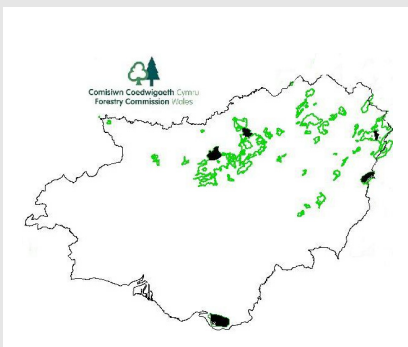


CARMARTHENSHIRE LOCAL BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN

NIGHTJAR/ CAMPRIMULGUS EUROPAEUS



Conservation objectives:

- Confirm the status of the nightjar population in the county.
- Maintain a regularly breeding population of nightjars.
- Encourage appropriate habitat management for the species.

What you can do to help:

- Report all signs of nightjars to the county bird recorder

Further information:

[www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/
Nightjar](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/Nightjar)
www.carmarthenshire.gov.uk

In Somerset nightjars were thought to be witches in disguise, who could only be destroyed by a gun loaded with a silver sixpence!



Ecology

A summer visitor from Africa, the nightjar is really a heathland bird, nesting on bare or sparsely vegetated patches on the ground. The similar conditions that occur in conifer plantations shortly after blocks of trees have been felled and replanted is also an ideal habitat. Nightjars mainly feed on moths and beetles, being most active at dusk and dawn and will travel from nest sites to feed on a range of habitats such as heathland, woodlands, rivers and even gardens! Nightjars are rarely seen during the day, staying still and camouflaged on the ground. The males have a distinctive 'churring' call (the name nightjar comes from night-chuur) and often perch on a branch of a prominent tree, standing out against the night sky.

Distribution in Carmarthenshire

In Carmarthenshire the species is a scarce but increasing summer visitor. There are records of calling males at Brechfa, Glasfynydd and Crychan Forests in the north east and old records from Pembrey. Numbers appear to be increasing but this may be due to increased recording effort. A Forestry Commission survey showed that in 2003 there were 31 calling males on their land and at least 13 nesting pairs.

Legal status

The nightjar is protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 (as amended) and Annex I the EC Birds Directive.

What are the threats?

- * Loss of nesting habitat – heathland and 'clearfell' areas in forests.
- * Loss of feeding habitat.
- * Decline in food availability caused by increased use of pesticides and changes in agricultural practice.
- * Disturbance by humans

What is being done locally

- * All records sent to Carmarthenshire Bird Recorder.
- * The Forestry Commission surveys regular breeding sites in Carmarthenshire.
- * The British Trust for Ornithology is co-ordinating a UK-wide survey
- * The Woodland Grant Scheme, run by the Forestry Commission, offers grants for woodland management that promotes biodiversity.
- * The Tir Gofal agri-environment scheme aims to support the management and restoration of lowland heathland.

Where you can look for nightjars

They are best looked for at dusk on warm, still, summer evenings in suitable forest/heath areas – listen out for their distinctive call.