

COUNTY: HEREFORD AND WORCESTER SITE NAME: FISHPOOL VALLEY

DISTRICT: LEOMINSTER

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

Local Planning Authority: HEREFORD AND WORCESTER COUNTY COUNCIL,
Leominster District Council

National Grid Reference: SO 451662 Area: 32.38 (ha.) 80.0 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 137 or 148 1:10,000: SO 46 NW, SO 46 NE

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1952 Date of Last Revision: 1975

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1984 Date of Last Revision: –

Other Information:

Owned by the National Trust. Boundary alteration (addition and reduction).

Reasons for Notification:

A secluded and well wooded stream valley which contains a series of pools created by damming the stream several centuries ago.

The main area of woodland which runs through the centre of the valley, adjacent to the stream and pools, is dominated by ash *Fraxinus excelsior*, pedunculate oak *Quercus robur* and alder *Alnus glutinosa*, the last being abundant near the stream. The shrub layer includes hazel *Corylus avellana*, elder *Sambucus nigra* and guelder rose *Viburnum opulus*. Of particular interest is an area of hornbeam *Carpinus betulus* which is very local in western Britain.

In the south eastern corner of the site the woodland is dominated by pedunculate oak with birch *Betula pendula* and wild cherry *Prunus avium* also present. Elsewhere the indigenous species are found in association with sweet chestnut *Castanea sativa* and beech *Fagus sylvatica* which have been introduced in the past.

The stream valley contains a variety of aquatic and swamp habitats which have largely developed out of the silting up of the original dams and pools owing to neglect during this century. The swamp and pool margins have a wealth of associated plants including brooklime *Veronica beccabunga*, water mint *Mentha aquatica* and marsh horsetail *Equisetum palustre*. In the pools themselves the most characteristic species is amphibious bistort *Polygonum amphibium* which occurs in some profusion.

The area is of considerable ornithological importance with woodland species such as pied flycatcher *Ficedula hypoleuca*, treecreeper *Certha familiaris* and greater spotted woodpecker *Dendrocopos major* breeding here. The pools and stream attract other birds such as mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*, teal *Anas crecca*, moorhen *Gallinula chloropus* and coot *Fulica atra*.