

# Penzance B.S.A.C Conservation Officer's Report August 2009

An anglers catch made off the coast of County Clare in southwest Ireland breaks a number of records. The remarkable capture has prompted admiration but also controversy, with some anglers saying the trophy should have been returned to the water to help conservation. The haul was made by Mr Waldis, aged 70 from Switzerland, whose mackerel bait snared a 12ft 9ins bluntnose six-gill shark which weighed 1056lbs (480kg) It sets a new record for the heaviest rod-caught fish in British or Irish waters, overtaking a 968lb Bluefin Tuna caught in 2001, and is more than double the weight of the heaviest rod-caught fish within the UK, a Porbeagle Shark of 507lbs taken off Orkney in 1993.

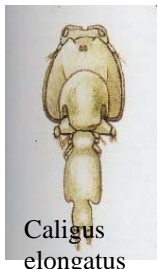


The sea louse, a parasitic copepod, is widely distributed among wild fish species along the Norwegian coast. The parasite is found in large numbers on the Lumpfish, or Lumpsucker, *Cyclopterus lumpus*, which is now considered to be one of the primary hosts of the parasite. The lumpfish in turn infects several types of farmed fish when it comes into the coast during the spring months. The sea louse *Caligus elongatus* is a parasite that attaches to the skin of fish. It can cause sores, which at

worst may prove fatal to the fish. It has been found on more than 80 different fish species in most of the world's oceans. The lumpfish at left was infected by more than 600 sea lice. Sea lice are found on so many different north-Atlantic fish species, it is highly likely that they can transmit from wild fish to farmed fish, and is also likely that they can transmit between different farmed fish species. Other fish that are usually covered with parasites, are Ocean Sunfish, but the parasite usually found on them are *Lepeophtheirus nordmanni*.



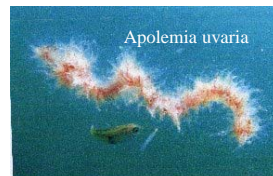
Lumpfish



Caligus elongatus

Strands of the Pearl Chain, *Apolemia uvaria*, have been seen this year.

First sighting was a foot long chain by a young lad Gillan Goodall at Whitesands Bay on July 3rd. Much longer chains up to 4 metres were seen at Gunwalloe Fishing Cove on several days late June and early July. And more chains up to a metre long were seen on the 9th & 10 July at Porthkerris Cove. Although these strands are detached from the main body of the syphonophore they are still able to give you a nasty sting. Keep clear, you do not want to be



Apolemia uvaria

stung by one of these. On July 25th a fisherman 25 miles south of Plymouth came across a brownish plankton bloom in which there were several sausage shaped jellyfish-like creatures about 4" to 6" long, purplish with at least one greenish stripe down their length. These were probably one of the Comb Jellys, possibly *Beroe cucumis*, (shown at left). There were 14 reported sightings of Basking Sharks during July, from St Agnes on the north coast to The Manacles on the south. Maximum number in one place was 7 off Godrevy. Ocean Sunfish were seen all around the coast from Godrevy to Plymouth with 19 reports, all of single fish except a report of two off Gwennap Head on the 16th. Bottlenose Dolphins were reported 14 times from Godrevy to Falmouth, and 5 other sightings of unidentified dolphins were probably also Bottlenose. The Falmouth sightings would have been the south coast pod, for the north coast pod was seen elsewhere at the same time. Common Dolphins were only seen 4 time, small pods off Penzance Harbour and Gwennap Head but 18 were seen playing in the The Carrick Roads on the 4th. Harbour Porpoises were reported 17 times, all between Cape Cornwall and Lowland Point near Coverack, with 10 seen off Gwennap Head the largest group on the 30th. Risso's Dolphins were only seen twice, 3 off Gwennap Head on the 18th and 2 off St. Loy on the 21st. 18 reports of Grey Seals ranged from Crackington Haven on the north coast to Falmouth on the south with the largest group of 10 off Godrevy. There was a sighting of an unidentified shark off Godrevy and two reports of Portuguese-man-of-War as well as the Pearl Chain sightings mentioned above. No doubt, the most amazing sighting for July was the Albatross seen off Gwennap Head on Sunday the 26th by the Seawatch Team

