

COUNTY: CAMBRIDGESHIRE **SITE NAME:** CASTOR HANGLANDS

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

Local Planning Authorities: Peterborough City Council

National Grid Reference: TF 116015, TF 123022

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 142 **1:10,000:** TF 10 SW

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

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1986 **Date of Last Revision:**

Area: 90.4 ha 223.4 ac

Other information: Castor Hanglands is a National Nature Reserve declared under Section 19 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949.

Description and Reasons for Notification

This area possesses a range of habitat types from ancient broadleaved woodland to unimproved grassland and scrub. Some of these habitats are scarce in Britain. All are scarce in the East Midlands.

The woodlands of Castor Hanglands are primarily of an ash-maple type over soils of limestone, clay, cornbrash and sands. A large number of tree and scrub species are present. The ground flora holds many plants indicative of an ancient woodland, including wood melick *Melica uniflora*, yellow archangel *Lamium galeobdolon* and ramsons *Allium ursinum*.

Pockets of limestone grassland hold species-rich turf where plants such as purple milk-vetch *Astragalus danicus* and pyramidal orchid *Anacamptis pyramidalis* grow. Additional grassy areas are neutral to acid in character and support a different flora. The drier areas contain herbs such as tormentil *Potentilla erecta* and crosswort *Galium cruciata* whilst wetter marshy areas contain marsh marigold *Caltha palustris*, marsh valerian *Valeriana dioica* and marsh orchid *Dactylorhiza incarnata*.

Other habitats on the site include ponds and ditches. These provide additional habitat diversity and hold a good aquatic fauna including a population of warty newt *Triturus cristatus*.

The whole area is of high value for invertebrates and some nationally uncommon species are present.