

The *Stitch in Time* Project

A new 15-month project to tackle invasive non-native species (INNS) in the Gwaun Valley is set to begin in the New Year.

The *Stitch in Time* project is to target Japanese knotweed, Himalayan balsam and Rhododendron, which are all known to be present in the valley. They also feature among the priorities for action in the Pembrokeshire INNS Grouped Species Action Plan.

The project is funded by the Sustainable Development Fund, which is administered by the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority.

INNS can out-compete native UK species, physically change ecosystems and damage property. Some, like Giant hogweed, can be extremely harmful to human health.

Piecemeal treatment of INNS rarely addresses sources of infection, which implies that treatment will need to continue indefinitely. Treatment is not cheap - the cost of managing INNS has been put at £1.7 billion per year in the UK - so prevention is better than cure.



Rhododendron Ponticum
Photo: RPS Group PLC

As many invasive species spread along water-courses, a joined-up, catchment-based response to control, and subsequent defence of the catchment, would seem to be a cost-effective approach.

PEMBROKESHIRE BIODIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP



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The project, which is being managed by the National Park Authority, will test just such an approach in the Gwaun Valley.

A central aim of the project is to increase awareness among organisations, individuals and communities about INNS and to build capacity in local communities to monitor and manage them and any re-infestation.

The *Stitch in Time* project will apply learning from other initiatives, including the recent Cemaes Himalayan Balsam Eradication Projects, also funded by the Sustainable Development Fund.

The newly-appointed *Stitch in Time* Project Co-ordinator is Dr Ali Wright, who will join the National Park Authority in the New Year.



Dr Ali Wright

Project Co-ordinator, Ali said: "I'm a local girl, and grew up in Llanrhystud where my parents ran the village pub. I gained a degree in Botany from Aberystwyth University, and later a PhD from the Institute of Grassland and Environmental Research (IGER) at Aberystwyth.

"I worked for six years in the south-east of England as a scientific writer, before moving back

to Ceredigion where I worked as a field scientist on the *Miscanthus* breeding programme at IGER.

"Since then I've worked in the Plant Health and Biotechnology Branch of Welsh Government where I updated the Code of Practice on ragwort, assisted on the consultation document excluding genetically modified plants from Wales and assessed applications for plants submitted onto the National List.

"More recently, I worked as a *Phytophthora* Inspector for Food and Environment Research Agency (FERA) where I surveyed for plant disease in North Wales and the north of England. This involved managing infection sites, working with landowners and stakeholders, and delivering *Phytophthora* awareness and training sessions. Biosecurity was a key consideration.

"Since leaving FERA, I've set up my own business specialising in refurbishment and painting of antique and vintage furniture, while training as a professional upholsterer.

"The *Stitch in Time* project promises to be a return to my roots and an exciting, community-based approach to management of invasive species. I can't wait to get started!"

Please get in touch if you would like to report any of the target species within the Gwaun catchment, or to get involved with practical action as part of the project. Email: info@pembrokeshirecoast.org.uk Tel: 0845 345 7275.

Michel Regelous

Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority



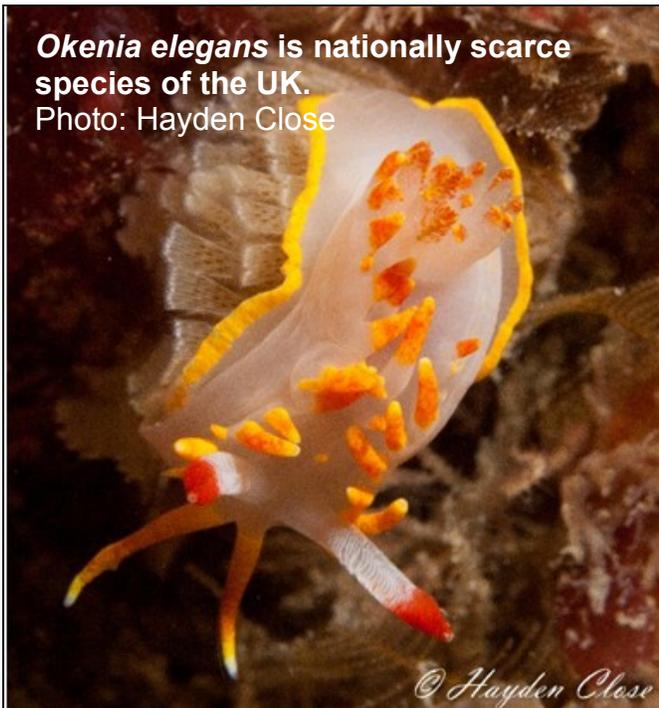
Jewels in the Ocean... Not Your Average Slug!

Nudibranchs are the carnivores of the 'sea slug world' and like their terrestrial cousins have a big appetite, however unlike the terrestrial slugs they exhibit a huge variety of shapes and dazzling colours. The name nudibranch means 'naked gill', the name refers to the external respiratory organs such as the brachial plumes or club like processes found on the outer body.

Nudibranch are predators, each species often only feeding on one kind of prey organism, thus a wide range of food needs to be available to host a high diversity of nudibranch species. As they are at the top of the food chain their presence is an indicator that the communities they rely on must also be healthy.

Okenia elegans is nationally scarce species of the UK.

Photo: Hayden Close



Nudibranch avoid being preyed on themselves as they have a very clever chemical defence mechanism. Some can produce their own chemicals whilst others concentrate the toxins from their prey rendering themselves toxic to predators.



Flabellina pedata

Photo: Phil Newman

Skomer Marine Nature Reserve boasts a high diversity of nudibranch species with 68% of the UK species represented in an area just 13.3 square kilometres. 75 species have been recorded since records for the Reserve began in 1975 and during summer 2014 a dedicated survey found 51 species over 2 weeks. This high diversity is a reflection of the wide range of communities found in the Reserve from tide swept rocky reefs to sheltered bays and rich sediment communities.

Kate Lock

Skomer Marine Nature Reserve

Pembrokeshire's Wildlife Set to Receive a Boost

The Welsh Government Minister for Natural Resources, Carl Sargeant, has approved funding for four projects in Pembrokeshire under the £6m Nature Fund announced last year. The fund is aimed at projects across Wales which tackle declining biodiversity and deliver benefits to communities.

The projects approved for funding in Pembrokeshire demonstrate the range of approaches to biodiversity conservation, made possible by close collaboration between the many active stakeholders in our county.



Pembrokeshire Coastal Forum are leading on a partnership between land managers, business, industry, government and third sector organisations to reduce nutrient discharges to the Cledau river catchment.

The National Trust are heading up a collaboration between several organisations to develop a repeatable template for improving the quality of and ecological connectivity between high value nature conservation sites, with additional benefits to local communities. The project will take place on the Castlemartin peninsula and the hope is that a 'toolkit' will be produced which can be used to repeat the project elsewhere.

Coed Cymru and the Rivers Trust will be working across mid and west Wales in a collaborative project focusing on the farmed landscape to improve the water quality in river catchments.

The future Fisheries Living Seas project will promote low-impact fishing practices to help species and habitats recover from previous unsustainable practices.

The projects are all expected to be complete by summer 2015 and the outcomes will be shared widely to inform further work.

Ant Rogers

Biodiversity Implementation Officer



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

The Welsh Sea Watchers Project

It has been a busy first year for the Welsh Sea Watchers Project. Having received funding from the Volunteering in Wales Fund, the Sea Watch Foundation has been working hard to further systematic monitoring through citizen science

and public awareness of Welsh whales and dolphins. The main focus has been on fieldwork and training courses, with over 100 volunteers benefiting from courses run by our Wales Development officer all around Wales to educate and inspire the general public to get involved in marine conservation.



In Pembrokeshire, both the Dale Fort Field Centre and the Tenby National Park Centre have hosted courses and talks for interested parties and thanks to the kind support of the RSPB and Thousand Island Expeditions, local volunteers were able to hold a land based cetacean survey on Ramsey Island for Sea Watch's annual National Whale and Dolphin Watch in July.

More recently Sea Watch volunteers assisted in the rescue of a rare pygmy sperm whale off the coast of Anglesey, which was successfully returned to the sea.

Going into our second year, we are hoping to build on the success of the first year but we need some help to do this! We are still looking for volunteers to get involved with the project on a regular basis. Whether you are a recent university graduate, wildlife professional or just someone with a strong personal interest in the subject, we want to hear from you, anyone is welcome! Activities involve anything from organising land based cetacean watches to data entry; partaking in boat surveys to giving public talks and promoting the project on social media.

If you think you can help, we want to hear



from you! We are particularly looking to build on our public awareness campaign and are hoping to recruit more volunteers as Sea Watch presenters, to give talks in schools and deliver fun and educational activities to the next generation of young conservationists.

Alternatively, if you are looking for talks and activities for your local wildlife group, university society or just an interested group of friends, why not get in touch to organise a cetacean training course?

For more information, please get in touch.

Katrin Lohrengel

Wales Development Officer

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Poppit Marsh – From Tangled Balsam Forest to Access-for-All Path

A wonderful world of wildlife has opened up for children with disabilities at Poppit Marsh, after a volunteer group teamed up with Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Rangers and Wardens to create a surfaced path.

Since 2010 St Dogmaels Community Association Cymdeithas Llandudoch has methodically cleared 18 acres of the invasive species Himalayan balsam from its source at the head of a stream to Poppit Marsh, through which an accessible gravel footpath runs.

National Park Authority North Area Warden Manager Geraint Harries said: “Authority staff repaired the path to a wheelchair standard while hard-working Cymdeithas Llandudoch volunteers systematically tackled the marshy areas where this ‘pink peril’ grows adjacent to the path.”

Gill Wislocka, a long-standing volunteer with Cymdeithas Llandudoch is delighted with the resulting facility and said: “I felt almost tearful to see families with disabled children on the

new wheelchair accessible path through Poppit Marsh. It is a joy that these children can access the marsh not as some special ‘disability’ feature but as a normal path that other families use.

“Now the balsam is very much depleted, people can see the stream, the dippers, the beauty and variety of flowers and plants such as the tussock sedges. They have also seen froglets crossing the path and heard the bird-song, which is far more varied than when this area was just a Himalayan balsam forest.”

She added she had spoken to some of the visitors, who wanted to extend their thanks to the National Park Authority for creating a path which has ‘made their holiday a joy and a place they will return to’.



Members of Cymdeithas Llandudoch at Poppit Marsh

Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority Chairman Cllr Mike James said: “We are continually working to make more and more of the beautiful Pembrokeshire Coast accessible for wheelchair users, people with pushchairs and those who are less able. Cymdeithas Llandudoch kick-started this project by making such tremendous efforts to clear the area of Himalayan balsam.

“It’s always pleasing to be able to work with communities in the National Park to bring about tangible improvements and I’m delighted that the path is now being so well used by local people and visitors.”

For more wheelchair accessible routes in the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park log onto www.pembrokeshirecoast.org.uk/WalksForAll.

Janet O’Toole

Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority



Biodiversity Events January—April



Date	Title	Information	Contact
12/01/15	The Nightjars of Brechfa Forest	Illustrated talk by Paddy Jenks at Furzy Park Community Centre, Haverfordwest.	John Steer 01646 278966
04/02/15	The Marine Life of Cardigan Bay	A presentation by Ben Sampson, Ceredigion County Council at the Catholic Church Hall, Cardigan.	Margaret 01239 621512
07/02/15	Walk – Fishguard Harbour	Walk on Fishguard Harbour outer breakwater to look for Purple Sandpipers, Cetaceans and other species.	John Steer 01646 278966
15/02/15	Build a Bug House or Bird Box	Build your own wildlife feature at the Welsh Wildlife Centre, Cilgerran.	01239 621600
17/02/15	Do You Know What an LBAP Is?	Talk by Ant Rogers, Biodiversity Implementation Officer at Foundry House, Pembroke.	Nikki Anderson 01646 686469
18/02/15	Make a Willow Bird Feeder	Join artist and sculptor Michelle Cain for a masterclass on building a willow bird feeder at the Welsh Wildlife Centre, Cilgerran.	01239 621600
20/02/15	Make Your Own Mini Wildlife Habitat	Create your own mini wildlife garden at the Welsh Wildlife Centre, Cilgerran to take away and watch develop.	01239 621600
22/02/15	Build a Bug House or Bird Box	Build your own wildlife feature at the Welsh Wildlife Centre, Cilgerran.	01239 621600
04/03/15	An Illustrated Talk on Bats	An illustrated talk on Bats by Bob & Annie Haycock at the Catholic Church Hall, Cardigan.	Margaret 01239 621512
09/03/15	The Brown Hairstreak Butterfly	An illustrated talk by David Redhead at the Furzy Park Community Centre, Haverfordwest with particular emphasis on how it is doing in Pembrokeshire.	John Steer 01646 278966
17/03/15	Reptiles, Amphibians and a Little More	Talk by Rob Parry, Wildlife Trust Conservation Manager at Foundry House, Pembroke.	Nikki Anderson 01646 686469
01/04/15	An Illustrated Talk on Otters (& AGM)	A brief AGM for the Wildlife Trust Local Branch, followed by a talk on Otters by Rob Parry, Wildlife Trust Conservation Manager at the Catholic Church Hall, Cardigan.	Margaret 01239 621512



Biodiversity Events January—April



Date	Title	Information	Contact
12/04/15	Walk Around St Anne's Head	Walk around St Anne's Head to look for signs of Spring.	John Steer 01646 278966
13/04/15	An Illustrated Talk on the Freshwater East Local Nature Reserve	Talk by Vicky Tomlinson at Furzy Park Community Centre, Haverfordwest.	John Steer 01646 278966
18-21/04/15	Guided Birdwatching Weekend on Skomer Island	Join the Wildlife Trust for this special weekend of birdwatching. Booking essential.	01239 621600
21/04/15	The Darwin Centre – A Local Charity	Darwin Centre manager, Marten Lewis will be talking about the work of the Centre at Foundry House Community Centre, Pembroke.	Nikki Anderson 01646 686469



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PembrokeshireBiodiversity](https://www.facebook.com/PembrokeshireBiodiversity)**



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Pembrokeshire Biodiversity website:

www.pembrokeshire.gov.uk (search - biodiversity)

Wales Biodiversity website:

www.biodiversitywales.org.uk

Biodiversity Newsletters

Mae'r cylch-lythyr hwn ar gael yng Nghymraeg, cysylltwch â Ant am gopi cymraeg.

PBP would like to thank all those who contributed to this newsletter. If you would like to write an article for the next newsletter please contact Ant.

PBP Members

County Landowners Association



Pembrokeshire Rivers Trust



Farmers Union of Wales



Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority



Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group



Pembrokeshire Local Action Network for Enterprise and Development



Keep Wales Tidy



Prince's Trust Cymru



Royal Society for the Protection of Birds



National Farmers Union – Wales



The National Trust



Natural Resources Wales



The Wildlife Trust of South and West Wales



Pembroke 21C Community Association Limited



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Pembrokeshire County Council



West Wales Biodiversity Information Centre

