



Holyhead Mountain and North Stack (Photo © John Briggs)



South Stack Lighthouse (Photo © John Briggs)



The coast near Penrhyn Mawr (Photo © John Briggs)

Holyhead Mountain, North Stack to Penrhyn Mawr

Seascape Types: THIR, THMR

Key Characteristics

Seascape types key

Sea	T	Tidal
	L	Tidal current- lateral
	E	Enclosed estuary or ria
Surface Geology	H	Hard rock coastline- cliffs etc
	S	Soft coastline- deposition, levels etc
Height	I	High- + 100mAOD, 250m inland
	M	Medium- 25-100mAOD, 250m inland
	L	Low- < 25mAOD 250m inland
Land Use	R	Rural, including wild land
	U	Urban Settlement
	D	Dunes

An indented and precipitous west and north west facing rocky coast with high cliffs backed by Holyhead Mountain and exposed island headlands.

Semi-natural vegetation on Holyhead Mountain and Penrhyn Mawr with pastoral farming elsewhere on the gently undulating coastal plateau.

Settlement is very limited but high points covered with wireless masts and headlands host a lighthouse and signal station.

The sea is exposed and open with large waves.

Long open views across the Irish Sea and from ferries.

The cliffs are popular as one of the best coastal climbing locations in Europe.

Key cultural associations: the lighthouses, and the location of Holyhead Mountain as the land mark of the westerly extremity of this part of Wales.

Physical Characteristics

Geology

Precambrian South Stack series of rocks with a small intrusion of igneous rock, possibly dolerite to the south. Boulder clay abuts part of the coast.

Coastal landform

A west and north west facing indented rocky shore with precipitous high cliffs and steep slopes immediately behind up to Holyhead Mountain which rises to 220m AOD. The North and South Stacks are islands.

Coastal landcover

Semi-natural vegetation including heather and bracken on Holyhead Mountain and around Penrhyn Mawr and pastoral farmland elsewhere. Settlement is very sparse and limited to a small linear cluster around Goferydd. There are also wireless masts and lighthouse.

Intertidal area

Limited to a narrow band of exposed rocks in places.

Characteristics of sea

The sea is very exposed and west facing with large waves breaking on the rocky shore. There are two small islands: North and South Stack, the latter is linked to the 'mainland'.

Hinterland land form

Holyhead Mountain dominates the island rising to 220m AOD with rocky outcrops and steep slopes. The land falls to the south to around 30 to 50m AOD of undulating coastal plateau.

Hinterland land cover

The land cover is a mix of pastoral farmland and semi-natural cover with small rocky outcrops in places. Heather heath characterises Holyhead mountain outside the enclosed farmland.

Lighting

The main concentration of light is at Holyhead, hidden from many views by Holyhead Mountain, and elsewhere light sources are limited. There is a lighthouse on South Stack and another by North Stack.

Use

Land/coast uses

The coast is an RSPB nature reserve and is also used for coastal recreation, in particular climbing, on what are some of the best cliffs for the purpose in Europe, walking on the coastal path, some limited agriculture and limited residential use.

Sea uses

The Holyhead to Ireland ferry routes cross this seascape, which is also used infrequently for some sailing and leisure boating.

Visual and sensory qualities

How the seascape unit is experienced

Coastal path, RSPB nature reserve, cliff climbing, South Stack lighthouse, settlement.

Degree of intervisibility of land and sea

Inter-visibility is limited by Holyhead Mountain acting as a visual barrier

Key views to sea and along the coast

Coastal path, Caer y Twr Hillfort, RSPB nature reserve – Ellin’s Tower; South Stack lighthouse, settlement.

Key views to land

Views from ferry passengers and from occasional yachts.

Tranquillity/remoteness/wildness

The west side of Holyhead Mountain feels remote and wild although relatively close to the town of Holyhead. The relative tranquillity is affected slightly by views of wireless masts, lighthouse and signal station.

Sense of scale

Large - high cliffs and landform, open sea

	<i>Openness/ enclosure</i>	Open
	<i>Diversity</i>	Moderately diverse.
	<i>Exposure</i>	Very exposed
Key cultural associations		<p>Navigation: the South Stack lighthouse, spectacularly located on a small island.</p> <p>Holyhead Mountain is visible for miles, and acts as a land mark for ferries arriving from Ireland.</p> <p>Views out to sea from Holyhead Mountain, with very distant prospects to Ireland's Wicklow Hills and mountains of Mourne in exceptionally clear weather.</p>
Forces for change	<i>Land/coast</i>	<p>Recreation pressure on coastal path, RSPB nature reserve and habitats.</p> <p>Use of Holyhead Mountain for communications masts.</p>
	<i>Sea</i>	-
Designations and sensitive features	<i>National Park</i>	-
	<i>AONB</i>	Anglesey Coast AONB
	<i>Heritage Coast</i>	Holyhead Mountain Heritage Coast
	<i>Long-distance coastal footpath/National Trail</i>	Anglesey Coastal Path
	<i>Outstanding and special historic landscapes</i>	-
	<i>Historic gardens and parks</i>	-
	<i>Key scheduled ancient monuments</i>	Caer y Twr Hillfort SH 2182
	<i>Country Parks</i>	-
	<i>Open access land</i>	Holyhead Mountain open access land; Penrhyn Mawr common

No: 9

Regional Seascape
Unit Name:**Holyhead Mountain, North Stack to Penrhyn Mawr**

Headline criteria	Sub-criteria	Increases sensitivity	Decreases sensitivity
Overall character and qualities	Summary of key factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The very wide panorama of elevated sea views This precipitous area feels particularly wild and remote, being at the western extremities of the landmass Views from the coastal path to the west would be particularly affected at sunset by visibility of development Culturally the location is significant for its westerly prospects to Ireland's Wicklow Hills and mountains of Mourne, visible in very clear weather 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The large scale of open sea views The presence of frequent ferries The North and South Stack lighthouses The wireless masts and apparatus on Holyhead Mountain.

Seascape sensitivity levels for different forms of offshore development

Modelled scenario	Generic form of development	Sensitivity	Comments
Offshore wind sensitivity	Tall structures 13km offshore	Moderate - High	The south westerly prospects are more sensitive than the north westerly to tall objects placed at sea. North west is associated with ferries arriving and departing Holyhead, and in south west locations, tall objects may silhouette at sunset.
Wave energy units sensitivity	Broad flat structures on the sea surface	Low - Moderate	Broad flat objects out at sea would not be as prominent, however they would be seen from higher elevations from land.
Tidal energy units sensitivity	Developments placed only a short distance offshore.	Moderate - High	The sense of wildness and relative intactness of this natural coastline would be affected by the introduction of developments just a short distance offshore. Whilst Holyhead Mountain is 'mountainous' (it is craggy, heather clad, unenclosed, and has a distinctive shape), it is nevertheless relatively low (220m AOD). Tall structures placed close to the mountain may therefore reduce our perceptions of it from being a mountain to just to being a high coastal headland.