

COUNTY: DEVON

SITE NAME: DEPTFORD FARM PASTURES

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 275187 Area: 22.2 (ha.) 54.8 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 190 1:10,000: SS 21 NE

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

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

Other Information:
This is a new site.

Description and Reasons for Notification:

Deptford Farm Pastures contain representative examples of certain traditionally managed heath, mire and fen communities which are collectively known as Culm Grassland. These are botanically rich and virtually restricted to Devon and Cornwall in England. The site is of particular importance for its well-developed wet heathland areas.

The site comprises a large field together with a series of small adjacent fields, situated in gently rolling countryside about 6km north east of Kilkhampton. It overlies the Carboniferous Culm Measures of north Devon. The soils, which are acidic and poorly drained, are mostly of the Onecote and Neath series.

The vegetation across the main fields consists of wet heath dominated by a short Purple Moor-grass *Molinia caerulea* sward, with abundant Devil's-bit Scabious *Succisa pratensis*, Tormentil *Potentilla erecta* and Meadow Thistle *Cirsium dissectum* throughout. Bog Asphodel *Narthecium ossifragum*, Lousewort *Pedicularis sylvatica*, Creeping Willow *Salix repens*, Heather *Calluna vulgaris* and Cross-leaved Heath *Erica tetralix* are frequent associates of these, while Petty Whin *Genista anglica*, an uncommon plant in Devon, is unusually abundant. Several boggy areas occur in this main field. They contain plants such as Bogbean *Menyanthes trifoliata*, Common Cottongrass *Eriophorum angustifolium*, Round-leaved Sundew *Drosera rotundifolia* and various bog mosses *Sphagnum auriculatum*, *S. subnitens* and *S. capillifolium*. Other plants of interest include Southern Marsh-orchid *Dactylorhiza praetermissa*, Lesser Skullcap *Scutellaria minor* and Saw-wort *Serratula tinctoria*.

The other fields within the site complement the main field, containing communities which are mostly dominated by Sharp-flowered Rush *Juncus acutiflorus* and tussocky Purple Moor-grass.

The site supports an exceptionally large colony of the nationally scarce Marsh Fritillary butterfly *Eurodryas aurinia*.