

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

SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST CITATION

VALE OF GLAMORGAN

LARKS MEADOWS

Date of Notification: 24 February 2011

National Grid Reference: SS 931702

O.S. Maps: 1:50,000 Sheet number: 170
1:10,000 Sheet number: SS 97 SW

Site Area: 3.35 ha

Description:

Larks Meadows is of special interest for its species-rich neutral grassland. The grassland at Larks Meadows, which has a particularly calcicolous nature, is one of the rarest types of grassland in Wales, and is now confined to a small number of sites in the Vale of Glamorgan, Monmouthshire and north-east Wales. The long history of traditional hay-meadow management at Larks Meadows adds to the interest. The grassland is associated with small areas of scrub and hedgerows.

The site lies 7km south-west of Cowbridge, close to the village of Marcross. It consists of four fields alongside a minor road. The meadows slope very gently with a south-westerly aspect, at an altitude of 85 to 95m, on brown earth soils with some clay.

The species-rich neutral grassland at Larks Meadows is characterised by grasses such as common bent *Agrostis capillaris*, sweet vernal grass *Anthoxanthum odoratum*, crested dog's tail *Cynosurus cristatus* and red fescue *Festuca rubra*. Typical herb species include yarrow *Achillea millefolium*, common knapweed *Centaurea nigra*, rough hawkbit *Leontodon hispidus*, and common bird's-foot-trefoil *Lotus corniculatus*.

The soils at Larks Meadows have a calcareous element, and this is reflected in many of the plants that grow there. Lady's bedstraw *Galium verum*, salad burnet *Poterium sanguisorba*, yellow oat-grass *Trisetum flavescens* and downy oat-grass *Avenula pubescens* all occur, together with quaking-grass *Briza media* and glaucous sedge *Carex flacca*.

Larks Meadows is host to a number of uncommon grassland plants, including pepper-saxifrage *Silaum silaus* and meadow barley *Hordeum secalinum*.

Remarks:

The site supports the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) priority 'lowland meadow' habitat.

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