

**CYNGOR CEFN GWLAD CYMRU
COUNTRYSIDE COUNCIL FOR WALES**

SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST CITATION

WREXHAM

SONTLEY MARSH

Date of Notification: 1986
National Grid Reference: SJ339478
O.S. Maps: 1:50,000 Sheet number: 117
1:25,000 Sheet number: SJ34
Site Area: 13 ha

Description:

Botanical interest.

One of the best wetland examples in Clwyd of the “southern mesotrophic mire” type more characteristic of south-west Wales and, in North Wales, largely restricted to Ynys Môn, Dwyfor and Clwyd.

The site occupies the western valley side of the Gefeiliau Brook, a tributary of the Afon Clywedog, and is fed by a series of springs along the valley slope, and by run-off.

Extensive areas of alder carr (woodland) occur, particularly adjacent to the Gefeiliau Brook and along spring-fed water courses. Alder *Alnus glutinosa* dominates, but there are extensive stands of Common Sallow *Salix cinerea* and Goat Willow *S. capraea* together with Bird Cherry *Prunus padus* and Guelder Rose *Viburnum opulus*.

Much of the site is dominated by tall fen vegetation with stands of Great Pond-sedge *Carex riparia*, Meadow-sweet *Filipendula ulmaria*, Lesser Pond-sedge *Carex acutiformis* and Great Horsetail *Equisetum telmateia*. Wetter areas here support Reed-grass *Phalaris arundinacea* and Hemp Agrimony *Eupatorium cannabinum* with Spindle *Euonymus europaeus* on drier sites. Dense strands of *Equisetum telmateia* also support Panicked Sedge *Carex paniculata* and Purple Loosestrife *Lythrum salicaria*. Marsh Valerian *Valeriana dioica* occurs throughout the site.

At the southern end of the site herb-rich damp grassland occurs with Ragged Robin *Lychnis flos-cuculi*, Yellow-rattle *Rhinanthus minor* and Devil's-bit Scabious *Succisa pratensis*.

Remarks:

The major part of the site is owned by the National Trust and managed as a Nature Reserve by the North Wales Naturalists Trust.

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