

**CORNWALL AGAINST DEAN SUPERQUARRY (CADS) RESPONDS TO
REPORT FINDINGS ON THE MANACLES MARINE CONSERVATION ZONE
Action group is resolute that this new data should prohibit
major development at Dean Quarry**

Action group Cornwall Against Dean Superquarry (CADS) welcomes the findings of a major report on the rarity and diversity of the benthic habitat and species within the Manacles Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ).

The report, which was launched by author Chris Wood of Seasearch at the 3rd Annual Marine Ecology and Conservation Network meeting at the University of Exeter, Penryn, on Wednesday 26th July 2017, is considered by CADS to be a coup for citizen science.

Seasearch is a volunteer underwater survey project for recreational divers that helps protect marine wildlife through the recording of underwater habitats and the plants and animals they support. Thanks to Seasearch's work, the area around the Manacles rocks was designated one of the UK's first MCZs in 2013. For the past 14 years, Seasearch has been monitoring the Manacles MCZ, and since 2015 the project has co-ordinated with the Marine Conservation Society, Cornwall Wildlife Trust, Exeter University and Porthkerris Dive Centre.

Impetus behind the monitoring programme increased in early 2015, when Shire Oak Quarries announced its proposal to re-open and massively upscale Dean Quarry, which is located on the shores of the Manacles Marine Conservation Zone. Shire Oak Quarries hopes to provide stone to its sister company, Tidal Lagoon Swansea Bay. This will involve constructing a huge breakwater and loading jetties in the MCZ to export the stone to Wales. It is expected that 60-80,000 tonnes of rock would be required every month to supply the proposed fleet of tidal lagoons, and that this quarrying would be carried out well into the next decade.

The Manacles was designated as an MCZ to protect the pinnacle reef and the areas of soft sediment, especially the forests of slow-growing pink sea fan corals, spiny lobster/crawfish, sea fan anemones and coralline maerl algae that are found there. In addition, 50 different species of fishes, from bright little black-faced blennies to spotted catsharks, are among the finds recorded in and adjacent to the Manacles MCZ.

Seasearch concentrated almost 50 additional underwater surveys on the area around Dean Quarry, and the resulting report has revealed that all designated species and habitats are found adjacent to the quarry and not just on the Manacles rock pinnacles themselves. Seasearch and the University of Exeter believe that the developer's intended harbour works would physically damage these protected habitats and be totally contradictory to the rationale of MCZ designation.

Report author Chris Wood says: "The Manacles is a wonderful example of the huge diversity of life in our coastal waters and have rightly been protected in recognition of this. As divers and lovers of marine life, Seasearch believes it should stay that way."

CADS will continue to oppose any future planning applications for major development at Dean Quarry. Mark Shorrocks, co-owner of Shire Oak Quarries and CEO of Tidal Lagoon Swansea Bay, is currently in negotiation with the UK Government on a strike price for subsidy levels.

Silke Roskilly, Chair of CADS, hopes that the weight of new scientific evidence emerging from the report will compel the authorities to reject any development into the MCZ. She says, "It is beyond belief that any ethical company that purports to have green credentials could be associated with major industrialisation within the Manacles MCZ, especially since the publication of Chris Wood's report. Shire Oak Quarries needs to do the right thing for the environment here – to do otherwise demonstrates a willingness to commit ecocide."

Dr Matthew Witt, of the University of Exeter's Environment and Sustainability Institute in Cornwall, says: "While conferring an area with Marine Conservation Zone status does not de facto prevent human activity, it would seem contrary to the underlying premise of Marine Conservation Zones, to license activities that produce underwater noise and light pollution, cause physical damage, alter local currents and potentially increase the sediment load in the environment that can smother local habitats".

If the Manacles MCZ is breached by Shire Oak Quarries' proposed development, it will result in long-term environmental damage and, as a test case for all MCZs, will bode ill for all the current and proposed UK MCZs.

The small Cornish communities and local businesses on the Lizard Peninsula have, for over two and a half years now, been threatened with the re-opening and massive upsizing of Dean Quarry.

ENDS

Further information and imagery available from:

Alison McGregor 07867 551137

www.cads2015.com Twitter: @cads2015 Facebook: www.facebook.com/CADS2015

Notes to Editors

To download Chris Wood's full report entitled "Seasearch surveys within and adjacent to the Manacles Marine Conservation Zone 2001 - 2015" visit www.seasearch.org.uk/achievements.html

The Marine Conservation Society (MCS) is the UK charity dedicated to protecting our seas, shores and wildlife. MCS campaigns for clean seas and beaches, sustainable fisheries, and protection of marine life. Through education, community involvement and collaboration, MCS raises awareness of the many threats that face our seas and promotes individual, industry and government action to protect the marine environment. MCS provides information and guidance on many aspects of marine conservation and produces the annual Good Beach Guide and the Good Fish Guide as well as involving thousands of volunteers in projects and surveys such as MCS Beachwatch. www.mcsuk.org

Seasearch provides training for volunteer divers and organises dives and survey expeditions. Seasearch is a partnership between the Marine Conservation Society (MCS), The Wildlife Trusts, statutory nature conservation bodies and others, co-ordinated nationally by MCS and co-ordinated and delivered locally in England by Wildlife Trust and MCS local co-ordinators.

Details of all Seasearch activities, including training courses and survey dives can be found on the Seasearch website at www.seasearch.org.uk

The University of Exeter is a Russell Group university that combines world-class research with very high levels of student satisfaction. Exeter has over 21,000 students and is in the top one per cent of universities worldwide. The Environment and Sustainability Institute of the University of Exeter is a £30M interdisciplinary centre, based on the Penryn Campus in Cornwall, undertaking cutting-edge research into solutions to problems of environmental change. The ESI has three research themes: clean technologies, natural environment, and social science and sustainability. For more information visit www.exeter.ac.uk/esi

Porthkerris Divers is a family run dive centre that offers fantastic shore and boat diving and a gateway to the Manacles MCZ.