

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

Citation for Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

Name: River Lambourn
Unitary Authority/County: West Berkshire
SAC status: Designated on 1 April 2005
Grid reference: SU398739
SAC EU code: UK0030257
Area (ha): 27.27
Component SSSI: River Lambourn SSSI

Site description:

The River Lambourn is a classic example of a lowland chalk river. It rises in Lynch Wood, north of Lambourn and flows down to a confluence with the River Kennet east of Newbury. The catchment is almost entirely chalk which results in a predominantly gravelly river bed.

A key feature is the ephemeral nature of the upper section which generally flows from February through to the autumn. This is known as a 'winterbourne'. Any flora or fauna occurring in these stretches must be adapted to wide variations in flow, thus winterbourne sections tend to be less species-rich than the lower reaches which hold water all year round. Species characteristic of these conditions include pond water-crowfoot *Ranunculus peltatus* which is the dominant aquatic plant, as well as fool's-water-cress *Apium nodiflorum* and the moss *Fontinalis antipyretica*.

Further down the river where there are perennial flows, the aquatic plants are typical of shallow, gravel-bedded watercourses. Stream water-crowfoot *Ranunculus penicillatus* ssp. *pseudofluitans*, lesser water-parsnip *Berula erecta* and water-cress *Rorippa nasturtium-aquaticum* are abundant; blunt-fruited water-starwort *Callitriche obtusangula* is also characteristic in the channel. The good water quality, coarse sediments and extensive beds of submerged plants provide excellent habitat for bullhead *Cottus gobio* and brook lamprey *Lampetra planeri*.

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:

- Water courses of plain to montane levels with the *Ranunculion fluitantis* and *Callitriche-Batrachion* vegetation. (Rivers with floating vegetation often dominated by water-crowfoot)

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:

- Bullhead *Cottus gobio*
- Brook lamprey *Lampetra planeri*

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

Register reference number: UK0030257

Date of registration: 14 June 2005

Signed: *Trevor Salmon*

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