

COUNTY: DORSET SITE NAME: SLOP BOG AND UDDENS HEATH

DISTRICT: WIMBORNE

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

Local Planning Authority: WIMBORNE DISTRICT COUNCIL, Dorset County Council

National Grid Reference: SU 065018 & SU 077018 Area: 43.5 (ha.) 107.4 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 195 1:10,000: –

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

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1985 Date of Last Revision: –

Other Information:

Reasons for Notification:

These heathland areas on Bagshot Sands and Valley Gravels are situated in the valley of the Uddens Water, a tributary of the Moors River. The wetter types of heath are best represented but there is dry heath in limited amount. Plant and animal communities typical of Dorset heathland occur and these include several rare species.

Dry heathland is mostly of the Ling *Calluna vulgaris*/Dwarf Gorse *Ulex minor* type, locally with Western Gorse *Ulex gallii*, but some areas have been colonised by Bracken *Pteridium aquilinum* or Scots Pine *Pinus sylvestris*. Humid and wet heath, variously dominated by Ling, Cross-leaved Heath *Erica tetralix* and Purple Moor-grass *Molinia caerulea*, covers larger areas and supports strong populations of the rare Marsh Gentian *Gentiana pneumonanthe*. The bog communities on the deep peat of Slop Bog are exceptionally rich. Their diversity owes much to abandoned peat-cuttings which vary considerably in the amount of water which they hold. In the east the wettest cuttings support White Water-lily *Nymphaea alba*, Bog-bean *Menyanthes trifoliata* and several species of *Sphagnum* moss. The bottoms of the slightly drier cuttings are often dominated by Cotton-grass *Eriophorum angustifolium* with White Beak-Sedge *Rynchospora alba*, the rare Brown Beak-sedge *R. fusca*, Bog Asphodel *Narthecium ossifragum* and the Sundews *Drosera rotundifolia* and *D. intermedia*. The uncommon Mud Sedge *Carex limosa* occurs very locally on bare wet peat in these cuttings. The dominant vegetation outside the cuttings is Purple Moor-grass with smaller amounts of Cross-leaved Heath, Ling and stands of Bog Myrtle *Myrica gale*, Sallow *Salix cinerea* and Birch *Betula*.

The dry heath provides excellent habitat for the rare reptiles, Sand Lizard *Lacerta agilis* and Smooth Snake *Coronella austriaca*. The peat-cuttings and ditches are breeding areas for dragonflies of which at least 11 species occur including the Small Red Damselfly *Ceriagrion tenellum* which is virtually restricted to heathlands of Southern England. Also in the wetter areas there are good populations of the local bush Crickets, Bog Bush Cricket *Metrioptera brachyptera* and Short-winged Conehead *Conocephalus dorsalis*. Slop Bog also supports a

colony of Large Marsh Grasshopper *Stethophyma grossum*, a rare insect of very restricted distribution.