

COUNTY: Norfolk

SITE NAME: CROSTWICK MARSH

DISTRICT: Broadland

Status: Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) notified under Section 28 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981

Local Planning Authority: Broadland District Council

National Grid Reference: TG 263165 Area: 11.2 (ha) 27.6 (ac)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 134 1:10,000: TG 21 NE

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): N/A Date of Last Revision: N/A

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1985 Date of Last Revision: –

Other Information:
A new site.

Reasons for Notification:

Crostwick Marsh lies about 3 miles west of Wroxham in the valley of the Crostwick Beck, a tributary of the River Bure. The site forms an excellent example of unimproved valley meadow and supports a series of intergrading plant communities ranging from damp neutral grassland through species-rich fen grassland to tall fen in the valley bottom. A spring line is present on the valley slopes which provides irrigating water, and calcareous flushes have developed locally at seepage points. The site drains to the Crostwick Beck through a series of dykes. A number of uncommon plants are present, several in great abundance and there is additional ornithological interest.

The damp neutral grassland is lightly grazed by cattle and the sward is dominated by a variety of grasses including Creeping Bent *Agrostis stolonifera*, Crested Dog's-tail *Cynosurus cristatus*, Sweet Vernal-grass *Anthoxanthum odoratum* and Yorkshire Fog *Holcus lanatus*. Typical herb species include Water Mint *Mentha aquatica*, Cuckoo Flower *Cardamine pratensis*, Black Knapweed *Centaurea nigra* and Marsh Pennywort *Hydrocotyle vulgaris* and these areas are notable for the great abundance of Southern Marsh Orchid *Dactylorhiza praetermissa*, Yellow Rattle *Rhinanthus minor* and Ragged Robin *Lychnis flos-cuculi*.

Species-rich fen grassland dominated by Blunt-flowered Rush *Juncus subnodulosus* occupies the lower valley slopes. Plants of interest include Lesser Spearwort *Ranunculus flammula*, Marsh Valerian *Valeriana dioica*, Devil's-bit Scabious *Succisa pratensis* and Marsh Marigold *Caltha palustris*. A taller-growing, but less diverse tall fen community is present on the wettest soils. Greater Pond Sedge *Carex riparia*, Reed Sweet-grass *Glyceria maxima* and Meadowsweet *Filipendula ulmaria* are dominant with Greater Tussock Sedge *Carex paniculata*, Marsh Thistle *Cirsium palustre* and Angelica *Angelica sylvestris*.

Calcareous flushes are characterised by areas of short vegetation within the *Juncus* grassland. Flea Sedge *Carex pulicaris*, Star Sedge *C. echinata* and Carnation Sedge *C. panicea* are dominant over a bryophyte carpet. Other notable species include Bog Pimpernel *Anagallis tenella*, Quaking Grass *Briza media* and Common Spike-rush *Eleocharis palustris*.

Additional interest is provided by small areas of Alder carr, mixed scrub, the drainage dykes and a length of the Crostwick Beck.

Marshland birds are well represented with breeding Snipe, Woodcock, Lapwing, Grasshopper Warbler and Sedge Warbler.