

**COUNTY:** CAMBRIDGESHIRE **SITE NAME:** BERRY FEN

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

**Local Planning Authorities:** Huntingdon District Council

**National Grid Reference:** TL 378745

**Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000:** 143                      **1:10,000:** TL 37 SE

**Date Notified (Under 1949 Act):** 1971                      **Date of Last Revision:**

**Date Notified (Under 1981 Act):** 1983                      **Date of Last Revision:**

**Area:** 18 ha 44 ac

**Other information:** A boundary modification has been made to exclude some 14 acres which have been arabalised.

### **Description and Reasons for Notification**

This site represents a washland habitat of ornithological value and holding neutral grassland communities of a type now scarce in Britain. The site is located close to the internationally important Ouse Washes and this factor influences the use of Berry Fen by wintering wildfowl, especially when the Washes are too deeply flooded. In particular, the Bewick's swan numbers reach nationally significant levels.

The wash grassland is characterised by grasses such as marsh foxtail *Alopecurus geniculatus* and reed canary-grass *Phalaris arundinacea*. This wet grassland grades into stands of reed sweet-grass *Glyceria maxima* towards the wetter parts of the site, together with clumps of slender-tufted sedge *Carex acuta*. Other herbs include the purple loosestrife *Lythrum salicaria* and meadowsweet *Filipendula ulmaria*. The ditches add further diversity, retaining open water into the summer months. Wetland herbs such as the local sneezewort *Achillea ptarmica*, marsh ragwort *Senecio aquaticus* and the uncommon narrow-leaved water-dropwort *Oenanthe silaifolia* occur. Most of the site floods irregularly during winter and wildfowl other than Bewick's swan may reach numbers of county significance.