

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

SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST CITATION

POWYS

RHOS PANT-TYLE

<u>Date of Notification:</u>	1999
<u>National Grid Reference:</u>	SN 903460
<u>O.S. Maps:</u>	1:50,000 Sheet number: 147 1:10,000 Sheet number: SN 94 NW
<u>Site Area:</u>	12.3 ha

Description:

The site consists of an extensive area of rhos pasture above the southern bank of the Afon Irfon, near Llanwrtyd Wells. It is of special interest for its marshy grassland, wet heath and flush vegetation and is one of the few remaining large areas of such habitat remaining in the district. It is situated on level to gently sloping ground with a north-westerly aspect, at an altitude of approximately 220 metres. Apart from a few drier banks supporting acidic grassland, the soils across the site have a water-table at or near the ground surface. The underlying rocks are Caradoc shales of the Ordovician period.

The principal feature of special interest is a large and continuous area of marshy grassland in which purple moor-grass *Molinia caerulea* is the principal component. Growing within the purple moor-grass are tormentil *Potentilla erecta*, cross-leaved heath *Erica tetralix*, heather *Calluna vulgaris*, sheep's fescue *Festuca ovina*, heath rush *Juncus squarrosus*, heath milkwort *Polygala serpyllifolia*, bilberry *Vaccinium myrtillus*, hair moss *Polytrichum commune* and the bog-mosses *Sphagnum papillosum* and *S. subnitens*. Elsewhere purple moor-grass remains dominant but the sward supports more grasses including sweet vernal-grass *Anthoxanthum odoratum* and velvet bent *Agrostis canina*. Associates here include whorled caraway *Carum verticillatum*, heath wood-rush *Luzula multiflora* and soft-rush *Juncus effusus*. In addition, there is an area in which tormentil, meadow thistle *Cirsium dissectum*, carnation sedge *Carex panicea*, sharp-flowered rush *Juncus acutiflorus*, lousewort *Pedicularis sylvatica*, whorled caraway, tawny sedge *Carex hostiana* and bog mosses occur within a sward composed primarily of purple moor-grass and sheep's fescue.

In patches this vegetation grades into wet heath, also characterised by purple moor-grass and cross-leaved heath, but with frequent cross-leaved heath, deergrass *Trichophorum cespitosum* and bog mosses. Petty whin *Genista anglica* occurs within this vegetation. Towards the south of the site, the vegetation is dominated by sharp-flowered rush *Juncus acutiflorus*, with velvet bent, marsh pennywort *Hydrocotyle vulgaris*, meadowsweet

Filipendula ulmaria, marsh valerian *Valeriana dioica*, marsh violet *Viola palustris*, water mint *Mentha aquatica*, lesser spearwort *Ranunculus flammula* and common sorrel *Rumex acetosa*. In places, there are flushed areas where soft-rush *Juncus effusus* grows above a carpet of the bog moss *Sphagnum recurvum*.

The wildlife value of the site is enhanced by the presence of an abundance of broadleaved trees along field boundaries along with patches of acidic grassland on drier banks. This grassland is characterised by frequent common bent *Agrostis capillaris*, sweet vernal-grass, tormentil, sheep's fescue and heath bedstraw *Galium saxatile*. It supports a number of associated species including common bird's-foot-trefoil *Lotus corniculatus* and mountain pansy *Viola lutea*, which displays the rarer purple-flowered form.

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