

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

Citation for Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

Name: Dover to Kingsdown Cliffs
Unitary Authority/County: Kent
SAC status: Designated on 1 April 2005
Grid reference: TR372448
SAC EU code: UK0030330
Area (ha): 183.85
Component SSSI: Dover to Kingsdown Cliffs SSSI

Site description:

The cliffs support a full zonation of maritime cliff communities found on chalk substrates, reflecting different levels of exposure to wind and salt spray. The most exposed, lowest parts of the cliff face support rock-crevice communities with rock samphire *Crithmum maritimum*, rock sea-lavender *Limonium binervosum* and thrift *Armeria maritima*, with the rare hoary stock *Matthiola incana* in places. On more sheltered slopes there is a community restricted to south-facing chalk cliffs characterised by wild cabbage *Brassica oleracea*.

The vegetation of the cliff tops consists mainly of chalk grassland interspersed with areas of scrub. Much of the grassland is dominated by tor-grass *Brachypodium pinnatum* or upright-brome *Bromopsis erecta*, though there are numerous areas of species-rich open grassland with a range of typical chalk-turf grass and herb species. These include sheep's-fescue *Festuca ovina*, salad burnet *Sanguisorba minor*, wild thyme *Thymus praecox* and horseshoe vetch *Hippocrepis comosa*. A number of nationally rare plants occur, including early spider orchid *Ophrys sphegodes* and oxtongue broomrape *Orobanche artemisiae-campestris*, which in the UK is confined to unstable coastal chalk cliffs of southern England, and has a stronghold on this site.

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:

- Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies: on calcareous substrates (*Festuco-Brometalia*) (important orchid sites). (Dry grasslands and scrublands on chalk or limestone, including important orchid sites)*
- Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts

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: UK0030330

Date of registration: 14 June 2005

Signed: *Trew Salmon*

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