

CARMARTHENSIRE LOCAL BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN

WET WOODLAND

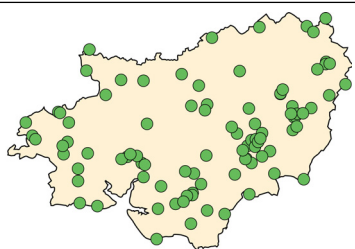


What is wet woodland?

Wet woodlands are found in river valleys, beside streams, and at the edges of ponds, lakes and bogs on poorly drained or seasonally wet soils. They can range from a scattering of shrubby willow to dense stands of alder. Wet woods frequently occur with other drier woodland habitats and with open ground habitats, e.g. floodplains. In Wales, alder, goat willow or downy birch are the dominant trees. Plants to look out for include meadow sweet, marsh marigold, golden saxifrage, yellow pimpernel, yellow flag iris and royal fern.

Saturated ground, high humidity and lots of dead wood allows lush carpets of mosses to grow and alder, birch and willow are associated with rich invertebrate communities. Wet woodland is important for many plants and animals and can provide cover and breeding sites for birds and otters.

Wet woodland



Distribution of records for wet woodland within Carmarthenshire. Data are summarised from Phase II surveys of Welsh woodlands.

Many wet woodlands have appeared in recent times, but others have a long history of management - making clog soles from coppiced alder was once an important rural industry. Other wet woodlands have developed through natural succession on open wetlands where active management such as grazing has been abandoned.

Distribution in Carmarthenshire

Carmarthenshire has a significant amount of wet woodland, mostly along streamsides or within larger blocks of woodland.

However few large areas occur. Notable stands occur on the dunes at Pembrey. Three SSSIs have been notified for their wet woodland.

Conservation objectives

- * Maintain the current extent of ancient semi-natural wet woodland in Carmarthenshire.
- * Where possible, restore wet woodland to former sites including floodplain areas
- * Ensure appropriate management of wet woodland on all SSSIs and land covered by agri-environment agreements

What you can do to help:

- * If you own this habitat – seek advice on management

Further information:

www.coedcymru.org.uk
www.forestry.gov.uk

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What are the threats?

- * Clearance or fragmentation and conversion to other land uses.
- * Abandonment of coppice management can dry woodland out.
- * Deterioration due to overgrazing and poaching by stock.
- * Invasion by non-native species (e.g. Himalayan balsam) and diseases such as *Phytophthora* a root disease of alder.
- * Drainage or water abstraction drying the woodland out.

What is being done locally

- * Woodland grants and agri-environment schemes operate on sites with wet woodland.
- * Ecological surveys of wet woodland have been undertaken.
- * Management and restoration of wet woodland is undertaken at numerous Forest Commission holdings.
- * Coed Cymru provides free advice on the management of broadleaved woodland, including wet woodland.
- * 16 ha of wet woodland have been established at the National Wetlands Centre of Wales (WWT).
- * A survey of the Tywi river area has been undertaken to determine the distribution of *Phytophthora*.

Where you can see this habitat

Wet woodland can be found along river valleys and coastal areas.