

EC Directive 92/43 on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora

Citation for Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

Name: Castle Eden Dene
Unitary Authority/County: Durham
SAC status: Designated on 1 April 2005
Grid reference: NZ435397
SAC EU code: UK0012768
Area (ha): 194.40
Component SSSI: Castle Eden Dene SSSI


Site description:

Castle Eden Dene is the largest and biologically the richest of a series of steep-sided wooded denes, formed as deep ravines in the Magnesian Limestone and boulder clay of the Durham Coast. Due to its size and difficult terrain large parts of the woodland remain comparatively free from human disturbance. The majority of the woodland is developed on base-rich soils with ash *Fraxinus excelsior* and wych elm *Ulmus glabra* as the main canopy species, although sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus* is well established and there are extensive yew *Taxus baccata* groves. Hazel *Corylus avellana* is the most abundant shrub species, but guelder rose *Viburnum opulus*, spindle *Euonymus europaeus*, privet *Ligustrum vulgare*, dogwood *Cornus sanguinea* and spurge laurel *Daphne laureola* are also significant components of the shrub flora. The species-rich ground flora is dominated by wild garlic *Allium ursinum* with wood anemone *Anemone nemorosa*, dog's mercury *Mercurialis perennis* and sanicle *Sanicula europaea*, whilst in the humid valley-bottom there are locally extensive stands of hart's-tongue fern *Phyllitis scolopendrium*.

Qualifying habitats: The site is designated under **article 4(4)** of the Directive (92/43/EEC) as it hosts the following habitats listed in Annex I:

- *Taxus baccata* woods of the British Isles. (Yew-dominated woodland)*

Annex I priority habitats are denoted by an asterisk (*).

This citation relates to a site entered in the Register of European Sites for Great Britain.
Register reference number: UK0012768
Date of registration: 14 June 2005
Signed: 
On behalf of the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs