

ROCKPOOLING

Adventures By The Shore



ROCKPOOLING, Adventure By The Shore

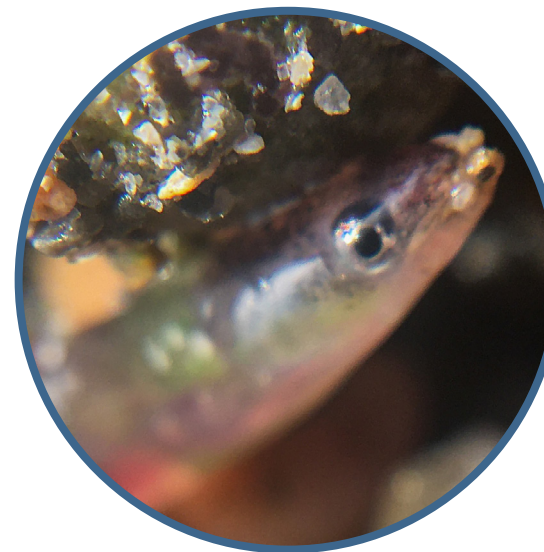
Over the last few months the weather has been awful, and not suited for rockpooling at all.

However, on the 15th of March the sun pierced the sky and the tides were perfect for a Rockpool Experience! After many months it was great to Explore The Shore and see what we could find!

Little did we know that this ROCKPOOL experience would prove to be something truly amazing.....

If you are interested in Rockpooling and Explore Your Shore, please see: [EXPLORE YOUR SHORE WEBSITE](#)

TOP THREE DISCOVERIES IN MARCH





Sand hopper
Talitrus saltator

Sand hoppers are a type of crustacean. They are pretty small and spend the daytime buried in the sand at depths of 10-30cm or hidden in strandline debris. They emerge at night to feed on decaying seaweed and other detritus.

Adults spend the winter in a dormant state, buried in the damp sand at depths of up to 50 cm above the spring tide mark.

They are an important food source for shore birds.

Source: <https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/wildlife-explorer/marine/>

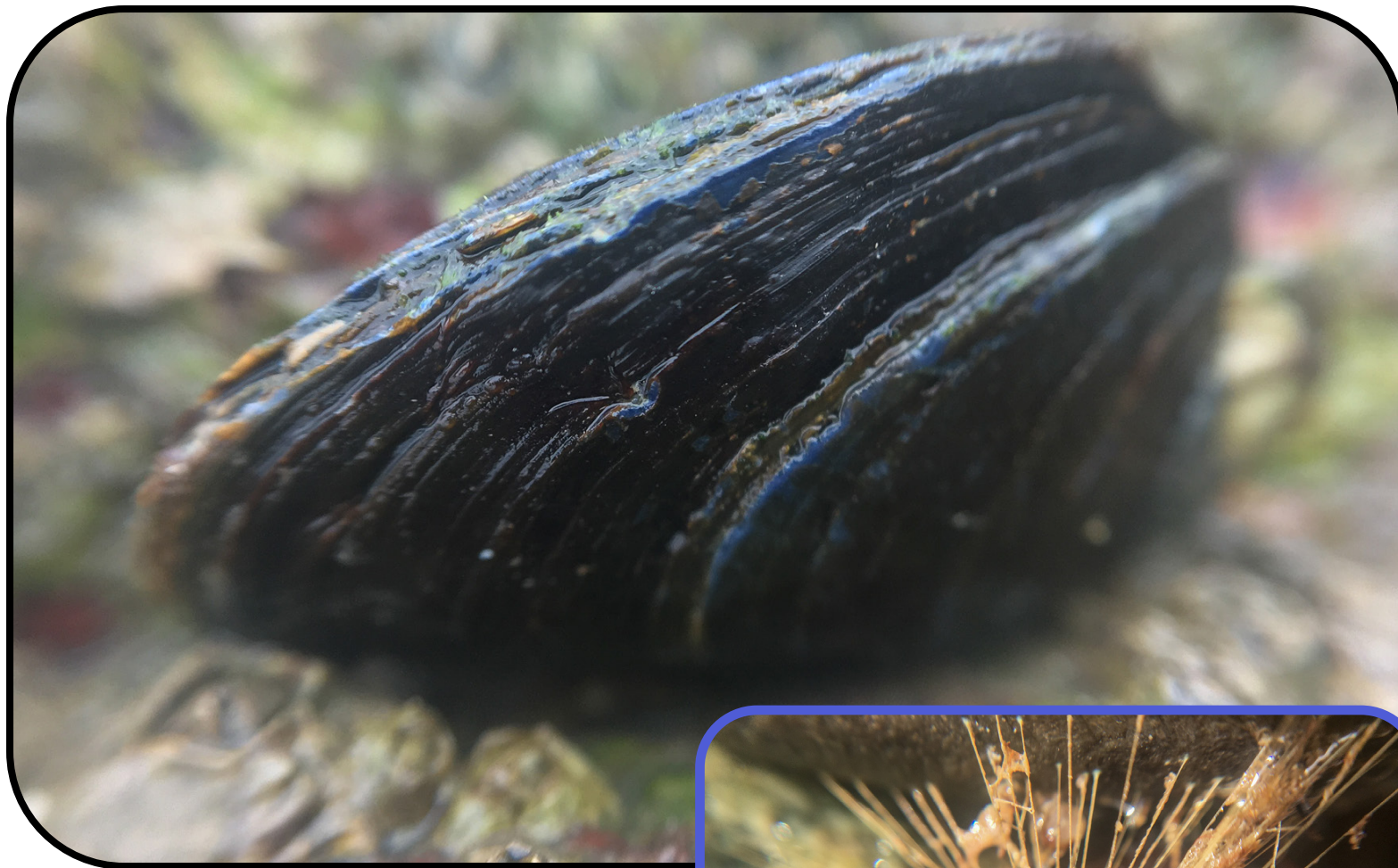


Shore crab
Carcinus maenas

The shore crab is the most common crab encountered on our shores. Normally a green-ish colour, shore crabs are easily found in rockpools. They aren't exactly picky eaters and will feast on anything and everything they come across, including seaweed, mussels, barnacles and even smaller crabs.

If you spot a crab with an orange mass on its stomach, don't be alarmed, they are eggs! Females carry the fertilised eggs with them to protect them from predators.

Source: <https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/wildlife-explorer/marine>



Mussel *Mytilus edulis*

One of our most familiar bivalves (meaning two shells - or valves - that clamp together), the Common mussel lives on rocky, sandy or muddy shores. It forms large, dense mussel beds that cover the seabed, with each mussel attaching itself to the seabed and each other using sticky fibres called byssus threads.

They are also an important food source for many creatures, including Starfish, Flatfish, Crabs and Dog whelks. They aren't helpless victims though and will use their sticky byssus threads to immobilise the Dog whelk predator, resulting in its slow death. Mussels are filter feeders, filtering detritus and plankton from the water.

Source: <https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/wildlife-explorer/marine/>



Fisherman's soap

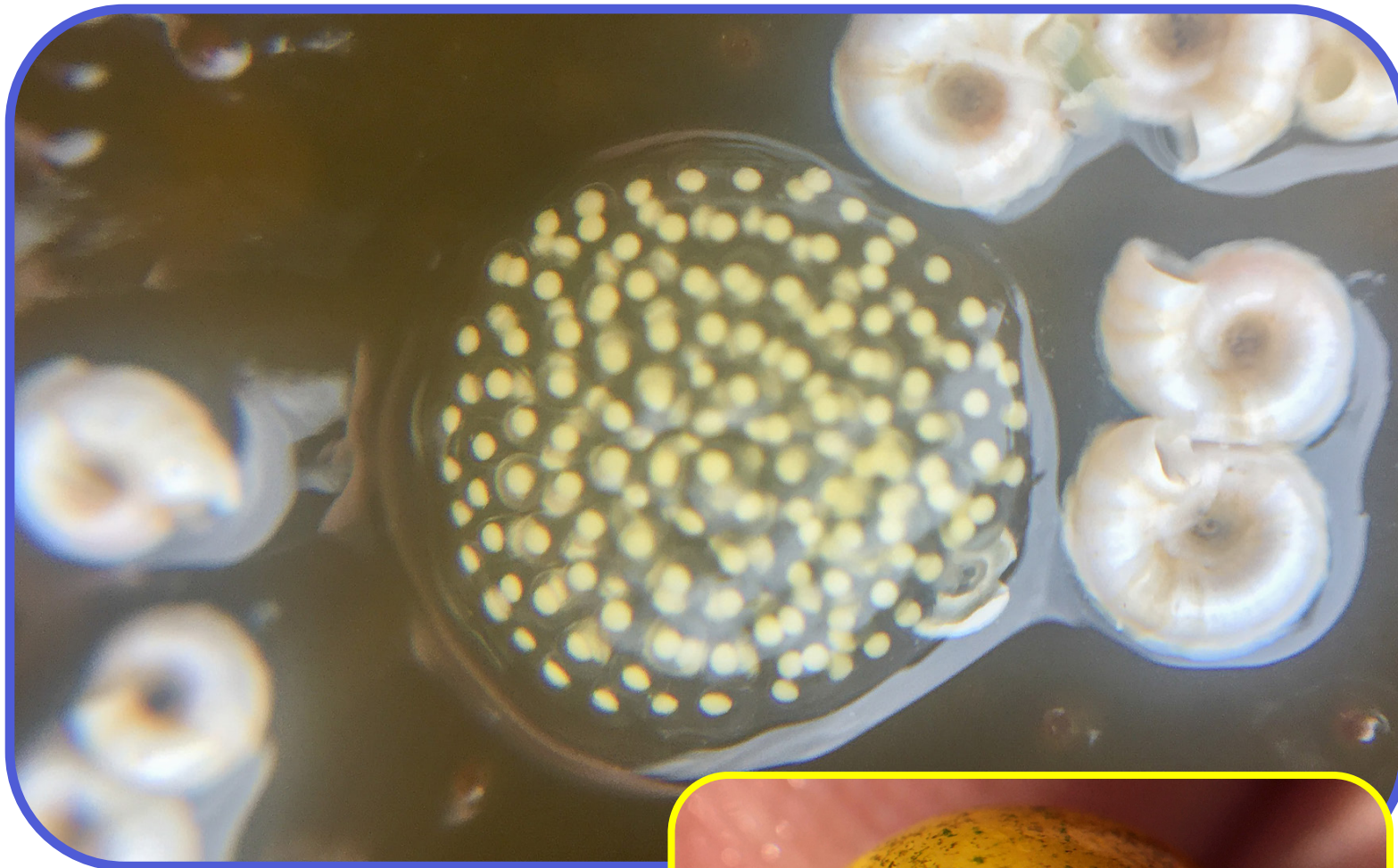
These are most usually empty clumps of individual WHELK capsules that have shed their little embryos in the water.

The empty clumps become buoyant and detached from their rocky holds and float on the surface to be driven ashore.. It is common to find a few left-over eggs and embryos deep inside the cloud.

Several females may contribute to each clump and some individual embryos are proven cannibals*
Whelks can live for at least 10 years.

AKA Egg clouds or sea wash balls





Flat periwinkle (eggs)
Littorina obtusata/fabalis

Found amongst the seaweeds on which it feeds, the flat periwinkle lives on the lower parts of the shore.

It is most commonly associated with Bladder Wrack seaweed and can be mistaken for the air bladders that makes the seaweed float.

They come in lots of different colours, including orange, bright yellow, banded brown and a sort of olive green that makes them hard to spot amongst their seaweed home.

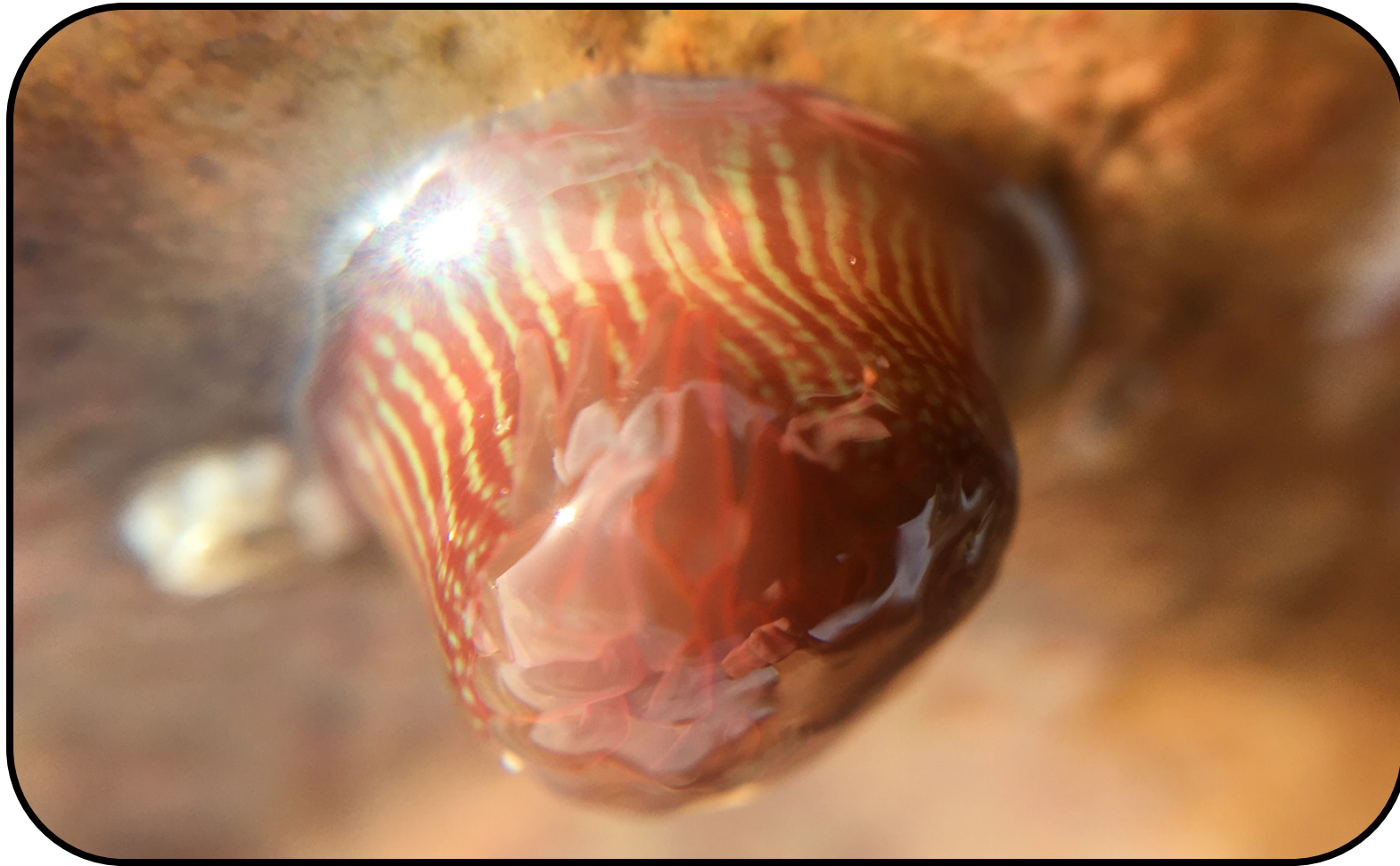


Shanny/Blenny
Lipophrys pholis

The shanny is an intertidal species which displays homing behavior and which occurs along rocky coasts in shallow waters.

This species can stay out of water sheltering under rocks or seaweeds. They prefer to remain in rockpools at low tide and will only shelter in crevices or under boulders if they cannot return to a favoured pool.

Its food consists of small benthic invertebrates, especially snails, barnacles and amphipods, as well as some algae. Less important in its diet are crabs, polychaetes, isopods, copepods, limpets, mussels and other small molluscs.



Beadlet Anemone
Actinia equina

The beadlet anemone (*Actinia equina*) is a common sea anemone found on rocky shores around all coasts. Its range extends to the rest of Western Europe and the Mediterranean Sea, and along the Atlantic coast of Africa as far south as South Africa and Australia.

Actinia equina can be found both in exposed and sheltered situations. It is highly adapted to the intertidal zone as it can tolerate both high temperatures and desiccation. The anemone may also be found in regions of variable salinity such as estuaries.

The size of beadlet anemones may be connected to their physiological adaptation in regards to limited food resources and withstanding environmental conditions.



Rock gunnel
Pholis gunnellus

The rock gunnel (*Pholis gunnellus*), or butterfish, is a species of marine ray-finned fish belonging to the family Pholidae, the gunnels. This species is found in the coastal waters of the North Atlantic Ocean and in the Atlantic part of the Arctic Ocean.

The rock gunnel may remain above the waterline at low tide, sheltered beneath rocks and algae, and can breathe air if necessary.

They are frequently encountered on rocky shorelines, and splash around noticeably when uncovered.

SPRINGTAIL



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[SPRINGTAIL](#)

Anurida maritima is a significant scavenger of the upper intertidal zone, feeding on dead animals, chiefly crustaceans (including barnacles) and molluscs.

The entire body is covered with white hydrophobic hairs which allow the animal to stay above the surface of the water on which it spends much of its life.

Anurida maritima is abundant and primarily limited to the upper intertidal zone. It can be found in large clusters of 20-100's wandering over rocks in search of food or floating on the surface film of upper shore rock pools (only when the water is still). This species retreats into rocky crevices, or shelters under weeds during high tide: retreating one hour before the tide begins to rise.

PILLBUG

Before you read: Very limited information about these amazing species, so any corrections greatly accepted.
The PillBug, (*Jaera albifrons*)

On a recent Rockpool experience I found these amazing species under a rock, using the microscope attachment for the phone I was able to get a closer look, and validate their amazing ability to roll into a ball!

I was able to photograph its underside and amazed to see its a pretty narrow species, meaning its formed around its carapace?

I had heard they can roll into a 'ball' for defense, and sure enough when I went to touch it it rolled into a ball. This 'rolling' behavior is called conglobation. They do this when they feel directly threatened or feel strong vibrations in the ground.

ETHICAL CONDITIONS

NOTE: The species was provoked to respond to human engagement, while this is a natural response to danger in the wild, we only need to do this once as the species was recorded.

HOWEVER, while there is limited knowledge about this species we may like to record the species again. The species is NOT LISTED as Critical, so further engagement is okay.

Its incredibly light and feels like a dry thumbnail.

This species is from a family of Isopods, such as sea slaters, sow bugs, and pill bugs and are a diverse group of crustaceans found in both aquatic and terrestrial environments.



Watch The Video:
[PILLBUG](#)



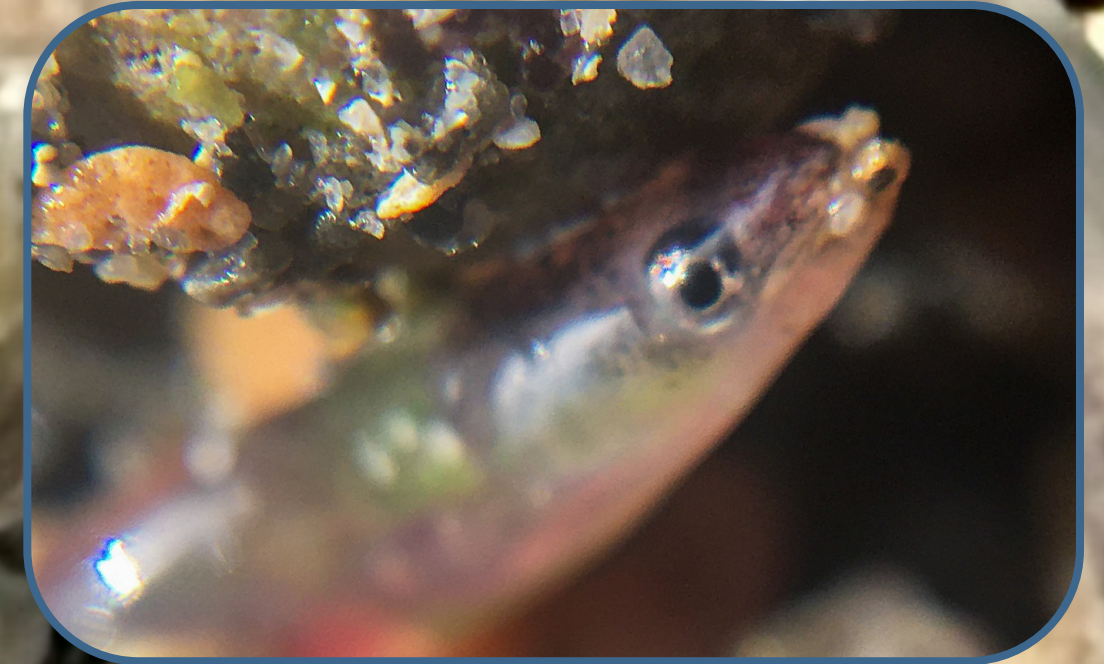
GLASSEEL

European eel (*Anguilla anguilla*)

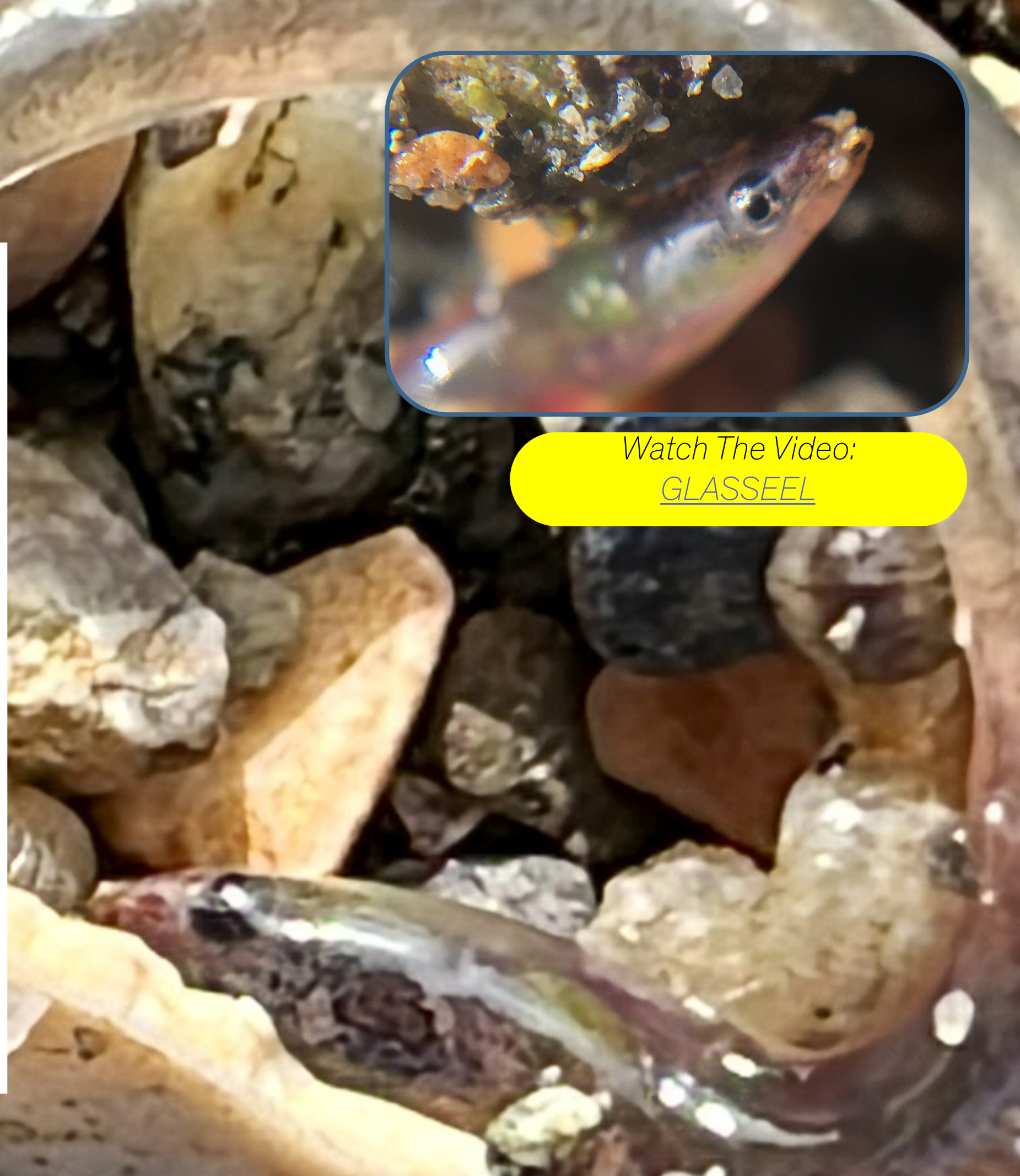
European eels have a fascinating and complex life history that is still somewhat mysterious and not fully understood. European eels are believed to spawn in the Sargasso Sea, an area of Atlantic Ocean just northeast of the Caribbean; a closely related species, the American eel (*Anguilla rostrata*), is also believed to spawn there.

After hatching, eel larvae called leptocephali drift through the ocean and metamorphose into transparent glass eels when they reach the Atlantic coasts of Europe and northern Africa. They migrate up rivers as small elvers, also called bootlace eels, to live in freshwater, where they feed on invertebrates and small fish on the bottom of rivers and lakes, growing bigger and changing colour to become yellow eels.

Eels are one of Ireland's most long-lived fish: many live to more than 25 years of age, and eels aged up to 50 years old have been recorded by the Eel Monitoring Programme.



Watch The Video:
[GLASSEEL](#)



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