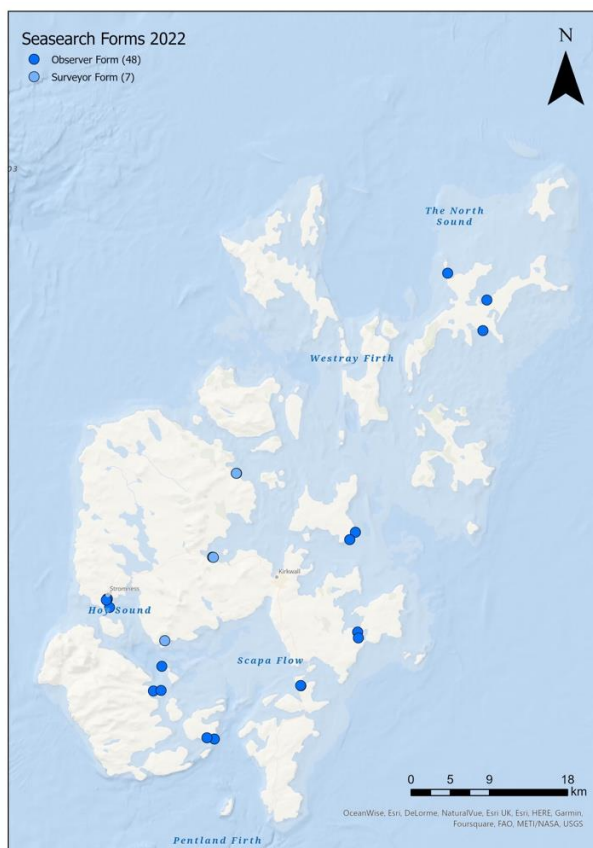


This report summarises the Seasearch activities conducted throughout Orkney and Shetland during 2022. It includes a summary of the training courses and events that were run for volunteer divers, snorkellers and beach walkers.

This report feeds into the Scotland and National annual reports which can be downloaded from the Seasearch website (www.seasearch.org.uk). Species data can be accessed through the National Biodiversity Network (NBN) Atlas website at nbnatlas.org or the Scottish NBN Atlas at scotland.nbnatlas.org.

Seasearch Orkney and Shetland Surveys 2022

The following pages summarise the main activities undertaken in 2022. The map (below) shows the distribution of Seasearch surveys carried out in Orkney throughout 2022.



A total of 55 survey forms were completed, 48 Observer and 7 Surveyor forms at sites throughout Orkney mainland and the surrounding islands of Sanday, Shapinsay, Hoy, Flotta and Cava.

This was a diverse combination of diver, snorkel, beach walks and Baited Remote Underwater Video surveys.

ORKNEY & SHETLAND:

Summary:

In February 2022 Seasearch Scotland saw the move of coordinator and tutor Karen from the west coast of Scotland to Orkney where she can direct and support Seasearch activities in the Orkney and Shetland region of Scotland. Karen was provided with a full set of coordinator materials to assist her.




Seasearch were involved in several collaborative public engagement events in Orkney throughout 2022. These are summarised below.

Orkney Nature Festival 19th May 2022

RSPB Rock-pooling Event

Seasearch supported the RSPB led annual event at by attending a rock-pooling event held at Brough of Birsay.



 **RSPB Orkney**
16 May 2022 · 🌐

Join **RSPB Orkney** for a special **Orkney Nature Festival** rockpooling event at the Brough of Birsay on Thursday 19 May from 4.30pm. Our Outdoor Learning Officer, Holly Peek, will be joined by **Alison Moore Underwater** and Karen Boswarva from www.seasearch.org.uk, plus other local experts. Booking isn't essential but is advised. Reserve your place by emailing orkney@rspb.org.uk. Children must be accompanied by an adult. Full details of all events available at www.orkneynaturefestival.org

Image credit: Orange-clubbed Sea Slug by Holly Peek

#RSPB #OrkneyNatureFestival

ID guides and information on Seasearch was made available to members of the public, with the event providing an opportunity for the coordinator to talk about the marine life in Orkney's coastal waters, Seasearch, and promote an uptake in Seasearch activities in Orkney with a many locals and tourists at a popular location.



Stromness Museum Shoreside Ramble

15th July 2022

Seasearch teamed up with the Stromness Museum and Kraken Diving to provide a day of informative snorkelling activities.



STROMNESS MUSEUM

Shoreline Ramble

Bringing the museum outdoors

15 July 3.30pm, 5 August 10am and 12 August 3.30pm

See behind the scenes of the Museum's Natural History Collection and join one of our team for a walk around the local shoreline to discover some of Orkney's coastal plants and animals - linking to the museum collection as we go.

Suitable for families with children over 6 years. Charge applies with discount for families. Numbers are limited.

To book call 01856 850025 or scan QR code. For further details, please visit our website: www.stromnessmuseum.org.uk/whatson



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 **ACCREDITED MUSEUM**

 **YouTube**
stromnessmuseum.org.uk



Participants were given a tour of the museum's natural history collection and a short talk about Seasearch and marine nature in Orkney seas

before donning drysuits and snorkels to look themselves. Each participant was given a spotting sheet of key intertidal and shallow subtidal species so they could record what they saw underwater. The Seasearch coordinator was on the surface with ID guides and to help with any questions. All the presence data from the day was collated into a single Seasearch Observer form by the coordinator during the activity so that participants could see their sightings records making a difference.



Orkney Nature Youth Collective

Big Kids Rock-Pooling Afternoon 12th August 2022

Seasearch supported the ONYC led event at Birsay Bay by providing ID guides and information on the species found by rock-pooling and snorkelling volunteers. Specimens were collected and placed in tanks for the public to view and learn more about. This was a popular event run as part of the yearly Orkney Nature Festival, it was a fantastic opportunity to talk about Seasearch with the local community and tourists.

Big Kids Rock-Pooling Afternoon
hosted by Orkney Nature Youth Collective

@orkney_nature_youth_collective

Join ONYC for an afternoon rock-pooling session at Birsay Sound, one of the best rock-pooling locations in the UK!

Explore the wealth of species these rock pools have to offer, including crabs, sea stars, sea slugs and with luck some groatie buckies!

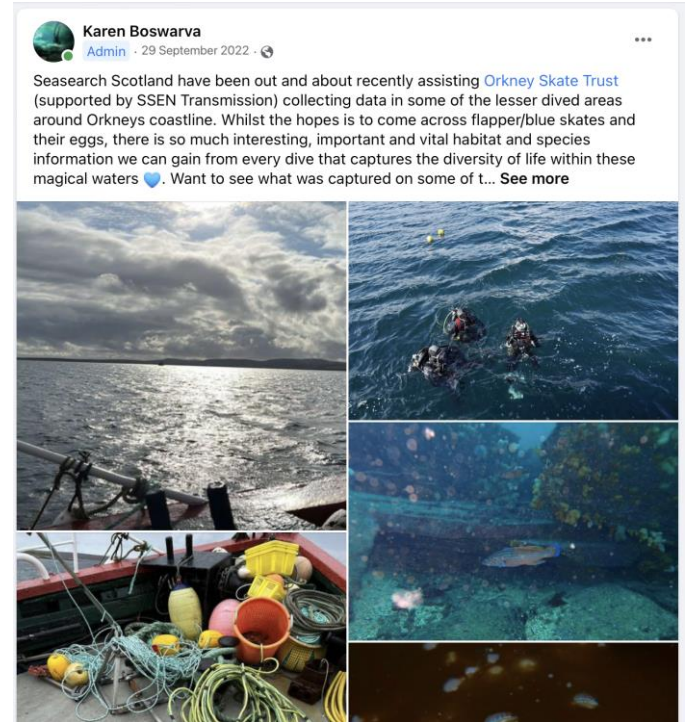
Who is invited?
This is a session for adults and teens 16+

When and where?
Friday 12th August, 2pm onwards at the Brough of Birsay Carpark/Birsay Sound

With support from seasearch
www.seasearch.org.uk



Seasearch are assisting The Orkney Skate Trust with their citizen science led research activities throughout Orkney by collecting Seasearch data from SCUBA dives, Baited Remote Underwater Cameras (BRUVs) and drop camera surveys conducted around Orkney's waters looking for evidence of flapper skate and flapper skate egg laying habitat. This is an ongoing project that will run throughout 2023.



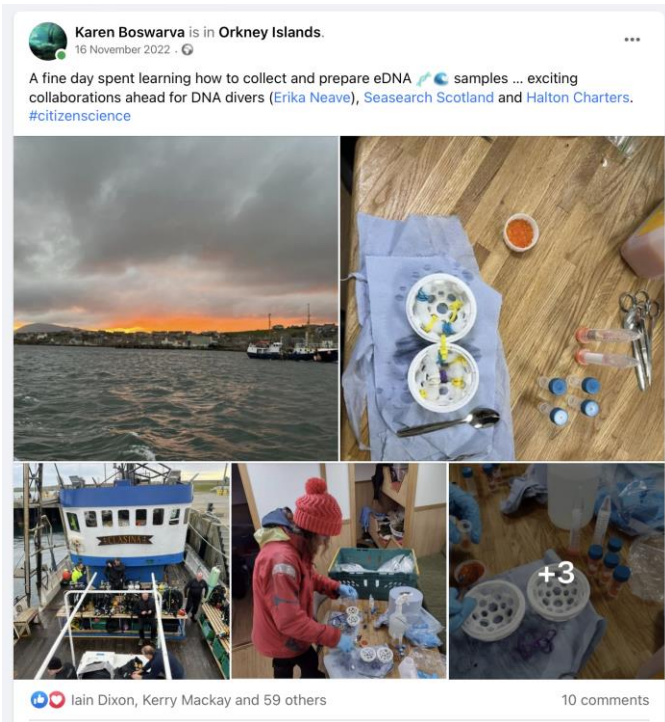
DNA Divers

Seasearch in collaboration with Halton Charters are assisting DNA divers with the collection of eDNA data around Orkney by conducting dives and snorkels in various locations so that eDNA data can be compared with data obtained on Seasearch forms. Researchers from Liverpool John Moore's University travelled to Orkney to train the Seasearch coordinator and crew of the Clasina in how to collect and process the eDNA data. This is an ongoing project that will run throughout 2023. The aim is to conduct repeat surveys over several key areas throughout Orkney.

Seasearch Orkney and Shetland were involved in several collaborative citizen science projects, the details of which are summarised below.

Orkney Skate Trust





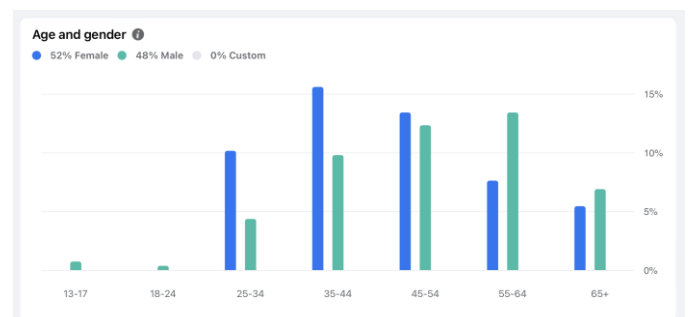
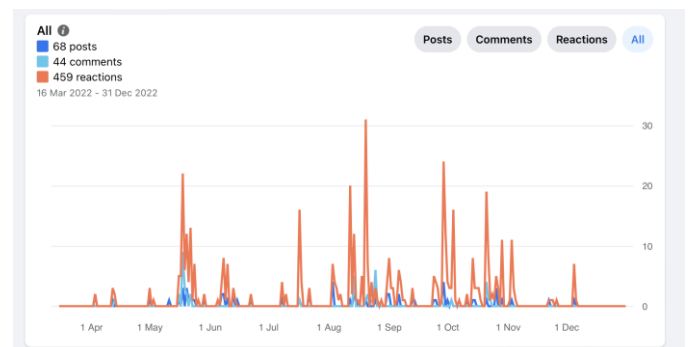
Participants travelled from throughout Orkneys outer islands to attend the event, conducting a combination of snorkel and shore walk surveys throughout the day before we all sat together to complete the qualifying forms.

Training Courses

Seasearch Orkney and Shetland ran one online Observer course aimed at snorkellers throughout August 2022. This was largely run for the Northern Isles Landscape Partnership Trust with the aim of bringing together the communities throughout Orkney's outer islands. The course was delivered online over a week with the practical element conducted throughout the day at Barrier 3 on Orkney mainland.

Social Media

The Orkney and Shetland Facebook group currently has 280 members. Coordinator Karen took over the running of the group when she moved up to Orkney. The page has seen a steady increase in members and participation throughout the year. Since March 2022 there have been 68 posts which have received a good level of participation.



Species of interest

Several interesting species were highlighted throughout the year using social media which led

to an increase in online discussion and local reports of sightings and how to report them.

Karen Boswarva
Admin · 15 October 2022 · 🌐

👉👉 Help us record crawfish in Scottish waters 🦞🦞

Known as craw, crawfish, crayfish, or European spiny lobster (*Palinurus elephas*). This lobster packs some punch. With its ultralong stripy antennae, small front claws, and bright orange/purple carapace this crustacean is truly unmistakable. Nothing delights and frustrates a photographer more than attempting to get the perfect craw shot right!





They are fascinating animals! 🦞 Found mainly on the west coast in rocky and mixe... See more



Karen Boswarva
Admin · 18 May 2022 · 🌐

Who's this peaking about from amongst the algae 🐟🐟

- 🐟 In 1 m of water on the edge of a #seagrass bed.
- 🐟 Turns out it's quite a rare sighting of a 3 spined stickleback (*Gasterosteus aculeatus*).
- 🐟 T... See more

+3

Check out this bad boy!

We have here what is believed to be an Atlantic saury (*Scomberesox saurus*) also known as a skipper. Found out at the Falls of Warness up near some of Orkney's northerly isles. Unfortunately this wasn't a live individual, however its presence is still pretty exciting as it's an Orkney first!

We don't have too many records of this small schooling fish from the rest of the UK either... only 34 records on the NBN. ... See more



Financial support for Seasearch in Scotland comes predominantly from NatureScot with oversight and support from the Marine Conservation Society.



Text by regional coordinator Karen Boswarva. Images by Karen Boswarva, Dan Wise, Katy Firth, Holly Peek. The photographers retain all rights over their submitted images.

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