

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

## Citation for Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

**Name:** Mells Valley  
**Unitary Authority/County:** Somerset  
**SAC status:** Designated on 1 April 2005  
**Grid reference:** ST657476  
**SAC EU code:** UK0012658  
**Area (ha):** 28.22  
**Component SSSI:** Old Ironstone Works, Mells SSSI, St Dunstan's Well Catchment SSSI, Vallis Vale SSSI

### Site description:

Mells Valley in southern England contains the maternity site associated with an exceptional breeding population of greater horseshoe bats *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*. A proportion of the population also hibernates at the site. The bats use a network of caves, quarries and old buildings.

An area of species-rich unimproved calcareous grassland occurs in the field to the east of Stoke Lane Quarry (in St Dunstan's Well Catchment SSSI). Sheep's-fescue *Festuca ovina*, meadow oat-grass *Avenula pratensis*, crested dog's-tail *Cynosurus cristatus* and common bent *Agrostis capillaris* are the most common grasses, and glaucous sedge *Carex flacca* and spring sedge *C. caryophyllea* are abundant. Herbs of interest include Lady's mantle *Alchemilla filicaulis*, devil's-bit scabious *Succisa pratensis*, salad burnet *Sanguisorba minor*, cowslip *Primula veris*, fairy flax *Linum catharticum*, common rock-rose *Helianthemum nummularium* and wild thyme *Thymus praecox*. Early-purple orchid *Orchis mascula* and common spotted-orchid *Dactylorhiza fuchsii* are widespread.

**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:

- Caves not open to the public
- Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies: on calcareous substrates (*Festuco-Brometalia*). (Dry grasslands and scrublands on chalk or limestone)

**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:

- Greater horseshoe bat *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*

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

Register reference number: UK0012658

Date of registration: 14 June 2005

Signed: *Trevor Salmon*

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