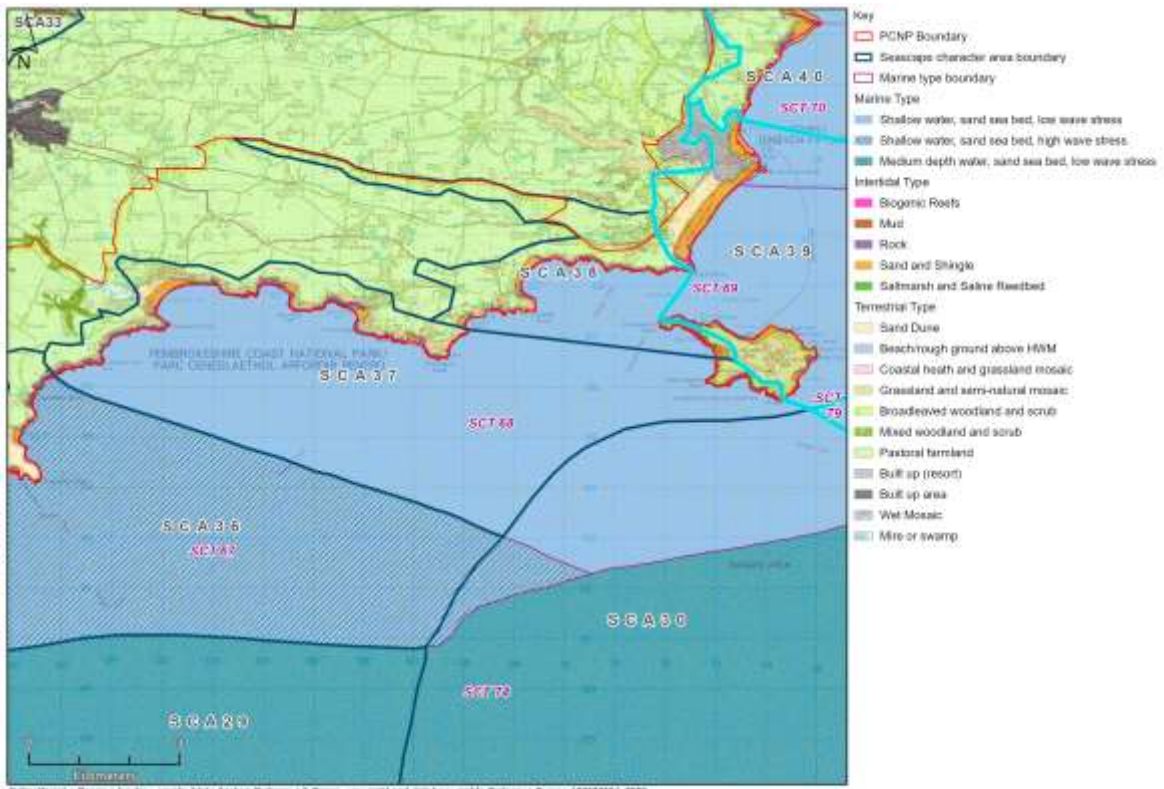


No: **37** Seascape Character Area Name: **Freshwater East and Manorbier**



SCA37: Freshwater East and Manorbier



Manorbier beach and the Priest's Nose



Cliff path on the Priest's Nose looking west



Freshwater East looking east

Summary Description
<p>This area is located on the south facing coast, west of Tenby, centred on the historic settlements of Manorbier with its castle (and MOD establishment) and the holiday settlement of Freshwater East. This mainly accessible coast comprises mainly red sandstone cliffs with dramatic limestone features to the east and scalloped beaches with some recreational sea use, mainly emanating from Tenby.</p>
Key Characteristics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• South and south east facing coast with sloping deep red sandstone cliffs with strong bedding in parts and semi-natural grass and heather slopes above interspersed with scalloped sandy bays.</li> <li>• Dunes at Freshwater East partly built on with informal resort settlement sprawling up the hill.</li> <li>• Manorbier Castle is a strong coastal landmark with associated traditional settlement which is a Conservation Area.</li> <li>• Sea moderately sheltered from westerlies but feeling exposed on headlands and open to southerly breezes.</li> <li>• There is kayaking and some motor and sail cruising around the coast which is protected from westerlies, although there are no anchorages.</li> <li>• Accessible, well used beaches at Freshwater East and Manorbier with access elsewhere makes the coast less tranquil in parts, as does use as part of Manorbier Range.</li> <li>• Wide, mostly unspoilt views out to sea and along the coast including to and from Caldey Island, including to Lundy Island and the North Devon coast.</li> </ul>
Physical Influences
<p>South east to south facing headland (~80m aod) with steep cliffs and scalloped bays in west-north west - east south east striking Old Red Sandstone, with Lower Palaeozoic (Ordovician shales, Silurian grey sandstones) exposed in Freshwater East Bay. The cliffs are distinctively angled, contrasting with the more vertical cliffs to the west, with strong bedding apparent, such as at Manorbier beach. This characteristic cliff profile is repeated on the southern coast of Caldey Island. Intertidal areas are dominated by narrow, moderate energy rocky shores (68%), with sandy coves and bays (32%). A wide rocky foreshore with rock cuestas crosses Manorbier Bay. The coast in this SCA is moderately exposed to wind and wave erosion though abrasion and attrition and hydraulic action.</p> <p>There is a gently sloping (&lt;1°) shallow (&lt;30m) sandy sea floor covering the bedrock succession. Seas are fairly sheltered from wind and wave stress although subject to swells from the south west. Tidal streams are set north east and south west, with rough waters off West Beacon Point. The tidal range is 6.9m.</p> <p>Above the angled cliffs there are often steep semi-natural grassy slopes, some with coastal heathland. There is reverting grassland surround military installation/range on Old Castle Head. Behind these are fairly regular medium-sized fields of improved pasture or arable land with low cut hedgebanks. Dunes and scrub lie behind the beach at Freshwater East and there is also a reedbed running inland.</p> <p>The sea and intertidal area west of, and out from the coast from, Manorbier forms part of the Pembrokeshire Marine SAC. The sea and intertidal area west of Freshwater East is part of the Stackpole Quay to Trewent Point SSSI and is an Important Bird Area as defined by the RSPB. To the east the coast is Freshwater East cliffs to Skrinkle Haven SSSI. The south coast of Caldey is covered by the Carmarthen Bay and Estuaries SAC and Carmarthen Bay Important Bird Area. Bird species include chough and peregrine falcon.</p>
Cultural influences

Strong linkages with the sea are evident from Prehistory (burial chamber, promontory fort) to modern times (the airfield). There are likewise strong linkages with the inland Ridgeway route, emphasised by the intervening Medieval field systems (outside the area), and with the town of Pembroke in the form of the 'Great Ditch'.

Greenala Point is a multivallate promontory fort, naturally defended on the east and south by sandstone cliffs and on the north by a series of substantial defences. It was once much larger, with traces of the forts defences on at least one of the adjacent stacks.

King's Quoit is a burial chamber overlooking Manorbier Bay made up of an earthfast capstone, supported by upright slabs, one of a significant concentration of Prehistoric monuments that suggest the antiquity of the Ridgeway, the ancient route to the north of (and outside) this seascape character area. Sand incursions have masked the Prehistoric topography of much of this area. Defensive sites are much in evidence. Old Castle Head is a much-eroded cliff-top enclosure, overlooking the Bristol Channel. Manorbier Castle is an early 12th century structure commanding a quiet, wooded valley with a view of the sea beyond. The wartime Manorbier airfield on Old Castle Head still sees use in the hands of the army for flying helicopters. The strip field system extending from the Ridgeway to the sea is a marked feature, and the 'Great Ditch' which enters the sea at Freshwater East is one of the limits of Pembroke's market in its charter from Henry II. Freshwater East became a popular recreation destination in the 19<sup>th</sup> century with the growth of the naval dockyard at Milford Haven.

Scheduled monuments include:

- PE004 (Manorbier castle): community: Manorbier
- PE035 (King's Quoit chambered tomb): community: Manorbier
- PE046 (Greenala Point promontory fort): community: Stackpole
- PE367 (unenclosed hut group): community: Stackpole
- PE405 (Old Castle promontory fort): community: Manorbier
- PE545 (promontory fort): community: Manorbier

Part of this area lies within the Manorbier Landscape of Special Historic Interest, and Manorbier is a Conservation Area. Manorbier is famous as the birthplace, in 1147, of Giraldus Cambrensis, who provided a description of his native patch.

Three wrecks are recorded in the area. One lies at Old Castle Head, the HMS Tormentor, sunk in 1929, a second to the west of Barafundle Bay- the Quog, sunk in 1995, and another unnamed wreck lies off Manorbier.

The main settlements on the coast are the historic village of Manorbier protected by its impressive and elegant castle. The apparently informal settlement of Freshwater East with its mix of old small timber chalets and aspirational 20<sup>th</sup> century villas untidily climbs up the slopes within and behind the dunes and there is a large rectilinear pattern holiday village nearby on the valley floor- Trewent Park. Other settlement is rural and scattered. The military facility structures at Old Castle Head are visible on the headland, with associated regimented housing estate set back from the coast.

Kayaking is popular with surfing off Freshwater East and Manorbier beaches with windsurfing across the whole bay. Sea angling also takes place off these beaches and in Swanlake Bay, both from the shore and boats. Dive boats go out from Freshwater East. Motor and sail cruising continues across the bay with good anchorages.

Freshwater East and Manorbier Bay are popular beaches and there is also a slipway at Freshwater East. Walking the Coast Path continues and wildlife watching is especially popular south of Manorbier. Manorbier Castle is a visitor attraction.

Fishing in the area comprises of hand gathered periwinkles on the eastern stretch, beach seining and beach nets, set nets, whelk, lobster and crab. The area is used as part of the Castlemartin and Manorbier firing ranges/military practice areas. The eastern part of the area around Caldey is used both for general sailing and for sail racing. There is a heavily used cruising route from here around the coast west to Milford Haven and Fishguard (Castlemartin Range allowing), across the Bristol Channel and to points east across Carmarthen Bay. There are also numerous routes across to Ireland.

**Aesthetic, perceptual and experiential qualities**

The red sandstone geology results in a less dramatic coast than to the west although the angled, dark red cliffs with their steep grass slopes above are distinctive and consistent. The jagged striated platform at Manorbier is distinctive. The south facing coast feels moderately exposed, especially Castle Head, but Freshwater East is very sheltered from the south westerlies by Trewent Point. There is general consistency in landcover with coastal grassland and heath and improved pasture although diversity is introduced at Freshwater East with rough textured dunes. Manorbier castle is a superb landmark feature. There are wide views from land out to an uninterrupted and unspoilt sea to the south and views to Caldey Island to the east, to Lundy Island and the North Devon coast. Caldey Island itself rises to the south to the red sandstone and there are unspoilt views from these cliffs to the south towards Lundy Island and along the coast west and across Carmarthen bay to Rhossili. Framed views are possible from the coves and beaches such as from Freshwater East and Manorbier. From the water the most apparent features are Freshwater East settlement and Manorbier Castle.

Areas are tranquil to an extent away from the car parks and beaches but this area is popular for walkers, climbers and beach users so there are often people around which reduces tranquillity. The structures at Old Castle Head are detractors. There is a strong smell of the sea and the semi-natural grassland and dunes along the coast give a feeling of naturalness in parts.

**Cultural benefits and services**

The area contributes significantly towards leisure and recreational services in the form of marine recreation, climbing and beach recreation, to natural heritage in the form of the unspoilt coast in parts and nature conservation interest, and to cultural and spiritual services in respect of Manorbier and other historic features and connectedness with nature along this coast which is particularly spectacular around Caldey Island.

Forces for change									
Summary	Key forces for change								
<p>Slow coastal erosion of rocky cliffs. The shoreline management plan states ‘do nothing’, except Freshwater East where managed realignment is specified to allow the dune system to function naturally.</p> <p>Tourism and associated built development at Freshwater East is changing the character of this area and settlement significantly.</p> <p>Visitor pressure at Freshwater East and Manorbier including wear at car park areas and the nearby accesses to the beach or cliffs and Coast Path.</p> <p>MOD uses associated with Manorbier Range.</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								
	<b>Key</b>		Change occurring in the area affecting the selected special quality						
Key sensitivities									
Factors that contribute to sensitivity				Factors that detract from sensitivity					
<p>Natural sloping deep red sandstone cliffs with strong bedding and prominent semi-natural grass and heather slopes.</p> <p>Unspoilt sandy bays such as Swanlake Bay.</p> <p>Dramatic vertically bedded limestone cliffs, caves and arches to the east.</p> <p>Rural pastoral character of the hinterland.</p> <p>Manorbier Castle as a strong coastal landmark with associated traditional settlement which is a Conservation Area.</p> <p>Wide, mostly unspoilt views out to sea and along the coast including to and from Caldey Island, including to Lundy Island.</p>				<p>Presence of Freshwater East partly built on with informal resort settlement sprawling up the hill and Trewent park holiday village.</p> <p>Accessible, well used beaches at Freshwater East and Manorbier with access elsewhere.</p> <p>Use as part of the Manorbier Range with structures at Old Castle Head.</p>					

Pembrokeshire Coast Path as a sensitive receptor.	
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