

Seasearch Cornwall

Surveying and mapping beneath the waves in Cornwall

NOV 2013 ISSUE:

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pMCZ Scuba Survey Success!



Pink Seafans *Eunicella verrucosa* flourish near Padstow pMCZ. Photo by Keith Hiscock

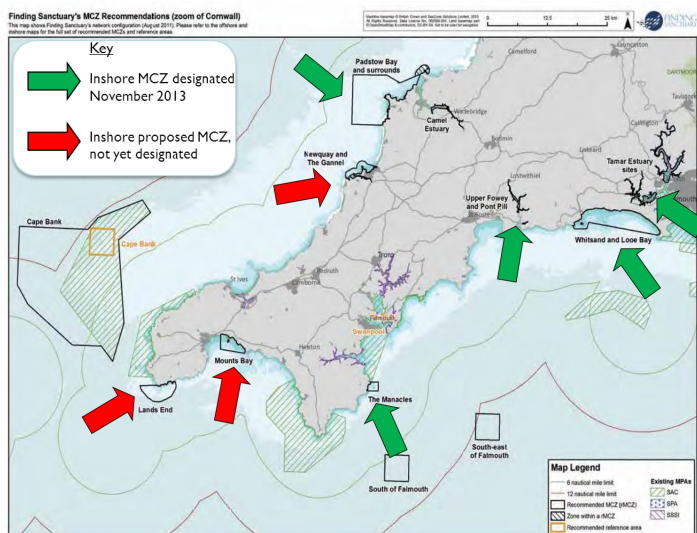
Seasearch divers have succeeded in surveying five of the six divable proposed Marine Conservation Zones (pMCZ's) in Cornwall! These include dives in Newquay and the Gannel, Padstow and Surrounds, Mounts Bay, The Manacles, and Whitsand and Looe Bay pMCZs. We have also carried out monitoring close to the estuarine Fowey pMCZ, and in Falmouth and the Helford Special Area for Conservation. Many of these sites will contribute data towards the exciting PANACHE project, which shares best practice in monitoring marine protected areas across the English Channel. Monitoring these sites is important to strengthen the case for their designation and conservation.

Left: Diver John McDonnall recording Pink Seafans. Photo by Keith Hiscock



News Flash! Cornish MCZ's Designated

Defra have announced that 27 MCZ's will be designated in November 2013. In Cornwall we will benefit from coastal Marine Conservation Zones at The Manacles, Padstow Bay and surrounds, Whitsand and Looe Bay, Upper Fowey and Pont Pill, and Tamar Estuary sites shared with Devon (green arrows). Nearby; the Isles of Scilly, Lundy, and 3 MCZ's offshore from Cornish are also being designated. These sites showcase some of our outstanding marine life and represent a huge achievement for conservation, but more work must be done to ensure that further proposed sites (red arrows) are included in the next tranche, due for designation in 2015-16. It is vital that a coherent network of MCZ's is established in order to ensure effective marine protection. Many more diverse and productive pMCZ sites remain vulnerable and in need of urgent protection.



Map reproduced from Finding Sanctuary



Outstanding volunteer effort



Photo by Lizi Miller

A **massive thank you** is due to our dedicated Cornish Seasearch volunteers for their phenomenal efforts and contribution to marine conservation through dive surveys! In the 2013 dive season we have logged an incredible **1002 volunteer hours**, which are fundamental to the success of the Seasearch programme.

Full training is provided to volunteers, and we would love to hear from anyone keen to get involved! Please see contact details below.

Training

We welcomed 26 new divers to Seasearch on Observer courses this spring. For experienced Seasearchers, there was a Specialist ID course on an often under recorded group, the Hydroids, and their brightly coloured but illusive little predators, the nudibranches.

Right a hungry *Flabellina brownii* nudibranch, by Trudy Russell. Far right, a fluffy Branched Antenna Hydroid by Matt Slater



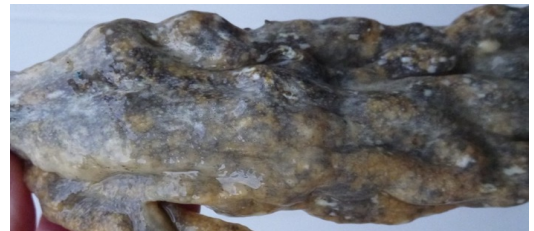
Divers ready to hunt Hydroids. By Angie Gall



Alien Invaders

Seasearch divers conducted dive surveys looking for non-native species in the Fowey Estuary. These surveys contributed to the important work of the Marine Science Project, which monitors and tracks the spread non-native species in Cornwall, and was supported by Fowey Harbour Commissioners.

We found a worrying lump of slime which at first looked like the highly invasive and economically damaging Carpet Seasquirt, but was in fact harmless *Diplosoma spongiform*, a native filter feeding colonial seasquirt. 5 non-natives were recorded - not many - well done Fowey!

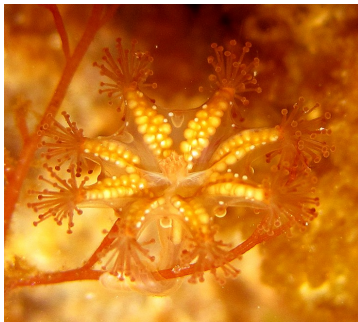


Scary slime is actually innocent *Diplosoma spongiform* seasquirt. Photo by Lisa Rennocks

Want to get involved?

For more information on how to become a Seasearch volunteer, prerequisite diving experience and contact Cat Wilding on (01872) 273939 ext 256

Rare stalked jellyfish found in Falmouth



Seasearch divers have found several of this nationally scarce Biodiversity Action Plan species this year. The stalked jellyfish are often only a few

Left: the tiny but beautiful Kaleidoscope Stalked Jellyfish *Halidystus auricula* can be brown, green, orange, scarlet or crimson. Photo by Paula Lightfoot

mm long, with large specimens reaching only 1.5cm. Divers recorded thousands of stalked jelly fish during one dive within the St Agnes Voluntary Marine Conservation Area, and have repeatedly found stalked jellies at various sites within Falmouth and the Helford Special Area for Conservation. These findings strengthen the case for conservation at these two sites.

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