

The Seahorse Trust

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH NATURE



NEWSLETTER

Autumn 2012

www.theseahorsetrust.org

www.britishseahorsesurvey.org

Facebook page: The Seahorse Trust

Registered charity no.1086027

Welcome

Welcome to the autumn 2012 newsletter, yet another very busy summer here at the trust and some amazing successes and new projects. We could not do any of this without you, so thank you from everyone here at the Trust, and from our partners and volunteers from around the world.

E-bay

After an approach from The Seahorse Trust following requests from Trust members, E-bay has brought their European and US sites in line with international regulations, trade regulations and banned the sale of real seahorses. The Trust estimates that up to 500,000 seahorses were sold on E-bay throughout the EU and the USA each year, these ranged from live seahorses to dead, real seahorses in paper weights.

It is now against their regulations to sell live or dead seahorses, in any form, so this will stop sales to the aquarium, curio and medicine trades.

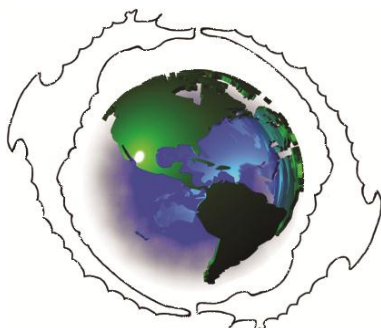
It will take a while to get all products of real seahorses off E-bay but Trust members can help by reporting any items they see using the report button on the site, then press the banned wildlife button.

There is a difference between the EU and the USA wildlife regulations, where sadly, they can still trade domestically but not outside of the USA.

This is a major step forward by E-bay and we would like to thank them for their prompt action after being alerted by the trust and its members. The next step is to get the USA in line with the EU and the trust with its partners will continue to lobby for this.



Adopting a seahorse makes a great Christmas present for friends or family or why not become a member of The Seahorse Trust from as little as £25 per year?



Seahorse Alliance

An exciting project started this summer is the formation of the Seahorse Alliance, which will bring together seahorse researchers, projects and individuals from around the world to work together, for the greater understanding and protection of seahorses worldwide.

The Seahorse Trust, Save Our Seahorses in Ireland and the Sealife group set up the alliance to build on their existing working partnership and there has been an amazing response with partnerships being formed from all over the world.

By speaking with one voice for seahorses we aim to make a major difference worldwide to the seahorses and the marine environment.

So far we have enquiries from projects all over the world and as time allows we hope they will all come on board with the alliance, combining our collective voice with a sharing of research. This will allow us all to understand one of nature's most enchanting species.

Save Our Seahorses Campaign

Recent research by our colleagues at Save Our Seahorses (SOS) in Ireland has shown that the situation with seahorses being used for the Traditional Medicine Trade (TMT) is considerably worse than we ever thought. We had always thought the numbers used each year were about 20 to 60 million which is bad enough but Kealan Doyle of SOS went undercover to discover the true extent of numbers and his conservative estimate is approximately 150 million per year. This is just not sustainable and seahorses could be extinct in so many parts of the world in the next 20 to 30 years, unless we all do something about it.

With Kealan and SOS and our partners in the Sealife group we have come up with an invite to the people of China to help us, make difference.

Sign up to the campaign on the trusts website or on the Save Our Seahorses campaign site. There will soon be an opportunity to sign an invite at all the Sealife Centres as well.

Sign up at www.saveourseahorses.org/home.php



Cambodia

The Trust was invited to visit a project in Cambodia in the spring by Paul Ferber founder and director of Marine Conservation Cambodia (MCC)

www.marineconservationcambodia.org. Paul and his team have been working hard to study and protect the seahorses in this threatened area for many years. They have battled illegal and dynamite fishing by working with the local community on Koh Rohl Samleom Island, just south of the coastal town of Sihanoukville.

The seahorses behave very differently in this area because their habitat has been so badly damaged, unlike most seahorses that forms territories and partnership's, it is thought that the destruction of the seabed has led to more free ranging, non-monogamous lifestyle. The widespread damage has also seen a reduction in species. Pre destruction there was thought to be up to 8 types of seahorse, now only one species dominates.

Through a working partnership made up of the Trust, MCC, SOS, Projects Abroad (PA) and the Cambodia government we have set up an indepth study of the Site, using volunteers coming from PA. The project is studying the area the seahorses occupy, pair bonding, territories, species and looking into habitat restoration. The partners are also starting a captive breeding project in Sihanoukville, to ensure the local species are secure; it is aimed that at least 1,000 seahorses will be ready for release for national fish day in 2013.

It is possible for paying volunteers to get involved in these projects through project partners Projects Abroad. Visit their website for more details www.projects-abroad.co.uk/volunteer-projects/conservation-and-environment/cambodia/

The Island of Koh Rohl Samleom is covered in dry tropical forest, during a jungle trek, Neil and Kealan came across a subspecies of Terrapin that could be new to science, the jungle contains many

plants and insects new to science, including 2 orchids never before discovered.

Neil has been in discussion within Exeter Universities Expedition Society who will be starting a full survey of the terrestrial side of the island in 2013. You can get involved with this through the Projects Abroad website or by contacting Ben on the expedition Facebook page www.facebook.com/expeditioncambodia

Studland Tagging Project

The seahorse study at Studland this year has been very worrying with a total of only 15 sightings all year (9 individuals). The ongoing degradation of the seagrass and the unusual weather patterns over the last couple of years have led to fewer animals and we are very worried that if the numbers drop too far they will disappear totally from the Site.

The Trust is still in discussions with the authorities to put in environmentally friendly moorings (EFM's) to help alleviate some of the problems, we hope they react before it is too late.

Studland is a unique site and the Trust has been studying it for a number of years now; it has been proposed as a Marine Protected Zone (MPZ), a process that has taken a ridiculously long time and has been fraught with so many problems but we hope it does not come too late for our Spiny Seahorses (*Hippocampus guttulatus*). Here at the Trust we have kept the authorities and others informed, from when we first visited the site in 2007, as to the problems facing the Seahorses. Even though there has been a lot of opposition to preserving the crucial seagrass meadow, we have slowly persuaded others that it can be protected and that others it can be used at the same time, however if they do not act soon it could be too late!!!



Poem by Gabrielle (aged nine)

If Stars Were Fish

by Gabriela Cunha-Molina

If stars were seahorses
they would be so special!
They would travel from planet
to planet gliding, riding.

It would be so much fun to watch
them blend with the skies
Through black holes in the black sea

If stars were seahorses they would
never stop, I know!
They would keep on riding, gliding
Through the dark, dark blue sea!

Sealife Centres

Our partners at Sealife have put in money collecting vortexes in all their European Sealife centres; please donate, whenever you visit any of the 26 European centres. The donations kindly made by you will help the trust to carry out its vital research and conservation work.

The trust sits on the Sealife Group's Ethical and Scientific committee and between all of us we are making a difference to the marine world. Through a number of research projects conducted by Sealife staff and others based at Sealife Centres, we are starting to understand more about subjects as wide ranging as; Seahorse behaviour and how to keep a seal away from a fishing net. As with the Seahorse Alliance which the Sealife group are members of, it is important to work in partnership with others to progress conservation and research worldwide.



By setting up a standing order you can regularly donate to the work of The Seahorse Trust, allowing us to plan research and conservation into the future and don't forget to Gift Aid your donations, it does not cost you anymore but it means we can claim back tax you have already paid.



A pair of courting Spiny Seahorses, photographed at Studland Bay in Dorset during August 2012

Picture copyright The Seahorse Trust © 2012

Donations

The work of the trust is totally reliant on the goodwill and generosity of others and we are lucky enough to have a variety of individuals, foundations, charities and businesses donate funds and things to us. Below are just a few of the organisations that kindly support us on a regular basis; we have others, and some individuals that have kindly supported us who wish to remain anonymous and so a massive thank you to them.

Some of our sponsors:-

GAC Logistics

www.gac.com/

Floy Tags

www.floytag.com/

Pentax

www.pentax.co.uk/

National Marine Aquarium

www.national-aquarium.co.uk/

OS Aquatics

www.osaquatics.co.uk/

Kaleidoscope Koi

www.aquaticsmadeeasy.com/

Website

As part of the ongoing developments of the website, Gavin from GL Solutions has been really busy updating the site so that it is more useful and more informative. The site is often used as a research

source, for general information and as a site to just watch seahorses on the live camera, beamed directly from the Trusts seahorse tank at its headquarters at Escot, Devon.

If you have any IT requirements contact Gavin at gavin@gslsolutions.co.uk. We highly recommend him. Gavin is now doing websites using a template system, which is very cost effective; he is also highly skilled at solving all your IT problems.

Facebook

Fantastic news we now have over 437 members on the Facebook page, Beccy our educational/diver volunteer who set up the Facebook page for the Trust keeps it updated for us, so a big thank you to her for all her help with this.

<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=107757299258869&ref=ss#!/group.php?gid=106564446031865&ref=ts>

Patrons/Trustees /Volunteers

The Seahorse Trust has had fantastic support from its patrons, trustees and volunteers this year and we would like to thank one and all for their amazing help in promoting the conservation of seahorses around the world.

Patrons

Nick Baker (President)	www.nickbaker.tv	Kate Humble	www.katehumble.com
Chris Packham	www.chrispackham.co.uk	Kirsty Jones	www.kirstyjones.com
Mark Carwardine	www.markcarwardine.com	Monty Halls	www.montyhalls.co.uk
Ellie Harrison	www.ellie-harrison.com	Prof Jack Cohen	

The Trust is only as strong as its volunteers and we would like to say a massive thank you to them all for their hard work and dedication, especially Eva who has dived all summer at Studland no matter the weather or conditions and Neil's bad jokes.

Adoption and membership schemes

Why not support the work of the Trust and adopt one of our British seahorses, for as little as £4 per month, or you could become a member of the Trust for a minimum of £25 per year. The money we raise from the adoptions and memberships goes directly to the work of the Trust. Your adoption will help to secure a future for seahorses here in the UK and in other countries through our research and partnership work.

We have already got both British species protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act. Now we are putting together the information we have gathered through the British Seahorse Survey forward to help with the formation of Marine Protected Zones.

When a seahorse is adopted the adoptee receives a certificate of adoption, regular newsletters via e-mail, a fluffy toy seahorse, a Trust pin badge and a Trust sticker; all this for a minimum of £4 per month (more would be welcome).

The regular adoption of Seahorses adds funds to the ongoing work of the Trust and in the long term this will allow us to plan our finances to create a more secure future for Seahorses.

As a Trust member you get regular newsletters via e-mail, a membership card, a Trust pin badge and a Trust sticker; all this for £25 per annum.

Fund raising

- Christmas is coming and what a great present a Adopting a Seahorse would make
- Become a member of the Trust and know that you are directly making a difference to the conservation of seahorses.
- Don't forget to Gift Aid any donation you make; we can claim 25p for every pound you donate from the Inland Revenue as long as you are a UK tax payer, and the great news is, it does not cost you a penny more. Contact us for more information on Gift Aiding.

- Why not buy a second hand book when you visit the centre here at Escot, we have set up a partnership with Topsham books who provide us with good quality second hand paperbacks for sale (50% of all profits from this go directly to The Seahorse Trust)
- If you have an event to raise funds for charity, please consider us, without your help we could not do the work we do.

There are other ways of donating to the Trust either through donation tins like at OSA Aquatics in Wool, Dorset, Kaleidoscope Koi in Paignton in Torbay Devon, The National Marine Aquarium in Plymouth or any of the European SEALIFE Centres, or why not buy some jewellery from Kerstain Laibach where she will make a donation to the Trust from some of her jewellery sold.

SEALIFE Centres in Europe	www.visitsealife.com/
Kerstain Laibach	www.kerstinlaibach.com/
National Marine Aquarium	www.national-aquarium.co.uk/
OSA Aquatics, Tim and Barb	www.osaquatics.co.uk/
Kaleidoscope Koi, Adrian Aplin	www.aquaticsmadeeasy.com/

If you want to support the Trust by raising funds there are so many ways of getting people to donate their sponsorship monies securely and safely such as this listed below.

VIRGIN GIVING	www.uk.virginmoneygiving.com/giving/
E-BAY	www.ebay.co.uk
BIG GIVE	www.thebiggive.org.uk
EVRYCLICK	www.everyclick.com/theseahorsetrust/search
DONATIONS	www.theseahorsetrust.org
THROUGH OUR WEBSITE	www.theseahorsetrust.org

We are a registered charitable trust with the Charity Commissioners of England and Wales, our charity number is 1086027.

Like everyone this year The Seahorse Trust has been hit badly by the recession and we are very grateful for our existing and new supporters who kindly donate by standing order; this allows us to plan ahead for the important work that we do. Check out our site for ways of supporting us and don't forget to Gift Aid your donation this allows us to claim 25p for every pound you donate from the government if you are a UK taxpayer.

We have had some great support from companies as well as individuals and we would like to offer a huge thanks to them all.

We have had a number of donations from private individuals and companies that wish to remain anonymous. We would like to publicly thank them for their support, without them we could not do as much work as we do.

Thank you and have a great Autumn

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