

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

SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST CITATION

SWANSEA

PENARD VALLEY

Date of Notification: 1972, 1987

National Grid Reference: SS 539887 to SS 554893

O.S. Maps: 1:50,000 Sheet number: 159
1:25,000 Sheet number: SS 58

Site Area: 31.5 ha

Description:

A meandering river valley with a diversity of habitats typical of the carboniferous limestones of Gower. Plant communities range from those of the rocky salt spray zone, together with one of the few shingle beaches in the former county of West Glamorgan, through to saltmarsh, dunes and limestone grassland. On its western bank the Penard Pill is flanked by a strip of ash-wych elm woodland, immediately beneath which can be found a small area of species rich fen.

The dunes south-east of the castle are especially notable as the most southerly station of the British endemic the Isle of Man Cabbage *Rhynchosinapis monensis*. More typical of the dune and limestone grasslands is the occurrence of such attractive species as squinancywort *Asperula cynanchica*, purging flax *Linum catharticum*, sheep's-bit *Jasione montana* and bloody cranesbill *Geranium sanguineum*.

The small shingle beach supports a range of typical species including sea holly *Eryngium maritimum*, sea sandwort *Honkenya peploides* and common orache *Atriplex patula*. Immediately behind the beach the lightly grazed saltmarsh is particularly interesting as the site of the uncommon rock sea lavender *Limonium binervosum*.

Northhills Wood is predominantly ash with wych elm, sessile oak and locally abundant field maple, although the heavier soils of the lower slopes support a mixture of ash and hazel. The ground flora features good stands of butchers broom *Ruscus aculeatus* within a dense cover of dogs mercury *Mercurialis perennis*, wild garlic *Allium ursinum* and soft shield fern *Polystichum setiferum*. The strip of fen immediately below the woodland holds tubular water dropwort *Oenanthe fistulosa* and false fox sedge *Carex otrubae*.

Remarks:

Within Gower AONB