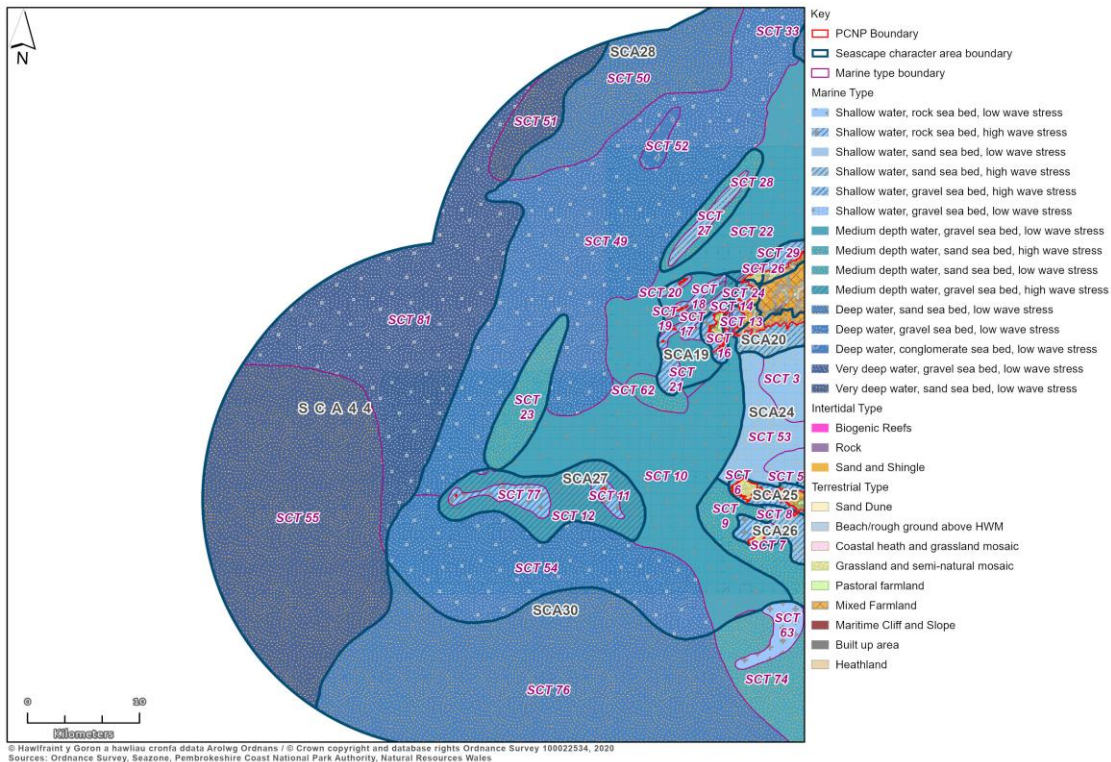


No: **44**Seascape Character
Area Name:**Western offshore- very deep water**

SCA44:Western offshore - very deep water

Summary Description

This offshore open sea is located on the furthest westernmost part of the study area running upto territorial limits. It is very deep water on a gravelly sand seabed and is used by shipping as safe water west of the Smalls, having a traffic separation zone.

Key Characteristics

- Very large area of sea, over 100m deep on gravelly sand and sand seabed with low wave stress.
- There are a moderate number of wrecks in the area.
- A very small part is in the Pembrokeshire Marine SAC.
- The area is used by commercial shipping with a traffic separation zone west of the Smalls, for ferries and for fishing.
- Land would be apparent to the east and forms part of the unspoilt view on the horizon from the western coast, including from the Pembrokeshire Coast Path.
- Open sea area with unspoilt, simple, consistent and unified marine character at a vast scale and a significant sense of openness, tranquillity, remoteness and exposure.
- The area's qualities are determined almost entirely by the natural forces of water, through swell and waves, and wind.

| Physical Influences |
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| <p>This is a zone of very deep water (>100m) with a gently NE-SW sloping (<1°) sea floor at the western margin of the study area, extending westwards from 20km off the Ramsey Island to around 46km. The sandy gravel sea floor that extends northwards from Milford Haven into Cardigan Bay is replaced towards the south by finer, gravelly sands then sands, which trend across from Carmarthen. The area has low wave stress.</p> <p>The offshore bedrock beneath sea floor sediments comprises Mesozoic (Permian-Jurassic) mudstones, sandstones and limestones in the south, overlain by Cenozoic (Palaeogene-Neogene) mudstones, sandstones and lignite over the northern part. The bedrock is cut by north east-south west faults.</p> <p>The eastern central fringe of the area is part of the Pembrokeshire Marine SAC.</p> |
| Cultural influences |
| <p>The area forms part of the deep water route where the Bristol Channel joins the Irish Sea - as such part of the coastal trading seascape, and also the 'home waters' seascape of Britain and northern Europe as well as of the global deep-water trade. The cultural 'story' of this area derives from its associations with maritime trading, warfare and emigration, and always with Pembrokeshire's role on aviation, particularly during the war years.</p> <p>There are a number of wrecks. These include those lost in war- the Wilson, an Irish schooner scuttled by a U boat (1918), the Empire Frost lost in an air raid (1941), Beemsterdijk (1941) and the Churchill (1944). More recent losses include the Cawsand Bay (1984), Solitude (2001) and the Arca, a trawler which foundered (2007).</p> <p>The ferry route between Pembroke Dock and Rosslare crosses the area. There is a north/south commercial shipping traffic separation area west of the Smalls. Recreational cruising routes for sailing craft cross the area linking Wales with Ireland and there is motor cruising.</p> <p>Fishing in the area comprises of whelk, lobster and crab potting, drift lining to south, heavy beam and rockhopper trawling offshore and light otter trawling inshore.</p> <p>The area has previously been granted a Round 24 licence for oil and gas in its northern waters and is a restricted area in this location. Future applications may be made.</p> |
| Aesthetic, perceptual and experiential qualities |
| <p>This area has not been visited. It is in the outer reaches of the study area at least 20km west of Ramsey Island and it would be expected that only the higher hills such as Carn Llundain or Carn Llidi and the tops of cliffs would be apparent as a single dimensional line on the horizon in good visibility. These would disappear below the horizon in the outer reaches of the area.</p> <p>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 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.</p> <p>The number of leisure craft will be limited but there will be occasional views of commercial vessels using the shipping ways west of the Smalls. The lighthouse just to the east will be highly apparent at night.</p> |
| Cultural benefits and services |
| <p>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 in the distance from the sensitive coasts of the National Park, and to spiritual services in respect of a sense of wildness and connectedness with nature.</p> |

| Forces for change | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|-----------------------------------|------------------|---|-----------------|----------------------|-------------------------|---------|--|
| Summary | Key forces for change | | | | | | | | |
| <p>Limited forces for change in deep seas.</p> <p>Future licences for oil and gas would change the character of the area if exploited.</p> <p>Future licences for floating offshore wind in surrounding areas would change the character of the area.</p> <p>The use by tankers has potentially adverse effects which could increase with increased traffic eg LNG.</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 | | | | | | | | |
| | Key | | | Change occurring in the area affecting the selected special quality | | | | | |
| Key sensitivities | | | | | | | | | |
| <p>A very small part is in the Pembrokeshire Marine SAC.</p> <p>The area forms part of the unspoilt view on the horizon from the western coast, including from the Coast Path.</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>General lack of light pollution.</p> <p>Presence of commercial shipping with a traffic separation zone</p> <p>Presence of the Smalls lighthouse to the west.</p> | | | | | | | | | |