

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

SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST CITATION

**POWYS**

**GWEUNYDD DYFFRYN NEDD**

<b><u>Date of notification:</u></b>	1954, 1965, 1978, 1979, 1999
<b><u>National grid reference:</u></b>	SN 915115
<b><u>O.S. Maps:</u></b>	1:50,000 Sheet number: 160 1:10,000 Sheet number: SN 91 SW
<b><u>Site area:</u></b>	31.7 ha

**Description:**

Gweunydd Dyffryn Nedd is of special interest for its extensive areas of damp pasture and wet heath, including a type of fen meadow vegetation that has a restricted distribution in England and Wales. Large areas of this type of vegetation are now rare because of drainage and agricultural changes.

The site comprises a series of old enclosures on gently sloping ground above the Afon Nedd Fechan to the south-west of Ystradfellte. The fields have a westerly aspect and an altitude range of 230-290 metres.

The local geology of glacial drift over Millstone Grit supports seasonally waterlogged soils, with extensive accumulations of surface peat in places. The resultant variation in soil conditions has allowed a variety of plant communities to develop.

Fen meadow is widely distributed within this site, in discrete stands and as a mixture with other plant community types. It is characterised by purple moor-grass *Molinia caerulea* and meadow thistle *Cirsium dissectum*. This site supports one of the largest populations of the latter species in Brecknock. There is a distinctive heathy element comprising cross-leaved heath *Erica tetralix*, bog asphodel *Narthecium ossifragum* and, more locally, heather *Calluna vulgaris* and petty whin *Genista anglica*. Other species present include devil's-bit scabious *Succisa pratensis*, tawny sedge *Carex hostiana* and flea sedge *C. pulicaris*.

Further types of purple moor-grass dominated vegetation occur throughout the site, supporting such species as tormentil *Potentilla erecta*, sweet vernal-grass *Anthoxanthum odoratum*, bents *Agrostis spp.* and mat-grass *Nardus stricta*. In places the purple moor-grass is tussocky and there are very few associated species.

In the wetter hollows the vegetation is dominated by soft-rush *Juncus effusus* with a range of marshland species including common marsh-bedstraw *Galium palustre*.

The central and southern parts of the site support a type of wet heath, characterised by species such as cross-leaved heath, heather, tormentil and deergrass *Scirpus cespitosus* with purple moor-grass an important constituent once again. The moss layer is well developed and includes a variety of bog mosses *Sphagnum spp.*.

Small pocket of unimproved acidic grassland occur where drier soils are present. Sheep's-fescue *Festuca ovina*, common bent *Agrostis capillaris*, sweet vernal-grass, tormentil and heath bedstraw *Galium saxatile* are frequent throughout. The sward is more species-rich in places. Characteristic associates here include devil's-bit scabious, betony *Stachys officinalis*, lousewort *Pedicularis sylvatica* and heath grass *Danthonia decumbens*.

Around the margins of the site, the pasture grades into woodland dominated by either sessile oak *Quercus petraea* or alder *Alnus glutinosa*, over a grassy field layer. Additional interest is provided by small neutral flushes and patches of scrub.

**Remarks:**

The site lies within the Brecon Beacons National Park.

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