

A preliminary assessment of Important Areas for Ponds (IAPs) in Wales

A first test of a new approach to pond conservation in the UK



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Aims of IAP assessment

Knowledge of IAPs will:

- Highlight IAPs for practitioners (including Conservation Agencies, Local Authorities, Defra and Non-Governmental Organisations) creating a better understanding and recognition of the high quality pond resource.
- Increase awareness of the importance of special and often overlooked pond types (e.g. temporary ponds and mawn pools).
- Act as a focus for pond creation and management, thereby strengthening the existing resource.
- Help in the development and the delivery of the UK Pond Habitat Action Plan under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan.

What are IAPs and HQPs?

- IAPs are geographical areas which support significant numbers of High Quality Ponds (HQPs)
- HQPs are identified using a standard set of biological criteria (see below).

A temporary 'mawn' pool in the Radnorshire and Brecknock IAP. These ponds can support assemblages and species of national importance such as Fairy Shrimp (*Chirocephalus diaphanus*) and Pillwort (*Pilularia globulifera*)



A manmade, marl pit pond in the North-east Wales IAP. These ponds occur at high density and can support species of European Importance such as Great Crested Newt (*Triturus cristatus*) and water beetle species of national importance, e.g. *Hydrochara caraboides*

What are the criteria used to define HQPs?

HQPs are ponds with:

- Habitats of high conservation importance as defined by Annex I of the Habitats Directive.
- Species of conservation importance, including those listed on Annex II of the Habitats Directive, Red Data Book and Nationally Scarce species and those prioritised in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan.
- Exceptional assemblages of key biotic groups (e.g. amphibians, wetland plants and macroinvertebrates), as defined by agreed guidelines.
- High ecological quality scores, those which are >75% using the PSYM monitoring method.
- Other important features, for example pingos, 'mawn pools' and dune slack ponds

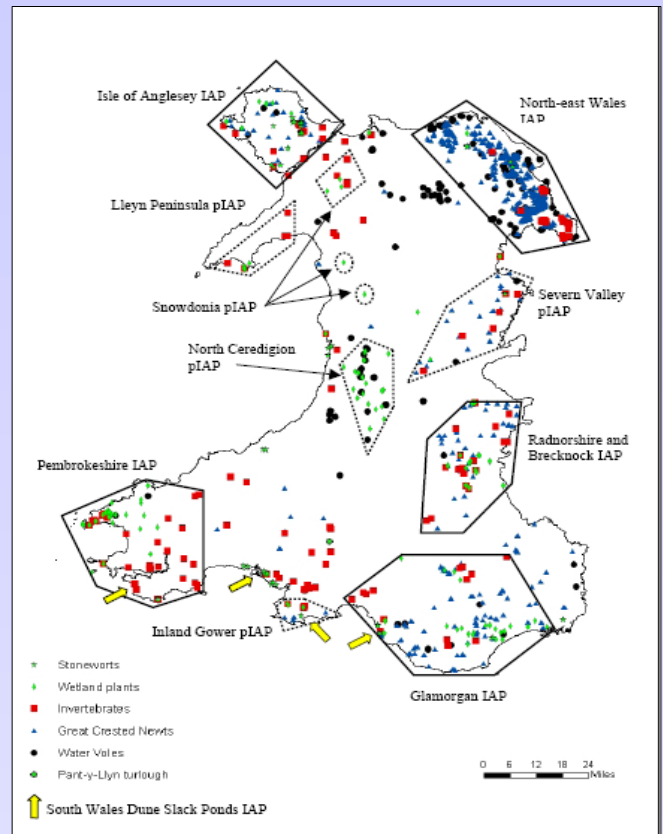


Figure 1: Overview of IAPs (full line) and pIAPs (dotted line) in Wales. Dot show HQPs based on actual data.

Where are IAPs in Wales?

The Isle of Anglesey IAP: Anglesey has a high density and a great variety of ponds, including fen ponds, dune-slack ponds and heathland ponds. Many ponds support stonewort species rare in the UK such as Dwarf Stonewort (*Nitella tenuissima*).

North-east Wales IAP: The ponds in this area include those created as a result of past industrial and agricultural activities, and also by natural processes. This area is a well-known stronghold for Great Crested Newt (*Triturus cristatus*).

Radnorshire and Brecknock IAP: This area is particularly well known for the 'mawn' pools, a distinctive type of pond which supports a flora and fauna of national importance.

South Wales Dune Slack Ponds IAP: Dune slacks ponds are an Annex I habitat which tend to support a rich diversity of plants, particularly stoneworts and invertebrates.

Pembrokeshire IAP: This IAP is rich in heathland ponds within a mosaic of semi-natural habitats, ensuring the persistence of a rich fauna and flora.

Glamorgan IAP: This area of South Wales has a high population density but still supports a wide range of ponds, both natural and manmade as a result of past industries.

Other areas were proposed as *potential* Important Areas for Ponds (pIAPs) based on expert knowledge, but insufficient data was available at this time to make them full IAPs (see dotted line in Figure 1): **Liŷn Peninsula, Severn Valley, North Ceredigion, Snowdonia and Inland Gower.**