

SITE NOTIFIED TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE ON 25TH JULY 1990

COUNTY: NORFOLK            SITE NAME: SOUTHREPPS COMMON

DISTRICT: NORTH NORFOLK

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

Local Planning Authority: North Norfolk District Council

National Grid Reference: TG 261350            Area: 5.3 (ha.) 13.1 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 133            1:10,000: TG 23 NE & TG 23 SE

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): –            Date of Last Revision: –

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1990            Date of Last Revision: –

Other Information:

Description:

Southrepps Common is situated in the upper valley of the River Ant and supports a variety of damp grassland and calcareous valley fen types. Such undrained river valley sites are now uncommon throughout much of Norfolk, and this site supports very local fen communities largely restricted to East Anglia.

On the lower area of the northern valley slope an intricate mosaic of vegetation types has developed, with blunt-flowered rush *Juncus subnodulosus* dominating. Calcareous fen species, several of which are particularly uncommon in the county, are present here including grass of parnassus *Parnassia palustris*, bog pimpernel *Anagallis tenella*, marsh arrowgrass *Triglochin palustris*, common quaking grass *Briza media* and flea sedge *Carex pulicaris*. Associated low hummocks support species more characteristic of acid conditions including meadow thistle *Cirsium dissectum*, heather *Calluna vulgaris*, heath woodrush *Luzula multiflora*, mat grass *Nardus stricta*, heath grass *Danthonia decumbens* and common cotton-grass *Eriophorum angustifolium*.

The southern valley side has developed an open bed of reed *Phragmites australis* under much of which blunt-flowered rush again dominates. Exceptionally large colonies of the uncommon marsh helleborine *Epipactis palustris* and fragrant orchid *Gymnadenia conopsea* var *densiflora* are present throughout, together with marsh valerian *Valeriana dioica* and occasional long-stalked yellow sedge *Carex lepidocarpa* and bogbean *Menyanthes trifoliata*. Small areas of open bryophyte carpets occur very sporadically, and these support the low-growing calcicole species characteristic of the northern valley side together with marsh lousewort *Pedicularis palustris*, eyebright *Euphrasia officinalis* (agg) and few-flowered spikerush *Eleocharis quinqueflora*. Around the margins of this area reed has become dominant, and these reedbeds support sedge warbler and reed bunting.

On the higher valley slopes, mainly to the north, damp grassland replaces the fen communities. Fescues (*Festuca rubra* and *F. ovina*) and Yorkshire fog *Holcus lanatus* dominate, and herbs include yellow rattle *Rhinanthus minor* (agg), southern marsh orchid *Dactylorhiza praetermissa* and ragged robin

*Lychnis flos-cuculi*. Further diversity is provided by scrub areas and a strip of alder *Alnus glutinosa* carr along the river.

A number of rare and notable diptera (true flies) characteristic of undisturbed wetlands have been recorded from this site, most notably *Pteromicra glabricula* and *Colobaea distincta*, flies whose larvae are parasitic on snails.