

COUNTY: LEICESTERSHIRE

SITE NAME: LOCKINGTON MARSHES

DISTRICT: NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE

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

Local Planning Authority: North West Leicestershire District Council

National Grid Reference: SK 486304

Area: 10.98 (ha.) 27.13 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 129

1:10,000: SK 42 NE, SK 43 SE

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1981

Date of Last Revision: –

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1983

Date of Last Revision: 1993

Other Information:

Reasons for Notification:

The site comprises one of the largest remaining areas of willow carr woodland in Leicestershire and a diverse complex of wetland habitat supporting an important invertebrate fauna with many nationally scarce species.

Biology:

Lockington Marshes includes willow carr woodland, inundation meadow and pools lying in the floodplains of the Rivers Soar and Trent.

The majority of the site is dominated by willow can composed of a range of *Salix* species, including crack willow *S. fragilis*, sallow *S. cinerea* and osier *S. viminalis*. Beneath the willows is a characteristic ground flora of this community dominated by nettles *Urtica dioica*. Elsewhere the ground flora is composed of abundant water mint *Mentha aquatica*, marsh woundwort *Stachys palustris* and purple loosestrife *Lythrum salicaria*, and by the occurrence locally of creeping Jenny *Lysimachia nummularia* and marsh marigold *Caltha palustris*.

The site supports an important invertebrate fauna, including nationally scarce beetles and flies and other invertebrate species which are rare in Leicestershire. There are a number of notable assemblages including deadwood beetles, such as the weevil *Anthribus fasciatus*; species of wet woodland like the predatory ground beetle *Agonum livens* and invertebrates associated with marshy places: the water beetle *Noterus crassicornis* and the rove beetle *Tachyusa coarctata*. Lockington Marshes is the only known site in Leicestershire for several of these species. The diversity of habitat found at Lockington Marshes contributes to the range of invertebrate species, many of which are closely associated with particular aspects of wetland at this sites.

In the southern part of the site lies an area of species-rich marshy meadow characterised by the presence of *Caltha palustris*, meadowsweet *Filipendula ulmaria*, tubular dropwort *Oenanthe fistulosa*, lady's smock *Cardamine pratensis* and meadow rue *Thalictrum flavum*. In the extreme south-west this community is replaced by marsh dominated by reed sweet-grass *Glyceria maxima*. This marsh encloses a shallow pool with areas of swamp, including stands of grey club rush *Scirpus tabernaemontani*, common spike rush *Eleocharis palustris* and pink water speedwell *Veronica catenata*.

In contrast the north-western part of the site supports wet grassland swards, often characterised by tussocks of tufted hair grass *Deschampsia caespitosa* and in these swards marsh stitchwort *Stellaria palustris* is recorded. The shallow waters of a pool adjacent to this grassland have developed fringing stands of common reed *Phragmites australis*, reed

mace *Typha latifolia* and, locally, water dock *Rumex hydrolapathum*, while much of the pool bed is dominated by rigid hornwort *Ceratophyllum demersum* and Canadian waterweed *Elodea nuttallii*.

Additional interest is provided by the numbers of wintering waterfowl which utilise the site, including teal, mallard and snipe.