



Restoring the Humberhead Peatlands



Thorne Moors. © Natural England/Robert Goodison



Hare's-tail Cottongrass on Thorne Moors. © Natural England/Peter Roworth

The LIFE+ EU funding programme for the natural environment has awarded a £2.3 million grant to Natural England to help restore the precious lowland raised bog habitat of the Humberhead Peatlands National Nature Reserve. This European investment will help provide a long-term future for the rare plants, birds and insects that have evolved to live on this unique wetland habitat. The bog requires long-term restoration due to the impact of commercial peat extraction which occurred from the 1870s until 2004, leaving only a shallow depth of peat over much of the site.

This three-year project will be completed in 2017 and will involve careful management of water levels using dams, weirs and bunds and by clearing scrub vegetation to reduce the amount of water being sucked out of the peat. By re-creating boggy conditions, specialist bog plants can once again flourish.

Natural England already carries out restoration work on its Humberhead Peatlands National Nature Reserve (NNR) as it is part of two internationally important sites - Thorne Moors Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Hatfield Moors SAC which together form the UK's largest lowland raised bog complex.

The LIFE project will boost this much needed restoration and compliments the Water Level Management Plan already being delivered by the Doncaster East Internal Drainage Board (DE IDB) on Thorne Moors. The Board is a key partner working with Natural England to carefully manage the water levels on the

Moors. The LIFE+ funding provided by the European Union matches funding already secured by DE IDB, along with a contribution from Natural England.

Restoration of raised bog sites also has the added benefit of contributing to combating climate change as healthy peat habitats lock in carbon and wetland restoration can help prevent flooding.

Job creation is an additional benefit of the LIFE project, as a team of 4 full time staff and 7 part time staff will be recruited to deliver the scheme.

Outcomes of the project include:

- 28 square kilometres of the area rewetted to restore degraded peatland and provide habitat for birds such as nightjar and hobby and specialist plants, including cotton grasses, bog mosses and wild cranberry.
- Research and monitoring will be undertaken into the bog's unique bird and insect populations which will help similar restoration projects elsewhere.
- Public awareness will be raised by explaining what work is carried out and why during engagement with local communities and the results of the project will be widely disseminated.

The LIFE project will help to safeguard the Humberhead Peatlands for wildlife and for future generations of people to enjoy.



Natura 2000 - Europe's nature for you. This site is part of the European Natura 2000 Network. It has been designated because it hosts some of Europe's most threatened species and habitats. All 27 countries of the EU are working together through the Natura 2000 network to safeguard Europe's rich and diverse natural heritage for the benefit of all!



Humberhead Levels Partnership

Doncaster East IDB





The Life Programme

The LIFE programme is the EU's funding programme for the environment and climate action. The general objective of LIFE is to contribute to the implementation, updating and development of EU environmental and climate policy and legislation by co-financing projects with European added value.

<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/index.htm>

The Humberhead Peatlands LIFE+ project is managed by a steering group including the following partner organisations:



Natural England is here to secure a healthy natural environment for people to enjoy, where wildlife is protected and England's traditional landscapes are safeguarded for future generations. www.gov.uk/natural-england



The Doncaster East Internal Drainage Board operates under the Land Drainage Act 1991. The Board's purpose is to protect people and property against river and surface water flooding through water level management within low lying areas. This is predominately from the east of Doncaster whose water discharges into the River Trent. By working with partners, water levels are managed for the overall benefit of people, property, commerce, industry, agriculture and the aquatic environment. www.shiregroup-idbs.gov.uk



Formed in 1989, Thorne and Hatfield Moors Conservation Forum acts as an umbrella for a wide range of like-minded organisations. Its extensive network is drawn from voluntary organisations and natural history societies, and it has observers from statutory agencies and local authorities. It has, on occasions, taken on a campaigning role but this aspect of its work has always been underpinned by robust science, research, survey and monitoring. The Forum is administered by an Executive Committee and it publishes its findings extensively. www.thmcf.org



Lincolnshire
Wildlife Trust

Founded in 1948, the Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust is dedicated to safeguarding wildlife and wild places in Lincolnshire and promoting understanding and enjoyment of the natural world from the Humber to the Wash. The Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust is the largest voluntary nature conservation organisation in Lincolnshire with over 25,000 members and around 100 nature reserves. Our vision is for Lincolnshire, North and North-East Lincolnshire, and the neighbouring sea and estuaries, to be rich in wildlife for the benefit of everyone.

www.lincstrust.org.uk



North Lincolnshire Council was established on 1 April 1996, taking over an 85,000-hectare area of the former South Humberside. The area has a population of 157,050 in a mix of urban and rural areas. Scunthorpe is the largest town in North Lincolnshire with a population of around 60,000. The council provides a range of local government services from schools and libraries to roads and refuse collection. Our vision is "Aspiring people, inspiring places" aiming to provide excellence in customer service, value for taxpayers money, making our communities safer and stronger, regenerating our area and increasing prosperity. www.northlincs.gov.uk



Doncaster Council's purpose is to ensure Doncaster and its people thrive. Doncaster is geographically the largest Metropolitan Borough Council in the United Kingdom. The borough contains a unique diversity of habitats due to its geology, soils, climate and history, including Thorne and Hatfield Moors, which are of international importance for their wildlife. The Council's environmental priorities are to protect and enhance green infrastructure, nurture progressive, healthy, safe and vibrant communities and improve quality of life today and for future generations. The Council will continue to work in partnership to support these aims. www.doncaster.gov.uk