

CARMARTHENSHIRE

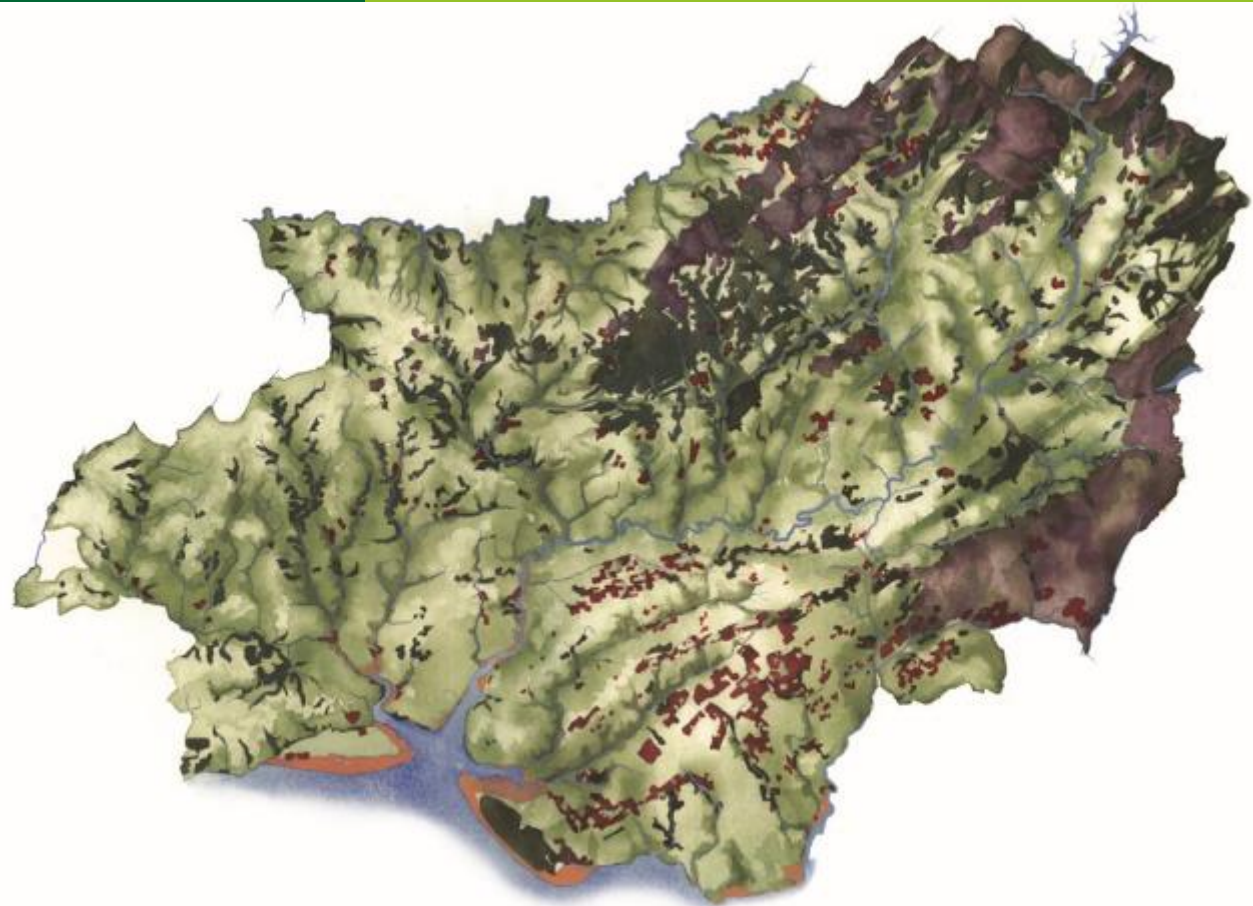
Nature Notes

JULY-SEPTEMBER 2025

Partneriaeth Natur
SIR GÂR • CARMARTHENSHIRE
Nature Partnership



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 the read our Nature Recovery Plan:
carmarthenshire.gov.wales/biodiversity

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



Endive flowers

A 'relaxed' approach to gardening can provide dividends and it's always worth taking a closer look when out enjoying your patch. Here an Endive lettuce (*Cichorium endivia*), which first produces salad leaves, but if left, grows a tall flowering stem with sky-blue flowers. Related to Chicory, the flowers are visited by various species of bees, including honeybees, leaf cutter bees, and ground-nesting bees, along with other insects like flies and beetles. These pollinators are attracted to the flowers, and their pollen.



Decaying leaves

Extreme temperatures this summer brought autumn early for some plants. The plant cells here are in various states of decay. The green colour of leaves comes primarily from chlorophyll, a pigment responsible for photosynthesis. Other pigments include carotenoids that produce yellow, orange, and brown colours and tannins that contribute to brown colouration within aging leaves. Leaf colours change when the levels or visibility of these pigments shift due to internal or external factors. The warm, dry spells this summer may well have contributed to this here..



Flesh flies

A distinctive garden visitor are flies from the Flesh fly family. Adults have bright red eyes and transparent wings. Unusually they do not lay eggs but give birth to live young (maggots) – often on dead animals where they can feed straight away. Their name is deceptive though - only a few species feed on living tissue. Dung, parasitising other invertebrates or feeding on decaying bodies are other options – delightful – but important in the functioning of our natural systems.



Harebells

The delicate flowers of the Harebell (*Campanula rotundifolia*) are a late summer delight. More resilient than they might appear, they grow in dry places from the bare slopes of hills to the windy coastline. They are regularly visited by bumblebees and honeybees, providing an autumnal source of nectar for these insects.

In Scotland this 'Bluebell' was used in the past for dyeing tartans and is the floral emblem of Sweden, where a nationwide vote was held to choose the national flower.

Do you know what the [county flower of Carmarthenshire](#) is?



Beefsteak Fungus

This immature Beefsteak Fungus (*Fistulina hepatica*) could be said to look a bit like a tongue. The name *Fistulina* means 'with little pipes or tubes'. Here though, each tube is separate rather than being shared with neighbouring tubes. The specific name *hepatica* is a reference to the liver-like appearance of mature Beefsteak Fungus brackets.

Beefsteak fungus is common in the UK. It is usually found in broadleaved woodland, low on the trunks of oak trees and sometimes on recently cut oak stumps.



Disk Snails

Common throughout Britain, the Disk Snail (*Discus rotundatus*) is small (5-7 mm) with a reddish-brown shell that is flattened, with tight, ribbed coils. They live in soil and leaf litter, feeding on plant debris, humus, algae and fungi. These snails, like most terrestrial gastropods (slugs and snails), are hermaphrodite (possessing both male and female reproductive organs) and can live 2–3 years. Some gastropods can self-fertilize or reproduce asexually but the most common method involves a reciprocal mating between two hermaphroditic individuals, i.e. both laying eggs.



Pill Woodlouse

The Pill Woodlouse (*Armadillidium vulgare*), already covered in a shell 'armour', has another defensive tactic – curling up into a tight ball when attacked.

Woodlice are actually crustaceans, not insects, so are more closely related to crabs and shrimps.

They live in a variety of habitats and emerge at night to feed on dead and decaying matter and are important nutrient-recyclers. They are not picky eaters but require damp conditions to survive and absorb moisture from the air.

In the winter, during very low temperatures, they may become dormant, to survive temperatures that would otherwise might kill them.



Knopper Galls

The tiny Knopper Gall wasp (*Andricus quercuscalicis*) can make its mark. They produce knobby, bowl-shaped protrusions (galls) from acorns. They form in August and are sticky and red, later becoming woody and brown. Like most gall wasps, the lifecycle of the knopper gall wasp is complicated, with an alternation of a sexual and asexual generation each year.



Red Admiral Butterfly

The Red Admiral butterfly (*Vanessa atalanta*) – once known as the Red Admirable(!) has a short adult life span. They are known to migrate to the UK from warmer climates in the spring. The main adult generation emerges in late summer and early autumn, when they are most commonly seen. Some adult Red Admirals remain and overwinter by hibernating. Adults are commonly seen feeding on flowers like Buddleia, while that patch of nettles in your garden is the caterpillars' primary food plant.



Brown Hairstreak butterfly

This photograph is evidence of a real conservation success story. Butterfly Conservation have been working with the South Wales Trunk Roads Agency to manage and enhance suitable egg-laying Blackthorn habitat for the Brown Hairstreak butterfly (*Thecla betulae*) along the A40 in Llandeilo. Here is the result of the hard work put in here. An adult butterfly is seen perching on one of the posts supporting a blackthorn whip. Now, by not felling all the habitat regularly, it should provide even more egg-laying habitat.



Semi-improved grassland

Here is an example of a grazed pasture where silage is taken which still has some diversity of flowering plants and grasses. As well as being productive farmland it has value for wildlife as well, supporting a range of pollinators and other invertebrates.

With appropriate management, semi-improved grasslands can be enhanced to become more species-rich, with good soil structure that helps store Carbon and soak up water.



Fin Whale

In early September a large whale was washed ashore on Cefn Sidan. Closer inspection showed that it was the decomposing body of a large Fin Whale (*Balaenoptera physalus*). It measured at around 20-22m in length and weighed as much as 30 tonnes.

The finding was reported to the [Cetacean Strandings Investigation Programme](#). They routinely attend strandings to carry out post-mortems and determine whether the deaths occurred naturally or were linked to issues such as ship strikes, fishing gear entanglement or ingestion of plastic waste.

Fin Whales are the second largest mammal on Earth and considered vulnerable to extinction by the IUCN.



Autumn berries

Here are autumn fruits in abundance. These photos were taken in July, it could be said to be a bit too early. But rather than signifying an early change of seasons, this occurrence is may well be a stress response to the unusually hot spring and summer that we have experienced this year.

In many parts of the UK brambles have been ripening since mid-summer and apples and acorns, sloes and elderberries were all maturing early this year and in plenty. If this fruit mature too early, it could result in a food gap in the autumn for wildlife.

Many birds, such as blackbirds, rely on these fruits and berries in the autumn after consuming insects in spring and summer.

We can all help. Don't be too tidy! Leave some seedheads, leaf piles, and long grass to provide shelter and food for insects and birds through autumn and winter.

amphibian and reptile
conservation



Butterfly Conservation Wales
Gwarchod Glöynnod Byw Cymru



Botanical
Society of the
British
Isles



buglife



Bumblebee
Conservation
Trust
Ymddiriedolaeth
Cadwraeth
Cacwn



The
carbon
community



Clwb Adar Sir Gaerfyrddin
Carmarthenshire Bird Club

Cyngor Sir Gâr
Carmarthenshire
County Council



Carmarthenshire
Meadows
Group



Grŵp
Dolydd Sir
Gaerfyrddin

CoedLleol
SmallWoods



Dŵr Cymru
Welsh Water



Floodplain
Meadows
Partnership



MENTER AR GYFER
CADWRAETH NATUR CYMRU



INITIATIVE FOR NATURE
CONSERVATION CYMRU



LLANELLI NATURALISTS
NATURIAETHWYR LLANELLI



Mid Wales
Red Squirrel Partnership
Canolbarth Cymru
Partneriaeth Gwiwerod Coch



National Botanic
Garden of Wales
Gardd Fotaneg
Genedlaethol Cymru



Cyfoeth
Naturiol
Cymru
Natural
Resources
Wales



Ymddiriedolaeth
Genedlaethol
National Trust



Rhwydwaith
Ffermio
er Lles
Natur



Nature
Friendly
Farming
Network

PROJECT SEAGRASS



Plantlife



RSPB



Asian Telford De Cymru
South Wales Trust Road Agency



W W B I C



WEST WALES
BIODIVERSITY INFORMATION CENTRE
CANOLFAN WYBODAETH BIOAMRYWIAETH
GORLLEWIN CYMRU

WEST WALES
RIVERS TRUST
YMDIRIEDOLAETH AFONYDD
GORLLEWIN CYMRU



WWT



Ymddiriedolaeth Natur
De a Gorllewin Cymru
Wildlife Trust of
South & West Wales



COED CADW
WOODLAND
TRUST



VWT Vincent
Wildlife Trust



Carmarthenshire Nature Partnership