

COUNTY: NORFOLK AND SUFFOLK

SITE NAME: BRECKLAND FARMLAND

DISTRICT: FOREST HEATH, ST EDMUNDSBURY, BRECKLAND, KINGS LYNN AND WEST NORFOLK

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

Local Planning Authority: Suffolk County Council, Norfolk County Council, Forest Heath District Council, St Edmundsbury Borough Council, Breckland District Council, Kings Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council

National Grid Reference: TL 762783

Area: 13,335.70 (ha.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 156, 169 **1:10,000:** TF 70 NE, TF 70 SE, TF 80 SW, TL 68 NE, TL 76 NE, TL 76 NW, TL 77 NE, TL 77 NW, TL 77 SE, TL 77 SW, TL 78 NE, TL 78 NW, TL 78 SE, TL 78 SW, TL 79 NE, TL 79 SE, TL 79 SW, TL 87 NE, TL 87 NW, TL 88 NE, TL 88 SE, TL 89 NE, TL 89 NW, TL 89 SE, TL 98 NW, TL 98 SW, TL 99 NW, TL 99 SW

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): –

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 15 November 2000

Other Information:

Stone curlew is specially protected by being listed on Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as amended.

Stone curlew is listed on Annex 1 of the European Communities Directive 79/409/EEC on the Conservation of Wild Birds.

Stone curlew is a priority species of the UK Biodiversity Action Plan.

Reasons for Notification:

This site is notified for its internationally important population of stone curlew *Burhinus oedicephalus*.

Description:

Breckland Farmland SSSI lies between Bury St Edmunds in Suffolk and Swaffham in Norfolk. Breckland is characterised by its climate and soils. Breckland's climate is semi-continental, being the driest region of the British Isles and subject to great extremes of temperature. The soils are complex, but typically are very sandy free-draining mixes of chalk, sand, silt, clay and flints.

The predominant land use within the SSSI is arable. This is characterised by field scale vegetables and root crops, generally in rotation with cereals and outdoor pig units. Management for gamebirds is also a characteristic feature. Stone curlews nest from March each year in cultivated land which has plenty of bare ground and very short vegetation. Late sown spring crops such as sugar beet and vegetables are favoured. They also occupy set-aside where this has been rotated. Stone curlews are very sensitive to recreational disturbance and benefit from lack of recreational access on agricultural land; they are not usually affected by mechanised agricultural operations. Other habitats such as grassland are used for foraging. A restored mineral working also supports breeding stone curlews. Breckland Farmland SSSI is adjoined by a number of heathland SSSIs which also provide breeding and foraging habitat for stone curlew.