

COUNTY: WILTSHIRE      SITE NAME: CLATTINGER FARM

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

Local Planning Authorities: NORTH WILTSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL,  
Wiltshire County Council

National Grid Reference: SU 012933      Area: 60.3 (ha.) 149 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 173      1:10,000: SU 09 SW

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1971      Date of Last Revision: 1972

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1987      Date of Last Revision: –

Other Information:

Description and Reasons for Notification:

Clattinger Farm comprises a series of meadows and pastures which display a wide range of unimproved grassland types and an outstanding meadow flora. It constitutes the only lowland farm in Britain known to have received absolutely no agricultural chemicals.

The site is located in the Upper Thames Basin and is bounded by the Flagham Brook to the north and the Swill Brook to the south. The combination of high water levels, soils developed from alluvium overlying Oxford Clay, and uninterrupted traditional management involving cutting for hay and aftermath grazing, has favoured the growth of an exceptional range of meadow plants.

The meadow complex supports at least 40 species of grass and sedge, many of which are indicative of old unimproved grasslands. Most frequent are creeping bent *Agrostis stolonifera*, upright brome *Bromus erectus*, meadow foxtail *Alopecurus pratensis*, sweet vernal-grass *Anthoxanthum odoratum*, red fescue *Festuca rubra*, and Yorkshire-fog *Holcus lanatus*, although seldom is any one species dominant. Slightly less common are quaking-grass *Briza media*, meadow barley *Hordeum secalinum*, downy oat-grass *Avenula pubescens* and tall fescue *Festuca arundinacea*. Sedges are well represented and include distant sedge *Carex distans*, spiked sedge *C. spicata*, spring-sedge *C. caryophyllea* and the extremely rare Red Data Book species, downy-fruited sedge *C. tomentosa*.

A striking feature of Clattinger Farm is the differing floristic content of the meadows. One is characterised by an abundance of adder's-tongue *Ophioglossum vulgatum*, common twayblade *Listera ovata*, and the rare fritillary *Fritillaria meleagris*; a second supports large quantities of cowslip *Primula veris* and rough hawkbit *Leontodon hispidus*, whereas another contains abundant common spotted-orchid *Dactylorhiza fuchsii*, common fleabane *Pulicaria dysenterica* and oxeye daisy *Leucanthemum vulgare*. Numerous other herbs are widespread throughout the site, including betony *Stachys officinalis*, saw-wort *Serratula tinctoria*, fairy flax

*Linum catharticum* and great burnet *Sanguisorba officinalis*. The unique complex of unimproved meadows also allows less common plants to thrive such as hairy lady's-mantle *Alchemilla filicaulis*, and meadow saffron *Colchicum autumnale*.

Additional interest is provided by the meadow boundaries. These comprise a series of ditches, along with thick species-rich hedges containing hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*, blackthorn *Prunus spinosa*, dog rose *Rosa canina* and hazel *Corylus avellana*. This combination of habitats favours an associated diversity of invertebrates.