

County: Dorset **Site Name:** Worgret Heath

District: Purbeck

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

Local Planning Authority: Dorset County Council, Purbeck District Council

National Grid Reference: SY 895871 **Area:** 8.4 (ha) 20.8 (ac)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 195 **1:10,000:** SY 88 NE

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

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1987 **Date of Last Revision:** –

Other Information:

A New Site.

Description and Reasons for Notification:

This site comprises a small area of heathland situated between the rivers Frome and Piddle on acidic Bagshot Sands and Plateau Gravels. A remnant of the once extensive heath in this area, the site is important for the rare and protected sand lizard *Lacerta agilis*.

The heathland is mostly dry in character, dominated by heather *Calluna vulgaris* with bell heather *Erica cinerea*, dwarf gorse *Ulex minor*, bristle bent *Agrostis curtisii* and the lichens *Cladonia portentosa* and *C. uncialis*. Bracken *Pteridium aquilinum* is locally abundant. The wetter heathland types are also represented and cross-leaved heath *Erica tetralix*, purple moor-grass *Molinia caerulea*, deer grass *Trichophorum cespitosum*, round-leaved sundew *Drosera rotundifolia* and the local Royal fern *Osmunda regalis* occur here.

Scrub has developed on parts of the site with hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna* to the south and common gorse *Ulex europaeus* to the north-west. Scots pine *Pinus sylvestris* also occurs locally.

The site supports a dense breeding population of sand lizards, a species whose remaining British populations are now mostly restricted to the Dorset heathlands. The dry south-facing slopes of Worgret Heath provide a particularly favourable habitat for this lizard. Local heathland invertebrate species found on the site include silver-studded blue butterfly *Plebejus argus* and bog bush-cricket *Metrioptera brachyptera*.

Site Notified to Secretary of State on 18 November 1987