

COUNTY: HEREFORD & WORCESTER SITE NAME: CAEIRON MEADOW

DISTRICT: SOUTH HEREFORDSHIRE SITE REF: 15W7H

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, South Herefordshire District Council

National Grid Reference: SO 283386 Area: 1.6 (ha.) 3.9 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 161 1:10,000: SO 23 NE

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

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

Other Information:
New site.

Description and Reasons for Notification:

Caeiron Meadow lies at an altitude of over 300 metres above sea level on gently sloping ground on the eastern flanks of the Black Mountains, in western Herefordshire. The soils, derived from Old Red Sandstone, are neutral to mildly acidic. This meadow is a type of herb-rich neutral grassland, characterised by crested dog's-tail *Cynosurus cristatus* and common knapweed *Centaurea nigra*, which is now nationally restricted. The diversity of the flora is enhanced by the presence of wetter areas dominated by rushes *Juncus* spp.

The sward contains a wide variety of grasses, the most abundant being sweet vernal-grass *Anthoxanthum odoratum*, sheep's-fescue *Festuca ovina*, Yorkshire-fog *Holcus lanatus* and crested dog's-tail. The rich herbaceous flora includes species such as devil's-bit scabious *Succisa pratensis*, betony *Stachys officinalis*, autumn hawkbit *Leontodon autumnalis* and cowslip *Primula veris*. A number of species which are rare or uncommon in Herefordshire are also present, including common bistort *Polygonum bistorta*, frog orchid *Coeloglossum viride*, pale sedge *Carex pallescens* and lady's-mantle *Alchemilla xanthochlora*.

A particular feature of this site is the presence of several characteristic upland plants which are not found in this type of meadow at lower altitudes. One of these, wood bitter-vetch *Vicia orobus*, is nationally scarce and is known from only one other site in Herefordshire. Globeflower *Trollius europaeus* also occurs here at one of its most southerly stations in Britain.

The areas of marshy grassland are dominated by jointed rush *Juncus articulatus* in association with sneezewort *Achillea ptarmica*, lesser spearwort *Ranunculus flammula*, common marsh-bedstraw *Galium palustre* and carnation sedge *Carex panicea*.

The meadow is surrounded by tall hedges composed mainly of hazel *Corylus avellana*, hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna* and rowan *Sorbus aucuparia* with white willow *Salix alba* and alder *Alnus glutinosa* where it adjoins the Escley Brook on its northern edge.