

COUNTY: DORSET: **SITE NAME:** LODMOOR

DISTRICT: WEYMOUTH AND PORTLAND

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

Local Planning Authority: Weymouth and Portland Borough Council, Dorset County Council

National Grid Reference: SY 688813 **Area:** 71.5 (ha.) 176.7 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 194 **1:10,000:** SY 68 SE

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1952 **Date of Last Revision:** 1977

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

Other Information:

Part of the site is leased to the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and managed as a nature reserve.

Reasons for Notification:

An area of reedbed and brackish grassland, Lodmoor is of outstanding interest for birds. Construction of a sea wall in the early 20th century has prevented regular tidal inundation, but the low-lying land is still influenced by saline groundwater. Frequent flooding by freshwater occurs, especially in winter. The site is notable for waders on passage and wildfowl in winter, and several nationally rare species breed.

The central part of Lodmoor comprises brackish grassland in which creeping bent *Agrostis stolonifera* is dominant with marsh foxtail *Alopecurus geniculatus* and strawberry clover *Trifolium fragiferum*. The many ditches are fringed with sea club-rush *Scirpus maritimus* and locally bulrush *Schoenoplectus tabernaemontani*. The rare water crowfoot *Ranunculus baudotii* is frequent. Towards the southern side of this area saltmarsh increases and species such as sea milkwort *Glaux maritima*, arrowgrass *Triglochin maritima* and salt mud rush *Juncus gerardi* are frequent. Taller saltmarsh vegetation of cord grass *Spartina anglica* and sea aster *Aster tripolium* occurs in pools along the southern margin.

Stands of reed *Phragmites australis* occur to the west and east of this central grassland. Those in the west have been much reduced by refuse tipping and reclamation; the eastern reedbeds grade into drier grassland in which tall fescue *Festuca arundinacea*, tufted hair grass *Deschampsia cespitosa* and other tall grasses are abundant. The fringes of these marshes support scrub vegetation, including much bramble *Rubus fruticosus*.

The reed/scrub areas support breeding bird species of particular note. Bearded tit *Panurus biarmicus* and cetti's warbler *Cettia cetti* nest regularly, while marsh warbler *Acrocephalus palustris* and savi's warbler *Locustella luscinioides* may breed. Various wildfowl are present in winter, depending on the extent of flooding. However the site is perhaps best known for its great range of wading birds. In addition to regular winter gatherings of many of the commoner species such as lapwing *Vanellus vanellus* and snipe *Gallinago gallinago*, there are small numbers of more uncommon waders including jack snipe *Lymnocyrtus minimus*, greenshank *Tringa nebularia* and ruff *Philomachus pugnax*. Passage migrants regularly include wood and green sandpipers *Tringa glareola* and *T. ochropus*, spotted redshank *T. erythrepus* and wimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*. Scarce and more exotic species frequently occur.

This damp coastal site also supports vigorous populations of two scarce insects; short winged conehead *Conocephalus dorsalis* and lesser marsh grasshopper *Chorthippus albomarginatus*.