

Pembrey Invasive Sea Buckthorn will be removed to boost dune biodiversity

On 04-06 Feb 2021, Natural Resources Wales as part of the Dynamic DunesCAPES project is undertaking invasive species removal work at Pembrey dunes.

In January 2021, contractors have been working on site to cut and remove areas of sea buckthorn. This is an invasive species introduced in the 1950s which now covers an area of 37ha – or 37 rugby pitches! This species is incredibly good at re-growing, and an effective way of stopping it from coming back is removing and then burning it. As a result, there will be several controlled fires of sea buckthorn at Pembrey finishing on Friday 5th February. Please keep your dogs on a lead, look out for signs and keep your distance from the works.

Invasive species are plants or animals that can overwhelm important aspects of any habitat. Invasive species are one of the top five drivers of biodiversity loss worldwide. Sea buckthorn *Hippophae rhamnoides*, is an invasive species at Pembrey. It grows in large, dense clumps, and as its roots grow readily in loose sand it has expanded rapidly into open dune habitat.

Large areas of sea buckthorn are a problem for wildlife. It dominates the sand dunes, leaving less space for rare and native wildflowers, including many orchid species, and other sand-dune specialist creatures including reptiles and burrowing insects, which need bare sand and low vegetation. Two conservation projects, Dynamic DunesCAPES and Sands of LIFE, are working at Pembrey Dunes to restore these habitats. **These restoration works are essential for restoring poor-health sand dune systems and supporting coastal biodiversity, particularly in the face of challenges presented by the climate & ecological crisis.**

David Kilner, Dynamic DunesCAPES Officer said ‘The dune systems we love and enjoy today are just half the size of what they were 50 years ago, it’s no surprise that Wales’s wildlife follows a similar track – 60% of wildlife in Wales is in major decline.’

Camarthen Bay alone is home to 250 species of plant 1/5th of all of Wales’ plant species and hundreds of insect species. This vital work will help create a safe haven for our wildlife, they pollinate our food, breathe for us and connect us. Mobilising the dunes creates healthier self-managing habitats that will thrive.’



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The fire brigade, MOD and neighbouring land owners and authorities have been informed and the fires will be carried out in a controlled manner with safety equipment, banksmen and water bowsers present at all times.

Dynamic DunesCAPES is a partnership project working across 34 sites in England and Wales, the projects aims to undertake 7,000 hectares of conservation restoration, supporting 33 important sand dune species. The project is funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund and the EU LIFE Programme. Project partners are Natural England, Plantlife, National Trust, Natural Resources Wales and The Wildlife Trusts.

Find out more about our work in Pembrey:

<https://dynamicdunesCAPES.co.uk/project/carmarthenshire/>

And work in Wales @duneswales on Twitter @dynamicduneswales on Facebook

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Images (Single-use)



Title: Sea buckthorn removal works at Pembrey, as part of the Dynamic DunesCAPES project.: Dynamic DunesCAPES

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Natural Resources Wales



Title: Sea buckthorn removal as part of the Dynamic Dunescapes project. **Credit:** Dynamic Dunescapes



Title: Robo-mulcher – a remote controlled mulcher used to clear young sea buckthorn as part of the Dynamic Dunescapes project **Credit** Dynamic Dunescapes

Contact:

David Kilner, Engagement Officer Wales – Dynamic Dunescapes, Plantlife

David.kilner@plantlife.org.uk



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Emma Brisdion, Communications Officer - Dynamic DunesCAPES, Natural England

Emma.brisdion@naturalengland.org.uk, or dynamicdunesCAPES@naturalengland.org.uk.

Find out more about Dynamic DunesCAPES: <https://dynamicdunesCAPES.co.uk> and about Sands of Life: <https://naturalresources.wales/about-us/our-projects/nature-projects/sands-of-life/?lang=en>

Notes to editors

About Dynamic DunesCAPES

Dynamic DunesCAPES is a partnership project restoring sand dunes across England and Wales for the benefit of wildlife, people and communities, funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund and the EU LIFE Programme. Project partners are Natural England, Plantlife, National Trust, Natural Resources Wales, Cornwall Wildlife Trust, Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust and Cumbria Wildlife Trust.

The coastal dunes of England and Wales are internationally important habitats for wildlife, listed as one of the most threatened environments in Europe for biodiversity loss. These dunes are a sanctuary to rare species like the fen orchid, natterjack toad and sand lizard. But, dune management messaging supporting dune stabilisation over many decades has meant that dunes have become overgrown with vegetation. We now realise that this is putting protected wildlife at risk. Healthy sand dunes need to be free to move and be dynamic. Many species need areas of open sand to thrive, so this project will bring life back to the dunes by creating areas of open sand. Other specialised creatures need us to improve the dune slacks, as these often water-filled dips behind the dunes are important habitats for amphibians and birds. Invasive species will also be removed from the dunes and dune grasslands, to improve conditions for rare native plants to flourish. We will work with skilled local and national experts, and involve schools and local groups, volunteers and visitors of all ages and abilities to help rejuvenate our dunes.

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