

COUNTY: NORFOLK            SITE NAME: EAST WINCH COMMON

DISTRICT: WEST NORFOLK

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

Local Planning Authority: West Norfolk District Council

National Grid Reference: TF 702158            Area: 25.6 (ha.) 63.25 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 132            1:10,000: TF 71 NW, 61 NE

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1954            Date of Last Revision: –

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1984            Date of Last Revision: –

Other Information:

A nature reserve owned and managed by the Norfolk Naturalists' Trust.

Description:

An area of predominantly wet acid heathland on shallow peat of a type that has become rare in west Norfolk. Many wet hollows are present containing diverse fen and mire communities. One rare plant species occurs and also several uncommon species. The site is surrounded by young woodland.

The wet heathland is dominated by heather *Calluna vulgaris* with cross-leaved heath *Erica tetralix* co-dominant and with abundant purple moor-grass *Molinia caerulea* and bog mosses *Sphagnum spp.* Cross-leaved heath and bog mosses are abundant in the wet hollows where several interesting species are present including sundew *Drosera rotundifolia*, sneezewort *Achillea ptarmica*, bog pimpernel *Anagallis tenella*, common cotton-grass *Eriophorum angustifolium* creeping willow *Salix repens* and the rare marsh gentian *Gentiana pneumonanthe*.

In hollows where the peats are less acid, a fen-type community has developed that is dominated by yellow iris *Iris pseudacorus* and blunt-flowered rush *Juncus subnodulosus* and in these areas the southern marsh orchid *Dactylorhiza praetermissa* is abundant. Gorse *Ulex europaeus* and silver birch *Betula pendula* are common and bracken *Pteridium aquilinum* dominates the drier areas of the open heath.

The surrounding woodland consists mainly of silver birch and oak *Quercus robur* with abundant willow scrub in the wetter areas. The ground flora is generally sparse and includes bracken, creeping soft-grass *Holcus mollis* and enchanter's nightshade *Circaea lutetiana*.

Among the more interesting breeding birds are nightingale and grasshopper warbler.