

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

Citation for Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

Name: Orton Pit

Unitary Authority/County: City of Peterborough

SAC status: 1) Orton Pit was designated as a SAC on 1 April 2005.
2) Extensions to the Orton Pit SAC were designated on 10 December 2009.

Grid reference: TL162943

SAC EU code: UK0030053

Area (ha): 141.24

Component SSSI: Orton Pit SSSI

Site description:

Orton Pit's extensive pond system, occupying the disused ridge-and-furrow created as a result of clay extraction for the brick-making industry, contains alkaline water low in nutrients. The site supports a total of ten species of charophyte including one of the main English populations of bearded stonewort *Chara canescens*. *C. canescens* is an early coloniser of ponds at the site and is rarely found in ponds over 25 years old. It favours brackish conditions, which at Orton Pit are thought to be provided by the release of salts out of the top few millimetres of the clay that becomes oxidised over a period of time. Other nationally scarce stonewort species present include *Chara aspera*, *C. contraria*, *C. pedunculata* and *Tolypella glomerata*. The distribution of *Chara* species across the site varies according to the age and stage of succession of the ponds, with few being found in ponds greater than 25 years old.

Orton Pit supports a large population of great crested newts *Triturus cristatus*. The range of habitats found throughout the site, including the extensive pond systems at various successional stages, as well as surrounding areas of grassland and scrub, provide good conditions for breeding, feeding and sheltering newts.

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:

- Hard oligo-mesotrophic waters with benthic vegetation of *Chara* spp. (Calcium-rich nutrient-poor lakes, lochs and pools)

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:

- Great crested newt *Triturus cristatus*

This citation relates to a site entered in the Register of European Sites for Great Britain.
Register reference number: UK0030053
Date of registration: **10 December 2009**

Signed: *S G Hopkins*
On behalf of the Secretary of State for Environment,
Food and Rural Affairs