

# 65. Dowrog Common

St. David's, Pembrokeshire

<b>Grid References</b>	O.S. Explorer map OL36 North Pembrokeshire. Main entrance: SM772274 Site centre: SM772270
<b>Status</b>	Notified as a SSSI and part of the north-west Pembrokeshire Commons cSAC.
<b>Tenure</b>	Leased from the National Trust.
<b>Size</b>	101 ha (242 acres).
<b>Location and Access Notes</b>	Road goes through reserve. Small off road parking area by cattle grid. Very wet in places; not accessible for wheelchairs.
<b>Public transport</b>	Puffin Shuttle and Celtic Coaster from St Davids. Info from Pembrokeshire Coast National Park. St Davids visitor centre (01437) 720392.

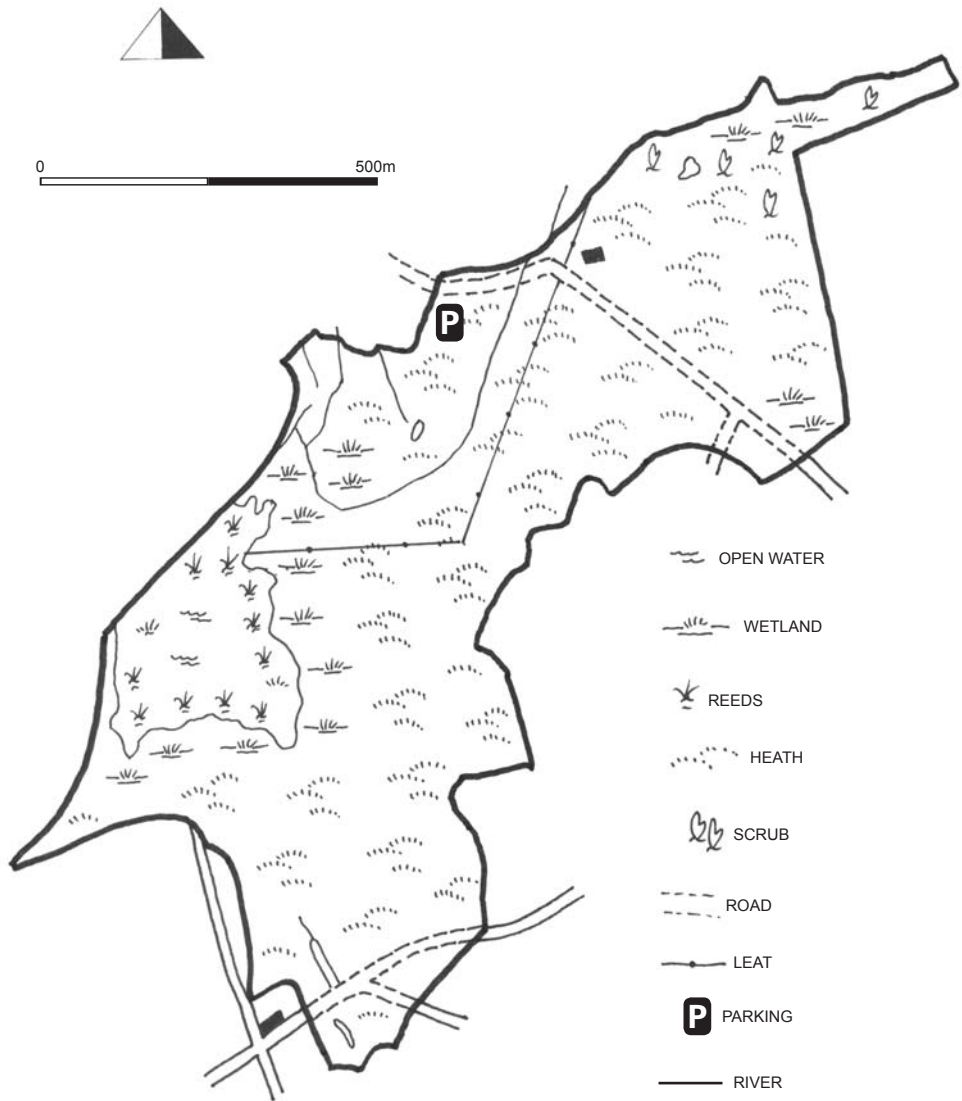
**Description:** An extensive tract of wet and dry heath with pools and fen, in the upper reaches of the River Alun. This diverse site supports over 350 species of flowering plants including the Lesser Butterfly Orchid (6-7).

The wet heath supports Western Gorse (7-9), Heather (Ling) (7-9), Cross-leaved Heath (7-9) and Bell Heather (7-9), with Purple Moor Grass, Common Fleabane (8-9) and Hemp-agrimony (7-9) on the riverside marsh and fen, along with Grey Willow. Many rare oceanic heath and marsh plants occur on the reserve, including Yellow Centaury (8-9), Pale Dog-violet (5-6), Wavy St. John's Wort (7-9), Three-lobed Crowfoot and Pilwort. There are several small pools colonised by Bog Pondweed and Marsh St. John's Wort (6-9). To the western end of the reserve lies Dowrog Pool, a seasonal pond which reduces to 6 ha of open water during dry periods. The pool is surrounded by a swamp of Reedmace, Water Horsetail, Marsh Cinquefoil (6-7) and Bogbean (5-7). Further pools have been excavated on the reserve to enhance this important habitat for Odonata and to encourage the spread of the rare Pilwort.

The site supports a diverse and interesting range of invertebrates including the Marsh Fritillary butterfly, Scarlet Tiger moth, Small Red Damselfly, Hairy Dragonfly and Scarce Blue-tailed Damselfly. Rare flies include *Colobaea bifasciella* and *C. distincta* and notable beetles include *Bradycellus collaris* and *Galerucella calmarfensis*.

Wintering wildfowl and birds of prey proliferate on the Common. Hen Harrier roost on site, and Short-eared Owl and Merlin are regular winter visitors. Bewick's and Whooper Swans, Teal, Wigeon, Shoveler and Mallard can be seen in winter along with Snipe, Water Rail, Coot and Moorhen, particularly around Dowrog Pool. The wetland areas also support breeding Grasshopper Warbler, Reed Bunting and Sedge Warbler.

Otters regularly visit the site and Water Shrews have also been recorded.



**Management Objectives:** To maintain the heathland mosaic and prevent succession to scrub through an appropriate grazing regime and to protect the heathland from damaging fires by maintaining firebreaks the roadsides. To manage the pools by periodic clearance of Reedmace.

#### Good times to visit

May to Aug Butterflies and damselflies/  
dragonflies

Jun - Aug Heathland plants

Oct - Feb Wintering wildfowl