

COUNTY: Norfolk

SITE NAME: ALDERFEN BROAD

DISTRICT: North Norfolk

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

Local Planning Authority: Broads Authority

National Grid Reference: TG 355195 Area: 20.63 (ha) 50.98 (ac)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 134 1:10,000: TG 31 NE

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1954 Date of Last Revision: 1971

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

Other Information:

Owned and managed as a nature reserve by Norfolk Naturalists' TRust

Reasons for Notification:

Alderfen Broad is situated on shallow fenland peats in a side valley of the River Ant. The site shows a classic succession of plant communities from open water, through marginal reedswamp, to carr woodland. The Broad is undergoing restoration following isolation from nutrient-enriched waters from the catchment and is an important research site for studying the problems associated with eutrophication in Broadland. Water plants have re-established and a wide range of breeding birds nest in the reedbeds and woodland.

Several species of water plant have re-colonised the open water following isolation of the Broad and a reduction in nutrient levels. Rigid Hornwort *Ceratophyllum demersum* is generally dominant, with small populations of White Water-lily *Nymphaea alba*, Water Violet *Hottonia palustris*, Starworts *Callitriche* spp. and Fennel Pondweed *Potamogeton pectinatus*.

The marginal vegetation shows an interesting transition depending on the depth of the water. Lesser Reedmace *Typha angustifolia* and Bulrush *Schoenoplectus lacustris* are the primary colonisers in deep water. Reed *Phragmites australis* invades the shallower water and forms a band of reedswamp. Tall fen vegetation surrounds the Broad. This habitat is also dominated by Reed but is relatively diverse and includes Greater Tussock Sedge *Carex paniculata*, Purple Small-reed *Calamagrostis canescens*, Milk Parsley *Peucedanum palustre*, Meadowsweet *Filipendula ulmaria* and Bog Myrtle *Myrica gale*.

Carr woodland is invading the open fen on the landward side. Alder *Alnus glutinosa* is dominant with frequent Common Sallow *Salix cinerea* and the ground flora includes Yellow Flag *Iris pseudacorus*, Gipsywort *Lycopus europaeus*, Lesser Pond Sedge *Carex acutiformis* and Greater Tussock Sedge. Pendunculate Oak *Quercus robur* is frequent in woodland on the driest soils.

Breeding birds in the fen and reedbeds surrounding the Broad include Great Crested Grebe, Pochard, Water Rail, Grasshopper Warbler and Reed Warbler.