



**North York Moors National Park Authority**

# State of the Park 2012

**Published May 2013**

## **INTRODUCTION**

The State of the Park report is produced every three years to review broad progress on delivery of the National Park Management Plan and to monitor wider environmental, social and economic trends in the National Park. The State of the Park reports focus on outcomes and the general state of the National Park rather than outputs and the delivery of specific projects or actions. The same set of indicators has been used over a number of years, enabling longer term trends to be drawn out. This report follows the format of the 2009 report and contains just the headline indicators – a wider suite of indicators was contained in the 2006 and 2003 State of the Park reports.

A new National Park Management Plan was agreed in 2012 and therefore future State of the Park reports will be focusing upon delivery of this new Plan, although most of the State of the Park indicators are still relevant and are identified within the new Plan. It may be appropriate to use a different set of headline indicators which better reflect the aims and targets of the new Plan, albeit that these indicators for which there is a long established set of data will still be monitored.

A summary of all the main changes since 2009 is provided at the end of this report, and should be read alongside the explanations contained within the report.

## LAND MANAGEMENT

<i>Change in area of land managed in line with conservation objectives (2009 – 2012)</i>	<b>+ 1%</b>
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<b>Area of land managed in line with conservation objectives<sup>1</sup></b>							
	1992	1997	2003	2004	2006	2009	2012
Totals (hectares)	43,775	71,525	88,811	91,127	101,954	<b>112,690</b>	<b>113,808</b>

Source: North York Moors National Park Authority

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 management agreements and grant schemes. The area of land managed in this way has increased significantly over the past two decades although more recently the rate of increase has slowed due to the fact that a large area of the Park is now managed in a favourable way. Work has instead focussed upon improving further the quality of land management within these areas, and the future focus will be upon improving habitat connectivity in line with the targets set out in the 2012 Management Plan.

## BIODIVERSITY

<i>Change in the number of breeding Moorland wading birds</i>	<b>No recent data</b>
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This survey has not been repeated since 2008, the most recent set of results were reported in the 2009 State of the Park report and are set out below:

<b>Number of pairs of breeding moorland wading birds</b>					
	Lapwing	Golden Plover	Curlew	Snipe	Total
1996	791	856	1320	243	3210
2000	939	779	1796	184	3698
2008	672	832	1629	220	3353
Change 2000-2008	-28%	+7%	-9%	+20%	-9%

Source: North York Moors National Park Authority – Moorland Wader Surveys

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. As reported in

<sup>1</sup> This includes a range of land management situations including land managed under agri-environment schemes, land designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest and land owned by the National Park Authority or other body with conservation objectives.

the 2009 State of the Park report, the fluctuations in the numbers reported are not large and can probably be attributed to normal population dynamics. As this is a 'snapshot' survey, particular circumstances in any one year such as unusual weather can mask any underlying trend.

## WATER QUALITY

<i>Change in the number of river sites with water quality identified as "very good" (2005 – 2007)</i>	<b>+ 11%</b>
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Classification of rivers under the General Quality Assessment									
	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	A
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	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

Source: Environment Agency

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

Overall status of water bodies under the Water Framework Directive	
	2011
High	0%
Good	29%
Moderate	54%
Poor	16%
Bad	0%

Source: Environment Agency

Water quality has been assessed using the General Quality Assessment for a number of years. However, following the introduction of the Water Framework Directive, a new method of monitoring water quality in rivers has now been introduced. This measures water quality in terms of chemical condition, biological condition and nutrients, although has only been collected once so far – in 2011. However, historic records (assessed under the General Quality Assessment) show that water quality in the sampled rivers has been improving over the past decade.

It is thought that the reason not all water bodies in the National Park are reaching a 'good' standard is due to diffuse pollution and barriers to fish migration, although some may be failing due to natural

reasons such as pH levels. The new Management Plan for the National Park identifies a number of ways in which water quality in rivers and streams will continue to be improved including through agri-environment schemes and Catchment Sensitive Farming Initiatives.

## AIR QUALITY

<i>Change in the number of days per year when low-level ozone is “moderate to higher” (2009 – 2012)</i>	<b>Fluctuating</b>
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<b>Number of days when ozone pollution at High Muffles exceeded Air Quality Strategy Standards<sup>2</sup></b>											
2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>
20	24	16	26	31	31	13	41	<b>40</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>17</b>

Source: UK Air – Annual and Exceedence Statistics ([www.uk-air.defra.gov.uk](http://www.uk-air.defra.gov.uk))

Ozone levels have been measured continuously since 1987 at the air quality monitoring station at High Muffles, just inside the National Park near to Cropton Forest. Ozone concentrations may occur a long distance from the source of the pollutants meaning that action to reduce concentrations must often be taken at a wider level. Ozone concentrations can also be influenced by the weather with warmer spring weather tending to result in more exceedences. The large degree of variability generally reflects patterns for rural areas across the UK.

## PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY AND ACCESS

<i>Change in the percentage of Public Rights of Way that are Easy to Use (2009 – 2012)</i>	<b>+9.3%</b>
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<b>Percentage of the Public Rights of Way Network classed as easy to use</b>									
2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>
49.5	70.8	60.5	68.5	69.7	70.9	<b>65.2</b>	<b>70.5</b>	<b>65.1</b>	<b>71.3</b>

Source: North York Moors National Park Authority

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. Whilst the percentage of rights of way which are easy to use varies from year to year as would be expected from a relatively small (5%) sample size, the upward trend continues and, over the past decade there has been an improvement of over 20 percentage points. A slightly refined survey which discounts those factors which do not affect public enjoyment, shows that over 80% of the rights of way network is now easy to use by a member of the public.

<sup>2</sup> for 2005 (O3) daily maximum 8-hour running mean > 100 ug/m3

## VISITORS & TOURISM

<i>Change in the number of visitor days (2009 - 2011)</i>	<b>-4.2%</b>
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<b>Visitor days to the North York Moors (millions)</b>										
1998	2000	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>
9.5	9.5	9.5	9.1	9.3	9.0	10.76	10.57	<b>10.73</b>	<b>10.2</b>	<b>10.1</b>

Source: Scarborough Tourism Economic Activity Monitor annual reports (Global Tourism Solutions (UK) Ltd)

The database used for collecting data on visitors was updated in 2007 and is the reason for the apparent dramatic increase in visitors between 2006 and 2007. The data shows that the number of visitor days spent in the Park has been declining since 2007. The new National Park Management Plan seeks to reverse this decline through a number of measures and policies. Over the longer term, since 1998, there appears to have been an overall growth in the annual number of visitor days.

## TRAFFIC & TRANSPORT

<i>Change in the amount of traffic (2009 - 2012)</i>	<b>Fluctuated</b>
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<b>Annual traffic count figures at Saltersgate, A169 (million)</b>									
1998	2000	2003	2006	2007	2008	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>
1.64	1.65	1.98	1.95	1.93	1.84	<b>2.02</b>	<b>1.76</b>	<b>1.90</b>	<b>1.74</b>

Source: North Yorkshire County Council traffic data

In 2011, 1.9 million vehicles passed the Saltersgate traffic counter, located between Pickering and Whitby. This is one of the Park's relatively major routes, although the figures will only represent a fraction of total traffic in the Park. The figures show that the amount of traffic passing the Saltersgate traffic counter has fluctuated over recent years, although over a longer time period has generally increased.

## CULTURAL HERITAGE

<i>Change in number of moorland sheep flocks on the moors (2008 - 2012)</i>	<b>+1%</b>
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<b>Number of moorland flocks</b>				
1998	2003	2006	<b>2008</b>	<b>2012</b>
125	100	100	<b>100</b>	<b>101</b>

Source: North York Moors National Park Authority

The numbers of moorland sheep flocks have risen by 1 since the last State of the Park report was published. This is a positive outcome given the drastic rate of decline seen around a decade ago, prior to the introduction of the Sheep and Wildlife Enhancement Scheme in 2003 but sheep flocks are nevertheless still at risk from future changes.

## COMMUNITY FACILITIES

<i>Change in the number of villages with a general store (2009 - 2012)</i>	<b>No change (see explanation)</b>
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<b>Facilities in villages</b>						
Percentage of villages with:	1989	1995	2003	2006	<b>2009</b>	<b>2012</b>
General Store	44%	40%	40%	30%	<b>28%</b>	<b>28%</b>
Post Office	63%	72%	42%	32%	<b>27%</b>	<b>29%</b>
Village Hall	70%	70%	70%	62%	<b>81%</b>	<b>69%</b>
Village Pub	74%	74%	72%	64%	<b>71%</b>	<b>71%</b>
Children's Play Area	26%	28%	35%	25%	<b>36%</b>	<b>39%</b>

Source: North York Moors National Park Authority - Community Facilities Surveys

This data is the result of the Community Facilities Survey which is sent to all Parish Councils in the National Park. The results are dependent upon the response rate to this survey. The figures for 2009 and 2012 are based upon the Settlement Hierarchy contained in the 2008 Core Strategy which differs slightly from the previous years when the villages listed in the 2003 Local Plan were used. Despite this, it is still considered that the figures create a realistic overall picture of the state of the Parks' communities. The loss of general stores and post offices is particularly significant, and doesn't necessarily only affect one community but can mean residents of smaller surrounding villages have to travel further to access facilities. Although not reflected in the latest figures due to the response rate, 3 respondents reported the loss of a general store between 2009 and 2012. There is a similar story in relation to post office provision as, whilst the percentage reported has not declined, the survey responses reveal that a total of five Post Offices have been lost since the previous survey. Around 50% of post office services are now being provided within other facilities rather than as stand-alone services.

## HOUSING AND PEOPLE IN THE PARK

<i>Affordability Index: multiple of earnings required to finance a mortgage (2008 – 2011)</i>	<b>Improved by 14%</b>
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<b>House Price Affordability Index<sup>3</sup></b>			
2006	2007	<b>2008</b>	<b>2011</b>
11.4	11.3	<b>10.7</b>	<b>9.2</b>

Source: North York Moors National Park Authority interpretation of data from Annual House Price Survey (2011) and Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (2011)

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 multiple has fallen since 2007 which is likely to reflect the downturn in the housing market, however housing is still not affordable to many local people and the figure is still much higher than the national average of 6.5 and the Yorkshire and Humber average of 5.1<sup>4</sup>. 109 affordable houses have been granted planning permission in the National Park since 2006. The 2012 National Park Management Plan continues support for the provision of affordable housing and sets a target for the provision of 75 further units by 2017.

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<sup>3</sup> 2008 figures onwards are based upon the average lower quartile full time annual earnings of the 4 constituent district and borough councils and the lower quartile house price. Data relating to before 2008 is based upon the annual income of a Skilled Estate Worker and the average price of a semi-detached house. It is therefore not possible to draw any longer term conclusions.

<sup>4</sup> CLG live tables on affordability



# STATE OF THE PARK 2012

## SUMMARY OF CHANGES IN THE NORTH YORK MOORS NATIONAL PARK

The Headline Indicators below summarise the changes in key areas over recent years. These should be read alongside the details contained in the report.

Headline Indicator	Change since 2009 State of the Park report
<b>Land Management</b> <i>Area of land managed in line with conservation objectives</i>	<b>+ 1%</b> (2009-2012)
<b>Biodiversity</b> <i>No. of breeding Moorland wading birds</i>	<b>No recent data</b>
<b>Water Quality</b> <i>No. of river sites with water quality identified as 'very good'</i>	<b>No comparable data</b>
<b>Air Quality</b> <i>No. of days per year when low-level ozone is 'moderate to higher'</i>	<b>Fluctuated</b> (2009 – 2011)
<b>Public Rights of Way &amp; Access</b> <i>Percentage of the Rights of Way network classed as easy to use</i>	<b>+ 9.3%</b> (2009 – 2012)
<b>Visitors &amp; Tourism</b> <i>Number of visitor days</i>	<b>- 5.9%</b> (2009 – 2011)
<b>Traffic &amp; Transport</b> <i>Amount of traffic at Saltersgate traffic counter</i>	<b>Fluctuated</b> (2009 – 2011)
<b>Cultural Heritage</b> <i>No. of Moorland sheep flocks on the moors</i>	<b>+ 1%</b> (2009 – 2011)
<b>Community Facilities</b> <i>Change in the number of villages with a general store</i>	<b>No change<sup>5</sup></b>
<b>Housing and People in the Park</b> <i>Affordability Index: multiple of earnings required to finance a mortgage</i>	<b>Improved by 14%</b> (2008 – 2011)

<sup>5</sup> See explanation