

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

Citation for Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

Name:	River Avon
Unitary Authority/County:	Wiltshire, Hampshire, Dorset
SAC status:	Designated on 1 April 2005
Grid reference:	SU124339
SAC EU code:	UK0013016
Area (ha):	498.24
Component SSSI:	Jones' Mill SSSI, Lower Woodford Water Meadows SSSI, Porton Meadows SSSI, River Avon System SSSI, River Till SSSI

Site description:

The Avon and its tributaries comprise a large, lowland river system. It includes sections running through chalk, greensand and clay, with transitions between them.. Five aquatic *Ranunculus* species occur in the river system, but stream water-crowfoot *Ranunculus penicillatus* ssp. *pseudofluitans* and river water-crowfoot *R. fluitans* are the main dominants. Some winterbourne reaches, where pond water-crowfoot *R. peltatus* is the dominant water-crowfoot species, are included in the SAC. There is an extensive population of Desmoulin's whorl snail *Vertigo moulinsiana* along the margins and associated wetlands of the Rivers Avon, Bourne and Wylfe.

The River Avon system has a mosaic of aquatic habitats that support a diverse fish community. The bullhead *Cottus gobio* is an important component of this community, particularly in the tributaries. A healthy, stable population of brook lamprey *Lampetra planeri* occurs in the main river and a number of tributaries. The main river, and in particular its tributaries, provides beds of gravel for spawning and extensive areas of fine silt for juveniles to burrow into. There are also excellent examples of the features that the sea lamprey *Petromyzon marinus* needs for survival, including areas of sand and gravel in the middle to lower reaches of the river where the species is known to spawn. The Avon also supports Atlantic salmon *Salmo salar* populations typical of a high-quality chalk stream, unaffected by the introduction of genetic stock of non-native origin. The excellent mosaic of aquatic habitats includes extensive areas of gravels essential for spawning and growth of juvenile fry.

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:

- Water courses of plain to montane levels with the *Ranunculion fluitantis* and *Callitriche-Batrachion* vegetation. (Rivers with floating vegetation often dominated by water-crowfoot)

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:

- Bullhead *Cottus gobio*
- Brook lamprey *Lampetra planeri*
- Sea lamprey *Petromyzon marinus*
- Atlantic salmon *Salmo salar*
- Desmoulin's whorl snail *Vertigo moulinsiana*

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

Register reference number: UK0013016

Date of registration: 14 June 2005

Signed: *Trevor Salmon*

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