

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

SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST CITATION

**PEMBROKESHIRE**

**CORSYDD LLANGLOFFAN**

<b><u>Date of Notification</u></b>	1992, 2003
<b><u>National Grid Reference:</u></b>	SM 904318
<b><u>O.S. Maps:</u></b>	1:50,000 Sheet number: Landranger 157 1:10,000 Sheet number: SM 83SE, SM 93SW
<b><u>Site Area:</u></b>	57.3 ha

**Description:**

Corsydd Llangloffan is of special interest for the range of wetland vegetation types including wet woodland, fen and swamp, and for its assemblages of epiphytic lichens and peatland invertebrates, and for its populations of otter *Lutra lutra*, bullhead *Cottus gobio*, river lamprey *Lampetra fluviatilis*, and brook lamprey *Lampetra planeri*, all of which are reliant on the Western Cleddau River which flows through the site. Corsydd Llangloffan SSSI is a large remnant of a once extensive valley and floodplain complex near the headwaters of the Western Cleddau River, 7 kilometres southwest of Fishguard.

Corsydd Llangloffan occupies a wide valley, 60 metres above sea level, which once drained westwards to the sea at Aber Mawr. It was later modified by glacial meltwater and ultimately blocked by glacial deposits thereby reversing the flow. This left a small central watercourse meandering through flat waterlogged ground. As early as 1794 there was a reference to a fen near Mathry. Although the Western Cleddau has since been partly canalised and deepened, the barrier of Llangloffan bridge and the numerous springs rising at the toe of the valley slopes from drift aquifers have ensured a continuing high water table. The underlying rocks of the surrounding gently rolling plateau surface are shales and thin sandstones of Ordovician and Cambrian age.

Variation in the water table and in the mineral and peat soils largely accounts for the wide range of fen vegetation present. Reed canary-grass *Phalaris arundinacea* dominates adjacent to the riverbank, whilst the wetter peaty areas alongside the springs have abundant clumps of greater tussock-sedge *Carex paniculata*. Another widespread community is tall fen vegetation characterised by mixed stands of common reed *Phragmites australis*, hemp-agrimony *Eupatorium cannabinum*, wild angelica *Angelica sylvestris*, meadowsweet *Filipendula ulmaria* and purple-loosestrife *Lythrum salicaria*. In some areas greater pond-sedge *Carex riparia* can dominate and there are patches of bottle sedge *C. rostrata* and marsh cinquefoil *Potentilla palustris* vegetation. Towards the drier margins of the site, summer grazed wet pasture with much sharp-flowered rush *Juncus acutiflorus*, purple moor-grass *Molinia caerulea* and greater bird's-foot-trefoil *Lotus uliginosus* is frequent. The wet woodland or carr that has developed east of Llangloffan Bridge is largely dominated by grey willow *Salix cinerea*. Unlike other wet valley floor woodlands in Pembrokeshire there are elements of downy birch *Betula pubescens* as well as

some alder *Alnus glutinosa* and numerous scarce plants. The presence of heather *Calluna vulgaris*, cross-leaved heath *Erica tetralix* and creeping willow *Salix repens*, along with abundant *Sphagnum* moss in the centre of the woodland indicates areas of moderately acid peat.

The scarce plants include marsh fern *Thelypteris palustris* which grows in quantity in two locations, whilst great fen-sedge *Cladium mariscus* occurs at its only current Pembrokeshire station. Drainage ditches also support a population of pillwort *Pilularia globulifera*. Other plants of note are royal fern *Osmunda regalis*, wavy St John's-wort *Hypericum undulatum*, cranberry *Vaccinium oxycoccus* and marsh stitchwort *Stellaria palustris*. The water dock *Rumex hydrolapathum* is found in the wettest area of the fen. The more mature parts of the grey willow carr have well developed tree-growing, or epiphytic lichen communities with species such as *Usnea articulata*, *U. wirthii*, *Sticta limbata*, *S. sylvatica* and *S. fuliginosa*. Young ash *Fraxinus excelsior* supports colonies of *Phlyctis agelaea* and *Nephroma laevigatum* and all three *Sticta* species. Other notable lichens found in the carr are *Hydrotrachyna britannica* and *Parmelia reticulata*.

Notable invertebrates include a rare spider *Glyphesis servulus* and the flies *Allodia angulata*, *Anatella damphi*, *Mycomya britteni*, and *Pseudexechia aurevernica*.

Surveys in the catchment of the Western Cleddau have also revealed signs of intense and regular activity of otters *Lutra lutra* within Corsydd Llangloffan. Water voles *Arvicola terrestris* have been recorded breeding here at their only known Pembrokeshire breeding site, along the grassy riverbanks. Notable fish within the river include bullhead, river lamprey and brook lamprey.

Breeding birds include barn owl *Tyto alba*, song thrush *Turdus philomelos*, spotted flycatcher *Muscicapa striata*, linnet *Carduelis cannabina*, bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula* and reed bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus*. Amongst the winter visitors are water rail *Rallus aquaticus* and snipe *Gallinago gallinago*, whilst hen harrier *Circus cyaneus* and corncrake *Crex crex* are seen occasionally.

### **Remarks:**

The Countryside Council for Wales owns the majority of the eastern portion (east of Llangloffan bridge). Most of the western part is owned and managed by the Wildlife Trust South and West Wales. In July 1991 these areas were jointly declared as Corsydd Llangloffan National Nature Reserve (amounting to 40 hectares) - the western part under Section 35(c) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. The remainder of the SSSI is privately owned.

Corsydd Llangloffan SSSI is within the Afonydd Cleddau/Cleddau Rivers Special Area of Conservation (cSAC) for otter, bullhead, river lamprey, brook lamprey, sea lamprey and floating vegetation often dominated by water crowfoot.

*This document is **NOT** a definitive legal version and has been formatted, updated and partially edited for use on the CCW Web site. This document should not be used in any legal proceedings, public enquiry or any other hearing or appeal. If you require a full legal copy of the document please contact CCW in writing.*