

COUNTY: SUFFOLK

SITE NAME: HOPTON FEN

DISTRICT: ST EDMUNDSBURY

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

Local Planning Authority: St Edmundsbury District Council

National Grid Reference: TL 990800

Area: 14.37 (ha.) 33.51 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 144

1:10,560: TL 98 SE, TL 97 NE

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1958

Date of Last Revision: –

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1984

Date of Last Revision: –

Other Information:

Reasons for Notification:

Hopton Fen is one of a series of valley fens spanning the watershed between the headwaters of the Waveney and Little Ouse. It supports a variety of tall fen communities and is floristically rich.

The site contains areas of reed-dominated fen, most of which is cut for thatching purposes, and other areas dominated by saw sedge. Associated fen species include blunt-flowered bush, large bird's-foot trefoil, marsh bedstraw, yellow loosestrife and valerian. The sedge-dominated areas are generally less botanically diverse than the reed areas, reflecting the effect of the build-up of litter.

Near the margins of higher ground are small seepage areas dominated by black bog rush, blunt-flowered rush and purple moor-grass. Higher up the slope bracken dominates and forms the boundary between the fen and adjacent arable land. On the opposite side of the fen, close to the adjacent drain, there is a good population of greater tussock sedge *Carex paniculata*.

Around the margins of the fen, scrub, mostly willow and alder buckthorn, has invaded. In some places this has developed into woodland dominated by alder. Twayblade occurs in the ground flora of this woodland, along with a variety of fen carr species.