

COUNTY: Devon

SITE NAME: BRADWORTHY COMMON

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 325149 & SS 332150 Area: 14.1 (ha) 32.5 (ac)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 190

1:10,000: SS 31 SW & 31 NW

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): –

Date of Last Revision: –

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1992

Date of Last Revision: –

Other Information:

This is a new site.

Description and Reasons for Notification:

Bradworthy Common supports certain mire communities which are both rare in Devon and contain various scarce plant and insect species.

The site comprises two areas of land situated on either side of a minor road running north from Bradworthy village, about 10 km north west of Holsworthy. Both areas slope down to small tributaries of the River Waldon. It overlies the Carboniferous Culm Measures of north Devon which give rise to acidic soils with poor drainage, mostly of the Hallworth series.

The vegetation in the western part of the site consists of a mosaic of mire and fen meadow communities. The majority of this area is dominated by a herb-rich Purple Moor-grass *Molinia caerulea* sward characterized by abundant Meadow Thistle *Cirsium dissectum* and Devils'-bit Scabious *Succisa pratensis*, the latter supporting an exceptionally large colony of the nationally scarce Marsh Fritillary butterfly *Eurodryas aurinia*. Bog mosses *Sphagnum* spp. are unusually abundant here, forming frequent hummocks with species such as *Sphagnum subnitens*, *S. capillifolium* and *S. palustre*. The area is also atypical in exhibiting an abundance of Bog Asphodel *Narthecium ossifragum* and of sedges, particularly Star Sedge *Carex echinata* and Caranation Sedge *C. panicea*, the latter forming pure mats in places. Ditches and rivulets support species such as Marsh St Johns-wort *Hypericum elodes*, Bog Pondweed *Potamogeton polygonifolius* and Floating club-rush *Eleocharis fluitans*, an uncommon plant in Devon away from Dartmoor. There is a high frequency of heathland species including Heather *Calluna vulgaris* and Cross-leaved Heath *Erica tetralix*, with occasional heath Rush *Juncus squarrosus* and Deergrass *Trichophorum cespitosum*.

The eastern side of the site predominantly consists of a waterlogged mire community which is unknown elsewhere in north Devon. It is characterized by an abundance of Bog-bean *Menyanthes trifoliata*, Marsh Cinquefoil *Potentilla palustris*, Bottle Sedge *Carex rostrata*, Common Sedge *C. nigra*, Carnation Sedge and the mosses *Aulacomnium palustre* and *Sphagnum subnitens*. Other frequently occurring plants include Devils'-bit Scabious, Water Horsetail *Equisetum fluviatile*, Marsh Pennywort *Hydrocotyle vulgaris*, Star Sedge and the mosses *Campylopus stellatum* and *Brachythecium rivulare*. Among the more unusual species present are Round-leaved Sundew *Drosera rotundifolia*, Marsh Lousewort *Pedicularis palustris*, Pale Butterwort *Pinguicula lusitanica* and White Sedge *Carex curta*, a rare plant in Devon.

The Small Pearl Bordered Fritillary butterfly *Boloria selene* and Keeled Skimmer dragonfly *Orthetrum coerulescens* are among the insects present on site.