

COUNTY: HEREFORD & WORCESTER

SITE NAME: MIDLAND PLATEAU  
GRASSLANDS, 14 BROWN'S  
CLOSE 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 772750

Area: 2.72 (ha.) 6.72 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 138

1:10,000: SO 77 NE & SE

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:

Brown's Close Meadow is located in north Worcestershire, on the western edge of the town of Bewdley. The meadow slopes gently to the north, overlying the Old Hill Marl of Upper Carboniferous Coal Measures which give rise to neutral 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. The dominant vegetation is mesotrophic (neutral) grassland characterised by common knapweed *Centaurea nigra* and crested dog's-tail *Cynosurus cristatus*, a type which is nationally scarce and declining.

The most frequent grasses are common bent *Agrostis capillaris*, crested dog's-tail, sweet vernal-grass *Anthoxanthum odoratum*, yellow oat-grass *Trisetum flavescens* and red fescue *Festuca rubra*. There is an abundance of herbs, which include common bird's-foot-trefoil *Lotus corniculatus*, selfheal *Prunella vulgaris*, pignut *Conopodium majus*, rough hawkbit *Leontodon hispidus* and oxeye daisy *Leucanthemum vulgare*. Woodland species are also a feature of the sward, these include bugle *Ajuga reptans*, wood anemone *Anemone nemorosa* and twayblade *Listera ovata*. Locally uncommon species are lady's mantle *Alchemilla filicaulis* ssp. *vestita*, heath spotted-orchid *Dactylorhiza maculata* and meadow saffron *Colchicum autumnale*.

The northern end of the field contains an area of marshland with a small pool. Species found here include great-willowherb *Epilobium hirsutum*, marsh thistle *Cirsium palustre* and meadowsweet *Filipendula ulmaria*. A wooded stream forms the site boundary to the north.

The rest of the site boundaries are species-rich hedges with ash *Fraxinus excelsior*, hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*, elder *Sambucus nigra* and goat willow *Salix caprea*.

The invertebrate fauna includes small skipper *Thymelicus flavus*, meadow brown *Maniola jurtina*, and ringlet *Aphantopus hyperantus* butterflies and the chimney sweeper moth *Odezia atrata*.