

COUNTY: LINCOLNSHIRE

SITE NAME: DEEPING GRAVEL PITS

DISTRICT: SOUTH KESTEVEN

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

Local Planning Authority: SOUTH KESTEVEN DISTRICT COUNCIL

National Grid Reference: TF 180 082

Area: 55.9 (ha.) 138.1 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 142

1:10,000: TF 10 NE

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1968

Date of Last Revision: –

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1986

Date of Last Revision: –

Other Information:

The boundary of this site has been modified at renotification by partial deletions.

Description and Reasons for Notification:

The variety of habitats present and the undisturbed nature of the area make Deeping Gravel Pits an extremely important ornithological site. The pits support a heronry of national importance, being the largest in Lincolnshire with over seventy occupied nests. The diversity of the wintering wildfowl species and the breeding bird community are of regional importance.

Breeding birds include gadwall, great crested grebe, shoveler, tufted duck, heron and kingfisher. The extensive areas of open water support a wide variety of wildfowl in winter, including wigeon, pintail, goldeneye, mallard, teal and goosander, as well as water-rail and bearded tit. The site is remarkable in being an inland breeding locality for cormorant.

Aquatic and fen vegetation occur around the open-water margin, characterised by common reed *Phragmites australis*, lesser bulrush *Typha angustifolia*, common clubrush *Schoenoplectus lacustris*, yellow water-lily *Nuphar lutea* and yellow iris *Iris pseudacorus*. Elsewhere, there is much willow scrub *Salix* spp., grading into pedunculate oak *Quercus robur* and ash *Fraxinus excelsior* woodland. The water is nutrient-rich and is dominated by Nuttall's waterweed *Elodea nuttallii* with small amounts of spiked water-milfoil *Myriophyllum spicatum* and stonewort *Chara* sp.

7 March 1986