

County: Devon

Site Name: Teign Valley Woods

District: Teignbridge

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

Local Planning Authority: Devon County Council
Teignbridge District Council
Dartmoor National Park Authority

National Grid Reference: SX 798883 **Area:** 172.0 (ha) 425.0 (ac)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 191 **1:10,000:** SX 78 NE, SX 88 NW

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1952 **Date of Last Revision:** 1976

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1985 **Date of Last Revision:** –

Other Information:

The site lies within the Dartmoor National Park.

Part of the site (Dunsford and Meadhaydown Woods) is managed as a nature reserve by the Devon Trust for Nature Conservation.

The site was formerly known as Dunsford and Cod Woods.

The boundary has been amended.

Description:

The site is a fine example of upland oak/hazel woodland lying on the fringes of Dartmoor, and demonstrates features characteristic of such woods in South West England. The flora is diverse and includes both uncommon and rare species.

The Woods clothe the slopes of the River Teign Valley, ranging in altitude from 80 to 260 metres, and are developed on acid soils derived from the Carboniferous Culm Measures, with less acidic alluvial soils on the valley floor.

The woodland character is primarily high forest dominated by pedunculate oak *Quercus robur* derived from the singling of former coppice. Such uniform woodland with an even closed canopy inhibits the development of a shrub layer. However, the ground flora is better developed, being dominated variously by greater woodrush *Luzula sylvatica*, bracken *Pteridium aquilinum*, bilberry *Vaccinium myrtillus* and creeping soft-grass *Holcus mollis*, with common cow-wheat *Melampyrum pratense* also abundant on the lower slopes.

Open heathy areas, characterised by heather *Calluna vulgaris* and common gorse *Ulex europaeus*, occur within the woods, and in Meadhaydown Woods the rare toadflax-leaved St John's-wort *Hypericum linarifolium* and the uncommon shepherd's cress *Teesdalia nudicaulis* are found.

The richer soils along the stream courses and on the valley floor give rise to a more diverse woodland flora including alder *Alnus glutinosa* and ash *Fraxinus excelsior*, with an understorey of coppiced hazel *Corylus avellana*. Wild service tree *Sorbus torminalis*, uncommon in Devon, is found here. Along the woodland edge beside the river, a large native colony of wild daffodil *Narcissus pseudonarcissus* occurs. These more diverse parts of the woodland support a

characteristic breeding community of woodland birds which includes redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus* and pie flycatcher *Ficedula hypoleuca*.

The woodland floor is characterised by an abundance of nests of wood ant *Formica rufa*, and the invertebrate fauna is diverse. Over 25 species of butterfly have been recorded including marsh fritillary *Euphydryas aurinia* and high brown fritillary *Argynnis cydippe*. Two other invertebrates of note are the wood cricket *Nemobius sylvestris*, which is rare outside the New Forest, and *Callicera aenea*, a rare fly which breeds on dead wood.

The River Teign flows eastwards off Dartmoor and has characteristic riffles and pools. Both kingfisher *Alcedo atthis* and dipper *Cinclus cinclus* breed along its banks, while European otter *Lutra lutra* is known to use the river and its tributary streams.