



# East Anglia Seasearch - 2008 Report

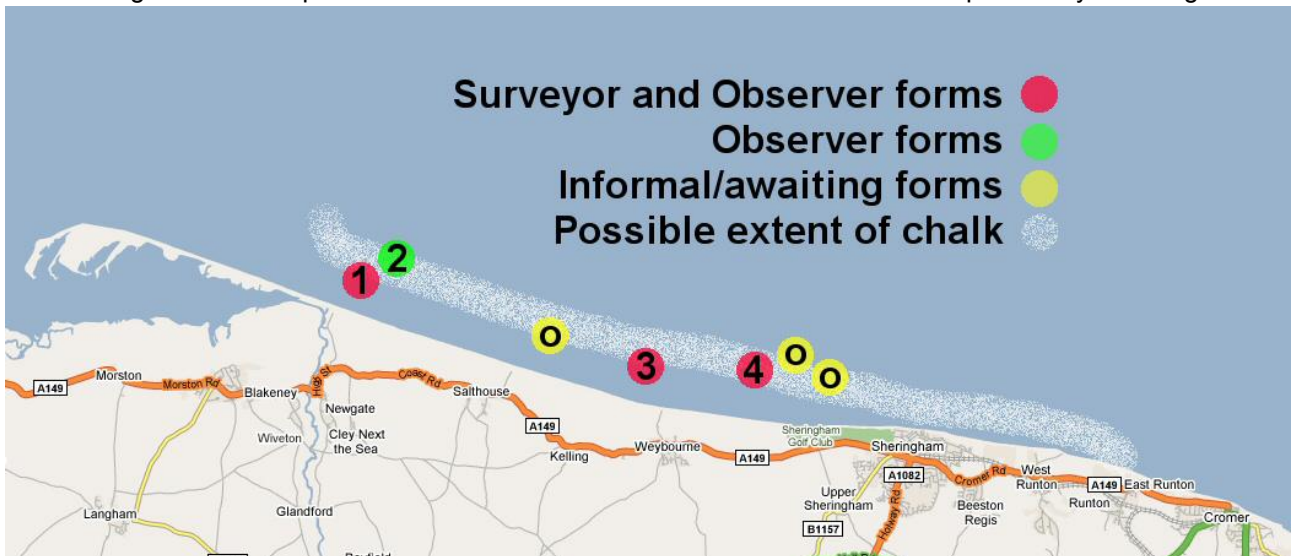


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## Seasearch surveys in 2008

A total of nine sites were surveyed during 2008 between 28<sup>th</sup> June and 19<sup>th</sup> October, a season made very short by the late visibility and very patchy by the unusually rough seas. Dives ranged from 4m on the inshore gullies to 26m on some of the deeper wrecks. Diving took place between 8.30 am and 8.00pm, with the 6.30 am dives always the ones where the waves proved too big! Not a fantastic year for visibility, it ranged from 1.5 to 12m, with most divers experiencing 5m or less. 114 different species were recorded, a number which should rise over time as new Observers become more confident about their marine ID. Most commonly recorded were plumose anemones, edible crabs and elegant anemones. Nudibranchs were much less common generally than in preceding years.

Much of our activity was conducted on the inshore wrecks and chalk gullies off North Norfolk between Cley and Sheringham. The map below shows the locations of sites 1-4 and additional spot surveys of the gullies.



### 1. Wreck of The Vera , Cley, North Norfolk

52.57900N 001.03220E

The Vera seems to lie in a gravelly scour around a small core of remaining wreckage at around 6m deep. The metalwork looks shotblasted in places by the action of shingle. This seems to keep the metalwork clear of rust and life on some of the lowest plating, and there's very little silt around. The Vera is less protected from the tidal currents than surrounding bays which contributes to the surprisingly good vis so close to shore. There is no upper structure left and the diving is on a low debris field with the familiar trio of engine, boiler and propshaft as landmarks. This is an excellent macro photography dive with slugs, pipefish and even porcelain crabs. Cley is a popular spot with anglers and the Vera has seen shoals of bass and mackerel as well as a large resident population of juvenile bib.

### 2. Williams Flints, Cley North Norfolk

52.57900N 001.03220E

This site was discovered by a pair of divers (led by William) aiming to dive the Vera in very rough conditions. They missed the wreck, but discovered a site mostly comprised of cobbles and pebbles in mixed sand and gravel. This may have been exposed natural rock or aggregated ballast somehow displaced from the nearby wreck. One unusual feature of the site was large numbers of large common sunstars, which are only seen occasionally on other sites. This site is thought to be to the NE of The Vera, but the position given just indicates the point of entry.

### 3. Wreck of The Rosalie, Weybourne, North Norfolk

52.57000N 001.0850E

The Rosalie is in about 10m and now spread over a large area. There is no superstructure left erect and the opened hull extends more than 20m either side of the keel in places. The boilers, engine and prop shaft have all remained in place. The engine remains rise 5m from the seabed. The twin boilers are each 4m long, 3m round and lie inshore of the engine - there are only low hull ribs and plating further in - though it is covered in life all the way to the curved stump of the bow. Aft of the engine the propshaft runs back for 30m still supported 1.5m from the plate covered seabed. At the end of the propshaft the quadrant for the rudder stands at an angle marking the end of the wreckage. There is little beyond that point as the seabed is plain and sandy, the wreckage is a very real artificial reef in a comparative desert. The Rosalie seems to be in a slightly sheltered bay and there is a layer of fine silt over some of the low flat areas although most edges are clean or like higher parts of the wreck covered in something growing. The plumose anemones are the most striking fauna on the wreck, they cover almost everything and seem to have displaced the deadmans fingers which used to share the area 50/50. There are a spectacular number of lobsters about and every size and type of crab imaginable - lots of variety too.

### 4. The Chalk Gullies, from Weybourne to East Runton, North Norfolk

52.56945N 001.09500W (Weybourne end)

This is a big area of chalk reef running from about 12m deep to the shore. The gullies run between chalk outcrops from 0.5 to 2m high, with areas of chalk rubble and coarse sand between. The marine life here seems very different to the nearby wrecks, with squat lobsters and porcelain crabs numerically dominating the crustaceans and breadcrumb sponge and *Diplosoma spongiforme* squirts making up most of the sessile life. Dives in this area have been very brief so far; we hope to make a much more thorough survey in 2009.

The rest of our returns were produced on RIB excursions from Sea Palling, North East Norfolk. The map below shows these locations. All of these are wreck sites, next year's gap filling will include seabed drifts.

### 5. Wreck of the Ilsa (or Ilse), 3 miles NE of Sea Palling, Norfolk

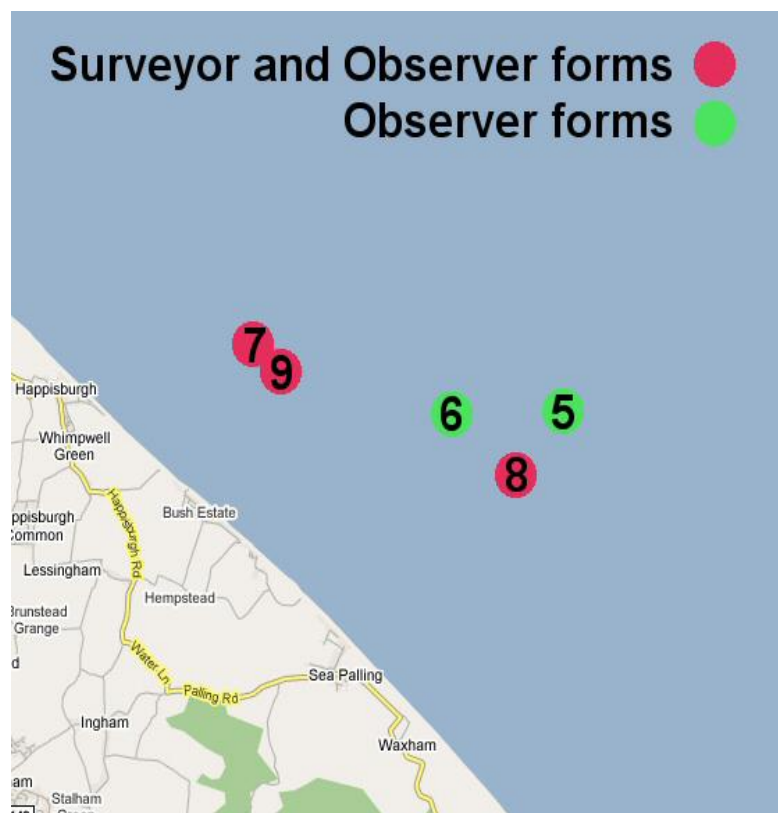
52.4944N 001.3961E

This 1929 wreck lies in 26m of water off Sea Palling and has been mostly broken down to within 2m of the bottom, which is boulders, cobbles and pebbles over sand and gravel. There are large areas of empty whole shells. Life on the wreck is mostly dominated by large crustaceans, plumose anemones and hornwrack. There is a large shoal of resident bib.

### 6. Wreck of the Fulgens, 2 miles N of Sea Palling, Norfolk

52.4913N 001.3636E

Another metal wreck built 1912, in about 17m of water and rising 3m from the seabed. Again, the bottom here is comprised of boulders, cobbles and pebbles in mixed sand and gravel, but there are also large areas of *Sabellaria* reef. There are also large numbers of horse mussels in the area, though no actual beds were recorded. Again, the life on the wreckage was mostly dominated by large crustaceans and shoals of bib.





## 7. Wreck of the Ethel, 6 miles NW of Sea Palling, Norfolk

52.5373N 001.3159E

Built in 1878, a metal wreck standing several metres off the seabed, which was not surveyed on this occasion. Most notable life was nudibranchs – abundant *Dendronotus frondosus* and three other species, two of which were new to us (including *Eubbranchus farrani* pictured left). Very large examples of *Polymastia penicillus* and shredded carrot sponge dominated the sessile life, with feathery hydroids, *Bugula* bryozoans and plumose anemones also common. A tompot blenny was also seen.

## 8. Wreck of the Alice Taylor, 5 miles NE of Sea Palling, Norfolk

52.4938N 001.3914E

Sunk in 1918, steel wreckage rising 2m above the seabed. Seabed mostly sand and gravel with boulders cobbles and pebbles and large areas of *Sabellaria* reef. Wreckage mostly covered in short animal turf – mixed bryozoans with plumose, elegant and dahlia anemones. Large numbers of bib and ling seen.

## 9. Wreck of the Nubia 3 miles NE of Happisborough, Norfolk

52.5059N 001.3203E

An area of coarse sand, gravel and shell gravel with low lying metal wreckage in 15m of water. Although this wreck was surveyed in August, oaten pipes were still abundant and very few nudibranchs were seen. The short animal turf was mostly comprised of bryozoans and seasquirts. Some horse mussels were seen, but no beds were recorded.

### Species recorded:

A total of 114 species were recorded by Observers and Surveyors on the sites listed. We emphasise the need to be absolutely confident of ID or to bring back a photo for shore confirmation so we expect this total to increase with experience. Numbers of species recorded in each phylum: Sponges 11, Cnidarians 16, Worms 5, Crustaceans 21, Molluscs 13, Bryozoans 10, Echinoderms 3, Sea Squirts 14, Fishes 11, Others 1 and Algae 9. A complete species list is included as an appendix.

### Notable species recorded in 2008

Two sites of *Sabellaria* reefs were recorded off Sea Palling. It is hoped that many more instances of this BAP habitat will be recorded in 2009, as we will brief volunteers to look out for it.

Horse mussels were recorded at several sites, though no beds have been recorded so far. We have been informed of mussel beds to the South of Sea Palling which we will target for gap filling in 2009.

Again a tompot blenny was recorded at one site and several other sightings were received. While this species was not recorded off East Anglia before 2007 local divers often tell us that they have been present for some time.

Lone examples of the nudibranchs; *Eubbranchus farrani*, *Catrina* (or *Cuthona*) *gymnota* and *Doto* spp. (possibly *dunnei*) were recorded at single sites.

### Other achievements in 2008

#### Norfolk Crab Rescue

A weekend's Seasearch diving in Norfolk took a tragic turn when surveying divers found a section



of discarded net fouled on the Vera. Underwater the net appeared to have attracted a few crabs, after cutting several lobsters free we realised there were too many to free underwater. It was well tangled and it took 20 minutes to free and another 10 to lift and get it to shore. On shore 9 Seasearch volunteers soon discovered that there weren't just a few crabs trapped, an hour later they had freed nearly 200 shore, velvet and edible crabs and safely disposed of the net.

### Training in 2008

A total of 24 people attended two Observer courses held in Sheringham and at the Norfolk Wildlife Trust in Norwich, though the weather put paid to the planned shore dives for the first course, which meant getting people through in small groups whenever they were available over the Summer.

A Specialist Nudibranch ID and Underwater Photography course held in June attracted 10 attendees, though again huge waves stopped our diving. A small, foolish heroine was used to collect samples for classroom microscopy and further practical fun was had in the rock pools at West Runton.

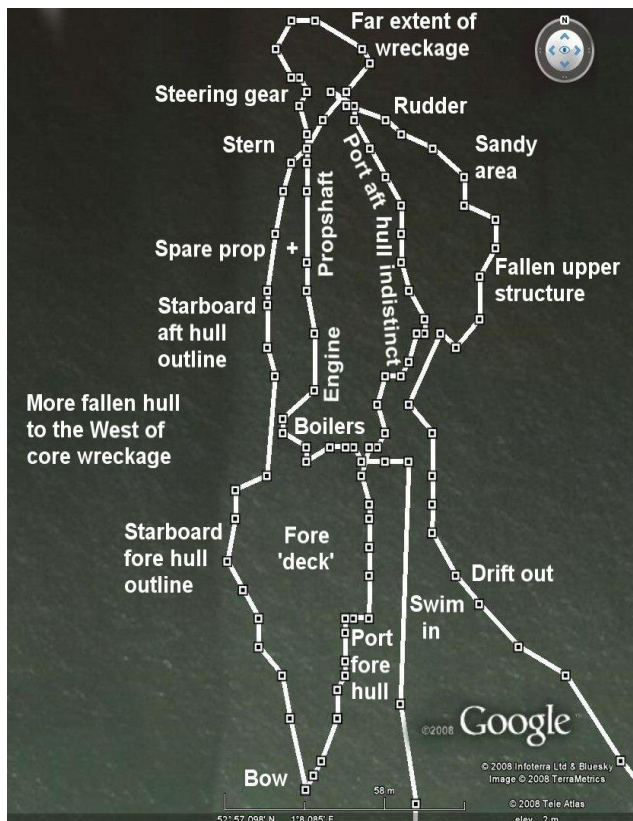
### GPS site surveys of The Vera and The Rosalie

To help visiting divers find and navigate the two inshore wrecks at North Norfolk, Rob and two volunteers took a GPS attached to an SMB on a guided tour of each, pausing to take synchronised photos at various points on the way. The plots were supplied to the Sheringham Shoal windfarm project team to help them avoid disturbing the wreck habitats as they engineer the landfall for the generator output. The results can be viewed at: <http://www.1townhouses.co.uk>

We hope to complete a much more comprehensive mapping and survey of the Chalk Gullies in 2009.

### 2008 Seasearch divers

- Rob Spray
- Dawn Watson
- Jane Adams
- William Hutchings
- Kate Risely
- Rosie Thomas
- Rick Southwood
- David Prince
- Sarah Fossberg



And nearly 20 others who dived and would have completed their 5 forms if not for the awful weather!



## Appendix:

### Species list – including distinct species which could not be identified

<b>Sponges</b>	<i>Palaemon serratus</i>	<b>Sea squirts</b>
<i>Halichondria panicea</i>	<i>Athanas nitescens</i>	<i>Morchellium argus</i>
<i>Haliclona oculata</i>	Unknown Shrimp	<i>Clavellina lepadiformis</i>
<i>Leucosolenia botryoides</i>	<i>Carcinus maenas</i>	<i>Polyclinum aurantium</i>
<i>Amphilectus fucorum</i>	<i>Cancer pagurus</i>	<i>Didemnum maculosum</i>
<i>Dysidea fragilis</i>	<i>Necora puber</i>	<i>Perophora listeri</i>
<i>Polymastia penicillus</i>	<i>Liocarcinus depurator</i>	Unknown solitary
<i>Scypha ciliata</i>	<i>Pisidea logicornis</i>	Unknown colonial
Unknown encrusting	<i>Ebalia tumefacta</i>	<i>Diplosoma spongiforme</i>
<i>Cliona celata</i>	<i>Pagurus</i> spp.	<i>Diplosoma listerianum</i>
Unknown chimney	<i>Galathea squamifera</i>	<i>Aplidium punctum</i>
Unknown branching	<i>Homarus gammarus</i>	<i>Sidnyum turbinatum</i>
	<i>Inachus</i> spp.	<i>Archidistoma productum</i>
<b>Cnidarians</b>	<i>Macropodia</i> spp.	<i>Clavellina pinhead</i>
<i>Eudendrium annulatum</i>		<i>Botryllus schlosseri</i>
<i>Eudendrium</i> spp.	<b>Molluscs</b>	
<i>Nemertesia antenina</i>	<i>Calliostoma zizyphinum</i>	<b>Fish</b>
<i>Hydractinia echinata</i>	<i>Flabellina pedata</i>	<i>Trisopterus luscus</i>
<i>Tubularia indivisa</i>	<i>Janolus cristatus</i>	<i>Molva molva</i>
<i>Tubularia larynx</i>	<i>Doto coronata</i>	<i>Pomatoschistus</i> spp.
Unknown feathery	<i>Aeolidia glauca</i>	<i>Gobius paganellus</i>
<i>Sargatia elegans</i>	<i>Coryphella browni</i>	<i>Parablennius gattorugine</i>
<i>Sargatia troglodytes</i>	<i>Cadlina laevis</i>	<i>Taurulus bubalis</i>
<i>Urticina felina</i>	<i>Eubranchus farrani</i>	<i>Labrus bergylta</i>
<i>Urticina eques</i>	<i>Cuthona gymnota</i>	<i>Dicentrarchus labrax</i>
<i>Metridium senile</i>	<i>Dendronotus frondosus</i>	<i>Callionymus lyra</i>
<i>Alcyonium digitatum</i>	<i>Ancula gibbosa</i>	<i>Syngnathus acus</i>
Comb jelly	<i>Mytilus edulis</i>	<i>Entelurus aqueorus</i>
<i>Aurelia aurita</i>	<i>Modiolus modiolus</i>	
<i>Chrysaora hysoscella</i>		<b>Others</b>
	<b>Bryozoans</b>	Sea spider
<b>Worms</b>	<i>Alcyonidium diaphanum</i>	
<i>Lanice conchilega</i>	<i>Bugula purpurotincta</i>	<b>Algae</b>
<i>Sabella pavonina</i>	<i>Bugula</i> spp.	<i>Palmaria palmatum</i>
<i>Pomatoceros</i> spp.	<i>Crisia</i> spp.	<i>Enteromorpha linza</i>
<i>Filograna implexa</i>	<i>Crisia eburnea</i>	<i>Ulva lactuca</i>
<i>Sabalaria spinulosa</i>	<i>Cellaria</i> spp.	<i>Calliblepharis ciliata</i>
	<i>Electra pilosa</i>	<i>Bryopsis plumosa</i>
<b>Crustaceans</b>	<i>Flustra foliacea</i>	<i>Plocamium cartilaginium</i>
<i>Barnacle</i> spp.	Unknown encrusting	<i>Polysiphonia</i> spp.
<i>Jassa falcata</i>	Unknown branching	Mixed red
Unknown amphipod		Mixed green
Mysid shrimps	<b>Echinoderms</b>	
<i>Caprella linearis</i>	<i>Asterias rubens</i>	
<i>Idotea linearis</i>	<i>Henricia</i> spp.	
<i>Idotea</i> spp.	<i>Crossaster papposus</i>	