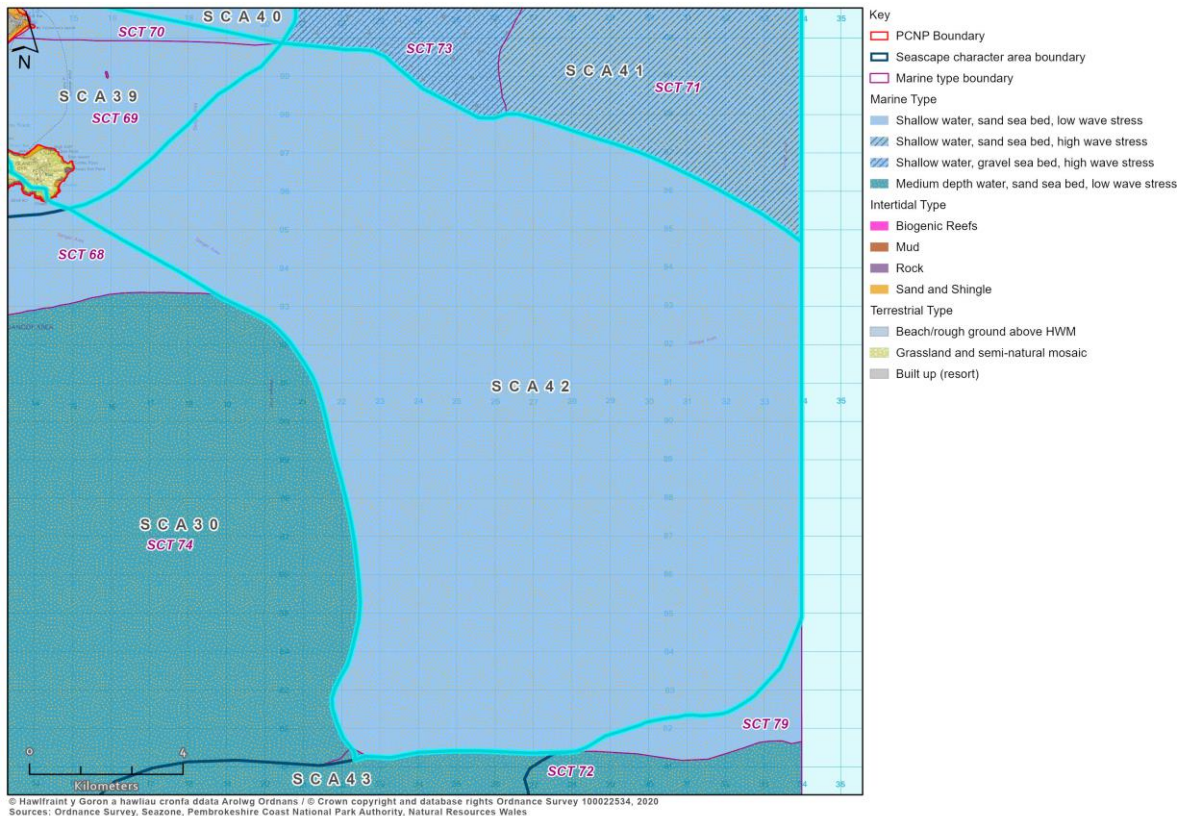


No: **42** Seascape Character Area Name: **Carmarthen Bay**



SCA42:Carmarthen Bay



Area visible from Pendine Sands in Carmarthen Bay- Rhossili Downs in Gower lies to east and Caldey Island to west [right]

Summary Description

The area is located in the outer reaches of Carmarthen Bay south east of Caldey Island and west of the Gower. It is predominantly shallow water less than 30m deep with a sand seabed and low waves.

Key Characteristics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shallow outer bay less than 30m deep with gently sloping sandy sea floor • Generally low wave stress and low tide speed. • Northern and eastern parts used by overwintering wildfowl and designated nature conservation interest. • Very few wrecks. • Used for leisure sailing by larger boats and dredgers and commercial craft may be visible to the south. • Open sea with simple, open characteristics at a vast scale dominated by swell, waves and winds with a sense of remoteness. • The key visible coastal features are Rhossili Down and the Carmarthenshire coastal hills with Caldey Island and its lighthouse plus Tenby spire to the west. • Tranquillity will be reduced by MOD use as a training area.
Physical Influences
<p>Shallow water (>30m), gently south sloping (<1°) sandy sea floor in bay that has tidal currents set around the curve of the coastline. Tidal streams at flood tides are <1.5 knots inshore. The bay is exposed to low wind and wave stress, increasing towards the east coast. Sediments cover east-west striking bedrock of Upper Palaeozoic sandstones and mudstones to Jurassic mudstones and limestones, cut by east-west faults.</p> <p>The area is within the Bristol Channel Approaches SAC and the northern and eastern parts within the Carmarthen Bay and Estuaries SAC. The northern and eastern fringes are in the Carmarthen Bay SPA and the northern part is an Important Bird Area holding 33,000 wintering water birds on a regular basis such as scoter.</p>
Cultural influences
<p>The inundated palaeolandscapes of the Bristol Channel may yield evidence for the change from hunter-gatherer societies to communities of settled farmers. The area forms part of the off-shore waters of the sea-way to South Wales and to Cornwall and Devon, and that is fed by the Severn and the Avon. It has strong linkages with the maritime trade-routes of western Britain since Prehistory. The cultural associations of this seascape character area are made up by the long history of sea-borne trade. There are very few wrecks in the area which is an indication of its lack of dangerous features. The only three recorded wrecks. The Olive which was a wooden smack carrying coal and sunk in 1877. The Juta was a steel hulled steamship on passage from Rouen to Glasgow in ballast, holed in 1945. Its wreckage is still extant in three parts. The Lady Sheila was a motor vessel lost in 1954.</p> <p>The West Helwick light lies on the south eastern fringes of the area. Recreational cruising routes for sailing craft cross the area linking Llanstephan with Tenby and with the north coast of Devon and Cornwall and east to Burry Port and Cardiff. Motor cruising is also found in this area.</p> <p>Fishing in the area comprises of set nets, whelk potting and potential for light otter trawling, and long lines in the south eastern corner.</p> <p>The north and western parts of the area form the outer part of the Pendine and Manorbier military practice and firing danger areas. Marine aggregate dredging licences lie at Nobel Bank to the south.</p>
Aesthetic, perceptual and experiential qualities
<p>This area is in the outer reaches of Carmarthen Bay and so the land is only just apparent in some areas. The main features will be Rhossili Downs in the Gower which are a particular landmark, nearer Caldey Island with its lighthouse and the coastal hills of Carmarthenshire, with a smudge of wind turbines visible on clear days. Tenby spire might be visible to the west. The land will appear as a single dimensional line on the horizon with simple colours. Lundy Island is visible as a simple isolated landform to the south in clear visibility.</p> <p>The sea has a simple, consistent and unified character at a vast scale and a significant sense of</p>

openness, isolation and exposure which increases to the south. Its qualities are determined entirely by the natural forces of water, through swell and waves, and wind. The area is 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 but there may be occasional views of commercial vessels including dredgers to the south. The use of the area for military exercises and training will severely disrupt tranquillity at times.

Cultural benefits and services

The area contributes significantly towards leisure and recreational services in the form of marine recreation ie sailing and motor cruising, to natural heritage in respect of its role as overwintering area for birds, and to cultural and spiritual services in the form of the mainly unspoilt sea visible from the sensitive coasts of the Gower and the National Park.

Forces for change								
Summary	Key forces for change							
Limited natural forces for change in this bay. Dredging reduces tranquillity.	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							
	Key		Change occurring in the area affecting the selected special quality					
Key factors to be taken into account when assessing sensitivity to change								
Simple, open, wild and remote character with clear views of South Wales coast and Lundy. Forms part of the open setting for Carmarthen Bay overlooked by the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park and the Gower AONB contributing to the sense of remoteness and wildness in these areas. Nature conservation value of part of the area for overwintering birds. Coast Path as a receptor at a distance.								

General lack of light pollution.

Presence of MOD use and dredging use to the south reducing tranquillity.