

SWANSEA TIDAL LAGOON

The strife aquatic...

ENVIRONMENTAL campaigners in Cornwall were delighted to read a report by volunteer dive organisation Seasearch into the rich and rare sealife species to be found in the Manacles, a rocky reef off the Lizard peninsula which has been designated a marine conservation zone (MCZ).

The Manacles is under threat from plans to reopen a nearby quarry, dig out millions of tonnes of rock and transport them by ship to build a proposed tidal lagoon in Swansea. Both the Swansea Tidal Lagoon project and the quarry are run by Mark Shorrocks (*Eyes passim*), whose super-quarry plans are at odds with his environmental objectives.

His company, Shire Oak Quarries, carried out environmental surveys over three days in 2015 on the impact of building a 500-metre

breakwater and jetty to enable his company to remove the rock by ship. The survey concluded that there would be minimal harm caused. "None of the MCZ designated species were recorded during the surveys... any effects on sediment transport and local hydrodynamics would be negligible or highly localised," it concluded.

The Seasearch report (carried out over 14 years with the Marine Conservation Society and Cornwall Wildlife Trust) has a very different conclusion. Its divers found pink sea fans, sea fan anemones and crawfish, among other things, on the shoreline close to the quarry. The report concluded that "all of the habitats and species listed in the MCZ designation" are found close to the quarry site and are "likely to be directly physically affected by the construction of a new breakwater and loading jetties."



Shire Oak Quarries told the *Eye*: "Options for sea transport are still being investigated so we believe this report is premature and is based on draft proposals from two and half years ago which are no longer under consideration. Any significant new sea transport infrastructure would require a planning application and marine licence application, including a full impact assessment."

The Seasearch report points out that the existing jetty is in poor condition and can only be accessed at high tide. Since it's impractical to take the proposed volume of stone out by road, new loading facilities of some kind will have to be built. Seasearch concluded there will be an environmental impact caused by sedimentation during construction work and pollution from the quarry's vessels and loading activities.

Shorrocks, meanwhile, has just set up a new environmental consultancy, Ecosystem Enhancement plc. It may come in handy if Shire Oak has to carry out more surveys on its own impact on the Manacles ecosystem.

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