

Saunton visit starts summer survey season

The third year of Coastwise beach profiling got under way on 28th May with a visit a couple of ours ahead of the low tide, 1.3m, to Saunton led by Paula Ferris.

She reports “Half a dozen of us monitored the shore and were delighted to find so much life and activity amongst the marine animals. It was a lovely day and the recent good weather has encouraged the hydroids to beard the undersides of the rocks, a sure sign for me that there will be an increase in sea slugs and other animals that feed on them.

In all we recorded 64 species of seaweed and animals, and I think the numbers and health of the sea anemones impressed even members of our anemone project team.

Illustration 1: Sargatia

One low shore gully, under too much water in previous years and now full of sand, could be accessed for the first time and there we found an anemone not previously seen by us on this coast, probably a *Sagartia*, the elusive Glaucus Pimplet, and the Celtic Sea Slug, both specialties of our stretch of coast.



There were also up to a dozen hermit crabs scuttling about, the eggs of a Common Grey sea slug and Jay Nicholson found a large shore crab shedding its shell.

The day before I had found the slug itself, and on taking hydroids home to the microscope another 2 species of sea slug - *Eubranchia farrani* & *Polysera quadrilineata*, the former comical, the latter elegant.”

Fecundity seemed to be all around from the Egg Wrack on the strandline oozing orange gametes, to the string of eggs in a mid shore rock recess, probably squid but awaiting confirmation from Marlin.



Illustration 2: Common Grey Sea Slug

The Croyde beach profile update takes place on 28th June, meet Baggy Car Park, 11 am.



Illustration 3: Shore Crab Shedding Shell



Illustration 4: Squid Eggs (Probably !)