

File ref:

County: Lincolnshire **Site name:** Scotton and Laughton Forest Ponds

District: West Lindsey

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

Local Planning Authority: West Lindsey District Council

National Grid Reference: SK 860995 **Area:** 49.4 (ha) 122.1 (ac)
SK 849992

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1: 50 000: 122 **1: 10 000:** SK 89 NW, NE,
SE 80 SE

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1959 **Date of Last Revision:** 1970

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1987 **Date of Last Revision:** -

Other Information:

Description and Reasons for Notification:

Scotton and Laughton Forest Ponds comprise a number of peaty heathland pools associated with open acid grassland, birch woodland and a distinctive marginal wetland vegetation. This latter habitat, the most important on the site, is a type of base-poor fen/mire with a characteristic suite of plant species, which has formed on permanently wet acid soils. It represents the county's largest resource of this nationally scarce plant community, one which is uncommon in lowland England through drainage and agricultural improvement. The ponds and their surroundings have escaped the widespread conifer afforestation to which virtually all of the adjacent Scotton and Laughton cover sand commons of north-west Lincolnshire have been subjected.

The marginal wetland vegetation, sometimes extending into the ponds as a floating mat, is characterised by soft rush *Juncus effusus*, bottle sedge *Carex rostrata*, marsh cinquefoil *Potentilla palustris* and marsh pennywort *Hydrocotyle vulgaris*. There is a local abundance of common cotton grass *Eriophorum angustifolium*, greater pond sedge *Carex riparia*, common sedge *C. nigra*, sharp-flowered rush *Juncus acutiflorus* and bogbean *Menyanthes trifoliata*. Mosses are an important component of this vegetation, either carpeting the ground or forming large mounds through which the higher plants grow. At least four bog mosses *Sphagnum* spp. occur, these being *S. fimbriatum*, *S. palustre*, *S. recurvum* and *S. squarrosum*, in addition to *Polytrichum commune*, *Calliargon stramineum*, *Drepanocladus exannulatus* and *D. fluitans*. This latter species is also locally dominant as a submergent in the pools where it is associated with the water starworts *Callitriche stagnalis* and *C. hamulata* and amphibious bistort cont...

Scotton and Laughton Forest Ponds (cont...)

Polygonum amphibium. Single species stands of marginal vegetation are formed by bulrush *Scirpus lacustris* and common reed *Phragmites australis*.

The grassland area is dominated by tussocky wavy hair grass *Deschampsia flexuosa* with heath bedstraw *Galium saxatile* and wood sage *Teucrium scorodonia*. The peripheral woodland is dominated by the birches *Betula pubescens* and *B. pendula*, over, respectively, purple moor grass *Molinia caerulea* and bracken *Pteridium aquilinum*.