



# PROJECT SIARC Summary

November 2021 - March 2023



## ABOUT US

The Shark Trust's Great Eggcase Hunt has been engaging members of the public in shark conservation since 2003. By recording shark & skate eggcases (also called mermaid's purses) that wash up on the beach, or those seen developing underwater, we can get a better understanding of the presence & diversity of oviparous (egg-laying) species in British waters.

Project SIARC (Sharks Inspiring Action and Research with Communities) is a multidisciplinary project operating throughout Wales, with emphasis on community engagement & research at two Special Areas of Conservation (SACs). Since Project SIARC launched in November 2021, a series of eggcase hunts have been conducted by the North Wales Wildlife Trust in collaboration with the Shark Trust. To date, these eggcase hunts have been focused within the Pen Llŷn a'r Sarnau SAC & across North Wales. As well as joining an organised event, we encourage coastal communities to conduct self-led eggcase hunts & record any findings (with photos!) to the Great Eggcase Hunt using either the online Recording Hub (available in English or Welsh) or via the Shark Trust's citizen science app.

Here is what you have found since Project SIARC began...



## PHASE ONE Eggcases collected January 2022 - March 2023

Total number of  
**EGGCASE HUNTS**

**102**



Total number of  
**RECORDERS**

**66**

**347**

**PARTICIPANTS**

at events between March and September

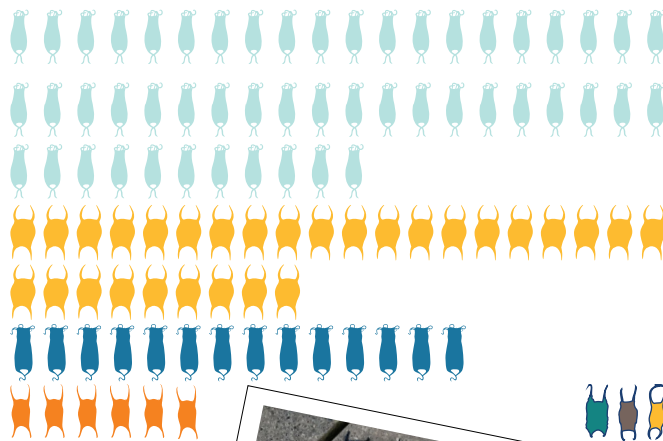
**25**  
**EGGCASE CHAMPIONS**

trained to run GEH events



Total number of

**EGGCASES RECORDED: 7,003**



Each = 1% of records

- Nursehound
- Thornback Ray
- Smallspotted Catshark
- Spotted Ray

Each = < 1% of records

- Small-eyed Ray
- Blonde Ray
- Cuckoo Ray



Thornback Skate (*Raja clavata*) eggcases found at Dinas Dinlle by Charles & Clare Welsh

Smallspotted Catshark (*Scyliorhinus canicula*) eggcases found at Conwy by Charles & Clare Welsh



Cuckoo Ray (*Leucoraja naevus*) eggcase found at Cable Bay by Sue Timperley

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# TOP RECORDERS

The top 5 recorders for phase one of Project SIARC (Jan 2022 - March 2023) submitted an amazing total of **5,752** eggcases between them!

The top recorders\* for Project SIARC in 2022 were:

\*please note that many of these have been submitted on behalf of bigger groups of people during events.

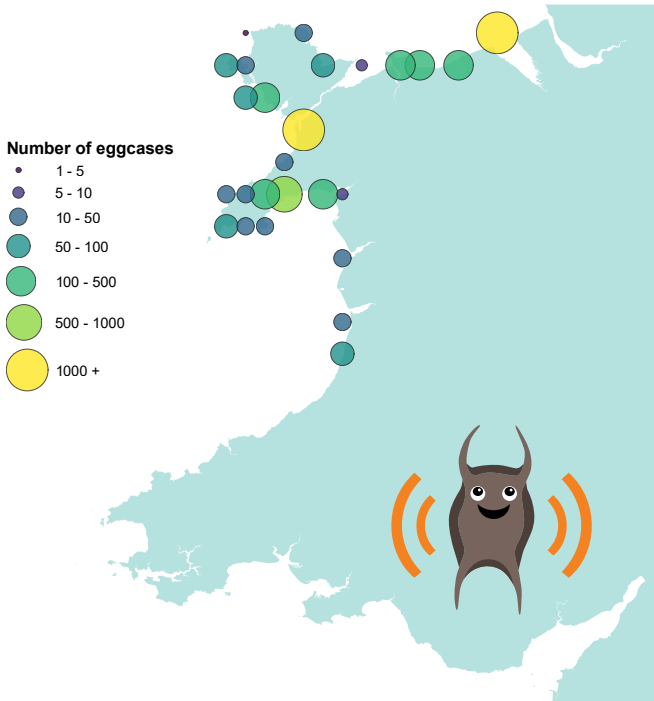
- 1 Reece Halstead - **2,008**
- 2 Elaine Blanchard - **1,842**
- 3 Charles & Clare Walsh - **1,079**
- 4 Dawn Thomas - **823**
- 5 (joint 5<sup>th</sup>) Julie Rose AND Sue Timperley - **204** (each)



571 Nursehound (*Scyliorhinus stellaris*) eggcases found at Dinas Dinlle by Reece Halstead

## EGGCASE LOCATIONS

Over the last year 7,003 eggcases have been reported through Project SIARC from 43 locations, mostly in North Wales with some submissions from Mid Wales:



Eggcase hunters at one of the Project SIARC events at Pwllheli in July 2022



Eggcase hunters at a Project SIARC training day



A Flapper Skate (*Dipturus intermedius*) eggcase found by Hannah Crute in Aberystwyth



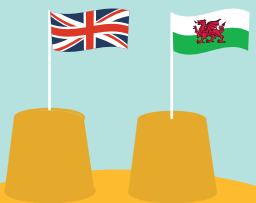
A Blue Skate (*Dipturus batis*) eggcase found by Louise Rogers in Aberystwyth

## UNUSUAL FINDS

In February 2022, the Shark Trust received an exciting submission of a Flapper Skate (*Dipturus intermedius*) eggcase found on South Beach, Aberystwyth. Usually a species encountered in Scotland and the Northern Isles, this is the first verified Flapper Skate eggcase submission the Great Eggcase Hunt has ever received from Wales!

Later in the year, in December 2022, a Blue Skate (*Dipturus batis*) eggcase was reported to the Shark Trust, also found on South Beach, Aberystwyth! We've only had 13 verified Blue Skate eggcases reported to the Great Eggcase Hunt as beach finds since the project began 20 years ago, and three of those have been from South Wales (Gower and Pembrokeshire). Though neither of these finds were submitted as part of Project SIARC, they are very exciting nonetheless!

While the focal species of Project SIARC to date have been the Angelshark (*Squatina squatina*), Tope (*Galeorhinus galeus*), Spurdog (*Squalus acanthias*), and the Common Stingray (*Dasyatis pastinaca*), we plan to add both the Flapper and Blue Skate as focal species in future work! An extra reason to keep your eyes peeled for the eggcases of these two Critically Endangered species.



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