

Arfordir Fieldwork Information

The fieldwork for the Arfordir project will be ongoing throughout the year and will involve going out on site both with GGAT staff and independently. Because the study area covers most of the Gower peninsula and Swansea Bay, there is lot of variety in the kind of sites and terrain we will be dealing with, as well as a great variety in the weather we can expect!

We will be surveying sites both in the intertidal zone and on dry land, and therefore, for the former sites, attention must be paid to the tide times. Make sure you know the times of high and low tide, and don't take risks with timing or with working in areas where you may get cut off. Generally, if you're going into tidal areas or remote locations, take someone with you, don't go alone. Also, try to avoid boggy areas and waterlogged ground where possible. A particular danger when working in environments with a lot of water, is leptospirosis, also known as Weil's Disease, which is most commonly carried by feral rats, and occasionally other small mammals. Infection is caused when the urine or blood of an infected animal comes enters the bloodstream, which most commonly happens via water which is drunk or inhaled, via broken skin, or the lining of the mouth, airway and lungs. The bacteria cannot survive in saltwater, so the risks while conducting this project are low, however, should you start to feel unwell (early symptoms of leptospirosis are similar to flu, often with a red pinpoint rash) see your doctor and mention that there may be a chance you have come into contact with contaminated water. See the Leptospirosis Information Centre (<http://www.leptospirosis.org/>) or the Health and Safety Executive (<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg84.pdf>) for more information.

Likewise, some of the study area includes cliffs, take care when walking along coastal paths close to the edge, don't go close to the cliff edge, avoid them in high winds and don't access any areas where signs indicate danger. Don't walk along unstable cliffs, and don't walk below them in case of falling rocks. Take special care when recording a site – don't take risks with your safety for the sake of getting a measurement. When you go out, take a mobile phone, and tell people where you are planning to go and what time you expect to be back. Also, be aware of sinkholes or other areas of erosion, which may open up into hidden cavities. Parts of the Gower had extractive industries; be aware of where there is a likelihood to be mine workings or quarries, and take extra care, avoid shafts and don't stand underneath quarry faces where there is potential for falling rocks.

As some of the areas we will be covering are in remote locations away from facilities and cover, it is important to take food and drinks, plan toilet breaks and rest breaks, and to wear suitable clothes for the weather: warm waterproof clothing, or suncream and a hat, as well as sturdy footwear suitable for walking long distances. When you go out to survey area of the coastline, plan your route in advance. In general, stick to footpaths, and don't access farm land where permission has not been given by the owner.

For group activities organised by GGAT, members of staff will include a trained and qualified first aider.