

The table to the left shows how many species in each phylum were found and what the most common species were.

Sponges. The boring sponge *Cliona celata* was the most common species recorded. This species is named not for its uninteresting nature but rather for its habit of boring into shells and other calcareous substrates. Both the massive form (which can reach over a metre across) and the cryptic form (in which only the tips of the raised oscules are visible above the substrate) were spotted.

Anemones, Corals, Hydroids and Jellyfish. The anemones

Sagarteogeton laceratus and *Sagarteogeton undatus* were recorded from soft sediment areas.

Crustaceans. Scampi *Nephrops norvegicus* were recorded from several locations. These live in burrows in areas of soft mud.

Molluscs. The 'highland dancer' side gilled sea slug *Pleurobranchus membranaceus* was recorded. This large sea slug can reach up to 12cm in length. It was mating at the time of the survey in spring and its large coils of spawn were visible on the substrate.

Echinoderms. Two Northern Ireland Conservation Priority Species, the sea cucumber *Thyonidium drummondii* and the purple sunstar *Solaster endeca* were recorded. The sea cucumber lives in areas of horse mussel bed and is a priority as it might be affected by damage to this habitat. The purple sunstar is a northern species at the southern end of its range in Northern Ireland. It may disappear from our waters if sea temperatures increase.

Fish. Several records were made of the tompot blenny *Parablennius gattorugine*. Strangford is one of the best places in Northern Ireland to spot this charismatic species.

Seasquirts. The fluted sea squirt *Asciidiella aspersa* was recorded. This white sea squirt was using dead horse mussel shell as a substrate.

Seaweeds. Fewer species were recorded than on other areas of the coast. Strangford waters are relatively turbid so the algal zone does not extend very deep.

Phylum/sub-phylum	Common name	Number of species	Total records	Common species (number of records in brackets)
Porifera	Sponges	8	20	<i>Cliona celata</i> (7) – Boring sponge
Cnidaria	Anemones, corals, hydroids, jellyfish	24	87	<i>Metridium senile</i> (10) – Plumose anemone <i>Alcyonium digitatum</i> (9) – Dead men's fingers
Annelida	Segmented worms	2	3	<i>Eupolytnia nebulosa</i> (2) – Strawberry Worm
Crustacea	Lobsters, crabs, barnacles	19	124	<i>Cancer pagurus</i> (14) – Edible crab <i>Necora puber</i> (17) – Velvet swimming crab
Mollusca	Shells, sea slugs, cuttlefish, octopus	42	93	<i>Calliostoma zizyphium</i> (8) – Painted top shell <i>Pecten maximus</i> (12) – King Scallop
Bryozoa	Sea mats	3	3	<i>Flustra foliacea</i> (1) - Hornwrack
Echinodermata	Starfish, urchins, sea cucumbers	16	102	<i>Asterias rubens</i> (20) – Common starfish <i>Crossaster papposus</i> (13) – Common sun star
Tunicata	Sea squirts	7	19	<i>Clavelina lepadiformis</i> (8) – lightbulb sea squirt
Pisces	Fishes	25	100	<i>Pollachius pollachius</i> (8) – Pollack <i>Callionymus lyra</i> (9) - Dragonet
Algae	Seaweeds	6	11	<i>Laminaria hyperborea</i> (4) – Forest kelp <i>Chorda filum</i> (2) – Thong weed
Total		152	562	



The sea cucumber *Thyonidium drummondii*, a NI Conservation Priority species.



Strangford Lough Survey 2007



Elegant sea slug *Okenia elegans*



Black Goby *Gobius niger*



Horse mussel *Modiolus modiolus*



Tompot blenny *Parablennius gattorugine*



Scampi *Nephrops norvegicus*



Sea cucumber *Thyonidium drummondii*



Surveyors taking part were: Danny Aley, Thorsten Brabetz, Graham Day, Sharon Doake, Colin Ferguson, Melanie Gomez, Claire Goodwin, David Goodwin, Deirdre Greer, Alasdair Kennedy, Paul McIlWaine, Melina McMullan, Julia Nunn, Mark Patton, Franklyn Riemann, Chris Wood. Thanks to DV diving, who were used for boat cover and supplied site info.

Seasearch is a volunteer underwater survey project for recreational divers to actively contribute to the conservation of the marine environment (see www.seasearch.org.uk for more information). Financial support for the project was given by the Environment and Heritage service Northern Ireland. This report was written by Claire Goodwin (thanks to Julia Nunn and Chris Wood for editorial comments). Photos are by Claire Goodwin.



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For more information on Seasearch Northern Ireland email claire.goodwin@gmail.com.

www.seasearch.org.uk

