

COUNTY: Norfolk

SITE NAME: CRANWICH CAMP

DISTRICT: Breckland

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

Local Planning Authority: Breckland District Council

National Grid Reference: TL775 942 Area: 12.64 (ha) 31.23 (ac)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 144 1:10,000: TL 79 SE

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

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

Other Information:
A new site.

Description and Reasons for Notification:

Cranwich Camp is a grassland site situated on sand and chalk towards the western edge of Breckland. It is a former army camp and has experienced some disturbance; nevertheless it remains a good example of Breckland grassland and is of high botanical and entomological interest. Three Red Data Book plants, four Red Data Book insects and seventeen other notable insects are recorded.

The main plant community is a more mesotrophic disturbed and ungrazed example of the *Festuca ovina*–*Hieracium pilosella*–*Thymus* grassland. The community is dominated by Bent grasses *Agrostis* species, False Oat-grass *Arrhenatherum elatius*, Sweet Vernal-grass *Anthoxanthum odoratum* and Red Fescue *Festuca rubra*. Associated herbs include Kidney Vetch *Anthyllis vulneraria*, Greater Knapweed *Centaurea scabiosa*, Viper's-bugloss *Echium vulgare* and Lady's Bedstraw *Galium verum*. Purple Milk-vetch *Astragalus danicus*, Common Rock-rose *Helianthemum nummularium* are locally frequent in the more calcareous areas together with the Breckland specialities Spanish Catchfly *Silene otites* and Purple-stem Cat's-tail *Phleum phleoides*.

The vegetation in the vicinity of the demolished buildings is more disturbed with Biting Stonecrop *Sedum acre* growing over the old foundations. The disturbance has, however, provided a favourable habitat for Glabrous Rupturewort *Herniaria glabra*.

The site is one of very high entomological interest in supporting populations of some of Britain's rarest invertebrates characteristic of the Breckland. Among the scarcer species recorded are two moths Tawny Wave *Scopula rubiginata* and Marbled Clover *Heliothis viriplaca*, and two beetles, *Odontaeus armiger* and the Breckland speciality, *Diastictus vulneratus*. The diverse flora and small areas of disturbed ground, both maintained by the rabbit population, are beneficial in retaining the high invertebrate interest on this site.