



# Pembrokeshire Marine Special Area of Conservation (SAC) Relevant Authority Group (RAG) Annual Report 2012

## 1. Introduction

The Relevant Authorities for the Pembrokeshire Marine Special Area of Conservation (SAC) launched their agreed management scheme for the site in August 2008. Work since then has focused as much as possible on management scheme implementation. A full revision of the scheme is due in 2014 to allow inclusion of formal site condition reporting, due to occur in 2013. This report summarises the period 01 Jan 2012 to 31 December 2012.



Sea slug, Milford Haven Waterway  
*SeaSearch (David Kipling)*

The year 2012 was a year of uncertainty, especially for those involved in marine nature conservation. Welsh Government's Marine Conservation Zone Project (more detail below) overshadowed all marine conservation discussions, diverting much attention away from work in progress. This project also had the effect of stalling any Welsh Government response or onward discussion regarding CCW's Marine Protected Area Review, as well as moving the timetable for review and possible extension of the Special Protection Area network.

The development of the new body *Natural Resources Wales* revealed unanswered questions about how Wales's marine environment would be managed in the future; details on the consideration of the marine environment within Living Wales documentation were sparse.

Uncertain times lead unsurprisingly to financial

uncertainty, although Relevant Authority Group (RAG) members were able to maintain a level of financial commitment that will see the Group through to 2014.

So, much like 2011, lack of sufficient staff time and financial limitations have impacted the work of the RAG, but plenty of action has still resulted regardless. It is the achievements of the RAG as a partnership that really stand out at times when some individual organisations progress has had to be reduced. Pooling resources and joining forces to gradually make a positive contribution to marine biodiversity conservation in Pembrokeshire just makes sense.

## **Noteworthy Legislation and Policy**

### The Marine Conservation Zone Project Wales

This project focuses on identifying marine conservation zones (MCZs) in Welsh waters. Welsh Government undertook a consultation and engagement exercise between April and July 2012. This exercise set out the science behind 10 (including 2 within the Pembrokeshire Marine SAC – Skomer and Dale) potential highly protected site options and focused on gathering more information and views from people:

- about how they use and enjoy the marine environment;
- how they might be affected by a highly protected designation; and
- how any effects could be minimized.

It was intended that the information collected during this consultation would be used to inform and refine the next iteration of sites for a second consultation on potential hpMCZs in January 2013. However, the response to the consultation was huge – just under 7000 responses, the biggest ever for a Welsh Government consultation. A summary covering all consultation responses was promised, but had yet to appear by the end of 2012. Local communities and industry overwhelmingly felt threatened by the proposed hpMCZs and there was a general lack of understanding as to the need and potential benefits of adding hpMCZs to the

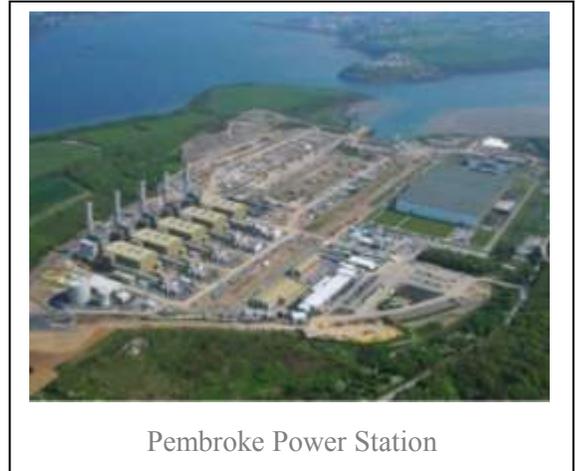
current network of MPAs in Wales. On a positive note, it got the people of Wales talking about marine conservation albeit not always agreeably.

In November 2012, John Griffiths, Minister for Environment and Sustainable Development, released a statement announcing a period of additional work to reflect on and fully explore all the information received, to inform how to move ahead with MCZs in Wales. A Task and Finish Team (with members from the Welsh Government and government agencies) was created to take this work forward, and to report by the end of April 2013 to the new Minister for Natural Resources and Food, Alun Davies. A Stakeholder Focus Group was created to work alongside the Task and Finish Team, chaired by Peter Davies, Wales' Commissioner for Sustainable Futures.

#### The Natural Environment Framework 'A Living Wales'

The Natural Environment Framework (NEF) was developed in 2010 and places a stronger focus on sustainable land and marine management in Wales, adopting an ecosystems approach.

In January 2012 Welsh Government launched a Green paper '*Sustaining a Living Wales*' which sought views on a fresh approach to the management and regulation of the environment in Wales. A parallel consultation '*Natural Resources Wales - Proposed arrangements for establishing and directing a new body for the management of Wales' natural resources*' sought views on the creation of the new single body for Wales. Both consultations ran until May 2012.



Pembroke Power Station

The Environment Minister gave an oral statement to the National Assembly on 23 October 2012 on the outcomes of the 'Sustaining a Living Wales' consultation. In it he said "Ecosystems provide us with the natural resources upon which we all rely. Our long-term aspiration is for natural resource management at each level to demonstrate our focus on sustainable development. By enhancing and managing our natural environment more holistically and by putting in place the structures, tools and evidence to support better decisions, we will not only secure our environmental wellbeing but maximise the economic and social benefits for the long term. That is what we mean by the ecosystem approach." He also stated that "The priority for the Welsh Government continues to be the creation of sustainable jobs and growth in these tough times, and our environmental wellbeing is clearly crucial to this aim." The oral statement concluded with "We can continue to lead the way in terms of integrating the ecosystem approach, and most importantly, putting the needs of future generations at the heart of our decision making, delivering truly sustainable development."

A Written Statement on the Living Wales Programme was released on 25<sup>th</sup> October 2012 that stated that work was well underway to design the new organisation which was to be called 'Natural Resources Wales / Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru', and come into being on 1 April 2013.

By the end of 2012 the establishment of the new environment body in Wales was proceeding with Professor Peter Matthews as Chair of the new organisation, and Emyr Roberts as Chief Executive. The ten non-executive directors include Morgan Parry, Professor Lynda Warren, and Pembrokeshire-based Andy Middleton.

#### UK MCZ Progress

Several significant milestones towards the establishment of a coherent network of marine protected areas (MPAs) in UK waters were reached in 2012:

i) In July, Natural England and the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) submitted formal advice on Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs) to Defra. The headline message was that JNCC and Natural England broadly supported the MCZ recommendations made by the four regional projects, subject to some amendments;

- ii) In November, Scottish Nature Heritage (SNH) and JNCC submitted formal advice to Marine Scotland on the identification of nature conservation MPAs in Scottish waters. The advice contained 32 MPA proposals; with five MPA search locations yet to have been fully assessed;
- iii) A Defra consultation in December 2012 (to end 31 March 2013) included proposals that sites should be designated in “tranches” and that 31 sites (of the 127 initially put forward including 65 reference sites), are designated in the first tranche. These would not include reference areas (highly protected MCZs), which Defra will consider further before making a final decision about them.
- iv) 11 new marine Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) were submitted to the European Commission in 2012, including 8 sites identified by JNCC in offshore waters. The submission also included Skerries and Causeway in Northern Ireland, which is the first SAC in UK waters to be designated for harbour porpoise.

A new ‘UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework’, endorsed by the four environment ministers in the UK, was published by JNCC and Defra on behalf of the Four Countries Biodiversity Group on 17 July 2012. The biodiversity framework has been developed in response to two major drivers: the publication of the Convention on Biological Diversity’s (CBD’s) *Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020* and its 5 strategic goals and 20 ‘Aichi targets’, following the CBD meeting held in Nagoya, Japan, in October 2010; and the publication of the new EU Biodiversity Strategy (EUBS) in May 2011.

The framework describes the UK-level co-ordination and action that is needed to build on the work undertaken in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and ensure that the UK can meet its international commitments. Its development reflects a revised direction for nature conservation, towards an approach which aims to consider the management of the environment as a whole, and to acknowledge and take into account the value of nature in decision-making. It sets out the common purpose and shared priorities of the UK and the four countries, and, as such, is a hugely important document, which is to be owned, governed, and implemented by the four countries.

#### The EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive

A joint consultation on implementing the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) “Marine Strategy Framework Directive Consultation: UK Initial Assessment and proposals for Good Environmental Status” was held by DEFRA and the devolved administrations between March and June 2012. Views were sought on:

- the first stages of implementation;
- a draft assessment of the state of the UK’s seas;
- proposals for UK characteristics of GES;
- proposals for UK targets and indicators of GES; and
- an impact assessment setting out potential implications of the proposed GES targets and indicators.

The UK Marine Strategy Part 1: UK Initial Assessment and Good Environmental Status was published in December 2012 and is a major step in the implementation of this important Directive. The MSFD was developed in response to concerns that although existing legislation protected the sea from some specific impacts, it was sectoral and fragmented. The MSFD outlines a transparent, legislative framework for an ecosystem-based approach to the management of human activities which supports the sustainable use of marine goods and services. The MSFD is complementary to, and provides the overarching framework for, a number of other key Directives and legislation at the European and UK level (e.g. the EC Habitats Directive, EU Water Framework Directive, Common Fisheries Policy and the UK Marine & Coastal Access Act).

The overarching goal of the Directive is to achieve ‘Good Environmental Status’ (GES) by 2020 across Europe’s marine environment. In order to achieve GES in a coherent and strategic manner, the MSFD establishes 4 European Marine Regions. The North East Atlantic Marine Region is divided into 4 sub-regions, with UK waters lying in 2 of these (the Greater North Sea and the Celtic Seas). Each Member State’s marine strategy is developed in coordination with other countries within the same marine region or sub-region. This coordination is to be achieved through the Regional Seas Conventions, which for the UK is the OSPAR Convention. The MSFD does not state a specific programme of measures that Member States should adopt to achieve GES, except for the establishment of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs).

## 2. SAC Management Scheme Action Progress (Regulation 36 work)

Table 1 presents some of the main achievements from each relevant authority, and the relevant authorities collectively (the RAG), for 2012. It should be noted that Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water are not included in this table as their SAC management actions, which are relevant to water quality and water abstraction, are covered within their day-to-day regulated operations.

**Table 1: Main Relevant Authority Group Achievements 2012**

PMSAC Management Action		Authority	Action(s) achieved
<b>Ports, harbours &amp; shipping</b>			
<b>PHS 6.0</b>	<i>Develop, implement and maintain under review an integrated dredging strategy to minimise requirement for and effect of dredging and identify most appropriate best practice and also address dredge spoil disposal.</i>	<b>MHPA</b>	Dredge strategy implementation. 2012 was year 1 of the 5-year maintenance dredging strategy. A maintenance dredging campaign was conducted during late Summer, in line with the 5-year strategy and 5-year disposal licence conditions. Pre and post-dredging bathymetric surveys were completed in order that estimates of sediment deposition rates can be further refined as a predictive tool to anticipate future maintenance dredging requirements throughout the port.
<b>Living resources (including fisheries)</b>			
<b>LR 10+13</b>	<i>Develop and implement specific management measures to protect habitats and species of SAC features sensitive to commercial bait collection</i>	<b>CCW</b>	Site meeting with Sergeant Matthew Howells (CCW Police Liaison Officer) to work towards the resolution of bait digging and related fisheries management issues in the intertidal zone at The Gann.
		<b>PCNPA</b>	Continued to liaise with CCW (lead partner) and other partners regarding the most appropriate way forward.
<b>Water quality, pollution &amp; waste disposal</b>			
<b>WQW 2.2 + 3.2</b>	<i>Ensure no significant pollution risk to SAC from agricultural and urban run-off.</i>	<b>EAW</b>	We have completed our investigations into waterbodies feeding into the Marine SAC. This has involved a mixture of desk top studies, water quality and fish population monitoring and river walks. We now have a database of reasons for failure for those stretches not meeting good ecological status which, in turn, has informed a range of practical measures. Pembrokeshire environment management team are now undertaking a series of work programmes with targets set for the next two, three and five years.
		<b>EAW</b>	We have carried out catchment initiative work in the Cleddau catchment at Spittal and Pelcomb. In addition we are working with Afonydd Cymru on a bid with DCWW to reduce nutrient input into Llys y fran reservoir.

<b>PMSAC Management Action</b>		<b>Authority</b>	<b>Action(s) achieved</b>
<b>WQW 7+8</b>	<i>Manage pollution response to safeguard SAC features</i>	<b>EAW</b>	EAW have continued to work with the Local Resilience Forum to develop contingency plans. This has involved taking part in a multi-agency review of the SEM logistics incident. We are currently reviewing the COMAH plans. We have contributed to a MCA consultation on the National Contingency Plan, Impact assessment (PREMIAM) and Ports of Refuge.
		<b>PCNPA</b>	PCNPA continued to contribute to marine pollution contingency planning e.g. revision/up-dating of the WWEG oil spill contingency plan; responding to consultations on other contingency plans e.g. the MHPA oil pollution contingency plan as and when appropriate.
<b>WQW 9</b>	<i>Ensure prompt and timely response to any operational or small accidental spills.</i>	<b>EAW</b>	EAW led the response to the loss of 100 metres cubed of gas oil from SEM logistics in June 2012. The oil contaminated ground water beneath the site but did not reach the marine habitat. This was the most significant land based pollution in the year.
<b>WQW 11+12</b>	<i>Develop and introduce new management measures, as required, to safeguard the SAC features from any unfavourable effects of refuse and litter. Minimise potential unfavourable effects of refuse and litter on SAC features.</i>	<b>MHPA</b>	At the end of 2012, agreement to participate in the Fishing for Litter programme for a trial 6 month period in 2013 in order to allow Belgian trawlers to land litter under the scheme. This is one illustration of how MHPA have increased their liaison with the fishing industry.
<b>WQW 12.3</b>	<i>Continue to sensitively and manually clean amenity beaches of litter during the tourist season.</i>	<b>PCC</b>	Council beach cleaning continues to be all hand gathered – no mechanical – and only non organic litter.
<b>Recreation</b>			
<b>Rec 8+12</b>	<i>Continue to support the work of the Marine Code and Outdoor Charter groups</i>	<b>PCNPA</b>	PCNPA continued to provide practical and financial support for the Marine Code and Outdoor Charter groups. Examples of specific projects included support for the NARC leaflet on lost lines and the development of a canoeing code of practice.
<b>Rec 14.1.1</b>	<i>Exclude all anchoring and new moorings in areas of <i>Zostera spp.</i> (seagrass) and <i>Maerl spp.</i> (chalky seaweed) beds within the Haven.</i>	<b>MHPA</b>	A revised proposal by MHPA for a voluntary approach to mooring & anchoring controls in the Waterway to protect maerl & seagrass beds was discussed with The Milford Harbour Users Association. The SAC Officer is tasked with facilitating a formal agreement and developing an awareness raising programme.
<b>Miscellaneous activity</b>			
<b>Mis 1.2</b>	<i>Undertake Appropriate Assessments where there may be a 'likely significant effect' on SAC features</i>	<b>CCW</b>	The level of casework and required responses regarding "plans and projects" has, as always, dominated work. In addition, CCW have been involved in extensive ongoing Pembroke Power Station monitoring discussions.

PMSAC Management Action		Authority	Action(s) achieved
		PCC	Plans & Projects routinely screened for "likely significant effect" on the SAC features; standard agreed proforma utilised.
<i>Mis 2.0</i>	<i>Ensure that any maintenance procedures (of civil engineered structures) take into account and minimise any unfavourable effects on SAC features</i>	PCC	PCC Process of consultation on Coastal Defence Infrastructure and Shoreline Management Plans SMP2 as part of a national review to update shoreline management.
<i>Mis 2.1</i>	<i>Use environmentally sensitive alternatives to harmful chemical agents when cleaning shoreline surfaces (steps, slipways etc.)...</i>	PCC	Slipways and relevant surfaces are now cleaned using pressure hose and Mould Remover supplied by the Natural Solution Cleaning Company. The Health and Safety Data Sheet states it is not classed as hazardous in accordance with the Chemical Regs 1994.
<b>Information and data gathering</b>			
<i>ID (various)</i>	<i>To secure good quality relevant data (in particular on PORTS, HARBOURS &amp; SHIPPING and POLLUTION) sufficient to adequately inform SAC management.</i>	MHPA	MHWESG work, chaired by MHPA. 2012 Bioaccumulation surveillance sampling, analysis and reporting was undertaken. Sediment investigations included a significant sediment profile imaging, (SPI) project (due to report first quarter 2013), Sediment hydrocarbon forensics, final ERT/Fugro Data Report and DIL Context Setting Report also due early 2013.
		CCW	MHWESG sediment profiling & small inlet sediment core work.
<i>ID 9 (also MRR 3-5)</i>	<i>Maintain and continue to expand the knowledge base of effects of recreational activities on the SAC features</i>	RAG	Seagrass research discussions with SEACAMS and others to better inform seagrass management within the SAC. Partner for a SEACAMS seagrass friendly moorings project, and on the steering group for seagrass research in North Wales.
<i>ID 13 + 14</i>	<i>Secure good quality relevant data on pollution sufficient to adequately inform SAC management.</i>	EAW	The 2 year study to look into the causes of algal mat growth within the Haven has come to an end. EAW will shortly be reporting on the status of the Haven in terms of polluted or sensitive waters.
<b>Resources</b>			
<i>Res 2</i>	<i>Secure the resources necessary to implement the SAC management scheme</i>	RAG	Even through times of extreme financial insecurity in the public sector, funding has been secured to maintain the SAC officer post and contribute to the RAG's ongoing work programme.
<b>Awareness Raising</b>			
<i>AR (various)</i>	<i>Raise awareness of pollution issues within the Waterway and their relevance to SAC management.</i>	MHPA	A 20th Anniversary Event for the MHWESG, generally raising awareness of the Group and showcasing its work, was successfully held in October 2012 at the Bridge Innovation Centre.
<i>AR 16</i>	<i>Raise level of awareness of general stakeholders and the public to enable understanding of the SAC and its management scheme</i>	PCNPA	PCNPA continued to develop its advocacy role e.g. by responding to consultations on HPMZs and by contributing to the Welsh Assembly's marine policy enquiry.

PMSAC Management Action		Authority	Action(s) achieved
		<b>RAG</b>	Provision of SAC talks on request, partner provider for 3 public events including Pembrokeshire Fish Week and the Bioblitz weekend at Stackpole, responding to general information requests, maintaining SAC website, and a specific targeted SAC awareness raising boat trip with local MPs/AMs.
		<b>RAG</b>	Successful application to PCNPA's SDF Fund to finance a marine awareness schools road show targeting Foundation Phase children in 25 Pembrokeshire schools for the 2012-13 academic year.
<b>AR 17.1</b>	<i>Ensure all relevant departments within relevant authorities and competent authorities are aware of and act upon their SAC management responsibilities.</i>	<b>MHPA</b>	Continued appropriate representation on the RAG, with Harbourmaster involvement as well as the Corporate Affairs Director taking on the role of Acting Chair.
<b>Monitoring, review and reporting</b>			
<b>MRR 2</b>	<i>Effective/comprehensive knowledge of the condition of the SAC features.</i>	<b>CCW</b>	Sublittoral and littoral monitoring programme for 2012 completed. Analysis of infaunal data for Carew Mill pond and West field Pill conducted. Saltmarsh (Atlantic Salt meadow) monitoring was undertaken this year, in partnership with EA's WFD monitoring team.
<b>Aiding MRR 2</b>		<b>CCW</b>	CCW provided Welsh SAC feature condition assessments to JNCC for incorporation into the UK's report to Europe in 2013. This is the second formal assessment (the first took place in 2006) and draws from CCW's extensive habitats and species monitoring and surveillance work.
		<b>RAG</b>	Developed and let an otter research project to follow up on work started in 2002 and to try to establish whether otter populations on the coast are transient or a separate breeding population independent of the inland river system.
<b>MRR 10+11+5</b>	<i>Ensure SAC is taken fully into account in the preparation and review of all statutory management policies, plans and initiative; promote more holistic integrated approach where appropriate</i>	<b>RAG</b>	Input into national policy including Welsh Government's Marine Conservation Zones project. Continued liaison at a national level through working with the Welsh Group of European Marine Sites (GEMS) and Wales Environment Link.
<b>MRR 11(also AR17+18)</b>	<i>Promote a more holistic and integrated management approach where appropriate</i>	<b>CCW</b>	CCW/EA work on integrating Outcome 21, Water Framework Directive and SAC management. First Milk case. Workshop held to identify priority work areas
		<b>EAW</b>	An holistic approach to management was undertaken through an ecosystems approach pilot project with CCW and First Milk.

### **3. Routine Assessments (Regulation 61 work)**

Competent authorities (all ‘relevant’ authorities are also ‘competent’ authorities, but not all ‘competent’ authorities are ‘relevant’ authorities) routinely deal with what are termed “plans and projects” (something that requires some sort of specific statutory consent, authorisation, licence or permission). When such “plans and projects” occur within or have the potential to affect the SAC, they need to undergo a Habitats Regulation Assessment. This is a formal step-wise process that should ensure that any effects to the SAC are considered, and that plans and projects only get the go ahead if they will not have an adverse effect on site integrity, and will not result in deterioration of SAC habitats or significant disturbance of SAC species. Under certain specified conditions, plans and projects with adverse effects on site integrity can go ahead provided that those effects are compensated through other measures.

Plans and projects have perhaps the biggest collective impact on the SAC’s features. It is for this reason that the RAG, within the partnership, routinely exchanges information on current plans and projects, and seeks ways to locally improve the consenting process and ultimately to minimise any effects on the SAC. Plans and projects are not addressed in detail within the site management scheme because they are dealt with individually by RAG members through Habitats Regulation Assessments. The response to plans and projects is necessarily reactive, whereas conversely the SAC management scheme is proactive, looking at what improvements need to be made to current management, and identifying the information needed to better inform future management.

Dealing with plans and projects, such as large developments with multiple consents associated with them, can be time-consuming both for the consenting authority and for the nature conservation advisors, the Countryside Council for Wales. The big ‘projects’ that dominated in 2012 included the Pembroke Power Station (consenting process had been completed but much work was needed on monitoring), and pre-application talks concerning a proposed new combined heat and power station at South Hook.

Intentions to populate the RAG’s GIS-based Plans and Projects Inventory in 2012 were not successful mainly due to the staff time needed. A student placement was set up to help remedy the situation, but the student had to cancel at the last minute. At the SAC Officer’s encouragement, Pembrokeshire Coastal Forum (PCF) had included work on the inventory within their CCW grant application as part of their Wales Activity Mapping work; this was subsequently successful. Four weeks dedicated work is due to take place on the inventory by PCF in 2013 which will hopefully fill the system and make it fully functional. Data will be vetted by the RAG before being uploaded to the inventory (which remains password protected).

To access the Plans and Projects Inventory, users are directed to <http://www.pembrokeshiremarinesac.org.uk/english/manage/plans.htm>. The Inventory is hosted by the Wales Activity Mapping (WAM) website managed by the Pembrokeshire Coastal Forum. The quickest way to get to grips with the project is to watch the demo video at <http://www.walesactivitymapping.org.uk/help-videos/>. (Note that the inventory has yet to be populated, and for this reason the individual layers are not currently ‘live’).

#### 4. Site Feature Condition

Formal assessments of the condition of the SAC features are carried out in Wales by CCW and then fed up to the UK's Joint Nature Conservation Committee for incorporation into a UK report which is then submitted to Europe (European reporting on the overall state of Natura 2000 features occurs at a member state level).

CCW's 2006 assessment, being the first since site designation, was based on just one round of feature monitoring within the Pembrokeshire Marine SAC. The second formal assessment took place in late 2012 (to inform reporting to Europe in 2013). Having benefitted from, in some cases, annual monitoring, it is anticipated that this second formal assessment will be much better informed than the first. Early informal interim information for the Pembrokeshire Marine SAC from CCW, pre the formal assessment in late 2012, was reported in the RAG's annual report for 2011. The table below replicates this as at the time of writing formal site-specific feature condition assessment information was not yet available.

It should be noted that 'condition' relates to how the feature is now, its current condition, whereas 'status' (favourable conservation status) incorporates not just current condition, but also its future prospects into the foreseeable future.

**Table 2: Informal interim summary of feature assessment by CCW (early 2012)**

Feature name (informal)	Condition assessment	Status	Comments	Adverse Activity [unprioritised - some have (or are likely to have) a more adverse impact than others].
Allis shad	Not assessed	Not assessed	No data	
Atlantic salt meadows	Unfavourable: Declining	Unfavourable	Medium confidence based on data available.	Loss of habitat, pollution.
Estuaries	Unfavourable: Declining	Unfavourable	High confidence	Loss of habitat, pollution, disrupted physical processes and biological quality
Grey seal	Favourable: Maintained	Unfavourable	Medium confidence based on localised limited data available.	Prey depletion, disturbance concerns. Status unfavourable due to Irish Sea fish stocks.
Intertidal mudflats and sandflats	Unfavourable: Declining	Unfavourable	High confidence that the sediment particle size analysis, topography of flats and surface relief are unfavourable. Varying confidence that the species populations, sediment contaminants, spatial range of species and distribution of biotopes are unfavourable. The future management is unfavourable.	Coastal defence, cockle fishery.
Lagoons	Favourable: Maintained	Favourable	Medium confidence based on partial data available.	Nothing specifically identified.

Feature name (informal)	Condition assessment	Status	Comments	Adverse Activity [unprioritised - some have (or are likely to have) a more adverse impact than others].
Otter	<b>Favourable: Maintained</b>	<b>Favourable</b>	Low confidence due to lack of time series data, and therefore ability to establish trends in population structure. Assessment determined on baseline data which indicates widespread coastal otter activity.	Disturbance especially via recreational activity, possible interaction with inshore fisheries potting/netting, habitat modification.
Reefs	<b>Unfavourable: No-change</b>	<b>Unfavourable: declining</b>	Medium confidence in condition and high confidence in status	Fisheries/management security / potential developments including oil/gas industry, power generation and renewable energy
River lamprey	<b>Unfavourable: No-change</b>	<b>Unfavourable</b>	Results based on upstream monitoring of Afonydd Cleddau SAC	Possibly due to water resources issues
Sea caves	<b>Favourable: Maintained</b>	<b>Favourable</b>	Low confidence / lack of data	Very little known to be adverse/possible recreation and tourism pressures
Sea lamprey	<b>Unfavourable: Decline</b>	<b>Unfavourable</b>	Results based on upstream monitoring of Afonydd Cleddau SAC	Possibly due to water resources issues
Shallow inlets and bays	<b>Unfavourable: Declining</b>	<b>Unfavourable</b>	High confidence	Habitat loss/pollution/disrupted physical processes and biological quality
Shore Dock	<b>Favourable: Maintained</b>	<b>Favourable</b>	Population size stable and reproductive.	Nothing specifically identified.
Subtidal sandbanks	<b>Unfavourable: No-change</b>	<b>Unfavourable</b>	Medium confidence	Fisheries/management security
Twaite shad	<b>Not assessed</b>	<b>Not assessed</b>	Medium confidence	Lack of secure fisheries management

## 5. RAG priorities

Any review of work done is not complete without some forward planning. The RAG is continuously evaluating SAC issues, and priorities may change. Priorities are also set in recognition of feature condition assessments. Current priorities for each relevant authority and also joint RAG priorities for 2013 are summarised in Table 3. It should be noted that Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water are not included in this table as their SAC management actions, which are relevant to water quality and water abstraction, are covered within their day-to-day regulated operations.

**Table 3: Relevant Authority Group Priorities for 2013**

Authority	Action	Action plan reference	Action ref. also a priority for:
Countryside Council for Wales (CCW) – Natural Resources Wales (NRW) from April 2013	N2K reporting year - JNCC will be reporting to Europe in 2013. Ensure site specific feature condition and status information is passed to all relevant authorities in order to help inform RAG work and future management.	MRR 12.1	-
	Seek to ensure that the RAG partnership continues to have strong local staff representation and financial support following the creation of the new single body 'Living Resources Wales'.	Res 2 + 4	EAW, <b>RAG</b>
	Continue to work towards the resolution of bait digging and related fisheries management issues in the intertidal zone at The Gann in partnership with the local community and PCNPA.	LR 10+13	PCNPA, PCC
	Intertidal and sublittoral monitoring work.	MRR 2	EAW
	Finalise agreement with recreational users on no mooring/ anchoring zones to protect maerl & seagrass, and pursue fisheries support.	Rec 14.1.1	POMH
Environment Agency Wales (EAW) – Natural Resources Wales (NRW) from April 2013	Seek to ensure that the RAG partnership continues to have strong local staff representation and financial support following the creation of the new single body 'Living Resources Wales'.	Res 2 + 4	CCW, <b>RAG</b>
	Follow-up work to bring Water Framework stretches feeding into the Marine SAC up to good ecological status (using recently completed database of reasons for failure to prioritise actions).	WQW 2 + 3	-
	Bathing water improvements.	WQW 1 + 16	-
	EAW will continue ongoing initiatives on embedding work on Directive compliance with RAG partners, particularly where pilots and any DCWW bids are successful.	MRR 2	CCW
	Continue to further encourage the development of recovery plans to deal with mitigation and clean up after incidents.	WQW 7 + 8	PCC, PCNPA, <b>RAG</b>
	Aim to complete the recommendations made in MHWESG commissioned report (Little, 2009).	ID 2.1.8	-

Authority	Action	Action plan reference	Action ref. also a priority for:
Port of Milford Haven (POMH) – formally known as Milford Haven Port Authority (MHPA)	Continue to implement the five-year Maintenance Dredging Strategy for its second year in 2013.	PHS 6.0	-
	Provide support in reaching agreement with MHW Recreational Users, and Welsh Fisheries on no mooring/ anchoring zones to protect maerl & seagrass. (SAC Officer and CCW to lead)	Rec 14.1.1	CCW
	Monitor and encourage the forward MHWESG work programme, and provide feedback on where work can provide added value to the SAC management scheme (sediment forensics and SPI reporting).	ID various	EAW
	Maintaining close liaison with developing Welsh Regulatory mechanisms with relevance to SAC. i.e. Welsh Marine Planning, Welsh Marine Conservation Zones, Emergence of Single Body (NRW), WFD Second Cycle planning etc.	AR 1, MRR 10	PCNPA
Pembrokeshire County Council (PCC)	Ensure continued commitment to Chairing the RAG, as well as appropriate specialist representation on the group.	AR 17 + 18	RAG
	Build greater awareness of SAC issues throughout the Council, making better use of SAC Officer where possible.	AR 17 + 18	RAG
	Formalise shoreline / pollution response plans and involvement, and provide EROCIPS type data for input to an appropriate database, following up ARCOPOL work.	WQW 7 + 8	EAW, PCNPA, RAG
	Bait digging – partnership working to halt damage.	LR 10+13	CCW, PCNPA
	Relevant data (EIA/AA etc.) from plans & projects to be provided for inclusion in the RAG Plans and Projects Inventory.	ID 6.10.22 (also Mis 1.3)	RAG
Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority (PCNPA)	Continue to contribute to the resolution of bait digging and ancillary management issues in the intertidal zone with partners and the local communities.	LR 10+13	CCW, PCC
	Continue to provide support for the work of the Marine Code and Outdoor Charter groups	Rec 8 + 12 (+others)	-
	Continue to develop/pursue advocacy role for the SAC and the site's conservation objectives e.g. through responding/contributing to policy consultations and in the general promotion of the National Park	AR 16, MRR 10	POMH, RAG
	Continue to advocate for and to contribute to the development, review and exercising of all marine pollution contingency plans that are relevant to the SAC.	WQW 7 + 8	EAW, PCC, PCNPA, RAG

Authority	Action	Action plan reference	Action ref. also a priority for:
Relevant Authorities Group (RAG)	Continue to secure resources to continue the work of the RAG (funding the SAC officer and committing appropriate staff time).	Res 2	CCW, EAW
	Support of existing members during transition to Natural Resources Wales, and encouraging ongoing active engagement in the RAG.	Res 2 + 4.2	CCW, EAW
	Complete historical data input into the RAG plans and projects inventory, and ensure systems are in place to capture current data in order to keep the inventory up to date. Only an accurate and in date system will properly aid both competent authorities and developers with Habitats Regulations Assessments. Share widely.	ID 6.10.22 (+ Mis 1.3)	PCC
	Continue to raise general awareness of the SAC and its needs, particularly through use of the SAC website.	AR 16	PCNPA
	Complete marine awareness schools road show, making full use of associated awareness opportunities, and seek additional funding to target further schools in the next academic year.	AR 16	PCNPA
	Encourage more active WG involvement in SAC management, building on liaison to date.	AR 17 + 18	PCC
	Manage the SAC otter research project, making use of a network of volunteers to help collect data.	aiding MRR 2	CCW, EAW
	Pursue research opportunities (including using SEACAMS) to help fulfil information requirements of the SAC.	ID various, MRR 3-5	EAW, POMH, CCW
	Encourage progress with marine contingency plans in order to safeguard the SAC, in particular with respect to local shoreline response.	WQW 7 + 8	EAW, PCC, PCNPA
	Continue to develop, maintain & share GIS datasets relevant to SAC management (e.g. Wales Activity Mapping online GIS system).	ID 6.10.22 (also MR 3)	-
	Continue ongoing review of compliance with and effectiveness of management actions, particularly with the management scheme review due in 2014.	MRR 6+7	-

Sue Burton, Pembrokeshire Marine SAC Officer, Spring 2013

For more information on the SAC including management documentation, see [www.PembrokeshireMarineSAC.org.uk](http://www.PembrokeshireMarineSAC.org.uk)