

COUNTY: SHROPSHIRE

SITE NAME: MUXTON MARSH

DISTRICT: The Wrekin

SITE REF: 15WT9

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

Local Planning Authority: SHROPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL, District of the Wrekin Council

National Grid Reference: SJ 716134

Area: 7.3 (ha.) 18.0 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 127

1:10,000: SJ 71 SW

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): –

Date of Last Revision: –

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1987

Date of Last Revision: –

Other Information:

New site.

Description and Reasons for Notification:

This site is part of a complex of habitats which have developed in an area of north-east Telford left semi-derelict by past coal-mining. Impeded drainage caused by spoil dumping has contributed to the formation of wetland habitats here. Reclamation of derelict sites in and around Telford has greatly reduced the area of semi-natural vegetation in this part of Shropshire, and this site is the best remaining example of unimproved grassland, fen and carr. The site also includes an area of woodland which occupies the western slope of the adjacent spoil tip (Freehold Mound).

The western part of the site consists of unimproved grassland, much of which is low-lying and marshy. The sward is dominated by a range of grasses, sedges and rushes, including marsh fox-tail *Alopecurus geniculatus*, sweet vernal-grass *Anthoxanthum odoratum*, carnation sedge *Carex panicea*, toad rush *Juncus bufonius* and jointed rush *J. articulatus*. Among less common species present are bristle club-rush *Isolepis setacea*, marsh arrow-grass *Triglochin palustris*, yellow rattle *Rhinanthus minor* and a species of marsh orchid thought to be *Dactylorhiza incarnata*. To the north is a somewhat similar area in which tussocks of tall fescue *Festuca arundinacea* are an important component.

There is an extensive area of sedge fen which is dominated by lesser pond-sedge *Carex acutiformis*. False fox-sedge *C. otrubae*, great willowherb *Epilobium hirsutum*, water horsetail *Equisetum fluviatile*, hard rush *Juncus inflexus*, greater reedmace *Typha latifolia* and yellow iris *Iris pseudacorus* are present in this community.

At the foot of the slope of the pit-mound there is a zone of wet carr, dominated by grey willow *Salix cinerea* but containing small amounts of alder *Alnus glutinosa* and crack willow *S. fragilis*. This grades into the sedge fen, and many of the fen species persist as a field layer beneath the willow. Nearer the slope fen species are replaced by bog mosses *Sphagnum* sp. which form a carpet beneath the willows. The slope above the eastern margin of the carr is occupied by oak *Quercus* sp. and silver birch *Betula pendula* woodland. Although this is clearly of secondary origin, it contains a few characteristic woodland plants, including wood anemone *Anemone nemorosa*, yellow archangel *Lamium galeobdolon* and dog's mercury *Mercurialis perennis*.