

Notification Date: 16 June 1989

COUNTY: HEREFORD & WORCESTER SITE NAME: TRENCH WOOD

DISTRICT: WYCHAVON SITE REF: 15 WQ9

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

Local Planning Authority: HEREFORD & WORCESTER COUNTY COUNCIL,  
Wychavon District Council

National Grid Reference: SO 926588 Area: 61.5 (ha.) 152.0 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 150 1:10,000: SO 95 NW

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

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

Other Information:

New site. Part managed as a nature reserve by the Worcestershire Nature Conservation Trust.

Description and Reasons for Notification:

Trench Wood is an ancient woodland site on poorly drained clays a few miles to the north-east of Worcester. Two-thirds of the wood has been replanted with mixed broadleaves whilst the remaining one third retains its semi-natural character. The site is selected because of its invertebrate and ornithological interest. It is one of the best sites for moths and butterflies (Lepidoptera) in the county with over 500 species recorded including 20 which are nationally restricted. The site also has a breeding bird community which includes high densities of nesting summer migrants.

The semi-natural areas of woodland that remain have been managed as coppice-with-standards. Pedunculate oak *Quercus robur* is the dominant tree with ash *Fraxinus excelsior*, field maple *Acer campestre* and aspen *Populus tremula* also present in the canopy. The understorey is dominated by hazel *Corylus avellana* with a variety of other shrubs including wild service-tree *Sorbus torminalis*, midland hawthorn *Crataegus laevigata* and wild privet *Ligustrum vulgare*. There is a rich ground flora dominated by dog's mercury *Mercurialis perennis* and bluebell *Hyacinthoides non-scripta*. Some more local species also occur such as herb-Paris *Paris quadrifolia*, violet helleborine *Epipactis purpurata* and goldilocks buttercup *Ranunculus auricomis*.

A number of nationally scarce moths are associated with the tree species in these areas. The larvae of the festoon *Apoda limacodes* and the micromoths *Psoricoptera gibbosella* and *Strophedra nitidana* all feed on oak. The larvae of light orange underwing *Archiearis notha* and lead-coloured drab *Orthosia populeti* feed on aspen.

The replanted areas are dominated by beech *Fagus sylvatica*, sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus*, birch *Betula pendula* and grey alder *Alnus incana*. Two nationally restricted moth species are associated with the introduced tree species. The larvae of the micromoth *Lampronia fuscatella* occur in galls in young birch trees and those of *Phyllonorycter strigulatella* feed on the leaves of grey alder.

The openness of the replanted areas and the extensive ride system provide conditions suitable for a wide range of herbs, many of which are foodplants for the larvae of moths and butterflies. Again, a number of species which occur here are nationally restricted. These include mere wainscot *Photedes fluxa* whose larvae feed on wood small-reed

*Calamagrostis epigejos* and triple-spotted pug *Eupithecia trisignaria*, which feed on wild angelica *Angelica sylvestris*.

Of the butterflies, over twenty five species breed in Trench Wood including the nationally restricted wood white *Leptidea sinapsis* and pearl-bordered fritillary *Boloria euphrosyne*. The wood is also the only known site in Worcestershire for marsh fritillary *Euphydryas* whose larvae feed on the abundant devil's-bit scabious *Succisa pratensis* along the rides.

The areas of mature woodland and recently replanted woodland each support different bird communities. Typical woodland species such as tawny owl *Strix aluco*, nuthatch *Sitta europaea* and great-spotted woodpecker *Dendrocopus major* occur in the mature woodland areas whereas the replanted areas support many summer visiting warblers such as garden warbler *Sylvia borin*, blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla* and grasshopper warbler *Locustella naevia*. Trench Wood is also one of the best woods in Worcestershire for breeding nightingale *Luscinia megarhynchos* with up to ten singing males recorded annually.