

COUNTY: WEST SUSSEX

SITE NAME: BURTON PARK

DISTRICT: CHICHESTER

Status: Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) notified under Section 28 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. Part of this site is a Local Nature Reserve (under S21 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949).

Local Planning Authority: CHICHESTER DISTRICT COUNCIL

National Grid Reference: SU 977178                      Area: 43.2 (ha.) 06.7 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 197                      1:10,000: SU 91 NE

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1954                      Date of Last Revision: 1980

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

Further Information:

Part of the site is a local nature reserve, jointly owned by the Sussex Trust for Nature Conservation and West Sussex County Council and managed as a single unit. Burton Park SSSI lies within the South Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Reasons for Notification:

This site has developed over the lower greensand of the Folkestone Beds and comprises an extensive area of open water with good aquatic and emergent vegetation, surrounded on most sides by carr woodland. Other habitats within the site include woodland, bog and small areas of wet heath and marshy grassland. The site supports a rich insect fauna including several nationally rare species and is of considerable importance for its breeding water bird community.

The open water of Mill Pond is dominated by yellow water-lily *Nuphar lutea* with abundant spiked water milfoil *Myriophyllum spicatum* and some uncommon species of pondweed including fennel pondweed *Potamogeton pectinatus*, perfoliate pondweed *P. perfoliatus* and hair-like pondweed *P. trichoides*. The emergent vegetation around the edges of the lake consists of common reed *Phragmites australis* with great reedmace *Typha latifolia*, bulrush *Schoenoplectus lacustris*, branched bur-reed *Sparganium erectum* and greater pond-sedge *Carex riparia*. Cowbane *Cicuta virosa*, a very local plant found nowhere else in Sussex, is also a component of the fen vegetation at Burton Pond.

The fen vegetation grades into mature alder *Alnus glutinosa* carr on all but the north and north-western margins with abundant grey willow *Salix cinerea* and goat willow *S. caprea*. This wet woodland has a rich ground flora dominated by greater tussock sedge *Carex paniculata*, and includes species such as fools' water-cress *Apium nodiflorum*, marsh bedstraw *Galium palustre*, red current *Ribes rubrum* and male fern *Dryopteris filix-mas*. Where the woodland has developed on peat such plants as bogbean *Menyanthes trifoliata* and cranberry *Vaccinium oxycoccos*, which has only three other localities in the county, also occur.

Away from the lake alder carr grades into a drier birch *Betula pendula* and oak *Quercus robur* woodland, which has been modified in places by planting Scots pine *Pinus sylvestris* and sweet chestnut *Castanea sativa*. On the Warren mature oak, beech *Fagus sylvatica* and birch form a variable woodland in which sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus* and whitebeam *Sorbus aria* are locally common. Here hazel *Corylus avellana*, holly *Ilex aquifolium* and the rather rare alder buckthorn *Fangula alnus* form the shrub layer over a dense ground flora which consists of wood sage *Teucrium scorodonia*, honeysuckle *Lonicera periclymenum*, bluebells *Endymion non-scriptus* and bracken *Pteridium aquilinum*. In the east of the Warren the wood has colonised a former bog and the original ground flora of tufted hair-

grass *Deschampsia cespitosa*, soft rush *Juncus effusus* and mosses has so far remained unchanged.

To the north of Button Pond there is a small area of wet heathland with typical species such as purple moor-grass *Molinia caerulea*, heather *Calluna vulgaris*, cross leaved heath *Erica tetralix* and *Sphagnum* mosses. On Newpiece Moor an area of marshy grassland supports a number of interesting plants, most notably greater tussock-sedge *Carex paniculata* and colonies of the southern marsh orchid *Dactylorhiza praetermissa*.

Burton Pond supports a rich invertebrate fauna, and is particularly important for Coleoptera (beetles) Odonata (dragonflies) and Diptera (flies). Three nationally rare invertebrates occur here: the craneflies *Erioptera meijerei* and *Tipula marginata* and the mud snail *Lymnaea glabra*. Twenty species of beetle *Donacia* species, and fifteen species of dragonfly also occur here, including the variable damselfly *Coenagrion pulchellum* and the hairy dragonfly *Brachytron pratense* both of which are uncommon species. The pond supports a rich molluscan fauna which includes *Bithynia leachii* a snail not often found in West Sussex. It is also the only known site in the county of *Arctocorisa germari*, a species of lesser water boatman. Other notable invertebrates include the mayfly *Caenis robusta* the wood grasshopper *Omocestus rufipes*, and a spider discovered in 1979 which was new to Britain *Theridiosoma gemmosum*.

The site also supports a diverse community of wetland breeding birds including water rail, tufted duck, kingfisher, little and great crested grebes, as well as a large population of reed warbler.