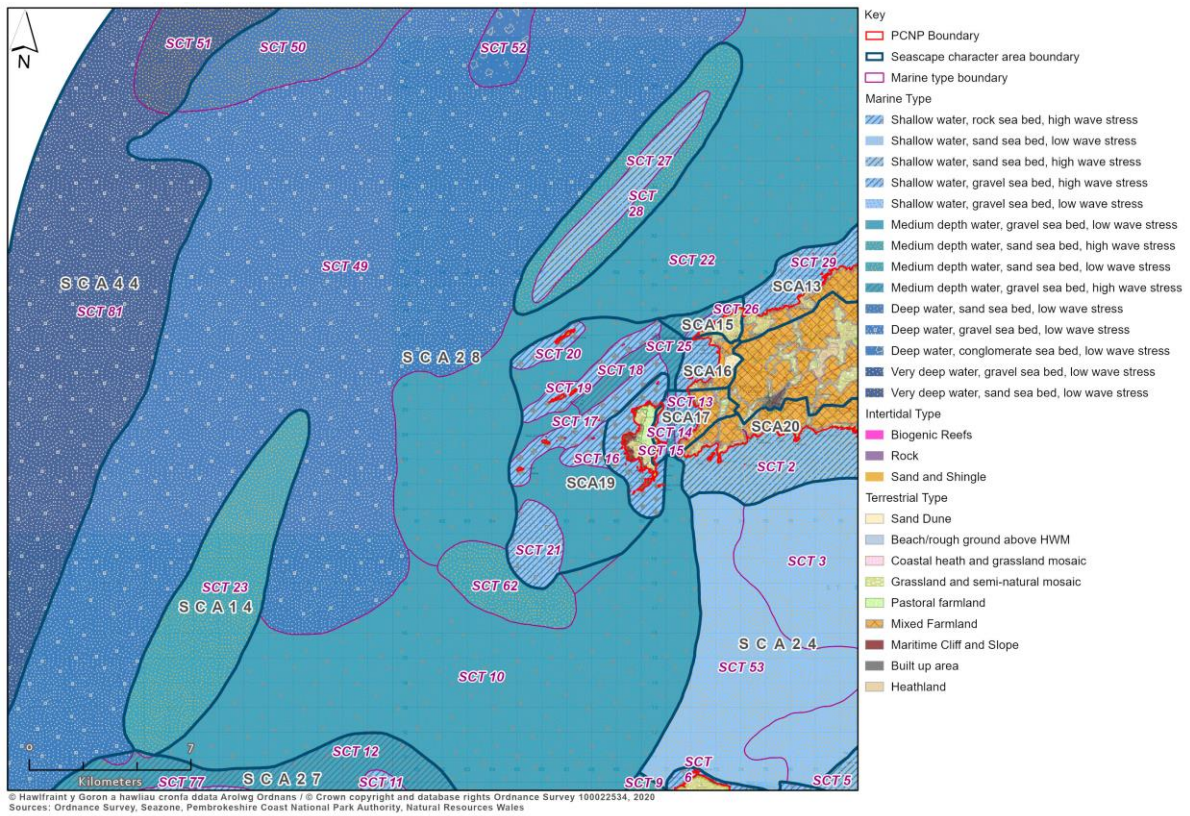


No: **14** Seascape Character Area Name: **Western sand and gravel bars**



SCA14:Western sand and gravel bars



View of northern component of area from Carn Llidi in SCA14 with SCA13 and SCA28 in middle ground

**Summary Description**

The area comprises sea over two offshore bars of gravelly sand running parallel to the coast reflecting tidal flows. They are located north west of St David’s Head and west of St Bride’s Bay/north of the Smalls respectively. These are relatively shallow compared to surrounding seabed but only the north is shallow at around 10m. They are exposed to the south westerlies

but have no recorded wrecks.
<b>Key Characteristics</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two elongated offshore bars of gravelly sand lie on the seabed parallel to the coastline in line with tidal stream and shallower than surrounding seas.</li> <li>• Northern bar has high wave stress and reaches 10m depth.</li> <li>• Southern bar has low wave stress and reaches 50m depth.</li> <li>• There are no wrecks in the area.</li> <li>• Part in the West Wales Marine SAC and the Pembrokeshire Marine SAC.</li> <li>• The area is used for sea angling and fishing and commercial ships would cross the southern area.</li> <li>• Land would be apparent to the east, especially from the northern area and the areas form part of the unspoilt view from the coast.</li> <li>• Open sea areas with unspoilt, simple, consistent and unified marine character at a vast scale and a significant sense of openness, remoteness and exposure.</li> <li>• Both area's qualities are determined almost entirely by the natural forces of water, through swell and waves, and wind.</li> </ul>
<b>Physical Influences</b>
<p>Two offshore bars of gravelly sand, elongate parallel to the coastline and set of tidal currents (north east-south west offshore from the Bishops and Clerks; north-north east - south-south west north of Grassholm and the Smalls) and forming shallows (&lt;10m in 60 m depth area; &lt;50m in 70m depth area). The very shallow, more northerly bar has a moderate slope (1-10°) into the surrounding sea floor and is covered by seas exposed to high wave stress. It overlies Lower Palaeozoic faulted against Permo-Triassic sandstone bedrock. The deeper bar has a gentler slope (&lt;1°) and is covered by seas of low wave stress. The underlying bedrock is Upper Palaeozoic sandstones and mudstones. Sediment in the very shallow bar may be affected by storm turbulence.</p> <p>The areas form part of the West Wales Marine SAC with the exception of a small area on the southern edge of the southern bar. But this area and the southern part of the bar to the north are part of the Pembrokeshire Marine SAC.</p>
<b>Cultural influences</b>
<p>Association are with the traditions of maritime trade but there are no recorded wrecks in these areas. Sea angling takes place here. Fishing in the area comprises of set nets, whelk, lobster and crab potting and potential for light otter trawling. The area has previously been granted a Round 24 licence for oil and gas and future applications may be made.</p>
<b>Aesthetic, perceptual and experiential qualities</b>
<p>These two areas have not been visited. The northern area lies 5km off the nearest coast and the southern area 13km. It would be expected that the higher hills such as Carn Llundain or Carn Llidi and the tops of cliffs would be apparent as a single dimensional line on the horizon in moderate to good or better visibility. However, the feeling in the area would be that of open sea away from the influence of land, other than this visual connection.</p> <p>The sea has a simple, consistent and unified character at a vast scale and a significant sense of openness, isolation and exposure. Its qualities are determined entirely by the natural forces of water, through swell and waves, and wind. The areas are exposed to the south westerlies 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 may be occasional views of commercial vessels using the shipping ways to the west or at anchor to the east of the southern area around St Bride's Bay.</p>

Cultural benefits and services
The area contributes towards leisure and recreational services in the form of marine recreation, to natural heritage in the form of an unspoilt marine area of sea and seabed, and to spiritual services in respect of a sense of wildness and connectedness with nature.

Forces for change								
Summary	Key forces for change							
<p>Limited forces for change in deeper water settings.</p> <p>Future licences for oil and gas would change the character of the area if exploited.</p> <p>There may be pressure for sand extraction in the shallower depth sand bar in the future.</p>	<b>Special Qualities</b>	Natural processes/ climate change	Visitor pressure	Marine use- commercial and fishing	Offshore energy	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								
<p>Simple, open, wild and remote character with views of the western coast and islands.</p> <p>Forms part of the open setting for of the western coast and islands overlooked by the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park contributing to the sense of remoteness and wildness in these areas.</p> <p>Coast Path as a receptor overlooking the area at a distance.</p> <p>Marine nature conservation designations.</p>								