

Blue Carbon IN ST. AUSTELL BAY

What is Blue Carbon?

Blue carbon habitats refers to living structures that provide natural homes to organisms, whilst also absorbing and storing carbon.

In this way they act as a nature-based solution to climate change.

These biodiversity hotspots also support coastal protection, water quality, and food provision.

Seagrass and maerl both function as blue carbon habitats in St. Austell Bay.

MAERL

Maerl is a very slow growing, free living, calcified red seaweed which lives in shallow water and forms 3D structured layers on the seabed, known as 'maerl beds'.

Living maerl sits on top of layers of dead maerl which builds up over time (centuries or millennia).

During Seasearch dives which took place in 2022

56 SPECIES

were found within the **SEAGRASS BEDS** including a short-snouted seahorse

66 SPECIES

were found within the **MAERL BEDS**



Cornwall
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SEAGRASS

Seagrasses are the only true flowering plant that grows in our seas, it absorbs and stores carbon above ground in its leaves and branches and below in the root and rhizome systems.

Some healthy seagrass meadows are able to store more carbon per unit area than terrestrial forests.

The leaves provide shelter from predators for juvenile fish and can be colonised by algae and a wide range of invertebrates.

How you can get involved...

With your local community group

Get involved with your local community groups through our Your Shore Network. Those local to St. Austell Bay include:

Wild Roseland
coordinator@wildroseland.org

Three Bays Wildlife Group
info@threebayswildlife.co.uk

Friends of Par Beach
contact@parbeach.com

Friends of Fowey Estuary
friendsofthefowey@gmail.com

The Your Shore Network consists of **18 community-led marine conservation groups** across the county. This thriving network of dedicated and skilled local marine volunteer groups look after and shout about their wonderful marine wildlife. Please search 'Your Shore Cornwall Wildlife Trust' online to see where your nearest group is.



sustainable

Make sure your seafood is caught using sustainable, seagrass and maerl friendly methods, such as handlines.

REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER: 214929

Collecting data with Cornwall Wildlife Trust

Citizen science (scientific research carried out with help from the public) is hugely valuable, enabling a large amount of data to be collected which can then be used to help guide policy and decision making. Below are a range of Cornwall Wildlife Trust led projects which you can get involved with. All data is valuable, regardless of how often you are able to collect it.

When we all work together, we can make a big difference

Shoresearch is a user-friendly and fun method of exploring the shore and recording species and habitats.

Seasearch is a national project for qualified volunteer divers who have an interest in what they are seeing under water.

Sequest Southwest collects sightings data on the abundance and distribution of marine megafauna around the Cornish coast.



Marine Strandings Network (MSN) has been recording and monitoring dead marine wildlife strandings in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly for 20 years.

Download the ORKS app - we want your wildlife sightings! Submit wildlife records using the ORKS app to the Environmental Records Centre for Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.



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