

COUNTY: NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

SITE NAME: WILFORD CLAYPITS

DISTRICT: RUSHCLIFFE

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

Local Planning Authority: RUSHCLIFFE BOROUGH COUNCIL

National Grid Reference: SK 571 355

Area: 1.78 (ha.) 4.396 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 129

1:10,000: SK 53 NE

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1981

Date of Last Revision: –

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1983

Date of Last Revision: –

Other Information:

Reasons for Notification:

The site contains one of the best remaining areas of marsh in Nottinghamshire and is representative of marsh communities on somewhat base-rich soils in Central and Southern England.

Biology

Present habitats have developed on former claypits which exposed strata of the Triassic Keuper Marl series. The upper pit slopes are mainly dry although occasional springs issue from skerry bands and much of the pit floor is occupied by pools and flowing dykes. Grassland at an early successional stage has developed on the mineral soils of the pit slopes and is characterised by forbs such as bird's-foot trefoil *Lotus corniculatus* and fairy flax *Linum catharticum*. The grassland community on the damper soils of the pit floor tends towards marsh and is characterised by the abundance of creeping bent *Agrostis stolonifera*, red fescue *Festuca rubra*, Yorkshire-fog *Holcus lanatus*, yellow oat grass *Trisetum flavescens*, and smooth meadow grass *Poa pratensis*, and by the variety of herbs including wild carrot *Daucus carota*, bee orchid *Ophrys apifera*, southern marsh orchid *Dactylorhiza praetermissa*, yellow-wort *Blackstonia perfoliata* and fleabane *Pulicaria dysenterica*. Wetter areas adjacent to the pools and dykes support marsh characterised by the abundance of grey club-rush *Scirpus tabernaemontani*, hard rush *Juncus inflexus*, common spike-rush *Eleocharis palustris* and, locally, cotton grass *Eriophorum angustifolium*. Stands of branched bur-reed *Sparganium erectum* and bulrush *Typha latifolia* occur in rather deeper water with aquatic plants such as mare's-tail *Hippuris vulgaris*, horned pondweed *Zanichellia palustris* and various-leaved water-starwort *Callitriche platycarpa*. The range of terrestrial and aquatic habitats present provides suitable conditions for populations of breeding amphibia and supports a diverse insect fauna.