

COUNTY: KENT            SITE NAME: SEVENOAKS GRAVEL PIT

DISTRICT: SEVENOAKS

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

Local Planning Authority: SEVENOAKS DISTRICT COUNCIL

National Grid Reference: TQ 522569    Area: 71.0 (ha.) 175.3 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 188    1:10,000: TQ/55 NE

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1968    Date of Last Revision: 1981

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1989

Other Information:

This site is managed as the Sevenoaks Wildfowl Reserve by the Jeffery Harrison Memorial Trust. There are boundary amendments including extensions and deletions.

Reasons for Notification:

The interest of this group of lakes, formed by the flooding of the former gravel workings and fed by the River Darent, centres on its breeding bird populations. Extensive landscaping to create shallows, spits and islands, and the planting of trees and aquatic plants have provided conditions suitable for both breeding and wintering birds.

The most numerous breeding species are Canada and greylag geese, mallard and tufted duck. Many other water birds breed including great-crested grebe, kingfisher, moorhen and coot. Wintering and passage wildfowl include pochard, shelduck, teal and shoveler, and passage waders are also attracted including greenshank and green sandpiper. The uncommon little ringed plover is a regular breeding species here.

The woodland and reed beds support a typical range of song birds including whitethroat, reed, and sedge warblers. There is also a large rookery, and a sand martin colony in a sand face in the south of the site. Sand martins have undergone a major fluctuation in population levels in recent years and this face supports one of the few significant colonies in West Kent.

The botanical and entomological interest of the site is also known to be developing. Thirteen species of Odonata (dragonflies) are present including the locally-distributed downy-emerald dragonfly *Cordulia aenea*. Plants of note include small cud-weed *Filago minima*, dwarf elder *Sambucus ebulus*, and slender bird's-foot trefoil *Lotus angustissimus*.