

**BEACON BOG
SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST**



YOUR SPECIAL SITE AND ITS FUTURE

‘Your Special Site and its Future’ is part of our commitment to improve the way we work with Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) owners and occupiers. In it, we explain what is special about the wildlife on your site, and what care is needed to look after its wildlife into the future.

All SSSIs are considered to be of national importance and we recognise the crucial role that owners and occupiers play in their management and protection. We need you to share your views and knowledge of this site with us, to help safeguard it.

We hope that you will find ‘Your Special Site and its Future’ interesting and helpful. Please contact us if there is anything about the site and its management that you would like to discuss.

What is ‘special’ about the wildlife at Beacon Bog SSSI?

This site has 1 special feature.

- Feature Lowland raised bog

As well as the features listed above, this site has other habitats that contribute to the special wildlife interest. These include scrub, semi-natural broad-leaved woodland, marshy grassland and standing water. This diversity of habitats similarly supports a wide range of species and these too are a key component of the special interest of the site. Unless it is specified below, management of this site should aim to look after these habitats as well as the listed features of interest.

What do we want Beacon Bog to look like?

The following is a description of how we would like to see the features at this site.

The raised bog should ideally occupy about 65% of the total site area, and marshy grassland about 15%. Scrub and woodland should be limited to no more than 20% of total site area.

Plants of the raised bog should include common cotton-grass, purple moor grass, heather, cross-leaved heath, bog asphodel, bog rosemary (rare in Carmarthenshire, but found at Beacon Bog), various bog mosses and royal fern. Woody species indicative of drier conditions, such as birch and Scots pine, should be absent.

The woodland should be dominated by locally native trees, such as willow, and will include trees of all ages. An abundance of dead wood, standing and fallen, will provide habitat for invertebrates, fungi and birds. Alien invasive plants such as rhododendron and Indian balsam should be absent from the SSSI.

The black bog ant, a notable and uncommon species, is found nearby at Cors Goch Llanllwch National Nature Reserve. It is hoped that Beacon Bog will also support a community of these ants, as environmental conditions are apparently similar.

The rare weevil, Bagous frit, previously recorded at Beacon Bog, should ideally also be present.

What management is needed on Beacon Bog SSSI and why?

Although this site is an excellent place for wildlife it will only remain so if the necessary management continues. CCW’s priority is to work with you to ensure that this management is carried out.

What does this mean in practice?

There are a number of different factors that could damage the special features at this site if they are not properly managed. These are the ones we regard as most important:

Water level maintenance

The development of the raised bog vegetation over many centuries has been partly due to impeded drainage patterns. These ensure that the vegetation (apart from that directly exposed to wind and sun) is permanently wet. To conserve the raised bog it is essential that water levels within it are not allowed to drop significantly. Drainage operations that have taken place around the Bog's edge and on adjacent farmland may already be having a slow adverse effect on the site's mean water levels. No new drainage systems should be put in place, and any maintenance of the existing drainage system should be done carefully with guidance from CCW.

Beacon Bog's water levels should be periodically monitored by a hydrologist and, if necessary, remedial action should be taken to restore water to previous levels.

Scrub control

Scrub should be kept from further encroaching into the raised bog. Its extent should be routinely monitored and, if necessary, some of it should be cut and removed from the site.

Non-native species

Rhododendron is presently growing in the raised bog. Its presence is undesirable, as over time it will displace species typical of raised bogs. These plants should be removed from the SSSI by hand under guidance from CCW as soon as possible, and in future the site should be periodically checked and any new plants should be similarly dealt with.

Fire

Beacon Bog has been burnt quite frequently in the past, but such management (intentional or accidental) is undesirable, as it is known to harm the invertebrate communities of the site.

Finally

Our knowledge and understanding of wildlife is continually improving. It is possible that new issues may arise in the future, whilst other issues may disappear. This statement is written with the best information we have now, but may have to change in the future as our understanding improves. Any information you can provide on the wildlife of your site, its management and its conservation would be much appreciated.

If you would like to discuss any aspect of your SSSI, or have any concerns about your SSSI, please contact your local CCW office. Your local office is:

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