

**County:** Cumbria

**Site Name:** Brantrake Moss and Devoke Water

**District:** Copeland

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

**Local Planning Authority:** Lake District Special Planning Board

**National Grid Reference:** SD 156970      **Area:** 120.6 (ha) 298.0 (ac)

**Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000:** 96      **1:10,000:** SD 19 NW, NE

**Date Notified (Under 1949 Act):** 1969      **Date of Last Revision:** 1975

**Date Notified (Under 1981 Act):** 1986      **Date of Last Revision:** 1986

**Other Information:**

1. This site was formerly known as Linbeck Gill, Brantrake Moss and Devoke Water.
2. The site has been modified by partial deletion at this revision.
3. The site lies within the Lake District National Park.

**Description and Reasons for Notification:**

Brantrake Moss and Devoke Water lie at an altitude of between 190 and 240 m O.D. in the Birker Fells some 7 km east of Ravenglass. The underlying rocks comprise the granites and metamorphic strata of the Borrowdale Volcanic Series. Brantrake Moss is a valley bog fed by seepages from the slopes of the surrounding granite hills; Rough and Water Craggs to the south and Brantrake Craggs plus Garner Bank to the north. The peat bog is drained by Black Beck which flows out to the west to meet Linbeck Gill. Devoke Water occupies a larger glaciated valley, similar in shape and aspect, south of Rough and Water Craggs. It is drained by Linbeck Gill flowing out to the north-west.

Brantrake Moss forms the largest upland valley bog in West Cumbria with a plant community characteristic of nutrient-poor, western-oceanic peatlands. This is typified by a high cover of purple moor-grass *Molinia caerulea* and bog myrtle *Myrica gale* in a community dominated by cottongrasses *Eriophorum angustifolium*, *E. vaginatum* with deer grass *Tricophorum cespitosum* and cross-leaved heath *Erica tetralix*. Bog mosses *Sphagnum* spp. are common throughout, often dominating the wetter hollows. Associated with these are the sundews *Drosera rotundifolia* and *D. intermedia*, bog asphodel *Narthecium ossifragum*, cranberry *Vaccinium oxycoccus* and bulbous rush *Juncus bulbosus*. Drier hummocks support heather *Calluna vulgaris* with tormentil *Potentilla erecta* and occasional bilberry *Vaccinium myrtillus*.

In addition to the wet-bog species listed above, many of the flushes supplying Brantrake Bog, along with those by the northern shore of Devoke Water and east of Linbeck Gill, are rich in sedge species. These include common sedge *Carex nigra*, carnation sedge *C. panicea*, ribbed sedge *C. binervis*, spring sedge *C. caryophyllea*, star sedge *C. echinata*, and white beak-sedge *Rhynchospora alba*. Another plant typical of the flushes is the insectivorous butterwort *Pinguicula vulgaris*.

Devoke Water is the only example of a nutrient-poor (meso-oligotrophic) tarn in west Cumbria and has a variety of aquatic plant species typical of low-nutrient conditions. This community is represented by water lobelia *Lobelia dortmanna*, quillwort *Isoetes lacustris*, and, in sheltered

situations, floating bur-reed *Sparganium angustifolium*, together with alternate water milfoil *Myriophyllum alterniflorum* in the shallows, shoreweed *Littorella uniflora* and intermediate bladderwort *Utricularia intermedia*. Some of these species, for example, intermediate bladderwort, in being restricted to low-nutrient waters, are nationally uncommon. Other species, such as water lobelia and quillwort are frequent in Cumbria but uncommon elsewhere in England.

Additional habitats on the site include wet heath with heather, cross-leaved heath and heath-rush *Juncus squarrosus*; dry heathland and acid grassland dominated by mat-grass *Nardus stricta* and sheep's fescue *Festuca ovina*; stands of bracken, and the upland, nutrient-poor streams, Black Beck and Linbeck Gill. On Devoke Water, a small island, unaffected by grazing, supports a low woodland of willow and alder.