

The Seahorse Trust

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH NATURE

The
Seahorse
Trust



Registered charity no.1086027

NEWSLETTER WINTER 2009

www.theseahorsetrust.org

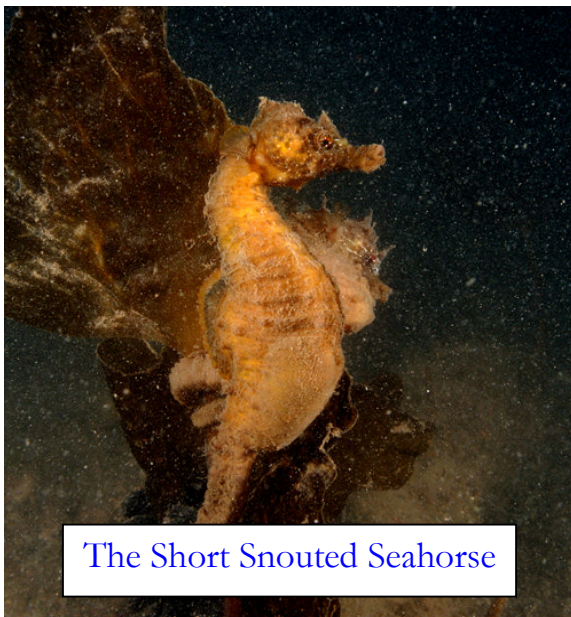
www.britishseahorsesurvey.org

Studland Tagging project funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund.

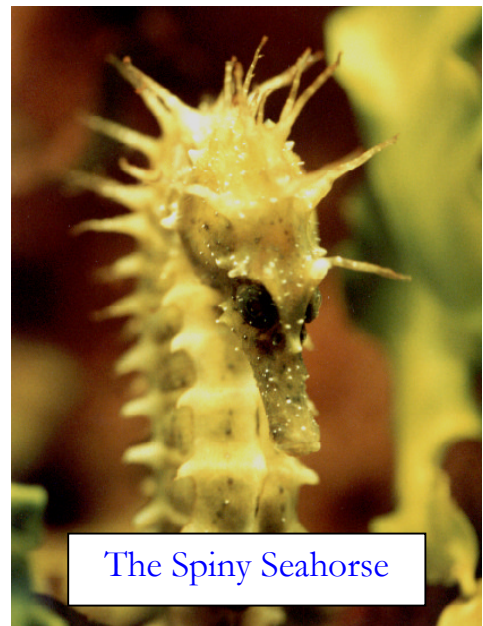
What an incredible year we have had on the survey work at Studland with a great team of volunteers we have managed to tag 5 seahorses and have recovered them 30 times in total, a superb result and thanks to everyone who has helped out. This is the first time this type of work has been achieved in the UK using this method and it has already yielded some amazing results in such a short time.

Studland is a site of international importance, a breeding site for both British species of Seahorse but mainly for the Spiny Seahorse; a stunning large seahorse that as its name suggests has a 'mane' of spines on its head and down its back.

The other species found on the site in smaller numbers is the Short Snouted Seahorse; slightly smaller in size but more rotund than the Spiny and as its name suggest it has a shorter snout ideal for targetting different prey types than the larger, longer nosed Spiny Seahorse.



The Short Snouted Seahorse



The Spiny Seahorse

Tagging Seahorses

We use a small tag on an elasticated necklace to tag the Seahorses which is being done under special license from Natural England. This allows those of us who are trained (and those we train) to handle the Seahorses and attach the tag. Each tag has its own individual number on it so we can keep reidentifying them as we find them. This will help us to build up a picture of the lives and movements of individual Seahorses over many years.

The tags we use have been researched extensively to minimise the effects on the Seahorses. For 4 years prior to using them in the wild we did extensive trials in captivity to see if there was a detrimental effect on the Seahorses.



Trust patron Kate Humble and the trust director Neil diving at Studland

Divers

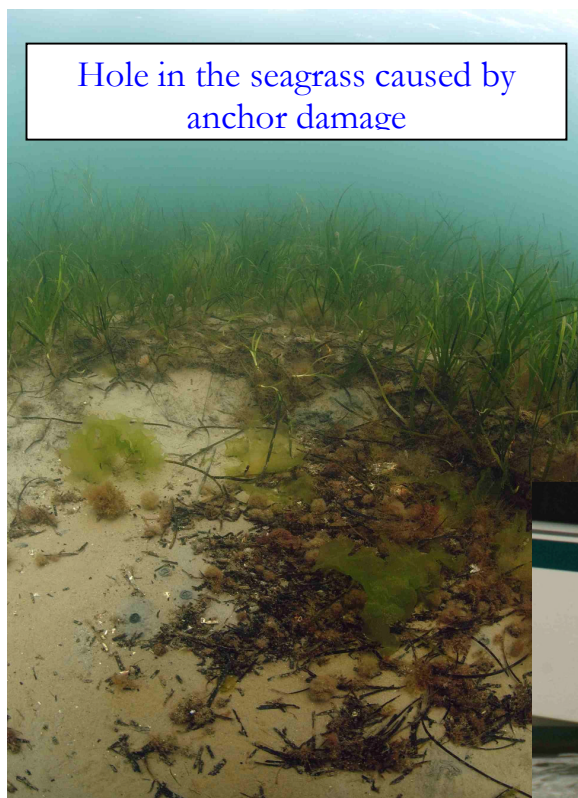
Divers are vital to the work of the survey as they help us to find the seahorses, keep an eye on them and make sure they are safe in their habitat. Over the summer we have had 129 volunteer divers giving us 235.5 hours of their time, without this amazing input we would never have achieved so much, so a massive thank you to them all.

When diving on the project divers get briefed about protocols and safety on the site and what to look for when they are seahorse searching.

If you want to get involved diving with us looking for Seahorses then contact the trust office via our website but you must be at least PADI Open water in above to qualify.



Steve Trewhella Underwater photographer and Tagging Project Officer



Hole in the seagrass caused by anchor damage

Yacht and boat users

Over the summer we have chatted to hundreds of boat users at Studland Bay to let them know how special this site is and we have been cheered and astounded by the positive response we have had. Most boat users were completely unaware of the problems their anchors have been causing in the seagrass beds and have asked for advice from The Seahorse Trust on how to avoid damaging the Seahorses habitat. We have also advised sailing magazine several articles and authors.



Boat anchor covered in ripped up seagrass

Fishermen

Over the years fishermen and the fishing industry have been vital to the work of the survey and we need more of their help. Every year fishermen pull up Seahorses in their nets and pots and the knowledge they gather on depth found, location, weather conditions, time of year etc will help us to discover more about these incredible animals. So if you're a fisherman or know of any fishermen who find Seahorses please let us know if you find a Seahorse; please report the finding to us.



Volunteers

As part of the Studland Tagging Project we have had many volunteers coming to help us, without their incredible help we would not have achieved so much. The Seahorse Trust would like to give a heartfelt thank you to them all for their help.

If you want to volunteer at the Studland Tagging Project then contact us through the trust website.

The Studland Tagging Project is kindly funded by the National Lottery through the Your Heritage Fund and many other organisations and individuals and we would like to say many thanks to them for there invaluable support

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



Torbay SeaTorbay Project

The Seahorse Trust as part of its commitment to marine conservation is part of the SeaTorbay Project which is looking at the marine situation in Torbay and through a group of stakeholders from fishermen to conservationists is putting together a management plan for the future to ensure the bay is there for many generations to come.

Malta

Malta and its associated islands set in the stunning Mediterranean are home to the same two species of seahorse we have here in the UK and as such we are interested in comparing the lives and habitats with our own two species.

We are working very closely with Paul Camilleri of the University of Malta in sharing information and data so that we can compare how the two species live in the wild and what needs they have.

The trusts director Neil grew up in Malta and got his love of the marine environment when he worked in the old aquarium in St Julian's and has now gone full circle by working alongside Paul in Malta.

During a recent holiday in Malta Neil and Paul met up in person for the first time to discuss future projects together and they have formed a formal partnership between the two organisations to share data and information.

One way the trust can help in doing this is by putting a page on its website for anyone finding seahorses in Malta to be able to report them, the data will then be sent through to Paul and his team for analysing. This way they can build up a picture of the unique lives of Seahorses around the Maltese archipelago.



A Spiny Seahorse found in Malta

The One Show

The Seahorse Trust appeared on the One Show with Miranda Krestovnikoff back in August; we spent 2 days on our study site at Studland in Dorset filming for the 4 minute slot on the show. It was hard work and involved lots of time in the water but we managed to film some Seahorses and Miranda and Neil chatted underwater about the stunning world of Seahorses.



Filming the One Show underwater with world renowned underwater videographer Scott Tibbles



Trust Director Neil; and Miranda taking a break during filming



Miranda after seeing her first Seahorse, the smile says it all.



Team photo for the One Show shoot

BIAZA Native species group

We are part of the British and Irish Aquarium and ZOO Associations Native species group and in December we held a meeting here at Escot. The group links captive breeding and research with research in the field a vital link for the future of many native species.

Sealife Centres and other collections

The Seahorse Trust and the Sealife Centres and other collections around the world, notably the Anglesey Seazoo in North Wales 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 field.

With the Sealife Centres we sit on their ethics committee helping to ensure the highest standards possible in husbandry.

Sealife Centres
Anglesey Seazoo

<http://www.sealife.co.uk/>
<http://www.angleseyseazoo.co.uk/>

Talks and meetings

We have had a busy year working with the Studland Tagging Project but we have still managed to fit in some public talks for groups as diverse as Jurassic Divers in Exmouth, South Devon, Topsham Museum and the Friends of Charmouth Heritage Centre on the beautiful Jurassic coastline (home to both species of British seahorse) and Low Tide Day held at Studland and run by the National Trust.

Already the diary is filling up for talks during 2010 and so if you want us to come and do a talk as they say book early.

Website

Andy our amazing website designer has been hard at work doing more work and changes to the website as part of the HLF grant; this will make the site much more interactive and we hope informative. He has included lots of downloads and information about our work.

After many years Andy has managed to change our trust web address to .org, so we are now www.theseahorsetrust.org although if you use the old .co.uk ending it will still go through.

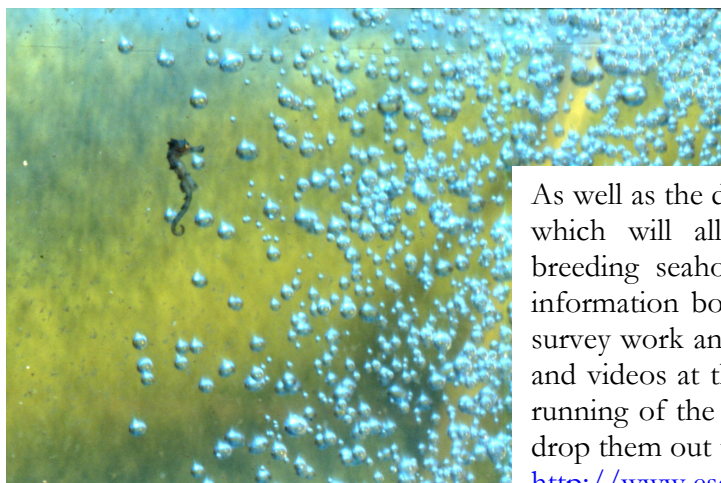
We have to say a massive thank you to Andy Paton for kindly redesigning and building our fantastic website and continuing to do so and we hope you enjoy all the information on it.

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 Mark Welch of FiNETra www.finetra.co.uk, many thanks to both of them.

Escot

We have now moved back out to Escot to a purpose built centre, we have moved around the corner from the original centre into the old Pet Cabin. Neil the trust director spent months building the new centre and we finally opened at the end of the summer.

Within the centre we have display tanks with 4 different species of Seahorses, including the two native Seahorse species and since we have been open the Zebra Snouted Seahorses (*Hippocampus barbouri*) have given birth and at the time of writing this newsletter we have 4 young Seahorses in the research room eating us out of house and home.



As well as the display tanks we also have a research room which will allow us to expand our knowledge on breeding seahorses in captivity; there are also lots of information boards on the wall, telling the story of our survey work and don't forget we sell second hand books and videos at the centre to raise funds for the work and running of the trust. If you have any spare books please drop them out to us.

<http://www.escot-devon.co.uk>

Adopt a Seahorse.

We have now started our Adopt a Seahorse scheme and it helps generate funds for our much needed work. Members of the public will be able to adopt Seahorses that have been found around the British Isles as part of our British Seahorse Survey.

For £4 per month (if you want to donate more we would certainly make good use of the funds) for a minimum of 6 months you will get a fact card / photo of your seahorse, a trust pin badge, a certificate of adoption and a fluffy Seahorse.

By adopting a Seahorse you will be helping us to help them, to adopt a seahorse please go to our website and look at the support us page and don't forget to gift aid it.

<http://www.theseahorsetrust.org>

Fund raising

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 standing order; this allows us to plan ahead for the important work that we do.

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

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
- 🐡 **BUT DON'T FORGET TO GIFT AID IT, THIS ALLOWS US TO CLAIM 25P FOR EVERY POUND YOU DONATE FROM THE GOVERNMENT IF YOU ARE A UK TAXPAYER.**

As well as our amazing luck in being granted a Heritage Lottery grant under the Your Heritage fund we also received three generous donations from other organisations; two of them prefer to remain anonymous and the third which was kindly arranged by Kate Humble for us was from They make superb outdoor clothing so check out their website.

Trust partners

The Seahorse trust could not do all its work without its partners throughout the world, so check out our website (www.theseahorsetrust.org) for a list of our partners and friends and thank you to them all for their help.

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 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 great winter.

British
Seahorse
Survey



British Seahorse Survey
www.britishseahorsesurvey.org

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