

File Ref: SE 23/2

COUNTY: West Yorkshire

SITE NAME: Leeds-Liverpool Canal

DISTRICT: Leeds

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

Local Planning Authority: Leeds City Council

National Grid Reference: SE 213374

Area: 19.5 (ha) 48.2 (ac)

Ordnance Survey Sheet: 1:50,000: 104

1:10,000: SE 23 NW, SE 23 SE, SE 23 NE

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1984

Date of Last Revision: -

Other Information:

1. This is a new site
2. The site lies within the Kirkstall Valley Park

Reasons for Notification:

This section of the Leeds-Liverpool canal extends from close to Leeds city centre 'upstream' to a point just north of the village of Calverley. It rises from 50m to 60m above the sea level and closely follows the river Aire. Whereas the underlying rocks of the Aire valley at this point are the Coal Measures the water quality and biological character of the canal are largely determined by the nature of the water supply and materials used in its construction.

Low levels of pollution and turbidity combined with alkaline water supply and a base rich puddle clay substrate provide a unique aquatic habitat in this part of West Yorkshire. The Leeds-Liverpool canal is the best example of a slow flowing fresh-water habitat in the county.

There is a rich aquatic flora including eight species of pondweed (*Potamogeton* spp) one of which, *Potamogeton trichoides*, is nationally scarce and known to be declining. Ridged hornwort (*Ceratophyllum demersum*) a species more typical of still rather than moving water occurs and there is an abundance of arrowhead (*Sagittaria sagittifolia*). Both species have a very restricted distribution in the county.

The canal supports a characteristic range of emergent vegetation but two notable species occur here; the flowering rush (*Butomus umbellatus*) and sweet flag (*Acorus calamus*), both of which are uncommon in West Yorkshire and are here close to the northern limits of their range in Great Britain.

The aquatic moss *Fontinalis antipyretica* is widely distributed and in places abundant, and the brown alga *Bangia atropurpurea* occurs here close to its northernmost limits in this country.

A representative aquatic fauna occurs with good populations of fish, including pike, roach and gudgeon and both common frog and common toad breed here. There is an abundance of invertebrates with molluscs being very well represented and including both gastropods such as *Lymnaea peregra* and bivalves such as *Sphaerium rivicola*. The number and individual size of freshwater sponges (*Spongilla* spp) and horse leech (*Haemopsis* spp) are a particularly interesting feature.

Operations likely to damage the special interest

Site name: Leeds-Liverpool Canal

OLD1004146

Ref. No.	Type of Operation
1	Cultivation, including ploughing, rotovating, harrowing, and re-seeding.
2	The introduction of grazing and changes in the grazing regime (including type of stock, intensity or seasonal pattern of grazing and cessation of grazing).
6	Application of pesticides, including herbicides (weedkillers).
7	Dumping, spreading or discharge of any materials.
8	Burning and changes in the pattern or frequency of burning.
9	The release into the site of any wild, feral or domestic animal*, plant or seed.
10	The killing or removal of any wild animal*, including pest control.
11	The destruction, displacement, removal or cutting of any plant or plant remains, including herb, moss and fungus.
13b	Modification of the structure of watercourses eg the canal and associated water courses, including their banks and beds, as by re-alignment, re-grading and dredging.
13c	Management of aquatic and bank vegetation for drainage purposes.
14	The changing of water levels and tables and water utilisation (including irrigation, storage and abstraction from existing water bodies and through boreholes).
15	Infilling of the canal and associated watercourses.
16a	Changes in freshwater fishery production and/or management, including sporting fishing and angling.
21	Construction, removal or destruction of roads, tracks, walls, fences, hardstands, banks, ditches or other earthworks, or the laying, maintenance or removal of pipelines and cables, above or below ground.
22	Storage of materials.
23	Erection of permanent or temporary structures, or the undertaking of engineering works, including drilling.
24	Modification of natural or man-made features, clearance of boulders, large stones, loose rock and battering, buttressing or grading rock-faces and cuttings.
26	Use of vehicles or craft likely to damage or disturb features of interest.
27	Recreational or other activities likely to damage the canal bed, banks and aquatic vegetation.

* 'animal' includes any mammal, reptile, amphibian, bird, fish or invertebrate.