

Seasearch Summary Report

South Wales 2007/2008



Areas covered in this report

- Gower
- Castlemartin Range
- Stackpole Quay
- Grassholm
- Barrel Rock
- Lydstep

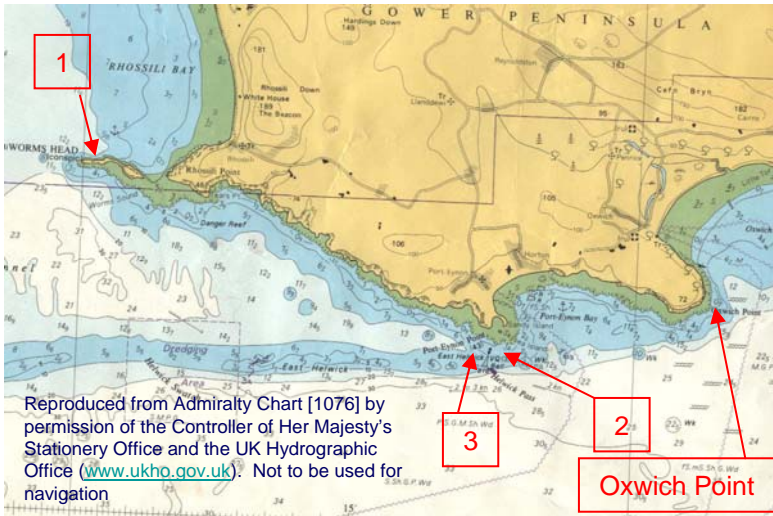


Introduction

Over the past two years surveys in South Wales have covered a variety of sites from Pwllddu Head on the east part of the Gower to Barrel Rock which is approximately 15 miles off the westerly most point of Pembrokeshire. The sites are generally moderately to highly exposed and many are subjected to strong currents. Most sites comprise of rocky reef in varying forms, some with gullies of sand and cobbles and others characterised by mussel beds.

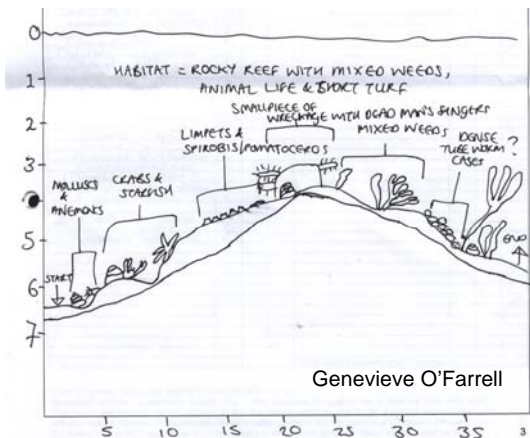
The sites were surveyed using hard boats (Grassholm, Crow Rock), RIBS (Gower) and a few were reached from the shore including West Angle Bay and Stackpole Quay. Although the aim was to visit sites not previously targeted by Seasearch other sites were re visited and the species list for these sites is continuing to grow. The divers were all trained to at least Observer level and many are regular collectors of Seasearch data comprehensively completing the surveyor form.

Gower 2007



Pwllddu Point

A rocky reef dominated by an extensive mussel bed and numerous common starfish, *Asterias rubens*. The reef building worm *Sabellaria alveolata*, typically found in intertidal areas, was recorded in patches at depths up to 7m. Although this species does not have its own Species Action Plan it is covered in its reef form by a Habitat Action Plan. This site is not shown on the chart and is 3 miles east of Oxwich Point (shown on map).



Worms' Head (1)

Rocky ledges and boulders with a dense mussel bed, *Mytilus edulis*. Dominant animal life included the common starfish *Asterias rubens*, and the spiny spider crab, *Maja squinado* and encrusting sponges.

Culver Hole, Port Eynon (2)

A rocky reef with sand and gravel at base of gullies and some sandy areas. Abundant crustacea including the lobster, *Homarus gammarus*, edible crab, *Cancer pagurus* and the spiny spider crab. Fish species included butterfish *Pholis gunnellus*, the tompot blenny *Parablennius gattorugine* and the bull rout *Myoxocephalus scorpius*.



Helwick Pass, near Port Eynon (3)

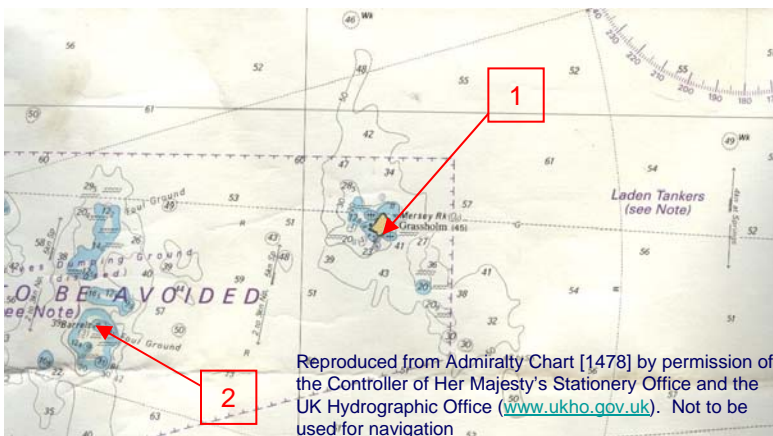
Sand and gravel habitat with shoals of at least 100 individuals of greater sand eels, *Hyperoplus lanceolatus* and also smaller shoals of the smaller relative *Ammodytes tobianus*.



Stackpole Quay 2007 and 2008

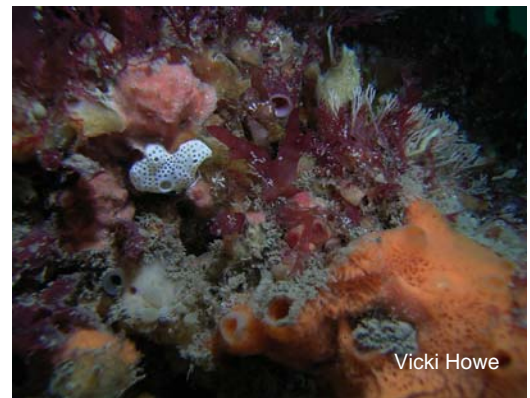
Stackpole is regularly visited by Seasearch divers as it is a straightforward, pretty shore dive with a rocky reef interspersed with sandy areas. There are a good variety of red seaweeds including *Dilsea carnosa*, *Heterosiphonia plumosa* and *Drachiella spectabilis* and browns such as *Dictyopteris membranacea* and *Laminaria hyperborea*. The greater pipe fish, *Syngnathus acus*, can often be discovered hiding in amongst the algae and within the cracks and crevices of the limestone rocks can be found *Clavelina lepadiformis*, the horseshoe worms *Phoronis hippocrepia* and sponges such as *Dysidea fragilis* and *Tethya aurantium*. In 2007 one pair of divers also managed to rescue a small-spotted catshark entangled in fishing line. There is a good diversity of fish recorded at Stackpole with the leopard spotted goby (*Thorogobius ephippiatus*) and two spotted goby (*Gobiusculus flavescens*) being the smaller species recorded in 2008.

Grassholm and Hats and Barrels 2007



Grassholm (1)

A rocky reef with an extensive mussel bed. Large crustacea such as *Cancer pagurus*, *Homarus gammarus* and the spiny lobster *Palinurus elephas* were recorded as common at this site. The spiny starfish, *Marthasterias glacialis*, was also recorded in numbers. Fish species included 3 species of wrasse (*Centrolabrus exoletus*, *Labrus mixtus* and *Labrus bergylta*) and the eel, *Conger conger*.



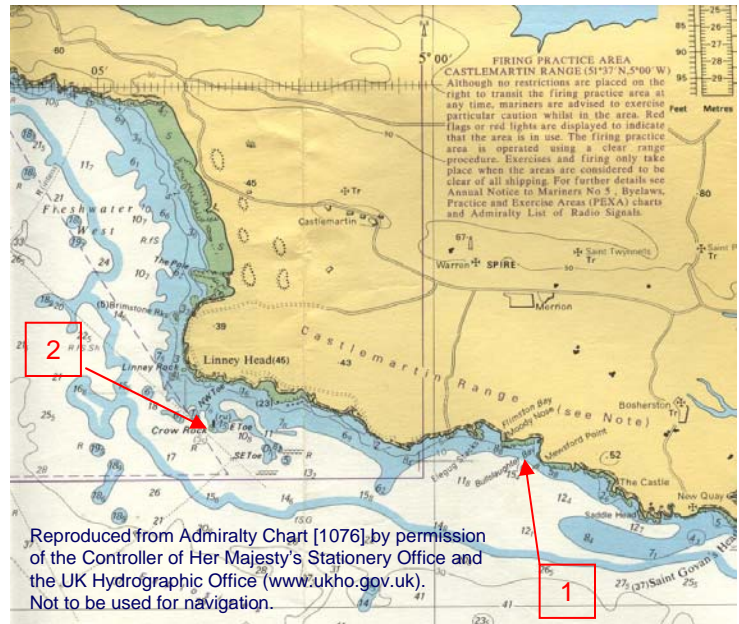
Barrel Rock (2)

A very exposed rocky reef pinnacle with flat areas characterised by *Laminaria hyperborea*, (at top (approximately 11m) and mussel beds at deeper depths, with vertical walls dominated by sponges, *Alcyonium digitatum* and the plumose anemone *Metridium senile*.

Castlemartin Range 2008

Bullslaughter Bay (1)

A flat, slightly sloping rocky reef characterised by kelp forest (*Laminaria hyperborea*), mixed red algae and ammunition shells! Red algal species included *Plocamium cartilagineum*, *Heterosiphonia plumosa* and the colourful *Drachiella spectabilis*. The corkwing wrasse and goldsinny were recorded in shallow cobble based gullies and large overhangs and crevices provided shelter for a variety of crabs, *Necora puber*, *Cancer pagurus*, *Galathea* sp. and *Inachus* sp.



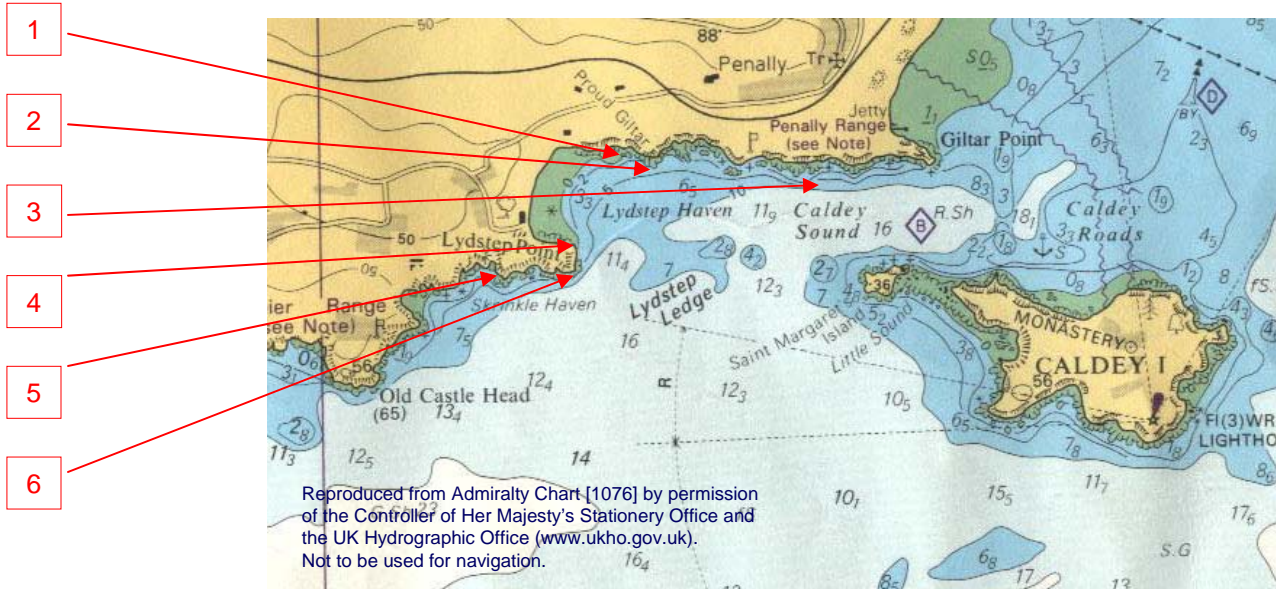
Crow Rock (2)

A steep limestone rocky pinnacle with rocky archways exposed to strong tidal streams. The rocks are densely covered in *Tubularia indivisa*. Sandy gullies and some wreckage in local vicinity. A number of sponges were also recorded at this site and included *Polymastia penicillus*, *Hemimycale columella*, *Dercitus bucklandi* and *Pachymatisma johnstonia*. Other sessile species included the colonial ascidian *Botryllus schlosseri* and the solitary *Dendrodoa grossularia*. A number of small-spotted catshark (*Scyliorhinus canicula*) were recorded in the gullies.



Lydstep 2008

A number of sites were visited around Lydstep including north shore of Lystep beach (1,) Proud Giltar (2), Caldey Sound (3), Lydstep Point (4 and 6) and shore line between Lydstep Point and Skrinkle Haven (5). The sites were shallow, undulating rocky reefs characterised by kelp forest (*Laminaria hyperborea* and *Saccorhiza polyschides*, gullies and sandy areas. Lobster, *Homarus gammarus*, of a variety of sizes were frequently recorded in the area and one was also noted to be out in the open.



A total of 7 sea slugs were recorded including numerous *Polycera quadrilineata* feeding on sea mat, the uncommon species, *Flabellina pellucida*, *Facelina auriculata* and also *Doto pinnatifida* found feeding on the hydroid *Nemertesia antennina*. Another mollusc found in abundance included the tiny blue-rayed limpet, *Helcion pellucidum*.

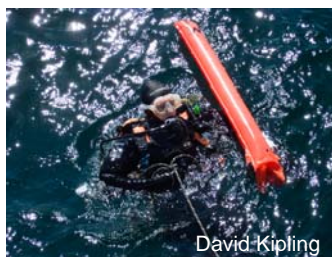


The unusual stalked jelly fish, *Haliclystus auricula* was recorded at site 5 together with many *Inachus* sp. and large common prawns hidden in crevices with sponges and dead man's fingers found on rocky out crops separated from the main reef. Various sites around Lydstep Point were visited with juvenile butterflyfish, *Pholis gunnellus* and some large examples of the boring sponge *Cliona celata* being noted.

Phylum/Class	Common Name	Number of species	Common name of some species recorded	Species Name
Porifera	Sponges	14	Golf ball sponge Boring sponge Crater sponge Black tar sponge	<i>Tethya citrina</i> <i>Cliona celata</i> <i>Hemimycale columella</i> <i>Dercitus bucklandi</i>
Cnidaria	Anemones, corals and hydroids	20	White striped anemone Snakelocks anemone Daisy anemone Trumpet anemone Kelp fur	<i>Actinothoe sphyrodeta</i> <i>Anemonia viridis</i> <i>Cereus pedunculatus</i> <i>Aiptasia mutabilis</i> <i>Obelia geniculata</i>
Crustacea	Crabs, lobsters and shrimp	12	Spiny spider crab Common prawn Leach's spider crab European spiny lobster	<i>Maja squinado</i> <i>Palaemon serratus</i> <i>Inachus phalangium</i> <i>Palinurus elephas</i>
Mollusc	Snails, sea slugs and bivalves	21	Sea slug Sea slug Sea hare Netted dog whelk Edible mussel	<i>Janolus cristatus</i> <i>Flabellina pellucida</i> <i>Aplysia punctata</i> <i>Hinia reticulata</i> <i>Mytilus edulis</i>
Bryozoa	Sea mats	6	Hornwrack Spiral bryozoan	<i>Flustra foliacea</i> <i>Bugula</i> sp.
Phoronida	Small "worms"	1	Horse shoe worm	<i>Phoronis</i> sp.
Polychaeta	Bristleworms	4	Sand mason worm Honeycomb worm	<i>Lanice conchilega</i> <i>Sabellaria aveolata</i>
Echinodermata	Starfish, sea urchins and sea cucumbers	5	Common starfish Crevice sea cucumber	<i>Asterias rubens</i> <i>Aslia lefevrei</i>
Tunicata	Sea squirts	6	Light bulb sea squirt Club sea squirt	<i>Clavelina lepadiformis</i> <i>Aplidium punctum</i>
Pisces	Fish	26	Greater Pipefish Bull rout Greater sand eel Plaice Two spotted goby	<i>Syngnathus acus</i> <i>Myoxocephalus scorpius</i> <i>Hyperoplus lanceolatus</i> <i>Pleuronectes platessa</i> <i>Gobiusculus flavescens</i>
Algae	Seaweeds	14	Eyelash weed Rainbow weed Red algae Brown algae	<i>Calliblepharis ciliata</i> <i>Drachiella spectabilis</i> <i>Heterosiphonia plumosa</i> <i>Dictyopteris membranacea</i>



Vicki Howe



David Kipling



Vicki Howe

Thank you to all the divers and boatmen who have contributed to South Wales Seasearch activities – you are too numerous to mention by name! Report prepared by Vicki Howe. Full survey results and species list available on the JNCC NBN Gateway. Seasearch is a volunteer underwater survey project for recreational divers who wish to contribute to conserving the marine environment. Financial support for the project has been given by:

