

Wildlife in your Ward – Betws



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 Betws 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 Betws ward 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

Betws Ward

Betws ward runs from the lower-lying more urban Amman Valley (where there is still plenty of evidence in the landscape of its former mining industry) steeply up through small fields with typically thick holly- and oak-rich hedgerows to the exposed and windswept plateau of Mynydd Betws, at just over 300 m. From here there are extensive views over Carmarthenshire and the Brecon Beacons. Adjacent to the streams that rise on the edge of the mountain and descend towards the Amman are mosaics of scrub, woodland, marshy grassland and small pockets of heathland, making for a landscape that has retained its much of biodiversity and habitats and one that has escaped significant agricultural intensification.



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 Betws 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.



Swallow, swifts and house martins are all recorded in your ward. Their arrival from Africa is a sign that summer is on its way. They all use buildings to nest, and feed on insects whilst on the wing. They are declining – you can help by providing space to them to nest.



Twenty fern species have been recorded in Betws. Look in woods, along hedge banks and even walls. The brown dots on the underside of a fern frond hold the spores, from which new plants eventually grow. Some ferns grow all year – a welcome splash of green in the winter months.



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.



The purple-blue flower heads of devil's-bit scabious can be found in damp meadows and marshes. It flowers between July and October, attracting a wide variety of bees and insects. It is also the food plant for the rare marsh fritillary butterfly, for which the Amman Valley is so important.



The garden tiger is one of the 380 moth species recorded your ward. It flies at night in July–August and can be found in gardens. The 'Woolly Bear' caterpillars feed on stinging nettles, docks, and many garden plants. It is suffering from the 'tidying up' of our countryside.

How can you help?

If we want to protect the wildlife in Betws, 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.

➡ The only reptile recorded in Betws is the common lizard, but 380 moth species have been recorded! Why not help by sending in records of what you see?

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

➡ 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, village and gardens for wildlife – make space for Nature.

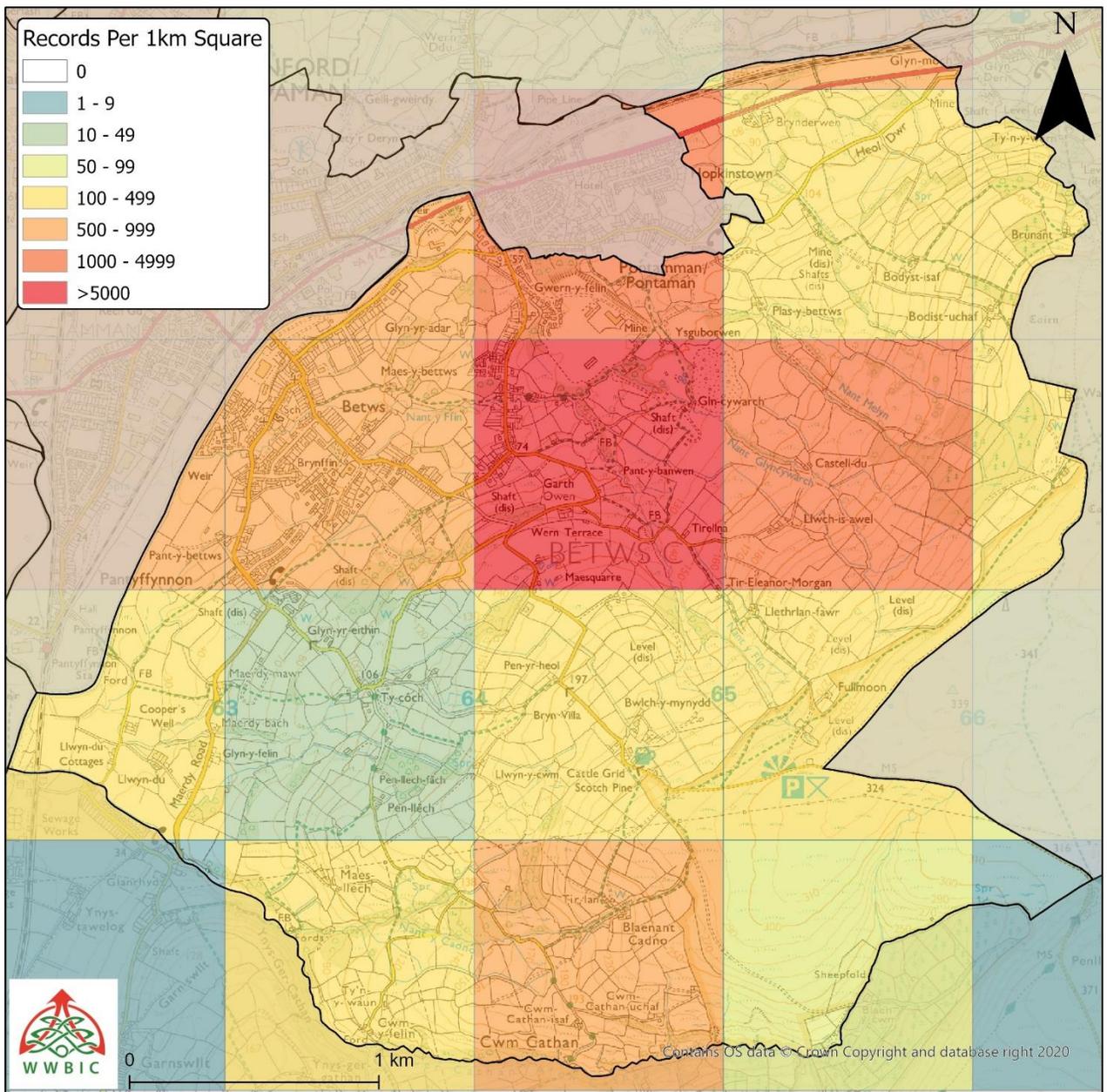
➡ Get involved with a local conservation group – volunteer some of your time for Nature.

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/2OqmfQe>
- Wales Biodiversity Partnership: <https://www.biodiversitywales.org.uk/Home>





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.

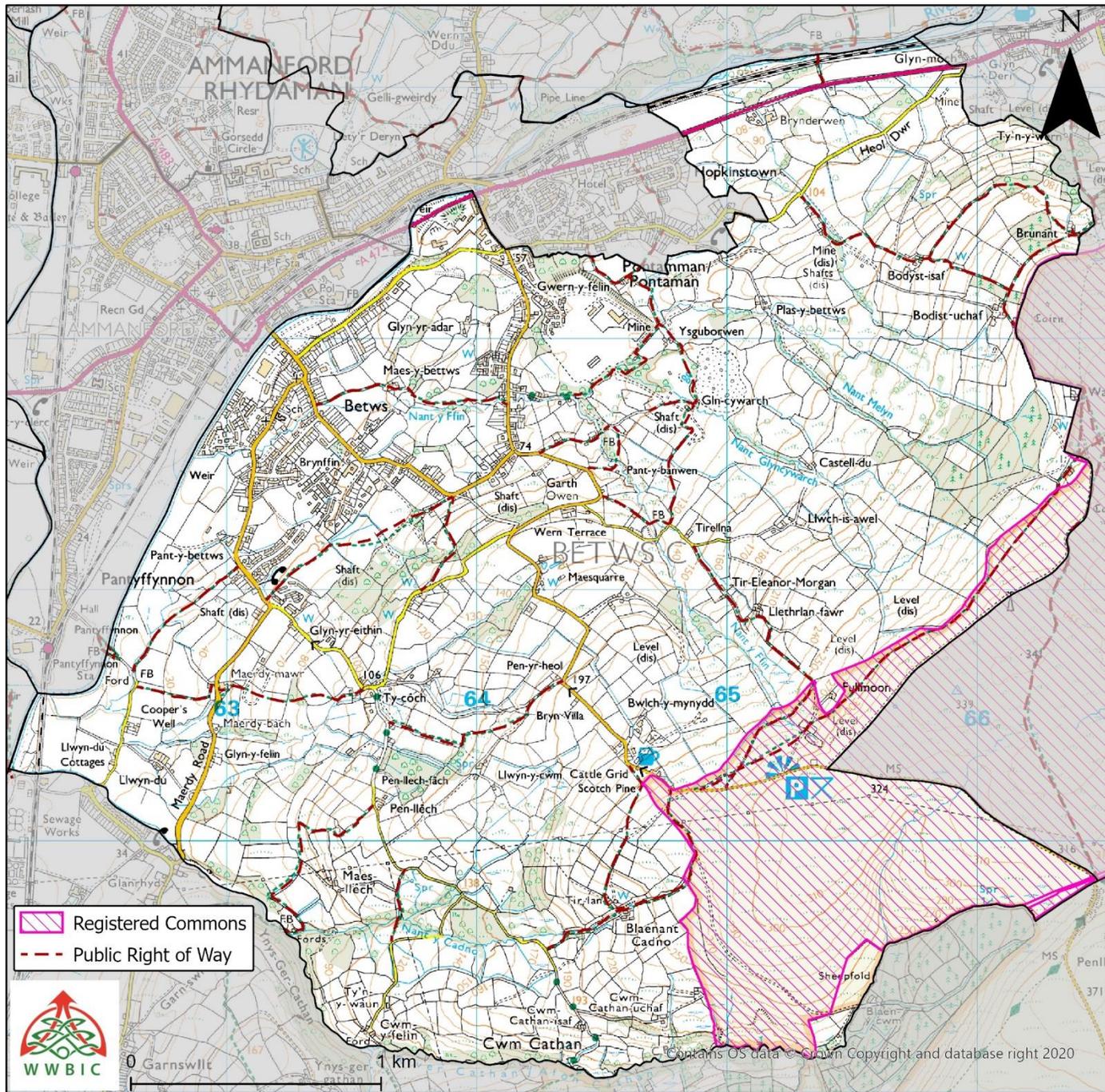
WWBIC holds a lot of biological records for Betws (see the map above) but there is one 1-km square with less than 50 species records. Can you help fill in the gap?

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



This map highlights places to walk and visit in Betws.

➡ 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>



➡ Your ward 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:

- Mynydd y Betws

Your Ward

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



Oak tree - © L.Wilberforce



Views from Mynydd y Betws