

COUNTY: Norfolk

SITE NAME: GOODERSTONE WARREN

DISTRICT: Breckland

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

Local Planning Authority: Breckland District Council

National Grid Reference: TF 799014                      Area: 21.95 (ha) 54.24 (ac)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 144                      1:10,000: TF 70 SE & TF 80 SW

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): N/A                      Date of Last Revision: N/A

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1987                      Date of Last Revision: –

Other Information:  
This is a new site.

**Description and Reasons for Notification:**

Gooderstone Warren lies towards the north-western edge of Breckland. Its sandy soils range from mildly acid to fairly calcareous, so much of the range of grassland types characteristic of this region is present here. These habitats are easily destroyed by conversion to arable use and are declining throughout the Breck.

In the southern strip of heathland species-rich calcareous turf is present. This is lightly rabbit-grazed and supports a number of chalk grassland plants which are uncommon in East Anglia. Rockrose *Helianthemum nummularium*, Squinancy Wort *Asperula cyanchica*, Dwarf Thistle *Cirsium acaule*, Crested Hair-grass *Koeleria macrantha* and Dropwort *Filipendula vulgaris* are amongst the more unusual species present, along with Hairy Oat-grass *Avenula pubescens* and Meadow Oat-grass *Avenula pratense*. The presence of Heather *Calluna vulgaris* on slight ridges running down the valley side indicates that ground striping, created during the last glaciation, occurs here. A small area dominated by Sand Sedge *Carex arenaria* is also found on this part of the site, with Tormentil *Potentilla erecta* and Harebell *Campanula rotundifolia* associated.

A shallow valley runs across the northern part of the heath and the valley bottom supports slightly acidic grassland which is lightly rabbit-grazed. Here short Grasses such as Sheep's Fescue *Festuca ovina* and Sweet Vernal grass *Anthoxanthum odoratum* are present with taller species, and herbs include Lady's Bedstraw *Galium verum*, Sheep's Sorrel *Rumex acetosella*, Field Woodrush *Luzula campestris*, Harebell, Dropwort, Common Dog-violet *Viola riviniana* and Brown Knapweed *Centaurea jacea*. Bracken *Pteridium aquilinum* is frequent on the sides of the valley and there is a chalk pit at the western end.

A large pit at the north end of the site supports a chalk flora which includes the uncommon Purple Milk Vetch *Astragalus danicus* on the side and a colony of Cowslips *Primula veris* on the bottom.