

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

Citation for Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

Name:	Dartmoor
Unitary Authority/County:	Devon
SAC status:	Designated on 1 April 2005
Grid reference:	SX590864
SAC EU code:	UK0012929
Area (ha):	23165.77
Component SSSI:	Dendles Wood SSSI, East Dartmoor SSSI, North Dartmoor SSSI, South Dartmoor SSSI, Tor Royal Bog SSSI, Wistman's Wood SSSI

Site description:

Dartmoor is the southernmost blanket bog in Europe and the main vegetation community is deergrass – hare's-tail cottongrass (*Trichophorum cespitosum* – *Eriophorum vaginatum*) blanket mire. Many of the bogs are dominated by purple moor-grass *Molinia caerulea* and micro-topography is poorly developed. Nevertheless, good areas are frequently encountered that are very wet, support frequent and widespread *Sphagnum* mosses of a range of species, and display small-scale surface patterning.

The site is notable because it contains extensive areas of western gorse – bristle bent (*Ulex gallii* – *Agrostis curtisii*) dry heath, a type most often found in the lowlands, and heather – bilberry (*Calluna vulgaris* – *Vaccinium myrtillus*) dry heath, a predominantly upland type. The former type generally occupies the lower slopes of the moor, with the latter occurring on the steeper, better-drained slopes. Wet heath is typically of the deergrass – cross-leaved heath (*Trichophorum cespitosum* – *Erica tetralix*) type, which together with other mire communities and small areas of drier heathland, forms a distinctive mosaic of vegetation types not fully represented elsewhere. There are also transitions from wet heath to valley mire.

Three main areas of oak woodland (Wistman's Wood, Dendles Wood and Black Tor Copse) are included within this site. Unusually for old oak woods in the UK, they are dominated by pedunculate oak *Quercus robur* rather than sessile oak *Q. petraea*. The bryophyte and lichen assemblages are very species-rich.

A valley mire at 280 m altitude supports a southern damselfly *Coenagrion mercuriale* population. The stronger population occurs in the northern portion of the mire, where springs feed shallow soakways that flow through wet heath. The southern part of the mire has a higher water table with *Sphagnum* bog-mosses dominating. Rivers and streams flowing through Dartmoor hold Atlantic salmon *Salmo salar* and otter *Lutra lutra*.

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:

- Blanket bogs*
- European dry heaths
- Northern Atlantic wet heaths with *Erica tetralix*. (Wet heathland with cross-leaved heath)
- Old sessile oak woods with *Ilex* and *Blechnum* in the British Isles. (Western acidic oak woodland)

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:

- Atlantic salmon *Salmo salar*
- Otter *Lutra lutra*
- Southern damselfly *Coenagrion mercuriale*

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: UK0012929

Date of registration: 14 June 2005

Signed: *Trevor Salmon*

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