

COUNTY: Devon

SITE NAME: DENDLES WOOD

DISTRICT: South Hams

Status: Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) notified under Section 28 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Part of this site has been declared a National Nature Reserve under Section 19 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949.

Local Planning Authority: Dartmoor National Park Authority

National Grid Reference: SX 615620 Area: 50.4 (ha) 124.5 (ac)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 202 1:10,000: SX 66 SW

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1969 Date of Last Revision: 1976

Dendles Wood NNR declared: 1965

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1986 Date of Last Revision: –

Other Information:

In Dartmoor National Park. Nature Conservation Review site. Part of Hawns Wood and High House Moor SSSI has been incorporated into the site. Remainder of Hawns Wood and High House Moor SSSI to be included with Central South Dartmoor SSSI. Boundary amended by deletion.

Description and Reasons for Notification:

This site is an example of an ancient upland Oakwood. It supports a rich lichen and moss flora and high numbers of breeding bird species.

Within an altitude range of 160 m to 280 m the woodlands cover the valley slopes at the confluence of Broadall Lake and Ford Brook with the River Yealm. The parent rock is mainly granite but slates occur in the southern part of the site; the soils are shallow and generally well drained. Boulder-strewn ground occurs in some areas, whilst the water courses are typical of Dartmoor's streams, being fast-flowing and nutrient-poor.

The woodland is dominated by Pedunculate Oak *Quercus robur*, occurring with Beech *Fagus sylvatica* on the lower slopes. Heavy grazing has led to an impoverished shrub layer with Hazel *Corylus avellana*, Holly *Ilex aquifolium* and Rowan *Sorbus aucuparia* are scattered throughout. The ground flora is characterised by Creeping Soft-grass *Holcus mollis*, Sweet Vernal-grass *Anthoxanthum odoratum*, Bramble *Rubus* spp., Bluebell *Hyacinthoides non-scripta*, Wood-sorrel *Oxalis acetosella*, Tormentil *Potentilla erecta* and Herb Robert *Geranium robertianum*. Bracken *Pteridium aquilinum* is scattered throughout, forming dense stands in places. In some parts, where drainage is impeded or seepage flushes occur, marshy vegetation has developed, with willows *Salix* spp., Alder Buckthorn *Frangula alnus*, Purple Moor-grass *Molinia caerulea*, Yellow Pimpernel *Lysimachia nemorum*, Marsh Violet *Viola palustris* and Bog Mosses *Sphagnum* spp. present.

The site's cool and moist conditions have enabled a profuse growth of mosses to develop. Common species of the sward are *Rhytidiadelphus squarrosus* and *Thuidium tamariscinum*, while many boulders carry a mat of mosses including *Isoetes myosuroides*, *Dicranum scoparium*, *Polytrichum formosum* and *Plagiothecium undulatum*. The well lit trees and a high rainfall have also enabled a luxuriant epiphytic lichen flora to develop, characterised by the Parmelieta laevigatae community. There is a profuse growth of *Usnea* species and the site is also the richest locality in south west England for the rare *Graphina ruiziana*. *Cetrelia cetrarioides*, a rare lichen widespread in Dartmoor

woodlands, is also frequent here. The riverside banks support abundant ferns including Royal Fern *Osmunda regalis* and Tunbridge Filmy-fern *Hymenophyllum tunbrigense*; both local species.

The woods support a breeding bird community highly representative of upland oak woods. Species present include Buzzard *Buteo buteo*, Wood Warbler *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*, Pied Flycatcher *Ficedula hypoleuca* and Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*; while Dipper *Cinclus cinclus* and Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea* nest alongside the water-courses. A diverse invertebrate fauna is present which includes the Silver-washed Fritillary *Argynnis paphia* and Green Hairstreak *Callophrys rubi* butterflies. The mammal fauna includes Red Deer *Cervus elaphus* and Fallow Deer *Dama dama* as regular visitors.