

# Penzance B.S.A.C. Conservation Officer's Report August 2007

Britain's ISIS robot submarine is a van-sized bundle of technology and is being used for the first time to explore a vast valley the size of the Grand Canyon, just off the coast of Portugal. Researchers are able to view previously hidden features up to 5 Km (three miles) deep in the Nazare Canyon, and the ISIS vehicle can bring specimens back to the ships deck. The Census explorers of the continental margins have discovered a new Macro microbe, a protozoan. The single cell of this fragile new species of Xenophyophore was found at a depth of 4,300 metres, and is enclosed within a plate-like shell, 1 cm in diameter, composed of mineral grains. The Census team of researchers have also been investigating the Mid-Atlantic Ridge and among 80,000 Organisms—encompassing 354 families, genera and species, they have discovered a new species of Squid, *Promachoteuthis sloani*. A squid that chews.

A very embarrassing shark attack occurred on Folkestone Pier when a tackle shop owner, fishing off the pier with a friend, caught a lesser-spotted dogfish, a member of the shark family. He shouted to his friend, "Hey mate, look at this whopper" but when his friend approached to have a close look, he accidentally nudged the arm of the jubilant catcher and the fish catapulted itself up to his nose with its mouth wide open. It clamped around his nose and wouldn't let go. The fisherman said afterwards, "It didn't just hang on either, I could feel it chomping it's teeth as



if it wanted me for it's last meal, and everyone on the pier was watching me jumping up and down with a shark hanging off my nose and singing the Jaws theme tune –I've never felt so embarrassed" He finally



Darkie Charlie

managed to get the fish off and was left with bloody gashes and rows of tiny teeth marks. He said, "I was too embarrassed to go to the hospital because I didn't want the doctors to laugh at me too" A rare shark was caught off Cornwall and landed at Newlyn Market. The media was calling it a Kitefin Shark but is correctly named Darkie Charlie *Dalatias licha*, This species is not usually found in UK waters, but more commonly in deeper waters of Continental Europe in depths of 200 to 600 metres. They grow up to 6ft long and feed off deepwater fish, squid and crustaceans.

The shark was bought at the market by a firm of Taxidermists with

plans to stuff and mount the unusual creature.

There were 18 reports of Bottlenose Dolphins during July, all from Watergate Bay on the north coast around to Penzance on the south., except one report of a pod of about 30 well out off Fowey on the 6th July. Four reports of unidentified dolphins were also probably Bottlenose. Common Dolphins were spotted 4 times, the largest pod being 16. There were 14 sightings of Harbour Porpoises, around West Penwith from Penzance to Pendeen The largest number being 6 off Pendeen. There was however another unusual sighting of a very large pod of Harbour Porpoises off Nare Head on the 31st of the month. They were heading west over a wide area with dozens of their backs breaking the surface at a time and the estimated number in the pod was at least 100 12 reports of Ocean Sunfish were all around the western tip of the county from St. Ives to Porthcurno. The largest number of reports were of Basking Sharks, these again were all around the western tip from Pendeen to Porthcurno except for one sighting of 2 off The Rumps, near the Camel Estuary on 10th July. A shark was seen to jump clear of the water off Pendeen , it was thought to be a Blue Shark. A Minke Whale was seen off Porthgwarra on the 18th and the 20th of the month, and a pod of 3 whales, probably Minkes were seen off Cudden Point on the 20th. The only report of a Grey Seal was from The Rumps. Three very large Triggerfish were seen by divers near The Cow & Calf Rocks off Port Quin. And a colony of Buoy Barnacles were found washed up at Stanbury Mouth, east of Bude