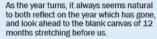
## Out on the Towans:

## Cornwall's coral reef

by Martin Rule, Towars Ranger



I'd like to wish you a very happy 2023, and I hope that you managed to spend at least some of 2022 out on the Towans, immersing yourself in the incredible environment and wildlife we have here.

Looking back at 2022, I would like to thank all the amazing volunteers who have worked so hard in recent months. More than 2,000 hours of work have been given across the year, from beach cleaning to bramble bashing to wildflower and butterfly monitoring, as well as increasingly working alongside local school children. All fantastic stuff which we plan to do more of in 2023.

Despite hideous weather, about 50 people attended our AGM in November, when we were treated to a fascinating talk by Dr Colin French, one of Cornwall's most eminent botanists. Using his incredible database, Colin demonstrated just how rich a place our Towans is for wildlife, especially plants. In his study of 100 of Cornwall's top nature sites, our very





In fact, in preparing for this talk, it dawned on us that the land from Lelant to Godrevy makes up less than 1% of Cornwall, but holds about 25% of its wildlife species! This mirrors the world's coral reefs, which occupy less than 1% of the planet but support 25% of all biodiversity – hence the title of Colin's talk.

in behind Gwithian Church, came out top of the

league in terms of rare species per acre.

I really think we've hit on something here. Everyone knows how valuable coral reefs are – but we need to keep on raising



awareness among local residents, as well as visitors, about how important and precious the Towans is. I want people to know they've entered a special place – like a National Park or the Jurassic Coast – and to take more interest in it and feel more inclined to help look after it. I must admit to being disappointed that lots of my "Pick up (doe) Poo' signs placed around the Towans recently have been removed very quickly. This is not the sort of attitude that shows we care about the place, or that we feel it's special. I'm sure it is the attitude of a small minority of people, but it lets us all down.

You'll notice our grazing ponies and cattle are busy now, as are our twice-weekly work parties, winter being the time when we do the bulk of our habitat management work. As ever, if you'd like to get involved with any of this, just email me at martinrule@talktalk.net

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