

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

Citation for Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

Name:	River Camel
Unitary Authority/County:	Cornwall
SAC status:	Designated on 1 April 2005
Grid reference:	SX061708
SAC EU code:	UK0030056
Area (ha):	621.17
Component SSSI:	River Camel Valley and Tributaries SSSI

Site description:

The Rivers Camel, Allen and tributaries, their associated woodlands, carr, fen, heath and wet meadows are of special interest for wildlife. The system is particularly important for otters *Lutra lutra* which benefit from the unspoilt river corridors with extensive woods, excellent bankside cover and little disturbance. The rivers are also of great value for fish such as the Atlantic salmon *Salmo salar*, bullhead *Cottus goblo*, and sea lamprey *Petromyzon marinus*.

The River Camel and its tributaries represent the full range of conditions used by the otter in freshwater. These range from the upland headwaters of the De Lank to lowland reaches of varying sizes, flow rates and cover and include small side streams. The lower reaches of the Camel and Allen are tidal providing added diversity. Otters require high water quality, good fish stocks and areas of undisturbed riparian vegetation, all resources available in the site.

Some of the largest remaining ancient semi-natural woodlands in Cornwall are found alongside the Camel. They are often sessile oak *Quercus petraea* dominated but the system also supports significant areas of more recent wet grey willow *Salix cinerea* and alder *Alnus glutinosa* woodland for which Cornwall is particularly notable. These areas support a rich wildlife including many important insect species and lower plants such as mosses. Woodland is particularly characteristic of the Camel, Allen, Clerkenwater and parts of the Ruthern. The steeper valley side woods on acid to neutral soils comprise oak wood characterised by bramble *Rubus fruticosus* agg. and bracken *Pteridium aquilinum* or birch *Betula* spp. and wavy hair-grass *Deschampsia flexuosa*. Much of it has been historically coppiced. On flatter ground grey willow *Salix cinerea* and alder *Alnus glutinosa* carr has developed with a variable and sometimes rich ground flora including ferns, yellow iris *Iris pseudacorus*, opposite leaved golden saxifrage *Chrysosplenium oppositifolium*, hemlock water dropwort *Oenanthe crocata* and greater tussock sedge *Carex paniculata*.

Along particularly the Ruthern, Allen and lower Camel a range of fen and wet neutral grassland plant communities have developed often in mosaics and associated with scrub and wet woodland. There are transitions to valley mire and there is also limited wet and humid heath development, notably at Brynn Moor and Demelza, characterised by heathers, such as cross-leaved heath *Erica tetralix*, as well as western gorse *Ulex gallii* and bristle bent *Agrostis curtisii*.

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:

- Alluvial forests with *Alnus glutinosa* and *Fraxinus excelsior* (*Alno-Padion*, *Alnion incanae*, *Salicion albae*). (Alder woodland on floodplains)*
- European dry heaths
- Old sessile oak woods with *Ilex* and *Blechnum* in the British Isles. (Western acidic oak woodland)

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

- Atlantic salmon *Salmo salar*
- Bullhead *Cottus gobio*
- Otter *Lutra lutra*

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: UK0030056

Date of registration: 14 June 2005

Signed: *Trew Salmon*

On behalf of the Secretary of State for Environment,
Food and Rural Affairs