

Gwent Wildlife Site/SINC Notification Form (WS/SO50/79)

SITE SUMMARY

SITE NAME: **Beacon Hill**

GRID REF: SO515054

SURVEYOR(S): Lauri MacLean, Rebecca Price,
Julie Smith, Gabrielle Horup

SIZE (approx.): 28ha

HEIGHT IN M: 250-295

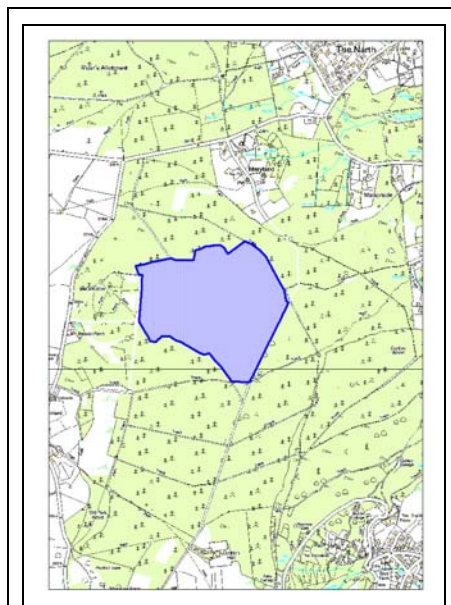
DATE OF SURVEY: 01/7/10

SKETCH MAP OF SITES LOCATION:

LOCAL AUTHORITY AREA:

WARD: Trellech United

MAIN HABITAT TYPES PRESENT:



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Habitat types	NVC type	Area (ha)
Lowland Heath	H12 H8 H9 H18	total site area: 28ha
Track side species rich flora		
Open water (pond)		

LBAP PRIORITY HABITATS/SPECIES PRESENT?

Lowland Heath: Lowland heath is a Monmouthshire LBAP habitat and subject to a Local Habitat Action Plan. The Greater Gwent Biodiversity Action Plan for lowland heath currently only lists a few small fragmented areas with a target to re-establish 44ha. The 28ha of heathland restoration at Beacon Hill contributes towards the 44ha target set in the Monmouthshire LBAP.

Monmouthshire Species Action Plan:

Nightjar (*Caprimulgus europaeus*). European nightjars have consistently been recorded in the area and this is a species which is directly associated with heathland habitat.

Hazel Dormouse (*Muscardinus avellanus*). The local records centre returned a hazel dormouse record (2002) immediately adjacent to the site.

FULL DESCRIPTION OF SITE (including topography, adjacent land use, and boundaries etc.):

Beacon Hill lies within the Wye Valley AONB and is situated to the east of the village of Trellech, approximately 6 miles south of Monmouth. It is approximately 28ha in size and occupies an elevated position at 250-295m, lying on the Trellech plateau, overlooking the Wye Valley. The site has an overall gentle-moderate east facing slope. The soil type is a quartz conglomerate overlying Devonian Sandstones.

The site is fenced on all boundaries and enclosed by mature conifer plantations, part of a network of commercial plantations owned and managed by Forestry Commission Wales. These plantations interlink with a wider network of deciduous woodlands and semi-improved grasslands centred along the Wye Valley of national and local conservation importance. Cleddon Bog SSSI and FC's Broad Meend Plantation (also undergoing heathland restoration) lie approximately 1km to the south.

A number of paths and forestry tracks run through the site and a public bridleway forms part of the south eastern boundary of the site. The margins of many of the tracks support a herb rich community over the dry, interface supports the highest plant diversity of the site. The main point of entry is via a small car park off Beacon Road to the west of the site.

The interior of the site is unfenced, but the site's network of paths divides the site into six broad compartments. These have been clear felled at slightly different times and one compartment was subject to bracken control through herbicide spraying in 2009. As a result heathland vegetation height and relative species density varies between compartments. The site also contains two recently dug ponds.

Official Use Only: Site selected as a Wildlife Site/SINC? YES NO Date: 2 feb 2012

DETAILED SITE INFORMATION

SITE OWNERSHIP: Including names of any tenants/graziers Name(s)

HELD BY GWT

Is/are the owner(s) i) aware of the site's nature conservation value? Yes No
ii) managing the land sympathetically? Yes No
iii) willing to manage the land sympathetically? Yes No Unknown

Describe the access to the site:

The main point of entry is via a small car park off Beacon Road (to the west of the site SO 510 052).

Are there any public rights of way on the site? Yes No

If so please describe their location:

A number of paths and forestry tracks run through the site and a public bridleway forms part of the south eastern boundary of the site.

What is the current management at the site?

Site clear felled in 2005
Controlled burning, removing much of the humus layer (Feb and March 2006)
4 Welsh mountain ponies grazing since 2008
Herbicide spraying to control bracken on one compartment

Are there any invasive species present?

None recorded

Are there any threats to the site?

Tree invasion
Bracken invasion

Are there any protected species present?

Please state the section(s) of the Wildlife Sites Guidance that this site qualifies under:

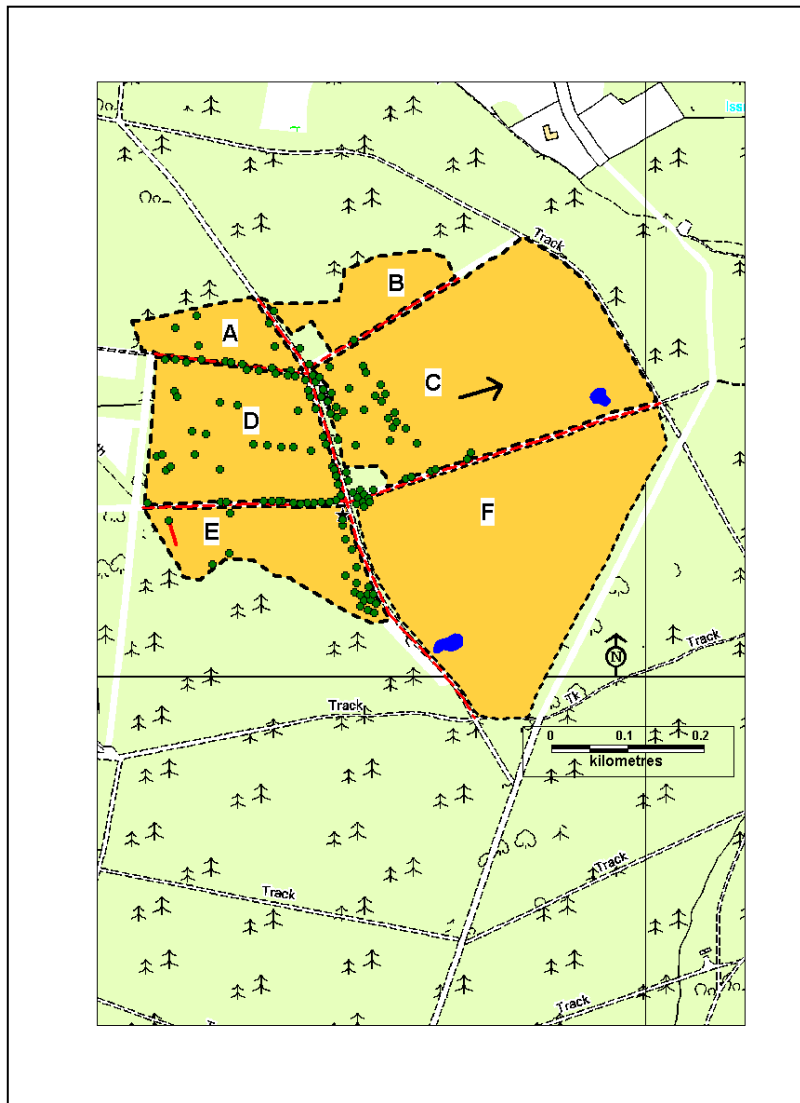
H10 Heathland and grass-heath communities

The site's species-rich track edges are a supporting reason under Section **H5 Calcareous Grasslands**.

Is the site part of any grant schemes? No Grant Scheme: End date

Does the site already have any designations? Yes No Designation:

Sketch map of site (including northpoint, scale and areas of the site of particular note):



Please list all additional survey information both past and present that relates to this site:

CCW Phase 1 survey (1991) SO50NW: Beacon Hill heathland site coded as coniferous woodland

Steph Tyler – Walkover survey 2007, 2008.

Gwent Ecology Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey, 2nd July 2010, including SEWBReC data search

Gwent Ecology Heather Monitoring, 24th August 2010

Gwent Ecology – Breeding Bird Survey, Nightjar Survey, 2011

SPECIES LIST

Phase 1 Survey

A botanical species list is provided by the Gwent Ecology Phase 1 Survey.

A review of bird, mammal and plant records of SINC importance was undertaken as part of the survey and provides supporting reasons for SINC identification. The status of the birds as breeding/overwintering needs to be confirmed

See attached document

Other records:

Trelleck bramble (*Rubus trelleckensis*), Beacon Hill, 2000, Gwent Rare Plants Register.

A significant number of moth records exist with SEWBReC for Beacon Hill, provided by a local recorder Ray Armstrong. There are many locally notable species including beautiful yellow underwing (*Anarta myrtilli*) at Beacon Hill, and cloaked carpet moth (*Euphyia biangulata*) and satin lutestring moth (*Tetheella fluctuosa*) both at Beacon Farm. Other records of interest near to Beacon Hill include polecat (*Mustela putorius*) Tintern Forest and small pearl bordered fritillary (*Boloria selene*) Cleddon bog.

Steph Tyler additional records:

- *Spergularia rubra* - Sand Spurrey – used to occur along the track. It's quite scarce in VC35 and a genuine heathland species.
- Yellow wort

OFFICE USE ONLY

Site no.:

Please note: The data on this form may be held in accordance with the Gwent Wildlife Trust's registration under the Data Protection Act 1996