

COUNTY: SUFFOLK      SITE NAME: STALLODE WASH, LAKENHEATH

DISTRICT: WEST SUFFOLK

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

Local Planning Authority: FOREST HEATH DISTRICT COUNCIL

National Grid Reference: TL 675853      Area: 33.95 (ha.) 83.86 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 143      1:10,000: TL 68 NE

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1958      Date of Last Revision: 1972

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

Other Information:

Reasons for Notification:

Stallode Wash is an area of washland which has a permanently high water table and is regularly flooded by water from the Little Ouse River. The vegetation ranges from seasonally flooded grassland, through a large area of mixed, tall fen to reedswamp. There are smaller areas of open water, including a series of old dykes. Some invasion of Willow carr *Salix spp.* has taken place. Stallode Wash contains populations of two nationally rare plants and is also noted for its bird life.

The drier grassland areas have grown up and become very thick, reflecting the lack of grazing in recent years. Grasses such as Cocksfoot *Dactylis glomerata*, Tufted Hair Grass *Deschampsia caespitosa* and Reed Canary Grass *Phalaris arundinacea* are abundant, as are 'weedy' species such as Hemlock *Conium maculatum* and Hairy Willow Herb *Epilobium hirsutum*. Some smaller plants typical of damp grassland conditions do survive, notably Water Mint *Mentha aquatica* and Water Forget-me-not *Myosotis scorpioides*. These plants increase in frequency as the grassland gets wetter and are joined by plants such as Water Dropwort *Oenanthe fistulosa*, Common Strike-Rush *Eleocharis palustris* and Marsh Arrow Grass *Triglochin palustris*.

The wet grassland gradually grades into tall fen. This is dominated by Reed *Phragmites communis* with the Greater and Lesser Pond Sedges *Carex riparia* and *C. acutiformis* also being very prominent. There is a wide range of associated plant life; the Fen Bedstraw *Galium uliginosum*, Valerian *Valeriana officinalis* and Yellow Loosestrife *Lysimachia vulgaris* are amongst the more common species.

In the wettest areas tall fen gives way to Reed swamp. This is also dominated by Reed but has fewer plant species associated with it. In the south-east corner it gives way to open water. Around the water margins there are various sedges and rushes, as well as aquatic plants such as Arrow-Head *Sagittaria sagittifolia*.

Two nationally rare plants occur on this site; the Water Germander *Teucrium scordium* and the Marsh Pea *Lathyrus palustris*. The former is protected under Section 13 of the 1981 Wildlife and Countryside Act. The site is also noted for its bird life.