

Notification Date: 12 May 1986

COUNTY: HEREFORD & WORCESTER SITE NAME: SHRAWLEY WOOD

DISTRICT: MALVERN HILLS SITE REF: 15 WTE

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

Local Planning Authority: HEREFORD & WORCESTER COUNTY COUNCIL, Malvern Hills District Council

National Grid Reference: SO 808660 Area: 103.1 (ha.) 254.8 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 150 1:10,000: SO 86 NW

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1955 Date of Last Revision: 1971

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1986 Date of Last Revision: –

Other Information:

Part owned by the Forestry Commission. Site boundary alteration (extension & reduction).

Description and Reasons for Notification:

Shrawley Wood lies on the western bank of the River Severn between Worcester and Stourport. The site overlies Keuper sandstone from which the soils are derived. They are slightly acidic on the plateau but become more neutral to alkaline on the slopes and valley bottom.

The site has been selected as a large tract of ancient woodland almost completely dominated by coppiced small-leaved lime *Tilia cordata*. This type of woodland is a feature of eastern England and its occurrence here is unusual in the West Midlands. The woodland also has a long history of management with records going back to the beginning of the eighteenth century.

A small section of the wood has pedunculate oak *Quercus robur* standards amongst the lime coppice. Downy birch *Betula pubescens* is common and pedunculate oak, rowan *Sorbus aucuparia* and ash *Fraxinus excelsior* occur sporadically throughout the wood. Sweet chestnut *Castanea sativa* has been introduced in small numbers. In the wetter areas along the streams and in the vicinity of a system of artificial pools, alder *Alnus glutinosa* is the dominant species.

On the slightly acidic soils of the plateau the ground flora is dominated by bracken *Pteridium aquilinum*, foxglove *Digitalis purpurea* and bluebell *Hyacinthoides non-scripta*. On the more alkaline slopes dog's mercury *Mercurialis perennis*, enchanter's-nightshade *Circaea lutetiana* and ramsons *Allium ursinum* become more abundant. Many interesting and locally uncommon plants occur within the ground flora, including herb paris *Paris quadrifolia*, giant bellflower *Campanula latifolia*, broad-leaved helleborine *Epipactis helleborine* and lily-of-the-valley *Convallaria majalis*. Two rarities, wood fescue *Festuca altissima* and spreading bellflower *Campanula patula* are also present.

The streams and pools included in this site add to the site's conservation value. Here opposite-leaved golden-saxifrage *Chrysosplenium oppositifolium* and large bitter-cress *Cardamine amara* are present in the waterside communities and the rare soft hornwort *Ceratophyllum submersum* occurs in one of the pools. Over 400 species of fungi have been recorded in the woodland.

The wood is important for its breeding birds which include the three native species of woodpecker, and in the coppiced lime a large number of garden warblers *Sylvia borin*. The last mentioned are the subject of a long term population study. Dipper *Cinclus cinclus* and kingfisher *Alcedo atthis* occur along the streams and ponds.

A rare slug *Limax tenellus*, a characteristic species of ancient woodland, has been found.