

Why is Cornwall Wildlife Trust concerned about County Wildlife Sites?

County Wildlife Sites are an important part of the countryside and make up approximately 10% of our county's land area. They often underpin local, national and regional nature conservation objectives (Biodiversity Action Plans).



Large white butterfly, Liz Cartwright

As County Wildlife Sites have no direct statutory protection, many have been lost over the years through a variety of causes including;

- neglect
- inappropriate management
- pollution
- development
- intensification of agriculture
- recreation
- vandalism

These can cause habitat destruction and fragmentation as well as species isolation.

County Wildlife Sites Project



Meadow by the sea, Mount's Bay, Liz Cartwright

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County Wildlife Sites



Cornwall



Riverside bluebell woodland, Liz Cartwright

This leaflet explains the importance and value of County Wildlife Sites in the countryside.

Cornwall Wildlife Trust recognises the importance of local landowners and their interest in the countryside. The County Wildlife Sites Project aims to work with landowners to enable them to manage important wildlife habitats sensitively.

What is a County Wildlife Site?

County Wildlife Sites (CWS) are the most significant areas for wildlife in Cornwall outside Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs).

There are over 490 CWS in Cornwall under both public and private ownership. CWS range from small ponds, copses and linear features, such as river valleys, to wetlands, ancient woodlands and large moors.

How were County Wildlife Sites selected?

CWS were identified and selected in the 1980s and 1990s using a combination of aerial photograph data, past and local knowledge and where possible, ground based surveys.

They were selected because of their high nature conservation value. Selection was based on distinctive, important or threatened species and habitats in either a national, regional or local context. Selection also aimed to link and buffer other important areas for nature conservation, such as SSSIs.



Good dragonfly habitat, North Tamerton, Liz Cartwright

What does owning a County Wildlife Site mean for me? - The benefits and implications of County Wildlife Site ownership

- County Wildlife Site status can attract grant aid through Defra's Environmental Stewardship schemes.
- Cornwall Wildlife Trust can provide free management advice for landowners of CWS.
- As the CWS designation is non-statutory, no restrictions are placed on any agricultural operations.
- Landowners and managers remain in control of all land management decisions.
- Other than in Local Development Plans, site details are not publicised.
- Access is by permission of the landowner only and no rights of access are created.
- For substantial changes in land use of a CWS, Local Authorities take wildlife into account together with all other planning considerations.



Coastal heathland, Porthtowan, Liz Cartwright

What does Cornwall Wildlife Trust's "County Wildlife Sites Project" offer to County Wildlife Site owners?

Cornwall Wildlife Trust has a full time member of staff dedicated to the County Wildlife Sites Project.

The Trust can provide free site visits and management advice to County Wildlife Site landowners.

This includes;

- a full desk study of species and habitats previously recorded in the area which could be used in Environmental Stewardship applications
- a free report identifying habitat types and species present on site and giving management recommendations for their maintenance and enhancement where possible
- advice on possible funding sources for habitat management or signposting landowners to the relevant organisations for advice



Broadleaved bluebell woodland near Liskeard, Liz Cartwright