# What habitats are found in Bridgend County?

Bridgend offers a wide variety of habitats and these have been classified into six specific types, each with their own features. The following table shows the habitats and their features.

| Habitats | Key features |
|---|---|
| Hedgerows | **Above Ground**<br>• Flowers are a key resource for pollinating insects<br>• Plants are a key seed source for grasses<br>• Hedgerows themselves help provide shelter against strong winds<br>**Below Ground**<br>• Wider hedges and those planted across slopes or near streams play a key role in regulating the flow of water following heavy rainfall<br>• Plant roots remove impurities from the soil water as do soil fauna and flora |
| Woodlands | **Above Ground**<br>• Woodlands support the greatest number of species, including insects that pollinate plants, and therefore are a large pool of genetic diversity<br>• The plants (i.e. mainly trees) fix carbon through photosynthesis<br>• Some plants can remove air impurities and all plants release water vapour which cools the air<br>• Their leaves, branches and trunks regulate surface water runoff as they intercept raindrops<br>**Below Ground**<br>• Roots store and regulate water run off<br>• Plant roots remove impurities from the soil water as do soil fauna and flora<br>• Roots and organic soil matter store carbon (in the lowland woodlands on deep brown earths this can be a very significant resource)<br>• Play a key role in soil fertility through the nitrogen cycle |

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| Parklands and grasslands | **Above Ground**<br>• Semi-natural grasslands provide us with a grazing resource that produces high quality meat and dairy products<br>• Semi-natural grasslands provide homes for pollinating insects<br>• They provide homes for other insects that are predators of important crop pests<br>• Grass margins around arable fields can capture nitrates before they enter watercourses<br>• Wildflower seed mixes (or varieties of clover) can be sown around the boundaries of arable and grassland fields, to provide nectar for pollinating insects<br>**Below Ground**<br>• Their soils store carbon, as plant roots and organic matter<br>• Semi-natural grasslands' roots remove impurities from soil water, unlike intensive grasslands and arable land where the use of artificial fertilisers can add pollutants to the water |
| Wetlands | **Above Ground**<br>• Although reed beds are generally just made up of a few plant species these trap sediment and their roots remove impurities from the water<br>• Wetlands support a wide range of bird species and a number of key plants, such as rushes used in traditional thatching<br>• A number of key medicinal plants come from wetlands<br>• They provide a refuge for insects which can act both as pollinators and as predators for natural pests<br>**Below Ground**<br>• Wetlands have a key role in storing water, preventing flooding by slowing its flow to rivers and providing a steady source of water in drought conditions.<br>• Wetland soils are carbon-based peat and therefore store carbon<br>• Wetlands also have a key role in preventing soil erosion |

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| Heaths | **Above Ground**<br>• Provide grazing for traditional breeds of livestock<br>• Provide 'game' for food and field sports<br>• Intact heathlands and blanket bogs hold the fragile peat soils together stopping organic particles being carried into drinking water<br>• Heathlands have a strong landscape value the brown purple cover of the hill tops of the county borough are a key part of the character of these areas<br>**Below Ground**<br>• Peat-based soils hold a large proportion of organic carbon |
| Coastal sand dunes | **Above Ground**<br>• Harsh environment therefore pioneer species are found here, which are not found in other habitats. These organisms can tolerate the barren conditions but are not good at competing with other plants in less challenging habitats.<br>• Sand dunes have a very strong contribution to tourism and regional character<br>• Contribute to coastal defence by acting as a barrier to wave and wind action<br>**Below Ground**<br>• Coastal stabilization below the ground by grass species' roots |