

COUNTY: NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

SITE NAME: BADBY WOOD

District: Daventry District

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

Local Planning Authority: Daventry District Council

National Grid Reference: SP 565582

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 152 **1:10,000:** SP 55 NE

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1955 **Date of Last Revision:** 1970

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

Area: 47.1 ha 116.3 ac

Other Information: An area of mixed plantation has been excluded.

Description and Reasons for Notification

Badby Wood is the largest of a localised group of ancient semi-natural woodlands lying mainly on acidic soils derived from Jurassic Upper Lias Clays and Northampton Sands. It has a history of continuous woodland cover for over seven hundred years. Lowland hazel-pedunculate woodland is the most common vegetation type present, with pedunculate oak-ash-hazel occurring locally in the wetter areas. Woodland habitat of this kind has declined significantly throughout Northamptonshire and is now unusual in the county.

The canopy consists mainly of pedunculate oak *Quercus robur* with occasional ash *Fraxinus excelsior* and birch *Betula pubescens* and *B. pendula* present. Coppiced hazel *Corylus avellana* dominates the shrub layer with hawthorns *Crataegus monogyna* and *C. laevigata*, elder *Sambucus nigra* and honeysuckle *Lonicera periclymenum* occurring frequently and holly *Ilex aquifolium* and rowan *Sorbus aucuparia* occasionally. In parts of the wood the native community is modified by the presence of sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus* and sweet chestnut *Castanea sativa* as overgrown coppice or standards.

The ground flora contains a good assemblage of species with some areas dominated by bramble *Rubus fruticosus* agg. or creeping soft grass *Holcus mollis* and others with herb-rich communities including plants such as bluebell *Hyacinthoides non-scripta*, wood anemone *Anemone nemorosa*, wood sorrel *Oxalis acetosella* and yellow archangel *Lamiastrum galeobdolon* present. Several county rarities have been recorded including wood horsetail *Equisetum sylvaticum*, blinks *Montia fontana*, hairy wood-rush *Luzula pilosa* and wood melick *Mellica uniflora*.

Additional areas of interest include bracken glades, ancient woodland banks and a stream.

The small marsh on the northern boundary of the site contains a remarkable number of species of herbs, sedges and rushes including the county rarities greater tussock sedge *Carex paniculata*, marsh valerian *Valeriana dioica* and near the wood edge blackcurrant *Ribes nigrum* and wood vetch *Vicia sylvatica*. An overgrown hedge and a strip of unimproved neutral grassland on the banks add to the interest of the area.

A good number of typical woodland bird species have been recorded from the site including nuthatch, redstart, wood warbler and tree pipit, the latter three of which have bred recently. Badger setts are known and the common butterfly species are abundant.

