

CARMARTHENSHIRE STATE OF NATURE – SECTION 7 ‘PRIORITY’ BIRDS AMPHIBIANS AND REPTILES (HERPETOFAUNA)

Environment (Wales) Act 2016 – Section 7 - Biodiversity lists and duty to take steps to maintain and enhance biodiversity.

The species listed in this table have been identified by Welsh Government (WG) as part of a list of species and types of habitat found in Wales that they consider are of key significance to maintain and enhance biodiversity in this country. This list (Section7 list) is currently under review by WG and Natural Resources Wales (as of 2024) .



Public authorities (e.g. WG, councils) must take reasonable steps to maintain and enhance the species and types of habitat included in Section 7 and encourage others to take such steps. By safeguarding these species and habitats, improving their management and raising awareness about them it is hoped that a resilient natural environment in Wales will be sustained into the future.



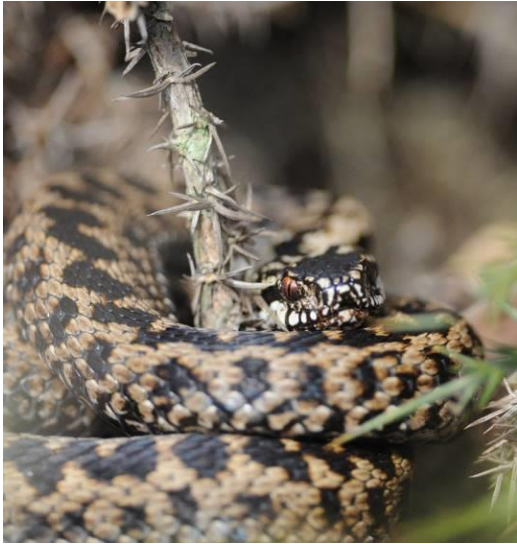
It is the Section 7 species that the Carmarthenshire Nature Partnership consider for priority action, but other species have been identified for local action where there are few records or where Carmarthenshire has populations where specific action can help conserve enhance the species.

Associated habitats refers to the relevant Section 7 Priority habitats in Wales

Please refer to www.arguk.org for more detailed species description information

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SPECIES	Carmarthenshire overview	Identified priority action
<p><i>Anguis fragilis</i> Slow-worm</p>  <p>© Kate Preston</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Associated Priority Habitat: Almost any open or semi-open habitat - often found in gardens and is widespread. • Current status: Most common reptile in the British Isles. • Trends: but has suffered declines due to loss of suitable habitat • Threats: loss of suitable habitat 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise awareness and encourage records • Landscape scale habitat creation and restoration will benefit this species
<p><i>Bufo bufo</i> Common toad</p>  <p>© Fred Holmes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Associated Priority Habitat: they prefer deeper water bodies with fish in which to breed. They have a strong migratory instinct and will follow the same route back to ancestral breeding ponds each spring. • Current status: widespread • Trends: showing a decline in numbers. Reasons not firmly identified but the fragmentation of habitat and intensification of farming are likely to have contributed • Threats: loss of habitat fragmentation of migration routes to breeding ponds. New road schemes should survey for migration routes and avoid soakaways here. Consideration should be given to wildlife tunnels and the use of dropped curbs. Also, when improving old roads consider retrofitting of suitable features at migration routes. Care should be taken with drain ladders as they are not necessarily a good solution. • Current action <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Retrofitting of ‘toad kerbs’ at a migration route in Burry Port. • Some migration crossings in Carmarthenshire have Toad signs and volunteers have ‘crossing patrols’ in the spring. • ARC has created ponds in the county under grant-funded projects, more large ponds are needed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage records – toads are likely to be under recorded in the county. • Create and restore large toad breeding ponds with large suitable hibernacula and woodlands near by

SPECIES	Carmarthenshire overview	Identified priority action
<p><i>Zootoca vivipara</i> Common lizard</p>  <p>© Mark Barber</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Associated Priority Habitat: Most frequently seen on commons, heaths, moorland, dry stone walls, embankments and sea cliffs around the British Isles. • Current status: widespread • Trends: Declines in recent decades due to habitat loss. • Threats: habitat loss. Steep declines in the Netherlands linked to the drying up of sites, humidity/wet habitats could be critical for survival. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landscape-scale habitat creation and restoration will benefit this species
<p><i>Natrix helvetica</i> Grass snake</p>  <p>© Pete Hill</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Associated Priority Habitat: Brownfield /Farmland /Lowland Grassland and Heathland/Wetland • Current status: Lack of systematic monitoring has meant it is difficult to determine the conservation status. • Trends: declining • Threats: Loss of egg-laying and foraging sites has led to local declines. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use vegetation cuttings, including grass cuttings, dead leaves, and wood chip (a mixture is best) to create oviposition sites at suitable sites. • Careful use of manure (mainly horse) if on-site to create egg-laying sites, plus spoiled silage and hay bails. • Pond creation and restoration will help this species.
<p><i>Vipera berus</i> Adder</p>  <p>© Chris Dresh</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Associated Priority Habitat: Open habitats such as heathland, moorland, open woodland and sand dunes/sea cliffs. They rarely stray into gardens. • Current status: fastest declining widespread reptile. • Trends: Mostly steeply declining widespread species, possibly due to loss of habitat and connectivity. • Threats: habitat loss and fragmentation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ARC has a project that focuses on adders (through Natur am Byth) which can include sites in Carmarthenshire, local partners and volunteer input needed. • Adder hibernation sites need to be found and protected. More sensitive management needed on protected sites. • Landscape-scale work and on-site connectivity of suitable features (hedges, gorse, bracken, heather, bramble) are important. • Latest research from Europe shows that wetlands/ponds are essential for recruitment and juvenile survival.