

COUNTY: HEREFORD & WORCESTER

SITE NAME: SEVERN VALLEY  
GRASSLANDS, 15 ROOKERY  
COTTAGE MEADOWS

DISTRICT: REDDITCH

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,  
Redditch District Council

National Grid Reference: SO 996614

Area: 5.72 (ha.) 14.13 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 150

1:10,000: SO 96 SE

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:

Rookery Cottage Meadows are located on the east of the central Worcestershire plain, about one kilometre west of Feckenham. The three meadows overlie a medieval ridge and furrow and have been maintained by traditional hay cutting with aftermath grazing by cattle. The soils are poorly drained and slightly calcareous, derived from the underlying Lower Lias clays of the Jurassic Period.

The special interest of the site lies in the diversity of the semi-natural grassland sward with its rich assemblage of herbs and grasses. The vegetation of the north and south meadows 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 furrows are grass dominated with such species as yellow oat-grass *Trisetum flavescens* and downy oat-grass *Avenula pubescens*. The flora of the ridges is more diverse with glaucous sedge *Carex flacca*, hoary plantain *Plantago media*, rough hawkbit *Leontodon hispidus*, bulbous buttercup *Ranunculus bulbosus*, goat's-beard *Tragopogon pratensis*, common bird's-foot-trefoil *Lotus corniculatus*, meadow vetchling *Lathyrus pratensis*, yellow rattle *Rhinanthus minor* and common spotted-orchid *Dactylorhiza fuchsii*.

The southern meadow has abundant cowslip *Primula veris* on the ridges and a wet area in the south east corner where common fleabane *Pulicaria dysenterica* is common. A feature of the northern meadow is a single crab apple tree *Malus sylvestris* in the centre.

The eastern damp meadow has impeded drainage, and shows a transition from mesotrophic grassland, as described, to an extensive area of mire which is typical of the soft rush *Juncus effusus* and common marsh-bedstraw *Galium palustre*. The mire community is dominated by lesser pond-sedge *Carex acutiformis* and meadowsweet *Filipendula ulmaria*, which cover of the southern half of the meadow, with frequent jointed rush *Juncus articulatus*, hard rush *Juncus inflexus*, ragged-robin *Lychnis flos-cucculi* and devil's-bit scabious *Succisa pratensis*.

The meadows are surrounded by large species-rich hedges, with midland hawthorn *Crataegus laevigata*, blackthorn *Prunus spinosa*, dogwood *Cornus sanguinea*, buckthorn *Rhamnus catharticus* and ash *Fraxinus excelsior*.