

Date Notified: 20 March 1992

File ref: SE 74 SL 3

Site Code: 18WCH

County: North Yorkshire and Humberside

Site Name: Derwent Ings

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

Local Planning Authority: North Yorkshire County Council, Humberside County Council, Selby District Council, Boothferry Borough Council, East Yorkshire Borough Council

National Grid Reference: SE 703466 - 703347

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 105, 106
SW, 74 NW, SW

1:10,000: SE 63 NE, 64 NE, SE, 73 NW,

Area: 662.45 (ha) 1,636.91 (ac)

First Notified: 1975*

Date of Revision: 1981*, 1983⁰, 1992+

Description:

The Derwent Ings consists of a series of neutral alluvial flood meadows, fen and swamp communities and freshwater habitats lying adjacent to the River Derwent between Sutton-upon-Derwent and Menthorpe. The freshwater habitats are associated primarily with a section of the Pocklington Canal, between East Cottingwith and Storwood, and the dyke system. The Derwent Ings represents one of the most important examples of agriculturally unimproved species-rich alluvial flood meadow habitat remaining in the UK. These grasslands, which were formerly widespread, are now very restricted in distribution due to agricultural improvement. They form part of an internationally threatened resource.

The character and species composition of the grassland, fen and swamp communities is largely controlled by topography, differences in winter flooding and by the type of agricultural management.

In the wettest areas the vegetation is dominated by species such as reed sweet-grass *Glyceria maxima* reed canary-grass *Phalaris arundinacea* and slender tufted-sedge *Carex acuta*, or by creeping bent *Agrostis stolonifera*, marsh foxtail *Alopecurus geniculatus* and silverweed *Potentilla anserina*.

On the drier areas where flooding is short-lived, a species-rich community occurs characterised by species such as great burnet *Sanguisorba officinalis*, meadow foxtail *Alopecurus pratensis*, sweet vernal-grass *Anthoxanthum odoratum*, meadowsweet *Filipendula ulmaria*, sneezewort *Achillea ptarmica*, ragged-robin *Lychnis flos-cuculi* and pepper-saxifrage *Silaum silaus*, together with important populations of the nationally scarce narrow-leaved water-dropwort *Oenanthe silaifolia*.

The site is important as a habitat for a wide range of breeding wetland bird species. Breeding wildfowl include shoveler, shelduck, mallard, teal, pintail, gadwall and garganey. Breeding

waders include snipe, lapwing, redshank and curlew. Other breeding birds include quail, barn owl, kingfisher, yellow wagtail and reed, sedge and grasshopper warblers.

In winter the Ings support internationally important concentrations of waterfowl (>20,000 individuals) together with nationally important numbers (>1% British wintering population) of Bewick's swan, teal wigeon, mallard, pochard, golden plover and ruff. Nationally important numbers of whimbrel occur in late April and early May.

The freshwater dyke system of the Ings support a rich diversity of plant species including two nationally scarce species, greater water-parsnip *Sium latifolium* and flat-stalked pondweed *Potamogeton freisii* together with locally rare species such as water violet *Hottonia palustris* and round-fruited rush *Juncus compressus*.

The site has an outstanding assemblage of invertebrates with species associated with the dykes and the fen and swamp habitats being particularly significant. These include up to 16 species of damselflies and dragonflies, together with a variety of species of other invertebrate groups and including three nationally rare species, a snail killing fly *Sciomyza dryomyzina*, a fresh water snail *Lymnaea glabra* and a Ptilid beetle *Acrotrichis subcognata*.

Other Information:

1. The Derwent Ings is of international significance and has been designated a Wetland of International Importance under the Ramsar Convention and as a Special Protection Area under the terms of the European Community Directive 79/409/EEC.
2. This is a nationally important site listed in "A Nature Conservation Review" edited by D A Ratcliffe (1977). Cambridge University Press.
3. Part of the site is declared as the Lower Derwent Valley National Nature Reserve under Section 19 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act, 1949 and Section 35 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981.
4. Part of the site is owned by the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust and is managed in conjunction with the Nature Conservancy Council for England (English Nature) under the terms of a Nature Reserve Agreement under Section 16 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act, 1949.
5. Part of the site is a statutory Sanctuary under the Wild Birds (Wheldrake Ings Sanctuary) Order 1978, Statutory Instrument No. 1259.

*Under Section 23 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act, 1949.

^oUnder Section 28 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981.

+Under Section 28 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 (as amended).