

Notification Date: 18 March 1987

COUNTY: HEREFORD & WORCESTER

SITE NAME: WILDEN MARSH &  
MEADOWS

DISTRICT: WYRE FOREST

SITE REF: 15 WTX

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, Wyre Forest District Council

National Grid Reference: SO 827738

Area: 44.0 (ha.) 108.7 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 138

1:10,000: SO 87 SW

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1971

Date of Last Revision: 1975

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1987

Date of Last Revision: –

Other Information:

Part of the site is owned and/or managed by the Worcestershire Trust for Nature Conservation as a nature reserve. Site boundary alteration (extension & reduction).

Description and Reasons for Notification:

Wilden Marsh lies in the floodplain of the River Stour between Kidderminster and Stourport-on-Severn. It is the richest and most diverse wetland habitat in Worcestershire, and includes examples of fen, damp meadow, marshy grassland and carr.

The tall fen vegetation in the centre of the site is rich in plant species with large colonies of plants scarce in Worcestershire, such as lesser reedmace *Typha angustifolia*, lesser water-parsnip *Berula erecta* and water dock *Rumex hydrolapathum*. More common wetland species such as greater pond-sedge *Carex riparia*, wild angelica *Angelica sylvestris*, greater reedmace *Typha latifolia*, meadowsweet *Filipendula ulmaria* and yellow iris *Iris pseudacorus* are also abundant.

The site includes substantial areas of neutral damp grassland, some of which is grazed while some is neglected and consists of a mosaic of coarse grasses, marsh vegetation and ruderal herbs. These areas contain several ditches with abundant fool's water-cress *Apium nodiflorum*, marsh horsetail *Equisetum palustre*, marsh woundwort *Stachys palustris* and water mint *Mentha aquatica*, together with reed sweet-grass *Glyceria maxima* and reed canary-grass *Phalaris arundinacea*. The grazed meadows are noted for their abundance of southern marsh-orchid *Dactylorhiza praetermissa*.

The areas of neglected grassland and marsh are especially species-rich, and include such plants as sneezewort *Achillea ptarmica*, fen bedstraw *Galium uliginosum*, marsh pennywort *Hydrocotyle vulgaris*, marsh cinquefoil *Potentilla palustris*, marsh arrow-grass *Triglochin palustris* and marsh valerian *Valeriana dioica*. Rushes and sedges are also present in considerable numbers and include wood club-rush *Scirpus sylvaticus*, sea club-rush *Scirpus maritimus*, star sedge *Carex echinata* and the rare lesser tussock-sedge *Carex diandra*.

These areas of carr are dominated by alder *Alnus glutinosa* and crack willow *Salix fragilis*. In places grey willow *Salix cinerea* scrub has invaded the marsh vegetation on the edge of the carr. Several white willow *Salix alba* and crack willow pollards occur and there are a few fine specimens of black poplar *Populus nigra*.

The site is of some ornithological interest, particularly for the wetland birds, including snipe *Gallinago gallinago*, which breed here. This interest is enhanced by the proximity of the open water provided by the adjacent settling ponds.