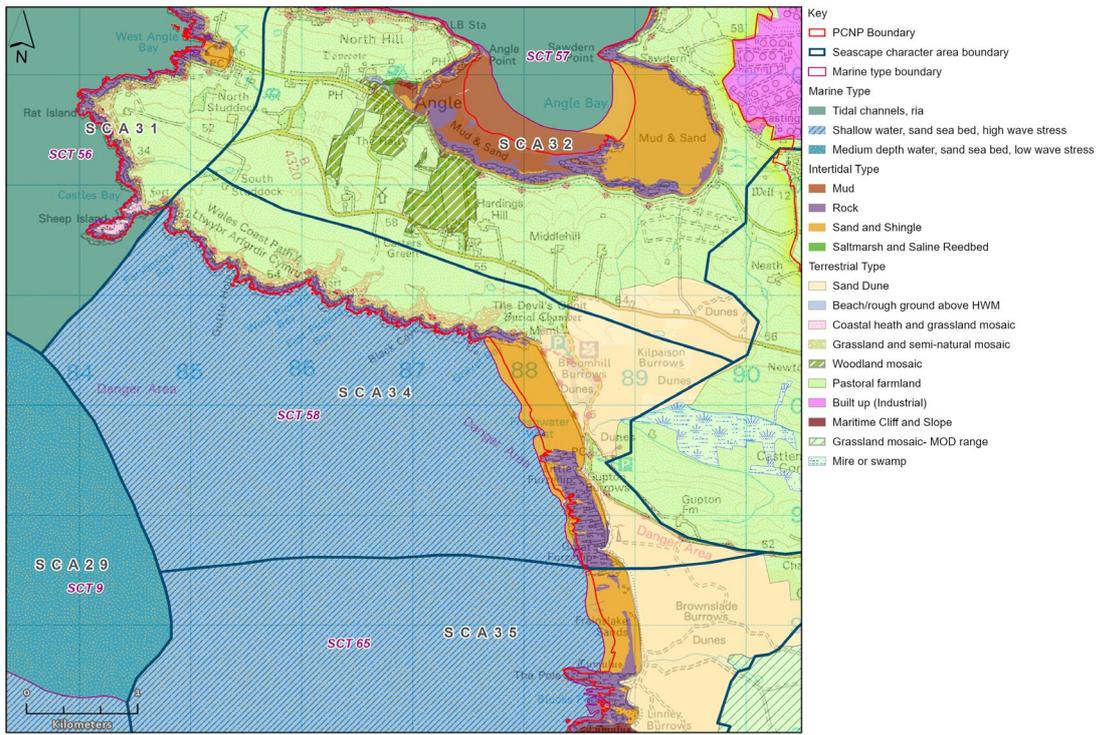


No: **34** Seascape Character Area Name: **Freshwater West**



SCA34: Freshwater West



looking south from Little Furznip



looking north east from Little Furznip

Summary Description
A large, exposed south and west facing coast with a beach at Freshwater West, backed by dunes and enclosed by the limestone cliffs at Linney Head to the south, with low jagged sandstone cliffs backed by semi natural vegetation on the south coast of the Angle peninsula.
Key Characteristics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A large, west facing sandy beach with rocky outcrops, Freshwater West is known for large waves and strong dangerous currents with a wild character.</li> <li>• Behind the beach is a large dune system</li> <li>• Sandstone cliffs and wavecut platforms.</li> <li>• The coastal path rejoins the coast at this point on the east side, and continues westwards along the cliff edge</li> <li>• No settlement and a disused airfield.</li> <li>• Broad views westwards to Dale peninsula and south to Linney Head</li> <li>• Low key, recreational use of beaches, with car park and informal paths through the dunes</li> <li>• Some leisure boating and ship anchorage but restricted by use of sea by the Castlemartin MOD firing range.</li> </ul>
Physical Influences
<p>The headland from Sheep Island (36m aod) around west-facing Freshwater West Bay towards Linney Head (40-50m aod) is predominantly in red sandstones that form irregular, steep cliffs with fallen rocks at the back of beaches. Freshwater West bay exposes older, Lower Palaeozoic mudstones and siltstones in its core, overlain to both north and to the south in Frainslake Bay by Old Red Sandstone sandstones, in east-west striking, long rocky intertidal foreshore outcrops. A submerged fossil forest is partially exposed on the beach. Extensive dune fields lie behind the bays (Broomhill Burrows, Gupton Burrows), incised by a river valley. The south facing coast of jagged, low cliffs on peninsula reaches 55m aod with gently rising ground behind to 63m AOD.</p> <p>Intertidal areas are dominated by sand in the core of the bay (53%) and between rocky cuestas, particularly extensive south of Great Furzenip in northern Frainslake Bay. Wind and wave erosion act through abrasion, attrition and hydraulic action, while sediment is transported though traction, saltation and suspension. Tidal and longshore sediment movement covers or exposes the fossil forest periodically.</p> <p>The shallow (&lt;30m), gently to moderately westwards shelving (&lt;1<sup>0</sup>-10<sup>0</sup>) sandy sea floor overlies an east-west striking Lower Palaeozoic - Old Red Sandstone succession of sandstones and shales. The seas are exposed to high wave stress. Tidal currents are set northwest and southeast. The tidal range is 6.5m. The beach at Freshwater West is known for its exposed character, strong waves and currents.</p> <p>The waters form part of the Pembrokeshire Marine SAC. The coast forms part of the Angle Peninsula Coast, Broomhill Burrows and Castlemartin Range SSSIs. Land habitats include coastal sand dunes, fens, reedbeds, purple moor grass and rush pastures, grassland, and maritime cliffs. The area supports numerous important species include chough, over-wintering lapwings, waders and grey seal.</p>
Cultural influences
<p>This area includes the medieval field system which extends over the Angle peninsula. The small wooden shelter at Furzenip is all that remains of a group of approximately four shelters used for the collection of seaweed and for the production of laverbread. The name 'Parsonsquarry' indicates that stone was extracted in the sea-cliff here.</p> <p>Scheduled monuments include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PE167 (promontory fort): community: Angle</li> <li>• PE264 (promontory fort): community: Hundleton</li> <li>• PE446 (fort): community: Angle</li> </ul>

- PE494 (battery): community: Angle
- PE541 (enclosure, defended): community: Milford

The area has been used in the making of the film *Robin Hood* (2010) and the *Harry Potter* films. Two wrecks are noted in this area. One is LCG15 which was a landing craft which was lost in heavy seas with large loss of life in 1943. This led to modifications for subsequent craft used in the latter stages of the Second World War. The other, the Saint Jacques, was a steel hulled steamship, parts of which are still extant according to divers. This was carrying small coal from Barry to Algeria in 1917 when it was holed by German submarine UC51.

Motor and sail cruising takes place although navigation is dangerous close inshore due to firing range at Castlemartin MOD establishment- a wide berth is required around range. Surfing and windsurfing popular off Freshwater West beach. Kayaking takes place along the whole of this coast as does sea angling from both the shore and boat. Diving takes place off Castle Bay. Ships occasionally anchor in this bay.

There is a wide beach at Freshwater West with general beach activities. Cliff top walking around the rugged coastline is popular along the Coast Path although restrictions exist around Castlemartin MOD range. Important dunes exist behind Freshwater West beach for wildlife. There are local signs of erosion along informal footpaths through the dunes. Climbing is a popular sport around the whole of the area's cliffs.

Fishing in the area comprises of hand gathered periwinkles, set nets, lobster and crab potting and potential for light otter trawling.

The north western part of the area has previously been granted a Round 24 licence for oil and gas and future applications may be made. The public road where passing through the dune system, is recessed and largely hidden.

#### **Aesthetic, perceptual and experiential qualities**

This is an exposed south and west facing seascape feeling large scale with the wide, low sweep of the bay and extensive beaches, large waves and strong winds and currents. This gives a feeling of wildness. The relatively smooth texture of the beaches contrast with the jagged and angular form of the cliffs and the wave cut platform at Furzenip.

The dunes have a unique quality of containment at a micro scale with sheltering dips and pockets, including some sections of the road, set against the open views and exposure on higher ground and dune tops.

When the wind creates a strong surf there is a powerful auditory and sensory effect.

Views are wide and partially framed by the north and east edges of the bay, but with long views to St Ann's Head and beyond to Skokhlom.

There is a sense of remoteness and tranquillity in the landscape is marred by noises from the firing ranges, with its accompanying sense of threat, and road traffic and visitor access.

#### **Cultural benefits and services**

The area contributes significantly towards leisure and recreational services in the form of beach activities and walking, to natural heritage and spiritual services in the form of the wide beaches, sense of spaciousness at sea edge and remoteness in dunes, and connection with nature and the power of the surf.

Forces for change									
Summary	Key forces for change								
<p>The shoreline management plan recommends managed realignment in Freshwater West to allow the dune systems to function naturally.</p> <p>Visitor pressure, and natural forces from wind on dune system.</p> <p>Effect of activity on firing ranges.</p> <p>Management of the coastal landscape for nature conservation purposes.</p> <p>Existing and future licences/leases for floating wave energy and offshore wind respectively in offshore areas could change the character of the area.</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								
	Accessing the Park								
	Space to Breathe								
	<b>Key</b>		Change occurring in the area affecting the selected special quality						
	Key factors to be taken into account when assessing sensitivity to change								
Factors contributing to potentially higher susceptibility and value					Factors contributing to potentially lower susceptibility and value				
<p>Remote, unspoilt sweep of beaches and dune system with craggy cliffs.</p> <p>Wide views across bay and to focal points such as St Ann's Head.</p> <p>Tranquillity when no firing on ranges.</p> <p>Important recreational destination.</p> <p>Coast Path as a receptor.</p> <p>Biodiversity and landscape designations.</p>					<p>MOD firing ranges nearby.</p> <p>Presence of established recreational use.</p> <p>Large boat anchorage.</p>				