

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

SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST CITATION

CARMARTHENSHIRE

CAEAU BLAEN-BYDERNYN

Date of Notification: 1998

National Grid Reference: SN 558439

O.S. Maps: 1: 50,000 Sheet number: 146
1: 10,000 Sheet number: SN 54 SE

Site Area: 10.4 ha

Description:

Caeau Blaen-bydernyn is of special interest for its mixture of wet grassland communities and the stands of species-rich acid grassland on the drier banks.

The site is situated approximately 32km east of Llanybydder in north Carmarthenshire and consists of three enclosures lying on gently sloping, north facing ground, at an altitude of 225-255m. Silurian shales and mudstones comprise the underlying geology. Soils are generally poorly draining, although there are some drier banks in the central and south-eastern fields.

The principal wet grassland community is dominated by purple moor-grass *Molinia caerulea*, although there is considerable variation between stands. Other grasses such as velvet bent *Agrostis canina*, common bent *A. capillaris*, mat-grass *Nardus stricta* and sweet vernal-grass *Anthoxanthum odoratum* also occur at high frequency. A rich diversity of forbs includes tormentil *Potentilla erecta*, devil's-bit scabious *Succisa pratensis*, whorled caraway *Carum verticillatum*, lousewort *Pedicularis sylvatica* and heath spotted-orchid *Dactylorhiza maculata*. In places the sward is quite heathy, with heather *Calluna vulgaris* and heath rush *Juncus squarrosus* becoming frequent; petty whin *Genista anglica* is scattered in these heathier stands. Other parts are more rank, being strongly dominated by large tussocks of purple moor-grass, with much sharp-flowered rush *Juncus acutiflorus* between the tussocks.

Rush-pasture also occurs extensively at the site dominated by a mixture of sharp-flowered rush *Juncus acutiflorus* and soft rush *Juncus effusus*, with associates like common marsh-bedstraw *Galium palustre*, greater bird's foot-trefoil *Lotus pedunculatus* and common sorrel *Rumex acetosa*.

Acid flush is the other main wet community. Again this is dominated by sharp-flowered rush, although here there is a luxuriant carpet of bog mosses (mainly *Sphagnum recurvum* and *S. palustre*) below the rush canopy.

Other wet communities include some small stands of wet heath and fen-meadow. The latter vegetation is of particular interest, being very scarce on the normally acidic soils of north Carmarthenshire. It is characterised by the presence of several base-demanding species including

meadow thistle *Cirsium dissectum*, tawny sedge *Carex hostiana* and flea sedge *C. pulicaris*.

The stands of dry acid grassland are especially species-rich, containing a wide range of forbs including tormentil, devil's bit-scabious, common bird's-foot-trefoil *Lotus corniculatus*, bitter-vetch *Lathyrus linifolius* and harebell *Campanula rotundifolia* and uncommon plants including lesser butterfly-orchid *Platanthera bifolia*, common twayblade *Listera ovata*, wood bitter-vetch *Vicia orobus*, mountain everlasting *Antennaria dioica*, petty whin and also the largest known population of dyer's greenweed *Genista tinctoria* in Carmarthenshire.

Noteworthy Lepidoptera include marsh fritillary *Eurodryas aurinia*, small pearl-bordered fritillary *Boloria selene* and scarlet tiger moth *Callimorpha dominula*.

Remarks:

The marsh fritillary is listed under Annex II of the EC Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora.

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