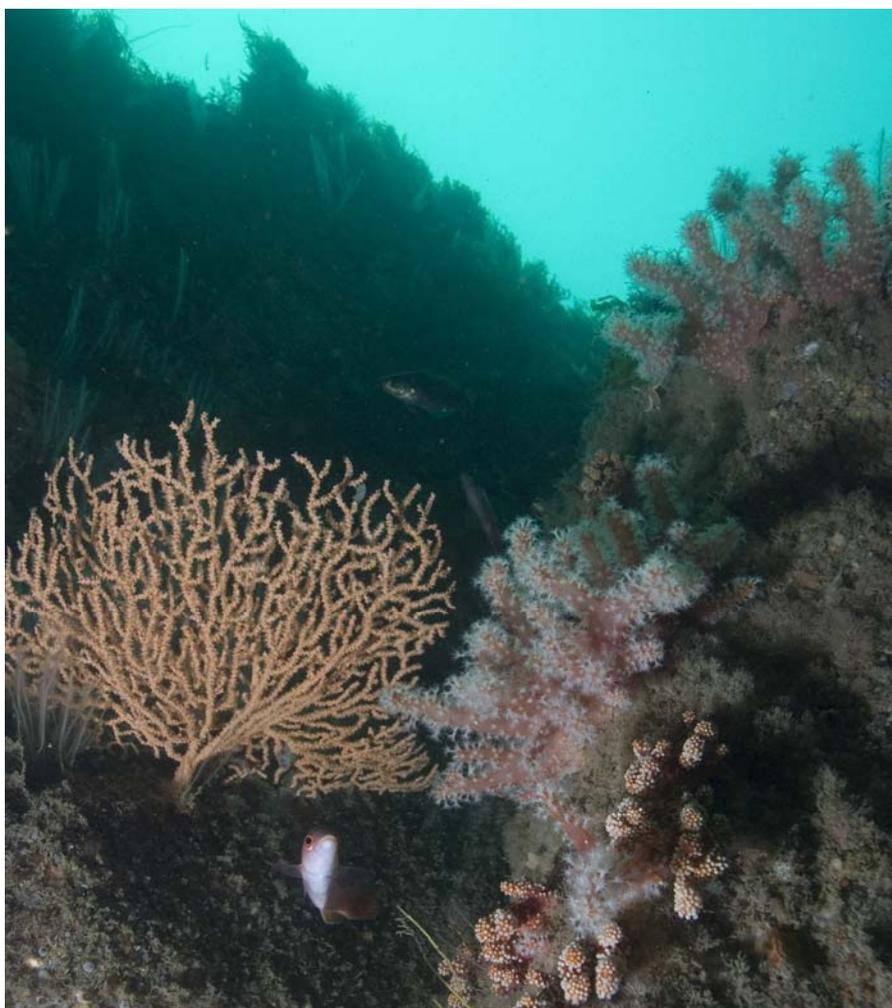




Devon 2010 Summary Report



**Report prepared by
Sally Sharrock**

Introduction

2010 was another successful year in Devon with over 50 divers regularly taking part in organised Seasearch dives. Many other divers returned forms from their own dives and Plymouth University students also completed Observer courses and training dives.

Attention was focussed on BAP species and habitats, candidate and proposed SACs, areas that could or should be of interest to the MCZ process and in surveying new sites or areas where there is very little up-to-date information.

Seventeen full days and 9 evening dives were run covering a total of 43 sites of which over half were new sites i.e. previously had no Seasearch record.

A special feature for this year was a focus on the north Devon coast and two full weekends resulted in 8 new sites being recorded there for Seasearch. Surveys were also carried out along the south Devon coast from Lyme Bay in the east of the region, in and around Torbay, out of Dartmouth, around Start Point and off Bolt Tail, within Bigbury Bay and at a number of sites in the Plymouth area.



Seasearch divers at the Bioblitz

Apart from dive surveys, talks and presentations were given to those clubs and organisations that requested them and Devon Seasearch was again represented at various other events including the Devon County MCZ advisory group and has provided input to the SAC consultations and the Lyme Bay project. In conjunction with the Marine Biological Association and the Natural History Museum Seasearch took part in the Mothecombe Bioblitz day recording 84 marine species on a single dive to add to the grand total from land.

Recording Forms

At the time of writing a total of 92 Surveyor forms and 128 Observer forms were received. Surveyor forms are the most useful, usually giving several habitats for each site and a more comprehensive description and species list enabling biotopes to be assigned. Many of the Observer forms are training forms which reflects the high number of courses run and the interest still being generated with new divers – or indeed more experienced divers who are just new to Seasearch.

All forms have now been input to Marine Recorder and biotopes added where possible. The biotope codes show a wide range of differing habitats across the region. It should be noted that on occasions where an exact biotope match is questionable the nearest match may have been used where *some* of the key species are present – in these cases 'best match' has been added to the text in this report (and the code in Marine Recorder tagged as 'uncertain'). In addition, sediment based biotopes do not always reflect the true picture of life present since although it is often present in varying numbers it may not be frequent enough to warrant a more specific code than SS.SCS.CCS for example.

The Marine Recorder files will be merged and uploaded to the national JNCC Gateway site in spring 2011.

The Dive Sites

Lyme Bay

A Seasearch team dived four sites in Lyme Bay in mid September. Two years after the ban on bottom trawling in a large part of the Bay, the results are plain to see.

Two of the sites visited, Outer Sawtooth Ledges and West Bay High Ledge, were sites which had escaped the main brunt of the trawling because they had areas of upstanding reef formed of soft pitted rock with fissures, crevices and overhangs. Here there was the typical range of fauna for the area, seen at its best. Forests of sea fans *Eunicella verrucosa*, all in good condition, tall branching sponges and two Lyme Bay signature species, huge *Phallusia mamillata* sea-squirts and trumpet anemones *Aiptasia mutabilis*. The overhangs provided shaded areas where the very rare sunset cup coral *Leptopsammia pruvoti* and scarce Weymouth carpet coral *Hoplangia durotrix* were both recorded.

Biotopes CR.HCR.XFa.ByErSp.Eun
CR.FCR.Cv.SpCup
SS.SCS.CCS



Phallusia sea squirt, sponges and trumpet anemones Photo Chris Wood



New seafan growth
Photo Chris Wood

The other two sites were known to have been badly damaged by scallop trawling three years ago. West end of Lanes Ground was an area of low lying cobbles and Pinhay Settle small, flat rock ledges. At both sites what was noticeable was the number of small sessile animals, branching sponges, young sea fans (recorded as frequent, hence the *Eunicella* best match biotope) and potato crisp bryozoans *Pentapora foliacea*. These offer evidence that, once the pressure is taken off, the sea bed is capable of recovery and offer huge hope for all those areas that are eventually identified as marine conservation zones in the process currently taking place.

Biotopes CR.HCR.XFa.ByErSp.Eun best match
SS.SMx.CMx
SS.SCS.CCS

Exmouth

A weekend out of Exmouth enabled a Seasearch team to survey four new sites at the western end of Lyme Bay.

South of Exmouth an area known as Southern Tors was formed of low isolated soft rock reef outcrops in an area of mixed ground and silty mud. The area is currently potted and because of that it is not usually bottom trawled. The reef supported sparse faunal cover but noticeable were occasional groups of good sized bushy *Eunicella verrucosa*. Worms, crustacea and echinoderms were also recorded in good numbers.

Biotopes CR.MCR
SS.SMx.CMx
SS.Smu.CfiMu



Queen scallop on mainly dead maerl.

A second site nearby known as The Tors is one that shows signs of being regularly bottom trawled. The flat sediment seabed consisted of shallow ridges and furrows with a large amount of broken shell in the furrows. The sediment was composed mainly of dead maerl with a very small percentage 2-5% of live maerl. Hermit crabs *Pagurus bernhardus* and common starfish *Asterias rubens* were the predominant fauna, nothing else being recorded as more than rare.

Biotope SS.SMx.CMx best match (since most of the maerl was dead).

Two sites inshore off Dawlish sands were recorded by Devon Wildlife Trust a few years ago from grab samples as being eelgrass bed *Zostera marina*. Previously Seasearch has ground-truthed the outer (deeper, c 20m bsl) mark given by DWT but failed to find any eelgrass. This time we surveyed the inshore mark where the shallower depth suggested eelgrass may be possible. A level fine sand seabed c 6-7m bsl with small ripples supported a community of razor shells *Ensis sp*, Sagartid anemones, sand mason worms *Lanice conchilege*, at least 5 species of crab, many molluscs and echinoderms. Loose leaves of *Zosera noltii* were recorded floating in the water and just two small tufts of apparently rooted thin eelgrass were recorded between the 12 divers. It was undecided whether these were *Zostera marina* or stray *Z. noltii* from the Exmouth estuary. As the area is very turbid and the sand quite mobile it was felt they were probably the latter and that no real extent of *Z. marina* would be found, the light level being so low.

Biotope SS.SSa.IMuSa.EcorEns best match

An inshore reef named Two Stones approximately 250m off Budleigh Salterton was also surveyed. Silt covered rock with many crevices, fissures and overhangs, was home to abundant common starfish *Asterias rubens* with no obvious food source, perhaps explaining why large numbers of dead starfish were occasionally washed ashore. Crustacea were occasional and one edible oyster *Ostrea edulis* was recorded. Various sediments surrounded the rock outcrop including medium fine sand with beds of brittlestars *Amphiura brachiata*.

Biotopes CR.MCR
CR.FCR.Cv
SS.SSa.CMuSa.AbraAirr best match.

Torbay

Sites surveyed in the Torbay area included the well known Brixham breakwater beach sites which were used early in the year as Observer training dive sites. Although this area is well known it is an ideal place to introduce new Seasearchers to underwater fauna. What may at first sight appear a rather barren sedimentary area becomes on closer observation full of

varied life with eelgrass beds of *Zostera marina*, beds of the invasive slipper limpet *Crepidula fornicata*, a wide variety of different crustacea including masked crab *Corystes cassivelaunus*, mud runner crab *Goneplax rhomboids* and many different hermit crabs and on one dive one edible oyster *Ostrea edulis* was recorded. The area was also abundant in large terebellid worm tubes *Terebellidae indet* and burrowing anemones. The manmade structure and boulders of the breakwater itself are well bored and pitted with piddocks and have solitary hard corals *Caryophyllia smithii* amongst the mixed weeds and occasional kelp.

Biotopes IR.FIR.IFou
SS.SMx.CMx.CIlOMx
SS.SMx.IMx.CreAsAn

Other sites targeted were well known but in the past not well recorded. The Pipes is close inshore on the northern side of the bay and as the name suggests is a collection of metal pipes at the foot of the bedrock wall/underwater extension of the cliff. Patchy edible mussel beds *Mytilus edulis* cover some of the rock whilst the sparsely covered pipes have at least one pink seafan *Eunicella verrucosa*.

Biotopes IR.MIR.KR
CR.FCR.FouFa

Thatcher rock to the south of the Hope's Nose promontory was sloping, upward facing bedrock, heavily silted and notable for abundant featherstars *Antedon bifida*, many anemones including *Urticina felina*, *Cereus pedunculatus* and *Anemonia viridis* and the rather rarer *Aiptaisia mutablis*. Another site close in to the shore had cave-like overhangs with the tiny pink soft coral *Alcyonium hibernicum*.

Biotopes CR.HCR.XFa
SS.SMx.CMx
IR.HIR.KSed.LSacSac
SS.SCS.CCS

Further east Tucker Rock was similar low silted rocky reef notable for an abundance of paired crabs, dense clumps of the hydroid *Nemertesia spp* and many hermit crabs *Pagurus bernhardus* with parasitic anemones *Calliactus parasitica* attached.

CR.HCR.XFa.SpNemAdia

The shallow water of Fishcombe Bay was surveyed mainly to retrieve a temperature sensor implanted last season to record for the CRESH project. Dense healthy eelgrass *Zostera marina* was recorded here.

Biotope SS.SMp.SSgr.Zmar

Just outside the bay to the south of Berry Head a new site called Mudstone Ledge was surveyed. Low rocky reef with faunal cover of anemones, hydroids and sponges was interspersed with gullies of sediment and broken mussel shells. Three BAP species were recorded here - *Eunicella verrucosa* was recorded on the rock, anglerfish *Lophius piscatorius* and plaice *Pleuronectes platessa* on the sediment.

Biotopes CR.HCR.XFa.SpNemAdia
SS.SMx.CMx

Dartmouth

In April a weekend was spent surveying sites out of Dartmouth. Across Start Bay two sites within the newly designated extension proposed SAC Prawle Point to Start Point were surveyed, both very tide swept areas just off Start Point and both with no previous Seasearch records.



Large *Adreus fascicularis*

The first, a reef south of Mattiscombe Sands, was formed of low lying bedrock around 16m below sea level. The upward facing rock formed ridges and troughs with coarse gravel and sand between giving sand scoured areas with typical fauna for that habitat of chimney sponges *Ciocalypta penicillus* and *Polymastia penicillus*, the dahlia anemone *Urticina felina* and some exceptionally large stands of the scarce finger sponge *Adreus fascicularis*. On the unscoured bedrock habitat the Indian feather hydroid *Gymnangium montagui* was a prominent feature

with a few *Eunicella verrucosa* and patches of the uncommon brown tasselweed *Carpomitra costata*. Where the gravel areas were more extensive the gravel cucumber *Neopentadactyla mixta* was recorded.

Biotopes CR.HCR.XFa.ByErSp
SS.SCS.CCS.NMix
CR.MCR.EcCr.UrtScr

The second site in this area was south of Peartree Point and consisted of flattish upward facing bedrock at 17m bsl with deep gullies, the rock falling away near vertically to the southeast to 23m bsl. Dense oaten pipe hydroid *Tubularia indivisa*, characteristic of such tide swept areas, dominated the top edge and sides of the plateau with *Eunicella verrucosa* in the more sheltered areas of the gullies and below the face. At 23m bsl shallow rock ridges with gravel sand between and scour action were similar to the previous site except the seafans were more extensive here and most in good condition.



Abundant fresh *Tubularia indivisa*

Adreus fascicularis and *Ciocalypta penicillus* were also found plus many featherstars *Antedon bifida*. This site would be classed as the BAP habitat 'fragile sponge and anthozoan communities on subtidal rocky reef'.

Biotopes CR.HCR.XFa.ByErSp.Eun
CR.HCR.FaT.CTub

Two dives were made nearer Dartmouth, again at sites with no previous Seasearch record. The first was at Middle Blackstone, a tideswept underwater basalt pinnacle to the east of the estuary, rising from the seabed at 22m bsl to 12m bsl. The pinnacle is a complicated formation of blocks and gullies with the different faces having slightly differing fauna. In places there were abundant *Antedon bifida* and a single large nudibranch *Tritonia hombergii* was found apparently feeding on these (it's usual food is dead men's fingers *Alcyonium digitatum* and it is an uncommon species in the south); other orientated faces had abundant cover of jewel anemones *Corynactis viridis* and *Tubularia indivisa* was also recorded as abundant. Large and frequent *Urticina felina* anemones were found amongst the other fauna especially in the more silty gullies. At the base of the pinnacle very plump common starfish *Asterias rubens* were found on a bed of empty mussel shells.

Biotopes CR.HCR.FaT.CTub.Adig
SS.SMx.CMx

The final site was dictated by the weather and was close inshore on the east side of the mouth of the estuary at Newfoundland Cove. Here a kelp forest of *Laminaria hyperborea* on shallow rocks was recorded, the rocks also covered in extensive mussel *Mytilus edulis* spat which was being eaten by *Asterias rubens*. Further away from the shoreline the seabed became a mix of cobbles and sand with extensive sand mason worms *Lanice conchilege*.

Biotope IR.MIR.KR.LhypT
SS.SCS.ICS.SLan

Bolt Area

The area to the south of Bolt Head and Tail has strong tidal streams which makes suitable dive opportunities at weekends (when most Seasearch volunteers are available) scarce and hence Seasearch information lacking. One long weekend was planned to dive deeper sites in this area on the morning slack tides in conjunction with second dives at less challenging sites.

Shoal Ground Pinnacle and Shoal Ground Drop Off lie approximately 6km due south of Bolberry Down. Bedrock rises from the seabed at 40m bsl to 25m bcd. The upper domed rock was dominated by *Alcyonium digitatum* with patches of the hornwrack *Flustra foliacea* and *Tubularia indivisa*, typical for these current swept areas. *Corynactis viridis* was a major component on the vertical SE faces. In one almost circular gully sheltered from the main current a rock outcrop surrounded by clean gravel supported a small forest of *Eunicella verrucosa* with surrounding scoured rock.

Biotopes CR.HCR.XFa.FluCoAs
CR.HCR.XFa.CvirCri
CR.HCR.XFa.ByErSp.Eun best match.
CR.HCR.FaT.CTub.Adig
CR.MCR.EcCr.UrtScr best match

The third site in this area was called Greystone Ledges but was in reality somewhat to the west of these and to the west-south-west of Bolt Tail. Low lying ridges of rocky reef were interspersed with sand patches. The reef supported a very diverse fauna of sponges with over 26 species being recorded and shredded carrot sponge *Amphilectus fucorum* being a major component, together with hydroids especially *Nemertesia antennina* and a few *Eunicella verrucosa*. The sand patches had gravel cucumbers *Neopentadactyla mixta* in them.

Biotopes CR.HCR.XFa.SpNemAdia
SS.SCS.CCS.Nmix best match
CR.HCR.XFa.ByErSp



Diverse faunal cover on Greystone Ledges

Bigbury Bay

Inshore close to Mothecombe beach a site was surveyed in conjunction with the Bioblitz event. Low rock reefs amongst sediment were home to cuttlefish *Sepia officinalis*, catsharks *Scylliorhinus canicula* and *S. stellaris* and a painted ray *Raja microcellata* was also recorded here.

Biotopes IR.MIR.KR.LhypT.Ft
CR.HCR.XFa
SS.SCS.CCS



Alcyonium hibernicum at Wells Rock

To the east of the bay Burgh Rock and Wells Rock both had similar rugged layered and tilted type strata with kelp park on the upper surfaces. The former was dominated by *Nemertesia antennina* and *Alcyonium digitatum* and had some *Eunicella verrucosa* in poor condition. A large crawfish *Palinurus elephas* was recorded in surprisingly shallow water together with the scarce nudibranch *Doris Sticta*. At Wells rock the tiny pink soft coral fingers *Alcyonium hibernicum*, yellow cluster anemones *Parazoanthus axinellae* and the small black faced blenny *Tripterygion delaisi* were all recorded.

Biotopes IR.MIR.KR.LhypT.Pk
CR.HCR.XFa.SpAnVt
CR.HCR.XFa.ByErSp best match
CR.HCR.XFa
SS.SCS.CCS

To the inshore west end of the bay St Anchorite's Rock Reef was dominated by both red and brown weed with *Laminaria hyperborea* and the golden kelp *L. ochroleuca* on the upper sections forming a kelp forest. Some very large *Pollachius pollachius* frequented the kelp. The trumpet anemone *Aiptasia mutabilis* and black faced blenny *Tripterygion delaisi* were found amongst the mixed weeds. Gravel patches between the reef fingers had *Neopentadactyla mixta* and the solitary hydroid *Corymorpha nutans* together with the Imperial anemone *Aureliania heterocera*.

Biotopes IR.MIR.KR.LhypT.Ft
IR.MIR.KR.LhypT.Pk
SS.SCS.CCS.NMix
SS.SCS.CCS



Laminaria ochroleuca in Bigbury Bay

Close inshore at Thurlestone on the wreck of the Louis Shied an individual diver recorded two species of stalked jellyfish *Haliclystus auricula* and *Lucernariopsis cruxmelitensis*.

The offshore limestone pinnacle of East Rutts was surveyed. This site is very tide swept and covered in a *Laminaria hyperborea* kelp forest with some *L. ochroleuca*. Below this, dense *Tubularia indivisa* and *Nemertesia antennina* are typical of the strong current conditions. Faunal turf on very pitted rock consisted of a variety of sponges including *Adreus fascicularis*, patches of *Corynactis viridis* and various seasquirts including the football squirt *Diazona violacea* covered the steeply sloping sides and gullies. At c 30m bsl and deeper

more level areas were home to very large boring sponges *Cliona celata* and occasional *Eunicella verrucosa*.

Biotopes IR.HIR.KFaR.LhypR.Ft
CR.HCR.FaT.CTub.Adig
CR.HCR.XFa.SpNemAdia

Stoke Point to Wembury Mewstone

This area is within the candidate SAC and Seasearch surveyed a variety of well known sites together with those that had no previous Seasearch records. The area is hugely diverse from kelp forest and park in shallower areas, surge gullies close inshore to deeper sponge and anthozoan rich sites.

Deeper sites c 25-35m bsl at both Stoke Point (to the east of the section) and Shark Reef (a site close to the Mewstone to the west of the section) were mainly low profile reef with sediment scour between the sponge rich ridges and a typical scour tolerant fauna of *Polymastia* sponges and *Ciocalypa penicillus* at the edges. This edge biotope can be difficult to match, especially in this area, as one of the key species *Urticina felina* is rare between the Mewstone and Stoke Point but the sand scoured habitat with the typical sponges occurs quite widely. Anglerfish *Lophius piscatorius* was recorded at Stoke Point, sand eels *Ammodytes tobianus* over the sand patches, the rare Steven's goby *Gobius gasteveni* and a very small 20cm long juvenile nursehound *Scylliorhinus stellaris* at Shark Reef and (unusual here) *Urticina felina* at Ebb Rocks just off Gara Point. Spawning spiny starfish *Marthasterias glacialis* were abundant on one dive at Ebb Rocks. *Eunicella verrucosa* were evident throughout the area and the small soft coral *Alcyonium hibernicum* recorded at Halsea gully.

An unusual verbal report from a shellfish collector of abalone (or ormer) *Haliotis tuberculata* at the Mewstone was followed up with a survey dive. Abalone has not been verifiably recorded on this side of the Channel as yet and none were found on this occasion although the habitat is suitable and they may well exist – just being extremely difficult to spot. Blackfaced blenny *Tripterygion delaisi* was however recorded here together with *Alcyonium glomeratum* at a very shallow 7m bsl.

Biotopes for this whole stretch of the coast were wide ranging as can be seen from the following list.

Biotopes IR.MIR.KR.Lhyp.Ft
IR.HIR.KFaR.Ala
IR.HIR.KFaR.LhypR.Ft
IR.HIR.KFaR.LhypR.Pk
IR.FIR.SG.CrSp
CR.MCR.EcCr.UrtScr best match
CR.HCR.XFa
CR.HCR.XFa.CvirCri
CR.HCR.XFa.ByErSp
CR.HCR.XFa.ByErSp.Eun
CR.HCR.XFa.SpAnVt
SS.SCS.CCS

Plymouth Sound and Approaches

This area covers the Sound itself and the nearby sites from the Mewstone in the east to Rame Head in the west and has been well recorded in the past. Most of the forms from this area this year were training forms, many completed by the numerous university students who have attended recent Seasearch courses.

Devil's Point at the Narrows of the Tamar is a popular angling site. It was surveyed early in the year to give some idea of how much angling debris there was, prior to an organised clean up by local clubs. A large amount of line, weights and other angling debris was recorded.

Eunicella verrucosa were recorded at many sites including those on the Breakwater Fort and a very recent report of a young recruit a few centimetres high from Eastern Kings at the north end of the Sound.

Laminaria ochroleuca was recorded on some of the more southerly sites.

Biotopes IR.LIR.K.LhypLoch
CR.HCR.XFa.SpAnVt
SS.SCS.CCS



Eunicella verrucosa recruit, Eastern Kings
Photo Keith Hiscock

North Devon

It was decided this year to focus on the north Devon coast rather than Lundy Island. Lundy is surveyed by the statutory bodies and it was felt the few funds available should be targeted on areas where we have very little information. In the past years we have tried to survey the north coast but been largely defeated by the weather, managing just one survey dive each year. The area is very challenging due to the turbidity of the water, strong currents and tides and the very variable weather. Boat costs on the north coast are also nearly double those on the south coast. Despite all that, this year we had two successful weekends diving and surveyed 8 new sites for Seasearch. Forms from 3 other sites were returned by independent volunteer divers. It is disappointing that the local dive clubs are not interested in surveying their local area and that we rely on divers from further afield to visit on organised Seasearch trips.

An extremely tide-swept site off Hartland Point consisted of low rocky reef surrounded by mixed sediment. The reef had a dense hydroid turf of *Tubularia indivisa*, typical of such conditions. There were also large patches of mussel bed on the upper sections. In the sediment there were small conglomerations thought to be *Sabellaria spinulosa* but unconfirmed from the photograph. There is scope for much more recording work to be done in this area.

Biotopes CR.HCR.FaT.BalTub
SS.SMx.CMx
CR.MCR.CMus.CMyt
CR.HCR.FaT.CTub.Adig

Sites near Baggy Point were also in strong tidal streams. Low rock outcrops with deep gullies again had mussel beds on the upper surfaces, many hydroids and within the gullies a richer faunal turf of anemones and sponges. A stalked jellyfish was recorded here. The sediment at the base also had mussel beds.

Biotopes CR.HCR.FaT.CTub
CR.HCR.XFa.SpAnVt best match
CR.HCR.XFa.ByErSp
CR.MCR.CMus.CMyt
SS.SBr.SMus.MytSS
SS.SMx.CMx

Morte Stone site was a fairly rugged reef, again covered in hydroids with anemones and sponges. The base of the gullies and surrounding area was composed of coarse sand and gravel.

Biotopes CR.HCR.FaT.CTub
CR.HCR.FaT.CTub.Adig
SS.SCS.CCS

Sites in Combe Martin Bay proved very interesting despite rather poor visibility and a high degree of silt. Low rocky reef formations in the centre of the bay had a good variety of sponges. BAP species *Eunicella verrucosa* was recorded as occasional, at least 4 *Palinurus elephas* were seen on one dive together with angler fish *Lophius piscatorius* plus unusual or rare species curled octopus *Eledone cirrhosa*, Imperial anemone *Aureliania heterocera*, policeman anemone *Mesacmaea mitchellii*, and nudibranch *Lomanotus genei*. A site inshore off Egg Rocks also had *Eunicella verrucosa*, together with *Palinurus elephas* and a large stand of the rare sponge *Adreus fascicularis* and the southern cup coral *Caryophyllia inornata*.



Palinurus elephas, Combe Martin Bay

Biotopes CR.HCR.XFa
SS.SSa.CFiSa
CR.HCR.XFa.ByErSp
SS.SSa.CMuSa

BAP Habitats and species

BAP species and habitats were a particular target this year

Blue mussel beds on rock were recorded in north Devon at Baggy Point and Hartland Point and in south Devon at Dartmouth.

Blue mussel beds on sediment were recorded at Baggy Point.

Blue mussel beds were also recorded in Torbay but it is not clear if they were on rock or sediment.

Fragile sponge and anthozoan communities on subtidal habitats were recorded in Lyme Bay, off Start Point and at several sites out of Plymouth.

Eelgrass beds throughout the county are in general well known. This year sites were surveyed in Torbay.

The table below gives details of where BAP species were recorded.

Species name	Common name	Where recorded in 2010
<i>Amphianthus dohrnii</i>	Seafan anemone	None recorded on forms but known to be present on the Persier wreck
<i>Eunicella verrucosa</i>	Pink seafan	Lyme Bay Exmouth Torbay Dartmouth Start Point Bolt Area Bigbury Bay Plymouth area N Devon, Combe Martin & Lundy
<i>Halicyclustus auricula</i>	Stalked jellyfish	Bigbury Bay

<i>Lucernariopsis cruxmelitensis</i> Species unknown	Stalked jellyfish	Bigbury Bay N Devon, Baggy Point
<i>Leptopsammia pruvoti</i>	Sunset cup coral	Lyme Bay
<i>Lophius piscatorius</i>	Anglerfish	N Devon, Combe Martin Bolt Berry Head Stoke Point
<i>Palinurus elephas</i>	Crawfish/spiny lobster	Bigbury Bay N Devon, Combe Martin & Lundy
<i>Ostrea edulis</i>	Edible oyster	Exmouth Torbay Bigbury Bay
<i>Pleuronectes platessa</i>	Plaice	Berry Head Plymouth N Devon, Hartland Point
Maerl indet	Maerl	Exmouth but only 2-5% live maerl
<i>Zostera marina</i>	Eelgrass	Dawlish Torbay

Training

A Marine ID course for improvers was held in Plymouth in March, tutor Sally Sharrock. An Observer course and a Surveyor course were held in Plymouth, tutor Sally Sharrock. Observer courses were held during the year at Plymouth University for marine biology students, tutor Kat Brown.

Other projects

Mothecombe Bioblitz in conjunction with the Natural History Museum, OPAL & the Marine Biological Association took place for a 24 hour period in July. Devon Seasearch carried out a dive at the edge of the survey area and also assisted with plankton collection. Seasearch added 84 marine species to the total collection

Devon Seasearch is represented on the Devon County MCZ group and has been actively inputting knowledge of known and recorded species and habitats and recommending areas for protection. Input has also been given to the DEFRA funded project to monitor the Lyme Bay closed area and to the Natural England SAC consultations.

Acknowledgements

Seasearch is a volunteer underwater survey project for recreational divers to contribute to the conservation of the marine environment. Financial support for the project in England during 2010 has been given by The Environment Agency. Devon Seasearch is successful because a large number of people give their time and expertise freely. In past years funding has been such that divers returning forms were given a small rebate towards their dive costs. This year funding has been concentrated on the expensive north coast dives together with a small subsidy to the Lyme Bay dives.

Thanks go to all those Seasearch divers who have completed and sent in forms and to all the skippers who have ensured we had safe and enjoyable diving. Thank you also to Kat Brown and Chris Webb who have acted as dive organisers for two of the trips.

Photos in this report are by Sally Sharrock unless otherwise credited.

This is a summary report of the year's activities. Exact dive positions, more in-depth details of habitats or the species recorded can be obtained on request from the author sally.sharrock@btopenworld.com

