

CARMARTHENSHIRE

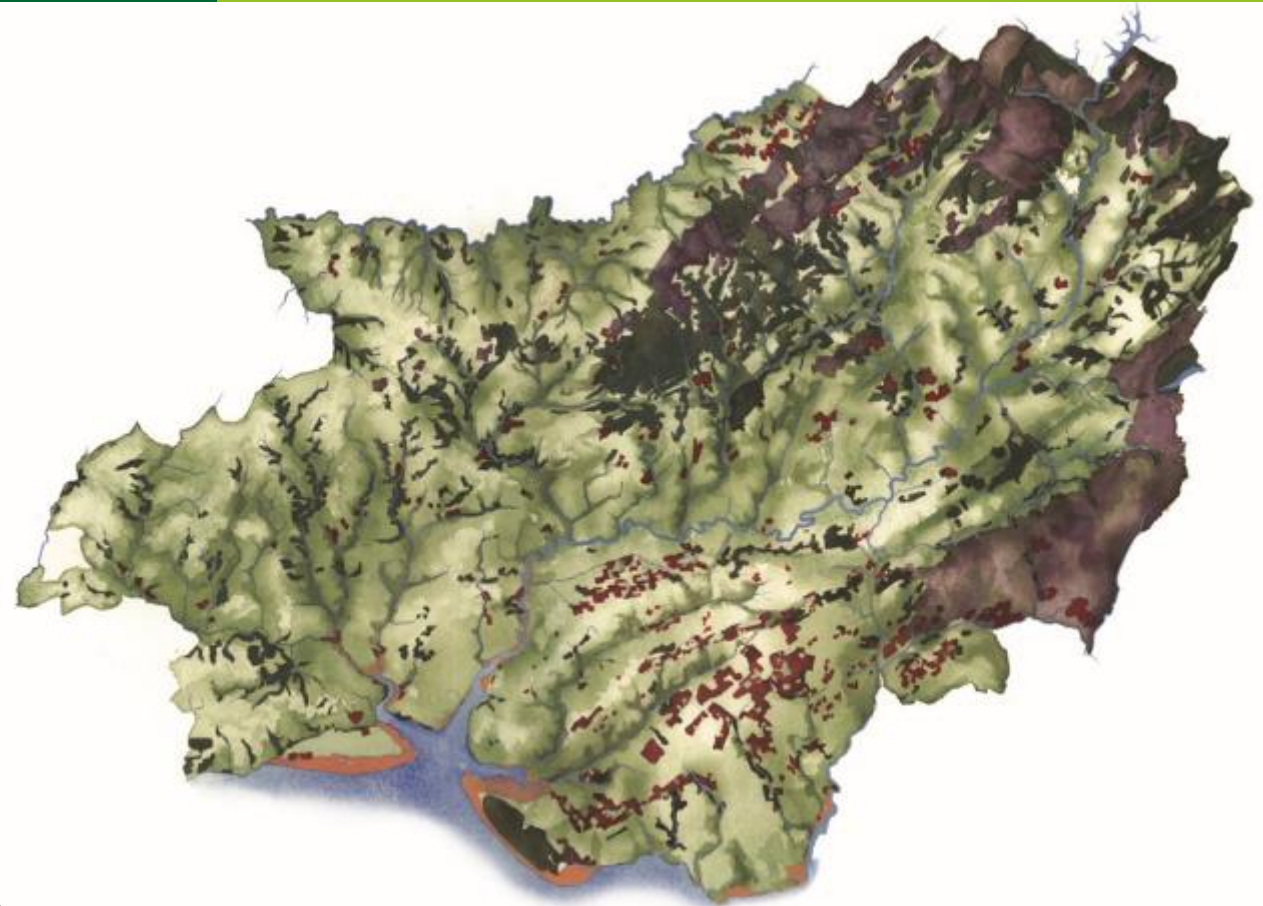
# Nature Notes

*Partneriaeth Natur*  
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*Nature Partnership*



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Carmarthenshire has some wonderful wildlife. These 'Nature Notes' are some highlights to encourage us all to take a closer look around us – even the common is special. Seen anything interesting – then why not send us a photo?



For more information about nature in the county then read our Nature Recovery Plan:  
[carmarthenshire.gov.wales/biodiversity](http://carmarthenshire.gov.wales/biodiversity)

Send your photos to: [Biodiversity@carmarthenshire.gov.uk](mailto:Biodiversity@carmarthenshire.gov.uk)



## Robin migration

Look closely and you will see the ring on this Robin's leg. Often thought of as regular garden birds, many migrate. Each autumn, Robins from northern and eastern Europe travel west to Britain to escape harsher winters. At the same time, some British Robins move south or into towns. This seasonal movement explains why Robins seem more numerous in winter and why individuals can be fiercely territorial when new arrivals appear. Was this bird ringed locally or in Europe?



## Dead wood

A dead branch still attached to a living tree may look insignificant or even unsightly to some, but it plays a vital role in nature. Providing perches for birds, entry points for insects to burrow in, and food for fungi that recycle nutrients back into the soil. Over time, these branches help create cavities and deadwood habitats that support a wide range of wildlife.



## Oak Beauty Moth

The Oak Beauty Moth is a striking night-flying insect with patterned grey and black wings that resemble lichen-covered bark. Its camouflage helps it avoid predators while resting on trees during the day. The caterpillars feed on oak and other deciduous trees. This moth is a good example of how insects are closely adapted to their habitats. Resting on the side of a house here gave us a chance to take a closer look and study its attractiveness.



## Fungus

Fungi are essential to healthy ecosystems. Often hidden from view, they break down dead plants and wood, releasing nutrients that other organisms depend on. Some form partnerships with tree roots, helping plants absorb water and minerals. Although fungi are sometimes overlooked, they quietly support us and the vast range of habitats where they occur by keeping natural cycles working.



### **Hazel flower**

Sometimes you really need to search for some bright colour on a gloomy day. Hazel flowers appear in late winter, long before most plants come into leaf. The male flowers form pale yellow catkins that release clouds of pollen into the wind. Female flowers bud-like female flowers with bright red styles to capture the pollen. Hazel relies on wind rather than insects for pollination and is one of the earliest signs that spring is approaching.



### **Honeysuckle leaves**

Honeysuckle leaves are soft, oval, and often slightly hairy, growing in pairs along climbing stems. They provide food for caterpillars and shelter for insects. In winter, some species retain their leaves, offering greenery when little else is growing. Eventually the leaves are joined by the honeysuckle's lovely scented flowers, which attract moths and other pollinators.



### **Seaweed stipe**

The stipe on a seaweed is the stem-like part of the algae that anchors floating fronds to the seabed. It is flexible, but strong enough to withstand the relentless waves and tides. Stipes lift the fronds toward sunlight, allowing seaweed to photosynthesise. Along rocky shores, seaweed create underwater 'forests' that provide shelter and food for marine life.



## Celandine leaves

Lesser celandine leaves are glossy, heart-shaped, and appear early in spring, often carpeting woodland floors. Their rich green colour helps them capture sunlight before trees come into leaf. These leaves store energy that allows the plant to flower quickly and then die back. Celandines are among the first wild plants to brighten our verges and woodlands in the spring.



## Wet woodland

Wet woodland is a habitat formed by waterlogged soils, streams, and seasonal flooding. Trees such as Alder and Willow thrive here, creating cool, shaded conditions. This environment supports mosses, fungi, insects, and birds that depend on constant moisture. Wet woodlands also help reduce flooding by slowing water flow and storing excess rain naturally. Often seen as of little importance they have been much reduced and neglected in the county.



### Twisted stem

This Hazel stem has an amazing twisted spiral appearance. This is caused by winding Honeysuckle . As its stems wind themselves around a branch, they can eventually distort its shape as the tree grows. In some cases, the honeysuckle remains embedded in the hazel's bark as they grow together. These 'twisters' are highly prized for making unique walking sticks and wands. .



### Bending, not breaking...

This Holly tree has been heavily influenced by the natural stone crag it is growing next to. It even has stones enveloped by the bottom of the trunk. More obviously is the amazing bend in the trunk. Holly trees are known for their resilience and ability to grow in various shapes. Here an injury or break to the main or 'leader' stem may have caused the tree to grow in such a dramatic way. The gnarled trunk here has created an interesting sculptural appearance.





## The wonders of moss

Here moss covers most of this Oak tree growing alongside a river. Beside the river it is likely benefit from constant moisture. Mosses do not have roots, so they absorb water and nutrients directly from rain and mist. Along rivers, they provide micro-habitats for tiny insects, and habitats for other plants to root into and for birds to hunt for food on and collect the moss for their nests.



## *Sphagnum capillifolium*

*Sphagnum capillifolium* is a type of bog moss that forms soft, spongy cushions in wet places. There are scattered records of it recorded in bogs, wet heath and upland moorland across Carmarthenshire Carmarthenshire, it helps create and maintain peatland habitats by holding large amounts of water. This moss plays an important role in storing carbon and supporting specialised plants and insects.

## Carmarthenshire Nature Partnership

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