

COUNTY: HEREFORD & WORCESTER

SITE NAME: SEVERN VALLEY  
GRASSLANDS, 9 GREAT  
BLAYTHORN MEADOW

DISTRICT: WYCHAVON

SITE REF: 15 P5K

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

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

National Grid Reference: SO 913482

Area: 2.03 (ha.) 5.02 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 150

1:10,000: SO 94 NW

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:

Great Blaythorn Meadow is located in the centre of the Worcestershire Plain about one kilometre south-west of Drakes Broughton. The species-rich sward is maintained as a traditional hay meadow, but the aftermath is not grazed. Part of the meadow is on level ground while the southern portion slopes gently to the south-east. It overlies Lower Lias clays of the Jurassic Period which give rise to neutral soils.

The special interest of the site lies in the diversity of the semi-natural grassland sward which is particularly rich to the north of the meadow. The vegetation conforms with the mesotrophic (neutral) grassland characterised by crested dog's-tail *Cynosurus cristatus* and common knapweed *Centaurea nigra*, and is typical of the lady's bedstraw *Galium verum* sub-community.

The southern part of the meadow is dominated by soft brome *Bromus hordeaceus*, while the central area has frequent salad burnet *Sanguisorba minor* and meadowsweet *Filipendula ulmaria*. The flora of the northern area includes lady's-mantle *Alchemilla vulgaris* agg., bugle *Ajuga reptans*, betony *Stachys officinalis*, devil's-bit scabious *Succisa pratensis* and downy oat-grass *Avenula pubescens*.

Locally uncommon species in the meadow include dropwort *Filipendula vulgaris*, green-winged orchid *Orchis morio*, fragrant orchid *Gymnadenia conopsea* and meadow saffron *Colchicum autumnale*.

The meadow is largely bounded by a hedge of hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna* and blackthorn *Prunus spinosa*, with a stream forming the eastern boundary. The site supports colonies of holly blue *Celastrina argiolus* and meadow brown *Maniola jurtina* butterflies.