

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

SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST CITATION

SWANSEA MORFA A CHRAIG CWM IVY/CWM IVY MARSH AND TOR

Date of Notification: 1953, 1979, 1983, 2002

National Grid Reference: SS 442941

OS Maps: 1:50,000 Sheet number: 159
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Site Area: 47.9ha

Description:

Morfa a Chraig Cwm Ivy/Cwm Ivy Marsh and Tor is of special interest for its marshy grassland (lowland fen meadow). Additional habitats, particularly damp neutral grassland, calcareous grassland and fixed dune grassland add to the diversity of the site. The freshwater and brackish ditches are also of special interest.

The site lies on the north side of Gower, between the village of Llanmadoc and the southern end of Whiteford Burrows spit. Cwm Ivy Marsh comprises a series of pastures reclaimed from adjoining saltmarsh and is protected from the tides by a seawall at its eastern end. Most of the Marsh sits on alluvial clay soils, with some areas of sandy peaty soil. Cwm Ivy Tor is a steep cliff of Carboniferous Limestone rising to just over 50m and its thin, free-draining soils are derived from wind-blown sand and the underlying Carboniferous Limestone.

Cwm Ivy Marsh contains a number of marshy grassland communities. Along the northern edge of the site there are tall stands of yellow flag *Iris pseudacorus*, with meadowsweet *Filipendula ulmaria*, greater bird's-foot-trefoil *Lotus uliginosus* and common spike-rush *Eleocharis palustris*. Blunt-flowered rush *Juncus subnodulosus* dominates in some areas, with water horsetail *Equisetum fluviatile*, yellow flag and greater bird's foot trefoil. Further areas of marshy grassland are characterised by soft-rush *Juncus effusus* and jointed-rush *Juncus articulatus*, with greater bird's foot trefoil and common sedge *Carex nigra*.

The drainage ditches of Cwm Ivy Marsh form the majority of field boundaries and support a range of ditch habitats, with areas of open water and emergent vegetation, freshwater and brackish water. Typical emergent species include yellow flag, fool's water-cress *Apium nodiflorum*, lesser water-parsnip *Berula erecta* and water horsetail *Equisetum fluviatile*. Other emergent species such as common reed *Phragmites australis* and branched bur-reed *Sparganium erectum* are locally abundant. The brackish influence at the eastern end of the site is indicated by species such as parsley water-dropwort *Oenanthe lachenalii*, grey club-rush *Schoenoplectus tabernaemontani* and sea club-rush *Scirpus maritimus*.

A number of notable plant species are present, including brackish water-crowfoot *Ranunculus baudotii*, thread-leaved water-crowfoot *Ranunculus trichophyllus*, sharp rush *Juncus acutus* and fine-leaved water dropwort *Oenanthe aquatica*. The nationally scarce marsh-mallow *Althaea*

officinalis occurs on the banks of the brackish ditches.

A number of additional habitats add to the overall diversity of the site. Damp neutral grassland, is widespread, characterised by soft rush with Yorkshire fog *Holcus lanatus*, water horsetail and common sedge. Wetter areas also contain marsh-marigold *Caltha palustris*, common fleabane *Pulicaria dysenterica* and water mint *Mentha aquatica*. Some pasture on the northern margins of the site resembles dune slack vegetation, with marsh horsetail *Equisetum palustre*, common sedge and silverweed *Potentilla anserina*.

Narrow-mouthed whorl snail *Vertigo angustior* occurs on Cwm Ivy Marsh, which forms part of the population of Whiteford Burrows, the largest known population in the United Kingdom.

Cwm Ivy Tor is a steep outcrop of Carboniferous Limestone, although much of the limestone is obscured by shallow sandy soils vegetated by fixed dune grassland. Typical species include red fescue *Festuca rubra*, lady's bedstraw *Galium verum* and common restharrow *Ononis repens*, with dewberry *Rubus caesius* and burnet rose *Rosa pimpinellifolia*. Where the limestone is closest to the surface, small areas of calcareous grassland exist with common rock-rose *Helianthemum nummularium*, sheep's fescue *Festuca ovina*, wild thyme *Thymus polytrichus* and crested hair-grass *Koeleria macrantha*. Notable species include lesser meadow-rue *Thalictrum minus* and the nationally scarce ivy broomrape *Orobanche hederæ*.

Remarks:

Narrow-mouthed whorl snail *Vertigo angustior* is listed on Annex II of the EC Habitat Directive (Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and Wild Fauna and Flora).

It also lies within the Gower Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.