

COUNTY: SUFFOLK

SITE NAME: DEW'S PONDS

DISTRICT: SUFFOLK COASTAL

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

Local Planning Authority: Suffolk Coastal District Council, Suffolk County Council

National Grid Reference: TM 390719

Area: 6.74 (ha.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 156

1:10,000: TM 37 SE

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 2000

Date of Last Revision: –

Reasons for Notification:

This site supports one of the largest known breeding populations of great crested newts *Triturus cristatus* in the UK.

General description:

This site lies in north east Suffolk in the parish of Bramfield, some 5km south of the town of Halesworth and 10km west of the Suffolk coast. This part of Suffolk has a high density of farm ponds, supporting a widespread distribution of great crested newts. Dew's Ponds contains a number of ponds which collectively support exceptionally high numbers of great crested newts on a regular basis.

The majority of the site is on level ground. The underlying solid geology is chalk but this is overlain by an extensive deposit of boulder clay. The clay gives rise to a poorly draining, moderately nutrient-rich, heavy soil.

There are twelve ponds within the site, ranging from long established farm ponds to more recently created ones (dug in 1990s). The ponds contain a variety of emergent and submerged aquatic vegetation including bearded stonewort *Chara canescens*. They have been managed for conservation purposes during the last decade. In contrast, many other ponds in the surrounding area have been infilled or neglected and therefore no longer support large populations of great crested newts. Rough, semi-improved grassland surrounds the ponds at the Dew's Ponds site with some scrub and hedgerow habitat. The terrestrial habitats are important to newts for feeding, shelter and hibernation during the non-breeding season.

Great crested newts have been recorded in at least nine of the twelve ponds in exceptional numbers. Various other amphibians and reptiles also breed on site. The ponds support good numbers of smooth newt *Triturus vulgaris*, with common frog *Rana temporaria* and common toad *Bufo bufo*. Grass snake *Natrix natrix*, slow-worm *Anguis fragilis* and common lizard *Laccerta vivipara* are also present and breed on site.

Other Information:

Great crested newt is specially protected by being listed on Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as amended.

Great crested newt is a priority species of the UK Biodiversity Action Plan.

Great crested newt is listed on Annex II and IV of the European Communities Directive 92/43/EEC, on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora -- The Habitats Directive.