



Between August 2007 and September 2012 ARS Ltd carried out a desk based study, aerial photograph mapping and site surveys on the North West coast on behalf of [English Heritage](#) . The project aimed to assess the threat posed to heritage assets on the North West coast by rising sea levels and the coastal erosion that happens as a result. The North West Rapid Coastal Zone Assessment, or NWRCA, is one of a series of projects initiated by English Heritage around the coasts of England. The assessment was undertaken throughout with reference to Defra's Shoreline Management Plans, or SMPs. The area that was assessed extends from the Anglo-Welsh border in the Dee Estuary to the Anglo-Scottish border in the Solway Firth.

The NWRCA study area consists of nearly 700km of coastline between the Lowest Astronomical Tide (LAT) and 1km inland from Mean High Water Springs (MHWS). The review of the coastline and the decision on which areas merit the most attention was based on two different data sets. The first consists of the Historic Environment Records (HERs). These are maintained by or for Local Authorities across the country and include information about archaeological remains and historic buildings for that particular area. For the NWRCA project the HERs that were consulted were Cheshire Archaeology Planning Advisory Service, Merseyside Archaeological Service, Lancashire County Council, Cumbria County Council and the Lake District National Park Authority. The second data set consists of the English Heritage archive and aerial photograph coverage of the study area from which all archaeological features visible have been mapped. This was followed by targeted site visits and accurate

The project was able to identify the most 'at-risk' sites and to predict the effect that continued sea-level rise would have on them in the future. These have been carefully assessed and scored against consistent criteria to produce a prioritised list of sites under threat. These range from Mesolithic flint scatters and footprints to World War II remains.

Defensive structures are common on the coast and range from Iron Age hillforts, Roman forts and milefortlets, Norman motte and bailey castles through to medieval castles and the buildings of World War II. The industrial legacy of the region is also well-represented, as are remains of historic shipping, fishing and farming.

*Links to County-specific information:*

[Cheshire](#) [Merseyside](#) [Lancashire](#) [Cumbria South](#) [Cumbria North](#)