

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

Citation for Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

Name: Wimbledon Common
Unitary Authority/County: Greater London
SAC status: Designated on 1 April 2005
Grid reference: TQ227719
SAC EU code: UK0030301
Area (ha): 348.31
Component SSSI: Wimbledon Common SSSI

Site description:

Wimbledon Common supports an extensive area of open, wet heath on acidic soil and also contains a variety of other acidic heath and grassland communities. The high plateau in the east and north of the site has a capping of glacial gravels overlying Claygate Beds and London Clay, which are exposed on the western slope of the Common. The acidic soils and poor drainage give rise to a mosaic of wet heath and unimproved acidic grassland. Semi-natural broadleaved woodland covers the deeper, clay soils of the western slope.

A significant cover of heather *Calluna vulgaris* distinguishes areas of dry and wet heath. The wet heath supports typical species such as the heath rush *Juncus squarrosus*. The brown sedge *Carex disticha* is present, as is mat-grass *Nardus stricta* on drier parts. Localised areas of dry heath support bell heather *Erica cinerea* and dwarf gorse *Ulex minor*.

The semi-natural woods of the clay soils comprise a dense canopy of maturing pedunculate oak *Quercus robur* and silver birch *Betula pendula*, with beech *Fagus sylvatica*, hornbeam *Carpinus betulus* and aspen *Populus tremula* in parts. Holly *Ilex aquifolium* is the dominant understorey species. Hazel *Corylus avellana* and alder buckthorn *Frangula alnus*, also occur. Where sufficient light penetrates there is a herb layer of bracken *Pteridium aquilinum* and bramble *Rubus fruticosus* agg. Wimbledon Common has a large number of old trees and much fallen decaying timber. The site supports a number of other scarce invertebrate species associated with decaying timber, including stag beetle *Lucanus cervus*.

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:

- European dry heaths
- Northern Atlantic wet heaths with *Erica tetralix*. (Wet heathland with cross-leaved heath)

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:

- Stag beetle *Lucanus cervus*

This citation relates to a site entered in the Register of European Sites for Great Britain.

Register reference number: UK0030301

Date of registration: 14 June 2005

Signed: *Trevor Salmon*

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