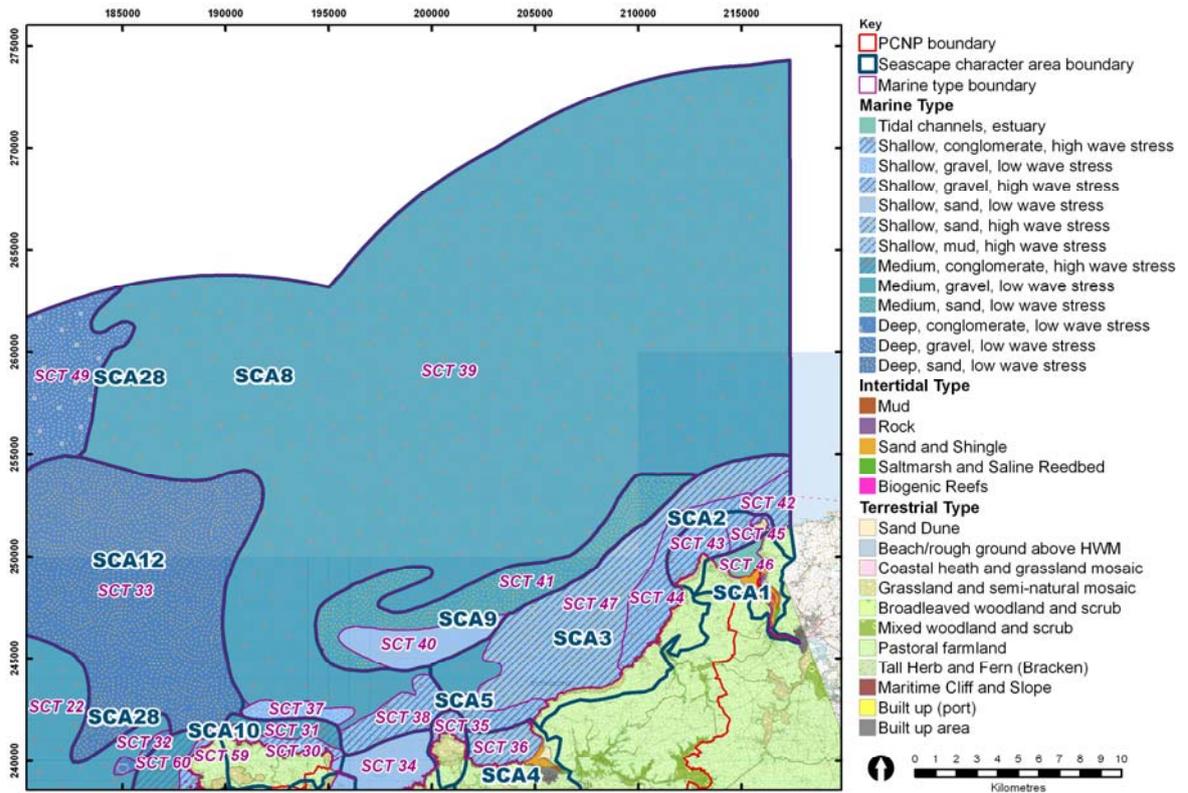


No: 8 Seascape Character Area Name: North open sea

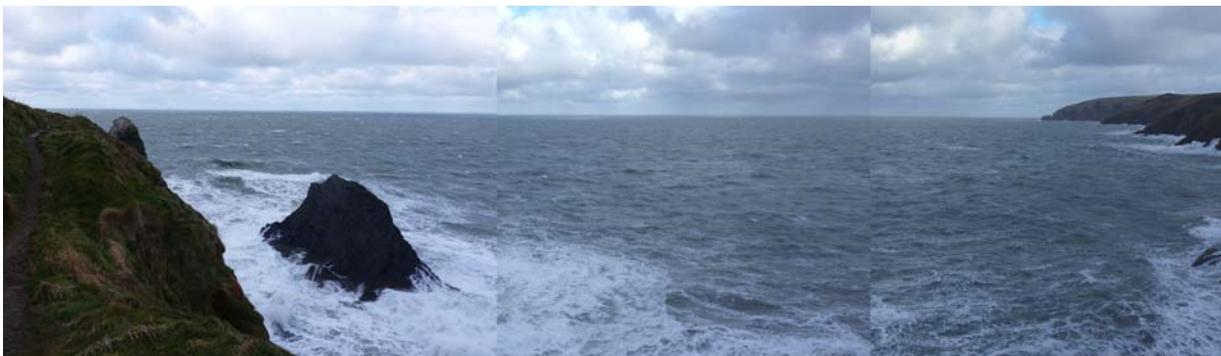


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SCA 8: North open sea



Area visible from Dinas Head



Area visible on horizon from Ceibwr Bay

Summary Description
<p>This large offshore area is located in St George's Channel on the southern edge of Cardigan Bay running out to the 12nm limit. It is predominantly sandy gravel medium depth water with low wave stress but towards the coast includes the shallow sandy gravel bar of Strumble Bank with higher wave stress.</p>
Key Characteristics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mainly medium depth water on sandy gravel seabed.</li> <li>• Generally low wave stress and low tide speed parallel to the coast along St George's Channel.</li> <li>• Shallower water around Strumble Bank to the south with high wave stress.</li> <li>• Few wrecks, concentrated on the approaches to Fishguard Harbour, north of Strumble Head.</li> <li>• Used for leisure sailing by larger boats, commercial craft and ferries to and from Fishguard Harbour.</li> <li>• Open sea with simple, open characteristics at a vast scale dominated by swell, waves and winds with a sense of remoteness.</li> <li>• The key coastal features are Cemaes Head and Dinas Head with a backcloth of coastal hills including Mynydd Carningli and east of Strumble Head.</li> <li>• The lighthouse at Strumble Head would be highly apparent at night, as would the street lights of Fishguard and the ferry port from closer distances. Much of the coast would be dark.</li> <li>• Tranquillity will be reduced by MOD use as a training area.</li> </ul>
Physical Influences
<p>Medium depth (30-60m), gently northwest sloping (&lt;1°) sandy gravel sea floor with narrow bars of gravel and gravelly sand elongated east-northeast - west-southwest. Seas are exposed to low wave stress. Offshore currents set east-northeast - west-southwest along the coast. Sea floor sediments overlie Jurassic-Cenozoic bedrock striking east-northeast - west-southwest, and cut by faults that have the same trend. Towards the coast north of Crincoed Point to Strumble Head, the sea floor shallows to the sandy gravel bar of east-west Strumble Bank (&lt;30m). North of Fishguard bay the shallow sea floor is exposed to high wave stress. Beneath these shallow areas the bedrock is east-west striking Ordovician sandstones and volcanics.</p> <p>The eastern part of the area is in the Cardigan Bay SAC.</p>
Cultural influences
<p>The historic routes/linkages associated with this area include both the coastal trade and the history of maritime relations along the western seaways. As a deepwater area, features are confined to wreck-sites. The visual relationship of the off-shore areas with the whole of Cardigan Bay as far as Llŷn (on a clear day) emphasises the coastal culture of west Wales.</p> <p>Ferries between Fishguard and Rosslare and commercial shipping will regularly traverse the area with a concentration of activity to the south nearing Fishguard Harbour.</p> <p>The main recreational uses will be sailing locally from Fishguard old harbour and some jet skis inshore through to transient cruising craft travelling up and down the Irish Sea. There are cruise sailing routes linking Fishguard and points south/west, north across Cardigan Bay.</p> <p>Fishing comprises of set nets in the inshore part of the area, lobster and crab potting and potential for light otter trawling.</p> <p>The area has a Round 24 licence for oil and gas in its outer waters and is part of the Aberporth firing range and military practice area. There is a small seabed dumping/spoil ground just off Fishguard.</p>

<b>Aesthetic, perceptual and experiential qualities</b>
<p>This area extends upto 12nm offshore so from proximity to Dinas Head to this limit there will be a wide range of experience from domination of high cliffs to open sea to land barely visible in most conditions. In much of the area the coast will be a minor but apparent feature to boat users depending on visibility. The main features will be Cemaes Head and Dinas Head with a backcloth of coastal hills including Mynydd Carningli and east of Strumble Head. The land will generally appear as a single dimensional line on the horizon with simple colours. Inshore areas will see the sprawling coastal settlement of Fishguard. From land the area is visible from the coast, including well used viewpoints such as the Coast Path, enhancing the sense of wildness and openness of this coastline in parts.</p> <p>The sea has a simple, consistent and unified character at a vast scale and a significant sense of openness, isolation and exposure which increases to the north. Its qualities are determined entirely by the natural forces of water, through swell and waves, and wind. The area is exposed to the south westerlies and northern winds and in poor weather conditions the sea is likely to feel threatening. There is a strong likelihood of tranquillity and sense of wildness and remoteness in this open sea.</p> <p>The number of leisure craft will be limited but there will be regular views of ferries entering and leaving Fishguard Harbour and occasional views of commercial vessels which will introduce man made elements and movement and reduce tranquillity and the sense of isolation. The use of the area for military exercises and training to the east will disrupt tranquillity at times.</p>
<b>Cultural benefits and services</b>
<p>The area contributes significantly towards leisure and recreational services in the form of marine recreation ie sailing and motor cruising, to natural heritage in respect of its role as part of the Cardigan Bay SAC, and to cultural and spiritual services in the form of the mainly unspoilt sea visible from the wild, sensitive western coasts of the National Park.</p>

Forces for change								
Summary	Key forces for change							
<p>Limited forces for change in medium depth seas. The offshore shallows of Strumble Bank may accrete through longshore sediment drift.</p> <p>Potential use for oil and gas exploration and extraction.</p> <p>Use for MOD purposes.</p>	Special Qualities	Natural processes/ climate change	Visitor pressure	Marine use- commercial and fishing	Offshore energy or minerals	Development pressure	Land management changes	MOD use
	Coastal Splendour							
	Islands							
	Diversity of Landscape							
	Remoteness, Tranquillity and Wilderness							
	Diverse Geology							
	Richness of Habitats and Biodiversity							
	Rich Archaeology							
	Distinctive Settlement Character							
	Cultural Heritage							
	Accessing the Park							
	Space to Breathe							
	Key		Change occurring in the area affecting the selected special quality					
Key sensitivities								
Factors that contribute to sensitivity				Factors that detract from sensitivity				
<p>Simple, open, wild and remote character with clear views of National Park coast.</p> <p>Forms part of the open setting for Cardigan Bay overlooked by the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park contributing to the sense of remoteness and wildness in the area.</p> <p>Nature conservation value of part of the area as an SAC.</p> <p>Pembrokeshire and Wales Coast Path as a sensitive receptor overlooking the area at a distance.</p>				<p>Presence of MOD use reducing tranquillity.</p>				