

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

Citation for Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

Name: Rooksmoor
Unitary Authority/County: Dorset
SAC status: Designated on 1 April 2005
Grid reference: ST740110
SAC EU code: UK0012681
Area (ha): 61.36
Component SSSI: Lydlinch Common and Stock Wood SSSI, Rooksmoor SSSI

Site description:

This site comprises a series of species-rich meadows and copses on heavy neutral to acidic soils over Oxford clay. It supports an exceptionally large population of marsh fritillary butterfly *Euphydryas aurinia*. A large outlying population at Lydlinch is also included within the site as it is considered to be part of the metapopulation in this area.

The grassland forms a community which is otherwise rare in Dorset, and is intermediate between a common knapweed *Centaurea nigra* - crested dog's-tail *Cynosurus cristatus* neutral grassland and a purple moor-grass *Molinia caerulea* - meadow thistle *Cirsium dissectum* fen meadow. At least thirty species of grass are present on the site, including bents *Agrostis* spp., fescues *Festuca* spp., sweet vernal grass *Anthoxanthum odoratum* and Timothy *Phleum pratense*. Tufted hair-grass *Deschampsia cespitosa* is abundant while wood small-reed *Calamagrostis epigejos*, reed canary-grass *Phalaris arundinacea* and purple moor-grass *Molinia caerulea* are locally frequent. Devil's-bit scabious *Succisa pratensis*, the food plant of the marsh fritillary caterpillar, is abundant.

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:

- *Molinia* meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (*Molinia caerulea*).
(Purple moor-grass meadows)

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:

- Marsh fritillary butterfly *Euphydryas* (*Eurodryas*, *Hypodryas*) *aurinia*

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

Register reference number: UK0012681

Date of registration: 14 June 2005

Signed: *Trevor Salmon*

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