

Breeding Bird Survey of the Peak District Moorlands



Moors for the Future Research Note No 1

May 2005

Special Conservation Value

— The moorlands of the Peak District National Park support nationally and internationally important numbers of Golden Plover, Dunlin, Curlew, Merlin, Ring Ouzel and Whinchat.

International Importance

— After surveying this area for upland breeding birds in 1990 (Brown & Shepherd), the moors were designated as Special Protection Area (SPA, EU Birds Directive).

Survey 2004

— In order to assess changes, the Moors for the Future project conducted the first full repeat of the 1990 survey, the 2004 Peak District Moorland Breeding Bird Survey.



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Dunlin on moorland plateau

Indicators of Habitat Quality

— Bird populations are excellent indicators of positive and negative changes in habitat condition. This may help identify efficient conservation and recreation management planning for sustainable moorlands in the future.



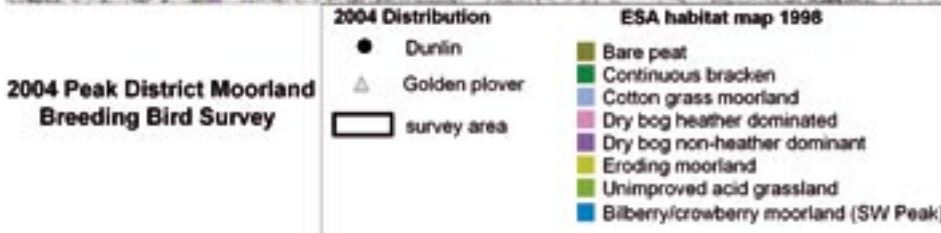
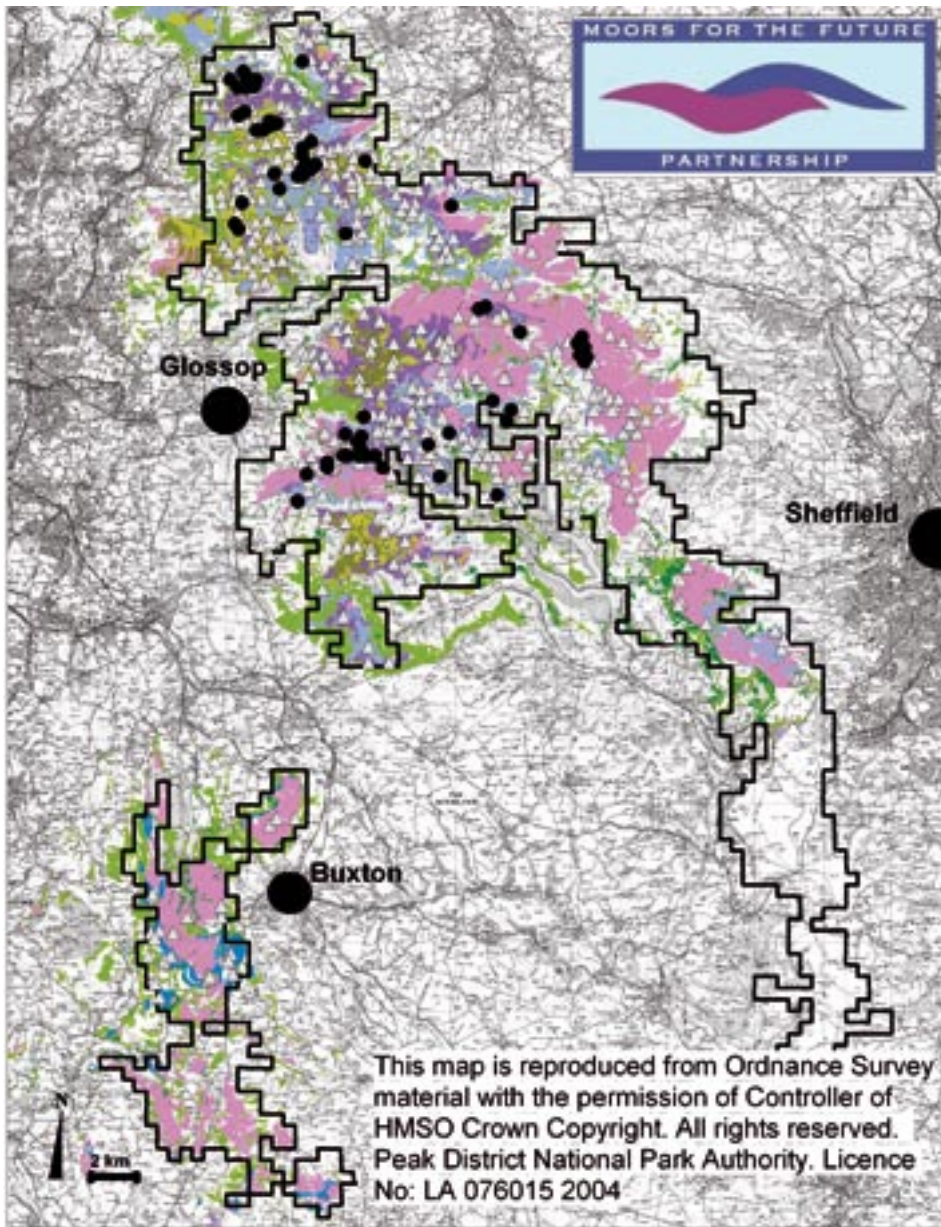
NUMBER BREEDING PAIRS

Species	Peak District ^a	Great Britain	% of total
Merlin ^b	31(6)	1,300	2.38 (0.46)
Peregrine ^b	25 (5)	1,185	2.11 (0.42)
Golden Plover	424	22,600	1.88
Red Grouse	5,598	250,000	2.24
Dunlin	67	9,150	0.73
Curlew	514	33,000	1.56
Short-eared Owl ^b	28 (18)	1,000	2.80 (1.80)
Wheatear	51	55,000	0.09
Ring Ouzel	83	5,500	1.51
Twite	11	65,000	0.02

^a data for whole survey area

^b raptor sightings (in brackets confirmed breeding pairs)





Habitat Associations

Blanket Bog / Eroding Peat

The vast blanket bogs of the Peak District support large numbers of breeding Golden Plover and smaller numbers of Dunlin.

While the Golden Plover is also associated with eroding moorlands and even bare peat, the Dunlin is notably absent from the Bleaklow plateau – hopefully a reversible trend after Moors for the Future restoration.

Heather Moorland

On the better-drained heather moorlands, Curlew, Red Grouse and Short-eared Owl breed.

Moorland Fringe

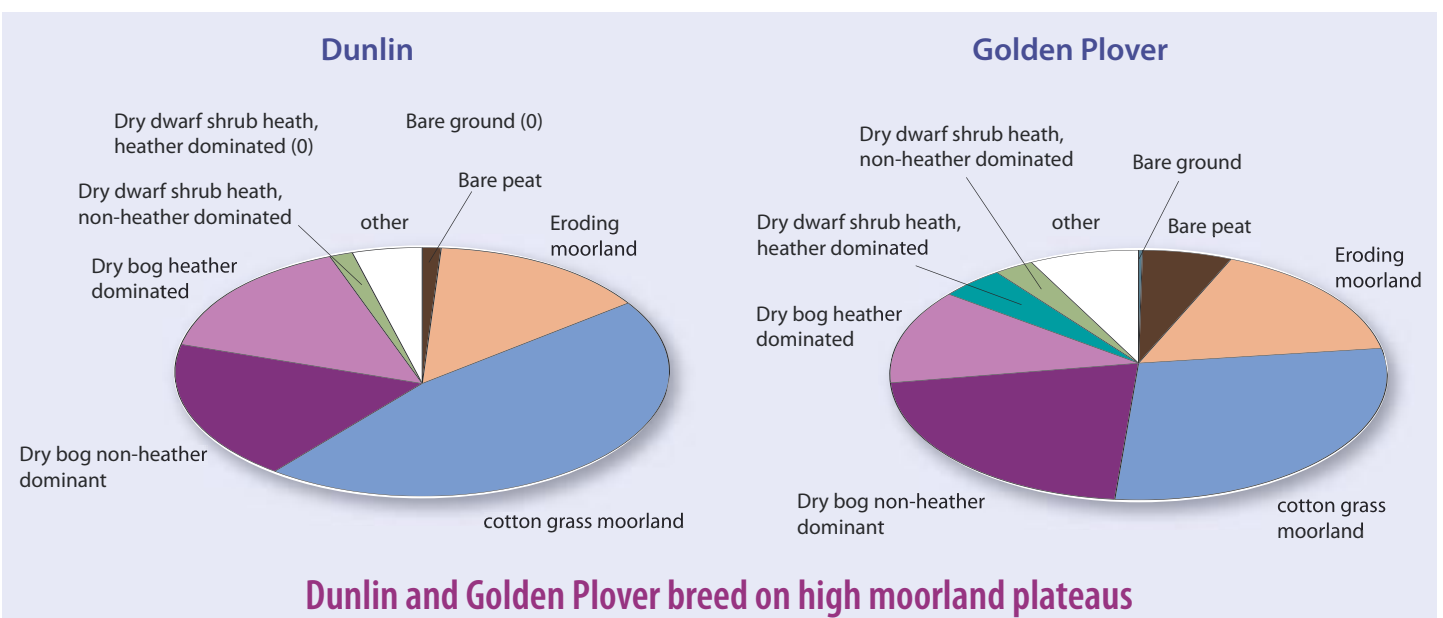
The peripheral areas of acid grassland and Juncus flushes are particularly important for Curlew, Snipe and sometimes Lapwing.

Cloughs / Cliff faces

The cloughs and gritstone edges with their associated rock litter and bracken are characterised by breeding Ring Ouzel, Whinchat and Stonechat.

Rivers

The rivers and reservoir shores hold species like Common Sandpiper, Dipper and Grey Wagtail.



2004 Moorland Breeding Bird Survey

- repeat of 1990 Brown & Shepherd survey (Brown, A. F. & Shepherd, K. (1991) Breeding Birds of the South Pennine Moors. JNCC Report No.7)
- 503 km² moorlands surveyed
- 2 visits to each km² square between 1st April - 30th June 2004
- 33 species recorded (number of adults & young, behaviour)

Distribution Changes 1990 -2004

Decline

- Twite have suffered a reduction in both range and numbers
- Wheatear is similarly much reduced in 2004
- Dunlin are slightly reduced in both range and numbers

No change / little change

- Golden Plover population has remained stable
- Little change for both Skylark and Meadow Pipit
- No evidence for change of Ring Ouzel

Increase

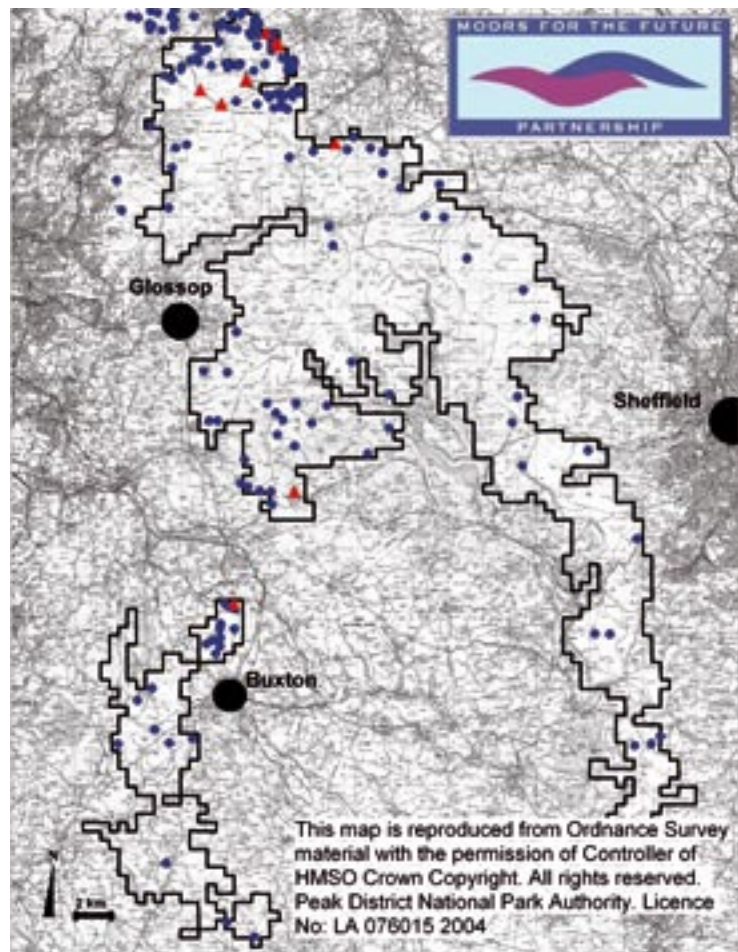
- Curlew, Lapwing and Snipe were recorded in greater numbers in 2004
- Whinchat, Stonechat, Reed Bunting and Dipper all increased in both range and numbers
- The Red Grouse population in 2004 is far greater than in 1990
- For birds of prey, range and numbers increased for Peregrine, Merlin and Short-eared Owl
- Raven have colonised the area since 1990 and Hen Harrier is perhaps attempting to re-colonise

^a data for only those 489 km² grid squares surveyed in both periods

^b raptor sightings (in brackets confirmed breeding pairs)

^c number of individuals, not pairs (1990 counts in broad classes, 2004 actual)

^d indication of change not reliable, as species associated with reservoirs not included in surveys



2004 Peak District Moorland Breeding Bird Survey

Twite Distribution
 ▲ 2004
 ● 1990
 □ 2004 survey area

species	breeding pairs		occupied km ² squares		percentage change	
	1990a	2004a	1990a	2004a	abundance	occupancy
Buzzard ^b	1	18(2)	1	18	1700%	1700%
Canada Goose	3	57	4	37	1800%	825%
Carrion Crow	117	11	67	11	-91%	-84%
Common Sandpiper ^d	14	28	10	20	100%	100%
Cuckoo	49	15	48	14	-69%	-71%
Curlew	259	453	189	288	75%	52%
Dipper	12	21	12	20	75%	67%
Dunlin	91	67	54	33	-26%	-39%
Golden Plover	436	419	225	218	-4%	3%
Goshawk ^b	3	2	3	2	-33%	-33%
Grey Wagtail	26	46	24	41	77%	71%
Kestrel ^b	68	84(5)	68	77	24%	13%
Lapwing	61	131	44	65	115%	48%
Meadow Pipit ^c	10410	8432	476	472	-19%	-1%
Merlin ^b	21(9)	31(6)	21	30	48(50)%	43%
Peregrine ^b	7(3)	25(5)	7	25	286(40)%	257%
Red Grouse ^c	2337	5416	324	422	132%	30%
Redshank	9	6	8	4	-33%	-50%
Reed Bunting	16	143	13	91	794%	600%
Ring Ouzel	98	83	69	65	-15%	-6%
Short-eared Owl ^b	18(5)	27(18)	18	27	50(260)%	50%
Skylark ^c	1153	1069	311	306	-7%	-2%
Snipe	56	135	42	82	141%	95%
Sparrowhawk ^b	14	13	14	13	-7%	-7%
Stonechat		83		64		
Twite	131	10	88	7	-92%	-92%
Wheatear	109	45	65	37	-59%	-43%
Whinchat	59	97	37	64	64%	73%



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Data availability

- The survey report is available from the Moors for the Future office. This leaflet is downloadable from the Moors for the Future website.
- All 2004 data are digitised and available as GIS files, spreadsheets or paper copy maps for non-commercial use.

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The Moors for the Future Partners are:

English Nature, National Trust, Peak District National Park Authority, United Utilities, Severn Trent Water, Yorkshire Water, Sheffield City Council, Peak Park Moorland Owners & Tenants Association, Defra, Country Land and Business Association, National Farmers Union



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