

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

Citation for Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

Name:	North Somerset and Mendip Bats
Unitary Authority/County:	Bath and North East Somerset, North Somerset, Somerset
SAC status:	Designated on 1 April 2005
Grid reference:	ST480544
SAC EU code:	UK0030052
Area (ha):	561.19
Component SSSI:	Banwell Caves SSSI, Banwell Ochre Caves SSSI, Brockley Hall Stables SSSI, Compton Martin Ochre Mine SSSI, King's Wood and Urchin Wood SSSI, The Cheddar Complex SSSI, Wookey Hole SSSI

Site description:

The Cheddar complex and Wookey Hole areas support a wide range of habitats which provide feeding grounds for bats. These include semi-natural dry grasslands of which the principal community present is sheep's-fescue – meadow oat-grass (*Festuca ovina* – *Helictotrichon pratense*) grassland which occurs on rock ledges and on steep slopes with shallow limestone soil, especially in the dry valleys and gorges and on the south-facing scarp of the Mendips. King's Wood and Urchin Wood have developed over limestone which outcrops in parts of the site and forms a steep scarp to the south-east. There is mostly oak *Quercus robur* and ash *Fraxinus excelsior* woodland, though some areas are dominated by small-leaved lime *Tilia cordata* with both maiden and coppice trees. Other canopy trees include yew *Taxus baccata*, cherry *Prunus avium* and wild service tree *Sorbus torminalis*. There is a rich ground flora including many ferns and mosses.

The limestone caves and mines of the Mendips and the north Somerset hills provide a range of important breeding and hibernation sites for lesser horseshoe bat *Rhinolophus hipposideros* and greater horseshoe bat *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*.

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:

- *Tilio-Acerion* forests of slopes, screes and ravines. (Mixed woodland on base-rich soils associated with rocky slopes)*
- Caves not open to the public
- Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies: on calcareous substrates (*Festuco-Brometalia*). (Dry grasslands and scrublands on chalk or limestone)

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:

- Greater horseshoe bat *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*
- Lesser horseshoe bat *Rhinolophus hipposideros*

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: UK0030052

Date of registration: 14 June 2005

Signed: *Trew Salmon*

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