

COUNTY: Norfolk

SITE NAME: CANTLEY MARSHES, NORFOLK

DISTRICT: Broadland

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

Local Planning Authority: Broads Authority

National Grid Reference: TG 370040

Area: 296.03 (ha) 664.77 (ac)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 134

1:10,000: TG 30

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): –

Date of Last Revision: –

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 9 January 1997

Date of Last Revision: –

Other Information:

Much of the area is owned and managed as a nature reserve by the RSPB. It lies adjacent to the much larger Yare Broads and Marshes SSSI.

Reasons for Notification:

Cantley marshes are situated in the Yare valley in Broadland. They occupy a broad sweep of land on the north site of the River Yare between Buckenham and Cantley village. The site is predominantly grazing marsh with wet alder carr woodland occurring on the valley margin and tall herb fen along the river frontage.

The majority of the grazing marsh is improved, however areas of species-rich grassland and fen meadow of importance are present along the 'upland' margin. The freshwater dyke system of the grazing marsh occurs over a range of soil types from peat to clay and supports a wide range of plant communities, with eight of the ten types present in Broadland. The dykes support a rich and diverse aquatic flora. This includes a large proportion of the Broadland population of the nationally rare sharp-leaved pondweed *Potamogeton acutifolius*, and three nationally scarce species; whorled water milfoil *Myriophyllum verticillatum*, greater water parsnip *Sium latifolium*, and the hairlike pondweed *Potamogeton trichoides*. Five regionally important species are also present; blunt leaved pondweed *Potamogeton obtusifolius*, lesser water plantain *Baldellia ranunculoides*, flat-stalked pondweed *Potamogeton friesii*, soft hornwort *Ceratophyllum submersum* and floating clubrush *Scirpus fluitans*. Tall herb fen found on the river frontage supports a population of the nationally scarce marsh sowthistle *Sonchus palustris*.

The wide range of dyke types attracts a diverse invertebrate fauna that includes two nationally rare dragonflies. The Norfolk Hawker *Aeshna isosceles* is found on the open grazing marsh dykes while the scarce chaser *Libellula fulva* is associated with wet carr woodland.

The areas of alder woodland along the valley sides are of significant wildlife interest.

The marshes support an internationally important population of wintering wigeon, and nationally important populations of bean goose (the majority of the British population) and European white-fronted goose. Other species wintering on the marshes include lapwing, snipe, dunlin, shelduck and teal. The marshes support an important breeding bird assemblage with lapwing, oystercatcher, redshank, snipe, pochard and yellow wagtail breeding on the marshes, while Cetti's warbler and marsh harrier nest in areas of tall herb fen. Kingfisher and barn owl also breed on the site.