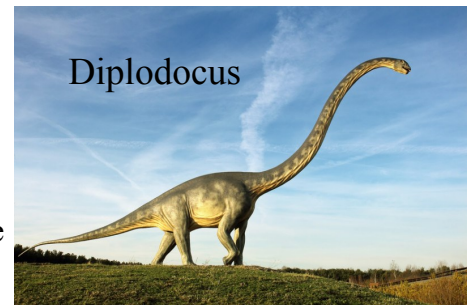


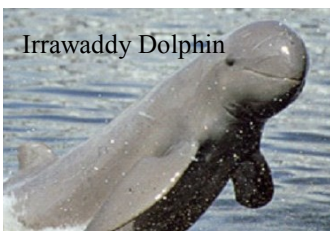
Friends of Penzance B.S.A.C. Conservation Officer's Report June 2014

An international committee of taxonomists and related experts selected the top ten from among the approximately 18,000 new species named during the previous year and released the list on May 22nd to coincide with the birthday, May 23rd, of Carolus Linnaeus, the 18th century Swedish botanist who is considered to be the father of modern taxonomy. The list includes a quartet of tiny newcomers to science: a miniscule skeleton shrimp, a single celled protist, (an organism on the border line between plants and animals) that does a credible imitation of a sponge, a clean room microbe that could be a hazard during space travel, and a teensy fringed fairyfly named Tinkerbelle. Also on the list are a gecko that faded into the background in its native Australia and a fungus that, conversely, blazed its way into contention by virtue of the bright orange colour it displays when it's produced in colonies. Crawling slowly into the final spot on the alphabetical list is *Zospeum tholussum*, a tiny, Croatian snail from one of Earth's deepest cave systems.

If you thought the largest dinosaurs to have walked the Earth produced the biggest eggs you'd be mistaken. A team of scientists have suggested reasons why the large dinosaurs produced smaller eggs than might be expected. One of the defining characteristics of the dinosaurs was their vast size, and the sauropods, a suborder of dinosaurs which includes the famous Diplodocus, were the largest of all. Scientists had been puzzled at the relative small size of sauropod eggs. Both individual egg size and clutch size are smaller than might be expected for such enormous creatures, relative to modern egg-laying animals. Researchers have now concluded that the substantial incubation time required for sauropod embryos to develop and hatch may have been an important constraint and that this could explain the small individual size of sauropod eggs.



Imagine if you were one of just 85 humans left. That's how it is for a population of Irrawaddy dolphins—only 85 survive today in a small stretch of the Mekong River in Cambodia. Those few are being threatened by a newly proposed hydropower project, the Don Sahong Dam. The sound waves from the initial explosions to clear tons of rock could kill these critically endangered dolphins, which have highly sensitive hearing. If they survived and the dam was built they would have to survive more boat traffic, lower water quality and habitat destruction. The Don Sahongv Dam is not just bad news for the dolphins: it will have dire consequences for the food security and livelihoods of the people who rely on the Mekong River's rich fisheries. In fact the Mekong—known as “our mother” to locals is more than a great river, it is a way of life for more than 60 million people. Giving life to the world's largest inland fisheries, the Mekong is second only to the Amazon River in terms of fish biodiversity. The WWF is fighting to minimise destruction of the Mekong River's ecosystem and protect its precious wildlife.



There were 12 reported sightings of Bottlenose Dolphins during June. Largest pod seen was 20 in the Camel Estuary. 2 small pods of unidentified dolphins were probably also Bottlenose. Only 4 reports of Common Dolphins in Mounts Bay and Fal Bay, largest pod, about 100 in Fal Bay. 4 reports also for Risso's Dolphin, again Fal and Mounts Bay, largest pod 9 in Mounts Bay on the 22nd. 19 reports of Harbour Porpoises, were from Pendeen to Fal Bay with largest pod 29 in Mounts Bay. Minke Whales were reported 4 times, single animals except for 3 in Fal Bay on 29th. A large unidentified whale was seen northwest of Land's End on the 14th. Ocean Sunfish were reported 13 times, seen from Botallack to Fal Bay. Only 6 reports of Basking Sharks, Porthcurno to the Lizard. Grey Seals were reported regularly around Fal and Mounts Bays. almost daily. A Common Seal was seen on 4 occasions in Fal Bay A Leatherback Turtle was seen off Nanjulian and a Blue Shark in Fal Bay. Barrel Jellyfish were seen all around the coast from St Agnes to Fal Bay in large numbers, one report was of 70 off Porthleven. Also seen on several occasions were Compass, Moon and Cyanea jellyfish