

THORNE MOORS MAMMAL REPORT 2009

Compiled by Keith Heywood

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MAMMAL 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 mammal 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*. This is now superseded by a place-names map on the website of the Thorne & Hatfield Moors Conservation Forum.

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:
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.

VERTEBRATES RECORDING IN 2009

1. Publications, reports, etc. During 2008, the second edition appeared of 'The Mammals of Thorne Moors' (*THMCF Technical Report 15*). This provides full summaries of available records to the end of 2007. They include records 2004-07 that did not appear in the relevant *Thorne Moors Vertebrates Reports*.

In addition, the following reference appeared during 2009, using mammals data concerning Thorne Moors:

Croxton, R. (2009) Meeting to Crowle and Thorne Moors – 27 June. *Sorby Natural History Society Newsletter* **503**: 13.

SYSTEMATIC LIST

Mole *Talpa europaea*. One was found dead, freshly killed, along Elmhirst Tram on 1st April. Only the hindquarters of the animal were left.

Common Shrew *Sorex araneus*. One was found dead along Fisons' Road, near Will Pits on 3rd October.

Pygmy Shrew *S. minutus*. One was found dead near Blue Bridge on 14th February. Individuals reported on Goole Moor Tram on 15th August and at the NNR shed on 25th September. One found dead on Goole Moor Tram on 11th November.

Water Shrew *Neomys fodiens*. One was found dead at Shoulder o' Mutton on 13th February.

Pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*. One bat, probably this species, seen along Collis's Tram on 15th November.

Rabbit *Oryctolagus cuniculus*. Present throughout the year. The majority of the sightings were along Fisons' Road, near Swinefleet Warming Drain from 24th February to 13th May and from 12th June to 10th October. The maxima were 30 on 28th February and also on 12th June. 20 were seen on Goole Moor on 27th May. Less usually one at Blue Bridge on 13th May.

Brown Hare *Lepus capensis*. Three were seen on 8th April (Southern Fields). One was seen on arable land near Cassons on 2nd April and a leveret was on Goole Moor Tram on 2nd May. Other sightings, all singles, were 2nd May (Shoulder o' Mutton), 9th September (on Fisons' road on Rawcliffe Moor) and 11th September (Goole Moor).

Grey Squirrel *Sciurus carolinensis*. Singles were seen at Will Pits on 21st January, 25th February and 7th March. Two were at Woodpecker Wood on 31st August, with singles at the same location on 25th September and 5th October.

Water Vole *Arvicola terrestris*. One was seen in an arable land drain south of Crowle Moors (SE748138) on 24th February. On 1st March one reported near the Viewing Platform, with another single in the Western Boundary Drain on 25th April. An adult with juvenile were in the ditch alongside the railway at Moors Bridge on 2nd August.

Wood Mouse *Apodemus sylvaticus*. One was found dead at the W. end of Shoulder o' Mutton Tram on 12th October.

Weasel *Mustela nivalis*. Singles seen on 29th June (at former Swinefleet Peat Works) and 10th November (on footpath at Cassons).

Mink *Mustela vison*. Close views of an adult on 27th June (no location) by a Sorby Natural History Society group. One was seen at the NNR shed on 28th August. NE commented that they are now common and are causing concern with regard to the Water Vole population of the moors.

Fox *Vulpes vulpes*. Singles were encountered in all months up to September, including a young animal on 29th July. On 30th September SH reported lots of fox droppings across the moor, purple from the fruits of Bramble *Rubus fruticosus* agg.

Red Deer *Cervus elaphus*. The first record was two hinds at Will Pits on 29th January. There were three hinds at Bank Top on 14th February. In March three hinds were on Fisons' road at Will Pits on the 7th and again on the 15th, with two stags and a hind in the fields off Crowle Moor on the same date. On 1st April a stag was heard roaring in Pony Bridge Wood, and on 6th April eight hinds were at Will Pits, with a further sighting of a hind on Fisons' road at Will Pits on 25th April. 5th May brought records of 12 individuals at Will Pits in three groups, with seven on the 15th at the same location. There were three records in June, all at Will Pits, one on the 10th, a hind with calf on the 24th, and three hinds on the 29th. A stag and five hinds were at Will Pits on 4th August; on 7th August a blind calf at Will Pits was culled on humane grounds. A calf was at Pony Bridge Marsh on 24th August, and on the same date five hinds with three calves were seen at Angle Drain. On 7th September a hind and yearling were on Goole Moor Tram, while Will Pits yielded three individuals on 16th September and a roaring stag on 21st September; a "huge" stag on Collis's Tram on the 25th completed the month's records. A stag was observed at Will Pits on October 3rd, with three stags bellowing at the Southern End of the moors on October 5th. Four males were seen at Will Pits on 19th November, including three prickets, one with only one antler. Sightings on 8th December of 13 individuals along Mervyn's Tram and two hinds at Will Pits completed records for the year.

Roe Deer *Capreolus capreolus*. There were frequent records during January-May, ranging over most of the moors and surrounding arable land. The highest count in January was six (no location) on the 4th. In February eight were recorded on the 24th at Bank Top, with eight again on the 28th at the Northern End, with further sightings the same day of two at the floods off Fisons' Road, two at Shoulder o' Mutton, one on the Western Boundary path and one in the Southern fields. The first fawn was recorded on 29th June at Green Belt. Singles were occasionally reported in July and early August, with two adults on 2nd and 4th August, plus a doe with a fawn on the latter date. There were six records in September including 3 adults on Goole Moor on the 11th and a fawn at Bank Top on the 23rd. October brought 4 records including eight adults on the 20th (no location), and the remaining records for the rest of the year were all singles except three does on 11th November on Goole Moor and six adults at Will Pits and Goole Moor on 27th December.

LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

The following is a list of those contributing to the systematic lists of species (with apologies for any omissions). Thanks are offered to all who have submitted 2009 records.

R Croxton (Sorby Natural History Society), K. Heywood, S. Hiner (Natural England), P. Hinks (Goole & District Natural History Society), J. McDermott (NE volunteer), R. Moat, R.J. Sprakes, G. Thomas (NE volunteer), B.P. Wainwright, C. Wall.

CONTACTS

1. Keith Heywood (mammals records)
15 South End, Thorne, Doncaster DN8 5QN. Phone (01405) 813117. E-mail ae359@yahoo.com
2. Kevin Bull (Senior Site Manager, Natural England):
Reserve Office, 2, Dykes Marsh Farm Cottages, Marsh Lane, Moorends, Doncaster, DN8 4JT.
Phone/Fax: 01405 740640. E-mail: kevin.bull@naturalengland.org.uk