

Friends of Penzance B.S.A.C. Conservation Officer's Report September 2015



Nematode worms are about a millimetre long and commonly found in short-lived environments, such as decomposing fruit or other rotting plant material. The worms face a high level of unpredictability in these environments as temperature and food availability fluctuate, and frequently need to move to new locations. Little was understood on how such a small animal with limited mobility was able to travel long distances to find new food. However, researchers have found that slugs and other invertebrates provide essential transport for these small worms. The survey revealed that nematode worms are commonly found on slugs, woodlice and centipedes. Further experiments confirmed that the worms invaded the guts of slugs, survived and proliferated within the intestines, and were subsequently excreted alive. Some slugs have other passengers., Many years ago I often watched small inch long grey slugs with black stripes along their backs on my garden path and they had several minute mites on their back. Some mites would get left behind on the slimy trail left by the slug, but the mites would race along the slime to catch up with the slug before it got too far away. Unfortunately I have not seen the little slugs since I have had a camera capable of capturing this sequence of events.



From ancient times, people have been aware of the rooster's "cock-a-doodle-do" that marks the crack of dawn, but has anyone wondered who crows first? In a new study biologists have revealed that there is actually a systematic rule based on social ranking that determines the order of crowing in roosters. Triggered by the first crow from a rooster, other roosters nearby also start to crow like a ripple effect. Crowing is considered to be an action by roosters to alert other of their territory. In addition chicken are known to be highly social creatures and develop a dominance hierarchy called pecking order when a small number of chickens form a group. This pecking order starts with the dominant chicken pecking all the chickens, the second dominant chicken pecking all the chickens apart from the dominant one and with the least dominant chicken remaining harmless. The social ranking of roosters is strongly reflected in the actions within the groups, and the highest ranking rooster has been known to have priority in eating and mating.



We are not seeing Bottlenose Dolphins as often as we were in recent years but some of the sightings recently have been amazing, with a report of a pod of about 200 in Fal Bay on the 4th of September, There was also a sighting of 12 in Fal Bay on the 1st of the month. The only other sighting in September was of 5 near the Runnelstone on the 25th. Common Dolphins were seen in Fal Bay and Mounts Bay, off The Lizard, Pendeen and Cape Cornwall with 12 sightings altogether, largest pod about 50 near the Runnelstone. 2 sightings of Rissos Dolphins were 20 in Mounts Bay and 6 off Pendeen Watch. Harbour Porpoises were seen from Fal Bay around Lands End to Pendeen with 28 sightings. 4 Minke Whales were seen, 1 in Fal Bay and 3 off Gwennap Head area.. The 7 Sightings of Ocean Sunfish were all in Mounts Bay. 5 Sightings of Barrel Jellyfish were all in Fal Bay with over 200 seen on one day. 19 reports of Grey Seals were from Fal Bay and Mounts Bay and there was a report of Blue Fin Tuna in Mounts Bay on the 7th of the month.