

COUNTY: SHROPSHIRE

SITE NAME: FENEMERE

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 445228      Area: 16.34 (ha.) 40.4 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 126      1:10,000: SJ 42 SW

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1953      Date of Last Revision: 1963

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1984      Date of Last Revision: –

Other Information:

Boundary alteration (extension and reduction).

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'.

Fenemere is a particularly rich and interesting mere with eutrophic water.

There are extensive beds of white and yellow water-lilies *Nymphaea alba* and *Nuphar lutea*, but otherwise the aquatic vegetation is sparse, consisting of horned pondweed *Zannichellia palustris*, fennel-leaved pondweed *Potamogeton pectinatus* and Canadian pondweed *Elodea canadensis*.

Reed beds are well developed round the edge and dominated by common reed *Phragmites australis*. Other species present include lesser reedmace *Typha angustifolia*, bulrush *Schoenoplectus lacustris* and bur-reed *Sparganium erectum*. Great duckweed *Lemna polyrhiza*, a scarce plant, occurs in the reed beds.

On the western side of the mere there is a broad belt of alder carr, in which tussock sedge *Carex paniculata*, cyperus sedge *C. pseudocyperus* and cowbane *Cicuta virosa* occur.

The site includes, to the north and west of the mere, a series of damp pastures which are exceptionally rich botanically. The flora includes marsh orchid *Dactylorhiza incarnata*, bogbean *Menyanthes trifoliata*, marsh arrow-grass *Triglochin palustris* and water dropwort *Oenanthe fistulosa*.

Fenemere is also important for its rich aquatic invertebrate fauna. It has a more diverse mollusc population than any other mere, having fourteen species.