

Seasearch Cornwall 2021

On a major rebound following a quiet year in 2020 due to covid, Seasearch in Cornwall had probably its busiest year ever in 2021.

Three Seasearch courses were carried out including a very popular course aimed at snorkellers and free divers, and a course for Exeter University marine biology students. Three ReMEDIES funded seagrass expeditions were carried out and our amazing volunteers were prolific, completing a huge amount of self directed Seasearch dives! The informal Seasearch WhatsApp group, led by Mark Card, was also very good at encouraging people to organise their own dives with likeminded seasearchers! Overall it was an exceptional year!

Group	No of Species
cnidarian	66
red alga	68
mollusc	73
sponge	41
bryozoan	23
tunicate	27
crustacean	35
bony fish	54
brown algae	43
annelid	21
echinoderm	17
cartilaginous fish	9
sea spider	2
green algae	8
fungus	0
marine mammal	1
flatworm	1

Number of Seasearch forms:	239
Number of divers/recorders:	46
Number of species recorded:	506
Number of species records:	4792
Number of biotopes recorded:	50
Number of biotope records:	401

Massive thanks to all who are involved, our volunteer divers, Seasearch tutors, boat skippers, underwater photographers, supporters and funders. we can't do all this without you!

Matt Slater, Cornwall Wildlife Trust

Facebook group
Seasearch Cornwall



These Survey dives were conducted as part of the national Seasearch programme. Seasearch is a volunteer underwater survey project for recreational divers to actively contribute to the conservation of the marine environment. . For details of Seasearch in Cornwall visit



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Protecting Cornwall's wildlife
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Seasearch Cornwall - Summary Report 2021



Seasearch recorder of the year—Mary Ledlie



Spider crab aggregation—Matt Slater



Juvenile crawfish, The Bizzies - Matt Slater



Seagrass at St Mawes Harbour— Matt Slater



Steven's goby, Helford —Matt Slater



Juvenile squid—Matt Slater

Registered charity number 214929

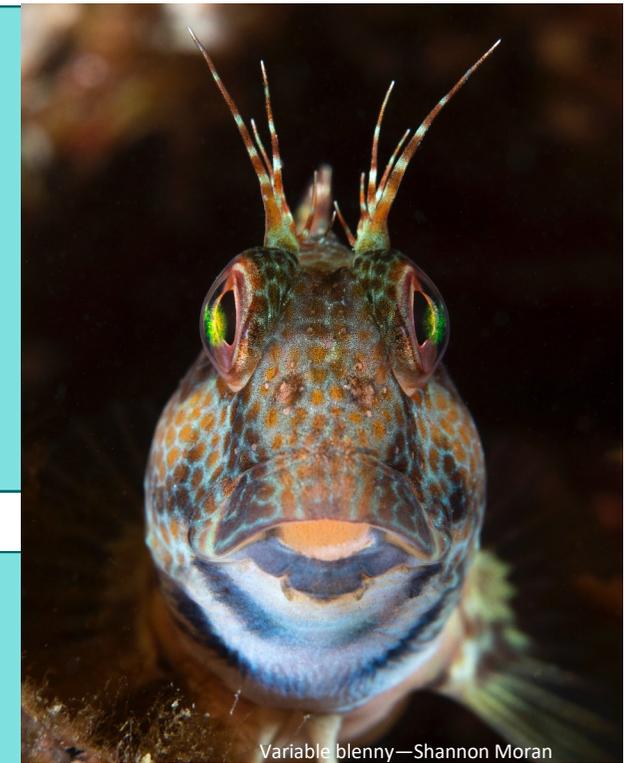
Spider crab aggregations

In late July 2021 large aggregations of spider crabs appeared in Falmouth bay. The spectacular sight of hundreds of full grown male spider crabs aggregating in shallow water was seen by many Seasearchers. The crabs had recently moulted and were soft shelled. A few days earlier they would have been shedding and possibly mating. Hopefully they will be there again next year. We are deliberately keeping exact locations a secret.



Variable blenny

The variable, or ring necked blenny, *Parablennius plicornis* is a warm water species that appears to be expanding its range. First recorded in Plymouth sound in the early 2000's, they were found to be fairly common on the Fal maerl beds during this years ReMEDIE's dive expedition. They are called variable as they are black when the males are guarding eggs. Also seen this year again in large numbers in the Fal were Stevens' goby, *Gobius gastevensi*, another warm water species that is becoming more common (see front cover).



Variable blenny—Shannon Moran

ReMEDIES

Three successful dive expeditions were carried out this year with boat costs subsidized by the EU Life ReMEDIES project. The first was from Porthkerris surveying seagrass beds in Porthallow and Parbean cove and surveying the maerl beds and seagrass of the Helford. The second with In Deep Diving, Plymouth, explored seagrass habitat in north Cawsand bay and the seagrass restoration site at Jennycliffe within Plymouth Sound SAC.

The final survey was carried out from Mylor with Atlantic Scuba and we surveyed seagrass and maerl beds off Carricknath, St Just shore and in the waterski zone in Carrick Roads

The expeditions have provided us a huge amount of ground truthing and a better understanding of the health of the environments visited. We look forward to more ReMEDIES dive expeditions in 2022.

Additionally several snorkel and shore dives were carried out by volunteers within the ReMEDIES areas helping us to expand our knowledge of the seagrass and building public appreciation for these vital ecosystems.



Surveying seagrass with Exeter University

Cornwall Wildlife Trust Seasearch Coordinator Matt Slater was invited to help with survey work led by Chris Laing of University of Exeter in Falmouth. A detailed survey has been carried out of five seagrass beds within the Fal SAC, to calculate growth rates of seagrass and taking core samples to investigate the amount of carbon storage in the beds.



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