

**CYNGOR CEFN GWLAD CYMRU
COUNTRYSIDE COUNCIL FOR WALES**

SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST CITATION

DENBIGHSHIRE, GWYNEDD, POWYS, WREXHAM

BERWYN

Date of Notification: 1957, 1983, 1985, 1986, 1987, 1988, 1990, 1996

National Grid Reference: SJ 073429 (northern edge) to
SH 919136 (southern edge)

O.S. Maps: 1:50000 Sheet Number: 125
1:25000 Sheet Number: SJ 01, 03, 04, 12, 13, 14
SH 81, 82, 91, 92, 93

Site area: 24267.5 ha
2956 ha in Wrexham
5714.5 ha in Denbighshire
4117.2 ha in Gwynedd
11479.8 ha in Powys

Description:

The Berwyn is a long spine of moorland stretching from the A5 trunk road near Llangollen in the north-east to the A458 trunk road near Mallwyd in the south west. The topography is characterised by gently contoured ridges and spurs rising to 827m in altitude at Cadair Berwyn. The site embraces the upper catchments of several rivers including the Dyfrdwy (Dee) and Efyrnwy (Vyrnwy).

The geology is largely sedimentary slates and shales of Ordovician and Silurian age with outcrops of contemporaneous volcanic rock. The higher ridges and spurs are covered by blanket peat, and mid and lower slopes by loamy upland soils often with a peaty surface horizon.

The Berwyn is of national and international importance for its moorland breeding birds and vegetation, particularly *Calluna* dominated heath and blanket mire. It is also notified to conserve a colony of the rare Welsh clearwing moth.

The blanket mire vegetation is very varied and contains constituents that are characteristic or both the west coast of Britain and of Central Europe. The dominant species are heather *Calluna vulgaris*, hare's tail cottongrass *Eriochorum vaginatum* and a number of bog moss *Schagnum* species which often form "lawns". Associated species are cross-leaved heath *Erica tetralix*, cranberry *Vaccinium oxycoccos*, deergrass *Trichoohorum cespitosum* and woolly moss *Racomitrium lanuginosum*. Cloudberry *Rubus chamaemorus* is locally frequent here, at its southernmost point in Britain, together with lesser twayblade *Lisitera cordata* a scarce species in Southern Britain. Dwarf shrub heath dominated by heather and with associated bilberry *Vaccinium myrtillus* is the other major vegetation type covering the steeper slopes below the summits. Acid grasslands (including submontane types), flushes and bracken dominated areas are among the other vegetation communities present. Several nationally scarce species occur including bog rosemary *Andromeda polifolia*, tall bog-sedge *Carex magellenica*, and rock stonecrop *Sedum forsterianum*.

Berwyn is the most important upland in Wales for breeding birds. It supports a wide range of species including internationally significant numbers of hen harrier *Circus ovaneus*, merlin *Falco columbarius*, peregrine *Falco peregrinus* and red kite *Milvus milvus*, as well as significant proportions of the Welsh populations of other species including short-eared owl *Asio flammeus*, golden plover *Pluvialis apricaria*, red grouse *Lagopus lagopus* and black grouse *Tetrao tetrix*.

A colony of the Welsh clearwing moth *Synanthedon scoliaeformis*, a Red Data Book species is found at one locality this being the strongest of only three populations in Wales.

Remarks:

Part of the site is within the Snowdonia National Park

Part of the site is registered as common land.

Part of the site is an RSPB Reserve.

Part the Berwyn is owned by CCW including the 3500 ha Y Berwyn NNR declared in 1994.

Parts of the Berwyn are owned by Forestry Commission and Severn-Trent Water Authority.

*This document is **NOT** a definitive legal version and has been formatted, updated and partially edited for use on the CCW Web site. This document should not be used in any legal proceedings, public enquiry or any other hearing or appeal. If you require a full legal copy of the document please contact CCW in writing.*