

COUNTY: Norfolk

SITE NAME: HOCKERING WOOD

DISTRICT: Breckland

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

Local Planning Authority: Breckland District Council

National Grid Reference: TG 073144

Area: 87.72 (ha) 216.76 (ac)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 133

1:10,000: TG 01 SE

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1968

Date of Last Revision: -

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1984

Date of Last Revision: -

Other Information:

Forestry Dedication agreement concluded with Forestry Commission in 1958. Management agreement between owners and Norfolk Naturalists' Trust dated 1977.

Reasons for Notification:

Hockering Wood is one of the largest blocks of ancient, semi-natural woodland in Norfolk. The major stand-type is acid oak-lime wood which is rare in the county and generally occurs elsewhere only as isolated fragments. Large areas of the ancient woodland have remained undisturbed and the site contains many rare and local species, particularly bryophytes but also higher plants. The ecological range is unusual for Norfolk.

The principal stand-type is small leaved lime-pedunculate oak wood with Birch *Betula pubescens* and scattered Hazel *Corylus avellana*. Elder *Sambucus nigra*, Holly *Ilex aquifolium* and Gean *Prunus avium* are occasional. On less freely-drained soils, Ash *Fraxinus excelsior* occurs with the Lime *Tilia cordata*, as coppice or fully grown trees, and Maple *Acer campestre* is also present in a few areas. Locally, lime is absent and small patches of acid hazel-pedunculate oak wood are scattered throughout. Fragments of light soil sub-types of hornbeam-pedunculate oak wood, maple-ash wood and suckering elm wood are also present. Sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus* is locally abundant, especially in the N.W.

The ground flora is generally diverse; it is dominated by bracken on the most acid soils with Honeysuckle *Lonicera periclymenum* and Wood Sage *Teucrium scorodonia*. Lily of the Valley *Convallaria majalis* is locally abundant. Elsewhere bracken occurs with bramble, Yellow Archangel *Lamium galeobdolon*, Wood Sorrel *Oxalis acetosella*, Bluebell *Hyacinthoides non-scripta*, Dog's Mercury *Mercurialis perennis* and Ground Ivy *Glechoma hederacea*. Wood Spurge *Euphorbia amygdaloides* is locally frequent, and Herb Robert *Geranium robertianum* and Water Avens *Geum rivale* occur on more calcareous soils. Ramsons *Allium ursinum*, Wood Anemone *Anemone nemorosa*, Pendulous Sedge *Carex pendula*, Hairy Woodrush *Luzula pilosa*, Yellow Pimpernel *Lysimachia nemorum*, Herb Paris *Paris quadrifolia* and Hard Shield-fern *Polystichum aculeatum* are also present.

Additional interest is provided by the woodland ponds which support a breeding population of the Great Crested Newt *Triturus cristatus*, a species protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

Blocks of conifer, hardwood and mixed hardwood-conifer plantation are also present.