

APPENDIX B

SNH ADVICE ON SEASCAPE, LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACTS

This advice from SNH on the potential seascape/landscape and visual effects of the Forth & Tay offshore wind farm proposals – Seagreen, Inch Cape and Neart na Gaoithe – is based on review of the Environmental Statements (ES) for each proposed development and on field visits made by SNH staff and landscape consultants.

1 SUMMARY OF KEY EFFECTS

The proposed Forth & Tay wind farms would cause widespread and significant adverse landscape and visual impacts along the Scottish east coast from St Cyrus in Aberdeenshire, through Angus and Fife south to Dunbar in East Lothian. The scale and extent of development, if consented, is unprecedented within Scotland (onshore or offshore) in recent times.

The main impacts would be experienced along the following stretches of coast:

- **South Aberdeenshire/Angus** where **Inch Cape** would form a visually prominent feature across the sea-horizon and cause a significant change to the open sea views experienced from the coastal settlements of Montrose, Arbroath and Carnoustie and as seen from the A92, the East Coast railway, NCN Route 1 and the Angus Coastal Path. Inch Cape would have major effects on coastal character including the highly scenic Montrose Bay and Lunan Bay and on the rugged and dramatic coast between Lang Craig and Deil's Heid north of Arbroath. In the north and south of this area, **Seagreen** and **Neart na Gaoithe** in combination with Inch Cape would result in significant cumulative effects on views and coastal character.
- **East Fife** where **Neart na Gaoithe** and **Inch Cape** would form visually prominent features across the sea-horizon and result in significant changes to open sea views affecting the experience of remoteness and the natural aspect of the Tentsmuir coast, the coast between St Andrews and Fife Ness and the Isle of May. Both wind farms are likely to affect the landscape setting of St Andrews and appreciation of its historic skyline. They will also significantly affect views from beaches, golf courses and from the Fife Coastal Path between Crail and Tentsmuir. **Neart na Gaoithe**, being closest to this stretch of coast, would have a particularly severe effect and would also be seen from the Inner Firth of Forth.
- **East Lothian** where **Neart na Gaoithe** would form a visually prominent feature across the sea horizon and intrude on the spectacular seascape panorama which includes the distinctive Bass Rock and North Berwick Law.

In addition, these offshore wind farms – particularly **Neart na Gaoithe** and **Inch Cape** – would change the night-time character of the sea, extending lit-ribbon development from along the Fife and East Lothian coasts out into the Forth.

2 THE STRUCTURE OF OUR ADVICE ON SLVIA

- **Section 3** indicates the ‘worst case’ design envelope submitted for each proposal in respect of seascape, landscape and visual impact assessment. Because turbine selection and layout for successful applications will only be finalised post-consent, we emphasise the most important design principles for applicants to address and advise on the importance of ensuring the engagement of qualified landscape architects in establishing design principles for each wind farm and to influence the post-consent design iterations to finalise wind farm layout, in particular.
- **Section 4** sets out a general appraisal of the factors that can influence the degree of wind farm visibility offshore.
- **Sections 5, 6 and 7** provide our advice on the key seascape, landscape and visual impacts arising from these wind farm proposals on the following stretches of coastline:

South Aberdeenshire and Angus **Section 5**

East Fife **Section 6**

East Lothian **Section 7**

We give a brief description of each coastline which is supported by the more detailed information on coastal character and recreation value provided in **Appendix A**.

We then discuss and provide advice on the key impacts to coastal character areas (CCA)¹, designated landscapes and sea views, identifying which of the wind farms these impacts are attributable to.

- **Section 8** provides our advice on the seascape, landscape and visual impacts that would occur in other areas beyond those above.

3 DESIGN OF PROPOSALS

Each applicant provides a ‘design envelope’ for the basis of impact assessments within which the final designs of the schemes would be ‘fixed’. For SLVIA, the applicants have assessed the following scenarios:

- **Neart na Gaoithe**²: 90 turbines up to 197m high set in an offset grid.
- **Inch Cape**: 213 turbines up to 215m high set in a regular grid layout
- **Seagreen**³: 150 turbines up to 210m high set in an ‘arc’ arrangement.

Each wind farm would additionally require a number of Offshore Substation Platforms (OSP). There would be two types of lighting, maritime and aviation. Maritime lighting involves significant points/corners of the wind farm being fitted with flashing yellow lights visible in a range of ‘*not less than 9.26km*’ (but these could be visible up to 21km away). Aviation lights comprise red lights fitted at the top of selected turbines and these may be flashing or steady and could be visible at distances beyond 39km.

Because final designs cannot be assessed at this stage we highlight the important contribution **wind farm design** (post-consent iteration of proposed layouts and turbine choice) can make to mitigating landscape and visual impacts. **The following recommendations address this:**

¹ The term we use, Coastal Character Area, is synonymous with the term Seascape Area.

² The ‘worst case’ scenario presented in the Neart na Gaoithe ES addendum.

³ This is Seagreen phase 1, the alpha and bravo sites (75 turbines proposed for each).

- Each developer should employ at least one qualified and experienced landscape architect to be involved in the post-consent design process and to 'sign off' the final wind farm design alongside project engineers.
- If more than one development is consented, the cumulative effects of wind farm design should be assessed, particularly where visual impacts are currently assessed as major.
- Visualisations could be provided post-consent to illustrate the finalised wind farm from key representative viewpoints. These would be for public information only (not consultation).

4 KEY FACTORS DETERMINING VISIBILITY

The degree of visual impact associated with offshore wind farms is mainly influenced by the size of the turbines and their distance from shore. However, offshore wind turbines are very large vertical structures (~200m in height to blade tip) and this does increase potential for visual impact even when proposals are located some distance from shore.

Atmospheric conditions (weather and light) and the seascape context will also influence the impact of the wind farms. Atmospheric conditions can limit the number of days that offshore wind farms are visible from the coast.

In respect of these proposals in the Forth & Tay, we advise that turbines are likely to appear more prominent when backlit in the mornings. This effect is demonstrated by the Bell Rock Lighthouse which stands just 35m high yet can be clearly seen from Angus and Fife in such conditions. Inch Cape would lie at a similar distance from Arbroath as the lighthouse (~19km). In the evenings, turbines may also be highlighted against darker skies, 'standing out' when lit from the west. Blade movement is likely to catch the eye, particularly in good weather conditions.

At night, navigation lighting would be visible at some considerable distance from the coast (and possibly as far as 21km-39km) introducing a potentially significant change to the night-time seascapes.

5 EFFECTS ON THE SOUTH ABERDEENSHIRE / ANGUS COAST

5.1 Summary description

Much of the coast between St Cyrus and Carnoustie is well settled with Montrose, Arbroath and Carnoustie forming a focus for coastal tourism and recreation in the south of the area. However, some sections are more remote and rugged such as the extensive sandy bay of St Cyrus, and the coast between Montrose and Arbroath which includes the highly scenic Lunan Bay.

5.2 General visibility of the developments

Inch Cape would have the greatest effect on landscape/seascape and on views in this area as it lies between 17km and 24km from the coast. It would form a major new feature across the currently open and undeveloped sea horizon. The spread of turbines would appear especially extensive in some locations where the wind farm is closer to the shore and/or where sea views are more contained, for example from Lunan Bay in Angus.

The influence of Neart na Gaoithe would increase south of Arbroath where it lies around 31-33km from the coast. Seagreen would have a less visual influence because it would be further from the coast, although where it lies at its closest point to the coast between St Cyrus (32km) and Montrose (38km), it would be more visible.

5.3 Landscape/seascape effects

There are no local landscape designations within Angus or Aberdeenshire. This does not reflect an absence of regionally valued landscapes but rather the approach that both authorities have taken. Neither has formally adopted local landscape designations, instead relying on protection through their Local Development Plan policies.

Significant effects would occur on part or all of the 6 Seascape Areas (SA) defined in the FTWDG regional assessment. The effects of the Inch Cape wind farm would be particularly severe with **major** effects on currently open and natural sea horizons and on the setting the sea provides to the coastal character of the highly scenic Montrose Bay and Lunan Bay (SA4, SA6, SA7) and the particularly complex, rugged and dramatic coast between Lang Craig and Deil's Heid north of Arbroath.

5.4 Effects on views

There would be significant effects on the settlements of Inverbervie and St Cyrus, Gourdon and Johnshaven, Monifieth, Lunan, Auchmithie, across most of Carnoustie and Arbroath and parts of Montrose. The Inch Cape wind farm in particular would have a **major** effect on views from these settlements although the Neart na Gaoithe wind farm would be increasingly visible south of Arbroath.

There would be **major** effects associated with the Inch Cape proposal on views from National Cycle Network (NCN) Route 1 and on the Angus Coastal Footpath where this development would lie relatively close to the coast (17-19km) between Montrose and Arbroath. There would also be intermittent and significant effects on views from the A92, which is designated a National Tourist Route, and from the East Coast Mainline railway which runs close to the coast in Angus and south Aberdeenshire.

The long sandy beaches, which are a key characteristic of the Angus coast, are well used for recreation. The Inch Cape wind farm would have a **major** effect on views from the coast at St Cyrus and beaches between Montrose and Arbroath. Views to and from the highly scenic Lunan Bay with its richly diverse hinterland would be particularly severe due to the relative proximity of the wind farm (19km) and its horizontal extent (which has the effect of 'filling' the bay) given the rather more contained nature of seaward views.

5.5 Cumulative effects

Cumulative effects would be **major** on the South Aberdeenshire and Angus coast when Inch Cape is seen in combination with either Seagreen (to the north, around St Cyrus and within Montrose Bay) or Neart na Gaoithe (to the south from Arbroath to Carnoustie). The Corse onshore wind farm proposal would also contribute to cumulative effects with Inch Cape, although experienced in a fairly limited area around Carnoustie and Muirdrum.

6 EFFECTS ON EAST FIFE

6.1 Summary description

In the north, Tentsmuir National Nature Reserve (NNR) has a strong sense of naturalness and seclusion. Further south, St Andrews is renowned for its many visitor attractions, its historic townscape and scenic coastal setting. It is recognised as one of Scotland's most important international visitor destinations.

South of St Andrews the coast becomes rocky, more complex and varied, with abundant natural rock formations, low cliffs and beaches. Fife Ness forms an exposed 'point' at the entrance to the inner Firth of Forth and the Isle of May, an instantly recognisable 'landmark' sitting at the mouth of the Firth, has a remote and natural character. The coastal villages of the East Neuk have a strong historic character and are of high scenic quality. The subtle coastline of low rocky cliffs and small beaches and the Firth, is important to their setting.

6.2 General visibility of the developments

Near na Gaoithe and Inch Cape would have the greatest effect on the East Fife coast. Near na Gaoithe lies closer to shore (at 15 – 32 km) and would be more visible within the inner Firth of Forth to Elie, while Inch Cape would be significantly less visible west of Crail. Seagreen would be visible in good conditions but seen at considerable distance (>50km) and behind Inch Cape in many views, further limiting its visual influence.

6.3 Seascape/landscape effects

There are a number of *Local Landscape Areas* along the East Fife coast – locally designated landscapes which are adopted in the Local Plan. These LLAs broadly accord with the coastal character areas (CCAs) along this coast. Our assessment of the effects that would arise from the proposed wind farms is as follows:

- Inch Cape and Near na Gaoithe would each have **moderate/major** effects on the strongly remote and natural character of the Tentsmuir Coast CCA and LLA.
- Near na Gaoithe and Inch Cape would each have significant effects on St Andrews Bay CCA and St Andrews Links LLA. Both wind farms are likely to affect the landscape setting of St Andrews and appreciation of its historic skyline, and we recommend that this issue is further explored.
- In the St Andrews to Fife Ness CCA and LLA there would be consistent visibility of both Near na Gaoithe and Inch Cape (lying 20km and 29km from Kingsbarns respectively). Near na Gaoithe would have a **major** impact on the character of this coast and Inch Cape would have **moderate/major** effects. The wind farms would be dominant features interrupting the open horizon of the sea and adversely affecting the experiential qualities of this distinctly natural coastline.
- Near na Gaoithe (16km distance) would have **major** effects on the appreciation of the natural and remote character of the Isle of May (Forth Islands LLA), but with the effects of the more distant Inch Cape (31km) still being **moderate/major** and therefore significant.
- Near na Gaoithe would be likely to adversely affect the landscape setting and key approaches to the distinctive coastal settlements of the East Neuk CCA and LLA, including Crail, Anstruther and St Monans. Effects would lessen gradually beyond Elie as visibility of the wind farm becomes more restricted.

6.4 Effects on views

Views from St Andrews would be significantly affected by both Neart na Gaoithe and Inch Cape although Neart na Gaoithe, being closer (28km), would be more prominent in views from principal monuments and from formal promenades along the East Scores, East Sands and the St Andrews Links (GDL) and West Sands. This would detract from the views and diminish the visual amenity of residents and visitors to St Andrews as open sea views are interrupted by turbines. Neart na Gaoithe would also be likely to detract from the focus of views to the town, for example, from the popular West Sands.

Other settlements significantly affected by one or both of these developments would include Crail, Anstruther and Tayport. While housing within the historic East Neuk villages of Crail, Anstruther and St Monans mainly faces to the south and therefore not east towards Neart na Gaoithe, views to this wind farm (at around 22km from the coast) would be possible from parts of harbours and promenades and there may be impacts on views to the Isle of May from some of the East Neuk settlements.

Both Inch Cape and Neart na Gaoithe would be visible from the A917 between St Andrews and Crail, especially where the road is most open and elevated in the Boarhills and Kingsbarns area and south of Cambo. Both developments would be consistently visible from the Fife Coastal Path with effects on views most significant between Fife Ness and St Andrews where Neart na Gaoithe would lie between 15-20km from the coast and Inch Cape would lie within 30km.

There would be significant effects on views from well-used beaches (including Tentsmuir and West Sands) and from the many golf courses which lie on this stretch of coast.

6.5 Cumulative effects

Neart na Gaoithe and Inch Cape, in combination, would have significant cumulative impacts on sea views and coastal character at Tentsmuir, St Andrews and along the coast between St Andrews to Fife Ness. These two wind farms would also significantly impact on appreciation of the natural and remote character of the Isle of May. Seagreen would have minor effects on seascape character and on views in this area due to its distance (>50km).

7 EFFECTS ON THE EAST LOTHIAN COAST

7.1 Summary description

The landscape of East Lothian is wide and open in longer views from high ground to the south but, particularly around North Berwick and Dunbar, it is much more complex in the immediate coastal zone. The landform and coastal configuration are varied, with extensive beaches at Yellowcraigs, North Berwick and Bellhaven Bay (John Muir Country Park) interspersed with rocky promontories, wave-cut platforms and small, sandy coves.

There are attractive, historic coastal towns and seaside resorts of high visual amenity (often Conservation Areas) and recreational value. Prominent and highly distinctive seascape features include inshore islands, North Berwick Law and Bass Rock (of volcanic origin and visible for miles around). Most of the coastline is designated an Area of Great Landscape Value (AGLV) and classified as undeveloped coast. There are various gardens and designed landscapes (including Tynninghame, Biel, Broxmouth Park and Dunglass) that are characterised by coastal views.

7.2 Visibility of the developments

Within East Lothian, Seagreen would be unlikely to be visible as it would lie >60km distance. Inch Cape (at ~50km) would also be barely discernible from this coast. The main landscape/seascape and visual impacts are attributable to Neart na Gaoithe which would lie between 25km to 35km from the coast in this area. The orientation of the East Lothian coast NE-SW, directly towards Neart na Gaoithe increases scope for significant impacts to occur.

7.3 Landscape/seascape effects

The likely visual interaction between Neart na Gaoithe and distinctive seascape features in this area (principally Bass Rock and North Berwick Law) would be the main source of impact. This could adversely affect seascape character and perceptions of naturalness associated with this coastline. Key effects would occur on the North Berwick and St Baldred's CCAs where the linear spread of the wind farm would interrupt the setting and role of the Bass Rock and North Berwick Law as notable landmarks.

7.4 Effects on views

Neart na Gaoithe would be visible from North Berwick and Dunbar at around 28km distance. It would be a prominent feature seen from beaches, esplanades and more elevated walks in and around these settlements and would have significant effects especially on views to iconic coastal features such as the Bass Rock.

The wind farm would be more prominent from elevated sections of the coast including from Tantallon Castle and North Berwick Law, both popular visitor destinations. It would be clearly visible from the many well-used sandy beaches along the East Lothian coast. These predominantly face north-east towards Neart na Gaoithe and there would probably be **moderate/major** effects on visual amenity.

There would be **moderate/major** effects arising from Neart na Gaoithe from the long distance recreational route of the John Muir Way over approximately 39km between Eyebroughy to Pease Bay. Views from the East Coast Railway, the A1 and other coast roads are unlikely to be significantly affected.

7.5 Cumulative effects

Seagreen and Inch Cape would be barely visible from the East Lothian coast. Neart na Gaoithe would be the dominant development as it lies significantly closer. Combined theoretical visibility of these wind farms is predicted to occur over approximately a 5km stretch of the East Lothian coast. Cumulative effects would not be significant.

8 EFFECTS ON OTHER AREAS

Within **Abderdeenshire**, north of St Cyrus, Seagreen would be seen at distances greater than 40km and would have relatively minor visual influence. It would be seen as a very distant linear feature on the horizon in clear conditions and would not dominate the coast. Inch Cape would also be seen at distance (>40km) and although visible from more elevated areas around Stonehaven, it would have a minor effect due to its distance and limited spread on expansive sea horizons. Neart na Gaoithe (>70km) would be barely visible from here.

Within the **Inner Firth of Tay**, Inch Cape and Neart na Gaoithe would bring a noticeable change to the horizon in existing sea views, particularly when seen from elevated locations such as Dundee Law. However, we consider impacts would not be significant as both wind farms would be seen at distance, beyond 40km.

APPENDIX A

DESCRIPTIONS OF COASTAL CHARACTER AND RECREATIONAL VALUE

1. SOUTH ABERDEENSHIRE AND ANGUS

The Angus countryside is one of the region's greatest assets and the coastline, with its mixture of dramatic cliffs and sandy beaches, is attractive to visitors and residents. Key attractions include the open golf course at Carnoustie, Arbroath Abbey, Lunan Bay and Montrose Basin.

St Cyrus is located at the north end of Montrose Bay (SA4) with **Montrose** occupying the southern part of the bay. Built on a peninsula between the open coast and Montrose Basin, Montrose has a distinctive profile with its tall spire, harbour and intermittent movement along the main East Coast railway line. Its profile is accentuated by the extensive sand dunes and broad, open, gently curving bay outwith the town; the dunes and sandy bay form an attractive and natural resource for Montrose Links Golf Course, informal bathing and recreation, and (to the north) the St Cyrus National Nature Reserve. Formal seaside recreation is catered for by 'Splash', the remodelling of early C20th seaside resort facilities first set out along Traill Drive in 1912, affording bracing air and wide, panoramic sea views.

Lunan Bay [SA6] extends for some 4.7km (Rickle Craig to Ethie Haven). It is of high sensitivity as '*one of the most attractive and popular sections of coastline in Tayside, a relatively 'natural', unspoilt tract of expansive, medium/large-scale open coast, with localised shelter amidst the informal path network through the dunes*'.⁴ This popular, long, sandy beach and dune complex is contained by high cliffs at either end, contrasting markedly with the elevated hinterland of large arable fields.

Lang Craig – Whiting Ness CCA This CCA [SA7] is primarily comprised of rugged, coastal cliffs bordered by an almost continuous rock platform. This is the longest stretch of continuous sea cliffs and rocky shore in Tayside (11km).⁵ There is limited access to the shore apart from at Auchmithie, and cliff top walks north of Arbroath to Maiden Castle, the Deils Head and onto Auchmithie (5km). The cliffs reach up to 50m in height, with the classic village of Auchmithie set on a 40m clifftop above the harbour. From the cliffs, there are open views out onto broad expansive seas. In contrast, the coastal edge is intricate and smaller scale (with inlets, blowholes, caves and promontories).

Arbroath is a principal sea-side town where tourist and recreational facilities range along the seafront – Victoria Park, Springfield Park, Inchcape Park, Gayfield Park Football stadium, promenades, Queens Drive, West Links recreational areas. Some streets and houses have direct sea views or lead directly onto the shore – as at South Street. The Signal Tower is a prominent landmark, set on the sea front. It directly relates to the sea in function and character, originally serving as a shore base for the Bell Rock lighthouse. There are also sea views from elevated areas in the town, especially from the war memorials, commons and prominent buildings, like Arbroath Infirmary.

The Bell Rock Lighthouse is visible only in clear weather from the shore. Although distant on the horizon, its white tower is distinct and in bright weather 'catches' the eye.

⁴ Beaches of Tayside (1981), Section 3.6, page 40.

⁵ Angus Shoreline Management Plan, Volume 2, Appendix 3, 2-3-14

2. EAST COAST OF FIFE

Fife's tourism centres on its natural environment⁶, especially its coastline. The majority of the coast is designated internationally or nationally for its natural heritage significance, with the East Neuk forming a major focus of Fife's tourist and recreational activity.⁷ Visitor numbers to East Fife have been steadily increasing over the last five years and peaked in 2008 with 1.48 million days. St Andrews is recognised as one of Scotland's most important international visitor destinations and is Fife's major tourist destination, accounting for around 23% of visitor numbers to the region.⁸

The **Tentsmuir Coast CCA** extends from Tayport to the Eden estuary. Much of this coastline is encompassed by Tentsmuir National Nature Reserve (NNR) where the extensive sands make a good picnic and bathing site and it is an easy walk to the beach from the Kinshaldy, Tayport or Morton.⁹ This coast is also designated as an LLA for its diverse scenic value and extensive, expansive views.¹⁰ Despite the visitor numbers, it is possible to experience a high degree of remoteness and solitude in this area.

St Andrews is renowned for its beaches, golf, many visitor attractions and coastal setting. The town is set on an elevated ridge so that its historic, distinctive skyline is visible from considerable distance, immediately recognisable and widely portrayed.¹¹ The composition of church steeples and St. Rule's Tower are the most prominent features, alongside the Castle, the Cathedral and University buildings. Many of these look out onto coast and sea, and are tourist destinations.¹²

West Sands and The Links form St Andrews' coastal setting to the north, providing amenity greenspace and a recreational resource for residents and visitors alike. West Sands is an exceptionally wide, two mile-long designated bathing beach; a spectacular stretch of white sand backed by dunes and The Links golf courses. The beach leads directly out from town, and forms a focal point for recreation, readily accessible on foot and by car. It is well-used all year round and is popular for a range of beach and water sport activities.¹³ It is also well known from the opening scene of 'Chariots of Fire'.

The Links comprise six public golf courses internationally renowned as the '*home of golf*'.¹⁴ They are designated as a Garden and Designed Landscape (GDL) for their classic relationship with the town and coast. In views south from West Sands and The Links, the eye is drawn to the skyline of the town, and the meeting point between the raised coastal edge and the sea.

⁶ www.dunfermlinepress.com/news/roundup/articles/2013/10/02/473448-fifes-outdoors-most-popular-in-scotland/

⁷ *The Beaches of Fife* (1979) SNH Commissioned Report. (Reprinted 2001) pp13.

⁸ *2007-2015 Fife Tourism Strategy*. Fife Council, Scottish Enterprise Fife and VisitScotland.

⁹ Tentsmuir NNR is visited by some 25,000 people a year.

¹⁰ *Fife Local Landscape Designation Review*. pp139-141.

¹¹ [St Andrews Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan \(2010\)](#)

¹² In 2012 there were 60,176 visitors to the Castle and 30,682 visitors to the Cathedral. Historic Scotland.

¹³ *A Draft Management Plan for the West Sands St Andrews 2011-2025*. The West Sands Partnership (2011). Available from: www.publications.1fife.org.uk

¹⁴ GDL citation available from: <http://www.historic-scotland.gov.uk/index/heritage/gardens.htm>

In **St Andrews - Fife Ness LLA** the coast becomes rocky and more varied, with interesting rock formations (such as The Rock and Spindle), low cliffs, strata and cultural features (such as Cambo GDL).¹⁵ Many people come to this coastline for recreation and enjoyment, to appreciate its diverse natural and cultural heritage.¹⁶

Sea views are expansive, exposed and, in many areas, the complex, rugged coastal edge is broad and visually distinct from its hinterland.¹⁷ Although well-frequented, some areas can seem remote as settlements (such as Boarhills and Kingsbarns) are small and set back from the coast.

Fife Ness is Fife's most easterly point – a headland which feels relatively remote and contains the evocative remains of Stevenson's 19th century working platform for the North Carr beacon, as well as the more recent lighthouse. From the Ness, the sea views are expansive, a 240° vista, with the horizon stretching northwards along the Angus coast, and southwards to the Lothian coastline. The Isle of May is distinctive in these views, and further away, the Bass Rock may also be seen in clear conditions.

The **East Neuk CCA** extends from Fife Ness to Ardrross and is designated as an LLA. Key coastal characteristics include low rocky cliffs and foreshore, interspersed with small pocket beaches and small sandy beaches. The East Neuk burghs of Crail, Cellardyke, Anstruther (Easter and Wester), Pittenweem and St Monans have a strong maritime and historic character – they have been, and continue to be, defined by their relationship with the sea. They are designated Conservation Areas, retaining harbours and vernacular buildings, now widely appreciated and portrayed for their picturesque qualities. Essential to the character of these East Neuk burghs are the strong contrasts of the natural coastline between the settlements, and the surrounding managed farmland.

The **Fife Coastal Path** runs the full length of the East Fife coast from North Queensferry up to Newburgh. Considerable numbers of people use the path, on day walks, or to complete longer sections or the whole route. In 2005-6, some 480,000 – 580,000 visits were made with people noting the sea, the 'beautiful scenery', the beaches, the towns and villages, and the ease of access as primary reasons for walking along the path.¹⁸ The path is almost completely coastal – certainly the 58km from Elie to Tentsmuir which would be heavily impacted by the offshore wind farms. This section of the path is often elevated with expansive sea views.

The **Isle of May** is remote and isolated in character, but appeals to visitors with the exhilarating boat journey to reach it, and the attraction of plentiful wildlife – seabirds, especially puffins, and marine mammals, particularly the grey seals which haul out here. The island is now managed as an NNR¹⁹ and designated as an LLA:

..the combination of the rugged natural island with the cultural heritage features of the lighthouse buildings creates a diversity of landscape with high scenic value. The rugged rocky perimeter of the island and dramatic cliffs, alongside the clamour and constant motion of seabirds convey the strong sense of naturalness of the island.²⁰

¹⁵ *Fife Local Landscape Designation Review* (2009). pp 225-232

¹⁶ Fife Tourism Strategy 2007 – 2015.

¹⁷ Fife LCA (1999) see C.13 Coastal Cliffs pp 83-85.

¹⁸ *Usage and Impact Study. Fife Coastal Path*. Fife Coast and Countryside Trust. (December, 2009).

¹⁹ The total number of day visitors to the NNR reached 8,728 in 2009, and June 2013 saw 2,785, the highest number of visitors to date in a single month, see [Isle of May NNR Annual Report, 2009](#)

²⁰ *Fife Local Landscape Designation Review* (2009) pp 99-100.

3. EAST LoTHIAN COAST

The coast forms a focus for tourist and recreational activity in East Lothian²¹, and it is well known for its beaches, including Gullane, Yellowcraigs and North Berwick, which are well provided with car parking and transport links, and easy to access from key settlements in the area, including Edinburgh. The region's distinctive coastal features, including the Bass Rock, Berwick Law and Tantallon Castle, are significant visitor attractions and important to the tourist economy, often used in promotional material for the region. East Lothian's links and coastal golf courses are a vital recreation for tourists, as well as servicing a popular home market.

North Berwick CCA. Between Eyebroughy and Milsey Bay, the coast is complex and varied. Sandy beaches cluster to east and west of North Berwick, sheltered by and interspersed with rocky promontories, wave-cut platforms, small skellies and ridges. Numerous prominent and highly distinctive seascape features include inshore islands – Fidra, the Lamb, Craigleith and the Bass Rock, strung along the coast. Access to the coast is excellent, and the topography means that walks vary from beach level to short sections of low-cliffs and headlands.

Inland, the volcanic outcrops of Berwick Law and Traprain Law vary the relief. These striking landforms act as orientation points and are visible for miles around. Berwick Law is a popular vantage point, commanding a 360° panorama of the open sea, the Forth, the Fife coast, the Lothian coastal plain and the Lammermuirs. From the summit, the view out to the Bass and its seascape is well renowned and widely portrayed.

North Berwick is based around an historic core of tightly packed buildings. Views from the town out to sea are punctuated by the distinct and iconic forms of the Bass Rock and the Isle of May. The Scottish Seabird Centre at the harbour is closely identified with these islands – they are part of an active resource, marketed as major 'discovery' points of access to the Firth of Forth's role as a key seabird breeding area.

The coastline along **St Baldred's CCA** is more elevated, with the shore becoming less accessible except at specific 'pocket' beaches. Views look directly out onto the Bass Rock which soars dramatically up, out of the sea. A major commanding landmark are the romantic ruins of Tantallon Castle, a Scheduled Ancient Monument set atop grassy lawn on cliffs to the east.²² There are dramatic sea views from the castle towers and walkways, as well as a viewpoint at the cliff edge.

Tynninghame Sands CCA includes extensive beaches from Peffer Sands to Belhaven Bay, and rocky outcrops that include St Baldred's Cradle, a notable natural and cultural feature. The area is popular for open recreation in John Muir Country Park (1,760 acres managed by East Lothian Council). In the **Dunbar CCA** there is good access and many popular walks along the coast, extending out from Dunbar to east and west. Much of this coast is heavily man-modified, however, the landform to the south-east is more intricate. From the Barns Ness coast and foreshore (AGLV) the focus is on the composition of sea, islands and lighthouse.

The **John Muir Way** (73km) extends from Musselburgh to the Borders, with specific coastal sections from Aberlady to North Berwick, and from Dunbar to Pease Bay. The path interlinks smaller sections of existing path networks and allows visitors to sample some or all of the route and in particular markets the dramatic geological landforms of the Bass Rock and North Berwick Law alongside the cultural attractions of Tantallon Castle.

²¹ *East Lothian Coastal Tourism Strategy. Part 1-Technical Report.* (November, 2009).

²² In 2012 there were 31,811 visitors to Tantallon Castle. Historic Scotland.