A joint partnership publication for the Humberhead Peatlands National Nature Reserve.
Welcome to the Humberhead Peatlands National Nature Reserve – a beautiful and unique place to see wonderful wildlife, explore history, get involved by volunteering or participate in any of the many activities taking place. Imagine on one visit you could see common crane, red or roe deer, and then watch adders bask in sunshine as they emerge from Winter slumber... Walk on Crowle Moors and across onto its neighbour Thorne Moors and visit Hatfield Moors, pausing at one of the tranquil resting and viewing spots listening to the song of visiting and resident birds that fill the air.

This is the first in what we hope will be a series of news-sheets and concentrates on letting you know how to get into the Moors. The individuals and organisations who have got together to produce this publication feel it is important to let you know why changes are needed and how they might also benefit the local community. It will be a two-way process in which you tell us what you think – your concerns and also what you enjoy about the Moors so we can focus on the right subjects and seek out the most useful information for you the reader. The Editor welcomes other points of view, providing they are constructive and supported by facts.

This area of our countryside has been shaped over thousands of years by human activities and changes in climate. Ancient flooding, loss of trees and more recently peat extraction, have all shaped the Humberhead Peatlands. Whether you think it should be covered with trees or be an open heath with cottongrass and heathers, it is a wild space and it gives a feeling of getting away from the daily grind.

Peat bogs like these are only found in a few places across the world and they are very rare in south and east England. They are so special, we have a real responsibility to look after them. We can take pride in our local Moors being so important, nationally and internationally.

It would take a long news-sheet to describe all the amazing features of the Moors but a few of the main ones are listed below:

- Two largest lowland peat bogs in Great Britain. Though damaged by centuries of drainage and peat extraction they are now set up to recover over the next hundred years. For this reason Thorne and Hatfield Moors are Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and a Special Protection Area (SPA).
A long list of invertebrates (flies, spiders, butterflies, beetles, snails, etc) many of which are described as endangered in Britain. Not only does the bog support these invertebrates but others that were once common in the surrounding flat landscape (sometimes known as the Humberhead Levels) before they were drained and used for agriculture.

Birds including the hobby, that chases and eats dragonflies, which we have noted above, are supported by the bog. The nightjar – nocturnal as the name suggests, nests and feeds on the Moors in summer and is why they are designated as a Special Protection Area.

Most of the Humberhead Peatlands National Nature Reserve is managed by Natural England with Crowle Moors managed by Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust and North Lincolnshire Council. Natural England is responsible for understanding what the special wildlife of the peat bogs rely on so that the right work can be done to help them prosper. It is challenging managing nature reserves as there are often competing demands, even between different rare species. We would like some feedback from you as to how we are doing.

Autumn 2014 marked another exciting time in the history. A new three-year EU-funded LIFE+ Project started and Natural England staff were joined by a Project Manager, a Monitoring Officer, a part-time Administrator, and eight practical members of staff, six of whom are seasonal workers.

The LIFE+ Project and the Water Level Management Plan, together constitute the biggest single investment in peatland restoration on Thorne and Hatfield Moors since DEFRA bought remaining peat extraction rights in 2002 to halt peat extraction. Doncaster East Internal Drainage Board are carrying out a Water Level Management Plan on Thorne Moors. This will help to achieve the right water levels to get really good bog developing again over much larger areas of the Moors. This means that a lot of ditch damming, building of small weirs and forming walls of peat (called bunds) to keep the water where it is needed most are being constructed. The cover of birch will also be reduced as it is so effective at sucking the peatland dry.
The EU funding is aimed squarely at restoring habitats on our internationally important bogs. However, it will also commission research into our nightjar populations, and the effects of the Project on water levels for plants and insects will be monitored.

All of us are working towards understanding just how important the bogs are for wildlife, and for people, as well as their importance in locking-up carbon dioxide and helping to reduce climate change.

What changes might you see when you visit? The old peat milling fields on Hatfield Moors will grow over with cottongrasses and sphagnum. There will be a bit less heather and a bit more cottongrass generally. Although we do not want to alter the overall landscape, the dense scrub and rhododendron will be thinned in many places.

Even though there are very few places in England where more species of insects have been recorded, we are still finding new species on the National Nature Reserve.

In the last year, more than 19 new species of moth have been identified for the first time on Thorne Moors alone – adding to the overall list of more than 5,000 plant and animal species supported by the Reserve!

Take care

※ There are many old peat workings, drains and water courses. You are strongly advised to keep to way marked walks and existing tracks.
※ Please take responsibility for your own safety. In hot weather you will need a sunhat, drinking water and insect repellent.
※ Dogs must be kept under effective control at all times. You must keep your dog on a short lead between 1 March and 31 July and all year round near farm animals.
※ Camping, fishing, barbeques, motorcycles, horses and cycles are not allowed. Cycles are permitted on the designated route only at Hatfield and horses by permit only at Hatfield.
※ Do not leave valuables in your car.
※ Danger deep water. No swimming.
※ Snakes live here. Do not touch them.

Please follow the Countryside Code

※ Be safe, plan ahead and follow any signs.
※ Leave gates and property as you find them.
※ Protect plants and animals and take your litter home.
※ Keep dogs under effective control.
※ Consider other people.

Facilities

※ There are toilets on Hatfield Moors at the Boston Park car park but none at Thorne Moors – the nearest being in the town.
Walking the Moors

There are picnic areas, benches and viewing points throughout the Reserve, most of which are shown on interpretation boards at key access points.

The Peatlands Way long distance footpath crosses the Moors. The Countryside Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW) gives you the right to walk freely in designated areas of open space. A large proportion of the Moors is covered by the Act but not all so see maps on site for more details.

Occasionally, we may have to restrict access to certain areas for wildlife management, for your safety. Areas that have to be temporarily closed will be clearly signed and also shown on www.gov.uk/natural-england

For more information about Open Access please contact Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council 01302 736000 or the Open Access Contact Centre 0300 060 2091.
Thorne Moors

There are two flat walks across Thorne from the west access point near Moorends. From the east, Crowle Moors meets Thorne at a metal footbridge access point (Bailey Bridge) and there is a third circular walk. All involve a mixture of peatland, grass and boardwalks underfoot.

Please park thoughtfully along Grange Road or at the Winning Post Centre in Moorends. Follow the brown signs along a disused road to a metal footbridge on the Reserve’s boundary, close to site of the old Thorne Colliery. Cycle racks are available.

For foot access, leave Marshland Road in Moorends at the brown sign. Turn left into Moor Lane and then right onto Jones’ Cable. Follow for a mile to the Reserve’s boundary.
How do I get to Humberhead Peatlands NNR?

The closest towns to the NNR are Goole, Doncaster and Scunthorpe.

By public transport

Rail stations – Thorne North and South. Contact South Yorkshire Transport on 01709 515151.

Moorends is served by bus from Thorne. Contact Doncaster Tourist Information on 01302 734309.

Crowle is served by rail and bus. Contact Brigg Tourist Information on 01652 657053.

Hatfield Woodhouse and Wroot villages are served by bus. For information call Traveline on 0871 200 2233.

Hatfield Moors

Hatfield Moors has three way-marked walks, including an easy access route suitable for wheelchairs, pushchairs and some mobility buggies – featuring viewing and dipping platforms, bird hides and resting places. Also a signed cycle route and a horse riding route – by permit only.

The main car park is at Boston Park, which is easily accessed off the A614 between Hatfield Woodhouse and Blaxton, following the brown signs. Free and accessible parking, disabled toilets and cycle racks are available. There is a smaller car park at Ten Acre Lake accessed down a rough track off Remple Lane from the A614 in Hatfield Woodhouse.

Foot access is from Wroot village. Follow the finger post marking a bridleway at the western end of village. Head north across the River Torne and continue down a track to a metal footbridge on the Reserve’s boundary.
Peatlands Way
Dragonfly walk. Easy access. Flat, no steps or hills
Heather walk. Flat, no steps or hills. Some peat surface
Deer walk. Flat, no steps or hills. Mostly peat surface
Blue trail. Horse riding (by permit only), and cycling
Hide. Suitable for wheelchair access
Lindholme Bank Road
No vehicular or pedestrian access to the public
Viewing platform
Moor Space is produced by a Steering Group and is edited by Roger Meade, who knew the Moors well before retiring from English Nature in 2006. He can be contacted at moorspace@yahoo.com

The Steering Group includes representatives of the following organisations:

**North Lincolnshire Council** – Own and manage land on Crowle Moors and maintain access to this and other land nearby.
Contact: 01724 729000  *  environmentteam@northlincs.gov.uk

**Doncaster Metropolitan Council** – Publicises access to and around the Moors.
Contact: 01302 736000  *  publicrightsofway@doncaster.gov.uk

**Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust** – Owns land on Crowle Moors and manages it as a nature reserve.
Contact: 01507 526667  *  info@lincstrust.co.uk

**Natural England** – Natural England owns land on Thorne Moors, Goole Moors and Hatfield Moors. It is all part of the Humberhead Peatlands National Nature Reserve. You will shortly find the Reserve on Facebook – search for Humberhead Peatlands.
Contact Senior Reserve Manager: 07770 408259.
www.gov.uk/natural-england

**Thorne & Hatfield Moors Conservation Forum** – Prioritises science and publishes research, see website for list of publications. It also campaigns on issues affecting the conservation of the Moors.
www.thmcf.org and see also thmcf.wordpress.com
Contact: execsec@thmcf.org

**Restoring the Humberhead Peatlands** – LIFE+ Project (LIFE13NAT/UK/000451) – Funding from the European Union’s Biodiversity and Nature Programme (EU LIFE+), Doncaster East Internal Drainage Board and Natural England is helping the restoration of lowland raised mires of Thorne and Hatfield Moors
Contact: Humberhead.Peatlands@naturalengland.org.uk

**JBA** – Is a multi-disciplinary environmental and engineering consultancy specialising in wetland ecology, river restoration and the management of water with offices throughout the UK, Ireland and in the far East.
Contact: Kieran Sheehan on 01302 720313
kieran.sheehan@jbaconsulting.com

**FRONT COVER IMAGES**: Cottongrass on Thorne Moors © Peter Roworth
Visitors to Hatfield Moors © Chris Robinson. Volunteers on Crowle Moors © Janet Canning