

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

Citation for Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

Name:	Penhale Dunes
Unitary Authority/County:	Cornwall
SAC status:	Designated on 1 April 2005
Grid reference:	SW769572
SAC EU code:	UK0012559
Area (ha):	621.34
Component SSSI:	Penhale Dunes SSSI

Site description:

Penhale Dunes is an extensive and exposed calcareous dune system where active geomorphological and successional dune processes occur. The dunes are composed of windblown calcareous shell sand and soils are highly calcareous with little organic content.

The majority of the dunes are fixed grey dunes colonised by marram *Ammophila arenaria*, and red fescue *Festuca rubra*. They support species such as kidney vetch *Hippocrepis comosa*, wild carrot *Daucus carota*, restharrow *Ononis repens*, sand sedge *Carex arenaria*, and Portland spurge *Euphorbia portlandica*. Nearer the sea are areas of yellow dune with evidence of active blow-outs.

Dune slacks with an interesting flora are well developed in the northern section where they often form marshy areas or pools. The drier slacks support short, rabbit-grazed turf, dominated by red fescue with herbs such as silverweed *Potentilla anserina*, common centaury *Centaureum erythraea*, pyramidal orchid *Anacamptis pyramidalis* and common storksbill *Erodium cicutarium*. Damper areas are colonised by taller herbs such as meadowsweet *Filipendula ulmaria*, water mint *Mentha aquatica*, common reed *Phragmites communis*, great willowherb *Epilobium hirsutum*, and marsh horsetail *Equisetum palustre*.

The older dunes have been eroded to form flatter expanses of species-rich dune grassland dominated by red fescue. Small patches of dune heath also occur. The dunes also support a number of uncommon plant species including a large population of petalwort *Petalophyllum ralfsii*, shore dock *Rumex rupestris* and strong populations of early gentian *Gentianella anglica*.

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:

- Dunes with *Salix repens* ssp. *argentea* (*Salicion arenariae*). (Dunes with creeping willow)
- Humid dune slacks
- Fixed dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes). (Dune grassland)*
- Shifting dunes along the shoreline with *Ammophila arenaria* (white dunes). (Shifting dunes with marram)

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*
- Petalwort *Petalophyllum ralfsii*
- Shore dock *Rumex rupestris*

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

Register reference number: UK0012559

Date of registration: 14 June 2005

Signed: *Trew Salmon*

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