

COUNTY: LEICESTERSHIRE

SITE NAME: DONINGTON PARK

DISTRICT: NORTH-WEST LEICESTERSHIRE

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

Local Planning Authority: NORTH-WEST LEICESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

National Grid Reference: SK 414269

Area: 37.4 (ha.) 92.4 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 129

1:10,000: SK 42 NW

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1981

Date of Last Revision: –

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1983

Date of Last Revision: 1990

Other Information:

Reasons for Notification:

The site comprises a medieval deer park which contains a fine population of ancient oak trees possessing a rich associated invertebrate fauna, including a number of rare and uncommon species.

Biology

Donington Park is mentioned in the Domesday Book and for its recorded history has been managed as a deer park. It is sited on a generally north-facing slope overlooking the River Trent. Its soils are derived from the clays, silts, and sandstones of the Triassic Keuper Marl and Keuper Waterstones series and vary in texture and soil-moisture content. The ground vegetation generally comprises a short grass sward although, locally, areas dominated by bracken *Pteridium aquilinum* occur. The Park contains a fine population of ancient oaks *Quercus robur*, together with numbers of mature lime *Tilia* sp and sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus*. Old bushes of hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna* are also present together with a few old false acacia *Robinia pseudoacacia*. Associated with the old oaks is a rich and characteristic invertebrate fauna which includes many species restricted to habitats containing very old and decaying trees. The beetle fauna contains a number of uncommon species including *Dorcatoma chrysomelinus*, *Lissodema cursor* and *Scymnus femoralis*, while among the bugs present *Pilophorus perplexus*, a southern species in Britain, is rare in Leicestershire. The spider fauna is also notable and includes the rare spiders *Lepthyphantes midas* and *Tetrilus macrophthalmus*. The ancient trees have additional value in that they provide suitable breeding habitat for a variety of hole-nesting birds.

Date Notified: 13 December 1983