

COASTWISE

NORTH DEVON

August 2017

AUTUMN PROGRAMME

October

- 12 Seals of South West England, Sue Sayer, Cornwall Seal Group
- 19 Lundy Granite, Stan Coats, geologist
- 26 Building your Knowledge of Intertidal Species, Heather Buttivant, "Cornish Rockpools" blog

November

- 2 Seasearch Diving, Maggs Ashton, Ilfracombe Dive Club
 - 9 Fantastic Plastic? Imogen Napper, Plymouth University
 - 16 The Animals of the Foreshore, ecologist Pip Jollands
 - 23 Surveying our Coast with Coastal Creatures, Cat Oliver, Coastal Creatures Project Officer
 - 30 Members' Session, Nicola Mello
- December
- 7 Amazon Adventure, Jack Wiggins, Petroc
 - 14 Introducing the Marine Pioneer Project - Chrissie Ingle, North Devon Biosphere, tbc.

ON THE LIZARD

This year the annual spring Coastwise excursion organised by Mavis Symons was to Kennack Sands on The Lizard. Its extensive rock pools and overhangs & gullies provide a sheltered environment and different fauna from North Devon. Different geology too. Geological heat and pressure has resulted in the attractive Serpentine, basalt and peridotite rock that form an intriguing backdrop to Kennack.

Expert guides Trudy Russell and Jason Birt helped us find beautiful sea slugs, unusual sponges & sea squirts, lovely ascidians, and even the hermit crab that seems to be making its Torrey Canyon comeback, the St Piran's crab. We were also lucky enough to witness one of rock-pooling's more striking spectacles - ragworms surfacing to mix their eggs(rt) & sperm in a wriggly fertilising dance.
Photo Rob Jutsum



Coastwise is teaming up with AONB's Coastal Creatures and the Marine Biological Association for a 24 hour Bioblitz at Lee on 22/23 September. After a schools programme on Friday morning, the Bioblitz will open to the public from 2 pm Friday to 3 pm on Saturday. Lots of family activities & mini missions will be on offer.

The aim of a Bioblitz is for experts to help others learn more about nature whilst together they identify and record as many different animals and plant species as possible in 24 hours.

Coastwise Bioblitz organiser Nicola Mello says "We hope this survey will strengthen our knowledge of local species and record new arrivals, such as the rare crab Xaiva biguttata, found during a Capturing our Coast survey at Lee earlier this year".

Basecamp will be at Lee Village Hall with a beach-side presence for Coastwise in the Biosphere Dome.

Lee Bay BioBlitz Outline Programme

- Friday
- 10.30-2.00...Schools Programme
 - 2.00-3.30...Woodland Walk
 - 4.00-5.30...Seine Netting, Push Netting, Plankton Trawling
 - 7.00-9.00...Creatures of the Night
 - 12.00-3.00...Midnight Rockpooling
- Saturday
- 6.30-8.00...Dawn Chorus
 - 10.00-10.30...Moth & Small Mammal Reveal
 - 10.00-12.00...Cetacean Watch
 - 10.30-11.30...Bug & Spider Hunt
 - 12.00-1.00...Freshwater Search
 - 1.30-3.00...Rockpool Rambles

COASTAL CREATURES SUCCESSES

The AONB Coastal Creatures Project, which runs to July 2018, has already proved to be a huge success. Project Officer Cat Oliver has used her marine and organisational expertise to support Coastwise activities throughout her first year in post - see Shore Time below. Yet this has only been a fraction of her achievements. Two more are of particular interest to Coastwise. She ran 20 beach cleans under Tesco's Bags for Life scheme, mobilising 1000 volunteers, including plenty of members, 3 of whom are pictured below.



For many of us it is the links she has made with local schools that are of special value - ten or so to date with more in her sites. One event alone, a March Bioblitz led by Coastal Creatures project partner Graham Hockley of Combe Martin School, was attended by over 300 children from local schools. Those that took part were still talking about it months later.

SHORE TIME FOR COASTWISE

Over 20 or so members signed up to take part in survey sessions & training workshops offered by the Coastal Creatures Project. So far 10 surveys have been completed, 8 general species and 2 biotope surveys. 4 training workshops have been given: Algae identification, Coastal Creatures survey methodology, Coastal photography & Seashore safari training. More expert workshops on Anemones, Crabs & Polychaetes are planned. An informal workshop on Microscopes & mini-beasts was also organised by members.

A keen cohort of "Coastwiser" has developed with improved ID skills, greater confidence and enthusiasm for surveying. We hope to build on this and continue the submission of data to iRecord that has started under the Project.

The very full programme of summer shore events included public shore safaris which peaked during the school holidays. Attendances, often in excess of 50 participants, included many young families with a welcome level of curiosity and enthusiasm.

Under our striking beach umbrella our temporary tanks proved as popular as ever stewarded by Brian Heath and Sue Austin, busily answering a multitude of questions whilst keeping creatures cool and safe. At Lee Bay our display had strong competition, from a young Common Seal perched nearby. Thankfully those keeping watch over it were able to deal well with the interest it aroused. Appropriately seals are the subject of our first autumn talk.

Coastwise owes much to the Coastal Creatures Project for this packed shore programme. We will be planning how to sustain the best into the future in the coming months. Member-led events could be one way. Jan Whittington invited others to join her on visits to her favourite spots this summer, to Bucks Mills and Tunnels Beach, Ilfracombe. Several did so and clearly relished the experience, plenty of uncommon and colourful life at both, with the added bonus of surge gulley swimming for those seeking, successfully, the cup corals and jewel anemones at Tunnels.

Still to come: A shore census at Lee Bay, 20 September, 11.30 am, then the Lee Bioblitz on 22/23 September, followed by our last shore safari of the year, at Hele on 7th October on a 0.6m tide.

FLOTSAM

- Several members joined Cat's biotope mapping - using a Trimble/GPS device to map the patchwork of ecological communities on key beaches - brilliant.
- We undertook our regular Shore Thing surveying at Lee & Abbotsham with Pip Jollands.
- Snorkel training sessions were held for us by Chris Mandry at Woolacombe Holiday Park
- Ten members went to see Glimpses of the Wonderful, the Exeter Museum exhibition honouring Gosse and others. Congratulations to the museum for putting marine life at the heart of its summer shows.
- Jan Whittington, Nicola Mello & Paula Ferris got First Aid trained by First with Iain, Bideford, in August.
- Sue Austin produced some lovely Business Cards to help us recruit.
- Cat Oliver ran an introductory social media training session for members.
- Nicola Mello set up the @coastwiser Twitter account.
- Membership of Facebook-Coastwise North Devon run by Jan Whittington attracts members from far & wide.