

COUNTY: SHROPSHIRE

SITE NAME: OSS MERE

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 565438

Area: 28.32 (ha.) 70 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 117

1:10,000: SJ 54 SE

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1953

Date of Last Revision: 1963

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1983

Date of Last Revision: –

Other Information:

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 had 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'.

A shallow mere of moderate fertility, bordered on two sides by reedswamp and alder carr. The site also includes woodland on dry peat and on fringe of damp grassland.

Within the mere both white and yellow water lilies *Nymphaea alba* and *Nuphar lutea* occur, but are scarce. Horned pondweed *Zannichellia palustris* is the dominant submerged aquatic plant.

The alder carr is particularly rich, and has a flora which includes cyperus sedge *Carex pseudocyperus*, cowbane *Cicuta virosa*, bog violet *Viola palustris*, marsh fern *Thelypteris thelypteroides* and royal fern *Osmunda regalis*, all of which are uncommon in Shropshire.

The reedswamp surrounding the mere is unusual since it contains *Sphagnum squarrosum* and *S. fimbriatum* in some abundance. Marsh cinquefoil *Potentilla palustris* also occurs.

Damp grassland on the east side of the mere and to the south of the alder carr is moderately species rich. Among the more uncommon species recorded here are marsh arrow-grass *Triglochin palustris*, sneezewort *Achillea ptarmica* and bristle club-rush *Isolepis setacea*.