

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

SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST CITATION

**CEREDIGION/
CARMARTHENSHIRE**

CWM DOETHIE – MYNYDD MALLAEN

Date of Notification:

1954, 1985

National Grid Reference:

SN 720420 – SN 780570,
SN 690445 and SN 702451

O.S. Maps:

1: 50,000 Sheet Number: 146 and 147
1: 25,000 Sheet Number: SN64, SN74, SN75 & SN85

Site Area:

6187 ha

Description:

This site, consisting largely of steep-sided valleys and upland tracts, is of outstanding interest for its wealth of habitats and wildlife, in particular its birdlife. Included are herb-rich grasslands and alder-fringed rivers in the valley bottoms, remnants of sessile oakwood and heath on the steep rocky valley sides, and upland grassland, moorland and blanket bog on the unenclosed sheepwalk on the plateau areas. Crag and cliff plant communities are frequent. On the valley sides of the rivers Doethie and Pysgotwr there are fine sessile oakwoods containing large maiden oaks and occasional ash, alder, birch, elm and rowan. The diverse ground flora has an abundance of mosses and liverworts and the older trees support a rich epiphytic lichen flora. Gorge woodlands, particularly in the Cothi and Melyn valleys, also contain notable assemblages of lower plants. In all these woods there is a rich variety of small birds.

Uncommon plants occurring in the site are globeflower *Trollius europaeus*, parsley fern *Cryptogramma crista* and lesser clubmoss *Selaginella selaginoides*, the latter growing in the most southerly site known in Britain. The rocks at Craig Ddu and Craig Clyngwyn support a remarkable variety of calcicole species, notably marjoram *Origanum vulgare*, wall lettuce *Mycelis muralis*, fairy flax *Linum catharticum*, the rare hawkweed *Hieracium lasiophyllum* and rock stonecrop *Sedum forsterianum*, together with at least eighty other species of higher plants.

The site is noted for its variety of upland and woodland birds. It is especially important for its strong populations of carrion-feeding species, such as buzzard and raven; the rare red kite also occurs. Among the other upland birds are peregrine falcon, merlin, red grouse and ring ouzel, while golden plover has bred in the past. Typical bird communities of Welsh native woodland, including redstart, pied flycatcher, wood warbler and tree pipit are very well represented. The rivers and streams hold dipper, grey wagtail

and common sandpiper, with the goosander as a very recent colonist. Farmland in the Gwenffrwd valley and elsewhere is included in the site because it forms part of the habitat of some of these birds or their prey.

Remarks:

Includes Allt Rhyd-y-groes National Nature Reserve (70.2 ha), managed and partly owned by the Countryside Council for Wales. Also includes the Gwenffrwd and Dinas nature reserves (totalling 688 ha) of the RSPB and the Nant Melin reserve (2.8 ha) of the West Wales Trust for Nature Conservation.

Parts owned by the Forestry Commission, Crown Estate Commissioners and National Trust. Much of the site registered as common land.

Buildings and gardens are excluded from the site.

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