

## CITATION

COUNTY: AVON SITE NAME: PUXTON MOOR

DISTRICT: WOODSPRING

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

Local Planning Authority: AVON COUNTY COUNCIL, Woodspring District Council

National Grid Reference: ST 412630 Area: 31.07 (ha.) 76.77 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 172 1:10,000: ST 46 SW

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

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1994 Date of Last Revision: –

Other Information:

A new site.

Description and Reasons for Notification:

Puxton Moor forms part of the Avon Levels and Moors, an extensive area of low-lying largely agricultural land, situated to the north of the Mendip Hills. The moor lies entirely on the silty clays of the Wentlloog series.

Drained by a network of rhyes and ditches the area supports aquatic plant communities of great nature conservation interest.

Regularly maintained water courses (including some IDB\* rhyes) are particularly species-rich. It is not uncommon for a short length of ditch to contain as many as 15 species and in some areas up to 30 species have been recorded. Open water species such as Canadian and Nuttall's Waterweed *Elodea canadensis* and *E. nuttallii*, Frogbit *Hydrocharis morsus-ranae*, Small and Lesser Pondweed *Potamogeton berchtoldii* and *P. pusillus*, Common Water-crowfoot *Ranunculus aquatilis* and the locally uncommon Opposite-leaved Pondweed *Groenlandia densa* are all present. Also occurring are the nationally scarce Rootless Duckweed *Wolffia arrhiza* and the Soft Hornwort *Ceratophyllum submersum*, the latter dominating a number of ditches.

Emergent species are also well-represented and Branched Bur-reed *Sparganium erectum*, Tubular water-dropwort *Oenanthe fistulosa*, Water Plantain *Alisma plantago-aquatica*, Water Horsetail *Equisetum fluviatile* are all common. Also present are Flowering-rush *Butomus umbellatus* and Cyperus Sedge *Carex pseudocyperus* both of which are declining in south west England.

Many of the less frequently maintained field ditches are dominated by emergent species. Reed Sweet-grass *Glyceria maxima*, Common Reed *Phragmites australis*,

Yellow Iris *Iris pseudacorus* and Soft and Hard Rushes *Juncus effusus* and *J. inflexus* are abundant in some areas.

Preliminary investigations have shown that a diverse invertebrate fauna is also associated with the rhynes and ditches. Molluscs, Coleoptera and Hydracarina (water mites) are all well-represented and breeding populations of several odonata including the Ruddy Darter *Sympetrum sanguineum* and locally uncommon white-legged Damselfly *Platycnemis pennipes* are also present.

\*IDB – Internal Drainage Board.