MEETH DWT RESERVE

2017-2026: Priority Site of National Importance

Flooded ball clay workings with Small Red Damselfly and Ruddy Darter possibly breeding; presence of Scarce Chaser. Former breeding population of Scarce Blue-tailed Damselfly.

Last updated: 15/12/2025

Site: MEETH DWT RESERVE	**1987-1996**			**1997-2006**			**2007-2016**			**2017-2026**		
Grid ref.: SS5308	**Breeding**		**Other**	**Breeding**		**Other**	**Breeding**		**Other**	**Breeding**		**Other**
	Succ	**Poss**		**Succ**	**Poss**		**Succ**	**Poss**		**Succ**	**Poss**	
Damselflies												
Beautiful Demoiselle			A			B			B			C
Banded Demoiselle						B						A
Emerald Damselfly				C	B	E	C	A	E	A	B	D
White-legged Damselfly												
Large Red Damselfly		A	C	C	C	D	B	B	E	C	B	D
Blue-tailed Damselfly		B	C		C	D		B	D			C
Scarce Blue-t Damselfly					**B**	**D**	**A**	**A**	**B**			
Common Blue Damselfly				C	D	E	B	C	F	C	C	E
Southern Damselfly												
Azure Damselfly	A		B	C	C	E	D	B	E	C	B	D
Red-eyed Damselfly												
Small Red-eyed Damselfly												
Small Red Damselfly					**B**	**C**			**C**		**B**	**D**
Dragonflies												
Hairy Dragonfly												
Common Hawker												
Norfolk Hawker												
Brown Hawker												
Southern Hawker	A		+	B		B	B		B			C
Migrant Hawker							C		A			
Emperor Dragonfly				C	A	C	D		C	A		C
Lesser Emperor												A
Vagrant Emperor												
Golden-ringed Dragonfly				A		B			B			C
Downy Emerald												
Broad-bodied Chaser			A	A		B	B		B			D
Scarce Chaser												**B**
Four-spotted Chaser			B	A	A	D	B	B	D			C
Keeled Skimmer				C	B	D	B	B	C	B		C
Black-tailed Skimmer				C	B	C	A	B	C			C
Common Darter	A		+	D	A	D	B		D	B		C
Red-veined Darter									A	B		C
Ruddy Darter											**B**	**B**
Black Darter												
Yellow-winged Darter												
Scarlet Darter												
Total species in category:	3	2	8	12	12	17	13	9	18	8	6	20

Bold underlined = nationally important species **Bold black = important species**

Succ = Successful breeding (exuvia(e) and/or larva(e) and/or pre-flight emergent and/or oviposition);
Poss = Possible breeding (copulating pair); Other = Adult(s) or unspecified.
Abundance codes: A=1; B=2-5; C=6-20; D=21-100; E=101-500; F=>500; + = no count.

Key Species History

Scarce Blue-tailed Damselfly – 4 (2 at Glebe Pit, 1 at Glebe Pit Water Traps, 1 at Jack's Marsh Pit) on 18/7/2005; 68 (1 pair *in cop*.) on 3/7/06 and 11 (3 pairs *in cop*.) on 13/7/06; 3 on 30/5/08 and 23 (7, including 1 pair *in cop*. on eroded benches, runnels and ponds in Glebe Pit; 8, including 1 newly-emerged, in ditches E & W of track by Stockley Pit; and 8 in Wolladon Pit Marsh Quarry Terrace Pools) on 19/6/08. Only subsequent record (validated?): larva at SS53180907 on 18/6/16 (Andy Brown).

Small Red Damselfly – 'present' on 5/8/81; 14 (3 pairs *in cop*.) on 3/7/06; at Stockley Pit North Lagoons, 10 males (2 on A, 8 on B) on 19/6/08; c15 on 27/7/14; c25 (5 pairs *in cop.*) on 25/7/21.

Scarce Chaser – 2 males on 26/6/21 and an overmature female on 20/7/21; 2 immatures on 29/5/23 suggest breeding at the site.

Ruddy Darter – several, including mating pairs, on 16/7/19 and 26/8/19; B (2-5) on 7/8/20.

Other species of note:

[**Common Hawker** – reported as 'present' on 3/9/10 and 26/8/11 but unvalidated and easily confused with Migrant Hawker.]

Lesser Emperor – singles on 14/7/19 (male) and 4/8/21.

Red-veined Darter – a pair egg-laying on 12/6/14 and single males on 14 & 29/6/15; at least 10, including at least two pairs egg-laying, on 14/7/19; a male on 25/5/23.

Habitat

Extensive area of former ball clay workings (worked until the 1990s), with associated runnels and settlement ponds, surrounded by often sparse ruderal vegetation (2008). Pits allowed to flood prior to becoming a Devon Wildlife Trust Reserve in 2013. Much European Gorse, Alder, willow and birch scrub growth by 2021. Much scrub, woodland and species-rich grassland by 2021.

The old Stockley Pit North Lagoons, where Small Red Damselfly has been known since at least 2006, had become very overgrown by 2021 (of the original four lagoons, only two could be found). Two wet, more-or-less open, areas immediately SE and SW of the lagoons.

Status

Devon Wildlife Trust Reserve

Area

150 ha.

***Local Authority**:* North Devon DC

Owner/tenant

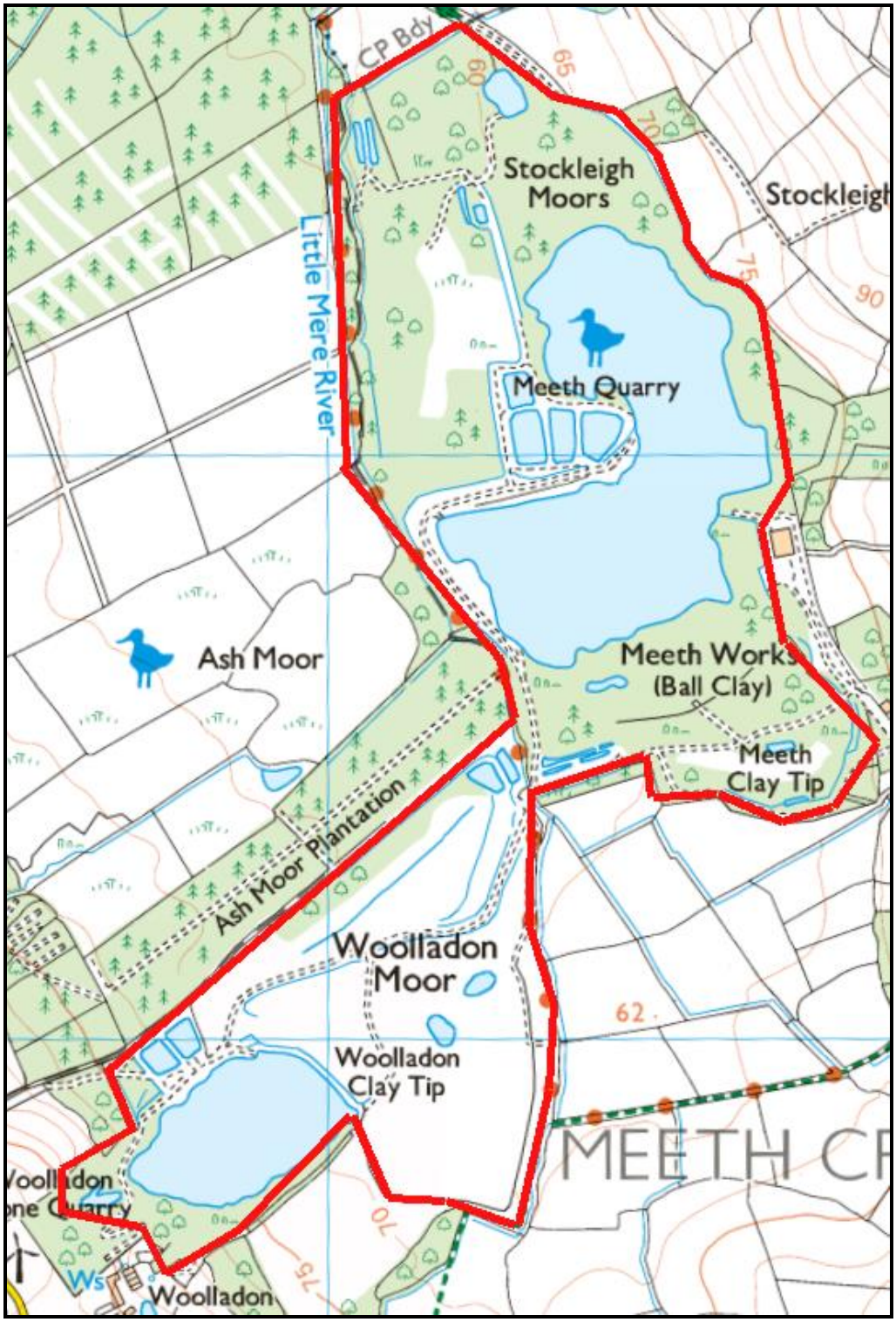
Imerys/Devon Wildlife Trust

***Threats** [identified before pumping ceased and pits flooded]*

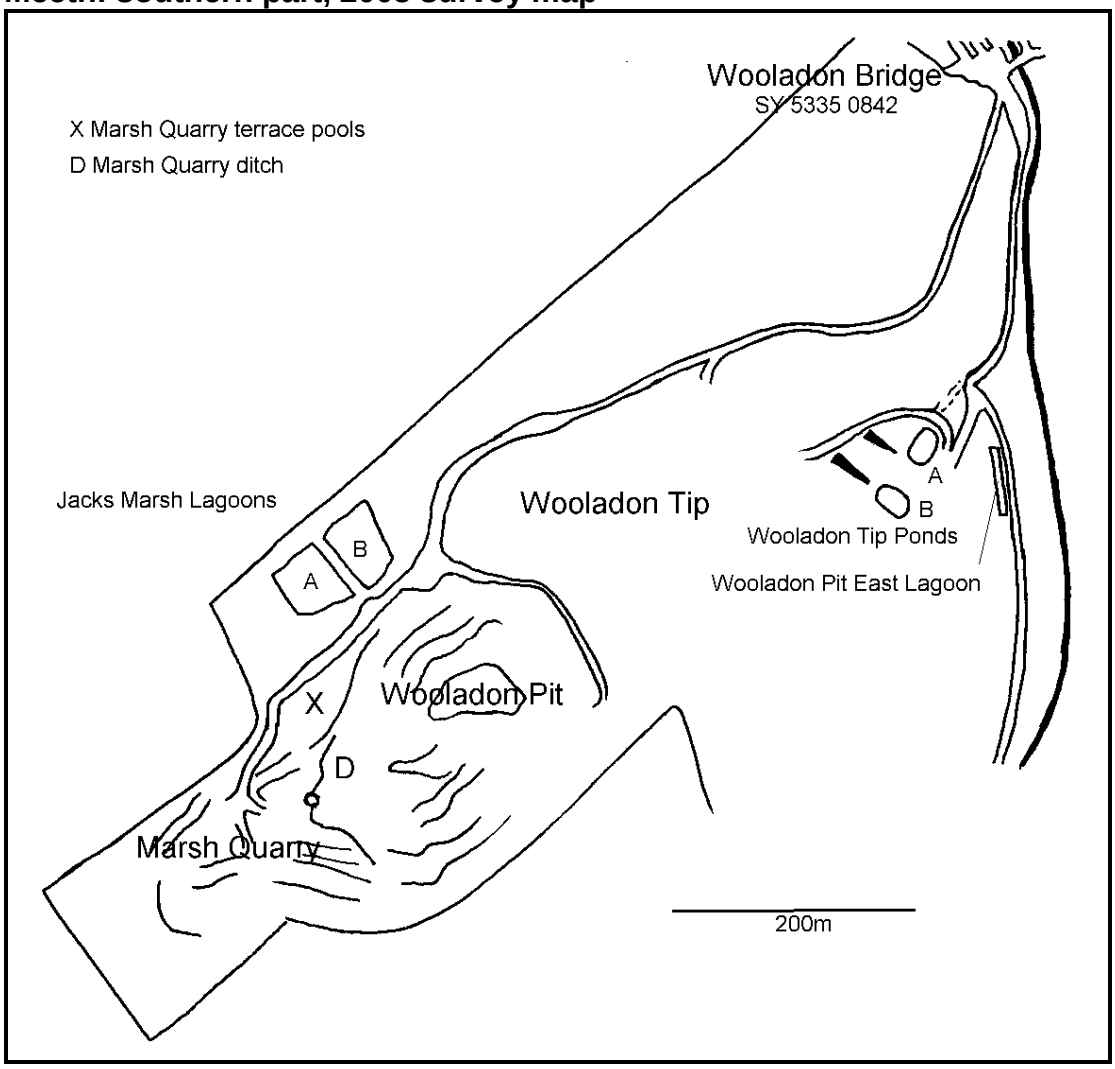
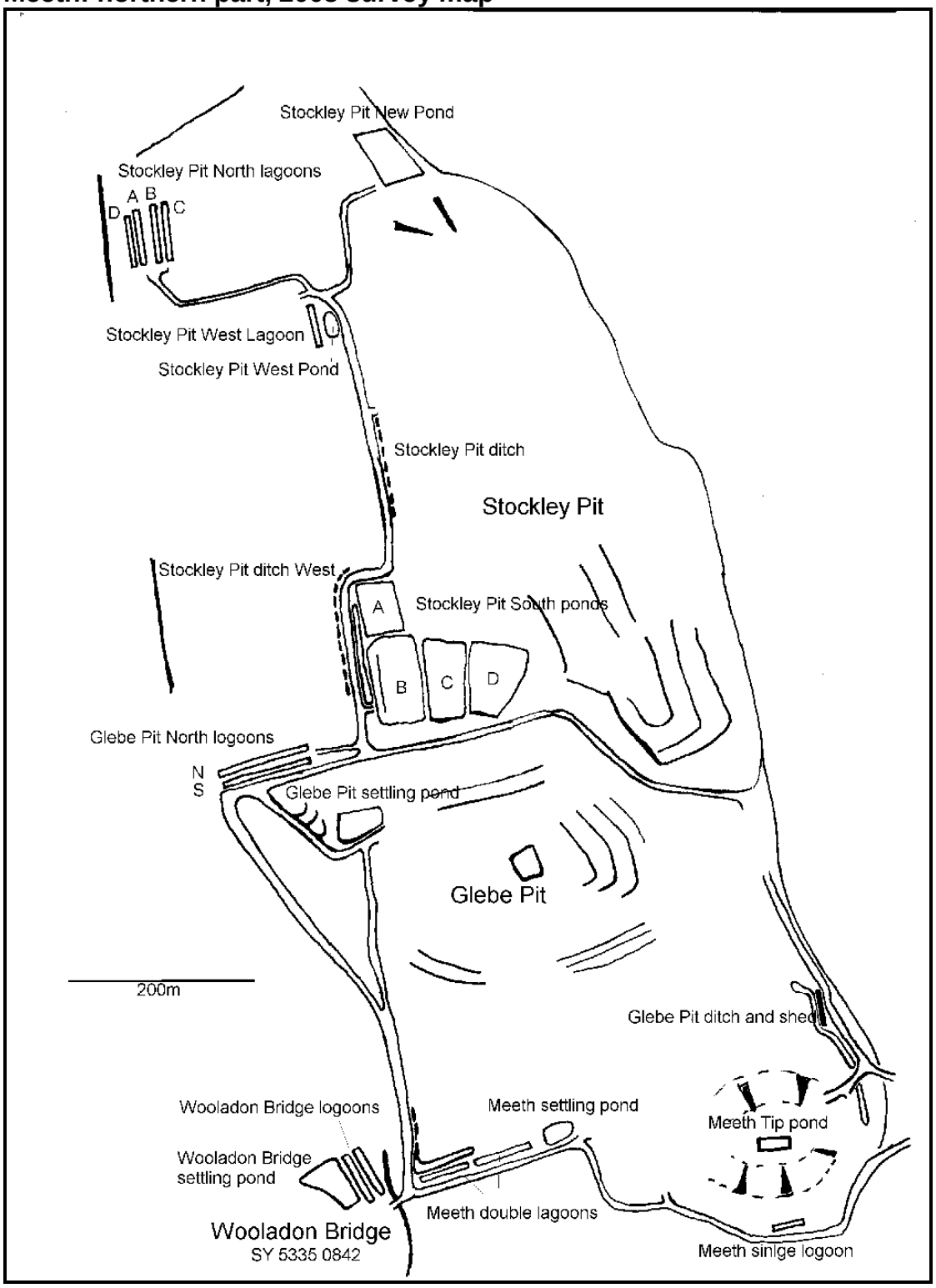
- Cessation of pumping, causing flooding of breeding areas of Scarce Blue-tailed Damselfly and other species in main pits and drainage channels.
- Drainage/loss of Stockley Pit North Lagoons and other settlement ponds.

Management suggestions

- Maintain/create early successional ponds and runnels suitable for Scarce Blue-tailed Damselfly (which possibly still persists at Petrockstowe).
- Retain old settlement ponds (Stockley Pit North Lagoons) and maintain open aspect by regular coppicing.
- Undertake some minor scraping to extend the very limited areas of submerged *Sphagnum* further east at Stockley Pit North Lagoon C and dig shallow ponds in damp, low open areas immediately SW and SE of lagoons, to extend Small Red Damselfly breeding area.



Meeth: southern part, 2005 survey map



Meeth: northern part, 2005 survey map