

Conservation Officer's Report



Kittiwake with Pipefish

During the last couple of years the Snake Pipefish population in the North Sea seems to have exploded, they are being seen in vast numbers all along the Norwegian coast and off northeast England and southeast Scotland, and they appear to form a significant part of the diet of many fish eating birds in the area.

There are reports of pipefish being used as nesting material by seabirds, which must indicate their poor nutritional value. They also seem to be hard to swallow, judging by the amount of head shaking and struggling before they finally go down. Many larger fish being caught off the Northumberland coast have stomachs full of pipefish, and Pollack have been seen with pipefish escaping via their gills.



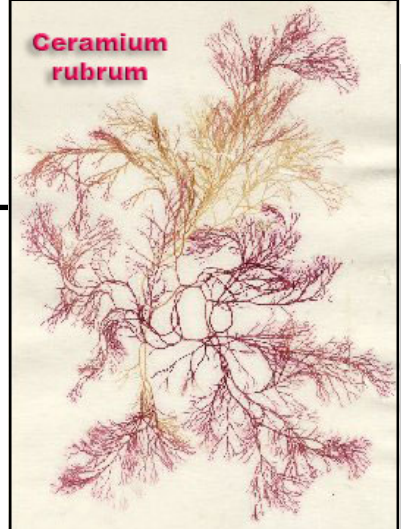
Red Breasted Merganser with Pipefish



New Zealand fishermen have landed a colossal squid, which could be the largest ever found and is expected to be a record breaker for size and weight, estimated at nearly a ton, and 33 ft. long!

A marine expert from the University of Plymouth Marine Institute says the future of the fishing industry in Cornwall and the rest of Britain is in serious danger. Research by the institute claims poor sea management is damaging the underwater ecosystem. Either we team up in the UK to sustain marine life or we face a future of catastrophes. He says fisheries industries could collapse because not enough is being done to protect the coastal and sea environments, and that the current system for protecting our marine environment cannot cope with the pressures imposed by modern society.

Ceramium rubrum



The red seaweed *Ceramium rubrum* is a very delicate looking weed, as can be seen by the pressed specimen on the right. But when looked at under the microscope we get a very different picture, the dichotomy of the tips can be seen in great detail.



Microscope View. Photo by Pat Woodward

There were very few sightings reported of marine creatures during February. The largest number of reports being of Harbour Porpoises. There were 12 reports from Port Quin, beyond the Camel Estuary on the North coast around to St. Anthony Head near Falmouth on the South Coast. One report was of a large pod of about 100 watched for 3½ hours in the Camel Estuary on Feb 1st. Of four reports of Bottlenose Dolphins 2 were off St Ives on the same day,

morning and afternoon, and the other two were in Mounts Bay on the 4th and 20th of the month. Two other reports of dolphins were off Rame Head and Pendennis Point, probably also Bottlenose. The only other report was of a Grey Seal off Sennen.