

**County:** Devon

**Site Name:** Reed's Farm Pit

**District:** East Devon

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

**Local Planning Authority:** Devon County Council  
East Devon District Council

**National Grid Reference:** ST 213003      **Area:** 0.56 (ha) (ac)

**Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000:** 193      **1:10,000:** ST 20 SW, SW 29 NW

**Date Notified (Under 1949 Act):** 1952      **Date of Last Revision:** 1976

**Date Notified (Under 1981 Act):** 1995      **Date of Last Revision:** –

**Other Information:**

This site is of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) notified under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act, 1949.

The site is also within Blackdown Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and the Blackdown Hills Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA).

**Description and Reasons for Notification:**

This well-known old locality has several alternate names (Hutchins Pit, Waterworks Pit) but still exhibits important exposures of Cretaceous sediments. The base of the sequence recorded is the Eggardon Grit 'Member', part of the Upper Greensand Formation, the top surface of which is a mineralised hardground (possibly equivalent to the Small Cove Hardground of the Devon coast). The overlying basement bed of the 'Wilmington Sands' is a rich shell-bed with many bivalves (including trioniids) and an important and unusual ammonite fauna of the *couloni* horizon at the top of the *caritanense* Subzone of the *mantelli* Zone (Lower Cenomanian). The succeeding sands contain rare specimens of the ammonite *Austiniceras*, but overlying calcareous sandstones, known locally as 'Grizzle', yield a richer fauna of the *dixoni* Zone. Exact correlation of the 'Wilmington Sands' with coastal sequences in South East Devon remains unclear, but there is general equivalence at least in part, to the Pounds Pool Sandy Limestone and the Hooken Nodular Limestone members of the Beer Head Limestone Formation.

A succeeding limestone unit capped by a mineralised hardground yields a sparse fauna of the *rhotomagense* Zone (Middle Cenomanian) – correlation with the Little Beach Bioclastic Limestone Member (Beer Head Limestone Formation) of coastal sections is often assumed. The overlying glauconitic chalk although often correlated with the Pinnacles Glauconitic Limestone Member of the coastal Beer Head Limestone Formation, is already lithologically 'Lower Chalk'. It yields a derived phosphatised fauna with elements of the *jukes-brownei* Zone (Middle Cenomanian and the *guerangeri* Zone (Upper Cenomanian). An indigenous fauna however, indicates the younger *geslinianum* Zone (also Upper Cenomanian).

The richness of some of the internationally important faunas, especially the correlative elements (such as ammonites) makes Reed's Farm Pit of national and international significance. Although the succession is broadly similar to that of the nearby Wilmington Quarry (White Hart Sandpit) SSSI, many significant differences are present and Reed's Farm Pit has yielded better preserved specimens of certain faunal elements. Both sites are stratigraphically complementary.