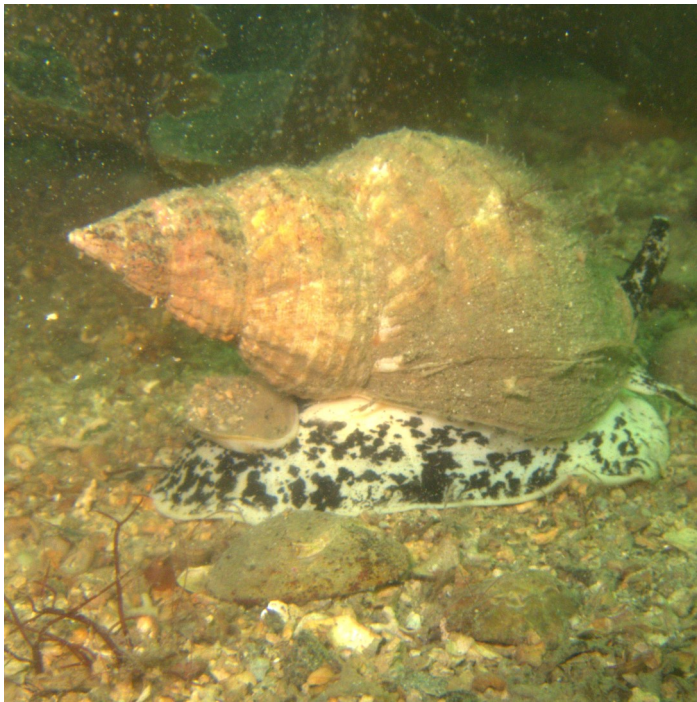


Common Whelk (*Buccinum undatum*)

Gastropoda (Mollusca:Neogastropoda)



Easily identifiable due to their large size and white and black speckled colouration on the body the common whelk is found on most parts of the Irish coast on sandy, gravel and occasionally rock (right) substrates. Primarily feeding on bivalves they are often seen predated on mussels with common starfish which will in turn predate the whelks. Distinctive egg masses (below) seen at sites are an indication of whelks in an area.



What dive sites can I see it at?

Likely to be seen on any dive over sandy or gravel substrate where large numbers of bivalves occur they are particularly common in Killary Fjord.

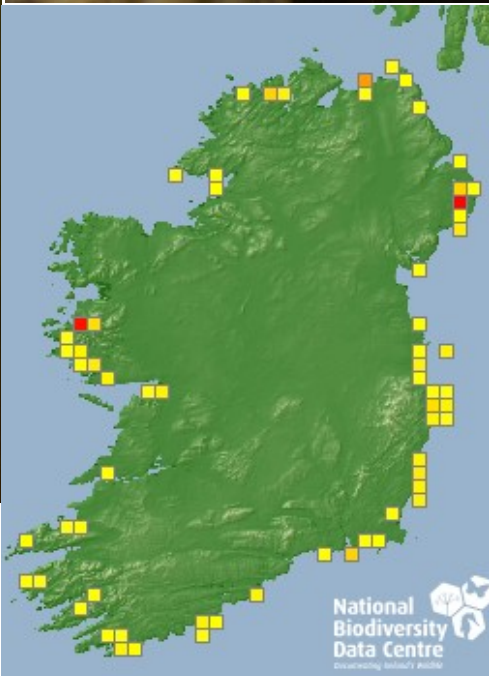
Taxonomy: Gastropoda->Neogastropoda->Buccinidae

IUCN Red List Categorisation: Not Assessed

The common whelk is a large, edible marine gastropod with a distribution from Iceland in the north to the Bay of Biscay. Though to be declining since the 1970s as it was one of a number of species in which imposex (male genitalia in female snails) was observed. This is caused by endocrine disrupting hormones released into the sea in the form of various chemicals including anti-fouling paint on ships hulls.



Prepared by Rory O'Callaghan.



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