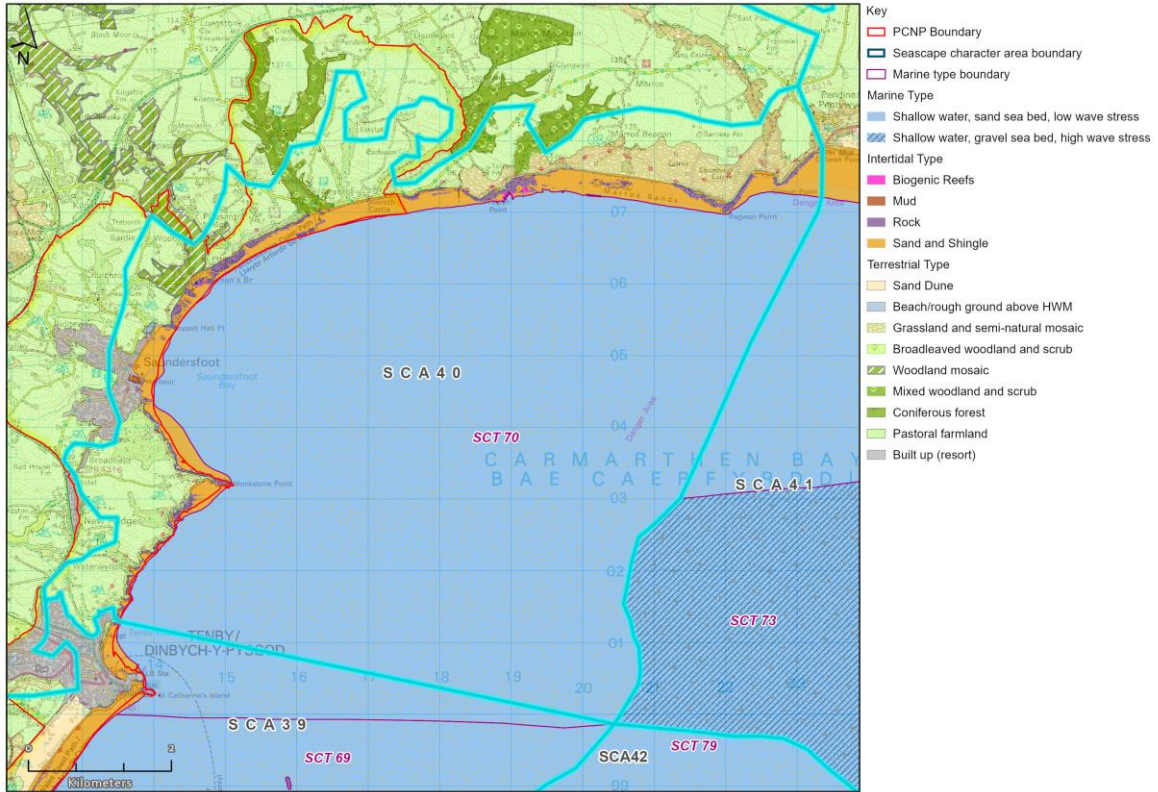


No: **40**

Seascape Character Area Name:

**Carmarthen Bay west**



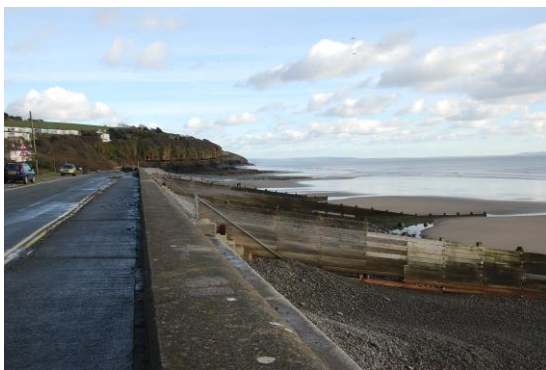
**SCA40:Carmarthen Bay west**



*Saundersfoot harbour and beach*



*Monkstone Beach illustrating natural beauty*



*Amroth- sea wall and groyne*



*Caravan parks and woodland on the coast- Wiseman's Bridge*

<b>Summary Description</b>
<p>The area is located on the north and west coast of Carmarthen Bay. It comprises an indented coast with small headlands and accessible beaches seen against a hill and valley rural backcloth. The focus is Saundersfoot which is a small resort and the area is popular for beach and marine recreation although there are quieter rural stretches of semi-natural coast.</p>
<b>Key Characteristics</b>
<p>An indented Upper Carboniferous rock coast of cliffs, rocky shores, a series of minor headlands and accessible beaches on the north and west side of the tidal Carmarthen Bay.</p> <p>Hill and valley hinterland of mixed farmland and mixed mature woodland running to the coast interspersed with coastal settlements and caravan parks which are noticeable and detractive in parts.</p> <p>Some sheltered bays are protected from the prevailing wind.</p> <p>A popular area for tourism due to accessibility of beaches to vehicular traffic focussed on Saundersfoot, Amroth and Wiseman's Bridge.</p> <p>Pembrokeshire Coast Path is popular starting at Amroth and running along the cliff tops linking the settlements.</p> <p>Traffic and hard edges to the coast in places reduce naturalness and tranquillity but this is present in rural stretches of coast.</p> <p>Long views out to sea across the bay to the Gower on clear days.</p>
<b>Physical Influences</b>
<p>The wide east to south facing Carmarthen Bay is enclosed to the west. The headland increases in height eastwards &lt;160m aod, made of east-west striking Upper Carboniferous (Coal Measures, Millstone Grit) sandstones and shales, giving way to older, north-south striking Carboniferous Limestone in the east at Marros. Incised river valleys drain to the coast around the bay. Coastal hills lie generally close to the coast. Rocky coasts, boulder-strewn beaches and cliffs at headlands bound sandy bays at Saundersfoot and Amroth. Marros Sands is a ~2km long sand beach. Intertidal areas are dominated by sand beaches (80%), and rocky shores (19%). Sand sediment is transported and deposited through wind, wave and storm action, moving by traction, saltation and in suspension. Groynes are located on the northern coast around Amroth to modify the movement of material. Erosion of rocky coasts takes place through abrasion, attrition and hydraulic action.</p> <p>The shallow (&lt;30m), gently sloping (&lt;1°) sandy sea floor overlies Upper Carboniferous bedrock. The seas are fairly sheltered from wind and wave stress, particularly along the east facing coast. Tidal streams set north east and south west, with rates up to 1.5 knots in the north east flood stream. Tidal range is 7.7m.</p> <p>The sea is within the Carmarthen Bay and Estuaries SAC. Carmarthen Bay is an SPA and Waterwynch Bay to Saundersfoot, the Telpyn Coast and Marros Pendine Coast are SSSIs so the area has significant nature conservation interest. Carmarthen Bay is an Important Bird Area holding 33,000 wintering water birds on a regular basis. There are mussel and barnacle communities in stretches such as around Telpyn Point. Old mine adits and tunnels along the coast are used by bats. In winter large numbers of Scoter gather offshore, but visible from the coast and gulls, oystercatcher and turnstones gather onshore.</p>
<b>Cultural influences</b>
<p>At Wiseman's Bridge and Amroth respectively, tree stumps from a submerged forest are periodically exposed and various prehistoric artefacts such as worked flints have been discovered. The inundated palaeolandscapes of the Bristol Channel may yield evidence for the change from hunter-gatherer societies to communities of settled farmers.</p> <p>Saundersfoot's historic harbour area is testament to its significance as an industrial port. It exported anthracite coal from the 14<sup>th</sup> century until the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. The colliery railways/tramways survive as relict features; part of the route follows the coastline from</p>

Saundersfoot to Wiseman's Bridge. Other exports were fire-bricks and pig-iron. The town Conservation Area extends west from the harbour to include the core of the town. Its key qualities are explained in the Conservation Area statement.

Scheduled monuments include:

- PE019 (round barrow): community: Pendine
- PE039 (chambered tomb): community: Eglwyscummin
- PE053 (house, domestic): community: Eglwyscummin
- PE321 (chapel): community: Stackpole
- PE458 (colliery shaft mounds): community: St Mary's Out
- PE563 (Trelessy enclosure, defended): community: Amroth

The Policy was a wooden brig on passage from Quebec to Llanelli with a cargo timber when it was wrecked in a gale at Monkstone in 1859. The wooden schooner Medora transporting coal was stranded on the coast in a gale in 1860 also near Monkstone. The Fermanagh was travelling from Drogheda to Llanelli in ballast when it was caught in a hurricane sheltering in the Caldey Roads in the 1930s but dragged into the bay where it sank after colliding with Woolhouse Rocks.

Winston Churchill visited Wiseman's Bridge in 1943 as part of the build-up to D-Day.

North of Tenby the majority of the coast is rural with a semi-natural mosaic on coastal land and cliffs backed by pasture with some arable and mixed and deciduous woodland on steep slopes and valley sides. Estate farmlands are apparent in the hinterland. Woodlands are remarkably close to the coast and trees quite large mature heights, indicating that parts are relatively sheltered from prevailing winds. Within this rural matrix lie the coastal settlements which were previously related to the coal industry are now in tourism use mainly around Saundersfoot, Amroth and Wiseman's Bridge. The key to the area's development is the availability of easily accessible beaches. Saundersfoot is focussed on a harbour with associated car park and there are caravan parks on flat and rising ground which are particularly apparent along this coastline. Elsewhere settlement is relatively sparse and scattered. The land based area lies in LCA1: Saundersfoot Settled Coast.

Kayaking continues along this coast as does sea angling from boat and shore. Surfing takes place around Monkstone Point while windsurfing takes place across the bay. Dinghy sailing and sea rowing are to be found along Saundersfoot Bay. Motor and sail cruising is popular across the whole of this area. Wildlife and general boat trips operate out of Saundersfoot Harbour. Saundersfoot and Coppit Hall are popular anchorages.

There is a small harbour at Saundersfoot providing shelter for a small coastal fishing fleet and recreational craft with a slipway. There is also a large area for hard standing boat storage adjacent to the car park. There is also a slipway at Coppit Hall. Beach activities are popular along the wide beaches which spread from Saundersfoot to Pendine. Coastal walking along the Pembrokeshire Coast Path and wildlife watching are especially popular to the north of Tenby as far as Monkstone Point and from Amroth to Pendine. There are camp and caravan sites all along this coast.

Fishing in the area comprises of hand gathered cockles off South Beach, beach seining and beach nets, set nets, whelk potting and potential for light otter trawling. The eastern fringe of the area is in the Pendine military practice and firing danger area. The sea is mainly used for general sailing based at Tenby.

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

This indented, angular and essentially rural coast of cliffs, rocky shores and small sand bays and coves is medium scale, generally enclosed, diverse and interrupted by settlements in this part of the 'resort coast'. Framed, balanced views are generally possible although the caravan parks are discordant elements. There is activity in the tourist honeypots but elsewhere the coast is relatively tranquil although movement is usually perceptible in views along the coast and out to sea. Marros Sands appear to be relatively unspoilt.

Wide views are possible across Carmarthen Bay as far as Worms Head on the Gower in clear visibility, and along the coast to Caldey Island with the spire at Tenby a particular landmark feature to the south.



Cultural benefits and services
The area contributes significantly towards leisure and recreational services in the form of beach and marine recreation and coast path, to natural heritage in the form of the mainly unspoilt coast of cliffs, beaches and rocky shores, and to cultural and spiritual services in respect of the area’s historic sites.

Forces for change								
Summary	Key forces for change							
<p>Slow coastal erosion of rocky cliffs, more rapid in the back of the small bays.</p> <p>Limited net longshore sediment drift.</p> <p>The shoreline management plan is to Do Nothing in areas of rocky cliffs and hold the line in bays (Amroth, Wiseman’s Bridge, Saundersfoot).</p> <p>Development pressure on tourist settlements. Redevelopment of Saundersfoot Harbour may increase visitor pressure.</p> <p>Recreational use leading to compaction and erosion of coast path and habitats.</p> <p>Intensity of tourism/ recreation reducing the area’s tranquillity.</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>Indented coast of intricate rocky shores and sandy bays forming a natural coastal edge.</p> <p>Views framed by headlands and trees.</p> <p>Woodland cover on and near coast.</p> <p>Semi-natural mosaic along coastal edge including cliffs.</p> <p>Historic character of settlements including Saundersfoot with its harbour.</p> <p>Views out to sea, across Carmarthen Bay and along the coast.</p> <p>Coast Path as a receptor.</p> <p>Biodiversity, historic and landscape designations.</p> <p>Presence of resort settlements and caravan parks interrupting rural character and reducing tranquillity and scenic beauty.</p> <p>Presence of intensive recreational use at resort and other beaches and spreading along coast and coastal waters.</p>

Hard edge to coast including groynes reducing naturalness.

Lighting related to settlements and roads.