

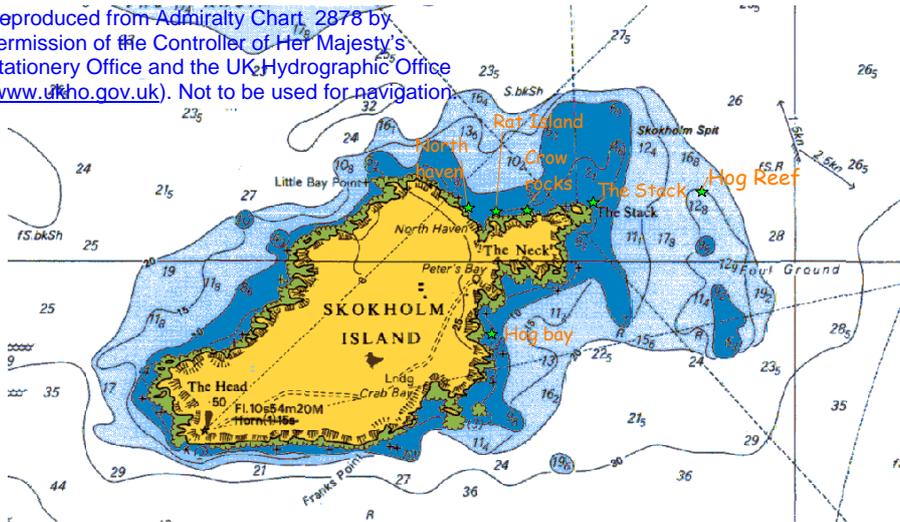
Skokholm is an old red sandstone island that is located 2 miles west of the Pembrokeshire coast. Skokholm is internationally important for its seabird colonies and its waters and seabed lie within the Pembrokeshire Marine Special Area of Conservation.

Seasearch surveys were carried out around Skokholm during 2002 and 2004. In 2002 the diving was organised by Kate Lock, strong winds restricted the team to sheltered bays and low visibility hampered the recording. In 2004 diving was run in early August by Jen Jones, West Wales Diving School to complete a pink seafan (*Eunicella verrucosa*) survey, strong winds again restricted diving to just one day. At the end of August dives were completed at Hog Reef by Vicki Billings and divers on a MCS diving weekend. This report summarises the Seasearch recordings for these surveys.

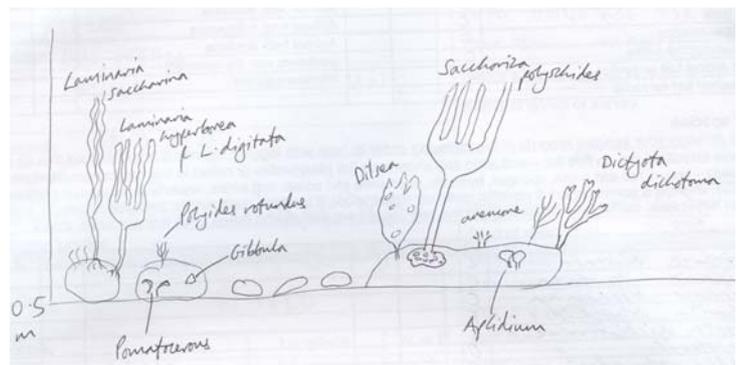
## 2002 Survey

**1. Rat Island:** Coarse sand and cobbles with ripples at 14m bcd running north to south giving way to boulders and bedrock between 11-13m bcd. Bedrock covered in mixed seaweeds and kelp park. 10 species of red algae were recorded including *Drachiella spectabilis*. A good variety of sponges were seen, the branching sponges *Axinella dissimilis* and *Stelligera stuposa* and the cushion forms of *Polymastia mammillaris* and *Halichondria viscosa*.

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**2. North Haven:** Boulders and cobbles with coarse sand between at 11m bcd, boulders covered in mixed seaweeds including 3 Kelp species - *Laminaria hyperborea*, *L. saccharina* and *Saccorhiza polyschides* and the red algae *Polyides rotundus* and *Drachiella spectabilis*. A bryozoan turf was recorded and the ascidian *Aplidium punctum*. The keel worm *Pomatoceros lamarcki* was common on the cobbles.



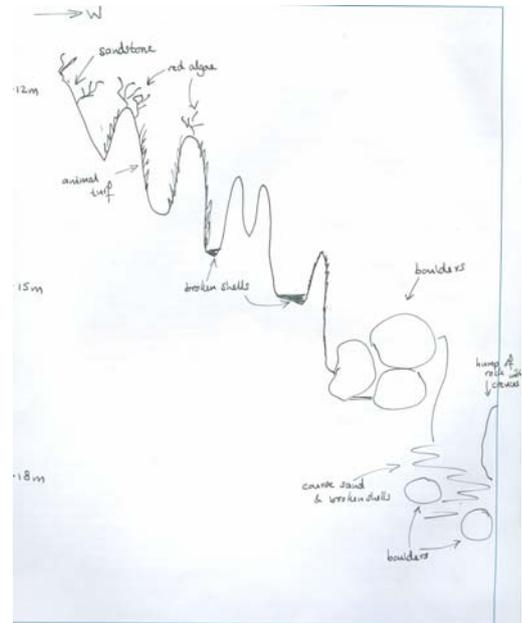
**3. Crows Rock:** Rocky gullies with cobbles found between 10-11m bcd. A kelp park of *L. hyperborea* and mixed red algae was found on the top of the rocky outcrops along with common urchin, *Echinus esculentus* grazers and spider crab, *Maja squinado*. A variety of sponges were seen including the golf ball sponge, *Tethya aurantium* and the staghorn sponge, *Axinella dissimilis*, and in abundance was the ascidian *Aplidium punctum*. No life was recorded on the cobbles.

**4. Hog Bay:** Low relief bedrock at 12m bcd with cobbles and pebbles between. The rock was covered in short animal turf, red algae turf and kelp park. The animal turf was species rich with the ascidian *Sidnyum elegans*, sponges *Polymastia mammillaris* and *Hemimycale collumella* and devonshire cup coral, *Caryophyllia smithii*. The nudibranch *Janolus cristatus* was spotted and there were frequent sightings of cowries *Trivia sp.*

## 2004 survey

**5. The Stack:** A bedrock reef at 15m bcd with occasional boulders festooned in animal life. Ross coral, *Pentapora foliacea*, the staghorn sponge *Axinella dissimilis*, dead mans fingers *Alcyonium digitatum* and common urchins, *Echinus esculentus* were all recorded as common. A variety of starfish species were seen including the seven armed starfish *Luidia ciliaris* and the area was active in fish and crab life. A single pink seafan, *Eunicella verrucosa* was recorded and its size and condition noted for the pink seafan survey.

**6. Hog Reef:** Rocky reef at 12-14m bcd with intersecting gullies typically 3-4m deep. The rocks faces were covered in animal turf with red algae found at the crests and broken shell in the bottom of the gullies. The animal turf was rich in sponges with 10 species recorded, carpets of the mashed potato sponge *Thymosia guernei*, elephants ear sponge *Pachymatisma johnstonia* and the shredded carrot sponge *Esperiopsis fucorum*. Smaller sponges were also seen like the puff ball sponge *Suberites carnosus*. The area was active in crustacean life with 3 crab species recorded along with lobster *Homarus gammarus*, squat lobster *Galathea strigosa* and crawfish *Palinurus elephas*. Bryozoans and ascidians were commonly seen including ross coral *Pentapora foliacea*, hornwrack *Flustra foliacea* and the sea squirt *Botrylloides leachi*. 8 species of fish were recorded, the most common were ballan wrasse *Labrus bergylta*, cuckoo wrasse *Labrus mixtus* and Pollack *Pollachius pollachius*.



Phylum	Common Name	Number of species	Common Species and species of interest
Porifera	Sponges	16	<i>Polymastia mammillaris</i> Staghorn sponge <i>Axinella dissimilis</i> Mashed potato sponge <i>Thymosia guernei</i>
Cnidaria	Anenomes, corals		Hydroid <i>Gymnangium montagui</i> Devonshire cup coral <i>Caryophyllia smithii</i>
Annelida	Segmented worms	4	Fanworm <i>Bispira volutacornis</i> Keel worm <i>Pomatocerus lamarcki</i>
Crustacea	Crabs, lobster, barnacles	7	Crawfish <i>Palinurus elephas</i>
Mollusca	Shells, sea slugs	8	Nudibranch <i>Tritonia quadrilineata</i>
Bryozoa	Sea mats	5	Ross coral <i>Pentapora foliacea</i> Hornwrack <i>Flustra foliacea</i>
Echinodermata	Starfish, sea urchins	7	Seven armed starfish <i>Luidia ciliaris</i> Crevice sea cucumber <i>Pawsonia saxicola</i>
Tunicata	Sea squirts	5	<i>Diplosoma spongiforma</i>
Pisces	Fishes	9	Cuckoo wrasse <i>Labrus mixtus</i>
Algae	Seaweeds	15	Kelp <i>Laminaria hyperborea</i> Red seaweed <i>Drachiella spectabilis</i> , <i>Polyides rotundus</i>

Divers taking part in the recording were 2002: Kate Fleming, Louise Luddington (nee Squire), Polly Whyte, Beccy Seeley, Kate Lock, Nicola Helliwell, Colin Garlick, Steve Myatt, Scott Taylor, Andrew Powell, Daniel Clarke. 2004: Mike Flavell, Darren Fawcett, Fiona Ravenscroft, Nick Owen, Dawn Wilde, Phil Jones, Andrew Powell, Glyn Powell, Kerry Lewis, Mandy John, Rachel Locklin, Blair Lindsay, Tim Theobalds, Dominic Smith, Vicki Billings.

Report prepared by Kate Lock. Full survey results and species lists available on the JNCC NBN Gateway

Seasearch is a volunteer underwater survey project for recreational divers who wish to contribute to conserving the marine environment.

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