

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

SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST CITATION

**CARMARTHENSHIRE**

**PEN-Y-GRAIG-GOCH**

**Date of Notification:** 7 October 2010

**National Grid Reference:** SN742226

**O.S. Maps:** 1:50,000 Sheet number: 160  
1:10,000 Sheet number: SN72SW

**Site Area:** 8.7 ha

**Description:**

Pen-y-graig-goch is of special interest for its marshy grassland and associated wetland habitats. Within the marshy grassland, the fen-meadow component includes a particularly fine example of the heathy form of this vegetation type.

The site is situated above the Sawdde valley approximately 2km south-west of the small village of Twynllanan and 7km south-east of Llangadog. It consists of several contiguous enclosures at an altitude of 150-190m. The underlying geology is of red sandstones and siltstones, sometimes with calcareous bands, belonging to the Dittonian Series of the Lower Devonian. Soils are mainly stagnogleys, with shallow peats in some areas.

**Biology:**

The marshy grassland at the site has abundant high cover of purple moor-grass *Molinia caerulea* or rushes *Juncus* spp. Much of this is fen-meadow with frequent meadow thistle *Cirsium dissectum*, devil's-bit scabious *Succisa pratensis*, carnation sedge *Carex panicea*, flea sedge *C. pulicaris* and tawny sedge *C. hostiana*. Many of the fen-meadow stands have a heathy stamp, with species such as cross-leaved heath *Erica tetralix*, heather *Calluna vulgaris*, saw-wort *Serratula tinctoria*, bog asphodel *Narthecium ossifragum* and petty whin *Genista anglica*, often with a carpet of bog mosses *Sphagnum* spp. Also present, mainly at the edges of fields, are small areas of wetter and more tussocky fen-meadow, lacking heathy species. Some marshy grassland has frequent tormentil *Potentilla erecta* and grasses such as sweet vernal-grass *Anthoxanthum odoratum*, velvet bent *Agrostis canina* and Yorkshire-fog *Holcus lanatus*, but lacks plants characteristic of fen-meadow. Whorled caraway *Carum verticillatum* is common through much of the damp vegetation. Associated with heathy stands of fen-meadow are areas of wet heath with frequent purple moor-grass, deergrass *Trichophorum cespitosum*, cross-leaved heath and heather.

In the eastern part of the site, there may have been attempts to drain some fields in the distant past and strips of fen-meadow are separated by lines of vegetation dominated by rushes. Some vegetation here has a mixture of marshy grassland plants and those more typical of dry grassland, such as crested dog's-tail *Cynosurus cristatus*, greater knapweed *Centaurea nigra* and greater burnet *Sanguisorba officinalis*; a few patches of more typical neutral grassland also occur.

Within the marshy grassland are a few small base-rich flushes, with abundant small sedges *Carex*

spp., and brown mosses such as yellow starry feather-moss *Campylium stellatum* and intermediate hook-moss *Scorpidium cossonii*. The largest flush supports a variety of uncommon and locally rare plants including common butterwort *Pinguicula vulgaris*, few-flowered spike-rush *Eleocharis quinqueflora*, marsh arrowgrass *Triglochin palustris*, fen bedstraw *Galium uliginosum*, marsh helleborine *Epipactis palustris* and broad-leaved cottongrass *Eriophorum latifolium*.

Other uncommon species recorded at the site include lesser butterfly-orchid *Platanthera bifolia*, marsh fritillary *Eurodryas aurinia* and small pearl-bordered fritillary *Boloria selene*.

Stands of alder *Alnus glutinosa* woodland and dense willow *Salix* spp. scrub occur in the western fields.

**Remarks:**

The site lies within the Brecon Beacons National Park.

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