

Polzeath Marine Conservation Group

Newsletter 2018



Polzeath Marine
Conservation Group



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A message from the Chair

Well what a fantastic year the PMCG have had, hugely helped by the absolutely wonderful weather. The highlight of our year has to be the installing and opening of our 2 water bottle refill stations which we have called H2O 4 free. A huge thank you to volunteer Tina Robinson whose idea and drive managed to raise the funds not only to put one on Polzeath beach but also a 2nd one in Rock. The whole project has taken over 2 years of her time and has achieved astonishing amounts of water to be drawn off them, 14,500 litres for the 4 summer months. There have been no overflowing bins on the beach this summer, this is surely due to the fact that water doesn't have to be bought in non reusable bottles anymore.

The increased number of Rockpool Rambles had a mixed result with some still being full and others struggling to get even half filled so we have used this year's figures as a guide and will be offering 10 rambles over July and August in 2019. The paying for these 24 hrs in advance worked really well with few people not turning up on the day.

The beach cleans have continued monthly, organized as ever by the wonderful Nick Pickles and his Beachcare team. The marine litter continues to wash up on our local beaches so volunteer Laura decided to make a marine rubbish sculpture and created a fantastic shark followed fast by a huge jellyfish. These have caused many people to stop and look and have photos taken with our rubbish sculptures, keep an eye out on social media for her next creation which could well be a hermit crab. As ever we are looking into different methods of fund raising to be able to continue our work and particularly to be able to sponsor university students in the summer not only to help us with the marine centre and events but also to keep us updated in all things marine biological, and of course to help us with social media, we now have 496 followers on Instagram and 1178 on facebook, all our events are on these mediums. We have just signed up to "easy fundraising" which gives us a tiny donation for every item you buy online from participating organisations (most big organisations are participating) all it takes is a minute to register on easyfundraising.org.uk.

Finally and most importantly a massive thank you to all the volunteers and our Beach Ranger Holly for all the hundreds of hours they have donated to making the group so successful, without you none of what we have achieved would be possible.



Rockpool Rambles!

Over the 2018 summer period we decided to do more Rockpool Rambles so that we can teach and spread the marine conservation word. We held a total of 13 Rockpool Rambles with over 470 guests! Each ramble everyone got stuck in with our handmade scoops, trying to find the biggest crab or weirdest looking fish. Our amazing volunteers helped them along the way and over the season we have found many delightful creatures from scorpion fish, spiny sea stars, clam worms, porcelain crabs and the star of the season a giant goby, this is the first time it has been recorded in our rock pools. Of course we also found lots of other common species, such as shore crabs, shannies, blennies, top shells, periwinkles, whelks, anemones and a range of seaweeds. We have had such wonderful feedback from our guests on the Rockpool rambles and we hope to see you all next year on more amazing Rambles! Dates to be confirmed, if you're a member you will get sent the dates next year, if not then keep a close eye on social media!

Marine Discovery Day May 31st

We were totally blessed again with a beautiful hot day for our annual event, and the beach was packed with locals and holiday makers. Your Shore beach rangers led a rock pool ramble, and there was a sand sculpture competition, RNLI and dolphin rescue displays, a book reading, craft and animation sessions. There were more organisations than ever before all providing a different aspect of conservation with lots things to do for the children. A massive thank you to Cornwall Wildlife Trust, Your Shore Beach Rangers, RNLI, British Divers Marine Live Rescue, Cornwall Seal Group, Surfers against Sewage, Fathoms Free, Marine Biological Society, The Wave Project, Shark Trust, Cleaner Seas Project, RSPB, Refill, and especially The National Trust Rangers who helped out with preparing the sand and erecting gazebos .

Talk with Dr Mike Kent- "Seashore studies beyond rock pool rambles".

We had such an informative evening with Mike learning about our wonderfully diverse shore, and this has led to more sessions and regular surveys which Mike is leading. This gives the group much more credibility as a conservation group and is a fantastic opportunity for our university volunteers to take part in.

H2O4Free Polzeath and Rock

2 years hard work fundraising by volunteer Tina Robinson culminated in the opening of the first two water bottle refill stations on beaches in the country. The Polzeath unit was opened by Joe Absolom, of Doc Martin fame and a local lad, the second by Carol Mould and Scott Mann, our local councillor and MP. An astounding 14,500 litres was drawn off the units throughout the summer which will have saved thousands of single use bottles being thrown away.



Interpretation Board

After many years of discussion, the group installed a board in the village, depicting the marine life living in Polzeath designed by our fabulous local artist Andrew Hucklesby.



Richard Peirce came to the Tubestation to talk to us about "Nicole, the greatest shark story ever told" and what a story it was. We were absolutely shocked to hear about the shark fin trade and fascinated about Nicole's journey from South Africa to Australia and back.

School visits

We had school visits this year, which is more than ever before and so we have decided to fund raise to increase the area of the marine centre by making the outside area safer with a sail shade, fencing at the back and a stone surface to also make it wheelchair accessible. During the visits we entertained and educated the children with a song recording, litter picking, plastic pollution and marine quizzes and Rockpool rambles.

The Aquarium

What a huge hit the aquarium has been again this year. Thanks to Tesco's who donated us money to buy a new aquarium and equipment. After a very tricky and frustrating start the water quality was correct to allow us to put in creatures. We have had reproduction, murder and so much more! The main highlights were when James the prawn got eaten by the snakelock anemone who 24hrs later cloned itself (note to self, don't name the creatures next year!), then Clara our medium sized Shore crab decided it was time to grow and so moulted, unfortunately she had become too comfortable in our care and instead of hiding until her new shell had hardened, went for an investigation and the Strawberry anemone ate her. This was the 2nd incident of this kind with the Strawberry. A marine biologist brought in 2 buoy barnacles (see below) he had found, these were put in the tank and within 5 minutes Jayden the prawn had pulled them down to the anemone who ingested them within 10 minutes. We are hoping to have a camera in the tank next summer so we can film all the shenanigans going on.



2nd August— Seaquest Public Seawatch

This event is held by Cornwall Wildlife Trust and their Seaquest project to monitor whales, dolphins, sea birds and seals around Cornwall for that week of summer. Two of our PMCG volunteers met the wildlife trust and other members of the public on the Rumps and began looking out to sea—which by the way is a beautiful spot to look out for marine wildlife! With our binoculars ready we were able to spot many lovely birds, such as guillemots and even a pod of common dolphins that were on their way to Polzeath beach. We were also able to see quite a few gulls having a meal out of some dead carcass, although we were unsure as to what the carcass once was. Seaquest record and compile all of this data to create a great database of animal sightings around Cornwall.

16th August— Big Seaweed Survey

The big Seaweed Search focuses on environmental changes: sea temperature rise, ocean acidification and the spread of non-native species. They use 14 seaweed species to monitor these changes, as these key environmental changes will affect the distribution and abundance of these seaweeds. Three of our fabulous volunteers took part in this survey in the middle of August on the rockpools on the right hand side of Polzeath beach. Sugar kelp, bladder wrack and serrated wrack were the most common species found. We also found a lot of our non-native Wireweed species and plenty of calcified crusts on the submerged rocks, as well as lots of coral weeds which is a good sign as it shows that ocean acidification hasn't affected these seaweeds enough to corrode their chalky skeletons! !

Andy Hughes' talk "Plastic waste in art- art and advocacy" was a fascinating evening with a forerunner in the plastic pollution issue. How astute he was to foresee the problems that were to come and document them all in his photographs.

Sandcastle Competitions

Throughout the Summer holidays we held weekly sandcastle competitions, these tended to have a poor entry but we felt that it was a good time to chat to visitors about our work, away from the centre, so we will do these again next year but won't include them in the events leaflet, we will post it on Social media and display local posters for date and times according to weather forecasts.



Talk by Sue Sayer "All at Sea—Seals, Cetaceans, and Seabirds"

This illustrated talk was interesting, stunning and upsetting showing the harm that marine pollution can cause to our sea creatures and birds. We all left vowing to do more to try and help stop this suffering.



Thankyou
Barnecutt
Bakery
Mega Beach
Clean 15/9

Mega Beach Cleans March and September

PMCG volunteers, community members and Beachcare volunteers all came together to clean Polzeath beach. During the September clean we released our creatures from our aquarium inside the centre and everyone loved saying goodbye to them. They were wonderful events with yummy donations from Barnecutt Bakery in Rock (Huge thank you to them!). Beach cleans are such an important part of a marine conservation group because we want our marine friends to be as safe and happy as we are when we visit the beach. Everyone can do a small beach clean, as every small piece of rubbish removed is a great step in the right direction.

5th September—Big Beach Day

On a wonderfully sunny day in early September we attended the Big beach Day on Polzeath beach. We had a few scares from some unhappy looking grey clouds but they soon moved and let the sun come back out! We hosted a sandcastle competition, with one of our lifeguards being the judge of it all. Unfortunately we ran out of spades for our competition but thankfully our friends at Tj's surf café and shop gave us a great deal on spades, so we have plenty for next year too! We gave prizes to 1st, 2nd, and 3rd but then we ended up giving prizes to everyone because everyone was a winner. All in all it was a lovely day and great to see so many familiar faces, and we hope to see them again next

20th September—Fundraising Quiz

On September 20th, we paired up with our great friends, Polzeath area Residents Association to hold a quiz. The aim behind the quiz was to get a lot of the local business' to come together for some fun after the crazy summer season and raise some money for a good cause of course! The total money raised was £343 and was split between PARA and PMCG. We cannot thank Jamie from the waterfront/Sandbar enough for hosting and providing fabulous meals! Also a big thank you to all who came and took part, including some of Polzeath's local business' Cone Zone and Vanilla. Hopefully we will do it all again next year!



Baby legs

We are proud to have become one of the founder members of Cornwall Marine Microplastic Researchers. This has meant that we have helped to fund the importation of a mantra trawl which has now been used 13 times and we are shocked that all 13 trawls have produced micro plastics.



2018 Donors and supporters

This year has been our most successful fundraising year to date with several large projects completed. A massive thank you to all the organisations and people who have given us donations. In alphabetical order. Bridge Bistro, Cornwall Council, Fusion, Link Magazine, Luke and Dingle, Malcolm Barnecutt, National Trust, Net Curtains Direct, Padstow Harbour Commission, Polzeath Area Residents Association, Postcode Lottery, Quinnian Trust, Sea Changers, South West Water, Spar, St. Minver Highlands and Lowlands Parish Councils, Tescos, The Waterfront, T.J's, Tubestation, Valley Caravan Park, and to all our members who continue to support us in particular Peter Watson and Andrew Hucklesby and of course our wonderful volunteers and committee who between them have donated more than 4000 hours.