

COUNTY: HEREFORD & WORCESTER

SITE NAME: SEVERN VALLEY
GRASSLANDS,
3 STARLING BANK

DISTRICT: MALVERN HILLS

SITE REF: 15 P5K

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,
Malvern Hills District Council

National Grid Reference: SO 778379

Area: 2.20 (ha.) 5.44 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 150

1:10,000: SO 73 NE

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): –

Date of Last Revision: –

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 15 March 1994

Date of Last Revision: –

Other Information:

New site.

Description and Reasons for Notification:

Starling Bank is located on the side of a hill in South Worcestershire, near Castlemorton Common. The bank lies on glacial river terrace deposits of sand and gravel in the central plain of the Severn Valley, overlying Mercia Mudstones of the Triassic Period.

The special interest of this bank lies in the transition from calcareous (lime-rich) grassland at the top, characterised by upright brome *Bromus erectus*, to crested dog's-tail *Cynosurus cristatus* and common knapweed *Centaurea nigra* mesotrophic (neutral) grassland near the stream. The transition between these two communities is of particular interest.

The lower part of the bank supports the meadow vetchling *Lathyrus pratensis* sub-community, with abundant sweet vernal-grass *Anthoxanthemum odoratum*. The associated flora includes yellow rattle *Rhinanthus minor*, lady's bedstraw *Galium verum*, cowslip *Primula veris*, goldilocks buttercup *Ranunculus auricomus*, burnet saxifrage *Pimpinella saxifraga*, common bird's-foot-trefoil *Lotus corniculatus* and wild onion *Allium vineale*.

Locally uncommon species include adder's-tongue fern *Ophioglossum vulgatum*, pepper-saxifrage *Silaum silaus* and dyer's greenweed *Genista tinctoria*.

The site is bounded on three sides by species-rich hedges which are dominated by hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*, hazel *Corylus avellana* and ash *Fraxinus excelsior*, with wych elm *Ulmus glabra*, field maple *Acer campestre*, blackthorn *Prunus spinosa* and dogwood *Cornus sanguinea*.