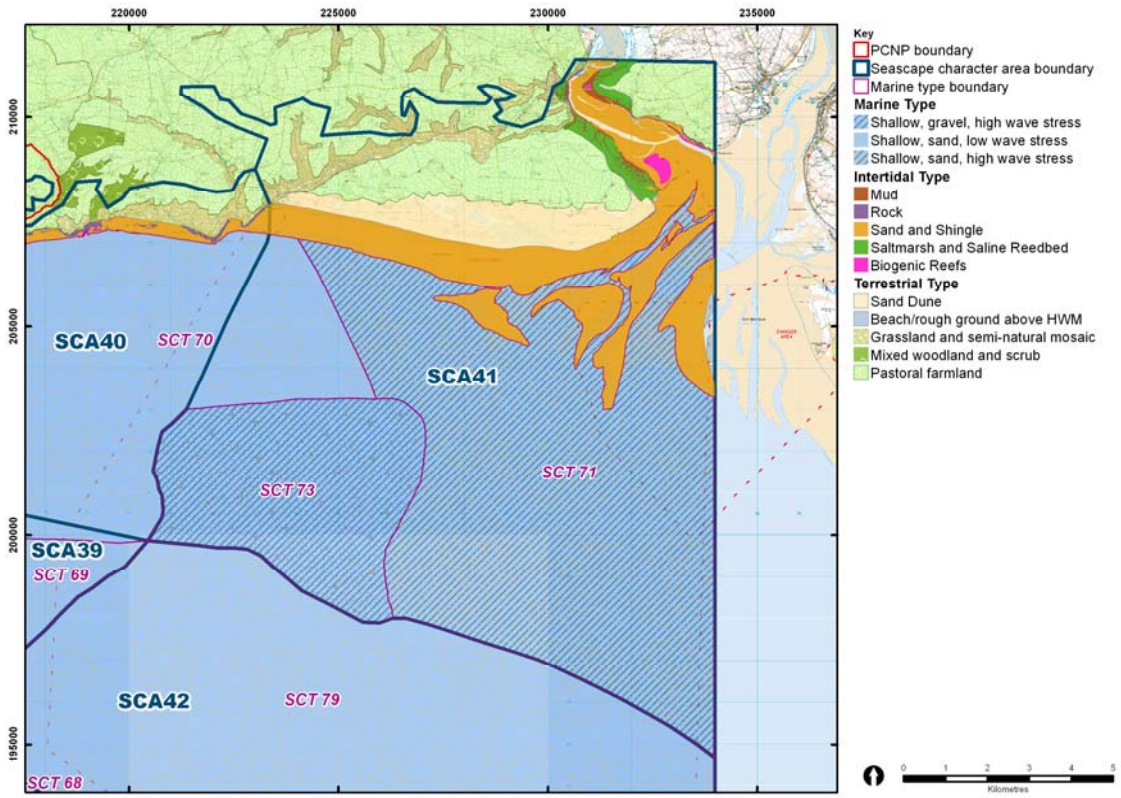


No: 41 Seascape Character Area Name: Carmarthen Bay north- Pendine



SCA 41: Carmarthen Bay north - Pendine Sands



View south east across Carmarthen Bay towards the Gower



View west



View east along Pembrey Sands

Summary Description
<p>The area is located on the eastern fringes of the study area forming the north coast of Carmarthen Bay, flanked by the Taf estuary to the east. The area is defined by the extensive flat beach and shallow waters bordered by the flat topography of the Pendine and Laugharne Burrows and grazing marshes to the north used for MOD purposes. Coastal settlement is limited to Pendine on the western edge which is a small tourist resort with associated caravan parks and slipway. Activities are focussed on the beach with some kayaking around Pendine and small craft inshore. Larger leisure boats generally avoid the shifting sands and the Taf Estuary.</p>
Key Characteristics
<p>A wide, large scale, open south facing very shallow tidal bay bordered by a wide estuary to the east.</p> <p>Highly distinctive long, wide sandy beach of hard sand which has allowed land speed record to have been set here.</p> <p>Beach backed by dunes and grazing marsh and a steep and prominent hill fringe with woodland to the north.</p> <p>The beach, dunes and part of the marsh are owned by MOD with firing range and military exercises extending out into Carmarthen Bay.</p> <p>Tourism and recreation focussed to the east at Pendine. Beach access is limited at times due to MOD restrictions.</p> <p>Wildness and tranquillity increase to the east towards the estuary.</p> <p>Long views out to sea and across to the Gower including Worms Head. Also views across to Caldey Island, Tenby and Saundersfoot to the west.</p>
Physical Influences
<p>The headland in east-west striking Old Red Sandstone (Raglan Mudstone Formation) is up to 180m aod. The coast is fringed by the 11km long straight level strip of Pendine Sands, backed by the dunes of Pendine Burrows, the grazing marsh of East Marsh and the marshy land of West Marsh before the steep hills rise to the north. The Sands extend east to the Taf estuary. At the west end of the Sands a river valley is incised east of Dolwen Point. The intertidal areas are sandy, backed by salt marsh.</p> <p>The shallow (<30m), gently sloping (<1°) sandy sea floor overlies Old Red Sandstone bedrock. The seas are exposed to high wind and wave stress. Tidal streams set east and west, with rates up to 1.5 knots in the east flood stream. The tidal range is 7.7m. Wind and wave action transport and deposit sediment through traction, saltation and suspension.</p> <p>Carmarthen Bay is an SPA and the Pembrey Coast, Taf Estuary and Laugharne and Pendine Burrows 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 such as scoter.</p>
Cultural influences
<p>The small harbour has been used for local sea-going trade, also evident in several shipwrecks within this seascape character area. The remains of a timber wreck have been exposed by sand-dune erosion at top of Pendine beach within the MOD area. There are in addition aircraft crash sites within this seascape character area.</p> <p>The small harbour developed into a resort in the early 20th century. The sands have been used since the 1920s for car and motor bike races as was straighter and smoother than many major roads of the time. <i>Motor Cycle</i> described them as 'The finest natural speedway imaginable'. Pendine Museum of Speed celebrates the motor racing enthusiast Malcolm Campbell, who broke the world speed record three times here, and preserves 'Babs', the motor car raced by John Parry-Thomas on the sands to the world record in 1926, and recovered from the beach. Amy Johnson and her husband unsuccessfully attempted a non-stop flight to New York from here in 1933.</p>

The beach has been owned by the Ministry of Defence since the Second World War; signs warn of the dangers of unexploded munitions and public access is restricted. The sea area forms the major part of the Pendine military practice and firing danger area.

Scheduled monuments include:

- PE141 (enclosure): community: Llanddowror
- CM003 (castle): community: Laugharne
- CM232 (enclosure): community: Laugharne

Beach activities take place on the sands in front of Pendine- the sands to the east, along with associated dunes, are exposed and prone to shifting. However, these sands are popular for walking and wildlife watching but some areas are restricted due to hazardous conditions. There is a slipway at Pendine and two at Laugharne.

Kayaking only extends, in the main, to waters off Pendine due to the shifting conditions of Pendine Sands, and up the River Taf. Windsurfing and rowing also take place up the River Taf. Sea angling from boats and the shore are popular activities. Motor and sail cruising takes place but craft keep further out to be well clear of Pendine Sands. Recreational cruising routes for sailing craft cross the area linking nearby anchorages [Tenby, Llanstephan and Burry Port] and Milford with the north coast of Devon and Cornwall and points east such as Cardiff.

Cockling is a viable activity for local fishermen. There is also beach seining and beach nets, set nets, whelk potting and potential for light otter trawling offshore.

Aesthetic, perceptual and experiential qualities

A large, open relatively simple bay. It is generally smooth in texture. The area feels exposed and windy with such limited shelter. There is some containment by cliffs to the west but this diminishes significantly to the east and out to sea in the very wide bay. The area has low contrasts with muted colours of the grey sea, and sand and sand dunes.

There are long views to the Gower including Worms Head to the south east and Tenby and Caldey Island to the south west. Views are mainly from the beach but also from the coast path.

The eastern reaches of the beach especially around the estuary can feel remote, natural and very tranquil.

Cultural benefits and services

The area contributes significantly towards leisure and recreational services in the form of the beach and marine recreation, to natural heritage in the form of the nature conservation interest of the dunes, estuary and waters of Carmarthen Bay, and to cultural and spiritual services in respect of the historical use of the beach for land speed records and motor related use.

Forces for change								
Summary	Key forces for change							
<p>The natural forces for change are the estuary which is a sediment sink, an extensive dune system which is vulnerable to storm damage and low lying grazing marsh which is vulnerable to flooding.</p> <p>The shoreline management plan recommends managed realignment, to allow the dune system to function naturally.</p> <p>MOD use degrades the aesthetic and physical character of the area, reducing tranquillity.</p> <p>Tourism use including caravan parks can be visually intrusive and reduce tranquillity.</p> <p><i>[Note: the area is outside the National Park but the forces for change on the SCA's qualities are still noted to the right]</i></p>	Special Qualities	Natural processes/ climate change	Visitor pressure	Marine use- commercial and fishing	Offshore energy or minerals	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								
Factors that contribute to sensitivity					Factors that detract from sensitivity			
<p>Simple, wide, open character of the sandy bay and simple backcloth of dunes has limited capacity for visual change.</p> <p>Open estuary with wild coastal character.</p> <p>Views across Carmarthen Bay to Worms Head and to Caldey Island.</p> <p>Steep backcloth behind flat land is visually prominent.</p> <p>Wales Coast Path as a sensitive receptor.</p> <p>Grazing marsh as a rare and distinctive land cover.</p> <p>Nature conservation designations including marine SPA and SSSIs.</p> <p>Cultural connection to land speed record.</p>					<p>Presence of MOD infrastructure and use.</p> <p>Tourism infrastructure including caravan parks and poor quality buildings on seafront around Pendine.</p> <p>Beach focussed activities at Pendine.</p>			