

COUNTY: HEREFORD AND WORCESTER

SITE NAME: YELLOW HOUSE
MEADOW

DISTRICT: WYCHAVON

SITE REF: 15 P3N

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

Local Planning Authority: HEREFORD AND WORCESTER COUNTY COUNCIL,
Wychavon District Council

National Grid Reference: SO 967527

Area: 1.74 (ha.) 4.3 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 150

1:10,000: SO 95 SE

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): –

Date of Last Revision: –

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 24.3.93.

Date of Last Revision: –

Other Information:

New site.

Description and Reasons for Notification:

Yellow House Meadow is located on the East Worcestershire plain near the village of Naunton Beauchamp. It is a traditionally managed hay meadow overlying a medieval ridge and furrow system. The soils are predominantly neutral with a slight calcareous influence, derived from the underlying Lower Lias clays of the Jurassic period.

The special interest of this site lies in the diversity of the semi-natural grassland sward which has been maintained under traditional management by hay cutting and grazing, and is of a type which is nationally scarce and declining. The vegetation conforms with the mesotrophic (neutral) grassland characterised by common knapweed *Centaurea nigra* and crested dog's-tail *Cynosurus cristatus*. The undulating topography of the ridge and furrow increases the diversity of the grassland giving rise to two sub-communities of this grassland type. Frequent within the seasonally wet furrows are meadow foxtail *Alopecurus pratensis*, tall fescue *Festuca arundinacea*, rough meadow grass *Poa trivialis*, glaucous sedge *Carex flacca* and meadowsweet *Filipendula ulmaria*. In contrast, the dominant grasses on the ridges are sweet vernal-grass *Anthoxanthum odoratum*, downy oat-grass *Avenula pubescens*, meadow brome *Bromus commutatus* and red fescue *Festuca rubra*. Associated herbs include ox-eye daisy *Leucanthemum vulgare*, common birds-foot-trefoil *Lotus corniculatus*, black medick *Medicago lupulina*, cowslip *Primula veris*, and yellow rattle *Rhinanthus minor* agg.

Uncommon and lime-loving (Calcicole) species found occasionally throughout the sward are adder's-tongue *Ophioglossum vulgatum*, dropwort *Filipendula vulgaris*, hoary plantain *Plantago media*, salad burnet *Sanguisorba minor*, and pepper-saxifrage *Silaum silaus*.

The whole meadow is surrounded by tall, well-structured hedgerows with thick scrubby bases. Shrubs and trees found in these hedgerows include English elm *Ulmus procera*, hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*, blackthorn *Prunus spinosa*, field maple *Acer campestre*, ash *Fraxinus excelsior*, crack willow *Salix fragilis*, dogwood *Thelycrania sanguinea* and crab apple *Malus sylvestris*.

The meadow supports a strong colony of the common blue butterfly *Polyommatus icarus*.