

**REPORT OF THE BIODIVERSITY OFFICER**

---

**SUBJECT: CONSERVATION LAND MANAGEMENT REPORT 2015 - 2016**

1. The attached Report sets out what outcomes are being achieved for this National Park through our conservation land management work.
2. The report sets out the:
  - The land management monitoring results for 2015 to 2016
  - Specific examples of achievements under the 'Conserving the Park' scheme
  - An update on the Pembrokeshire Grazing Network
  - An update on the Pembrokeshire Fire Safety Partnership Update
  - Progress made on Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority owned sites
  - Stitch in Time project progress
  - Work with Volunteers and Monitoring
  - Training and Events
3. The report illustrates the substantial amount of work the Authority undertakes across a range of activities. The main contributors internally are the officers in Park Direction, the Warden Teams and the Ranger Service.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

**Members are requested to RECEIVE and COMMENT on the Report.**

*(For further information contact Sarah Mellor on extension 4829)*

# Conservation Land Management Report 2015 to 2016



**Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority**



*Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority Conservation Land Management Report 2015-2016*

0

## Table of Contents

Introduction .....	2
Land Management Monitoring Results .....	3
Monitoring Results.....	3
1. Conserving the Park .....	5
Background .....	5
Butterfly Bonanza at Treathro .....	5
Homes for barn owls.....	6
Ponies arrive at South Hook LNG .....	6
New sites in 2015-16.....	7
2. Pembrokeshire Grazing Network Update .....	8
PONT best practice visit .....	8
3. Pembrokeshire Fire Safety Partnership Update .....	9
4. Pembrokeshire National Park Authority owned sites.....	10
Wild about Welsh Meadows at Skrinkle Haven.....	10
Wildflower Arks.....	10
Penlan 10 years on.....	11
Ancient Woodland Restoration .....	11
5. Projects .....	12
Stitch in Time .....	12
6. Volunteers & Monitoring .....	14
Sychpant Meadow and Butterfly Transect .....	14
Brown Hairstreak Butterfly Monitoring .....	14
Annual Chough Monitoring.....	15
7. Training and Events.....	15
Grassland Ecology Staff Training Day.....	15
Bee Identification Training .....	16
Butterflies for Beginners .....	16
Conferences .....	16
Appendix 1 - Conservation Land Management Sites – Monitoring Methodology .....	17
Appendix 2 ‘Conserving the Park’ Scheme .....	20

## Introduction

1. As part of our land management programme conservation work is carried out on over one hundred sites, a total of approximately 4,178<sup>1</sup>hectares (~6.8% of the National Park), aimed at benefitting priority habitats and species within Pembrokeshire Coast National Park. This is achieved through the management of the National Park Authority's owned or leased estate and also through working in partnership with private landowners through our 'Conserving the Park' scheme.
2. In addition, we engage in specific projects, either through direct delivery or as part of a partnership. At any one time we may have a number of live projects aimed at engaging landowners in a particular aspect of land management, for example control of non-native invasive species through the 'Stitch in Time' project
3. This report details the work and outcomes for the financial year 2015-16.

---

<sup>1</sup> This figure is derived from GIS data held by the National Park Authority and provides our best estimate as to the total area where the National Park Authority is supporting positive land management for biodiversity. The figure covers three categories of land:

1. Property owned by the National Park Authority managed for biodiversity: 462.25ha
2. Land managed for biodiversity in partnership with private land owners: 966.26ha, of which 400ha is under a formal management agreement.
3. Access land where the National Park Authority supports commons management partnerships: 2750.37ha

## Land Management Monitoring Results

4. The Authority's conservation work covers a diverse range of activities and is normally individually tailored to sites. The practical elements of our conservation work are carried out in partnership with the Delivery team, including volunteers.

Typical activities include:

- Ecological survey and monitoring.
  - Vegetation management e.g. burning and cutting.
  - Facilitation of conservation grazing.
  - Management agreements with landowners.
  - Capital projects associated with land management such as fencing, gates and water supply.
  - Woodland management.
  - Advice on conservation management and grant schemes including agri-environment schemes and burning plans.
  - Practical assistance through the warden and ranger teams (for example assistance with tasks such as burning, cutting, fencing and scrub management)
5. Conservation sites in the active work programme are subject to formal audit visits which are written up and recorded on file. During formal visits sites are assigned a Red, Amber or Green category<sup>2</sup>.

## Monitoring Results

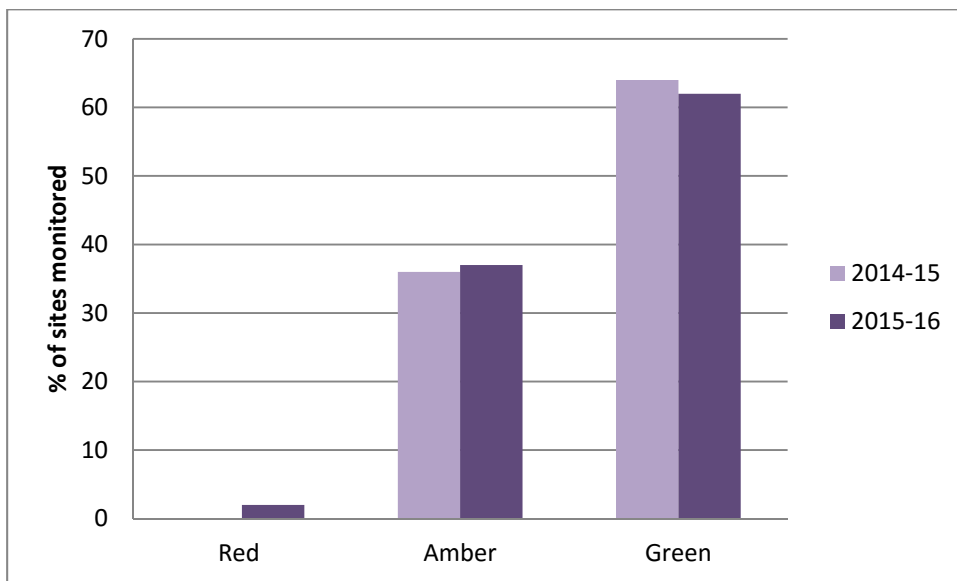
6. During the monitoring period of 2015-16, 66% of sites on the conservation work programme received a formal monitoring visit and assessment.
7. The monitoring scheme covers all sites under the Conserving the Park scheme as well as land owned by the Authority, a total area of 1428.51ha.
8. The graph below shows the monitoring results for 2015-16. Results from 2014-15 are included for comparative purposes.

---

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix 1 for a description of the monitoring method

*Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority Conservation Land Management Report 2015-2016*

9. The results show little change from 2014-15 with the majority of sites assigned an amber or green category. The small increase in the percentage of sites classified as Amber can be explained by the recruitment of new sites (new sites are assessed as requiring enhancement of management therefore are generally classified as Amber). Overall, sites continue to be managed in line with nature conservation objectives on both Authority-owned land and on land managed in partnership with private landowners. A single site (an Authority-owned site) was assessed as being in red condition due to a grazing issue. This issue has now been resolved through discontinuing the grazing licence and seeking an alternative grazier.



## External Reporting

10. The outcomes of the land management programme are reported to the Wales Biodiversity Partnership through the Biodiversity Action Reporting System (BARS)<sup>3</sup> an online resource which is widely accessible to the general public, policymakers and decision makers alike.

<sup>3</sup> [BARS](#)



## 1. Conserving the Park

### Background

11. Conserving the Park is the Authority's flagship scheme for working with private landowners within the National Park. It has proved a powerful tool in delivering practical land management for key habitats and species and is the key vehicle for delivering first purpose conservation objectives in the National Park Management Plan, the Authority's Corporate Improvement Plan and the Pembrokeshire Biodiversity Partnership's Local Biodiversity Action Plan.
12. Conserving the Park<sup>4</sup> evolved from the highly successful Conserving the Coastal Slopes project which was the practical answer to the Authority's Chough Conservation Strategy. Further background on this project can be obtained from the project report which neatly outlines the challenges for conservation management of semi-natural habitats within the Park and is as relevant today as it was in 2002.

### Butterfly Bonanza at Treathro

14. Treathro comprises 21 ha of spectacular coastal heathland near Pwllderi in the west of the National Park. The site's naturally thin soils and exposed location meant it was no longer managed as part of the farm. Authority officers have been working with the landowner in conjunction with Natural Resources Wales (NRW) to introduce pony grazing to the site for a number of years in order to help manage the site for a diverse range of vegetation including heathland, coastal grassland, and bracken over violets.
15. The work was richly rewarded in the summer of 2015 when we received reports from various sources. County butterfly recorder David Redhead contacted us to say he had one of his best ever days in 40 years of butterfly recording at this site. On a single visit he counted over 39 Dark Green Fritillaries. Further reports came in from Mike Howe (a former Authority officer) of 20 small Pearl-bordered Fritillaries at Treathro as well as a number of Green Hairstreaks, Small Skippers and Common Blues.
16. This is another success for the Pembrokeshire Grazing Network and provides a wonderful summer experience for locals and visitors. This site has recently



<sup>4</sup> See Appendix 2 for more information on the Conserving the Park Scheme

*Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority Conservation Land Management Report 2015-2016*

gone up for sale and we will seek to work with the new owners to preserve continuity of management on this special site.

### Homes for barn owls

17. The Barn Owl Conservation Trust has highlighted Pembrokeshire as a priority area for Barn Owl conservation. A key activity is the provision of artificial nest sites in the form of boxes. Since 2006 the Conserving the Park scheme has distributed a total of 44 barn owl boxes across Pembrokeshire. As well as providing indoor and outdoor boxes, a visit is made to each site assess the suitability of the surrounding habitat and also to give advice on siting the boxes. Assistance with putting up the boxes has also been provided if required.

18. Our monitoring report highlights the success of the scheme in achieving 12% occupancy by barn owls during 2014, following several seasons of breeding depression in the Barn Owl population due to poor weather conditions. A bounce back in the breeding success during the 2014 season led to reports of an additional 3 boxes occupied during 2015 bringing total box occupancy to 21%. This is in line with similar schemes with published data.



19. Breeding adults in occupied boxes are monitored by Paddy Jenks (opposite) and chicks are ringed before they fledge. This helps to track the success of the breeding season and also dispersal of young birds from their natal area.

20. Feedback from scheme participants indicates that the new tenants are very welcome.

*“An amazing day at Slade. I spent half an hour sitting in the green barn at 0800 watching the small white owl stand on the owl box, preening. He/she then flew over my head and perched on the other side of the field and returned sometime later when I walked towards the house. Truly magical.”*

### Ponies arrive at South Hook LNG

21. When compared to mechanical vegetation management, grazing is a safe and sustainable management tool. Providing advice on managing grazing animals



on a top-tier Control of Major Accident Hazards (COMAH) site was a new challenge for the grazing animals network.

22. Six ponies arrived at South Hook LNG in October 2015 and spent the winter grazing 50ha of nature conservation area which is managed by South Hook LNG Terminal Co Ltd as part of their Section 106 planning



obligation. This stunning brownfield site has been reclaimed by nature and is now important for a range of wetland birds, dragonflies and damselflies and some less common Pembrokeshire plants such as Pale Flax.

23. The impact of the grazing animals was declared a success at the annual Nature Conservation Area meeting and the animals will be returning for the second winter here this year to a newly enlarged grazing enclosure.

#### **New sites in 2015-16**

24. Some new sites have joined the scheme this year around Brynberian village, a particularly wildlife rich tributary of the Nevern. The new sites are adjacent to other sites within the scheme thus adding value to our existing work. These holdings are not eligible to receive assistance from anywhere else so the scheme is able to step in and plug a real gap in support. Brynberian is now a small hotspot of National Park-led management activity. The new sites include three species rich grassland sites and a pond creation project.
25. Surveys are carried out on each new site to determine which habitats are present. Subsequent visits inevitably reveal more, and we were especially pleased to discover a new breeding site for the Brown Hairstreak butterfly on one of our new agreements near West Williamston. This is adding to our knowledge of this elusive and restricted species.

## 2. Pembrokeshire Grazing Network Update

26. Research conducted by NRW as part of its Natura 2000 LIFE programme highlighted inappropriate grazing as by far the greatest issue faced by our European designated sites network (Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas). Under-grazing or inappropriate grazing is a key reason for unfavourable condition of habitats across the designated sites network and also the wider countryside<sup>5</sup>
27. This year the Pembrokeshire Grazing Network supported grazing on 42 sites covering a total of 335ha.

### PONT best practice visit

28. In May 2016 the Pembrokeshire Grazing Network hosted a joint meeting with the newly-appointed officers of PONT (Pori, Natur, a Threftadaeth – Grazing, Nature and Heritage). PONT has been re-launched with financial support from Welsh Government to work with individuals and organisations to deliver grazing for the benefit of wildlife. The re-launch of PONT with significant new funding provides an excellent opportunity to raise the profile of conservation grazing throughout Wales and to create a network of local grazing schemes such as ours.
29. PONT staff were particularly interested to learn from our experiences as we are one of only 2 local grazing networks in Wales. The Pembrokeshire Grazing Network has sourced grazing for over 70 sites, with 45 sites still benefitting from the network in 2015-16.
30. One of the key reasons for the success and longevity of the Network is that conservation grazing practice is embedded within the organisations of all key partners and grazing management has become part of the 'day job'.

---

<sup>5</sup> [https://naturalresources.wales/media/674546/nrw28788-life-natura-2000-report-december-2016-update\\_english\\_spreads.pdf](https://naturalresources.wales/media/674546/nrw28788-life-natura-2000-report-december-2016-update_english_spreads.pdf) page 9.

### 3. Pembrokeshire Fire Safety Partnership Update

- 31 Authority staff continue to play an active role in the activities of the Pembrokeshire Wildfire Group, including its chairmanship. In 2015 the group was able to bring their practical experience to Welsh Government's review of the Heather and Grass Burning Code.
- 
32. The group also made a successful bid to the Welsh Government's ERD fund, securing £15,000 to purchase a second fire fogger and quad bike as well as A-frame advertising hoarding for use at marts and shows.
33. The aim of the group is to reduce the incidence and impact of wildfires through education and practical land management. Wildfires have a devastating impact on wildlife as well as a cost to public services. As of July 2015 the Fire and Rescue Service recorded a 33% reduction in call-outs to wildfires since the group began its work in 2013.



## 4. Pembrokeshire National Park Authority owned sites

### Wild about Welsh Meadows at Skrinkle Haven

34. The Authority's meadow at Skrinkle Haven is featured in Plantlife's new guide to exploring Welsh meadows<sup>6</sup>. The meadow displays a profusion of wildflowers at an easily-accessible clifftop site. Skrinkle is appreciated by local walkers as well as visitors to Manorbier Youth Hostel and nearby campsites, and a range of typical meadow flowers are evident with Yellow Rattle, Black Knapweed, Birdsfoot Trefoil and Oxeye Daisy contributing to the colourful display. Relaxing the mowing regime on this grassland has really paid off.



### Wildflower Arks

35. A local contractor collected seed from St. Davids Airfield this summer using a brush seed harvester. Wyndrush Wild is a local company which specialises in selling locally-sourced wildflower seeds, and the seeds harvested here will be used to establish new meadows elsewhere in the county. Wyndrush Wild also collected from Blaencleddau Farm, a privately owned site which is part of the Conserving the Park scheme.



36. A 95% decline in wildflower meadows since the Second World War highlights the important role of the remaining meadows as 'Arks' of genetic diversity, and it is good to see them being used to establish new meadows. Visitors were also able to buy packs of seeds from Oriel y Parc for use in wildlife gardening projects.

---

<sup>6</sup> [Explore the magical world of Welsh meadows | Publications](#)

### Penlan 10 years on

37. In 2001 the Authority embarked on a five year experimental project to create native heathland and woodland on what was then a 70ha conifer plantation in the Gwaun Valley. In 2015 a consultant was commissioned to assess the success of the project.

38. A detailed field survey revealed that 39ha of heathland, grassland and scrub and 21ha of incipient woodland has emerged from what was a dark canopy of Sitka spruce: a resounding success. The survey also noted that highly mobile bird species associated with



heathland such as Linnet, Reed Bunting, Skylark, Grasshopper Warbler, Kestrel and Cuckoo have already made their way to the site.

39. The survey also identified the potential for colonisation by several scarce higher plants present on adjacent Carningli. Penlan also offers potential habitat for some specialist invertebrates including moth species and two uncommon damselflies, the Southern Damselfly (a Preseli specialist) and the scarce Blue-tailed Damselfly.

### Ancient Woodland Restoration

40. Pentre Ifan saw another major phase of conifer removal by woodland wardens this winter which has completely transformed the experience along one of the woodland rides. This was a tricky phase on wet ground during a very wet winter – however, hundreds of new native trees planted by National Park Volunteers leapt into life this spring.



41. A further phase of conifer removal also took place this winter at Cilrhedyn Wood. This almost completes the removal of conifers from the site. Dormice are still eluding us in boxes provided at Pentre Ifan but their presence in the woodland was confirmed by hazelnut evidence found outside of box number 12.

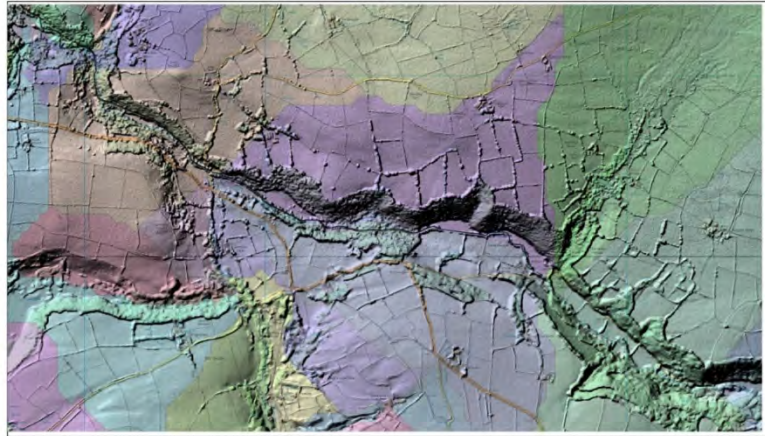


## 5. Projects

### Stitch in Time

42. The Stitch in Time project aims to eradicate Japanese knotweed, Himalayan balsam and *Rhododendron ponticum* from the Gwaun Valley catchment. It is funded by the Sustainable Development Fund (administered by the Authority) with additional assistance from NRW.

43. A part-time Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS) Project Coordinator post is being funded by the project and their main role is to devise and implement a control strategy for the target INNS.



Half-drainage basins in a section of the Gwaun Valley

Downloaded from Ordnance Survey / Created by EN @user, full\_name NI (13/10/2016) GridInfo / Scale: 1:1 001  
© Hereford & Gordon's, hereford.co.uk Ordnance Survey / © Crown copyright and database rights, Ordnance Survey 100022134.



44. Systematic eradication (or near-eradication) from a defensible area is the most cost-effective solution in the long term. As INNS often spread down watercourses, catchments are an appropriate scale at which to work.

45. A systematic survey of the Gwaun catchment was undertaken by the project officer and benefitted enormously from dedicated survey volunteers as well as sightings by members of the public. The survey recorded INNS at 120 sites in the Gwaun Valley, locating 4.5ha of Himalayan Balsam, 9ha of Japanese Knotweed and 11ha of Rhododendron.

46. Volunteers have contributed almost 140 person-days and have been critical to the management of Himalayan Balsam. The Project Coordinator has received an overwhelming amount of support from groups and individuals including Cymdeithas Llandudoch, Friends of Pembrokeshire Coast National Park,



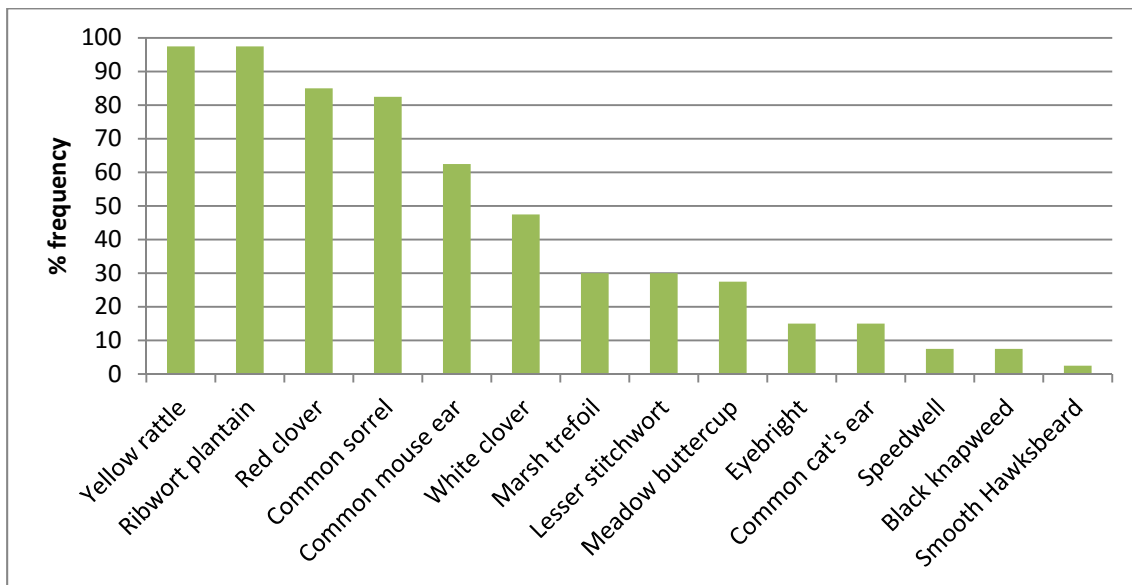
Pembrokeshire Rivers Trust and Nevern Angling Association.

47. The Friends of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park have subsequently “adopted” some sites for ongoing monitoring and pulling any Himalayan Balsam that emerges – allowing the Project Coordinator to focus on other sites. The response from landowners has also been excellent with the majority of landowners within the valley participating in the project.
48. Japanese knotweed and Rhododendron require specialist control and have either been treated by contractors or by Authority staff. However, four volunteers were funded to undertake spraying training and have put this to good use in 2016. Newport Paths Group was provided with a brushcutter for the 2016 Balsam season in the Nevern and Clydach. The Group funded brushcutter training themselves and are now able to work alongside contractors.
49. Himalayan balsam has been found at about 30 sites so far, with a total extent of 4.5 ha. Control is in progress on a total of 3.5 ha with excellent results. Effective eradication is a possibility by 2019.
50. Japanese knotweed has been found at about 60 sites so far, with a total extent of about 9 ha. Plants were stem injected and foliar sprayed in 2015. Stem injection appears to have given the best result (no/very few stems visible above ground). Foliar sprayed plants show reduced above-ground plant mass/growth/vigour, but will require 3-5 seasons of treatment. (Due to the stem diameter required for injection not all knotweed can be injected.)
51. Rhododendron has been found at about 30 sites so far, with an extent of 11 ha. 8 ha of this lies within the Trecwn Valley (Gwaun catchment) of which about a quarter has been treated.
52. The funding for the project comes to an end in September this year, while excellent progress has been made the job is clearly not over. Delay gives a chance for INNS to re/colonise, so continuity of resourcing is highly desirable in order to keep up the momentum of control and to protect resources already invested.
53. We have submitted an application for a Heritage Lottery Fund Heritage Grant development phase project in June 2016. If this application is successful, a second round application would follow in 2017 for delivery from 2018 – 2023.
54. The project has applied learning and skills from other initiatives, including the SDF-funded Cemaes Himalayan Balsam Eradication Projects (2012 and 2013), run by Cymdeithas Llandudoch.

## 6. Volunteers & Monitoring

### Sychpant Meadow and Butterfly Transect<sup>7</sup>

55. Four north area voluntary wardens who were keen to get more involved in biological monitoring undertook quadrat sampling on meadow species at the Authority's beautiful Sychpant meadow. Volunteers took 40 quadrat samples recording key grassland flowers allowing estimation of the percentage frequency of these species within the sward. This will provide a very useful baseline for future monitoring visits.
56. Graph showing % frequency of herb species at Sychpant Meadow 2015



57. We also set up a new butterfly monitoring transect which incorporates the meadow and also the wood pasture of the Sychpant Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and volunteers hope to monitor this on a weekly basis over the coming season. A number of butterflies were sighted on the day including Dark Green Fritillary and Silver-washed Fritillary. We also made the first ever record of Small Skipper for that map square!

### Brown Hairstreak Butterfly Monitoring

58. The Brown Hairstreak butterfly has a very restricted distribution in Pembrokeshire and its main stronghold is now around the Daugleddau area. The species lays its eggs on young blackthorn regrowth. Hedge-cutting practices are the biggest



<sup>7</sup> Standard Method used for butterfly monitoring by the UK Butterfly Monitoring Scheme run by Butterfly Conservation.

challenge for this butterfly; annual hedge trimming is practised widely in the National Park and is capable of wiping out a population in just two years. Hedgerow trimming on a 3 year rotation is the ideal management for this species.

59. The butterflies are very hard to spot as they spend much of their time flying high in the canopy of the trees. The best way to monitor the species is to head out in winter to hunt for the exquisitely beautiful eggs on bare blackthorn twigs.
60. South area volunteer wardens braved the soggy winter weather to help survey two farms as part of Butterfly Conservation's annual surveys. Unfortunately we drew a blank on the first farm despite lots of suitable habitat, but our efforts were rewarded on the second farm when we turned up a total of 29 eggs distributed on sheltered hedgerows around the farm.
61. Elsewhere across the county, many hours were contributed by Butterfly Conservation volunteers, helping to keep an eye on this scarce species.

### **Annual Chough Monitoring**

62. The 2015 Chough survey identified an additional eight occupied territories (compared to 2014) and a higher number of Chough pairs with eggs and young in the nest.
63. Overall productivity (i.e. chicks fledging) was slightly lower than in 2014 due to late stage failures, possibly resulting from predation or weather impacts. The number of non-breeding birds was estimated at between 65 and 76 birds - the highest for many years. In conclusion, the population continues to show good signs of recovery since the severe winters of 2009/10 and 2010/11.
64. 2015 Chough monitoring was undertaken almost entirely by volunteers.

## **7. Training and Events**

### **Grassland Ecology Staff Training Day**

65. In July we held a grassland training workshop for Authority Warden teams at Mynachlogddu. We spent the morning talking about the challenges of grassland conservation and putting the work we do here in the National Park into a wider context. In the afternoon we had a sunny visit to Llwyn Eithin farm where the landowner manages haymeadows and wet pasture on his low input farm. It was a really useful day all round, and provided a nice opportunity for Wardens to see the meadows at their finest in the height of summer - rather than muddy and barren in winter when the majority of the hard work is carried out.



### Bee Identification Training

66. With the widespread decline of bumblebees much in the news these days, there is much interest in learning more about these important pollinators. A bumblebee training event was held in the dunes at Freshwater East in July. With local expert Clare Flynn, participants learnt about bee life cycles and how to identify and record the various species we have here in Pembrokeshire. As the course was very popular and oversubscribed, these bee events will now be held annually, at a different location each year.



### Butterflies for Beginners

67. Twelve people attended our Butterflies for Beginners course here at Llanion Park. Led by David Redhead, a local enthusiast, we spent the morning learning about UK butterfly species we are likely to see in Pembrokeshire and then headed off to Westfield Pill to put our skills to the test. Westfield Pill didn't disappoint and we recorded a number of species including Small Skipper, Large Skipper, and Comma.

### Conferences

68. Geraint Jones gave a presentation on our Conserving the Park scheme to the Wales Biodiversity Partnership Conference at Aberystwyth in September.



## Appendix 1 - Conservation Land Management Sites – Monitoring Methodology

### Method

A formal assessment considers the species and habitats for which the site is being managed. Monitoring is different for each site depending on what we are trying to achieve through management. The timing of formal visits may be varied from year to year to assess a site with multiple features of interest.

### Monitoring considers two things:

i) The quality of the habitat which is discerned through the presence and abundance of typical positive indicator species (e.g. typical haymeadow flowers) and negative indicator species (e.g. nettles, docks) as recommended by the Joint Nature Conservation Committee. We may also consider vegetation structure in terms of sward heights or the balance of scrub to grassland where these are critical to individual species. We carry out some selected specialist species monitoring for example Skylark and Marsh Fritillary where appropriate.

ii) Compliance with an on-going suitability of the management regime. This will include information on the appropriate timing of management interventions, the success of individual interventions for example bracken control, and physical audit of capital items.

Relying entirely on (i) above to provide a monitoring result is fraught with difficulty. Species can often 'hang on' in habitats of declining quality and natural population fluctuations driven by the weather, or other factors outside of our control can confound the interpretation of these results.

Therefore we combine the information provided by both (i) and (ii) with the professional judgement of experienced staff to assign the site to one of three categories (Red, Amber, Green). Adding a qualitative professional judgement element has been used very successfully in nature conservation scheme monitoring and this was used by the Countryside Council for Wales' (Natural Resources Wales legacy body) rapid review of SSSIs in 2006.

## Explanation of Monitoring Categories

RED	AMBER	GREEN
<p>A site is judged to be Red if:</p> <p>A serious or repeated breach of management plan has taken place.</p> <p>Damaging activities have taken place or features of interest destroyed/partially destroyed.</p>	<p>A site is judged to be Amber if:</p> <p>Management is considered compliant and effective but the conservation value of the site will take time to improve.</p> <p>There is a positive direction of travel in terms of quality improvement but with minor deviations from the management plan which may slow recovery or improvement of conservation value.</p> <p>Management is compliant but our recommended management is not producing the expected results.</p>	<p>A site is judged to be Green when the management regime is compliant, the management is effective and the site is of high quality and with high ecological integrity.</p> <p>In the green category we are often 'running to stand still' as maintenance of good condition requires continued management.</p> <p>Such sites may slip back to Amber if the land changes hands or the owners' circumstances change.</p>

<p>Our response:</p> <p>The Authority will make a judgement on whether to continue involvement with the site.</p>	<p>Our response:</p> <p>In the first case, the positive feedback is provided to the landowner.</p> <p>In the second case we communicate with the landowner regarding ideal management practice and reasons for deviation, perhaps looking for alternatives.</p> <p>In the third case we would work with the landowner to experiment with management. This is standard practice in nature conservation management and is referred to as 'adaptive' management.</p>	<p>Our response:</p> <p>Green sites may stay with the scheme requiring smaller amounts of intervention. For example a site which had capital expenditure such as gates and scrub control may now only need a small amount of on-going assistance with grazing animals.</p> <p>For some sites continued support may be the only option for retaining the conservation interest of the site.</p>
---	---	--

Some of the detail of these responses are only relevant to the Conserving the Park scheme, but for the broad principles apply across all the Authority's conservation portfolio.

## Appendix 2 'Conserving the Park' Scheme

### Background

'Conserving the Park' is Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority's flagship scheme for working with private landowners within the National Park. It has proved a powerful tool in delivering practical land management for key habitats and species and is our key vehicle for delivering first purpose conservation objectives in the National Park Management Plan, the Authority's Corporate Improvement Plan and the Pembrokeshire Biodiversity Partnership's Local Biodiversity Action Plan.

Conserving the Park evolved from the highly successful 'Conserving the Coastal Slopes' project, which was the practical answer to the Authority's Chough Conservation Strategy. Further background on this project can be obtained from the excellent project report, which neatly outlines the challenges for conservation management of semi-natural habitats within the National Park and which is as relevant today as it was in 2002.

### Why is it needed?

Habitats such as flower-rich grasslands, marshy grasslands and woodlands and coastal slopes all contribute to the rich diversity of wildlife in the National Park. These semi-natural habitats suffer from a range of issues such as land abandonment, inappropriate stock, lack of grazing and lack of traditional vegetation management.

Outside of designated areas there are gaps in the support available to landowners who aspire to manage their land for the benefit of wildlife. The Conserving the Park scheme aims to fill these gaps, and also to facilitate access to other sources of support and to add value where possible. It is important to note that the scheme is not intended to compete with, or replace existing schemes.

The scheme supports community spaces such as churchyards, which often hold remnants of ancient flower-rich grassland. Volunteers help out with the annual cut and rake which produces an abundance of spring and summer flowers and excellent pollinator habitat at Stackpole Churchyard.

### How does the scheme work?

Landowners enter the scheme by two main avenues. They may see the scheme information on our flyers or on our website and contact us directly, or as is often the case they are referred to us by one of our partners, for example NRW..

Sites are visited and assessed for current conservation value and condition and their potential to deliver conservation outcomes for priority habitats and species. The list of priority habitats and species are taken from the Local Biodiversity Action Plan for Pembrokeshire which provides action plans for European Annex 1 habitats and Annex 2 species and UK Biodiversity Action Plan habitats and species in Pembrokeshire, as well as those of local concern.

The Local Biodiversity Action Plan partnership consists of a wide range of statutory and non-governmental organisations and voluntary organisations. The Local Biodiversity Action Plan is regularly updated and reviewed by a core steering group of key partners including NRW, Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority, Pembrokeshire County Council and the Wildlife Trusts of South and West Wales - ensuring information is relevant and up to date. A list of priority habitats and species can be found in Appendix 1 of the Local Biodiversity Action Plan. Please click [here](http://www.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/content.asp?id=19158&nav=1626,109,135&parent_directory_id=646):

[http://www.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/content.asp?id=19158&nav=1626,109,135&parent\\_directory\\_id=646](http://www.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/content.asp?id=19158&nav=1626,109,135&parent_directory_id=646)



**Help ar gyfer Help  
bywyd gwyllt for wildlife  
ar eich tir on your land**

Os ydych chi berchen ar wylwyr dŵr ac am wylwyr gwyllt yn fflurhysu, yno fe allwch ein helpu gyda'n nod o atgyfwynio rhydwylwyr a goronau wylwyr bywyd gwyllt a lewys y Parc Cenedlaethol. Yn gyflwrdd am llyso, fe allwch ni ddarparu:

**Cyngor**

- Gwybodaeth ar grantiau a mathau eraill o gymorth
- Help ymarferol rhad ac am ddim gyda staff ac offer arbennigol
- Help gyda gwaith cylkwl fel ffensiō gwlwyr cyflwrdd dŵr
- Toliadau am nodi i'r trwy gylwddau rhydwylwyr
- Help i gael hyd i'r stoc pori a'r peiriauwlwyr iawn
- Calfogaeth barhaus hyd yn oed pan fydd y rhydwylwyr newn iŵ

Am fwy o wybodaeth, ffonwch 0845 345 7275 neu e-bostwch [julag@pembrokeshirecoast.org.uk](mailto:julag@pembrokeshirecoast.org.uk)

**Advice**

- Information on grants and other assistance
- Free practical assistance with staff and specialist equipment
- Help with capital works such as fencing, water supply, gates
- Payments for managing land through management agreements
- Help to source the right grazing stock and machinery
- Continued support even when management is up and running

For more information, call 0845 345 7275 or email [julag@pembrokeshirecoast.org.uk](mailto:julag@pembrokeshirecoast.org.uk)

**Cynffwrdd allweddol:**

- Glaswylwyrdd • Rhawylwyrdd
- Cwylwyrdd • Prynwylwyrdd
- Cwylwyrdd • Gwylwyrdd
- Tynwylwyrdd

**Key habitats:**

- Grasslands • Heathlands
- Coastal slopes • Scrub
- Woodlands • Wetlands
- Woodland edges

**Parc Cenedlaethol  
Pembrokeshire Coast  
National Park**



## Process

Check the site is eligible by deciding whether it supports/is capable of supporting priority habitats and species.



Identify the ideal management regime.



Discuss management with the owner and identify barriers to management (such as lack of stock, inability to carry out work, lack of site infrastructure) and sources of alternative funding such as agri-environment schemes.



Barriers to management removed by selecting items from the toolkit (below).



Management and toolkit support agreed with the owner and site enters the scheme. Annual monitoring provides owners with ongoing support and progress updates on their management.

## The Toolkit approach

The Toolkit approach was developed during the Conserving the Coastal Slopes Programme. It is highly effective as it can tailor solutions to site management issues and therefore offer highly targeted support.

