

The Seahorse Trust

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH NATURE

The
Seahorse
Trust



Registered charity no.1086027

NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2010

www.theseahorsetrust.org

www.britishseahorsesurvey.org

www.seahorses.tv

Facebook page: The Seahorse Trust

Studland Tagging Project.

What a year for the Tagging project at Studland; we have had a huge number of volunteer divers helping us which has allowed us to cover a large area of the seagrass meadow and the most remarkable find and highlight of the season was the discovery of a 4cm baby (fry) Spiny Seahorse (*Hippocampus gutturalis*).

This amazing find is the final piece in the puzzle of Seahorses at Studland. We have found adult males and females, pregnant males, juveniles and now a Seahorse fry. When Seahorses are born there is no adult care and the fry are completely on their own where sadly many are eaten by predators. Those that make it through the first few weeks settle into the seagrass and start eating huge quantities of food, which allows them to grow very fast. We have found through our work that even at a young age seahorses will set up a territory and tend to move from it only when disturbed or until the winter storms come when they migrate to deeper water.



Seahorse fry
spotted at Studland

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The Seahorse trust
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The Seahorse Trust has been actively working with Finding Sanctuary and Balanced Seas, both organisations have been tasked with putting forward potential areas to set up as marine protected areas and Studland is high up on the list because of the uniqueness of the site. To be able to do this they require data on the various species and habitats in these areas and the tagging project and the British Seahorse Survey run by The Seahorse trust has provided this information

The Marine Conservation Society (MCS) has set up a public voting system so that we can all vote for our own favourite marine areas to be protected and Studland Bay has one of the highest votes yet. You can make a difference by logging onto the MCS Your Seas Your Voice website (link below) and have your say, only by people putting their vote forward can we protect this amazing site and all the creatures including the Seahorses in it.

www.yourseasyourvoice.com/mpa/?region=3&site=14#map

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 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.

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 going in its second year and we would like to say many thanks to them 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 and Seafaris Education department

Seafaris first Summer in action! By Charlotte Coleman (Seafaris)



Charlotte; founder of Seafaris
Pictures copyright
Seafaris © 2010

We could not have been luckier with the sunny hot weather for our first summer on the beach! We have had a wide variety of adults and children take part in Seafaris activities; from birthday parties; foreign visitors; adults; families and schools to Rainbows brownies and Bristol Schools camps. We found a wide range of marine creatures from starfish to worm pipefish, anemones to sea urchins and opened up a whole new world to many young children who had never seen the sea let alone any creatures from it! We found a number of alien species (no not little green men from Mars but animals that do not naturally belong here in the UK), worked on some fascinating beach sculptures and created some lovely mobiles from natural artefacts on the beach. So a real success for a first season.

Seafaris is the official education department for The Seahorse Trust and Charlotte is being helped by trust volunteer diver and educationalist Beccy who is designing with Charlotte a range of curriculum based educational packs for Seafaris and The Seahorse Trust. As well as doing beach activities Charlotte also does guided coast walks, freshwater activities and natural history talks to groups of all ages young and old.

If you have a school, group or society that would like to have an exciting wildlife experience then contact Charlotte at exeseafaris@googlemail.com and/or visit her website at <http://www.sea-faris.co.uk/> and don't forget to book early as Charlotte gets booked up very quickly and you wouldn't want to be disappointed.



MMO Working Group

The Seahorse Trust has been invited to join a group set up by the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) to work with a group of people and organisations looking at the best way to protect seahorses in the wild here in the UK. Unfortunately most of the areas that seahorses are found in are also the ones most used by mankind; so it puts untold pressure on them.

The work the trust has been doing at Studland and our success in getting both species protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) has helped to persuade the MMO that there is a need to have this important working group to address the problems facing Seahorses in the wild.

Breeding Seahorses

The Seahorse Trust has always helped private individuals, researchers and research projects and aquaria around the world in looking after and breeding their seahorses and we have continued to do this over the summer. Many private individuals are now making a significant contribution to research, breeding and helping in the fight against Seahorse losses from the wild, the more that can be bred in captivity means that less are taken from the wild.

It is vital that Seahorses are not taken from the wild and only by working together can we make a difference and with this in mind the breeding programmes around the world are striving to breed enough Seahorses in captivity to stop the need for taking them from the wild; they want and have to be self sufficient.

Like with our sister project in Ireland; Seahorse Ireland we share ideas and experiences to help others to improve on their breeding records and to be able to breed new species.



Seahorse fry bred by a private researcher, they are only 4 days old and already eating voraciously.

Working in partnership with other collections

The Seahorse Trust and the Sealife Centres and other collections around the world, notably Anglesey Seazoo in North Wales and the National Marine Aquarium (NMA) in Plymouth 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.

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 Anglesey Seazoo and lots of other aquaria researching the behaviour and breeding of native seahorses in captivity.

Sealife Centres

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

Anglesey Seazoo

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

National Marine Aquarium

<http://www.national-aquarium.co.uk/>

Talks

In the early part of the summer we did a talk to the Heritage Lottery Fund about the work at Studland that they kindly funded for its first year. It was one of their lunchtime talks and was very well attended. Trust Director Neil Garrick-Maidment did a talk and Q and A session which showed how the HLF money was spent and what we learnt from our first years work; nobody fell asleep so it must have gone down well.

Many thanks to HLF for funding the first year of the project and for inviting us to talk to them.

Media

The list of media coverage has increased dramatically this year due to the work at Studland. This amazing site with its population of breeding spiny Seahorses (*Hippocampus guttulatus*) has captured everyone's imagination and everyone wants to know about it.

The latest programme to feature the Seahorses was Countryfile and presenter Ellie Harrison endured a freezing cold, long wet day to film them.

Despite the appalling weather and the cold Ellie managed to see a number of Seahorses and observe the anchor and mooring damage that is on the site.

The Trust's Project Officer trained Ellie in the correct way of handling the Seahorses, so that when she came across them she knew what to do and could help with the research work. Seahorses can be easily stressed so it is vital that they are handled carefully



A busy days filming at Studland for the Countryfile programme shown in 2010.

Pictures copyright
The Seahorse Trust © 2010

The discovery of the 4cm long seahorse fry (right) provoked a huge response from the media and the pictures of this incredible baby appeared in newspapers and magazines all over the country.

The Trust has appeared on lots of radio programmes in the last twelve months and appeared (and written) many articles about the trusts work including many national newspapers and magazines and academic and other journals such as Global published by the Marine Biological Association in Plymouth.



Seahorse Ireland

Late in 2009 the trusts Director went across to Dublin in Ireland to take part in a joint film with Seahorse Ireland about the work of Seahorse Irelands founder Kealan Doyle. Kealan who has been a good friend of the trust for a long time and the film documentary show the ups and downs of Kealan's work over the last 10 years including his recent undercover trip to China to learn more about the Traditional Medicine trades use of Seahorses.

The documentary has now been shown on Irish television; four half hour programmes over 4 consecutive nights (and had massive viewing numbers) and subject to commissioning, an hour long documentary will be filmed by Gillian Marsh TV <http://www.gmtv.ie/> that will look at the natural history of Seahorses,

One revealing and sadly desperate piece of news that came out of Kealan's China trip is the size of the traditional medicine trade; sadly it is considerably larger than previously thought. We have always stated that 20 to 60 million animals are used in the trade every year. Kealan's work shows it's much higher and nearer to 100million a totally unsustainable number. This needs to be addressed soon otherwise the days of having this amazing fish in our seas will be gone.

Websites

The trusts new website has been a major hit and we have been having some amazing feedback from it, with the new format we can update news more readily and so it makes the site much more informative. It allows us to also use it as an educational site where we have a number of articles and papers to download and where members of the public can access up to date information about seahorses and our research work.

Many thanks to Gavin from GL Solutions for putting this together for us and we can highly recommend his professionalism and enthusiasm. www.gslsolutions.co.uk/

Facebook

Fantastic news we now have 115 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 packs with Charlotte from Seafaris.

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

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.

Escot

The centre here at Escot has proved to be a big hit this year with many positive comments about our work and the centre. Listening to the comments from the visitors we are pleased to hear that our media coverage about the work at Studland has led to many of them coming to Escot.

It is good news to hear how widely spread the problems at Studland have become and what amazing support we have for making the site a protected area

The display is developing all the time (it all costs money) so please keep coming back to see the changes. <http://www.escot-devon.co.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.

Patrons

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

Nick Baker	http://www.nickbaker.tv
Kate Humble	http://katehumble.com
Chris Packham	http://www.chrispackham.co.uk
Kirsty Jones	http://www.kirstyjones.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 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 are just about to launch our membership scheme via the website which we hope will appeal to the many people interested in supporting the trust; again this will help 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.

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, please make it payable to The Seahorse Trust.
- 🐡 **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.**

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.

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 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 Winter.

British
Seahorse
Survey



British Seahorse Survey

www.britishseahorsesurvey.org

Live Seahorse tank

www.seahorses.tv

The Seahorse Trust

www.theseahorsetrust.org

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