

UPPER MELINCOURT VALLEY

Reference No: NPTSINC110

Ward: Resolven

Grid ref at centre: SS8448899976

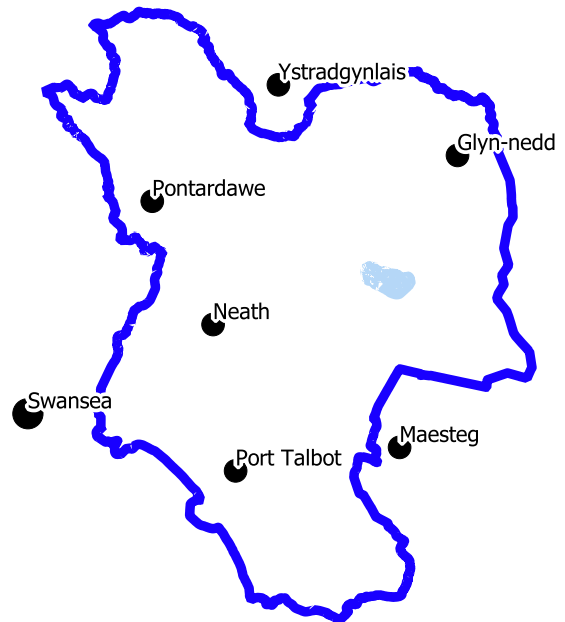
Area (ha): 107.24

Reason for selection:

H8:2 Upland heathland

H9:3 Purple moor-grass and rush pastures

H16 Mosaic habitats



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SITE OF IMPORTANCE FOR NATURE CONSERVATION

UPPER MELINCOURT VALLEY

Site Description:

An area of upland rush pasture and wet heathland notable for: (i) its large size (>1km²) (ii) the occurrence of several plant species that are uncommon in Neath Port Talbot (iii) dramatic landscape setting in the Upper Melincourt Valley below the Ffynnon Oer Wind Farm. Notable plant species occurring here include bryophytes (e.g. *Philonotis calcarea* and *Splachnum ampullaceum*) and Ivy-leaved Bellflower (*Wahlenbergia hederacea*). The site is located at the top end of the Melincourt Valley above Resolven. The lower valley is a Wildlife Trust reserve; Melincwrt Waterfall, which is an upland Oak woodland with a dramatic 80 foot waterfall.

Qualifying features

The 'block designation' of extensive areas of open countryside where semi-natural upland features predominate.

H8:2 Upland heathland

H9:3 Purple moor-grass and rush pastures

H16 Mosaic habitats

Important species

Species recorded: bryophytes such as *Philonotis calcarea* and *Splachnum ampullaceum*. Ivy-leaved Bellflower, Soft rush, Purple Moor-grass, Bog violet, Lesser skullcap, Marsh willowherb, Star sedge, Lemon-scented fern, Cross-leaved heath, Bog asphodel, Bog Bead-moss, Soft Bog-moss, Bog pimpernel, Thick-nerved Apple-moss, Claw-leaved Hook-moss, Beech fern, Compressed flapwort, Cruet Collar-moss. Common Frog.

Management Recommendations

The site is in a relatively stable condition in terms of successional change and the current (non-intense) sheep-grazing regime appears to be beneficial. At the time of the survey, sheep were grazing mostly on the drier valley sides and were avoiding the very wet areas in the valley bowl. Consequently, the Ivy-leaved Bellflower population on the banks of the Melincourt Brook was not very accessible to sheep. This situation may change after a drier summer and the status of the population should be monitored from year to year, accordingly. It should be noted that sheep are not only required to maintain a beneficial grazing regime on the site but also to provide the dung substrate necessary for sustaining the population of Cruet Collar-moss.

Last surveyed: 2012 Surveyor: CH Author: ER

To be read in conjunction with Wildlife Sites Guidance Wales (WBP 2008) and the NPT amendments. This area has been designated as a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation by Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council. This does not formally protect the site or place any restrictions upon the landowner. Neath Port Talbot Council's Countryside & Wildlife Team will endeavour to support and encourage activities that maintain and enhance the biodiversity interest of the land; where funding is available, funds may be provided to facilitate these activities. The information given is used to ensure that nature conservation is taken into account in planning decisions. The designation itself does not confer any rights of access to the site and places no restriction on the management of the land.