

Upper Tawe Valley Living Landscape



Creating a healthier future for wildlife and people in the Upper Tawe Valley



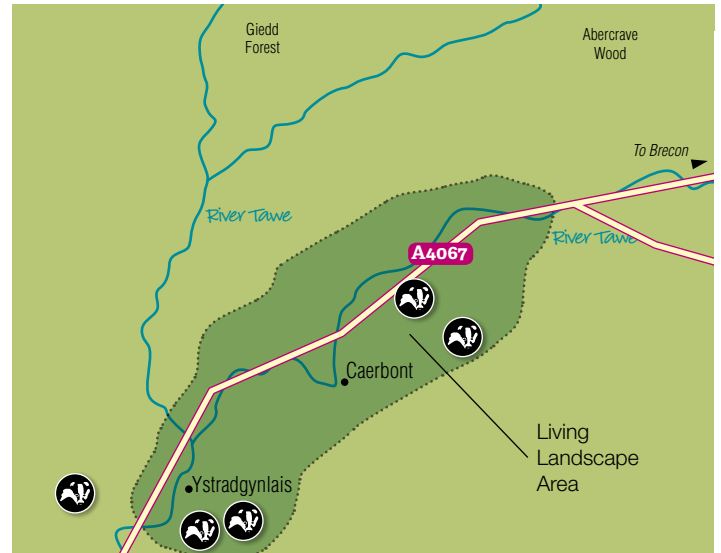
Lying on the southern edge of the Brecon Beacons National Park, the Upper Tawe Valley is an area of great potential for wildlife with many priority habitats and species.

One such species is the marsh fritillary butterfly. It breeds in rhos pasture which contains both its food plant, (devil's bit scabious) and thick tussocks of grass that shelter the caterpillars over winter. This area holds a key population of the butterfly and is one of the best sites in Wales.

Marsh fritillaries require extensive habitat networks for their long term survival. However, with the continued fragmentation of this habitat, this species has become scarce, suffering a severe decline in its distribution over the last century.

In parallel to this, large areas of the valleys are identified as areas of multiple deprivation. Local communities often seem disenfranchised from nature and see wildlife as remote and inaccessible.

Led by Brecknock Wildlife Trust (BWT), the Upper Tawe Valley Living Landscape Project is working to restore, recreate and reconnect wildlife rich spaces. They also aim to bring local communities closer to the wonderful wildlife on their doorstep.



 Nature reserves

This project brings together the management of several nature reserves which form the cornerstone of this Living Landscape. But wildlife cannot be restricted to nature reserves if it is to survive. Therefore, BWT is working with neighbouring landowners to enhance their land for wildlife, allowing populations to be safeguarded and adapt to climate change.

They aim to restore uplands habitats to fulfil their important ecosystem services such as water regulation, flood prevention and pollution control.

Restoring the River Tawe and tributaries to act as wildlife corridors will help engage local people to take care of nature in their patch. In turn, this will equip those communities with the confidence and skills to avail of new employment opportunities such as increased wildlife tourism.

Species	Habitats
Marsh fritillary	Rhos pasture
Harvest mouse	Blanket bog
Grass snake	Marshy/Wet grassland
Common lizard	Acid and limestone grassland
Redstart	Heathland
Green and great spotted woodpeckers	Oak woodland
Marsh orchid	
Devils bit scabious	



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Vision

The Upper Tawe Valley Living Landscape project aims to create a healthy and resilient landscape for both wildlife and people. Wildlife populations will be safeguarded and able to expand and colonise new areas, adapting to climate change. People will be inspired by wildlife and re-connected to it, empowered to take action to conserve it and benefit from the economic, social and health opportunities it can provide.

Environment

The Upper Tawe Valley Living Landscape will **restore, recreate and reconnect a fragmented landscape**. BWT are working with partners to bring forward a selection of rhos pasture sites into appropriate management for marsh fritillary and create new wetland habitats for amphibian and reptile species.

This work will contribute to **Water Framework Directive** objectives and help bring designated sites into 'favourable conservation status'. BWT aims to manage limestone grassland to benefit rare wildflowers and restore urban and upland river habitats, improving their ecological connectivity. This in turn will allow animals to adapt and be resilient, to the effects of climate change.

Social

By using iconic species, the Upper Tawe Living Landscape will inspire, empower and re-connect local communities and disadvantaged people to nature. BWT aim to work with local health initiatives to provide fun outdoor recreation, health walks and voluntary work for people with mental health issues who frequently suffer from isolation and **social exclusion**.

BWT aim to offer opportunities and training to **disadvantaged young people** who are long term unemployed. They will look to offer training in wildlife conservation, practical conservation skills, management plans, grant funding, sponsorship and community fundraising. This will benefit participants confidence and improve their social skills.

BWT are continuing to develop relationships with schools and community groups. They encourage and support the use of the outdoors and nature for **education, health and wellbeing**. They are also continually **improving access** to wild areas to allow more opportunities for engagement with local wildlife.

Economic

BWT are working with partners and landowners to inspire a new economic vision for the Upper Tawe. BWT aims to harness the potential within the uplands to sequester carbon and prevent flooding further downstream thus improving and safeguarding critical **ecosystem service** provision.

BWT are working alongside Visit Wales and Brecon Beacons National Park to utilise wildlife reserves as tourist 'honeypots', bringing tourists into previously unexplored areas.

BWT are also creating new jobs by employing Wildlife Apprenticeships and Community and Wildlife Education Officers, recruited from the local community.

Key Partners: WREN, Visit Wales, Natural Resources Wales and Brecon Beacons National Park.

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