

Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru | National Assembly for Wales
Y Pwyllgor Newid Hinsawdd, Amgylchedd a Materion Gwledig | Climate
Change, Environment and Rural Affairs Committee
Ymchwiliad i reoli ardaloedd morol gwarchoddedig yng Nghymru | Inquiry into
the management of marine protected areas in Wales

MPAW 22

Ymateb gan : Prif Iwyddiannau Grwpiau Awdurdodau Perthnasol / y Swyddog
Safleoedd Morol Ewropeaidd
Evidence from : Welsh Relevant Authorities Groups (RAGs) / European Marine
Sites Officer Key Achievements

Relevant Authorities Groups (RAGs) are present at the following European Marine Sites in Wales: Severn Estuary SAC ([SE](#)), Carmarthen Bay & Estuaries EMS ([CBE](#)), Pembrokeshire Marine SAC ([PM](#)), Cardigan Bay SAC ([CB](#)), and Pen Llŷn a'r Sarnau SAC ([PLAS](#)).

Key projects delivered by RAGs in Wales: (*Italics show where additional outside funds were secured*)

- Porthdinllaen Seagrass Project (*funded by NRW Competitive Grant, SDF, Nature Fund and Ecosystem Resilience Fund*). A partnership project to improve seagrass condition including testing of alternative moorings. [PLAS](#)
- Morfa Gwyllt Lagoon Project (*funded by NRW Competitive Grant*). A project looking to improve the condition of the lagoon addressing issues such as trampling, litter and access by quad bikes. [PLAS](#)
- Milford Haven Native Oyster Regeneration Project – Stage One (current status and practicalities). (*Led by WWSFA Ltd, funded by NRW Competitive Grant £11200, project managed by SAC Officer*). [PM](#)
- Seasearch Native oyster survey work to supplement 2016–17 regeneration project (*Biodiversity Solutions Ltd £2400*). [PM](#)
- Pembrokeshire Sustainable Shellfish Initiative pilot project. *Sustainable Development Fund (WG, PCNPA administered £20,237)*: Working with local pot fishermen to trial gear modifications towards greater sustainability. [PM](#)
- Gwynedd / Anglesey / Conwy Marine Codes (*NRW and SEAFISH funded*). [PLAS](#)
- Criccieth marine litter project (*NRW and SEAFISH funded*) & wider awareness raising. [PLAS](#) / [CB](#)
- Code of Conduct for Estuary Users. Informed by recreational boating in the Severn Estuary consultation report and series of activity reports. [SE](#)

- Development of good practice guidance notes, such as “Sharing the Severn Estuary – its wildlife and you” and “Archaeological Activities and the Severn Estuary European Marine Site”. SE
- Marine Environmental Education programme for schools. CB
- Seashore education pack. CB
- Public events calendar including Dolphin Watch and Seashore Safaris. CB / PLAS
- Awareness raising outputs including published guidance on rock pooling and crabbing, and seal watching. CB
- Guidelines for sustainable intertidal bait and seaweed collection. *Resilient Ecosystems Fund (WG, £26,217)*. The project produced reports detailing a legislative review and review of impacts across Wales. PM
- Provision of visitor buoys to encourage and increase code compliance for the Waterway Sensitive Zone voluntary agreement. *Nature Fund (WG, through partnership working with PLAS)*. PM / PLAS
- Considerable information transfer to NRW to allow production of the N2K LIFE Prioritised Improvement Plans for the SACs and relevant Thematic Action Plans. SE, CBE, PM, CB, PLAS
- Llŷn Marine Ecosystems project in partnership with WFA. (*NRW and SEAFISH funded, project managed by the SAC Officer*). PLAS
- Schools marine awareness road show project. (*Sustainable Development Fund £2,400*). Continued for 2 more years and broadened to KS1+2 funded through the RAG and the *Darwin Initiative*. PM
- Instigation of voluntary Pembrokeshire Marine Code and subsequent development with PCF. PM
- Plans and Projects Inventory held online at Wales Activity Mapping (an organised repository where managers and potential developers can easily access information to help inform Habitats Regulations Assessments). PM
- Bait digging voluntary code of conduct (including provision of signage) at The Gann to reduce impacts on SAC features. PM
- Cardigan Bay recreational boating code of conduct. CB
- Milford Haven Waterway sensitive habitat zonation voluntary code of conduct to protect maerl and seagrass beds. PM
- Otter habitat surveys and management recommendations. CBE, PM
- Project mapping the presence of the invasive non-native Chinese mitten crab. PLAS
- Living Coasts Living Seas (*European Community Interreg funded project £151,000*) developing methods of community awareness raising. PLAS
- “Turning Tide” marine litter project (*KWT Tidy Towns funding ~£10,000*). PLAS
- Development of methods to facilitate volunteer recording of marine and coastal activity data. CBE

Additional key pieces of “routine” work for all RAGs

- Production of management documentation including joint management schemes for all sites where RAGs are located (Severn Estuary 2004 and later reviewed, Carmarthen Bay & Estuaries 2013, Pembrokeshire Marine 2008, Cardigan Bay 2001 through LIFE UK SACs Project and later reviewed, Pen Llyn a'r Sarnau 2001 through LIFE UK SACs Project and later reviewed).
- Annual reporting which demonstrates continual appraisal of management actions and prioritisation of the RAG work programme.
- General awareness raising about the SAC, local marine life, site issues and site management (through the SAC websites, interpretation materials, media, talks, ad hoc enquiries...) leading to an increased appreciation for the site and increased probability that stakeholders will contribute to and accept management options.
- Increased and better communication and improved working relationships with stakeholders leading to greater opportunities for partnership working as well as improving knowledge of the site.
- Input to national level work in order to improve consistency and help inform policy and decision making.
- Occasional EMS Officer assistance to CCW/NRW for SAC monitoring and assistance in marine related work for all other RAG members.
- The simple act of having a RAG partnership and holding regular meetings ensures a more efficient and successful working relationship between RAs. Personal relationships are improved through regular contact and minor concerns can be aired and resolved before they become issues. Examples include informal 'heads-up' about possible plans/projects with resultant mitigating action to reduce future workloads, and also raising opportunities for collaboration as well as reducing potential duplication.

This is a quick brief summary to offer an insight into the activity of RAGs over the last 17 years. It is not exhaustive.

Sue Burton and Alison Hargrave April 2017

Cardigan Bay

Marine Protected Area Officer Update of activities

April 2016– March 2017

Cardigan Bay Marine Protected Area visitor's centre, New Quay

The promotion and delivery of environmental education activities along with the provision of interpretation information relating to local marine eco-systems informs, engages and inspires both local communities and visitor's to the Ceredigion coast.

Total number of visitor to the information centre April 2016 – March 2017: 8789

Events

Public 'Dolphin Watch' events

Held weekly to raise awareness of the special marine wildlife that can be observed by land based watching and to promote the Ceredigion Marine Code of Conduct.

Total number of participants – 328 (number participating each month listed below)

May – 37	June – 46	March 2017 – 24
July – 42	August – 88	
September – 51	October – 35	

'Marine Creature Creations' workshops

Delivered to increase understanding of the issues of marine litter, particularly plastics, leading to behaviour changes to reduce litter at source.

7 Workshops run daily throughout October half term – 70 participants

Seashore Safaris

To raise awareness of the issues of trampling of fragile reef habitats, the seashore code and marine litter.

6 Seashore Safaris run during the summer school holidays – 98 participants

School shore visits

Pupils from Borth, Aberaeron, New Quay, Bro Sion Cwilt, and Aberporth all attended sessions on their local shore in 2016 – 17 covering key marine conservation

messages; marine eco-system interdependence, adaptations, trampling of fragile habitats and marine litter.

Total number of participants– 678

‘Dolphin Watch’ monitoring programme

The ‘Dolphin Watch’ monitoring programme ran throughout the summer at Aberystwyth, New Quay harbour, New Quay Bird’s Rock, Aberporth, and Mwnt. Data from last year’s survey effort is currently being inputted, analysed and a report will be produced .

The MPA Officer has also supported, advised and trained Gwynedd County Council staff and volunteers to assist in the establishment of the ‘Dolphin Watch’ programme on the Gwynedd coast.

Beach Cleans

Beach cleans are run monthly from New Quay, and four times yearly at Tan-y-Bwlch, Aberystwyth.

The MPA Officer has also encouraged and supported the communities in Borth and Aberarth, to establish regular cleans involving local residents, the local school and scouts and guides.

Total number of people who participated in beach cleans April 2016 – March 2017: 328.

Consultations

The MPA Officer has responded to the following WG consultations in 2016 – 17:

SAC – Harbour porpoise

SPA – Red throated diver

New Quay – Quay Fresh

WG Marine Protected Area management review

EIA consultation

Marine and Fisheries Stakeholder Consultation

Interpretation: leaflet creation and distribution and development of appropriate signage

Rock pooling leaflets were distributed from the Cardigan Bay Marine Protected Area visitor's centre. Crabbing leaflets were distributed from the visitor's centre and by the local shop in New Quay selling crabbing gear. Leaflets were also distributed daily to crabbers on New Quay harbour wall by the MPA Officer.

To increase awareness of the needs of pupping seals and to reduce disturbance from access and recreation, leaflets have been distributed to cafes, pubs and caravan parks along the coast of the SAC. Seasonal interpretation boards to raise awareness were designed, produced and erected during the August – November seal pupping season. 12 boards were produced in total. These were located at 7 sites along the SAC coast; New Quay – Traeth y Dolau, Cwm Tydu, Llangrannog, Tresaith, Mwnt, Penbryn and Ceibwr Bay.

The seal pupping awareness campaign was promoted through social media by Ceredigion County Council Press Officer Dana Thomas and NRW Press Officer, .Laura Morris.

Response from Laura Morris (NRW Press Officer):

“You will be pleased to know that we had a really positive response to this on social media with 37 shares and reaching over 3000 people. We also had 26 retweets on Twitter, reaching over 38,000 people”.

Llangrannog, Penbryn, Tresaith, Mwnt, Ceibwr Bay



Cwm Tydu – below. Bottom left – Traeth y Dolau, New Quay. Bottom right – ‘Dolphin Watch’ training.



Cardigan Bay MPA Officer projects – (funded by NRW competitive grant for officer time 3 days a week)

Access and recreation :

Education and awareness raising work with schools adjacent to the SAC (400 + pupils per year)

Awareness raising work with local communities and visitors to the coast (Public Dolphin Watch events and Seashore Safaris – 30 events held per year)

Promotion of the marine code of conduct for commercial and recreational vessels (now also being rolled out in PLaS)

Running of the Cardigan Bay Marine Protected Area Visitor's Centre in New Quay

Running the Dolphin Watch monitoring programme, recruiting and training volunteers, co-ordinating monitoring, data entry, analysis and report production (now being rolled out in Gwynedd, PLaS, CB Officer assisting with provision of training for volunteers, development of monitoring forms, keys, guidance notes)

Production of leaflets and interpretation boards to raise awareness of issues relating to disturbance during the seal pupping season

Production of leaflets/interpretation boards to raise awareness of impacts of trampling to Sabellaria reef structures

Marine Litter project :

Quarterly beach cleans at Tan y Bwlch, monthly beach cleans in New Quay

Supporting community beach cleans in Borth and Aberarth

Running marine litter workshops during the school holidays – making marine creatures from recycled materials

Establishment of sustainable communities project working with Keep Wales Tidy (also link with marine litter project in Gwynedd, PLaS)

Provision for removal of derelict fishing gear from the harbours in New Quay and Aberystwyth