

**COUNTY:** HUMBERSIDE

**SITE NAME:** RISBY WARREN

**Status:** Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) notified under Section 23 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as amended.

**Local Planning Authority:** Glanford Borough Council

**National Grid Reference:** SE 921135

**Area:** 150.8 (ha.) 372.6 (ac.)

**Ordnance Survey Sheets 1:50,000:** 112

**1:10,000:** SE 91 SW

**First Notified:** 1966\*

**Date of Revision:** 1986

**Description:**

Risby Warren is the largest surviving area of a once extensive heathland developed the coversand of the Lincolnshire Limestone escarpment. The windblown sands, local up to 10m thick on Risby Warren, were deposited extensively in north west Lincolnshire during the late Devensian cold period (about 8,000 B.C.). Few good examples of the deposits now remain and Risby Warren is exceptional in demonstrating their surface morphology and dune forms. The mosaic of plant communities includes not only one of the finest inland dune systems in Britain, but also heathland, contrasting acidic and calcareous grassland, broadleaved scrub, and areas of coniferous plantation. The characteristic vegetation is largely maintained by rabbit grazing. Airborne pollution from the nearby industrial complex at Scunthorpe, is thought to have an adverse affect upon the heath communities.

The dune ridges, which are orientated east-west across the southern section of the site have been stabilised by the introduction of marram grass *Ammophila arenaria* during the 1920's. Other plants associated with the dunes include sand sedge *Carex arenaria* buck's-horn plantain *Plantago coronopus* and common cudweed *Filago vulgaris*. The dunes grade into a complex association of lichenbryophyte and ling *Calluna vulgaris* heathlands with acidic grassland communities supporting common bent *Agrostis capillaris* sheep's fescue *Festuca ovina*, heath bedstraw *Galium saxatile* and early forget-me-not *Myosotis ramosissima*.

At a lower level on the north-facing valley slope a very shallow soil is developed over the limestone bedrock. Here tor-grass *Brachypodium pinnatum* is dominant, with associated species including carline thistle *Carlina vulgaris*, purging flax *Linum catharticum*, purple milk-vetch *Astragalus danicus* and common centaury *Centaureum erythraea*.

Bracken *Pteridium aquilinum* dominates the vegetation on the deeper more loamy soil of the south-facing slope and the valley floor in association with red fescue *Festuca rubra* and Yorkshire fog *Holcus lanatus*. Biting stonecrop *Sedum acre*, carline thistle viper's bugloss *Echium vulgare* and ploughman's spikenard *Inula conyza* are found here in areas disturbed by rabbits and on the trackways. Ragwort *Senecio jacobaea*, ungrazed by rabbits, forms extensive stands on the south-facing slope.

In the lower-lying part of the site small damp depressions support hard rush *Juncus inflexus*, blunt-flowered rush *J. subnodulosus*, lesser pond-sedge *Carex acutiformis* brown sedge *C. disticha* and creeping willow *Salix repens*. Tree cover on the site includes several coniferous shelter-belt plantations as well as scattered birch and gorse scrub.

**Other Information:**

1. During the 1986 revision the boundary of this site has been amended to include land not previously notified and to exclude part of the land previously notified\*.
2. This site is listed in 'A Nature Conservation Review', edited by D A Ratcliffe (1977) Cambridge University Press.

3. The Warren is subject to localised subsidence as a result of extensive ironstone mining under the site; a former opencast working forms the scarp edge on the southwest boundary.
4. See also Manton and Twigmoor SSSI, Wrawby Moor SSSI and Messingham Heath SSSI.

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