

**CYFOETH NATURIOL CYMRU
NATURAL RESOURCES WALES**

SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST: CITATION

RHONDDA CYNON TAF

CAEAU NANT Y GROES

Date of Notification:

7 January 2015

National Grid Reference:

SO 028022

O.S. Maps:

1:50,000 Sheet number: 170
1:10,000 Sheet number: SO 00 SW

Site Area:

11.27 ha

Description:

Caeau Nant y Groes is of special interest for its species-rich neutral grassland.

Caeau Nant y Groes is a group of fields situated 2.5km east of Aberdare, overlooking the Nant y Groes, a tributary of the River Cynon. The altitude ranges from 200m to 270m and the fields have a south westerly aspect. Associated habitats include acid grassland, hedgerows and small areas of woodland and scrub.

The bedrock beneath Caeau Nant y Groes comprises mudstones, siltstones and sandstones of the South Wales Middle Coal Measures Formation, that were formed during the Upper Carboniferous Period. These are overlain by glacial tills laid down during the Quaternary Period. Soils are predominantly freely-draining, acid and loamy.

Species-rich grassland is present on the freely draining soils on slopes across the site. Typical grasses include red fescue *Festuca rubra*, common bent *Agrostis capillaris* and crested dog's-tail *Cynosurus cristatus*, accompanied by common knapweed *Centaurea nigra*, common bird's-foot-trefoil *Lotus corniculatus*, red clover *Trifolium pratense* and meadow buttercup *Ranunculus acris*. In places, these species are joined by tormentil, *Potentilla erecta*, devil's-bit scabious *Succisa pratensis* and heath-grass *Danthonia decumbens*.

In the most floristically diverse areas, rough hawkbit *Leontodon hispidus*, quaking-grass *Briza media*, betony *Betonica officinalis*, oxeye daisy *Leucanthemum vulgare*, burnet-saxifrage *Pimpinella saxifraga* and lousewort *Pedicularis sylvatica* are present. Great burnet *Sanguisorba officinalis* also occurs very locally.

In some areas, particularly towards the north of the site, the grassland takes on a distinctive acid-soil quality. Here, sheep's-fescue *Festuca ovina* and heath bedstraw *Galium saxatile* occur, together with tormentil and devil's-bit scabious. Very small

areas of this acid grassland can also be found elsewhere on the very steepest slopes, where the grassland abuts stands of bracken *Pteridium aquilinum*.

Remarks

The site supports the following UK biodiversity action plan (BAP) priority habitat: lowland meadows.