

January 2019

STRANGERS ON THE SHORE

Coastwise is embarking on two timely survey ventures: to find and record Invasive and Non-native species, INNShore North Devon, and monthly walk-over censuses, organised by Annette Dutton, and a return to past practice.

Except for Wireweed and the occasional Slipper Limpet sighting, North Devon has been relatively free of the alien plants and animals found on the south coast and North Cornwall. Or so we thought but at the Lee 2017 bioblitz David Fenwick spotted abundant Pom-pom weed mid shore, and it has since been found on most of the beaches we have surveyed.

Recently members have also reported Pacific Oysters finds on Facebook. This has sparked an informative discussion about options to minimise the impact.

Non-natives are high on the MBA's agenda and now ours. Pip Jollands, formerly our MBA Shore Thing co-ordinator, and Nicola Mello have been developing an appropriate protocol for us with advice from MBA staff. We are joining forces with Christine Wood and colleagues to contribute the North Devon component of the MBA's INNShore project. This welcome collaboration as they seek citizen science input will start with a training day from Jack Sewell at Lee Bay on 24th April.

Knowing what we've got is the first step, see overleaf for all survey dates.

THE BARE BONES OF THE STORY



Glenis Beardsley & Ruth Turner give scale to Septimus. Photo R.Down

Coastwise members have been keen supporters of the Cornwall Seal Research Trust over the last few years. During their latest visit in November Sue Sayer and Rob Wells told the story of Septimus Seal, whose skeleton accompanied them to Barnstaple Library.

Septimus's story started in 2015. He was alive when first seen but later found washed up on a Cornish beach by Rob. He and Sue then arranged for the 2.4m Atlantic Grey Seal to be collected and buried to strip the carcass. At length his remains were painstakingly cleaned and sanitised then taken to London to be reconstructed before being returned to Cornwall in all his glory, prior to going on tour round Cornwall and now North Devon.

Assembly and articulation was done professionally with the help of CSRT's own fundraising to which Coastwise contributed, and the whole story captured on film. Narrated by CSGT Patron Gillian Burke and starring Sue, Rob and a host of others, Septimus's story so entertainingly told, was voted a great success at Coastwise, and later at Braunton Countryside Centre. This has also earned him summer appearances at Lundy by all accounts.

The project is proving to be so rewarding that CSGT hopes to repeat the process for a 2018 pup casualty once sufficient funds can be raised. Further information www.cornwallsealgroup.co.uk

Talking Points

During Natural Capital, Ecosystem Services and Valuing our Marine Environment, the topic of Tara Hooper's

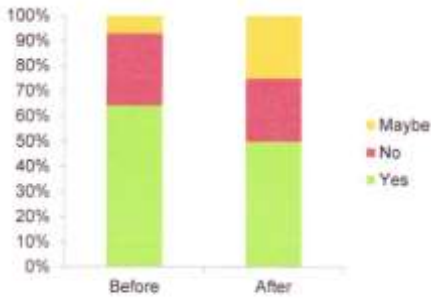


Figure 1. The percentage of the audience holding different viewpoints on whether we should place a monetary value on nature before and after the talk

November talk, she posed a key question: Should we be trying to put a monetary value on nature? Before the talk most were decided in their view, Yes - the

majority, No about a quarter, with few undecided. After her presentation about a third had changed their view, reporting greater uncertainty. One verdict: uncertainty is unsurprising in the context of complex & political choices. A good presentation.

Coastwise may be collaborating more with **Northam Burrows Country Park** centre in future. Coastwise has recently supported its application to the Coastal Communities Fund to rebuild its premises to include a community room and café. Displays will include several huge whalebones which were exposed nearby in the winter gales. Member Liesje Birchenough, who works at the Centre, reported that these came from a huge Fin Whale nearly 20m long stranded in 1921, to much interest at the time. Still the subject of local reminiscences, the huge vertebrae will provide an impressive display.



The Coastwise Community

Changes at Top Table - following the **AGM** Malcolm Roberts is now sole Chair following co-chair Nicola's resignation from the post & committee to focus on the family move, Stan Coats is Deputy, and Liesje Birchenough joins the committee. But it's good to share and you don't have to be on the committee to help. Nicola is continuing to lead on the new survey and developing the next generation of beach profiles. Others are welcome to promote their own interests. Café culture has come to Coastwise at **Queen Anne's, Café on the Strand**, just 5 mins walk away from our

library venue. It is ideal after the Thursday morning talk for us to continue our discussions there, and plenty of us are already doing so. All welcome **Facebook** is expanding our community well beyond North Devon. With over 370 members, posts cover marine life from around the southwest and beyond. Closest to home Mark Fellows briefs us on all things Cornwall & particularly Bude, prompting some to make a recent visit. Mike Pul gives a very welcome South Devon perspective and is planning a South Devon group. Maybe we can help? Time for a visit? Another post featured our Looe friend Heather Buttivant's forthcoming book, **Rock Pool - Extraordinary Encounters between the Tides**, reported by a member privileged to see a draft to be fascinating, beautifully written and full of information. Coastwise even gets a mention.

A full timetable

Coastwise Census Surveys and INNShore surveys

23 January Combesgate, Woolacombe 12.00
20 February Saunton Beach 11.00
21 April Ilfracombe, Tunnels Beaches 12.00
7 May *Lee Bay 12.00
8 May *Westward Ho! 1.00
17 May Greycliff 9.30
19 June Combesgate, Woolacombe 12.30
5 July Saunton Beach 1.00
2 August Greycliff 12.00
30 September *Westward Ho! 12.00
1 October *Lee Bay 12.00
16 October Ilfracombe, Tunnels Beaches 12.30
All welcome. *INNShore surveys

Coastwise microscopy will get a boost from the new invasives focus during our surveying, as many of the target species benefit from microscopic examination. A workshop was held at the Ilfracombe Dive Club following the Cheyne shore census, and we were able to confirm the ID of Pom pom weed, *Caulocanthus ustulatus*, there. The next will be in the spring.

We will not be advertising shore safaris to the public this year. Instead we hope the public will choose to join members' beach visits, attracted by curiosity to our Umbrella Basecamp with its animal tanks. This will minimise our work in a year busy with surveys, keep insurance costs down, and avoid cancellation problems caused by bad weather.

Don Hills

Sadly dear Don, who was a member from 2008 to 2015, died in October. He gave his unique brand of energy and enthusiasm to everything he did, to our delight this included Coastwise, and of course his beloved Combe Martin. Our best wishes go to his wife Helen and family.

Paula Ferris

www.coastwisenorthdevon.org.uk