

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

SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST CITATION

**CARMARTHENSHIRE**

**CAEAU CARADOG**

**Date of Notification:** 11 March 2011

**National Grid Reference:** SN 649460

**O.S. Maps:** 1:50,000 Sheet number: 145  
1:10,000 Sheet number: SN 64 NW

**Site Area:** 16.71 ha

**Description:**

Caeau Caradog is of special interest for its series of species rich neutral grassland meadows typically associated with traditionally managed hay-meadows and pastures. Of additional interest are the large areas of marshy grassland that are associated with these meadows and the vegetation mosaics which represent a transition from dry grassland through to marshy grassland, heathy vegetation and mire.

The site consists of eleven enclosures situated at an altitude of 190 -220 m, approximately 1km north of the village of Ffarmers in north Carmarthenshire.

The stands of species rich neutral grassland support a high cover of forbs typically associated with this type of grassland. Prominent species include red fescue *Festuca rubra*, common bird's-foot-trefoil *Lotus corniculatus* and common knapweed *Centaurea nigra*. The slightly acidic nature of much of the soil is indicated by the presence of frequent devil's-bit scabious *Succisa pratensis*, tormentil *Potentilla erecta* and whorled caraway *Carum verticillatum*. The marshy grassland comprises areas of rush *Juncus* spp. pasture with open swards of purple moor-grass *Molinia caerulea*. Species associated with these wetter areas include devil's-bit scabious, greater bird's-foot-trefoil *Lotus pedunculatus*, heath spotted-orchid *Dactylorhiza maculata* and a variety of grasses and short sedges. In other areas, the vegetation assumes a more heathy nature, with heather *Calluna vulgaris*, cross-leaved heath *Erica tetralix*, and abundant hare's-tail cottongrass *Eriophorum vaginatum* with bog-mosses *Sphagnum* spp. The site is varied in both topography and vegetation and this is reflected in the transition between the dry and wet plant communities present.

Noteworthy plant species recorded at Caeau Caradog include whorled caraway *Carum verticillatum*, present throughout the neutral and marshy grassland, and scattered plants of petty whin *Genista anglica* within the fen community. The rare and declining marsh fritillary butterfly *Eurodryas aurinia* has been recorded at this site. The fields to the north-west of Cae-Caradog are bordered by the Afon Twrch and, below the farmhouse, the Nant Clawdd. Otters are known to use these rivers. On the drier slopes east of the road, the unimproved grazed pastures support a small population of waxcap fungi. Mature tree-lined hedges surround most of the fields. These hedgerows, along with narrow bands of native woodland and scrub support a diversity of

farmland bird species, small mammals and invertebrates that add to the overall biodiversity interest at Caeau Caradog.

**Remarks:**

Marsh fritillary is listed in Annex II of European Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora, and is also listed under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as amended.

This document is **NOT** a definitive legal version and has been formatted 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.