

Tourism in the North York Moors National Park

WHAT'S SO SPECIAL ABOUT THE NORTH YORK MOORS?

The attraction of the North York Moors lies in the wide variety of landscapes, wildlife habitats, local communities and recreational opportunities which the area offers. The special qualities of the North York Moors include:

- the largest area of heather moorland in England and Wales
- scenic farmland in the valleys
- woodland and forests
- a spectacular coastline
- villages and buildings of historical and architectural interest
- a rich archaeological and industrial heritage.

It is these special qualities and the fact that the North York Moors is easily accessible to a large surrounding population, which resulted in this area being selected as one of England's National Parks in 1949. The Hobhouse Report in 1947 stated that 'there are few places elsewhere in Britain which can offer such extensive and remote tracts of wild and unspoilt scenery within such easy reach of populated areas.'

THE DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM IN THE NORTH YORK MOORS

Visitors have been coming to the North York Moors for centuries. Early visitors came as pilgrims and stayed in the great abbeys. When the first railways were built in the 1800s the moors immediately became more accessible. The area became a destination for day-trippers from Teesside and elsewhere in Yorkshire as well as for grouse shooting parties from London. During the last 50 years venturing out to remote and beautiful places has become more and more popular, especially with the development of a better road network, private cars, more leisure time and better wages. Recent surveys (1998) have estimated that the North York Moors National Park now receives almost 10 million visitor days per year.

IMPACTS OF TOURISM

Each of the 10 million visitor days per year in the North York Moors makes an impact on the landscape, the local economy and the lives of local people. These impacts may be small, large, beneficial or detrimental.

POTENTIAL IMPACTS OF TOURISM

Beneficial

Jobs for local people (but often seasonal and/or low paid)
Substantial income to the local economy;
Diversification of the local economy;
Preservation of rural services eg. bus services, village shops / post offices;
Preservation of traditional customs and crafts;
Increased demand for local produce;
Long-term investment of care in the environment;
Increased awareness and understanding of rural issues.

Detrimental

Physical damage to the landscape;
eg. litter / footpath erosion / fires / disturbance to livestock;
Traffic - congestion, sheep deaths, pollution, parking;
Increased pressure for new developments including roads;
Inappropriate range and price of local goods;
Competition for housing for local people.



THE ROLE OF THE NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY - ENCOURAGING SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

The National Park Authorities in England and Wales have two statutory purposes: to conserve and enhance the landscapes within the Parks and also to encourage people to enjoy and understand these areas. However, people in great numbers can, in time, damage the landscape they have come to enjoy. Reducing the numbers of people visiting the countryside is not the solution - experiencing the peace and beauty of our open spaces is a vital part of our busy lives. The National Park Authority's role, therefore, is to enable people to use the countryside without spoiling it, ie. to encourage tourism which is sustainable. Sustainable tourism can be defined as 'a way of positively managing tourism for the benefit of visitors, residents and the environment in a way that does not prejudice the long term survival of the environment and its enjoyment by future generations.' (Landscape for Visitors: NYMNP) 'Managing tourism' involves many different areas of work for National Park staff including: the public rights of way network, traffic and transport issues, facilities and services for Park users, specialist recreation issues and information and interpretation.

PRINCIPLES FOR TOURISM IN NATIONAL PARKS (AGREED BY ALL NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITIES IN ENGLAND AND WALES)

National Park Authorities will work in partnership with others to foster tourism in innovative ways which ensure a better quality of life for everyone - socially, economically and environmentally - now and for generations to come.

1. Tourism is About People

- People choose to visit National Parks because of their landscape quality, their opportunities for outdoor recreation and their peace and tranquillity. Tourism activities should draw on the special character of the National Parks, recognising that some places are valued for being wild and remote.
- Activities and facilities which are developed should be relevant and accessible to the whole of society.
- National Park Authorities will work in partnership with the tourism industry to deepen people's enjoyment, appreciation, understanding and concern before, during and after a visit.

2. The environment in National Parks is special

- Although the environment is often robust, the tourism industry should seek guidance about the short and long term effects of all activities.
- The scale, design, management and marketing of developments should respect local distinctiveness and diversity, the carrying capacity of the local environment and its communities, and seek to enhance the landscape.
- The tourism industry should encourage and support practical conservation measures, including through raising awareness of their guests.

3. Natural resources are finite

- National Parks are places where tourism has the opportunity to demonstrate strong environmental concern. Energy reduction, the encouragement of public transport, staff training and the monitoring of environmental impacts should be key factors for new and existing businesses.

4. Economic growth and employment support living National Parks

- The tourism industry should support the economy and vitality of local communities particularly by the use of local supplies, skills and services.
- A balance should exist between tourism and other local economic activities particularly agriculture.

The National Park Authority's objectives regarding tourism are given in the North York Moors National Park Management Plan.

TOURISM STATISTICS - THE NEED TO KNOW

In order to provide for the needs of visitors effectively and encourage sustainable tourism it is essential to obtain information about visitors' habits. In 1994 a comprehensive survey of visitors in all 11 National Parks was carried out. (1994 All Parks Visitor Survey - Countryside Agency)

In the NYMNP people were interviewed as they left the Park at 4 roadside locations and at 10 recreation sites distributed throughout the Park. A total of 4356 people were interviewed and 1354 questionnaires were returned. Data from automatic traffic counters were also used.

Selected results from this survey are shown below but it is important to recognise that the results are estimations and accuracy will vary from Park to Park due to various factors including:- size of Park, number of roads crossing the Park boundary, clarity of the Park boundaries and the fact that evening visitors and through traffic were not accounted for.

1994 Visitor Survey - Definitions:

Visitor Day: A day visit to the Park from home or a holiday day spent in the Park by someone staying either inside or outside the Park.

eg. 2 people spending one day in the Park = 2 visitor days

2 people spending a week in the Park = 14 visitor days

Day visit A single visit which begins and finishes at the visitor's home.

Holiday maker: Someone who is staying away from home, inside or outside the Park, for one or more nights.

Unless otherwise stated all statistics are taken from the 1994 All Parks Visitor Survey.

FIG.1 ESTIMATED MINIMUM NUMBER OF VISITOR DAYS TO NATIONAL PARKS IN 1994

National Park	Total Estimate
Lake District	13,925,000
Peak District	12,400,000
Yorkshire Dales	8,303,000
North York Moors	7,790,000 (1998 estimate: 9,520,000)
Snowdonia	6,568,000
The Broads	5,361,000
Pembrokeshire Coast	4,662,000
Dartmoor	3,825,000
Brecon Beacons	3,622,000
Northumberland	1,408,000
Exmoor	1,397,000

FIG.2 TYPE OF VISITORS (NYMNP)

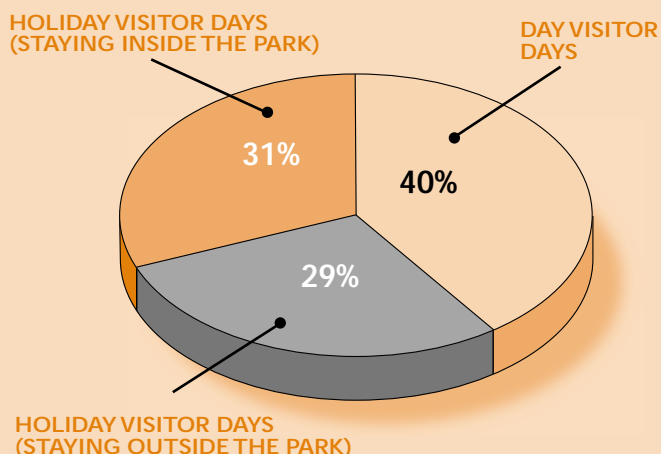


FIG.3 MAIN PURPOSE OF VISIT (NYMNP)

	% of respondents (day trip visitors)
Going for a short walk (up to 2 hours)	23
Going for a long walk (over 2 hours)	2
Driving around and sightseeing from car	23
Sitting and relaxing	16
Visiting a tourist / historic attraction	7
Visiting a town/village	11
Pursuing a hobby or special interest	1
Motor sports or powered water sports	<1
Other outdoor sports	1
Visiting friends / relatives	1
Going to the seaside	2
None of these	3

(Base number 474)

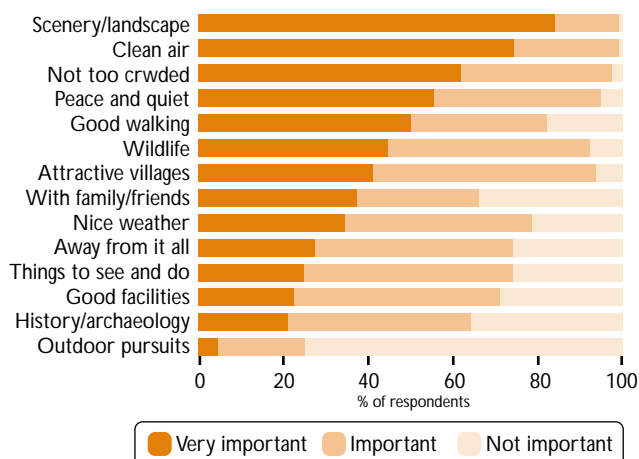
For day trip visitors walking or sightseeing were the most frequently mentioned purposes of the visit. People on holiday are there for longer and tended to do a wider range of activities than day visitors.

FIG. 4SELECTED ATTRACTIONS / PLACES VISITED

Location	% of respondents	
	Day Trippers	Holidaymakers
Whitby*	25	83
Pickering*	27	62
Goathland	26	61
Robin Hoods Bay	13	59
Helmsley	32	37
Hutton - le - Hole	21	28
Staithes	8	32
Thornton-le-Dale	11	19
Runswick Bay	6	21
Moors Centre, Danby	9	18
Dalby Forest	5	18
Falling Foss / May Beck	2	7
Broxa Forest	0	1
None of these	17	1

* Outside National Park

FIG.5 ASPECTS OF THE NORTH YORK MOORS ENJOYED

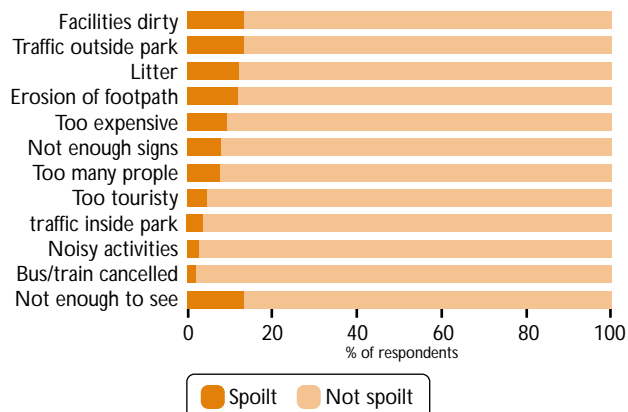


(Base number = 550)

Source: 1994 All Parks Visitor Survey

Views expressed by day trip visitors and holidaymakers were similar. However, holidaymakers were more likely to regard good facilities and the variety of things to see and do as more important whilst day trip visitors considered being with family and friends more important.

FIG.6 ASPECTS SPOILING ENJOYMENT



(Base number = 623)

Source: 1994 All Parks Visitor Survey

Views expressed by day trip visitors and holiday visitors were similar although holiday visitors were more likely to complain about the cost of things.



FIG.7 TYPE OF ACCOMMODATION USED BY HOLIDAY MAKERS

SERVICED	% of respondents (holiday makers staying in the Park)
Hotel / motel	12
Guest house	4
Pub	3
Bed and Breakfast	12
Total serviced	31
SELF CATERING	
Caravan (static)	6
Caravan (touring)	16
Camper van	2
Camping (campsite)	5
Camping (open country)	1
Self catering accommodation	29
Youth Hostel	2
Second home	1
Holiday camp / chalet / cabin	1
Total self catering	64
Friends / relatives' homes	4

(Base number 729)

Accommodation used is partly due to supply and availability as well as visitor preference. However, as only 8% of visitors reported any difficulty in getting the accommodation they wanted, this suggests that demand is not particularly constrained by lack of availability. Compared with the national picture for domestic holidays there is a greater reliance on self catering and B&B accommodation, with fewer people staying in hotels. However, hotels were more frequently used by holiday makers staying outside the Park but coming in for the day.

FIG. 8 DAILY EXPENDITURE PER PERSON IN AND AROUND THE PARKS - EXCLUDING ACCOMMODATION. (1994)

	£
Lake District	12.90
Pembrokeshire Coast	12.40
Yorkshire Dales	10.70
The Broads	10.40
Snowdonia	10.00
North York Moors	9.10 (1998 estimate: £13.39)
Exmoor	7.80
Northumberland	7.20
Peak District	7.00
Brecon Beacons	6.80
Dartmoor	6.70
Average for all Parks	9.70

88% of visitors spent money during their visit to the Parks. The nature and level of expenditure will be related to the opportunities to spend which in turn depend on the availability of services, facilities and attractions in each area.

FIG.9 THE VALUE OF TOURISM TO THE LOCAL, REGIONAL AND NATIONAL ECONOMY.

Total revenue from visitors in the North York Moors National Park. (Source NYMNPA)

Year	Total revenue (£million)
1992	91
1993	102
1994	112
1995	118
1996	119
1997	152
1998	169

In 1996 the total revenue from tourist expenditure in the whole of North Yorkshire was £1054 million.
For the whole of the UK tourism is worth £38 billion per year!
(Source: STEAM)

FIG.10. ANNUAL TOTAL EMPLOYMENT FIGURES DIRECTLY AND INDIRECTLY RELATED TO TOURISM IN THE NYMNP IN 1996, SHOWING THE SEASONAL NATURE OF EMPLOYMENT IN THE TOURIST INDUSTRY. (SOURCE: NYMNPA)

Jan 2005	Feb 2545	Mar 3109	April 4465	May 4722	June 5704	July 6382	Aug 7655	Sep 5451	Oct 4472	Nov 2566	Dec 2651
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Population of the NYMNP in 1996: 25,520 (NYCC mid year estimate based on 1991 census data)
No. of persons economically active: 12,272 (NYCC Unemployment records 1997)

Total no. of jobs supported by tourism expenditure in the whole of North Yorkshire in 1996: 23,597

National Park Visitor Centres

SUTTON BANK NATIONAL PARK CENTRE

Sutton Bank is a popular stopping point on the main A170 road from Thirsk to Scarborough, but the site has been a local landmark since the earliest settlements after the last ice age. A visitor centre and car park were developed here in 1975 by the National Park Authority as a response to the potential danger caused by cars parked on the road side and people wishing to admire the views from the top of the escarpment.

Year	Average no. of vehicles passing Sutton Bank per day
1930	630
1970	3451
1995	7742

Year	No. of vehicles parked at Sutton Bank top at 3.30pm on a Sunday in August
1973	179
1980	332 (includes 58 on road side)
1991	180 (restricted by car park)

Located at the south-western corner of the National Park the visitor centre is a gateway to the North York Moors and there is an excellent opportunity for the NPA to provide information to the public about the National Park.

FACILITIES AVAILABLE AT SUTTON BANK NATIONAL PARK CENTRE

Pay and display car park for 180 cars and 4 coaches.

Moorsbus destination.

Tourist Information Centre with accommodation booking service.

Shop with local maps, books, guides and souvenirs.

'Window on the Park' interpretive exhibition.

Toilets

Tea Room

Mountain bike hire and cycle trails.

Briefing room for school groups, exhibitions, meetings.

Guided walks and other events and activities.



The area around Sutton Bank provides many opportunities for recreation - spectacular views, woodland walks, gliding, the White Horse of Kilburn, Cleveland Way National Trail, Yorkshire Gliding Club.

THE MOORS CENTRE

Originally a 17th century shooting lodge, The Moors Centre stands in 5 hectares of grounds beside the River Esk in the heart of the North York Moors. The visitor centre was opened in 1976 and now receives over 100,000 visitors per year. The surrounding area provides many opportunities for learning and enjoyment and is within easy reach of open moorland, farmland, woodland, Danby Castle and spectacular views across the Esk valley.

The National Park Education Service is based at The Moors Centre and welcomes over 13,000 pupils per year. Education service staff provide guided walks, talks and other educational activities to school groups of all ages, both here and at Sutton Bank.

FACILITIES AVAILABLE AT THE MOORS CENTRE

Car and coach parking, free at the time of writing.

Tourist Information Centre with accommodation booking service.

Shop with local maps, books, guides and souvenirs.

'Living Landscape' interpretative exhibition.

Toilets

Tea Room

Brass rubbing centre

Lecture theatre and classrooms for school groups.

Wildflower garden and children's tree nursery.

Compass navigation course.

Outdoor quiz trails and woodland walks.

Moorsbus Destination





ACCESS FOR ALL

Electric wheelchair buggies are available to visitors free of charge at both centres. At Sutton Bank Centre the 2 km footpath to The White Horse which is part of the Cleveland Way is accessible for people with wheelchairs and pushchairs and at The Moors Centre a wheelchair accessible woodland trail has been created.

Total Numbers of People Entering National Park Centres

Year	The Moors Centre	Sutton Bank National Park Centre
(Apr. to Mar.)		
1987/88	75,913	47,556 (New refreshment facilities and exhibition)
1988/89	78,534	67,259
1989/90	80,100	74,790
1990/91	89,592	120,337
1991/92	84,459	96,265 (Restricted parking and charges introduced)
1992/93	87,266 (Shop area refurbished)	81,204 (Pay and display parking introduced)
1993/94	135,308 (New exhibition installed)	82,187
1994/95	127,624	76,375
1995/96	117,396	69,853
1996/97	117,631	64,527 (Closed in September for refurbishment)
1997/98	112,912	122,068 (Re-opened completely refurbished)
1998/99	146,325 (Counter moved to main entrance - previously at exhibition entrance)	133,231

THE COUNTRYSIDE EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES PROGRAMME

Deepening the appreciation of the beauty and fragility of the National Park amongst visitors and residents is a key element of sustainable tourism and this depends to a large extent on providing high quality information and interpretation in a variety of different ways.

The National Park Authority has organised a summer Events Programme for a number of years to provide opportunities for people to experience the special qualities of the Park. In 1998 additional European funding was secured for a 3 year project to develop the programme further. The funding allowed the recruitment of a full time Project Officer and the opportunity to offer a year round programme of events and activities. The objectives of the programme are:

- to provide opportunities for enjoyment and learning in the National Park for visitors and residents;
- to provide a wide range of activities to attract people of all ages and sections of society; (activities include guided walks, adventure activities, lectures, art exhibitions, children's activities, art and craft demonstrations)
- to link events and activities to public transport networks wherever possible; (in 1998/99, 123 of the 224 events were linked to public transport)
- to use small, local businesses as providers wherever possible, thereby assisting the local economy; (in 1998/99 the total number of local businesses supported in this way was 57).

Each year around 2500 people participate in chargeable events to discover and enjoy the National Park. Thousands more visit free exhibitions or larger public events. In total around 25,000 people receive the National Park message every year through the Events Programme. This is a key contribution towards encouraging sustainable tourism in the National Park.



North York Moors National Park
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