

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

Citation for Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

Name:	Flamborough Head
Unitary Authority/County:	East Riding of Yorkshire, North Yorkshire
SAC status:	Designated on 1 April 2005
Grid reference:	TA257701
SAC EU code:	UK0013036
Area (ha):	6311.96
Component SSSI:	Flamborough Head SSSI

Site description:

The site lies close to the boundary between two North Sea waterbodies and encompasses a large area of hard and soft chalk cliffs which extend seaward as bedrock, boulder and cobble reefs further than at other site in the UK.

The reefs at Flamborough are important due to their substrate type, biogeographic position and the influences of hydrodynamic processes on reef topography and community structure. The reefs and cliffs on the north side of the headland are harder and more exposed than those of the south side of the headland and as a result they support a different ranges of species. The site supports an unusual range of marine species, rich animal communities and some species that are at the southern limit of their North Sea distribution, e.g. the northern alga *Ptilota plumosa*. More than 110 species of seaweed and over 270 species of invertebrates have been recorded on the rocky shores. In the shallow waters the hard nature of the chalk have enabled kelp *Laminaria hyperborea* forests to become established. These are important as they are considered to be a key structural and functional component of the reefs at Flamborough. In the deeper waters the reefs become dominated by faunal turfs which are made up of sea mats and sponges, soft corals and sea fans.

The site contains caves cut into soft rock exposures and is important for its specialised cave-algal communities, which contain abundant *Hildenbrandia rubra*, *Pseudendoclonium submarinum*, *Sphacelaria nana* and *Waerniella lucifuga*. There are more than 200 caves within the site. Some are partially submerged at all stages of the tide, others dry out at low tide, and some lie above the high water mark but are heavily influenced by wave splash and salt spray. The largest extend for more than 50 m from their entrance.

The vegetated sea cliffs are characterised by both a maritime influence, and by the chalk underlying the boulder clay. Thrift *Armeria maritima* and sea plantain *Plantago maritima* grow alongside herbaceous species more typical of chalk grassland such as kidney vetch *Anthyllis vulneraria*. Where the undercliff has slipped and is flushed by calcareous runoff, northern marsh orchid *Dactylorhiza purpurella* may be found with saltmarsh species, including sea arrowgrass *Triglochin palustris* and sea-milkwort *Glaux maritima*. Towards the northern and southern end of the site the chalk is masked by drift deposits, which support mesotrophic and acidic grassland communities.

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:

- Reefs
- Submerged or partially submerged sea caves
- 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: UK0013036

Date of registration: 14 June 2005

Signed: *Trew Salmon*

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