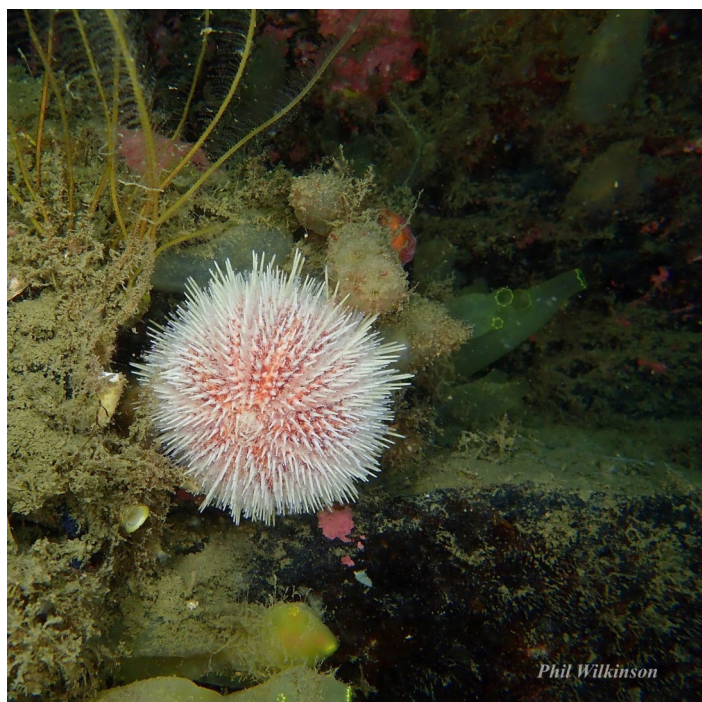


Edible urchin (*Echinus esculentus*)

Echinoidea (Echinodermata: Camarodonta)



Pink in colour with white spines this is the largest urchin species found in Irish waters. Individuals can reach 150mm in size and live over 10 years. Found on rocky habitats at a variety of depths, though unlikely to occur in shallow waters at extremely exposed sites, this species is unlikely to be confused with any other urchin species that occurs in Irish waters.

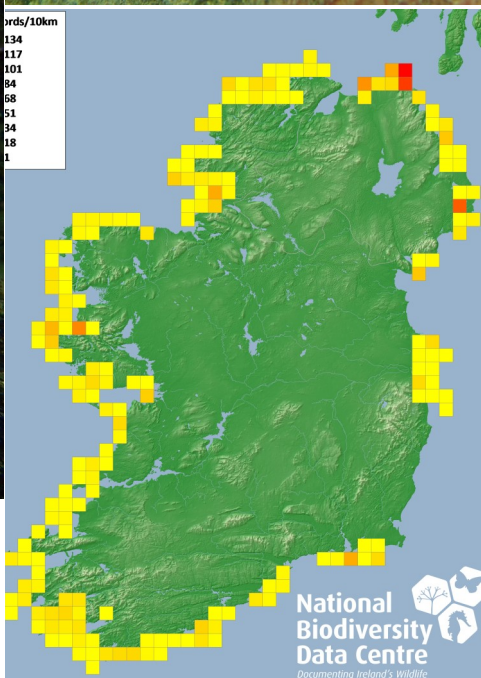
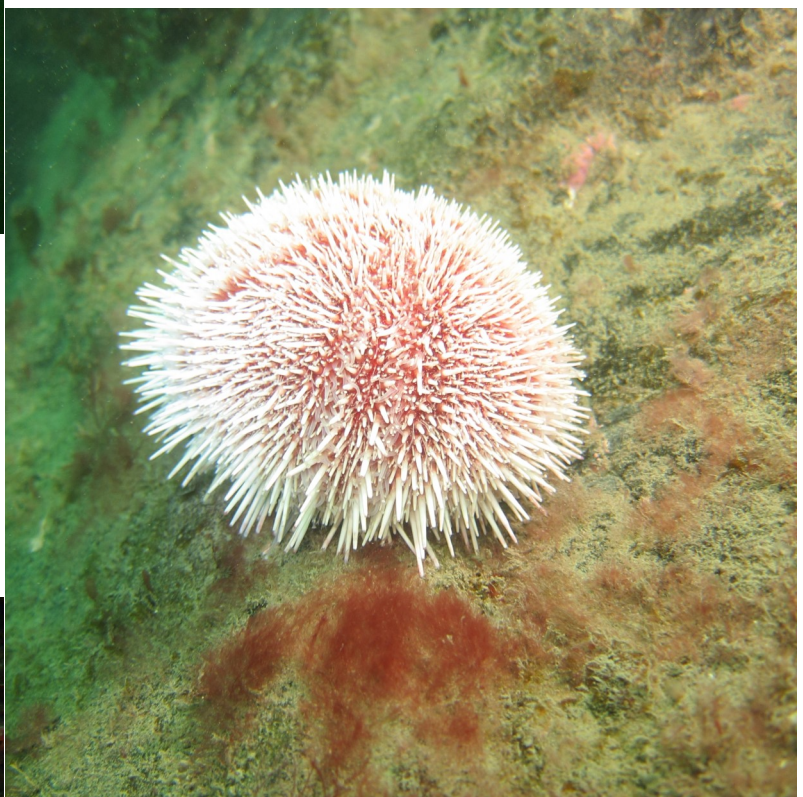


Common on all Irish coasts where hard substrates occur this species is one of the most commonly seen species by divers.

Echinodermata->Echinoidea->Camarodonta

IUCN Red List Categorisation: Near Threatened

Restricted to the North East Atlantic this species is found in Norway and Sweden and south as far as Portugal. A keystone species urchins when are abundant they can suppress algae growth resulting in 'urchin barrens'. However the exact mechanism for the creation of 'urchin barrens' in British and Irish waters is unknown and may be as a result of a variety of factors.



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