

## CITATION

COUNTY: DEVON      SITE NAME: STADDON MOOR

DISTRICT: WEST DEVON

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

Local Planning Authority: WEST DEVON BOROUGH COUNCIL, Devon County Council

National Grid Reference: SS 680025      Area: 4.8 (ha.) 11.9 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 191      1:10,000: SS 60 SE

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

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1991      Date of Last Revision: –

Other Information:

Description and Reasons for Notification:

Staddon Moor is a species-rich remnant of Culm Grassland supporting well-developed and highly representative communities typical of this threatened and declining habitat.

The single field lies on a gently sloping hill-top plateau at around 190m A.O.D. Its fine clayey and loamy soils, derived as drift from the underlying Carboniferous sandstones and shales of the Culm Measures, are slowly permeable and prone to seasonal waterlogging.

The site supports three characteristic Culm Grassland communities, wet heath, fen meadow and rush pasture, in a mosaic complicated by a shallow ridge and furrow system. The first two communities are characterised by Purple Moor-grass *Molinia caerulea*, growing with Red Fescue *Festuca rubra*, Sweet Vernal-grass *Anthoxanthum odoratum*, Creeping Bent *Agrostis stolonifera* and Mat-grass *Nardus stricta*. They also have a rich, short sedge component which includes Common Yellow-sedge *Carex demissa*, Star Sedge *C. echinata*, Carnation Sedge *C. panicea*, Flea Sedge *C. pulicaris* and Tawny Sedge *C. hostiana*.

The main associates of the fen meadow community are Meadow Thistle *Cirsium dissectum*, Tormentil *Potentilla erecta*, Devil's-bit Scabious *Succisa pratensis* and Greater Bird's-foot-trefoil *Lotus uliginosus*. Also typically present are Sneezewort *Achillea ptarmica*, Saw-wort *Serratula tinctoria* and Lesser Skullcap *Scutellaria minor*.

The heathland element is presented locally by Heather *Calluna vulgaris*, Cross-leaved Heath *Erica tetralix*, Western Gorse *Ulex gallii* and Creeping Willow *Salix repens*. Of particular note is the large population of Heath Spotted-orchid *Dactylorhiza maculata* subsp. *ericetorum* and the presence of Petty Whin *Genista anglica*, a scarce species in Devon. Mosses are a conspicuous feature throughout these communities.

The lush and grassier areas of rush pasture typically comprise Yorkshire Fog *Holcus lanatus* with Soft Rush *Juncus effusus* and Sharp-flowered Rush *J. acutiflorus*. Characteristic wet pasture species also present include Ragged Robin *Lychnis flos-cuculi*, Cuckooflower *Cardamine pratensis* and Wild Angelica *Angelica sylvestris*.

The fen meadow and wet heath vegetation communities present on Staddon Moor are virtually restricted in Britain to the South West where they are under threat and declining fast.

Snipe *Gallinago gallinago* use the moor in winter and Barn Owl *Tyto alba* hunt over it.