

COUNTY: SHROPSHIRE

SITE NAME: CLAREPOOL MOSS

DISTRICT: North 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, North Shropshire District Council

National Grid Reference: SJ 433342

Area: 15.62 (ha.) 38.6 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 126

1:10,000: SJ 43 SW

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1953

Date of Last Revision: 1963

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1983

Date of Last Revision: –

Other Information:

The site is subject to a management agreement between NCC and the owner.

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 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'.

Clarepool Moss is a basin mire which has developed, in part at least, as a quaking bog (Schwingmoor). In this respect it is similar to Chartley Moss (Staffordshire) and Wybunbury Moss (Cheshire), but different from the other major sites in North Shropshire.

The vegetation of much of the site consists of pine woodland with bog moss *Sphagnum* spp. and crowberry *Empetrum nigrum*. There are open areas of *Sphagnum* bog with characteristic species such as cranberry *Vaccinium oxycoccus*, bog rosemary *Andromeda polifolia* and sundew *Drosera rotundifolia*, and also a series of peat cuttings which also contain *Sphagnum*-dominated communities. The main open *Sphagnum* communities coincide with the quaking bog areas, which have developed over deep hollows.

On the eastern side of the moss there is a large pool, partly surrounded by nutrient-poor fen in which royal fern *Osmunda regalis* occurs. The pool has peat-stained water, and is of interest for its freshwater invertebrate fauna.

Rare species which have been found include bog sedge *Carex limosa*, the moss *Dicranum undulatum* and the water beetle *Acilius sulcatus*.

The site includes, at the southern end, an overgrown field with damp grassland and scrub communities which add to the diversity of the site.