

**COUNTY:** NORTHAMPTONSHIRE                      **SITE NAME:** PLUMPTON PASTURE

**District:** South Northamptonshire

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

**Local Planning Authority:** South Northamptonshire District Council

**National Grid Reference:** SP 594481

**Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000:** 152                      **1:10,000:** SP 54 NE

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

**Date Notified (Under 1981 Act):** 1985                      **Date of Last Revision:**

**Area:** 3.8 ha 9.4 ac

**Other Information:** This is a new site.

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

Plumpton Pasture is an area of unimproved grassland overlying boulder clay, with a pronounced ridge-and-furrow formation. The vegetation present includes two grassland communities. The well-drained ground on the ridge-tops supports a herb-rich community of the crested dog's-tail-common knapweed type, whilst the vegetation on the wetter ground in the furrows conforms to the Yorkshire fog-tufted hair-grass community type. Both these community types were formerly widespread on this Midland soil type under traditional management but as a result of agricultural change, the crested dog's-tail-common knapweed type is now rare both in Northamptonshire and in Great Britain.

This community is dominated by sweet vernal-grass *Anthoxanthum odoratum*, common bent *Agrostis capillaris*, Yorkshire fog *Holcus lanatus*, common knapweed *Centaurea nigra*, lady's bedstraw *Galium verum* and meadow vetchling *Lathyrus pratensis* with frequent crested dog's-tail *Cynosurus cristatus*, red fescue *Festuca rubra*, yellow oat-grass *Trisetum flavescens*, rough hawkbit *Leontodon hispidus* and common bird's-foot-trefoil *Lotus corniculatus*. Grassland species associated with this community type include quaking-grass *Briza media*, ox-eye daisy *Leucanthemum vulgare*, devil's-bit scabious *Succisa pratensis*, bittervetch *Lathyrus montanus*, pepper-saxifrage *Silaum silaus*, yellow rattle *Rhinanthus minor*, cat's-ear *Hypochoeris radicata* and autumn hawkbit *Leontodon autumnalis*. Betony *Stachys officinalis* is locally abundant in the western part of the site above the pond.

The Yorkshire fog-tufted hair-grass community of the furrows is dominated by the grasses creeping bent *Agrostis stolonifera* and Yorkshire fog *Holcus lanatus*, with tufted hair-grass *Deschampsia cespitosa* and herbs such as common knapweed *Centaurea nigra*, red clover *Trifolium pratense* and white clover *T. repens* occurring frequently.

The small pond surrounded by hawthorn *Crataegus* and ash *Fraxinus excelsior* and the mature hedges forming the boundaries of the field add to the interest of the site.

Re-presentation of details approved by Council. Re-typed September 1999.