Sponges
The erect cup-shaped Axinella infundibuliformis, typical of deeper rock, was the most recorded sponge. Others of note included the nationally scarce Phakellia ventilabrum, and the unusual Haliclona viscosa (pictured).

Anemones, corals and hydroids
Devonshire cup corals were found at every site except Rubh A' Chairn Mhoir. On Oberon Bank, hydroids were common, with sea beard (Nemertesia antennina) most recorded. The scarce white cluster anemone Parazoanthus anguicominus was frequent on mixed ground, the southerly species red fingers (Alcyonium glorimeratum) recorded as rare to the south and the northern sea fan Swiftia pallida frequent all over Oberon Bank.

Bryozoans
The branching bryozoans Porella compressa and Omalosecra ramulosa were recorded from deeper parts of Oberon Bank.

Echinoderms
Featherstars were recorded at most sites, although Leptometra only on Oberon Bank. The sea cucumber Holothuria forskali is found on east Oberon Bank.

Seasquirts and fishes
The football seasquirt Diazone violacea was widespread on Oberon Bank. Fish were also numerous, particularly goldsinny, bairdian and cuckoo wrasse and poor cod among the kelp park.

Fan Shells and Scallops
No fan shells (Atrina fragilis) were found. King scallops (Pecten maximus) were at all sites except the steep east Oberon Bank.

This Seasearch survey was organised as part of the Marine Conservation Society's Member's Dive Programme. Funding for dive costs was provided by Scottish Natural Heritage, Fort William Office. Surveyors taking part were: Calum Duncan and Chris Wood (organisers), George Brown, Frank Fortune, Don MacNish, Sue Scott and Howard Wood. Photographs are by George Brown, Calum Duncan, Sue Scott, Chris Wood and Howard Wood. This report by Calum Duncan (MCS).

Many thanks to John Payne for the use of his boat.
**Oberon Bank**

On top of the submerged Oberon Bank, bedrock ridges run north-south at 16-21m and are covered in kelp park (Laminaria hyperborea) with red seaweeds (including Heterosiphonia plumosa and Deiesseria sanguinea), frequent poor cod (Trisopterus minutus), goldsinnys (Ctenolabrus rupestris), red cushion stars (Porania pulvillus) and seven-armed starfish (Luidia sarsi).

**West Oberon Bank**

Below the seaweed zone to the west, bedrock is covered in barnacles, sea beard (Nemertesia anteninna), bryozoans, Devonshire cup corals and the featherstar *Leptometra*. At 22m, small boulders, cobbles, pebbles, coarse sand and shell descends gradually west. Sea beard, featherstars, white cluster (Parazoanthus anguicomas) and sandy creepet anemones (Epizoanthus couchii; see below) grow on boulders and cobbles. Queen scallops (*Aequapecten opercularis*), dragonets (*Callionymus lyra*), sandmasons and a even a lone sea pen (*Pennatula phosphorea*) live on or in the sand of this very diverse site.

**North Oberon Bank**

In deeper waters to the north (27-30m), bedrock is covered in Devonshire cup corals (Caryophyllia smithii), encrusting and foliose (*Securiflustra securifrons*) bryozoans and featherstars (*Antedon bifida* and *Leptometra cellica*). A mixed sediment plain supports hydroids (*Abietinaria abietina* and *Kirchenpaueria*), colonial anemones and king scallops (*Pecten maximus*).

**South Oberon Bank**

Bedrock at 20-28.5m is colonised by barnacles, Devonshire cup corals, sea beard and featherstars with some football seasharts (*Diazone violacea*), northern sea fans (*Swiftia pallida*) and bryozoans, including *Alcyonidium*. As to the north and west, below 28.5m boulders, cobbles and pebbles in muddy shell gravel support hydroids (sea beard and *A. abietina*), sponges, featherstars, colonial anemones (white cluster and sandy creepet), sea fans, colonial seasharts (football and *Botryllus schlosseri*) and king scallops. Spiny starfish (*Marthasterias glacialis*), wrasse and poor cod are also found here.

**East Oberon Bank**

To the east, Oberon Bank is markedly different. It descends in a series of steep, rounded bedrock faces with varied filter-feeding animal life. In some places the hard, branched bryozoans *Porella compressa* and *Omalosecosa ramulosa* dominate, in others featherstars. The erect cupped sponges *Axinella infundibuliformis* and *Phakellia ventilabrum*, Devonshire cup corals, northern sea fans, featherstar *Leptometra* and football seasharts increase with depth. Although at 30m the coarse sand ledges where fan shells had previously been reported were located, during this Seasearch trip no *Atrina fragilis* were seen.

**Seasearch Oberon Bank**

Seasearch Oberon Bank was organised by MCS on 15-18 August 2003 to search for the protected species *Atrina fragilis* (fan shell). Although none were found, 10 Seasearch dives provided some of the first information about marine life on the bank. During poor weather, sites in the Sound of Arisaig were surveyed.

**Western Scottish Bank**

At the mouth of Loch Allort, Priest Rock is crowned at 3m with kelp forest, beneath which urchins (*Echinus esculentus*) have grazed the understorey. On the surrounding seabed, hydroids, scallops, common starfish (*Asterias rubens*), seven-arm starfish and sandmasons are common.

**Ardnish**

A cliff covered in featherstars (*A. bifida*) is crowned with mixed kelp forest (*Laminaria saccharina*, *L. hyperborea* and *Saccorhiza polyschides*). At the base, a steep slope of boulders covered in the seaseaqt *Ciona intestinalis*, with squat lobsters (*Munida rugosa*) in crevices, descends to a shell gravel and mud slope at 23m. Here king scallops and the burrowing anemone *Cerianthus lloydii* are common.

**Rubha A’Chairn Mhoir**

At this point east of Glenug Bay, a gentle boulder slope is covered with mixed kelp species and, due to low urchin grazing, abundant bushy red seaweeds. A gentle slope of sand, shell gravel and cobbles with king scallops, swimming crabs (*Liocarcinus depurator*), gobies and the occasional gurnard then descends to mud. Sea pens (*Virgularia mirabilis*), tower shells *Turrilla*, hollows made by the edible crab *Cancer pagurus* and burrows of the mud runner crab *Goneplax rhomboides* are common in the mud.