

COUNTY: WEST SUSSEX     SITE NAME: SINGLETON AND COCKING TUNNELS

DISTRICT: CHICHESTER

Status: Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) notified under Section 28 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

Local Planning Authority: CHICHESTER DISTRICT COUNCIL

National Grid Reference: SU 872145, SU 874166     Area: 4.8 (ha.) 11.9 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 197                      1:10,000: SU 81 SE, SU 81 NE

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1989

Other Information:

This is a new site consisting of two important hibernacula used by bats listed on Schedule 5 and protected under Section 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

Reasons for Notification:

Singleton and Cocking Tunnels constitute the most important sites for hibernating bats in south-east England and are the fifth most important in Britain.

These two disused brick railway tunnels, located in rural Sussex, once formed part of the Chichester to Midhurst railway line. They now support, during the winter months, large numbers of hibernating bats, and are the only known location in Britain for the Mouse-eared bat *Myotis myotis*. Eight species have been found in all; those best represented include Natterer's *Myotis nattereri*, Daubenton's *Myotis daubentoni*, Brown long-eared *Plecotus auritus* and Brandt's *Myotis brandti*/Whiskered *Myotis mystacinus* (these two cannot normally be distinguished in the field, but are both known to occur here). Other species regularly occur in small numbers.