

**CYNGOR CEFN GWLAD CYMRU
COUNTRYSIDE COUNCIL FOR WALES**

SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST CITATION

CARMARTHENSHIRE

CAEAU BLAENAU-MAWR

Date of Notification: 1988, 1998

National Grid Reference: SN 596122

O.S. Maps: 1: 50,000 Sheet number: 159
1: 25,000 Sheet number: SN 51 SE

Site Area: 10.4 ha

Description:

Caeau Blaenau-Mawr consists of two enclosures situated 1 km east of Capel Hendre, on gently sloping ground at an altitude of between 130 and 150 m. The site overlies the Carboniferous Coal Measures, and soils are characterised by impeded drainage.

The site is important as an extensive example of the type of unimproved species-rich damp grassland that was once widespread in this part of Carmarthenshire. Such sites are becoming increasingly scarce due to agricultural improvement and industrial development. The vegetation consists mainly of a mix of various rush pasture *Molinia/Juncus* communities. The larger enclosure is dominated by purple moor-grass *Molinia caerulea* with abundant tormentil *Potentilla erecta* and associated grasses such as sweet vernal grass *Anthoxanthum odoratum* and velvet bent *Agrostis canina*. Devil's-bit scabious *Succisa pratensis* is frequent throughout the sward. This north-western section of the field is dominated by rushes, in contrast to the rest of the site. Both soft rush *Juncus effusus* and sharp flowered rush *J. acutiflorus* are well represented, together with common marsh-bedstraw *Galium palustre* and greater bird's-foot-trefoil *Lotus uliginosus*.

The smaller of the two enclosures comprises a mosaic of *Molinia/Juncus* community types, together with a higher proportion of fen meadow species. These include meadow thistle *Cirsium dissectum*, a characteristic plant of the Coal Measures; devil's-bit scabious which is found throughout the sward, as well as other base demanding species such as flea sedge *Carex pulicaris* and tawny sedge *Carex hostiana*. Other species of note include whorled caraway *Carum verticillatum* and great burnet *Sanguisorba officinalis*.

Marsh fritillary *Eurodryas aurinia* and marbled white butterflies *Melanargia galathea* have been recorded at the site.

Remarks:

The marsh fritillary butterfly is listed on Annex II of the EC Habitats Directive and Appendix II of the Bern Convention. It is also protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

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