



# North Llŷn Peninsula Seasearch August 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> 2006



The dive sites for this Seasearch weekend, located along the North coast of the Llŷn Peninsula, were chosen to follow up and explore several previously un-dived reefs discovered during earlier monitoring projects by the Countryside Council for Wales. During both days the weather was fine and the sea smooth, allowing the 5 Seasearchers and Paul Turkentine on RIB Waterline to race from Porth Dinllaen to the dive sites. During the weekend several interesting species and features were observed including an extensive bed of the small bivalve mollusc *Musculus discors*. Other species of note were the nationally rare hydroid *Aglaophenia kirchenpaueri* and a large crawfish (*Palinurus elephas*). A total of 4 sites were surveyed by 5 keen Seasearchers who completed 13 forms.

Rare and Scarce Species found		
Phylum	Species Name	Location (date)
Cnidaria	<i>Aglaophenia kirchenpaueri</i>	Maen Mellt (6/08/2006)

The first site '**Mickies Reef**' was a rocky outcrop about 1km offshore in 20 metres of water. Surrounded by gravel and pebbles the rocky reef was dominated by animal communities including many sponge and bryozoa. The top of the reef was covered in kelps and a mixture of red algae.

**Andrew Holban recording at Mickies Reef**

**Greater Spotted Dogfish photographed by Liz Morris at Maen Mellt**

**Octopus eggs at Porth Colmon**

**Rohan Holt sketches the West Bardsey site**

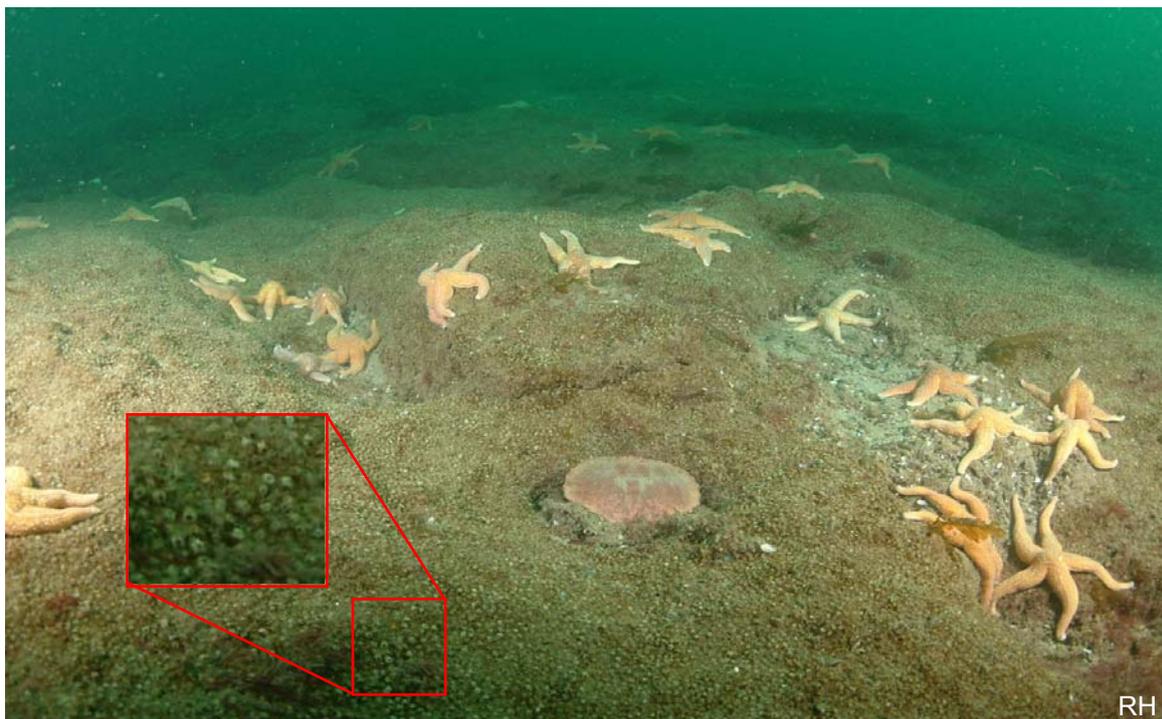
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Site 2, **west of Bardsey Island** comprised large tide-wept boulders with pebbles, cobbles and gravel and a sporadic cover of sponge, cnidarians and bryozoa on the sides of boulders, especially in areas more sheltered from the currents. Some of the boulders being made of

limestone were riddled with large sponges, cnidarians and other tall animal turfs. Also observed at this site was a large crawfish (see photo below).



A crawfish (*Palinurus elephas*) with Harry Goudge as dive model, photographed at West Bardsey Island by Rohan Holt.



*Musculus discors* bed with a magnified view of individual animals photographed by Rohan Holt.

**Porth Colmon** on the 6<sup>th</sup> August was a rapid drift dive covering almost 1 km over beds of *Musculus discors* and the brittlestar *Ophiothrix fragilis*. The bed of *M. discors* consisted of millions of the tiny bivalve molluscs which bind together the sediment. This species is not often seen forming dense beds such as this so was a rare sight indeed. Other interesting species seen on this dive included an octopus, lobsters as well as the greater and lesser spotted catsharks (*Scyliorhinus stellaris* and *S. canicula*).



A reef wall covered with Jewel anemones at Maen Mellt, photographed by Rohan Holt.

**Maen Mellt** was the final dive of the weekend and comprised a steep rocky reef about 0.5 km offshore. After descending through the kelp zone, the reef wall was sporadically covered by jewel anemones (*Corynactis viridis*) and other colourful species such as the Devonshire cup coral (*Caryophyllia smithii*) and the light bulb sea squirt (*Clavelina lepadiformis*).

### Species Summary for the North Llŷn - August 2006

Phylum	Common Name	No. of Species	Most Common Species
Porifera	Sponges	15	<i>Tethya citrina</i> , <i>Cliona celata</i> , <i>Pachymastia johnstonia</i> , <i>Polymastia boletiformis</i>
Cnidaria	Anemones, hydroids, corals, jellyfish	21	<i>Alcyonium digitatum</i> , <i>Actinohoe sphyrodeta</i> , <i>Caryophyllia smithii</i> , <i>Corynactis viridis</i>
Annelida	Segmented Worms	3	<i>Bispira volutacornis</i> , <i>Salmacina dysteri</i>
Platyhelminthes	Flatworms	1	<i>Prostheceraeus vittatus</i>
Crustacea	Lobsters, crabs, Barnacles	8	<i>Necora puber</i> , <i>Cancer pagurus</i>
Mollusca	Shells, Sea Slugs, Octopus	10	<i>Archidoris pseudoargus</i> , <i>Trivia monacha</i>
Bryozoa	Seamats	13	<i>Pentapora foliacea</i> , <i>Flustra foliacea</i>
Echinodermata	Starfish, urchins	5	<i>Echinus esculentus</i> , <i>Asterias rubens</i>
Tunicata	Sea Squirts	8	<i>Clavelina lepadiformis</i> ,
Pisces	Fishes	13	<i>Ctenolabrus rupestris</i> , <i>Labrus mixtus</i> , <i>Pollachius pollachius</i> , <i>Scylliorhinus canicula</i>
Algae	Seaweed	10	<i>Dictyota dichotoma</i>
<b>Total Species</b>		<b>107</b>	

A big thanks to Seasearchers **Liz Morris, Rohan Holt, Robert Cook, Andrew Hoban and Harry Goudge** who completed a total of 8 observer and 5 surveyor forms over the weekend. Thanks also to Paul Turkentine for speeding us safely between the sites.

Produced by Harry Goudge for Seasearch and the Countryside Council for Wales on 9<sup>th</sup> April 2007  
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