

County: North Yorkshire **Site Name** Bastow Wood

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

Local Planning Authority: Yorkshire Dales National Park, (Craven District Council)

National Grid Reference: SD 990657

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: SD 98

1:10,000: SD 96 NE

Area: 52.04 (ha) 128.59 (ac)

First Notified: 1975 *

Date of Revision: 1984

Description:

Bastow Wood comprises an area of ash-hazel wood pasture, a habitat known from only one other side in the Yorkshire Dales. It is situated on a bench of Carboniferous Limestone, on the eastern flank of Upper Wharfedale. The site overlies a Celtic field system and the wood pasture habitat is maintained by grazing. In this, it contrasts strongly with the ungrazed woodland flora of the adjacent Grass Wood SSSI.

There is a discontinuous canopy of ash *Fraxinus excelsior*, birch *Betula pendula*, sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus* and rowan *Sorbus aucuparia* with an abundance of hazel *Corylus avellana* in the understorey. Bird cherry *Prunus padus*, hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*, blackthorn *Prunus spinosa* and geulder rose *Viburnum opulus* are rather less frequent.

Under the canopy, and in the clearings, thin limestone soils support a grazed sward of blue moor-grass *Sesleria albicans* and red fescue *Festuca rubra* which is rich in herb species such as rockrose *Helianthemum nummularium*, bloody crane's-bill *Geranium sanguineum* and fairy flax *Linum catharticum*. Bare rock and fragmentary pavement crop out in places and there are shallow limestone scars. The presence of ant hills is indicative of old pasture.

There are more localised areas of deeper soil, neutral in character, but also rich in herbs such as lady's mantle *Alchemilla glabra* and selfheal *Prunella vulgaris*.

In a limited area at the southern end of the site, the community assumes a more heavily wooded character: the canopy becomes denser and the ground flora is dominated by dog's mercury *Mercurialis perennis*.

Other Information:

1. This site forms part of 'Conistone Old Pastures and Bastow Wood' listed in 'A Nature Conservation Review edited by D A Ratcliffe (1977), Cambridge University Press. It was formerly notified as part of an SSSI under the same name, and is now renotified but with a reduced boundary to exclude Lea Green pasture to the east.
2. Adjacent to Grass Wood SSSI and Conistone Old Pasture SSSI.
3. See Oxenber Wood SSSI, where wood pasture also occurs.

*Under Section 23 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act, 1949.