

***Sabellaria spinulosa* reefs**

EUNIS Code: A4.22 and A5.611

National Marine Habitat Classification for UK & Ireland code: SS.SBR.PoR.SspiMx and CR.MCR.CSab

Two sub-types: *Sabellaria spinulosa* reefs on rock

Sabellaria spinulosa reefs on mixed (sediment) substrata

The tube-building polychaete *Sabellaria spinulosa* can form dense aggregations on mixed substrata and on rocky habitats. In mixed substrata habitats, comprised variously of sand, gravel, pebble and cobble, the *Sabellaria* covers 30% or more of the substrata and needs to be sufficiently thick and persistent to support an associated epibiota community which is distinct from surrounding habitats. On rocky habitats of bedrock, boulder and cobble, the *Sabellaria* covers 50% or more of the rock and may form a crust or be thicker in structure. In some areas, these two variations of reef type may grade into each other. *Sabellaria* reefs have been recorded in depths between 10-50m BCD or more. The reef infauna typically comprises polychaete species such as *Protodorvillea kefersteini*, *Scoloplos armiger*, *Harmothoe* spp., *Mediomastus fragilis*, *Lanice conchilega* and cirratulids together with the bivalves *Abra alba* and *Nucula* spp. and tube-building amphipods such as *Ampelisca* spp. Epifauna comprise calcareous tubeworms, pycnogonids, hermit crabs, amphipods, hydroids, bryozoans, sponges and ascidians. *S. spinulosa* reefs are often found in areas with quite high levels of natural sediment disturbance; in some areas of reef, individual clumps of *Sabellaria* may periodically break down and rebuild following storm events. *S. spinulosa* reefs have been recorded from all European coasts except the Baltic Sea, Skagerrak and Kattegat. Areas of dead *Sabellaria* reef indicate the site supported reef habitat in the past and should be reported as this habitat type.

See OSPAR Agreement 2008-07 for references