

COUNTY: HEREFORD & WORCESTER

SITE NAME: CAGE BROOK  
VALLEY

DISTRICT: SOUTH HEREFORD

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

Local Planning Authority: HEREFORD & WORCESTER COUNTY COUNCIL, South Herefordshire District Council

National Grid Reference: SO 451386, SO 443377      Area: 4.93 (ha.) 12.2 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 149, 161      1:10,000: SO 43 NE, NW

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1969      Date of Last Revision: 1975

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1985      Date of Last Revision: –

Other Information:

Reasons for Notification:

The site consists of two blocks of semi-natural woodland and small areas of unimproved neutral grassland in the valley of the Cage Brook.

The woodland in the northern section is dominated by ash *Fraxinus excelsior* with some sessile oak *Quercus petraea* and silver birch *Betula pendula*. The dense shrub layer is dominated by hazel *Corylus avellana*. In the southern section ash is again dominant, but here it is associated with wild cherry *Prunus avium*. Hazel and hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna* form the shrub layer. Areas of damp alder *Alnus glutinosa* woodland occur in the areas immediately adjacent to the Cage Brook, together with willows *Salix caprea* and *S. fragilis*. In the drier parts of the woodland the ground flora is dominated by such characteristic species as dog's mercury *Mercurialis perennis*, enchanter's nightshade *Circaea lutetiana* and herb-robert *Geranium robertianum*. In the wetter alder woodland the ground flora contains a number of plants which are uncommon in Herefordshire. These include greater tussock-sedge *Carex paniculata* and monk's-hood *Aconitum napellus*. The latter species is uncommon in Britain and this colony is one of the largest in the West Midlands. Some plants also occur in the small areas of grassland.

The grassland is dominated in the drier parts by crested dog's-tail *Cynosurus cristatus* and Yorkshire fog *Holcus lanatus*. In the damper areas soft rush *Juncus effusus* and floating sweet-grass *Glyceria fluitans* occur together with hemlock water-dropwort *Oenanthe crocata* and great willow-herb *Epilobium hirsutum*.