



# going overboard

dire. However Sunday dawned as Sunday will to find calm seas and a gentle breeze, so plans to dive inshore sites were abandoned and we set off for Jeanie's Reef, an offshore pinnacle at the top of the Sound of Liung.

I've dived here quite often and it's one of my favourite sites, but I have not dived it for three or four years. Like most of the pinnacles around here there is a gentle sloping top covered with kelp and a dramatic drop off that goes from 10m down to over 40m. The last time I dived here there were occasional patches of jewel anemones lots of *sagertia elegans* but the ledges all had a light covering of fine silt.

This time it was a revelation, every inch of rock was covered in jewel anemones, still lots of *sagertia*, parazoanthus and plumose anemones. At 32m Nigel and I photographed a crawfish - a bit late in the season but a welcome sight anyway.

Back on the boat David said I was not the only person to see an increase in marine-life on this site. We wondered if this was due to the fact that scallop dredging has been

banned in the Firth of Lorne during the past two years, possibly. It got us thinking now is the perfect time for us to do as detailed a survey as possible. Seasearch did a survey a few years ago and David has also been monitoring as best he can, the health of the rocky reefs.

Those surveys were carried out while dredging was and had been going on for a long time. So the rocky reefs are at the moment as good as they have been for years and therefore this would give us a baseline of the richness and diversity of them prior to any damage caused by dredging.

This is the sort of thing divers are good at; lots of divers making observations from as many sites in the area and more importantly taking pictures and video evidence would allow us to show just why the Firth of Lorne was made a Special Area Of Conservation. If you would like to help then get in touch with me to start with at: [editor@scotsac.com](mailto:editor@scotsac.com) and I will liaise with David as to the best way to carry out a survey.

**Jack Morrison, Editor**

THE BEST thing about having a conference in Oban is you can stay over on Saturday and go diving on Sunday, provided you don't spend too much time in the Oban Inn. That's one of the reasons we chose Oban in the first place. The conference was a huge success and you can read about it elsewhere in this magazine.

I had booked *Porpoise* with skipper David Ainsley and over the preceding few days we had discussed possible dive sites bearing in mind the forecast was pretty

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