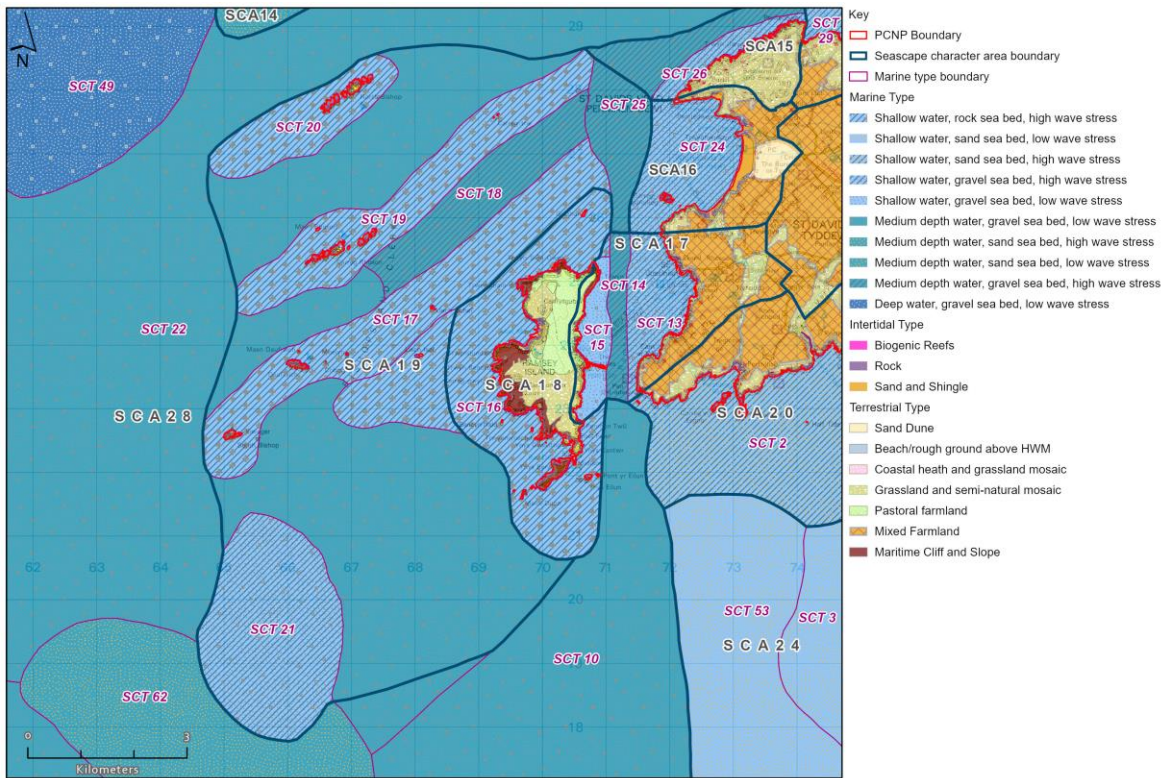


No: **19** Seascape Character Area Name: **Bishops and Clerks**



SCA19: Bishops and Clerks



View of the Bishops and Clerks from Carn Llidi. Ramsey Island lies to the left and St Davids Head to the right.

**Summary Description**

This exposed area of sea is located west of St David’s Head and Ramsey Island incorporating a series of rocky islets and reefs which are known shipping hazards but also a haven for wildlife and attractive for recreation including wildlife tours and diving. The remote South Bishop lighthouse marks their outer edge.

Key Characteristics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Series of rock islets and reefs along submarine ridges interspersed with moderately deep channels off the west coast</li> <li>• Exposed seascape area with high wave stress, strong tidal currents and tidal rips and overfalls around rocks.</li> <li>• Wildlife especially around rocks including puffins, seals, porpoises and dolphins.</li> <li>• Many wrecks especially around North Bishop.</li> <li>• South Bishop lighthouse marks the western edge and emphasises hazardous nature of waters.</li> <li>• Some recreation including wildlife trips, sailing and diving.</li> <li>• Strong sense of remoteness, wildness and tranquillity with views to mainland and Ramsey Island and feeling of drama and threat around rocky islets.</li> <li>• The area forms part of the iconic Park view from Carn Llidi to Ramsey Island</li> </ul>
Physical Influences
<p>The area comprises a series of igneous rock islets, or shallows, formed by resistant gabbro and acid intrusions along submarine ridges striking northeast-southwest, separated by moderately deep (30-60m) channels. A shallow (&lt;30m), moderately sloping (1-10°) rock or sandy gravel sea floor surrounds the islets. The sea floor sediment of channels between rows of islets covers bedrock of northeast-southwest striking Cambro-Ordovician sandstones and mudstones. The sea is exposed to high wind and wave stress, and islets or shallowly submerged rocks are associated with tidal rips and overfalls. Waters between Ramsey and the islets can be rough, with spring tides up to 5 knots.</p> <p>High energy rocky shores around steep sided islets, some of moderate relief (e.g. North Bishop &lt;38m aod, Carreg Rhoson &lt;26m aod), while other smaller islets are only tidally exposed. Deep rocky inlets, generally exposed to wind and wave energy. Intertidal areas are exclusively high energy rocky shores. Wind and wave erosion takes place through abrasion, attrition and hydraulic action.</p> <p>The area is covered by the Pembrokeshire Marine SAC and the Offshore Islets of Pembroke SSSI. North Bishop has a small colony of puffins and grey seals. Manx Shearwater are apparent. Porpoises and to a lesser extent dolphins are sighted and whales are occasionally sighted.</p>
Cultural influences
<p>The historic routes and linkages are exemplified in the Norse place-names, the lighthouse, and the wrecks of ships. The South Bishop Lighthouse acted as a way-mark for vessels navigating offshore and as assistance to ships navigating around the island group. It was built in 1839 and converted to electric operation in 1959 and fully automated in 1983. James Walker FRS, builder of the lighthouse, was a prolific engineer. Wrecks include steamship losses in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, illustrate the hazardous nature of these rocks to mariners. There are around 13 recorded wrecks, all lying against the various islets with the majority around North Bishop which is the northernmost outer array. These include the Morna a wooden steamship working as a packet between Belfast and London which struck rocks in thick fog (1855). The Cwmric Prince en route from Melilla to Hartlepool was also wrecked in foggy conditions (1917). The Colonian, a steel hulled steamship on passage from Boston, Massachusetts, to London with a cargo including fuses and shells lies up to 13m above the seabed (wrecked in 1915). The Wiema lies to the south, sunk in 1961.</p> <p>South Bishop's alternative name, Emsger, name derives from the Old Norse sker - a skerry, an isolated rock in the sea. There is also 'Bishop and Clerks' islet group in Australia.</p> <p>All islands are important for wildlife and thereby attract motor and sailing craft and tours, many emanating from St Justinians. These mostly use large, fast manoeuvrable ribs but also slower craft. North Bishop is popular with divers with their attendant boats. Sea fishing is also popular. Motor and sailing cruisers taking a heavily used coastal cruising route to and from North Wales and Ireland use the outside passage to avoid Ramsey Sound. Commercial shipping often waits in</p>

St Bride's Bay to enter The Milford Haven Waterway, especially in rough weather.

The South Bishop Rock lighthouse has a navigation light, radar beacon and foghorn indicating the presence of the Bishops and Clerks at their western extent.

Fishing in the area comprises of set nets to the north, lobster and crab potting and the area has the 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**

The area has not been visited, although waters to the south in St Brides Bay and around Ramsey Island have, and the area has been viewed from Carn Llidi. It would be expected that North Bishop would feel most isolated at around 5km from the coast. The coast would be apparent in clear visibility with Carn Llidi and Carn Llundain being the main landmarks at the areas outer point where the mainland and Ramsey Island will appear as a single dimensional line on the horizon with simple colours. Closer in, detail and separation of the land masses will be apparent.

The area has a simple, consistent and unified character at a vast scale and a sense of openness, isolation and exposure, interspersed with linear rocks and reefs which become the visual focus as they are approached. The qualities are determined entirely by the natural forces of water, through swell and waves, and wind, although the rocks bring drama to the seascape with crashing waves and spray in some conditions. The area is exposed to the south westerlies and in poor weather conditions the sea is likely to feel threatening, particularly close to the rocks. The remote South Bishop lighthouse is a reminder of these dangers and is the main light source in the area. In calm conditions, such as around dusk, the seas can be serene. There is a strong likelihood of tranquillity and sense of wildness and remoteness in this area. Wildlife, particularly around the rocks enhance the richness of experience of the seascape.

Leisure craft will be apparent particularly in season as this is a popular area for wildlife watching, sailing and diving. This will reduce the sense of remoteness and tranquillity within the area. There may be occasional views of commercial vessels.

From the mainland, the area forms an important part of the superb vistas from Carn Llidi, St Davids Head, Whitesands Bay and Ramsey Sound, and the Coast Path. This is the wild unspoilt west coast of Wales enhanced by the islets giving a sense of perspective and visual interest.

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

The area contributes towards leisure and recreational services in the form of marine recreation including wildlife trips, to natural heritage in the form of wildlife, an unspoilt marine area of sea visible from the sensitive coasts of the National Park, and to spiritual services in respect of a sense of wildness and connectedness with nature.

Forces for change									
Summary	Key forces for change								
<p>Wind and wave erosion around exposed islets. Shoreline management plan states ‘do nothing’.</p> <p>Increase in commercial shipping traffic into Milford may reduce tranquillity.</p> <p>Increase in leisure craft including tours may reduce tranquillity.</p> <p>Future licences for oil and gas would change the character of the area if exploited.</p>	Special Qualities	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>Unspoilt, wild, remote and tranquil character with no development except the lighthouse which emphasises remoteness.</p> <p>Natural character of the rocks and reefs.</p> <p>Wildlife especially around rocks including puffins, seals, porpoises and dolphins.</p> <p>Use of area as destination for nature lovers.</p> <p>The contribution to the view and visibility from some of the most sensitive parts of the coast including St Davids Head, Carn Llidi and the Pembrokeshire Coast Path eg to Ramsey Island.</p> <p>Presence of some recreation including wildlife trips, sailing and diving.</p> <p>Lighthouse is a source of light and apparent feature (although emphasises remoteness).</p>									