

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

Citation for Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

Name: Ashdown Forest
Unitary Authority/County: East Sussex
SAC status: Designated on 1 April 2005
Grid reference: TQ451306
SAC EU code: UK0030080
Area (ha): 2729.00
Component SSSI: Ashdown Forest SSSI

Site description:

Ashdown Forest contains one of the largest single continuous blocks of lowland heath in south-east England, with both dry heaths and, in a larger proportion, wet heath. The wet heath element provides suitable conditions for several species of bog-mosses *Sphagnum* spp., bog asphodel *Narthecium ossifragum*, deergrass *Trichophorum cespitosum*, common cotton-grass *Eriophorum angustifolium*, marsh gentian *Gentiana pneumonanthe* and marsh clubmoss *Lycopodiella inundata*. The site supports important assemblages of beetles, dragonflies, damselflies and butterflies, including the nationally rare silver-studded blue *Plebejus argus*.

The dry heath in Ashdown Forest is dominated by heather *Calluna vulgaris*, bell heather *Erica cinerea* and dwarf gorse *Ulex minor*, with transitions to other habitats. It supports important lichen assemblages, including species such as *Pycnothelia papillaria*. This site supports the most inland remaining population of hairy greenweed *Genista pilosa* in Britain.

The damming of streams, digging for marl, and quarrying have produced several large ponds in a number of areas of the forest. Although often largely free of aquatic vegetation there may be localised rafts of broadleaved pondweed *Potamogeton natans*, beds of reedmace *Typha latifolia* and water horsetail *Equisetum fluviatile*. These species are particularly abundant in the marl pits. Some of the ponds have large amphibian populations, including the great-crested newt *Triturus cristatus*.

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:

- Great crested newt *Triturus cristatus*

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

Register reference number: UK0030080

Date of registration: 14 June 2005

Signed: *Trevor Salmon*

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