

COUNTY: HEREFORD & WORCESTER SITE NAME: STOURVALE MARSH

DISTRICT: WYRE FOREST

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, Wyre Forest District Council

National Grid Reference: SO 830780 Area: 9.98 (ha.) 24.7 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 138 1:10,000: SO 87 NW

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1971 Date of Last Revision: 1975

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1984 Date of Last Revision: –

Other Information:

Reasons for Notification:

The marsh lies in the flood plain of the river Stour. The soils, derived from alluvium, are base rich and organic and because of impeded drainage remain wet for most of the year.

The site contains a number of wetland habitats i) damp grassland, with abundant tufted hair-grass *Deschampsia cespitosa* and marsh foxtail *Alopecurus geniculatus* ii) tall fen dominated by meadowsweet *Filipendula ulmaria* with abundant lesser pond-sedge *Carex acutiformis* and marsh horsetail *Equisetum palustre*; iii) tall rank vegetation on the river bank with abundant comfrey *Symphytum officinale* and iv) small areas of carr woodland dominated by common alder *Alnus glutinosa* and crack willow *Salix fragilis*. Scattered patches of scrub occur throughout the site composed of a variety of species including osier *Salix viminalis*, blackthorn *Prunus spinosa* and guelder rose *Viburnum opulus*.

Within the site there are a number of plants which are becoming less common in the county as more land is drained. These include narrow-leaved water parsnip *Berula erecta*, southern marsh orchid *Dactylorhiza praetermissa*, hemp agrimony *Eupatorium cannabinum* and great water dock *Rumex hydrolapathum*.

A number of birds such as the reed bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus* and the sedge warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus* breed on the site.

The site is also important for insects. These include dragonflies such as brown aeshna *Aeshna grandis* an uncommon species in the county.