

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

SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST CITATION

CARMARTHENSHIRE

LLYN LLECH OWAIN

<u>Date of Notification:</u>	1993
<u>National Grid Reference:</u>	SN 568152
<u>O.S. Maps:</u>	1: 50,000 Sheet number: 159 1: 25,000 Sheet number: SN 51
<u>Site Area:</u>	10.2 ha

Description:

Llyn Llech Owain is a shallow water body situated on the highly acidic Namurian quartzite ridge just north of the village of Gorslas, near the western periphery of the South Wales Coalfield.

In spite of its comparatively low altitude (about 250 metres; 820 feet), the lake exhibits features that are more typical of the upland oligotrophic (deficient in plant nutrients) lakes of the mountainous massifs of mid and north Wales. Such lakes are rare in the county of Carmarthenshire. The acid-loving vegetation in and around the lake is based on a peaty substrate and only a few species of aquatic macrophytes which are adapted to such acidic conditions occur in the lake, the most noticeable being the floating rafts of yellow and white water-lily (*Nuthar lutea* and *Nymphaea alba* respectively). Areas of bogbean *Menyanthes trifoliata* extend outwards from the lake margin, and in the western corner, a substantial bed of bottle sedge *Carex rostrata* grows. The upland hoverfly, *Platycheilus tertallidus*, occurs in this sedgy area, and Llyn Llech Owain is one of the most southerly British stations known for this upland species. There is also much bulbous rush *Juncus bulbosus* var. *fluitans* and bog pondweed *Potamogeton polygonifolius*, whilst shoreweed *Littorella uniflora* and water horsetail *Equisetum fluviatile* occur on the margin of parts of the lake. As befits the lake's trophic (nutrient) status, the most numerous dragonflies are the four-spotted chaser *Libellula quadrimaculata* and the late-flying black darter *Symtetrum danae*, but a range of other species occurs, including the emperor *Anax imperator*, which is normally found inhabiting richer lowland waters.

The lake is encircled by vegetation communities which can tolerate the prevalent acidic conditions, namely much tussocky purple moor-grass *Molinia caerulea* and tufted hair-grass *Deschampsia cespitosa*, with swards of cross-leaved heath *Erica tetralix* in the damp areas; whilst the wettest hollows have strong growths of common cottongrass *Eriophorum angustifolium* with a little hare's-tail cottongrass *E. vaginatum* and, amongst *Sphagnum* mosses, the insectivorous round-leaved sundew *Drosera rotundifolia*; white-beaked sedge *Rhynchospora alba* also occurs. Scattered throughout are clumps of royal fern *Osmunda regalis*. To the south of the lake the vegetation is a little more diverse, with patches of various sedges, including common sedge *Carex nigra* and star sedge *Carex echinata*; heath milkwort *Polygala serpyllifolia*, devil's-bit scabious *Succisa pratensis* and lousewort *Pedicularis sylvatica* also occur.

Drier areas to the east of the lake and on the slopes to the north are clad with heather *Calluna vulgaris*, bilberry *Vaccinium myrtillus* and growths of the exclusively upland race (subsp. *strictissima*) of tormentil *Potentilla erecta*, on the thin mineral soils. Peripheral grey willow *Salix cinerea* scrub around parts of the lake and the boggy areas shelters many nesting birds, including redpoll and willow tit but, due to the lake's nutrient status, its resident avifauna is rather poor, though dabchick regularly breeds.

Remarks:

The site is owned and managed by Carmarthen District Council.

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