

The Seahorse Trust

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH NATURE

The
Seahorse
Trust

NEWSLETTER

Summer 2012

www.theseahorsetrust.org

www.britishseahorsesurvey.org

Facebook page: The Seahorse Trust



Registered charity no.1086027

Welcome

Things are getting very busy here at the trust and we have already had 11 seahorses reported to us from throughout the South West; this year is set to be busier than normal, despite the strange weather. It is probably due to the mild winter that has allowed the food that the seahorses eat, to keep breeding, which has given them a head start. Sadly the food and higher temperatures have brought them into shallow waters early and the following storms have washed them up onto the beach but the good news is, that due to the publicity we have received, especially from the Bournemouth Echo, members of the public know what to do if they find a stranded seahorse on the beach that is still alive; which is to put it straight back into the water and if they can get a photo of it (without flash), all the better and then send us the sighting.



The first seahorse of the year seen during the survey work at Studland, despite the really bad visibility, trust volunteer Eva, spotted this delicate, little, female Spiny Seahorse, who has been seen again since.

Studland Tagging Project

We have been diving over the winter and as expected there have been no seahorses to report but even when we do not see seahorses we are still gathering much needed information, such as about the state of the seagrass, the other species on the site and the temperature during the winter. All this adds up to giving us a better picture of the environment and how it changes over a long period of time, especially for the seahorses and their home habitat at Studland; the seagrass.

However there have been four seahorses spotted because of the storms, and two of them were very lucky indeed. The first one was in Torbay which was a Short Snouted Seahorse (*Hippocampus hippocampus*) seen by divers and the other 3 that were Spiny Seahorses (*Hippocampus guttulatus*) that were seen at Knoll Beach in Studland and Sandbanks in Poole Harbour. All had been washed up on the shore because of the recent bad storms, which are unseasonal and have caused immense damage.

The one at Knoll Beach was a female and was spotted by a schoolboy just after it had been run over by a bicycle. She was rescued and then Kevin Rideout from the National Trust put her back into the water, where she swam off happily.

The second one was spotted by Dave Hartwell from the Water Sports Academy on Sandbanks and he contacted the trust where we got him to take photos of the mature female Spiny Seahorse against a ruler and then he released her back into the water, into a sheltered spot. This was great news because we gathered much needed information and the seahorses were released back into the wild; helping this uncommon species to survive for another day.

MMO meeting

Since the staff and volunteers of The Seahorse Trust succeeded in getting full protection for British Seahorses under the Wildlife and Countryside Act in 2008, we have since been involved with a variety of organisations to help ensure this protection is enforced. This is to ensure that others are aware of the high level of protection seahorses now receive.

Part of this partnership work is working with the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) that has taken over from Natural England looking after the protection of our coastal waters.

The Seahorse Trust sits on the Studland Advisory Group (SAG) and the Diving Group (DG) run by MMO and this winter we had a meeting of the Studland Advisory Group where we discussed the possibility of putting in 50 environmentally friendly moorings in a trial to see if this stops the damage of the fragile seagrass meadow on the site; a favourite home of the Spiny Seahorse and occasionally the Short Snouted Seahorse.

Although still early days, this looks as though it is going to go ahead, which is great news, we hope it will be a model for other sensitive areas around the country; not just for seahorse sites but other fragile eco-systems as well.

South Beach at Studland Bay has been put forward as a proposed Marine Protected Zone (pMPZ) because of the work of the trust and our colleagues at the National Oceanography Centre at Southampton University and we are hoping it is going to be nominated in the first tranche of MPZ's, that will be appointed early in 2013.

Projects

The Seahorse Trust has always made a point of working with others; in fact, our motto 'Working in partnership with nature' is the backbone of the trust's ethos and direction. With this in mind we advise projects all over the world and here in the UK. It stretches from working with school children to graduates, to survey projects here in the UK to advising captive breeding and survey projects all over the world.

This winter we placed graduate Lauren Timson at the National Marine Aquarium in Plymouth to study the courtship behaviour of Short Snouted Seahorses and we have had SEALIFE Centre staff diving with us on our project at Studland Bay in Dorset.

We have also advised a breeding project in Kenya and in June of this year trust staff in partnership with Seahorse Aquatics (Ireland) staff are set to go to Cambodia to advise Marine Conservation Cambodia on setting up a captive breeding project to re-establish the depleted seahorses in the area (see below).

This is just a small sample of the trusts work and none of it would be possible without our amazing team of volunteers, trustees and without the superb support and encouragement of our patrons and members of the public.

Cambodia

Marine Conservation Cambodia is a conservation project involving the community of Koh Rong Samleom Island in the south west of Cambodia run by Paul Ferber and supported financially and with the provision of students by Projects Abroad www.projects-abroad.co.uk/volunteer-projects/conservation-and-environment/cambodia/ By working together they have achieved so much, from a marine protected zone, to a health centre and a local school and now the trust and Seahorse Aquatics (Ireland) have been invited by them to assist in setting up the captive breeding facility. Both Projects Abroad and MCC are covering the costs of this trip and we hope it will be the start of a long term project that will secure the future of the seahorses and marine life in this part of Cambodia.

SOS project Seahorse Aquatics (Ireland)

Kealan Doyle director and founder of Seahorse Aquatics is an old friend of the trust and he has started a project called Save Our Seahorses (in partnership with the trust) to try and educate others about the problems with the Traditional Medicine Trade (TMT).

Seahorses and many other species are used extensively in this trade and through Kealan's undercover work we have discovered the problem is a lot worse than we thought; in excess of 100 million seahorses used per annum, this is not sustainable.

By working with Kealan and his team we will make a difference; look out for a forth coming documentary to be shown here in the UK (Channel to be decided) about Kealan and his work in Ireland and China narrated by actor John Hurt and trust director Neil.



Dried seahorses for sale in a Traditional medicine market in China. Photograph by Nick Baker

Media

We are very lucky here at the trust in that so many people are interested in seahorses and the work of the trust and over the winter we have appeared in so many magazines and newspaper articles and we were also interviewed for radio 4's saving species programme.

All this shows how much concern there is in the world for the protection of seahorses and the



fragile environment they live in.

Donations and sponsorship

The trust has kindly be given a Pentax underwater camera to use in our research, although its early day we are getting some great shots with it and it is aiding our work at Studland because it has a built GPS and can be used in very low light levels, ideal for working with seahorses as we managed to get flash photography banned because it is harmful to seahorses.



Zebra Snouted Seahorse picture taken with the new Pentax camera



Donations

The works 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. Over the winter we have had some donations and we wish to respect the wishes of those organisations that wish to remain anonymous who kindly donate to us, one large charity kindly donated to us this spring and we would like to offer our heartfelt thanks to them.

Two other organisations to be noted are GAC Logistics (<http://www.gac.com/>) who made a donation to the trust and we would like to thank Pete Smith for organising this for us. The other organisation that has made a big difference is Floy Tags (<http://www.floytag.com/>) who kindly donated 300 tags for our work in tagging seahorses in the wild and captivity. These tags allow us to identify individual seahorses and because of this it has meant we have had a greater understanding of the movement of seahorses in the wild. This increased knowledge has meant we can contribute to securing a better future for seahorses in the wild.



<http://www.gac.com/>

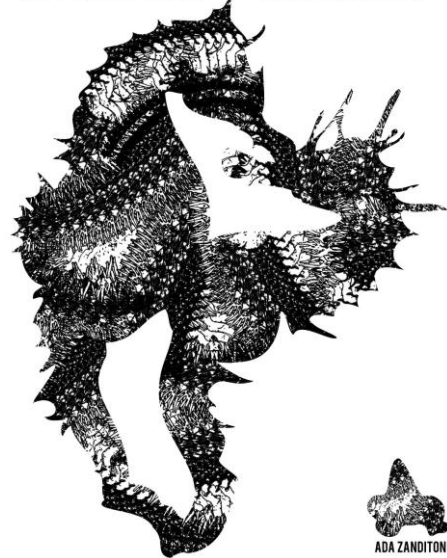


<http://www.floytag.com/>

Fashion swims for seahorses



THE LUCKY ONES | ADA ZANDITON



Ada, Kurt and Nik from the Fashion swims for Seahorses team after their mammoth swim to raise funds for the trust. Ada is wearing recycled speedo swimsuit by fashion brand Somewhere

On the 27th of May, Ada (<http://www.adazanditon.com/>), Kurt and Nik did a sponsored swim for The Seahorse Trust to raise funds for our work. They swam 4 km each - which is a team distance of 12km about 2 and a half miles, so they exceeded their goal, a really fantastic achievement and a massive thank you to the 3 of them and everyone who sponsored them. It is still not too late to donate to the swim by going on the Virgin Giving site (below) www.virginmoneygiving.com/%2Fteam%2Ffashionswimsforseahorses&h=1AQEmYJZj

Despite aches, pains and exhaustion they achieved so much for the seahorses and went the extra distance for us. THANK YOU so much Team Seahorse.

Websites

As part of the ongoing developments of the website, Gavin 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 which is beamed directly from the trusts seahorse tank at its headquarters in Escot, Devon.

If you have any IT requirements contact Gavin at gavin@gslsolutions.co.uk we highly recommend him.

Facebook

Fantastic news we now have over 240 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

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 are very pleased to say that Ellie Harrison from Countryfile and Monty Halls have kindly come on board as patrons, they are both very passionate about the oceans and seas and all the creatures that live in them so a warm welcome to them both.

Nick Baker

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

Adoption and membership schemes

In celebration of the Queens Jubilee we have added another seahorse onto our adoption scheme called Jubilee, she is a generic seahorse representing all the seahorses in the UK. We recommend a minimum of £4 per month adoption fee (more would be fantastic), the monies raised goes directly to the work of the trust and you know your adoption is helping to secure a future for seahorses here in the UK. We have already got both species protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act and 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

- 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
EVERYCLICK	www.everyclick.com/theseahorsetrust/search
DONATIONS	www.theseahorsetrust.org
THROUGH OUR WEBSITE	www.theseahorsetrust.org
GIFT AID	

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 Summer

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