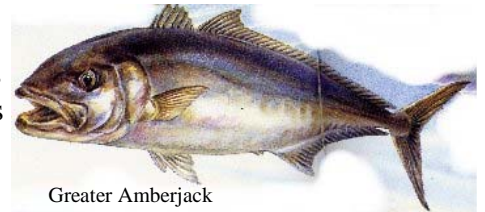
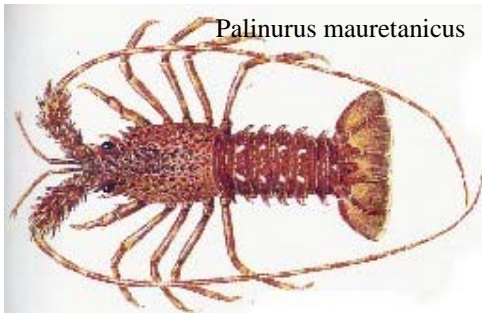


# Penzance B.S.A.C. Conservation Officer's Report October 2007

A Newquay fisherman recently caught a fish that normally lives in the Caribbean. The Almaco Jack *Seriola rivoliana*, which was caught off the north coast, is believed to be only the 5th of this species ever recorded in British waters and the 1st to be kept alive. It is now in the Blue Reef Aquarium at Newquay. It is related to and very similar to a British fish The Greater Amberjack *Seriola dumerili*, but the rear of the upper jaw is much deeper.. A giant Pink Spiny Lobster, *Palinurus mauretanicus* was recently caught and landed at Newlyn. It was caught about 200 miles off Newlyn with two other which were sold at the market. The Blue Reef Aquarium, where the monster is now housed, is trying to establish if it is



Greater Amberjack



Palinurus mauretanicus

a record breaking size. The Pink Spiny Lobster is closely related to the Common Crawfish, *Palinurus elephas* but is usually found off the coast of Africa and in the Mediterranean There are records of catches off the west of Ireland up to 53° N but at a depth of 180 metres or deeper. As there is not much water of that depth close to the UK they are very infrequent in British landings.

During August and September the National Oceanography Centre, Southampton. (NOCS) and the RSPB have had observers at Gwennap Head to carry out a survey of Balearic Shearwaters. They have recorded not only all the birds seen, but also all marine animals and fish and their

records have all been put on their website which is updated daily, so I have received massive numbers of sightings from them. The records for September 6th were 28 Basking Sharks, 2 Minke Whales, 9 Bottlenose Dolphins, 90 or more Common Dolphins, 20 Harbour Porpoises and a Grey Seal, and it went on like this for most of the month. It just goes to show just how rich the sea is and what you could see if you really look for it. These are reports from just one site and did not include the 462 Basking Sharks seen from Land's End on September 5th. The sea is full of food at present. Fred brought me in samples of plankton during the month and each time it was absolutely full of zoo plankton, all of it that I examined was of copepods. Each little drop of water I put onto a microscope slide contained several of these tiny creatures. Samples of plankton usually contain a rich mixture of creatures like Copepods, Mysids, Euphausids, Pagurid and Coenobitid Larvae etc., but the samples Fred brought to me contained only copepods, but it was still a rich soup for the Basking Sharks that were out there.



copepod

The largest number of sightings were of Basking Sharks. There were 42 reports and all but one were from Cape Cornwall around to Carn Barges just west of Lamorna. The exception was on the 1st of September when 8 were seen well north of St. Ives. Second in line for report numbers were of Harbour Porpoises with 37 reports, they were seen from Godrevy all around the south coast to Whitsand Bay, east Cornwall. The largest numbers were of 50 off Godrevy on both the 22nd and 23rd of the month. Next came Common Dolphins with 30 sightings and Bottlenose Dolphins with 24 reports, although if you add in 12 sightings of unidentified dolphins, which were probably Bottlenose Dolphin, they would have come in second place. Perhaps the surprise of the month was the sighting of 19 Minke Whales, all around west Cornwall. There was also a Pilot Whale and an unidentified whale. A Leatherback Turtle was seen in Whitsand Bay on the 1st of the month. *Cyanea lamarckii* and Compass Jellyfish were reported off The Scilly Isles on September 3rd. Pieces of Pearl Chain, *Apolemia uvaria*, a colonial hydroid, were brought in for me to examine under the microscope, an amazing mass of squirming tentacles. Basking Sharks were seen being harassed off Gwennap Head and Sennen on three occasions during the month