

Date Notified: 21 August 1985

County: Humberside

Site Name: Messingham Heath

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

Local Planning Authority: Glanford Borough Council

National Grid Reference: SE 877034

Area: 17.4 (ha) 43.0 (ac)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 112

1:10,000: SE 80 SE

First Notified: 1965*

Date of Revision: 1985, 1990

Description:

Messingham Heath is an important example of coversand heathland. Such heathland, once extensive in the Scunthorpe-Messingham area, originated as a result of largely wind-blown sand accumulating against the Jurassic escarpment of the Lincoln Cliff at the end of the Ice Age. It is a much-threatened habitat which rapidly dwindled following enclosure, agricultural reclamation and, more recently, sand winning.

The coversand at Messingham Heath overlies clays and gravels of the Trent valley. The majority of the site is an undulating area of sand hills supporting an open community of dry heath and scattered birch. The vegetation is dominated by common bent *Agrostis capillaris*, with wavy hair-grass *Deschampsia flexuosa*, sheep's sorrel *Rumex acetosella*, bell heather *Erica cinerea*, heather *Calluna vulgaris* and sand sedge *Carex arenaria*. Lichens are plentiful and, with the moss *Polytrichum juniperinum*, cover large areas.

Messingham Heath is noted for the occurrence of the Grayling butterfly.

Other Information:

During the 1990 revision a small area of land was removed from the site.

*Under Section 23 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act, 1949.