

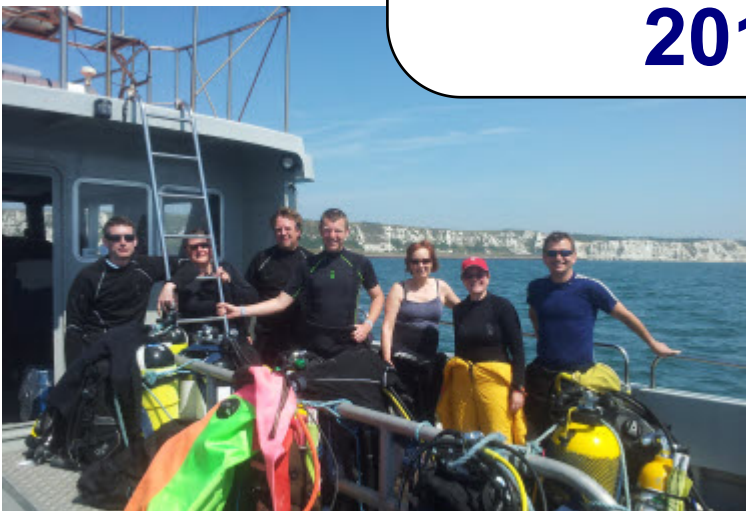


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Kent Seasearch Summary Report 2015



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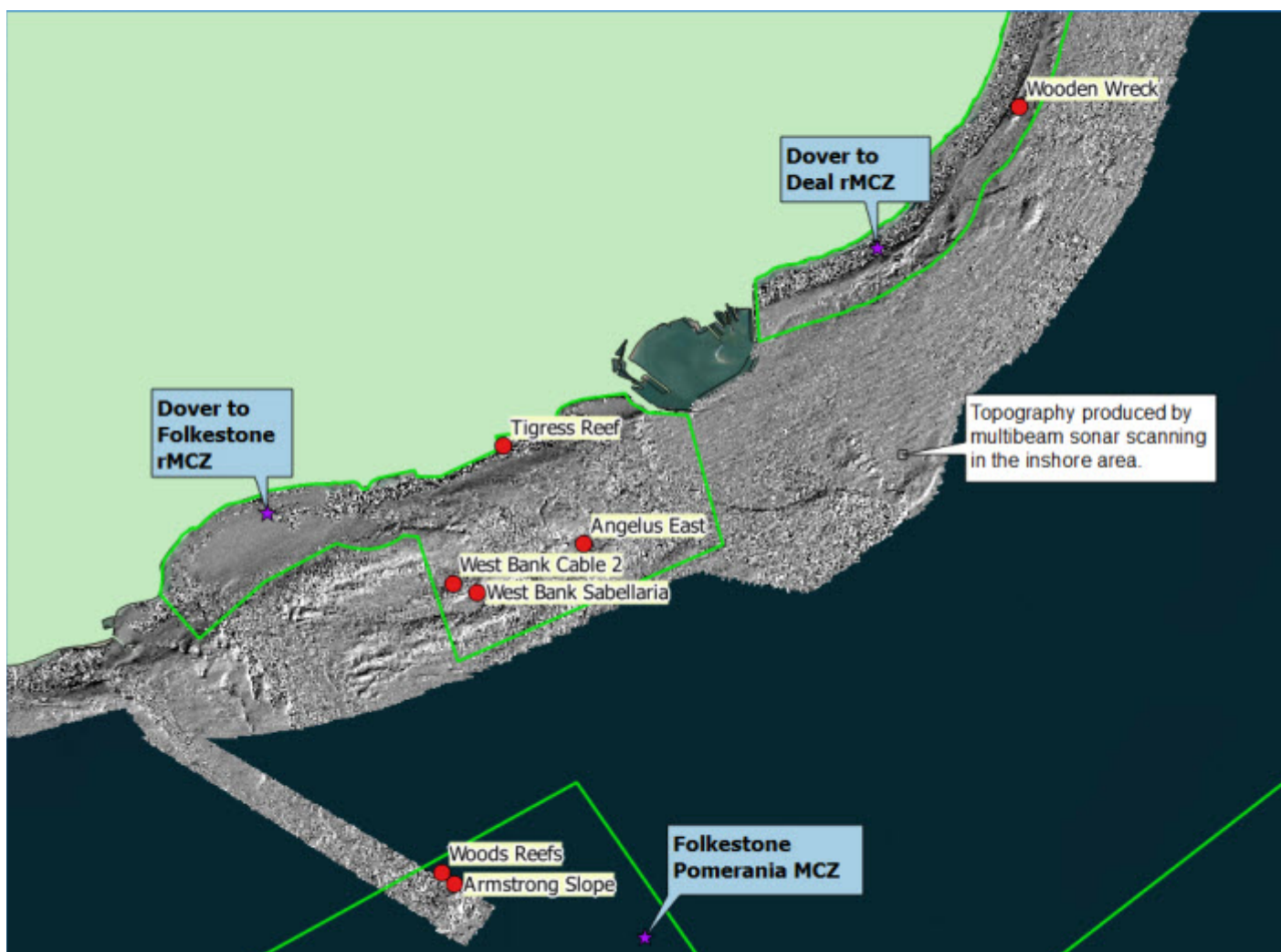
Kent Seasearch surveys in 2015

Kent Seasearch divers surveyed the seabed at 7 different locations and at depths from 8m to 29m. A total of 7 diving days were planned, but two were cancelled due to poor weather and an afternoon dive cancelled for the same reason. Around **150** different species were identified, and a total of **442** species records made. Most commonly recorded species was once again the common starfish *Asterias rubens*, this year followed by dahlia anemone *Urticina felina*, deadman's fingers *Alcyonium digitatum*, oaten pipe hydroid *Tubularia indivisa*, and painted topshell *Calliostoma zizyphinum*. All of the surveys took place in Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs) or recommended Marine Conservation Zones (rMCZs), which are marked in green on the map.



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Kent Seasearch 2015 Surveys



Dover to Deal rMCZ

Wooden Wreck

51° 09.426N , 01° 24.399E

This site was dived twice on the same day and the improved visibility on the second dive allowed the divers to better appreciate the site.

Scattered wreckage lay over the seabed of small boulders, cobbles, pebbles and sand. Oaten-pipe hydroids (*Tubularia indivisa*) and sponges were the dominant life over the seabed, with sponges and anemones dominating the wreckage. Edible crabs (*Cancer pagurus*) were seen by several divers.



Above right: Anemones (*Diadumene cincta*) and seasquirts on the wreckage

Dover to Folkestone rMCZ



Above: A male velvet swimming crab (*Necora puber*) holds on to a female waiting for her to moult at West Bank Cable 2.

Tigress Reef 51° 06.370N , 01° 16.983E

One of the shallower dives undertaken this year, giving Seasearchers the opportunity to practice their seaweed identification skills.

Large boulders were covered in a mix of red algae and patches of sugar kelp (*Saccharina latissima*). The boulders stood on piddock bored, marly chalk with varying amounts of sediment cover. Few mobile species or sessile animals were observed here.



Above: A hermit crab makes use of a tusk shell at West Bank Cable 2

West Bank Cable 2 51° 05.134N , 01° 16.252E

A very level and silty seabed of cobbles and pebbles. Patches of grey chalk bedrock, with piddock holes were exposed in places and lots of life was observed, including burrowing anemones (*Cerianthus lloydii*), dahlia anemones (*Urticina felina*) and plumose anemones (*Metridium senile*).

A bed of *Ampelisca* (approximately 2m x 2m) was observed, covered in ripples of very fine silty mud .



Above: Silty capsules of the amphipod *Ampelisca*

Angelus East 51° 05.487N , 01° 18.139E

This site lies approximately 1.5 miles south of Dover and comprises a fairly flat seabed of a few small boulders and mixed sediments with a covering of attached life including hydroids, bryozoans and anemones.

Several hermit crabs, tiny spider crabs and topshells were recorded including the painted topshell (*Calliostoma zizyphinum*). A few purse sponges (*Scypha ciliata*) were seen attached to cobbles. Squid and cuttlefish were also recorded.



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Above: A hermit crab peers from beneath its shell

West Bank Sabellaria
51° 05.053N , 01° 16.597E

This site featured a predominantly flat terrain of pebbles, a few cobbles and boulders. Several species of bryozoan were recorded including *Vesicularia spinosa* and a species of *Cellaria*. Hydroids included the herring-bone hydroid (*Halecium halecinum*) and antenna hydroids (*Nemertesia antennina*). Seasquirts of the *Molgula* genus were recorded as were the reef building ross worm (*Sabellaria spinulosa*) and several hermit crabs.

Folkestone Pomerania MCZ



© Jason Armstrong

Armstrong Slope
51° 02.416N , 01° 16.269E

An interesting site with low lying outcrops of chalk bedrock interspersed with coarse sand and mixed ground of pebbles, sand and shell fragments.

Of particular note was the extensive cover of bushy bryozoans, later identified as *Cellaria fistulosa* together with an even smaller bryozoan *Celleporina decipens*. This was the first record of this species in Kent and a very exciting discovery.

Woods Reefs
51° 02.524N , 01° 16.100E

Plenty of life was seen at this site which comprised rocky outcrops of the chalk platform with fine sand in between. Several sponges were recorded including the chocolate finger sponge (*Raspailia ramosa*) and the golf ball sponge (*Tethya citrina*). Six yellow edged polycera seaslugs (*Polycera faeroensis*) were observed within a surprisingly small area.



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Above: The anemone *Actinothoe sphyrodeta* at Woods Reefs

Right: Chocolate finger sponge (*Raspailia ramosa*)

Training in 2015

Seasearch Observer and Surveyor Courses

In May we ran our annual Seasearch Observer course at Reculver. Three divers new to Seasearch diving attended along with two others who had previously attended a course. Two of the participants joined us on Seasearch dives in Kent this year and one is currently furthering her diving qualification to join us in 2016.

Two Kent Seasearch divers attended the Surveyor course run in Hampshire at the end of May and are now well on their way to completing the required dives to become qualified Seasearch Surveyors.

Fish identification workshop

In June we teamed up with Sussex Wildlife Trust at Brighton Sealife Centre to run a fish identification workshop. This was led by Dr. Frances Dipper author of British Sea Fishes and co-author of Marine Fishes of Wales & Adjacent Waters, and proved extremely popular. Seasearchers and other interested participants learned what to look for when trying to identify fish, and were able to examine the preserved specimens brought along by Frances as well as the live fish in the multitude of tanks at the centre.

Hyroid and bryozoan workshop

We also hosted a specialist workshop focusing on the identification of hydroids and bryozoans. Some of our regular Seasearchers joined several other enthusiastic volunteers to examine samples under the microscope and get a feel for which species can be identified in the field, and which require closer examination under a microscope.



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Left: Divers prepare to start their survey

Above from top: Identifying fish at Brighton Sealife Centre; a tompot blenny - one of the more easily identifiable fish; studying hydroids and bryozoans under the microscope.



Number of species recorded in each phylum, and the species most commonly recorded in each group.

Marine algae (seaweeds) - Approximately 23 species, including: *Saccharina latissima* (sugar kelp), *Calliblepharis ciliata* (beautiful eyelash weed) and *Palmaria palmata* (dulse)

Porifera (sponges) - Approximately 18 species, including: *Raspailia ramosa* (chocolate finger sponge), *Amphilectus fucorum* (shredded carrot sponge), *Haliclona oculata* (mermaid's glove sponge) and *Halichondria panicea* (breadcrumb sponge)

Cnidaria (hydroids, anemones, corals and jellyfish) - Approximately 17 species, including: *Tubularia indivisa* (oaten pipe hydroid), *Nemertesia antennina* (Antenna hydroid), *Urticina felina* (dahlia anemone), *Cerianthus lloydii* (burrowing anemone) and *Alcyonium digitatum* (deadman's fingers)

Annelida (polychaete worms) - Approximately 7 species, including: *Lanice conchilega* (sand mason worm), *Bispira volutacornis* (double spiral worm) and *Spirobranchus triqueter* (keel worm)

Crustacea (barnacles, amphipods, prawns, crabs and lobsters) - Approximately 15 species, including: *Pandalus montagui* (humpback prawn), *Necora puber* (velvet swimming crab), *Cancer pagurus* (edible crab) and *Pagurus bernhardus* (hermit crab)

Mollusca - Approximately 19 species, including: *Callistoma zizyphinum* (painted topshell), *Pholadidae* (piddocks), and *Aequipecten opercularis* (queen scallop)

Bryozoa (sea mats) - Approximately 15 species, including: *Flustra foliacea* (hornwrack), *Alcyonidium diaphanum* (finger bryozoan) and *Cellapora pumicosa* (orange pumice bryozoan)

Echinodermata (starfish and sea urchins) - Approximately 5 species, including: *Asterias rubens* (common starfish), and *Ophiura albida* (brittlestar)

Chordata (sea squirts) - Approximately 9 species, including: *Corella eumyota* (orange-tipped sea squirt), *Ascidia mentula* (red sea squirt) and *Asciidiella aspersa* (fluted sea squirt)

Chordata (fish) - Approximately 10 species, including: *Scyliorhinus canicula* (smallspotted catshark), *Trisopterus minutus* (poor cod) and *Parablennius gattorugine* (tompot blenny)

A great big thank you! To all the divers who took part in the Kent Seasearch dives during 2015.

2015 Kent Seasearch Divers:

Roger Danks, Elaine Purse, Dave Wood, Matt Hurley, Paula Young, Chris Read, Simon Panteny, Jason Armstrong, Fiona White and Bryony Chapman.

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Seasearch is a partnership between the Marine Conservation Society (MCS), The Wildlife Trusts, statutory nature conservation bodies and others, co-ordinated nationally by MCS and co-ordinated and delivered locally in England by Wildlife Trust and MCS local co-ordinators. Kent Seasearch is run by Kent Wildlife Trust (KWT).

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For more information: Kent Wildlife Trust, Tyland Barn, Sandling, Maidstone, Kent, ME14 3BD. Tel: 01622 662012
E-mail: info@kentwildlife.org.uk Website: www.kentwildlife.org.uk

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