

## Seasearch Cornwall 2024

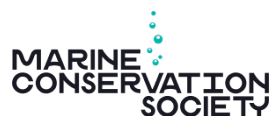
This has been a great year with loads going on. Notable ecological changes were the huge influx of juvenile red seabream—a phenomenon not seen since the 1980's. We were sad to reach the end of the fabulous ReMEDIES funding but were delighted to be working more with local charity Fathoms free who provided the services of their rib and skippers for five great days of diving this summer! Mary and I trained a total of 76 new observers! We had over 200 forms again this year with 50% approx. being from snorkellers— showing the importance of this group of volunteers. Volunteers trained in seagrass and kelp methodology did a tremendous job in St Austell bay and have now nearly mapped all of the shallow intertidal! The best find of the year has to go to Keith Raven for finding and photographing an anemone shrimp off Newquay while freediving— amazing!

Number of Seasearch forms:	276
Number of divers/recorders:	56
Number of species recorded:	
Number of species records:	TBC
Number of biotopes recorded:	
Number of biotope records:	

Massive thanks to all our volunteers, and to our funders for making this another great Seasearch year! Particular shout out to our volunteers of the year Becky and Paul Gill! And to Mary Ledlie for all she does helping the smooth running of Seasearch Cornwall.

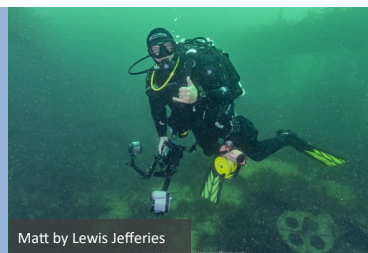
Matt Slater, Cornwall Wildlife Trust

These Surveys were conducted as part of the national Seasearch programme. Seasearch is a volunteer underwater survey project for recreational divers and snorkellers to actively contribute to the conservation of the marine environment. [www.cornwallwildlifetrust.org.uk/seasearch](http://www.cornwallwildlifetrust.org.uk/seasearch)



Group	No of Species
cnidarian	
red alga	
mollusc	
sponge	
bryozoan	
tunicate	
crustacean	
bony fish	
brown algae	
annelid	
echinoderm	
cartilaginous fish	
sea spider	
green algae	
fungus	
marine mammal	
flatworm	

Data not available yet — coming soon



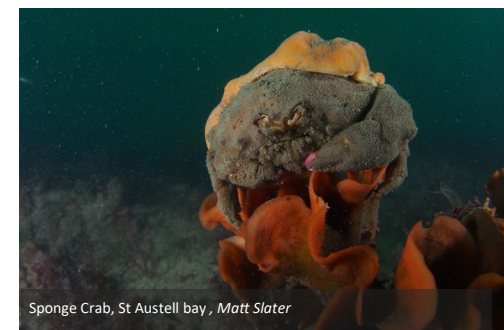
Matt by Lewis Jefferies



## Seasearch Cornwall - Summary Report 2024



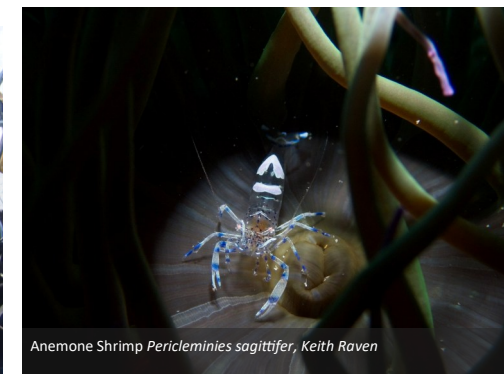
Cuttlefish off Looe Island, Matt Slater



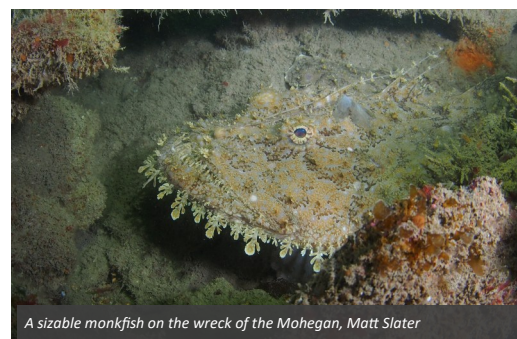
Sponge Crab, St Austell bay, Matt Slater



Happy seasearchers—Luke, Nia and John Yarrow, Matt Slater



Anemone Shrimp *Periclemines sagittifer*, Keith Raven



A sizable monkfish on the wreck of the Mohegan, Matt Slater



Cuckoo wrasse, Yarrows Wall Matt Slater



## An influx of mystery bream..

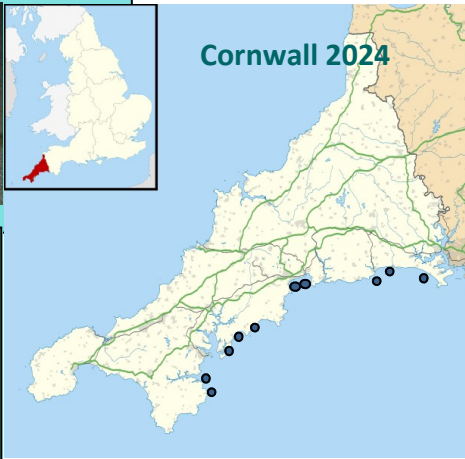
Summer 2024 saw a sudden influx of silvery coloured, juvenile sea bream, being spotted in large shoals in shallow waters all along Cornwall's South Coast, from Durgan to Whitsand Bay. First noted by Jenny Kent and following that the numbers of reports were astonishing. It was very challenging to get good enough photos for identification purposes but eventually Keith Raven managed to get some excellent close ups following a night snorkel in Newquay Bay. They appear to most likely be juvenile red bream, a species that has not been seen in significant amounts in Cornish waters since the 1980's when anglers and commercial fishers found large numbers off the North coast. Another potential sign of warming seas as breams prefer warmer conditions.



Juvenile sea bream, Matt Slater



Red sea bream, Keith Raven

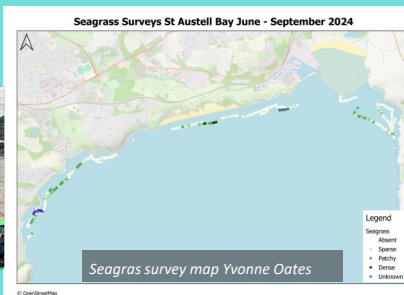


## Seagrass and kelp surveys!

This summer a special Seasearch observer course for snorkelers was held at Porthpean in St Austell bay and the volunteers were trained a few weeks later to carry out our Kelp and seagrass monitoring methodology. This methodology has been tested by our volunteers and is a great way to improve our knowledge of the shallow subtidal in an area that cant be surveyed with side scan sonar as its too shallow. The georeferenced images produced are extremely helpful in mapping the extent of seagrass and kelp forests within the shallow coastal strip that is actually poorly studied.



Seagrass survey team, Yvonne Oates



Seagrass survey map Yvonne Oates

## Looe bay dive survey

Two days of dive surveys were carried out in Looe and Whitsand bay MCZ aboard the Captain Paul Watson foundation Rib with Fathoms free. Highlights were the incredible profusion of fish life evidenced on the wreck of the James Eagan Layne and a fantastic cuttlefish encounter over kelpy low reefs south of Looe Island. We also explored the seagrass beds right next to the entrance of Looe Harbour and under threat from proposed redevelopment.



Seagrass off Looe Harbour, Matt Slater

## Jellies and salps

2024 was an unusual year from the point of view of gelatinous plankton! Numerous excellent pictures were taken by Penberth based snorkeler David Hamilton—including the rarely recorded northern comb jellyfish *Bolenopsis infundibulum*, seen in the early summer and later in the year numerous chains of the large salp *Salpa confoederata*. The warm waters of the autumn saw a huge bloom of Mauve stingers *Pelagia nociluca*, a species that is rarely seen in Cornwall.



Northern Comb Jelly, David Hamilton



Salp Chain, David Hamilton



Mauve Stinger, David Hamilton

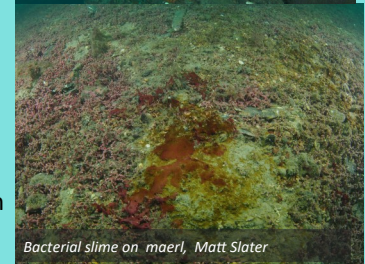
## ReMEDIES dive expeditions

Seasearch Cornwall has enjoyed a real boost over the past five years thanks to the EU Life funded ReMEDIES project which subsidised cost of dive boat hire allowing Seasearch divers to focus their efforts on sites within the Fal and Helford Special SAC and the Plymouth Sound SAC. The dives were spent exploring seagrass beds and maerl beds and in 2024 our focus shifted to other areas of Falmouth bay where maerl has been found

including sites in Gerrans bay and sites to the south of the Helford. Extensive maerl was found in Gerrans bay but again of concern was the discovery of large areas of maerl covered in slimy red bacterial film—a possible sign of high nutrient levels, surprising considering the tidal nature of the bay. A highlight was discovering maerl at a depth of 22m next to Gul rock—a dive site named Yarrows wall after seasearcher John Yarrow



Yarrows wall Matt Slater



Bacterial slime on maerl, Matt Slater