

SITE NOTIFIED TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE ON 6 JULY 1990

COUNTY: DERBYSHIRE

SITE NAME: LONGSTONE MOOR

DISTRICT: DERBYSHIRE DALES

SITE REF: 15 WLD

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

Local Planning Authority: PEAK PARK JOINT PLANNING BOARD, Derbyshire Dales District Council

National Grid Reference: SK 195735

Area: 112.7 (ha.) 278.5 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 119

1:10,000: SK 17 SE, SK 27 SW

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): –

Date of Last Revision: –

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1990

Date of Last Revision: –

Other Information:

New site.

Description and Reasons for Notification:

Longstone Moor, 1.5 km north off the village of Great Longstone, is the largest example of limestone heathland in the Peak District National Park and represents the best of only a very few remaining areas of this unusual type of vegetation. Whereas today the vast majority of the heathland vegetation is found on the acid, peaty soils over gritstone in the north of the Peak District, large tracts of the limestone plateau supported heathland until the enclosures and subsequent agricultural reclamations of the late 18th Century.

On Longstone Moor acid loving plants grow on deep deposits of wind-blown 'loess' soils which are acidic in character and mask the effects of the underlying limestone. Where the soils are thinner a complex and interesting mixture of acid heathland and calcareous grassland plants grow together. Good examples of calcareous and acidic grasslands form a mosaic around the heathland.

The dwarf-shrub heathland is a mixture of heather *Calluna vulgaris* and bilberry *Vaccinium myrtillus*, with heath bedstraw *Galium saxatile*, heath rush *Juncus squarrosus* and tormentil *Potentilla erecta*. The calcareous grasslands, which merge into the heathland, are dominated by sheep's-fescue *Festuca ovina*, yellow oat-grass *Tristemon flavescens* and glaucous sedge *Carex flacca*, with common rock-rose *Helianthemum nummularium* around limestone outcrops. The acidic grasslands are dominated by common bent *Agrostis capillaris* and wavy hair-grass *Deschampsia flexuosa*, with areas of mat-grass *Nardus stricta* and heath-grass *Danthonia decumbens*.

The remains of old lead mine workings with associated spoil tips containing high concentrations of heavy metals, especially lead, are scattered throughout the site. These sites support a specialised flora of which spring sandwort *Minuartia verna* is most typical. Other species here include wild thyme *Thymus praecox*, autumn gentian *Gentianella amarella* and early-purple orchid *Orchis mascula*.

A wide variety of lichens, for which this site is of particular importance, are associated with these areas of mine spoil. *Centraria islandica* is extremely rare in lowland Britain and occurs here at one of only two known Peak District locations.

The site is also important for *Caldonia* species, including *C. uncialis* which normally grows on strongly acidic soils.

The site also contains a series of ponds which support floating sweet-grass *Glyceria fluitans* with jointed rush *Juncus articulatus*, common spike-rush *Eleocharis palustris* and lesser spearwort *Ranunculus flammula* around the marshy margins. These ponds have good populations of newts, including great crested newt *Triturus cristatus*.