

Monitoring of Sea Star Wasting Disease



The minus tides were back again in April so a small group of four Feiro volunteers went out Easter Sunday. As in previous surveys we walked to the far end of the survey area, turned around and started looking for sea stars. All sea stars were identified to species and checked for the disease. The sizes of all Ochre stars were determined by measuring the length of one arm from the tip to the center of the disk.

During the survey we only saw one sunflower star that showed clear signs of the wasting disease (Table 1). Two other sea stars (one sunflower and one sun star) had one regenerated arm, but no white spots on the body; these were not counted as diseased because the arm could have been lost in other ways.

Table 1. April 2014 intertidal sea star survey data

Species	Disease Category				
	0	1	2	3	4
Ochre star	94	0	0	0	0
Blood star	56	0	0	0	0
Mottled star	10	0	0	0	0
Sunflower star	4	0	0	1	0
Sun star	3	0	0	0	0

We counted and measured the most Ochre stars (94) so far observed during a single survey. The minus tide and good daylight were a great help, but it was the volunteers that at times went to great length to reach the sea stars (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Burt and Gery measuring Ochre stars

Next Survey

Come volunteer on the next survey **Saturday May 31, 2014**. We will meet at the **Freshwater Bay Boat Ramp** at **9:30 am**. We will tell you how to identify the different sea stars and how to conduct the survey, which will probably take about 2 hours. **Bring rubber boots and warm layered clothes** that can get dirty. Please call Helle at 360-808-4984 if you are planning to come.