

Notification Date: 29 January 1987

COUNTY: HEREFORD & WORCESTER

SITE NAME: MONK WOOD

DISTRICT: MALVERN HILLS

SITE REF: 15 WRW

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

Local Planning Authority: HEREFORD & WORCESTER COUNTY COUNCIL, Malvern Hills District Council

National Grid Reference: SO 804608

Area: 62.2 (ha.) 153.7 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 150

1:10,000: SO 86 SW

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1971

Date of Last Revision: 1975

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1987

Date of Last Revision: –

Other Information:

Part of the site is owned and managed by Worcestershire Nature Conservation Trust and The British Butterfly Conservation Society. Site boundary alteration (extension & reduction).

Description and Reasons for Notification:

Monk Wood is a mixed broad-leaved plantation on an ancient woodland site which lies on heavy clay-loam soils to the north-west of Worcester. The canopy is dominated by grey alder *Alnus incana*, ash *Fraxinus excelsior* and beech *Fagus sylvatica* which were planted in the early 1950's. Some of the former damp oak woodland survives.

The site is of special interest because of its outstandingly rich invertebrate fauna which is associated with the largely open structure of this commercially managed woodland. Good populations of plants important to the larvae of lepidoptera are found along the rides and tracks. These include tufted vetch *Vicia cracca*, meadow vetchling *Lathyrus pratensis* and greater bird's-foot-trefoil *Lotus uliginosus*. The wood contains the largest populations of wood small-reed *Calamagrostis epigejos* in the county.

Thirty species of butterfly have been recorded including the county's largest population of the wood white *Leptidea sinapsis*. Other uncommon or declining species include the brown hairstreak *Thecla betulae*, pearl-bordered fritillary *Boloria euphrosyne*, high brown fritillary *Argynnis adippe* and dingy skipper *Erynnis tages*.

Over 100 beetles have been recorded. These include nationally scarce species such as *Philonthus atratus*, *Staphylinus pedator* and *Psylliodes chalcomera*. Glow-worms *Lampyris noctiluca* and a rare harvestman *Leiobunum rotundum* are also present. The wood is noted for its population of the terrestrial caddis *Eniocyba pusilla*, a species confined to woods in the north of the county. Over 80 spiders have been recorded, including several scarce species such as *Agyneta ramosa*.

The site's ecological importance is enhanced by two unimproved ridge and furrow meadows and a pond at its southern end. These meadows support a large population of green-winged orchid *Orchis morio*, together with a variety of other plants typical of damp meadows such as lady's mantle *Alchemilla vulgaris* agg., ragged-robin *Lychnis flos-cuculi*, cuckoo flower *Cardamine pratensis* and adder's-tongue *Ophioglossum vulgatum*.

Its importance is further enhanced by its juxtaposition to the unimproved grassland and scrub of Monkwood Green SSSI.