MILFORD HAVEN WATERWAY AND DAUGLEDDAU ESTUARY

Monitoring of Eelgrass Populations

Pembrokeshire Coast National Park

MONITORING OF EELGRASS POPULATIONS IN THE MILFORD HAVEN WATERWAY AND DAULGLEDDAU ESTUARY

Mike Howe
PCNP

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MONITORING OF EELGRASS POPULATIONS

1 Background to the survey

The Milford Haven Waterway and Daugleddau Estuary support significant populations of eelgrass, Zostera angustifolia, a nationally scarce species of flowering plant. In the 1970's and early 1980's, the plant was recorded at several locations, including Angle Bay, Pembroke River and Sandy Haven, where it grows on muddy/sandy sediments on the foreshore. The populations at Angle Bay and Pembroke River in particular had been recorded as being very large, although the eelgrass has not been subject to recent monitoring. In view of the significance of the populations in the Milford Haven Waterway and Daugleddau Estuary, re-survey and subsequent monitoring of known populations has been included in the rolling programme of research and monitoring administered by the Milford Haven Waterway Environmental Monitoring Steering Group (MHWEMSG).

In this report, the results of the survey are presented and recommendations concerning future monitoring are made.

2 Aims and objectives of the survey.

- To revisit sites where Zostera angustifolia has previously been recorded.
- To remap the location, extent and density of populations at 1:10 000 scale.
- To locate new populations within the estuary, waterway, tributaries and embayments.

The survey was limited to the species Zostera angustifolia and only to the inter-tidal regions of the estuary. The distribution and extent of the closely related species, Zostera marina, which is entirely sub-tidal, was not featured in this survey.