

20 Years of the RSPB Dearne Valley



The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds were keen to get involved in the Dearne Valley for 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.

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 management of the Old Moor Wetland Centre; it's first urban wetland site. Management plans included developing a place for people to come, as well as providing habitats for nature.

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



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: Julian Mayston*



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 conservation success stories and were once unheard of in South Yorkshire.

Thanks to the efforts of the RSPB, they 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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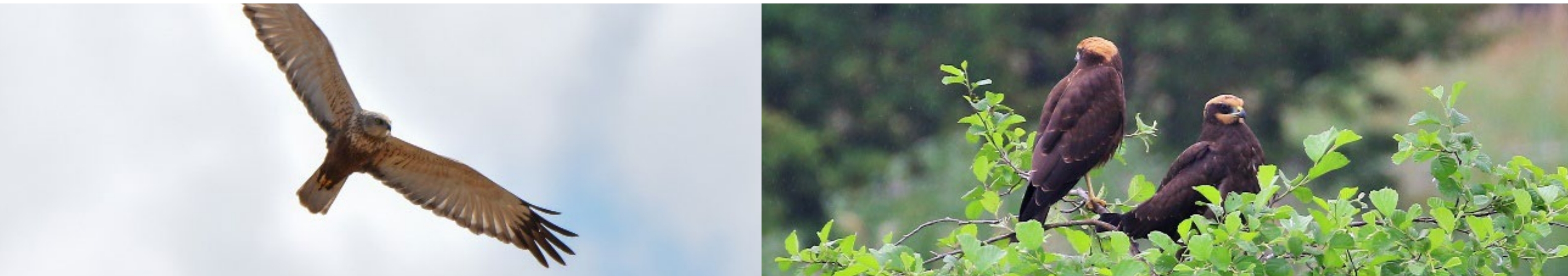


2010 to 2016: Eels were reintroduced to increase biodiversity.

2016-2017: The breeding success of wading birds has continued to improve since predator fencing has been installed at Adwick Washlands. Predator fences are vital to the RSPB's work in the Dearne Valley to reverse population declines of species like black-tailed godwit and lapwing. *Wader Image 1: Fay Louise Wader Image 2 Oystercatchers: Keith Pickering Wader Image 3: Wendy Goulty*



2020: Marsh harriers successfully bred at Old Moor, and have done so each year since then. There are roughly 600 Marsh harriers in the UK, fewer than tigers globally yet they are regularly seen at RSPB Old Moor, swooping over the reedbeds. *Image 1 Marsh Harriers: Gerald Lax Image 2: Julian Mayston*



2022: Dearne Valley wetland sites, including RSPB Old Moor are awarded SSSI status. This recognises that they are a Site of Special Scientific Interest for their rare wildlife and range of different habitats. It is a BIG achievement in the conservation world. *Image Red Kites: Gerald Lax*



RSPB Old Moor is often perceived as being only a Birder's paradise but thanks to The 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 occasional sightings of grass snake. Otter have returned to the River Dearne and are occasionally active at Old Moor - this is testament to our efforts to increase biodiversity in the Dearne Valley.



Damselfly and Dragon: David Pritchard Bee orchids: Jenny Tweedie