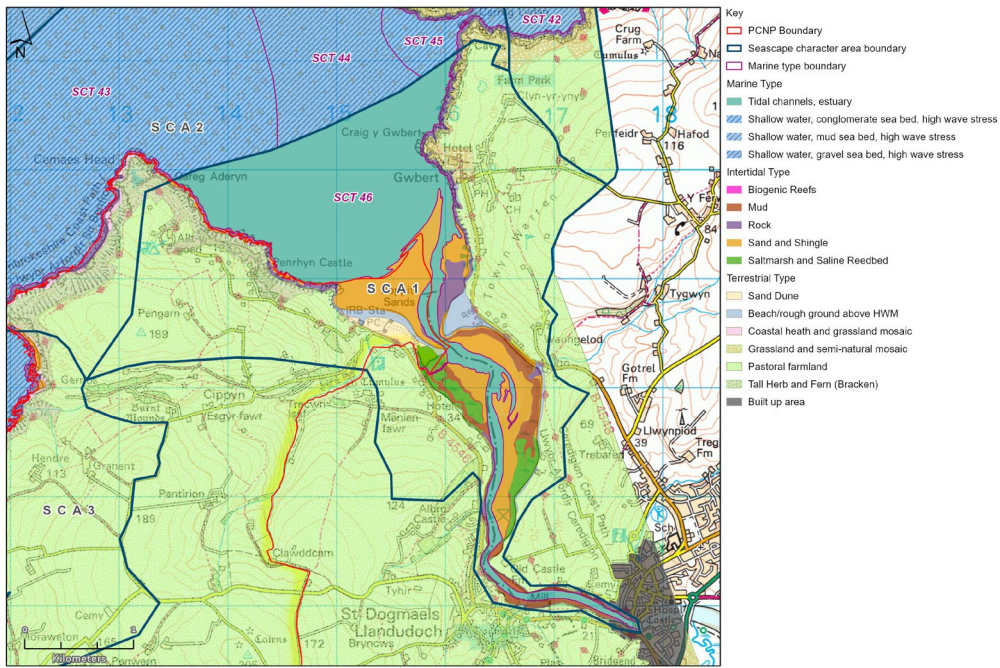


No: 1 Seascape Character Area Name: **Teifi Estuary**



SCA1:Teifi Estuary



The outer bay looking from Cemaes Head



Approaching Cardigan (© Bronwen Thomas)



Middle section of the estuary

Summary Description
<p>This area includes the tidal estuary of the Teifi from the bridge near the castle in Cardigan, down through a sinuous wide and open valley with mudflats, through to the extensive sand bar at Poppit Sands and the open water of the bay. There some strong contrasts between the estuary inland of the sand bar and the more exposed bay although both are well used for recreation. There are dramatic cliffs and headlands and tranquil rolling pastoral landscape enclosing the waters.</p>
Key Characteristics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A sinuous estuary with mudflats running into a sandy bay backed by dunes. • The estuary is bordered by sloping ground on all sides, generally steeper and higher to the south and west and the bay enclosed by headlands. • Mature deciduous trees line the estuary west of Cardigan around St Dogmaels, and on steeper ground, with predominantly pastoral farmland adjacent. • The estuary has many moorings and slipways with established boating use and the bay is used for sailing. • High beach activity use at Poppit Sands and fishing is popular. • Built waterfront at Cardigan and St Dogmaels. • The coast path runs around the west side of the estuary • Contained views in estuary and panoramic views from headlands.
Physical Influences
<p>A subtidal estuary seafloor becoming increasingly sandy outwards, sloping gently (<1°) NE to around 10m depth between Cemaes Head and Cardigan Island. Sediments cover offshore bedrock of Ordovician sandstones and mudstones that strike ENE-WSW across the estuary. Tidal currents outside the estuary are set northeast and southwest. The tidal range is 4.1m and the tidal reach is as far inland as Cardigan.</p> <p>The northwest facing estuary mouth is incised into northeast-southwest striking Ordovician sandstones and mudstones, which form cliffs around the prominent bounding headlands of Cemaes Head and Cardigan Island. Rocky shores along the estuary have small coves, shingle and sand beaches (e.g. Poppit Sands; 17%). The estuary mouth of muddy sand with sand bars (54%) is flanked locally in the inner estuary by salt marsh (12%) and mud flats (16%). The intertidal zone reveals the meandering channel of the Teifi across the beach. The estuary is a sediment sink. Sediment transport out into the estuary is seasonally variable. Sediment is transported and deposited through traction and in suspension.</p> <p>Though a sheltered bay it is exposed to north westerly winds and a high degree of wave disturbance especially where the river meets the sea.</p> <p>The Teifi estuary is an SSSI and forms part of Cardigan Bay SAC. The inner tidal reaches are part of the River Teifi SAC and SSSI. The coastal fringe of the bay is an SSSI- at Aberarth- Carreg Wylan. Migratory fish including sea trout and salmon are famously found in the Teifi and sea bass use the estuary/bay as a nursery.</p> <p>The estuary is bordered by sloping ground on all sides, generally steeper and higher to the south and rising to around 100mAOD. The landcover is predominantly pasture, with prominent mature hedgerows. Semi-natural vegetation lies in a thin strip at the mouth of the estuary separating the coast from pastoral farmland. Mature dune vegetation lies on either side of the estuary, but is more extensive to the north. Habitats include sea cliff grassland and heath on the cliff tops and coastal slopes, rocky shores, and pebble/cobble beaches. Lowland mixed deciduous woodland occurs in the most sheltered coastal stream valleys.</p>
Cultural influences

The SCA forms the tidal reaches of one of the great rivers of Wales, navigable up to Cilgerran, and which served the town of Cardigan, with its long-standing history of coastal and ocean-going trade. The town was also an important shipbuilding centre in the 19th century, mainly for timber-built coasting vessels. The location of the priory indicates the importance to monastic orders of sites where rivers joined the sea. The fish traps may be associated with the priory.

Historic anchorages are recorded in the mouth of the estuary sheltering vessels from the south westerlies. Wrecks include the Cupid which was a schooner carrying guano from London to Cardigan in 1895 when it became stranded around 1 mile inside the Cardigan Bar. An obstruction has been recorded at this location based on aerial photographs.

St Dogmaels was the target of Viking raids. Its priory dates from 1115. Substantial remains of the abbey church survive, including the western end wall, the north wall, northern transept and the eastern end walls of the crypt. Extensive monastic buildings also survive to the south and south-east - Albro Castle. There is a small harbour associated with the village. The corn mill indicates a local maritime trade in foodstuffs from harbour to harbour.

Scheduled monuments include:

- CD003 (hillfort): community: Cardigan
- CD116 (ringwork): community: Troedyraur
- CD274 (promontory fort): community: y Ferwig

The area forms part of the Lower Teifi valley Landscape of Special Historic Interest.

The seascape character area may possibly include the site of the battle of St Dogmael's in 1091 '.....once again Rhys [ap Tewdwr] was triumphant; in the battle of Llandudoch, fought near the mouth of the Teifi, Gruffydd [ap Maredudd] was defeated and slain.' The Teifi was where many Cardiganshire people emigrated to the USA from, especially in the 1820's and 1830's.

Commercial fishing in the area comprises of set nets and lobster and crab potting.

At the mouth of the Teifi there is a sand bar which makes navigation challenging as it moves constantly. The navigational channel is marked with buoys and marks. Dinghy sailing, including racing, kayaking and motor boating are popular. Surfing, windsurfing and jet ski take place off Poppit beach as does sea angling both from the beach and boats. Yacht cruiser sailing takes place from sheltered moorings in the estuary upto Cardigan but is somewhat restricted due to navigational challenges getting back over the bar at the entrance to the estuary. Beach activities are especially popular along the wide Poppit Sands beach. Coasteering occurs along the south coast of the bay.

Access to the water are possible at several locations down slipways with associated swing moorings- on the north shore of the River Teifi by Cardigan Bridge, St Dogmaels, the Teifi Boat Club on the north east bank and the Webley Arms public house. Those closer to the mouth accommodate dinghies and other launchable craft (kayaks, day boats, jet-skis etc.).

A couple of traditional coastal vessels are moored next to a Maritime Heritage Centre by Cardigan bridge. Downriver from Cardigan, as it bends south, there is a boat building company on the north bank using the river for boat trials. The Teifi boat club has a large hard standing area for boat storage, which can take up to 50 craft, and a dinghy park.

On land, the northern extent of the Pembrokeshire Coast Path starts at St Dogmaels but this is now part of the Wales Coast path which continues to the east to Cardigan and then on the northern side of the estuary. An 18-hole golf course overlooks the bay and Cardigan Island from the north side of the estuary. A large hotel, The Cliff Hotel, is prominently located on the headland and is a landmark for seafarers. There is also a prominent caravan park at Gwbert on former dunes with its own coastal defences extending into the estuary adjacent to the boat club. There is a lifeboat station at Poppit Sands.

Aesthetic, perceptual and experiential qualities

The estuary has a distinct character with natural scenic beauty modified by historic coastal settlement and recreational marine uses. Detractors include the Cliff Hotel, the Gwbert caravan park and Boat Club outside the National Park. The estuary is medium scale, partly enclosed by the land either side of the bay but with framed views out to sea. The sinuous tidal estuary features many moorings with boats creating picturesque scenes. The most tranquil places lie at the mouth of the estuary, away from roads, although nowhere is very remote from lines of communication.

The experience at water level is increasing openness and naturalness towards the mouth and the presence of waves replacing tidal or river flow at Poppit Sands. Boat and beach users experience strong estuarine smells, and though sheltered in places, the wind can channel down the river. Cemaes Head and Cardigan Island mark the outer limits of the area and are key orientation points for marine navigation.

The estuary is animated with activity and movement especially in the summer months with the beach use at Poppit Sands and various boating activities. There is some effect on night skies of lighting associated with Cardigan and St Dogmaels.

There are wide views across the bay and beyond and some are spectacular, with long views across the green valley sides and out to sea, such as from the Coast path.

Cultural benefits and services

The area contributes significantly towards leisure and recreational services in the form of marine recreation and beach activities as well as access to towns + centres of accommodation, to natural heritage in the form of the mainly unspoilt coast and estuary, and to cultural and spiritual services in respect of the sense of openness and remoteness at the estuary mouth.

Forces for change								
Summary	Key forces for change							
	Special Qualities	Natural processes/ climate change	Visitor pressure	Marine use- commercial and fishing	or energy minerals	Development pressure	Land management changes	MOD use
<p>The estuary is a sediment sink. Shoreline management plan notes the dynamic coastal sedimentary environments, with a 'do nothing' recommendation at Poppit Sands and the southern shoreline; as a result salt marsh will continue to erode back, prior to the Pen yr Erygd Spit breaching. Following the breach there will be an inundation with sand.</p> <p>Recreational pressure for sailing/canoeing may increase demand for shore-based facilities.</p> <p>There may be additional pressure to develop land as for caravan or camping sites, holiday accommodation, or leisure-based land uses.</p>	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							

<p>Agricultural activities such as small scale livestock raising may become unprofitable, which could lead to a loss of pasture and hedgerow management.</p>	Space to Breathe							
	Key			<p>Change occurring in the area affecting the selected special quality</p>				
<p>Key factors to be taken into account when assessing sensitivity to change</p>								
<p>Factors contributing to potentially higher susceptibility and value</p>				<p>Factors contributing to potentially lower susceptibility and value</p>				
<p>Remote, unspoilt rural landscape to the south west. Natural features of sinuous estuary and adjacent natural vegetation and habitats. Wild, dynamic character of estuary mouth. Historic character of settlements. Unspoilt, framed views out to sea. The views from higher ground are spectacular, with long views across the shallow valley and out to sea. Largely rural and undeveloped edge to the north contributing to scenic views across the water from the National Park. Coast Path as a receptor. Biodiversity, historic and landscape designations.</p>				<p>Presence of established recreational use at Gwbert. High use of Poppit Sands and Gwbert as visitor hotspots. Housing and caravan park. B roads on both sides of estuary.</p>				