

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

## Citation for Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

**Name:** Castle Hill  
**Unitary Authority/County:** Brighton and Hove, East Sussex  
**SAC status:** Designated on 1 April 2005  
**Grid reference:** TQ372066  
**SAC EU code:** UK0012836  
**Area (ha):** 114.68  
**Component SSSI:** Castle Hill SSSI

### Site description:

This is one of the best examples in East Sussex of the nationally uncommon chalk grassland habitat. The variation of plant and animal communities with aspect and slope is of special ecological interest. The chalk grassland consists of a mosaic of calcareous semi-natural dry grasslands, notably sheep's-fescue – meadow oat-grass (*Festuca ovina* – *Helictotrichon pratense*) grassland and upright brome *Bromopsis erecta* grassland, as well as the taller tor-grass *Brachypodium pinnatum* grassland which is valuable for grasshoppers and crickets. Castle Hill's important assemblage of rare and scarce species includes early spider-orchid *Ophrys sphegodes* and burnt orchid *Orchis ustulata*. The colony of early spider-orchid is one of the largest in the UK.

**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:

- Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies: on calcareous substrates (*Festuco-Brometalia*) (important orchid sites). (Dry grasslands and scrublands on chalk or limestone, including important orchid sites)\*

**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:

- Early gentian *Gentianella anglica*

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: UK0012836

Date of registration: 14 June 2005

Signed: *Trevor Salmon*

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