

Carneddau Ponies 'Unique'

Tuesday, 14 May 2013

Kate Green



Some wild Welsh ponies have been found to be genetically unique from the Welsh Section A, with which they share many traits

The wild ponies grazing the Carneddau mountains in North Wales will receive more focused conservation concern now that researchers at [Aberystwyth University](#) have established that they are a genetically unique population separate from the Welsh Section A, a popular riding pony breed for children.

Clare Winton, who carried out the study for her PhD, reveals: 'Although the Carneddau ponies have shared ancestry with the Welsh Section A pony, they exhibit genetic signatures such as unique mutations while maintaining high genetic diversity, demonstrating that the population has been isolated for at least several hundred years.'

Numbers have been dramatically reduced this spring, due to heavy snowfall in their Snowdonia habitat, and Winton's supervisor, Dr Nash, adds that the ponies' existence is threatened by the expense of microchips and passports, a legal requirement for every horse in the UK, although it is possible for populations deemed 'rare' to be exempt.

Carneddau Ponies 'Unique'

* [Subscribe to Country Life and save; Get the Ipad edition](#)

Henry VIII ordered the destruction of feral ponies that weren't strong enough to carry knights in armour, but the efforts of local farmers safeguarded the herd over centuries; the Carneddau are now used for conservation grazing as part of a project to preserve the chough in Snowdonia.

* Follow [Country Life magazine on Twitter](#)

Image from <http://naturcymru.blogspot>.

The NGO Educational Trust wishes to thank the Country Life for permitting us to reproduce this article for the benefit of our website users.