

County: Lancashire **Site Name:** Rough Hey Wood

District: Wyre

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

Local Planning Authority: Wyre Borough Council

National Grid Reference: SD 521429 **Area:** 5.9 (ha) 14.5 (ac)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50 000 102 **1:10 000** SD 54 SW

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1979 **Date of Last Revision:** –

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1984 **Date of Last Revision:** –

Other Information:

1. Site boundary unchanged at renotification.

Reasons for Notification:

Rough Hey Wood is situated approximately 1 km to the north-west of the village of Claughton, near Garstang, and is a planted mixed woodland containing one of Britain's largest heronries.

The wood is a mixed plantation of oak, sycamore and alder, dating back over 100 years, with patches of exotic conifers of more recent origin in the centre. Formerly the herons nested in the hardwoods but have in recent years moved almost entirely into the conifers, particularly the larch in the central block, which they appear to favour despite problems with windblow.

The colony has increased in numbers quite dramatically since the early 1960s, when only about 20 nests were occupied, to a peak count of 137 nests in 1975. This increase is largely due to the location of the wood within the Claughton Hall Estate, providing a degree of protection from human disturbance and the wood has in recent years regularly supported over 100 pairs (115 on average), which represents more than 1% of the total British breeding population. The Claughton heronry is therefore of national importance and is one of only 5 heronries in Britain regularly containing over 100 nests.

Other birds known to breed include chiffchaff, black cap, tawny owl, sparrow hawk and great spotted woodpecker.