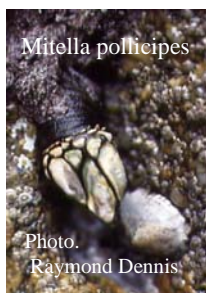


Penzance B.S.A.C Conservation Officer's Report February 2008

On November 8th 2007, 5 Japanese Whaling Ships once again set off to defy international law and hunt protected whales in the Antarctic Ocean south of Australia and New Zealand, the Southern Ocean Whale Sanctuary, a critical protected area. On that very same day the Japanese whaling program received a fresh rebuke. Japanese government proposals to re-open commercial whaling and trade in Minke and Bryde's Whales were soundly defeated at the UN CITES (Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species) meeting underway in Santiago Chile. It was the fourth time that the Japanese proposals had failed. Once again the world will witness the unnecessary and destructive pretence of "scientific whaling" But who carries out this research? There are no scientists on these boats, the research is carried out by the Japanese whaling industry. The Japanese government claims that the so called research is needed to learn what whales eat, and claims that whales are responsible for declining fish landing, when over fishing and other human activities are the true cause. These so called researchers have failed, because they seen ignorant of the most basic fact about their subjects. On the same hunt last year the whalers caught 440 whales and not one of the 440 whales had eaten fish. These species do not eat fish, and this has been well known for decades. If it's really data that these "researchers" want, then the painful and protracted deaths of harpooned whales is completely unnecessary. Australian scientists have determined how to learn about whale diet by analysing whale faeces from live animals, a methodology which actually yields superior data over time. A Common Dolphin was found stranded alive at Marazion on Tuesday 15th January, probably washed ashore by huge waves whipped up by recent stormy weather. A team of experts from the RSPCA and BDMLR attended, and took it to Carbis Bay where the seas were much calmer and made a successful release. It seemed a little confused at first and reluctant to leave the shore but soon realised it was free and headed offshore.



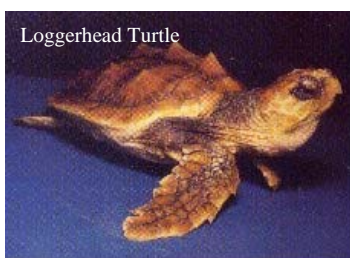
Mitella pollicipes

Photo.
Raymond Dennis

A diver has recently photographed 3 unusual barnacles in a crevice near Tater du, and sent the picture to Plymouth for identification. They turned out to be *Mitella pollicipes*. This species was first discovered on British shores in 1880 by a Mr Groves who collected the 3 he found and sent them to The Natural History Museum in London where they remain pickled in formaldehyde. When rock climbing in June 1983 I found a single specimen on a rock which is only expose at very low spring tides, at the base of the cliff at Carn les Boel. I did not collect it, but took a photo and this single *Mitella* has been the only known specimen of this species in British waters until now. I have just learned that another diver found and photographed a Striped Blenny *Parablennius rouxi* off Plymouth last November. This species is normally found in the Mediterranean, so are they moving north? It is unlikely that this would be the only one off British shores so keep an eye out for this new fish and



Striped Blenny



Loggerhead Turtle

report it to me if you spot one. A 20" Loggerhead Turtle was found stranded alive in a mound of seaweed on Blackrock Beach near Bude. BDMLR volunteers who attended said it was covered in oil and in a severely weakened state. They took it to The Blue Reef Aquarium, Newquay where it was name James Bond after its official Stranding number 007. After nursing it back to good health, they plan to airlift it to warmer waters. There were 6 reported sightings of Bottlenose Dolphins during January, 2 dolphins off Newquay on the 24th and the other 5 sightings were all in the St Ives area. One report of an unidentified dolphin, also off St Ives were almost

certainly the Bottlenose. The only other dolphins reported were the Common Dolphin rescued at Marazion and taken to Carbis Bay for release and a Striped Dolphin at Gunwalloe that did not survive. 3 Harbour Porpoises were seen off the Rumps on the 1st day of the month and on the last day of the month the Loggerhead Turtle was found.. There were 80 cetacean carcass's found on Cornish Beaches during 2007, They were 40 Common Dolphins, 26 Harbour Porpoises, 9 unidentified dolphins, 3 Bottlenose Dolphins, a Striped Dolphin and a Minke Whale. From October onwards Grey Seals were the main casualties with 25 strandings, 7 of which were pups. From late November to the end of the year Triggerfish were stranding, 10 were found all along the north coast from Land's End to Mother Ivey's Bay near Padstow . .