

COUNTY: CAMBRIDGESHIRE **SITE NAME:** BASSENHALLY PIT

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

Local Planning Authorities: Fenland District Council

National Grid Reference: TL 286985

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 142 **1:10,000:** TL 29 NE

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

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

Area: 8.9 ha 22.0 ac

Other information: The site is managed by agreement as a nature reserve of Cambridgeshire and Isle of Ely Naturalists' Trust.

Description and Reasons for Notification

Bassenhally Pit holds a wide range of habitat types which have developed over shallow gravel workings. Of primary interest are the grassland and aquatic habitats and particularly a small marsh where many locally uncommon vascular plants have been recorded. The latter area represents a habitat type rare in Cambridgeshire and one which is nationally scarce.

The marsh is dominated by a number of grasses, sedges and rushes, including creeping bent *Agrostis stolonifera*, jointed rush *Juncus articulatus* and the two spike-rushes *Eleocharis palustris* and the local *E. uniglumis*. A great variety of herbs are present such as lesser water-plantain *Baldellia ranunculoides*, early marsh-orchid *Dactylorhiza incarnata* and water violet *Hottonia palustris*. Of particular interest are stands of sea club-rush *Scirpus maritimus*.

The other grassland and aquatic habitats are also of high value to wildlife and together with the marsh, scrub and woodland provide a valuable site in the Fenland district.

Bassenhally Pit also provides an important educational facility for local schools.