

COUNTY: HEREFORD & WORCESTER

SITE NAME: MIDLAND PLATEAU
GRASSLANDS,
11 BUCKERIDGE MEADOW

DISTRICT: WYRE FOREST

SITE REF: 15P23

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, Wyre Forest District Council

National Grid Reference: SO 723738

Area: 2.59 (ha.) 6.40 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 138

1:10,000: SO 77 SW

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): –

Date of Last Revision: –

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 31 March 1995

Date of Last Revision: –

Other Information:

New site.

Description and Reasons for Notification:

Buckeridge Meadow is situated in north Worcestershire, one kilometre to the south of the dispersed village of Far Forest, Rock. The meadow lies on gently sloping ground overlying the Upper Carboniferous Coal Measures, which give rise to either neutral or slightly acidic soils.

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 light grazing, and is of a type which is nationally scarce and declining. The vegetation conforms with the heath-grass *Danthonia decumbens* sub-community of the mesotrophic (neutral) grassland type characterised by common knapweed *Centaurea nigra* and crested dog's-tail *Cynosurus cristatus*.

The most frequent species of grass are common bent *Agrostis capillaris*, sweet vernal-grass *Anthoxanthum odoratum*, crested dog's-tail, Yorkshire-fog *Holcus lanatus* and red fescue *Festuca rubra*. A diverse range of herbs are found in the sward, including yarrow *Achillea millefolium*, bitter-vetch *Lathyrus montanus*, common bird's-foot-trefoil *Lotus corniculatus*, cowslip *Primula veris*, betony *Stachys officinalis*, pignut *Conopodium majus* and devil's-bit scabious *Succisa pratensis*. Several woodland herbs also occur within the grassland, including bluebell *Hyacinthoides non-scripta*, wood anemone *Anemone nemorosa* and lesser celandine *Ranunculus ficaria*. Locally uncommon species are lady's mantle *Alchemilla filicaulis* ssp. *vestita*, pepper-saxifrage *Silaum silaus* and fragrant orchid *Gymnadenia conopsea*, the latter being very rare in the county. A particular feature of the grassland is the abundance of wild daffodil *Narcissus pseudonarcissus*.

Three of the field boundaries are formed by species-rich hedges with ash *Fraxinus excelsior*, hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna* and hazel *Corylus avellana*. The northern end of the field contains a small area of wood pasture which is dominated by sessile oak *Quercus petraea* and holly *Ilex aquifolium*.

The invertebrate fauna includes meadow brown *Maniola jurtina* and ringlet *Aphantopus hyperantus* butterflies.