

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

## Citation for Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

**Name:** St Austell Clay Pits  
**Unitary Authority/County:** Cornwall  
**SAC status:** Designated on 1 April 2005  
**Grid reference:** SX022549  
**SAC EU code:** UK0030282  
**Area (ha):** 0.61  
**Component SSSI:** St Austell Clay Pits SSSI

### Site description:


The three discrete parts of this site are all located within the St Austell china clay district to the north of St. Austell. They are underlain by the Upper Carboniferous St Austell Granite, which is part of the Cornubian batholith. Zones within the granite, altered by kaolinisation (a process of decomposition), have been extensively worked for china clay. All three areas are located within currently active china clay workings consisting of pits, spoil tips and granitic debris with sparse vegetation cover.

The site supports important populations of the internationally rare liverwort western rustwort *Marsupella profunda*. In the St. Austell Clay Pits, western rustwort is generally found growing on clay waste substrates which are flat or gently sloping. Some patches occur on granitic rocks, usually where these are soft or crumbling. Western rustwort is a pioneer species, the largest populations being found on surfaces showing the early stages of colonisation by other bryophytes and by vascular plants.

**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:

- Western rustwort *Marsupella profunda*\*

Annex II priority species are denoted by an asterisk (\*).

This citation relates to a site entered in the Register of European Sites for Great Britain.  
Register reference number: UK0030282  
Date of registration: 14 June 2005  
Signed:   
On behalf of the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs