

# WINTER

**Penzance B.S.A.C.**

## **Conservation Officer's Report AGM January 2010**



Bottlenose Dolphins were seen every month during 2009. Most of the reports were of the north coast pod, which spent the year mainly in the St. Ives area, but occasionally moving east as far as Port Issac, and westward, around Lands End as far as Marazion. The south coast pod was reported a few times, seen from The Lizard to Plymouth Sound. There were no reported sightings between Marazion and The Lizard. The best months were August, when there were 19 reported sightings, and December when there were 18 sightings, but overall, not as many sightings as in the previous few years. The largest pod reported was of about 50 near The Wolf Rock Lighthouse.

Common Dolphins, were seen in January and each month from April to October with only 26 reported sightings, 15 of which were in August. Pod sizes were usually much bigger, but only up to about 50 animals, again much smaller pod sizes than in previous years

There were 14 reported sightings of Risso's Dolphins, from February to November, but usually of small pods of 2 to 5 animals.

Pods of Whitebeaked Dolphins were seen in August and October. A pod of about 12 off Fowey in August and a pod of about 25 heading west off Gwennap Head in October.

Harbour Porpoises were reported every month except April, and by far the largest number of reports of cetaceans, with well over 130 reported sightings, 35 of which were in September, mainly around the Penwith coast. The pod sizes were usually of 1 to 6 animals but larger pods were seen off Gwennap Head by the Seawatch Team in September and October, with a pod of about 20 on October 8<sup>th</sup>. A pod of 20 to 30 was seen on December 15<sup>th</sup> and a pod of about 50 on October 13<sup>th</sup>.

Minke Whales were seen in September and October, 31 reported sightings altogether. 24 sightings in September were all off Gwennap Head except 2, which were off the Wolf Rock, and the 7 sightings in October were all off the Gwennap Head and Porthgwarra area.

2 Pilot Whales and a large whale, thought to be a Sei Whale, were seen in September and another large unidentified rorqual whale was seen in October. A whale seen heading westward past the NCI Lookout at Gwennap Head on December 15<sup>th</sup> was thought to be a Fin Whale because the blow was very high and vertical.

Basking Sharks were seen from February to October, with over 160 reported sightings. The sightings were usually of small numbers 1 to 6 animals, but a pod of about 70 was seen off The Lizard on 4<sup>th</sup> June, which was the best month for sightings when there were 67 reported sightings.

Ocean Sunfish were seen each month from June to October with 44 reported sightings. Sightings were usually of single fish, but with a few reports of 2 or 3.

2 small turtles were seen in May and June, one of which was thought to be a Logger Head and Leatherback Turtles were seen in June and August.

By-the-wind-Sailors, *Veleva veleva*, stranded in their thousands along the south coast in May and Portuguese-man-of-War and strands of the Pearl Chain *Apolemia uvaria* were seen in July.

A Mako Shark was seen in June, but the most unusual visitor for the year must have been the Albatross seen off Gwennap Head by the Seawatch Team in July.

