

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

SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST CITATION

CARMARTHENSHIRE

CRAIG DDU-WHARLEY POINT CLIFFS

Date of Notification: 1987

National Grid Reference: SN 320102 – SN 345097

O.S. Maps: 1: 50,000 Sheet number: 159
1: 25,000 Sheet number: SN 30 & SN 31

Site Area: 43.4 ha

Description:

The Old Red Sandstone cliffs extending from Craig Ddu to Wharley Point, located between the Taf and Tywi estuaries on the south Carmarthen coast, are noted for their botanical and ornithological interest; additionally several invertebrate taxa of note occur there. The geographical position of the site, which is open to the ameliorating influences of the Atlantic, has resulted in a strong representation of species that require mild winter conditions. The frost-tender maidenhair fern *Adiantum capillus-veneris*, sea spleenwort *Asplenium marinum* and madder *Rubia peregrina* are good examples; likewise the centipedes *Lithobius pilicornis* and *Hydroschendyla submarina*, which otherwise are mostly found only in south-west England.

Near the cliff tops, maritime scrub (with much dogwood *Thelycrania sanguinea*) and low woodland has developed, though where the cliffs are steeper or where only rather skeletal soils are found, there is a more open herbaceous plant community, with localised species such as bloody cranesbill *Geranium sanguineum* and Portland spurge *Euphorbia portlandica*. A well developed maritime lichen flora also occurs, including notable calcicoles such as *Dermatocarpon miniatum* and *Physcia tribacia*. A small outcrop of Lower Limestone shales above Craig Ddu has a distinctive base-demanding flora that includes ivy broomrape *Orobanche hederarum*, southern polypody *Polypodium cambricum*, early dog-violet *Viola reichenbachiana* and bee orchid *Ophrys apifera*.

The snail *Pomatias elegans*, a southern thermophilus species, and here near the edge of its range, has populations at Craig Ddu, whilst the small subterranean snail *Cecihoides acicula* is another local species of note. Also at Craig Ddu, a woodlouse of very restricted distribution, *Halophiloscia couchi*, is found under rocks near high water mark. There is a long-established heronry of about twenty pairs and the peregrine falcon is a regular nester at one cliff-top site.

Remarks:

Most of the site is owned by the National Trust.

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