

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

Citation for Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

Name: Epping Forest
Unitary Authority/County: Essex, London Borough of Redbridge, London Borough of Waltham Forest
SAC status: Designated on 1 April 2005
Grid reference: TQ399959
SAC EU code: UK0012720
Area (ha): 1604.95
Component SSSI: Epping Forest SSSI

Site description:

Epping Forest is a large ancient wood-pasture with habitats of high nature conservation value including ancient semi-natural woodland, old grassland plains, wet and dry heathland and scattered wetland. The semi-natural woodland is particularly extensive but the Forest plains are also a major feature and contain a variety of unimproved acid grasslands.

The semi-natural woodlands of Epping Forest include important beech *Fagus sylvatica* forests on acid soils, which are important for a range of rare epiphytic species, including the moss *Zygodon forsteri*. The long history of pollarding, and resultant large number of veteran trees, ensures that the site is also rich in fungi and invertebrates associated with decaying timber. Records of stag beetle *Lucanus cervus* are widespread and frequent.

Areas of acidic grassland transitional with heathland are generally dominated by a mixture of fine-leaved grasses. In marshier areas, purple moor-grass *Molinia caerulea* frequently becomes dominant. Broad-leaved herbs typical of acidic grassland and heathland are frequent, including heather *Calluna vulgaris*. The site also contains an example of wet dwarf-shrub heath with both heather and cross-leaved heath *Erica tetralix*.

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:

- Atlantic acidophilous beech forests with *Ilex* and sometimes also *Taxus* in the shrublayer (*Quercion robori-petraeae* or *Ilici-Fagenion*). (Beech forests on acid soils)
- European dry heaths
- Northern Atlantic wet heaths with *Erica tetralix*. (Wet heathland with cross-leaved heath)

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:

- Stag beetle *Lucanus cervus*

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

Register reference number: UK0012720

Date of registration: 14 June 2005

Signed: *Trevor Salmon*

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