



IN RESERVE

Liza Cole, Ranger at the St Abbs & Eyemouth VMR reports on events at the Reserve

WELL, HARD to believe that we are now on the run up to the Splash In yet again – how time flies when you’re having fun! This popular underwater photography competition will be undergoing a number of changes this year; there will be no film competition for one thing. A bit sad to see it go, definitely the end of an era, but there are just not enough people using film anymore.

There will also be a new venue for the Sunday night slide show, the newly re-vamped Coldingham Village Hall, which has fantastic facilities including raked seating. Sadly, however, it will not hold quite so many people as the one in St Abbs, so it will have to be a tickets bought in advance affair. Please see the website for more information.

Speaking of the website. This has undergone a bit of a transformation too. Not only has it had a total face-lift but there is also a lot more downloadable information and activity sheets on there too. This is mostly aimed at schools but hopefully will be attractive to a wider audience.

But the best thing about the new website is that I can update it from my desk, so if

there is news from the Reserve or something really exciting has been seen I can get it online without delay. So, why not take a look at the website and see what you think. And if you do see anything exciting when you are diving in the Voluntary Marine Reserve drop me an e-mail with all the details and I’ll get it online as soon as I can.

Although the weather has been mucking up the diving somewhat this year, there have still been plenty of exciting wildlife sightings in the Reserve. How about a pod of 7 or 8 bottle-nosed dolphins jumping out of the water next to your dive boat? Well, a lucky group of divers were treated to this in late April. And many lucky folk were able to witness colourful male lumpsuckers dutifully guarding their eggs throughout May and June.

Please do remember that recreational divers are our eyes and ears out there in the Reserve. It would be a great help if you would fill in a Diver Survey Form to tell us what you have seen after each dive (or if you are trained in the art of Seasearch, a Seasearch form). You can

find both in the trailer at St Abbs or download a Diver Survey Form (and accompanying ID sheet) from the shiny new website!

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Image shows recent stormy weather at St Abbs

Scotland’s only Voluntary Marine Reserve would not have a full time Marine Ranger without the generous support of The National Trust for Scotland, Scottish Natural Heritage, The Crown Estate and the Esme Fairbairn Foundation.

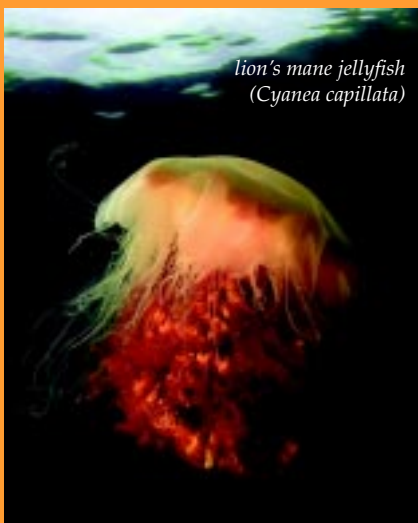


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CREATURE FEATURE



lion's mane jellyfish
(*Cyanea capillata*)

JELLYFISH BELONG to a group of animals called the Cnidaria, derived from the Greek word for stinging nettle (the same group as sea anemones, sea fans and soft corals). As the name suggests,

all have stinging cells, which are used to paralyse their prey before they eat it, and it is this very thing that makes jellyfish so unpopular with most visitors to the seaside. However, divers are uniquely placed to see these creatures in open water, quite literally in their element, and fully appreciate their delicate beauty.

There are six species of jellyfish commonly found in British inshore waters, sometimes in large aggregations, known as smacks, during the summer months. However, there are two species that are most regularly seen in the Marine Reserve, any time between May and September – the lion’s mane jellyfish and the blue jellyfish.

The lion’s mane jellyfish (*Cyanea capillata*) is a very common sight with its orangy-brown bell and mass of fine tentacles. Although they can grow up to 2m across, with 30m tentacles, don’t panic – the ones that you see in the Marine

Reserve are more usually up to about the size of a dinner plate! Do watch out for the tentacles though, as they do have quite a nasty sting.

As the name suggests, the blue jellyfish (*Cyanea lamarckii*) is normally purply-blue in colour but small individuals may be colourless or yellow. They usually grow up to about 15cm in diameter, but specimens of twice this size have been recorded. The blue has fewer tentacles than the lion’s mane so its sting is not so fierce, but best to avoid the tentacles never the less.



blue jellyfish (*Cyanea lamarckii*)