

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

## Citation for Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

**Name:** North Downs Woodlands  
**Unitary Authority/County:** Medway, Kent  
**SAC status:** Designated on 1 April 2005  
**Grid reference:** TQ674629  
**SAC EU code:** UK0030225  
**Area (ha):** 287.58  
**Component SSSI:** Halling to Trottiscliffe Escarpment SSSI, Wouldham to Detling Escarpment SSSI

### Site description:

This site consists of mature beech *Fagus sylvatica* forests and yew *Taxus baccata* woods on steep slopes. The stands lie within a mosaic of scrub, other woodland types and areas of unimproved grassland on thin chalk soils.

The beech and yew woodland is on thin chalk soils and where the ground flora is not shaded dog's mercury *Mercurialis perennis* predominates. Associated with it is stinking iris *Iris foetidissima* and several very scarce species such as lady orchid *Orchis purpurea* and stinking hellebore *Helleborus foetidus*.

The chalk grassland, on warm south-facing slopes, is dominated by upright brome *Bromopsis erecta* and sheep's-fescue *Festuca ovina* but supports many other plants which are characteristic of unimproved downland, including the nationally rare ground pine *Ajuga chamaepitys*.

**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)\*
- *Asperulo-Fagetum* beech forests. (Beech forests on neutral to rich soils)
- Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies: on calcareous substrates (*Festuco-Brometalia*). (Dry grasslands and scrublands on chalk or limestone)

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: UK0030225

Date of registration: 14 June 2005

Signed: *Trew Salmon*

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