

Wildlife in your Ward – Ammanford/Pontamman

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Nature Partnership



The **Carmarthenshire Nature Partnership** has produced this profile to highlight some of the wildlife, habitats, and important sites in your local area.

Carmarthenshire is justly celebrated for the variety within its natural environment, from the uplands in the north-east of the county to our magnificent coastline.

Every ward contributes to the rich and varied network of wildlife habitats that make up the county, whether that be woodlands, grasslands hedgerows, rivers or gardens. There are still gaps in our knowledge about Carmarthenshire's natural environment and the wildlife it supports. Despite having a wealth of data, some species and pockets of special habitats remain unrecorded and unmapped. There is always more to find out.

Wildlife and our natural environment reflect local culture and past human activity. We see this in the field and hedgerow patterns in our agricultural landscapes, and in areas previously dominated by industry where, today, new habitats develop on abandoned land. And our farm, house and street names provide clues to the history of our natural environment.

The mosaic of habitats in Ammanford and Pontamman make up an **ecological network**. If these habitats are well managed, are well connected and are sufficiently extensive, they will support a diversity of species and help to make a **resilient** natural environment.

A **resilient** natural environment supports wildlife and provides a range of **ecosystem services**, e.g. agricultural products, pollinators, timber, drinking

water, regulation of floods and soil erosion, carbon storage and recreation and inspiration.

Find out more at:

<https://bit.ly/3u12Nvp>

We hope it you will find this profile interesting and that it might encourage you to explore your local area and record what you see. There are links in the profile that will help you to find out more and take action locally.

Thank you to all those in Ammanford and Pontamman wards who have already sent information and photos. These profiles can be updated so please continue to send us information about the Wildlife in your Ward'.

Funded by Welsh Government through the Local Nature Partnership Cymru project.

Produced by Carmarthenshire County Council as part of the Carmarthenshire Nature Partnership

For further information please contact: Biodiversity@carmarthenshire.gov.uk

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Ammanford and Pontamman wards

Situated at the western edge of the South Wales Valleys, Ammanford and Pontamman have been dominated by the history of local coal mining. The Loughor and the Amman rivers run through the area, bringing wildlife into the wards. They are evidence of how we can improve the water quality of our rivers and restore their biodiversity: the Loughor, in particular, is now considered by some to be one of the county's richer salmon rivers. The wooded riverside walk and cycle path leads from Ammanford to Brynamman. Wildlife is quick to colonise ex-industrial sites, which can become rich in a range of versatile wildlife and the railway line is a valuable wildlife corridor. Towns provide a large proportion of available wildlife habitat is provided by gardens, which are the 'green lungs' of our built environment.



Special species in your ward...

All the species in your ward are important in some way and help make your natural environment special. Some of the species recorded in Ammanford and Pontamman are listed by Welsh Government as being of principal importance for biodiversity in Wales – so your area is important. Here are some species highlights from your ward.



The blackbird was the most recorded bird in Ammanford/Pontamman. Our native blackbirds are joined in the winter by birds migrating from northern Europe. Research has revealed that at least 12% of the blackbirds present in Britain and Ireland during the winter are migrants.



Look for ivy-leaved toadflax creeping along old walls and pavements. Its flowers resemble those of snapdragons. They can provide important food for pollinators such as wall-nesting solitary bee species.



Otter numbers have recovered from a serious decline and are now recorded on watercourses and linked habitats in your ward. Today road traffic accidents are one of the main causes of death and a lack of suitable isolated breeding sites may limit breeding success, so they are still vulnerable.



Areas in and around towns and villages can be excellent habitats for hedgehogs, and they often prefer them over farmland. There are good records of hedgehogs in your area. 'Wild' areas/log piles/holes in fences all help hedgehogs and other wildlife in our gardens.



The painted lady is one of over 20 butterfly species recorded in your area. It is a summer migrant to the UK from N. Africa, and southern Europe; sometimes it arrives here in enormous numbers. A frequent visitor to gardens, it will feed on buddleia and other flowers.

How can you help?

If we want to protect the wildlife in Ammanford and Pontamman, help from people who live here can make a real difference. There are many groups and individuals recording their local wildlife and managing areas for Nature in the county.

➡ Why not visit the Council's biodiversity web pages and the section on Priority Habitats and Species in the county: <https://bit.ly/3gsZgyP>

➡ There are no fungi records and records of only nine moth species records have been sent to the local record centre for your wards. Why not help by sending in records of what you see?

➡ Discover what is in your area – take a closer look at what is around you – let us know. It's amazing!

➡ Manage areas in your local school, park and garden for wildlife – make space for Nature.

➡ Get involved with a local conservation group – volunteer some of your time for Nature.

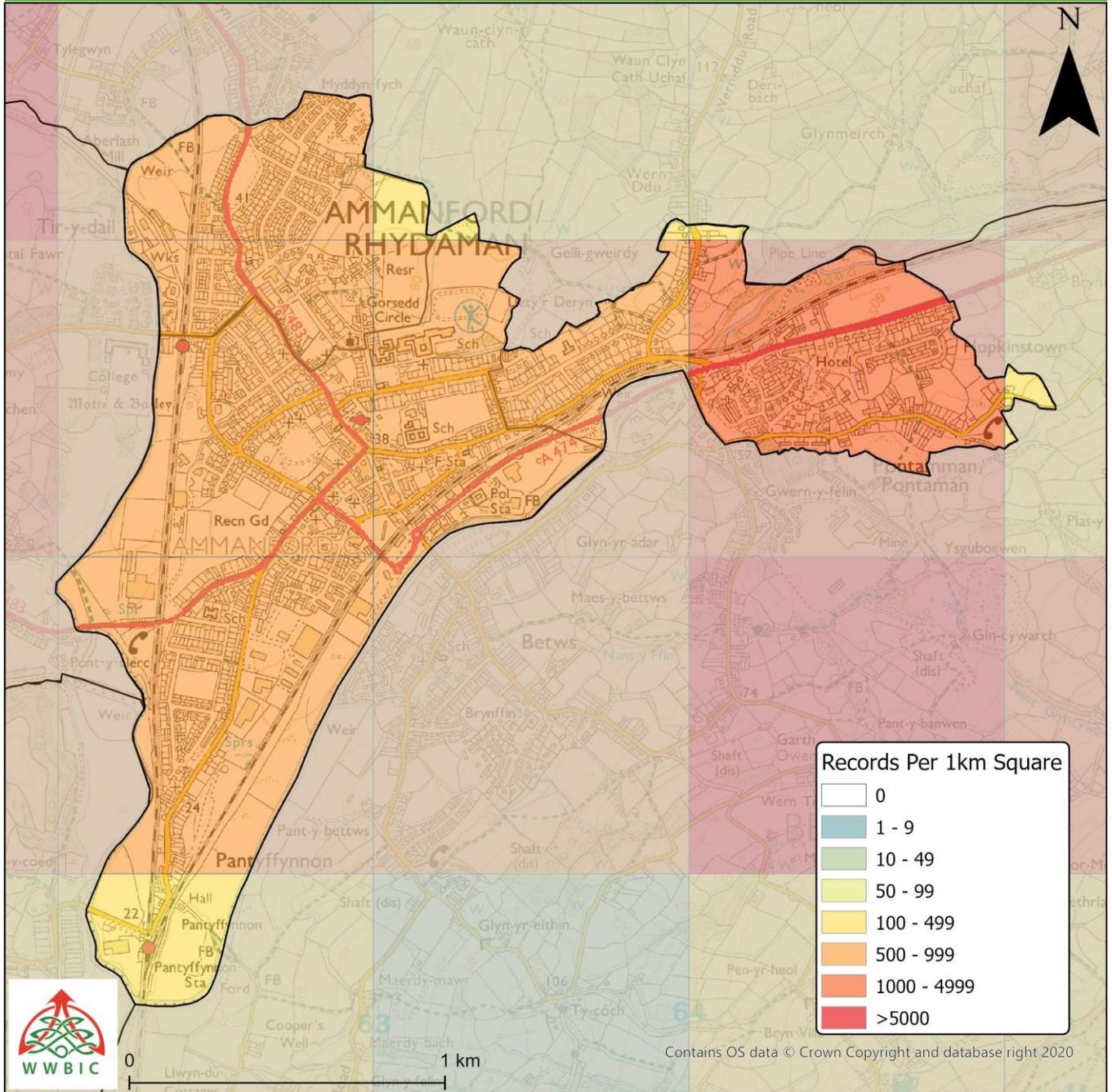
For a range of ideas visit: <https://bit.ly/2EENrZ6>

Useful links:

- Carmarthenshire biodiversity web pages: <https://bit.ly/3jb2Krl>
- Carmarthenshire Nature Recovery Plan: <https://bit.ly/2QqmfQe>
- Wales Biodiversity Partnership: <https://www.biodiversitywales.org.uk/Home>



Species records in this ward held by the West Wales Biodiversity Information Centre - Dec 2020



Help record the species in your area

West Wales Biodiversity Information Centre (WWBIC) is a valuable source of information about the county's wildlife and anyone can contribute. Common species are often under-recorded so you don't need to be an expert.

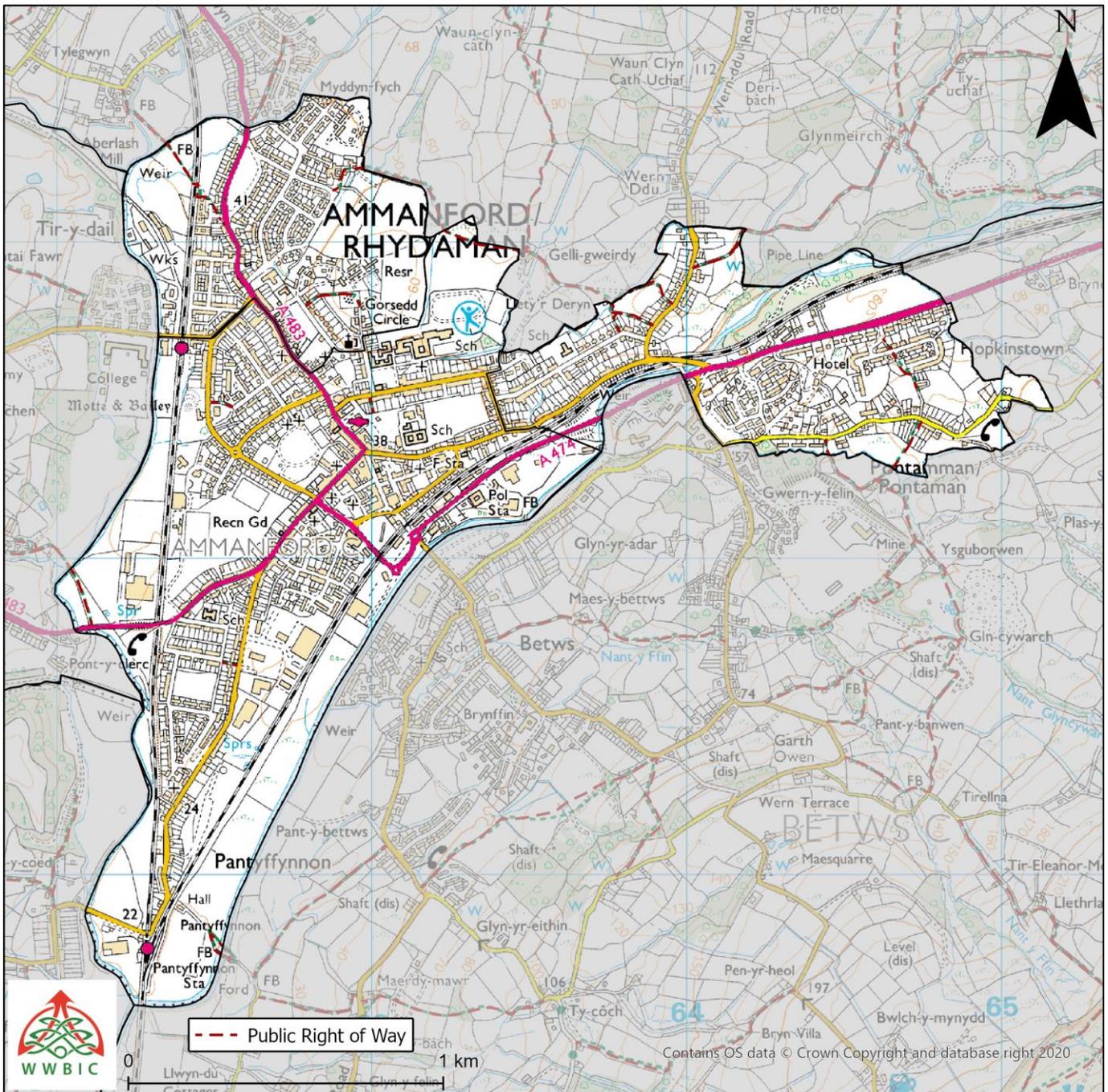
WWBIC holds a lot of biological records for your wards (see the map above).

Why not record the species that you see in your garden or when you are out and about? There are several ways you can record with WWBIC, by email, on the WWBIC website or using the LERC Wales App. More information can be found here: <https://www.wwbic.org.uk/wildlife-recording/>

There are many websites that can help with species identification. If you are on social media why not join West Wales Biological Recording (<http://www.facebook.com/groups/westwalesbiorecording/>)



Special sites in your area



➡ Urban areas may not have extensive Public Rights of Way nor any protected sites but they can still be great places to walk and see wildlife. Buildings, cemeteries, parks and even cracks and crevices can provide homes for some fascinating wildlife, including swifts and swallows, hedgehogs, bats and an array of interesting plants and insects. We also know that gardens are increasing important for wildlife so there might be plenty to see from you backdoor. Why not take a closer look?

➡ In Carmarthenshire we have a network of 'designated' sites, protected at a national or international level – these are the best examples

of particular habitats in Carmarthenshire or even the UK and/or places where important species live. They are the cornerstones of conservation work, protecting the core of our natural heritage. Want to find out more? Visit the Natural Resources Wales website - <https://bit.ly/2YwEybo>.

NB. These protected sites do not necessarily have public access unless they have a Public Right of Way passing through them or are Open Access Land (see next page).

➡ Locally we also have nature reserves with important habitats and species which are managed by a range of organisations. Find out more at: <https://bit.ly/2LcLJKM>



➔ Carmarthenshire has a network of Public Rights of Way (PROW). These footpaths are open to everyone to enjoy and a great way for you to explore your local area and the habitats and wildlife within it. The county also has areas of 'Open Access land'.



➔ 'Open Access land', under the CROW Act (2000), consists of open country (mountain, moor and heath land) and 'registered common land. It also includes areas of 'dedicated land' where owners, such as Natural Resources Wales, allow free access. In these areas you can walk wherever you like, and in the NRW managed forests you can also ride a horse or a bike on the forest tracks, but please be considerate of other users.



Find out more at: <https://bit.ly/3n2tahp>

➔ PROWs include Footpaths, Bridleways, Restricted Byways and Byways Open to All Traffic. There are over 2400 km of PROW across Carmarthenshire providing different levels of off road public access from walking to horse riding and cycling, each has its own unique character, you may already have your own favourite. Find out more at:



<https://bit.ly/2K7k9VK>



➔ The maps in this profile are Ordnance Survey maps (OS) – they are a great way to help you find local Public Right of Way and Open Access Land either through paper maps or through their phone App. Find out more at: <https://bit.ly/2Wi52Mo>



➔ The County also boasts numerous designated cycle paths, many of which make up part of the National Cycle network and Carmarthenshire's Active Travel network. There is over 100 km of designated cycle path in the county. Find out more at: <https://bit.ly/3gQopVC> and <https://bit.ly/3gPcck8>

➔ When you are out and about - always follow the Countryside Code: <https://bit.ly/37hFjJS>

Local Walks/sites to explore

You may already have your own favourite walk in your patch, where you experience the seasonal changes throughout the year. You may walk the same route regularly, but wildlife will not. So, keep your eyes peeled there is always something new to see/experience. But why not try walking another way? You might see something different but also the same sights – just in a different way.

Please tell us about your favourite walk or place to visit - here are some ideas.

General

➔ There are four local **Ramblers** groups in Carmarthenshire that explore the county. Find out more about the Ramblers' groups in Carmarthenshire: <https://bit.ly/3r6xZZn>

➔ **Walking Well Carmarthenshire** is an initiative which aims to encourage people of all ages and abilities to take advantage of the physical, social and mental health benefits offered by walking in groups of like-minded people. It does this by setting up walking groups around the County. Find out more: <https://bit.ly/2J48FCc>

➔ The **Discover Carmarthenshire** website promotes local walk and cycle routes: <https://bit.ly/3r35xYi>

Some local suggestions

- Amman Valley Riverside Path
- Pantyffynon to Brynamman along the River Amman

Your Ward

These are some of the photos we have received from you.



Meadow grasshopper © Lisa Jones