

COUNTY: SHROPSHIRE

SITE NAME: CATHERTON COMMON

DISTRICT: South Shropshire

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

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

National Grid Reference: SO 635785

Area: 135.32 (ha.) 334.4 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 138

1:10,000: SO 67 NW and SO 67 NE

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1963

Date of Last Revision: 1963

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1983

Date of Last Revision: –

Other Information:

Site extension notified in 1984.

Reasons for Notification:

An extensive area of wet and dry heathland, part of which has been modified in the past by coal mining. The diversity of the area is increased by the presence of streams and wet flushes. In addition to heathland dominated by common heather *Calluna vulgaris*, which is widespread in the eastern part of the common, there are areas of interesting mixed heathland with bell heather *Erica cinerea* and western gorse *Ulex gallii*, as well as areas of acid grassland with common bent *Agrostis tenuis*, sheep's-fescue *Festuca ovina* and mat grass *Nardus stricta*. At the eastern end, at Cramer Gutter, there is a series of small valley bogs with a very interesting flora and an area of grassland in which the marsh gentian *Gentiana pneumonanthe* occurs at its only Shropshire locality. Other uncommon plants at Cramer Gutter include butterwort *Pinguicula vulgaris*, dioecious sedge *Carex dioica*, lesser skull-cap *Scutellaria minor*, floating clubrush *Eleogiton fluitans* and early marsh orchid *Dactylorhiza incarnata ssp pulchella*. The stream and flushes here are of interest for dragonflies, including the rare species *Orthetrum caerulescens*.

A number of mosses and liverworts which are characteristic of upland streams eg *Racomitrium aciculare* and *Scapania undulata* grow in Crump's Brook which flows through the site.