

Dynamic DunesCAPES Dune Engagement Case Study

Working in partnership to increase biological recording and volunteering opportunities

Sand dune system	Wales – multiple sites (Tywyn Fferam, Tywyn Llyn, Morfa Bychan, Pembrey, Oxwich NNR, Penmaen, Crymlyn Burrows)
Case Study Subject	An account of working in partnership with other eNGOs to increase biological recording and volunteering opportunities at sand dune sites
The Engagement Intervention	

Site background information

As part of volunteering and community action work of the Dynamic DunesCAPES project in Wales, which encompasses *‘the provision of a range of new volunteering opportunities tailored for local audiences to involve new people in volunteering and create lifelong connections with the sand dunes’* (Dynamic DunesCAPES Action Plan), UK based eNGOs with long term volunteering/citizen science monitoring projects were identified.

What was the issue/change you hoped to make?

The aim was to increase the number of volunteering opportunities at sites throughout Wales. It was important that these opportunities would have a lasting legacy and that any new volunteers would be able to continue volunteering. The hope was that it would also be possible to generate more biological data on species abundance on sand dunes as well as more opportunities for people to have opportunities that served a wide range of interests. Working with partners we were able to identify gaps in data sets that could be addressed via collaboration.

What was the suggested intervention?

A number of different species groups that could be focused on for further monitoring were identified such as bats, bees, butterflies, reptiles, amphibians and birds. Of these groups, four opportunities were identified: The Marine Conservation Society’s (MCS) Beach Watch programme, Butterfly transects with the Butterfly Conservation Trust, Bee Walks with the Bumblebee Conservation Trust (BCT) and the National Amphibian and Reptile Monitoring Programme with Amphibian and Reptile Conservation (ARC).

What did you do and how?

We worked with ARC and BCT to set up monitoring at a number of sites and coordinate training for interested local community members and volunteers. Invite to training was done through newsletters and social media. Typically, these were sites that either had an active volunteer group associated with them, where we felt the transects would continue to be monitored or sites where the eNGOs (ARC & BCT) had their own local volunteers who might visit the site. Transect locations were identified in collaboration with local partners at each site.

BCT Transects were set up at:

Tywyn Fferam, Morfa Bychan, Pembrey, Oxwich NNR and Penmaen, with active volunteer groups at the latter 4 sites.

Details of the transects as well as Bee ID field guides, nets and pots have been handed over to the sites along with the contact details for the Bee Walk team.

Training on pollinators of the dunes, Bee ID and Bee recording took place at:

Pembrey – Summer 2022 & 2023

Oxwich – Summer 2022 & 2023

Morfa Bychan/North Wales – To be delivered September 2023

ARC Transects were set up at:

Tywyn Llyn, Oxwich, Crymlyn Burrows and Baglan. Oxwich and Crymlyn Burrows continue to be regularly monitored.

Training on monitoring reptiles and the legislation surrounding this took place at Ynys Las in 2022. ARC provided the training and funding held by Dynamic DunesCAPES helped support the costs of trainees getting to the site.

Once the monitoring stations are all set up, all site managers and a corresponding staff member from the organisation coordinating the monitoring project will receive a handover detailing the location of the monitoring transects, guidance on training future volunteers and a summary of useful resources. Examples for BCT transects can be seen at the end of this document.

Working with MCS we organised a day of citizen science training for interested groups on Anglesey, enabling people to ‘try something new’. We did not set up any Butterfly transects in Wales but ensured each summer we signpost to the big butterfly count to encourage visitors to the dunes to explore and understand more about other wildlife that rely on sand dune habitats.

How much did the intervention cost?

When external trainers were hired ID training sessions cost approximately £250 per session. When working in collaboration the Dynamic Dunescapes project covered the expenses of trainees and the organisation coordinating the monitoring project provided the training. Dynamic Dunescapes also covered the cost of equipment needs for the sites to enable them to take part in the monitoring.

Examples of handovers

