

A HUGE THANK YOU TO ALL OUR VOLUNTEERS AND SUPPORTERS

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Polzeath Marine Conservation Group and Centre



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ABOUT OUR COAST

Polzeath Marine Conservation Newsletter Summer 2014

Welcome back folks as we begin the much loved long summer days and BBQ nights. There are lots of different events happening in and around the Polzeath Marine Centre over the summer holidays for all to enjoy; so grab an events leaflet or visit our website www.polzeathmarineconservation.com and see which ones you would like to join in with... Maybe all of them! It is free for PMCG members to attend these events so it might be worthwhile signing up for PMCG Family membership to save yourself some money as well as having loads of fun! Have a wonderful Summer :)



Dahlia anemone photo by Nikki Clear

FUNDRAISING

Lots going on to help keep our doors open and the team are working hard to make sure a 2015 opening is a certain. One of our volunteers spotted a match funding opportunity for us in the local paper - [Thanks Tina](#) - localgiving.com matched some wonderful donations as a result and this was topped off by a donation to the site from [Chris Heardman](#) to go towards a new floor for the centre. Thanks so much to [Chris](#) and [all](#) who donated to this.

On 12th July the Rock Oyster Festival very kindly donated some of the day's takings to us - a great day was had by all we did marine themed face painting, getting crafty and generally promoting our amazing coastline.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED to join our [fab](#) team. Our volunteers are aged between 0 - 82!!! If you are interested in becoming a volunteer with us do get in touch. We are in need of more friendly people to help man the centre too... no experience needed just a big smile and a willingness to help (all training will be given as needed). Maybe you have other skills that could help us? Either way please do get in touch via e-mail polzeathmc@gmail.com

ACCESSIBILITY

[Annie](#) and [Jo](#) have been working hard on access issues for disabled people in and around the Polzeath area. We are thrilled to announce that finally there are **TWO** new **SANDCHAIRS** [pictured here](#) available for **FREE HIRE** from **WAVEHUNTERS SURF SCHOOL** which is based on Polzeath beach.



Also in response to letters and contact with [Cornwall Council](#) access to [Daymer Bay](#) is being assessed by the council team to see if easy access for all can be made available. We will update you on the result of the assessment as soon as we know their decision. Well done to both of them!



Marine Centre Arts and Crafts Photo by Jo

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SEA CREATURES OF POLZEATH'S ROCK POOLS

by Diana Millington

In Polzeath, we are lucky to have one of the most richly inhabited intertidal areas of our coast line.



If you have a chance to join one of our rock pool rambles, come with us to the Cowrie Rocks at low tide, and you may be lucky enough to see one of these: First pictured is the stalked jellyfish, (Photo No. 1) an animal no bigger than your fingernail, from the jellyfish family, though not looking much like the larger and more common types of jellyfish that we see afloat around our coasts. The stalked jellyfish fixes onto seaweed fronds in the rock pools. This little creature is an indicator of clean seas, and on a good beach, one would expect to find about 6 on average. On a recent survey at Polzeath, however, we found 13!



Next, the cowries (Photo 2) – again fingernail-sized: the cowrie is relatively common further out to sea but is only extremely rarely found on the shore except on the lowest spring tides, so this is a very special photo.



(Photo 3), again about a fingernail size, is very special to our coast, a southern species whose distribution in Britain is limited to the south and north coasts of Cornwall.

This is a very unusual sea slug in that it is an air breathing slug: it is related to land slugs, and has become adapted to life on the shore! It hides in crevices in the rock and 'holds its breath' (i.e. shuts off its lung and absorbs oxygen through its mantle) when the tide is in and when the tide drops it ventures out to forage for algae.



Another miniature animal is the beautiful iridescent blue-rayed limpet (Photo 4), which is almost always found on fronds of the brown sea kelp that grows in our bay.



Finally, two animals that are more common, bigger and more easily visible than most of the others pictured here: a limpet, and a snakelocks anemone. If you've looked at our rocks, you will have seen countless numbers of limpets (Photo 5), of course known for clinging immovably to the rocks. So you do not often see a limpet on the move. Here this amazing sight is captured by one of our intrepid photographers. Not many of us get the chance to see the live creature underneath the shell, so this is a remarkable photograph.



The snakelocks anemone (Photo 6) is one of the many different anemones we have in Polzeath, and one of the most beautiful, with its delicate grey-green, purple-tipped tentacles, which are rarely completely retracted.

All the animals mentioned in this article are just a small sample of the many species living alongside us in our bay. If you'd like to see more, come and join us as a visitor, a Polzeath Marine Conservation Group member, or a volunteer!

With thanks for these beautiful photos from Matt Slater of Cornwall Wildlife Trust, Sarah Stevens of The National Trust, and Bryan Bartlett, Former Beach Ranger at Polzeath.

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These are the days we live for!

The seal survey on 11 June 2014 was as glorious as it gets! With calm sea conditions and bright sunny skies we set off at 7:30am.

All along the coastline were nesting sea birds, many with visible chicks waddling around the nest area. Herring gull chicks occupied many ledges on our journey out to the survey sites.



There was a lot of commotion at the kittiwake colony as a juvenile peregrine falcon moved along the ledges removing chicks from their nests. Adult kittiwakes flew in all directions squawking loudly as they did so. This peregrine must have fledged in the last week. This is evident by its fresh and impressive plumage clearly displayed. Whereas the adult birds are currently undergoing their post breed moult.

The peregrine flew from the ledge to chase herring gulls in the air for a moment before returning to the ledges, then flew again above the skyline and landed on the slope of the nearby island in the sun as we left the colony behind us. Despite this predation, the colony seems to be healthy in terms of numbers of occupied nests and growing chicks.

During the course of the survey we saw lots of gannets, flying by or circling and diving. We passed a large group of Manx shearwaters, a Balearic shearwater, six Puffins and a storm petrel.

We were all at the front of the boat when Dave pointed out in front of us towards a pod of common dolphins. They were heading for our boat so Chris cut back the speed, stopping at first and then maintained a slow and steady course as the pod joined us.

There were 20 playful dolphins, they surrounded us, breaching into the air, riding the wake and playing at the bow and sides of the boat as another pod of 20 more dolphins joined them to play.

It got very exciting so we sat higher to get a better view of them leaping out of and twisting underwater sideways, weaving in and out of one another. Then suddenly another 17 dolphins came to our boat and joined the others followed by another 13. By now we were all on cloud nine, pinching each other to check this was real. Never before have we been so totally surrounded by these magical creatures.

The 70 dolphins were of mixed age, mostly between 1.5 – 2 metres in length. They stayed with us for a total of 37 minutes, continuing the same behaviours as we made our way onto the

next survey site, not forgetting we had work to do!

The dolphins carefully manoeuvred themselves alongside our boat, sometimes there was only a metre from them and us, we could clearly see all the markings and scars on their bodies and their watchful eyes peered up at us as they continued to play.



Gradually the dolphins thinned out, leaving the boat in small groups not as large as the original pods that they had arrived in, until there were four remaining dolphins swimming at the front of the boat, swaying and weaving rhythmically underwater playing with the two bows of the catamaran as it moved through the water. These four common dolphins stayed with us for some distance before suddenly veering sideways and leaving us altogether in awe of the experience we had just had.



Soon we were at the main seal haul out spot. In this particular survey we only saw three seals, which is not unusual given the time of year as the seals will be feeding further offshore. But it is the lowest number of seals we have ever had on a survey!

Despite the lack of seals all the volunteers agreed we may just have had the best survey ever, and all returned to normality on land with HUGE smiles on our faces :)

All the survey data we gather is used in marine conservation and has played a huge part in designating the proposed Padstow Bay Marine Conservation Zone. A huge thank you to Chris at Atlantic Divers, without you our important surveys would not be possible. Also a huge thank you to all the volunteers who dedicate their time and money to make these surveys happen.

Dolphin Photos and Text by Sarah Millward
Kittiwake Photo by Jane Pickles

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FUNDRAISING EVENTS

On 26th July we had the a 'Sea it Buy it' Bric a Brac and cake sale at Wadebridge Town Hall. This event raised just over £300.00 . Fantastic amount considering this was the first time an event like this has taken place! A **HUGE** thank you to all who donated items and gave up their time to do this!

On Sunday 10th August The Waterfront Restaurant Polzeath ran a Cream Tea Event to raise funds for us. The blustery sunny day didn't put people off! The event went well with many enjoying a sea view whilst sampling the delicious scones. A massive **thank you** to **Jamie** and his team who worked hard to make it such a special day.



OUR SECOND ANNUAL EASY ACCESS ROCKPOOL RAMBLE

On the 11th July children with disabilities from the Polzeath class at Camelford school came to join us for an EASY ACCESS ROCKPOOL RAMBLE. They had a fantastic day learning about our shore and its fab inhabitants. They have been studying the seashore in class so it was great to be able to help them access the beach easily and experience it for real. A **HUGE THANK YOU** to the **NATIONAL TRUST TEAM** who helped make this day possible.

TEXT AND PHOTOS BY JO



Newsletter designed by:

Sandra Pye-Coombs

Please e-mail any submissions you would like to be considered for future publications to: moonqueen@sky.com

Shore Shapers Guide

While many people are aware of the role the sea plays in shaping our coastlines via weathering and erosion, fewer understand the vital contribution of creatures such as limpets, boring worms and seaweeds which eat, drill into and protect rocky shores. Wildlife that helps shape shores can be thought of as ecosystem engineers. They interact with geology, the sea and climate to shape majestic landforms like rock pools and sea arches.

Dr Larissa Naylor of the School of Geographical and Earth Sciences at the University of Glasgow has developed a 'Shore Shapers' guide to highlight the important role animals, algae and microscopic life-forms play in sculpting our seaside landscapes.

Dr Naylor led a training session for volunteers from Cornwall's VMCA's (Voluntary Marine Conservation Areas) and Newquay Marine Group at Polzeath on Saturday 28 June.

Larissa introduced us to the content of the guide and walked us through the activities we can do with children and adults at our rock pool rambles and other events. We learnt the ways in which different species help shape the shore and how geology controls the distribution of some rocky shore species.

The guide is designed to be interactive, with fun science activities to help everyone explore the different ways in which wildlife helps to create each rocky shore. The fold-out, double-sided guide offers a range of educational activities for beach visitors to develop their knowledge of bio geomorphological processes. Bio geomorphology is the study of the interplay between plants and animals and the landscape, as well as how geomorphic processes (e.g., running water, ice, wind, wave action and landslides) affect the distribution of plants and animals. www.biogeomorph.org/coastal/shoresapers



Shore Shapers Photos and Text by Sarah Stevens