

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

SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST CITATION

POWYS

PENYGARNEDD MINE

Date of Notification: 1993

National Grid Reference: SJ 109237

O.S. Maps: 1:50,000 Sheet number: 125
1:25,000 Sheet number: SJ 12

Site Area: 2.1 ha

Description:

The Penygarnedd Mine adit is one of the most important winter hibernation sites for the lesser horseshoe bat *Rhinolophus hipposideros* known in Wales. This site is one of a number of old mines in the Upper Tanat Valley which together form one of the most important bat hibernaculum areas in Wales.

The site consists of a disused mine situated a mile or so south-east of the village of Penybontfawr, in the upper reaches of the Tanat Valley. The mine, cut into rocks of Ordovician age, was opened during the latter half of the last century for the extraction of phosphate-rich nodules which were used as an early form of agricultural fertiliser. The seam was extremely localised and the adit extends for only about 30 metres into what was once a well-wooded hillside.

Numbers of lesser horseshoe bat overwintering at this site have increased during the last decade, with a total of at least 140 individuals being recorded in October 1992. This bat is known to be very susceptible to disturbance and has declined in numbers in Britain and Western Europe over the past decade.

On the surface of the site brown podzolic soils support a range of plant communities, including deciduous woodland, dry heath and semi-natural grassland. Bordering the western and southern boundary is Afon y Wiber. These diverse habitats support a variety of invertebrate groups which are likely to be an important food source for the bats should winter feeding be necessary, and during the periods before and after hibernation.

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