

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

Citation for Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

Name:	Ingleborough Complex
Unitary Authority/County:	North Yorkshire
SAC status:	Designated on 1 April 2005
Grid reference:	SD756739
SAC EU code:	UK0012782
Area (ha):	5769.28
Component SSSI:	Ingleborough SSSI, Oxenber and Wharfe Woods SSSI, Whernside SSSI

Site description:

Ingleborough is Britain's finest karst area, the characteristic limestone landforms having been produced largely under glacial conditions. It is particularly noted for extensive dry stone pavements, dry valleys and gorges, shakeholes and sinkholes. Associated with the various acidic and basic strata, together with drift and peat which obscure the rocks over large areas, there is a wide range of vegetation types. Where limestone occurs at the surface, there is calcareous grassland dominated by blue-moor grass *Sesleria albicans*, while elsewhere blanket-bog is dominated by hare's-tail cottongrass *Eriophorum vaginatum*. Where flushing occurs the blanket-bog becomes floristically richer with sundew *Drosera rotundifolia*, cranberry *Vaccinium oxycoccos* and bog asphodel *Narthecium ossifragum*.

It has the most extensive series of limestone pavements in the UK, varying from moderate altitude to montane in character (300-640 m). The pavements range from those where grazing is completely excluded (Colt Park Wood), to some where grazing is restricted (pavements amidst cattle-grazed pastures) and others within common land intensively grazed by sheep. Characteristic species include baneberry *Actaea spicata*, great bellflower *Campanula latifolia*, lily-of-the-valley *Convallaria majalis*, marsh hawk's-beard *Crepis paludosa*, wall lettuce *Mycelis muralis*, lesser meadow-rue *Thalictrum minus* and mountain melick *Melica nutans*. Among the ferns, green spleenwort *Asplenium viride*, brittle bladder-fern *Cystopteris fragilis* and hard shield-fern *Polystichum aculeatum* occur on most pavements. Rigid buckler-fern *Dryopteris submontana* and limestone fern *Gymnocarpium robertianum* are widespread. Dog's mercury *Mercurialis perennis* and wood sorrel *Oxalis acetosella* occur on most pavements. Amid stands of calcareous grassland it has the only large stands of juniper on limestone pavements at high altitude in the UK. The scrub is of the relatively species-poor type typical of these situations.

Spring-fed flush fens are extensive across Ingleborough, commonly associated with calcareous grassland types, but also found amidst acid grasslands and heathland communities. They are often species-rich communities, in which rare or locally distributed species such as bird's-eye primrose *Primula farinosa*, black bog-rush *Schoenus nigricans*, few-flowered spike-rush *Eleocharis quinqueflora* and flat-sedge *Blysmus compressus* are frequent.

Crevice communities occur on extensive limestone scars and are characteristic of the area. The flora has a mix of northern and southern species, including purple saxifrage *Saxifraga oppositifolia*, yellow saxifrage *S. aizoides*, alpine meadow-grass *Poa alpina*, hoary whitlowgrass *Draba incana*, lesser meadow-rue *Thalictrum minus*, wall lettuce *Mycelis muralis* and baneberry.

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:

- Blanket bogs*
- Limestone pavements*
- Petrifying springs with tufa formation (*Cratoneurion*). (Hard-water springs depositing lime)*
- *Tilio-Acerion* forests of slopes, screes and ravines. (Mixed woodland on base-rich soils associated with rocky slopes)*
- Alkaline fens. (Calcium-rich springwater-fed fens)
- Calcareous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation. (Plants in crevices in base-rich rocks)
- *Juniperus communis* formations on heaths or calcareous grasslands. (Juniper on heaths or calcareous grasslands)
- *Molinia* meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (*Molinion caeruleae*). (Purple moor-grass meadows)
- 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: UK0012782

Date of registration: 14 June 2005

Signed: *Trew Salmon*

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