

An underwater photograph of a crab, likely a shore crab, resting on a rock covered in green seaweed. The crab's large, textured claws are prominent, showing a mix of brown, orange, and white. The background is a clear, blue underwater environment with light filtering through the water.

# Welsh MPA and Relevant Authority Groups 2019-20 Update

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# Welsh MPA and Relevant Authority Groups

## 2019/20 Update

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### Introduction

The MPA Management Steering Group was set up to help provide a national steer for MPA management across the network of MPAs in Wales. The group has since produced an MPA Network Management Framework for Wales. The framework sets out the structure for improving the management and condition of the network of MPAs in Wales for the period 2018-23. Following this, an MPA Network Management Action Plan was produced for 2019-20. The plan sets out the priority actions identified by the MPA Management Steering Group to maintain and improve the management and condition of the MPA network across Wales.

It was agreed by the MPA Management Steering Group that maintaining links between the network and local level was important. Therefore action 16 (previously action 20) was included in the action plan:

‘Maintain links between the Network Action Plan and locally agreed actions where they exist, and support exploration of funding opportunities’.

### MPAs and Relevant Authority Groups (RAGs)

This report covers five out of the 134 MPAs in Welsh waters, however they do represent the larger MPAs and as such cover a large portion of the Welsh MPA network. Many of the smaller MPAs such as SSSIs and RAMSARs fall within the boundaries of the five sites and help underpin them. Projects undertaken within the five MPAs will always consider the requirements of the smaller MPAs nestled within as well as other considerations e.g. Biodiversity Action Plans and the Water Framework Directive. Some of the projects will also help deliver management for the new Harbour Porpoise SACs as well as existing sites with no RAG e.g. Menai Strait and Conwy Bay SAC. Many of the projects outlined in this report are identified as local actions within the Network Action Plan 2019-20 Annex 1.

The RAGs included in this report:

- Pen Llŷn a’r Sarnau RAG
- Cardigan Bay RAG
- Pembrokeshire Marine RAG
- Carmarthen Bay and Estuaries RAG
- Association of Severn Estuary RAG

### Other work

This report focuses on the projects undertaken by the RAGs and site officers of the MPAs listed above, that will help improve or maintain site condition. However, there are many tasks undertaken by the RAGs and site officers that are essential to maintain site management that are not covered by individual projects. These include, but are not limited to:

- Maintaining the RAG and Liaison Group
- Stakeholder engagement
- Raising awareness and education
- Sourcing and securing funding

- MPA contact point
- Providing advice and information
- Liaison and partnership working
- Working with other site officers to ensure consistency across the network
- Sitting on various groups to ensure MPAs are represented and promote joint working e.g. MPA Management Steering Group, Marine Planning Stakeholder Reference Group etc.
- Input into national work packages e.g. NRW Unlicensable Activities Project, Clean Seas Wales Partnership, UK MPA liaison etc.

Funding for MPA site officers has varied greatly over the years. This is reflected in the number of days a week each site has a dedicated site officer. It varies from one to five days a week, see table 1. This in turn reflects the amount of work possible on site.

MPA	Number of days per week
Pen Llŷn a'r Sarnau SAC	5
Cardigan Bay SAC	4
Pembrokeshire Marine SAC	2.5
Carmarthen Bay and Estuaries EMS	1
Severn Estuary EMS	2

Table 1: Number of days per week each MPA has a dedicated site officer

## Management principles

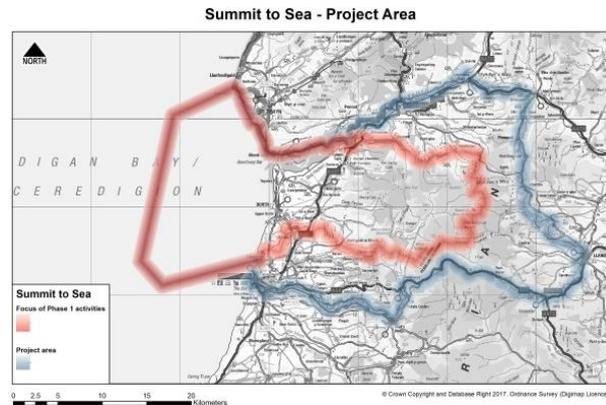
The MPA Management Steering Group developed five management principles to guide delivery of the vision and objectives for the management of the network. Each action included in this report contributes to at least one of the five management principles. Local actions contribute primarily to management principle 5, wider management. But many also contribute to other management principles.

<b>Management Principle</b>
<b>MP1:</b> Strategic Planning
<b>MP2:</b> Regulation, development consenting and assessment processes
<b>MP3:</b> Management advice and guidance
<b>MP4:</b> Understanding the condition of, and pressures and threats on, sites and their features to inform management
<b>MP5:</b> Wider management

Table 2: Management principles

## Land and Sea Llŷn / Summit to Sea

Funding has been secured for two catchment level projects within PLAS. Land and Sea Llŷn covers the Llŷn Peninsular and has secured three years funding from the Sustainable Management Scheme Funds. Summit to Sea covers the bottom third of the SAC and has secured five years funding through the Endangered Landscapes Fund. The aim of these projects is to manage marine, freshwater and terrestrial environments together. The SAC Officer is marine lead for both these projects. Many of the projects below are delivered under one or both of these projects. As well as project delivery a lot of time has been spent on stakeholder engagement and involvement.



## Water quality



Water quality is an issue that many MPAs across the network face. This project focuses on the Daron catchment on the Llŷn. Working closely with partners, such as NRW, the Daron River has been sampled at regular intervals at multiple locations over an extended period. A contract was also run to walk the entire catchment to identify sources of pollution. As a result a report was produced identifying sources of pollution as well as providing recommendations that will lead to improved water quality. A successful workshop was then run with landowners to present the results and discuss the recommendations. In 2019-20 the focus has been on implementing the recommendations in the report. This work will continue into 2020-21.

(This project also contributes towards Action 15 “Explore how outcomes from pilot projects on diffuse and atmospheric pollution at Pen Llŷn a'r Sarnau, Pembrokeshire Marine and Severn Estuary SACs can be applied across the network”.)

## Crawfish

It has been reported that crawfish populations in PLAS were decimated in the 1970s. Their populations remain critically low. Crawfish are a component of the reef feature in PLAS. This project looks to explore feasible options that will help the crawfish recover. The SAC Officer has been working closely with other areas and experts to explore possible actions. The SAC Officer has secured the support of local fisheries associations and dive clubs. A report has been completed that looks at the options for crawfish recovery. The SAC Officer is currently discussing options for next steps.

## Otters

Otters are a feature of PLAS. They are currently in favourable condition but still face a number of issues. This project is twofold, first to ensure that they remain in favourable condition and second to use the otter as an educational tool. A report has been produced collating information about otters in PLAS and recommendations for management options. Motion detection cameras were also placed in PLAS to try and capture further information on otter movement. A report was produced outlining the findings.

## Litter



Litter projects in PLAS focus on a number of different elements mainly, beach cleans, litter monitoring and reducing litter from source. A number of beach cleans have been run across PLAS. The Last Straw campaign has continued with many businesses pledging to stop using straws or switch to biodegradable versions. Work has also gone into maintaining the #2minbeachclean stations. PLAS also worked with a team of universities who sailed a Welsh long boat into Arctic waters to study the effects of plastic. Images and film taken during this voyage was used to create a PLAS litter exhibition and a stakeholder event. The SAC Officer also coordinated work on the litter review for Wales.



## Education Pack

Education is a key element of marine management. The SAC Officer has been leading a partnership to develop a bilingual education pack for primary schools. The pack will cover marine, freshwater and terrestrial environments in line with the catchment approach to management. The first draft of the education pack has been produced and approved by a number of local teachers.

## Marine Code

In partnership with Ceredigion SAC and stakeholders a new Marine Code was produced for PLAS in 2016. The SAC Officer then went on to produce a code for Anglesey and Conwy. The same code is now promoted across the four counties and has been adopted and distributed by each local authority. In 2019-20 work focused on distributing and promoting the code. The SAC Officer has also been working with the Pembrokeshire Coastal forum to develop special mapping for sensitive areas of PLAS. This has included several stakeholder workshops. The SAC Officer has also worked with the FLAG to develop a number of supporting materials for the marine code, including new stickers for boats, small information panels and a leaflet. These have been distributed throughout Gwynedd and the all along the north Wales coast. Technology such as NFC was also used and the material linked back to the Wild Seas Wales website to ensure consistent messaging.



## PLAS Biosecurity Plan

The SAC Officer has been working with NRW to develop a biosecurity plan for PLAS to help prevent the spread of invasive non-natives. This year the SAC Officer has worked with NRW on stakeholder mapping, engagement and awareness.

## Seal Pup Disturbance

The SAC Officer has coordinated work to produce the new seal pup disturbance panels. These have been distributed and installed along the Welsh coastline. They are temporary panels that will be re installed each year during the pupping season. A network of contacts has been created along the coast to help with installation. A social media campaign was also run to promote the issue.

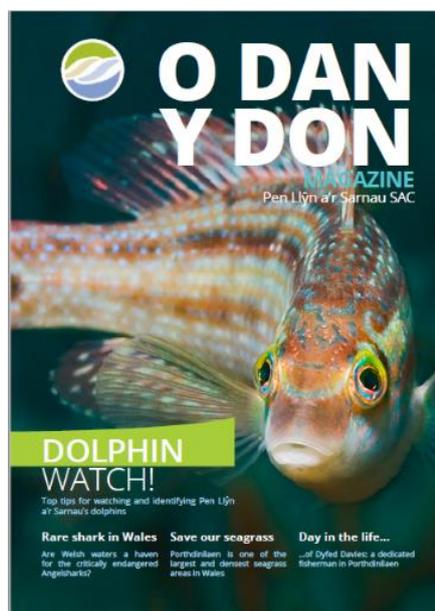
## Porthdinllaen Seagrass Project

This project looks at options to reduce the impact of anchoring and mooring on seagrass. Porthdinllaen has one of the largest and densest seagrass beds in Wales. In February 2019 two helical anchors were installed in the inner harbour in Porthdinllaen. These anchors have now been trialled for a year. A report has been produced outlining the methodology and initial findings. Helical anchors have a smaller footprint so have much less of an impact on installation, inspection and replacing.

## Awareness and Education

Awareness and education plays an essential role in marine management. In order to reach as many people as possible the SAC Officer has:

- Produced issue two of the PLAS magazine O Dan y Don
- Been active on social media accounts and maintained the PLAS website
- Written articles for a number of publications including local papers and newsletters
- Been on local radio discussing marine issues
- Given a number of presentations (11)
- Ensured that PLAS material has been at various shows and events
- Arranged and attended a number of events including guided walks, workshops and beach cleans (17 events, approx. 1,000 individuals engaged)
- Visited local schools (22 schools, 387 pupils)
- Promoted PLAS films
- Met with a large number of groups and organisations to promote PLAS and encourage partnership working (340 individual stakeholders engaged)



For further information about these projects or the Pen Llŷn a'r Sarnau SAC please contact Alison Hargrave at [alisonpalmerhargrave@gwynedd.llyw.cymru](mailto:alisonpalmerhargrave@gwynedd.llyw.cymru). Or visit [www.penllynarsarnau.co.uk](http://www.penllynarsarnau.co.uk). You can also find information on the PLAS Facebook and Twitter sites.

 [@ACA\\_PLAS\\_SAC](https://twitter.com/ACA_PLAS_SAC)

 [Pen Llŷn a'r Sarnau](https://www.facebook.com/PenLlynarSarnau)



# Cardigan Bay SAC RAG – 2019/20 Update

Melanie Heath

## Dolphin and Porpoise Watch (DPW)

The MPA officer has recruited new volunteers to the DPW project and has provided training for both new and existing volunteers. A total of nearly 50 volunteers have participated in training sessions and/or monitoring during the 2019 season. Volunteers also collected sightings data of cthough seen. New volunteers have been recruited through Dolphin and Porpoise Watch events, posters and social media. Eight training sessions have been provided by the MPA officer at different locations along the Ceredigion Coast from Borth in the north to Mwnt in the south. This involved 141 hours of volunteer time.



## Dolphin Watch Reports

The MPA officer has entered all the sightings data for the 2016 and 2017 monitoring seasons, analysed the results and wrote and published two reports:

- Dolphin Watch: Bottlenose Dolphins and Boat Traffic on the Ceredigion Coast, West Wales 2016
- Dolphin Watch: Bottlenose Dolphins and Boat Traffic on the Ceredigion Coast, West Wales 2017

Over the winter of 2019-20 the 2019 data was entered.

## Public Events

The MPA officer delivered twelve public Dolphin and Porpoise Watch events between February and the end of May at New Quay Bird's Rock, New Quay Harbour wall, Mwnt and Aberystwyth. Total number of participants – 74.



The MPA officer delivered a further twelve public Dolphin and Porpoise Watch events between July and September at New Quay Bird's Rock, New Quay harbour wall and Llangrannog. Total number of participants – 109.

The MPA officer ran three marine litter workshops at the Marine Protected Area visitor's centre during the February half term school holiday and a further three workshops during the Easter school holidays . A total of six workshops attended by 24 participants.

The MPA officer ran three marine litter workshops at the Marine Protected Area visitor's centre at the weekends during September and a further three workshops during the autumn half term school holidays. A total of six workshops attended by 22 participants.

## School Workshops

The MPA officer has delivered school workshops to years 3, 4, 5 and 6 at Ysgol Gynradd Aberporth and years 3, 4, 5 and 6 at Ysgol Gynradd Aberaeron during the first half of the summer term. Participants – 66 and 111.

During the second half of the summer term the MPA officer delivered workshops to years 3,4,5 and 6 at Ysgol Craig yr Wylfa, Borth and Ysgol Bro Sion Cwilt, New Quay. Participants – 37 and 63.

During the autumn term the MPA officer delivered a further workshop to years 3,4,5 and 6 at Ysgol Craig yr Wylfa, Borth. Participants – 32.

These sessions covered the differences between bottlenose dolphins and harbour porpoise, key behaviour and threats to each species.

A marine litter activity raising awareness of how long different materials take to break down in the marine environment and activities focusing on habitats, adaptations and food chains.



### MPA Visitor Centre

The MPA officer has opened the MPA visitors’ centre every Saturday from February to the end of October, on Bank Holidays and 4 days a week during school holidays.

SAC Leaflets have been distributed to visitors’ in the centre, and crabbing leaflets have been distributed by the MPA officer to families crabbing on New Quay harbour wall. These leaflets have also been supplied to visitors by local shops selling crabbing equipment.

### Ceredigion Marine Code of Conduct

The MPA officer met with Ceredigion Council Technical Services staff at the beginning of the year to ensure that codes of conduct went out with every mooring application for motor and sail boats and kayaks in Ceredigion. The MPA has distributed copies of the code of conduct to kayakers and paddle boarders launching from Traeth yr Dolau and main beach in New Quay. A skipper’s meeting was held at the beginning of the season with owners of wildlife trip boat companies to ensure compliance with the commercial code of conduct.

### Interpretation Panels

Seasonal interpretation panels to raise awareness of the impact on trampling to Sabellaria colonies were placed at key sites along the Ceredigion coast by the MPA officer. Seasonal panels to raise awareness during the seal pupping season were also put out by the MPA officer at key beaches along the Ceredigion coast.

### Disturbance

**Respect for Wildlife** Please Follow the Ceredigion Marine Code of Conduct  
Keep your distance and slow down to minimum speed to reduce noise and physical disturbance. Do not make changes in speed or course. Keep the engine running to avoid stopping in the water. If you do stop, increase your distance and limit your watching time. Limit observation time to 10 minutes.  
It is the responsibility of the skipper to be responsible to the behaviour of the animals. If all times and to respect them to maintain opportunity.

**Seabirds**  
**All is well**  
The vessel is sitting a sensible distance away (at least 100 metres) and the birds are relaxed on their eggs.  
**Caution**  
The skipper is making too close the birds are becoming wary and you can see them bobbing. They are leaving and diving frequently. The skipper needs to move away quietly before the birds fly.  
**Too late!**  
The skipper continues to ignore the warning signs and approaches too close: the birds have taken flight. Adults incubate their single egg on the rock. Adults can fly off to sea but the egg and chick are on low also vulnerable to predators.  
**Seals**  
**All is well**  
The vessel is sitting a sensible distance away (at least 100 metres) and the seals are relaxed and resting on their haul out.  
**Caution**  
If the vessel is too close and the skipper is too close. More seals are seen before the seals are disturbed. Other signs of movement towards the water.  
**Too late!**  
The skipper ignores the warning signs and the seals returns to the water to feed seals. Their rest time has been shortened and the animals may return to the water.  
**Dolphins and porpoises**  
**All is well**  
The skipper is slow down gradually and stopped or has slowed down and maintained their course. The skipper is keeping a distance of at least 100 metres away. The animals show no change in their behaviour.  
**Caution**  
The skipper is driving too fast too close to the animals. The animals are showing signs of disturbance: splashing or grouping together, tail flipping, taking longer dives, moving away from the vessel or the skipper.  
**Too late!**  
The animals have changed their behaviour in response to the vessel. The animals are showing signs of disturbance: splashing or grouping together, tail flipping, taking longer dives, moving away from the vessel or the skipper.

New interpretation panels and leaflets have been produced with funding kindly provided by Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority. The new interpretation material is to help water users recognise the signs of disturbance in marine mammals and sea birds.

## Ceredigion Plastic and Packaging Reduction Scheme

The MPA officer launched a competition with five primary schools adjacent to the Cardigan Bay SAC; the pupils were asked to design a logo to reduce plastic use by take away businesses in Ceredigion. Because awareness of plastic straws and other plastics has grown since the grant application was submitted, the decision was made to expand the remit of this project to cover five different categories of accreditation – no plastic straws, cutlery or sauce sachets; packaging reduction; provision of water bottle re-fill and a category specific to schools. Five winning designs were chosen to cover these categories. Winners and runners up each received certificates and each participating school were awarded with a ‘how to reduce your plastic’ book for the school library.



So far twenty three businesses and twelve schools have qualified and signed up to the scheme. It was hoped that the Ceredigion Council waste team and staff from Keep Wales Tidy would assist with the roll out of the accreditation scheme, unfortunately due to pressures on staff time this has not



been possible, therefore the roll out has been done only by the MPA officer. Now the accreditation scheme has been established and the initial publicity and awards have been completed, it would be beneficial if this scheme could be rolled out more widely across the county, this would need to be covered by a future funding grant, to enable the MPA officer to complete targeted awareness raising in individual towns and through school workshops more widely across the county.

## GEMS

The Cardigan Bay MPA officer has been working closely with the other Wales SAC officers on a collaborative project funded by Welsh Government. This project will run for three years and covers marine litter and disturbance. The MPA officer co-ordinated changes to the Ceredigion seal awareness panel so that this can now be used Wales wide. 50 boards were produced and have now been distributed for use during this year's seal pupping season all around the Wales' coastline.

For further information about these projects or the Cardigan Bay SAC please contact Melanie Heath at [Melanie.Heath2@ceredigion.gov.uk](mailto:Melanie.Heath2@ceredigion.gov.uk).

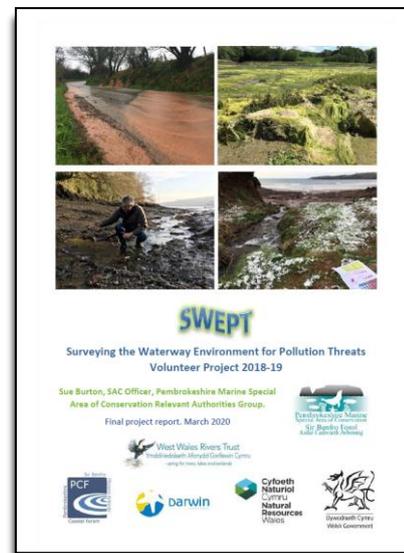
# Pembrokeshire Marine SAC RAG – 2019/20 update

Sue Burton

## **SWEPT (Surveying the Waterway Environment for Pollution Threats)**

SWEPT was led by the Pembrokeshire Marine Special Area of Conservation (SAC) Officer with funding from Natural Resources Wales. The primary objective was to gather data and look at the effects of nutrient pollution from land run-off on the marine environment. The citizen science project saw over 100 volunteers conduct repeat surveys of stretches of the shore within the Milford Haven Waterway and test water samples for levels of nitrates and phosphates between November 2018 and March 2019. Much of the second quarter of 2019 was spent on working up the resulting considerable data set.

SWEPT proved to be hugely successful, both in terms of the involvement of volunteers and the acquisition of useful data. So much so, that it won a national award. *The Park Protector Award*, run by Campaign for National Parks, the charity for England and Wales' 13 National Parks, celebrates and supports projects that make a difference to protecting some of the most famous countryside in the world. SWEPT was the only project from Wales to be shortlisted and raised awareness of the important connection between what we do on the land and the state of our coastal waters. The prize money from *The Park Protector Award* enabled further time to be spent on data analysis and the production of a comprehensive report to aid enquiries from those interested in replicating the methodology. This was completed in March 2020. A SWEPT sharing event due to be held at the end of March 2020 had to be postponed due to Covid-19 but it is hoped that a virtual event will be held later in the year.



*Sue Burton, Pembrokeshire Marine Special Area of Conservation Officer, and Anne Bunker and Simon Shorten from Natural Resources Wales received the Campaign for National Parks Park Protector Award for SWEPT at a parliamentary reception on July 10<sup>th</sup>, 2019 at the House of Commons. Prize money enabled production of the SWEPT report.*

The quality and amount of data generated far exceeded project expectations. During the four months of repeat surveying, 2105 photos and 881 nitrate and phosphate tests were taken by volunteers. Four canoe trips involving further volunteers collected data from hard to reach areas. Results saw a myriad of different freshwater inputs from seeps and mini waterfalls to pipes and streams, 320 were described across the waterway during the period of heaviest rainfall in December. Mapped results showed nitrate levels to be very high in many locations. Phosphate was generally low throughout. No

significant temporal difference in pollution levels was found although higher rainfall was noted to accompany higher levels of pollution. Three university students aided data handling and analysis and two students utilised SWEPT data for their theses (both receiving a first). In line with previous comparison studies, SWEPT concluded that Kyoritsu PackTest kits are a quick, easy and cost-effective way for citizen scientists to identify nutrient pollution over large areas. The colour change field kits were less accurate than laboratory test comparisons, but importantly they did identify pollution where it existed and were unlikely to provide false positives. In addition to the water quality results, volunteers also collected information on marine litter, non-natives and any other pollution threats such as oil or fly tipping. All immediate pollution concerns logged during the fieldwork were followed up and resolved by NRW. A Big River Clean-up, led by a Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Ranger, removed and recycled a considerable amount of marine litter from 'hot spots' highlighted by survey volunteers.

Marine features of the Pembrokeshire Marine SAC (which extends around the Pembrokeshire coast and includes the Milford Haven waterway to tidal limits) are in unfavourable condition due in part to nutrient pollution from agricultural run-off carrying fertilizers and sewage. The waterway has also failed to meet 'Good' status which is required for Water Framework Directive compliance by 2027. SWEPT data will supplement that already gathered by Natural Resources Wales (NRW) and will help NRW to prioritise land conservation actions and lead to environmental improvements.

SWEPT proved popular with participants and undoubtedly raised awareness of the issue of land run-off affecting the marine environment. Including local people in local environmental issues aids awareness and understanding of human impacts and this provides real impetus for environmental protection. Interest in applying "SWEPT methodology" to other areas has already been expressed; it is hoped that the SWEPT report and appendices can aid this.

(SWEPT also contributes towards Action 15 "Explore how outcomes from pilot projects on diffuse and atmospheric pollution at Pen Llŷn a'r Sarnau, Pembrokeshire Marine and Severn Estuary SACs can be applied across the network".)

### **Seagrass Ocean Rescue.**

The Seagrass Ocean Rescue project has been a joint venture between Sky Ocean Rescue, WWF and Swansea University, with assistance on stakeholder planning and engagement from the Pembrokeshire Coastal Forum and the Pembrokeshire Marine SAC Officer. Following some intensive local community liaison and licensing, the project successfully planted 750,000 seeds in an agreed area in Dale Bay in late February/early March 2020. The SAC Officer also input to a work package on visitor moorings for the area. Stakeholder liaison continues with the creation of the Dale Seagrass Stakeholder Group to discuss future management and monitoring.

### **Pembrokeshire Marine Bilingual Education Pack.**

Completion of this resource was delayed to 2020 due to the pressures of other work including SWEPT and Seagrass Ocean Rescue. The Seashore Activity Pack combines on shore activities with supplementary activities across all curriculum topics. It builds upon feedback from primary school teachers during a workshop in March 2019 to provide a resource that can encourage outdoor learning in the marine environment. The pack is not directed solely at schools, but to anyone keen to learn more, whether through an outdoor activity provider, any organised group or via home schooling. Pack contents can also fulfil requirements for a national marine education resource freely available for all (some funding was received from Keep Wales Tidy for this). The Marine Conservation Society are enthusiastic about provision of bilingual resources through their platform and the SAC Officer has been liaising with them regarding this.

# Beach Bingo (uwch)

 Craig streipio	 Bwyd y môr (yn fwr neu'n fwr) sy'n cwmni i rywbeth	 Rhywbeth sydd â thell yddo	 Bwyd y môr sy'n fwr (e.e. chaussonn draeth)
 Plys y ffr-fwrnys (yn wrae stwn/morgrwth)	 Cranc neu ran o granc	 Urhwybwrth a lwsedd gan bobl a ohrwyd i'r traeth gan y ffronau	 5 math o sbectol o grasen ffr
 Gwydr môr	 3 cheustlad o 3 beth tebyg	 Rhywbeth nad wyt yn gwybod beth ydyr	 Pethau wedi eu pwrnead gan bobol - 1 corch, 1 twedwr, 1 alen

Wyt ti'n gallu cael llinell lawn (pedwar mewn rhes)? Wyt ti'n gallu cael tŷ llawn (pob un)?

Deilghybyrd y canllaw hwn gan: Pembrokeshire Marine SAC  
www.PembrokeshireMarineSAC.org.uk



Credyd i'r BODDdellau: Nwr Burdon, Jodie Archer-Horsman

# The Rocky Shore - Spotter's Guide

 Dog whelk	 Orange sponge	 Flat periwinkle	 Serrated wrack	 Keel worm
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Drills through the shell of its prey then injects enzymes to digest the insides before sucking back out.</li> </ul> <p>5 points</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It may not look like one, but a sponge is an animal!</li> <li>Soft with 'holes' and found in shady places.</li> </ul> <p>15 points</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A sea snail with flattened 'spire'. Colour varies.</li> <li>Likes to live on seaweed.</li> </ul> <p>5 points</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Brown seaweed with a jagged edge like a saw.</li> <li>Found on the lower shore.</li> </ul> <p>5 points</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Builds hard white tubes on rocks and lives in them.</li> </ul> <p>10 points</p>
 Shanny	 Lever bread	 Prawn	 Hermit crab	 Brittle-star
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Changes colour to blend in with rocks or seaweed.</li> <li>Can survive outside water for a short time.</li> </ul> <p>15 points</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A flat red seaweed that grows purplish as it gets bigger.</li> <li>A classic Welsh food!</li> </ul> <p>5 points</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Has very good hearing.</li> <li>A prawn has a pointed rostrum 'horn', the flattened dorsal 'beak'.</li> </ul> <p>10 points</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Found in pools and the shallows.</li> <li>A prawn has a pointed rostrum 'horn', the flattened dorsal 'beak'.</li> <li>Very good at righting themselves if the shell is knocked over.</li> </ul> <p>20 points</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Found in crevices and under stones (be sure to replace stones afterwards).</li> <li>Handle with extreme care - it's in the name!</li> </ul> <p>20 points</p>

Some of the seashore activity pack resources by the SAC Officer.

## Additional work.

As well as the above three projects which filled the bulk of the SAC Officer's time during 2019-20, the SAC Officer also input to the following projects:

- Building Resilience into Catchments (BRICs) led by PLANED and Pembrokeshire Coastal Forum.
- Wales Activity Mapping, including mapping risks to marine conservation features from recreational activities led by Pembrokeshire Coastal Forum.
- Guidance and awareness raising to reduce the impacts of light pollution on Manx shearwaters on behalf of the Wildlife Trust for South and West Wales.
- Rocky shore training events for the Pembrokeshire Marine Code and Outdoor Charter Groups led by Pembrokeshire Coastal Forum.
- Native oyster regeneration within the Milford Haven waterway led by NRW.
- Bait digging management review of The Gann led by NRW.

Awareness and educational work occur on an *ad hoc* basis when time allows. Twitter and Facebook accounts are maintained.

For further information about these projects or the Pembrokeshire Marine SAC please contact Sue Burton at [sue.burton@mhp.co.uk](mailto:sue.burton@mhp.co.uk)



@PembsMarineLife



@PembrokeshireMarineWildlife

# Carmarthen Bay and Estuaries EMS RAG – 2019/20 Update

Judith Oakley

Currently, the Carmarthen Bay & Estuaries European Marine Site Officer is only employed for one day per week. This is due to availability of funding from the Relevant Authorities Group partners or other external funding. The post was recently funded again for 12 months from 1st April 2020 until 31st March 2021.

It is therefore difficult to undertake much project work in such limited time.

The main areas of work include:

- acting as Secretariat to the RAG
- attending external meetings and providing feedback to RAG
- responding to consultations
- liaison with other Welsh EMS Officers
- liaison with NRW officers responsible for different aspects of the site
- answering queries
- contributing to funding bids/projects

However, in the past year the site officer has participated in two joint projects with the other Welsh SAC Officers. These were funded by Welsh Government and involved: a national review of marine and plastic litter projects and marine mammal disturbance - raising awareness of seal pups by installing temporary information panels at key locations. Within the CBEEMS boundary, these were at Port Eynon and Worms head, Rhossili.



CBEEMS Officer Judith Oakley with seal pup panel erected at Port Eynon, Gower

Carmarthen Bay and Estuaries SAC and SPA was selected as a case study for a pilot study to model and map the potential risk to marine conservation features. The project used spatial data on marine recreational activities in south-west Wales from Wales Activity Mapping database. In addition, information and other data was provided by the CBEEMS Officer. The project was delivered by GoBe Consultants and funded by Natural Resources Wales (NRW), the Welsh Government and Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority (PCNPA). The report '**Mapping the Potential Risk to Marine Conservation Features from Multiple Recreational Activities**' is available from: [https://www.walesactivitymapping.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/WAMSensitivityMapping\\_06042020.pdf](https://www.walesactivitymapping.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/WAMSensitivityMapping_06042020.pdf)

There are various projects underway concerning the North Gower saltmarsh saltmarsh, led by NRW. These include research to further understand the effects of sheep overgrazing on the site, and saltmarsh run-off and impacts on water quality and shellfish health in the Burry Inlet.

The new site information leaflet has been distributed widely to help raise awareness of the important species and habitats and conservation designations of Carmarthen Bay and Estuaries EMS.



Front and back page of the CBEEMS site leaflet.

Due to the Covid -19 lockdown, the site officer has been working at home since March 2020. The RAG held their first ever on-line quarterly meeting via Skype in June, which was very successful with good representation from partners.

For further information about Carmarthen Bay and Estuaries EMS please contact Judith Oakley at: [cbeems.officer@gmail.com](mailto:cbeems.officer@gmail.com).

## Association of Severn Estuary Relevant Authorities (ASERA) – 2019/20 Update

Lucy Taylor (April 2019 – 18<sup>th</sup> March 2020), Katie Havard-Smith (18<sup>th</sup> March 2020 – present)

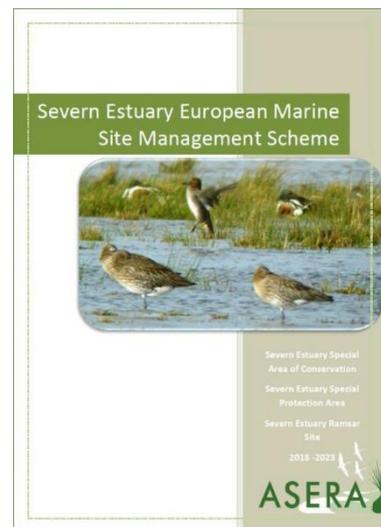
### Severn Estuary European Marine Site Management Scheme & Relevant Authorities Action Plan

ASERA was pleased to publish the new 2018-2023 Severn Estuary European Marine Site (EMS) Management Scheme & Relevant Authority (RA) Action Plans in May 2018. The ASERA Management Scheme provides a mechanism for Relevant Authorities to set the framework within which their activities will be managed, either voluntarily or through legislation, to achieve the nature conservation objectives of the site. It considers whether activities are causing adverse effects and, if so, how such activities can be regulated by Relevant Authorities to prevent damage to the features and sub-features of the site. The impact of an activity can depend upon its scale, location and frequency, as well as the vulnerability of a feature.

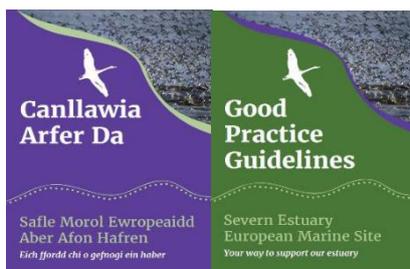
Action Plans provide the mechanism for Relevant Authorities to address the following:

- Activities identified as likely to be causing deterioration or significant disturbance to the site;
- Activities of which the effects are unknown (i.e. there is insufficient evidence available at present to determine the level of deterioration or disturbance to the site);
- Specific plans and projects of an ongoing and repetitive nature for which ASERA may facilitate the production of guidance notes.

The reporting year for the RA Action Plans is 1 April to 31 March. The 2019-2020 report will be available later this year.



### Severn Estuary Good Practice Guidelines



Recreational disturbance has been identified by ASERA as one of the key issues affecting the conservation status of the Severn Estuary EMS. Disturbance is any activity or noise that could change behaviour of an animal (feeding, resting or breeding) or habitat structure. Repeated disturbance can threaten the survival of some of the key species and habitats designated under the Severn Estuary EMS.

Although produced in 2017, promotion of the guidelines remains a key component of ASERA's work to ensure they are actively supported by RAs and are respected by user groups.

### Recreation Studies

As mentioned above, recreational disturbance has been identified as a key issue for the Severn Estuary EMS. A key focus of the ASERA Officer has been to undertake a review of activities in order to understand the potential impact they may be having on the features of the EMS.

### Land-based Recreation

Phase 1 of this study aims to bring together existing data on a range of land-based recreational activities (e.g. bird watching), beach-based activities (e.g. kite surfing, sand bugging, motor cross) and

coastal access. Data has been collected on the intensity, frequency and location of these activities alongside and adjacent to the Severn Estuary. The Phase 1 report, which presented the data collected, was reviewed by a sub-group of ASERA members and formed the basis for the summary report, which will be completed by autumn 2020.

### *Bait Digging & Recreational Angling*

This study includes both shore and boat-based angling, and bait digging for recreational purposes. Phase 1 of the study has involved collating and mapping existing information on these activities, in order to identify where there are gaps in data/evidence. Phase 2 is likely to involve site surveys, with the project completed by 2021. This evidence will inform whether there are any management actions required for RAs.

### *Coastal Access*

This study includes coastal access using public rights of way around the EMS for recreational purposes, including the Wales Coast Path and the proposed England Coast Path routes. Phase 1 of the study has involved collating and mapping existing public rights of way around the EMS. Phase 2 is likely to involve meeting with coastal access leads and site surveys to understand concerns regarding specific locations and existing management measures. A summary report will be produced by 2021. This evidence will inform whether there are any management actions required for RAs.

### Biosecurity in the Bristol Channel – What’s the Risk?

In May 2018, ASERA provided a platform to pilot and ‘test’ the RAPID LIFE project biosecurity training package aimed at user groups most at risk of spreading Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS) in coastal environments. As a result of these discussions, the group agreed to undertake a high-level risk assessment of INNS in the Severn Estuary EMS. In 2019, we were successful in attaining funding for an 8-week student placement to support this review. This involved collating available information on the presence and location of established INNS within the EMS, the potential types of pathways for INNS spreading within and adjacent to the EMS and how both recreational and commercial use of the estuary may influence the spread of INNS. This was further supported by an undergraduate student dissertation, which provided understanding (informed by both proforma responses from RAs and public data) of the likely pathways for INNS into the EMS, through source-pathway-receptor models, and horizon scanning for the future. A summary report will be produced to support this work and a specific sub-group of ASERA members has been set up to oversee this review.

### Awareness Raising, ASERA Meetings & External Engagement

The ASERA Officer continues to support the Relevant Authorities Group (RAG), facilitating meetings of both the ASERA Management and Working Group, and organising the Annual General Meeting (November 2020).

We have also had a presence at many events over the year, promoting our recreational Good Practice Guidelines and communicating the work of ASERA.

ASERA have also been represented by the ASERA Officer on Welsh Government’s Marine Planning Stakeholder Reference Group and the Wales Marine Advisory and Action Group (WMAAG), ensuring the cross-boundary Severn Estuary EMS has been taken account of in decision-making related to both Wales’ and England’s marine environment.

For further information on the activities of ASERA, please contact Katie Havard-Smith at [Havard-SmithK@cardiff.ac.uk](mailto:Havard-SmithK@cardiff.ac.uk).