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Outdoor Recreation Service - Conservation Team

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PHASE 1 HABITAT SURVEY REPORT

Burry Port Harbour Sediment Deposition

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1. Executive Summary

The survey is to provide up-to-date information on the Phase 1 habitats found in the area of Burry Port Beach East, with the mapped area proposed to receive sediment removed from Burry Port Harbour subject to relevant permissions and licenses.

The report outlines the Phase 1 habitats recorded using the JNCC Phase 1 habitats codes, target Notes highlight features of relevance He use of the codes H1.3 and H4 are the best match to describe the habitats however they are comprised primarily of post industrial materials.

2. Introduction

2.1 Background

Aerial photographs show significant changes in the habitat recorded since the last Phase 1 in 2000 conducted by the then Countryside Council for Wales see appendices

2.2 Aims & Objectives

The Phase 1 is being conducted to provide evidence that the habitats recorded in the previous Phase 1 survey, that may have provided feeding and or roosting sites for Oystercatchers, *Haematopus ostralegus*, a significant feature species of the Burry Inlet SPA; are either diminished in size or no longer exist and have been replaced through the dynamics of coastal changes with habitats that no longer provide optimum foraging areas for Oystercatchers.

2.3 Scope

The survey will take place between the following coordinates

244982.42 . 200184.68 – 245228.38 . 200216.14 – 245505.80 . 200264.76 – 249992.00 . 200240.45

244968.12 . 200008.79 – 245987.71 . 2000070.26

See appendices

3. Methodology

3.1 Survey Standards Used

Phase 1 Habitat Survey (JNCC standard). Desktop survey of latest satellite imagery, walk over of the area, excavation to look for the presence of bivalves – see target notes

3.2 Field Survey Methods

Field survey was conducted on 20th/ 21st January 2026, a walk over of the site with target notes provided in appendices

20th January 2026, 14:15 -!4:45 low water 13:35hrs

21st January 2026, 11:00 0 14:00 low water 14:11hrs

3.3 Desk Study

The following resources were used to inform this report.

DataMap Wales Phase 1 intertidal – 2000; Google Earth, internal Geodiscoverer historical mapping.

Burry Inlet Special Protected Area Condition report NRW report 913

3.4 Constraints

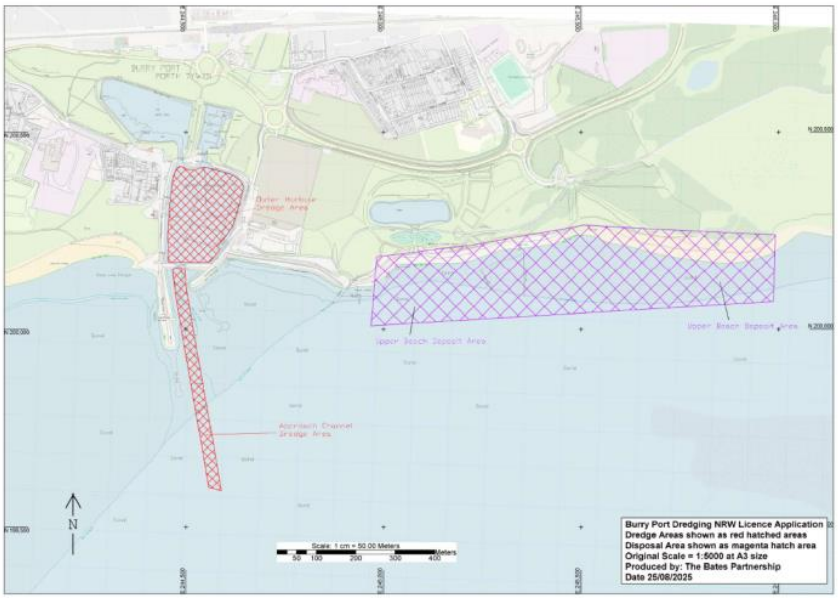
None

4. Site Description

4.1 Location

Centre NGR SN454001 large-crosshatch area

Dredging Locations within the Approach Channel and Outer Harbour and Deposition Location on Burry Port East Beach



4.2 Context

Burry Port Beach East sits in the Burry Inlet Special Protected Area and the Carmarthen Bay and Estuaries Special Area of Conservation.

Bounded to the North and East by the Millennium Coast Park, to the West by Burry Port Harbour including a large unsurfaced car park the terrestrial habitats are largely manmade, resulting from the decommissioning and subsequent demolition of the Burry Port Power station.

The Millennium Coast Park is a mix of amenity grassland, naturalized grassland, marshy grassland and semi natural woodland and plantation with lakes

The beach is well used by the residents and visitors for dog walking and recreation whilst the adjacent slipway is used by fisherman to launch and retrieve their boats the area has a high level of year round disturbance on 21st January 20026 during the survey there were several walkers plus 11odgs all off leash.

5. Results

5.1 Habitat Descriptions

The habitats, coded with JNCC Phase 1 habitats codes are

H1.1 Intertidal mud/sand

H1.3 Intertidal boulders/rock s – source artificial

H4 Boulders/rocks above high tide mark – source artificial

5.2 Protected and Priority Features survey area only

Section 7 habitats	None
Section 7 species	Black Headed Gull *Larus ridibundus*, Herring Gull *Larus argentatus*
SPA features	Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*

5.3 Invasive Species

None recorded

6. Evaluation

6.1 Habitat Value Assessment

The habitat H1.1, being the dominant habitat, is found within the survey area and along the coast to the east and west of the survey area.

H1.3 is artificial because of coastal erosion, the images in the appendices shown the ephemeral nature of this habitat, in many years covered by sand

The H4 habitat is artificial as a result of the demolition of the former power station infrastructure and coastal defence gabions which have spilled their contents leaving the assortment of rocks used in the gabions on the beach - clinker, shale and concrete blocks

6.2 Sensitivity of Features of concern: Oystercatcher, *Haematopus ostralegus*

Oystercatchers are not known to use the area in the Phase 1 survey for roosting or feeding, the main roost site on the north side of the Burry Inlet is on "The Nose" at the eastern end of Cefn Sidan on the Pembrey Coast SSSI- Pembrey Burrows Local Nature Reserve: SS435998. (the author is the site manager for the majority of the Pembrey Coast SSSI) Most Oystercatchers are recorded flying into the roost, from the Southeast, (from the Llanrhidian marshes) and West of the inlet

As the tide recedes from "The Nose" the Oystercatchers disperse Southeast and West, most Oystercatchers can be seen mid estuary -foraging or resting.

During the survey period a small flock of Oystercatcher, c50 individuals were observed following and foraging the retreating tide with three birds in the survey area, although these were not seen to forage

No evidence was found of any colonies of Mussel Mytilus edulis at the location recorded on the Phase 1 conducted 2000, the pipe was not visible at low water on 20th January

Four test digs to search for cockles, *Cerastoderma edule,* across the area no presence of the species or any other bivalve was found.

7. Recommendations

7.1 Management Recommendations

No recommendations are felt appropriate as the survey is intended to update the last survey in May 2000

8. Conclusion

During the survey there was no evidence that the area under consideration was of any great value to Oystercatchers or any other waders as a foraging area given the availability of extensive, less disturbed areas of the same habitat within 200m of the proposed deposition site.

9. References

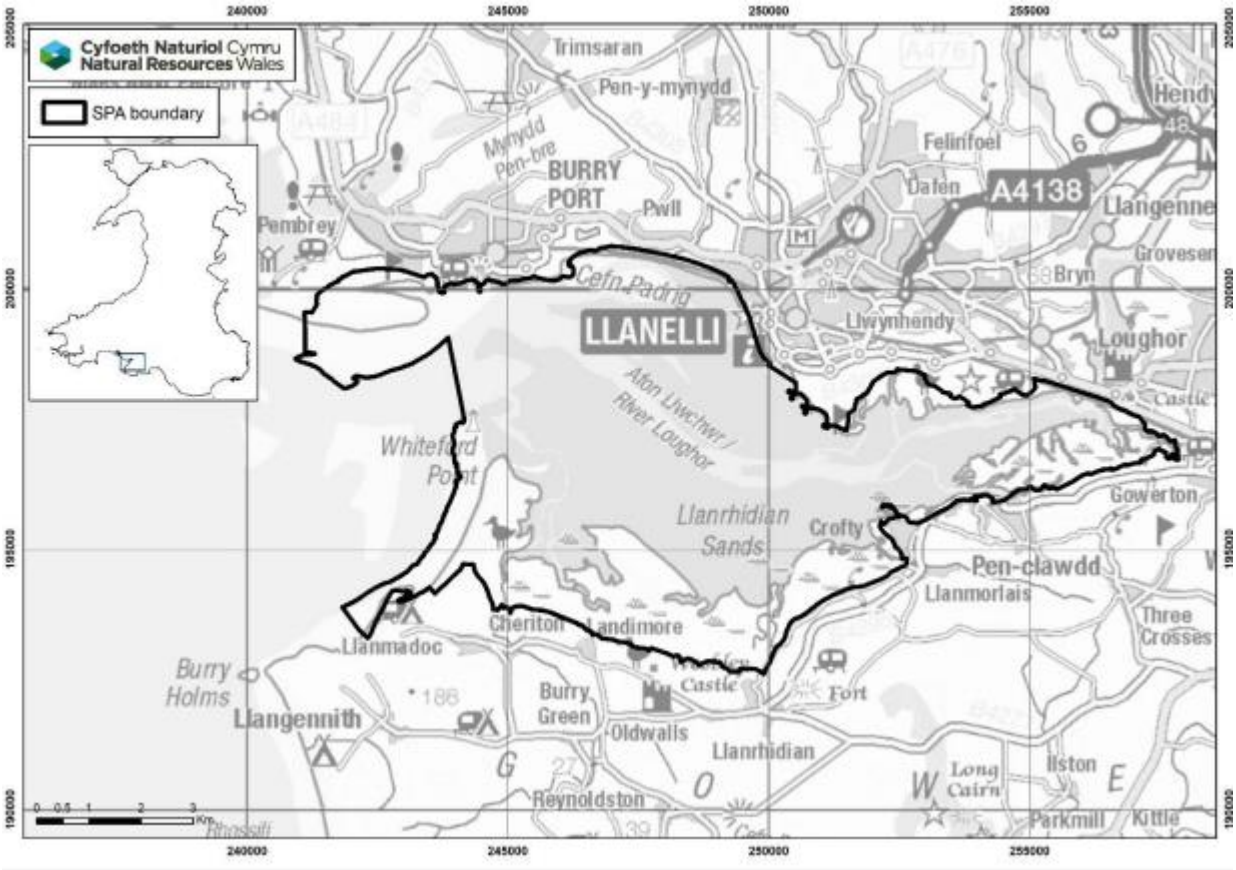
Intertidal Phase 1 Habitat Survey | DataMapWales

final-r37-carmarthen-estuaries-sac.pdf

condition-assessment-for-burry-inlet-spa.pdf

“Hatton-Ellis, M., Murphy, M., Cuthbertson, S, Jackson-Bué, M. and Wynter, E. 2025. Condition assessments for the designated features of Ardal Gwarchodaeth Arbennig Cilfach Tywyn / Burry Inlet Special Protection Area. NRW Evidence Report, No: 913, 112pp, Natural Resources Wales, Cardiff.”

- **Condition assessment for the designated features OYSTERCATCHER** *Haematopus ostralegus*,
- **Burry Inlet Special Protection Area NRW report 913 June 2025 -extract**



3.1. Condition assessment for oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*

Oystercatcher in the Burry Inlet SPA has been assessed in Table 2. The table has a summary of the assessment outcome against each performance indicator. This outcome and reasons for any failure are discussed in more detail in the sections below.

Table 2. Condition assessment of oystercatcher in the Burry Inlet SPA. Each indicator target has a primary (P), secondary (S) or tertiary (T) weighting (see section 1.1).

Indicator	Target	Assessment rationale	Target assessment	Target confidence
Wintering population	Maintain the wintering population of oystercatcher at a minimum of 13,685 individuals across the site. (P)	• The latest five-year peak mean of oystercatcher in the Burry Inlet SPA is 13,805 (counts from wintering seasons in the years 2018/19 to 2022/23). • This is actually based on three years as there were two partial counts within the five years. • The target has been passed but with medium confidence due to the partial counts.	**Pass**	Medium
Wintering population distribution	The distribution of the wintering oystercatcher population should not be significantly impacted by anthropogenic activity. (P)	• There are currently no known anthropogenic activities that have impeded the use of the whole site by oystercatchers or restricted their movements. • The assessment is based on expert judgement which has reduced the confidence level to medium.	**Pass**	Medium
Wintering population disturbance (by human activity)	Aggregations of roosting or feeding oystercatcher are not subject to significant disturbance. (P)	• There are currently no known anthropogenic activities that have caused significant disturbance to this feature on this site. • Confidence has been reduced to medium as there is no direct monitoring for disturbance on this site.	**Pass**	Medium

Indicator	Target	Assessment rationale	Target assessment	Target confidence
Supporting habitat	Maintain sufficient extent, distribution, function and quality of habitat to support an oystercatcher population of 13,685 individuals. (S) Maintain existing unrestricted bird sightlines in every direction around both roosting sites and feeding areas. (S)	• There are currently no known issues with the supporting habitat or bird sightlines on this site and the latest five-year peak mean of oystercatcher is above the target. This indicates that there are no issues with the supporting habitat. • Confidence has been reduced to medium as there are no targeted surveys for supporting habitat or sightlines.	**Pass**	Medium
Food availability	Maintain the distribution and abundance of oystercatcher food supply at levels sufficient to support a population of 13,685 individuals. (S)	• There are currently no known issues with the food availability on this site and the latest five-year peak mean of oystercatcher is above the target. This indicates that there are no issues with the food availability. • Confidence has been reduced to medium as there are no targeted surveys for food availability.	**Pass**	Medium

Assessment conclusions

Oystercatcher in Burry Inlet SPA have been assessed as being in favourable condition (medium confidence). No indicators failed to meet their targets (Table 3). The main threats to the oystercatcher at Burry Inlet come from disturbance and climate change. Further information on the assessment outcome and threats to condition can be seen in the detailed assessment information below.

Table 3. Summary of the condition assessment for oystercatcher in Burry Inlet SPA.

SPA Feature	Overall Condition Assessment	Indicator failures	Reason for indicator failure	Threats to condition
Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*	**Favourable (medium confidence)**	None	N/A	• Disturbance • Climate change

Food availability

The availability of an abundant food supply is critically important for successful fitness, survival and the overall sustainability of the population. Inappropriate management or impacts (direct or indirect) that affect the distribution, abundance and availability of food may adversely affect the population and alter the distribution of birds. Page 20 of 113 Oystercatchers predominantly feed on shellfish, although feeding on worms is common amongst juveniles. Once adult, however, few birds take worms and concentrate on blue mussels Mytilus edulis, and/or cockles Cerastoderma edule. In periods of food shortage, they may take other sources of food, particularly Macoma sp. and other clams (Zwarts et al. 1996). The birds may also spend the high tide period 'topping up' on invertebrates in surrounding agricultural or grassland, if such habitat is available (Goss-Custard et al.,1994). There is a commercial cockle fishery in the SPA that could potentially cause declines in the availability of cockles if improperly managed. The Burry Inlet cockle fishery is subject to the Burry Inlet Cockle Fishery Order 1965 which was made under Section 1 Sea Fisheries (Shellfish) Act 1967. This Order will expire on 15 June 2025. From 16 June 2025, the following Order will apply to the Burry Inlet Cockle Fishery - Cockle Fishing Management and Permitting (Specified Area) (Wales) Order 2024. Catch limits are set to ensure sufficient cockles remain to support the wintering population of oystercatchers. They feed on other molluscs, including mussels at Whiteford sands, as well as other bivalves. The current bird numbers strongly suggest that the food availability is sufficient to support the appropriate number of oystercatchers on this site therefore the food availability indicator met its target. Confidence in the pass is reduced to medium as there is no direct monitoring of food availability. Reasons for target failure

The oystercatcher feature in the Burry Inlet SPA has been assessed as being in favourable condition as none of the targets failed. Threats to condition Part of the condition assessment is to identify threats to the condition of the oystercatcher feature at the Burry Inlet SPA. A threat is defined as an activity that is currently not impacting condition but has the potential to do so over the next reporting cycle, if activity levels increase or are unmanaged. It is important to identify these threats to be able to put pre-emptive management in place to prevent further declines in condition. The threats to the Burry Inlet SPA for the oystercatcher feature are stated below. Disturbance Although current disturbance levels are not affecting the condition of the feature, oystercatchers are moderately sensitive to disturbance pressure so any increases in human derived disturbance need to be carefully assessed. Climate change It is not yet clear what pressures will be seen from climate change at the site level or how different pressures will counteract each other. However, threats from climate change that could impact the species may include: • Rising sea levels (affecting high tide roosts). • Increasing sea surface temperature. Page 21 of 113 • Increased storm events. • Changes to prey availability and abundance

10. Appendices

Appendix A: Phase 1 Habitat Map

Appendix B: Target Notes

Appendix C: Species Lists

Appendix A Phase 1 map

Appendix B

Target Note No	Notes
1	Western edge of coastal defence below car park, outside deposition area no image
2	Concrete enclosed structure outside of deposition site, no evidence of Mussels
3	Collapsed road/track surface made up of clinker and rock
4	Pulverised Fuel Ash, PFA, cliff with recent deposits of sand seaward of the cliff face, adding protection to the friable PFA
5	Base of wind turbine – ref only
6	Section of rocks/cement aggregate/bricks used in collapsed gabions as coastal defence
7	Investigation for presence of Cockles/bivalves depth 400mm No bivalves found
8	Investigation for presence of Cockles/bivalves depth 400mm No bivalves found
9	Investigation for presence of Cockles/bivalves depth 400mm No bivalves found
10	Investigation for presence of Cockles/bivalves depth 400mm No bivalves found

TN 2

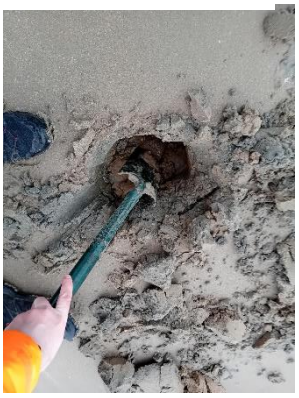
TN 3

TN 4

TN 5

TN 6

TN 7



GENERAL VIEW EAST ACROSS DEPOSITION AREA

Appendix C

Species	Number In deposition area	Activity	Number outside deposition area	Activity
Oystercatcher	3	Not active	c50	Feeding at waters edge/loafing
Sanderling	1	Not active	47	Feeding at waters edge
Herring Gull	0	N/A	23	Feeding/loafing
Black-headed Gull	0	N/A	17	Feeding/loafing

DataMap Wales Intertidal Phase 1 survey May 2000 for embedded target notes see [New map | DataMapWales]

Aerial images showing changes to Burry Port East Beach since 1999-2001

1999 - 2001

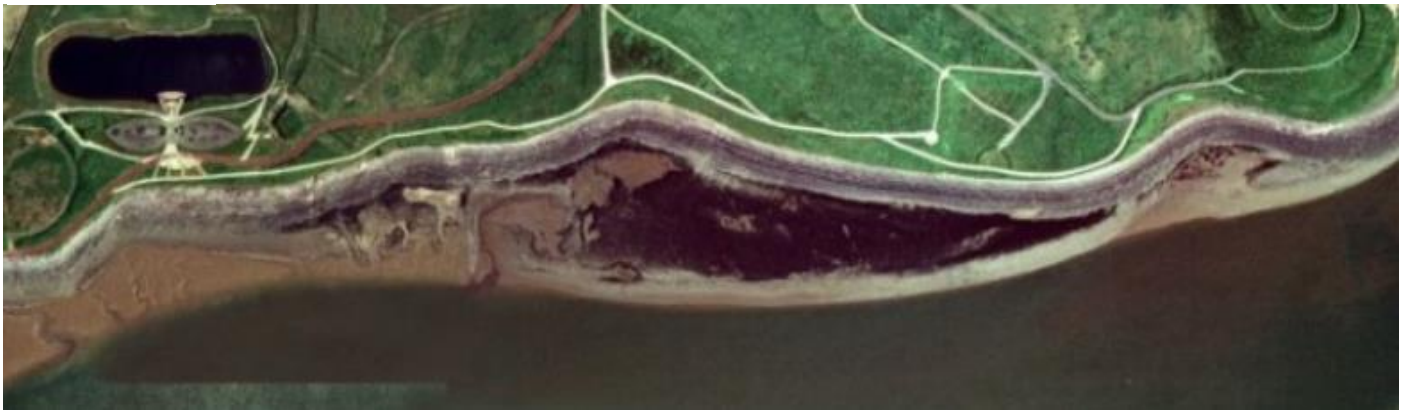


Image 2006

Image 2009 -2010

Image 2013 -2014

Image 2017

Image 2020

Image 2023

Main Oystercatcher high tide roost