

File ref:

**County:** Hampshire

**Site Name:** Greywell Fen SSSI

**Local Planning Authority:** Hampshire County Council, Hart District Council

**National Grid Reference:** SU 719509

**Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000:** 186      **1:25,000:** SU 75

**Area:** 29.19 (ha) 72.13 (ac)

**Date Notified (Under 1949 Act):** 1951      **Date of Last Revision:** 1978

**Date Notified (Under 1981 Act):** 1984      **Date of Last Revision:** -

**Other Information:**

**Reasons for Notification:**

Greywell Fen is a calcareous valley mire extending for about 2km along the headwaters of the River Whitewater, a second order tributary of the River Thames.

The vegetation of the fen falls into two distinct sections. Upstream from Deptford Bridge, the fen is primarily unmanaged agriculturally and is dominated by alder carr with tussock sedge *Carex paniculata* below. In a few small areas the canopy has remained open and these patches contain a very rich flora with a wide range of rich-fen species, including various sedges such as *Carex diandra* and *C. lepidocarpa*, a rare hybrid marsh orchid *Dactylorhiza traunsteineri* 3 *praetermissa*, marsh helleborine *Epipactis palustris*, broad-leaved cottongrass *Eriophorum latifolium*, water avens *Geum rivale*, marsh arrowgrass *Triglochin palustris*, marsh valerian *Valeriana dioica* and marsh fern *Thelypteris thelypteroides*. Other rare species formerly recorded, such as great fen-sedge *Cladium mariscus* and slender cottongrass *Eriophorum gracile*, appear to have been lost through competition with more vigorous vegetation.

The lower section of the site is best described as wet fen meadow, grazed by cattle, with the exception of an area of carr woodland along the side of the Basingstoke Canal. Parts of this lower section have been agriculturally improved in recent years and their flora has been much reduced in diversity overall. Collectively, however, there is still a very rich flora, including most fen species, together with meadow species such as cowslip *Primula veris*, dyer's greenweed *Genista tinctoria* and pepper-saxifrage *Silaum silaus*. One small area supports colonies of an unusual variant marsh helleborine *Epipactis palustris* var. *ochrolenca* and the fen subspecies of fragrant orchid *Gymnadenia conopsea* var. *densiflora*.