

PART C DETAILED GUIDELINES FOR HABITATS AND SPECIES-GROUPS

INTRODUCTION

The following 19 chapters provide detailed guidelines for NCC staff to apply in selecting sites to recommend to the Council for notification as SSSIs. Chapters 1-10 are concerned with habitat groupings based on those used in A Nature Conservation Review (see references on p. 40) and relate as far as possible to the National Vegetation Classification (NVC), which is currently being prepared for the NCC under contract and is to be published by Cambridge University Press as British plant communities (edited by Dr John Rodwell). Chapters 11-19 provide guidance on species-groups, principally to complement the guidelines in the earlier chapters. Part C should be used in conjunction with Part B, particularly 2.10-2.15 which give guidance on the assessment of habitats and species-groups against minimum standards and on the choice of best examples to represent fields of ecological variation.

The guidelines are not intended to be rigid rules fixed for ever. They are, however, rooted in basic principles that have always underlain the selection of biological SSSIs and they can be expected to stand as the basis of the NCC's practice in the years ahead. Nevertheless, some parts of them, for example the guidance relating to less well-known species-groups such as non-vascular plants (C.12), freshwater and estuarine fish (C.16), and invertebrates (C.17), will need to be amplified or modified in the light of new knowledge and experience. The final decision to notify any particular area as an SSSI rests with the Council, but in exercising its opinion the Council has regard to the same principles of evaluation and selection.