

20 Years at the RSPB Dearne Valley



The RSPB were keen to get involved in the Dearne Valley so that they could have the opportunity to work with the Environmental Agency to create and manage sites for nature conservation. This led to the RSPB taking on management of Wombwell Ings, Bolton Ings, Adwick and the full acquisition of Edderthorpe Flash.

2007: The RSPB, Natural England and Environmental Agency formed the Dearne Valley Green Heart Partnership.

Past 20 Years: Habitat Creation and Restoration have been the key drivers for much of the reserve network. There are way too many things to be celebrated but to highlight some of the big ones:

2003: RSPB took over the management of now RSPB Old Moor. The RSPB's first Urban Wetland Site, with not only nature in mind but also a place for people to come and enjoy nature, connect with nature and feel safe.



2009: Avocets started breeding on our sites. This Schedule 1 species is the emblem of the RSPB and symbolises the bird protection movement in the UK more than any other species. *Image Avocets: Spike*



2009 saw our first nesting Bearded Tit, their “pings” a regular occurrence over the reedbeds. This bird was once one of the rarest breeding birds in the UK. *Bearded Tit Image: Emma Batterley*

2012 saw the First Breeding Bittern at Old Moor. The bittern is one of the greatest success stories and were once unheard of in South Yorkshire, thanks to the efforts of the RSPB these are now a regular favourite sighting here.

Image 1 Bittern: Ben Andrew Image 2 Bittern: Dylan Harvey



2013: Our famous bittern hide was built for people to be able to access the reedbeds for great viewings of the ever so elusive bitterns.



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Between **2010** and **2016** eels were reintroduced to create more food for the bitterns.

2016/2017: The productivity of wading birds has increased even more, since the predator fencing has been put in at Adwick Washland. The main driver behind the decline of our beloved meadow birds in many parts of Europe is insufficient breeding success as a result of high levels of predation. Fewer chicks fledged means fewer become breeding birds themselves, reducing population size over time. To reverse population declines of species like black-tailed godwit and lapwing. This is why these fences are vital to the work we are undertaking in the Dearne Valley. *Wader Image 1: Fay Louise Wader Image 2 Oystercatchers: Keith Pickering Wader Image 3: Wendy Goulty*



2020: Marsh Harriers moved into the area and have been nesting here ever since. There are roughly about 600 Marsh Harriers in the UK, which is less than tigers globally and we can find them right here at RSPB Old Moor as a regular swooping over the reedbeds. *Image 1 Marsh Harriers: Gerald Lax Image 2: Spike*



2022: We were designated SSSI status. This is a Site of Special Scientific Interest, a formal designation, it means that our reserve is described as having a particular science interest due to rare species of fauna or flora it contains or even important geological or physiological features. Pretty BIG in the conservation world! *Image Red Kites: Gerald Lax*



RSPB Old Moor is often conceived as being only a birders paradise but thanks to RSPB's conservation efforts, we see a great variety of wildlife on this reserve, the rare Willow Emerald Damselfly and Hairy Dragonflies can be spotted at Old Moor. There are regular stoat and weasel sightings from the front of the welcome shed and an occasional grass snake is spotted around. A great wildlife highlight in the Dearne Valley and thanks to the efforts to increase biodiversity in the Dearne Valley there is now occasional otter activity at Old Moor and certainly along the river Dearne.



Damselfly and Dragon: David Pritchard Bee orchids: Jenny Tweedie