



Tompot Blenny
Parablennius gattorugine

Dave Wood



Painted topshells
Calliostoma ziziphantum

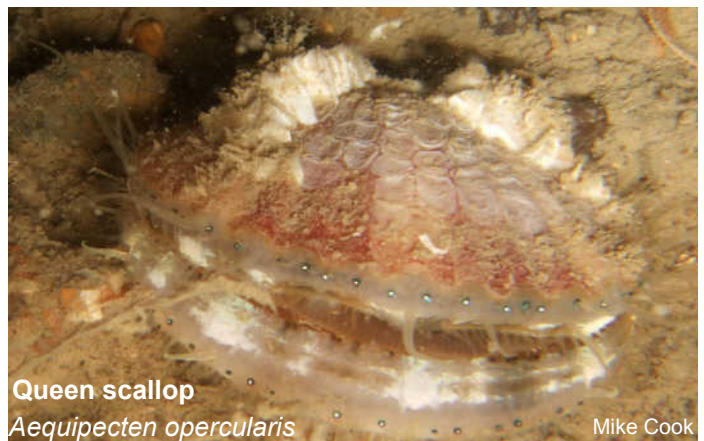
Dave Wood

**Kent Seasearch
2008 Summary**



Dahlia anemone
Urticina felina

Dave Wood



Queen scallop
Aequipecten opercularis

Mike Cook



Double spiral worms
Bispira volutacornis

Dave Wood



Velvet swimming crab
Necora puber

Jason Armstrong



Long-clawed porcelain crab
Pisidia longicornis

Jason Armstrong

Kent Seasearch surveys in 2008 Kent Seasearch divers surveyed the seabed at 15 locations, at depths from 3m to 33m. On the 57 forms completed, a total of 1,035 species records were made, including 156 different species. The most frequently recorded species was again the common starfish (*Asterias rubens*). Many of the surveys recorded life on the special Kent habitats of chalk and ross worm formations, which are recognised as important in the national and county Biodiversity Action Plans.

1 Four Fathoms Channel, Whitstable 51.43335N, 1.004133E

An area of blocks, up to 1m long and 0.5m high, possibly of concrete, piled up and standing about 1m proud of seabed at 8m, with a cover of short animal turf. Adjacent to this is a field of flints with numerous crabs, and beyond this very fine sand and clay with shells and numerous brittlestars and long-legged spider crabs (*Macropodia*). Many old crab and lobster pots in and around the blocks. A single large native oyster recorded. The blocks and flint field appeared to have been cargo.

Greater pipefish



Jason Armstrong

2 North of Clite Hole Bank 51.41183N, 1.06065E

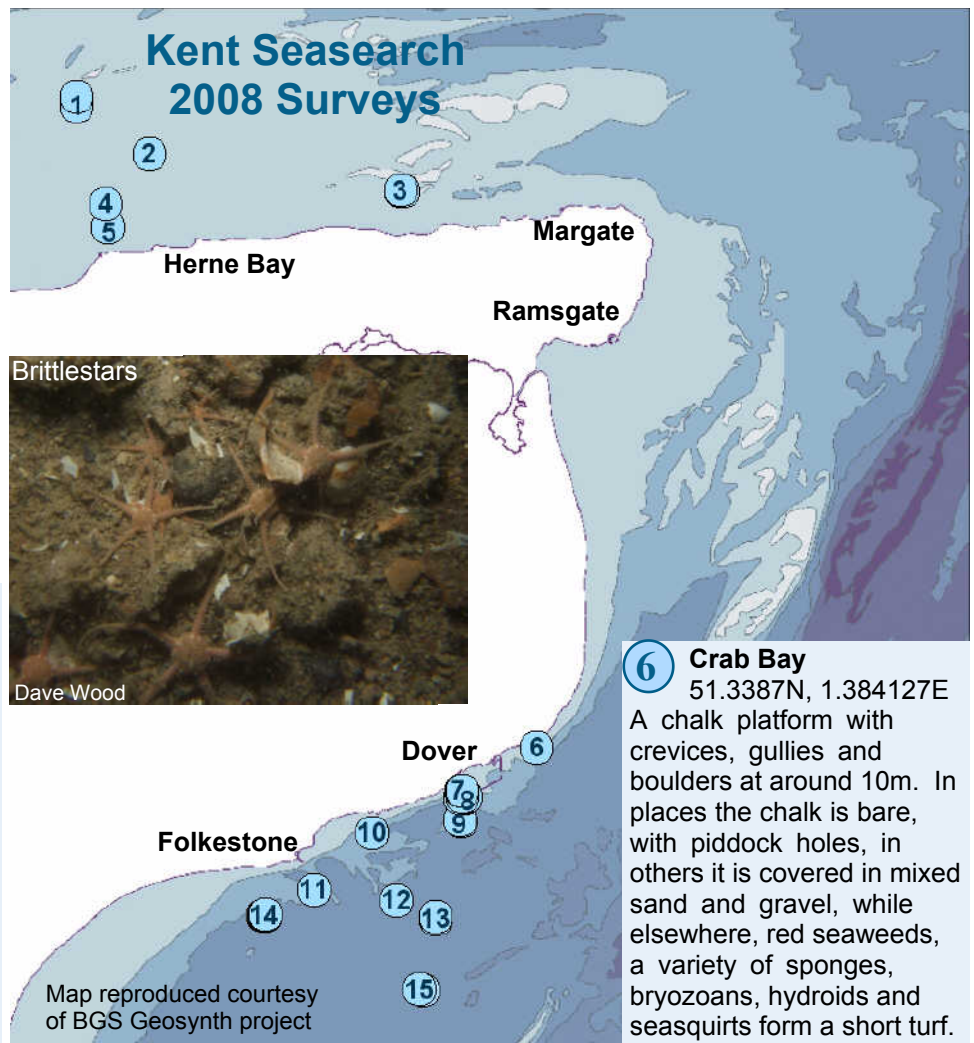
A flat seabed at 8m, comprising firm clay overlain in most places by a layer of sand, soft mud and shell up to 10cm thick, with some pebbles and the occasional cobble. Piddock holes evident where the clay is exposed, and attached life comprises mainly a close turf of hydroids, bryozoans and seasquirts, with some taller species, including hornwrack, and finger bryozoans. Sparse mobile life including many long-legged spider crabs. Many detached leathery seasquirts noted drifting on the seabed.

3 Gore Channel 51.39718N, 1.254367E

A flat area in a sunken channel at 16-18m, between the north Kent shoreline and a steep-sided sandbank about 1 mile offshore. The seabed is mainly soft, fine muddy sand with low, irregularly arranged ripples about 8" apart, with numerous sand brittlestars all over the surface. Very occasional clusters of empty Pacific oyster shells and small pebbles offer the only hard surface for attached hydroids and bryozoans. Also in the channel are sand waves about 1m high, and occasional small ledges of exposed clay.

4 The Street Hole, Whitstable
51.3875N, 1.028333E

Beyond the end of The Street, the seabed is mud with a covering of shells, some broken, some alive (slipper limpets). A variety of other life, in particular several sponge species, numerous peacock worms, some red algae and lots of leathery seasquirts and hornwrack. ENE from the end of The Street, is a 4m deep hole with gently sloping sides and a muddy clay bottom. The life within the hole is similar to the seabed above and around, but with fewer shells and generally sparser life, apart from numerous brittlestars.



Dave Wood

5 The Street, Whitstable
51.37653N, 1.0305E

A solid, piddock-bored clay seabed overlain in places with a layer of pebbles, shell, sand and gravel, with a seaweed and short animal turf cover. Running out north from the shore is a pebble and shell spit which rises gently from the west and east about 1m above the clay to a flat platform about 20m wide. The spit is colonised by mixed red, green and brown seaweeds and a few attached and mobile animals.

6 Crab Bay
51.3387N, 1.384127E

A chalk platform with crevices, gullies and boulders at around 10m. In places the chalk is bare, with piddock holes, in others it is covered in mixed sand and gravel, while elsewhere, red seaweeds, a variety of sponges, bryozoans, hydroids and seasquirts form a short turf.

7 Dover Harbour Admiralty Arm 51.11338N, 1.31365E

This popular shore site was again visited by a number of Seasearch divers, adding to the growing list of species recorded here. Please contact KWT for a copy of the list, and please continue to send in your records and photos!

The stepped stone blocks of the outer harbour wall offer a firm attachment surface and countless holes and crevices for a rich variety of marine life. Scattered kelp plants and red algae on the shallower blocks give way to an animal turf further down. Among the species recorded in the crevices are double spiral worms, mussels, crabs, leopard spotted gobies and tompot blennies. Bunches of white strings of squid eggs are often recorded, along with greater pipefish, topknobs, bib and wrasse. Piddocks have bored their characteristic holes in the occasional blocks of softer rock. The mobile shingle of the beach is too harsh an environment for most, apart from occasional visiting crabs and fish. Following the base of the wall out, the seabed turns to sand which harbours occasional masked crabs and other crustaceans and fish. Off to the SW is a chalk reef with boulders and gullies, supporting a variety of animals.

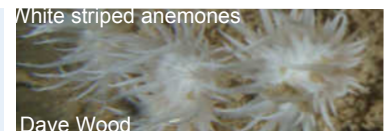
8 Shakespeare Bay 51.1101N, 001.315867E A short-snouted seahorse was found here, on a mixed ground seabed at 17m, with its tail wrapped round an oaten pipe hydroid, among other hydroids and bryozoans and broken ross worm formations. Other divers surveyed adjacent areas of the gently sloping seabed in this bay outside Dover harbour. Seabed types include a 6cm-thick layer of silt over rock, through rippled muddy sand and gravel, to coarse sediment with cobbles, pebbles and occasional chalk boulders. There are numerous burrows in the finer sediments, while the larger cobbles and boulders support a short turf of hydroids and bryozoans and other animals including dahlia and other anemones. Occasional velvet swimming crabs, hermit crabs and common starfish.

9 Shakespeare Chalk Bumps 51.09888N, 001.312917E An area of chalk boulders and outcropping chalk bedrock including low cliff areas about 30cm proud of the surrounding seabed at 26m, heavily bored by piddock bivalves, and scoured at the base by the surrounding mobile sand and gravel. The chalk is covered in a turf of mostly hydroids and bryozoans, with some sponges and anemones. On the mobile sediment between the outcropping chalk are occasional dahlia anemones, starfish, hermit crabs and fish. Other areas of the seabed comprise a relatively stable mix of shell, gravel, pebbles and sand with a rich turf of animals dominated by tall hydroids and bryozoans, and occasional fish and starfish. Elsewhere are mobile sand waves 50cm high, with sparse life.

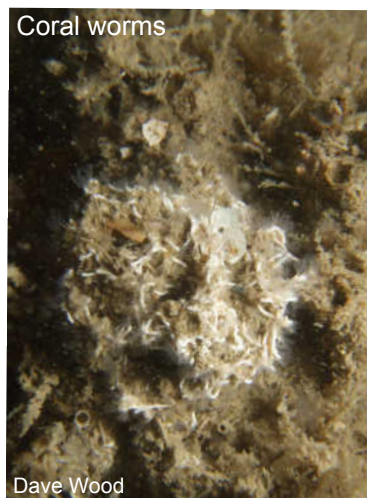


10 Empire Lump and surrounds 51.09233N, 001.244667E A rocky outcrop, about 15m long x 10m wide, standing 1.5m proud of the mixed ground seabed at 19m, with fissures and shallow gullies providing home for a variety of attached and mobile life, including anemones, bryozoans, sponges, crabs and starfish. The seabed around the Lump is muddy, with a covering of shelly sand, and patches of ross worm formations, rich in small animal life, particularly anemones, abundant brittlestars, hermit crabs, long-legged spider crabs and common starfish.

11 Folkestone Ridge 51.0646N, 001.202E A flat rocky platform with a few small boulders and large cobbles with little life other than velvet swimming crabs. To the west, the seabed slopes steeply from 25m down to 28m, turning to a mix of gravel, pebbles and mud, supporting a variety of anemones, and many brittlestars.



12 Leicester 51.0603N, 001.2649E The Leicester was a 240-foot steamer, carrying stone. The wreck now lies in 25m on coarse sand, gravel and shell with occasional boulders. Upright sections of wreck stand 2m proud of the seabed, covered in a dense turf of hydroids, bryozoans, encrusting sponges, dead men's fingers and anemones. Lesser spotted dogfish, starfish, painted topshells and bib are found here. Sections of wreckage to the south lie among cobbles and large boulders, all covered in animal turf, including dead men's fingers.



13 Kyanite cement wreck 51.052N, 1.295E The wreck of a steamship, standing 4m proud of the seabed at 26m. The wreck is covered in animal turf, dominated on the vertical side by dead men's fingers, anemones and hydroids, and on the upper surfaces by oaten pipe hydroids, sea squirts and anemones.

The Kyanite was carrying cement bags, which now form a reef on top of the wreck, in places stacked 2m-high. The hardened cement is covered in animals like oaten pipe and antenna hydroids, while gaps between the bags harbour numerous tompot blennies. Bib, goldsinny and cuckoo wrasse and many common starfish live around the wreck. The seabed below the wreck is silt, broken shells and sand, with scattered wreckage and some cobbles with hydroids, anemones and keel worms, starfish, gobies and some ross worm.

14 Jane Anwell Wreck and surrounds 51.0518N, 001.164233E A generally flat, mixed ground seabed at 26m, comprising pebbles, gravel, coarse sand and shell with very occasional boulders and some wreckage of the Jane Anwell and her slate cargo. The wreckage supports short animal turf, various crustaceans and starfish, and a shoal of bib. Away from the wreckage, are patches with king and queen scallops, gobies, abundant sand brittlestars, and hermit crabs with cloak anemones. Ross worm reef formations, 35cm high, cover several square metres, with feathery hydroids and anemones attached to the worm tubes, and hermit crabs and brittlestars moving about.

15 HMS Brazen and surroundings 51.01805N, 001.2875E Broken up wreck, with bib shoals, and densely covered in short animal turf dominated by oaten pipe hydroids. Around the wreck, the seabed is coarse sand, gravel and shell fragments, some in dunes largely barren of life. Elsewhere, clumps of pebbles support hydroid and bryozoan turf, keel worms and tall barnacles (many of these damaged and broken off). Some small patches of ross worm, many clumps of tall antenna hydroids, bryozoans (including hornwrack and *Cellaria*), and several sponges. Mobile life includes starfish, gobies, spider crabs, hermit crabs and several dogfish.



Special records for 2008

The highlight of the year was the discovery by Brian Stockwell and Ian Barrie of a short-snouted seahorse *Hippocampus hippocampus* in Shakespeare Bay in May, just a few months after the species had been added to the protected species list. Brian's video was shown on TV and internet news sites and the two divers featured in local newspapers!



Other species new to the Kent Seasearch list were a small burrowing anemone (*Halcapma chrysanthellum*) recorded by Jon Bramley; mermaid's eyelashes (*Myxicola infundibulum*) recorded by Sharon Meadows and Dave Wood; a solitary hydroid (*Corymorpha nutans*); and a seaslug (*Tritonia hombergii*) (left) recorded by Kate Kellett and Mike Cook.



Training in 2008

A total of 21 divers undertook the Kent Seasearch Observer courses in 2008, and six divers completed the newly revised Surveyor course held jointly by Kent and Sussex Seasearch, in Dover.

Thank you! Grateful thanks to all the divers who took part in the official Seasearch dives, and who undertook Seasearch surveys independently on their own dives, submitting a total of 57 forms over the summer of 2008. **Divers:** Brian Stockwell, Clare Brant, Dave Wood, Georgia Conolly, Ian Barrie, Jacqueline MacDonald, Jason Armstrong, Jim Brian, Jon Bramely, Kate Kellett, Kay Skinner, Keith Kempton, Mike Cook, Paul Hymers, Phil Buckley, Sharon Meadows, Stef Buel, and Ted Westhead. We are all grateful to Dave Batchelor and the Neptune crew once again.



Numbers of species recorded in 2008 in each phylum, and the species most commonly recorded in each group.

Sponges - 16 species, including: *Esperiopsis fucorum* (shredded carrot sponge); *Suberites* spp. (sea orange sponges); *Scypha ciliata* (purse sponge); *Cliona celata* (boring sponge) and *Raspalia ramosa* (chocolate finger sponge).

Cnidaria (jellyfish, corals and anemones) - 22 species, including: *Tubularia indivisa* (oaten pipe hydroid); *Nemertesia antennina* (antenna hydroid); *Hydrallmania falcata* (helter-skelter hydroid); *Alcyonium digitatum* (dead men's fingers); *Urticina felina* (dahlia anemone); *Metridium senile* (plumose anemone); *Actinothoe sphyrodeta* (white striped anemone); *Cereus pedunculatus* (daisy anemone); *Cerianthus lloydii* (a tube anemone) and *Diadumene cincta* (orange anemone).

Annelida (polychaete worms) - 11 species, including: *Lanice conchilega* (sand mason worm); *Sabellaria spinulosa* (ross worm); *Pomatoceros triqueter* (keel worm); *Sabella pavonina* (peacock worm); *Bispira volutacornis* (double spiral worm).

Crustaceans - 21 species, including: *Necora puber* (velvet swimming crab); *Cancer pagurus* (edible crab); *Pagurus bernhardus* (hermit crab); *Macropodia* (long legged spider crab); *Corystes cassivelaunus* (masked crab); and *Palaemon serratus* (common prawn).

Molluscs - 27 species, including: *Calliostoma zizyphinum* (painted top shell); *Hinia reticulata* (netted dog whelk); *Aequipecten opercularis* (queen scallop); piddocks; *Buccinum undatum* (common whelk) and *Crepidula fornicata* (slipper limpet).

Bryozoans (sea mats) - 10 species, including: *Flustra foliacea* (hornwrack); *Alcyonidium diaphanum* (finger bryozoan); *Vesicularia spinosa* (a feathery bryozoan); *Cellepora pumicosa* (orange pumpice) and *Bugula plumosa* (a spiral bryozoan).

Echinoderms - 7 species, including *Asterias rubens* (common starfish); *Ophiura albida* and *Ophiura ophiura* (sand brittlestars) and *Psammechinus miliaris* (green sea urchin).

Chordata (sea squirts) - 6 species, including: *Styela clava* (leathery sea squirt); *Molgula* sp.; *Diplosoma* sp. and *Clavelina lepadiformis* (light bulb sea squirt).

Chordata (fish) - 24 species, including: *Trisopterus luscus* (bib); *Scyliorhinus canicula* (lesser spotted dogfish); *Parablennius gattorugine* (Tompot blenny); *Callionymus lyra* (common dragonet); *Ctenolabrus rupestris* (goldsinny); *Pomatoschistus minutus* (sand goby); and *Hippocampus hippocampus* (short-snouted seahorse).

Algae - 11 species, including: *Palmaria palmata* (dulse); *Ulva lactuca* (sea lettuce); *Laminaria saccharina* (sugar kelp); and *Calliblepharis ciliata* (red fringe weed).

Seasearch is a national volunteer survey project for recreational divers to support conservation of marine life.

Kent Seasearch is run by Kent Wildlife Trust. We are very grateful for a contribution towards the 2008 programme from Natural England and Environment Agency via National Seasearch. Preparation of this report has also been supported by Natural England and The Crown Estate.

For more information, contact Kent Wildlife Trust, Tyland Barn, Sandling, Maidstone, Kent ME14 3BD. Tel: 01622 662012. info@kentwildlife.org.uk. Website: www.kentwildlifetrust.org.uk

Kent Wildlife Trust is the leading conservation charity for Kent and Medway. Charity No: 239992.

