

CARMARTHENSHIRE LBAP – WETLANDS HABITAT ACTION PLAN

Introduction

This grouped habitat action plan includes lowland fens, lowland raised bog, reedbeds and coastal and floodplain grazing marsh habitats.

Wetlands are one of our most important natural resources. They support many native wildlife species including important wetland plants, invertebrates, including dragonflies, birds, otter and water vole. They form part of a healthy and functional landscape.



Wetlands are also important for people. They provide us with fresh water by filtering out pollution and can act as water storage areas that reduce flood risk. They provide livelihoods for people. However, wetland habitats have declined greatly: fens have been drained, grazing marshes ploughed and reseeded, reedbeds polluted, and lowland bogs damaged through peat extraction.

Today wetland habitats are recognised for the benefits that they can provide us, including helping buffer the extremes associated with climate change. Managing our wetland habitats appropriately and recreating them in the right places could bring great benefits within the county.

Reedbeds (*Gwelyau cyrs*) can occur as small areas of habitat on the fringes of waterbodies and therefore are often quite fragmented. Along the coastline from Bynea to Kidwelly there are a number of small examples of reedbed. However, Witchett Pool at Laugharne Burrows and Ffrwd Fen near Pinged have large areas of reedbed. Our estuaries also support areas of reedbed such as the extensive area at Llangennech, overlooking the Loughor estuary.

A significant sized **lowland raised bog** (*Cyforgors ar dir isel*) occurs in the county at Cors Goch at Llanllwch and smaller examples occur near Carmel, at Beacon Bog, Carmarthen and along the ridge above the Tywi valley near Brechfa and Llanfynydd. They are increasingly rare examples of an important peatland habitat so important as a carbon sink. These habitats can support a range of specialised plants and invertebrates; Cors Goch is one of only two sites in South Wales for the black bog ant.

Significant areas of **grazing marsh** occur around the Burry Inlet and Carmarthen Bay area and **floodplain** grazing marsh along the lower reaches of the major river valleys, especially the Gwendraeth, Taf and Tywi valleys. This is part of a once more extensive area within the county which is now greatly declined. The most important areas of **coastal** grazing marsh occur in the lower Gwendraeth and Pendine areas. Here the marshes are relatively intact and retain significant wildlife interest – Pendine is important for wintering golden plover. Both areas are of landscape significance. (*Tir pori corslyd ar forfa arfordirol a gorlifdir*)

The Llanelli Levels (south-east of Llanelli) was a former area of coastal grazing marsh. Most of this now is degraded through urban and industrial development. However the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust at Penclacwydd has undertaken a significant amount of habitat creation.

Natural benefits of wetland habitats

As well as the inherent value of these habitats and for the species they support they provide us with a number of natural benefits:

- Flood alleviation and protection for or homes.
- Coastal/river floodplains are important grazing habitats for livestock.
- Reedbeds store and filter water - often used in mine water purification schemes.
- Lowland bogs store water and carbon helping with flood prevention and climate regulation.

Why are wetland habitats changing (from the *State of Nature* report: www.rspb.org.uk/stateofnature/)?

- Physical modification and drainage.
- Water pollution.
- Lack of active management.
- Climate change.
- Water abstraction.

Vision Statement and objectives

The overall vision for this plan is to maintain, extend and improve the condition of wetland habitats within the county and the BAP species associated with them. The LBAP would also seek to promote the creation and maintenance of wetlands of biodiversity value as part of large developments such as road schemes and business parks, particularly where water attenuation facilities are required. Any action would seek to meet one or more of the following objectives:

WET1 To positively manage these wetlands habitats in Carmarthenshire and connect and expand where possible

WET2 To maintain and expand the range and/or population of species associated with these habitat types

WET3 To identify and record priority areas of wetland habitats within Carmarthenshire outside SSSIs

WET4 To raise awareness of wetland habitats and the benefits they bring us

Associated BAP/S42 species (NB this may not be an exhaustive list):

Birds - Eurasian curlew, Tree Sparrow, Common cuckoo, Reed bunting, Common grasshopper warbler, Willow tit, Common starling, Northern lapwing, Yellow wagtail, Grasshopper warbler.

Mammals - Harvest mouse, Water vole, Otter

Herpetiles - Common Lizard, Common toad, Grass snake, Adder

Plants/Fungi - Tubular Water dropwort, *Euphrasia rivularis*, Pennyroyal, Fen orchid, Agaric, *Armillaria ectypa*

Invertebrates - Oxbow diving beetle, The Crescent (moth), Oblique Carpet , Heath Rustic, Double Dart, Blood vein.

Summary of action achieved by LBAP Partners (for more information contact the biodiversity officer – Biodiversity@carmarthenshire.gov.uk) or visit the national Biodiversity Action Reporting System - <http://ukbars.defra.gov.uk>:

2010–12

- Cors Goch NNR bog - scrub removal and access improvements – WTSWW WET1
- Llyn Llech Owain Country Park – bog restoration via tree clearance and ditch blocking – CCC WET1
- Wetland subgroup created for county – CCC/NRW/WT/RSPB/WWT WET1/4
- Ffrwd Farm Mire SSSI – management via grazing and scrub control – WTSWW WET1
- Habitat quality survey of ditches/floodplain in Llanelli for water vole – WTSWW/CCC/NRW WET3
- Bog restoration on Pyllau Cochion Common, nr Brechfa – ditch blocking – CCC WET1

2013

- REF-funded bog restoration project on upland commons – scrub management/management plans – CCC/NRW WET1
- Survey for harvest mouse at Median Farm – MISE WET2
- Improved access to Cors Goch NNR (lowland raised bog) – to allow machinery and animals for grazing – WTSWW/NRW WET1
- Scrub clearance - Cors Goch NNR to help raised bog – WTSWW WET1
- Scrub clearance in marshy grassland and reedbed margins to allow future open water creation – Ffrwd Farm mire NR – WTSWW WET1
- Ditch management - Ffrwd Farm mire NR – WTSWW WET1
- Sandy water park – lake margin habitat management undertaken WET1
- Pwll lagoon – fen management to remove birch and willow saplings WET1

2014

- Pond vegetation clearance on annual rotation started at Cors Goch NNR, SSSI – WTSWW WET1
- Invasive conifers removed from bog habitat at Llyn Llech Owain CP – ARC/CCC/Vols WET1
- Several km of ditch fencing completed in the Pembrey area to protect and enhance the ditch network habitat on the Gwendraeth Levels – NRW WET1
- Project in Pwll Lagoon LNR to keep fen floor clear of scrub. CCC/NRW WET1
- [REF funded bogs project](#) – peat survey of six bogs in common land – CCC WET3
- [REF funded bogs project](#) – hydrological survey of Figyn common – CCC WET3
- [REF funded bogs project](#) – ditch blocked on Figyn common to restore bog habitat – CCC WET3
- [REF funded bogs project](#) – firebreaks cut to protect bog habitat cut on 4 commons WET3
- [REF funded bogs project](#) – 3 information panels and leaflet produced to promote bog habitats - CCC WET4
- Harvest Mice - Bait pots set up and droppings collected and analysed from six sites in Carms – 1 positive result was from Ffrwd Farm Mire SSSI – MISE/WTSWW/CCC WET2
- Harvest Mice - Vol nest search at Ffrwd Farm Mire SSSI – MISE/WTSWW/Vols WET2
- Conservation grazing of marshy grassland and cutting back reedbed to maintain place of present interface at Ffrwd Farm Mire SSSI – WTSWW WET1

- Grazing introduced and monitoring programme started at Garn South, Carmel NNR – WTSWW WET1

2015

- Cleared encroaching vegetation from an area of Ffrwd fen for rare marsh pea - WTSWW WET1/2
- [HLF Carmarthenshire Bogs Project](#) – ditch blocked on Figyn Common - CCC WET1
- HLF Carmarthenshire Bogs Project – firebreaks cut on 3 commons with bogs - CCC WET1
- HLF Carmarthenshire Bogs Project – knotweed treated on Pyllau Cochion common - CCC WET1
- Analysis of peat core from Pyllau Cochion Common – Swansea Uni WET3
- Meetings to discuss Carmarthen Wetlands Project and management required – CCC/NRW WET1
- Hydrological survey of Gwendraeth levels – RSPB/NRW WET3
- Scrub managed invading on to open bog habitat at Carmel NNR – WTSWW WET1

Future proposed action

- Consider management of CCC-owned wetland habitat adjacent to WWT – CCC WET1
- Look at water flow through Llanelli wetlands area around WWT and Morfa Berwig – NRW WET3
- Continue with HLF Carmarthenshire Bogs Project WET1
- Management of wetland area below Kidwelly Castle – Burns Pet Foods/NRW – WET1
- Coedbach marshes – habitat management and visitor access – RSPB WET1/4
- Carmarthen – manage wetland area on edge of town – including for public open space – CCC/NRW WET1

Useful links:

www.wildlifetrusts.org/wildlife/habitats/wetlands-and-rivers

www.wwt.org.uk/visit/llanelli/

www.rspb.org.uk/futurescapes/

www.wetlandvision.org.uk/

<http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-1433>

www.biodiversitywales.org.uk/en-GB/Wetlands

Where to see these habitats in Carmarthenshire:

Reedbeds/Fen: Ffrwd Fen near Pinged; Millennium Coastal Park

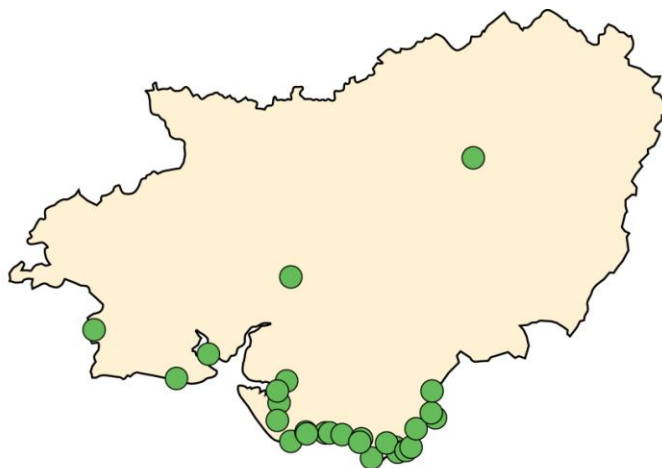
Grazing marsh: Pendine – Ginst point; coast between Pembrey and Kidwelly

Lowland raised bog: Cors Goch NNR (contact WTSWW)

Maps used with permission of Countryside Council for Wales 2004. Extracted from *Priority Habitats of Wales: a technical guide*, edited by P. S. Jones, D. P. Stevens, T. H. Blackstock, C. R. Burrows and E. A. Howe., 2003.

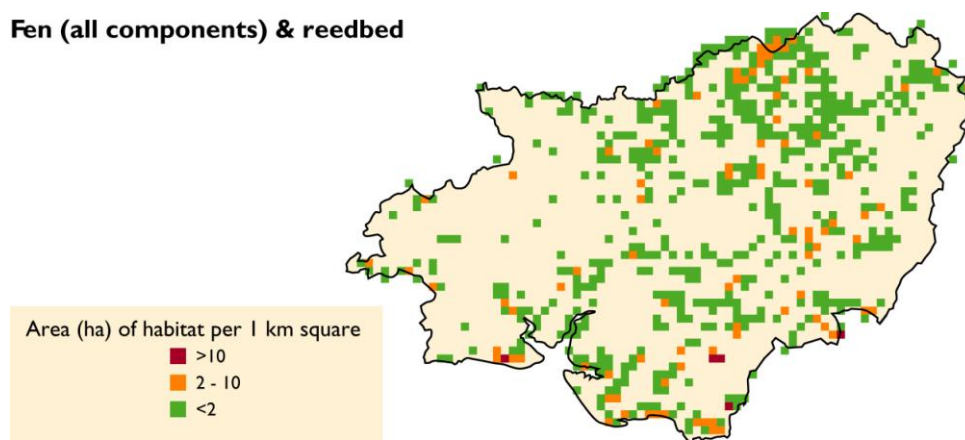
Reproduced from the Ordnance Survey map with the permission of the Controller of HM Stationery Office, Crown Copyright Reserved-LA 0997L

Reedbed



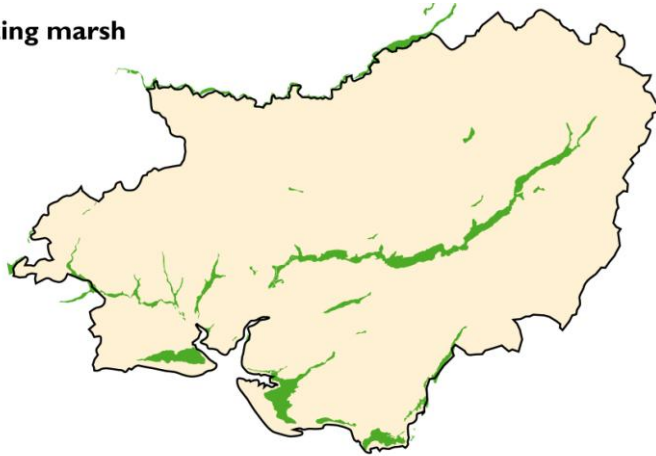
Distribution of sites with reedbed within Carmarthenshire. Data are summarised from the RSPB survey of Welsh reedbeds (Tyler, 1993).

Fen (all components) & reedbed



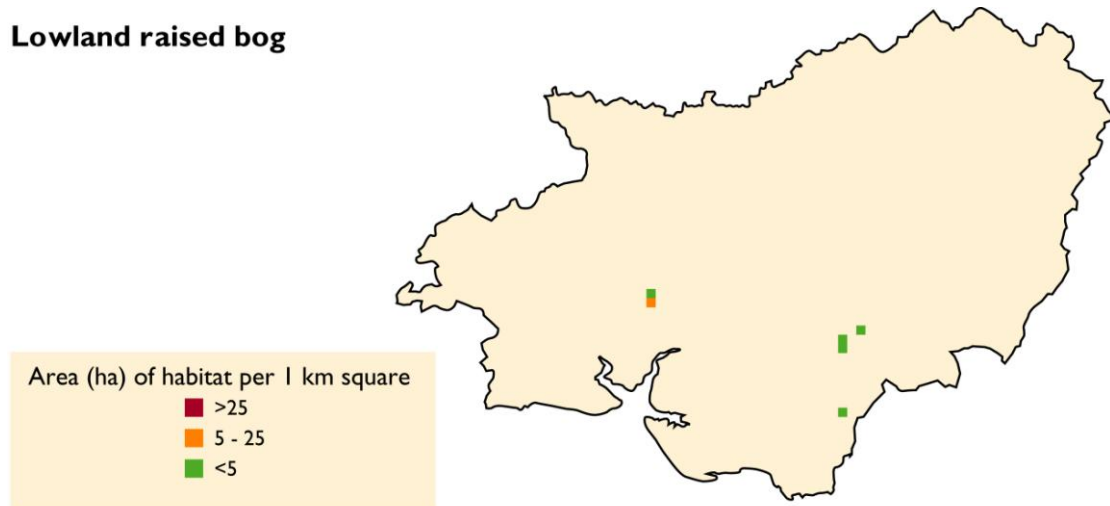
Distribution of 1 km squares with habitats referable to the fen and reedbed HAPs within Carmarthenshire. Data comprise lowland examples of the three Phase I categories of fen (basin, valley and floodplain mire), flush and swamp and are summarised from the NCC/CCW Lowland Habitat Survey of Wales (1987-1997).

Coastal & floodplain grazing marsh

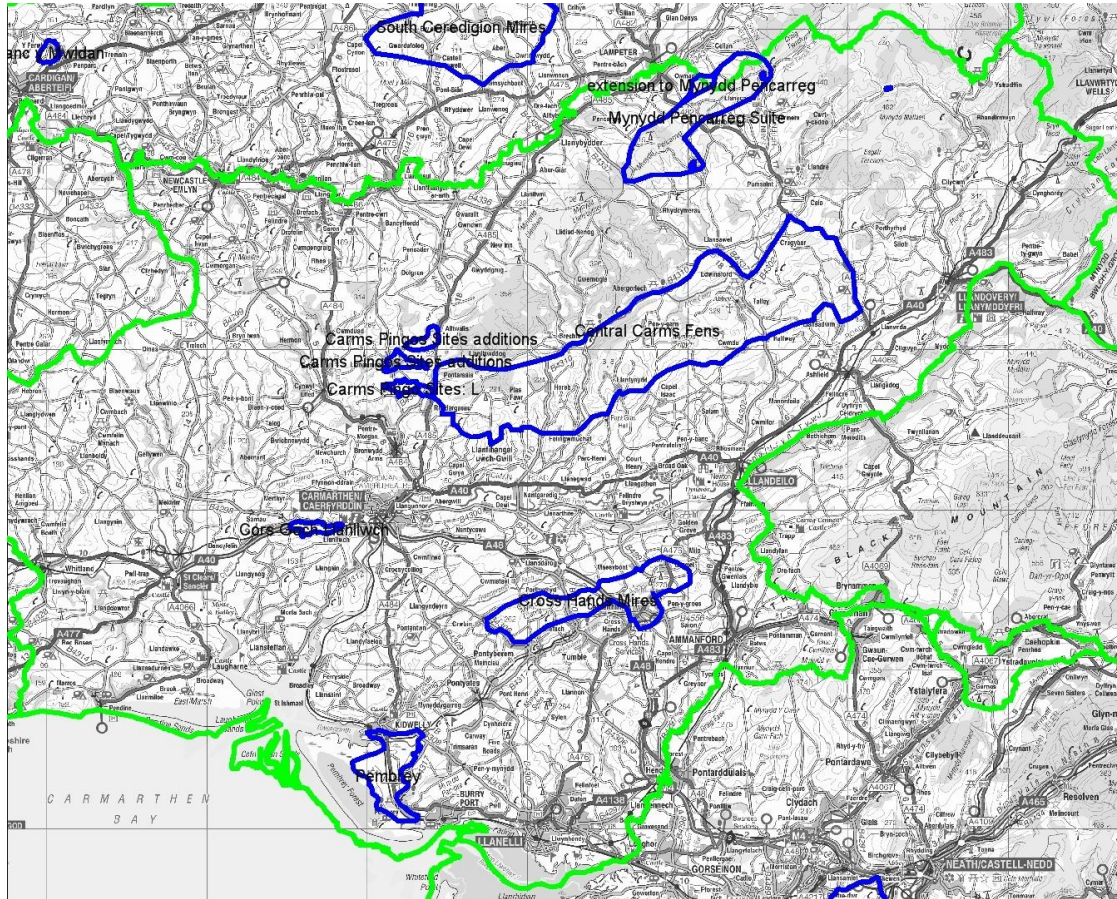


Distribution and extent of sites with coastal & floodplain grazing marsh habitat within Carmarthenshire. Data are summarised from the CCW Inventory of Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marshes Dargie & Dargie, 1998), based largely upon the NCC/CCW Lowland Habitat Survey of Wales (1987-1997).

Lowland raised bog



Distribution of 1 km squares with lowland raised bog within Carmarthenshire. Data are summarised from the NCC/CCW Lowland Habitat Survey of Wales (1987-1997) and comprise raised bog and areas of modified bog assignable to this priority type.



Wales Biodiversity Partnership priority wetlands areas Carmarthenshire



Partneriaeth Bioamrywiaeth Sir Gaerfyrddin
Carmarthenshire Biodiversity Partnership

www.carmarthenshirebiodiversity.co.uk

The [Carmarthenshire Biodiversity Partnership](#) (CBP) is made up of the following organisations: [Carmarthenshire County Council](#) (CCC), [Wildlife Trust of South and West Wales](#) (WTSWW), [Natural Resources Wales](#) (NRW), [RSPB](#), [Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust](#) (WWT), [Carmarthenshire Bird Club](#) (CBC), [National Botanic Gardens Wales](#) (NBGW), [Butterfly Conservation](#) (BC), [Carmarthenshire Rivers Trust](#) (CRT), [National Trust](#) (NT), [Botanical Society of the British Isles](#) (BSBI), [Llanelli Naturalists](#) (LN), [Bat Conservation Trust](#) (BCT), [West Wales Biodiversity Information Centre](#) (WWBIC), [Amphibian and Reptile Conservation](#) (ARC), [Woodland Trust](#) (WT)