July. In the Broadbent Gate Road-Jones' Cable area, August-December counts reached 5 on 5th August and 9 on 18th September, but often only amounted to 1-2.

Turtle Dove *S. turtur*. Recorded between 1st May-24th July, with daily counts of 1-3 'purring' birds. However, 7 were 'purring' during a walk on 23rd May from Durham's Garden to Cassons. A pair was at the Natural England workshop at Will Pits Scrape in early June, and 5 were at Green Belt on 11th June.

Common Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus*. Heard from 25th April-20th June. Up to 3 were calling in May, and a juvenile was seen on 23rd August.

Barn Owl *Tyto alba*. On 5th January, 1 was watched near the former Swinefleet Works. Seen hunting in the area of the Alder Woods in April-May, including 2 on 28th April. There was also 1 at the site of the Moorends Works on 8th August.

Little Owl *Athene noctua*. One called from Jones' Cable on 30th September, and 1 was in the orchard at Priory Farm on 1st October.

Tawny Owl *Strix aluco*. In February, heard calling from Will Pits and Green Belt. There was further evidence from the former in March-April, including 2 on 30th April. Bred in Top House Wood and on the western moor edge.

Long-eared Owl *Asio otus*. One at Creyke's on 18th July.

European Nightjar *Caprimulgus europaeus*. The moorland population was put at 47 territories, 13 of them on Crowle Moor (*Yorkshire Birding* 16: 39-40).

Common Swift *Apus apus*. Eight on 28th April, "hundreds" on 11th/15th May, and 112+ on 20th May.

Common Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*. Singles were seen on 18th February (along the Western Boundary Drain) and 18th April (Jones' Cable).

Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major*. Bred on Crowle Moor and probably at Will Pits.

Lesser Spotted Woodpecker *D. minor*. One at Will Pits on 4th February (SH).

Sky Lark *Alauda arvensis*. Southerly movement on 21st October amounted to 41 birds. Bred in surrounding farmland.

Sand Martin *Riparia riparia*. Recorded from 6th March (3) to 27th September (5). On 20th September, 30+ included 25 at Will Pits Scrape.

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*. Bred at Top House Farm (3 nests). Present at Top Moor Farm, where breeding probably also occurred.

House Martin *Delichon urbicum*. Occasional in April from 25th, and 10+ were over the flooded workings on 15th May. One was seen at Top Moor Farm on 17th July. August-September records included 20+ on both 27th August (flooded workings) and 29th September (Goole Moor), but these were eclipsed by c.140 overhead on 18th September.

Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis*. Four were singing on Crowle Moor on 21st/25th April, as was 1 near the Viewing Platform on 28th April. In May, 2 sang at Pony Bridge Marsh on 1st and 1 on 30th, with 4 males on Crowle Moor on 16th. Ten on Crowle Moor on 3rd June (*Lincolnshire Bird News*), and on 20th a nest was found here.

Meadow Pipit *A. pratensis*. Breeding proved, and 8 sang/displayed in the Shoulder o' Mutton area. The August maximum was 27 on 5th. Counts in September reached 57 on 26th, followed by an October maximum of 38 on 21st.

Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava*. After the first on 19th April, there were occasional singles in May. Totals in August reached 7 on 5th and 10 on 29th, and included 1+ juvenile on 13th.

Pied Wagtail *M. alba*. A field next to Moor Road, close to Top House Wood, held 44 on 3rd December.

Grey Wagtail *M. cinerea*. On 4th November, 1 was flushed from along Thorne Waste Drain near Jones' Cable.

Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*. The highest count was 43 on 26th December.

Dunnock *Prunella modularis*. Breeding proved.

Robin *Erithacus rubecula*. 30+ were in song on 5th March. Breeding proved.

Common Nightingale *Luscinia megarhynchos*. One sang at Will Pits on 28th April and reluctantly in May. Another sang at Cassons on 1st May, and 1 was heard on the northern edge of Goole Moor (SE742176) on 5th June.

Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra*. On 27th August, 2 immatures were near the Paraffin Cuttings. Surprisingly, 1 was present near Will Pits on 9th November (CW). Accepted by the YNU OS Reports Committee as a first-winter male.

Common Stonechat *S. torquatus*. On 1st January, at least 1 male and 1 female were along Fisons' Road, followed on 7th by single male and female near the Viewing Platform and a further male along Shearburn & Pitts Drain. Seven were located on 14th, mostly between Fisons' Road West and eastwards across the flooded workings (2 pairs, 2 single males), the outlying bird being a male at the Southern Canals. The flooded workings attracted further birds in February, maximum 4 males and 1 female on 18th. There were also occasional records from 'Middle Moor' and (on 18th) Jones' Cable. During March, a pair was present along Fisons' Road and a male was seen at the Shoulder o' Mutton. Elsewhere, a pair was along Middle Moor Tram on 5th, and a pair was on Goole Moor on 26th.

On 6th April, a male sang in the Mill Drain Marsh-Fisons' Road area. All other records from this month were centred along Fisons' Road, comprising up to 2 males and 1 female. In May, individuals were regularly seen along Fisons' Road, usually a male, but on 8th an "alarmed pair" was seen (RB), indicating young birds. On 11th May, a pair was watched carrying food to a clump of overgrown Heather *Calluna vulgaris* at New Mill Drain in the Green Belt area. Elsewhere, a male was on Rawcliffe Moor on 2nd, a further male was occasionally seen at Mill Drain Marsh, and on 20th a female and a juvenile were on Goole Moor.

In June-July, the focus of interest transferred to Crowle Moor. After a male on 6th June, on 17th a pair was seen carrying food for young (RB). Here, there was a pair and 2+ juveniles on 10th July (RB). Other Crowle Moor records in July included 3 on 14th. At Mill Drain Marsh near the Viewing Platform, a pair was seen carrying food for young on 24th July. In the Viewing Platform area, there were two discrete family groups on 10th August, a male with 2 females/juveniles and a second male with a single female and juvenile. Records from along Fisons' Road and in the Shoulder o' Mutton area continued to be obtained, sometimes of pairs, but including a male and a juvenile along Shoulder o' Mutton Tram on 5th August.

September yielded many scattered records, especially from the Fisons' Road-flooded workings area, often just of single males, but occasionally more. The peak occurred on 26th

September, when the area from the western end of Shoulder o' Mutton Tram to the Shoulder o' Mutton. and along Fisons' Road, yielded 7 males, 6 females and 1 juvenile (RJS). After a male on Goole Moor on 20th September, this same northern stretch subsequently held a pair occasionally to the end of the year. However, most sightings October-December again centred on the flooded workings, and Mill Drain Marsh. In these latter parts, combinations of birds led to an overall maximum of 6, including 3 males. There were also 1 male and 2 females near the Viewing Platform on 4th November.

In summary, the peak in the early months was 7 on 14th January, that in the later months being 14 on 26th September. Two and probably 3 pairs bred on the Yorkshire portion of the moorland, and 1 pair in the Lincolnshire sector.

Northern Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe*. There were numerous records during 12th April-30th May, mostly of males. Daily figures were often of 1, occasionally 2-3, plus 5 on 24th April and 6 males in the Creyke's area on 20th April. There were also singles in the area on 16th August and 13th/24th September, plus 2 on 12th October.

Blackbird *Turdus merula*. Breeding proved. Counts in November were notable on 4th (45) and 11th (52).

Fieldfare *T. pilaris*. On 5th January c.200 fed in Hawthorns *Crataegus monogyna* near Top Moor Farm, with other January-March counts not exceeding 60+. The first returning birds were 20 on 30th September, with October totals of grounded birds and others passing over (usually west) peaking at c.70 overhead on 13th. No counts in the subsequent months exceeded c.30.

Song Thrush *T. philomelos*. Three sang at Will Pits, where breeding was proved. Additionally, 2 sang at Green Belt in May, and 3 sang at Durham's Garden on 23rd May.

Redwing *T. iliacus*. Few records in the early months, with January peaks of 12 on 1st and 60+ along Jones' Cable on 14th. Reported in September on 27th (8) and 29th (5). On 13th October, there were 35 at Bank Top and 15+ elsewhere. November counts reached 78 on 17th.

Mistle Thrush *T. viscivorus*. Bred in the colliery area. Twenty were along Jones' Cable on 30th September.

Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella naevia*. On 15th April 1 'reeled' at Mill Drain Marsh, with 1 on 17th along Middle Moor Tram, and singles on 25th alongside Fisons' Road and near Will Pits Scrape. There were additional records from both these latter areas, including the last, heard along Fisons' Road on 24th July. There were also further records of singles from the Mill Drain Marsh area in April-May, and 1 sang at 'Middle Moor' on 10th July. Another 'reeled' all summer from a field border close to Top House Wood.

Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*. Nineteen sang on 3rd May (north of a line from Durham's Garden-Will Pits Scrape), and 20+ were logged on 11th May. Breeding proved.

Reed Warbler *A. scirpaceus*. Singing was first heard on 25th April, along Swinefleet Warping Drain at Will Pits. Subsequently also heard along Cottage Dyke (3), at Will Pits Scrape (2) and at the Shoulder o' Mutton (1). Ten sang along the moor edge from Durham's Garden to Elmhirst on 23rd May. Breeding was proved along Swinefleet Warping Drain and at Durham's Garden. Two were at Pony Bridge Marsh on 27th August.

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*. After the first on 7th April, the highest total was 12 singing on 3rd May (7 at Will Pits). Breeding was proved at Will Pits and on Crowle Moor. Latest record 29th September.

Garden Warbler *S. borin*. Eight sang on 3rd May (at Bell's Pond and Will Pits). Bred on Crowle Moor.

Lesser Whitethroat *S. curruca*. Two sang along Jones' Cable on 18th April. One sang at Green Belt during 25th April-1st May, with another male along the canal towpath (Canals) on 3rd May. On 17th May, 1 sang near Top House. Bred on colliery wasteland near the colliery road, with a brood being fed on 11th June (RB).

Common Whitethroat *S. communis*. Breeding proved.

Common Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*. Breeding proved. On 5th October, singles were at Will Pits and the Yorkshire Triangle, with a further single later in the month at Will Pits Scrape on 21st.

Willow Warbler *Ph. trochilus*. Counts of singing males peaked at c.60 on 3rd May. Breeding proved. The last were 2 on 29th September and 1 on 5th October.

Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*. There were occasional singles in January-February. From 20th September (2) to the end of the year, daily counts ranged from 1-4.

Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus*. Nest-building was watched at Will Pits and at two locations in the Durham's Garden-Thorne Colliery area. The maximum was 22 on 4th November.

Blue Tit *Cyanistes caeruleus*. Possibly bred at Will Pits, and certainly did so in a nestbox on Crowle Moor.

Great Tit *Parus major*. Singles sang in May at Will Pits on 3rd and at 'Middle Moor' on 23rd. On 30th December, 10+ were along Jones' Cable.

Coal Tit *Periparus ater*. In December, 1 was at Green Belt on 26th and 2 were at Top House Wood on 28th.

Eurasian Treecreeper *Certhia familiaris*. One was at Will Pits on 5th March.

Eurasian Jay *Garrulus glandarius*. The maximum was 8 on 18th September.

Magpie *Pica pica*. There were several high counts in September. On 18th, 21 were along Jones' Cable; on 20th, 34 were reported, including 10 along Jones' Cable and 16 mobbing a Marsh Harrier.

Western Jackdaw *Corvus monedula*. One was perched in a tree on Goole Moor on 29th September. On 4th November, 9 flew north over Will Pits with 120+ Rooks.

Rook *C. frugilegus*. There were two exceptionally high counts. On 26th September, 260+ flew north in late afternoon over Will Pits (RJS). Again over Will Pits, 120+ headed north in early afternoon on 4th November (RJS). There were also 4 north on 17th November.

Carrion Crow *C. corone*. Counts (including roosting birds and those in peripheral fields) were high in the second half of September, reaching c.260 on 26th and c.120 on 30th.

Common Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*. Reported on the moor edges and overhead through the year, with totals of 24+ along Jones' Cable on 14th January, 33+ along Broadbent Gate Road on 26th September, and 30 on wires at Top Moor Farm on 13th October. In November, there were 30+ along Jones' Cable and 51 overhead on 4th. This was followed by a day total of 220+ on 17th, including transient birds and 160+ in the Broadbent Gate Road-Jones' Cable area.

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*. Noted around Thorne Colliery only in December, maximum 2. Counts along Broadbent Gate Road in November reached 7 on 11th.

Common Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*. Twenty-two sang on 3rd May. Bred in Woodpecker Wood and at Will Pits.

Greenfinch *Carduelis chloris*. Along the western moor edge, counts in January-February of roosting birds reached 60+ on 18th February. Sixteen were at Long Acres on 5th March. May records included 2 at Top Moor Farm on 11th, 3 between Red House Farm and Top Moor Farm on 24th, and a continual presence in the Durham's Garden-Thorne Colliery area. There were c.300 feeding in a field alongside Snaith & Cowick Moor in September-early October.

Goldfinch *C. carduelis*. Counts in September-October, including flying birds, reached 30 birds. This total was exceeded by 40+ along Fisons' Road at Swinefleet Warping Drain on 29th September, and c.150 at Top Moor Farm on 13th October. Seen with food at Durham's Garden on 23rd May, and juveniles were later present here and on the Thorne Colliery spoilheap.

Siskin *C. spinus*. Recorded on several dates in the second half of September, heading south (maximum 6 on three dates) and north-west (7 on 26th). Also 1 at Natural England's workshop at Will Pits Scrape on 11th November.

Linnet *C. cannabina*. Counts reached c.40 in March and September. Breeding proved.

Lesser Redpoll *C. cabaret*. Nine fed on seeds of birch *Betula* at the Paraffin Cuttings on 13th November. No other daily totals exceeded 7, and there were none at all in the breeding season.

Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella*. One sang at Bank Top perched on a skip on 24th May. Breeding proved.

Reed Bunting *E. schoeniclus*. Up to 23 were counted in April-May and September, plus c.40 on 5th October. Breeding proved.

Corn Bunting *E. calandra*. In May, 1 sang from wires near Red House Farm, as did 3 others at Top House Farm.

Common Peafowl *Pavo cristatus* One male was with Common Pheasants at Natural England's workshop at Will Pits Scrape on 7th-8th June.

Budgerigar *Melopsittacus undulatus* A blue example was at the Alder Woods on 23rd October.

MAMMALS

Mole *Talpa europaea*. Fresh hills were obvious in several peripheral parts, including Goole Fields, along Swinefleet Warping Drain/Swinefleet Line Dyke, and on the southern and south-western moor edges.

Common Shrew *Sorex araneus*. Occasional dead specimens were found near the Entrance Bridge close to Whaley Balk, on the canal towpath near the Viewing Platform, and along Fisons' Road, in August and November.

Water Shrew *Neomys fodiens*. An example of this species crossed Shoulder o' Mutton Tram on 20th May. It was a large shrew, with black pelage above, white below (RJS).

Rabbit *Oryctolagus cuniculus*. Counts reached 20+ along Fisons' Road at Will Pits on 28th April and occasionally in May. Other records here included 10 on 5th October. One entered a burrow on the Thorne Colliery spoilheap on 22nd November. Three were along Middle Moor Tram on 19th December, with others along Jones' Cable in September and December. Significantly, on 26th September, 1 with myxomatosis was seen at Natural England's workshop at Will Pits Scrape.

Brown Hare *Lepus capensis*. Recorded on 14th January (1 along Shoulder o' Mutton Tram), 15th May (1 in a field north of Top Moor Farm), 20th May (1 along Fisons' Road North), 15th June (1 at

Creykes), 3rd August (1 at Will Pits), 5th August (1 at the flooded workings and 3 on Goole Moor) and 21st October (2 on Snaith & Cowick Moor).

Grey Squirrel *Sciurus carolinensis*. Singles were at Will Pits on 28th April, and at the Entrance Bridge near Whaley Balk on 29th August. One was along a track on the eastern side of Durham's Garden on 20th/27th/30th September and 30th December, on which latter date 2 were also along Jones' Cable.

Water Vole *Arvicola terrestris*. A single record of 1 in Shearburn & Pitts Drain at Will Pits on 29th November.

Brown Rat *Rattus norvegicus*. One ran across Fisons' Road at Will Pits on 6th September.

Fox *Vulpes vulpes*. Scattered singles were seen in January and August-December. In addition, 3 were at the eastern end of Jones' Cable on 11th November. One with a white tipped tail was at Will Pits on 6th September.

Stoat *Mustela erminea*. The first was at Natural England's workshop at Will Pits Scrape on 12th February. On 29th March 1 was along New Mill Drain, and on 26th April 1 crossed Fisons' Road at the flooded workings.

Weasel *M. nivalis*. Singles were seen along Fisons' Road on 21st May ("a very pale coloured individual") and 24th July.

Badger *Meles meles*. On Paraffin Tram next to the Paraffin Cuttings, a Badger was glimpsed on 13th November (CW). There have been recent reports of Badgers in the Moorends Works area. Two active setts noted elsewhere.

Red Deer *Cervus elaphus*. No data were made available from Natural England's Deer Management Group. Sightings commenced on 6th April, with a stag and 6 hinds at Will Pits. In May, records were obtained on 10th (1 stag at Will Pits), 15th (2 hinds at Will Pits) and 30th (1 hind east of Elmhirst Wood). Also present at Will Pits on 22nd June (1 hind), 13th July (3 hinds and 2 calves), 26th July (2 hinds), 19th September (1 stag roaring and 3 hinds), 20th September (2 hinds) and 30th September (1 stag and 2 hinds). Roaring by stags at Will Pits was noted on other dates in September, continuing into October, maximum 6 stags on 26th September. Next day, a hind and calf were on Middle Moor Tram close to the Shoulder o' Mutton.

Roe Deer *Capreolus capreolus*. Records during January-April were obtained from Creykes, Snaith & Cowick Moor, the Top Moor Farm area, and many parts of the central moors from Will Pits westwards. Also the western moor edge, including Durham's Garden. Day counts occasionally reached 4, but in the months to the end of March up to 6 were at Will Pits. In fields west and north-west of Moss Terrace, counts of up to 5 (9th February) were also obtained in this early period. On 5th March, a skull with antlers was found at Ribbon Row. From May-August, 1-2 were located widely from Goole Moor and Top Moor Farm southwards to the flooded workings and Pony Bridge Marsh. Counts occasionally reached 3 at both Will Pits and along Fisons' Road. In this same period, there were irregular sightings of does with 1 or 2 offspring, including a doe with a fawn at the junction of Shearburn & Pitts Drain and Fisons' Road North on 11th July. September records of Roe Deer were relatively frequent, with scattered singles and twos on the western margins (including the Paraffin Cuttings area), in the central parts and at Will Pits. Also 8 - in 2 groups of 4 - in southern fields in the early morning of 26th. During the remainder of the year, records were especially concentrated in the Will Pits area, with others from the central parts, Pony Bridge Marsh, the Inkle Moor and Durham's Garden areas, and in surrounding fields. Up to 3 were seen in a day, except on 30th December, when 4 were in southern fields and a young buck was at Mill Drain Marsh. Other sub-adults were seen in October-November.

ADDITIONAL RECORDS FOR 2005

Viviparous or Common Lizard. Single animals were observed on 12th July at Casson's, Woodpecker Wood, the Green Belt area and the Viewing Platform. There was 1 on 26th September at the Lonesome Pine.

Grass or Ringed Snake. On 2nd August, a female was along Fisons' Road c.100m west of the site of the Blue Bridge.

Adder or Northern Viper. Records in the Green Belt area included 2 males and 2 females on 12th July. One was along Mervyn's Tram on 25th September.

Black-headed Gull. A colour-ringed adult found dead at Swillington Ings, West Yorkshire, on 4th August had been ringed as a nestling on Thorne Moors on 15th June 2002 (*per Yorkshire Bird Report 2005*).

ADDITIONAL RECORDS FOR 2006

1. General records

Three-spined Stickleback *Gasterosteus aculeatus*. Present in Bell's Pond on 14th April.

Viviparous or Common Lizard. Singles fell into a rain gauge at the Southern Canals on 29th June (male) and 28th July (unsexed) (Hiner 2007).

Adder or Northern Viper. A female was along the Rhododendron Path on 27th February (Hiner 2007). 23rd March was a notable day, with 19 counted: at Green Belt (8 males), along the Rhododendron Path (4), along Mill Drain (SE7216) (5) and at 'Middle Moor' (SE733155) (2) (Hiner 2007, Sunter n.d.) On 29th March, a male was at the Entrance Bridge near Whaley Balk. with 2 further males along the Rhododendron Path (Hiner 2007). Finally in March, on 31st in the southern part of Crowle Moor, 2 were encountered (Sunter n.d.). One was at Bell's Pond on 14th April (WHP); and a female was at Pony Bridge Marsh on 4th October (Hiner 2007).

Greylag Goose. On 15th April, 17 included a white bird.

Common Shelduck. Three at the flooded workings on 18th February, with 2 there on 25th March.

Gadwall. At least 10 at Will Pits Scrape on 18th February. Also 10+ on 17th March and 1st April at the flooded workings.

Pintail. A pair was at the flooded workings on 1st April.

Shoveler. At least 10 occurred at the flooded workings on 1st April.

Common Pochard *Aythya ferina*. There were single male and female at Will Pits Scrape on 17th March. These were followed on 25th March by 1 male and 2 females at the flooded workings. A female was at the flooded workings on 1st April.

Tufted Duck. On 18th February, 20+ were at Will Pits Scrape and 6 at the flooded workings. On 25th March 8 males and 4 females were at the flooded workings, and from here 14 were reported on 17th June.

Goosander. One female was at the flooded workings on 18th February. A male was at Will Pits Scrape on 17th March. On 25th March, 1 male and 2 females headed north.

Ruddy Duck. Three males and 1 female were seen at Will Pits Scrape on 17th March, with 1 male at the flooded workings on 14th April. Next day, 5 males and 1 female were at the flooded workings. as were 8 on 27th May.

Black-necked Grebe. One was watched at Will Pits Scrape on 15th April.

Marsh Harrier. On 18th February, there was a single adult male and 2 females. Males were also reported on 14th April and 27th May.

Hen Harrier. On 18th February, both an adult male and an adult female were reported. On 17th March, 3 'ringtails' roosted at the Southern Canals. One male was seen on the moors next day. On 14th April, 2 'ringtails' were in the Southern Canals area, followed on 15th by a single 'ringtail'.

Merlin. One male was present on 17th March.

Water Rail. Singles were at the Canals on 17th-18th March. Also present at the flooded workings along Fisons' Road on 25th March.

Oystercatcher. One headed south-west over Durham's Garden on 27th May.

Little Ringed Plover. Two were at Thorne Colliery spoilheap on 25th March, with 1 at the Shoulder o' Mutton on 17th June.

Woodcock. One was flushed at Durham's Garden on 25th March.

Eurasian Curlew. One flew over Pony Bridge Marsh on 14th April.

Green Sandpiper. One occurred at Bell's Pond on 14th April.

Black-headed Gull. On 1st April, 300+ were at the flooded workings. On 14th of that month, there were 600+ at Will Pits Scrape and 100+ at the flooded workings along Fisons' Road.

Wood Pigeon. A roost held 1000+ on 17th March.

Barn Owl. One was near Woodpecker Wood on 17th March.

Tawny Owl. On 27th May at least 2 were at Will Pits.

Long-eared Owl. Nested on the western moor edge, with 3 young reared.

Short-eared Owl. One was over the Southern Canals on 18th February. Singles were seen on 17th March at both Pony Bridge Marsh and near Woodpecker Wood, which might have involved the same bird. There was also a single at Pony Bridge Marsh on 14th April.

European Nightjar. First recorded on 27th May.

Common Kingfisher. One was seen at Bell's Pond on 11th/18th March.

Yellow Wagtail. The first was at the flooded workings on 1st April.

Common Stonechat. Single male and female were at the Viewing Platform on 18th March, plus a male at the Platform on 1st April. Along Fisons' Road, there was a pair on 15th April and a male on 27th May. On 17th June, a pair was along Fisons' Road and at least 5 (a family party) was at the Shoulder o' Mutton.

Grasshopper Warbler. The first was 'reeling' on 14th April.

Willow Warbler. On 15th April, 75+ singing birds were counted.

Magpie. On 17th March, 28+ were on the Thorne Colliery spoilheap and 6 at Long Meadow.

Western Jackdaw. One passed east with Rooks on 18th March.

Rook. A flock of 7 flew east on 18th March.

Greenfinch. 200+ roosted in the Durham's Garden area on 11th March.

Grey Squirrel. One ran towards bushes on the Thorne Colliery spoilheap on 17th June.

Red Deer. Six hinds were at Will Pits on 17th March. A stag and 2 hinds were in a field alongside Crowle Moor on 14th April, with 4 hinds at Will Pits the next day.

Roe Deer. One was seen at the Southern Canals on 17th March. Two were in a field opposite Woodpecker Wood on 18th March, and a buck and 2 does were at Pony Bridge Marsh on 14th April. The total on 15th April was 4 bucks and 2 does; and 8 were counted on 27th May.

References

Hiner, S. (2007) *The Humberhead Peatlands National Nature Reserve Reptile Report 2006*. Unpublished report to Natural England.

Sunter, R. (n.d.) *The Yorkshire Reptile And Amphibian Report 2006*. Unpublished report by the Yorkshire Naturalists' Union herptiles recorder.

2. Top House Farm and Priory Farm

Pink-footed Goose. On 28th December 60 fed in a field.

Common Quail. Males were heard in a crop close to Top House in May on 12th (2) and 14th (1).

Little Grebe. On 14th May, 1 was on the drain alongside the railway at Creyke's Sidings.

Marsh Harrier. Single 'creamcrowns' occurred on 14th/20th February, 22nd/26th March and 21st April.

Hen Harrier. Single 'ringtails' were seen on 24th January and 21st October.

Common Kestrel. Nested in a box at Top House Farm, with 3 young reared.

Peregrine Falcon. Singles were logged on 29th April and 21st October.

European Golden Plover. At Creyke's Gate, there were 22 on 21st January, 25 on 14th April and 2 on 21st July.

Northern Lapwing. Bred, with 2 chicks found on 31st May.

Barn Owl. Singles were present at Top House Farm on 6th-8th July, 1st-4th/9th November, plus 2 on 21st July.

Little Owl. Nested in a box at Top House Farm, with 5 young reared.

Tawny Owl. Nested in Top House Wood, with 2 young seen.

Sky Lark. Counts in the fields achieved 38 on 21st January, 137 on 14th April, 116 on 14th May, 86 on 5th June, 95 on 24th June and 45 on 21st July.

Barn Swallow. Bred at Top House Farm (1 nest).

Meadow Pipit. Counts in the fields exceeded 10 on 14th April (69), 14th May (31), 5th June (24), 24th June (36) and 21st July (28).

Yellow Wagtail. Notable counts were 34 on both 14th May and 5th June, 38 on 24th June, and 39 on 21st July.

Northern Wheatear. April records involved 2 on 17th and 5 on 19th.

Goldcrest. Top House Wood held 21 on 21st January.

Great Tit. Counts of 20 or more were obtained in January and April-June. These reached 25 on 21st January and 27 on 14th April.

Eurasian Treecreeper. One was in Top House Wood on 30th January.

Common Chaffinch. Notable totals were 34 males on 12th February and 27 on 24th June.

Goldfinch. Counts of 14-21 were obtained during January-April and in December.

Linnet. The single count in excess of 16 was 35 on 14th May.

Corn Bunting There were 11 on 14th April, 5 on 14th May, 12 on 5th June, 10 on 24th June and 16 on 21st July.

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 records.

R. Atterby, C. Featherstone, M. Glover, B. Hibbard, S. Hiner (Natural England), J. Hinchliffe (Top House and Priory Farms), P. Hinks (Goole & District Natural History Society), J.G. Hitchcock, C.A. Howes (Doncaster Museum Service), J.W. Johnson, M. Limbert, F. Oates, S. Oates, A. Potter, W.H. Priestley (2006), J. Scutt, J. Snowdon, R.J. Sprakes, R.M. Sunter (Yorkshire Naturalists' Union), B.P. Wainwright, C. Wall, R. Watson, F. Weedon.

Lincolnshire Bird News. Yorkshire Bird Report 2005.

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BLACK-NECKED GREBES ON THORNE MOORS 1998-2007

Introduction

Since the first appearance of Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis* on Thorne Moors in 1998, visiting observers have been urged to provide details of every record obtained here. At the close of the 2007 season, data had accrued for a ten year period, with breeding reported in several of those years. Also in 2007, a significant paper on the changing national breeding status of this rare species was published (Martin and Smith 2007). This, however, gave variable coverage for Yorkshire, with insignificant or no attention to some sites including those in the Doncaster district. As a result of the foregoing, an overall summary of Black-necked Grebe records from Thorne Moors was considered timely, both for the interest of observers and as a site benchmark for county and national monitoring. This is presented as a descriptive chronology covering the first decade, to document annual variations in occurrence as well as the overall colonization of the site.

Descriptive chronology

1998: The first Black-necked Grebe was seen on 18th and 24th April, at the flooded peat workings.

1999: The number of records of Black-necked Grebe increased significantly in 1999, and spanned the period 8th April-26th June, with an isolated but probably linked record in mid-July. Again, sightings were obtained from the flooded peat workings, but also for the first time from Will Pits Scrape. This latter site held the first grebe, on 8th April, with other singles there on 28th April and 1st May. However, the flooded peat workings provided the bulk of the records, with one grebe, and sometimes two, from 18th April to 26th June. Display was observed on 9th May. The July bird was at the flooded workings on 18th.

2000: The initial momentum was checked, with only two sightings. Two Black-necked Grebes were at the flooded workings on 30th April, with one at Will Pits Scrape on 22nd May.

2001: The early part of 2001 was affected by access restrictions imposed by the national outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease, with the first evidence of Black-necked Grebes obtained on 7th May, when two were at Will Pits Scrape. All other records during the season were from that same water, and extended to 21st August. The first proof of breeding on Thorne Moors was gained on 5th June, when one bird of the resident pair was seen to have two juveniles riding on its back. There were relatively few sightings during the rest of June, merely comprising single adults on 9th, 14th and 17th. However, on 9th July an adult was seen with a lone juvenile, its age consistent with hatching sometime before 5th June. On 18th and 26th July, both adults were with a juvenile, but on 27th and 29th the total was two summer-plumaged adults with two well-grown young, and one winter-plumaged adult. In view of the relatively advanced moult of the latter, this grebe was perhaps a transient failed breeder or non-breeder. There were two records in August, of an adult and the two juveniles on 10th and the juveniles alone on 21st.

2002: Will Pits Scrape remained the centre of attention, where breeding by a pair of Black-necked Grebes was again proven. After a single bird here on 23rd March, two were in occupation the next day. On 29th March, there were two grebes at Will Pits Scrape and two more at the flooded workings, with all four at Will Pits Scrape on 30th. April records at Will Pits Scrape involved up to three grebes, except two pairs on 14th. There was also one individual at the flooded workings on 27th. A pair was seen throughout May at Will Pits Scrape, with one juvenile being carried on a parent's back on 19th and visible again on 27th and 31st. One, sometimes two, adults and the juvenile were watched during June-July, including all three on 26th July, the last date. An adult was at the flooded workings on 4th August, and the juvenile was found at Will Pits Scrape on a single August date (26th), the final sighting of the year.

2003: Records of Black-necked Grebe featured two breeding pairs in 2003. They were again concentrated at Will Pits Scrape, where the first bird was recorded on 19th March. This was followed by two on 30th March and three on 4th April. After one on 7th April, three were again located on 12th, and display was noted. Two grebes were then found on three subsequent April dates to 18th. On 19th, one was at Will Pits Scrape, but two more were at the flooded workings. An adult was visible at Will Pits Scrape on six succeeding dates to 11th June, plus both an adult and a

juvenile on 19th. A few days later, on 26th, at the flooded workings there was an adult with two juveniles, proving the occurrence of a second active pair. There were, however, no later records from either water, despite continued observation.

2004: The season began on 11th April, when two Black-necked Grebes were found at Will Pits Scrape, succeeded by three here on 17th, and two at the flooded workings on 22nd. May sightings included one or two grebes at Will Pits Scrape on 7th, but with all other records in that month from the flooded workings. These latter involved up to two birds, except on 24th (five, including two pairs), 27th (same five) and 28th (three). At these workings, June records were obtained on 5th and 13th (three on both dates) and 19th-20th (one). Towards the end of the month, on 25th, there were three at Will Pits Scrape. In July, all records emanated from Will Pits Scrape, commencing with a pair on 5th and three adults on 11th. However, on 20th one of the pair present was seen to be carrying young on its back. A week later, on 27th, this pair was accompanied by two young birds. Despite this, there were no subsequent records from the moorland except singles observed in August on 7th (at the flooded workings) and 15th (Will Pits Scrape).

2005: The first were single Black-necked 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 at least four on 2nd May, on which date there were also three at Will Pits Scrape. Subsequent May records included maximum counts of adults at Will Pits Scrape of three on 5th, 10th and 14th, four on 20th and 28th, and six on 12th. On 17th May, a pair had a small juvenile at this water. At the flooded workings, May totals decreased to two on 20th and one on 24th. Here, records in June-July occasionally involved one bird, but with two on 28th June and 3rd July, and three on 26th July, with the final grebe here on 2nd August. At Will Pits Scrape, June sightings included three on 2nd and two adults and two juveniles on 25th. Here in July, records were obtained on 3rd (two adults), 7th (two adults and one juvenile), 21st (two adults and two juveniles), 26th (three adults and two juveniles) and 30th (two adults and two juveniles). Two adults and a "fully grown" juvenile were observed on 2nd August, with further records during the month of one adult and the juvenile on 9th, 12th and 19th. In summary, the largest daily count of adults was seven on 2nd May, with the highest total at one water being six at Will Pits Scrape on 12th May. However, there was evidence of only one pair hatching young, at Will Pits Scrape, and of these latter, only one was apparently reared. In addition, an adult at Will Pits Scrape on 24th July was in almost full winter plumage. Again, as in 2001, this may have been a passing bird not otherwise associated with Thorne Moors.

2006: All records were from Will Pits Scrape. The first of the year was one on 2nd April, followed by one on 15th April and three (including a pair) on 21st. There were two pairs on 23rd-24th, one of them displaying. By 26th April there were six birds, the year's maximum. Subsequent records to 23rd June peaked at three on several scattered dates.

2007: All records were again from Will Pits Scrape. In April, there was a pair from 6th, with display observed from 17th; also three birds on 18th. There were up to four in May, and display was again noted, but with few subsequent records. However, these included an adult carrying a juvenile on 11th June, the year's only evidence of breeding. Beyond June, the last were adult grebes on 10th and 17th July.

Acknowledgements

Thanks are due to all who have obtained records of Black-necked Grebes on Thorne Moors. Without this effort, a picture of the species' local occurrence would have been impossible. Bryan Wainwright, the former bird recorder for Thorne Moors, collated the site records for 1998-2003.

Rcference

Martin, B. and J. Smith (2007) A survey of breeding Black-necked Grebes in the UK: 1973-2004. *British Birds* **100**: 368-378.

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REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

Fish and herptiles

A new version is in preparation of 'The Fish and Herptiles of Thorne Moors' (*THMCF Technical Report No. 13*). Any unsubmitted records of fish, amphibians and reptiles from Thorne Moors and surrounding parts will therefore be welcomed. Adder records (with locality details) embracing 2004-08 are especially requested, to understand the current local range of the animal.

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