

COUNTY: DORSET      SITE NAME: HARTLAND MOOR

DISTRICT: PURBECK

Status: Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) notified under Section 28 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as amended. Major part of site National Nature Reserve (NNR) declared under Section 19 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949.

Local Planning Authority: PURBECK DISTRICT COUNCIL, Dorset County Council

National Grid Reference: SY 948855      Area: 299.9 (ha.) 741.1 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 195      1:10,000: SY 98 NW, SW, NE, SE

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1954      Date of Last Revision: –

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

Other Information:

Large part owned by the National Trust. North-eastern part of original site excluded to become part of Poole Harbour SSSI. Site boundary extended.

Description and Reasons for Notification:

Hartland Moor is an extensive area of lowland heathland in Purbeck. It lies on extremely infertile soils derived from the sands and clays of the Bagshot Beds. A full range of heathland communities are present from dry heath to valley mire. Together, these constitute an exceptionally rich heathland flora and consequently, provide valuable habitat for a variety of animals, many of which are local or rare.

The valley mire system is roughly Y-shaped, running west to east. The two westerly arms show distinct vegetational differences due to the chemical composition of the water. The northern arm is acidic, low in calcium, and has a community dominated by the bog mosses *Sphagnum* spp. including an abundance of the rare *Sphagnum pulchrum*. There is a series of pools, some containing the scarce Bog Sedge *Carex limosa* and the rare Bog Orchid *Hammarbya paludosa* occurs here in several places. The southern arm is relatively base rich and the vegetation is dominated by tussocky Black Bog-rush *Schoenus nigricans*. At the confluence of the two arms, where there are intermediate conditions of base status, Broad-leaved Cotton-grass *Eriophorum latifolium* occurs. To the east, the bog becomes more acidic with a rich flora including the rare Brown Beak Sedge *Rhynchospora fusca* and Marsh Gentian *Gentiana pneumonanthe*. To the south are areas of Reed *Phragmites australis* and there is carr with Common Sallow *Salix cinerea* and Bog Myrtle *Myrica gale*.

Bordering the mire are large areas of wet heath containing some of the finest stands of the rare Dorset Heath *Erica ciliaris* to be found in Britain. Ling *Calluna vulgaris*, Cross-leaved Heath *Erica tetralix*, Purple Moor-grass *Molinia caerulea*, Carnation Sedge *Carex panicea* and Deer Grass *Trichophorum cespitosum* are all abundant components of the wet heath community. The dry heath is dominated by Ling with Bell Heather *Erica cinerea* and Dwarf Gorse *Ulex minor* and Common Gorse *Ulex europaeus* is present particularly along the boundary banks and edges of tracks. The enclosures to the immediate north and south of Scotland Farm provide examples of traditionally managed cattle-grazed heath and contain a range of heathland communities.

Hartland Moor supports a rich fauna including all six British reptiles, with breeding populations of the rare Sand Lizard *Lacerta agilis* and Smooth Snake *Coronella austriaca*. The ponds and bog pools support all of the typical heathland dragonflies including the very local Small Red Damselfly *Ceriagrion tenellum* and the rare Southern Coenagrion *Coenagrion mercuriale*. Grasshoppers are well represented and include the rare Heath Grasshopper *Chorthippus vagans* and Large Marsh Grasshopper *Stethophyma grossum* and a number of uncommon solitary wasps and spiders have been recorded. The gorse stands on the dry heath provide habitat for Stonechat *Saxicola torquata* and this is an important site for the rare Dartford Warbler *Sylvia undata*.