COUNTY: BUCKINGHAMSHIRE SITE NAME: FOXCOTE RESERVOIR AND WOOD

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

1981

**Local Planning Authorities:** Aylesbury Vale District Council, Buckinghamshire County Council

National Grid Reference: SP711364

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 152 1:10,000: SP73 NW

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1976 Date of Last Revision:

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1984 Date of Last Revision: 1992

**Area:** 48.32 ha 119.39 ac

**Other information:** The reservoir and its immediate surrounds are managed by the Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Naturalists Trust as a nature reserve.

## **Description and Reasons for Notification**

An unpolluted eutrophic freshwater reservoir of particular importance for overwintering wildfowl, surrounded by semi-improved meadows and bordered to the north by mixed deciduous woodland.

The reservoir was completed in 1956 by damming a small tributary of the River Great Ouse and it quickly became a notable site for wintering wildfowl in north Bucks. At least ten species are regular visitors between September and March and numbers of shoveler duck and Bewick swan have reached 1% of the total GB wintering populations. Others are goosander, teal, wigeon, pintail, pochard and goldeneye ducks. The gradual colonisation of the lake by freshwater plants such as horned pondweed *Zannichellia palustris* and a rich spectrum of aquatic animal life are of considerable ecological interest. Marginal vegetation, including emergent reedmace *Typha latifolia* and great pond-sedge *Carex riparia*, strandline plants such as celery-leaved crowfoot *Ranunculus scleratus* and the local sticky groundsel *Senecio viscosus*, lakeside brambles and scrub of willows *Salix fragilis* and *S. alba* and grey poplar *Populus canescens*, as well as the meadows, provide additional habitats for breeding birds.

The meadows themselves harbour a number of plant species which, because of modern intensive management techniques, are no longer commonly found in permanent grassland. Examples are meadow barley *Hordeum secalinum*, yellow rattle *Rhinanthus minor*, dropwort *Filipendula vulgaris* and lady's bedstraw *Galium verum*.

The woodland, which lies on heavy clay, is irregularly structured and has received minimal management for many years, other than the clearing of rides for game and the establishment of a small area of Norway spruce. Dominant trees include pedunculate oak, ash and field maple, with wild cherry and birch, and an understorey of hazel, hawthorn, blackthorn, sallow, goat-willow and honeysuckle. The ground flora contains bluebell *Hyacinthoides non-scriptus*, primrose *Primula vulgaris* and dog's mercury *Mercurialis perennis*, as well as giant fescue and hairy brome *Festuca gigantea* and *Bromus ramosus*, remote and wood sedges *Carex remota* and *C. sylvatica* and woodruff *Galium odoratum*. Of particular interest are the greater butterfly orchid *Platanthera chlorantha* and herb Paris *Paris quadrifolia*. A number of ponds have been created in the wood, and here lesser spearwort *Ranunculus flammula*, bulrush *Scirpus lacustris* and mare's tail *Hippuris vulgaris* have established, the last in one of its very few north Bucks localities.