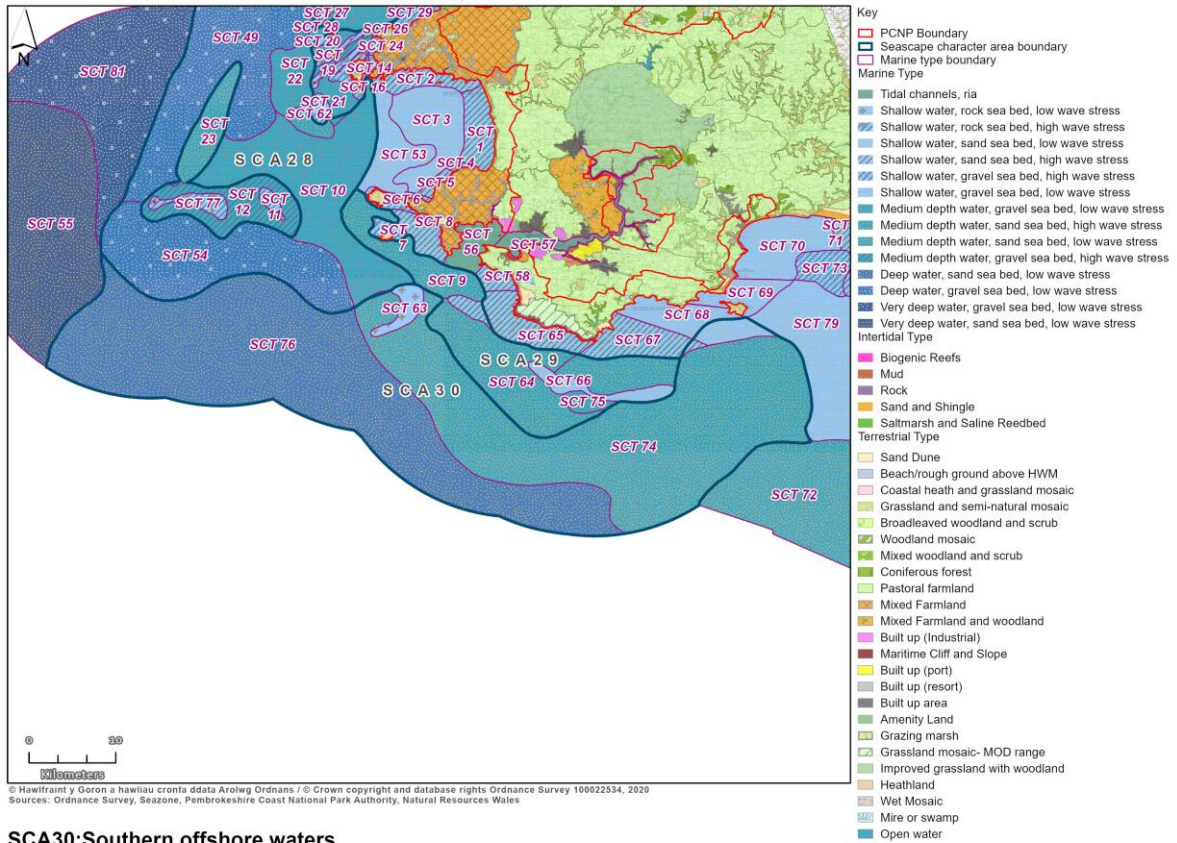


No: 30

Seascape Character Area Name:

Southern offshore waters



SCA30:Southern offshore waters



Area out to sea on horizon viewed from St Govan's Head (in SCA35) beyond SCA29



Area out to sea on horizon viewed from Lydstep Point beyond SCA37

<b>Summary Description</b>
<p>This very large area stretches off the south coast from Caldey Island in the east, running south and west to 42km offshore. It is mainly moderately deep. The east forms the setting to Caldey Island and the area is busier as part of the approaches to Milford Haven to the west as well as around Caldey, used by leisure sailors. The area is used as the outer part of the Castlemartin MOD range.</p>
<b>Key Characteristics</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very large area of sea, 30-100m deep on gravelly sand seabed with low wave stress.</li> <li>• There are numerous wrecks in the area.</li> <li>• Small part in the Pembrokeshire Marine SAC.</li> <li>• The area is used for fishing, ferries and commercial shipping.</li> <li>• Land would be apparent to the east and forms part of the unspoilt view from the southern coast, including from the Pembrokeshire Coast Path.</li> <li>• Open sea area with unspoilt, simple, consistent and unified marine character at a vast scale and a significant sense of openness, remoteness and exposure.</li> <li>• The 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>The area has medium to deep water (30-100m), gently southwest sloping (&lt;1°) sand to slightly gravelly sand sea floor. Seas are exposed to low wave stress. Tidal currents set east and west. Sea floor sediments cover bedrock of east-west striking Upper Paleozoic sandstones and mudstones overlain by Triassic and Jurassic mudstones, halite and limestone, cut by many east-west faults.</p> <p>The West Wales Marine and Bristol Channel Approaches SACs extend into the central and eastern parts of the area respectively. The westernmost and centrally located waters form part of the Skomer, Skokholm and the seas off Pembrokeshire SPA- avoiding the Milford Haven approaches.</p>
<b>Cultural influences</b>
<p>The area forms part of the sea-way of the Bristol Channel and as such part of the sea-routes of south Wales, Cornwall and Devon and of the English West Midlands. There are numerous recorded wrecks in the area which is an indication of its historical and naval use. Wrecks include many sunk in war years on the approaches to Milford Haven including the Lord Derby and Renfrew (sunk by torpedo in 1917 and 1918 respectively), Agnes (1916), Georgious Markettos (1917), Wiley Sike (1918), HMS Select (1918). The Clapham (1943) and Maplefield (1945) sunk after separate collisions. The Seafarer (1983) is an example of a more recent sinking.</p> <p>Commercial shipping uses these waters with the level of activity increasing significantly closer to the approaches to the Milford Haven Waterway. Motor and sailing cruisers also venture into the area for day sails and there are heavily used recreational cruising routes for sailing craft across the area linking Milford with points east, such as Tenby and the north coast of Devon and Cornwall. Recreational sea fishing occurs just south of Caldey Island.</p> <p>Commercial fishing comprises of set nets inshore to the east, drift lining over most of the area, light otter trawling and heavy beam and rockhopper trawling offshore.</p> <p>The area is a major offshore part of the Castlemartin and Manorbier firing ranges/military practice areas. An offshore minerals aggregate extraction area at Nobel Banks brushes the easternmost edge of the area. Two dumping grounds lie centrally and to the west.</p> <p>A Wave Energy Lease Area (leased by the Crown Estate) is located centrally within this Seascape Character Area.</p>
<b>Aesthetic, perceptual and experiential qualities</b>
<p>This area has not been visited. The area lies less than 1km from the coast south of Caldey out to around 42km. It would be expected that there would be a range of influence of the coast.</p>

Higher ridges west of Tenby and cliffs would be apparent as strong elements dominating the view at points to the north east decreasing to a thin line on the horizon only visible in good visibility to no views of land at all at 42km due to the height of the nearest cliffs and landforms. The feeling in the majority of the area would be open sea away from the influence of land, other than this visual connection.

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.

The number of leisure craft will be limited away from the coast but there will be occasional views of ferries, and commercial vessels using the shipping ways.

#### **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 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>Limited forces for change in deeper marine settings.</p> <p>The use by tankers has potentially adverse effects which could increase with increased traffic e.g. LNG.</p> <p>Use of the Wave Energy Lease area has the potential to change the character of the area if exploited.</p> <p>Future licences/leases for floating offshore wind in surrounding areas would change the character of the area.</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>Land would be apparent to the east and the area forms part of the unspoilt view from the southern coast, including from the Coast Path and from Caldey island.</p> <p>Open sea area with unspoilt, simple, consistent and unified marine character at a vast scale and a significant sense of openness, tranquillity and remoteness.</p> <p>Small part in the Pembrokeshire Marine SAC.</p> <p>Presence of commercial shipping.</p> <p>Use by MOD.</p> <p>Use by wave energy although this is temporary at present.</p> <p>Use for mineral aggregate extraction to the east although this is temporary and the vessels transitory.</p>								