

Notification Date: 26 July 1989

COUNTY: HEREFORD AND WORCESTER SITE NAME: UPTON HAM

DISTRICT: MALVERN HILLS SITE REF: 15 W4F

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

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

National Grid Reference: SO 860400 Area: 56.6 (ha.) 139.9 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 150 1:10, 000: SO 83 NE, SO 84 SE

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

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1989 Date of Last Revision: –

Other Information:
New site.

Description and Reasons for Notification:

Upton Ham is an unimproved flood meadow beside the River Severn at Upton. The meadow is traditionally managed with a late hay cut and aftermath grazing. Upton Ham is a southern alluvial meadow and has been selected as the largest example of this nationally scarce habitat in Worcestershire.

The meadow lies on base-rich alluvial soils and gravels overlying Keuper Marl. It is regularly flooded during the winter. The long continuity of annual hay making and aftermath grazing has given rise to a rich and distinctive flora which includes meadow foxtail *Alopecurus pratensis*, red fescue *Festuca rubra*, meadow vetchling *Lathyrus pratensis*, pepper-saxifrage *Silvaum silaus* and great burnet *Sanguisorba officinalis* which is particularly characteristic of this type of meadow. Less common plants include meadow saffron *Colchicum autumnale*, corn meadow-rue *Thalictrum flavum*, common bistort *Polygonum bistorta*, meadow crane's-bill *Geranium pratense*, parsley water-dropwort *Oenanthe lachenalii* and two nationally scarce species, narrow-leaved water-dropwort *Oenanthe silaifolia* and mousetail *Myosurus minimus*, the last being restricted to disturbed ground. Wood anemone *Anemone nemorosa*, a plant more typical of woodland, is found here. It is not known from other Hams in the lower Severn valley, however it does occur in some of the flood meadows in the upper Thames basin.

Because of its large size and openness this damp meadow attracts breeding curlew *Numenius arquata* and yellow wagtail *Motacilla flava* as well as large numbers of overwintering snipe *Gallinago gallinago*.

Along the bank of the River Severn which flanks the eastern edge of the meadow is a fringing belt of willows *Salix* sp., alder *Alnus glutinosa* and hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*. The nationally restricted small-flowered winter-cress *Barbarea stricta* occurs on exposed ground in this area. The white-legged damselfly *Platycnemis pennipes* and the nationally scarce club-tailed dragonfly *Gomphus vulgatissimus* breed along this section of the river.