

The Seahorse Trust

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH NATURE

Autumn 2020

NEWSLETTER



What an incredible summer, so many highs and so many lows, and more and more people join our mission to save seahorses, the oceans, and the natural world for the future.

Please enjoy this newsletter, and if you want to send us your feedback, send us seahorse sightings, or support the Trust, through our adoption and membership scheme, or just make a donation to our work, then please email us on theseahorsetrust@gmail.com

Like so many charities we have been hit by COVID-19, so any support you can give us would be amazing.

World Seahorse Survey and online database

We have fantastic news, after years of trying to raise the funds to build an online portal for our World Seahorse Database, we have finally been given a grant from the Sealife Centres.

This grant will allow us to build an online portal linked to our database. The portal will allow seahorse spotters to report their sightings, and upload pictures of their finds into the database.

The Seahorse Trust already runs the biggest and longest-running seahorse survey database in the world. It originally started out as the British Seahorse Survey in 1994, and now covers at least 44 countries with well over 3,500 sightings on it.

This database has helped governments and organisations the world over, to help conserve and preserve seahorses, and we hope the new online portal will allow us to do so much more.

This funding is part of Sealife's commitment to the natural world and is part of a signposting project they are undertaking with a number of conservation organisations.

The idea is the public can go to one website to be able to report their sightings

Seahorse fact

In the UK and colder water areas, seahorses start their migration to deeper waters as the winter storms start to approach. There they stay, until the days get longer in the spring, and they then start to migrate back inshore to breed.



[Click on the logo to the right to go to their conservation page](#)



Lockdown recovery and then disaster. The lockdown has been terrible for humans, however for the natural world it finally gave it the break from constant pressure by human activity. All around the world we heard of remarkable stories of nature recovering and moving into areas previously taken over by mankind, it was a remarkable comeback.

Regular readers of our newsletters know the history of Studland Bay, and our final success with our partners in 2019, in making it into a Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ).

Studland Bay was one such amazing story of how nature fought back during the lockdown. After becoming a MCZ we then had a long winter and straight after that, lockdown. This gave the seahorses and seagrass a chance to make a rapid bounce back.

Imagine our surprise when we did the first dive after lockdown and discovered 16 seahorses; this is



after having no seahorses for a couple of years. The second dive saw 21, the third 17 and in the end we identified 46 individual Spiny Seahorses, which is the best we have ever had.

Sadly, the unlocking of humans meant that suddenly harmful activity started up again, and the seahorses were under renewed and greater pressure.

Because nobody could fly away on holiday, more visitors than ever visited the bay and we recorded over 400 anchors being dropped into this protected site on most days. The seahorses could not cope with this pressure and rapidly left the site, and in a very short time we were down from 46 to 3 seahorses. This is despite our amazing team of volunteers spending so many hours looking for them.



We hope that the protection for this site will finally start to happen next year, and here at the Trust we are teaming up with commercial, very green, partners to try and find a solution.

More on this in our next newsletter.



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Steve Backshall dives with The Seahorse Trust for The One

Just after lockdown, naturalist Steve Backshall came to Studland to see our work and tell the story of seahorses and Studland Bay for The One Show. The great news is we found 3 to be able to show him. It was a great day, even though we were working under social distancing rules, we managed to get the film we needed. When it was shown on The One

Show, we had 5 million people watch it. Steve is a really great chap and was genuinely concerned about the plight of the seahorses and has stayed in touch since.



As you can see from the pictures below it was a very quiet day at the beach but that worked out well as we had to socially distance, whilst



we were filming. Not an easy task, but the team were very professional, and made sure we were all safe.

Thanks to them all for a great day.

STOP THE CURIO TRADE

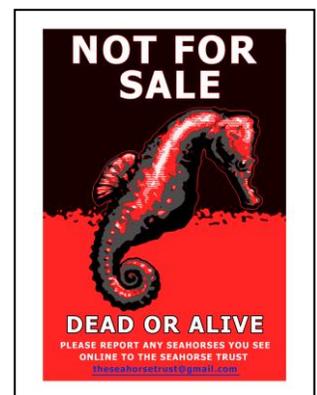
Etsy and the illegal trade in seahorses

The illegal trade in seahorses spans the world and so it is a massive problem to undertake, but here at the Trust, our small but dedicated Illegal Trade Team has done an amazing job in stemming the sale of seahorses on the internet.

We work with many organisations such as eBay, Amazon, Facebook, Spock and so many

others.

We are pleased to say that Etsy has now joined the group of online companies that have banned the sale of seahorses on their sites, in line with international and national laws. This was the last of the big internet sales platforms to allow such sales, and combined with the other platforms like Amazon, Facebook and all the others we estimate that we have stopped the sale of at least 150,000 seahorses per annum. Thank you to them all.



Seachangers grant and online seahorse course

In 2017, The Seahorse Trust was awarded a grant from the People's Postcode Local Trust to design and put online a seahorse survey course. Details for this course can be found on our website. It has been a very popular course and one of the comments that came back from it is, 'we need to know more about seahorses and what makes them tick'. As a result of this, Beccy Educational Director for The Seahorse Trust applied for and was awarded a grant from Sea Changers to put an online course together. We are all developing this at the moment and we hope to go online with it soon.

The course will cover all aspects of seahorse biology and ecology and exactly what makes them 'tick'.



As soon as the course goes online, we will let everyone know about it through our social media. Please keep an eye out for it.

[Click on the logo to the left to go to the Sea Changers website](#)

Sea Beneath

Working in partnership is crucial to the ethos of The Seahorse Trust and one partnership we are proud to have is with Sea Beneath. It was set up by Jemma who has an amazing passion for the ocean and all the creatures that live in it.

Working with Jemma we advised on her seahorse section, on her website and you can visit it by clicking on the logo. It is full of useful and fun facts about seahorses.



Seahorse fact

Seahorses do not mate for life. Some pair for a season, others are more opportunists.

In the summer season a male can get pregnant, give birth, and get pregnant again at least 6 to 8 times.



PLANET OCEAN Volunteers

The Seahorse Trust is so lucky to have so many volunteers to help, and they are all over the world, from Jessica in Bermuda, to the amazing team here in the UK. We call them PLANET OCEAN volunteers, as they are volunteering to look after planet ocean, this big beautiful blue ball we all call home.

They do a wide range of roles, from education, surveying, fund raising, stopping the illegal trade in seahorses, working on our IT, checking diving conditions, to just spreading the word.

There are so many of them, but we do have a core team who have spent years helping us, and we would like to say a massive thank you to them all.

Support us by making us your charity on

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Salcombe Brewery Beauty Kitchen



Trust Founder Neil popped down to Salcombe Brewery to pick a cheque as a donation towards our work. Every time someone buys a bottle of [Seahorse Ale](#), Salcombe Brewery kindly donate 5p towards our conservation and research work. It's the same with [Beauty Kitchen](#) who sell a range of



seahorse plankton products and they donate 1% of sales to our work. If it wasn't for the kindness of businesses and the public, we could not do the work we do. Check out our Sponsors Shops page to see who is supporting us, [and click on the logos to visit their sites](#)



Devon Environment Foundation

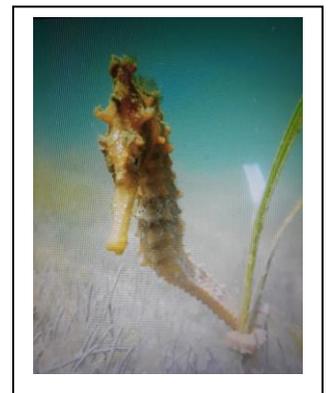
As they say, conservation should start at home, and with this in mind Trust founder Neil now sits on the Devon Environment Foundation Advisory Council. The DEF is a new local charity set up to channel funds from businesses and philanthropists that want to protect and restore nature in Devon to the grassroots projects that will make it happen. Its vision is to protect and restore 30% of Devon's land and water for nature.

It is an exciting new branch of the Conservation Collective, a charity that funds nature regeneration in special places around the world.

To find out more about DEF visit www.devonenvironment.org or @Devon_Enviro.

Roger in California

A special mention has to go to Roger in California who builds biomes for seahorses. These underwater cities are being copied all over the world, to provide shelter and homes for seahorses. Roger has been doing this for about 5 years, which is a long time. He has made thousands of dives onto his seahorse cities, but he has only seen 'his' seahorses a handful of times. Some of the seahorses have been with him since day one and he has seen them grow and develop into adults. Long may his work carry on and thanks to him from the seahorses and everyone here at The Seahorse Trust.



Grow flowers and protect seahorses

Wildflower Favours not only supports our work through their seahorse-inspired seed packets, but also by making regular donations to our work from the seed packets.

Check them out at <https://wildflower-favours.co.uk/>





Seahorses, nature and COVID-19

One thing this awful COVID-19 has taught us, is that nature can and will make a comeback, if mankind lets her. We saw at Studland how quickly the seahorse numbers bounced back, after the long winter and then lockdown.

There was peace and quiet in nature and all sorts of amazing things started to happen. Orca and other whales were singing more, because they could hear each other. Wildlife came into

cities, the sky was clearer because of no con trails from jet planes. Road kill reduced dramatically, hedgerows burst with life and sound. We need to go forward with this fresh in our minds, and redouble our efforts to make nature a priority. Without it, we are lost. Support us and help us make a difference. <https://www.theseahorsetrust.org/support-us/>

Adopt a seahorse or become a member

Why not adopt a seahorse or become a member of [The Seahorse Trust](https://www.theseahorsetrust.org/) and join the fastest-growing and biggest seahorse charity in the world to make a difference to our planet.

Find out more at:- <https://www.theseahorsetrust.org/support-us/>

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The Seahorse Trust

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