

Notified to the Secretary of State on 8 May 1985. Revised 8.3.88.

**County:** Dorset **Site Name:** Verwood Heaths

**District:** East Dorset

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

**Local Planning Authority:** East Dorset District Council, Dorset County Council

**National Grid Reference:** SU 078084              **Area:** 26.4 (ha) 65.2 (ac)  
                                092095,  
                                102088

**Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 1:10,000:** SU 00 SE, 10 SW

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

**Date Notified (Under 1981 Act):** 1985

**Date of Last Revision:** 1988

**Other Information:**

Boundary amended by part deletion at 1988 revision.

**Description and Reasons for Notification:**

Three pieces of heathland in the vicinity of Verwood near the north west limit of the Bagshot Beds. Dry, humid and wet heathland types are represented and several uncommon animals confined to the heathlands of southern England occur.

Much of the dry heathland which is typically dominated by ling *Calluna* is very mature and consequently is rich in lichens of the genus *Cladonia*, including the scarce *C. gracilis*. Common gorse *Ulex europaeus* and Scots pine *Pinus sylvestris* form dense stands in certain areas. The humid and wet heath is variously dominated by cross-leaved heath *Erica tetralix*, purple moor-grass *Molinia caerulea* or ling and the rare brown beak-sedge *Rhynchospora fusca* occurs in one of the wetter areas.

The dry heathland supports strong populations of the rare heathland reptiles, sand lizard *Lacerta agilis* and smooth snake *Coronella austriaca*. The heath grasshopper *Chorthippus vagans* which is restricted to some of the heaths of Dorset and the New Forest also occurs on the dry heath and the wet heath supports the local bog bush cricket *Metrioptera brachyptera*.