

Eric Pufahl Reports from the seashores of North Devon...

.Coastwise Shore safari, Barricane beach Thursday 16th June 2011

The weather was fine for the Festival shore safari, the 5th safari in our 2011 summer programme.



About 40 people assembled at Barricane for 11am, mostly couples and some families with very young children. Jim Monroe and Mavis Symmons led groups down the shore while other Coastwise members went out to find interesting creatures.

The main interest centred on sea hares and the jellies stranded on the shore, particularly the sea gooseberries. These were placed in the aquarium with some small fish and crabs and proved a magnet for both visitors and Coastwise members. Dave Jenkins brought along some of his strandline finds, including a dolphin skull, and ocean drifters such as Violet Snails and tropical beans,

collected during twenty years of beach combing.

A push net made by Malcolm Roberts for Coastwise had its first outing. Using it, both he and Coastwise guest, Brian Watts of Woolacombe, scoured the shallows. This 'sand dredging' resulted in a small collection of sand camouflaged shrimps and crabs, demonstrating the adaptive behaviour of these animals. Brian ventured into some of the lower shore pools where he caught fish and Lesser Weaver stung by the latter.

After the safari Clive went pool snorkelling and somewhat by water clouded spot a couple of Ballan



of sand camouflaged shrimps the adaptive behaviour of these into some of the lower shore small fish including young flat Fish, fortunately avoiding being

Symmons and Jim Monroe despite being thwarted with plankton, still managed to Wrasse in the pool.

Lee Bay Shore Safari 2nd August

A 1pm start at Lee Bay and already the beach is full of families, dogs and various types of watercraft. Once the Shore Safari table and aquarium appear at the collection point, families congregate. Jim and Mavis lead a group each. A woman from Oxford enjoyed Mavis's group at Barricane so much last year that she brought several members of her family with her to Lee from Oxford just for the day, and of course Mavis was delighted.

The rest of the Shore Safari team hunt for specimens, provide information at the table or sell shore guides. We also tested out a slightly larger plastic tank that Clive brought along. The sun heats the aquarium waters and soon the need to change the aquarium waters becomes a concern and people are sent out to collect cooler water from the sea. The tide recedes quite a way this day and the Shore Safari team (and a few of the youngsters) bring in a range of animals including shrimps, crabs and various fish. A sea spider and a number of brittlestars are found by Matt Hill.



Despite Jim's concern there wouldn't be much to be found this day, an interesting range of creatures were available for the 100+ visitors. Comments made to Coastwise members and left via the website suggests many visitors thoroughly enjoyed their Shore Safari experience.

Combe Martin Shore Safari 16th August 2011

Another very lively Shore Safari at Combe Martin Beach: 100+ participants, the majority children. The weather was kind, not too hot so the two aerated aquaria didn't need water changes. Two groups set out, led by Mavis Symmons and Jim Monroe while Brian Heath and Paula Ferris stayed by the Coastwise table to talk with visitors about the marine life in the aquaria. The highlight catches of the day were probably the Long-spined Scorpion fish and Montagu's Blenny. Two Blue-rayed Limpets were also found. Some of the younger visitors were particularly impressive in their curiosity and thoughtfulness about their finds and the aquarium residents. Spits of rain started as the tide turned and the marine creatures were all returned to their natural habitats and afternoon tea beckoned the intrepid explorers.