

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

Citation for Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

Name: Cannock Chase
Unitary Authority/County: Staffordshire
SAC status: Designated on 1 April 2005
Grid reference: SJ982188
SAC EU code: UK0030107
Area (ha): 1236.93
Component SSSI: Cannock Chase SSSI

Site description:

The area of lowland heathland at Cannock Chase is the most extensive in the Midlands. The character of the vegetation is intermediate between the upland or northern heaths of England and Wales and those of southern counties. Dry heathland communities are of the heather – western gorse (*Calluna vulgaris* – *Ulex gallii*) and heather – wavy hair-grass (*Calluna vulgaris* – *Deschampsia flexuosa*) types. Within the heathland, species of northern latitudes occur, such as cowberry *Vaccinium vitis-idaea* and crowberry *Empetrum nigrum*. Cannock Chase has the main British population of the hybrid bilberry *Vaccinium intermedium*, a plant of restricted occurrence. The scarcity of water over much of the Chase effectively confines wetland flora and fauna to the stream valley systems and a scatter of natural and artificial pools and damp depressions. The Oldacre and Sherbrook valleys have small-scale mosaics of spring-fed mire and wet heath vegetation, a result of complex water chemistry. Where acidic conditions prevail the mires are mostly formed of bog mosses *Sphagnum* spp. with cranberry *Vaccinium oxycoccus*, cottongrasses *Eriophorum* spp. and cross-leaved heath *Erica tetralix*.

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:

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

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

Register reference number: UK0030107

Date of registration: 14 June 2005

Signed: *Trevor Salmon*

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