

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

SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST CITATION

**VALE OF GLAMORGAN**

**CORS ABERTHIN**

<b><u>Date of Notification:</u></b>	23 March 2010
<b><u>National Grid Reference:</u></b>	ST 003755
<b><u>O.S. Maps:</u></b>	1:50,000 Sheet number: 170 1:10,000 Sheet number: SS 97NE, ST 07NW
<b><u>Site Area:</u></b>	11.7 ha

**Description:**

Cors Aberthin is of special interest for its marshy grassland, much of which is base-enriched, and its species-rich neutral grassland.

Cors Aberthin is located in the floodplain of the River Thaw, 1 km to the north of Cowbridge and west of the village of Aberthin. It consists of a series of enclosed pastures, separated by hedgerows and drainage ditches which flow in a westerly direction, towards the River Thaw. The altitude is approximately 30 metres.

Of particular interest is an extensive area of fen-meadow vegetation in the western part of the site. Most of this is dominated by blunt-flowered rush *Juncus subnodulosus*, associated with marsh thistle *Cirsium palustre*, meadowsweet *Filipendula ulmaria* and wild angelica *Angelica sylvestris*. Lower-growing plants include fen bedstraw *Galium uliginosum* and marsh valerian *Valeriana dioica*, both associated with base-rich conditions. Meadow thistle *Cirsium dissectum* is frequent and, in some more open areas, tawny sedge *Carex hostiana* and flea sedge *C. pulicaris* occur. The uncommon Dyer's greenweed *Genista tinctoria*, a plant normally found in drier grassland, also occurs here.

There are smaller areas of fen-meadow in which blunt-flowered rush is less prominent, mostly replaced by purple moor-grass *Molinia caerulea*. Associated species here include glaucous sedge *Carex flacca*, tawny sedge and flea sedge. Herbs include meadow thistle, marsh valerian, fen bedstraw, devil's-bit scabious *Succisa pratensis* and saw-wort *Serratula tinctoria*. Associated with the fen meadow are occasional spring heads, where base-rich water rises to the surface. In these slightly raised, open areas, marsh helleborine *Epipactis palustris* is often frequent.

Other areas of wet ground, where the conditions are less base-rich, support rush-pasture dominated by sharp-flowered rush, associated with meadowsweet, meadow buttercup *Ranunculus acris* and Yorkshire fog *Holcus lanatus*. There are also areas dominated by lesser pond-sedge *Carex acutiformis*. Some areas of purple moor-grass pasture lack any base-enrichment and here the common associated herbs are tormentil *Potentilla erecta* and devil's-bit scabious.

Species-rich neutral grassland is well-represented on the slightly higher, free-draining ground. Here, common knapweed *Centaurea nigra* and common birds-foot trefoil *Lotus corniculatus* occur, together with grasses such as common bent *Agrostis capillaris*, sweet vernal-grass *Anthoxanthum odoratum*, crested dog's-tail *Cynosurus cristatus* and red fescue *Festuca rubra*. In some of this vegetation, tormentil is common, with frequent or occasional devil's-bit scabious and betony *Stachys betonica*. Elsewhere, especially in the north of the site, more typical associates are meadow buttercup, bulbous buttercup *Ranunculus bulbosus*, yellow-rattle *Rhinanthus minor* and autumnal hawkbit *Leontodon autumnalis*.

Several uncommon plants occur at Cors Aberthin. Blunt-flowered rush is abundant here, but is a scarce species both in the Vale of Glamorgan and in Wales as a whole. Other notable species are long-stalked yellow-sedge *Carex viridula ssp. brachyrrhyncha*, brown sedge *C. disticha*, marsh helleborine and early marsh orchid *Dactylorhiza incarnata*. Ditches, mature hedgerows and a small area of woodland add to the diversity of the site.

**Remarks:**

The site supports the following UK biodiversity action plan (BAP) habitats:  
Purple moor-grass and rush pastures; fens; lowland meadows.

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