

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

SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST CITATION

MONMOUTHSHIRE

CAEAU FFERM

Date of Notification: 1999

National Grid Reference: SO 261258

O.S. Maps: 1:50,000 Sheet number: 161
1:10,000 Sheet number: SO22NE

Site Area: 10.8 ha

Description:

Caeau Fferm is of special interest for its extensive stands of dry mesotrophic grassland and its associated mixture of other habitat types.

The site is situated on the north-eastern flank of the Grwyne Fawr valley approximately 3km south-west of the village of Llanthony and 10km north-west of Abergavenny. It occupies steeply sloping ground, with a south-westerly aspect, at an altitude of 300-400m. The underlying bedrock is Old Red Sandstone which is overlain by brown earths.

The dry mesotrophic pasture is characterised by species such as common bent *Agrostis capillaris*, sweet vernal-grass *Anthoxanthum odoratum*, crested dog's-tail *Cynosurus cristatus*, spring-sedge *Carex caryophyllea*, field wood-rush *Luzula campestris*, common bird's-foot-trefoil *Lotus corniculatus*, red clover *Trifolium pratense*, meadow buttercup *Ranunculus acris* and cat's-ear *Hypochoeris radicata*. On steeper slopes, where soils are more free-draining, heath-grass *Danthonia decumbens*, mouse-ear hawkweed *Pilosella officinarum*, fairy flax *Linum catharticum*, burnet-saxifrage *Pimpinella saxifraga* and tormentil *Potentilla erecta* are common, with harebell *Campanula rotundifolia* and large thyme *Thymus pulegioides* locally abundant.

In parts of the site, mesotrophic grassland grades into acidic grassland in which sheep's fescue *Festuca ovina* and heath bedstraw *Galium saxatile* are common. In other areas where drainage is impeded, dry grassland grades into sharp-flowered rush *Juncus acutiflorus* and purple moor-grass *Molinia caerulea* dominated marshy grassland.

Uncommon species recorded at the site include adder's-tongue *Ophioglossum vulgatum*, meadow saffron *Colchicum autumnale* and large thyme, which here, is close to the western limit of its geographical range.

Remarks:

The site lies within the Brecon Beacons National Park

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