

# THORNE MOORS VERTEBRATES REPORT 2004

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## INTRODUCTON

Modern vertebrates recording began on Thorne Moors in 1966, and has been substantially continuous since then. From 1980-83, annual site reports (but mostly ornithological) were produced for Thorne Moors, compiled by Terry Wells, Warden for the Nature Conservancy Council. From 1990-2003, an annual bird report was made available *via* the NCC/English Nature. These reports were initially compiled by Peter and/or Janet Roworth (1990-95), the former being the Warden/Site Manager. The report for 1996 was the work of Peter Roworth and Bryan Wainwright, with the latter solely responsible for the reports covering 1997-2003. In parallel, following a joint summary for 1990-91, annual ornithological digests for Thorne Moors appeared in the Doncaster & District Ornithological Society's *Doncaster Bird Report* until the most recent, that for 2000. The present Thorne Moors report, dealing with 2004, once again widens the remit of these reports by embracing fish, herptiles and mammals as well as birds.

The most recent overview of the fish and herptiles of Thorne Moors was published in 2004 by the Thorne & Hatfield Moors Conservation Forum. This was issued as *THMCF Technical Report No. 13*. It comprises a detailed introduction, a summary of species status, exhaustive species accounts, a bibliography, and a descriptive appendix of a case of Adder-bite. A companion modern review of the mammals is currently being written. The baseline account of the birds is *Thorne Moors: Birds and Man*, published by the DDOS in 1986. A *Supplement* was issued by the NCC in 1990, extending the summary to the end of 1989. Since that time, a range of ornithological items has been published, including 'A Bibliography of Thorne Moors ornithology 1829-1999', issued in 2000 as *THMCF Technical Report No. 2*. In addition, as noted, an annual bird report has appeared since 1990, latterly including a site checklist. However, it is clear that a modern reappraisal of the avifauna is now overdue.

The inventory of Thorne Moors vertebrates amounts to the following from the earliest traced records to the end of 2004:

Fish: Twelve species, including five or six only present due to artificial stocking.

Amphibians: Four species.

Reptiles: Five species, two of them square-bracketed as erroneously ascribed to the area.

Birds: Two hundred and twenty-four species, as included in Categories A-C of the British List maintained by the British Ornithologists' Union, plus Yellow-legged Gull *Larus cachinnans*. Four of these species are square-bracketed as published but questioned in some way. In addition, there are records of five species included in Category E of the BOU list. This category comprises species that have been recorded as introductions, human-assisted transportees or escapees from captivity and whose breeding populations, if any, are thought not to be self-sustaining. In addition, birds showing the characters of at least eight additional races have also been recorded.

Mammals: Thirty-five species, including those naturalized/alien in Britain, and others only known locally as sub-fossils. Two of the total are square-bracketed as unconfirmed.

Combined together, these five classes of vertebrates comprise 285 species recorded on Thorne Moors from the earliest records to the end of 2004. This amounts to 272 species excluding those in square-brackets (eight) and birds in Category E of the BOU list (five).

## 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.

**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:

Davies, C.E. *et al.* (compilers and editors) (2004) *Freshwater fishes in Britain, the species and their distribution*. Colchester: Harley Books.

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* (British Birds Ltd, 1997), with amendments as detailed in *British Birds* 97: 2-5.

See [www.britishbirds.co.uk/bblist.htm](http://www.britishbirds.co.uk/bblist.htm).

Birds in Category E of the British List can be accessed via [www.bou.org.uk](http://www.bou.org.uk).

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 2004

**1. Statistics for 2004.** During the year, three species of fish, two species of amphibian, three species of reptile, 131 species of bird and 13 species of mammal were reliably reported from Thorne Moors. There were no additions to the existing lists, although rarely reported taxa like Wood Lark and Muntjac were met with. The number of records submitted saw a further drop in overall volume in 2004. It is urged that all records, even of common species, be made available.

**2. Publications, reports, etc.** The following references appeared during 2004, 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:

Bull, K. [2004] Thorne Moors NNR, South Yorkshire. In: A. Sugrue (compiler) *North West England Black-necked Grebe Study Group Monitoring Report 2003*. Unpublished report produced by the RSPB North West England Region, Denby Dale.

Carroll, D. (2004) Ruddy Shelducks in the Doncaster area. *Lapwing Special Series 11*: 11-13.

Limbirt, M. (2004) Records of Doncaster breeding birds from oological collections. *Lapwing Special Series 11*: 30-53.

Limbirt, M., S. Hiner and B.P. Wainwright (2004) The Fish and Herptiles of Thorne Moors. *THMCF Technical Report No. 13*.

Wainwright, B.P. (2004) Habitat Preferences of Rufous Nightingale on Thorne Moors. *THMCF Technical Report No. 11*.

## FISH

**Roach *Rutilus rutilus*.** In a railway delf on Inkle Moor (map reference SE696165), Roach were being fished for in 2004.

**Tench *Tinca tinca*.** As Roach.

**Perch *Perca fluviatilis*.** As Roach.

## AMPHIBIANS

**Common Frog *Rana temporaria*.** An immature animal was seen along Middle Moor Tram (map reference SE732149) on 2nd September (PH).

**Smooth or Common Newt *Triturus vulgaris*.** An adult was found on a rotting tree stump at Green Belt (map reference c.SE718165) on 2nd November (SH, AP).

## REPTILES

**Viviparous or Common Lizard *Lacerta vivipara*.** On 23rd April, two singles were on Goole Moor (map references SE730180 and 723177), and on 10th June one was along Swinefleet Warping Drain, at the bridge next to Top Moor Farm.

**Grass or Ringed Snake *Natrix natrix*.** On 28th January, one was inadvertently disturbed by machine whilst hibernating. It was in a 75cm long old plastic drain pipe under logs on Goole Moor (BH). Also on Goole Moor, one was seen (map reference SE744171) on 23rd April.

**Adder or Northern Viper *Vipera berus*.** The first of the year was one on the northern edge of Goole Moor on 5th February (BH). This is the earliest reported date for an active Adder in any year. March records were obtained on 17th/19th, and in April singles were encountered on 9th/19th/23rd. Other singles occurred on 20th May and 24th July. Localities included Whaley Balk, Collis's Tram, Limberlost Tram, the Viewing Platform, Green Belt (five males on 19th March), Goole Moor (map reference SE729181) and Crowle Moor. In addition, a dead female (53cm long) was found dead close to the disused Swinefleet peat works (map reference c.SE769172) on 21st July.

## BIRDS

**Mute Swan *Cygnus olor*.** On 4th January, four adults and one immature were flushed from the flooded workings, and later in the day an adult flew NE. Two headed south over Will Pits on 12th February, and on 10th July two landed at the flooded workings.

**Whooper Swan *C. cygnus*.** Noted between 4th-13th April in fields west of Rawcliffe Moor. There were 43 on 4th, 42 on 5th, 45 from 6th-8th, 43 on 10th and 51 on 13th. Five flew east over Durham's Garden on 31st October.

"A lasting memory for me will be the wonderful sight of whooper swans...roosting on Thorne Moors over a two-and-a-half week period in early April...They roost on the flooded workings... [they] were left undisturbed to feed on winter barley at Top House Farm, Creykes Siding by farmers David and James Hinchcliffe" (*Moor News* 21: 4).

**Pink-footed Goose *Anser brachyrhynchus*.** On 9th February 150+ were counted passing north. In October, 80+ flew east on 1st and there were two skeins (c.75 and c.200) on 27th. A lone goose NE on 4th January was probably this species.

**Greylag Goose *A. anser*.** The first of the year were 12 on 1st January, with other counts in that month peaking at 91+ on 4th and c.80 on 5th. A white bird was amongst 23 on 13th. The only large counts in February were c.70 on 6th and c.30 on 14th. The maximum during spring was six on 17th April. Seven on 11th July included two fledged young geese, with other July-September totals providing no further suggestion of breeding. During those same months, the maximum count was 20, on 4th September. The last of the year were on two October dates: c.400 on 1st (including one white bird and two others aberrantly plumaged) and three on 27th. Most of the year's birds were seen at Will Pits Scrape and the flooded workings, but also occasionally from Casson's Marsh in April.

**Canada Goose *Branta canadensis*.** Reported in March (one on 6th and three on 18th), and 14 were at Will Pits Scrape on 1st October.

**Common Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*.** After a lone bird on 7th January, counts in February-March reached eight on 17th February and ten on 25th March. Records continued to be obtained until 11th July (maximum eight on 9th April and 24th May), plus one on 7th November. Seen at the more extensive areas of water, but also Bell's Pond and Casson's Marsh.

**Eurasian Wigeon *Anas penelope*.** Very scarce, with only a male in transitional plumage at Will Pits Scrape on 11th July, followed by four males and six females at the flooded workings on 1st October.

**Gadwall *A. strepera*.** Single pairs were logged January-April, but with up to seven birds in January, at least ten at Will Pits Scrape on 20th February, and eight on 17th March. May counts reached six on 1st/28th, as did June counts on 13th, with the last of the year being one on 10th July. Most were seen at the flooded workings, with Will Pits Scrape being the remaining location.

**Eurasian Teal *A. crecca*.** Daily counts exceeded 50 in all months except March, June and August. Maxima were c.250 on 9th February and 4th September, 667 on 7th September, 120+ on 19th

September, 150+ on 1st October and c.125 on 19th December. Breeding was proved on four occasions, but one clutch was predated.

**Mallard A. *platyrhynchos*.** Significant counts were 112 on 1st January, c.120 on 2nd February, c.250 on 4th September, c.150 on 19th September, 456+ on 1st October and c.300 on 18th October. Breeding proved.

**Pintail A. *acuta*.** A pair at the flooded workings on 20th February was the only record from the earlier months. Seen in October - at the same workings - on 1st (25+) and 18th (four).

**Shoveler A. *clypeata*.** Until April, only encountered on 20th February (four) and 9th March (one pair). Numbers were greater in April, reaching ten males and seven females on 9th. There were fewer reported in May, but counts in June attained 14 on 13th. Numbers rose further in July, including 29 on 19th, and with a single August count of 20+ on 14th. In September, there were 60+ on 4th, 25 on 7th, and a report of c.160 on 19th (WHP); with c.30 on 27th October also notable. The only subsequent record was of three males on 7th November. Of 13 on 18th July, four were fledged juveniles. Away from the major wetlands, four males and three females at Casson's Marsh on 9th April was notable.

**Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*.** The first of the year were five on 12th February, with 16 on 20th. Counts in March reached five plus on 6th. In April, the maximum was 16+ on 17th, but with nine males and four females on 25th also notable. May-June counts did not exceed three males, but in July, two on 4th/10th were eclipsed by 20 on 24th, the last of the year. Usually noted at the flooded workings and Will Pits Scrape, but occasionally at Casson's Marsh and the Paraffin Cuttings.

**Goosander *Mergus merganser*.** In February, at Will Pits Scrape, there were five (including two males) on 15th, and one male and three females the next day. On 17th March, one male and three females appeared again, at the flooded workings.

**Ruddy Duck *Oxyura jamaicensis*.** The only pre-April record was two females at Will Pits Scrape on 20th February. On 17th April, there were two males and four females at Will Pits Scrape and two males and one female at the flooded workings. A few days later, on 22nd, totals were one male and one female at Will Pits Scrape and five males and one female at the flooded workings. Also, there were three pairs on 25th at the flooded workings. In May, counts at the flooded workings did not exceed one male and one female (15th), but there were three males and one female at Will Pits Scrape on 28th. In addition, on 24th May four young were seen with a female at Will Pits Scrape. Two good totals were obtained in June. On 5th, Will Pits Scrape held one female and four young, with six males and four females at the flooded workings. Over a week later, on 13th, there were two males and four females at Will Pits Scrape and two males and three females at the flooded workings. On 11th July, Will Pits Scrape held one male, two females and two small young. A single bird was at the flooded workings on 14th August, and two males and three females appeared at Will Pits Scrape on 1st October.

**Red-legged Partridge *Alectoris rufa*.** Met with on a mere three dates: 2nd February (seven), 13th April (two) and 11th July (three).

**Grey Partridge *Perdix perdix*.** Occasionally reported from the moorland and adjoining areas, mostly January-May, the only exception to the latter being five on 19th December. No other totals exceeded two.

**Common Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus*.** Daily counts generally reached up to 25, the exceptions being 36 in fields north of Crowle Moor on 16th February and 44+ on 7th November. One (and doubtless others) fell victim to a Fox.

**Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*.** Reported between 9th March-14th August, at the flooded workings, Will Pits Scrape, Casson's Marsh, the Paraffin Cuttings and Inkle Moor Pond. The daily

maximum was five, on 17th April. The most at any site was three at the flooded workings on 4th/10th July, from where a majority of the records originated.

**Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*.** Two were at the flooded workings on 11th April, and unusually one flew low to the north in fog over the Shoulder o' Mutton on 30th October (WHP).

**Black-necked Grebe *P. nigricollis*.** The season began on 11th April, when two were found at Will Pits Scrape, succeeded by three there on 17th and two at the flooded workings on 22nd. May sightings included one or two 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/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 (RB). A week later, on 27th, this pair was accompanied by two young birds (RB). 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).

**Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*.** Two overhead on 16th May possibly landed at Will Pits Scrape. In October, two flew south on 1st and one north on 18th.

**Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*.** Occasionally present during February-July and September. Counts involved one or two, except three (one adult and two immatures) on 10th July at the flooded workings.

**Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*.** Reported throughout the year except December. Usually one or two were seen *per visit*, but occasionally three to five, plus seven together on 8th September (RW, RJS). Most of those specified were described as females, 'creamcrowns' or immatures. Adult males were reported on 9th January, 7th May and 7th-8th September, with immature males on 25th April, 23rd-24th/27th May, 13th/28th June and 6th September. That on 13th June was said to be a second-year bird.

**Hen Harrier *C. cyaneus*.** 'Ringtails' were seen on 1st February, 7th-8th/24th September and 1st October, reflecting a meagre year.

**Eurasian Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*.** Encountered in most months, especially January-May, with display noted on 22nd April. No daily totals exceeded two, apart from three on 6th March. Reported quarry was Sky Lark (unsuccessful) and Pied Wagtail.

**Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo*.** Reports included singles on 19th February and 28th April, and two on 12th April.

**Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*.** Daily counts reached three plus on 24th/28th May.

**Merlin *F. columbarius*.** The only record involved a female on 7th-8th September.

**Hobby *F. subbuteo*.** Extreme dates were 25th April and 12th September, with no certain daily totals over two, apart from three on 16th/24th May and 8th September, and four on 2nd July. All those specified were adults except an immature bird on 8th/12th September. On 27th May, single adults were seen being mobbed by four Black-headed Gulls and mobbing a female Eurasian Sparrowhawk.

**Peregrine Falcon *F. peregrinus*.** There were frequent records in January, with an adult male and an immature female both reported. What were apparently the same two birds were present in February, the adult male being seen to chase a Jack Snipe on 4th. An adult female was reported on 29th February and 18th March, and the immature female was noted occasionally until 28th May. There were then no further records of the species until one (no details) appeared on 11th/19th July.

Logged in August on 7th (immature) and 15th (one pair), with an increased presence in early September. These latter dates were 4th (one immature), 6th (one male), 7th (one adult female and one immature female), 8th (one immature male and one immature female, watched talon-grappling) and 12th (same two birds, mobbing each other and talon-grappling). An immature was also present in October, described as an immature male on 13th. The only subsequent record was a single on 14th November. On 7th September, an immature female mobbed an immature Marsh Harrier and a Common Kestrel, and later in the same day a female mobbed two Marsh Harriers.

**Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus*.** Recorded singly except for two on 30th October. Mostly at the flooded workings (April, June-July, October), but also Pony Bridge Marsh (April), the Viewing Platform (October) and Durham's Garden (also October).

**Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*.** The only notable counts were obtained in April: 13 on 9th and 16 on 17th. Breeding proved.

**Common Coot *Fulica atra*.** Extreme dates were 9th March and 13th June. A majority of the records was obtained from the flooded workings, with a maximum of four on four dates. Other site maxima were four at Will Pits Scrape (28th May), one at Casson's Marsh (17th April) and one at Inkle Moor Pond (three dates).

**Common Crane *Grus grus*.** On 8th September, two overflowed Goole Moor and Goole Fields, departing to the north (RJS).

**Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*.** In May, singles were at the Thorne Colliery spoilheap on 15th and at Will Pits Scrape on 28th. Further singles, in July, flew over Will Pits Scrape (11th) and Green Belt (18th).

**Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*.** Three were at the flooded workings on 11th April, with almost all other records to the end of May concerning one, sometimes two, at the Thorne Colliery spoilheap. The exception was one at Green Belt Scrape on 17th April. Two were at the flooded workings on 13th June. All subsequent sightings were from these same workings, involving four on 4th July (one bird giving a 'broken-wing' display), three on 10th July and one the next day, and finally two on 14th August.

**Ringed Plover *C. hiaticula*.** Singles appeared on 11th/15th April, 15th August, 5th September and 13th October. The only specified location was the flooded workings, except the bird on 15th April, which flew north over Goole Moor.

**European Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria*.** The only dates in the early months were 4th January (heard) and 17th April (nine east). Others were overhead on 15th August (five), 5th September (one), 19th September (18 east), 27th October (ten south) and 19th December (11 NE).

**Grey Plover *P. squatarola*.** One was heard at the flooded workings on 14th-15th August.

**Northern Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*.** Reported throughout the year, with counts at the flooded workings exceeding 50 on three dates in July (maximum c.420 on 18th), three dates in August (maximum c.400 on 7th), and on 7th November (c.60). On 19th December, c.100 flew SW and 38 west then north.

**Red Knot *Calidris canutus*.** One was present at the flooded workings on 12th September.

**Sanderling *C. alba*.** One was present at the flooded workings on 15th August.

**Little Stint *C. minuta*.** One was present at the flooded workings on 15th August.

**Dunlin *C. alpina*.** Reported at the flooded workings from 10th July-14th August, with counts occasionally reaching four. Also six on 1st October.

**Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*.** Recorded on three dates, all at the flooded workings: 19th April (three), 11th July (three males) and 1st October (one).

**Jack Snipe *Lymnocyptes minimus*.** Noted on Goole Moor in January on 22nd (one), 26th (four) and 27th (two), and then on 4th February (four) and 18th March (one). Reported from near the Shoulder o' Mutton in February on 3rd/5th (one) and during the last week (two). In the latter part of the year, one was near the Viewing Platform on 16th December. One of those on 4th February was chased by a Peregrine Falcon.

**Common Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*.** There were contacts in all months except December, but with most daily counts amounting to no more than three. Larger totals featured on 14th August (22, including 15 together), 15th August (51, including 32 together), 4th September (20+), 5th September (51) and 1st October (c.15). Evidence of territoriality was sparse: single 'drumming' males in June on 4th (Viewing Platform), 12th (Middle Moor Tram) and 13th/19th (Green Belt area).

**Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola*.** Singles were encountered on ten dates (January-April, June, November-December), and two on 19th January.

**Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*.** The flooded workings were graced by 26 on 25th April, four (summer plumage) on 18th July, and one the next day. In addition, two flew east on 14th August.

**Eurasian Curlew *Numenius arquata*.** There were four records in February, all of singles, the first on 11th. Further lone birds continued to be noted infrequently until 10th July. There were also two on 17th March and four on 4th April.

**Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus*.** One appeared at the flooded workings on 14th August.

**Common Redshank *T. totanus*.** One was at the flooded workings on 2nd/4th January. There were reports from seven dates spanning 15th April-15th May, all singles except two on 16th April and ten the next day. Two were displaying on 13th June, but this was seemingly an isolated occurrence. After two on 4th July, singles occurred on three further dates in that month to 24th. All specified birds were at the flooded workings or Green Belt Scrape.

**Greenshank *T. nebularia*.** After one on 10th July, there were two between 11th-19th and one again on 24th. August records concerned singles on 7th/14th and two on 15th, and in September one on 4th was succeeded by two the next day, three on 15th and one on 19th. The last of the year was on 1st October. All specified birds were at the flooded workings or Green Belt Scrape.

**Green Sandpiper *T. ochropus*.** Apart from two at Durham's Garden on 9th October, all records were obtained in July (from 4th) and August (to 15th). Within those two months, reports of up to three were superseded by notable totals on 10th July (nine), 11th July (seven), 18th July (11+), 24th July (five), 7th August (four) and 14th August (five). Most were seen at the flooded workings (including eight together on 10th/18th July), with others at/over Green Belt Scrape, Durham's Garden/Bell's Pond and Jones' Cable.

**Wood Sandpiper *T. glareola*.** One occurred at Green Belt Scrape on 7th August.

**Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*.** The flooded workings held this species in August on 14th (four) and 15th (three), and in September on 5th (three).

**Black-headed Gull *Larus ridibundus*.** Territorial birds were first reported on 6th March, with colonies becoming established at the flooded workings and Will Pits Scrape. The first chicks were evident on 15th May, and there was a large scale departure from the colonies in the first half of July. A census of the breeding birds was undertaken (BPW). All sites were visited during 13th June, giving the following result ('adults' taken to include any first-summer birds):  
*flooded workings associated with Fisons' Road: c.300 adults and c.86 unfledged young.*

*flooded workings north of Shearburn & Pitts Drain: c.130 adults and six unfledged young.*

*flooded workings north of Shoulder o' Mutton: c.80 adults and some unfledged young.*

*Will Pits Scrape: c.300 adults, seven fledged young and c.53 unfledged young.*

This gave a combined total of c.810 adults (400+ pairs?) and 160+ young. A repeat count on 19th June gave a similar figure for adults (c.800), but a higher count of young (250+).

**Common Gull *L. canus*.** Very few reported, either overhead, in adjacent fields or at the flooded workings. None was notified from May-December, except two overhead and two in a field on 19th December. In the early months, January had six overhead on 8th and ten south on 30th.

**Lesser Black-backed Gull *L. fuscus*.** Until April, the only report was an adult at the flooded workings on 2nd February. The next date was 9th April (three immatures at the flooded workings), with succeeding records until 5th September. Between those dates, notable totals were 30 immatures on 23rd May, 48 (included 40 grounded) on 19th June, c.300 on 7th August and 16 on 15th August. Most were associated with the flooded workings.

**Herring Gull *L. argentatus*.** During January-March, the higher counts were 19 overhead on 1st January, and totals at the flooded workings which reached 80+ on 20th February and 30+ on 6th March. There were five on 19th June and one on 4th July. Notable counts in the later months reached c.150 at the flooded workings on 18th October, and 22 overhead (mainly west) on 27th of the same month.

**Great Black-backed Gull *L. marinus*.** Recorded from January-April (maximum c.20 at the flooded workings on 20th February), June (maximum four plus) and October (maximum six).

**Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*.** In July, four flew north on 18th and one was at Will Pits Scrape on 20th.

**Stock Dove *Columba oenas*.** On 4th January, c.40 *Columba* sp. flying over Northern Goole Moor and adjacent fields were considered to be Stock Doves, despite inadequate views of them all. During April-October, occasional daily counts of up to four were bettered by 16 (at Elmhirst-Casson's) on 20th May. There was also an isolated report of ten, in a field near Whaley Balk, on 19th December.

**Wood Pigeon *C. palumbus*.** The highest count was an undated January maximum of c.150.

**Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*.** Occasionally reported from Red House Farm, maximum four on 19th December. Also four at Jones' Cable on 7th August.

**Turtle Dove *S. turtur*.** Seen and heard between 1st May-15th August, but with daily counts rarely exceeding four: eight on 20th May, seven plus on 24th May and six on 5th June.

**Common Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus*.** With extreme dates of 23rd April and 22nd June, counts beyond four were obtained on two dates in May: six on 20th and nine on 26th.

**Barn Owl *Tyto alba*.** Observed in the Swinefleet peat works-Red House Farm area on 14th/28th January and 2nd February. Also in January, one was at Creyke's Siding on 19th.

**Tawny Owl *Strix aluco*.** Occasional at Will Pits (including June), and one was at Creyke's Siding on 14th January.

**Long-eared Owl *Asio otus*.** One was calling from Elmhirst Wood on 12th June.

**European Nightjar *Caprimulgus europaeus*.** A census recorded 21 'churring' males (*per* KB).

**Common Swift *Apus apus*.** The only April records concerned one on 17th and c.250 on 30th. May counts featured 300+ on 1st, c.200 on 23rd and 200+ on 28th. June figures reached c.180 on 13th,

and in July there were c.300 on 4th/10th-11th. The last, in August, were c.60 on 14th and 26 on 15th.

**Common Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*.** Although one was along Swinefleet Warming Drain towards Swinefleet on 8th January, the only moorland bird was at Bell's Pond on 9th October.

**Green Woodpecker *Picus viridis*.** There were frequent daily totals of up to four, and five on 9th/17th April. Breeding proved.

**Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major*.** Records of singles were exceeded by three on four dates. Breeding proved from two areas.

**Wood Lark *Lullula arborea*.** A male sang at Thorne Colliery during 6th March-22nd June.

**Sky Lark *Alauda arvensis*.** Present in most months, with the maximum in the early part of the year being 12+ on 9th April. October movements were witnessed on 9th (25 west), 18th (30 NW) and 27th (15 north). A Sky Lark was unsuccessfully pursued by a Eurasian Sparrowhawk.

**Sand Martin *Riparia riparia*.** After one north on 14th April, that month's maximum was seven on 30th, with the exception of 300+ on 17th. Records were then minimal until 14th August (c.220), with the last being six on 5th September.

**Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*.** April records - from 7th - exceeded 11 only on 30th, when the day's total was c.250. Subsequently, July counts reached 30+ (in the Thorne Colliery area) on 18th, and notable August counts were c.100 on 7th and 20 on 14th. The last were two on both 5th September and 1st October. A pair bred in the Thorne Colliery buildings.

**House Martin *Delichon urbicum*.** Remarkably, the first record of the year, c.100 on 30th April, far outshone anything else. No other counts exceeded four seen on 14th August, the last date of the year.

**Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis*.** Noted between 15th May-12th July. Males sang in the Casson's area (three), at Pony Bridge Marsh (one or two), 'Middle Moor' (one) and on Crowle Moor (four). Breeding was proved on Crowle Moor.

**Meadow Pipit *A. pratensis*.** Counts in January-February exceeded five on 29th January (20) and 29th February (34 over Inkle Moor). There were no reports from March, but April totals included 27+ on 9th and 15 on 17th. Counts during May-August reached 19 on 19th June and 15 on 14th August. September data included c.40 on 4th and c.70 on 19th; and October maxima were c.50 on 1st and c.150 on 18th. No subsequent figure exceeded six logged on 7th November.

**Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava*.** There were one or two on 17th April, and then subsequent counts of up to four, exceeded by ten plus on 24th July, c.15 on 7th August, c.30 on 14th August, and eight plus on 4th September. The last departed on 19th September.

**Pied Wagtail *M. alba*.** Few records of note, with the only count larger than six being eight on 24th July. Two were killed by Eurasian Sparrowhawks.

**Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*.** Maxima were 41 on 13th June and c.35 on 30th October. Breeding proved.

**Dunnock *Prunella modularis*.** The year's only count in double figures was ten plus on 30th October.

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

**Common Nightingale *Luscinia megarhynchos*.** A poor year for this species, with relatively little vocalization evident. The first was singing on Goole Moor (map reference SE744174) on 23rd April. A further bird sang at Casson's on 30th April. Two were at Will Pits on 23rd April and 7th May, with one there on 16th May. Also on 7th May, at least one was heard from Rhododendrons *Rhododendron ponticum* to the east or SE of Casson's. What was probably this latter bird ("near Limberlost Wood") was also heard on 13th/25th May.

**Common Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*.** A female showed at Will Pits on 23rd July.

**Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra*.** Two males, one carrying food, were at Pony Bridge Marsh on 13th June. A pair was seen here on 11th July. Along Fisons' Road, there were birds in September on 4th (four), 6th (one) and 19th (one male).

**Common Stonechat *S. torquatus*.** Recorded in the early months until 18th March, with single males on several dates, and occasionally one male and one female (including at the Swinefleet peat works on 13th February). However, there were two males and two females on 6th March. Records resumed on 1st May, with subsequent evidence of two pairs during the breeding season in the general area of the flooded workings. At the first site, a pair was noted from 1st May-15th August. A first brood of at least two juveniles was seen with the pair of adults on 2nd June (RB). The latter were feeding a second brood in the nest on 28th June, with three fledged juveniles then being fed on 5th July (RB). A male was with a juvenile on 15th August (RJS), the last date at this site. The second pair, first seen on 19th June, were also present to 15th August. Here, the male accompanied a fledged juvenile on 19th July, and was again with two fledged juveniles on 14th August (BPW), these latter presumably representing a second brood. Interestingly, four males, four females and two juveniles were along Fisons' Road on 4th September. Records continued to accrue throughout this month, maximum three birds except eight (no details) on 19th. There were two males on 1st October, an immature on 13th, and subsequent records of one male and one female on several dates to 14th November. Also a male on 14th December.

**Northern Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe*.** The earliest was a female on 25th March, followed by a male the next day. In April, there were two males and one female on 9th, one male and one female on 17th, two males and four females on 23rd, and one (probably female) on 27th. The only May record involved two on 7th. Also reported in September, with singles on 5th/12th/15th and two on 6th.

**Blackbird *Turdus merula*.** Daily totals occasionally reached 20, with 22 on both 4th January and 19th December. Breeding proved.

**Fieldfare *T. pilaris*.** In the early months, maxima were c.150 south on 28th January and 80+ at Durham's Garden on 20th February. The last of spring were 20 at Bank Top on 13th April. Most subsequent records were obtained in October, from 9th (c.20 west), with sizeable counts on 18th (160+ west), 26th (c.200 overhead) and 30th (c.150 at Durham's Garden). On 7th November, 70+ were counted, mostly from a roost east of Thorne Colliery, but many more were heard in fog leaving the same roost.

**Song Thrush *T. philomelos*.** No count exceeded five on 5th June.

**Redwing *T. iliacus*.** Until the last of spring on 24th March, the only count of note was 20+ on 6th March. Observed in October from 9th, with 50+ west on that date, and then 60+ present on 18th, c.70 overhead on 26th, and c.200 at Durham's Garden on 30th. No later count exceeded 18+, on 7th November.

**Mistle Thrush *T. viscivorus*.** Four were at Long Meadow on 20th February. In the vicinity of Thorne Colliery, there were two on 9th April, about six on 26th May, and two on 19th December.

**Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella naevia*.** 'Reeling' males were noted from 17th April, at the western moor edge from Whaley Balk to Collis's Tram, and also at Mill Drain Marsh, Fisons'

Road/Green Belt and Will Pits/Will Pits Scrape. This resulted in seven being heard on 22nd April, and probably nine in total. One was vocal along Jones' Cable on 25th April, but was not reported thereafter. The final date was 27th July, at Mill Drain Marsh.

**Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*.** Present from 22nd April-4th September, with maximum counts of 12 on 15th May and 19th June. Breeding proved.

**Reed Warbler *A. scirpaceus*.** Recorded between 1st May-5th September, with a daily maximum of nine, on 18th July. It was difficult to say how many males were in song, or precisely where they all were, from the evidence submitted.

**Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*.** Heard in April from 9th, and reported regularly until mid-July. Double-figure counts were 15+ on 22nd April and 20+ on 15th May. There was then one male on 14th August, plus one male and one female on 19th September.

**Garden Warbler *S. borin*.** With extreme dates of 17th April and 19th June, the only double-figure count was ten on 13th June. Breeding was confirmed by a nest found on 24th May.

**Lesser Whitethroat *S. curruca*.** After three on 28th April and two on 30th, singles occurred in four places in May. In addition, further singles appeared on 14th August at Durham's Garden and Green Belt.

**Common Whitethroat *S. communis*.** Present between 22nd April-4th September, with a maximum of 23, on 20th May. Breeding proved.

**Common Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*.** First heard on 20th March, and April counts reached 32 on 9th and 38+ on 17th, with 20 on 13th June. Still about in October, with four on 1st, two on 9th, and singles on 30th-31st.

**Willow Warbler *Ph. trochilus*.** The first and last were on 9th April and 14th August. Counts in April reached 57+ on 17th and 75+ on 22nd. Forty-four on 13th June was also notable. Breeding proved.

**Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*.** Recorded to 9th March (three) and from 5th September (two). There were five on 19th September, up to c.20 in October (maximum on 30th), and 11 on 7th November.

**Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus*.** Counts beyond 15 were 23+ on 4th January and 20+ on 2nd/16th February.

**Willow Tit *Parus montanus*.** Five on 4th January was the maximum, except for two separate broods discovered on 24th-25th May.

**Coal Tit *P. ater*.** One was along Will Pits Tram at Will Pits on 19th April.

**Blue Tit *P. caeruleus*.** The maximum count was 18 on 4th January. Bred in a nestbox on Crowle Moor.

**Great Tit *P. major*.** Counts were highest February-April, peaking in the latter month with 16 on 9th. On 24th May, young were being fed at a nest in a hollow metal signpost along the colliery road.

**Eurasian Treecreeper *Certhia familiaris*.** Singles were detected on 1st January (Will Pits), 4th January (Rawcliffe Moor) and 17th April (Woodpecker Wood).

**Eurasian Jay *Garrulus glandarius*.** Recorded in all months except May-June and September. Counts exceeded two on 9th April and 7th November (both four).

**Magpie *Pica pica*.** The year's maxima were ten on 4th January, 13 on 29th February, and 12 on 19th December.

**Western Jackdaw *Corvus monedula*.** The first sighting was two north on 6th March. In October, there were occurrences on 1st (one north), 9th (one west) and 30th (one north).

**Rook *C. frugilegus*.** One flew south on 17th April, and two headed SE on 20th May.

**Carrion Crow *C. corone*.** January's daily maximum was 168, although the only available detail from that month concerns 110+ on 4th, which included 70+ gathering over the 'Middle Moor'-Canals area prior to roosting.

**Common Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*.** Occasional in the Thorne Colliery area in May (maximum five on 20th). Other records commenced with 18 on 13th June (no details), followed by several reports in July. These were mostly from the flooded workings. The first (four) were there on 10th, and the next day 26 flew west. On 18th-19th/24th, Common Starlings were in flight with Northern Lapwings over the flooded workings, numbering 15, nine and 18 respectively. Similarly, there were 66 with the Northern Lapwings on 14th August.

**Common Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*.** Records included a roost in the area east of Thorne Colliery, but no separate figures were provided for this. Daily counts reached 38 on 17th April and c.30 on 7th November. Breeding proved.

**Brambling *F. montifringilla*.** On 9th October, one called as it passed over Durham's Garden.

**Greenfinch *Carduelis chloris*.** Counts included a small roost associated with the Common Chaffinches, but no daily totals exceeded ten seen on 27th October.

**Goldfinch *C. carduelis*.** Records were unremarkable, easily the largest number being c.30 at Bank Top on 14th January.

**Siskin *C. spinus*.** Four were in Woodpecker Wood on 20th February.

**Linnet *C. cannabina*.** Occasional counts of 15-18 were bettered by 20 south on 1st October. Breeding proved.

**Lesser Redpoll *C. cabaret*.** There were 20 on Goole Moor on 13th February. Other counts during January-April did not exceed five (28th January and 9th April). There were also odd singles from July-September, and four on 19th December.

**Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*.** Records were generally unexceptional, with counts exceeding eight on 18th February (20) and 9th March (12).

**Snow Bunting *Plectrophenax nivalis*.** As fog temporarily lifted on 7th November, two flew SW over Elmhirst Tram, calling frequently (ML).

**Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella*.** Observed through the year to 19th September, maxima six on 6th March and four on 11th July. Breeding proved.

**Reed Bunting *E. schoeniclus*.** The largest counts of the year were obtained on 13th June (32 males and five females), 4th July (34) and 4th September (c.50). Breeding proved.

## MAMMALS

**Mole *Talpa europaea*.** Molesigns were evident through the year.

**Rabbit *Oryctolagus cuniculus*.** Noted from the Thorne Colliery/Whaley Balk area, Swinefleet Warping Drain and the edge of the flooded workings. There were, however, no significant counts. In late November, the embankment of the railway to Goole, in at least the Inkle Moor-Durham's Warping Drain area, was treated with aluminium phosphide by a vermin control company, to check the Rabbit population there.

**Brown Hare *Lepus capensis*.** Few reported, but seen at the flooded workings and at Creykes, with three at the latter on 2nd January.

**Grey Squirrel *Sciurus carolinensis*.** Singles were noted at Will Pits on 1st/7th January, 2nd/4th-5th February and 13th March. Also one at Woodpecker Wood on 23rd May.

**Bank Vole *Clethrionomys glareolus*.** One was located towards the eastern end of Goole Moor Tram (map reference c.SE745168) on 23rd April (SH).

**Water Vole *Arvicola terrestris*.** The only notified records were singles at Mill Drain on 18th February and along Shearburn & Pitts Drain on 13th April.

**Fox *Vulpes vulpes*.** Reported on a range of dates during January-April, and in July, usually singly, but occasionally two in a day. Recorded prey was an unidentified duck and a Common Pheasant.

**Stoat *Mustela erminea*.** A Stoat in partial ermine was on Fisons' Road at Green Belt Scrape on 8th January (BPW). Also encountered on 3rd February (singles near the Shoulder o' Mutton and at Will Pits), 1st April (one at Fillingham's Gate), 19th April (one, no location), and 16th May (Will Pits).

**Weasel *M. nivalis*.** Seen in March on 6th (Swinefleet peat mill) and 18th (Bank Top).

**Badger *Meles meles*.** Present.

**Red Deer *Cervus elaphus*.** All records are listed:  
undated: Twenty-one near Will Pits Scrape and 14 on farmland south of Thorne Waste, regarded as constituting separate herds, thereby amounting to 35 head (KB).  
undated: Twenty-three in one herd at Will Pits.  
8th February: One stag at Will Pits.  
19th February: Eight in fields north of Crowle Moor.  
20th February: Six stags at the northern end of Crowle Moor.  
29th February: Eight at Will Pits, including five stags.  
6th March: Seven in a field opposite Bank Top.  
13th March: Nine at Will Pits.  
18th March: Nine at Will Pits.  
22nd March: Seventeen along Blackwater Dyke, with 14 later at the Swinefleet peat works, presumed to involve the same animals.  
23rd March: Seven at Will Pits, including four stags.  
25th March: Two immature stags at Will Pits.  
6th April: Nine at Will Pits.  
16th May: Ten stags at Will Pits.  
10th July: Seven on Fisons' Road at Will Pits, including four stags and one juvenile.  
11th July: Two stags on Fisons' Road at Will Pits.  
6th September: Eight hinds at Will Pits.  
6th October: Two at Will Pits.  
14th December: Two hinds near Mill Drain Marsh.

**Roe Deer *Capreolus capreolus*.** Reports in January included five north of Rawcliffe Moor on 19th, and February counts reached four (no details) on 11th. There were three records in March, including seven along Fisons' Road on 18th, and 15 on the NW edge of Thorne Waste on 14th (JGH). During April-May, the only record was of three does at Will Pits on 16th May. In June, occasional sightings included a pair along Shoulder o' Mutton Tram on 19th. There were infrequent records of up to five from early June to mid-September. These included an adult and a juvenile, and a separate doe, at the flooded workings on 10th July, and an adult and two juveniles (no details) on 2nd September. Other places in this period included Whaley Balk and Pony Bridge Marsh. The remaining records from the year concerned two in a field at the Pony Bridge on 7th November, eight in the 'Yorkshire Triangle'-Ribbon Row area on 14th December, and seven on 19th December distributed in the area of Moorends peat works (four) and Snaith & Cowick Moor (three).

**Muntjac *Muntiacus reevesi*.** Singles were encountered in Will Pits (KB) and on the Crowle side of nearby Warping Drain Bridge (*per* KG), but dates are not available.

## 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 2004 records.

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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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