

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

Citation for Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

Name: Tyne and Allen River Gravels
Unitary Authority/County: Northumberland
SAC status: Designated on 1 April 2005
Grid reference: NY689624
SAC EU code: UK0012816
Area (ha): 36.84
Component SSSI: Burnfoot River Shingle and Wydon Nab SSSI, Lambley River Shingles SSSI, Ninebanks River Shingle SSSI, Wharmley Riverside SSSI, Williamston River Shingle SSSI

Site description:

This site encompasses the most extensive, structurally varied and species-rich examples of riverine assemblages of plants indicative of metal-rich soils (metallophytes) in the UK. The river gravels contain a range of structural types, ranging from a highly toxic, sparsely vegetated area with abundant lichens through to closed willow/alder *Salix/Alnus* woodland. In addition, the site is of considerable functional interest for the series of fossilised river channel features. Spring sandwort *Minuartia verna* and thrift *Armeria maritima* are particularly abundant, and there are several rare species, including Young's helleborine *Epipactis youngiana*, which has its main UK population at this site. The site is also of great importance for its lichen communities, which include rare and scarce species such as *Peltigera venosa*.

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:

- Calaminarian grasslands of the *Violetalia calaminariae*. (Grasslands on soils rich in heavy metals)

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

Register reference number: UK0012816

Date of registration: 14 June 2005

Signed: *Trew Salmon*

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