

County: Devon **Site Name:** Lydford Railway Ponds

District: West Devon

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

Local Planning Authority: Devon County Council, Dartmoor National Park Authority

National Grid Reference: SX 500827 **Area:** 1.3 (ha) 3.3 (ac)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 191 **1:10,000:** SX 48 SE, SX 58 SW

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

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

Other Information:

The site lies within the Dartmoor National Park. A new site.

Description and Reasons for Notification:

Lydford Railway Ponds support an exceptionally diverse dragonfly fauna which includes a number of uncommon species.

A variety of semi-natural vegetation types has developed on disused railway land at Lydford Station. Drier areas are characterised by rough grassland dominated by coarse grasses but which also contains a wide range of meadow flowers such as yellow rattle *Rhinanthus minor*, bird's-foot trefoil *Lotus corniculatus*, purging flax *Linum catharticum* and common knapweed *Centaurea nigra*. Wetter areas between the station platforms have developed a marsh community characterised by rushes *Juncus* spp., angelica *Angelica sylvatica*, hemp agrimony *Eupatorium cannabinum*, fleabane *Pulicaria dysenterica*, southern marsh-orchid *Dactylorhiza praetermissa* and clumps of bog moss *Sphagnum* sp. The marsh contains open water pools and these together with a small disused reservoir at the north-east of the site are dominated by bog pondweed *Potamogeton polygonifolius*.

The site possesses a rich invertebrate fauna with an outstanding assemblage of dragonflies many of which breed on the site. Eighteen species of dragonflies have been recorded in recent years, including a number of uncommon species such as the small red damselfly *Ceriagrion tenellum*, the rudder darter *Sympetrum sanguineum* and the scarce ischnura *Ischnura pumilio*. The large emperor dragonfly *Anax imperator* has also been recorded.