

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

**SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST CITATION**

**CARMARTHENSHIRE**

**RHÔS PWLLYGAWNEN**

**Date of Notification:** 1988

**National Grid Reference:** SN 292300

**O.S. Maps:** 1: 50,000 Sheet number: 145  
1: 25,000 Sheet number: SN 22 and SN 23

**Site Area:** 31.5 ha

**Description:**

This is an extensive area of wet heathy pasture on shallow peat situated at the head of a tributary of Afon Cynin at 210 metres (687 feet) above sea level. The site is one of the last remaining blocks of unimproved acidic pasture in the district of Carmarthen and is representative of the type of grassland that was formerly widespread on poorly-drained soils in this area. Light grazing has produced a mosaic of sedge-rich swards amongst taller poor-fen grassland and patches of wet heath. Seasonal flushing adds further diversity to the habitats present.

Most of the site is covered by damp grassland dominated by Yorkshire-fog *Holcus lanatus*, sweet vernal-grass *Anthoxanthum odoratum* and crested dog's-tail *Cynosurus cristatus*. Whorled caraway *Carum verticillatum* is locally abundant in conspicuous stands, whilst other elements of this characteristic plant community include ragged-robin *Lychnis flos-cuculi*, devil's-bit scabious *Succisa pratensis*, rough meadow-grass *Poa trivialis* and marsh thistle *Cirsium palustre*. Interspersed within this drier grassland are seasonal flushes dominated by common sedge *Carex nigra* and carnation sedge *Carex panicea*, with much bog asphodel *Narthecium ossifragum*, heath rush *Juncus squarrosus*, round-leaved sundew *Drosera rotundifolia*, heath spotted-orchid *Dactylorhiza maculata*, common cottongrass *Eriophorum angustifolium* and lousewort *Pedicularis sylvatica*. Drier banks support a typical assemblage containing heather *Calluna vulgaris*, cross-leaved heath *Erica tetralix*, tormentil *Potentilla erecta*, heath bedstraw *Galium saxatile*, heath milkwort *Polygala serpyllifolia* and occasional bushes of bilberry *Vaccinium myrtillus*. The smaller enclosures are dominated by tussocky purple moor-grass *Molinia caerulea* in which patches of mature heather and cross-leaved heath are frequent.

Grasshopper warblers breed in the grey willow *Salix cinerea* carr that has invaded the wetter areas, and whinchats are frequent. Resident butterflies include marsh fritillary *Eurodryas aurinia* and small pearl-bordered fritillary *Boloria selene*, whilst the rare hoverfly *Microdon mutabilis*, occurs on the wet heath where the larvae develop inside ants' nests.

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