

**County:** Devon      **Site Name:** Bovey Heathfield

**District:** Teignbridge

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

**Local Planning Authority:** Devon County Council, Teignbridge District Council

**National Grid Reference:** SX 818 768      **Area:** 25.3 (ha) 62.4 (ac)  
SX 823766  
SX 824769

**Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000:** 191      **1:10,000:** SX 87 NW

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

**Date Notified (Under 1981 Act):** 1989      **Date of Last Revision:** –

**Other Information:**

A new site.

**Description and Reasons for Notification:**

This site contains important areas of Atlantic-climate lowland heathland and supports a rich invertebrate fauna with many rare and local species.

Lying within an altitude range of 25 to 43 m the site overlies Tertiary sands and clays of the Bovey Formation. The higher areas are freely drained whereas the low-lying parts are generally waterlogged. Sloping from approximately north to south the site has a mainly southerly aspect.

The dry heathland vegetation is dominated by heather *Calluna vulgaris* and this mixes in with abundant bell heather *Erica cinerea* and western gorse *Ulex gallii*. Acid grassland with abundant bristle bent *Agrostis curtisii* forms a mosaic with the dry heath in places with associated plants including tormentil *Potentilla erecta*, heath milkwort *Polygala serpyllifolia*, purple moor-grass *Molinia caerulea* and pale dog-violet *Viola lactea*.

Where drainage is impeded, species-rich wet heathland occurs. Purple moor-grass becomes more abundant here together with cross-leaved heath *E. tetralix* and bog myrtle *Myrica gale*. Many species are associated with the wet heath, including creeping willow *Salix repens*, lousewort *Pedicularis sylvatica*, heath spotted-orchid *Dactylorhiza maculata*, saw-wort *Serratula tinctoria*, devil's-bit scabious *Succisa pratensis*, heath wood-rush *Luzula multiflora* and sedges *Carex* spp. Bog pools support plants such as common cottongrass *Eriophorum angustifolium* and bog mosses *Sphagnum* spp.

Habitat diversity is provided by scrub communities with scattered pedunculate oak *Quercus robur*, birches *Betula* spp., European gorse *U. europaeus*, willows *Salix* spp. and alder buckthorn *Frangula alnus*. Bracken *Pteridium aquilinum* forms stands in places. In addition there is an area of alder carr woodland with alder *Alnus glutinosa*, downy birch *B. pubescens* and pedunculate oak forming a canopy over a rich ground flora. The species present are characteristic of undisturbed damp woodland conditions and include bugle *Ajuga reptans*,

common figwort *Scrophularia nodosa*, yellow pimpernel *Lysimachia nemorum*, water mint *Mentha aquatica* and broad buckler-fern *Dryopteris dilatata*.

The site's range of habitats and diverse environmental conditions supports a very rich invertebrate fauna, the heathland elements of which are well represented. Many nationally rare species have been recorded including 3 species of mining bee *Andrena* spp. and the fly *Platypalpus inexpectatus*. The nationally scarce bog bush-cricket *Metrioptera brachyptera* and slender ground-hopper *Tetrix subulata* occur and a colony of the nationally rare ant *Formica exsecta* has also been recorded.