

SITE NOTIFIED TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE ON THE 10TH
APRIL 1989

COUNTY: NORFOLK SITE NAME: FOULDEN COMMON

DISTRICT: BRECKLAND

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

Local Planning Authority: Breckland District Council

National Grid Reference: TF 762002 Area: 136.8 (ha.) 338.03 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 143 1:10,000: TF 70 SE, TL 79 NE

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1954 Date of Last Revision: 1971

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

Other Information:

The boundary has been extended after renotification.

Description:

Foulden Common is a large site which displays a wide range of habitats, from open water and rich fen through both acidic and calcareous grassland to birch woodland. This habitat mosaic, reflecting variation in topography, soil type and water regime supports a large number of plant and animal species including many national rarities.

Large areas of fen, dominated by saw sedge *Cladium mariscus* are present with reed *Phragmites australis*, cotton grass *Eriophorum angustifolium* and marsh pennywort *Hydrocotyle vulgaris*. On the margins of the southern fen area a fen grassland community has developed with purple moor-grass *Molinia caerulea*, blunt-flowered rush *Juncus subnodulosus*, black bog rush *Schoenus nigricans*, early marsh orchid *Dactylorhiza incarnata* and purple small-reed *Calamagrostis canescens*. Neutral grassland is present between this and the chalk grassland and is dominated by common quaking grass *Briza media*, oat grass *Arrhenatherum elatius* and cock's-foot *Dactylis glomerata* with lady's bedstraw *Galium verum* and spiny restharrow *Ononis spinosa*. The chalk grassland is diverse, grazed by cattle and containing many anthills. The sward is dominated by red fescue *Festuca rubra*, and the abundant herbs include squinancy wort *Asperula cynanchica*, dropwort *Filipendula vulgaris*, clustered bellflower *Campanula glomerata*, autumn gentian *Gentianella amarella*, large thyme *Thymus pulegioides* and fragrant orchid *Gymnadenia conopsea* var *densiflora*.

The pingos contain varying amounts of water; some are overgrown and nearly dry while others are clear with aquatic vegetation: the main species being greater bladderwort *Utricularia vulgaris* and fen pondweed *Potamogeton coloratus*. The fringing vegetation is interesting and includes bogbean *Menyanthes trifoliata*, reed *Phragmites australis*, saw sedge and the locally rare common butterwort *Pinguicula vulgaris*. Birch woodland covers much of the remainder of the site with alder carr present in the wetter areas. A small area of dry acidic heathland persists and this is dominated by gorse *Ulex europaeus* and heather *Calluna vulgaris*.