

# North Sea News



Issue 7 – Winter 2012

2011 was a busy year for the North Sea Wildlife Trusts, Marine Conservation Zones were recommended, thousands of people supported our Petition Fish campaign and exciting surveys were undertaken revealing new and fascinating finds.

During the winter period we spend considerable time analysing the findings of our summer survey work and planning the next year's survey. Here's a glimpse at what was discovered during 2011 and where 2012 might take us.....

## 2011 Highlights & 2012 plans

### Shoresearch

Five of the east coast Wildlife Trusts undertook training in shore survey, revealing exciting local finds. The last survey to take place was with Suffolk Wildlife Trust in October.



Keep an eye on the North Sea website for local Wildlife Trust Shoresearch surveys during 2012.

### Seaweed East

Seaweed East, a survey of the seaweed found on the East Coast revealed a new species of sponge within Norfolk's chalk reef and recorded 126 different seaweed species. During the survey samples of the seaweeds were collected, dried and pressed and have since been scanned. These scans will be available to view once all identification has been confirmed. Thanks to Rob Spray and Dawn Watson for all the hard work put in to make this happen as well as all the partners who supported the survey. Full data records can be seen here [http://www.seasearcheast.org.uk/Seaweed\\_East\\_1\\_1\\_docs/Seaweed%20East%20species%20counts.pdf](http://www.seasearcheast.org.uk/Seaweed_East_1_1_docs/Seaweed%20East%20species%20counts.pdf)

### Seasearch

Seasearch North East and East Anglia completed a range of exciting dives and continue to go from strength to strength. Seasearch North East welcomes a new coordinator, Paula Lightfoot who along with Yorkshire Wildlife Trust and other local divers plan to put together a show stopping programme of dives for 2012. Keep checking the Seasearch website for full details which will be released shortly <http://www.seasearch.co.uk/>

### Waves of Waste

Yorkshire Wildlife Trust begun a new volunteer litter recording programme to help clear Yorkshire's beaches of rubbish and to help identify key litter sources. To become a volunteer visit <http://www.ywt.org.uk/news/2011/12/02/help-clear-our-waves-waste>

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## White-Beaked Dolphin surveys

Northumberland Wildlife Trust has been working with Northern Experience Wildlife Tours to increase data available for White-beaked Dolphins in the North East. We hope the data from these surveys will help identify key areas of importance for this species off the Northumberland Coast.



© Martin Kitching Northern Experience Wildlife Tours  
<http://www.northernexperiencewildlifetours.co.uk/news.php?story=41>

## Divers delights off the Lincolnshire Coast

The North Sea Wildlife Trusts teamed up with Hull University this summer to ensure data was collected from a key range of North Sea sites. This included the Lincolnshire coast. Given the lack of diving currently undertaken off the Lincolnshire coast we were uncertain what we'd find, however the results were astonishing....revealing carpets of bryozoans and hydroids, sunstars and more.....



*This photograph alone shows over 30 different species of marine wildlife.*

## What to look out for in 2012?

- Keep an eye on your local Wildlife Trust website or [www.northseawildlife.org.uk](http://www.northseawildlife.org.uk) for spring events and surveys
- Yorkshire Wildlife Trust will, this summer be opening the first East Coast fully marine visitor centre, the Flamborough Living Seas Centre at Flamborough South Landing.
- The North Sea Wildlife Trusts will be heading out to sea to the Dogger Bank to survey seabirds, cetaceans and get a glimpse of what exciting marine wildlife the seabed holds.



### NORTH SEA WILDLIFE TRUSTS

Like our facebook page to get all the latest news and events and to share your stories with us.

## Petition Fish Update

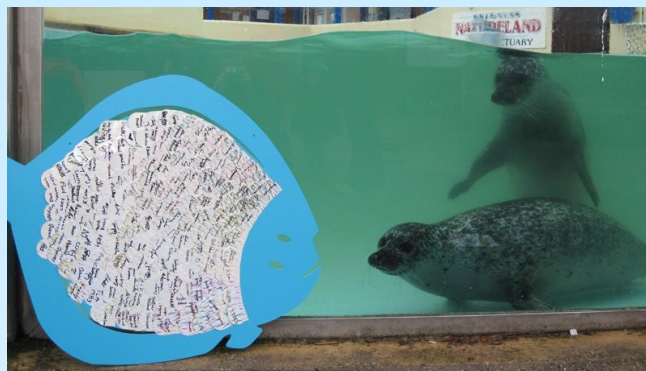
The campaign to put pressure upon our Governments to create a network of Marine Protected Areas is as important as ever. At the end of 2011 further delays were announced for the designation of our Marine Conservation Zones, resulting in no sites receiving designation until 2013 at the earliest.

Not long ago, we had huge populations of fish like cod in our seas, and fantastic marine mammals swam along our coast, such as the blue whale. Today, 88% of marine fish stocks are overexploited and two species of whale and dolphin are now extinct from UK waters. However, there is still the potential for recovery if we take action to protect our seas now. A network of MPAs is one of the vital tools towards achieving Living Seas. Thank you to those of you who have supported the campaign to date, please encourage others to do the same.

MP for York Central, Hugh Bayley has voiced his support and urged Fisheries Minister Richard Benyon to ensure that the Government uses the new marine laws to designate MPAs.



*Hugh Bayley supports Yorkshire Wildlife Trusts Petition Fish*



*.....Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust have recruited new supporters for their Petition Fish*



*And Norfolk Wildlife Trust continues to bring in crowds of signatures.....*

Help us to support our marine life by encouraging your friends and family to support our Marine Conservation Zones. Sign a scale at [wildlifetrusts.org/petitionfish](http://wildlifetrusts.org/petitionfish) today!! Or visit [www.northseawildlife.org.uk](http://www.northseawildlife.org.uk) and check the Living Seas events on offer for 2012.

## Porcupine Annual Conference, Hull



The Porcupine Marine Natural History Society (PMNHS) annual conference will be held at The Deep in Hull from 23-25<sup>th</sup> March with a provisional theme of “Why Marine Taxonomy?” Oral and poster presentations will be delivered on Friday and Saturday, with a field trip to Thornwick Bay on Sunday. Wildlife Trust speakers and staff will be available throughout the conference to answer any questions you may have.

PMNHS are interested in marine natural history and recording. Their aims are to promote a wider understanding of the biology, ecology and distribution of marine organisms by stimulating interest and encouraging the exchange of information.

If you have found something unusual along our shorelines or out at sea, PMNHS have a data scheme that collects formal and informal data. For more information about the society or to attend the conference, take a look at their website [pmnhs.co.uk](http://pmnhs.co.uk).



## Whales, Dolphins & Seabird Survey Training with MARINELife

Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> February 10.30-3.30pm



Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust

Charity No. 218895



MARINELife, the European marine conservation research charity, is seeking new volunteers to observe marine wildlife such as dolphins as part of vital new survey work in the North Sea.

A land-based training session for potential research surveyors in how to monitor whales, dolphins and seabirds scientifically will be taking place at Lincolnshire Wildlife Trusts' **Far Ings NNR Visitor Centre, Barton upon Humber, North Lincolnshire, DN18 5RG**

**Cost: £30 (£25 for Wildlife Trust Volunteers)**

For more information or to make a booking please contact: **Tricia Dendle, MARINELife Administrator, [tricia.dendle@marine-life.org.uk](mailto:tricia.dendle@marine-life.org.uk)**



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## Marine Planning Update

“Marine Planning is in full flow for the East Marine plan areas which cover Flamborough Head down to Felixstowe and out to our territorial limit. The Marine Management Organisation (MMO) has published its first document on the Evidence and Emerging Issues, which details all of the different activities in our area and the issues these pose; these issues will form the basis of the marine plan. The next step in the process will be setting the objectives for the plan area which should occur in mid March when an informal consultation will take place. The Wildlife Trusts will be trying to ensure that the environment and conservation are an important part of these objectives. The MMO are also keen to hear from members of the public who visit the coast and marine environment and so will be holding public drop in sessions throughout the plan area in February. For more information on marine planning and the public drop in sessions please see the current MMO Newsletter –

[http://www.marinemangement.org.uk/marineplanning/newsletters/newsletter6.htm#Article2.](http://www.marinemangement.org.uk/marineplanning/newsletters/newsletter6.htm#Article2)”



## Marine Species of the Week Thornback Ray



Rays and skates have rubbery skeletons made of cartilage – just like the squidgy bit on the tip of your nose. Traditionally we call the ones with longer snouts skate but the most important difference is the way they produce young. Rays give birth to live offspring whilst skates produce egg cases – commonly known as mermaid's purses. So the Thornback Ray, (*Raja clavata*), is really a skate!

The Thornback Ray is one of the easiest rays to identify because of the 30-50 thorns on its upper surface that give rise to its usual name. The Thornback ray has plenty of other common names too, often known as a Roker or Maiden Ray.

While walking along the shoreline you may see the dark, dried washed up egg cases of skates and sharks. Thornback egg cases are unusually large, covering the palm of an adult hand. To identify your egg case finds go to [www.eggcase.org](http://www.eggcase.org).



Visit [suffolkwildlifetrust.org](http://suffolkwildlifetrust.org) to follow their weekly profiles of marine species throughout 2012 to celebrate Suffolk's Living Seas.