

File ref:

County: Lincolnshire **Site name:** Swanholme Lakes

District: Lincoln

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

Local Planning Authority: Lincoln City Council

National Grid Reference: SK 944685 **Area:** 57.5 (ha) 142.1 (ac)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1: 50 000: 121 **1: 10 000:** SK 96 NW

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

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

Other Information:

Description and Reasons for Notification:

Swanholme Lakes are formed from flooded sand and gravel pits. Unpolluted water and a range of physical and chemical conditions now support an outstanding community of breeding dragonflies. The open water supports several uncommon species of submerged plants and is surrounded by a species-rich mosaic of habitats. The sandy heath, willow carr and sphagnum bog form an area of county importance for amphibians and reptiles and support several invertebrate groups, including grasshoppers and crickets, bumblebees and solitary wasps.

Much of the open water has been undisturbed for over 40 years. Aquatic plants reflecting a range of requirements in alkalinity and depth are present, including stonewort *Chara* sp., pondweeds *Potamogeton* spp., shore-weed *Littorella uniflora* and some nationally rare species dependent on nutrient poor and unpolluted waters, for example water soldier *Stratiotes aloides* and pill wort *Pilularia globulifera*. The 17 species of dragonfly include scarce and declining species, the red-eyed damselfly *Erythromma najas*, the black and ruddy darters *Sympetrum scoticum* and *S. sanguineum*, the variable damselfly *Coenagrion pulchellum*, four hawkers *Aeshna* spp. and the emperor dragonfly *Anax imperator*. Breeding birds and mammals include great crested grebe, kingfisher and the water shrew.

Wet areas dominated by *Sphagnum* spp. of moss have marsh pennywort *Hydrocotyle vulgaris*, sharp-flowered rush *Juncus acutiflorus* and slender spike-rush *Eleocharis acicularis*. Associated shallow water is the breeding area for common frog, common toad, smooth and great crested newt.

The early stages of sandy heath, dominated by *Cladonia* spp. of lichens and *Polytrichum* spp of moss, develop into areas of heathers *Calluna vulgaris* and *Erica cinerea* and then to gorse *Ulex*

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europaeus. There are areas with mature pedunculate oak *Quercus robur*, ash *Fraxinus excelsior* and birch *Betula* spp. Grassland dominated by heath grass *Danthonia decumbens* is associated with sheep's bit *Jasione montana* and supports a large population of grasshoppers.

Within the mosaic of habitats 24 species of butterfly have been recorded, including purple hairstreak and speckled wood. Other breeding birds include warblers, finches, greater spotted and green woodpeckers. Common lizard, adder and grass snake have been recorded.