

COUNTY: DORSET                      SITE NAME: SUTTON MEADOWS

DISTRICT: WIMBORNE

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

Local Planning Authority: WIMBORNE DISTRICT COUNCIL, Dorset County Council

National Grid Reference: SU 057107                      Area: 4.6 (ha.) 11.4 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 195                      1:10,000: SU 01 SE

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

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

Other Information:

One of the meadows is owned by the Dorset Naturalists' Trust and managed as a nature reserve.

Reasons for Notification:

These meadows which lie on drift deposits over London Clay, have been subject to many years of traditional management for hay. In consequence, they support a rich community of plants typical of damp neutral to mildly acid hay meadows. This type of grassland, once widespread, is now very uncommon due to agricultural improvement.

As a result of local variations in wetness and acidity, the plant communities of these meadows show considerable variety. A range of grasses occurs including Perennial Rye-grass *Lolium perenne*, Common Bent *Agrostis capillaris*, Sweet Vernal-grass *Anthoxanthum odoratum*, Tufted Hair-grass *Deschampsia cespitosa*, Heath Grass *Danthonia decumbens* and Quaking Grass *Briza media*. The sedges *Carex hirta*, *C. flacca*, *C. panicea* and *C. ovalis*, and the rushes *Juncus effusus* and *J. articulatus* are frequent. Among the uncommon flowering plants are Dyer's Greenweed *Genista tinctoria*, Pepper Saxifrage *Silaum silaus*, Sneezewort *Achillea ptarmica*, Bitter Vetch *Lathyrus montanus* and Corky-fruited Water Dropwort *Oenanthe pimpinelloides*. There are many other attractive herbs including Saw-wort *Serratula tinctoria*, Creeping Jenny *Lysimachia nummularia*, Devil's-bit *Succisa pratensis*, Yellow-rattle *Rhinanthus minor*, Oxeye Daisy *Leucanthemum vulgare*, Spotted Orchids *Dactylorhiza* spp. and in the wetter areas Ragged Robin *Lychnis flos-cuculi*, Meadowsweet *Filipendula ulmaria* and Meadow Thistle *Cirsium dissectum*. A small pond in the south of the Dorset Naturalists' Trust Reserve holds Star-wort *Callitriche* sp., Reedmace *Typha latifolia* and Spike-rush *Eleocharis palustris*.

The fauna of the site has not been exhaustively studied but the meadows are bounded by hedges or woodland which provide shelter and add diversity of structure valuable to a wide range of insects and nesting birds.