

File ref:

**County:** Lincolnshire **Site name:** Moor Closes

**District:** South Kesteven

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

**Local Planning Authority:** South Kesteven District Council

**National Grid Reference:** SK 980438 **Area:** 7.0 (ha) 17.3 (ac)

**Ordnance Survey Sheet 1: 50 000:** 130 **1: 10 000:** SK 94 SE

**Date Notified (Under 1949 Act):** 1968 **Date of Last Revision:**

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

#### **Other Information:**

Part of the site is owned and managed as a reserve by the Lincolnshire and South Humberside Trust for Nature Conservation. The site is also described in 'A Nature Conservation Review'.

#### **Reasons for Notification:**

This site is of national importance as an outstanding example of a traditionally managed calcareous loam pasture. Only fragments of this habitat type now exist, as these soils are easily improved for more intensive agricultural use.

The site consists of old pastures surrounded by dense mature hedges situated on a coarse alluvial sandy loam in the Ancaster Gap. A small stream runs through the site, which is mainly low-lying and wet, although to the north there are areas of drier pasture.

The drier areas support grasses such as red fescue *Festuca rubra*, sweet vernal-grass *Anthoxanthum odoratum*, Yorkshire fog *Holcus lanatus* and crested dog's-tail *Cynosurus cristatus*. Associated herbs include meadow saxifrage *Saxifraga granulata* and lady's bedstraw *Galium verum*. These areas support large populations of the inland sub-species of thrift *Armeria maritima* spp. *elongata* which in Britain is confined to a few meadows in the Ancaster Valley in Lincolnshire.

In the lower-lying areas, the grassland merges into a base-rich marsh community, characterised by marsh marigold *Caltha palustris*, common spike-rush *Eleocharis palustris*, common marsh-bedstraw *Galium palustre*, jointed rush *Juncus articulatus*, ragged robin *Lychnis flos-cuculi* and adder's tongue *Ophioglossum vulgatum*. Cuckooflower *Cardamine pratensis*, supporting very high numbers of orange tip butterflies, is a feature of wetter areas. cont...

### **Moor Closes (cont...)**

Sedge-rich areas are also present, with common sedge *Carex nigra*, carnation sedge *C. panicea*, purple moor-grass *Molinia caerulea*, marsh valerian *Valeriana dioica*, southern marsh-orchid *Dactylorhiza praetermissa* and common spotted orchid *D. fuchsii*. Both of these types of wet communities are scarce in the East Midlands.

The meadows provide a locally important breeding site for snipe and lapwing. Their numbers are monitored annually, as are the orchid, thrift and adder's tongue populations. The site is also a regular winter feeding area for fieldfare and redwing.