

STATE OF THE PARK REVIEW 2009

- CHANGES IN THE NORTH YORK MOORS -

Headline Indicators

Land Management <i>Area of land managed in line with conservation objectives</i>	2006 - 2009	+ 11%
Biodiversity <i>No. of breeding Moorland wading birds</i>	2000 - 2008	Lapwing - 28% Golden Plover + 7% Curlew - 4% Snipe + 20%
Water Quality <i>No. of river sites with water quality identified as "very good"</i>	2005 - 2007	+ 11%
Air Quality <i>No. of days per year when low-level ozone is "moderate to higher"</i>	2006 - 2008	+ 35%
Public Rights of Way & Access <i>No. of problems on the Public Rights of Way Network</i>	2006 - 2008	- 3.4%
Visitors & Tourism <i>Change in the number of visitor days</i>	2006 - 2007	+ 1.1%
Traffic & Transport <i>Change in the amount of traffic</i>	2006 - 2008	- 5.5%
Cultural Heritage <i>No. of Moorland sheep flocks on the moors</i>	2006 - 2008	No Change
Community Facilities <i>Change in the number of villages with a general store</i>	2006 - 2009	- 2%
Housing and People in the Park <i>Ratio of house prices against income (lower quartile)</i>	2008	10.7

LAND MANAGEMENT

<i>Area of land managed in line with conservation objectives (2006 – 2009)</i>	+ 11%
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Percentage of land managed in line with conservation objectives

	1992	1997	2003	2004	2006	2009
Totals (hectares)	43,775	71,525	88,811	91,127	101,954	112,690

This is a measure of the farmland, moorland and woodland that has some form of agreed management intended to protect, enhance or create sites and features of conservation value in accordance with the National Park Management Plan objectives. The agreed management may take a variety of forms including designation (SSSI), management agreements and grant schemes.

BIODIVERSITY

<i>No. of breeding moorland wading birds (2000 – 2008)</i>	Lapwing -28% Golden Plover +7% Curlew -9% Snipe +20%
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Moorland Wader Survey

	Lapwing	Golden Plover	Curlew	Snipe	Total (pairs)
1996	791	856	1320	243	3210
2000	939	779	1796	184	3698
2008	672	832	1629	220	3353
	-28%	+7%	-9%	+20%	-9%

The Moorland Wader Survey forms an in-depth survey (84 x 1km squares) of the breeding success of four wader species; the Lapwing, the Golden Plover, the Curlew, and the Snipe. The fluctuations in the numbers reported are not large and can probably be attributed to normal population dynamics. It is uncertain whether the large decline in Lapwing is part of the observed national decline in the lapwing population or whether the North York Moors birds may simply be favouring alternative habitat, such as in-bye land or whether the cold early spring reduced the breeding numbers. As ever with periodic “snapshot” surveys, particular circumstances in any one year such as unusual weather can mask any underlying trend. It is only once a reasonable series of such surveys has been carried out that firmer conclusions can be drawn. Nevertheless, these birds’ welfare will continue to be a priority for moorland conservation.

WATER QUALITY

<i>No. of river sites with water quality identified as “very good” (2005 – 2007)</i>	+ 11%
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River Water: GQA sampling results

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Esk at Ruswarp	B	B	B	B	A	B	B	B	B
Esk at Grosmont	B	A	B	B	B	B		A	A
Esk upstream of Wood End	DATA CEASED IN 2006								
Murk Esk at Grosmont	B	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Derwent at Forge Valley	A	A	A	A	A	A		A	A
Rye at Rievaulx	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Pickering Beck	A	A	A	A	A	B	B	A	A
Dove at Kirby Mills	B	B	B	A	A	A	A	A	A

A = Very Good B = Good C = Fairly Good D = Fair E = Poor F = Bad

In 2005 the percentage of rivers with “very good” water quality was at 75% with six of the eight rivers being rated A. In 2007, six out of the seven rivers were rated A (86%) showing an 11% improvement. Despite the termination of the Wood End results, Pickering Beck has improved from B to an A resulting in an overall improvement upon previous years.

The GQA status of the River Esk at Ruswarp is B for 2008 which means that the Water Framework Directive status is Moderate. This section of river is consistently poorer quality to that upstream as tends to be the case in most rivers. There is possible pressure from agriculture and sediment run off. However, work is being carried out in this area on the Esk Pearl Mussel and Salmon Recovery Project which is hoped to improve this stretch of river.

AIR QUALITY

<i>No. of days per year when low-level ozone is “moderate to higher” (2006 – 2008)</i>	+ 35%
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Ozone Figures for High Muffles

The major threat to air quality and clean air is posed by traffic emissions which are having an increasing impact on both urban and rural areas. For data on the North York Moors National Park, there is a National Rural Monitoring Site located at High Muffles on the edge of Cropton Forest, near Pickering. At this site, ozone levels are measured continuously providing a detailed picture of the air quality. Data has been collected here since 1987.

Number of days when ozone pollution at High Muffles exceeded Air Quality Strategy Standards for 2005 (O3) daily maximum 8-hour running mean > 100 ug/m3

1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
31	16	20	24	16	26	31	31	14	42

The data is often most dependent on the spring weather, when background ozone in the northern hemisphere is naturally highest and a warm spell can result in many consecutive exceedences. Later in July and August the background is lower and only really hot spells of weather tend to generate exceedence days.

2007 was a very low year for ozone everywhere because it was so wet and unsettled throughout the spring and summer. There were some severe floods across the UK in June and July, and the rest of the spring/summer was not much better.

In 2008 we had a very warm spring with a lot of exceedences in May, and then another couple of warm weeks at the end of August, so all monitoring sites were higher than in 2007. We do not have information regarding the specific details of regional weather patterns in that year, but for some reason the increase in 2008 is seen most significantly at High Muffles, Hull and Leeds Centre which are fairly close together - there must be some regional influence.

PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY AND ACCESS

<i>No. of problems on the Public Rights of Way Network (2006 – 2008)</i>	- 3.4%
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Public Rights of Way Network

Percentage of Public Rights of Way that are easy to use						
	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2008
% easy to use	56	49.5	70.8	60.5	68.5	71

The indicator for the number of problems on the Public Right of Way Network has been taken from the percentage of 'easy to use' rights of way. As the percentage of 'easy to use' rights of way has risen, the overall number of problems encountered has been reduced and in this case, the negative percentage is a positive result.

This indicator includes three component parts; 1) that a path is correctly signposted where it leaves the road; 2) it is free from unlawful obstructions; and 3) its surface furniture [e.g. gates, stiles, bridges] are in good repair. The increase in the percentage of 'easy to use' footpath reflects ongoing work by the Park to continually improve maintenance regimes, open up the correct legal line of obstructed routes and, where necessary, to modify the Definitive Map to correct anomalies and inaccuracies. The increase in correctly 'signposted where they leave the road' is a subset of the above works undertaken by the Park which is a requirement by the Countryside Act.

VISITORS & TOURISM

<i>Change in the number of visitor days (2006 to 2007)</i>	+ 1.1%
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Visitor Days

Visitor days to the North York Moors (million)											
1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
8.1	8.7	9.5	10	9.5	7.1	8.6	9.5	9.1	9.3	9.0	9.1

The most recent figures available are the 2007 STEAM figures, which calculated that the number of visitors to the North York Moors in 2007 was 9,074.40 million; an increase of 100,000 visitors from 2006. Due to the amount of information and data produced to calculate these figures, it is not expected that the 2008 figures will be available until September of this year.

TRAFFIC & TRANSPORT

<i>Change in the amount of traffic (2006 – 2008)</i>	-5.5%
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Saltersgate Counter

Annual traffic count figures at Saltersgate, A169 (million)									
1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
1.657	1.648	1.579	1.836	1.976	1.929	1.920	1.946	1.932	1.838

The 2008 figure represents a 4.9% decrease in the amount of traffic using the A169 which equates 94,000 vehicles less than in 2007.

CULTURAL HERITAGE

<i>No. of moorland sheep flocks on the moors (2006 – 2008)</i>	NO CHANGE
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Moorland Sheep

Number of Moorland Flocks			
1998	2003	2006	2008
125	100	100	100

The numbers of moorland sheep flocks have not seen a change since 2003. This is seen as a positive outcome given the drastic rate of decline seen in previous years, prior to the introduction of the Sheep and Wildlife Enhancement Scheme in 2003. Since then numbers have remained consistent.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

<i>Change in the number of villages with a general store (2006 – 2009)</i>	-2%
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Percentage of villages with key facilities

	1989	1995	2003	2004	2006	2009
General Store	44%	40%	40%	33%	30%	28%
Post Office	63%	72%	42%	37%	32%	27%
Village Hall	70%	70%	70%	72%	62%	81%*
Village Pub	74%	74%	72%	67%	64%	71%*
Children's Play Area	26%	28%	35%	27%	25%	36%
*These increases are attributable to a better response rate to the 2009 survey compared with 2006						

The figures for 2009 are based upon the Settlement Hierarchy adopted as part of the Core Strategy which slightly differs from the previous years when the villages listed in the Local Plan were used. The 2006 survey was based upon the 84 villages listed in Policy H1 of the Local Plan, whereas the 2009 survey was based upon the 85 villages listed in the Settlement Hierarchy of the Core Strategy. Despite this, it is still considered that the figures create a realistic overall picture of the state of the Parks communities and the loss of village stores is widespread throughout the Park.

The number of villages within the Park with a General Store has decreased from 30% in 2006 to 28% in 2009, resulting in a loss of 2%. The figures show a close correlation between the closure of the village stores and the loss of village Post Offices which could have resulted from a knock on effect following the Government's announcement to close 2,500 Post Offices across the UK back in 2007.

Those areas that have seen an increase, such as Village Halls and Village Pubs are explained by the better response rate from parishes to the 2009 survey compared with the 2006 survey.

HOUSING AND PEOPLE IN THE PARK

<i>Ratio of house prices against income (lower quartile) (2008)</i>	10.7
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House Price Ratio		
2006	2007	2008
11.4	11.3	10.7

In previous State of the Park Reports the Housing Affordability Index has been calculated by dividing the average price of a semi detached house (minus 5% for a deposit) by the annual income of a Skilled Estate Worker. However as Skilled Estate Workers only represent a small percentage of the overall resident workforce the new methodology for calculating housing affordability ratios is by dividing an average figure of lower quartile full time annual earnings of the 4 District Authorities (taken from the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings – Analysis by place of residence by Local Authority) by the lower quartile house price (taken from the North York Moors National Park's Annual House Price Survey). The Government Guidance suggests that a dwelling is affordable if the price is 3.5 times the gross annual income for a single earner or 2.9 times the gross annual income for households with two earners. The Housing Affordability Ratio has fallen slightly over the last three years reflecting the downturn in the housing market, however is still not affordable to many local people.