

Reasons for designation as a Special Area of Conservation

Area name: **Hollymount**

Administrative area: **Down**

Component ASSI: **Hollymount**

This area has been designated as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) because it contains habitat types and/or species which are rare or threatened within a European context. The ASSI citation describes the special interests for which the site was notified in the Northern Ireland context. The interests for which the site was selected as ASSI may differ from the interests selected in a European context.

The habitats and/or species for which this area has been designated as a SAC are listed below. The reasons for their selection are listed, together with a brief description of the habitats and species as they typically occur across the UK. This area contains the interests described although it may not contain all the typical features.

European priority interest(s):

1. Alluvial forests with *Alnus glutinosa* and *Fraxinus excelsior* (*Alno-Padion*, *Alnion incanae*, *Salicion alvae*)

- **for which this is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom.**

Alder woodland on floodplains. These forests, characteristic of the floodplains of lowland rivers, are now rare throughout Europe. Alder *Alnus glutinosa* is usually the dominant tree but willows *Salix* species, ash *Fraxinus excelsior*, downy birch *Betula pubescens* or elder *Sambucus nigra* may also be common. This habitat can range from alder stands on the braided channels of fast-flowing rivers, to stands on former peat cuttings along fenland rivers.

European interest(s):

2. Old sessile oak woods with *Ilex* and *Blechnum* in the British Isles

- **for which the area is considered to support a significant presence.**

Western acidic oak woodland. The western oak woods in the UK include a range of woodland types, some with much heather *Calluna vulgaris* and bilberry *Vaccinium myrtillus*, others more grassy. They typically have rich assemblages of Atlantic mosses and liverworts, distinctive birds, lichen communities, and ferns such as hard fern *Blechnum spicant*, lemon-scented fern *Oreopteris limbosperma* and various species of male- and buckler-fern *Dryopteris* species. Holly *Ilex aquifolium* is common in the

understorey. Such woodland is most abundant in the western parts of England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

The Register of European Sites in Northern Ireland

Register reference number:	UK0030169
Date of Registration	30 March 2006
Signed by: G R Seymour	
on behalf of the Department of the Environment	