

1. INTRODUCTION

Description and habitat requirements

The tentacled lagoon worm is a small polychaete worm, typically 3-5 mm in length. It inhabits intertidal muddy sediments in sheltered parts of estuaries and lagoons. It is a detritivore, obtaining its food from sediments using its tentacles.

Distribution in Pembrokeshire

The tentacled lagoon worm has been found in two locations in Pembrokeshire: Carew Mill Pond and Neyland Weir Pool (Westfield Pill). Both locations are within the Milford Haven Waterway/Daugleddau Estuary system. It may also be present elsewhere, in sheltered parts of the estuary system.

Population size

Unknown

It is thought to be present in low numbers in Carew Mill Pond (based on sampling in 1998).

Trends

Unknown

Conservation status

European: none

UK: the tentacled lagoon worm is nationally scarce. It is included on Schedule 5 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), on account of its scarcity and vulnerability to degradation or losses of habitat. It has been recorded at only two sites in Wales, both in Pembrokeshire.

Status in terms of UK BAP priorities:

Low: No costed Action Plan or species statement prepared.

2. FACTORS AFFECTING THE SPECIES IN PEMBROKESHIRE

- A. Pollution of sediments and water column
- B. Changes in estuary dynamics and sediment characteristics
- C. Changes in salinity of sediments and water column
- D. Dredging or other gross physical disturbance of sediments.

3. CURRENT ACTION

No specific action is currently being undertaken for this species.

4. OBJECTIVES AND TARGETS

Objective: to achieve favourable conservation condition for this species, where the following targets are met:-

- There is no contraction in the range/extent in the population (as known in December 1998).
- The population size is maintained at (or above) the current level (unknown).

Current condition

The tentacled lagoon worm population in Pembrokeshire is considered to be UNKNOWN

4. RATIONALE

No systematic sampling of mudflats and lagoons for this species has been undertaken and its current status must be described as unknown. Survey and subsequent monitoring are priority actions for this species.

- A.** Pollution of sediments and water column. This species is potentially vulnerable to pollution both in the sediments and the water column, which should be minimised.
- B.** Changes in estuary dynamics and sediment characteristics.
The tentacled lagoon worm appears to require muddy sediments in brackish water conditions. Changes in sediment characteristics, e.g. decrease in mud, increase in gravel or sand, or in other physical characteristics such as particle size; aeration may affect its distribution. Such changes could result from decreasing or increasing levels of sedimentation.
- C.** Changes in salinity of sediments and water column.
This species appears to tolerate a wide range of salinities (5 - 20%), although significant localised changes in salinity (of sediments and water column) e.g. from additional or increased inputs of freshwater may adversely affect it.
- D.** Dredging or other gross physical disturbance of sediments.
Gross disturbance, e.g. from dredging; excessive bait digging (?) could result in loss of or permanent changes to the habitat, causing decline or extinction of local populations. Any dredging or flushing proposals should be carefully evaluated in the light of this species' requirements and scarcity.

6. OUTLINE ACTION PLAN

	ACTIONS	FACTOR	LEAD PARTNER(S)
1.	Policy & legislation		
1.1	Include habitat requirements for the tentacled lagoon worm in relevant site management plans	A, B, C, D	PCNPA, WTWW
2.	Site safeguard and management		
2.1	Ensure appropriate protection and management of all known sites.	A, B, C, D	PCNPA, WTWW, CCW
3.	Monitoring and review		
3.1	Carry out sampling at known sites to establish population size and distribution		PCNPA, CCW
3.2	Extend sampling at all potentially suitable locations in the estuary system.		CCW
3.3	Monitor the known sites for the extent and size of populations.		PCNPA; CCW
3.4	This action plan to be reviewed every 6 years		PBP

7. RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS

Additional resources will be required for 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3.