

**County Wildlife Site
(Ref No: 476)**

Site Name: Snettisham Common

Parish: Snettisham

Grid Reference: TF 673337

Area: 12.8 ha

Site Description:

Snettisham common consists of an area of silver birch (*Betula pendula*)-invaded ericaceous heath grading through scrub to semi-natural high forest. The site has a varied topography, notably to the west where sand extraction has created a sheer semi-circular cliff. A small area to the south is used as a car park.

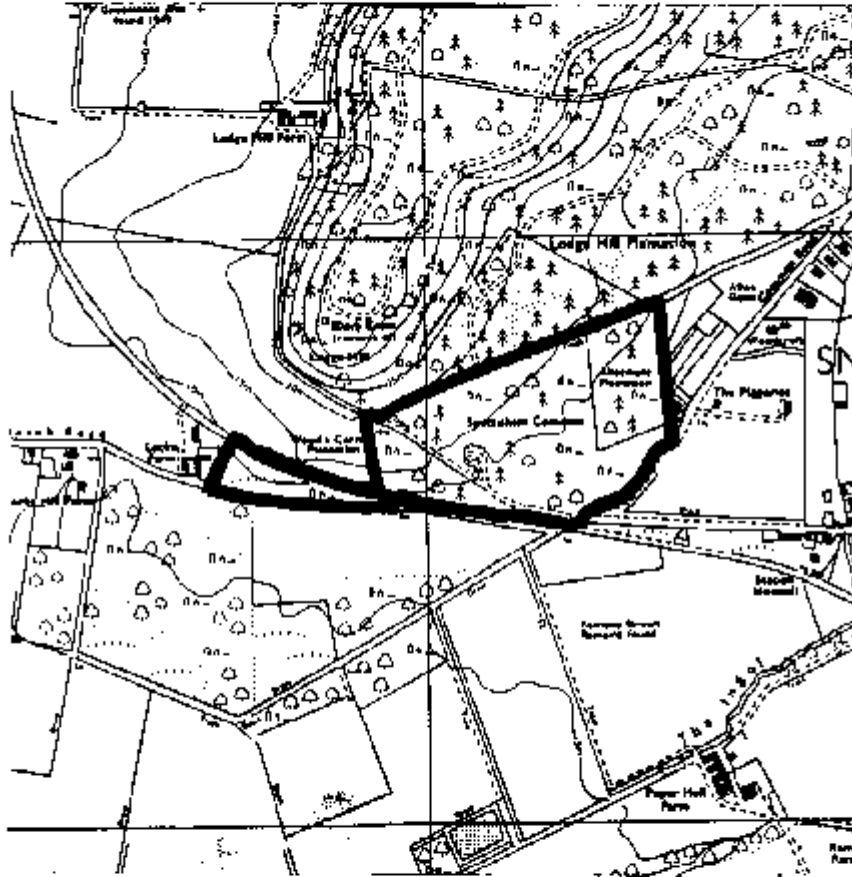
A large area of wavy hair-grass (*Deschampsia flexuosa*) and heather (*Calluna vulgaris*) heath is found towards the centre of the site. Although this is mainly mature and heavily grazed there is reasonable regeneration. Sheep's sorrel (*Rumex acetosella*) and bryophytes are abundant where grazing occurs and silver birch is encroaching at the peripheries. To the north of this area well established silver birch has been cut back and is now resprouting over patchy bell heather (*Erica cinerea*).

The east of the site comprises planted pine (*Pinus* sp.) with a heather ground flora. This area has good potential for reversion to heathland.

In the south and west of the site gorse (*Ulex europaeus*) scrub, dense in places, grades into secondary woodland. These wooded areas are generally oak (*Quercus robur*) dominated with frequent rowan (*Sorbus aucuparia*), beech (*Fagus sylvestris*) and birch over a field layer dominated by bramble (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.) with patchy ground-ivy (*Glechoma hederacea*) and greater periwinkle (*Vinca major*) which is presumably a garden escape. Although much of the woodland is young some mature trees are present including an oak pollard.

An area of tall herb and scrub has developed at the foot of the cliff and is characterised by bramble, common nettle (*Urtica dioica*), rosebay willowherb (*Chamerion angustifolium*), broad-leaved dock (*Rumex obtusifolius*), gorse, broom (*Cytisus scoparius*) and turkey oak (*Quercus cerris*).

Typical acid grassland vegetation occurs along the paths where ericaceous species are absent and is maintained by frequent trampling. Species here include wavy hair-grass, buck's-horn plantain (*Plantago coronopus*) and common stork's-bill (*Erodium cicutarium*).



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