

Carmarthenshire Nature Recovery Plan

Wetlands includes lowland fens, lowland raised bog, reedbeds and coastal and floodplain grazing marsh habitats.

Wetlands are one of our most important natural habitats. They support many native wildlife species including important wetland plants, invertebrates, (e.g. dragonflies), birds (e.g. grasshopper warbler) and mammals (e.g. 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 and drainage.

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 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** 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

Wetlands

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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.

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.

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.

Lowland Raised Bog



Floodplain Grazing Marsh



Associated priority species (NB this may not an exhaustive list!):

Birds

Eurasian curlew
Common cuckoo
Reed bunting
Common grasshopper warbler
Willow tit
Common starling
Northern lapwing
Yellow wagtail
Tree sparrow
Grasshopper warbler
Hen Harrier

Mammals

Harvest mouse
Water vole
Otter

Invertebrates

Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary
Oxbow diving beetle
Narrow-mouthed Whorl snail

Herpetofauna

Common toad
Grass snake
Adder
Common lizard

Plants/lower plants/fungi

Euphrasia rivularis
Pennyroyal
Tubular Water dropwort
Marsh Honey Fungus
Veilwort (liverwort)

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, lower reaches of the Gwendraeth, Taf and Tywi valleys.

Lowland raised bog: Pyllau Cochion, near Horeb, Mynydd Ystyfflau-carn

Vision statement and objectives

The overall vision is to maintain, extend and improve the condition of wetland habitats within the county and the priority species associated with them. We 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:

- ▶ To positively manage these wetlands habitats in Carmarthenshire and connect and expand where possible
- ▶ To maintain and expand the range and/or population of species associated with these habitat types
- ▶ To identify and record priority areas of wetland habitats within Carmarthenshire outside SSSIs
- ▶ To raise awareness of wetland habitats and the benefits they bring us

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/

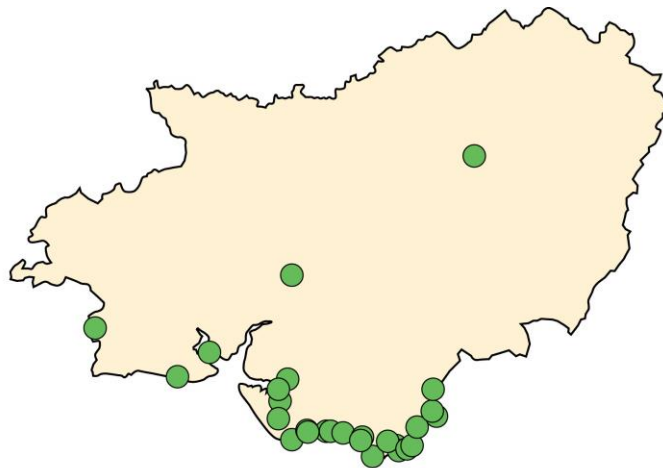
<http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-1433>

<https://www.biodiversitywales.org.uk/Wetlands>

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.

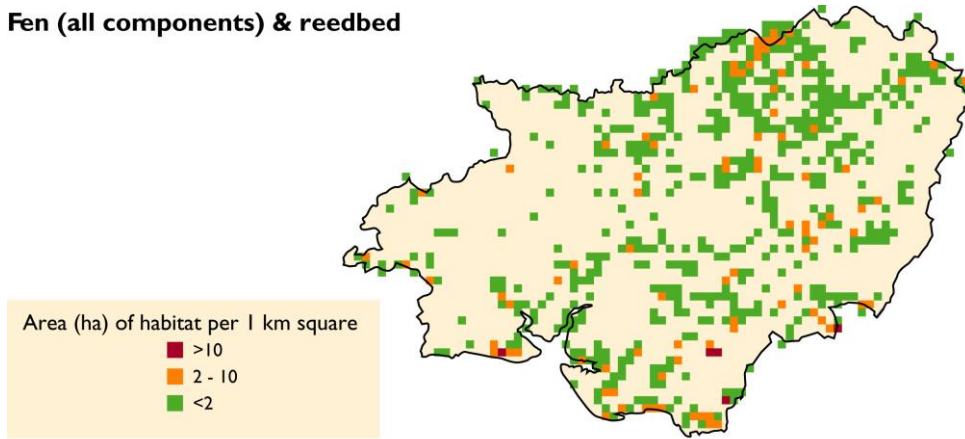
Reproduced from the Ordnance Survey map with the permission of the Controller of HM Stationery Office, Crown Copyright Reserved-LA 0997L

Reedbed



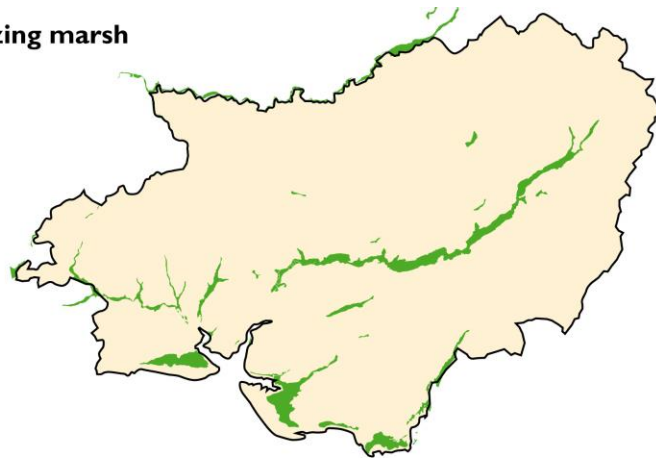
Distribution of sites with reedbed within Carmarthenshire. Data are summarised from the RSPB survey of Welsh reedbeds (Tyler, 1993).

Fen (all components) & reedbed



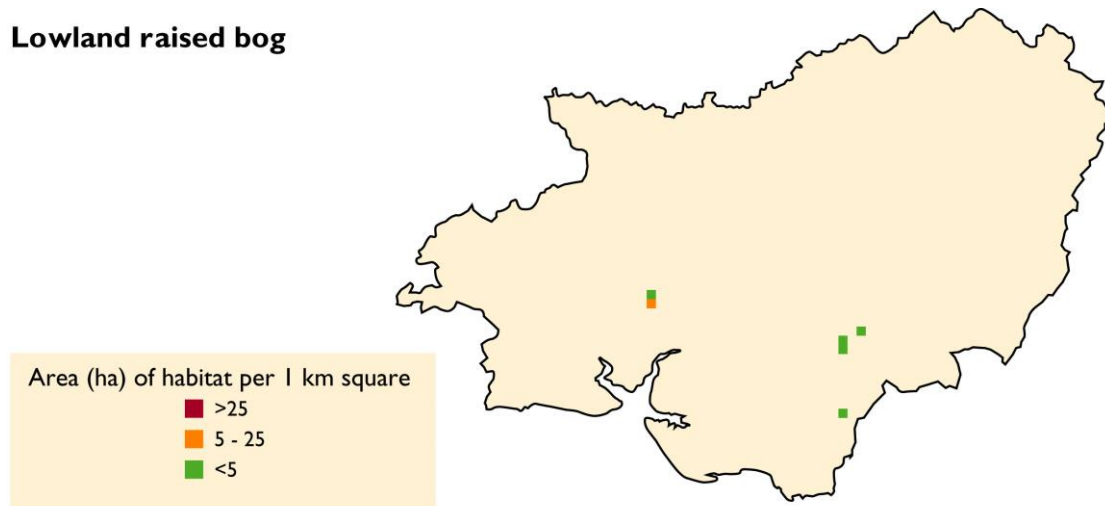
Distribution of 1 km squares with habitats referable to the fen and reedbed HAPs within Carmarthenshire. Data comprise lowland examples of the three Phase I categories of fen (basin, valley and floodplain mire), flush and swamp and are summarised from the NCC/CCW Lowland Habitat Survey of Wales (1987-1997).

Coastal & floodplain grazing marsh

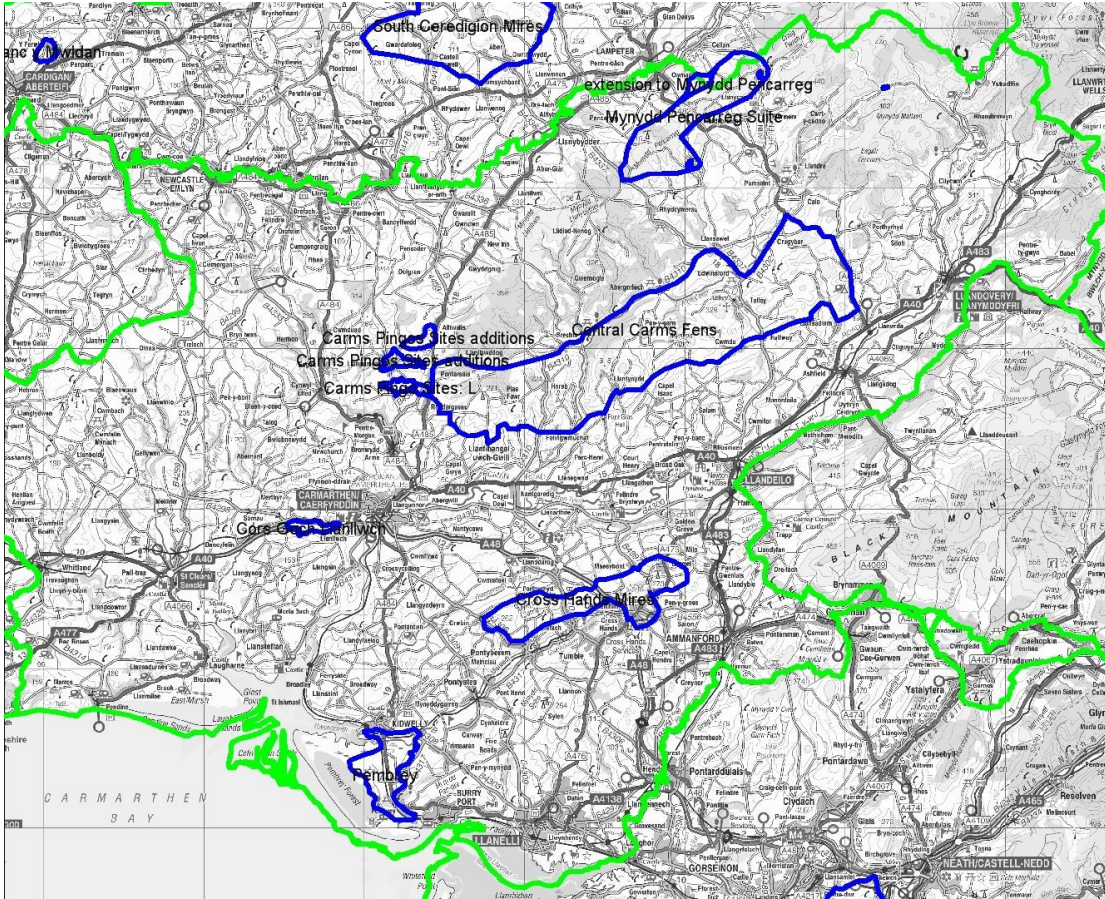


Distribution and extent of sites with coastal & floodplain grazing marsh habitat within Carmarthenshire. Data are summarised from the CCW Inventory of Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marshes Dargie & Dargie, 1998), based largely upon the NCC/CCW Lowland Habitat Survey of Wales (1987-1997).

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