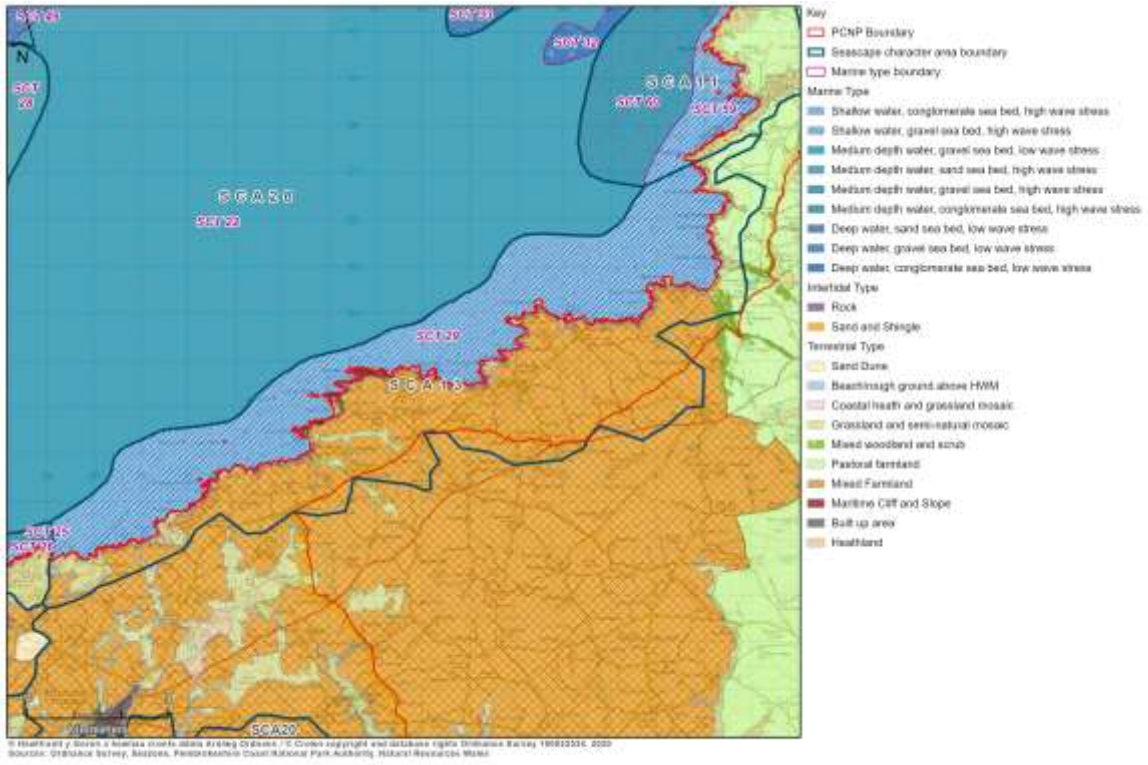


No: 13 Seascape Character Area Name: Penbwchdy to Penllechwen



Porthgain harbour markers looking north east towards Strumble Head



Porth Ffynnon- west of Porthgain- with quarry building



Carn Penberry from Carn Llidi looking north east

Summary Description
<p>This exposed seascape area is located on the northern coast of the St David's peninsula. It is a highly indented coast of cliffs and rocky shores with a few small sandy beaches and coves and a couple of small harbours. The coast has significant nature conservation interest and is the focus for much low key recreation and tourism. Settlement is limited to very small villages, often related to the area's quarrying and industrial past, sparse rural farmsteads and dwellings and a few caravan and campsites.</p>
Key Characteristics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indented rocky coast with cliffs up to 50m high interspersed with steep narrow valleys, harbours and small sandy coves and a few beaches.</li> <li>• Coastal edge with heath and coastal grassland.</li> <li>• Open pastoral landscape gently sloping to the coast with some medieval strip fields and low cut hedgebanks.</li> <li>• Valleys with woodland and scrub on steep sides</li> <li>• Industrial heritage at Porthgain and Abereiddi derived from quarrying and other trade.</li> <li>• Exposed sea with rocky coast gives feeling of exposure and limits sea-based recreation activities to close to the coast such as kayaking.</li> <li>• Coast Path along length of coast.</li> <li>• Vehicular access to coast limited to a few locations usually associated with small settlements such as Abercastle with its harbour. Light pollution is very limited.</li> <li>• Unspoilt open views out to sea and long views along coast to major headlands to north east and south west.</li> </ul>
Physical Influences
<p>This long stretch of north west facing coastline comprises small headlands between narrow river valleys opening into small bays. The north east-south west striking Ordovician bedrock is mostly shales, with some igneous intrusions, exposed in coastal cliffs 40-50m high and at Carn Penberry to the south. The land slopes gently from the cliffs to a crowned ridge just inland with views of the sea. There are numerous caves, blowholes and gullies. Historical coastal quarrying has cut back into the cliffs, for example forming the Blue Pool at Abereiddi and deep indentations at Porthgain. The intertidal zone is dominantly rocky shores (88%), with sand in small bays (12%). The coast is exposed to wind and wave erosion through abrasion and hydraulic action. Sediment is carried along swash, with little net longshore drift.</p> <p>Above the Ordovician shales with some igneous intrusions, the shallow marine seafloor (&lt;30m) of sandy gravel slopes gently (&lt;1°) from bays to moderately (1-10°) next to rocky headlands. The seas are exposed to high wind and wave stress. Tidal currents are set north east and south west along the line of the coast. Rough waters form off headlands. Tidal flow is &lt;2.5 knots.</p> <p>The area west of Abereiddi is covered by the Pembrokeshire Marine SAC, the coast is designated as the St David's SAC and Strumble Head to Llechdafad SSSI to the north east and St David's Peninsula Coast SSSI to the south west. There are a series of smaller SSSIs eg Afordir Abereiddi and Abermawr and some parts are also noted as important bird areas- the Pembrokeshire Cliffs. The waters around Ynys Deullyn to the west and Aber Mawr to the east, including the harbour at Abercastle are of nature conservation interest. The important habitats include sponge and anthozoan communities on sub tidal rocks and Ross 'coral'. Other species include grey seals and kelp forests.</p> <p>The undulating hinterland is predominantly improved pasture in a range of field sizes and patterns, including medieval strip fields, with low cut hedgebanks and dry stone walls. Trees and scrub are mainly found on the valley sides and bottoms. Semi-natural heath and coastal grassland lies on the coast edge and in the abandoned workings.</p>
Cultural influences
<p>The area has links with coastal trade throughout west Wales and with Ireland. Many of</p>

Pembrokeshire's Iron Age promontory forts and defended enclosures are located on this stretch of coast. They make good use of the defensive potential of the sea-cliffs.

In more recent times this area has evolved as a seascape of small harbours and quays for both export of minerals and for the trade in foodstuffs. Slate was quarried at a number of coastal locations, nowhere more dramatically than at the coastal quarry at Aberiddi where the remains of bastions and an engine-house survive. Porthgain preserves a remarkable coastal industrial complex that includes slate and stone quarries, industrial tramways, a harbour and an extensive brickworks, which used to ship to Llanelli and Dublin. In latter years dolerite road stone was exported from the harbour with the associated brick built hoppers still a feature by the harbour. A corn mill survives in the harbour at Abercastle. Trefin was founded by bishops of St David's with a 13<sup>th</sup> century palace and later grew with sea trade and quarrying.

Scheduled monuments include:

- PE029 (Castell Coch promontory fort): community: Llanrhian
- PE036 (Carreg Sampson chambered town): community:
- PE038 (Ynys y Castell hillfort): community: Mathry
- PE260 (round barrow): community: Llanrhian
- PE376 (mill): community: Llanrhian
- PE382 (quarry buildings): community: Llanrhian
- PE391 (Castell Coch promontory fort): community: St David's
- PE392 (Caerau promontory fort): community: St David's
- PE393 (Castell Coch promontory fort): community: St David's
- PE542 (Carreg Golchfa promontory fort): community: Pencaer
- PE549 (Porth Egr promontory fort): community: Llanrhian

Part of this area lies within the St David's Peninsula and Ramsey Island Landscape of Outstanding Historic Interest. Porthgain and Trefin are Conservation Areas.

Tregwynt is famous as the seat of the Harries family, who held a ball as the French landed four miles away. Tregwynt woollen mill is a centre for contemporary design. A current artist, John Knapp Fisher, has painted some of the area including Porthgain. There are a few wrecks spread along this coastline with the main concentration around Aberiddi. Here there are the boats from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century including the Musgrave [1892], Baron Ardrossan [1898] and, to the east, the Ragna [1900] and, to the west, the Amazon Ense [1881].

Settlement is limited to very small villages, often related to the area's quarrying and industrial past, sparse rural farmsteads and dwellings and a few caravan and campsites set back from the coast. Porthgain, Trefin, Aberiddi and Abercastle are the main settlements.

Kayaking is present all along the coast from Pwllcrochan to Aberiddi. Sea rowing is also popular out of Porthgain. Surfing occurs on beaches of Aber Mawr, Ynys Barry and Aberiddi. Diving, snorkelling and inshore fishing take place off Abercastle beach and slipway, and from boats going out from Porthgain which also has a small harbour and slipway with its own small inshore fishing fleet. There are also popular dive sites around Llech Usaf, Llech Isaf and Llech Ganol areas offshore as well as just of the Aberiddi Promontory. Sea angling from a boat is also practised around the coast of Ynys Barry and from the beach at Aberiddi. Sailing is limited due to the rocky nature of the coast, limited access and harbours and character of the sea.

There are good beaches at Pwllcrochan, Aber Mawr, Aber Draw, Porthgain, Ynys Barry and Aberiddi, popular for general beach activities. Coastal walking along the Pembrokeshire Coast Path continues to be popular. Climbing is found along the coastal cliffs, mainly from Penbwchdy to Trwyn Llwyd and around Llech Dafad, Penmorfa, Pwll Whiting and Pwll Long. There are car parks at Abercastle, Porthgain and Aberiddi as well as one inland at Trefin. Porthgain has a pub and restaurant and is a popular destination and minor honeypot for visitors to the area.

Fishing in the area comprises of set nets, lobster and crab potting and there is potential for light otter trawling. The area has previously been granted a Round 24 Oil and Gas Licence and future applications may be made.

#### Aesthetic, perceptual and experiential qualities

This is a highly indented and rocky coastline which gives a great variety of vistas for users of the Coast Path who negotiate the exposed and open clifftops as well as the incised and sheltered valley mouths, harbours and coves. The sea is at a vast scale contrasting with the relatively small scale and fine grain of the coastal edge with rough textured jagged rocks.

There are open unspoilt views out to sea with no discernible features and long views along the indented coast from the cliff tops as far as Strumble Head and Garn Fawr to the north east and Carn Llidi and St David’s Head to the south west.

Trefin as the only elevated settlement along the coast is a landmark from the sea. Light pollution is there limited with the light from Strumble Head the main source. The coast has a strong influence on the coastal waters, although the indentations apparent looking along the coast appear flattened at any distance from shore. The sea is exposed to westerlies and winds from the north. Some beaches such as Traeth Llyn at Ynys Barry which faces west are very exposed.

The smells of seaweed and fishing pots are apparent at harbours such as Porthgain.

The remains of quarrying and other small scale historical industry convey a strong sense of place especially apparent between and including Abereidid and Porthgain with distinctive features like the harbour markers at the latter.

The coast has a high degree of naturalness, a sense of tranquillity and wildness. In the evening the light from Strumble Head is apparent in the distance.

**Cultural benefits and services**

The area contributes significantly towards leisure and recreational services in the form of remote places to walk and appreciate nature, to natural heritage in the form of the rugged unspoilt coastline, and to cultural and spiritual services in respect of the sense of place related to industrial heritage, a sense of spaciousness and connection to nature.

Forces for change								
Summary	Key forces for change							
<p>Slow erosion of rocky headlands, more in back of bays. Shoreline management plan states mostly ‘do nothing’ and locally ‘hold the line’ (e.g. Porthgain) or ‘hold the line/retreat’ (Abereidid). There is little net longshore sediment drift.</p> <p>Proposed ICZM may limit the recreational use of Abercastle harbour.</p> <p>Visitor pressure at limited coastal access points such as Porthgain and Abereidid including parking.</p> <p>Visitor use of Coast Path including erosion near main access points.</p> <p>Deterioration of industrial heritage features.</p>	<b>Special Qualities</b>	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							

Effects of second and holiday homes on settlement character.  <u>Future licences for oil and gas would change the character of the area if exploited.</u>	Accessing the Park							
	Space to Breathe							
	Key		Change occurring in the area affecting the selected special quality					
<b>Key sensitivities</b>								
Factors that contribute to sensitivity					Factors that detract from sensitivity			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indented rocky coast with cliffs with natural character.</li> <li>• Coastal edge with heath and coastal grassland.</li> <li>• Historic patterns including strip fields and hedgebanks and industrial heritage.</li> <li>• Coast Path along length of coast as a sensitive receptor.</li> <li>• Limited vehicular access means much of the coast is tranquil.</li> <li>• Unspoilt open views out to sea and long views along coast to major headlands to north east and south west.</li> <li>• General lack of light pollution.</li> </ul>					Presence of caravan parks set back from the coast.			