

COUNTY: HEREFORD & WORCESTER

SITE NAME: IPSLEY ALDERS
MARSH

DISTRICT: REDDITCH

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

Local Planning Authority: HEREFORD & WORCESTER COUNTY COUNCIL, Redditch District Council

National Grid Reference: SP 078676

Area: 15.37 (ha.) 38 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 139

1:10,000: SP 06 NE

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1971

Date of Last Revision: 1975

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1985

Date of Last Revision: –

Other Information:

This site is managed as a nature reserve by the Redditch Development Corporation.

Reasons for Notification:

The site consists essentially of a meadow within which is a marsh receiving calcium-rich water from springs arising from the underlying Triassic Keuper Mails. This is an unusual habitat, and Ipsley Alders Marsh is the only sizeable area that now exists in the West Midlands.

The main marsh communities are dominated by tufted hair-grass *Deschampsia cespitosa*, soft rush *Juncus effusus*, marsh horsetail *Equisetum palustre* and hemp agrimony *Eupatorium cannabinum*. Particularly important are the large stands of blunt-flowered rush *Juncus subnodulosus*, a local plant associated with calcareous flushes.

The eastern part of the site is drier which is reflected in the grassland community which has such species as adder's tongue *Ophioglossum vulgatum*, cowslip *Primula veris* and devil's-bit scabious *Succisa pratensis*. This part of the site also has numerous ant hills of the yellow meadow ant *Lazius flavus*, indicating the undisturbed nature of the grassland.

The northern part of the site is crossed by a small stream fringed by a belt of alder *Alnus glutinosa* woodland. This stream and two small ponds which are present on the site are important for birds and attract such species as kingfisher *Alcedo atthis* and heron *Ardea cinerea*.

The Marsh itself provides a valuable breeding site for snipe *Gallinago gallinago*. The area also has a very large breeding population of reed bunting *Emberiza schoeniculus*, whose nests are often parasitised by the cuckoo *Cuculus canorus*.

The site is surrounded on most sides by dense tall hedgerows. These, together with the scattering of isolated large trees mainly pedunculate oak *Quercus robur* and pollard willows *Salix alba* and *S. fragilis* provide a screen from the adjoining housing development and a valuable additional wildlife habitat.