



Llwyngwair Manor Holiday Park Wildlife Report



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This is a pilot project so we would love to receive your feedback on this information pack. You can send your comments to sarahme@pembrokeshirecoast.org.uk or leave your comments in the visitor book.

Pembrokeshire Coast National Park

Welcome to Pembrokeshire Coast National Park!

Pembrokeshire lies at the south west extreme of Wales and is surrounded on three sides by the sea. Pembrokeshire's marine and terrestrial environments are strongly influenced by the Gulf Stream and the National Park supports species found in both warmer, southern areas as well as those from colder, northern regions.

Pembrokeshire is internationally important for many of its coastal, marine and lowland heath habitat as well as ancient, semi-natural oak woodland in the North of the park. These habitats support some of our most iconic species including choughs, puffins and seals.

The high wildlife value of the Park is reflected by its nature conservation designations which include:

- 13 Special Areas of Conservation (3 Marine SACs overlap about 75% of the Park coastline and account for about 60% of the inshore area).
- 5 Special Protection Areas.
- 1 Marine Nature Reserve (Skomer) – one of three in the UK.
- 7 National Nature Reserves.
- 60 Sites of Special Scientific Interest.

With miles of rugged coastline, sandy beaches, farmland, valleys, hills and woodlands to explore, we hope this short guide will help you experience some of the fabulous wildlife our National Park has to offer.



Llwyngwair

The long sweep of the drive as you arrive at Llwyngwair Manor is an echo of its past as the seat of the Bowen family from the 1500's to 1956. Since the 1980's the house and grounds have been managed as a family run business offering hotel accommodation as well as pitches for caravans and camping.

Located in lower reaches of the wooded Nevern valley, Llwyngwair offers a wonderful opportunity to experience one the National Park's largest rivers on its journey from the Preseli Hills to the nearby town of Newport. Without even leaving the site you have the opportunity to explore rivers, woodlands and grasslands and see some wonderful wildlife including otters, kingfishers and barn owls.

Llwyngwair provides a base for exploring the coast, woodland, steep river valleys and hills of the North of the National Park. You can head out on foot on one of the many walks in the area, all of which are steeped in history and natural beauty. A circular walk of approximately 2 miles follows the Pilgrims track to Nevern taking in ancient woodland on steep wooded slopes.

1 River Nevern

The river Nevern is the life blood of the site and can be enjoyed throughout the campsite. The river rises to the East of the Preseli hills on the slope of Frenni Fawr north east of Crymych. As it skirts the Northern slopes of the Preseli Hills it is joined by its tributaries the Afon Bannon, Afon Brynberian and the Nant Duad. It then winds its way along the steep wooded valley until it reaches the Newport estuary, finally discharging into the sea at Parrog, the old port area of Newport. Even at Llwyngwair you can see the tidal influence on the river in the form of a tide mark on the bankside vegetation at the very western boundary of the campsite. On rare occasions seals have even been spotted this far up the river.

The Nevern is an important salmon and sewin (sea trout) river. These fish have fascinating lifecycles, they are spawned in the Nevern river growing on through the fry, parr and smolt stage before becoming slivery sea going adults and migrating great distances at sea to feed on krill, sand eels, herring and crustaceans in the waters off south western Greenland. After 4-5 years at sea they will return to the Nevern to breed and spawn and the cycle begins again. Once back in freshwater, the adults are unable to feed and the majority of them die, but not before breeding and spawning the next generation in this epic life cycle.



Riverfly

Salmon and trout eat a variety of foods, but river invertebrates such as stoneflies, mayflies and caddis flies are particularly important. Some of these species are very sensitive to pollution hence the health of the river is important not just to these insects, but also to the birds, fish and otters.

Different species hatch sequentially though the year providing a continuous supply of food for the fish throughout the season. The fly fisherman knows the sequence in which these flies hatch and spends time crafting his fishing flies to match the emerging insects in order to trick the trout into biting his hook. In the case of mayflies, their magnificence is fleeting as they typically live for less than 24 hours.

With a plentiful supply of fish, it is not surprising that visitors have reported seeing otters on the river. Otters can cover large distances over land and the Llwyngwair otters may have holts (their breeding place) in other areas of the river that are less disturbed by people.



Heron

Hérons are also after the fish, standing upright and staring intently into the water before striking in a flash with their knife like beaks. If disturbed the heron will take flight revealing its impressive wingspan and you will hear the harsh 'fraank' or 'kark' call, an expression of displeasure at the interruption.

The smart brown and white livery of the dipper is a classic sight on the river Nevern and you are almost certain to see them perched on rocks foraging for insects as a pair nests very close to the campsite under the bridge.

Kingfishers are our most brightly coloured bird and can be seen along the river at Llwyngwair and also on the ornamental pond. You may just catch a flash of brilliant azure blue and the shrill chi-kee whistle of a kingfisher in flight, or you may be lucky enough to see one fishing from a favoured perch.



Kingfisher

Woodland

The woodland to the east of the river is secondary woodland with ash and sycamore. Badger tracks can be seen criss-crossing the woods, making their way to the river for a drink or perhaps waiting until dusk has fallen before making one of their famous Llwyngwair raids on the food stored in the awnings of caravans!

For spring visitors, the scent of wild garlic fills the air, look out for the distinctive starry white flowers with pointed petals.



Badger



Bluebell

Also in abundance are bluebells which grow closely together forming a stunning carpet of heady scented flowers. Both of these plants flower early to catch the sunlight reaching the woodland floor before the trees come into leaf and provide an important source of nectar for some bees, hoverflies and butterflies. Bees who's tongues are too short can steal the nectar from bluebells by biting a hole in the bottom and reaching the nectar without pollinating the plant.

To the west of the river, the ground slopes steeply upwards (especially at the north end of the site) leaving a narrow fringe of level ground by the river. This area is deciduous woodland with a mixture of ash, oak, hazel, alder, willow and sycamore. This area is listed as Ancient Woodland which means this land has been wooded since the 1600's and probably even longer. This woodland has survived because the ground is far too steep for farming. Under the trees plants such as herb Robert, red campion, wood avens, enchanter's nightshade and hart's tongue fern.

On a stroll through the woods you might see great spotted woodpecker (listen out for characteristic drumming in the spring) jay, goldcrest and tree creeper. In the early morning, pause and you will hear the song of common woodland birds such as robins, blackbirds and the loud repetitive song thrush and the rattling alarm call of the wren. In late spring when birds are returning to the woods from their winter migration return to the woods you may also hear pied flycatchers and the beautiful melodic song of the Blackcap.



Goldcrest

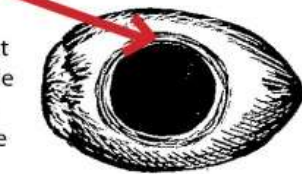
The wooded landscape of North Pembrokeshire is one of the last places in the County where you can still find the hazel dormouse. They have golden brown fur, large eyes and a furry tail. They are almost entirely arboreal which means they spend their life in the canopy of woodlands and hedgerows, rarely coming down to the ground.



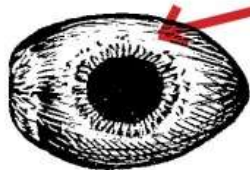
They are also nocturnal and they are only generally seen when found hibernating in log piles or sheds, or when killed and brought into the house by domestic cats. The best clue to the presence of dormice in a woodland is to look for hazelnut shells on the ground in the autumn, by looking closely at them you can tell the difference between nuts opened by birds and grey squirrels, those opened by wood mice and those opened by dormice.

Hazel dormouse

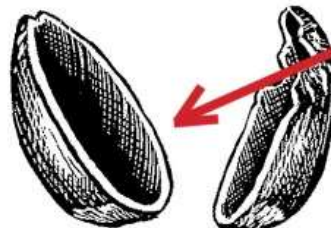
Dormouse-chewed hazel nuts have a smooth inner rim with tooth marks at an angle to the hole on the nut surface and look a little like a clog.



Vole-chewed hazel nuts have teeth marks across the inner rim of the nut but don't leave any marks on the surface, around the edge of the hole.



Wood mouse-chewed hazel nuts have teeth marks both on the inner rim of the nut and also on the surface, around the edge of the hole.



As squirrels and birds are larger and stronger than smaller rodents they simply crack a hazel nut open, shattering the shell.

Image courtesy of the Peoples Trust for Endangered Species (PTES).

Damp riverside fields



These fields can be reached through the woodland or by paddling across the ford. They form part of the floodplain of the River Nevern and they are damp underfoot, suggesting they may be irrigated by river gravels underneath. In the warmth of the early afternoon before being cast into shadow the grassland buzzes with activity as dragonflies and damselflies are active in the sunshine. The large golden-ringed dragonfly is a ferocious predator and will not hesitate to tackle a bumblebee.! Red common darters may be seen basking on bankside vegetation.



Red darter



Common blue damselfly

Damselflies are more delicate than dragonflies and hold their wings together when at rest, look out for common blue damselflies here.

Not all moths come out at night some fly in the day and the silver Y moth is commonly found here, resting on vegetation and taking flight as you disturb them.

The grounds staff at Llwyngwair have been engaged in a battle with alien invaders (see below) tackling some invasive species which are less welcome here in the meadow. As a result, they mow the area several times a year. However, this has resulted in a low diversity of flora with dock, nettle, silverweed and bramble evident.



Silver Y moth

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Alien Invaders

Himalayan Balsam is not native to the UK. It grows up to 2m high and spreads rapidly forming dense tall thick clumps preventing our native plants from thriving. It has a cunning way of spreading, when the seed pod is ripe, it explodes, firing seeds up to 4 metres away. If these reach the river they can travel long distances downstream to form new clumps.

Himalayan Balsam is a significant threat for wildlife in the Nevern Valley.

Japanese knotweed is more at home in East Asia where it originates. Like Himalayan balsam it is a rapid coloniser and because the below ground parts of the plant (the rhizome) can extend to 3m deep. It can also regenerate from even a tiny fragment of stem, so please help the staff at Llwyngwair control the plant, don't play with it or snap bits off as you will move it around the site!



Japanese knotweed

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Managed grassland areas / Camping and Caravan Sites

The grassy areas around the caravan and camping sites are mown regularly with the grassland kept very short. Within these mown areas, especially around the static caravans, owners have gone to great efforts to encourage wildlife. Washes of colourful garden plants attract bees such as common carder.

Birds boxes have been erected and bird feeders are full to the brim. It is from these caravans that owners have reported seeing an otter busying itself in the river.

Grassland which is mown short in the autumn can be very good for waxcap fungi and in the autumn after rain look out for these brightly coloured jewel like fungi in reds, oranges and yellows. Nine different species have been recorded in the large lawns leading down to the man road.



Bird box



Golden waxcap

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Ornamental pond



The pond is another little oasis for wildlife. Mallards are easily spotted resting on the grassy banks. Clear of weed and reflecting the cloud as they move overhead. The kingfisher is often spotted here and dragonflies such as common darters abound. The pond is managed by removing sediment every other year to ensure that it doesn't fill in.

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Wild guests at the Manor House

As well as hotel guests the Manor is home to a colony of nesting house martins, if you look up onto the eaves you will see their mud cup nests which are created from pellets of mud mixed with grass. A new nest will take a couple of weeks to build but many will repair an old nest which only takes a couple of days.

House martins raise two or three broods of chicks in a single year. The birds have a distinctive white rump and forked tail with glossy blue-black upper and pure white underparts. They feed on insects and spend much of their time feeding in the air above wetlands, grasslands and rivers.



Housemartins

Where the insect supplies are good you are also likely to see swallows which nest in properties adjacent to Llwyngwair. Although they look superficially similar, with a bit of practice they are easy to tell apart. Swallows have a much longer forked tail than house martins and have glossy blue-black upper parts. If they swoop close you may catch sight of the distinctive red patch under their chin.

8

Nightlife

The woodlands at Llwyngwair are perfect habitat for tawny owls. They can be quite elusive and you are more likely to hear them than see them. The well known 'to-wit too-woo' sound is actually the sound of the male and female calling to each other; with the female calling 'to-wit' and the male answering 'to-woo'.

Barn Owls nest close to Llwyngwair. Dusk is the best time to see them as they head out hunting on silent wings. Barn owls are stealth predators, their feathers are specially adapted for silent flight as they rely on their hearing to detect mice and voles upon which they prey. This adaptation comes at a cost because their feathers are not



waterproof and prolonged periods of wet, cold summer weather (not uncommon in Wales!) prevents them from hunting which can impact on breeding success.

The combination of woodland, trees and water make Llwyngwair perfect for another night time visitor – bats. They can be seen swooping for their prey along the treelines, edges of fields and along tree lines. The daubenton's bat is especially adapted for taking prey from the surface of the water can be observed feeding above the river.

8 species of bat have been recorded in and around Llwyngwair including greater and lesser horseshoe bats, soprano pipistrelle, whiskered bat, natterers bat, Brandt's bat, barbastelle bat, noctule and brown long-eared bat. Bats use a variety of roosts including the lofts of houses, barns, out-buildings and holes and cracks in trees. Bats feed on insects, a pipistrelle bat can munch its way through around 3000 midges a night, providing a great service for the comfort of guests at Llwyngwair on summer evenings.

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Reptiles

Common lizard, slow worm adder and grass snake have all been recorded within 1 km of the site. There is potential for all of the above to use the site. Grass snakes lay their eggs in compost heaps and slow worms can often be found hunting around compost heaps too. Reptiles hibernate between October and March making use of log or leaf piles and tree roots to stay dry and frost free.



Common lizard

Map of Llwyngwair Hotel



Key

- ① River Nevern
- ② Woodland
- ③ Damp riverside field
- ④ Alien Invaders (not on map)
- ⑤ Managed grassland / Camping sites
- ⑥ Ornamental pond
- ⑦ Manor house
- ⑧ Nightlife (not on map)

Showing habitat areas at Llwyngwair, read in conjunction with Naturally Connected Wildlife Report.

Further Afield

There is a lot of wildlife to explore in North Pembrokeshire, here are a few ideas for places to go to help you experience some of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park's iconic species and habitats

1 The Iron Bridge at Newport

This is a perfect place to spot birds and in the summer months a variety of ducks, geese and swans are likely. West of the bridge the river opens up onto mud flats and saltmarsh. Paths run along both sides of the river allowing you to explore both banks and look for a variety of birds such as Mediterranean gull, back headed gull, green sandpiper, herring gull, green shank, oyster catcher and bar-tailed godwit have all been observed.

The saltmarsh plants are highly specialised for tolerating salt water inundations and waterlogged soils as a result of this their flowers are small, meaning that they are easily overlooked. Exploring the area between mean high water neap tides and the spring high tide mark you will find glasswort (samphire), cord grass, sea purslane, saltmarsh, seablite and sea lavender amongst others.



Oystercatcher

2 Woodlands

The Nevern valley and adjacent Gwaun valley have the highest woodland cover in the National Park. Stunted oak woodlands cling to the poor thin acid soils on the valley side. The woodlands contain both common and sessile oak along with ash, hazel, birch, alder and willow. These woodlands have wonderful displays of spring flowers including bluebell, wood anemone, wood sorrel and wild garlic. These woodlands are also very important for lichens, the most recognisable of which is the striking string of sausages lichen.

Explore the Nevern valley woodland by taking a lovely wooded riverside circular walk to the village of Nevern on the footpath from the campsite. Look out for the pilgrims cross and also the bleeding yew in Nevern churchyard which, legend has it will 'bleed until once again a Welshman is Lord of the castle on the hill'.



Ty Canol Wood

Ty Canol National Nature Reserve is a wonderful place to experience the special atmosphere of an upland oakwood with its stunted twisty trees and moss covered rocks and branches dripping with lichens. Walk up from Ty Canol to the summit of Carnedd Meibion-Owen for stunning panoramic views of the Preseli ridge. Walk down through Ty canol into Pentre Ifan wood which is currently being restored to native woodland by the National Park Authority.

You can also visit other National Park owned woodlands in the Gwaun Valley, including Sychpant, Pontfaen and Kilkiffeth which all have parking and walking trails.

3

Newport Cliffs

Following the coast path to the North of Newport takes you into the Newport Cliffs Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). Exposed west facing cliffs tower to heights of 100m and the inaccessible beaches along this section are used by Atlantic grey seals who use inaccessible beaches and caves to have their pups. August and September are the best times to see them - when pup numbers are at their highest.

Along this section of the coast seabirds such as choughs, cormorants, shags, fulmar and small numbers of razorbill, can be also be seen.

At any time of year, you are likely to pass gorse in flower with its vivid yellow colour and delicious coconut scent. Other plants are more seasonal. In spring and summer, sea thrift, sea campion and spring squill colour the cliffs in spectacular displays of pink white and blue.



Newport centaury

The Newport cliffs are also home to a very special colony of perennial centaury, which is found at only two other places in the UK. Locally it is known as the Newport centaury.

4

Rocky Shores

Every trip to Pembrokeshire should include exploring our rocky shores, in this area the right hand side of both Cwm yr Eglwys and Newport are good options.

The shore is a tough place to live and species at the top of the shore have to cope with extremes of temperature and exposure whereas those on the lower shore need to be capable of withstanding long periods submerged in salty water. Life on the rocky shore arranges itself in zones from high to low water according to how well the organism is adapted to living in those conditions. If you look at the cliffs you can see distinct colour banding where species only survive in the conditions specific to that height on the shore.

Look out for classic rocky shore creatures such as periwinkles, barnacles, limpets and mussels as well as several types of sea anemone, breadcrumb sponges and star ascidians. Brown seaweeds such as bladder wrack and serrated wrack dominate the middle shore, but

look more closely to see more delicate bright green sea lettuce and delicate pink frosted coralline algae.

Remember don't pull anything off the rocks and if you turn over a rock, put it back in the same place gently. Return the animals back where you found them, crabs back under the seaweed, prawns back in their pools.

One of the most beautiful shells on the shore is the cone shaped Topshell. These are purple coloured shells with shiny spires made of mother of pearl.

6

Dinas Head

Slightly further afield again, this time by bus, car or bike is Dinas Head. Here you will find two very different walks as well as a pub to rest your weary feet!

Dinas head is promontory of land attached to the mainland by an isthmus which runs east to west. On the eastern side is Cym-yr-Eglwys and the western side Pwllgwaelod. If you fancy an easy wheelchair accessible stroll, follow the 1km path that links the two. Enjoy the wooded valley and explore the rock pools at Cwm-yr-Eglwys beach.

If time and energy allow, then the 5km walk around Dinas Head is well worth it. The vegetation is typical of Pembrokeshire coastal walks gorse and bracken with scrubby trees. Depending on the time of year you may also find orchids and heather as well as the plants listed above in the Newport Cliffs SSSI section. Typical year around birds to spot include stonechat and rock pipits inland and ravens, chough and various gull species.



Pwllgwaelod

In summer Needle Rock comes alive with nesting sea birds including guillemots and razorbills. Visit slightly too late and you will find the rock has been abandoned, the birds have headed back out to sea until they return to breed again next year. Leaving behind them a rock covered in white excretions and a pungent aroma that if the wind is in the right direction you may get a whiff of. With time though this will get washed away leaving no trace of their presence.



Razorbill

Carningli

At 347 miles Carningli is a prominent feature of the landscape which can be seen from the campsite. On a clear day, a walk to the top will be rewarded with spectacular views back to the campsite and the town of Newport.

A variety of birds of prey can be seen including kestrel, hen harrier and buzzard. The song of the skylark is the soundtrack to a warm summer day and linnets and stonechats can be seen perching on the tops of gorse bushes.

In the late summer and autumn the heathland comes alive as the heather and gorse bloom purple and yellow.



The view from Carningli back towards Newport



Stonechat



Linnet

Species List

Species recorded on 20/09/2016	
Common Name	Scientific Name
Alder	<i>Alnus glutinosa</i>
Ash	<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>
Beech	<i>Fagus sylvatica</i>
Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>
Bramble	<i>Rubus fruticosus agg.</i>
Broad buckler fern	<i>Dryopteris dilatata</i>
Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>
Cherry laurel	<i>Prunus laurocerasus</i>
Dandelion	<i>Taraxacum officinale agg.</i>
Common blue damselfly	<i>Enallagma cyathigerum</i>
Common darter	<i>Sympetrum striolatum</i>
Dipper	<i>Cinclus</i>
Dock	<i>Rumex patientia</i>
Elder	<i>Sambucus nigra</i>
Enchanter's nightshade	<i>Ciccaea lutetiana</i>
Field maple	<i>Acer campestre</i>
Field sorrel	<i>Rumex acetosa</i>
Fools watercress	<i>Apium nodiflorum</i>
Gunnera	<i>Gunnera manicata</i>
Great wood rush	<i>Luzula sylvatica</i>
Greater spotted woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopus major</i>
Ground Elder	<i>Aegopodium podagraria</i>
Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>
Hard fern	<i>Blechnum spicant</i>
Hart's tongue fern	<i>Asplenium scolopendrium</i>
Hazel	<i>Corylus avellana</i>
Herb Robert	<i>Geranium robertianum</i>
Himalayan Balsam	<i>Impatiens glandulifera</i>
Hogweed	<i>Heracleum sphondylium</i>
Horse chestnut	<i>Aesculus hippocastanum</i>
House martin	<i>Delichon urbicum</i>
Ivy	<i>Hedera helix</i>
Japanese knotweed	<i>Fallopia japonica</i>
Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>
Lady Fern	<i>Athyrium filix-femina</i>
Male Fern	<i>Dryopteris filix-mas</i>
Maidenhair spleenwort	<i>Asplenium trichomanes</i>
Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>
Meadowsweet	<i>Fillipendula ulmaria</i>
Nettle	<i>Urtica dioica</i>
Oak	<i>Quercus robur</i>
Opposite leaved golden saxifrage	<i>Chrysosplenium oppositifolium</i>
Red campion	<i>Silene dioica</i>
Ribwort plantain	<i>Plantago Lenceolata</i>

Rowan	<i>Sorbus aucuparia</i>
Song Thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>
Silverweed	<i>Argentina anserina</i>
Silver Y	<i>Autographa gamma</i>
Sow thistle	<i>Sonchus spp.</i>
Sycamore	<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>
Willow	<i>Salix sp.</i>
Wood avens	<i>Geum urbanum</i>
Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>