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COUNTRYSIDE COUNCIL FOR WALES**

SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST CITATION

NEWPORT/MONMOUTHSHIRE

**GWENT LEVELS – REDWICK
AND LLANDEVENNY**

Date of notification: 1989

National Grid Reference: ST 410855

O.S. Maps: 1:50,000 Sheet number: 171
1:25,000 Sheet number: ST 38/ST 48

Site area: 940 ha

Description:

The Gwent Levels constitute the lowlands between Cardiff and Chepstow and are drained by an ordered network of drainage ditches. They are an example of one of the most extensive areas of reclaimed wet pasture in Great Britain which includes the Somerset Levels, Romney Marsh and the Pevensey Levels, and is the largest area of its kind in Wales. Together these Levels systems constitute a national series of sites each with its own special features.

The Gwent Levels reens are rich in plant species and communities, many of which are rare or absent in other Levels systems. This is due to the variety of reen types and their management regimes and the timing of the management which results in a staggered programme across the Levels. The regular maintenance of some reens provides conditions for submerged species such as hairlike pondweed *Potamogeton trichoides* and openwater emergents such as arrowhead *Sagittaria sagittifolia* an opportunity to flourish. Others are less intensively managed and some have become completely overgrown by weeds and hedges.

The aquatic invertebrate fauna is very diverse and the Gwent Levels compares well with similar areas in Britain. Many nationally rare or notable species are present such as *Haliphus mucronatus* and *Hydrophilus piceus*. The area is important in the Welsh context for its snails and dragonflies and includes the species *Physa heterostropha* and *Brachytron pratense* respectively. The large number of hedgerows add to the diversity of the area and together with the main reen banks provide a habitat for nationally important assemblages of terrestrial invertebrates such as *Pipunculus fonscai* and *Tomosvaryella minima*.

The Redwick and Llandeenny area supports rich assemblages of invertebrate species including *Chalcis sispes* a parasite of the Stratiomys fly larvae, the beetle *Scirtes orbicularis* and the drone fly *Pharhelophilus consimilis*.

The area also contains a number of nationally rare plant species including the rare *Myriophyllum verticillatum* located in peaty ditches in the northern part of the site and the brackish water crowfoot associated with the ditches bordering the sea wall.

Remarks

The Gwent Levels – Redwick and Llandeenny SSSI is one of a series of SSSIs within the area between Chepstow and Cardiff known as the Gwent Levels.

The Severn Estuary SSSI is contiguous with the southern boundary of this area.

The Magor Marsh SSSI adjoins the north eastern boundary of this area.

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