

CARMARTHENSHIRE

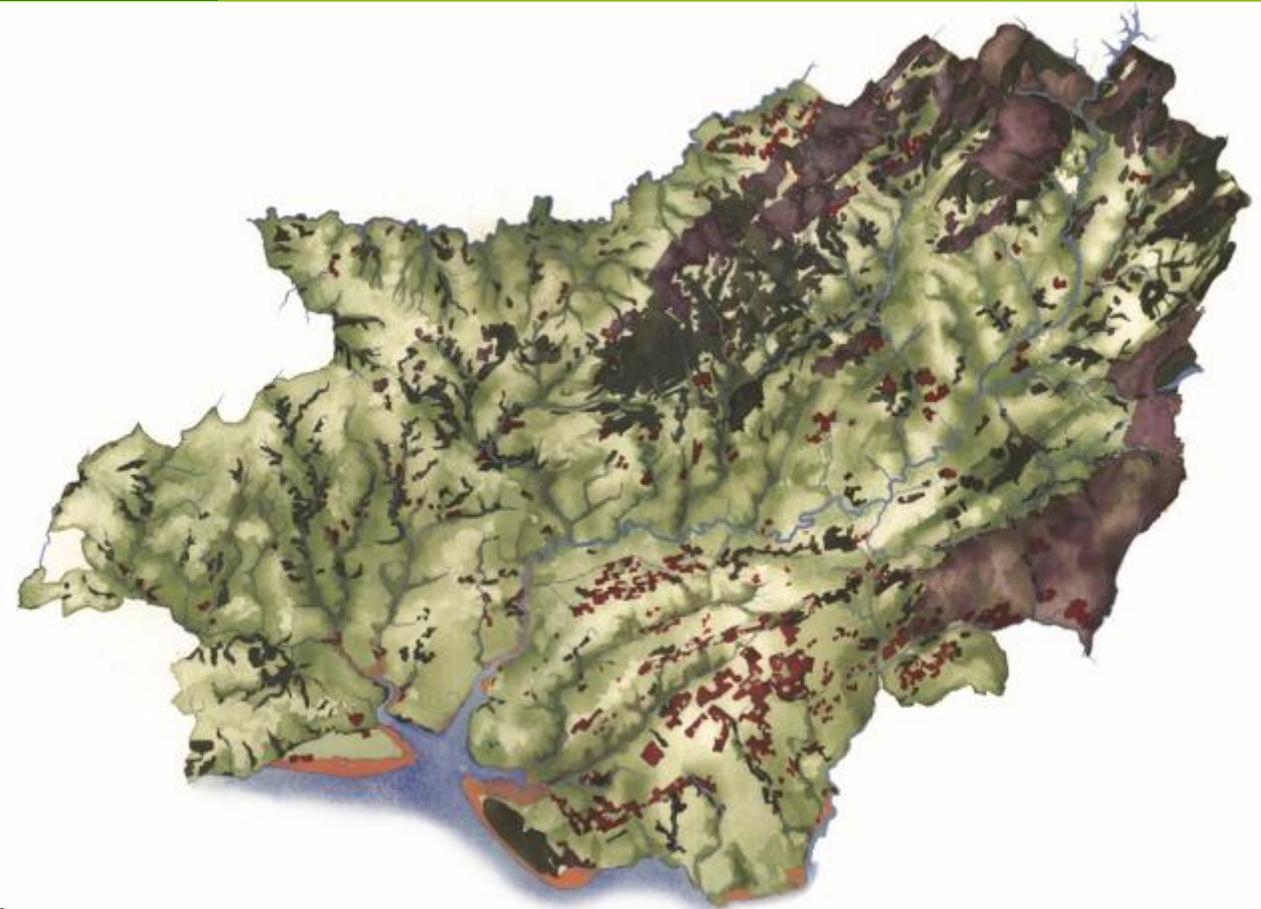
Nature Notes

Partneriaeth Natur
SIR GÂR • CARMARTHENSHIRE
Nature Partnership



JANUARY-MARCH 2025

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

Send your photos to: Biodiversity@carmarthenshire.gov.uk



Palmate newt

The palmate newt (*Lissotriton helveticus*) is normally olive or brown with some dark spots. The underside is yellow to orange, and the throat, unlike in the similar smooth newt, always unspotted. Here the newt has leucism – a condition of reduced pigmentation caused by a genetic mutation which inhibits melanin and other pigments from being deposited. Leucism is different from albinism because it does not affect the pigment cells in the eyes.



Dead Hedge

Dead hedges are wonderful habitats – ironically full of life. They provide shelter and nesting habitats for all sorts of wildlife, as well as food for insects.

A dead hedge is made up of woody material woven between vertical stakes. They provide a tangled maze and be built up over time, adding to it every time you have branches and twigs available. Dead hedges can be used to discourage people from walking across sensitive areas of a woodland.

[Build a dead hedge for wildlife](#)



Coral Spot Fungus

Coral Spot fungus (*Nectria cinnbarina*) is a (weak) pathogen of broadleaf trees. These were found on Hawthorn – standing out on the leafless winter branch. Here the fruiting bodies are mature and reddish and the ‘ascospores’ produced from these tiny reddish spore cases (perithecia) burst open when mature, releasing the spores. Rain and wind can disperse the ascospores to new sites of infection.



Storm Darragh

Storm Darragh caused significant tree loss in Carmarthenshire, with fallen trees impacting roads and footpaths, resulting in a substantial clean-up operation. Large areas within commercial forests were impacted with potential long-term effects on harvesting operations.

However, storm damage in a woodland can have benefits for biodiversity – creating space for new tree growth and natural regeneration and diversifying the woodland structure, providing deadwood habitat for insects and wildlife; essentially, allowing the woodland to adapt and become more resilient over time.



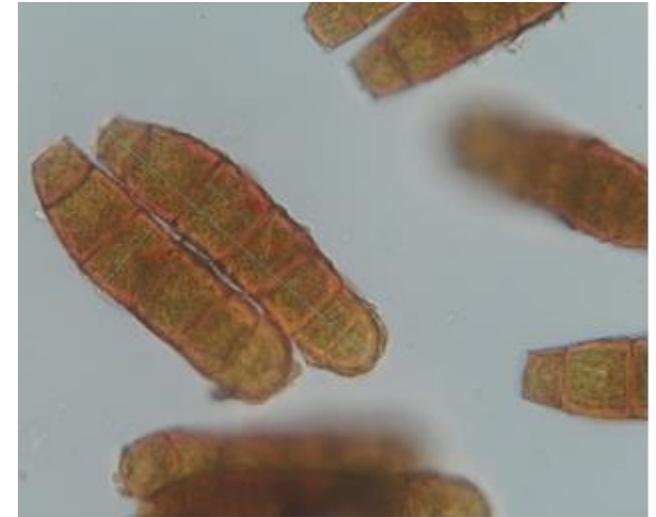
© Dave Astins

Desert Wheatear

This rare visitor to Britain, spotted for a few days in a car park at Pendine on 25 January, is a Desert Wheatear (*Oenanthe deserti*). Most records come from the autumn period.

This small, dark-winged bird found is an insectivorous species, normally found in in dry, open areas with sparse vegetation. Frequently seen perched up on posts, telephone lines, and rock mounds.

It is a migrant bird and a rare vagrant to western Europe, breeding in the Sahara and Arabian Peninsula and over winters in Pakistan and NE Africa – not Carmarthenshire!



© Theresa Greenway

Ulota phyllantha

This clump of the moss *Ulota phyllantha* was on an ash twig blown down by Storm Darragh, in a garden in Felingwm. At first glance it looks as though the shoots have been attacked by a fungus, but the little brown structures on the leaf tips are 'gemmae'. This species rarely produces capsules, so these gemmae are the main means of reproduction. A gemma is a single cell, or a mass of cells, or a modified bud of tissue, which detaches from the parent and develops into a new individual.



© Abbie Jordan

Yellow-necked Mouse

Peeping out of a nest box at the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust, this Yellow-necked Mouse is a species which is not often seen, and can be confused with the more common Wood Mouse. They were only identified as separate species in 1834. They are larger with a distinctive yellow band of fur that Wood Mice lack.

Normally nocturnal, they are good climbers, travelling large distances in trees in search of buds, seeds or small insects. More generally found on old woodland they can have extensive burrow systems where they store food and nest together in winter.



Sausage Beard Lichen

One of our more noticeable fungi, Sausage Beard Lichen (*Usnea articulata*) is a priority species in Wales. Industrial pollution caused a decline, so by 2000 it was known from fewer than 15 sites in coastal Pembrokeshire and Glamorgan. It is a good example of a species that when you start looking for it, it can pop up quite widely, from Cross Hands to Brechfa to Mynydd Mallaen. Sometimes it can be an idea to focus on records of just one species. Having a singular focus can often reap results.



Hedge weaving

Hedge flailing is the most common form of management in the county, but hedge laying can be seen more regularly now. Here the hedge has not been managed at all, but the tall annual growth of the hazel twigs has been woven back into the hedge. It should help make it denser.





Veteran Oak

This is an old but impressive Oak tree. But is it ancient? All ancient trees are veteran trees, but not all veteran trees are old enough to be ancient!

This is a veteran tree around long enough to have developed some of the features found on ancient trees – reduced crown, a low, fat and squat shape and a wide, sometimes hollow trunk.

However, these could result from natural damage, management, or the tree's environment. Veteran trees are usually only in their second or mature stage of life. This tree will hopefully be around some time yet.

Carmarthenshire Nature Partnership



Clwb Adar Sir Gaerfyrddin
Carmarthenshire Bird Club



MENTER AR GYFER
CADWRAETH NATUR CYMRU



INITIATIVE FOR NATURE
CONSERVATION CYMRU

LLANELLI NATURALISTS
NATURIAETHWYR LLANELLI



WEST WALES
BIODIVERSITY INFORMATION CENTRE
CANOLFAN WYBODAETH BIOAMRYWIAETH
GORLLEWIN CYMRU

