

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

SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST CITATION

CEREDIGION

BANC Y MWLDAN

<u>Date of notification</u>	1987
<u>Grid reference:</u>	SN198486
<u>O.S. Maps:</u>	1:50,000 Sheet number: 145 1:25,000 Sheet number: SN14, SN 24
<u>Total Area:</u>	18.8 Ha

Description:

This site consists of a number of lowland unimproved pastures lying along the south-eastern slope of the valley of the Afon Mwldan, where sandy glaciofluvial drift, support a remarkable assemblage of plants not known elsewhere in south-west Wales. In Ceredigion itself the presence of so many calcicolous species, several of them otherwise confined to the Ynyslas dune slacks in the north, makes this a site of outstanding floristic and ecological interest in this predominantly acidic District. The site also has an insect fauna of national significance.

The flushes of the soligenous mires have calcicolous species such as long-stalked yellow-sedge *Carex lepidocarpa*, tawny sedge *Carex hostiana*, broad-leaved cottongrass *Eriophorum latifolium*, fragrant orchid *Gymnadenia conopsea*, marsh helleborine *Epipactis palustris*, southern marsh-orchid *Dactylorhiza praetermissa* and early marsh-orchid *D. incarnata*. Dioecious sedge *Carex dioica* and flea sedge *C. pulicaris* occur in the more peaty flushes, and in places there is marsh with greater tussock-sedge *C. paniculata*. The fen communities range from eutrophic fen with common reed *Phragmites australis*, marsh helleborine, fragrant orchid and long-stalked yellow-sedge, through mesotrophic fen with dominant lesser pond-sedge *Carex acutiformis* and hard rush *Juncus inflexus*, to acidic poor-fen dominated by sharp-flowered rush *Juncus acutiflorus* and soft-rush *J. effusus*.

There are also small areas of species-rich, neutral-calcareous grassland containing spring-sedge *Carex caryophyllea*, quaking-grass *Briza media* and common restharrow *Ononis repens*, together with equally herb-rich areas of damp hay meadow. Mainly in the northern part of the site there is some acidic sessile oak *Quercus petraea* woodland, damp scrub of hazel *Corylus avellana* and ash *Fraxinus excelsior*, and wet slope alder *Alnus glutinosa* and grey willow *Salix cinerea* carr, the last two with an abundance of great horsetail *Equisetum telmateia*.

Numerous scarce insects have been recorded, including the attractive scarlet tiger moth *Callimorpha dominula* and the tortoise beetle *Cassida murraea*, and several soldier-flies, including *Oxycera rara*.

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