



Bloody henry starfish  
by Jolyon Chesworth



Dahlia anemone  
by Matt Dogget

Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust  
Seasearch Summary



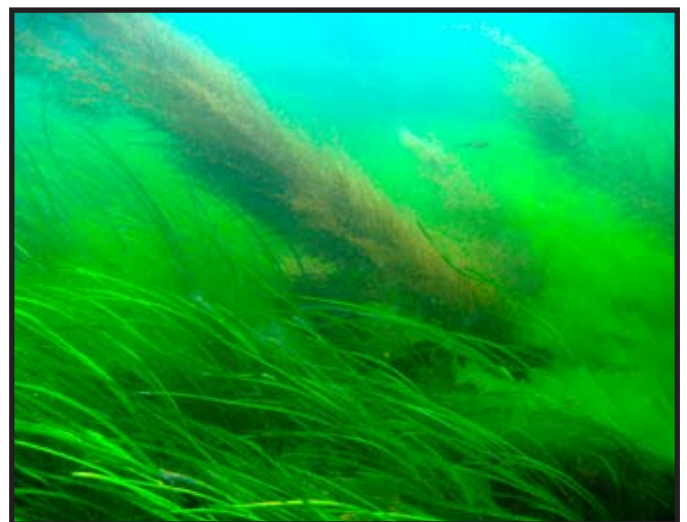
Double spiral worm  
by Mike Markey



Conger eel  
by Mike Markey



Suberites sponge  
by Mike Markey



Seagrass and sargassum  
by Jolyon Chesworth

## Seasearch Summary 2008

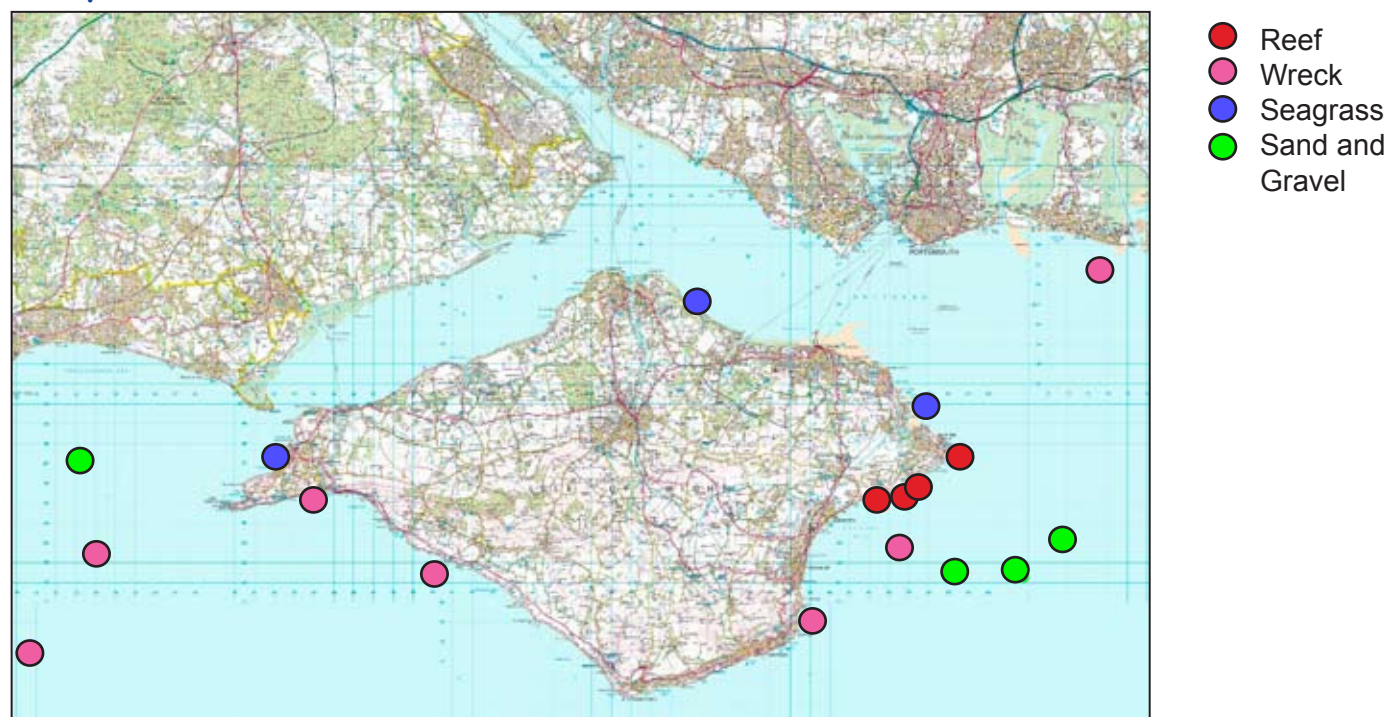
### Hampshire and the Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust

During 2008, Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust continued to run a successful Seasearch programme with nearly 20 sites surveyed (Table 1) and Observer, Specialist and Surveyor courses delivered. The areas surveyed included wrecks, reefs and sand and gravel beds and this report summarises what was found.

**Table 1. Sites surveyed in 2008.**

Dominant habitat	Site	Location	Site Depth
Wrecks	Dakota	50° 38.449 N 001° 06.320 W	19m
	Mystery Wreck	Not available	9m
	Impregnable Wreck	50° 45. 88 N 000° 57.55 W	6m
	Luis	50° 36.50 N 001° 10.0 W	18m
	The Fenna	50° 38.43 N 001° 40.47 W	23m
	Joannis Millas	50° 37.92 N 001° 26.09 W	9m
	War Knight	50° 39.96 N 001° 31.12 W	13m
	Venezuela	50° 35.78 N 001° 43.38 W	28m
	Reefs	Culver Cliff	50° 39.787 N 001° 05.953 W
Culver Cliff		50° 40.029 N 001° 05.490 W	9m
Culver Cliff		50° 39.595 N 001° 06.859 W	8m
Bembridge Hole		50° 40.840 N 001° 03.616 W	12m
Sand and gravel	St. Helen's Fort	50° 42.33 N 001° 05.139 W	3m
	Totland Bay	50° 40.969 N 001° 32.878 W	4m
	Osborne Bay	50° 45.231 N 001° 14.807 W	4m
	Christchurch Ledges	50° 41.10 N 001° 41.30 W	17m
	Hanson aggregate site 372 / 1 1	50° 38.595 N 000° 59.060 W	23m
	Hanson aggregate site 372 / 1 2	50° 37.615 N 001° 00.894 W	21m
Hanson aggregate site 372 / 1 3	50° 37.689 N 001° 03.718 W	24m	

#### GPS points of seasearch dives sites



## Wrecks

Eight wrecks lying on a variety of habitats from sand to chalk reef were investigated in 2008. Dominant species included hydroids and bryozoans, notably hornwrack, *Flustra foliacea*, deadmans fingers, *Alcyonium digitatum*, velvet swimming crab, *Necora puber* and sponges including the goosebump sponge, *Dysidea fragilis*. Fish were frequent, especially bib, *Trisopterus luscus*, and tompot blennies, *Parablennius gattorugine*. The BAP species short snouted seahorse, *Hippocampus hippocampus* was found on the Mystery Wreck.



Bib, by Mike Markey

## Reefs

The area hosts some of the best chalk reefs in the country and these BAP priority Habitats were surveyed at several sites on the east of the Isle of Wight. Culver Cliff is a rocky chalk reef with some mixed ground at a depth of 7 to 9 meters. The site is rich in marine life, with several species of red algae in the shallower areas. There



Short snouted seahorse, by Angela Gall

are numerous sponges at the site including the elephant hide sponge, *Pachymatisma johnstonia* and the chimney sponge, *Polymastia penicillus*. Worms included the commonly found *Bispira volutacornis*, and molluscs included painted topshells, *Calliostoma zizyphinum*, netted dogwhelks, *Hinia reticulata* and the common cuttlefish, *Sepia officinalis*. Thornback ray, *Raja clavata*, Bib, *Trisopterus luscus*, plaice, *Pleuronectes platessa*, ballan wrasse, goldsinny wrasse, *Ctenolabrus rupestris* and tompot blennies, *Parablennius gattorugine*, were all recorded, as well as a short snouted seahorse, *Hippocampus hippocampus*.

## Sand and gravel

Five dives took place on sand and gravel seabeds, a BAP priority Habitat. Three dives, Totland Bay, Osborne Bay and St Helens Fort, took place in shallow water known to host common eelgrass *Zostera marina*. The eelgrass beds were surveyed using transects and quadrats by counting plant densities and measuring leaf lengths. St Helens Fort had dense patches of eelgrass but this was interspersed by large Japanese Weed plants, *Sargassum muticum*. Osborne and Totland Bays had more extensive beds. Living amongst the plants were dahlia anemones, *Urticina felina*, and snakelocks anemones, *Anemonia viridis*, as well as eyelash worms, *Myxicola infundibulum*, and sand masons, *Lanice conchilega*.

Three dives were conducted at the Hanson Aggregate extraction zone 372/1 as part of an ongoing survey programme. This is an extremely diverse and stable site. Sponges such as *Suberites carnosus*, *Polymastia*



Counting seagrass, by Jolyon Chesworth



Ross coral, by Jolyon Chesworth

*boletiformis* *Dysidea fragilis*, *Pachymatisma johnstonia* were found. The anemones *Sagartia elegans*, *Urticina felina*, *Actinothoe sphyrodeta* were also recorded. Of particular interest were two very large, approx. 60cm in diameter, examples of ross coral, *Pentapora foliacea*. These are the largest recorded in this area and thought to be up to 30 years old. Other species include the leathery seaquirt, *Styela clava*, cuttlefish, *Sepia officinalis*, lobster, *Hommarus gammarus*, and scallop *Pecten maximus*.

**Table 2. Species recorded during Seasearch 2008**

PHYLUM	Common name of Species	No. of species recorded
Porifera	Sponges	22
Hydrozoa	Hydroids	10
Cnidaria	Sea anemones and corals	10
Annelida	Segmented Worms	9
Crustacea	Prawns, Lobsters, Crabs etc	14
Mollusca	Snails, bivalves, cuttlefish	22
Bryozoa	Sea Moss, Sea Mats	11
Phoronida	Horseshoe worm	1
Echiodermata	Starfish, sea cucumbers, urchins	1
Tunicata	Sea Squirts	14
Pisces	Fish	23
Algae	Red, brown and green	21
Angiospermae	Flowering Plants	1
<b>Total Recorded</b>		<b>159</b>

### Seasearch Summary for 2008

After another successful year, the Seasearch programme has surveyed nineteen sites and identified a total of 159 species. These surveys covered three BAP habitats and recorded four BAP species, including the only two records of seahorses in their natural environment. In total, 39 divers came on our organised dives, filling out nearly 50 forms, a record for our area! Two Observer courses were run to train new divers and another Seagrass Specialist course was also delivered. A big thank you to everyone who has participated in Seasearch in 2008 and we hope to see you on our dives in 2009.



*Seasearch volunteers surveying near the Needles, Angela Gall*