

## Introduction

During the 2007 season 51 Seasearch surveys were completed, recording 192 different species, including nationally rare species, such as the seahorse *Hippocampus* sp. at Port Isaac bay.

## Species Summary

### Sponges:

Fifteen species of sponge were identified this year with the most common being a type of boring sponge *Cliona celata*. Other common species were mermaid's glove *Simnia patula* and *Pachymatisma johnstonia*. The less frequently recorded species were chocolate finger sponge *Raspailia ramosa*, purse sponge *Scypha ciliata* yellow hedgehog sponge *Polymastia boletiformis* and *Stelligera rigida*.

### Cnidarians (Anemones, corals, hydroids and jellyfish):

28 species of Cnidarian were recorded. The most frequently recorded soft coral species were dead man's fingers *Alcyonium digitatum* and pink sea fans *Eunicella verrucosa*. Hard coral species recorded included the Devonshire cup coral *Caryophyllia smithii* and scarlet-and-gold cup corals *Balanophyllia regia*. Abundant anemone species recorded included; jewel anemone *Corynactis viridis*, snakelocks anemone *Anemonia viridis*, beadlet anemones *Actinia equinia* and elegant anemones *Sargatia elegans*. Five hydroid species were recorded; the antenna hydroid *Nemertesia antennina*, branched antenna hydroid *Nemertesia ramosa*, kelp fir *Obelia geniculata*, oaten pipe hydroid *Tubularia indivisa*, and the herringbone hydroid *Halecium halecium*. One jellyfish species was also recorded: the compass jellyfish *Chrysaora hysoscella*.

### Crustaceans:

Out of thirteen species of crustaceans recorded the three most abundant species found were the velvet swimming crab *Necora puber*, the edible crab *Cancer pagurus* and the common spider crab *Maja squinado*. The most rarely recorded species included Leaches spider crab *Inachus phalangium*, the long legged spider crab *Macropodia rostrata* and the spiny squat lobster *Galathea strigosa*.

### Molluscs:

Of the twenty five mollusc species the most abundant included common cuttlefish *Sepia officinalis*, the painted topshell *Calliostoma zizyphinum* and the king scallop *Pecten maximus*. Also recorded were the sea-fan seaslug *Tritonia nilsodhneri*, the beautiful yellow edged Polycera nudibranch *Polycera faeroensis*, and the sea lemon *Archidoris pseudoargus*.

### Echinoderms:

Only fourteen species of echinoderm were recorded of which the most common were the spiny starfish *Marthasterias glacialis*, edible sea urchin *Echinus esculentus*, cotton spinner sea cucumber *Holothuria forskali* and common starfish *Asterias rubens*. Also recorded were the bloody henry starfish *Henricia oculata*, white crevice sea-cucumber *Pawsonia saxicola* and the brown crevice sea-cucumber *Aslia lefevrei*.

### Fishes:

These survey dives were conducted as part of the national Seasearch Programme. Many volunteers took part in these surveys during 2007, too many to thank individually but thanks to all involved. Seasearch is a volunteer underwater survey project for recreational divers to actively contribute to the conservation of the marine environment. For details of Seasearch visit [www.seasearch.org.uk](http://www.seasearch.org.uk). For details of Seasearch in Cornwall visit [www.cornwallwildlifetrust.org.uk](http://www.cornwallwildlifetrust.org.uk).

This report has been prepared by Tom Hardy

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The most common species in order of abundance were; pollack *Pollachius pollachius*, cuckoo wrasse *Labrus mixtus*, ballan wrasse *Labrus bergylta* and corkwing wrasse *Ctenolabrus rupestris*. We also had some more unusual fish such as the snake pipefish *Entelurus aequoreus*, the fifteen-spined stickleback *Spinachia spinachia*, the horse mackerel *Trachurus trachurus*, and one recorded sighting of a seahorse *Hippocampus* sp. at Port Isaac Bay.

Table 1:

Phylum	Common name	Number of species
Algae	Seaweeds	22
Annelida	Segmented worms	20
Anthophyta	Flowering plants	1
Bryozoa	Sea mats and sea firs	7
Cnidaria	Anemones, corals, jellyfish and hydroids	28
Crustacea	Crabs, lobster, prawn and barnacles	13
Echinodermata	Starfish, brittlestars, urchins and sea cucumbers	14
Mollusca	Shells, seaslugs and cuttlefish	25
Pisces	Fishes	35
Platyhelminthes	Flatworms	1
Porifera	Sponges	15
Tunicata	Seasquirts	12
<b>Total</b>		<b>193</b>

### Nationally rare and important species:

Eight species of national importance were recorded during 2007 including the trumpet anemone *Aiptasia mutabilis*, pink seafan *Eunicella verrucosa*, maerl *Maerl indet*, ling *Molva molva*, yellow cluster anemone *Parazoanthus axinellae*, eelgrass *Zostera marina* scarlet and gold star-coral *Balanophyllia regia* and of course the seahorse *Hippocampus* sp..



Cornwall



# Cornwall Seasearch - Surveys 2007 Summary Report



Cuckoo wrasse - Sally Sharrock



Scarlet and gold star coral - Nathan Jones



Beadlet anemone - Joan Edwards



Jewel anemones - Paul Naylor



Leopard spotted goby - Paul Naylor



Eelgrass on sand - Paul Kay

## Penzance and Lands End

Six dives on five different sites were undertaken around Lands End at Mulberry Dock, the City of Westminster Wreck, Lamorna Cove, Low Lee Ledges, and Porthgarra.

The seabed consisted of two areas of wreckage, the City of Westminster and Mulberry Dock. The remaining sites were predominantly rocky reefs with sand. Common wreck species were dead man's fingers *Alcyonium digitatum*, pollack *Pollachius pollachius*, jewel anemones *Corynactis viridis*, and ballan wrasse *Labrus bergylta*.



Scarlet and gold star coral, Nathan Jones

On the rocky reef substrate

common species recorded were ballan wrasse, cuckoo wrasse *Labrus mixtus*, spider crabs *Maja squinado*, rainbow wrack *Cystoseira tamariscifolia* and the cotton spinner sea-cucumber *Holothuria forskali*. One rare species the scarlet and gold star-coral *Balanophyllia regia* was also recorded at Lamorna cove.

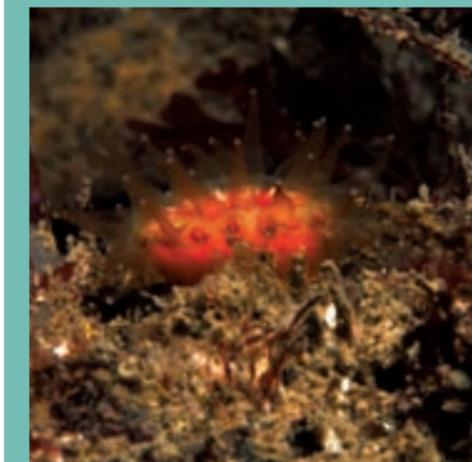
## Mounts Bay

Two survey dives were completed, one on the Helopes Wreck and the second at Roskilly in kelp and eelgrass beds. Common species at these sites included dead man's fingers, the edible sea urchin, the common starfish, dragonets, tube worm *Pomatoceros triqueter*, bib *Trisopterus luscus*, *Henricia sanguinolenta*, sea beech *Delesseria sanguinea* and cuevie *Laminaria hyperborea*.

## The Lizard and Manacles

In the East Lizard Point area only one dive at Penca Reef was completed, the seabed was a pinnacle and sloping wall. Over 130 pink sea fans were recorded in this single dive. Other common species were the jewel anemone, sea-beard hydroid *Nemertesia antennina*, *Pentapora foliacea* (a type of bryozoan) and the ascidian *Aplidium punctum*.

The west Lizard Peninsula area had two dives completed at Bellucia and Davas Rock, abundant species included cloak anemone *Adamsia carciniopados*, thongweed *Himanthalia elongata*, furbelows *Saccorhiza polyschides* and pink sea fans. Rarer species recorded were Devonshire cup corals *Caryophyllia smithii* and potato crisp coral *Pentapora fasciallis*.



Devonshire cup coral, Jason Roseveare

Seven dives were completed on the Manacles last year at Raglan Reef (2), Maenland Reef, Minstrel and Woodfords Wall, Spiridian Valiano (wreckage) and Vase rock. Recorded seabed types ranged from rocky reef to wreckage to kelp forest. The most abundant species at these sites were: jewel anemones, plumose anemones *Metridium senile*, goldsinny wrasse, dead man's fingers, Devonshire cup coral, pollack, sea mat *Electra pilosa*, star ascidian *Botryllus schlosseri* and *Porifera indet* sponge.

## St Agnes

Only one dive was carried out around St Agnes at Bawdens Rock on a rocky reef with mussel beds. Some of the more common species were the edible crab, dead man's fingers, edible urchin, ballan wrasse and the spiny starfish. Also present though not common was the important BAP species *Eunicella verrucosa*, the pink seafan.

## North Cornwall

In North Cornwall surveys were completed at Bude Bay, Newquay Life Guard Slipway, Port Gaverne, Varley Head, Port Quin (2), and Port Isaac Bay. The seabed type was predominantly rocky reef with boulders and sandy seabed. Common species encountered were pink seafans, dragonets *Callionymus lyra* and edible crabs *Cancer pagurus*. Some of the more unusual and rare sightings we had were the scarlet and gold star-coral *Balanophyllia regia*, leopard spotted goby *Thorogobius ephippiatus*, and a seahorse seen at Port Isaac Bay, but the species is unknown.



Leopard spotted Goby, Paul Naylor

## South East Cornwall

South East Cornwall can be separated into two diving areas Fowey (4 dives) and the Looe and Whitsand bay area (10 dives). The Fowey area sites surveyed were Hat Rock, Udder Rock and Talland bay. The seabed type in this area was predominantly rocky reef with vertical drop offs, ledges and fissures. Common species were dead man's fingers *Alcyonium digitatum*, jewel anemone *Corynactis viridis*, pink sea fans *Eunicella verrucosa*, *Aglaophenia pluma* (a type of hydroid), painted top shells *Calliostoma zizyphinum* and cuckoo wrasse *Labrus mixtus*.

The Looe and Whitsand bay dives showed a predominantly rocky reef seabed with the exception of Basket rock which had a small eelgrass bed. Common species were jewel anemones, *Diadumene cincta* anemone, *Halecium halecinum* hydroid, ballan wrasse *Labrus bergylta*, sea mat *Membranipora membranacea*, pouting *Trisopterus luscus*, goldsinny wrasse *Ctenolabrus rupestris*, pollack *Pollachius pollachius*, beadlet anemones *Actinia equina* and jewel anemones *Corynactis viridis*. The wreck sites James Egan Layne and the Rosehill also showed abundant pink sea fan *Eunicella verrucosa* populations.



Jewel anemone, Paul Naylor

## Rame head

Two survey dives were undertaken on a rocky reef seabed where abundant species included kelp species, *Laminaria hyperborea* and *Saccorhiza polyschides*, goldsinny wrasse *Ctenolabrus rupestris*, candy striped flatworm *Prostheceraeus vittatus*, and the common starfish.

## Dodman and St. Austell

Four surveys were completed in the East Dodman area at Curran Vein, Gwineas Reef, The Fields and the Gullies. These

dives were characterised by rocky reefs and mixed ground seabed types. The most abundant species at these sights were dead man's fingers, pink seafan, red sea fingers *Alcyonium glomeratum*, at Gwineas reef the rarer Devonshire cup coral *Caryophyllia smithii* was recorded. Two additional dives were completed in the Vryan & Gerran's Bay area at Bellows and Middle Whelps. Species of interest were dead man's fingers, jewel anemones and Devonshire cup corals.



Pink seafan, bushy close up

## Falmouth and Helford

Eight dives were completed in the Falmouth and Helford river area at Channel East West Narrows (2), East Narrows, Peterson (wreck), Epsilon Wreck (2), and Silver Steps (2). The seabed ranged from wreckage to mixed ground and rocky reefs.

The wreck sites showed common species including conger eel *Conger conger*, common starfish *Asterias rubens*, edible sea urchin *Echinus esculentus*, pouting *Trisopterus luscus*, pollack *Pollachius pollachius*, *Pachymatisma johnstonia* sponge, and the spiny starfish *Marthasterias glacialis*.

The areas of mixed ground found at Channel East West Narrows and East Narrows showed different species of interest: including great pipefish *Syngnathus acus*, anglerfish *Lophius piscatorius* common star fish *Asterias rubens*, edible crabs *Cancer pagurus*, king scallops *Pecten maximus*, horse mussels *Modiolus modiolus* and the invasive slipper limpets *Crepidula fornicata*.

In the Helford River three dives surveyed two areas of eel grass one at Durgan Beach, one at North Helford River and a third at Dennis Head. Common species in the eelgrass beds were: eelgrass *Zostera marina*, kelp *Laminaria saccharina*, razor shells *Ensis siliqua*, hermit crab *Pagurus bernhardus*, slipper limpets *Crepidula fornicata* and the two spotted goby *Gobiusculus flavescens*.

At Dennis Head on stony gravel with small boulders and cobbles, the common species included grey top shell *Gibbula cineraria*, two spotted goby *Gobiusculus flavescens* and king scallops *Pecten maximus*.

