

Seaquest Southwest is a marine citizen science and public participation project run by the Cornwall Wildlife Trust

Seaquest Southwest

ANNUAL REPORT 2018



CORNWALL LIFE

www.cornwallwildlifetrust.org.uk/seaquest

Cornwall
Wildlife Trust



Cornwall has over 350 miles of diverse coastline, ranging from the rugged and wild north coast to the calm and beautiful south coast. The surrounding waters are home to some incredible marine wildlife, from the harbour porpoise, Europe's smallest cetacean, right up to the fin whale, the world's second largest marine mammal.

Cornwall Wildlife Trust

works tirelessly to protect Cornwall's marine wildlife and wild places for future generations to enjoy. The Living Seas marine conservation team at CWT coordinate a series of different projects within the county, all of which work towards achieving our three major aims; to collect data on marine ecosystems, to create awareness of the threats facing marine life and to campaign for better protection of our marine habitats. Seaquest Southwest is one of these fantastic marine projects.



Cornwall Wildlife Trust

Protecting Cornwall's wildlife

Seaquest Southwest

is a citizen science marine recording project. For over 20 years we have been recording the distribution and abundance of our most charismatic marine wildlife; including dolphins, sharks, whales, porpoises, seals, sunfish and much more. Through educational activities and public events such as the Seaquest roadshow, evening talks and boat trips, we aim to increase people's awareness of these species and the threats they are under. The project incorporates sighting records sent in by the public with structured surveys conducted by trained volunteers, to better understand and monitor these species around the South West. Only with evidence-based records of occurrence, behaviour and ecology can we act to better protect and conserve these wonderful animals around our coasts.

▼ *National Whale and Dolphin Watch at Towan Head, photo by Niki Clear*



Aims of Seaquest Southwest



- 1 To engage people with the marine environment.
- 2 To collect data on marine wildlife.
- 3 To better understand and conserve marine wildlife.

Seaquest Southwest 2018 Key Facts and Figures

1,301

Wildlife sightings reported to Seaquest in 2018

16

Marine mega-fauna species reported through 2018

25

Seaquest Public Sea Watches were run around the county

1,036

People engaged with the project including trips and surveys

133

People submitted sightings and/or survey data

34

Sites surveyed during Seaquest Surveys

166

Seaquest effort surveys conducted all around the coast

360 1/2

Hours of dedicated seaquest survey effort

5

Evening talks and training sessions over the winter.

20

New volunteers recruited and trained

86

People attended the Marine Recorders Conference

10

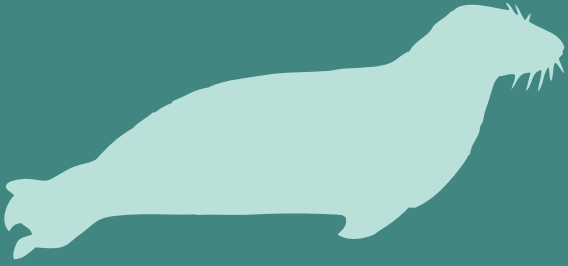
Surveys conducted as part of National Whale and Dolphin Watch

Seaquest Volunteer Support

We were very lucky to have Katie Bellman as the Volunteer Coordinator for Seaquest Southwest through 2018, until she finished in September to start an exciting position with the Cornwall Seal Group Research Trust. Katie led on supporting the Seaquesters (Seaquest volunteers), running training sessions, coordinating events and surveys as well as supporting the Marine Conservation Officer of Cornwall Wildlife Trust.

We want to thank Katie for her fantastic work over the last 2 years on Seaquest on behalf of the CWT team and all the Seaquest volunteers and partners. From August 2018, we welcomed Niki Clear to the Seaquest team when Niki joined the CWT Marine Team as maternity cover for Abby Crosby.

Seaquest Surveys



Rather than relying solely on casual sightings records, a better understanding of marine and coastal wildlife is achieved through ‘effort-based’ surveys, either from land or from boats.

These surveys are carried out by trained volunteers, and have been a key focus of Seaquest Southwest in recent years. This is a key focus for the project, and we have over 20 years of effort based survey data for Cornwall.

▼ *Bluefin tuna by Dan Murphy*

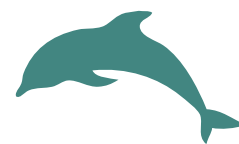


A key aim of Seaquest Southwest is to collect robust effort data of large marine wildlife through cliff-top effort based surveys, following the Seaquest Southwest survey protocol. Seaquest trains and supports volunteers to take part with these surveys by attending Public Seaquest Watches, join a Seaquest Sunday watch with their associated local marine groups or go to their favourite cliff top and run their own watch. These surveys can be run at any time of day, and Seaquest organised watches are typically run from 11am to 1pm. The information collected by volunteers whilst out on a Seaquest survey not only gives us a 'snap-shot' of what's happening around our coast, it also gives us vital information about which sections of the coast are key for these animals, and offers us an insight into their seasonal and annual changes and changes in their distribution. This gives us an understanding of the lives of marine mega-fauna in Cornwall and makes a real contribution towards effective protection and conservation for these species.

During 2018, 166 Seaquest Surveys were conducted as part of the project by the CWT Seaquest team and our trained volunteers, consisting of 360 ½ hours of effort at different locations all around the coast of Cornwall. There were 9 different species sighted during Seaquest surveys; harbour porpoise, grey seal, common dolphin, ocean sunfish, Risso's dolphin, bottlenose dolphin, basking shark, minke whale, barrel jellyfish, and some unknown dolphin or cetacean sightings.

St Agnes Head continues to be the most popular watch point for Seaquest Surveys with 60 surveys at the headland. It is a favourite spot for many key Seaquest volunteers and is the base for St Agnes Marine Conservation Group Seaquest events, as well as Seaquest Southwest public events. Harbour porpoise was the most commonly sighted species at St Agnes in 2018, with almost 20% of survey time watching these animals in the area. Common dolphin are often seen travelling past the site as well as feeding close in and further off shore, and grey seals are seen below the watch point. Risso's dolphin, basking shark and barrel jellyfish were also recorded in the waters off St Agnes Head. Harbour porpoise were most commonly sighted between March and May, and October to November, while common dolphins are most commonly sighted between July and November at St Agnes.

The Rumps, near Polzeath was the focus of 19 surveys and was the second most commonly surveyed site for 2018, followed by Black Head, St Austell with 14 surveys. At the Rumps, harbour porpoise was the most commonly spotted species with 24% of survey time watching these animals, Grey seals and common dolphins were also commonly sighted. Harbour porpoise are most commonly sighted from February to May, with another peak during October, where as common dolphin were sighted, March to April and during the summer, June to August.



▲ *Basking Shark* by Alan Woodward

Thank you to the Seaquest surveyors for all the survey effort in 2018

Adrian Tregunna
Becky Thomas
Brenda Tregunna
Colan Robinson
Dan Murphy
Dave Williams
Dave Wilshire
Emily Pollitt
Falmouth Marine
Conservation

Ian Boreham
Jane Duffy
Jax Keenan
Kate Williams
Katie Bellman
Mac McKenzie
Marion McKenzie
Meg Hayward-Smith
Mike Taylor

Newquay Marine
Group
Niki Clear
Pauline McKeogh
Richard Weeks
St Agnes Marine
Conservation Group
Stan Christophers
Terry Carne
Vic Hall

Seaquest Survey Sites

2018 Top 10 Survey Sites	No. of Surveys	Total Survey Time	Rate of Sightings (%)	No. of species seen	Species *
St Agnes Head	60	134:00	38%	7	HP, GS, CD, OS, RD, BS, BJ
The Rumps, Polzeath	19	44:00	41%	3	HP, CD, GS
Black Head, St Austell	14	28:30	40%	3	HP, CD, GS
Towan Head, Newquay	12	25:00	37%	3	HP, GS, CD
Lizard NT Wildlife Watch point	9	18:30	82%	3	GS, HP, BS
Trevoze Head	5	10:00	36%	2	GS, HP
Godrevy Point, St Ives Bay	5	10:00	52%	2	GS, HP
Pendennis Point, Falmouth	5	09:15	13%	2	CD, HP
St Ives NCI	4	08:15	65%	3	HP, GS, CD
Willapark headland, Boscastle	4	08:00	6%	1	GS

HP = harbour porpoise / CD = common dolphin / GS = grey seal / BND = bottlenose dolphin / RD = Risso's dolphin / MW = minke whale / BS = basking shark / OS = ocean sunfish / BJ = barrel jellyfish

* Species are listed in order of prevalence at that site

▼ *Seaquest Survey at St Ives NCI by Niki Clear*

Sightings per hour at Seaquest survey points ►



In 2018, 34 sites were visited for Seaquest Surveys all over the coast of Cornwall, accumulating in 360 ½ hours of effort or 1,961 intervals of effort, through organised Seaquest events and surveys conducted by trained volunteers. The table on page 6 shows the top 10 most surveyed sites for Seaquest in 2018, and the proportion of positive sighting intervals for that site. Species recorded in 2018 for those sites are also listed in order of most commonly recorded to least. St Agnes, the Rumps, Towan Head, St Ives and Black Head continue to be key sites for harbour porpoise, and harbour porpoise were recorded in 19 of the 34 sites overall. Grey seals were recorded at the majority of surveyed sites (19 of the 34 sites surveyed) and in the top 10 sites Pendennis Point, Falmouth is the only exception for grey seal sightings. Common dolphin was recorded at 13 sites, and in 2018 bottlenose dolphin was only recorded at one site during Seaquest surveys.

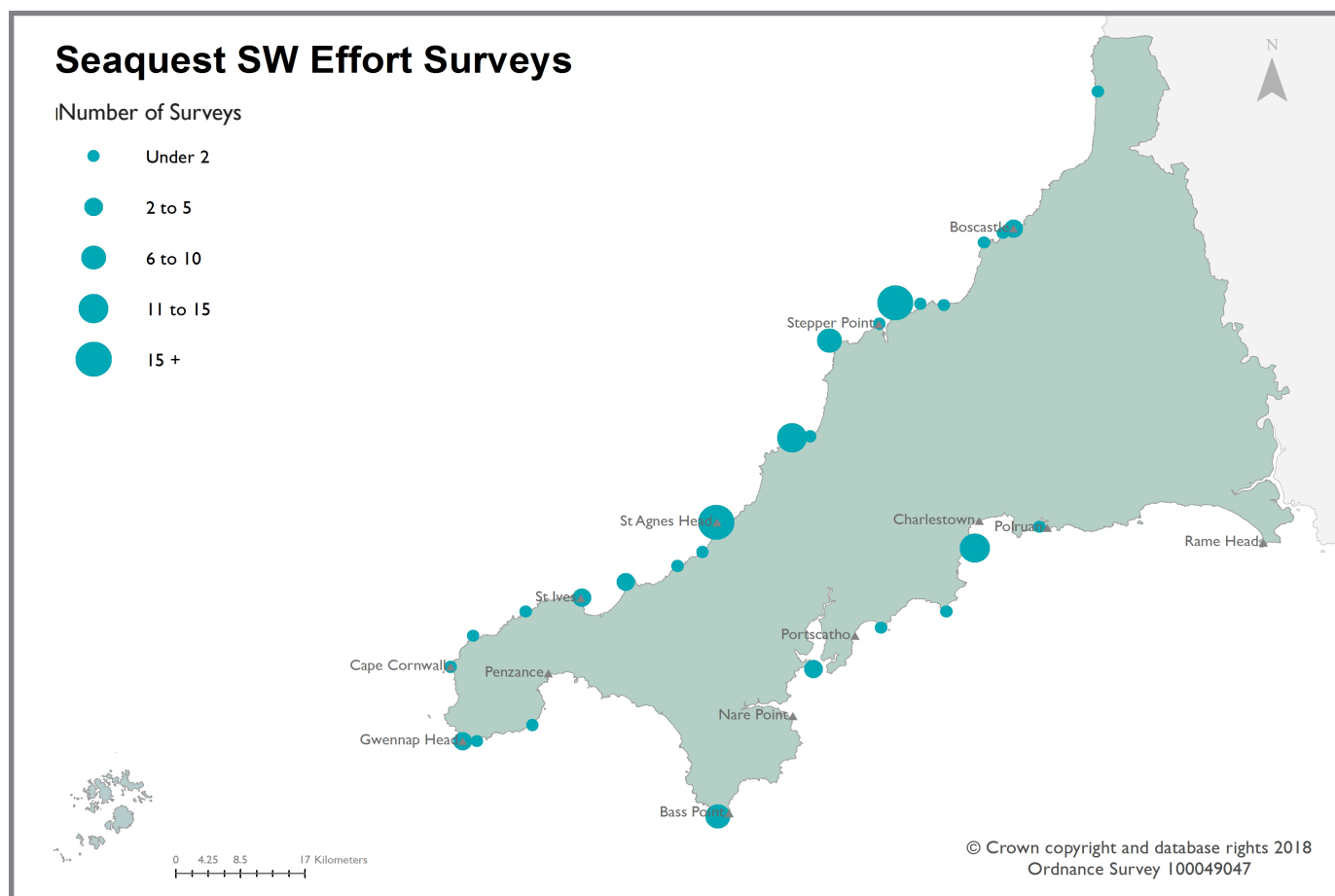
Due to the importance of the site for grey seals, Lizard Point has been identified as one the locations with reliable sightings, with 82% of surveys being

sighting positive, and similarly Godrevy had a grey seal present in 52% of time watching. However, if we exclude seals from the analysis cetaceans, sharks, fish or jellyfish were seen during 8% of time watching at Lizard point and 10% at Godrevy.

St Ives NCI was the key site for 2018 sightings with an astonishing 65% of intervals being sighting positive. 42% of survey time had sightings of cetacean species (common dolphin and harbour porpoise), showing that St Ives bay is not only important for seals, but also for porpoise and dolphins.

The Rump was a reliable site for sightings in 2018 with 41% of intervals being sighting positive, with harbour porpoise and common dolphin being the most frequently sighted species there. Black Head, St Austell had a similar sighting pattern with 40% of intervals being sighting positive.

St Agnes Head was the most surveyed and also had the highest number of different species recorded. 38% of intervals were sighting positive and the majority of these sightings consisting of cetacean species, mainly harbour porpoise and common dolphin.



Seaquest Surveys

Effort Sightings

9 species were recorded during Seaquest Surveys in 2018, including the Cornwall Big 4; harbour porpoise, common dolphin, grey seal and bottlenose dolphin. Seaquest volunteers were also lucky enough to spot some seasonal marine visitors while on the cliffs, including basking shark, Risso's dolphin, minke whale and barrel jellyfish.

Harbour porpoise was the most frequently sighted species across all sites with 344 sighting positive intervals, followed by grey seal with 267 intervals, and common dolphin with 140 intervals. Unusually bottlenose dolphin were a rare sighting throughout the year with animals only being spotted at one site (Port Quin) in 2018 and for a total of 5 intervals, compared to the 30 intervals, at 7 sites in 2017. Common dolphin were seen at more sites and more often during 2018 compared with 2017, which is similar to the casual sightings reports. This suggests that more common dolphins are currently using our inshore waters.

From historic Seaquest surveys harbour porpoise are

generally seen the whole year around with a slight dip in numbers during the summer months. This pattern was also seen in 2018 sightings of harbour porpoise, with the peaks for sightings between January and May, then again in October to December.

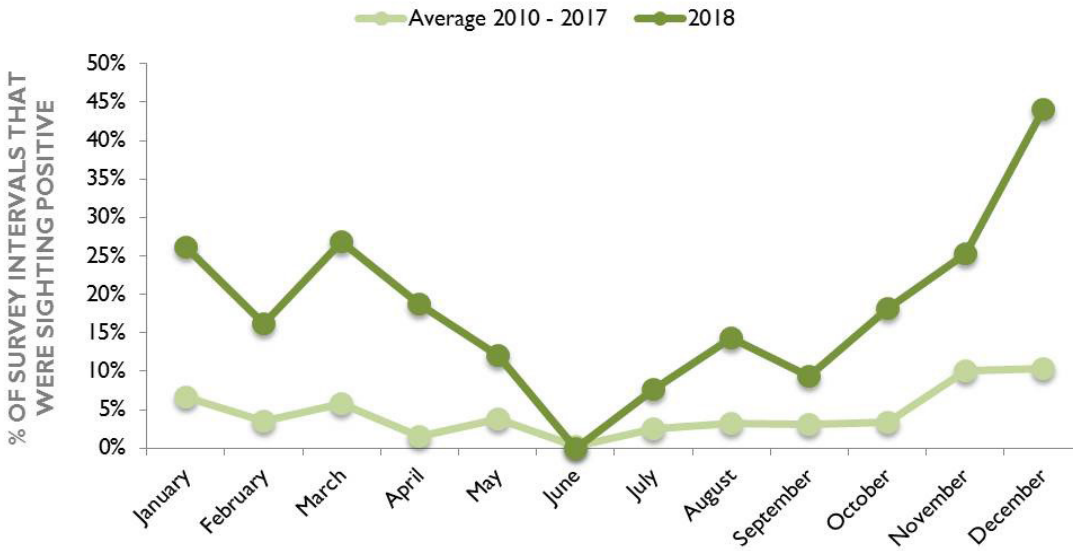
Common dolphins have a different pattern, when looking at survey data for all years, showing a peak for sightings during the late summer and autumn months. This was also seen during 2018. There were slightly more sightings during January to March than in previous years.

For 2019, we are hoping to build the number of survey hours at some key sites, including the focus sites for the associated Local Marine Groups, as well as other favourite survey locations around the coast. This is to help build a clearer picture of the distribution of marine mega-fauna around the coast. So make sure to bring your forms and binoculars with you when heading to the cliff-tops, and join in the Seaquest surveys running all around the beautiful Cornish coastline in 2019

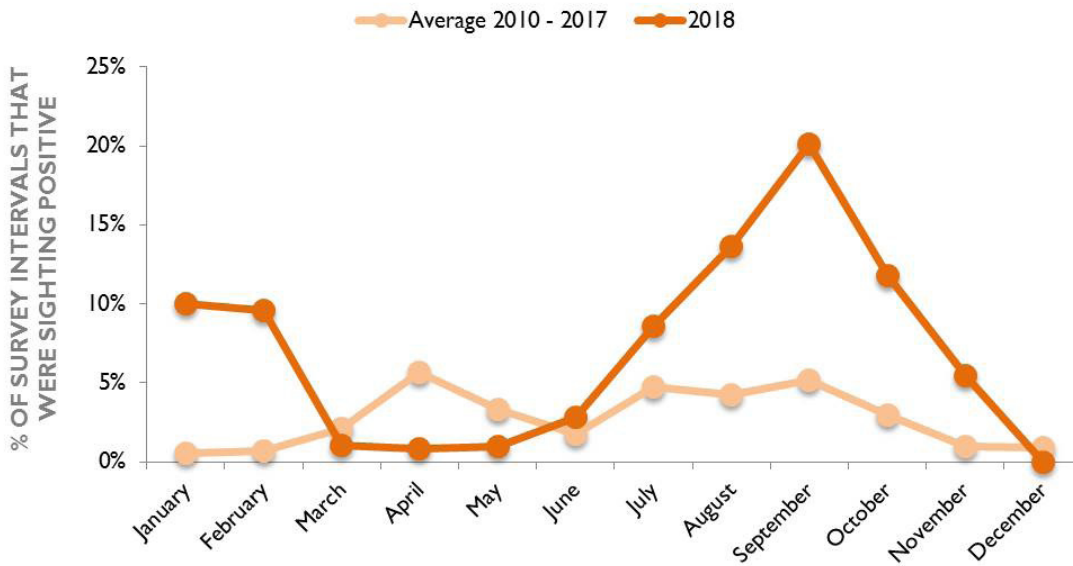
▼ *Harbour porpoise at the Rumps by Pauline McKeogh*



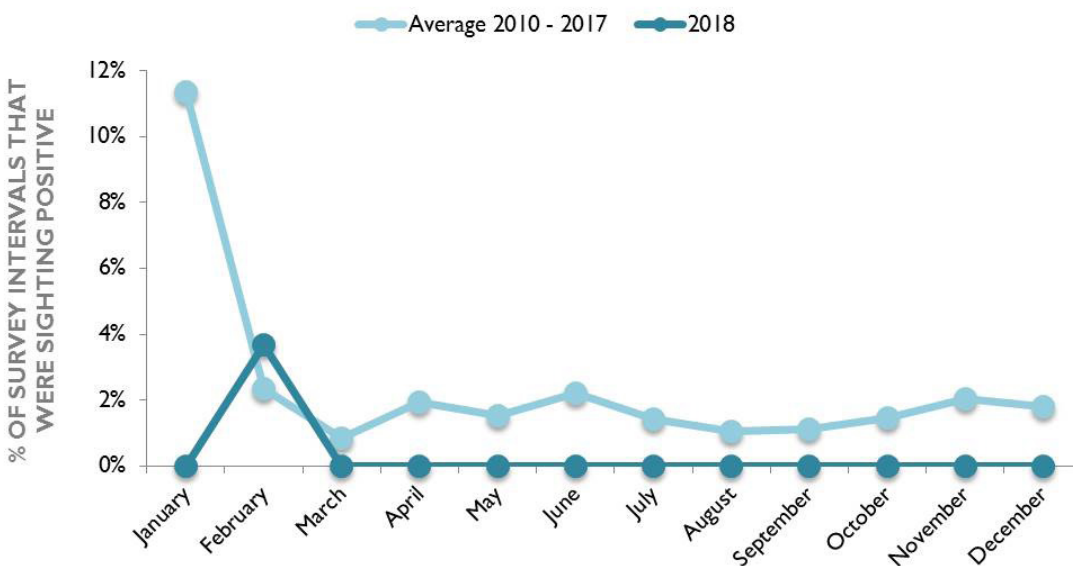
SIGHTINGS
SEASONALITY
**Harbour
Porpoise**



SIGHTINGS
SEASONALITY
**Common
Dolphin**

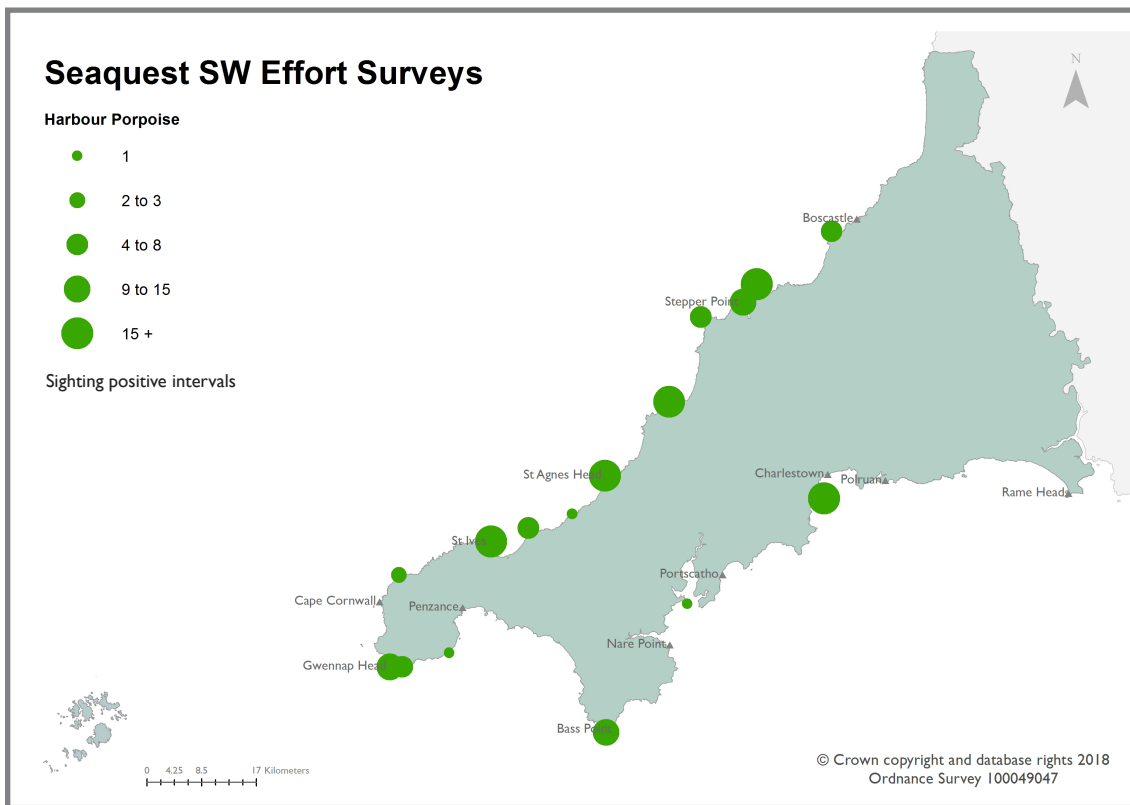


SIGHTINGS
SEASONALITY
**Bottlenose
Dolphin**



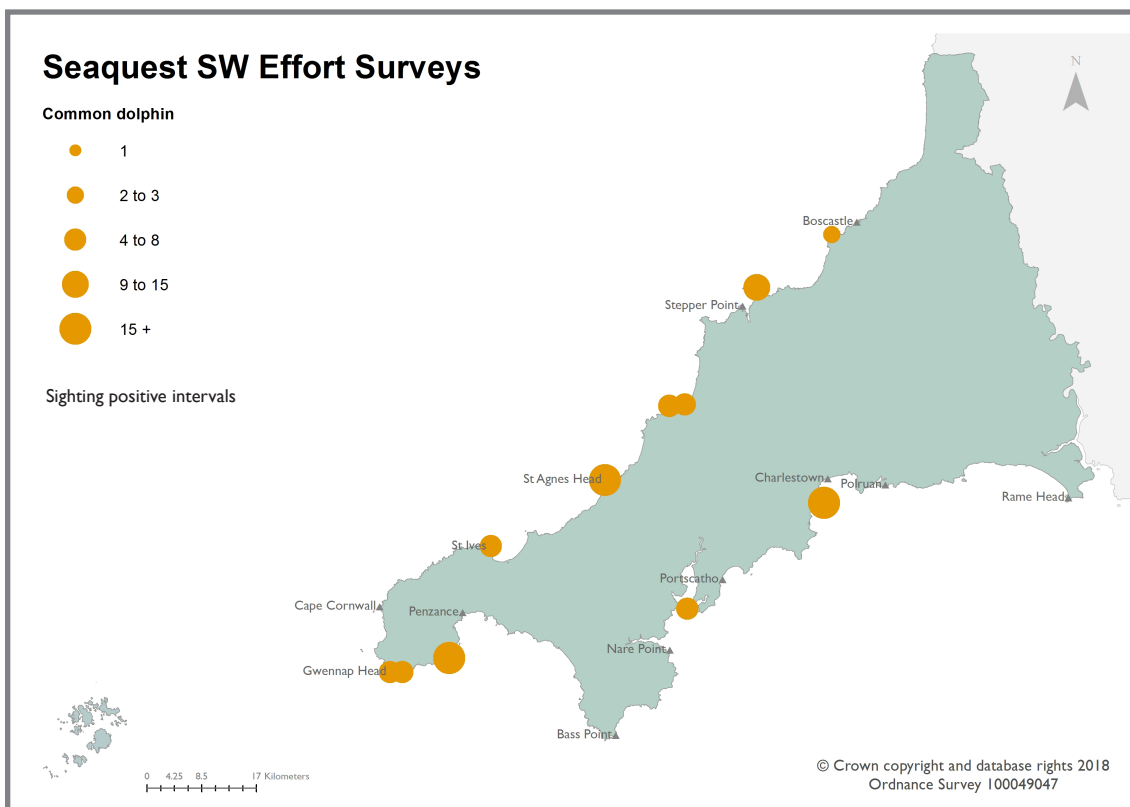
SIGHTINGS MAP

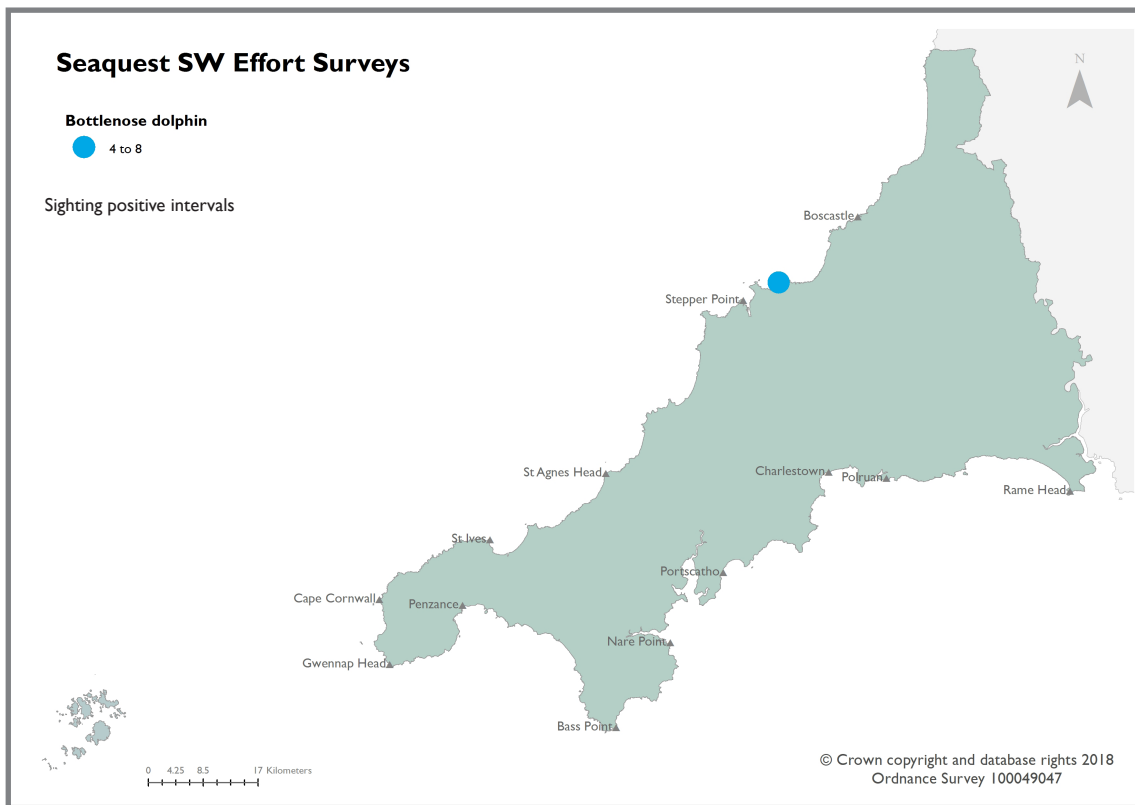
Harbour Porpoise



SIGHTINGS MAP

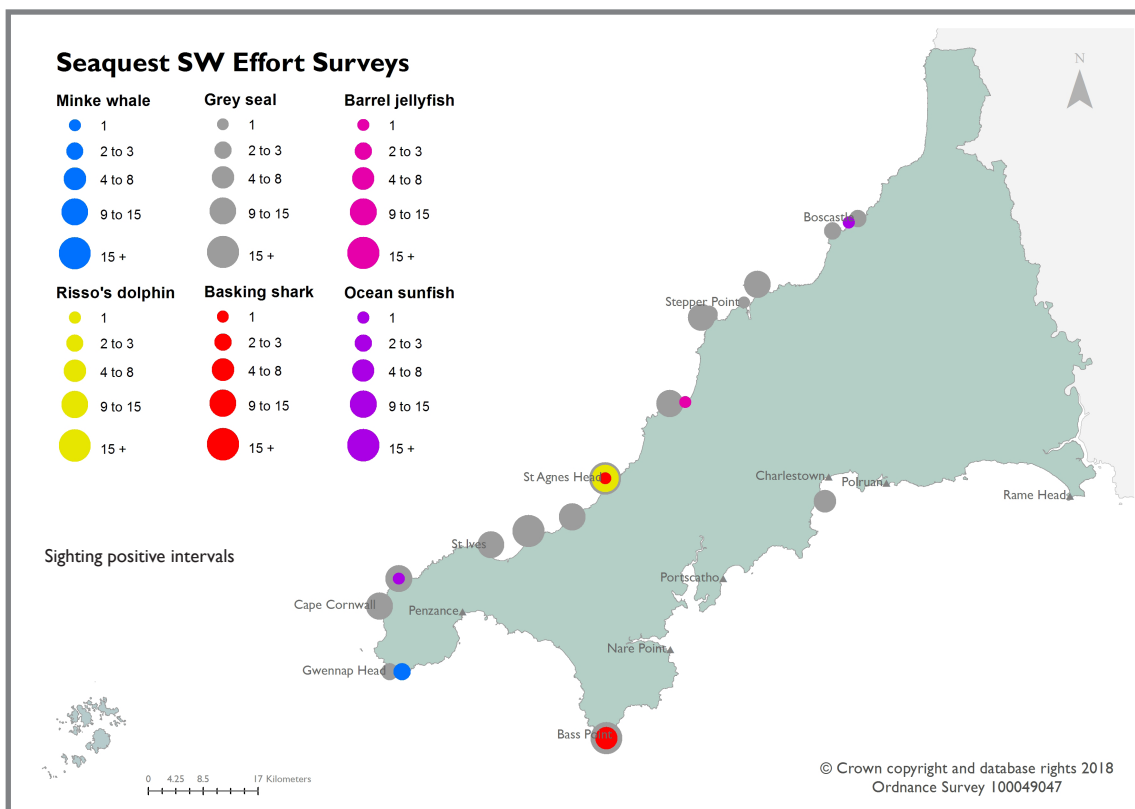
Common Dolphin





SIGHTINGS MAP

Bottlenose Dolphin



SIGHTINGS MAP

Other species

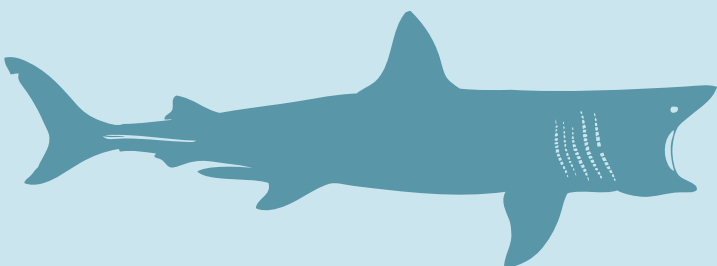
Seaquest Sightings



Brenda & Adrian Tregunna
WILDLIFE PICS

▲ *Bottlenose dolphin by Brenda and Adrian Tregunna*

‘Ad-hoc sightings’ are casual records of marine life, reported to Seaquest as-and-when animals are observed by volunteers and members of the public when they are out and about. This is in contrast to ‘effort-based’ data which comes from trained volunteers conducting surveys over a specific time period to actively search for the animals.



Ad-hoc sightings of marine wildlife are always encouraged, and can be sent to Seaquest Southwest via the Environmental Records Centre for Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly (ERCCIS) website at ORKS (Online wildlife Recording for Cornwall and Scilly) www.ORKS.org.uk. Alternatively the information can be emailed to seaquest@cornwallwildlifetrust.org.uk

Where possible, we ask that photos be included with sightings as they help to confirm species identification.

Seaquest is also very lucky to receive sightings data from dedicated volunteers, keen members of the public and fantastic local boat operators including Marine Discovery Penzance, Padstow Sealife Safari and Newquay Sea Safaris and Fishing.

Through 2018, 1,564 reports of marine-mega fauna were submitted to Seaquest from all around the Cornish coastline, including dolphins, porpoise, whales, basking shark, seals, and sunfish. We are seeing a continued decrease in the number of records being submitted to us, primarily due to changes some of our key sources of records have not been able to share with us this year and the fact that records for grey seals, for instance, are going straight to partner organisations like the Cornwall Seal Group Research Trust.

After a dip in sightings for harbour porpoise in 2017, we are seeing records increase again for 2018 from all around the coast. Common dolphin and minke whale

sightings have also increased from 2017.

However, we saw a decrease in the number of reports for ocean sunfish, bottlenose dolphin, Risso's dolphin, bluefin tuna and basking shark.

A remarkable sighting from 2018 was the Risso's dolphins which were seen repeatedly on the south coast of Cornwall and Devon through late summer. Usually Risso's are seen around our coast as they pass through our waters, and rarely spend more than a few days in the same area.

On the 5th June, we received an email from the National Marine Aquarium of a possible orca in Plymouth sound which caused quite a bit of excitement. However, from the photos received by CWT, it was clear that this animal was a large Risso's dolphin with a large dorsal fin. These animals were seen over a period of several weeks all along the south coast of Cornwall, giving locals and visitors a fantastic view of these wonderful dolphins.

Numbers of ad-hoc marine sightings reported to Seaquest Southwest between 2016 and 2018

Species	2016	2017	2018
Bottlenose Dolphin	105	69	38
Common Dolphin	465	530	479
Harbour Porpoise	561	368	493
Risso's Dolphin	36	49	26
Minke Whale	20	44	51
Humpback Whale	11	1	1
Grey Seal	792	837	343
Basking Shark	29	17	9
Ocean Sunfish	164	119	85
Leatherback Turtle	5	1	3
Bluefin tuna	5	31	15
Other species	17	22	21
Total	2210	2088	1564

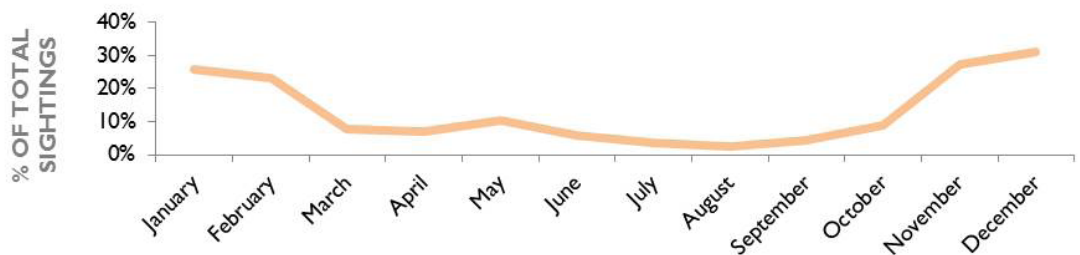
▼ Photos by Tom Thorpe of Plymouth Risso's



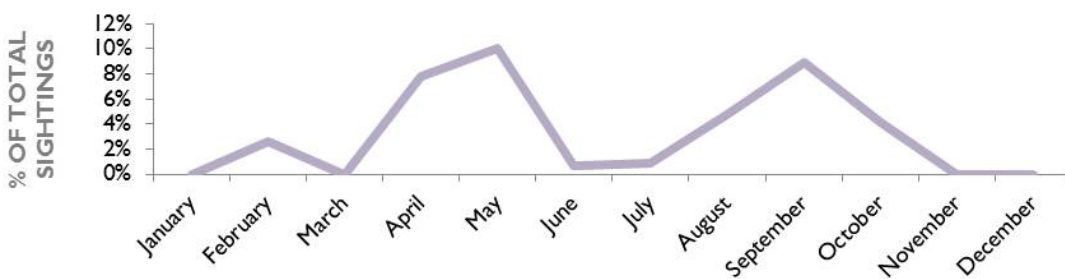
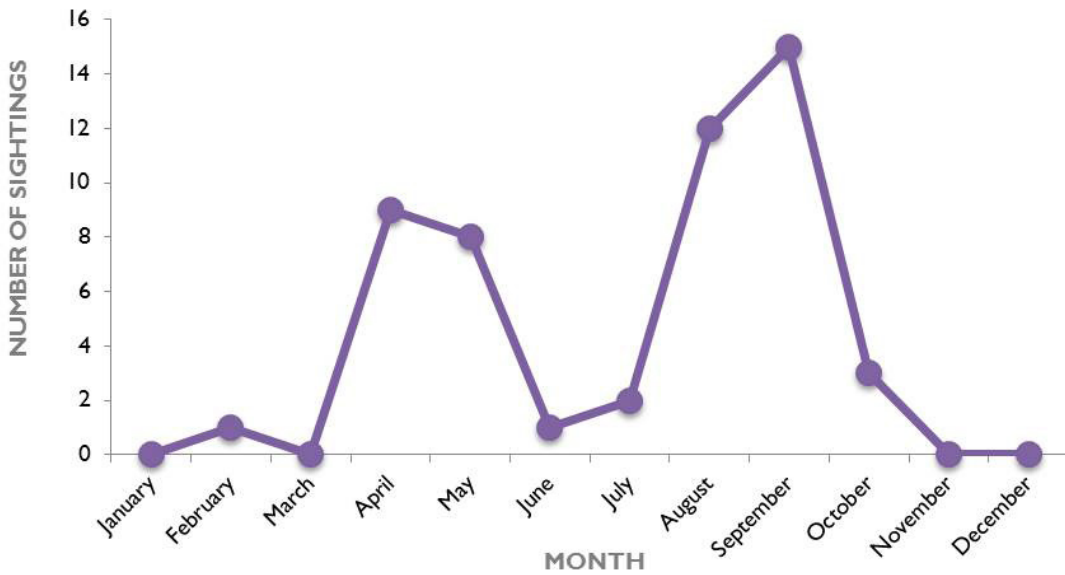
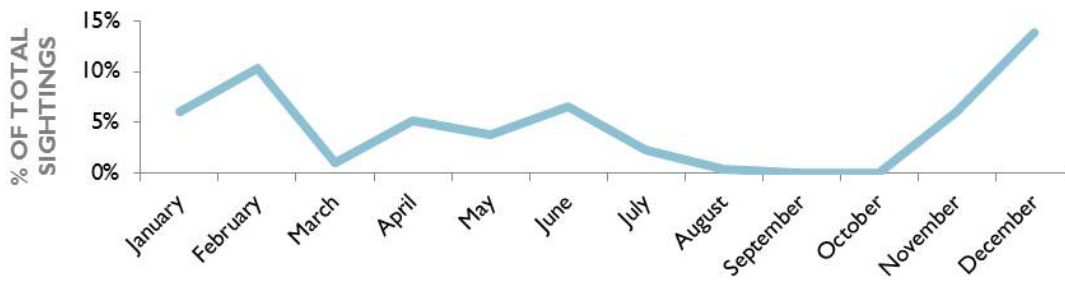
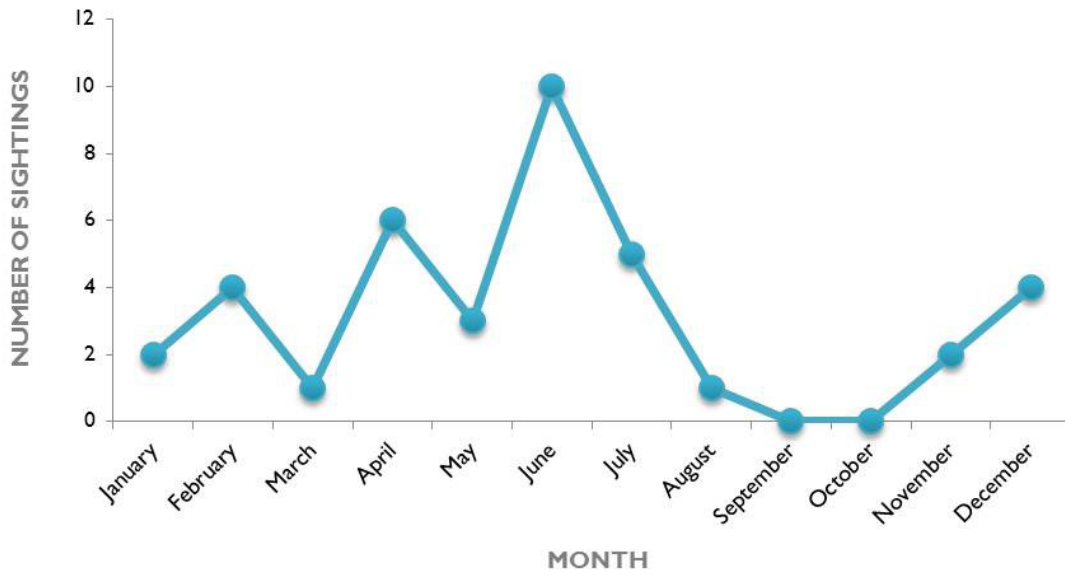
Casual Sightings Harbour Porpoise 2018



Casual Sightings Common Dolphin 2018

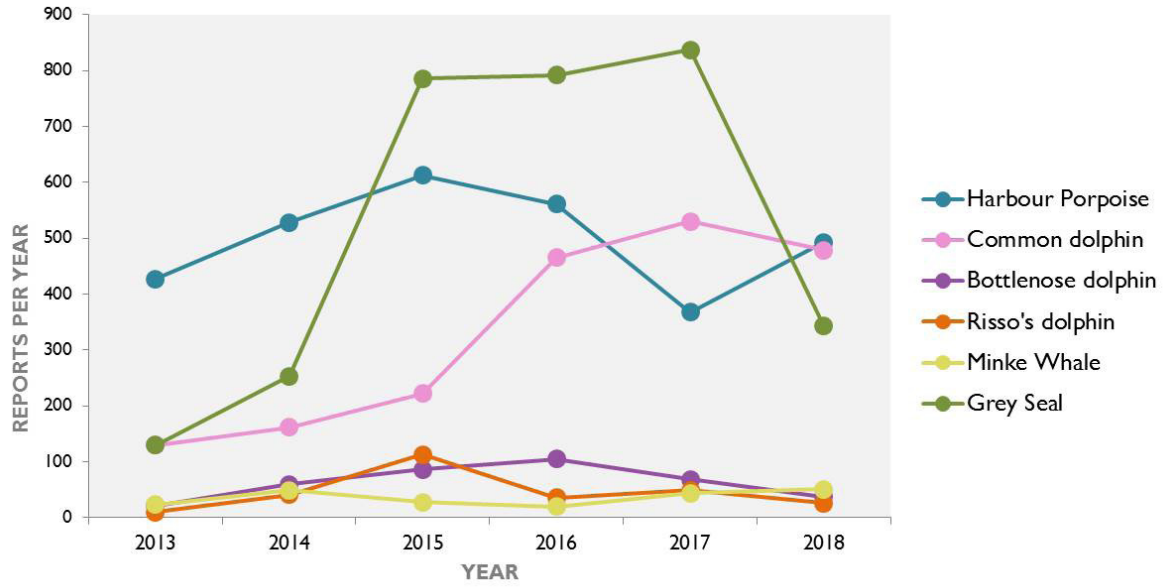


Casual Sightings
Bottlenose Dolphin
2018

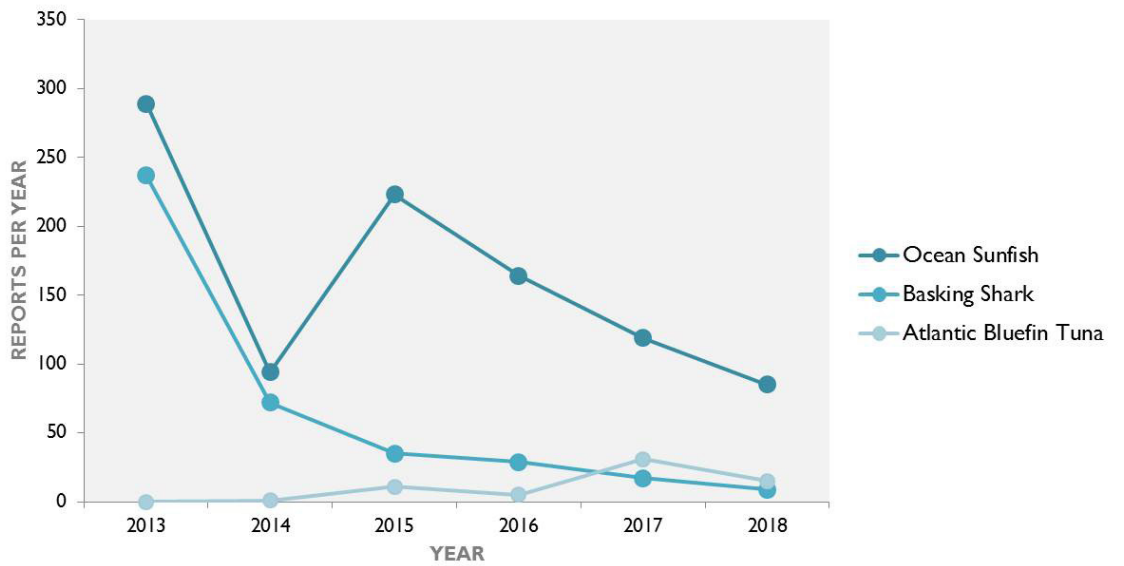


Casual Sightings
Minke Whale
2018

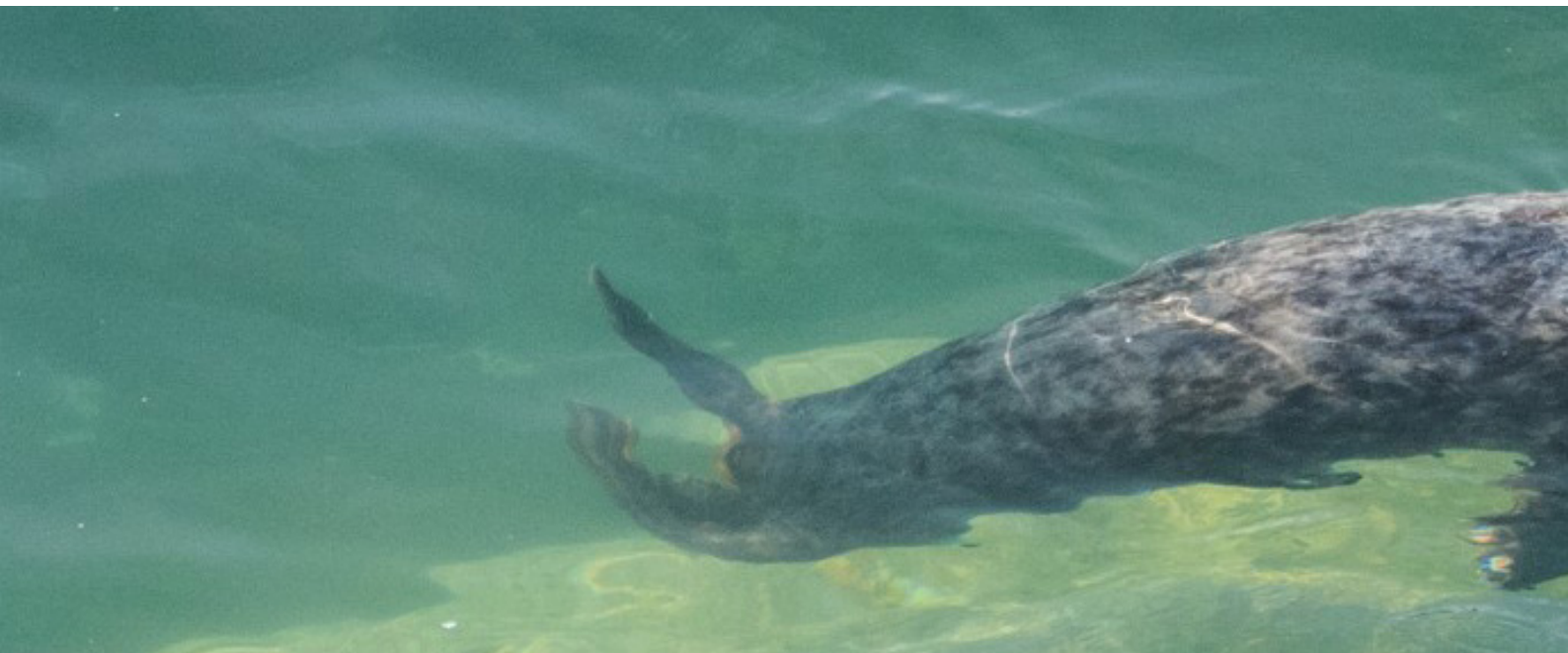
REPORTS PER YEAR
 marine mammals



REPORTS PER YEAR
 shark and fish



▼ Photo by Dan Murphy



Cornwall Seal Group Research Trust

Cornwall Seal Group Research Trust are the experts on grey seals in Cornwall and beyond. To ensure that we present a current and accurate picture of the grey seals in Cornwall, we've included an update directly from CSGRT.

2018 began with exciting news – we had won a large grant of £19300 from the People's Postcode Lottery, Postcode Local Trust and had our very first Amazement and Discovery Ranger in the form of Marion Beaulieu for one year. We have ended 2018 with an incredible three Rangers – our Seal Research Ranger Katie Bellman and our Creativity and Activity Ranger Emily Pollitt, all thanks to funding from World Animal Protection, National Trust and our incredible volunteer fundraising efforts and donations. CSGRT also hosted our second international intern Malo Gardin from Intechmer Mont Saint Michel, our first UK intern Stacey Pryor and welcomed two significant visits by DEFRA and the international campaign team from World Animal Protection. Incredibly the year ended with CSGRT being awarded two prestigious awards - the Environmental trophy from 'Cornwall Volunteers' and a 'Cornwall Sustainability Award' which saw Sue accepting a Kurt Jackson trophy on behalf of our huge team of amazing and inspiring volunteers without whom we would not exist.

Exponential expansion continued with our volunteer teams as Marion and Sue set up and trained 14 seal Photo ID Hubs across Devon and Cornwall to process the increasing amounts of data being received from our volunteers and members of the public.

2018 also saw the return of Septimus to CSGRT – a seal we knew in life and who became the third longest dead seal in Cornwall. In a project spanning over two years, Rob Wells and Sue Sayer collected Septimus' three part skeleton from Derek Frampton (a professional skeleton articulator) near London and returned him home to Cornwall and his favourite beach for a photo shoot. Ironically Septimus' story has taken on a roller

coaster life of its own, as he continues to inspire others to: make a film with our patron Springwatch presenter Gillian Burke and 3d scans and virtual reality experiences (Rose Summers). Next stop a 3d print! 2019 will see the #Septimussomeséal roadshow as he appears at talks in his honour or at exhibitions and conferences.

'Lucky Star' was first seen by Sue entangled in trawl net on 17/05. His photo had 249,918 Facebook views and despite several sightings, it took until 01/10 until he was finally successfully rescued by Sue and Dan Jarvis (British Divers Marine Life Rescue). Sadly all three seals in Newquay harbour were hooked with fishing lures during August, adding impetus to our 'Tough love: Do not feed' campaign work.

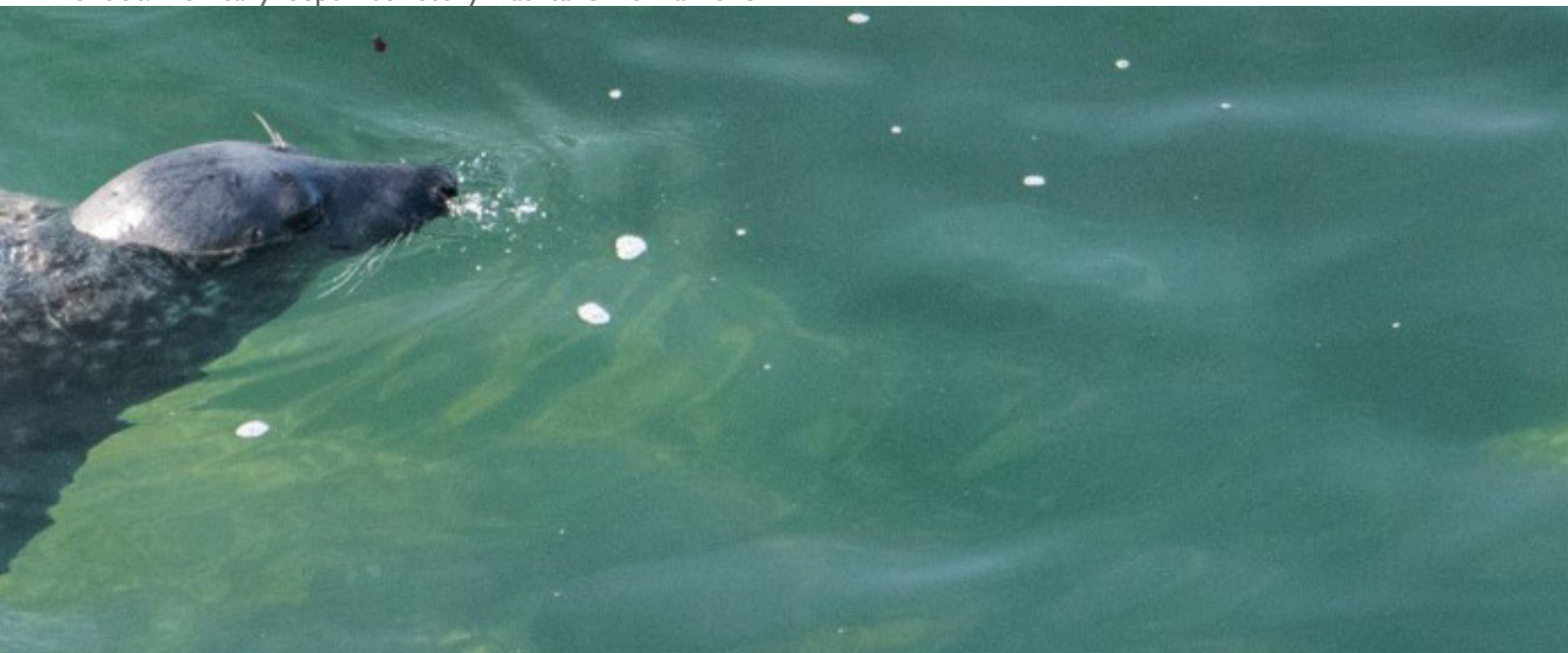
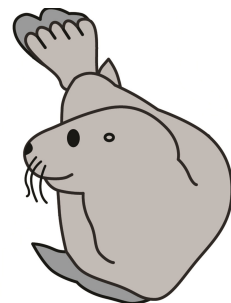
Other seal celebrities 'H chair' swam from West Cornwall to Lundy; 'Wings' (as one of only a handful of seals known to pup in Cornwall and in Wales) made it Cornwall 2: Wales 1!; 'Windy Dog' returned as Beachmaster at a pupping site in West Penwith having been off our radar for four years whilst 'Millie' returned to the Pentire site after an absence of sightings for nine years.

Huge thanks to everyone who has sent us records in 2018 and to all those volunteers who have helped out in a multitude of other ways. We are excited about our prospects and those of seals across the southwest for 2019...long may it all continue

Provided by Sue Sayer - CSGRT

www.cornwallsealgroup.co.uk

Cornwall
SEAL
Group
Research
Trust



Public Engagement



Increasing public participation and educating a wider audience in the importance of our marine environment is key to achieving the aims of the Seaquest project. During 2018 Seaquest Southwest organised a whole host of public events, evening talks, boat trips and social events to engage with people and volunteers of all ages and abilities.

Seaquest Southwest relies upon public participation to encouraging new volunteers, to submit sightings, and to spread awareness of the project. Once again, public events played a big part in Seaquest in 2018 and as a result the project now has a huge number of new participants for next year. We engaged with 1,036 people through the various events in 2018

▼ *National Whale and Dolphin Watch at St Agnes Head, photo by Katie Bellman*





▲ *Public Seavatch at Porthgwarra, photo by Katie Bellman*

Public Sea Watches

We ran 25 public sea watches in 2018, as part of Seaquest Public Watches. Seaquest Sundays and in partnership with associated local marine groups. These people friendly events attracted many of Seaquest volunteers and provided a chance to engage members of the public with the work of the Seaquest Southwest project.

We engaged with an amazing 376 people at these public events held throughout Cornwall at key cliff-top vantage points and headlands.

Seaquest Sundays

The first Sunday of each month is 'Seaquest Sunday' when we ask our trained volunteers and linked local marine groups from the Your Shore Network to run a dedicated Seaquest watch from their local or favourite watch point.

In 2018, 34 surveys were conducted on a Seaquest Sunday by trained volunteers and associated local marine groups; St Agnes MCG, Newquay Marine Group, Three Bays Wildlife Group, NT Lizard Watchpoint and Falmouth Marine Conservation.

Cetaceans of the Southwest with Dan Jarvis, photo by Katie Bellman ▼

The Seaquest Talks

Throughout the winter, when the weather is rough, the winds are cold and the days are short, Seaquest runs a series of evening lectures so we can learn more about the amazing marine life around the coast of Cornwall. In 2018, we ran 5 Seaquest Talks and Specialist training through the winter;

● **Plastic and Turtles** with Brendan Godley and Sarah Nelms in association with Falmouth Marine Conservation Group

● **Cetaceans of the Southwest** with Dan Jarvis, BDMLR

● **Coastal Wildlife and Disturbance** with Billy Heaney, Cat Lee and Sue Sayer in association with Newquay Marine Group

● **Harbour porpoises in Cornish waters: Are Cornish waters internationally important for this species?** Talk and training with Duncan Jones, Marine Discovery Penzance

We engaged with 392 people during these Seaquest Lecture and specialist training events.



Marine Recorders Evening

The conference took place in March this year, and was hosted by The Rockpool, Gwithian. We had a full house with 86 people attending the evening, including volunteers, wildlife enthusiasts and university students.

The conference offered an evening of talks including project updates from CWT Staff, gull recording by Rob Wells from Three Bays Wildlife Group, Environmental DNA by Dr. Alex Hayward, Pacific Oysters by Sue Scott, Update from Cornwall Seal Group Research Trust, and a key note from Natasha Phillips covering the wonderful world of Sunfish.

Seaquest Survey Training

In 2018 we ran 1 Seaquest Survey training in October, as a session arranged for April had to be cancelled. During this session 10 volunteers were trained up, including the new Seaquest coordinator for Falmouth Marine Conservation. Through 2018, 20 volunteers were trained to conduct Seaquest surveys. This training covers the Seaquest survey methodology and ID of common marine species seen from the Cornish coast.

Seaquest Boat Trips

Each year, partner boat operators very kindly offer Seaquest volunteers reduced rate trips out to see some of our spectacular marine wildlife. In 2018, we were lucky enough to go out with Marine Discovery Penzance and Padstow Sealife Safari, with some wonderful encounters with common dolphin, porpoise and a late season ocean sunfish

To all our Seaquest Volunteers

Thank you to all the Seaquest volunteers who got involved and supported the project in 2018! Your dedication and time at events and surveys and enthusiasm are what make this project a success. We look forward to working with you in the years to come.

Seaquest Southwest team would like to give special big thank you to everyone that contributed to the project in 2018.

- Katie Bellman, who did an incredible job through for 2 years as Seaquest Coordinator Volunteer, thank you!!
- Newquay Sea Safaris and Fishing, Padstow Sealife Safaris and Marine Discovery Penzance for sharing their sightings with us and for kindly taking out
- The Rockpool in Gwithian for hosting our annual Marine Recorders Conference.
- St Agnes Marine Conservation, National Trust Wildlife Watchpoint, Falmouth Marine Conservation and Newquay Marine Group for coordinating surveys on their patch.
- Cornwall Seal Group and the Newquay Marine Group, St Agnes Marine Conservation and Polzeath Marine Conservation Group for sharing cetacean sightings from their North coast boat surveys .
- NCI Coastwatch Stations for sightings data and support and a friendly face during our public events.
- ORCA and Seawatch Foundation for partnership sharing of data.
- Anyone and everyone who has sent Seaquest their sightings in 2018!

Thank you!



Spotlight on Supporters



Pauline McKeogh



The bottlenoses were absent for most of the year and I failed to see the rissos (though not for lack of trying!) but 2018 still had some exciting sightings. Between Christmas and New Year I saw fins every day, mostly common dolphins in St Austell Bay, but on 28th December I spent 4 hours watching at least 6 porpoises feeding quite close to the cliffs at the Rumps, and one of them was the very rare white porpoise. It is usually seen a few times in April/ May but I never saw it last spring so was thrilled to see it in December. Another memorable porpoise event at the Rumps was when Kate and Dave Williams and myself got some great views of a porpoise which appeared round the cliff, swam steadily close in below the cliff and around a crab pot float, and back. An unusually good photo opportunity. My best seawatch was probably in September near the Minack, with at least 8 porpoises feeding, 10 common dolphins, a seal and a minke whale. And my first Great Northern Diver of the season.

Great seawatching moments can indeed be about birds. Puffins breed on the Moulds and can often be seen on the water in spring/early summer, but on 28th June I was lucky enough to see one on the island, perched on a rock, and managed to get a photo through my scope.

2019 is looking good already!



Dave and Kate Williams



Our 2018 Seaquest surveys were notable for the number of times we recorded Harbour Porpoise, seen on 45% of our surveys. It's difficult to photograph Harbour Porpoise and so we were delighted to get a film of eight racing about, close to shore, on the east side of The Lizard at the end of July and some photos of a mother and calf from St. Agnes Head in October. We didn't see much of the Bottlenose Dolphin in 2018, however they were our last sighting of the year on the 28th of December from Marazion. We did see quite a few Common Dolphin sometimes in large pods and sometimes just a few. When they arrived at St Agnes Head they would often stay for a while but were always hard to count!

We had a memorable sighting of a Minke Whale from Porthgwarra in July and of leaping Bluefin Tuna from Zennor in November. The most surprising sighting was of a Basking Shark on a very cold Seaquest Sunday in November from St Agnes Head. This was our first sighting for over two years and our first from St. Agnes Head for five years.

Looking forward to 2019

Seaquest Southwest annual coordinator volunteer is vital to the running of the project and we are very lucky to welcome Cheryl Yarham and Clare Owen to the Seaquest team for 2019 season!

Clare has been involved in marine mammal research since finishing her Marine Biology degree at Plymouth University in 2010 and went on to study a MSc in Marine Mammal Science in Scotland. She has been very lucky to research marine mammals in some incredible places including New Zealand, Australia and Iceland with various universities and through the UK charity ORCA. More recently she has been helping BDMLR as a marine mammal medic and working at the Cornish Seal Sanctuary telling the visitors about the fantastic marine life in Cornwall.



Cheryl studied Marine Biology/Zoology at Bangor university and has spent nearly 10 years volunteering with MARINELife and ORCA, completing marine mammal surveys on some brilliant routes and getting to see some amazing marine mammals and countries. More recently she has been volunteering at Cornwall Wildlife Trust with the Marine Strandings Network, helping to compile all the data that the fantastic MSN volunteers (and members of the public) send in. As and when she can she's also help BDMLR relaying seal pups for rehabilitation.



Learn more!

Read the CWT Seaquest website and learn about Seaquest, you can also download the latest Seaquest Report

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Join us!

Come along to a Seaquest event and training– the 2019 Programme is available through the website, social media and newsletter