

Twyni Byw Sands of LIFE



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Twyni Byw
Eiddoedd Naturiol Cymru
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Welsh Government

Sands of LIFE project

Sands of LIFE is a major conservation project to rejuvenate sand dunes across Wales. It will recreate natural movement in the dunes and revitalise habitats which are home to some of our rarest wildlife.

The £4.4 million project, led by Natural Resources Wales, will restore over 2400 hectares of sand dunes, across four Special Areas of Conservation, on 10 separate Welsh sites:



Sands of LIFE project sites

Special Area of Conservation	SoLIFE project site	Area (ha)
Abermenai to Aberffraw Dunes	Twyni Aberffraw	337 ha
	Newborough Warren	1289 ha
	Morfa Dinlle	245 ha
Morfa Harlech and Morfa Dyffryn	Morfa Harlech	578 ha
	Morfa Dyffryn	484 ha
Carmarthen Bay Dunes	Laugharne - Pendine Burrows	796 ha
	Pembrey Coast	288 ha
Kenfig	Whiteford Burrows	122 ha
	Kenfig	716 ha
	Merthyr Mawr	474 ha

Dynamic dunes

Sand dunes are wild, iconic landscapes. They are biodiversity hotspots, where carpets of orchids still survive alongside song birds, butterflies and a wide array of endangered insects. Dunes are prized by locals and visitors for their unique character, as a backdrop to a day on the beach and as every child's perfect natural playground.

Healthy foredunes have plenty of bare sand and are constantly in motion. Sand hills are built by the wind, blow out and are built again. Unique and specialised communities of plants and invertebrates are constantly recolonising the open space.

However, over the last 80 years nearly 90% of the open sand has disappeared, being replaced by dense grass and scrub. The dunes have become overly fixed, and rare wildlife is disappearing.

This change has been caused by factors such as marram planning, the introduction of non-native species, lack of traditional grazing, a declining rabbit population and air pollution.



Action for sand dunes

Sands of LIFE will carry out an ambitious programme of practical action on these internationally important sites, by:

- re-profiling dunes to allow sand to move again
- lowering the surface of dried-out slacks (hollows) to re-create pools and wet habitat
- promote sustainable grazing by livestock and rabbits
- remove scrub and invasive non-native species

There will also be an extensive programme of before- and-after monitoring to track the project's progress.

Sands of LIFE will engage with local communities and raise understanding of the value and importance of sand dunes to people and the environment. The project will encourage sharing of knowledge on sand dune management with otheis in Wales and further afield.



Wales' well-being goals

As well as being reservoirs of biodiversity, sand dunes help safeguard our wider environment as they act as natural sea defences, maintain the quality and flow of freshwater and boost populations of vital pollinators. Beaches and dunes are important to the Welsh tourist economy and are great locations for outdoor exercise and recreation.

Sands of LIFE will contribute towards Wales' well-being goals by:

- supporting traditional farming practice
- creating economic opportunities for business
- training and developing a new generation of environmental managers
- enabling more people to use and enjoy the dunes, which in turn promotes health and well-being.

