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Kent Seasearch Summary Report 2012



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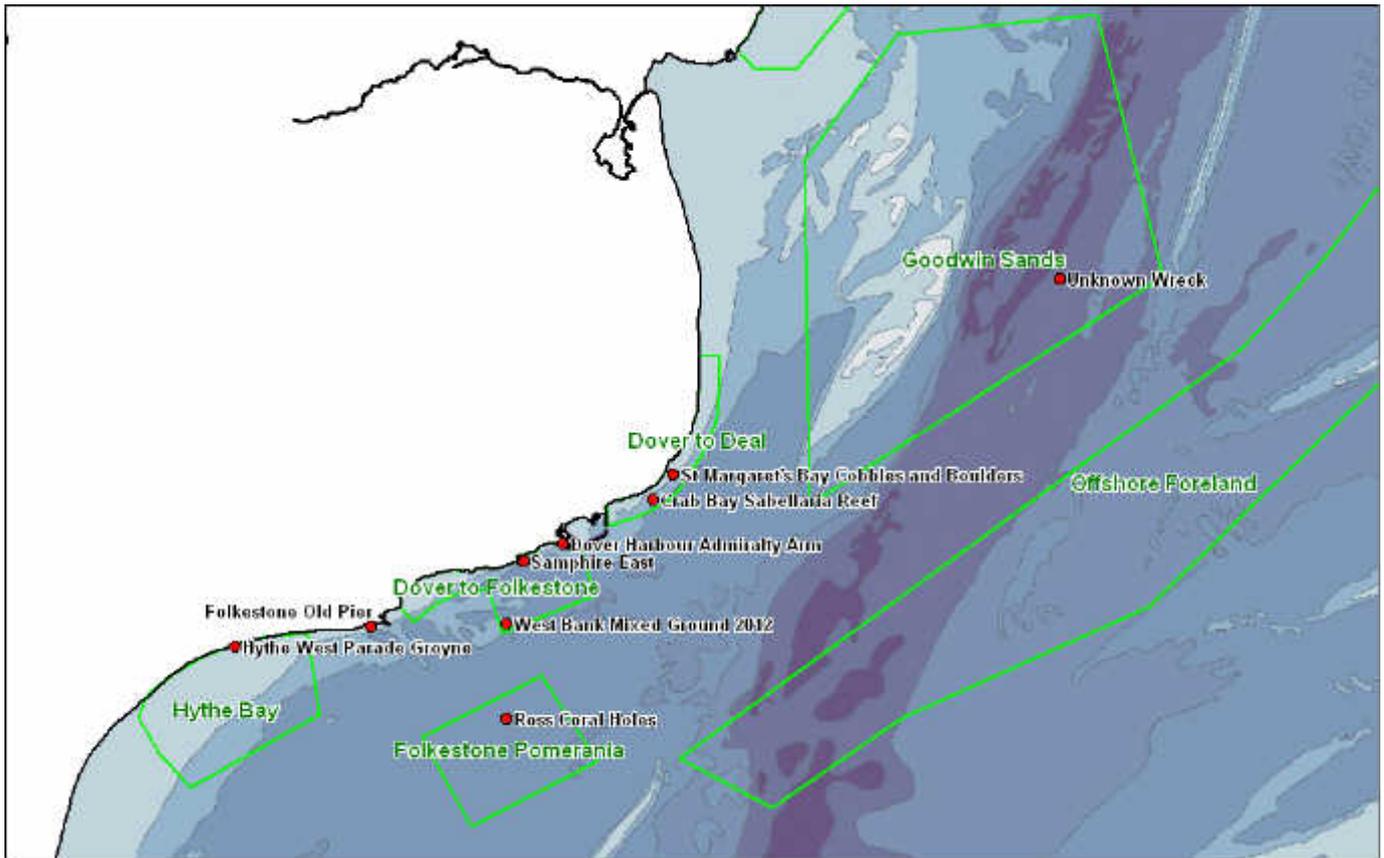
Kent Seasearch surveys in 2012

Kent Seasearch divers surveyed the seabed at 4 different locations and at depths from 30m to the shore. The year's diving was blighted with bad weather and 3 of the planned diving days were cancelled as a result. In spite of this, **140** different types of species were identified, and a total of **335** species records made. Most commonly recorded species was once again the common starfish, *Asterias rubens*, this year followed by *Urticina felina*, *Pagurus bernhardus*, *Flustra foliacea*, *Haliclona oculata*, *Cellepora pumicosa*, and *Alcyonium digitatum*. Many of the surveys took place at sites recommended for protection as part of the Marine Conservation Zone process, which are marked in green on the map.



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Kent Seasearch 2012 Surveys



Ross Coral Holes

51.03630N , 1.27718E

A site within the Folkestone Pomerania recommended Marine Conservation Zone, where we were searching in particular for nudibranchs (seaslugs) as part of the specialist training course led by Jim Anderson. The seabed (at 25m) comprised cobbles, pebbles, gravel and silty sand, all with a silt cover. Occasional dead man's fingers, *Alcyonium digitatum*, dahlia anemones, *Urticina felina* and ross coral/potato crisp bryozoan, *Pentapora foliacea*, with a diversity of short hydroid and bryozoan turf on cobbles. A careful search of a very small area revealed the small yellow and white *Polycera faeroensis*, and the large orange *Tritonia hombergii* seaslug, as well as the egg whorls of another three nudibranch species.



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Left: *Polycera faeroensis* as seen under a microscope.

Right: *Tritonia hombergii*, the largest British nudibranch



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Crab Bay Sabellaria Reef
51.13421N , 1.37544E

In the bay below the chalk cliffs to the north of Dover Harbour, within the Dover to Deal recommended Marine Conservation Zone. A mixed sediment seabed dominated by silty pebbles, supporting (and in many places completely obscured by) an extensive rosworm reef and crust (*Sabellaria spinulosa*). The reef supports a rich diversity of associated attached life including byozoans (including pumice bryozoan *Cellapora pumicosa*, and hornwrack *Flustra foliacea*), hydroids (including the helter-skelter hydroid *Hydrallmania falcata*) and anemones (including dahlia anemone *Urticina felina*, burrowing anemone *Cerianthus lloydii*, and the small white anemone *Actinothoe sphyrodeta*). Mobile life on the reef featured many crustaceans including prawns, squat lobsters, hermit crabs and porcelain crabs along with painted topshells, crystal seaslug, and the common starfish, *Asterias rubens*.



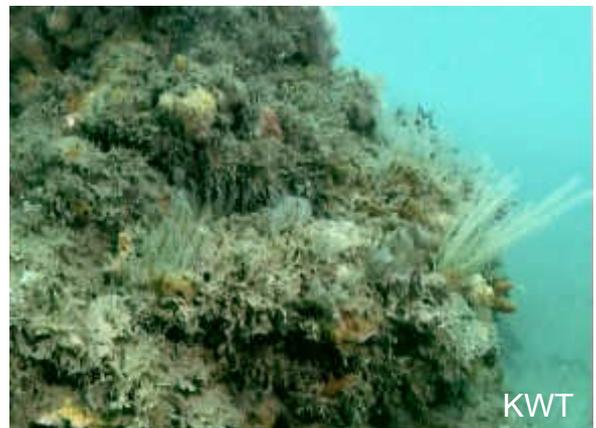
Top: Rossworm reef (*Sabellaria spinulosa*) at Crab Bay

Above and left: Anemones at Crab Bay



Left: Bib at Samphire East

Right: Feathery hydroids at Samphire East



Samphire East 51.10568N , 1.28516E

A level platform of piddock-bored marly grey chalk to the south west of Dover Harbour, within the Dover to Folkestone recommended Marine Conservation Zone. The seabed features large and very large chalk boulders at intervals around 4-5m apart, with crevices and underhangs harbouring shoals of bib. The tops of the boulders were in sufficient light to be dominated by red algae, while the sides were completely covered in a rich array of attached animal life which included: hydroids such as the antenna hydroid *Nemertesia antennina*, and the delicate feathery hydroid *Plumularia setacea* and *Aglaophenia pluma*; bryozoans, particularly finger bryozoans, *Alcyonidium diaphanum*, along with hornwrack *Flustra foliacea*, and *Chartella papyracea*; sponges including crater sponge *Hemimycale columella*, shredded carrot sponge *Amphilectus fucorum*, and goosebump sponge *Dysidea fragilis*; and seasquirts like the lightbulb, *Clavelina lepadiformis*, and club seasquirts both *Aplidium punctum* and *Morchellium argus*. Also in patches on the chalk were dense mats of small capsules containing tiny *Ampelisca* crustaceans.



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Above: Long and short animal turf at West Bank Mixed Ground

Below left: Hermit crab

Below right: Butterfish (*Pholis gunnellus*)

West Bank Mixed Ground
51.07788N , 1.27531E
 A gently sloping mixed ground seabed off Dover, within the Dover to Folkestone recommended Marine Conservation Zone, comprising mostly pebbles with occasional cobbles and very few small boulders, all in a silty matrix. The seabed had occasional burrows (about half to one inch diameter). Cobbles with a cover of hydroid and bryozoan turf, mostly close but including occasional antenna hydroids, *Nemertesia* and hornwrack, *Flustra foliacea*. A patch of *Ampelisca* mat, and abundant mobile life, mostly small spider crabs, hermit crabs and brittle stars. Pebbles mostly clean except for keelworms, indicating mobile nature of sediment.



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Independent Seasearch survey dives

Hythe West Parade Groyne
51.06481N , 1.08545E
 Man-made groyne of concrete blocks extending south from shore out to approximately 10m. Gently shelving shingle to the western side, grading down to fine sand and mud. Vast numbers of crustaceans including brown shrimps, *Crangon crangon*, hermit crabs, spiny spider crabs, *Maja squinado*, harbour crabs, *Liocarcinus depurator*, and shore crabs, *Carcinus maenas*. Abundant mussels *Mytilus edulis* providing food for the numerous dogwhelks, *Nucella lapillus*.



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Above right: Spiny spider crab (*Maja squinado*)

Left: Velvet swimming crab (*Necora puber*)



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Dover Harbour Admiralty Arm
51.11343N , 1.31336E
 An additional record of the life on the western arm of Dover Harbour, a wall of large stone blocks with eroded gaps between, harbouring crabs and squat lobsters.



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Unknown Wreck
50.93746N , 1.12993E
 Shipwreck standing 3m proud of chalk cobble seabed, supporting sponges like the branching *Haliclona oculata*, oaten pipe hydroids *Tubularia indivisa*, orange anemones *Diadumene cincta* and white anemones *Actinothoe sphyrodeta*, the colonial seasquirt *Diplosoma listerianum* and hornwrack *Flustra foliacea*. Mobile life included common starfish *Asterias rubens* and the brown crab *Cancer pagurus*.

Above left: Orange anemones (*Diadumene cincta*)

Below: Branching sponge (*Haliclona oculata*)

St Margaret's Bay Cobbles and Boulders
51.15030N , 1.39434E
 Cobble and boulder seabed with shell and gravel, supporting a diversity of mobile life including hermit crabs *Pagurus bernhardus*, brown crabs *Cancer pagurus* and spiny spider crabs *Maja squinado*, as well as the common starfish *Asterias rubens* and the lesser spotted catshark/dogfish *Scyliorhinus canicula*. Dahlia anemones present along with various sponges including the branching *Haliclona oculata* and shredded carrot sponge *Amphilectus fucorum*, and finger bryozoans *Alcyonidium diaphanum* and hornwrack *Flustra foliacea*.



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Left: Lesser spotted catshark (*Scyliorhinus canicula*) at St Margaret's Bay

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Below: Common starfish (*Asteria rubens*) at Folkestone Old Pier



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Folkestone Old Pier
51.07516N , 1.18053E
 A sloping cobbled beach leading to sand seabed with concrete projections from pier, with a covering of algae, and occasional common starfish, *Asterias rubens* and netted dogwhelk, *Hinia reticulata*.

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

Porifera (sponges) - 8 species, including: *Haliclona oculata* (mermaid's glove sponge), *Suberites* (sea orange sponge), and *Halichondria panicea* (breadcrumb sponge).

Cnidaria (jellyfish, corals and anemones) - Approximately 23 species, including: *Urticina felina* (dahlia anemone), *Alcyonium digitatum* (dead man's fingers), *Nemertesia antennina* (antenna hydroid), and *Actinothoe sphyrodeta* (white striped anemone).

Annelida (polychaete worms) - Approximately 9 species, including: *Lanice conchilega* (sand mason worm), and *Sabellaria spinulosa* (rossworm).

Crustacea (barnacles, prawns, crabs and lobsters) - Approximately 20 species, including: *Pagurus bernhardus* (hermit crab), *Necora puber* (velvet swimming crab), and *Maja squinado* (spiny spider crab).

Mollusca - 29 species, including: *Callistoma zizyphinum* (painted topshell), *Buccinum undatum* (common whelk), and *Aequipecten opercularis* (queen scallop).

Bryozoa (sea mats) - Approximately 13 species, including: *Flustra foliacea* (hornwrack), *Cellepora pumicosa* (pumice bryozoan), and *Alcyonidium diaphanum* (finger bryozoan).

Echinodermata (starfish and sea urchins) - 6 species, including: *Asterias rubens* (common starfish), and *Psammechinus miliaris* (shore urchin).

Chordata (sea squirts) - Approximately 8 species, including: *Clavelina lepadiformis* (lightbulb sea squirt), and *Diplosoma sp.*

Chordata (fish) - 14 species, including: *Pomatoschistus sp.* (gobies), *Parablennius gattorugine* (tompot blenny), *Ctenolabrus rupestris* (goldsinny), and *Scyliorhinus canicula* (lesser spotted catshark/dogfish).

Algae - 10 species, including: *Plocamium cartilagineum* (red comb weed), *Chondrus crispus* (Irish moss), and *Dictyota dichotoma* (Brown fan weed).

Seasearch is a national volunteer survey project for recreational divers to support the conservation of marine life. It is co-ordinated nationally by the Marine Conservation Society. Kent Seasearch is run by Kent Wildlife Trust. We are very grateful for contributions toward the 2012 programme from Biodriven and National Seasearch.

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Kent Wildlife Trust is the leading conservation charity for Kent and Medway. Charity No.: 239992

A Great big thank you! To all the divers who took part in the official Seasearch dives, and who undertook Seasearch surveys independently on their own dives.

2012 Kent Seasearch Divers:
Tim O'Hare, Sharon Meadows, Paula Young, Elaine Purse, David Dean, Dave Wood, Bryony Chapman, and Becky Hitchin.

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And finally, many thanks to Chris Webb at Mutiny Diving.



Training in 2012

Ten divers took part in a Seasearch Observer Course and a further 12 in a Nudibranch specialist course held in Kent.

