

Notification Date: 9 October 1989

COUNTY: HEREFORD & WORCESTER

SITE NAME: HALL WOOD

DISTRICT: Malvern Hills

SITE REF: 15 W1H

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

Local Planning Authority: HEREFORD & WORCESTER COUNTY COUNCIL, Malvern Hills District Council

National Grid Reference: SO 672333

Area: 17.9 (ha.) 44.2 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 149

1:10,000: SO 63 SE

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): –

Date of Last Revision: –

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1989

Date of Last Revision: –

Other Information:

New site.

Description and Reasons for Notification:

Hail Wood is a block of ancient broadleaved woodland situated on the Gloucestershire – Herefordshire border, four miles south of Ledbury. It lies on poorly drained, neutral, clay soils derived from the underlying Old Red Sandstone. The site is an ancient woodland containing some types of woodland which are nationally restricted. Hall Wood is also of historical importance as it is one of the earliest documented woods in Britain, with records dating from the thirteenth century.

The majority of the site is covered by woodland characterised by pedunculate oak *Quercus robur* and ash *Fraxinus excelsior* with an understorey of hazel *Corylus avellana*. Silver birch *Betula pendula* and wild service-tree *Sorbus torminalis* also occur in the canopy. As well as hazel the shrub layer includes guelder-rose *Viburnum opulus*, dogwood *Cornus sanguinea* and holly *Ilex aquifolium*. There is a rich ground flora dominated by bramble *Rubus fruticosus* with a number of locally uncommon species such as wild daffodil *Narcissus pseudonarcissus*, common twayblade *Listera ovata*, meadow saffron *Colchicum autumnale* and spurge-laurel *Daphne laureola*.

In the northern part of the site is an area of plateau alder woodland – an uncommon type nationally and largely confined to the south-east of England. Here alder *Alnus glutinosa* is associated with pedunculate oak, ash and aspen *Populus tremula*. Below this there is again a dense shrub layer of coppiced hazel with small amounts of hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna* and field maple *Acer campestre*. In addition to bramble, the herb layer includes male-fern *Dryopteris filix-mas*, wood-sedge *Carex sylvatica* and wood-sorrel *Oxalis acetosella*.

Two other nationally restricted types of woodland, characterised by maple, ash and small-leaved lime *Tilia cordata* and pedunculate oak and small-leaved lime occur in the western part of Hall Wood. The latter includes some areas which consist of almost pure coppiced small-leaved lime.

The woodland supports a rich invertebrate fauna, particularly of species associated with dead wood. Several nationally scarce beetles have been recorded including *Chalcoides nitidulus* and *Ischnomera sanguinicollis* and a nationally scarce fly, *Criorhina berberina*.