

Wales Grassland and Heathland Ecosystem Group Priority Action

Preseli and Carn Ingli Hills

With its distinctive moorland landscape and rocky summits the Mynydd Preseli and Mynydd Carningli range of hills is unique landscape feature within the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park. These hills support a patchwork of habitats including dry heath, wet heath, fen acid grassland and marshy grassland. Fragmented areas of open semi-natural habitat, often associated with common land, are also found on lower lying ground around the Preseli hills and form part of the

A number of key plant species are found in this area, particularly associated with the wetter habitats; these include pale butterwort, bog orchid, marsh clubmoss, assemblages of Atlantic-western bryophytes and Wilson's filmy fern, and bryophytes amongst the damp recesses of the rock tors. Mynydd Preseli SAC is particularly important for damselflies with southern damselfly, scarce blue-tailed damselfly and small red damselfly found in the flushes, streams and pools. The marsh fritillary is found on several sites including Mynydd Preseli SAC and Wallis Moor, one of the lower lying areas of common land to the south west of Preseli.

The condition of many of the sites in and around the Preseli hills has deteriorated primarily as a result of the reduction in grazing and associated agricultural management practices. Many of the sites are common land and a declining number of registered graziers are turning stock out on to the commons. The result is increasingly rank heathland, grassland and mire vegetation and the spread of scrub and bracken. Species which rely on relatively well-grazed vegetation such as the southern damselfly are threatened by these changes in management intensity and where grazing pressures have declined dramatically even those species which rely on light grazing such as marsh clubmoss are threatened. Additionally as vegetation becomes more rank the land becomes more difficult and costly to manage and the economic return for the graziers declines.

Action is therefore required to halt and reverse the decline in agricultural management, bring sites into favourable condition and to find a mechanism to promote the long-term profitability of these sites to the local agricultural community

Action required includes:

1. Support to help existing Pembrokeshire grazing scheme to allow it to continue and expand
2. Improved infrastructure to allow better management of stock
3. Scrub and bracken management
4. Establishment of grazing appropriate to the requirements of both the habitats and associated species
5. Pond restoration, management and creation, and control of invasive non-native species.
6. Heathland management by burning and/or mowing (where appropriate to habitat, situation and species)
7. Expanding marketing of heathland meat products to ensure long-term grazing commitment

Species Interest

Key Section 42 species:

Southern damselfly

Coenagrion mercuriale

Marsh fritillary
Marsh clubmoss

Euphydryas aurinia
Lycopodiella inunda

Other Section 42

Skylark
Linnet
Adder
Slow worm
Grass snake
Brown hare

Alauda arvensis
Carduelis cannabina
Vipera berus
Anguis fragilis
Natrix natrix
Lepus europaeus