

COUNTY: HEREFORD & WORCESTER

SITE NAME: SEVERN VALLEY
GRASSLANDS, 5 MERRIES
FARM MEADOWS

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 786356

Area: 0.93 (ha.) 2.30 (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:

Merries Farm Meadows are situated in south Worcestershire on level ground near Castlemorton. These two meadows lie in the central plain of the Severn Valley on river terrace glacial deposits of sand and gravel overlying Mercia Mudstones of the Triassic Period.

The special interest of the site lies in the diversity of the semi-natural mesotrophic (neutral) grassland sward characterised by crested dog's-tail *Cynosurus cristatus* and common knapweed *Centaurea nigra*. The meadows exhibit areas characteristic of the meadow vetchling *Lathyrus pratensis* sub-community in the western field, while the lady's bedstraw *Galium verum* sub-community is also found in the eastern meadow.

Characteristic herbs of the meadow vetchling sub-community include pepper-saxifrage *Silaum silaus*, common bird's-foot-trefoil *Lotus corniculatus*, tormentil *Potentilla erecta* and meadowsweet *Filipendula ulmaria*. Frequent grasses are sheep's fescue *Festuca ovina* and yellow oat grass *Trisetum flavescens*, with hairy sedge *Carex hirta*. The lady's bedstraw sub-community has frequent yellow rattle *Rhinanthus minor*, betony *Stachys officinalis*, devil's-bit scabious *Succisa pratensis*, agrimony *Agrimonia eupatoria* and common spotted-orchid *Dactylorhiza fuchsii*.

Locally uncommon species present in these meadows are green-winged orchid *Orchis morio*, adder's-tongue fern *Ophioglossum vulgatum* and dyer's greenweed *Genista tinctoria*.

The two meadows are surrounded by mature hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna* hedges with blackthorn *Prunus spinosa* and pedunculate oak *Quercus robur*.