

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

## Citation for Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

**Name:** Lewes Downs  
**Unitary Authority/County:** East Sussex  
**SAC status:** Designated on 1 April 2005  
**Grid reference:** TQ441093  
**SAC EU code:** UK0012832  
**Area (ha):** 146.86  
**Component SSSI:** Lewes Downs SSSI

### Site description:


Lewes Downs is an isolated block of downland which forms part of the South Downs. The majority of the site comprises unimproved species-rich chalk grassland, developed on steep slopes over thin soils. The sward is dominated by sheep's-fescue *Festuca ovina* and upright brome *Bromopsis erecta* grasses which form a springy turf with an abundance of characteristic herbs of chalk grassland. Salad burnet *Sanguisorba minor*, horseshoe vetch *Hippocrepis comosa*, yellow-wort *Blackstonia perfoliata* and squinancy wort *Asperula cynanchica* are widespread.

This site contains an important assemblage of rare and scarce orchids, including burnt orchid *Orchis ustulata* and musk orchid *Herminium monorchis*. The colony of burnt 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)\*

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: UK0012832  
Date of registration: 14 June 2005  
Signed:   
On behalf of the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs