

26. Leighton Moss

Geographical Coordinates 54°10'N 2°47'W

Area 125ha

Location About 12km north of the city of Lancaster, in the county of Lancashire, north-west England.

Date of Ramsar Designation 28 November 1985.

Other International Designations Special Protection Area under EC Directive 79/409.

National Designations Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

Principal Features Originally wet peatland, the area was drained and cultivated in the nineteenth century before being re-flooded in 1917. An extensive reedbed has since developed and the area has been managed as a nature reserve by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) since 1964. The base-rich water draining nearby limestone hills has produced a rich vegetation. There are large areas of open water, sedge beds, fen communities, wet *Salix* scrub and woodland. A diverse invertebrate fauna includes nationally or regionally rare beetles, moths, hoverflies, caddisflies and water fleas. The site supports nationally important populations of breeding birds* including *Botaurus stellaris* (5-6 pairs), *Circus aeruginosus* (1-2 pairs) and *Panurus biarmicus* (20-30 pairs). Average peak counts of wintering Anatidae for the five winters 1987/88 to 1991/92 included nationally important numbers of *Anas crecca* (960) and *A. clypeata* (179). (1a,2a,2c,3b)

*Figures refer to the 1990 breeding season.

Conservation Issues No reports of any problems have been received.