

MARINE HABITATS AND SPECIES GROUPED ACTION PLAN

Introduction and Vision Statement

This group habitat includes intertidal boulder communities, intertidal mudflats, seagrass beds, peat and clay exposures, subtidal sand and gravels, subtidal mixed muddy sediments(?), mud habitats in deep water(?), blue mussel beds and saline lagoons(?).



Our entire coastline is of significant importance for its wildlife. The Carmarthen Bay and Estuaries European Marine Site (EMS) extends from Tenby in the west almost to Oxwich Point in the east and includes the Burry Inlet/Loughor Estuary and the Taf–Tywi–Gwendraeth (Three Rivers) estuaries. The habitats making up the EMS include all the marine BAP habitats featured in our LBAP and the habitats of the coastal BAP that occur around our coast waterbirds

This EMS encompasses three European designated sites:

Carmarthen Bay Special Area of Conservation (SAC) – this was designated for having excellent European examples of six of the habitat and five of the species conservation features of interest listed in the European Union Habitats & Species Directive, e.g. mudflats, saltmarsh, estuarine habitats and shad, otter and lampreys

Carmarthen Bay Special Protection Area (SPA) – designated under the EU Birds Directive for the common scoter sea duck, *Melanitta nigra*, a BAP species.

Burry Inlet SPA and Ramsar site – regularly supports internationally important numbers of overwintering wildfowl and waders that feed in the saltmarshes and on the intertidal areas.

Sandbanks within Carmarthen Bay support a range of species (including bivalves, amphipods and worms), many of which spend most of their time wholly or partly buried in the sediment. Our coastline provides an example of a large estuarine site on the south coast of Wales, made up by the estuaries of the Rivers Loughor, Tâf, Tywi and the Gwendraeth. These estuaries support a range of subtidal and intertidal sediments that range from sand at the mouth to mudflats in the upper estuary. Extensive areas of intertidal mudflats and sandflats are dominated by bivalves, including cocklebeds. There are also beds of the nationally scarce dwarf eelgrass *Zostera noltei*.

The statutory authorities with responsibilities in the EMS, identified in the Habitats Regulations as ‘relevant authorities’ and which includes Carmarthenshire County Council, work collectively to develop and implement a management scheme for these sites as a key way of meeting their responsibilities arising from the Habitats Regulations.

The coastline around Carmarthenshire also has some of the most significant sea fisheries of the UK. The whole of the inter-tidal shoreline and inshore waters from Loughor Bridge in the east, to the county boundary west of Pendine, sustains an

economically locally important fishing industry and provides employment for a few hundred local people.

Fin fish landings each year are relatively small, but there are two substantial shellfish fisheries in the Burry Inlet and at the Three Rivers estuary which has produced between 3000 and 10,000 tonnes of cockles annually. Some of the shellfish is processed locally at Burry Port or at Penclawdd (in the City and County of Swansea's area), but the vast majority of the cockles collected from Carmarthenshire beaches are exported to European fish markets and processing plants.

The Carmarthenshire marine and coast is one of the defining landscapes of the county, contributing significantly to its overall character and if of importance for our local economy drawing visitors and inward investment.

The overall vision for this plan is to maintain and enhance these habitats in our coastal environment and the BAP species associated with them, especially within the context of our marine environment being an internationally recognised ecosystem.

Associated species:	Cod	Spiny dogfish
Arctic Skua	Tope shark	Angel shark/monkfish
Common Scoter	Lesser sandeel	Horse mackerel
	Porbeagle shark	Fan Mussel (historical record)
Harbour porpoise	Sea monkfish	Oceanic
Bottlenosed dolphin	Whiting	quahog/Icelandic
Risso`s dolphin	Ling	cyprine
Common dolphin	Plaice	
	Blue shark	
Loggerhead turtle	Undulate ray	
Leatherback turtle	Thornback ray	
	Blond ray	
Basking shark	Mackerel	
Herring	Sole	

Action Plan Objectives

MAR1ME	To maintain extent of these marine habitats
MAR2AC	To achieve favourable conservation status of these marine habitats
MAR3RS	To restore currently degraded marine habitats
MAR4SP	To maintain and expand the range and/or population of species associated with these habitat types
DCM2 MAR	To identify and record priority areas of marine and coastal habitats and associated species
RA4MAR	To raise awareness of marine/coastal species and the key issues pertaining to them

Actions

CODE	TEXT	START / END DATE	CONTACTS (lead in bold)
MAR1ME1	Contribute to the production and implementation of a management scheme for the Carmarthen Bay & Estuaries EMS	2010	CCC
MAR1ME2	Provide input into the CB&E EMS RAG	2010–2015	CCC
DCM2 MAR1	Promote voluntary marine data-gathering initiatives (e.g. MCS's recording schemes for turtles, basking sharks and jellyfish) in Carmarthenshire through PRs, newsletter and website – target coastal tourism sites and caravan parks, etc	2010–2015	CCC
DCM2 MAR2	Promote the <i>Marine Turtles in the UK</i> advisory note through appropriate outlets – target coastal tourism sites and caravan parks, etc	2010–2015	CCC
DCM2 MAR4	Promote reporting of sightings of skate and ray eggs through PR, newsletter and website – target coastal tourism sites and caravan parks, etc	2010–2015	CCC
DCM2 MAR5	Promote reporting of sightings of Harbour porpoise through PR, newsletter and website – target coastal tourism sites and caravan parks, etc	2010–2015	CCC
RA4MAR1	Organise a marine biodiversity day at Burry Port Harbour	2010	CCC
RA4MAR2	Hold at least 1 guided walk/event looking at these habitats every 2 years	2010–2015	CCC, LBAP Partners
RA4MAR3	Promote to schools the Marine Conservation Society's curriculum-linked education materials on their website	2010	CCC
RA4MAR4	Raise awareness of the adverse effect of balloons and other plastics on marine turtle populations.	2010–2015	CCC, WTSWW
RA4MAR5	Arrange a seminar for county tourism and leisure groups to ensure that they understand the value of marine and coastal biodiversity and the potential for adverse impacts through their activities and/or the activities they encourage	2011–2013	CCC, CCW, SACRAG
POL3MAR1	Fully engage in the SMP Review	2010–2015	LBAP Partnership

