

COUNTY: SHROPSHIRE

SITE NAME: WHITE MERE

DISTRICT: NORTH SHROPSHIRE

SITE REF: 15WA4

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

Local Planning Authority: SHROPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL, North Shropshire District Council

National Grid Reference: SJ 414330

Area: 31.97 (ha.) 78.8 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 126

1:10,000: SJ 43 SW

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): –

Date of Last Revision: –

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1986

Date of Last Revision: –

Other Information:

New site.

Description and Reasons for Notification:

The Meres & Mosses of the north west Midlands form a nationally important series of open water and peatland sites. These have developed in natural depressions in the glacial drift left by the ice sheets which covered the Cheshire-Shropshire plain some 15,000 years ago. The majority lie in Cheshire and north Shropshire, with a small number of outlying sites in adjacent parts of Staffordshire and Clwyd.

The origin of most of the hollows can be accounted for by glaciation but a small number have been formed at least in part by more recent subsidence resulting from the removal in solution of underlying salt deposits.

There are more than 60 open water bodies known as 'meres' or 'pools' and a smaller number of peatland sites or mires known as 'mosses'. They range in depth from about one metre to 27 metres and have areas varying between less than a hectare to 70 hectares.

Although the majority of the meres are nutrient rich (eutrophic) the water chemistry is very variable reflecting the heterogeneous nature of the surrounding drift deposits. Associated fringing habitats such as reedswamp, fen, carr and damp pasture add to the value of the meres. The development of these habitats is associated with peat accumulation which in some cases has led to the complete infilling of the basin. During this process the nutrient status of the peat surface changes and typically becomes nutrient poor (oligotrophic) and acidic thus allowing species such as the bog mosses *Sphagnum* spp. to colonise it. The resulting peat bogs are the 'mosses'. In a few cases colonisation of the water surface by floating vegetation has resulted in the formation of a quaking bog known as a 'schwingmoor'.

White Mere is one of the richest of the North Shropshire meres for aquatic plants, with a flora which includes needle spike-rush *Eleocharis acicularis*, shoreweed *Littorella uniflora*, small pondweed *Potamogeton berchtoldii* and grey club-rush *Schoenoplectus tabernaemontani*.

There is a varied invertebrate fauna, and White Mere is particularly rich in snails, of which eleven species have been found.

On the western side is an area of alder carr in which elongated sedge *Carex elongata* and bay willow *Salix pentandra* occur. This wood is also a major roost for cormorants *Phalacrocorax carbo*.

Pole Wood, on the southern side of the mere, contains wild service-tree *Sorbus torminalis*, a rare species in North Shropshire.