

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

Citation for Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

Name: Butser Hill
Unitary Authority/County: Hampshire
SAC status: Designated on 1 April 2005
Grid reference: SU716197
SAC EU code: UK0030103
Area (ha): 238.66
Component SSSI: Butser Hill SSSI

Site description:

Butser Hill is situated on the east Hampshire chalk which forms part of the South Downs. Much of the site consists of sheep's-fescue – meadow oat-grass (*Festuca ovina* – *Helictotrichon pratense*) grassland. The site has a varied range of slope gradients and aspects which has a strong influence on the vegetation composition. A particular feature of the site is its lower plant assemblage. It has a rich chalk grassland lichen flora and also supports the distinctive *Scapanietum asperae* or southern hepatic mat association of leafy liverworts and mosses on north-facing chalk slopes. This association is very rare in the UK and Butser Hill supports the largest known example. The site exhibits various transitions between semi-natural dry grassland, chalk heath, mixed scrub and yew *Taxus baccata* woods.

The coombes of the south-east flank of Butser Hill support dense yew woodland in association with scrub and chalk grassland. The yew is regenerating into the grassland and shows the classic interaction of these habitats in relation to grazing pressure.

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:

- *Taxus baccata* woods of the British Isles. (Yew-dominated woodland)*
- Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies: on calcareous substrates (*Festuco-Brometalia*). (Dry grasslands and scrublands on chalk or limestone)

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: UK0030103
Date of registration: 14 June 2005

Signed: *Trevor Salmon*

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