

County: Devon **Site Name:** Mambury and Stowford Moors

District: Torridge

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

Local Planning Authority: Torridge District Council, Devon County Council

National Grid Reference: SS 390162, SS 386174 **Area:** 39.5 (ha) 97.6 (ac)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 190 **1:10,000:** SE 31 NE

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

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1990 **Date of Last Revision:** –

Other Information:

Description and Reasons for Notification:

This site contains a nationally rare and distinctive type of habitat mosaic, consisting of various herb-rich grassland and heath communities. The majority of vegetation types typical of the Culm Measures of North Devon and north-east Cornwall are represented in this unusually diverse area.

Stowford and Mambury Moors are located in north Devon on Upper Carboniferous sandstone of the Bude formation which forms a major part of the Culm Measures. The soil is slowly permeable, seasonally waterlogged clay. The site lies at 150–170 m above sea level.

The main plant communities present reflect the impeded drainage. One of these is a type of fen meadow, with abundant purple moor-grass *Molinia caerulea*, devil's-bit scabious *Succisa pratensis* and meadow thistle *Cirsium dissectum*, and a range of sedges, including carnation sedge *Carex panicea*, flea sedge *C. pulicaris* and tawny sedge *C. hostiana*. Heath spotted-orchid *Dactylorhiza maculata* is frequent here. The particular variant of this community represented here, characterised by cross-leaved heath *Erica tetralix*, is almost wholly confined to the Culm Measures of Devon and Cornwall.

Another grassland community is dominated by purple moor-grass *Molinia caerulea* tussocks, with frequent marsh thistle *Cirsium palustre* and wild angelica *Angelica sylvestris*.

Wet heathland is also well represented with areas dominated by western gorse *Ulex gallii*, heather *Calluna vulgaris* and cross-leaved heath *Erica tetralix*. Petty whin *Genista anglica*, a very local plant in Devon, occurs here.

In the wettest areas, bottle sedge *Carex rostrata* beds are found, with bogbean *Menyanthes trifoliata* and marsh cinquefoil *Potentilla palustris*, both uncommon plants in Devon, and also the nationally scarce wavy St John's-wort *Hypericum undulatum*.

The fauna of the site has not been fully surveyed, but it is known to be of entomological importance, with the local marsh fritillary butterfly *Eurodryas aurinia* and a very strong colony of the marbled white *Melanargia galathea* butterfly.