

COUNTY: LEICESTERSHIRE

SITE NAME: LOUNT MEADOWS

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: (Area 1) SK 376189 Area: 9.8 (ha.) 24.2 (ac.)
(Area 2) SK 385191
(Area 3) SK 394192

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 128 1:10,000: SK 31 NE

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1981 Date of Last Revision: –

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1983 Date of Last Revision: 1990

Other Information:

The revision in 1990 led to an extension of Area No. 1 and reductions to Areas 1 and 3.

Description and Reasons for Notification:

The site includes some of the best examples of slightly acidic neutral grassland in Leicestershire and is representative of such grasslands in the English Midlands.

Biology

A very fine series of meadows and pasture land developed on somewhat acidic neutral soils derived from shales of the Carboniferous Coal Measures. Area 1 is a narrow hay meadow lying on both sides of a central watercourse. The sward is characterised by the dominance of common bent *Agrostis capillaris*, sweet vernal-grass *Anthoxanthum odoratum* and heathgrass *Danthonia decumbens*, and contains such typical herb species as great burnet *Sanguisorba officinalis*, devil's bit scabious *Succisa pratensis*, betony *Betonica officinalis* and lady's-mantle *Alchemilla filicaulis*. Area 2 comprises species-rich rough pasture and scrub which shows a range of grassland types characteristic of acid-loam soils including swards of permanently wet soils. The drier grassland areas are similar in type to those of Area 1 but the wetter areas are characterised by the presence of ragged robin *Lychnis flos-cuculi*, valerian *Valeriana officinalis* and spotted orchid *Dactylorhiza fuchsii*. Active ant hills are a feature of this grassland and have been colonised by such plants as bird's-foot trefoil *Lotus corniculatus*, self heal *Prunella vulgaris* and germander speedwell *Veronica chamaedrys*. Area 3 is a fine hay meadow having a sward characterised by the dominance of red fescue *Festuca rubra*, meadow fescue *F. pratensis*, crested dog's-tail *Cynosurus cristatus* and *Agrostis capillaris*. The sward is particularly notable for its diversity of grass species and also for its range of other herbs which includes a strong colony of Adder's tongue fern *Ophioglossum vulgatum*. There is also an area of marsh dominated by plicate sweet grass *Glyceria plicata* and water horsetail *Equisetum fluviatile*.

Date Notified: 13 December 1983