

File ref:

County: Lincolnshire **Site name:** Tortoiseshell Wood

District: South Kesteven

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

Local Planning Authority: South Kesteven District Council

National Grid Reference: SK 963199 **Area:** 9.4 (ha) 23.2 (ac)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1: 50 000: 130 **1: 10 000:** SK 91 NE, SK 92 SE

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): **Date of Last Revision:**

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1987 **Date of Last Revision:** -

Other Information:

The site is owned and managed as a nature reserve by the Lincolnshire and South Humberside Trust for Nature Conservation.

Description and Reasons for Notification:

The site is a good representative example of oak-ash-maple woodland developed on a plateau of poorly drained boulder clay overlying Eastern Jurassic limestone. The wood has an excellent structure and contains many of the less common characteristic plant species of woodlands on the Kesteven plateau, several of them being rare to the county.

The wood has a typical coppice with standards structure. The main standard is pedunculate oak *Quercus robur* with ash *Fraxinus excelsior* and wild service tree *Sorbus torminalis*, which occurs within the woodland rather than being restricted to the banks. Hazel *Corylus avellana* and field maple *Acer campestre* are the main understorey species, with dogwood *Cornus sanguinea*, spindle *Euonymus europaeus*, wild privet *Ligustrum vulgare*, crab apple *Malus sylvestris*, aspen *Populus tremula*, blackthorn *Prunus spinosa*, willows *Salix* spp., elder *Sambucus nigra* and birch *Betula* sp.

The soil is heavy and seasonally waterlogged in places, being predominantly calcareous with some neutral to slightly acidic areas. Bluebell *Hyacinthoides non-scripta* and dog's mercury *Mercurialis perennis* form the basis of the ground flora, with areas dominated by primrose *Primula vulgaris*, wood anemone *Anemone nemorosa*, yellow archangel *Lamium galeobdolon* and ramsons *Allium ursinum*. In the heavily shaded areas, plants such as sanicle *Sanicula europaea*, pignut *Conopodium majus* and enchanter's nightshade *Circaea lutetiana* occur.

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Tortoiseshell Wood (cont...)

Some of the less common species which are present within the wood include smooth-stalked sedge *Carex laevigata*, thin-spiked wood-sedge *C. strigosa*, herb paris *Paris quadrifolia* and greater butterfly orchid *Platanthera chlorantha*.

The site is also important for its number of breeding bird species, such as greater spotted woodpecker, kestrel, woodcock and nuthatch. The latter is a rare species in Lincolnshire, being largely confined to the south-west corner of the county.