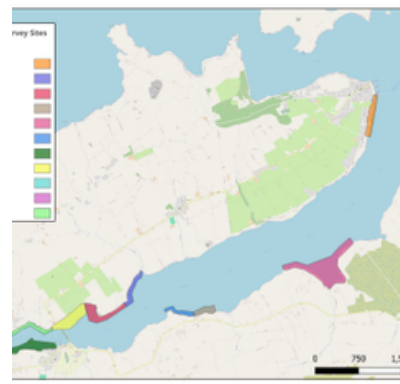
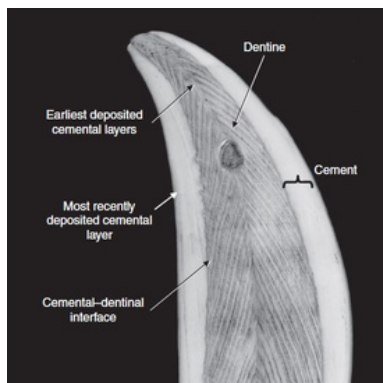
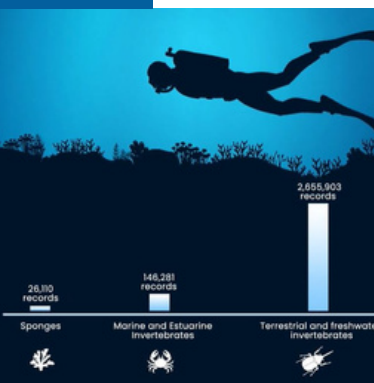


# CONSERVATION GRANT REPORT

Supporting Small Conservation Projects in the  
community that strive for protecting Biodiversity  
and connecting People and the Sea

20  
24



# The Sponge Project

The project aimed to help map the distribution of sponges in Irish waters, particularly cryptic and difficult to identify species, by marrying citizen science observations with expert spicule and genetic analysis of sponge samples.

For divers, sponges are amongst the least known marine taxa, therefore the project aimed to help Seasearch volunteers learn how to identify the most common sponge species and/or the sponges of their interest in their regular diving sites. A workshop was carried out by Seasearch Ireland and a video produced for wider dissemination.



**Collaboration  
between  
Seasearch Ireland,  
Galway  
Atlantiquaria &  
the University of  
Galway**

The video is  
available at  
<https://bit.ly/3HFIhwb>



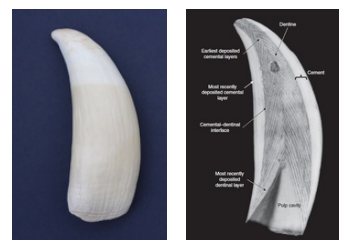
**Engage - Educate - Inspire**

# Irish sperm whale size structure and age assessment

Little is known about sperm whales in Irish waters. Up until recently all we really knew about this deep diving species came from stranded animals or those caught by whalers a century ago, in the late 2010's a wave of acoustic studies provided us with new details about the abundance, behaviour and size classes of sperm whales in Irish waters but we still have large data gaps for the life history of the species off Ireland. Age is a key characteristic in studying animals and we will use teeth from dead whales to provide the first estimates of age for this species in Ireland. We are delighted to help support Seán with this work.



**Carried out by  
Seán  
O'Callaghan,  
PhD Student  
from ATU**



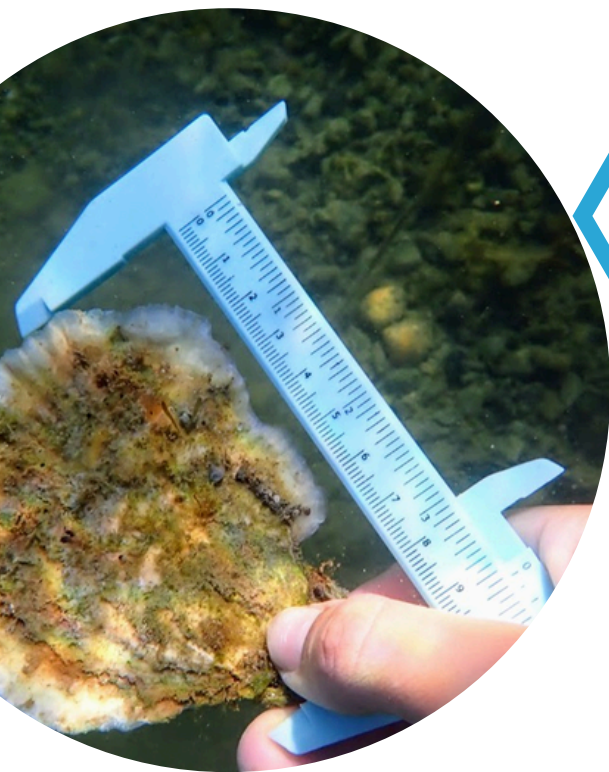
**SPERM WHALE SCALE**

**Engage - Educate - Inspire**



# Sea Synergy Oyster Project


This work aimed to establish the feasibility of an European oyster (*Ostrea edulis*) reef restoration within the Portmagee Channel Co. Kerry Ireland. This grant supported the fieldwork, carried out by summer interns at Sea Synergy in Kerry. They assessed the distribution of *Ostrea edulis* and associated biodiversity in the Channel. The information collected will provide baseline data on the marine species currently living in the channel and be used to assess the future feasibility of restoring *Ostrea edulis* reefs in the channel. This is the aquariums second year helping to support this fantiastic work.



**Establish the  
feasibility of  
Osyter Reef  
Restoration in  
the local area**

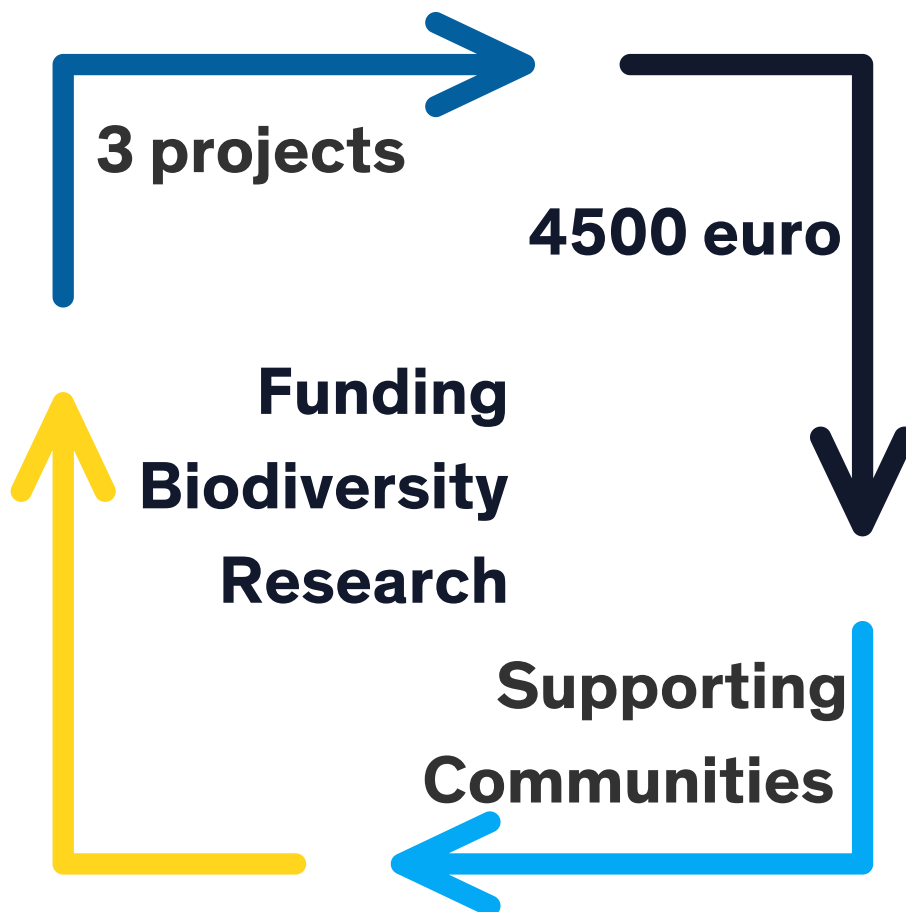


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# SMALL CONSERVATION GRANTS

20  
24  
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## Further Info at

- Sea Synergy <https://www.seasynergy.org/>
- Seasearch ireland <https://seasearchireland.ie/>
- Sponge Video: <https://bit.ly/3HFIhwb>
- Sperm Whale Press Release <https://www.atu.ie/news/atu-researcher-develops-new-technique-to-identify-individual-sperm-whales-using-aerial-photographs>
- Sperm Whale Podcast <https://soundcloud.com/afloatirl/new-technique-to-identify-sperm-whales-developed-by-atu-student>