

Site name: Eversden and Wimpole Woods

County: Cambridgeshire

District: South Cambridgeshire

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

Local Planning Authority: Cambridgeshire County Council, South Cambridgeshire District Council.

National Grid reference: TL 345531/TL 340525

Area: 66.48 ha

Ordnance Survey sheet: 1:50,000: 154

1:10,000: TL 35 SW

Date notified (under 1949 Act): 1954*

Date of last revision:
1970*

Date notified (under 1981 Act): 1984*

Date of last revision:
11 February 2003

Reasons for notification:

Eversden Wood is an important ancient semi-natural woodland of a type now localised in extent, and rare in lowland England. The habitats present also support a nationally important summer maternity roost for the barbastelle bat, *Barbastella barbastellus*.

General description:

The site is located close to Wimpole Park, and comprises a mixture of ancient coppice woodland (Eversden Wood) and high forest woods likely to be of more recent origin (Wimpole Woods).

A colony of barbastelle bats use trees as roosts in Wimpole Woods. These trees are used as a summer maternity roost where the female bats gather to give birth and rear their young. Most of the roost sites are within tree crevices. The bats also use the site as a foraging area. Some of the woodland is also used as a flight path when bats forage outside the site.

A total of six bat species have been recorded at this site, the other species being the pipstrelles *Pipistrellus pygmaeus* and *P.pipistrellus*, brown long-eared *Plecotus avritus*, Natterer's *Myotis nattereri* and noctule *nyctalus noctula*

Eversden Wood is a species-rich example of ancient ash *Fraxinus excelsior*- field maple *Acer campestre* - dog's mercury *Mercurialis perennis* woodland, and one of the largest remaining sites of this type on the Cambridgeshire chalky boulder-clay.

The woodland is predominantly relict coppice of ash and field maple over an understorey of hazel *Corylus avellana*, with aspen *Populus tremula*, birch *Betula* sp and small-leaved elm *Ulmus minor* also locally dominant.

The ground flora is characterised by dog's mercury and bluebell *Hyacinthoides non-scripta*, and the damp soil conditions are reflected in the local abundance of associated plants such as meadowsweet *Filipendula ulmaria* and tufted hair-grass *Deschampsia cespitosa*. Many herbs typical of old woodlands are present including yellow archangel *Galeobdolon luteum*, wood anemone *Anemone nemorosa* and the nationally scarce oxlip *Primula elatior*; a species largely confined to damp chalky boulder-clay woods of eastern England. Other locally uncommon plants represented include herb-Paris *Paris quadrifolia*, and, particularly on the drier wood banks, pignut *Conopodium majus* and hairy wood-rush *Luzula pilosa*.

The woodland rides provide additional habitat diversity and support herbs such as ragged-Robin *Lychnis flos-cuculi* and false fox-sedge *Carex otrubae*.

Other information:

The site has been extended to include important woodland roosting and foraging habitat of the barbastelle bat, a very rare species in the UK. All species of bat are listed in Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and Annex IV of the European Community Habitats and Species Directive. The site is within the West Anglian Plain Natural Area.

(Note: * refers to Eversden Wood only)