

The Seahorse Trust

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH NATURE

The
Seahorse
Trust

NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2011

www.theseahorsetrust.org

www.britishseahorsesurvey.org

www.seahorses.tv

Facebook page: The Seahorse Trust



Registered charity no.1086027

Studland Tagging Project.

We are just starting our third year of surveying and studies at Studland Bay in Dorset with our partners and this looks like it is going to be the most exciting one so far. The first two Seahorses arrived in May on almost exactly the same day as last year after measuring and photographing them, without the use of flash (see note below). We tagged one and recorded the location of the second one as it was too small to tag, under advice from The Seahorse Trust the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) have increased the size of tagging from 10cm to 13cm; we felt that the original 10cm was too small for the welfare of the seahorses.

We have already had a number of volunteers join us on the project and through our sponsorship deal with the SEALIFE Centres we have also had some of their divers join us spotting for Seahorses. Two of them Emily Madge and Chris Brown are now under the trusts license from the MMO to carry out this research and they are being trained for the forthcoming expansion of the project into other areas.



First Spiny Seahorse of 2011; a juvenile male which was about 10cm from the top of its head to the end of its tail.

Marine Management Organisation working group (MMOWG)

We have had our 2nd meeting of the MMOWG and it was very positive due to the inclusion of Studland Bay onto the proposed Marine Conservation Zone list which is being compiled at the moment.

Studland Bay has been included due to the vulnerability and uniqueness of the Seahorses and seagrass on the site and when the protection comes in we will be working with others to put together a management plan for the site. The inclusion of Studland Bay under the MCZ's is vital to protect this unique site; the work we are doing on the site will be used to advise other sites in England, hopefully leading to a management plan for Seahorses and Seagrass.

Marine Management Organisation ban the use of flash

The MMO has under advice from the trust banned the use of flash when photographing seahorses under water. This has been done as a precaution due to concerns from the trust about the effects of flash on seahorses which has been known to cause stress and in some cases death.

The research work at Studland is still in its early days but we are now beginning to understand more about British Seahorses, these incredible animals have a unique lifestyle and are truly one of those amazing enigmatic species occupying the waters off our shores. We intend to spend many more years working at Studland and comparing it to many other sites around the British Isles but we need your help to do this, please adopt a British Seahorse or become a member of the trust (details on our website), the monies you pay for both (don't forget you can just make a donation to the work) will allow us to do more for longer and if you are a UK tax payer then don't forget to gift aid it, we receive 25p for every pound you donate and it doesn't cost you a penny more..

We have had so many volunteers help us this year and we would like to say a massive thank you to them all especially Beccy, Eva, Jonny and John all of whom have put in many many hours of diving on the site.

Check out our website www.theseahorsetrust.org for regular updates on the work of the trust.

The Studland Tagging Project was kindly funded by the National Lottery through the Your Heritage Fund in its first year and many other organisations and individuals have helped to keep the project in its second year and going into the third year and we would like to say many thanks to them all for their invaluable support. If you want to support our work please make a donation, adopt a seahorse or become a member of the trust. (Check website for details)



<http://www.hlf.org.uk>

Seahorse Trust headquarters at Escot.

Things have been busy at our centre with the Seahorses over the winter, the pair of Spiny Seahorses (*Hippocampus guttulatus*) have started to do courtship displays each morning and although they haven't mated yet we hope this will be their year to start.

The Zebra Snouted Seahorses (*H. barbouri*) regularly have babies and although it is not always possible to rear them on all the adults in the tank have been bred at Escot..

Recent arrivals have been 3 female Slender Seahorses (*H. reidi*) that were bred in Israel; the trust advises projects throughout the world and although these Seahorses did not come directly from one of these projects, they are from a project we have advised over the years so it is good to see captive breeding working and this in turn will help protect wild populations by not having to collect from them from the wild.

SEALIFE Centres sponsor The Seahorse Trust



A £25,000 donation from the Sea Life centres will enable the Trust to continue the valuable research and conservation campaigning it has been carrying out since it was formed in 1999.

During the current financial crisis the Trust has found it increasingly difficult to secure funding.

This donation means our Seahorse Tagging Project, which has already provided a valuable insight into seahorse breeding off the UK's south west coast, will

continue and will be extended to other regions in partnership with many organisations and institutes

Marine experts from the Weymouth Sea Life Park have already teamed up with Trust members to survey the seahorse population off Studland in Dorset and to tag the seahorses they find there.

Trust volunteers recently found their first ever seahorse baby at Studland, Dorset, having previously recorded pregnant males and juveniles...but never any fry.

"It was as a direct result of the Trust's research, lobbying and volunteer work that both British species of seahorses were afforded protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act in 2008," said Trust founder Neil Garrick-Maidment.

A seahorse enthusiast since the age of 22 when he was invited by aquarium owner Les Jackman to start a seahorse breeding programme, Trust Director Neil currently holds the record for the largest number of 'closed' breeding cycles for 22 species of seahorse in the world.

Research by the Trust where seahorses are observed in the wild feeds into successful sea life centre breeding programmes, where even endangered species of seahorses are reproduced successfully and follows the trusts policy (and motto) of working in partnership with others.

The Trust's findings have already established that Spiny Seahorses *Hippocampus guttulatus* and Short Snouted Seahorses (*Hippocampus hippocampus*) are present in most coastal areas with eel-grass beds and other suitable habitat.

"We have worked closely with Neil and the Trust for many years and are thrilled to be able to help keep the Trust afloat," said SEALIFE's chief marine biologist Rob Hicks.

"We have developed seahorse breeding programmes almost simultaneously, and helped each other with shared learning's and even exchanged breeding stock from time to time."

Neil Garrick-Maidment, who serves as a consultant on Sea Life's scientific and ethical advisory committee, said funding for the Trust had been hit hard by the credit crunch.

"Without this support from the Sea Life network the Trust's work would have been placed in serious jeopardy"

Seahorse Trust Education department

Sadly Charlotte has decided to close down Seafaries for a variety of reasons and has now gone back to her original work. Seafaries was the official education department for the trust. We would like thank Charlotte for her amazing contribution to the work of the trust and for her work as a trustee of the trust, which she will continue to do.

The educational work of the trust is still ongoing and during the winter trust volunteer Beccy has been putting together an educational pack for the trust which will be available on the trusts website in the future to be used by schools and teachers. We hope that anybody using this resource will make a donation to the trust for its use.

Working in partnership with other collections

The Seahorse Trust and the Sealife Centres and other collections around the world, notably the National Marine Aquarium (NMA) in Plymouth, Seahorse Ireland, Anglesey Seazoo and the National Oceanography Centre at Southampton University have worked together for many years and this is still ongoing, sharing information and data between ourselves. We work very closely to ensure the future of Seahorses in captivity and in the wild and the marine environment.

2011 is already set to be an exciting year with projects lined up with Sealife and the NMA comparing wild seahorses around our coasts and with Seahorse Ireland, Anglesey Seazoo and lots of other aquaria researching the behaviour and breeding of native seahorses in captivity.

It is only by working with others through captive research or in the wild that we can learn more about these amazing animals.

Media

The trust has again been very lucky this last 6 months in that it has been on a number of media programmes where it has talked about its research work.

We have had an article in BBC Wildlife magazine amongst others and were featured on BBC Radio 4's Open Country programme. Recently we worked with trust patron Chris Packham in his series Truth about Wildlife, where Chris explained about the work of the trust at Studland Bay in Dorset and the problems the site is facing.



Websites

The website is still proving to be a big hit and as well as our live tank of Seahorses being beamed straight from the trusts headquarters we now have a documentary made by trust volunteer Joanna Whiting on the site which shows the work being done at Studland by the trust.

As always we must give a massive thank you to Gavin who has put the website together and manages our IT for us. Gavin is a computer whiz and he can be contacted on his website at www.gsolutions.co.uk for website design and construction.

If you are ever bored and want a change from watching the TV why not tune into one of our tanks here at the trust on www.seahorses.tv. The site was kindly donated by Danny Bamping Director of Crazeethingz toy company www.Crazeethingz.com and the web camera was kindly put in by Director Mark Welch of FINETRA www.finetra.co.uk , many thanks to both of them.

Facebook

Fantastic news we now have well over 120 members on the Facebook page, Beccy our educational/diver volunteer who set up the Facebook page for the trust keeps it updated for us and keeps telling me off if I don't put stuff on it, So a big thank you to her for all her help with this and all the hard work she is doing to write the educational pack.

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

Patrons

The Seahorse Trust has had fantastic support from its trustees and patrons this year and we would like to thank one and all for their amazing help.

We would like to offer a warm welcome to Mark Carwardine the internationally known naturalist, author and cameraman.

Nick Baker	http://www.nickbaker.tv
Kate Humble	http://www.katehumble.com
Chris Packham	http://www.chrispackham.co.uk
Kirsty Jones	http://www.kirstyjones.com
Mark Carwardine	http://www.markcarwardine.com

Adoption and membership schemes

During 2009 the trust launched its adoption scheme where it is now possible to adopt one of nine Seahorses from the British Seahorse Survey. This has been slow to get going partially due to website problems which are now fixed (thanks to Gavin) and we hope that things will now speed up.

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 secure future for Seahorses.

We also have a membership scheme on the website which we hope appeals to the many people interested in supporting the trust; again this helps secure the trust funds and allow us to plan the future more securely.

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.

Why not adopt a Seahorse or become a member or give an adoption or membership as a gift?

Fund raising

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

Two donations that have been memorable this year have been from younger conservationists which is very heartening as they are the conservationists of the future; the Salisbury Cathedral School had a Christmas Fair and raised £86 and budding naturalist Alice Young raised £70 by making and selling bracelets, thank you to them all.

Like everyone this year The Seahorse Trust has been hit badly by the credit crunch and we are very grateful for our existing and new supporters who kindly donate by bankers order; this allows us to plan ahead for the important work that we do.

We have had some great support from companies, other charities and organisations as well as individuals and we would like to offer a huge thanks to them all, especially the SEALIFE Centres.

We have also been kindly donated 2 £5,000 amounts, one from the Garfield Weston Foundation and the other from the James Gibson Charitable trust, thank you to both of them for this invaluable donation to our work.

We do occasionally receive anonymous donations to our work and the trust would like to thank them and respect their wishes, even though they do not wish to be identified this does not reduce how important their contributions are.

If you want to donate to the trust we now have several ways you can do this:

- 🐉 Donate through our website using the Everyclick Donation button on the home page. www.everyclick.com/theseahorsetrust/search
- 🐉 Donate through our website using the forms that can be downloaded on the Support Us page, and then send the forms to us so we can process them. www.theseahorsetrust.org
- 🐉 Go to the Big Give website and search for The Seahorse Trust www.thebiggive.org.uk
- 🐉 You can pay money directly into The Seahorse Trust bank account (details on the website)
- 🐉 Or you can send us a cheque and we will pay it into the Trust account, please make it payable to The Seahorse Trust.
- 🐉 Don't forget to gift aid any donation you make; we can claim 25p for every pound you donate from the government without it costing you a penny more if you are a UK tax payer.
- 🐉 We have now become an E-Bay charity and you can donate some of your administration costs to the work of the trust; so when you are on e-bay and at the check out please nominate us as your charity of choice. Many thanks

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.

Many thanks to one and all for your support this year and for helping out on our many projects, don't forget we still need your help and if you want to Adopt a Seahorse or become a Member of The Seahorse Trust check out the website or pop into the centre at Escot and any donations (especially gift aided) will help us to continue our valuable work with Seahorses and the natural world.

Thank you and have a great Summer.

British
Seahorse
Survey



British Seahorse Survey
www.britishseahorsesurvey.org

Live Seahorse tank
www.seahorses.tv

The Seahorse Trust
www.theseahorsetrust.org

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH NATURE

The
Seahorse
Trust

