

COUNTY: SUFFOLK      SITE NAME: NEWBOURN SPRINGS

DISTRICT: SUFFOLK COASTAL

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

Local Planning Authority: SUFFOLK COASTAL DISTRICT COUNCIL

National Grid Reference: TM 272434      Area: 13.0 (ha.) 32.1 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 169      1:10,000: TM 24 SE

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1954      Date of Last Revision: 1965

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1986      Date of Last Revision: –

Other Information:

This site is managed as a nature reserve by Suffolk Trust for Nature Conservation.

Reasons for Notification:

Newbourn Springs is a relatively small site which contains a variety of habitats in close juxtaposition. The major part of the site comprises a narrow spring-flushed valley occupied by a fast flowing stream with alder carr and small areas of fen on peat overlying London Clay. Drier more acidic soils further west and above the stream valley support broad-leaved woodland, scrub, grassland communities and bracken dominated heath. Active management has led to the maintenance of a rich and varied flora and the subsequent diversity of habitats attracts good populations of breeding and migratory birds.

Tall coppiced spring-line alder woodland with standards of oak and ash occupy the shallow southern slopes of the valley and grade into crack willow and silver birch further west. The spring-flushed soils support a diverse flora dominated largely by Red Currant *Ribes nigrum* with abundant Enchanter's Nightshade *Circaea lutetiana*, Male Fern *Dryopteris filix-mas*, Bittersweet *Solanum dulcamara* and Primrose *Primula vulgaris*. Where alder gives way to ash, Bluebell *Hyacinthoides non-scripta* predominates, whilst more notable species include Common Twayblade *Listera ovata*, Common Spotted Orchid *Dactylorhiza fuschii* and Bee Orchid *Ophrys apifera*.

An interesting flora has developed along the stream banks, particularly in clearings created by recent coppicing. Water Avens *Geum rivale*, Marsh Marigold *Caltha palustris*, Yellow Iris *Iris pseudacorus* and Greater Pond Sedge *Carex riparia* are among the species present.

Tall fen vegetation dominated by reed and reed sweet-grass has developed on the wetter abandoned grazing meadows along the valley floor. Angelica, hemp agrimony and meadowsweet are frequent and other associated species include Reedmace *Typha latifolia* Blunt-flowered Rush *Juncus subnodulosus* and Fen Bedstraw *Galium*

*uliginosum*. On drier soils this grades into mixed tall neutral grassland and ruderal herb vegetation.

The steep valley side above the stream supports oak-ash-hazel woodland which has grown up into high forest. Associated species include hawthorn and elder with bramble, nettle, primrose and bluebell dominating the ground flora.

Above the valley is a large area of bracken dominated heath fringed by thorn scrub. Some areas have been cleared and patches of dry acid grassland and heather heath have developed. The grassland contains a variety of herb species including Sheep's Sorrel *Rumex acetosella*, Heath Bedstraw *Galium saxatile* and Ragwort *Senecio jacobaea*. Where base-poor springs arise, calcicolous species such as Hairy Rockcress *Arabis hirsuta*, Lady's Bedstraw *Galium verum* and Rockrose *Helianthemum nummularium* also occur.

A variety of birds breed on the site including nightingales, goldcrests, warblers and woodpeckers. Migratory birds such as *sylvia* warblers and fieldfare are regular visitors as are many butterflies including the green hairstreak and white letter hairstreak butterflies.