

Wales Review 2025/26



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Year in review



“Securing agreements to put floating offshore wind farms in the Celtic Sea is an outstanding result that reflects the strides we’ve made in strengthening our operations in Wales through partnership, investment and engagement.”

Dan Labbad
Chief Executive

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This has been an important year of progress for The Crown Estate in Wales, as we continue to grow our ambitions for offshore wind and the marine economy – with a clear vision that these developments must deliver long-term value for Wales and Welsh communities.

Over the past few years, we have made significant strides to strengthen our operations through partnership, investment and engagement. Securing agreements for three floating offshore wind projects in the Celtic Sea reflects these efforts, with the potential to create more than 5,000 jobs and contribute £1.4 billion to the wider economy. At a time when conditions in the global market are unusually challenging and tenders in other countries have failed to attract interest, this is an outstanding result that shows what we can achieve when we work together.

The Crown Estate’s contribution has been to provide stability and direction through our longstanding experience and relationships, while investing significantly to derisk these three exciting projects. Alongside other experts, we contributed evidence and insight to the Welsh Government’s Offshore Wind Task and Finish Group, resulting in an ambitious action plan designed to harness Wales’ offshore wind potential. Now we are building momentum through the Celtic Sea Forum, supported by Marine Energy Wales, and working with developers to accelerate delivery.

Building a local skills base, infrastructure and supply-chain capacity for offshore wind will be vital to longer-term progress, helping to secure energy supplies and stabilise costs for households, while providing opportunities for businesses and creating new jobs. We are helping through our Supply Chain Accelerator, providing millions in funding for companies, skills providers and related port infrastructure, and working with the Swansea Bay Regional Skills Partnership. Meanwhile, our support for the Morlais project in Ynys Môn (see page 14) is helping to pioneer tidal stream energy in Welsh waters in a way that protects marine life.

As well as building energy security, we continue striving to deliver outcomes for nature, which underpins climate resilience, economic activity and the wellbeing of people. Activities like our peatland restoration pilot projects show how we are focusing our efforts where they can have the most benefit (see page 7).

This year, scrutiny of our work in Wales continued, and in September our Director of Devolved Nations and I were pleased to be called to give evidence to the Welsh Affairs Select Committee in Westminster, sharing our priorities for Wales with MPs from all parties. Our message to the Committee was clear: priorities like floating offshore wind and nature recovery can only be delivered through collaboration and a shared vision.

To that end, we have established a regular rhythm of engagement with Welsh Government and local authority officials across a range of portfolios. Our reception at the Senedd in July 2025 provided an important opportunity to hear directly from Members and partners, while sharing details of our contribution to coastal communities, nature recovery and the economy. We are grateful for the continued cross-party engagement and support.

Year in review continued

To further strengthen our approach, we recently established a new Wales Forum, bringing together a broad range of local perspectives and expertise. This will meet formally for the first time in June 2026, helping to ensure Welsh voices shape our activities.

One of the great strengths of The Crown Estate is our ability to take a long-term view in service of our purpose: to create lasting and shared prosperity. The results in this report show how we are delivering in Wales today, while laying the foundations to expand our impact in the years ahead. The following pages include our financial results, a summary of our activities, and our Environment (Wales) Act 2016 Section 6 report, setting out how we are enhancing biodiversity and ecosystem resilience.

In the year ahead, I am very much looking forward to working with Michael Plaut, our new Board Commissioner with special responsibility for Wales, alongside the team in our Cardiff hub, Forum members and partners to keep creating value for Wales and expanding our impact for future generations.

Dan Labbad
Chief Executive



Opportunities from Offshore Wind Leasing Round 5

>4 million

potential number of homes powered by floating offshore wind in the Celtic Sea

5,000

jobs could be created

£1.4 billion

potential contribution to the wider economy

About us

Who we are

The Crown Estate is an independent business that stewards land and the seabed for the benefit of current and future generations.

Our interests in Wales include ports and renewable energy, such as offshore wind and tidal projects. We lease seabed space for oil and gas pipelines, marine aggregates (used in construction) and the subsea cables and interconnectors that help manage electricity supply and carry intercontinental data traffic. We also manage around 65% of the foreshore and tidal riverbed. Inland, we are stewards of over 50,000 acres of common land that is primarily rough pasture, used for grazing.

Set up by an Act of Parliament and occupying a space between the public and private sectors, we are guided by four strategic pillars (see right).

The Crown Estate Act 2025 added to our founding legislation, giving us new borrowing and investment powers and making provision for the appointment of additional Board Commissioners, including one with special responsibility for giving advice about Wales, in addition to their other duties.

Following an open and competitive public appointments process, Michael Plaut was announced in May 2026 as our first Board Commissioner responsible for reporting on conditions in Wales, to further strengthen our decision-making. Michael has extensive leadership experience in the financial, commercial and non-profit sectors as well as the public sector. He is a non-executive director and Member for Wales at the BBC, Chair of the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama, and a former Chair of the CBI in Wales. He is also Governor at the University of South Wales. He lives and works in Wales and was awarded an OBE for his services to business and entrepreneurship.

Appointing a Commissioner for Wales is an important milestone, reinforcing The Crown Estate's commitment to transparency, partnership and meaningful engagement in Wales. The activities and results detailed in this report show that we are working hard to meet Welsh needs and priorities, and delivering meaningful impact for the communities we serve.



“It’s a real privilege to join The Crown Estate Board, and I’m excited by the opportunity ahead. I am particularly looking forward to bringing a strong understanding and insight of Wales into Board discussions, helping to make sure that Welsh interests, conditions and opportunities continue to be fully reflected as we take decisions for the long term.”

Michael Plaut
Commissioner with responsibility for Wales

Our strategy

Energy and climate resilience

Enable the UK’s transition to a low-carbon, climate-resilient and energy-secure future



Nature recovery

Protect, restore and connect people with nature, across land, cities and sea



Inclusive growth

Contribute to inclusive growth that unlocks potential and enables communities to thrive through improved access to new homes, jobs and infrastructure



Responsible financial returns

Responsibly generate financial returns and value for people in the UK



External context

Over the past few years, we've made significant strides to strengthen our operations in Wales, growing our ambitions for offshore wind and the marine economy. We are clear in our vision that these developments must deliver long-term value for Wales and Welsh communities through partnership, investment and engagement.

As our operations in Wales have grown, so too has public and political interest in the present and future of The Crown Estate in Wales. We welcome the debate and scrutiny and are responding positively by establishing governance structures and frameworks that will better inform and guide our work.

The Senedd 2026 election in May was an important milestone for Wales, with the number of Members increasing from 60 to 96, and the election of the first Plaid Cymru government. We thank the outgoing Welsh Labour administration for the positive working relationship that supported the early stages of our Round 5 plans in the Celtic Sea. The present Government is equally committed to making floating offshore wind in the Celtic Sea a success, and we are working closely with them to realise this opportunity.

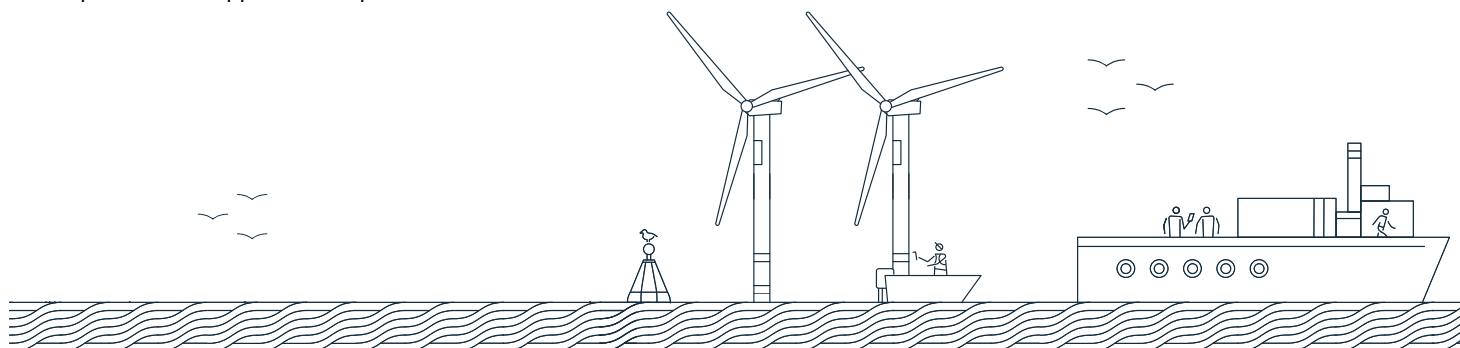
To maximise our positive impact, we have established a regular rhythm of engagement with officials across a range of portfolios. We were pleased to be invited to contribute evidence to the Welsh Government's Expert Group, established to explore The Future of The Crown Estate in Wales and identify opportunities for improving our governance and accountability to maximise the benefits to Wales. We recognise the value of independent expertise in informing future priorities and will engage constructively to support the delivery of the recommendations outlined in the Group's interim report.

Alongside this, we continued to meet regularly with the First Minister and Welsh Ministers to discuss how The Crown Estate contributes to priorities across energy, nature and coastal communities. It was hugely important to us to be present at the First Minister's Wales Investment Summit and our Chief Executive, Dan Labbad, was delighted to give a keynote address, outlining the investment opportunities enabled by offshore wind leasing in North and Southwest Wales.

Of course, we are accountable across all levels of government, and we have been working to build our relationships with UK Parliamentarians. Giving formal evidence to MPs on the Welsh Affairs Select Committee gave us the opportunity to set out our responsibilities, approach and priorities in Wales.

We value our strategic partnerships with local authorities in Wales, as the tier of government that is closest to communities. This year, we put our relationships with local councils under the spotlight to understand how we could improve our investments to better support growth locally, and how we could modernise our leasing arrangements in practical and sensible ways (see page 7). That work will continue over the coming year, and we're grateful to council leaders, cabinet members and officers with whom we have established good working relationships for the benefit of local communities.

Looking ahead, we will continue to work with industry, investors and local partners to help unlock opportunities for long-term investment, supply-chain growth and wider economic benefit. Our focus will be on building strong relationships with the new Welsh Government and Members of the Senedd, maintaining continuity where priorities align, adapting to changes in policy, and strengthening our governance structures to improve transparency and accountability.



Marine

Our Marine portfolio is where much of our activity in Wales is concentrated, and where the opportunity is greatest – not only to generate clean energy, but to support jobs, strengthen coastal communities and enhance the natural environment over the long term.

As outlined on page 1, floating offshore wind in the Celtic Sea is our flagship programme, and we are pleased to have made such huge progress on this during the year. Following the Offshore Wind Leasing Round 5 auction, which awarded rights for two floating wind farms in June 2025 to Gwynt Glas and Equinor, we made an award for the third site to Ocean Winds, a developer with significant international experience.

Floating offshore wind is an emerging technology, and at a time when the energy sector is facing a raft of challenges globally, the fact that we have made such progress on Round 5 is a major achievement. While there is a long road ahead, our decades of experience and investment in offshore wind, and our decision to invest in a programme of surveys ahead of the leasing round to reduce risk for developers, have made the Celtic Sea projects viable, and will help to retain the UK's position as a global leader in offshore wind.

In total, the three floating wind farms stand to provide 4.5GW of secure, renewable energy, powering homes and businesses and placing Wales at the forefront of innovation in the sector. But from the outset, our focus has gone beyond energy generation. Our developer contracts include requirements to create social and environmental value, helping to ensure that the opportunities created benefit Welsh businesses and communities. We are pleased to see the successful developers responding positively to their commitments in this regard.

The Crown Estate's £50 million Supply Chain Accelerator is supporting early-stage projects that will help to develop a vital UK supply chain. To date, we have funded seven organisations in Wales, from skills providers to ports and innovative companies, helping them to prepare for the demands of offshore wind.

Our wider investment in skills and opportunities include supporting the Fit for Offshore Renewables programme, which is helping local companies in South Wales to build their capability; the ORE Catapult, which is working with businesses in the Swansea Bay City Region; and the Pembrokeshire Coastal Forum on community initiatives around offshore wind.

Programmes like our North Wales Marine Internship are helping to build skills and create pathways into the sector for young people, ensuring the next generation can play a part in shaping Wales's energy future.

Taken together, these programmes and initiatives are intended to develop a supply chain and skills base that will improve outcomes, retain value locally and make Wales a more attractive place to invest in future renewable energy projects.

[!\[\]\(3cb60d42b10e53f9522bb0b392c1c4cd_img.jpg\) See case study on page 6](#)

Tidal power

Alongside offshore wind, we have continued to support the development of other marine sectors that are important to Wales. The Crown Estate has been involved in the Morlais tidal stream energy demonstration project in Ynys Môn for over ten years.

Most recently, we have invested £2.6 million in its Marine Characterisation Research Project, which uses pioneering technologies to record dolphin activity (see page 14 for more details). The social enterprise behind Morlais, the largest consented project of its kind in the world, aims to source its turbine technology locally wherever possible and create jobs and skills for local people.

Our involvement sits within a broader programme of work with partners such as Natural Resources Wales to strengthen the evidence base for tidal energy in Welsh waters. This year, we helped to fund a Marine Energy Taskforce, which brings together the UK, Welsh and Scottish Governments, key bodies and industry leaders to address challenges and seize the opportunities in this innovative sector.

£2.6 million

invested in the Marine Characterisation Research Project

7

Welsh organisations funded by our Supply Chain Accelerator



Marine continued

Holistic planning

There are of course many other demands on seabed space beyond renewable energy, including fishing, nature recovery projects, subsea data cables and energy interconnectors, oil and gas pipelines, marine minerals and aggregates, shipping and defence.

To help us balance the complex range of priorities and meet national needs, we work with stakeholders including the Welsh Government's Marine Planning team to understand how best to use seabed space. Drawing on this data and evidence, we have developed a spatial planning tool called the Marine Delivery Routemap. This interactive digital platform supports long-term planning by modelling different scenarios, helping to find solutions that support both economic development and nature recovery. A pilot was launched in February 2026, and we are now seeking feedback to ensure it meets our stakeholders' needs.

Carbon capture and storage

Carbon capture and storage (CCS) can play an important role in decarbonisation and we are supporting our customers to advance this emerging technology. This includes supporting Eni's Liverpool Bay project as a key part of the HyNet industrial cluster spanning North Wales and North West England.

Marine aggregates

Marine aggregates are an essential component of the building materials supply chain, with 90% of natural sand used in the construction industry in South Wales dredged from the sea. This in turn supports jobs and economic activity in construction, infrastructure development and coastal defence projects.

In the coming year, we will move to a new, more customer-centric licensing model that better supports nature by leasing discrete areas for individual projects. Longer term, the Marine Delivery Routemap will help to give operators and investors greater long-term visibility and confidence.

Nature outcomes

Caring for the marine environment is a constant thread through all our work. Our Marine Nature Principles guide how we make decisions, ensuring that we consider biodiversity and ecosystem resilience alongside economic outcomes.

This year, that has included supporting the establishment of MARINE Fund Cymru, progressing work to identify opportunities and projects to strengthen Marine Protected Areas, and continuing to build the data and understanding needed to manage the seabed responsibly over time. We have also been working with partners to explore opportunities in aquaculture and the wider blue economy, for example by bringing together researchers, industry and policymakers at the Seaweed Symposium in Swansea.

➤ See Section 6 report, pages 10-21



Engineering capacity in Pembroke Dock

A number of innovative solutions are being designed to support floating offshore wind in the Celtic Sea, including the automated mooring systems being developed by Ledwood Mechanical Engineering.

Based in Pembroke Dock, the firm is one of the largest employers in Southwest Wales, providing engineering, fabrication and construction services to industry. With experience in delivering infrastructure projects across the energy sector, it is well positioned to support this emerging market.

Through our Supply Chain Accelerator, The Crown Estate has awarded Ledwood funding to develop its anchor and mooring solutions, as part of our efforts to support a Welsh supply chain for floating offshore wind – and through it, skilled employment in coastal communities. We will also be working closely with Ledwood, helping to foster connections and relationships in the offshore wind sector.

Rural and Coastal

Through our stewardship of common land and our management of much of the foreshore and tidal riverbed, we support nature recovery and sustainable economic activity, while taking a long-term, place-based approach aligned with Welsh priorities.

Common land

Building on positive results from land management pilots (see case study), we are working to deliver positive, large-scale impacts for the habitats and species found on Welsh common land. By partnering with conservation bodies and commoners, we are developing restoration models that integrate local knowledge, land-use needs and cultural connections, while achieving long-term environmental outcomes and building more resilient rural economies.

Coastal communities

Over the year, our Coastal team established and strengthened relationships by meeting with 13 local authorities, with further, regular engagement planned. From these meetings, a programme of work is underway to reimagine the relationship between local authorities and The Crown Estate to reflect our commitment to fairness and our recognition of the vital role local government plays in supporting coastal communities. As an example, we are now developing new enabling agreements that will give leaseholders more freedom to deliver interventions that benefit communities and nature.

Caring for the coast

Caring for the marine and coastal environment is a core part of our role as stewards of the foreshore and tidal riverbed.

We recognise that water quality is of critical importance, as coastal waters underpin thriving marine ecosystems, tourism, recreation and the wellbeing of coastal communities. Through our Coastal portfolio, we are working with local and national partners to play a role in protecting and restoring freshwater, marine and coastal systems.

This includes supporting Surfers Against Sewage, the national environmental charity campaigning for cleaner seas. We contributed over £100,000 to enhance its Safer Seas & Rivers app, expanding coverage of pollution alerts and incident reporting and helping people better understand real-time water quality conditions across the UK. We also worked with partners to remove a number of harmful wrecks from Milford Haven and ran a dedicated marine litter clean-up programme.

➔ [See case study on page 15](#)

13

local authorities consulted on new enabling leases

>£100,000

contributed to enhance Safer Seas & Rivers app



Restoring peatland

Peat is the UK's single biggest carbon store and healthy moors supply significant quantities of drinking water; however, about 90% of them are degraded. With peatland covering around a fifth of our holding in Wales, we are taking action.

In the last year, we have run a project with the RSPB and local graziers with common rights. This has helped us to trial different methods and develop our approach to peatland restoration, community engagement and monitoring outcomes.

Our intention has always been to build a scalable model and we are now drawing on our learnings to plan a further pipeline of restoration work. Our next pilot, being scoped with the National Trust and Bangor University, will inform our longer-term work to co-create a peatland programme that delivers climate resilience and biodiversity improvements as well as benefits for local communities.

Financial review

As an independent business, we operate commercially to grow the value of our portfolio for future generations.

The majority of our work in Wales is focused on marine sectors, chiefly renewable energy. We also manage about 65% of the foreshore and tidal riverbed. Inland, we are stewards of over 50,000 acres of common land, primarily used for grazing. Each year, our revenue account profit is returned to the UK Treasury for the benefit of public spending.

Revenue and costs

Revenue streams include leasing seabed space for renewable energy generation, coastal assets, marine minerals and aggregates projects, oil and gas pipelines, data cables and energy interconnectors. Operating profit across our assets in Wales during the year was £210 million. This was an exceptional result driven by £200 million option fees from the Mona wind farm, an Offshore Wind Leasing Round 4 project that is 87% within Welsh waters.

The developer at Mona has been paying these fees, set at an auction in 2021, for exclusive rights to develop the site. As with other leasing rounds, these option fees are time-limited and front-loaded. While they have driven a significant uplift in revenue this year, this income has now ceased. This is because the developer has made rapid progress and the project has entered its pre-generation stage. Income during the pre-generation phase is set much lower and will decline as expected in 2026/27.

The Wales apportionment of Mona pre-generation rent is £5.2 million per annum, and once the wind farm starts to generate electricity, we will receive 2% of the revenue.

We also receive generation rent from the Gwynt y Môr, North Hoyle and Rhyl Flats offshore wind farms, off the coast of North Wales. This was the largest driver of our operating profit (excluding Round 4) of £9.8 million (2024/25: £7.8 million). The year-on-year increase in Welsh offshore wind revenue was largely due to wind speeds being more favourable than long-term averages, and non-option fee revenue from the Mona project (from the point at which it entered lease).

Operating costs were £2.9 million (2024/25: £2.4 million), which includes direct spend on Welsh activities and an attribution of relevant central costs.

Investment

The Crown Estate is investing significantly to support the future of renewable energy in Wales – including £40 million* spent on pre-consenting surveys to de-risk Round 5 projects in the Celtic Sea. With this work now complete, capital costs in Wales reduced to £5.6 million this year (2024/25: £21.5 million).

Alongside this, since 2024, we have invested £18 million* in projects that could support Round 5 delivery (see page 5), as part of our wider commitment to invest up to £400 million in a UK offshore wind supply chain. Our Offshore Wind Evidence and Change programme has awarded a total of £2.5 million funding to support research projects involving Welsh institutions, including collaborating with NERC to fund the ECOWind programme.

We are also supporting the development of tidal energy, with a £2.6 million investment in the Morlais tidal stream zone at Ynys Môn (see page 14) and backing for the UK-wide Marine Energy Taskforce.

The new investment and borrowing powers we acquired through the Crown Estate Act 2025 will help us to significantly increase

our investment in Wales, particularly in support of Welsh renewables and the supply chain over the next decade.

Valuation and outlook

For the financial year 2025/26, our assets in Wales were valued at £290 million – a 22% year-on-year increase following the successful award of contracts for Round 5 offshore wind farms in the Celtic Sea. The auction set Round 5 option fees at £1.6 million*, reflecting the more challenging conditions in the global market in recent years, and the less mature technology involved in floating offshore wind, which carries a different risk and cost profile.

While there is ongoing volatility in the market, we are confident that our sector experience and connections will allow us to keep augmenting our income and our investment over time, and unlock further value for Welsh businesses and communities. Further detail on the financial contribution The Crown Estate makes in Wales, and the revenues expected over time, is set out in the Welsh Government Expert Group's interim report, published in March 2026.

➤ [Read the Expert Group report at gov.wales/future-crown-estate-wales-interim-report](https://gov.wales/future-crown-estate-wales-interim-report)

£40 million
spent on surveys to de-risk Round 5 in the Celtic Sea*

£400 million
commitment to invest in the UK offshore wind supply chain

* These figures represent figures for all of Round 5, which is assessed as being 50.2% in Welsh waters

Financial review continued

Income statement

P&L, £m	FY26	FY25
Total revenue	12.7	10.2
Total costs	(2.9)	(2.4)
Operating profit excl Round 4	9.8	7.8
Round 4 option fees	200.2	245.6
Operating profit incl Round 4	210.0	253.4

Revenue by sector (excl. Round 4)

Revenue, £m	FY26	FY25
Marine – OSW	5.9	3.6
Marine – Coastal	0.8	0.7
Marine – Minerals	1.5	1.5
Marine – Linear Assets	2.3	2.0
Total Marine	10.5	7.8
W&R – Coastal	1.3	1.3
W&R – Rural	1.0	1.0
Total W&R	2.2	2.4
Total Wales	12.7	10.2

Capital spend

Capital, £m	FY26	FY25
Marine	5.0	21.0
Rural	0.6	0.5
Total	5.6	21.5

Portfolio valuation

Valuation, £m	FY26	FY25
Marine – OSW	218	169
Marine – Minerals	19	18
Marine – Linear Assets	21	18
Marine – Coastal	9	9
Total Marine	267	214
Rural – Coastal	15	14
Rural – Agricultural	9	9
Total Rural	24	23
Total	290	237

Our Nature Ambition for Wales

Section 6 Environment (Wales) Act
Biodiversity and Resilience of
Ecosystems Duty Report update



Our approach to nature recovery in Wales

Protecting and restoring nature is core to The Crown Estate's work, as one of the four pillars of our company strategy.

The most recent State of Natural Resources Report from Natural Resources Wales (NRW) highlights the scale of the challenge: one in five species is under threat, while only 40% of water bodies are considered to be in "good" condition. With ongoing threats from climate change, pollution and intensive usage of land and water, joined-up action is critical.

We therefore work closely with Welsh Government, NRW and other environmental organisations, industry, commoners and local communities to support nature to recover and flourish. Following their guidance on how we could best contribute to the Welsh Government's Nature Recovery Action Plan (see page 12), we published our Ambition for Nature Recovery in Wales in early 2025. It was prepared in line with our statutory duties under Section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016, which requires public authorities to embed support for biodiversity in their policies, programmes and activities, with a triennial report of actions taken.

This update supplements our report from 2025, with a focus on how we are implementing our biodiversity goal (one of three company-wide goals, shown right). The following pages share progress on our targets and actions in the year to March 2026, and set out targets and actions for the next three years.



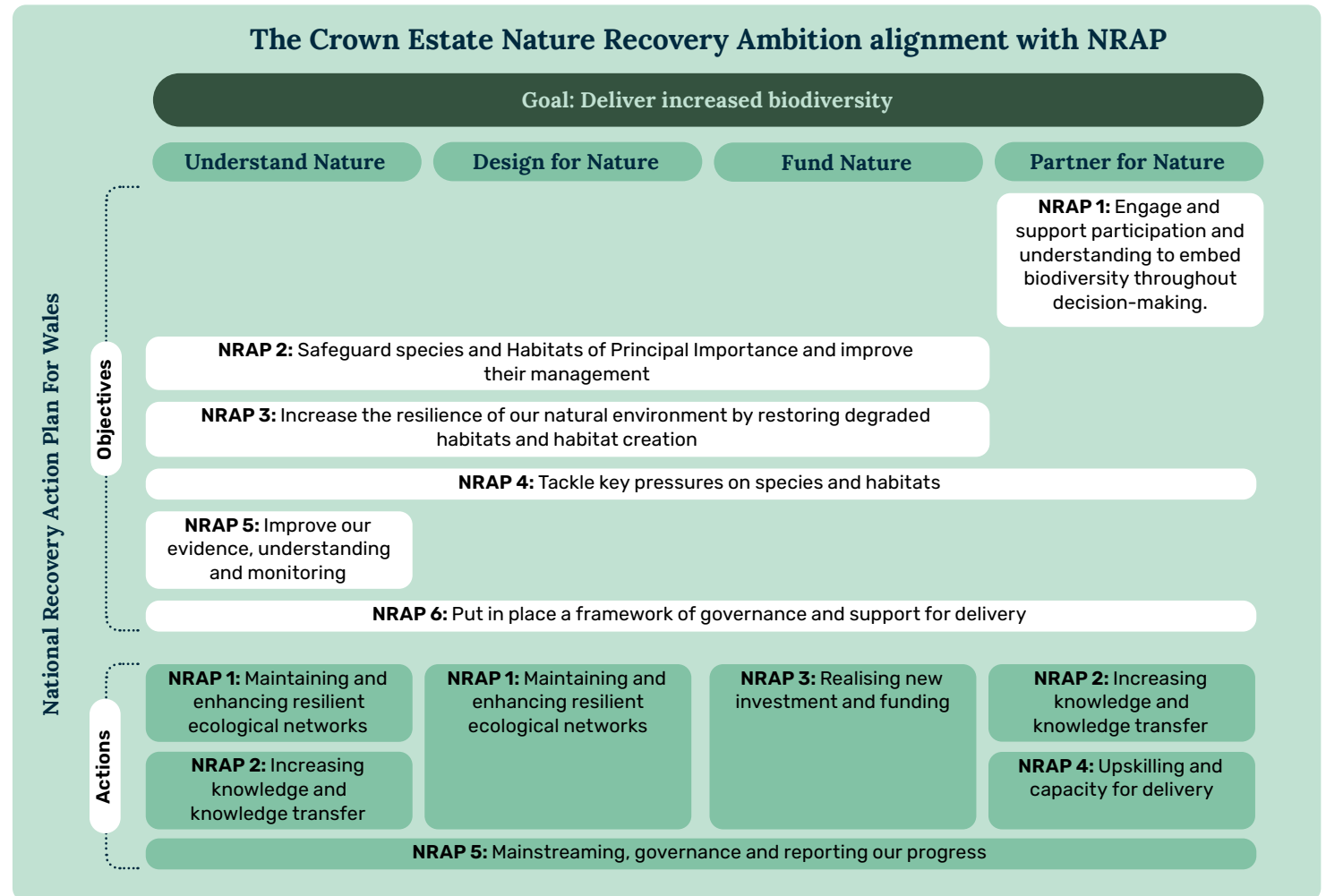
Aligning our Nature Recovery Ambition with NRAP

The Nature Recovery Action Plan (NRAP) is the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan for Wales.

Originally published in 2015 and refreshed in 2021, this document sets out a strategy to restore the natural environment and make it more resilient.

The Crown Estate's Nature Recovery Ambition aligns closely with this document, including three goals (see page 11) and the four pillars of our approach: to understand, design for, fund and partner for nature.

The diagram to the right illustrates how our goal and commitments on increasing biodiversity align with the NRAP framework in Wales.



Opportunities on land and sea

With assets spanning both land and sea (see map), we are responsible for stewarding a wide range of natural habitats.

These include nature reserves, ancient woodlands and many thousands of Habitats of Principal Importance as designated by Section 7 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016, such as grassland, heathland, pastures, swamps and fens. Further details are set out on page 16.

During the reporting period, we worked with partners to create a baseline as a starting point to inform our nature recovery activity. We improved our habitat and species datasets, updated mapping of Marine Protected Areas and identified areas with strong potential for restoration and enhancement, including seagrass and native oyster habitats.

Due to the scale of our holdings, we are not yet in a position to report on the condition of all the habitats in our care. We have, however, used data sourced from Natural Resources Wales to look at the condition of peatland, as well as its depth and potential emission and sequestration ability. We have also summarised the Species of Principal Importance present on our portfolio.



Progress highlights at sea



To ensure nature is protected in our Marine operations, we published the **Marine Guiding Nature Principles** that will shape our decision-making.

£500,000



Recognising the funding gap, we contributed £500,000 in seed funding to help establish the **MARINE Fund Cymru**. The fund aims to attract additional investment into projects that strengthen the resilience of marine and coastal ecosystems across Wales.



Working with NRW and other partners, we are refining restoration potential maps for native oysters and seagrass to highlight the most feasible areas to restore these vital habitats.



Positive Environmental Outcome Plans are now embedded in contracts for **Offshore Wind Leasing Round 5**, after bidders were required to outline measures they would take to support biodiversity and resilience in the Celtic Sea.



Protecting marine mammals at Morlais

We are proud to support the Morlais Marine Characterisation Research Programme (MCRP), which is helping to protect marine mammals and habitats while enabling the development of tidal power in Welsh waters.

The Morlais social enterprise is helping to put Wales at the forefront of this new technology, deploying tidal energy turbines within a demonstration zone off Ynys Môn. The MCRP is improving understanding of how marine mammals may interact with these devices, and developing monitoring and mitigation technology.

We have provided £2.6 million of funding for the programme so far, which is being used to develop an innovative, multi-sensor system that can detect marine mammals in the vicinity of operating turbines and deter them from the area. These capabilities could have much wider application across other sectors, including aquaculture and fisheries.

The programme is also contributing valuable environmental evidence that will be shared through our Marine Data Exchange, with the aim of supporting future marine energy projects.

Progress highlights on land



Learning from the results of **peatland restoration pilots** to prepare a larger pipeline of future opportunities with partners and fellow landowners in other areas.

➤ See case study on page 7



Beginning to develop **shared approaches to nature recovery** on the common lands with graziers, local communities, statutory bodies and other stakeholders. This is part of our longer-term commitment to create visions and action plans for selected commons by 2030.



Meeting 13 local authority officials to discuss a move towards more collaborative, **enabling lease agreements** that will give leaseholders more freedom to deliver interventions that benefit communities and nature.



Taking action to protect the surrounding environment and community after a routine inspection found a reservoir close to **Blaenau Ffestiniog** posed an immediate risk. Co-ordinating with local authorities, emergency services and Natural Resources Wales as specialist engineers safely lowered water levels.



Cleaning up Welsh coastlines

This year, we worked with Milford Haven Port Authority to deliver our first wreck removal programme in Wales.

The project at Castle Pill led to the safe removal of several abandoned vessels, fly-tipped items and litter that not only posed hazards to people, but to marine life – particularly as fibreglass broke down and entered the food chain.

The works have supported local wildlife and removed the potential threat to other craft, while reducing the antisocial behaviour that had been attracted. Longer term, our Coastal team are looking to develop a nationwide programme to remove wrecks that pose risks to navigation, the environment and public safety.

Our data

The data shared in this report is published in line with our obligations under Section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.

➤ [View our 2025 report at thecrownestate.co.uk](https://www.thecrownestate.co.uk)



Nature conservation designations and Habitats of Principal Importance

Designation type	Land hectares	Intertidal hectares	Sea hectares
Ancient Woodland Inventory	70	-	-
Habitat of Principal Importance (HoPI)	13,788	-	-
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) / National Landscapes	177	4,087	-
Local Nature Reserves (LNR)	1	1,222	-
Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	12,401	16,494	19,766
Special Protection Area (SPA)	8,649	7,984	442,456
Special Area of Conservation (SAC)	8,550	14,723	479,898
RAMSAR	5	4,467	5,540
National Nature Reserve (NNR)	5	3,238	-
National Parks	7,506	3,595	-
Marine Conservation Zones	-	-	1,281

Figures indicate areas (in hectares) of environmental designations located on The Crown Estate's ownership, split by land, intertidal and sea.

Nature conservation designations and Habitats of Principal Importance continued

Species of Principal Importance (SoPI)

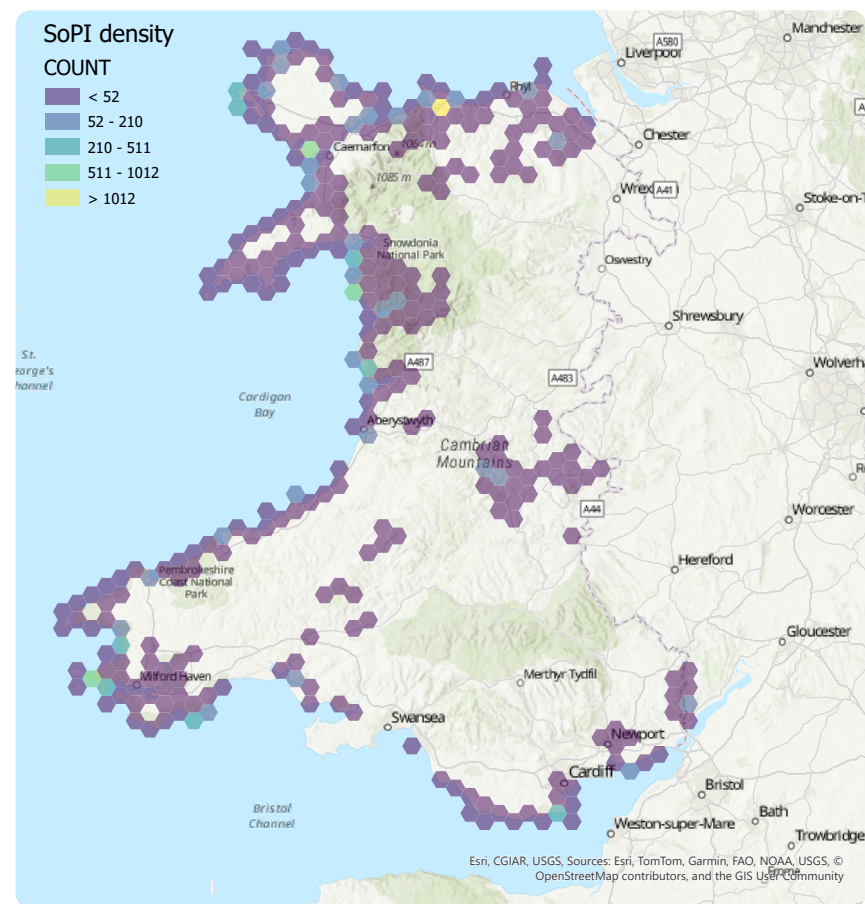
A data-gathering exercise from the GBIF/NBN database of species included in the JNCC 2007 UKBAP Species of Principal Importance list found 118 distinct species from this list recorded between 2016-2026 on land in our ownership (1,150 distinct species are included in the comprehensive list from JNCC). This data represents voluntary data collections that were not commissioned by The Crown Estate; as such this is open data and we cannot vouch for its accuracy. It is important to note that these recordings are undoubtedly underreporting the true abundance.

The most abundant species recorded within The Crown Estate land ownership within the red-list category (noted as “international threat” by JNCC) between 2016-2026 are:

- *Vanellus vanellus* – Northern Lapwing - bird (n = 1,081)
- *Aythya marila* – Greater Scaup - bird (n = 124)
- *Phocoena phocoena* – Harbour Porpoise – marine species (n = 81)
- *Salmo trutta* – Brown/Sea trout - fish (n = 51)

The following list includes the most abundant species recorded that meet the JNCC category “International responsibility + moderate decline in UK”:

- *Numenius arquata* – Eurasian Curlew - bird (n = 2309)
- *Anguilla anguilla* – European Eel - fish (n = 37)



Density of Species of Principal Importance recorded on The Crown Estate title land (terrestrial and foreshore) between 2016-2026 on the GBIF database

Headline targets for increasing biodiversity

This table shows our headline targets for sea and land, the NRAP objective that each target addresses, our progress in the last year and our planned action up to March 2029.

Realm	NRAP	Headline target	Progress in 2025/26	Actions out to March 2029
Sea	1	S1. Integrate nature as a priority into the Marine Delivery Routemap (MDR), drawing on our Whole of Seabed evidence base to: a) identify the most suitable locations for nature recovery interventions in partnership with stakeholders by 2028. b) Double the area leased to marine and coastal nature recovery focused activities by 2030, measured against a 2025 baseline.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Launched Guiding Nature Principles to inform marine decision-making. – Published framework for delivering nature recovery (Understand, Design, Fund, Partner for Nature). – Two licences granted for seagrass restoration (South Wales) and seabird recovery (North Wales), covering nine hectares. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Develop Strategic Nature Opportunity Map (embedded in MDR) by FY27. – Expand restoration activity through improved licensing and support for non-commercial projects. – Use mapping to target priority areas for nature recovery and development. – Deliver target to double area leased for marine and coastal nature recovery by 2030.
Sea	2,3	S2. Increase understanding of the state of protected and vulnerable habitats, both inside and outside of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), within our jurisdiction, working with others to support improvement by 2030.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Developed template for Marine Nature Action Plans. – Funded research to improve spatial understanding of saltmarsh, seagrass and native oyster restoration potential in Wales. – Active participation in CaSP Cymru, Seagrass Network Cymru and Saltmarsh Network Cymru. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Develop Nature Action Plans with other stakeholders in locations where appropriate, focused on improving habitat condition evidence by 2028. – Expand pipeline of marine nature recovery projects. – Support development of monitoring technologies in Morlais SAC.
Sea	1,2,3,5	S3. Accelerate private sector investment in nature and support the development of innovative, high-integrity finance mechanisms.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – £500,000 seed funding provided to MARINE Fund Cymru to unlock further investment. – Published High-Integrity Marine Natural Capital Markets Roadmap (2024). – Supported development of finance tools, data platforms (Marine Enhancement Directory – MEND) and pilot restoration projects. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Publish marine nature finance toolkit (via Green Finance Institute Hive). – Co-host Saltmarsh Finance Day to connect investors and project developers. – Support rollout and scaling of MARINE Fund Cymru. – Continue developing investable nature projects and strengthening marine natural capital markets.
Sea	3,4,5	S4. Develop and publish our 'best available nature baseline' annually from 2026, with evidence on habitats and mobile species from our Whole of Seabed approach.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Enhanced Whole of Seabed datasets with NRW, including Section 7 and OSPAR habitat data. – Improved representation of Welsh MPAs and species data. – Contributed to Welsh Government Spatial Assessment of Welsh Seas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Develop Strategic Nature Opportunity Map (embedded in MDR) by FY27. – Publish datasets via Marine Data Exchange to improve accessibility. – Complete spatial tools and methodologies to support restoration

Headline targets for increasing biodiversity continued

This table shows our headline targets for sea and land, the NRAP objective that each target addresses, our progress in the last year and our planned action up to March 2029.

Realm	NRAP	Headline target	Progress in 2025/26	Actions out to March 2029
Sea	2,3	S5. Develop and apply nature principles for all new tenders and leases to incentivise delivery of outcomes for nature across all sectors in the marine and coastal environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guiding Nature Principles launched (Jan 2026). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Embed Nature Principles across marine tenders, leases and portfolio activities. Publish Nature Routemap outlining delivery pathways and timelines (2026). Use Strategic Opportunity Map to guide nature-positive investment and development decisions.
Sea	2,3,4	S6. Continue to support effective initiatives that provide benefit for impacted, threatened or notable species in the marine and coastal environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Worked with Natural Resources Wales, Natural England, RSPB and JNCC to improve seabird data and map foraging areas. Combined existing and new data to strengthen understanding of key coastal and offshore habitats. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue co-funded research with partners to address key ecological evidence gaps. Improve understanding of sector impacts on marine species and habitats. Support development of tools and evidence to inform decision-making.
Land	1,2,3,4,5	L1. Work with graziers with common rights, local communities, statutory agencies and other stakeholders to agree a shared nature recovery vision for selected commons in Wales, by identifying key nature recovery opportunities on common land within our ownership and begin implementing action plans by 2030.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Survey completed identifying nature recovery opportunities on tenanted land in North Wales. Developed peatland restoration pilot with National Trust and commoners. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scale pilot approach to additional areas of common land. Develop shared vision and action plans for nature recovery with stakeholders. Expand landscape-scale peatland and habitat restoration projects. Apply survey and assessment methodology across priority sites.
Land	1,2,4,5	L2. Increase positive management of Rural Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Habitats of Principal Importance, in Wales. Produce Nature Action Plans by 2028 to improve their condition and implement actions by 2030.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivered c.5ha peatland restoration and associated land management at Mynydd Hiraethog SSSI. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete first cohort of Nature Action Plans by FY27. Develop species baseline using NBN data and align with SoPI list. Share methodology with NRW and partners to support wider application.

Evidence and research funded

This table shows the range of research projects involving Welsh institutions that The Crown Estate is supporting.

	Achieved over last year	Actions going forward
ECOFlow Frontline	This project, investigating the ecosystem level impacts of floating offshore wind on Celtic Sea Ocean fronts and biodiversity began this year with fieldwork planning, working with offshore wind developers, regulators, government bodies and fisheries representatives.	Fieldwork and data collection in the Celtic Sea. Maps, scientific publications and dataset delivery.
FRONTWARD	Enhancing our understanding of the relationship between ocean fronts and biodiversity hotspots (particularly mobile species) and evaluating how that data can be applied in the future planning of marine sectors, such as offshore renewables.	Enhancing data timelines to increase confidence. Integrating findings into our Whole of Seabed evidence base and used in planning.
Subsea Soundscape	Working with a wide range of partners, researching underwater noise conditions and marine mammal presence in the Celtic Sea. Understanding these baseline conditions will support future floating offshore wind projects.	Collecting acoustic data and producing guidance to support floating offshore wind in the Celtic Sea. Pioneering a new regional framework to support future environmental assessment.
Three projects run by the Offshore Renewables Joint Industry Programme (ORJIP)	Supported by a range of public and private sector stakeholders as well as The Crown Estate, these three projects aimed to understand the nature impact of offshore wind: QuMR improved how seabird mortality from offshore wind displacement is estimated, strengthening the evidence base for environmental assessments. InTAS (Integration of Tracking and At Sea survey data) project developed an integrated framework combining survey and telemetry data to improve estimates of seabird age distributions and better assess impacts from offshore renewable developments. BenCH (Benthic Habitat Changes) conducted a multi-site analysis of benthic monitoring data to investigate benthic habitat changes post-construction of offshore wind farms.	The guidance for all three projects has now been produced and published on the Marine Data Exchange.
ECOWind PELAgIO	PELAgIO (Physics to-Ecosystem Level Assessment of Impacts of Offshore Windfarms) is being run through the University of Aberdeen as part of the ECOWind umbrella programme. It is examining how fixed offshore wind alters physical processes and impacts the food chain.	PELAgIO will deliver a number of outputs that inform the delivery of net gain and help the UK work towards Good Environmental Status including: publications, models and decision-making tools to assess policy trade offs.

Evidence and research funded continued

This table shows the range of research projects involving Welsh institutions that The Crown Estate is supporting.

	Achieved over last year	Actions going forward
PhD project at Bangor University	We have sponsored and co-supervised a PhD on “Utilising trait-based approaches to understand offshore wind impacts on ecosystem processes and services”. The postgraduate is now in the final year of her four-year PhD programme and has been giving presentations at conferences and forums.	The PhD will include management and policy recommendations and be submitted for publication in 2027.
ProcBE	ProcBE (Procellariiform Behaviour and Demographics) led by the Joint Nature Conservation Committee, studied shearwater and petrel colonies in Wales and beyond to improve how these species are assessed in offshore wind planning, supporting future floating wind development.	Outputs/guidance delivered.
ReSCUE	ReSCUE (Reducing Seabird Collisions Using Evidence) conducted seabird surveys off Anglesey and Pembrokeshire to fill key data gaps on flight height and speed, improving impact assessments for offshore wind.	Outputs/guidance delivered.
ECOFlow Equify Research Project	Equify (Establishing a Framework for Quantifiable Evidence and Impact of Ecosystem Change throughout the Lifecycle of UK Floating Offshore Wind Farm) will assess the cumulative ecological, social and economic effects of floating offshore wind. It uses historical and contemporary data to underpin predictions of likely future pressures, including climate change and evolving marine use.	The project is in its second year, with field work planned for summer 2026 and 2027 and will produce a range of outputs, models and policy guidance.

Image credits

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