

Although not to the degree recorded earlier in the decade, 2018 saw further examples of transatlantic rafting after a blank the previous year. Perhaps most notable was early in the year when a length of black rope washed up in Windwick Bay, South Ronaldsay, Orkney was found by Yvonne Simpson and Lee Johnson to have numerous West Atlantic bivalves attached with multiple specimens of *Chama macerophylla* Gmelin 1791, *Dendostrea frons* (L., 1758) and *Isognomon bicolor* (Adams, 1845)***. At the opposite end of the country, Steve Trehwella found further *Stramonita haemastoma* (L., 1767) on a shoe washed up on Chesil Beach in December. The Orkney find increases the geographical range over which these transatlantic rafted molluscs have stranded, extending anticlockwise from there all around the Atlantic-facing coasts and up the Channel as far as Dungeness.

With numerous other recording schemes in operation, cephalopod records can be thin on the ground but the Society received a number of records of the commercial pelagic squid species via the fishing industry. There were some inshore reports too, including a large (85cm) and unusual-looking squid seen at Alnmouth***, Northumberland in May. Sadly the images were insufficient to permit determination to species but it was clearly an oegopsid, either *Todarodes sagittatus* (Lamarck, 1798) or *Ommastrephes bartramii* (Lesueur, 1821); either would have been a rare record, demonstrating just what can be found even on the shore if one is in the right place at the right time. Divers are a great source of cephalopod records and Seasearch stalwart and Conchological Society collaborator Dawn Watson reported a sighting of the rarely recorded bobtail squid species *Sepietta oweniana* (d'Orbigny, 1839-1841) from Kerrera Sound.

Records of pteropods are generally made from the discovery of their small, unusual shells in benthic grits but occasionally live observations are made and Kirsty Andrews submitted some beautiful images of swimming *Limacina retroversa* (Fleming, 1823)***, taken at 5 metres depth off the north coast of Scotland in July.

At the other end of the country, off the south coast, there is further evidence of the distributions of several sublittoral species creeping northwards. In March a beam trawl in the Channel brought up a very interesting find for reserachers Hayden Close and Ross Bullimore: a specimen of the notaspidean opisthobranch *Pleurobranchaea meckeli* (Blainville, 1825), generally considered a Mediterranean and Portuguese species. There have also been further records of the colourful chromodorid *Felimida krohni* (Vérany, 1846) which appears established at Eddystone now (Jan Davies) and was also recorded off Hilsea Point east of Plymouth by Bee Nuttall. Jan had something of a bumper year for nudibranchs in the south, also recording *Facelina annulicornis* (Chamisso & Eysenhardt, 1821), *Pruvotfolia pselliotes* (Labbé, 1923), *Cumanotus beaumonti* (Eliot, 1906)*** and *Doris ocelligera* (Bergh, 1881). Another Jan (Whittington) found a specimen of the rarely seen *Tritonia manicata* Deshayes, 1853*** near Ilfracombe in north Devon.

Other notable nudibranch records were *Janolus hyalinus* (Alder & Hancock, 1854) found by Tom Hughes in Menai Strait and *Geitodoris planata* (Alder & Hancock, 1846) photographed by Paula Lightfoot at both Saltwick and Cresswell in the North Sea, while at the end of the year Charlotte Bolton reported a lovely specimen of the very rare (in Britain at least) saccoglossan *Hermaea variopicta* (A. Costa, 1869) in Portland Harbour.

In Cornwall, David Fenwick was again busy and compiled a considerable body of records, particularly opisthobranchs. One species to receive plenty of attention recently has been *Runcina ferruginea* Kress, 1977 and David's 2018 observations suggest it was either a good year for the species or it is widening its distribution as he found it several times including at his regular sampling site at Newlyn, where it is almost certain he would have seen it previously had it been present. It may be

remembered that in 2017 David's excellent images and website enabled overseas expert Dr. Manuel Caballer Gutierrez to determine that some photographs thought to be of the sacoglossan *Hermaea bifida* (Montagu, 1816) were actually his recently described species *Hermaea cantabra* Caballer & Ortea, 2015. The plot thickened further in 2018 when David referred further images, similar to but different from *H. cantabra*, to the same expert who duly confirmed them as yet another species, *Hermaea paucicirra* Pruvot-Fol, 1953 ***. These records, again from Newlyn, are thought to be the first in the UK for this species, evidently often found alongside *H. cantabra*. David's other recent find, widely accepted as a new species within the recently described nudibranch genus *Rubramoena*, is yet to be scientifically described but he continues to provide distribution records for it.

Another prolific recorder, David McKay, again had a productive year. Perhaps his most perplexing find was specimens of what appeared at first glance to be *Nucula nitidosa* Winckworth, 1930 but which had a smooth shell margin. Upon investigation these are thought to be *Ennucula decipiens* (Philippi, 1844) which would be another first record for British and Irish waters for a species thought to have a more southern distribution. David's exploits on various fishing vessels produced other intriguing finds such as some deepwater *Calliotropis*, possibly including *Calliotropis mogadorensis* (Locard, 1898), the boreal whelk *Buccinum kjennerudae* Bouchet & Warén, 1985 *** from the Wyville Thomson Ridge and a specimen of *Acanthocardia* from Rockall, thought on close inspection to be *A. echinata* (L., 1758) but from an unexpected location and with very curved spines ***. He also found further records of the rare buccinids *Turrisipho fenestratus* (Turton, 1834) and *Turrisipho lachesis* (Mörch, 1869). Back on the bivalve front, David made additional finds of the deepwater species *Halicardia flexuosa* (Verrill & Smith, 1881) which he first found in 2017 and, off Shetland, collected some specimens of a tiny white bivalve he did not initially recognise but which were confirmed by Graham Oliver as the galeommatoidean *Arculus sykesii* (Chaster, 1895) which lives in association with crustaceans of the genus *Apseudes*. Coincidentally, earlier in the year a further record for *A. sykesii* was received, made by Andrian Rundle from shell grit in Benbecula; this represented a range extension to the north in itself but David's record extended that considerably further north and east.

Your author was fortunate to spend some time surveying with David on Lewis in the Outer Hebrides in May 2018, during which we compiled a large number of records for various sites around the island, notably live *Turbonilla jeffreysii* (Jeffreys, 1848) ***, some spectacular specimens of the chiton *Tonicella marmorea* (Fabricius, 1780) *** and 17 species of sea slug, including many *Adalaria proxima* (Alder & Hancock, 1854), demonstrating what the determined shore worker may achieve in a field often considered the preserve of divers. Some very limited offshore sampling was undertaken, yielding 32 taxa including *Tragula fenestrata* (Jeffreys, 1848) and *Myrtea spinifera* (Montagu, 1803).

Atrina fragilis (Pennant, 1777), the fan mussel or pen shell, was much in the news during the year, including an article in the Society's own publication (Baldock et al., 2018) which updated the long if sporadic record history of the species in the area. Elsewhere, Natural Resources Wales (2018) were pleased to announce the discovery of a live specimen in Milford Haven estuary, citing the locality's position within the Pembrokeshire Marine Special Area of Conservation as relevant to the potential survival and possible spread of the species there.

During the year further records and information emerged regarding the alien or non-indigenous species *Arcuatula senhousia* (Benson, 1842), discovered living in the Solent in 2017 (Barfield et al., 2018). There is news of records having been made some years earlier in the same area, perhaps suggesting the species may not spread as rapidly as feared, although less encouragingly there were also new records from the Isle of Wight. Further presence in the Solent was detected as part of an environmental DNA project (Holman et al., 2018) primarily intended to monitor the efficacy of this

new technique by utilising it to detect known non-indigenous species but actually going on to detect three others not, at the time, known to the authors to be present in British waters. Further work is planned with the intention at least in part of determining the vector by which the species has evidently become established. During 2018 it was also first recorded in West Africa in the Bijagós archipelago of Guinea-Bissau, one of the largest intertidal wetlands in that region (Lourenço et al., 2018), further extending this species' increasingly global distribution and where its presence could have an impact on the significant value of the area for wintering birds.

Parts of the south coast have surprisingly few records in the Society's digitised dataset and while this may reflect the outstanding need to digitise old paper-based records it nevertheless highlights a lack of contemporary surveying and recording. Recent efforts by enthusiastic beginner (I am sure he will not mind being referred to thus) Stephen Green have demonstrated what can be achieved with a little tenacity and industry and have generated a significant number of records of common and less common species including *Pandora inaequalis* (L., 1758), *Petricolaria pholadiformis* (Lamarck, 1818) and *Sepia orbignyana* Férussac [in d'Orbigny], 1826.

As always, there have been interesting reports of vagrant shells of tropical species but the most intriguing emerged at the very end of the year when Steve Trewhella reported a large bivalve seen while diving under Swanage Pier. Photographs showed it to be a fine specimen of *Antigona magnifica* (Hanley, 1845) ***, primarily a Philippine species but, amazingly, Steve said he had held it and it appeared alive. This created something of a stir and fortunately Steve was able to return to the site and relocate the specimen which turned out to have been dead all along (the solid shells are deceptively heavy) and on close examination even appeared to have the sticky mark left by a shop price label. How these things come to end up on our shores can only be speculated.

In closing I would like to thank all those who have contributed data or who have assisted in compiling it, and to encourage all Society members to conduct some marine surveying and submit the results. My gratitude is also extended to Ian Smith who has assisted in many ways, particularly in facilitating the British Marine Mollusca Facebook group and contributing regularly to it, and in helping with the "data purification" project aimed at correcting any errors in the existing data. I would also like to thank Brian Goodwin with whom I have been collaborating to explore methods by which the Society's extensive paper-based records may be digitised and added to the Recorder 6 dataset and thence shared via the National Biodiversity Network Atlas. Hopefully next year it will be possible to report considerable progress in this project.

References

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