

Dartmoor

- a special place for moorland birds

Dartmoor's moorland birds are a cause for celebration but they **need our continuing care!**

Dartmoor is the largest upland area in southern England, offering many different habitats to a wide variety of breeding birds. In particular, moorland areas are home to a fascinating range of birds all of which contribute to the richness of the area and our enjoyment of this special place.



As part of *Action for Wildlife: the Dartmoor Biodiversity Action Plan*, specific Action Plans have been prepared to help conserve Dartmoor's birds and their habitats. The success of these Plans depends very much on the co-operation of many organisations and individuals, including land managers and the public.

- some birds which evoke the spirit of Dartmoor, such as curlew and lapwing are now in serious decline and under threat of extinction within the National Park.

Recent surveys have shown that Dartmoor is a stronghold for species that have declined elsewhere, such as snipe and skylark; familiar Dartmoor birds, such as meadow pipit and stonechat are present here in nationally and even internationally important numbers;

The dates when birds breed varies between species, and from year to year. This can depend upon the weather on Dartmoor and, for migrants, on weather conditions abroad. However, past records of breeding behaviour on Dartmoor indicate that most activity connected with setting up territories, nesting and fledging young takes place between the beginning of March and the middle of July.

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- familiar Dartmoor birds, such as meadow pipit and stonechat are present here in nationally and even internationally important numbers;



Ecologist carrying out a bird survey © DMRPA

Ground nesting birds



Skylark

This bird has declined drastically in lowland Britain in recent years making the Dartmoor population of around 13,000 pairs particularly significant

© Phillip Newman, rspb-images.com



Wheatear

Nationally important numbers on Dartmoor of around 3,000 pairs

© RSPB



Meadow pipit

Dartmoor's most common moorland bird with a stable population (around 20,000 pairs) and internationally important

© Mike McKavett, rspb-images.com



Ring ouzel

Dartmoor is the main area where this upland bird breeds in southern England (around 35 pairs). Declining rapidly nationally

© Jan Hladky, rspb-images.com



Curlew

Now threatened with extinction as a breeding bird on Dartmoor (1-3 pairs). Declining nationally (30% in last 30 years)

© Mark Hamblin, rspb-images.com



Lapwing

Less than 20 pairs now breed on Dartmoor - a decline of 70% over the last 20 years. Declining nationally but particularly in south west England

© Ray Kennedy, rspb-images.com



Golden plover

Now threatened with extinction on Dartmoor (1-3 pairs) and nationally declining

© Roger Wilmshurst, rspb-images.com



Dunlin

The dozen or so pairs on Dartmoor are the most southerly breeding dunlin in the world! Another bird in national decline

© Chris Gemesall, RSPB



Snipe

The 150 pairs on Dartmoor are now probably the only breeding birds in Devon following a dramatic decline in lowland England

© Andy Hay, RSPB, rspb-images.com



Red grouse

The small breeding population on Dartmoor has declined slightly in recent years and is declining nationally

© Chris Knight, rspb-images.com

Other moorland birds



Whinchat

Dartmoor's population is of national importance

Whinchat © Mark Hamblin, rspb-images.com
Meadow pipit © Phillip Newman, rspb-images.com
Dartford warbler © Colin Carter, rspb-images.com



Stonechat

Whinchat numbers on Dartmoor (around 1,600 pairs) have increased in recent years despite a national decline and are now internationally important



Dartford warbler

has recently expanded its range across southern Britain to include Dartmoor. Around 50 pairs now breed in the National Park, a nationally significant number