

County: Hampshire

Site name: Bramshill

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

Local Planning Authority: Hampshire County Council, Hart District Council

National grid reference: SU774596

Ordnance survey sheet: 1:50,000: 186

1:10,000: SU76 SE/SW, SU75 NE

Date notified (under 1981 Act): 1988, 1990

Date of last revision: 20.10.2000

Area: 671.99 ha

Date of Confirmation: 17.7.2001

Reasons for Notification

This site is notified for a series of shallow acid ponds and associated mire, which support a rich assemblage of dragonfly and damselfly, and rotationally felled conifer plantation, which provides habitat for internationally important populations of nightjar, woodlark and Dartford warbler.

General Description

Bramshill comprises extensive areas of conifer plantation together with a series of shallow acidic ponds within relic wet heathland and a small unimproved grassland area adjacent which provides habitat for the nationally rare small fleabane *Pulicaria vulgaris*.

Management of the pine plantations results in a sequence of clearings and young coniferous trees which are utilised by breeding nightjar *Caprimulgus europaeus*, woodlark *Lullula arborea* and Dartford warbler *Sylvia udnata*. The site also contains small breeding populations of hobby *Falco subbuteo* and little ringed plover *Charadrius dubius*

The pond areas differ in character, the northern and middle areas occupying former gravel workings, whilst the southern series occupies a damp valley and was formed by damming a small acidic stream. The areas of open water are dominated by bog pondweed *Potamogeton polygonifolius* and very large populations of the nationally scarce pillwort *Pilularia globulifera*. The shallow, often exposed margins have a rich flora dominated by soft rush *Juncus effuses*, compact rush *J. conglomerates*, lesser spearwort *Ranunculus flammula* and reedmace *Typha latifolia*. Nationally scarce plants occurring here include the needle spike rush *Elecharis acicularis*, six stamened waterwort *Elatine hexandra* and small water-pepper *Persicaria minor*.

Within the plantations there are a few small areas of wet heath dominated by purple moor-grass *Molinia caerulea*, wet heathland with cross leaved heath *Erica tetralix* and fragments of dry heathland with heather *Calluna vulgaris*. Locally uncommon plants present include petty whin *Genista anglica* and small cudweed *Filago minima*, together with stag's horn clubmoss *Lycopodium clavatum* at its only Hampshire location. Heath communities are present alongside forest tracks and briefly recolonise after forestry clearance operations, before the

tree cover closes over again following planting. Yellow bartisia *Parentucellia viscosa* is found along some woodland rides.

The acidic ponds are fed by the surrounding heathland and are generally clear and free of pollution. At least 24 species of dragonfly and damselfly have been recorded breeding out of a total of 37 resident in Britain. The occurrence of the nationally scarce small red damselfly *Ceriagrion tenellum*, downy emerald *Cordulia aenea* and brilliant emerald *Somatochlora metallica* are of particular note. The open water and heathland areas are also important for other invertebrates, including the nationally scarce horsefly *Tabanus cordiger*, woodland grasshopper *Omocestrus rufipes* and a colony of the shortwinged conehead *Conocephalus dorsalis*.

Two unimproved grassland fields close to Springwater Farm lie adjacent to the northern plantation at Bramshill. Extensive grazing has created habitat for a population of the nationally rare small fleabane *Pulicaria vulgaris*, which is also vulnerable in a European context. This is the only site in Hampshire which supports this plant, outside the New Forest.

Other Information

1. This site incorporates two areas previously notified as Bramshill SSSI and Warren Heath Ponds SSSI with extensions to incorporate coniferous plantation which provide habitat for Annex I birds.
2. This site includes land which has been proposed for designation as a Special Protection Area under Directive 79/409/EEC on the Conservation of Wild Birds. Nightjar, woodlark and Dartford warbler are listed on Annex 1 of the Directive.
3. Woodlark and nightjar are priority species in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan.
4. Woodlark, Dartford warbler, hobby and little ringed plover are specially protected by being listed on Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).
5. Small fleabane is a Red Data book species listed on Schedule 8 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act.