

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

Citation for Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

Name: Culm Grasslands
Unitary Authority/County: Devon
SAC status: Designated on 1 April 2005
Grid reference: SS843214
SAC EU code: UK0012679
Area (ha): 768.69
Component SSSI: Bradworthy Common SSSI, Bursdon Moor SSSI, Dunsdon Farm SSSI, Hare's Down, Knowstone and Rackenford Moors SSSI, Hollow Moor and Odham Moor SSSI, Kismeldon Meadows SSSI, Mambury and Stowford Moors SSSI, Thorne and Doves Moor SSSI

Site description:

This site contains extremely diverse examples of the heathy type of purple moor-grass – meadow thistle (*Molinia caerulea* – *Cirsium dissectum*) fen-meadow, ranging from short, grazed swards through to stands that are transitional to scrub. Structural diversity accounts for the conservation of a wide range of flora and fauna, particularly of species characteristic of south-western Europe, such as meadow thistle and whorled caraway *Carum verticillatum*.

In places, the dominant purple moor-grass gives way to shorter vegetation dominated by heather *Calluna vulgaris*, cross-leaved heath *Erica tetralix* and deergrass *Trichophorum cespitosum*. On wetter peaty soils the plant communities grade towards those characteristic of wet heath.

The Culm Grasslands contains the largest cluster of sites for marsh fritillary butterfly *Euphydryas aurinia* in the south-west peninsula. It is judged to be the most important location for the species in its major south-west stronghold.

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)
- Northern Atlantic wet heaths with *Erica tetralix*. (Wet heathland with cross-leaved heath)

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: UK0012679

Date of registration: 14 June 2005

Signed: *Trevor Salmon*

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