

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

Citation for Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

Name: Beast Cliff – Whitby (Robin Hood’s Bay)
Unitary Authority/County: North Yorkshire
SAC status: Designated on 1 April 2005
Grid reference: NZ962031
SAC EU code: UK0030086
Area (ha): 260.20
Component SSSI: Robin Hood’s Bay: Maw Wyke to Beast Cliff SSSI

Site description:

Beast Cliff – Whitby is an east coast complex of hard and soft cliffs. The combination of geology, topography and plant communities found on the site are unique and it is one of the best examples of vegetated sea cliffs on the north-east coast of England. The underlying geology varies from base-rich to base-poor, and this variation is reflected in a characteristic and diverse flora across the site. Vertical hard cliffs support maritime crevice and ledge vegetation, and the more gently sloping parts of Beast Cliff itself are covered by scrub and woodland. Sandstone boulders support a luxuriant growth of mosses and ferns and pools on the cliff shelf support wetland plants and scrub. Due to the frequent land slippage occurring on the site, the woodland is constantly changing and being rejuvenated with mainly young trees forming secondary woodland. North of Beast Cliff to Ravenscar the vegetation is more open and reflects alternating strata of rich and poor base-status. Areas of calcareous clays support typical calcareous grassland and wet flush plant communities, whereas heathland species occur on more acidic sandstone outcrops. From Ravenscar north to Robin Hood’s Bay the cliffs are composed either partly or entirely of soft boulder clay. This clay is continually being eroded by wave action and slippage, and supports pioneer plant communities typical of this changing habitat.

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:

- Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts

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

Register reference number: UK0030086

Date of registration: 14 June 2005

Signed: *Trevor Salmon*

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