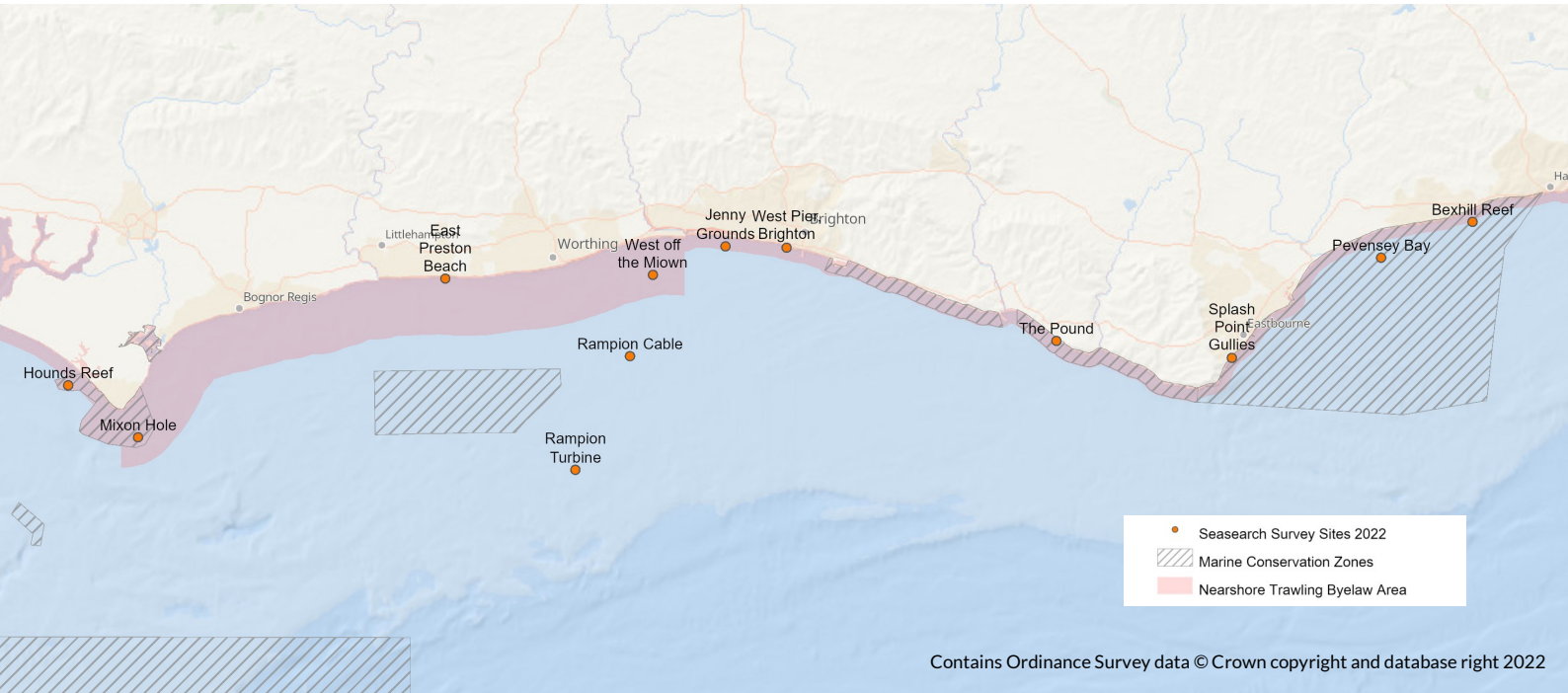


Sussex Seasearch

Summary Report 2022





2022 was a busier year for Sussex Seasearch than 2021. We were no longer restricted on the amount of divers allowed on boats due to the pandemic, though a number of dives were cancelled due to poor weather. Thanks as usual goes to all our volunteers who participated and contributed vital data to the project.

A total of 24 forms were received, from 12 surveys sites spread across East and West Sussex.

Analysis on the species recorded will come later in the year due to database issues.

Previous Page: Seasearch volunteers getting ready for a day of diving onboard Channel Diver at Brighton Marina, June 2022

Hounds Reef

50°44.184N 00°50.343W

This site is bank of mixed sandstone and limestone strata, raised from the seafloor at just 5-6m deep, with lots of overhangs and crevices.

It was expected to see many crustacean species here, though not many were seen on this survey. A small amount of kelp was seen along with other green and red algae.



Image: Rebecca Harris

Dead Man's Fingers - *Alcyonium digitatum*

Rampion Cable

50°45.229N 00°18.092W

The divers were dropped on the GPS point for the Rampion Windfarm cable, but no one knowingly encountered the structure.

This area was dominated by a mixture of pebbly and sandy habitats with larger stones spread around the site. Lots of Dead Man's Fingers and Keel Worms were recorded.

Jenny Grounds

50°49.21N, 00°11.94W

A wide area of mixed ground including boulders, cobbles, pebbles, gravel and sand with broken shell, overlying the bedrock. Lots of small seasquirts, likely *Molgula* spp, were recorded at this site.

Mixon Hole

50°42.288N 00°46.325W

This is a unique Sussex feature consisting of a 25m clay cliff capped by limestone with cobbles, pebbles and boulders at its base. The cliff is all that remains of the north slope of a drowned river.

Biological life includes lush mixed algae, boring piddocks and a range of molluscs, crustaceans and fish.

The area had rich algal cover of mixed reds and browns, notably *Sargassum miticum* and *Halidrys sp.* and a diversity of red seaweeds. A couple of juvenile kelps were sighted.

Bexhill Reef

50°50.061N 00°30.365E

This site consisted of a rocky chalk reef, mixed sand and gravel with short animal turf and with sediment life apparent. A number of species were recorded here, including Plaice, multiple Bryozoan species and Bivalves.

Pevensey Bay

50°48.767N 00°25.126E

This site had a similar substrate composition to Bexhill Reef. Both of these sites were targeted due to being inside Beachy Head East Marine Conservation Zone, the management plan of which was yet to be consulted on at the time of the surveys.

Dead Man's Fingers were present here, along with Sponges, Bryozoans and a Pipefish.



Great Pipefish - *Syngnathus acus*



Rampion Offshore Windfarm turbine

Rampion Turbine

50°41.102N 00°21.225W

One group of divers surveyed the turbine base of one of the wind turbines at the Rampion Offshore Windfarm, and the other surveyed the metal leg of the met mast.

On the met mast, below 9m there was a dense large *Mytilus* covering the structure, covered in hydroids and bryozoans down to seabed level at 26m. There were also barnacles, Dead Man's Fingers, Jewell Anemones and Sponges present.

The species composition on the concrete turbine base was similar.

West off the Miown

50°48.185N 00°16.789W

Mixed ground seabed with infrequent small boulders and cobbles supporting Keelworms and algal growth. A meadow of abundant *Chorda filum* was found at this site, with mixed brown, green and red algae on larger stones. Occasional sponge and bryozoan crusts were recorded, along with a small number of mobile crustaceans, molluscs and fish.

East Preston Beach

50°48.063N 00°28.699W

The seabed here was mixed ground, with chalk boulders featuring piddock-bored holes. Mixed seaweeds were present, dominated by *Fucus serratus*, *Ulva* spp, *Chorda filum* and *Halopteris scoparium*. A small amount of kelp *Laminaria digitata* was recorded.



Common Mussel - *Mytilus edulis*

The Pound

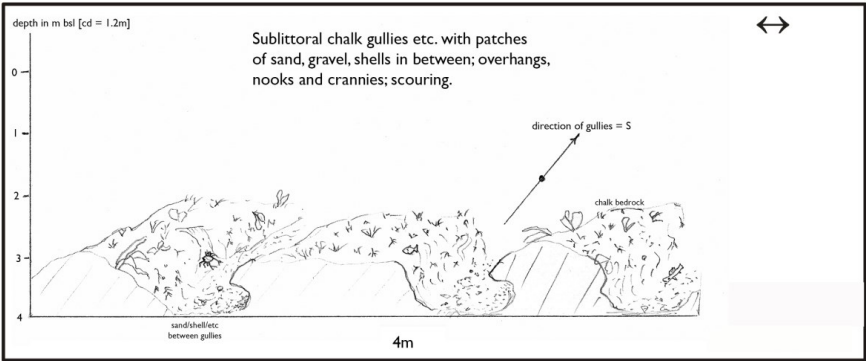
50°45.14N 00°16.55E

This rocky reef was densely covered by mixed seaweeds, including *Laminaria digitata* and *Saccharina latissima*

Splash Point, Seaford

50°45.753N 00°6.479E

A coastal site on a chalk wave-cut platform where gullies, overhangs and fissures are present. Mixed seaweeds dominate the upper surfaces with animal tuft present on vertical slopes and overhangs. A huge variety of life inhabits this near-shore area, including Common Mussels and Native Oysters.



Seabed profile diagram of Splash Point

West Pier, Brighton

50°49.177N 00°9.096W

This site consisted of a sand, gravel and mud substrate. Although there was indication of life apparent from tubes and burrows, no life was recorded during this survey.

A Huge Thank You...



Many thanks to all those who contributed to Seasearch in Sussex in 2022:

Dan Woodgate, Liz Lumb, Francis Jeffcock, Chris Bohea, Rick Young, Sarah Ward, Bryony Chapman, Andy Langler, Claire Saxby, Gerald Legg, Gabrielle Bignell, Alison Mayor, Moira McKendry, Sue Jenkins, Alison Bessell and Ivan Djordjevic

Additional thanks to Gerald Legg for data entry, and to the Mulberry Marine Experiences team and Steve Johnson at Channel Diver for expert skippering.



A Seasearcher with their DSMB deployed in Beachy Head East Marine Conservation Zone

Keep in touch

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Seasearch is a partnership between the Marine Conservation Society (MCS), The Wildlife Trusts, statutory nature conservation bodies and others, co-ordinated nationally by MCS and co-ordinated and delivered locally in England by Wildlife Trust and MCS local co-ordinators. Seasearch in Sussex is coordinated by Sussex Wildlife Trust.

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