

File ref:

**County:** Lincolnshire **Site name:** Surfleet Lows

**District:** South Holland

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

**Local Planning Authority:** South Holland District Council

**National Grid Reference:** TF 252285 **Area:** 3.8 (ha) 9.4 (ac)

**Ordnance Survey Sheet 1: 50 000:** 131 **1: 10 000:** TF 22 NE

**Date Notified (Under 1949 Act):** 1968 **Date of Last Revision:**

**Date Notified (Under 1981 Act):** 1986 **Date of Last Revision:** -

**Other Information:**

The site, leased from Lincolnshire County Council, is managed as a nature reserve by the Lincolnshire and South Humberside Trust for Nature Conservation.

**Description and Reasons for Notification:**

Surfleet Lows is one of the few remaining wet alluvial meadows in Lincolnshire which has not been subjected to agricultural improvement. Meadows of this type are now rare throughout lowland Britain. A typical range of meadow plants is present as well as a number of species more characteristic of coastal locations.

The meadow occupies a hollow formed by an old coastal creek system and its residual high salinity explains the presence of brackish marsh plants. The grassland is dominated by marsh foxtail *Alopecurus geniculatus* and floating sweet-grass *Glyceria fluitans*, together with hammer sedge *Carex hirta*, tubular water-dropwort *Oenanthe fistulosa*, celery-leaved buttercup *Ranunculus sceleratus*, hairy buttercup *R. sardous*, strawberry clover *Trifolium fragiferum*, sea milkwort *Glaux maritima* and other brackish and neutral grassland plants. Areas of marsh are characterised by common reed *Phragmites australis*, false fox-sedge *Carex otrubae*, sea club-rush *Scirpus maritimus*, common spike-rush *Eleocharis palustris*, distant sedge *Carex distans* and grey club-rush *Schoenoplectus tabernaemontani*. Additional interest is provided by wet fen woodland, pools and tall fen vegetation.

Winter flooding of the meadow attracts ducks such as mallard, teal and wigeon, and good numbers of snipe. Reedwarblers breed here, and at least 50 other species of bird have been recorded.