

# Carmarthen Bay and Estuaries candidate Special Area of Conservation

## Public Meetings 2001 Report

This report is a record of the public meetings held in the St. Clears Leisure Centre, St. Clears on 17 October 2001 and the Thomas Arms, Llanelli on 24 October 2001.

Both meetings were chaired by the independent facilitator Steve Shepstone of PSA training.

### INTRODUCTION TO THE RELEVANT AUTHORITIES GROUP (RAG)

Richard Beale from the City and County of Swansea and Chairman of the RAG explained the terms “relevant authority” and “competent authority” before introducing the representatives from the relevant authorities, and describing the responsibilities that the three local authorities in the RAG have with regard to the SAC:

The terms “relevant authority” and “competent authority” are defined in Regulations 5 and 6 of the Conservation (Natural Habitats &c.) Regulations 1994, known as the Habitats Regulations.

*A competent authority* is any statutory body or public office (including government departments and ministers) exercising legislative powers - whether on land or at sea.

*Relevant authorities* are competent authorities with local powers or functions which have, or could have, an impact on the marine area within or adjacent to a European marine site. Relevant authorities also have powers to establish a management scheme for a European marine site.

### Introductions to Relevant Authority Representatives

**City and County of Swansea** represented by Richard Beale

**Carmarthenshire County Council** represented by David Poulter

**Pembrokeshire County Council** represented by Trevor Theobald

Local authority responsibilities with regard to the SAC include:

- As planning authorities under the Town and Country Planning Acts :
  - Preparation of the Development Plan (planning policies)
  - Decisions on planning applications and enforcement controlling development and land as far out as Mean Low Water. Little development within the cSAC.

Development outside the SAC could affect it - consultation on planning applications ensures that appropriate organisations and individuals are consulted.

- Nature conservation – preparation of local biodiversity action plan management of Pembrey Saltings LNR.
- Preparation of an AONB management plan (Swansea only).
- Preparation of shoreline management plans- Coastal protection work including protection against erosion, but not against flooding.
- As highway authorities - not just roads but rights of way, cycleways and support for public transport.
- Recreation Management – including water safety and recreation management at Council owned beaches, managing country parks, e.g. Pembrey CC, and promoting footpath use.
- Emergency planning - counter pollution e.g. dealing with oil spills
- Water pollution monitoring
- Air pollution monitoring
- Environmental health - food safety e.g. shellfish processing Byelaws to limit dog fouling on the more popular beaches.
- Waste management - Controlling litter, beach cleaning, controlling fly-tipping
- Water safety and recreation management at Council owned beaches
- Promotion of tourism, recreation and economic development.
- As education authorities – inform people of local environmental resources including through outdoor centres such as Carmarthenshire County Council's at Pendine.
- Financial support for the South Wales Sea Fisheries Committee.

**Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority** represented by Jane Hodges

The Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority is a single purpose authority set up in 1996, as part of local government re-organisation in Wales.

The Environment Act 1992 sets out two purposes for National Parks in England and Wales:-

1. Conservation: “to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of National Parks.
2. Education and recreation: “to promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities (of the Parks) by the public.

National Parks are also required to “seek to foster the economic and social well-being” of local communities within the National Parks.

The National Park Authority (NPA) has a number of statutory functions and responsibilities. It is the sole local planning authority for the area within its boundaries. Land use policies which guide development in the National Park are currently set out in the NPA's Local Plan which includes a specific policy on any cSACs in the Park. This plan will be superseded by a Unitary Development Plan prepared jointly with Pembrokeshire

County Council, to cover the whole of Pembrokeshire, and not just the National Park. The NPA is also required to set out its management policies for the National Park in a National Park Management Plan which contains strategic objectives and targets for management of the National Park.

The NPA leases parts of the foreshore from the Crown Estate. The NPA also promotes “best practice” by water-based recreational users via the voluntary codes of conduct and liaison with groups such as Harbour Users associations within the National Park. The Pembrokeshire Outdoor Charter Group (facilitated by the National Park) is a principal mechanism for the development of best practice and dissemination of information amongst outdoor centres, many of which regularly use the marine environment adjoining the National Park coastline.

**Countryside Council for Wales** represented by Blaise Bullimore, Mike Camplin, Adam-Cole King, Nicola Rimington & Rebecca Wright

CCW is the governments statutory advisor on wildlife, countryside and marine conservation matters in Wales. Along with partner organisations such as the local authorities CCW also advises on landscape matters and promotes public enjoyment of the countryside.

CCW is responsible to the National Assembly for Wales who appoint its Council members and provide its annual grant in aid.

**Environment Agency Wales** represented by Mike Jenkins (St. Clears) and Michelle Guthrie (Llanelli).

The Environment Agency has a wide range of legal duties touching on every aspect of the environment. We regulate water quality through discharge consents, control waste disposal through waste management licences. Our remit also includes flood defence, fisheries and conservation. As a relevant authority we use our statutory powers to review all authorisations/permissions that we have issued. This is done in consultation with CCW and is ongoing at the moment. We also consider new applications we receive to ensure that there is no impact upon the cSAC.

**South Wales Sea Fisheries Committee** represented by Phil Coates

The South Wales Sea Fisheries Committee is funded by local authorities and covers an area from Cardigan to Cardiff and to 6 miles offshore. Bay closing lines and the offshore Pembrokeshire Islands increase this distance to about 22 miles in places.

Its remit is to manage stocks of fish and especially shellfish as it has done for over 100 years. However, in recent years SFCs have had their duties extended in the light of a growing realisation of the value of the marine environment, the need for conservation of species and habitat, and an acknowledgement of the impact of fishing operations. In 1992 SFCs were given the duty of 'endeavouring to achieve a reasonable balance between conservation of the environment and management of (shell)fish stocks. SFCs were given joint responsibilities to implement protective measures under the Habitats and Birds Directives, as well as towards other marine conservation measures to preserve biodiversity.

These broad duties are reflected in the Committee's membership : half are councillors from funding authorities, one Environment Agency appointee, and the remainder are appointed by the National Assembly for Wales as persons having relevant knowledge and experience. As well as practising commercial fishermen, anglers and marine conservation interests are represented.

Sea Fisheries Committees enforce their own local byelaws as well as elements of National and European fisheries legislation.

### **Saundersfoot Harbour Commissioners**

Saundersfoot Harbour Commissioners were unable to send a representative to the meetings.

### **Dŵr Cymru / Welsh Water**

DCWW were unable to send a representative to attend the meetings, but an enquiry pad was produced to enable stakeholders at the meeting to pass on queries and comments to DCWW.

Dwr Cymru Welsh Water is the appointed water and sewerage undertaker for Wales under the Water Industry Act 1991. As such, the Company is entrusted with supplying its customers with clean, wholesome drinking water and disposing of their sewage waste, whilst furthering conservation in all of its activities.

Whilst the Company has no water supply interest within the boundaries of The cSAC, it does have a number of sewage outfalls which dispose of effluent, directly or indirectly to the marine boundary of the site.

DCWW is committed to undertaking all its work in such a way as to protect the environment and with respect to sewage disposal is pledged to the eventual provision of full treatment and disinfection at all of its works which discharge to sea or estuary, including those to be found within the Carmarthen Bay and Estuaries cSAC.

### **Trinity House Lighthouse Service**

Trinity House were unable to send a representative to the meetings.

Trinity House Lighthouse Service is the General Lighthouse Authority for England, Wales the Channel Islands and Gibraltar. It provides aids to general navigation around the coasts of its areas of responsibility: lighthouses. light vessels, buoys, beacons and radio-navigation systems.

## **PRESENTATIONS**

**1. What is a marine Special Area of Conservation** Adam Cole-King, Countryside Council for Wales.

*Carmarthen Bay European Marine Site  
Public meetings 17 & 24 October 2001*



## What is a marine Special Area of Conservation (SAC)?

Adam Cole-King

Countryside Council for Wales

CYNGOR  
CEFN GWLAD  
CYMRU

COUNTRYSIDE  
COUNCIL  
FOR WALES

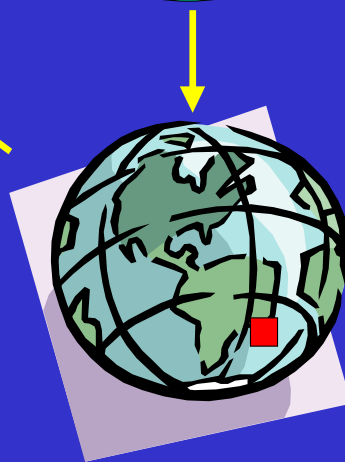
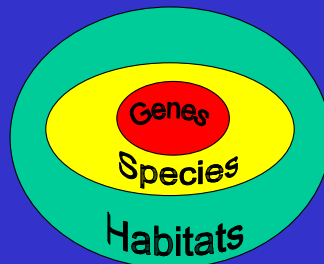


## SACs: some background

• Biodiversity: the  
diversity of life on Earth

• 1992 Rio de Janeiro:  
International Biodiversity  
Convention

• SACs are part of the UK's  
(and Europe's) commitment  
to global biodiversity  
conservation



CYNGOR  
CEFN GWLAD  
CYMRU

COUNTRYSIDE  
COUNCIL  
FOR WALES



# The legislation for SACs

## EC Habitats Directive 1992

- All member states must comply
- Aims to conserve EU Biodiversity (species and habitats)
- States must designate SACs
- ....and manage them appropriately
- Protection of some species wherever they occur
- Special Protection Areas (SPAs) for birds



## Process for designating SACs

Consultation on proposed list of sites  
(1995 and 2000)

Each member state proposes their list of  
sites to Europe (1996 – ongoing)



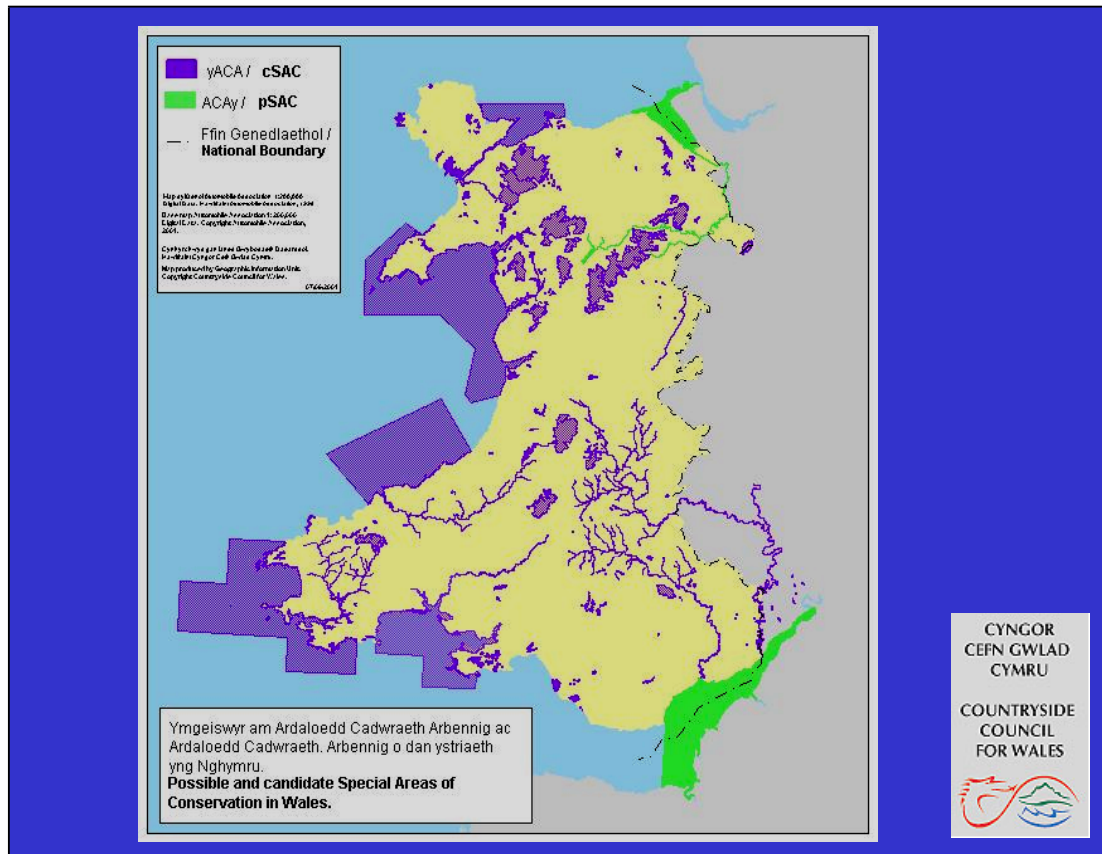
← **Sites to be protected  
from here**

EC and all member states agree list of sites  
Feb 2002?

← **We are here**

Sites are designated....2004?

Sites are chosen only taking account of their wildlife  
interest

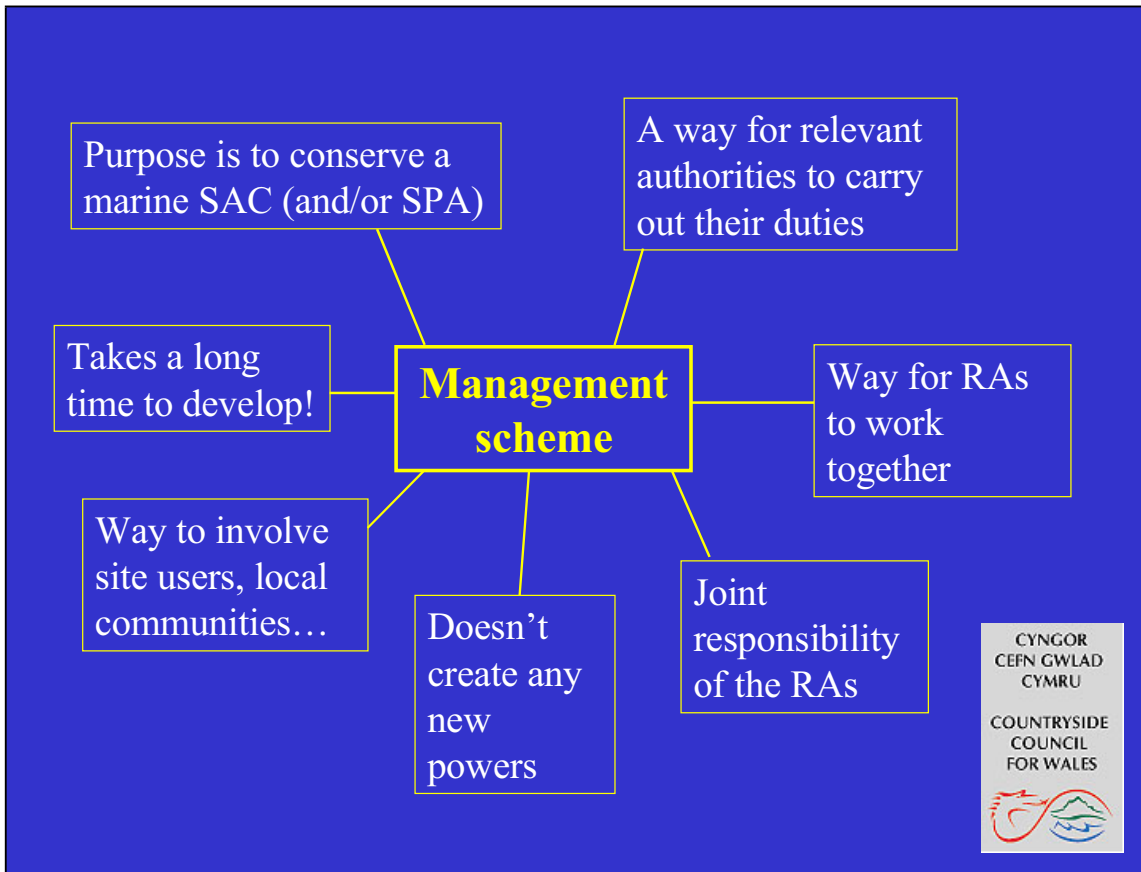


## What does a marine SAC (and SPA) mean in practice?

UK government, National Assembly for Wales and all public/statutory bodies must act in ways that conserve the species and habitats.

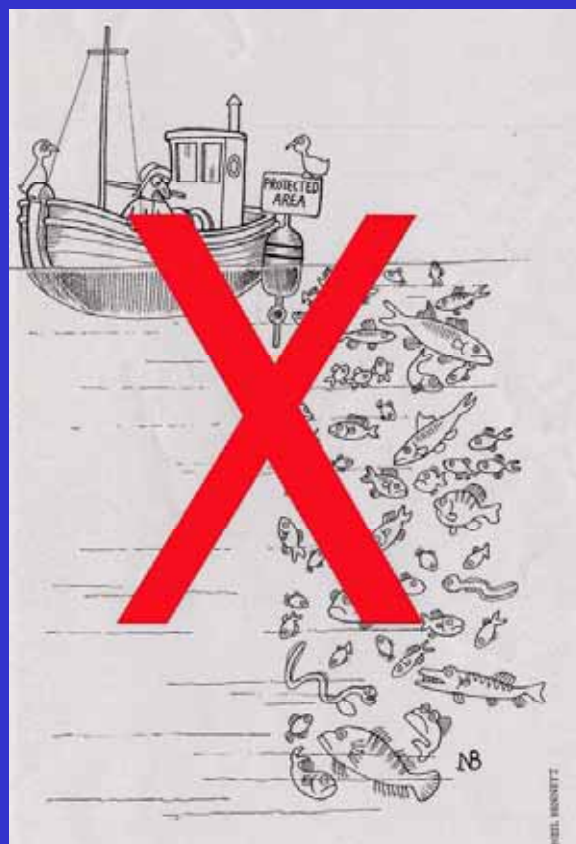
Specifically:

- Establish **necessary** conservation measures
- Take **appropriate** steps to avoid damage
- Set up a management scheme...**or not**
- Environmental assessment of new operations before they take place
- **All the above to take account of economic, social, cultural, local circumstances**



A marine SAC is a contribution to sustainable development

A marine SAC is not a “no-go area” ....





## Questions & answers

- Q:** Which authorities can make byelaws?
- A:** Various Relevant Authorities can make byelaws (the SAC has not changed the byelaw making power of any Relevant Authority, it has just meant that they must use these powers to avoid damage to the features of the site). CCW can make byelaws in situations not covered by the other Relevant Authorities powers.
- Q:** How can you do an Environmental Impact Assessment before a development takes place?
- A:** It is an established procedure to attempt to assess the impact a development might have before it is undertaken. Many impacts can be predicted beforehand, although the point is taken that you may not be able to precisely predict what may happen.
- Q:** How far does the SAC extend onto the land?
- A:** The SAC has a complex boundary, but in most places it extends up to Mean High Water.
- Q:** Where is Mean High Water? Laugharne Town Council can not find a definitive line.
- A:** It is impossible to point to precise line on the ground, but the lines are shown on Ordnance Survey maps.
- Q:** How are social and economic factors fed into the process?
- A:** This is a matter for the group and individual relevant authorities acting in the public interest.
- Q:** When SACs were selected who was consulted apart from public bodies?
- A:** All known interested organisations (not individuals).
- Q:** Are the reasons for designating the SAC public?
- A:** Yes, but they do not include a great deal of detail.
- Q:** Does the Relevant Authorities Group have any control over local authorities who break the rules?
- A:** The local authorities are part of the Relevant Authorities Group. No relevant authority - or the RAG as a whole - has any power over any other relevant authority. the relevant authorities, including the local authorities, are required by the 1994 Habitats Regulations to exercise their powers in order to secure compliance with the requirements of the Habitats Directive.

**Q:** Were town and community councillors invited to the public meetings?

**A:** Yes. Posters and leaflets were sent to the clerks to the councils.

**Q:** Could individual councillors be notified individually.

**A:** The Relevant Authorities Group will consider this.

**2. Carmarthen Bay and Estuaries cSAC features of conservation interest** Adam Cooper, SAC Support Officer

**3. Development of a Scheme of Management** Blaise Bullimore, Countryside Council for Wales (Next page)

**Questions:**

**Q:** Where exactly does the boundary of the SAC extend to up the river Towy?

**A:** The boundary is shown on the maps on the wall. We do not currently have a larger scale boundary map. The SAC no longer extends up to the tidal limit on the Towy as this would cause an overlap with the River Towy SAC.

**Q:** Are the seaward limits of the SAC defined by the extent of the features?

**A:** Common practice in defining the seaward limits of marine areas is to use lines of longitude and latitude. This is how the SAC seaward boundary is defined in order to encompass the features.

**Q:** Are there powers to control activities which might affect the SAC but are outside the SAC boundary?

**A:** Yes. Unlike other designated area legislation, the rules for SACs cover activities outside the SAC which could have an effect on the features of the SAC.

**Q:** Does that include landward development?

**A:** Yes, if it could have an effect on the features of the SAC.

**Q:** What powers does the RAG have over MOD land?

**A:** The Relevant Authorities Group has no powers over MOD land. The RAG has no powers collectively - all power and responsibilities lie with the individual relevant authorities. The MOD is a competent authority and is thus legally bound by the Habitats Regulations to exercise its functions relevant to marine conservation to secure compliance with the Habitats Directive.

# Development of a Scheme of Management

The primary task of the relevant authorities group

But what is a 'Scheme of Management'?

*The mechanism by which we jointly maintain the site's features in 'Favourable Conservation Status'*



## What are the key steps?

Identify site specific requirements

- Determine the Favourable Conservation Status (FCS) for each feature

Identify issues

- Determine any factors that are currently, or may in the foreseeable future, prevent the achievement of FCS

Identify, then implement solutions

- Actions to ensure that FCS is being met and will continue to be met for the foreseeable future.

# What does 'favourable conservation status' mean?

FCS is defined in the Habitats Directive, and is applied in terms of the features present and important at a site specific level



## 'Favourable conservation status' is defined in the Habitats and Species Directive as

Article 1 (e):

*"The conservation status of a natural habitat will be taken as "Favourable" when:*

- its natural range and the areas it covers within that range are stable or increasing, and,*
- the specific structure and functions which are necessary for its long-term maintenance exist and are likely to continue to exist for the foreseeable future, and*
- conservation status of typical species is 'Favourable as defined in Article 1 (i)*

Article 1 (i):

*'The conservation status [of a species] will be taken as 'Favourable' when:*

- population dynamics data on the species concerned indicate that it is maintaining itself on a long-term basis as a viable component of its natural habitats, and*
- the natural range of the species is neither being reduced nor is likely to be reduced for the foreseeable future, and*
- there is, and will probably continue to be, a sufficiently large habitat to maintain its populations on a long-term basis.*

## **But how do I know what favourable conservation status is supposed to be?**

FCS will be defined for the features of each site in the *Regulation 33 advice* provided by the statutory nature conservation agency.



## **And what is Regulation 33 advice?**

- **Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994**
- **Regulation 33 (2) requires the "appropriate nature conservation body" to advise other relevant authorities as to:**
  - a) **the conservation objectives**
  - b) **operations which may cause deterioration of the habitats or disturbance to the species****as soon as possible after the site becomes a European Marine Site.**

## **Regulation 33 advice must**

- **reflect the overall purpose and specific requirements of the European Habitats Directive**
- **meet the requirements of UK Habitats Regulations**
- **define the desired condition of the site's features in a way which expresses, for all to see, the conservation goal**
- **provide the standard against which potentially damaging proposed uses of the site will be judged**
- **include a set of 'performance indicators' of the condition of the site's features which are pragmatic, realistic, measurable, reportable and genuinely indicative**

## **What will Regulation 33 advice look like?**

- **An explanation of the advice**
- **A statement of the conservation objectives for the features of the site**
- **Advice on operations which may cause deterioration or disturbance to the features of the site**

**It will be designed to meet the diverse needs of a wide range of interests , regulatory authorities and consenting bodies.**

## What will the Carmarthen Bay & Estuaries SAC conservation objectives actually say?

The overall objective will be to maintain the integrity and natural development of marine habitats and communities throughout the site, whilst maintaining their overall diversity, condition and certain particularly important features.

Or, at its most simple, to maintain the overall quality of the features for which the site was selected in a condition as good as, or better than when the site was selected.

## What will the conservation objectives actually cover?

The quality and extent of the typical, *and* the special but typifying components:

- the physical structure of the habitat
- the fundamental physiochemical processes
- the biological communities and species
- the integrity of the interrelationships between the these three.



## **What will the advice on operations cover?**

- **General guidance on factors which may cause detrimental effects**
- **Specific guidance on the effects of operations or activities where causal links are known or can be inferred**



## **When will it be available?**

Production of Regulation 33 advice is a complicated task which cannot be completed quickly.

CCW are unable to provide a date at present.



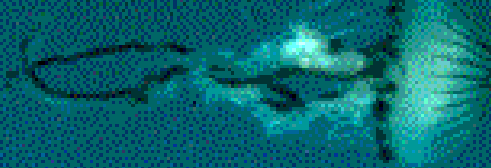


## What happens in the meantime?

- Use Habitats Directive definitions of favourable conservation status
- with
- best available information on the features of the site
  - applied using the precautionary principle

**It is CCW's responsibility to provide Regulation 33 advice *but***

- **it will only be as good as the information available to us – so**



- **if you have information to contribute, please do!**

**How?**

**That's next**

**Q:** What happens about damage caused to the SAC before designation?

**A:** The position on this is unclear.

**Q:** Is the common scoter a feature of the SAC.

**A:** No. SACs are not designated for birds. There is a proposed Special Protection Area in Carmarthen Bay to protect common scoter.

**Q:** Would the Cardiff Bay Barrage development have gone ahead if the area had been designated as a SAC?

**A:** It is impossible to say. However it is possible that it would have done as developments can go ahead despite an assessment showing an adverse effect on a SAC if the appropriate minister decides the reasons are of imperative overriding public interest, including reasons of a social or economic nature, and there are no alternative solutions.

**Q:** Will another authority assess performance indicators for the SAC?

**A:** The Countryside Council for Wales will do this.

**Q:** Does this mean that CCW is both “judge and jury”?

**A:** Yes, although CCW has to report to the UK government and assessments will be subject to consultation.

**Q:** If CCW report a degradation of the site what happens then?

**A:** The National Assembly for Wales is ultimately responsible.

**Q:** If production of the management scheme will proceed without Regulation 33 advice when will CCW produce some interim advice?

**A:** It is impossible to say at present

**Q:** If a new operation is proposed on what basis will it be judged?

**A:** On the precautionary principle.

**Q:** Will conservation slow down economic development?

**A:** There is no way of predicting this. Each case will be taken individually.

**Q:** Is this a talking shop rather than a “doing” process?

**A:** Yes, at the moment. It is important for the RAG to discuss issues with the stakeholders at this stage.

**Q:** Have you the power to restrict fishing totally?

**A:** The relevant authorities have a duty to exercise their powers - which are exactly the same powers as they had before the area was designated as a cSAC - in order to avoid damage, deterioration or disturbance to the features of the SAC. While the intention is not to create a “no-go area” for fishermen, if a particular type of fishing activity is deemed to damage, cause deterioration to or disturb a feature of the site the relevant authority which has management responsibility for that activity may impose restrictions.

**Q:** If restrictions are placed on activities such as fishing and bait collection will this not just move those activities and create extra pressure on other areas.

**A:** This is a possibility, and will be taken into account during the production of the management scheme.

**Q:** Why is there no mention of industry in the objectives for the SAC?

**A:** The objectives are based on science. Social and economic factors will be taken into account during the production of the management scheme – that is, they will be taken into account in *how* the objectives are achieved.

**Q:** Which organisation authorises sand dredging on the Helwick Bank?

**A:** The National Assembly of Wales.

**Q:** What plans are there to involve other organisations?

**A:** This meeting is the first step in doing so. The next part of the meeting will enable stakeholders to get involved.

**4. Liaison Structures** Mike Camplin, Countryside Council for Wales (Next page)

# Purpose of Liaison Structure

- To provide a means of effective communication and liaison between those with a responsibility for, and those with an interest in, the development of a scheme of management



# Problems

- Lots of people with an interest/responsibility
  - Large gatherings = wide range of views but can be unproductive
  - Small gatherings = fewer range of views but usually more productive
- But need to encompass full breadth of views and inputs

# Advice & Experience

- **LOTS**
- Most appropriate may vary with local circumstances, e.g. urban or rural environment

# Advice & Experience

- Most effective appears to be a combined approach incorporating:
  - Public meetings
  - Small gatherings of representatives from ‘groups’ with similar interests and responsibilities.
  - Backed up with informal liaison, newsletters, mail-shots and articles in the media.

## **LIAISON STRUCTURE DISCUSSION**

The following interest groups were mentioned and people invited to either join one of these or to suggest a new one if they felt they would not be represented by any of these groups:

- Industry/Business
- Fisheries
- Recreation/Tourism
- Farming/Forestry
- Nature Conservation/Environment
- Education
- Local Community

Some of these groups were not taken up by stakeholders.

A relevant authority rapporteur took notes for each group. The groups then discussed how they should be represented. The RAG provided the following a list of questions to structure the discussion.

### **Interest Group Questions**

- WHO is represented here ? – Name, organisation and interest
- Will an annual public meeting provide enough opportunity to receive information and address your interests and concerns?
- IF YES - what format should it take?
- IF NOT - Do you think there is a need for a liaison group?
- IF YES - Is there an existing organisation or group which could represent your interests?
- IF NOT - Do you think a new Sectoral Interest Group needs to be established to represent your interests?
- IF YES - Who is prepared to take a lead?
- IF NO-ONE - you will need to consider how else to best make your views known.
- Please think about your interests and concerns and how you want to be involved.
- Complete your questionnaire so that we - or whoever agrees to run interest groups - knows how to contact you.

### **Interest group responses**

#### **a) Industry / Business**

Llanelli meeting Rapporteur : David Poulter

Present: Paul Oram, Secretary, Carmarthenshire Chamber of Commerce.

An annual meeting would not be enough to represent stakeholder interests.



A Liaison group meeting quarterly would be appropriate.

The Carmarthenshire Chamber of Commerce is an existing group which could represent business/industry interests.

It would be a good idea to create a subgroup, and combine it with the recreation and tourism group.

The Chamber of Commerce could take the lead, but this would have to be arranged.

## **b) Fisheries**

St. Clears meeting Rapporteur : Phil Coates

About 20 individuals present (based on completed questionnaires), mainly commercial fishermen, (vessel operators) or representatives, but also two divers and three anglers.

David Gardner (Pembs CC) assumed the Chair. Phil Coates (SWSFC) offered guidance. The group was informed that all fishing interests were welcome, not just commercial interests. This was strongly endorsed.

The group strongly felt that an annual meeting would not be sufficient to ensure that their interests were sufficiently debated, nor taken into account during consideration of any management plan.

Support for a broad based group of fishing interests was strong. Discussion took place on whether sea anglers and divers would wish to establish a group of their own, or join with the fishing group or recreational / tourism group. It was stressed that attendance at any one group was not instead of, but complimentary.

Ian Wisby, Secretary of the Joint Fishing Community of South & West Wales, agreed to act as a co-ordinator / spokesman for future meetings, provided a replacement could be found for the same position that he occupied on the Pembrokeshire Marine SAC. D Gardner indicated that he was confident that another Association / representative could be found. I Wisby would attend the second Public meeting, and canvass views.

Phil Coates said that whilst the SWSFC was not able to get fully involved in any public liaison structure, it would assist where possible, eg. act as a secretariat, and by attendance if invited.

David Gardner opened a general discussion on the needs for liaison, and active participation and issues which could be raised. He suggested that individuals add these to the rear of the questionnaire.

Llanelli meeting. Rapporteurs: Phil Coates and Wisby (Joint Fishing Community South & West Wales).

About 26 individuals present (based on completed questionnaires). Mainly commercial fishing interests (vessel users, two associated with mussel cultivation, two cockle gatherers), plus commercial bait collectors, three divers. No specific angling interest was recorded.

David Gardner (Pembrokeshire CC) chaired the group as per the first public meeting. The Group considered that an annual meeting or larger group meetings would not be sufficient to address their needs for involvement, and agreed the need for a specialist grouping.

Existing groups were sectoral e.g. commercial fishermen, sea angling and divers. A debate took place on whether sea anglers and divers would be better placed establishing their own sub group. Notwithstanding that their attendance would not only be welcome, but encouraged upon any (commercial) fishing group in addition to any sub group.

It was noted that Pembs SAC fishing group was of commercial representatives only and sea anglers/divers had become involved with the Tourist / Recreational sub Group. Whilst the outcome was not resolved, the indications were of sufficient demand for a commercial fisheries sub Group allowing their particular interests to be pursued, provided attendance was open to any other interested party.

Ian Wisby indicated that whilst the first public meeting had proposed him as chair, by virtue of his link with the main commercial Fishermen's Association in the area, that position was open to anyone. He had no objection to, for example, a chair from a diving association being appointed in view of the fact that the chair would be promoting the group's views within any subsequent liaison structure. Mr Dick Rees (commercial fisherman) offered to assist Ian Wisby.

Phil Coates explained the SWSFC position having statutory duties and a limited budget. Nevertheless he said that he considered an active group to be essential, and that his organisation would probably be willing to take a more 'hands on' involvement than other relevant authorities, in recognition of the importance of fishery interests having an input and particular circumstances surrounding 'the industry' in its wider context. At the group's request and resources permitting this could extend to attending meetings as a secretariat or observer, assistance in circulating correspondence, and arranging a venue etc.

Several issues/concerns were raised, and would be submitted on the rear of returned questionnaires: the uncertainty as to whether existing or new operations might be curtailed in the name of conservation; the influence of 'greenies' or preservationists, (it was claimed that as fishermen rely upon the environment many were in any event 'conservators'); whether their views will in any event be taken into account (it was alleged that rules are often drawn up and consulted upon, having already previously determined the outcome).

David Gardner concluded that the participants had a strong desire to establish some form of fishery group, with Ian Wisby as suggested chair. Its purpose would be to ensure that individuals and organisations were well informed about the SAC and any developments and to ensure that the interests (and experiences) of users were taken into account when developing any scheme of management that may result. He emphasised that the SAC would progress with or without user involvement, and although public involvement would raise various difficulties, these obstacles would be overcome if the SAC raised issues for which the public was motivated to respond.

## **Recreation/Tourism**

St. Clears meeting. Rapporteur Richard Beale

Present: Geoff Morse – St Clears Boating Club(Chairman)

Mr A Scott – Carmarthen Bay Divers(Chairman)

Peter John - Carmarthen Bay Divers

N Little – Towy Boat Club

Mr B Williams – South Wales Sea Fisheries Committee & Angling Interests

Gwyn Coupland - Towy Boat Club (Secretary)

TW Brown - St Clears Boating Club

Alan Underwood – Carmarthen Bar Navigation Committee (Secretary)

Geoff Morse agreed to lead the discussion.

Q: Will an annual public meeting provide enough opportunity to receive information and address your interests and concerns?

A: Depends on what happens. Hypothetical. simple problems should be dealt with first – litter and dog fouling on beaches. The meeting should have been publicised in South East Wales as a lot of anglers come from that area. There are contentious issues such as bait gathering. Bait is collected from the SAC and sold in SE Wales. Any restrictions on bait gathering would have an effect on businesses elsewhere. How do we ensure that all users are made aware of SAC? Concern that holidaymakers make unrestricted use of the rivers without knowing what they are doing. Information about the SAC could be conveyed by angling, boating clubs etc. through their newsletters. It was concluded that one annual meeting would suffice until the objectives are clearer for the SAC.

Q. IF YES - what format should it take?

A. Not an AGM style, less formal rather like tonight's meeting perhaps.

Q. IF NOT - Do you think there is a need for a liaison group?

A. Yes. Each interest group should know what others are doing.

Q. IF YES - Is there an existing organisation or group which could represent your interests?

A. No.

Q IF NOT - Do you think a new Sectoral Interest Group needs to be established to represent your interests?

A. A number of diverse interests represented at tonight's meeting – anglers, recreational boating, sub-aqua divers. The relevant authorities need to discuss most appropriate grouping. It was agreed to wait until after the Llanelli meeting to see what other related interests emerge. Who is representing wildfowling? Should there be another group to represent marine archaeologists?

Other issues

1. Concern about byelaws being introduced without consultation e.g. by South Wales Sea Fisheries Committee.
2. Why isn't common scoter represented on list of SAC species? [Birds covered by SPA designation]
3. Concern about the effect of the use of military ranges, at Pendine and Pembrey, on habitats such as salt marshes. It was accepted that public access was restricted which in some cases may be beneficial.
4. A comment was made that the discussion had been very interesting allowing a cross-fertilisation of ideas and opinions.
5. It was stressed that this was the start of the process and not the end.

Llanelli meeting. Rapporteur Richard Beale

Present: Chris Corcoran – Keep Wales Tidy  
Rhian Evans – Cyclists Touring Club  
Stanley Szajda – South & West Wales Association of Sea Angling Clubs  
(Scientific & Pollution Officer)  
DM Coughlan – West Glamorgan Wildfowlers Association  
Roger Gore – Roger's Tackle  
Brian Davies – Country Angling Supplies  
Dennis Davies – European Federation of Sea Anglers (Wales) Public  
Relations & Liaison Officer

Geoff Morse agreed to lead the discussion.

Q. Will an annual public meeting provide enough opportunity to receive information and address your interests and concerns?

A. Public meeting OK for gathering information but NOT for dissemination of it. Interest groups need to be kept abreast of things as they happen and therefore an annual meeting is not frequent enough. Only have a meeting when needed. An open public meeting means that any body can come along not just those in one of the groups, and voice their opinion. The most important thing is to have feedback from the relevant authorities on a regular basis.

Q. IF YES - what format should it take?

A. Not an AGM style, less formal rather like tonight's meeting perhaps.

Q. IF NOT - Do you think there is a need for a liaison group?

A. Yes. Concern that the interest group would have a diverse range of interests which one person may not be able to adequately represent. RB suggested that the Group could nominate a spokesperson relevant to the issue being discussed at the liaison group if that was a problem. This was accepted. There was general agreement that key matter was dissemination of information.

Q. IF YES - Is there an existing organisation or group which could represent your interests?

A. No. Too diverse a range of interests.

Q IF NOT - Do you think a new Sectoral Interest Group needs to be established to represent your interests?

A. Yes. It would be a mechanism for referring matters back to individual organisations. May want to alter or refine titles. This group for example could be called 'maritime issues'. May want to choose a different spokesperson (see above). Some members of the Group said that they were happy for relevant authorities to take action as long as they consulted the organisations. They would like minutes of the relevant authority group meetings. Some said that this might be sufficient.

Q. IF YES - Who is prepared to take a lead?

A. Chris Corcoran of Keep Wales Tidy agreed to take the lead. The general feeling was that it would be useful to have an evening meeting before Christmas at a convenient location such as Cross Hands. Possibly the Business Centre or the country club in Gorslas. Help with setting this up was requested. RB said that the RAG could help including providing a list of names and addresses from both public meetings. [*The cost of this would need to be discussed at the next RAG meeting*]

Other issues: all members of the Group would like a copy of the minutes of the last RAG meeting.

Farming / Forestry

St/ Clears meeting. Rapporteur: Mike Jenkins

Present: Mr and Mrs Iori Evans  
R.F Stevens

There is no organisation that could represent them.

Each would be interested in the initial meeting should the group arise.

Annual meetings would serve their interest, one in the west, one in the East.

### **Nature Conservation / Environment**

St. Clears meeting. Rapporteur : Jane Hodges

Questionnaires completed. Group included reps from RSPB (Swansea), Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust (Penclacwydd) and individuals from Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire with a personal interest in conservation, environment or education. CCC staff present as well - Rosie Carmichael and a member of their UDP team. The group was joined by Mike Camplin, chaired by Geoff Proffitt and facilitated by JEH.

The group concluded that there should be at least an annual meeting bringing all interested groups and individuals together. It was also concluded that an annual meeting alone would not be sufficient.

The group concluded that there is a need for a liaison group or forum to provide the interface between the RAG and the interest/user groups and local communities. The liaison group/forum should comprise the Relevant Authorities and representatives of interest/user/community groups. The view of the group was that a liaison group/forum should be set up (ie there is no existing grouping that could perform the function of a liaison forum).

The group concluded that there is a need for a new sectoral group but that questions such as who should take the lead should be deferred until after the Llanelli meeting. The group felt strongly that there are potential hazards in setting-up self contained sectoral interest groups, particularly the danger of "entrenchment" of views and perceptions, reinforcing sectoral "boundaries". It was noted that this could be avoided by:

- interchange of ideas, information, views between interest groups;
- formation of a liaison group;

- annual meeting bringing every one together.

The group also concluded that there should be a direct link between it and the Relevant Authorities Group via the following mechanism:

- a member of the RAG to be a first point of contact for the group;
- the RAG contact to attend group meetings, to help/guide/support the group especially in the early stages - ie to be a facilitator for the group.

This point was made several times. Those present clearly regarded direct contact/immediate access to the RAG as a very important part of the liaison mechanism.

The group concluded its discussions by requesting names and addresses of all those present to be listed and copied to everyone present, to aid networking.

Burning issues. Not much time for this; two issues raised:

- Sediment budgets; coastal processes and sand supply (to beaches). Raised by Trevor Hallet Tenby Town Councillor).
- Need to integrate UDPs, management plans, LBAPs etc etc with the SAC management scheme. The LBAP in particular was seen as relevant: there would be considerable disappointment if existing schemes and initiatives were not adequately acknowledged and integrated into the SAC management process. (Raised by Rosie Carmichael).

Facilitator's note: this group may well find "leadership" coming from WWT or RSPB. Setting it up would not be too difficult, pending outcome of Llanelli public meeting. No WTWW or NT reps present.

Llanelli meeting. Chair & rapporteur : Jane Hodges

- Questionnaires completed by three people. Total (excluding RA reps) in the group was 4. representing, or at least members of: Cymdeithas Edward Llwyd

1. Gower Ornithological Society
2. CPRW \*
3. West Glamorgan Society (?) \*

\* Also President, Penclawdd Community Centre.

Two participants were members of more than one society/group/organisation.

By mutual consensus, JEH "chaired" the group discussion.

The Group concluded that there should be two public meetings a year. It also concluded that public meetings alone would not be sufficient.

The group concluded that there is a need for a liaison group, to provide the interface with the RAG. This should comprise the RAs, and representatives of interest/user/community groups. There is no existing group or forum that could perform the function of a liaison group, so one needs to be set up.

The group concluded that there is a need for an environment/nature conservation group and that its remit should include research and survey.

The potential pitfalls associated with setting up sectoral interest groups (eg isolationism; entrenchment of views/perceptions about other users/interests) were recognised by this group. These could be avoided by:

- Networking between individual sectoral groups, stimulating interchange of views, perceptions and information between sectoral groups;
- Formation of a liaison group;
- Annual public meetings, bringing everyone together.

Several names were mentioned in terms of who could "lead", at least in the initial stages of getting people together in a group.

- Geoff Proffit (WTWW, Penclacwydd)
- Tony Nelson-Smith (Lecturer, marine ecology UCS - retired)
- Charles Hipkin (Lecturer, UCS)
- Bob Howells (BTO Rep - based on the Gower)

Harri Williams indicated a possible willingness to help facilitate the group.

JEH suggested that the immediate need is for someone who could get people together, and get the group up and running. Who chairs, facilitates etc - after that would be a matter for the group to decide.

Other comments by the group:

1. Need to involve universities and colleges, to bring an academic perspective, especially to the areas of research and survey.
2. The RAG should encourage sectoral groups to network between them.
3. Language: the use of Welsh was warmly welcomed (all the group members were Welsh speakers). There was, however, a plea for written Welsh to be grammatically correct, and care to be taken over spelling in literature put out on behalf-of or by the RAG.
4. It was noted that one or two of the sectoral interest groups (eg fisheries) would be likely to be very large, covering everything from commercial dredging to sea angling. It will be important that, within such large groups, every voice/interest is adequately "heard".

Facilitator's note: no NT, WTWW or Glamorgan Wildlife Trust reps were present. In contrast to the St Clears meeting, there was no suggestion (from this group) that there needs to be a direct link between it and the RAG (other than via the liaison group). A question was also raised about scoter and its omission from the list of features.... JEH explained that Carmarthen Bay has been identified as a possible SPA for scoter. Reference was also made to the Natura 2000 network and to the fact that if Carmarthen Bay does become a SPA, then a single management scheme would be developed for both European designations (SAC & SPA).

## **Local Community**

St Clears meeting Rapporteur: Nicola Rimington

Questionnaires completed by four people. Also present David Poulter and Nicola Rimington as RAG representatives.

All four members lived near each other just outside Laugharne.

They said that annual public meetings would not be frequent enough if this were the only mechanism to have involvement. There was some confusion about what they would get out of their involvement- there are some local issues of concern relating to litter etc at Ginst Point. They were also initially keen that public meetings would be held as soon as any development was put forward so that they could have their say. DP informed them that such issues would need to be dealt with through the appropriate relevant/competent authorities rather than through the SAC liaison Group as such, although there may be opportunity to pick up issues like this through the management scheme in due course.

The representatives were wanted the best representation that would could be practically achieved and in this the ability to discuss issues with the relevant authorities. It was agreed that this couldn't be achieved just through public meetings, and therefore they supported the model that had been used in Cardigan Bay (liaison group and topic groups).

They were keen to have a representative on a liaison group and felt that that system would work.

There is no existing 'topic' group to build on, and it was felt that community councils would not represent their views. However, the community council should be aware of their concern, interest and involvement.

They were happy to form a group to represent Laugharne- Pendine interests and felt that this was something they could organise between them. Vince Taylor, however, put himself forward to take the lead, and he is the contact point for this interest group.

They will not move towards setting anything up until they have heard more from us. We told them that the RAG had a meeting scheduled in early November to review the meetings and to try to rationalise how the liaison mechanism would work. They would hear from the RAG (through the Project Officer) some time after that. There is an expectation that they will hear something before Christmas.

#### Llanelli meeting Rapporteur: Nicola Rimington

Only one member of the public attended this group. He was a member of Llanelli Town Council, but had attended because of his personal interest in the site.

He felt that annual public meetings were important and should be held, but would not be sufficient to secure proper involvement of interested parties on their own.

He was concerned that there wasn't full representation from the Town, Community and Rural Councils present. He said that information on the public meeting was included as a correspondence item under any other business at their last meeting, and that on the other hand they had spent an hour debating a response to NAW on sand dredging. He felt that a stronger steer needed to be given to these councils through their clerks to ensure that the importance of the site to them is made clear.

He felt that town, community and rural councils should be members of the RAG, but accepted that this was not accounted for in the Regulations.

He suggested a presentation by the RAG to individual councils, initially and then on a regular (annual) basis giving updates on progress. NR explained that this would unlikely to be feasible given the wide range of interests, and that the town, rural, community councils would need to consider how they would be involved otherwise. Given the poor



attendance at the public meetings, a compromise might be to give a short presentation to the clerks of a group of town, rural and community councils so that this issue is put more firmly on their agenda in future.

In terms of future involvement, KR suggested that grouping the councils around the Burry Inlet may be a way forward, as they often consult each other on that basis already. However, he could only speak for Llanelli Town Council in this respect.