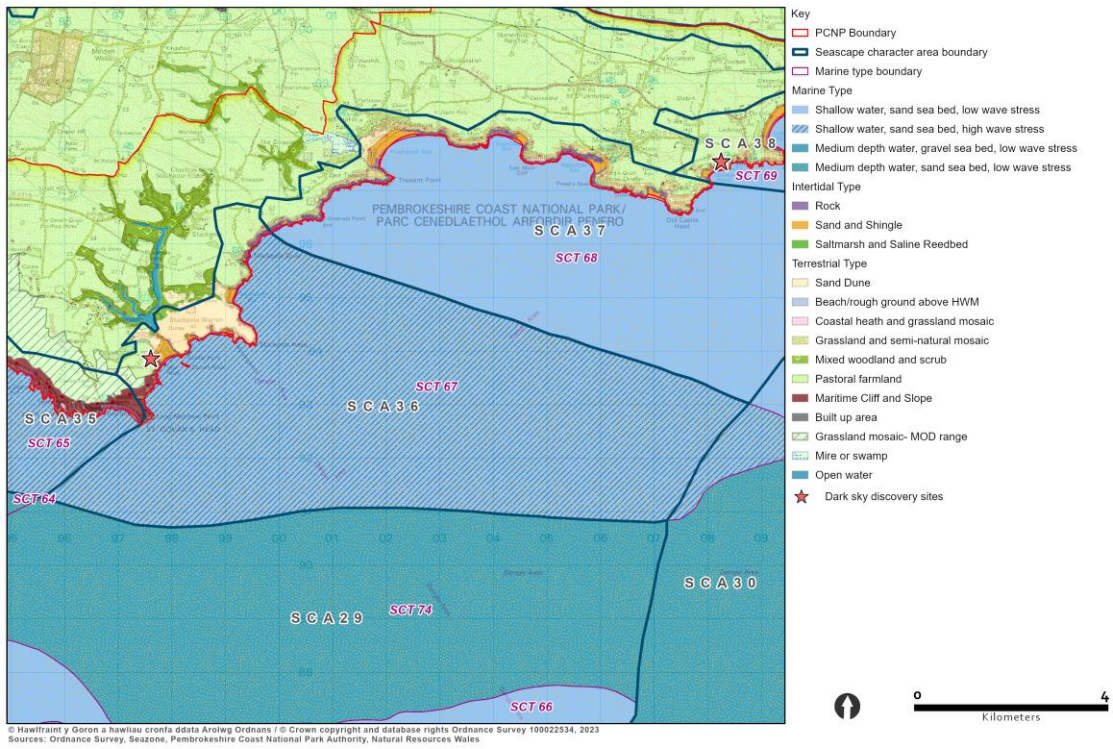


No: **36** Seascape Character Area Name: **Stackpole coastal waters**



SCA36:Stackpole coastal waters



View to St Govan's Head from Stackpole Head



Broad Haven beach looking towards Church Rock



Stackpole Quay

Barafundle Bay

Summary Description

South east facing limestone coast east of St Govan's Head with cliffs, dunes, beaches and coves popular for walking and climbing, and the main two beaches are popular. Access to the coast is limited, with one anchorage, so there is some limited recreational boat activity mainly out from Tenby.

Key Characteristics

- South east facing coast of steep limestone cliffs around 30m high interspersed with small coves and sandy beaches.
- The landcover is dune grassland, coastal grassland, improved pasture back from the coast and limited trees and scrub in sheltered valley areas.
- Settlement limited to a couple of traditional farmsteads.
- Popular car parks accessing Broad Haven beach and Stackpole/Barafundle Beaches, the Coast path with footpaths linking into Bosherton Lakes.
- Climbing is popular on the cliffs and there is kayaking and some motor and sail cruising around the coast which is protected from westerlies, especially at Barafundle Bay.
- Special relationship between Bosherton lakes inland with Broad Haven beach giving visual and sensory contrast and delight.
- Distinctive Stackpole Warren dune system as a buried archaeological landscape on cliff top and running down into adjacent valley.
- Wide, unspoilt views from the headlands to open sea, to Lundy Island and the North Devon coast, and along the coast and channelled views such as from Broad Haven beach to Church Rock.
- Feeling of tranquillity in places especially out of season, away from the Castlemartin range.

Physical Influences

The south east facing rocky headland (40-80m aod) from St Govan's Head to Stackpole Quay is composed of east-west striking Carboniferous Limestone, bounded by steep to vertical coastal cliffs. The headlands are scalloped into bays at the mouth of valleys (e.g. Broad Haven and Barafundle Bay). Stackpole Head has blowholes and caves. Off the coast there are erosional features such as rock stacks (e.g. Church Rock to the south west) and arches (e.g. Barafundle). High dunes lie adjacent to Broad Haven beach on the valley side south west of Bosherton, and at Stackpole Warren. Rocky shores (54%) fringe the Limestone cliffs, but bays have sandy shores (46%). Wind and wave erosion act through corrasion, solution, attrition and hydraulic action.

Sea floor sediment of gravelly sand covers the Limestone on a low to moderate slope (<10°) offshore. The seas are exposed to high wind and wave stress. Tidal currents set east and west along the Bristol Channel. Tidal streams set north east and south west, and a tidal race extends outside St Govan's Head. The tidal stream at Stackpole Head can reach 3 knots causing overfalls at times. The tidal range is 6.6 m.

The sea and intertidal area form part of the Pembrokeshire Marine SAC to the west, overlapping with the Bristol Channel Approaches SAC to the east. The western third is within the Skomer, Skokholm and the seas off Pembrokeshire SPA. Most of the coast is a SAC (as part of the Limestone Coast of South West Wales). The coast to the north is part of the Stackpole Quay to Trewent Point SSSI and is an Important Bird Area as defined by the RSPB. Stackpole Warren and coast and environs are a National Nature Reserve and SSSI. The Castlemartin Coast to the south west is an SPA and an SSSI. Notable species include the chough, adder, grass snake and slow worm, with significant colonies of seabirds on the cliffs.

This landcover is dominated by Stackpole Warren, which consists of a plateau of wind-blown sand perched on the edge of high limestone sea cliffs and running down into the valley to the west. Coastal grassland extends onto Stackpole Head and along the cliff edges to the north and south. Behind this there are pastoral fields with low field boundaries with trees and scrub limited to the more sheltered valley sides.

Cultural influences

Several important prehistoric settlement and ritual sites are located at Stackpole Warren which is an example of a buried archaeological landscape. An enclosure complex has produced much worked flint, along with iron-slag and possibly spindle-whorls. It can be linked to a wider pattern of relict field enclosure. A group of prehistoric ritual sites is centred on the Devil's Quoit standing stone, sited where there is level ground between the warren and the surrounding terrain.

Stackpole was the seat of the Campbell family (Lords of Cawdor in Scotland), an 18th century mansion which was subsequently enlarged, on the undercroft of a much earlier house. It was demolished in 1963. Its distinctive field systems and farmhouses survive. Stackpole Quay indicates the recent historic use of this character area including the movement of limestone from quarry to kiln and bringing in luxury goods for the Stackpole Court estate.

Part of this area lies within the Stackpole Landscape of Special Historic Interest.

Scheduled monuments include:

- PE533 (firing range): community: Stackpole (this also falls into SCA35)
- PE367 (Stackpole Warren Hut Group): community: Stackpole
- PE316 (promontory fort): community: Castlemartin
- PE468 (round barrow): community: Castlemartin

The Lort family of Stackpole were smugglers, antiquarians and supporters of both sides in the Civil War. Julius Caesar Ibbetson's *The Guide to the Stackpole Scenery pointing to Stack Rock Pembrokeshire* (oil on canvas and water-colour and black ink, 1793) is one of the most explicitly topographical coastal views of the area from this period.

Wrecks lie to the west and south of St Govan's Head. The Florrie, a wooden ketch carrying a cargo of burnt ore from Dublin to Cardiff, was sunk in heavy weather in 1918. The Otway sank in 1982.

The only settlement is a couple of small farmsteads set just back from the coast. Vehicular access and parking is at Broad Haven and at Stackpole Quay only. The former is also linked to the Bosherton Lakes making this a popular walk from the National Trust car park inland. Barafundle Beach and Broad Haven are popular for general beach activities. Coastal walking and wildlife watching takes place along the cliff tops along the Pembrokeshire Coast Path, often using Stackpole Head as a destination. Access is restricted to St Govan's Head when firing is being carried out at Castlemartin. Climbing takes place around St Govan's Head and Stackpole with clear evidence on the latter with worn routes and steel pegs along the cliff top. There is occasional coasteering. There is also a slipway at Stackpole Quay but access is restricted by the

National Trust and this is a very small drying harbour which is usually used by one lobster potting boat.

Diving and snorkelling is popular off Barafundle beach, Stackpole Head and Broad Haven. Kayaking continues around the coast and surfing takes place off Broad Haven. Stand up paddle boarding is becoming increasingly popular. There is a heavily used sailing cruising route from here around the coast west to Milford Haven [when MOD restrictions allow] and Tenby. Motor and sail cruising is more prevalent here compared to the west with good anchorage in Barafundle Bay. Sea angling is popular.

Commercial fishing in the area comprises of beach seining and beach nets, set nets, whelk, lobster and crab potting and potential for light otter trawling. The western part of the area is used as part of the Castlemartin firing ranges/military practice areas and by the less intensively used Manorbier area to the east.

Aesthetic, perceptual and experiential qualities

This coast has a strong unity with consistently moderately high grey limestone cliffs at around 30m indented with sandy beaches and deep coves. The coast is a moderate to large scale with the headlands at St Govan’s and Stackpole feeling exposed but sheltering, to an extent, the intervening coast from westerly winds. There is diversity in the landcover with sand dunes, grassland and scrub set against the cliffs. There are wide views from land out to an uninterrupted and unspoilt sea to the south, to Lundy Island, the North Devon coast and to Caldey Island to the east. Superb framed views are possible from the coves and beaches such as from Broad Haven where Church Rock is a feature. From the water the most apparent features are St Govan’s Head and Stackpole Head. Stackpole Quay is difficult to discern but lies near the distinct junction between the white limestone cliffs to the west and the red sandstone cliffs to the east [SCA 37].

Areas are tranquil to an extent away from the car parks and beaches but this area is popular for walkers, climbers and beach users so there are often people around which reduces tranquillity. The structures at St Govan’s Head are detractors. However, the natural beauty of this coast prevails. There is a strong smell of the sea and the semi-natural grassland and dunes along the coast give a feeling of naturalness.

Cultural benefits and services

The area contributes significantly towards leisure and recreational services in the form of marine recreation, climbing and beach recreation, to natural heritage in the form of the unspoilt coast nature conservation interest and wildlife watching, and to cultural and spiritual services in respect of the Stackpole Estate and other historic features and connectedness with nature along this spectacular coast.

Forces for change

Summary		Key forces for change						
Slow coastal erosion of rocky cliffs. The shoreline management plan states ‘do nothing’. Visitor pressure at car park areas and the coastal path including trampling of cliff top and dune vegetation. Apparent wear on cliffs through climbing with steel pins at top of cliffs (Stackpole Head). MOD uses to the east and	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							

west. Existing and future licences/leases for floating wave energy and offshore wind respectively in offshore areas could change the character of the area.	Wilderness							
	Diverse Geology							
	Richness of Habitats and Biodiversity							
	Rich Archaeology							
	Distinctive Settlement Character							
	Cultural Heritage							
	Accessing the Park							
	Space to Breathe							
	Key							

Change occurring in the area affecting the selected special quality

Key factors to be taken into account when assessing sensitivity to change

Steep indented coastline with cliffs and coves forming a natural coastal edge.
 Rural pastoral character of the hinterland and dunes, with very limited built form.
 Nature conservation interest of coast, grassland and dunes.
 Special relationship between Bosherton lakes inland with Broad Haven beach.
 Distinctive, historically important Stackpole Warren dune system.
 Wide, unspoilt views from the headlands to open sea and along the coast and channelled views such as from Broad Haven beach to Church Rock.
 Feeling of tranquillity in places especially out of season, away from the Castlemartin range.
 Coast Path as a receptor.
 Biodiversity, historic and landscape designations.
 Presence of popular car parks accessing Broad Haven beach and Stackpole/Barafundle Beaches.
 Climbing is popular on the cliffs.
 MOD ranges and training areas nearby.