

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

Citation for Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

Name: Windsor Forest and Great Park
Unitary Authority/County: Windsor and Maidenhead, Bracknell Forest, Surrey
SAC status: Designated on 1 April 2005
Grid reference: SU926743
SAC EU code: UK0012586
Area (ha): 1687.26
Component SSSI: Windsor Forest and Great Park SSSI

Site description:

Windsor Forest contains dry oak-dominated woodland. Relicts of the primary forest still survive as ancient oak pollards scattered throughout the Park and Forest. Veteran trees occur with a mosaic of unimproved and semi-improved grassland and grass-heath. It has the largest number of ancient oaks *Quercus* spp. in Britain (and probably in Europe), a consequence of its management as wood-pasture. Many of these trees are over 500 years old and some reputed to be up to 800 years. Of equal importance, although not reaching such a great age, are numerous over-mature beech trees *Fagus sylvatica*.

Being partially hollow and decayed, the oaks and beech afford habitats for a number of extremely rare and specialised insects. The site is of importance for its range and diversity of saproxylic (dead wood) invertebrates, including many rare species (e.g. the violet click beetle *Limoniscus violaceus*), and has recently been recognised as having rich fungal assemblages.

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:

- Atlantic acidophilous beech forests with *Ilex* and sometimes also *Taxus* in the shrublayer (*Quercion robori-petraeae* or *Ilici-Fagenion*). (Beech forests on acid soils)
- Old acidophilous oak woods with *Quercus robur* on sandy plains. (Dry oak-dominated woodland)

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:

- Violet click beetle *Limoniscus violaceus*

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

Register reference number: UK0012586

Date of registration: 14 June 2005

Signed: 

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