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River Avon

Site details

Country	England
Unitary Authority	Dorset and Somerset, Gloucestershire, Wiltshire and Bristol/Bath area, Hampshire and Isle of Wight
Centroid*	SU124339
Latitude	51.10388889
Longitude	-1.823333333
SAC EU code	UK0013016
Status	Designated Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
Area (ha)	416.57

* This is the approximate central point of the SAC. In the case of large, linear or composite sites, this may not represent the location where a feature occurs within the SAC.

General site character

Inland water bodies (Standing water, Running water) (95%)
Bogs, Marshes, Water fringed vegetation, Fens (2%)
Heath, Scrub, Maquis and Garrigue, Phygrana (2%)
Broad-leaved deciduous woodland (1%)

[Natura 2000 standard data form](#) for this site as submitted to Europe (PDF, < 100kb).

[Interactive map](#) from MAGIC (Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside).



Location of River Avon SAC/SCI/cSAC

Note:

When undertaking an appropriate assessment of impacts at a site, **all** features of European importance (both primary and non-primary) need to be considered.

Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site

3260 [Water courses of plain to montane levels with the *Ranunculus fluitans* and *Callitriche-Batrachion* vegetation](#)

The Avon in southern England is a large, lowland river system that includes sections running through chalk and clay, with transitions between the two. Five aquatic *Ranunculus* species occur in the river system, but stream water-crowfoot *Ranunculus penicillatus* ssp. *pseudofluitans* and river water-crowfoot *R. fluitans* are the main dominants. Some winterbourne reaches, where *R. peltatus* is the dominant water-crowfoot species, are included in the SAC.

Annex I habitats present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for selection of this site

Not applicable.

Annex II species that are a primary reason for selection of this site

1016 [Desmoulin's whorl snail](#) *Vertigo moulinsiana*

There is an extensive population of **Desmoulin's whorl snail** *Vertigo moulinsiana* along about 20 km of the margins and associated wetlands of the Rivers Avon, Bourne and Wylye. This is one of two sites representing the species in the south-western part of its range, in chalk stream habitat. It occurs here in a separate catchment from the Kennet and Lambourn, within an environment more heavily dominated by arable agriculture.

1095 [Sea lamprey](#) *Petromyzon marinus*

The Avon represents **sea lamprey** *Petromyzon marinus* in a high-quality river in the southern part of its range. There are excellent examples of the features that the species needs for survival, including extensive areas of sand and gravel in the middle to lower reaches of the river where sea lampreys are known to spawn.

1096 [Brook lamprey](#) *Lampetra planeri*

The Avon is a high-quality river that represents the southern part of the range of **brook lamprey** *Lampetra planeri*. A healthy, stable population occurs in the main river and in a number of tributaries. The main river, and in particular its tributaries, provides clean beds of gravel for spawning and extensive areas of fine silt for juveniles to burrow into.

1106 [Atlantic salmon](#) *Salmo salar*

The Avon in southern England represents a south coast chalk river supporting **Atlantic salmon** *Salmo salar*. The salmon populations here are typical of a high-quality chalk stream, unaffected by the introduction of genetic stock of non-native origin. The Avon has an excellent mosaic of aquatic habitats, which include extensive areas of gravels essential for spawning and growth of juvenile fry. There has been limited modification of the river course by comparison with many other southern lowland rivers in England.

1163 [Bullhead](#) *Cottus gobio*

The Avon represents **bullhead *Cottus gobio*** in a calcareous, relatively unmodified river in the southern part of its range in England. The River Avon has a mosaic of aquatic habitats that support a diverse fish community. The bullhead is an important component of this community, particularly in the tributaries.

Annex II species present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for site selection

Not applicable.

Many designated sites are on private land: the listing of a site in these pages does not imply any right of public access.