



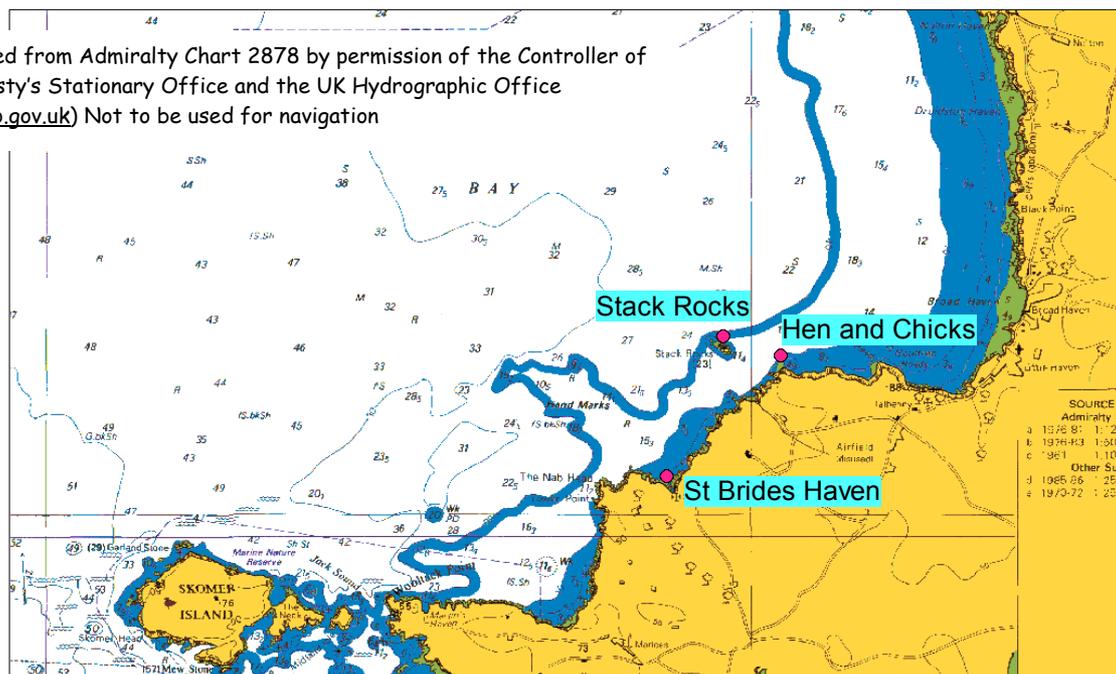
South St Brides Bay Seasearch 2007



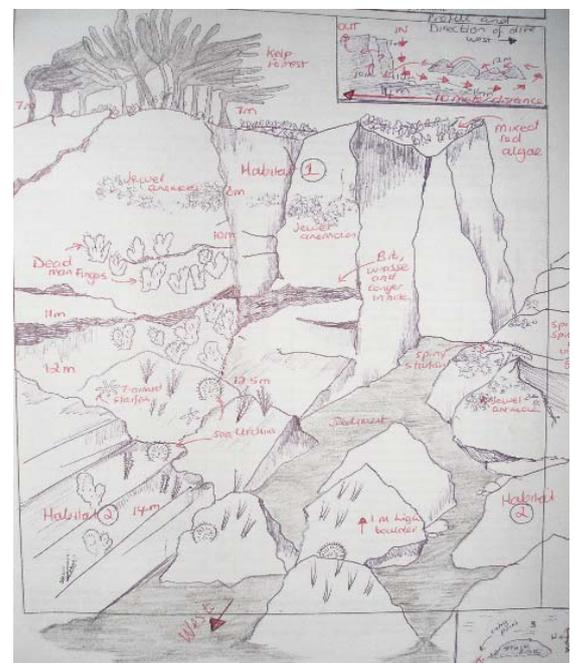
The old red sandstone islets of Stack Rocks and the Howney stones (locally known as the Hen and Chicks) are very popular dives sites located in the southern part of St Brides Bay. Stack Rocks are locally important for its colonies of seabirds and the islet's waters and seabed lie within the Pembrokeshire Marine Special Area of Conservation. Stack Rocks are also well known to local divers for the gathering of grey trigger fish in the late summer.

Seasearch dives were organised by Kate Lock with support by Jen Jones (West Wales Dive School) on the 28th April 2007. 14 divers enjoyed the fantastic sunny conditions, diving from boats operating out from St Brides Haven and lying on the beach to complete forms.

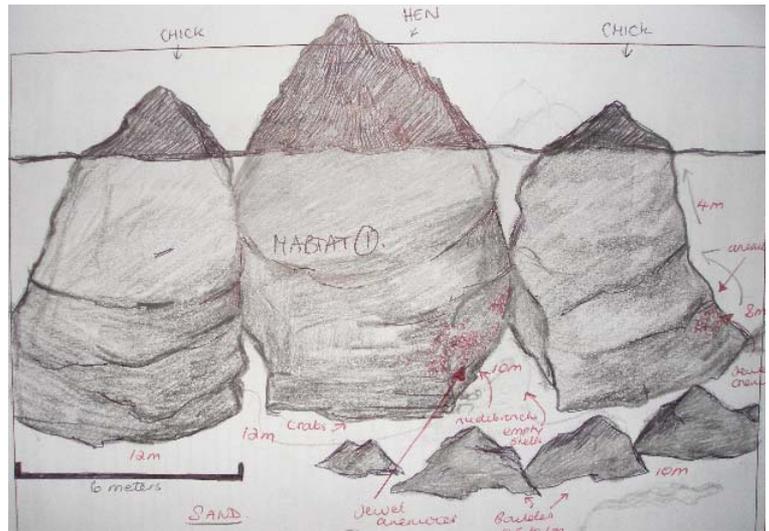
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Stack Rocks: Steep vertical rugged bedrock faces were found down to 14m depth. These were carpeted in jewel anemones *Corynactis viridis*, the white striped anemone *Actinothoe sphyrodeta* and deadmans fingers *Alcyonium digitatum*, some of which were observed with the false cowrie *Simnia patula*. At 14m depth bedrock sloping slabs with gullies and large boulders were found, deadmans fingers dominated the faunal turf along with both the antenna and branched antenna hydroids *Nemertisia antennina* and *N. ramosa*. The edible urchin *Echinus esculentus* was frequently observed and the occasional sighting of the seven arm starfish *Luidia ciliaris*. Fish species included the conger eel *Conger conger* along with more common wrasse species. Leading away from the bedrock platforms the seabed gives way to mixed sediments of sand, gravel and broken shell, here the marine life was sparse however there were sightings of the gravel sea cucumber *Neopentadactyla mixta*, the sand mason *Lanice conchilega* and dahlia anemones *Urticina felina*.



Howney Stones (Hen and Chicks): A series of three rocky outcrops that can be seen on the surface at low water. The larger middle rock is the Hen and the two smaller rocks the Chicks. Underwater the rocks form steep cliff faces down to 12m with small rocky outcrops and boulders are found in the gullies. Kelp park and red seaweed dominated the tops of the rocks. The rock faces were covered animal turf in particular the antenna hydroid, *Nemertisia antennina* with dense patches of the jewel anemone *Corynactis viridis* and plumose anemones *Metridium senile*, there were also occasional sightings of the trumpet anemone *Aiptasia mutabilis*. Numbers of edible crab *Cancer pagarus*, shrimp *Palaemon serratus* and lobster *Homarus gammarus* were found in the rock crevices and gullies. Fish species included observations of the snaked pipefish *Entelurus aequoreus*, tompot blenny *Parablennius gattorugine* and sea scorpion *Taurulus bubalis*.



The surrounding seabed is mixed ground dominated by dense fields of broken shells, low numbers of the burrowing anemone *Cerianthus lloydi*, the razor shell *Ensis spp* and the king scallop *Pecten maximus* were recorded.



Phylum	No of. species	Common Species and species of interest
Porifera (Sponges)	6	Shredded carrot sponge <i>Amphilectus fucorum</i> Hedgehog sponge <i>Polymastia boleteformis</i>
Cnidaria (Anemones, Corals)	17	Plumose anemone <i>Metridium senile</i> White stripe anemone <i>Actinothoe sphyrodeta</i> Devonshire cup coral <i>Caryophyllia smithii</i> Trumpet anemone <i>Aiptasia mutabilis</i>
Hydroids (Annelida (Segmented worms))	5	Sand mason worm <i>Janice conchilegea</i>
Crustacea (Crabs, lobster, barnacles)	11	Common Prawn <i>Palaemon serratus</i> Lobster <i>Homarus gammarus</i> Long legged spider crab <i>Macropodia sp</i>
Mollusca (Shells, sea slugs)	21	Nudibranch <i>Aeolidia papillosa</i> King scallop <i>Pecten maximus</i> <i>Simnia patula</i>
Bryozoa (Sea mats)	5	Potato crisp bryozoan <i>Pentapora foliacea</i>
Echinodermata (Starfish, sea urchins)	6	Spiny starfish <i>Marthasterias glacialis</i> Seven armed starfish <i>Luidia ciliaris</i> gravel sea cucumber <i>Neopentadactyla mixta</i>
Tunicata (Sea squirts)	10	Star sea squirt <i>Botryllus shlosseri</i> <i>Ascidia mentula</i>
Pisces (Fishes)	15	Ballan wrasse <i>Labrus bergyllta</i> Conger eel <i>Conger conger</i> Snake pipefish <i>Entelurus aequoreus</i>
Algae (Seaweeds)	18	Kelp - Cuvie <i>Laminaria hyperborea</i> Sea beech <i>Dellessaria sanguinea</i> Red fringe weed <i>Calliblepharis ciliata</i>
TOTAL SPECIES		111

Divers taking part in the surveys were: Stephen Bound, Blaise Bullimore, Ross Bullimore, Leon Hopkins, Mandy John, Joanne Porter, Simon Ward, Howard Manning, Ken Evans, Paul Holmes, Paul White, Vicky Swales, Angus Bloomfield, Sue Kinsey. **Boatmen** Bruce Jones, Mark, Dai Love and Ed Male

Report prepared by Kate Lock. Photos: Kate Lock and sketches: Vicky Swales. Full survey results and species list 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. Financial support for the project during 2007 has been given by:



