

Site notified to the Secretary of State on 7 March 1988

COUNTY: Devon

SITE NAME: BRAUNTON SWANPOOL

DISTRICT: North Devon

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

Local Planning Authority: Devon County Council, North Devon District Council

National Grid Reference: SS 471368

Area: 11.9 (ha) 29.4 (ac)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 180

1:10,000: SS 43 NE

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): –

Date of Last Revision: –

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1988

Date of Last Revision: –

Other Information:
New Site.

Description and Reasons for Notification:

Braunton Swanpool is important for its reedbed and herb-rich marshy grasslands, habitats which are rare in North Devon.

The site lies near sea-level in a shallow basin of old river terrace drift. The water table is at or near the surface for much of the year, with a general movement of water from north to south.

A large part of the site consists of reedbed dominated by Common Reed *Phragmites australis* with associated plants including Fleabane *Pulicaria dysenterica*, Common Marsh-bedstraw *Gallium palustre* and Bulrush *Typha latifolia*. There is an area of willow carr and scattered Willows *Salix spp* occur throughout. Some of the meadows support beds of sedges with Great Pond Sedge *Carex riparia* being particularly abundant together with Marsh Cinquefoil *Potentilla palustris*, Ragged Robin *Lychnis flos-cuculi*, Marsh Pennywort *Hydrocotyle vulgaris*, Wild Angelica *Angelica sylvestris*, Purple-loosestrife *Lythrum salicaria* and the local Parsley Water-dropwort *Oenanthe lachenalii*. Of special note is the presence of Marsh Arrowgrass *Triglochin palustris*, a rare plant in Devon.

Other meadow supports a rich flora where Meadowsweet *Filipendula ulmaria*, Marsh Marigold *Caltha palustris*, Yellow-rattle *Rhinanthus minor*, Marsh Ragwort *Senecio aquaticus* and Yellow Iris *Iris pseudacorus* are more frequent. Also found here are such plants as Water Mint *Mentha aquatica*, Southern Marsh Orchid *Dactylorhiza praetermissa*, Meadow Vetchling *Lathyrus pratensis* and Greater Bird's-foot-trefoil *Lotus uliginosus*.

A characteristic bird community is present, with Reed and Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus* and *A. schoenobaenus*, Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella naevia* and Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus* breeding here regularly.