

**County:** Humberside

**Site Name:** Epworth Turbary

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

**Local Planning Authority:** Boothferry Borough Council

**National Grid Reference:** SE 755040

**Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000:** 112     **1:10,000:** SE 70 SE

**Area:** 32.4 (ha)   80.06 (ac)

**First Notified:** 1951\*

**Date of Revision:** 1984

**Description:**

Epworth Turbary, an area of relict peat vegetation in the low-lying carr land west of the Isle of Axholme, is one of only three such areas known to remain in South Humberside. The peat has been partly covered by blown sand, and in the past was extensively cut for turves, resulting in localised variations in the water-table. The plant communities represented are birch woodland, heathland and fen.

The peatland has suffered widespread invasion by birch *Betula pendula* and *B. pubescens*, and towards the west, where the ground is higher, there is a dense canopy of birch and oak *Quercus* sp., with an understorey of bramble *Rubus fruticosus* or bracken *Pteridium aquilinum*.

In the wetter, eastern portion, its management as a nature reserve has maintained open areas of heathland and fen which would otherwise have been invaded by birch scrub.

The wet heath is dominated by purple moor-grass *Molinia caerulea* with cross-leaved heath *Erica tetralix* and hare's-tail cotton-grass *Eriophorum vaginatum*. Bog rosemary *Andromeda polifolia*, an uncommon plant of northern wet heathlands, occurs here at the south-eastern limit of its British range. Drier sandy areas support heather *Calluna vulgaris*, whilst the fen is characterised by reed *Phragmites australis* and saw-sedge *Cladium mariscus*. Small areas of bog-moss *Sphagnum* spp., still occur.

Breeding birds include teal, snipe, woodcock, long-eared owl, tree pipit, green and great-spotted woodpeckers and a number of the more common woodland species.

**Other Information:**

Epworth Turbary is managed as a nature reserve by the Lincolnshire & South Humberside Trust for Nature Conservation.

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