

Notification Date: 11 July 1986

COUNTY: HEREFORD & WORCESTER

SITE NAME: HURCOTT & PODMORE
POOLS

DISTRICT: WYRE FOREST

SITE REF: 15 WE1

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

Local Planning Authority: HEREFORD & WORCESTER COUNTY COUNCIL, Wyre Forest District Council

National Grid Reference: SO 854179

Area: 23.5 (ha.) 58.1 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 138 & 139

1:10,000: SO 87 NE

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): –

Date of Last Revision: –

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1986

Date of Last Revision: –

Other Information:

New site.

Description and Reasons for Notification:

Hurcott and Podmore Pools are situated in the valley of the Spennals Brook near Kidderminster. The site consists of two pools with adjoining woodland and has been selected as an important wetland complex, containing the largest area of wet valley alder carr in the County.

Both Pools were constructed in medieval times to provide power for mills. They have rich riparian vegetation zones at their upstream ends consisting of extensive beds of lesser bulrush *Typha angustifolia* and bulrush *T. latifolia* with branched bur-reed *Sparganium erectum*, water plantain *Alisma plantago-aquatica* and greater and lesser pond-sedges *Carex riparia* and *C. acutiformis*. Extensive patches of yellow water-lily *Nuphar lutea* occur in Hurcott Pool.

The woodlands are dominated by stands of alder *Alnus glutinosa*. A number of other associated tree and shrub species also occur including ash *Fraxinus excelsior*, silver birch *Betula pendula*, crack and goat willows *Salix fragilis* and *S. caprea* and guelder rose *Viburnum opulus*. The ground flora includes characteristic wetland species such as marsh marigold *Caltha palustris*, marsh thistle *Cirsium palustre*, marsh bedstraw *Galium palustre* and a number of sedge species including cyperus sedge *Carex pseudocyperus*. Plants uncommon in this part of the West Midlands also occur including greater tussock-sedge *Carex paniculata*, alternate-leaved golden-saxifrage *Chrysosplenium alternifolium*, large bitter-cress *Cardamine amara* and the nationally rare touch-me-not balsam *Impatiens noli-tangere* here at its only county location.

The open water and woodland form an important habitat for bird life. More than 30 species of birds breed here including great crested grebe *Podiceps cristatus*, little grebe *Tachybaptus rufficollis*, kingfisher *Alcedo atthis* and reed warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*.