

**County:** Humberside

**Site Name:** Pocklington Canal

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

**Local Planning Authority:** East Yorkshire Borough Council

**National Grid Reference:** SE 758444 – 799473

**Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000:** 105

**1:10,000:** SE 74 NE, SE 74 SE

**Area:** 25.4 (ha) 62.9 (ac)

**First Notified:** 1987

**Description:**

Pocklington Canal links the village of Pocklington to the River Derwent. This unrestored section of the Canal above Melbourne is one of the most important canal sites in England, notable for its assemblage of aquatic, fringing swamp and tall fen plant communities which include a number of rare and local species. The canal is flanked by neutral grassland, usually in association with ditches, becks, hedgerows and small areas of scrub, a complex of habitats which is important for invertebrates and breeding birds.

The open water of the canal supports a diverse aquatic flora including the nationally rare species soft hornwort *Ceratophyllum submersum* and flat-stalked pondweed *Potamogeton friesii*, together with five additional pondweeds *Potamogeton* spp. The canal is fringed by swamp, fen and inundation communities including significant stands of common reed *Phragmites australis* and reed sweet-grass *Glyceria maxima* and a variety of other fen species. The canal also contains the locally rare species narrow-leaved water-plantain *Alisma lanceolatum*, lesser water-plantain *Baldellia ranunculoides*, flowering-rush *Butomus umbellatus*, blunt-fruited water-starwort *Callitriche obtusangula*, fat duckweed *Lemna gibba* and fan-leaved water-crowfoot *Ranunculus circinatus*.

The canal supports an outstanding assemblage of aquatic invertebrates. At least thirteen species of dragonflies and damselflies are recorded from the canal, including the notable red-eyed damselfly *Erythromma najas*. The canal is also important for reed beetles *Donacinae* as well as a number of other invertebrate species. Stationary 'pools' of water in the canal locks support locally important communities of planktonic micro-crustacea.

Adjacent small ditches and becks contain additional stands of swamp and fen communities. The hedgerows are often overgrown and associated with scattered or dense scrub which is important in providing shelter for birds and invertebrates, particularly dragonflies and damselflies. Neutral grassland is present as a linear feature along both banks of the canal, particularly on the towpath side, and is species-rich in places with plants such as betony *Betonica officinalis*, meadow crane's-bill *Geranium pratense*, oxeye daisy *Leucanthemum vulgare* and great burnet *Sanguisorba officinalis*.

The canal and its margins support a breeding bird community typical of lowland open waters and their margins, including tufted duck, kingfisher, grey wagtail, sedge warbler, reed warbler and reed bunting. Additionally, the fringing hedges and scrub hold species such as turtle dove and whitethroat.

Otters are known to frequent the canal.

**Other Information:**

1. Part of this site is managed as a nature reserve by York University.
2. This site is adjacent to Melbourne and Thornton Ings SSSI.