

# CARMARTHENSHIRE STATE OF NATURE - BUMBLEBEES



Brown-banded Carder-bee © BCT



Ruderal Bumblebee ©L. Harris



Red-shanked Carder-bee © BCT

## HEADLINES

**There are currently 22 bumblebee species recorded in Wales and 20 have been recorded in Carmarthenshire.**

Of the five Section 'priority' bumblebee species in Wales, four have been recorded in Carmarthenshire since 2000.

The Carmarthenshire coastline is particularly important for bumblebees.

Populations of the Ruderal Bumblebee (*Bombus ruderatus*) were recorded in 2022, having not previously been recorded in the county since 1973.

## OVERVIEW

Bumblebees are incredibly important and are found in a broad range of habitats. They are one of the most effective indicators of environmental health and ecological change.

Many species are declining nationwide, with similar declines in Carmarthenshire. Three bumblebee species are considered at risk of local extinction in Carmarthenshire. Data is limited however, and specialised surveys are required to better assess the extent of species in the county.

One of the driving factors affecting bumblebee decline in the UK is the loss of 97% of our ancient wildflower meadows. In the UK two bumblebee species have become extinct since 1940.

Local action, such as that to promote biodiverse grassland via the Carmarthenshire Meadows Group and management of public open space, will have a local benefit.

## CURRENT PRESSURES

- Continued land use change, including insufficient or inappropriate management and agricultural intensification, including the isolation and loss of wildflower-rich habitats and traditional hay meadows.
- Insufficient mitigation on development sites.
- Climate change and weather extremes.
- Increased domesticated honeybee populations.
- Non-native invasive species.
- Pollution and pesticides (particularly neonicotinoid pesticides).

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR LOCAL ACTION

Promote landscape-scale conservation projects targeting threatened/vulnerable bumblebee species.

Increase flower-rich bumblebee friendly habitats such as hay meadows and floristically diverse road verges.

Incorporate mitigation and habitat creation for bumblebees (and other pollinators) in all new developments.

Increase survey, monitoring and research to inform conservation status of bumblebees in Carmarthenshire, undertake with citizen science - the Carmarthenshire Coast has been identified as a target location for surveys for five species by Bumblebee Conservation Trust.

Reduce reliance on pesticide use.

## KEY AREAS

Carmarthenshire coast

Upland areas around the Cothi and Tywi valleys



#### CASE STUDY

The Ruderal Bumblebee (*Bombus ruderatus*) was considered to have largely vanished from Wales, after significant losses throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The Ruderal Bumblebee is highly dependent on large-scale, open, flower-rich habitat and so was particularly badly affected by the loss of traditional hay meadows over the last 80 years. The last record in Carmarthenshire was 1973 near Rhandirmwyn. In June 2022, Bumblebee Conservation Trust staff identified a number of Ruderal Bumblebees in upland areas around Brechfa, and subsequently in upland pasture near Rhandirmwyn. It seems likely that these bumblebees have been present in these areas for a long period, supported by hay meadows in local smallholdings and low-intensity farming practices but due to being hard to identify have been under recorded.



**Ruderal Bumblebee**



#### WANT TO FIND OUT MORE?

[Priority Bumblebee species in Carmarthenshire](#)

[Welsh Landscapes for Rare Bumblebees 2021 - SeWBREC](#)

[Wales Threatened Bees Report – Buglife](#)

[BBCT – Connecting the Carmarthenshire Coast](#)

**[Commented on](#) by Bumblebee Conservation Trust 2024**