

Reasons for recommendation as a candidate Special Area of Conservation

Area name: **Afon Tywi/ River Tywi**

Administrative area: **Caerfyrddin/ Carmarthenshire**

Component SSSI: **Afon Tywi**

This area has been recommended as a candidate Special Area of Conservation (SAC) because it contains habitat types and/or species which are rare or threatened within a European context. The SSSI citation describes the special interests for which the site was notified in the British context. [NB: not for marine interests below mean low water mark]. The interests for which the site was selected as SSSI may differ from the interests selected in a European context.

The habitats and/or species for which the area has been recommended as a candidate SAC are listed below. The reasons for their selection are listed, together with a brief description of the habitats and species as they typically occur across the UK. This area contains the interests described although it may not contain all the typical features.

The area is considered to have a high diversity of habitats/species of European importance.

Interest(s) submitted to the European Commission

European interest(s):

1. *Alosa alosa*

- **for which the area is considered to support a significant presence.**

Allis shad. The allis shad is a medium-sized fish of coastal waters and estuaries of the western Mediterranean and north-east Atlantic coasts. It spawns in rivers but has become rare due to over-fishing, pollution and obstructions to migration.

2. *Alosa fallax*

- **for which this is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom.**

Twaite shad. The twaite shad is a fish that occurs in western European coastal waters. It enters lower reaches of rivers to spawn. It has become rare due to over-fishing, pollution and obstructions to migration.

3. *Cottus gobio*

- **for which the area is considered to support a significant presence.**

Bullhead. The bullhead is a small bottom-living fish found in the upper reaches of lowland rivers and lower and middle reaches of upland rivers in England and Wales. It is not found in badly polluted rivers.

4. *Lampetra fluviatilis*

- **for which the area is considered to support a significant presence.**

River lamprey. The river lamprey is a primitive, jawless fish resembling an eel. Confined to western Europe, it migrates from the sea to spawn in silt beds of many rivers in the UK. One population in the UK is, however, known to live entirely in freshwater. The river lamprey is absent from some rivers because of pollution and barriers to migration.

5. *Lampetra planeri*

- **for which the area is considered to support a significant presence.**

Brook lamprey. The brook lamprey is a primitive, jawless fish resembling an eel and is the smallest of the lampreys found in the UK. It lives entirely in fresh water and occurs over most of the UK in streams and occasionally in lakes.

6. *Lutra lutra*

- **for which this is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom.**

Otter. Otters are semi-aquatic mammals, requiring both good fishing grounds for food and suitable shelter on land for resting and breeding. Once widespread in Europe, the otter population declined sharply during the 1960s and 1970s. It is now showing signs of recovery in the UK and is spreading to repopulate its former areas. The UK, and in particular Scotland, supports some of the largest concentrations of otters in Europe, with both freshwater and coastal populations.

7. *Petromyzon marinus*

- **for which the area is considered to support a significant presence.**

Sea lamprey. This is a primitive, jawless fish resembling an eel. It is the largest of the lampreys found in the UK. It inhabits North Atlantic coastal waters and migrates to spawn in rivers. It has a widespread distribution within the UK, although populations have declined due to pollution and barriers to migration.

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