

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

SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST CITATION

CARDIFF

CAEAU BLAEN-BIELLY

<u>Date of Notification:</u>	10 September 2010
<u>National Grid Reference:</u>	ST 101825
<u>O.S. Maps:</u>	1:50,000 Sheet number: 170 1:10,000 Sheet number: ST 18SW
<u>Site Area:</u>	10 ha

Description:

Caeau Blaen-bielly is of special interest for its species-rich neutral grassland, and marshy grassland, some of which is species-rich 'fen-meadow'.

Caeau Blaen-bielly is located on the outskirts of Pentyrch, a village a few kilometres north-west of Cardiff. It consists of a series of enclosed pastures with a south to south-easterly aspect, separated by hedgerows. The altitude of the site ranges from 130 – 170 metres.

Species-rich neutral grassland occupies the free-draining ground. Here, common knapweed *Centaurea nigra* and 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*. A significant part of this grassland type contains plants that are tolerant of nutrient poor, slightly acidic conditions, such as devil's-bit scabious *Succisa pratensis* and heath grass *Danthonia decumbens* which are common, with frequent or occasional tormentil *Potentilla erecta*, an eyebright *Euphrasia rostkoviana* subsp. *rostkoviana* and betony *Stachys officinalis*. Typical associates throughout the neutral grassland include meadow buttercup *Ranunculus acris*, bulbous buttercup *Ranunculus bulbosus*, and autumn hawkbit *Leontodon autumnalis*.

Areas of fen-meadow that are dependent on a flow of lime-rich ground water occur adjacent to and often in close mosaic with the neutral grassland. Here purple moor-grass *Molinia caerulea* is prominent often with a suite of sedges including carnation sedge *Carex panicea*, glaucous sedge *Carex flacca*, tawny sedge *Carex hostiana*, and flea sedge *Carex pulicaris*. Herbs include meadow thistle *Cirsium dissectum*, devil's-bit scabious and saw-wort *Serratula tinctoria*. Bog mosses *Sphagnum* spp. can be found in the bulk of this vegetation type.

Other areas of wet ground, where the conditions are not so base-rich, support rush-pasture dominated by sharp-flowered rush, associated with greater bird's-foot-trefoil *Lotus uliginosus*, devil's-bit scabious and Yorkshire fog *Holcus lanatus*. Some areas of purple moor-grass pasture lack any base-enrichment and here the common associated herbs are tormentil and devil's-bit scabious. Some of this vegetation is particularly rich where it grades from flushed neutral grassland. Here betony, heather *Calluna vulgaris*, common birds-foot trefoil and quaking grass *Briza media* can be found.

Small brooks, mature hedgerows and areas of scrub and woodland around the margins of the grassland provide additional wildlife habitat.

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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