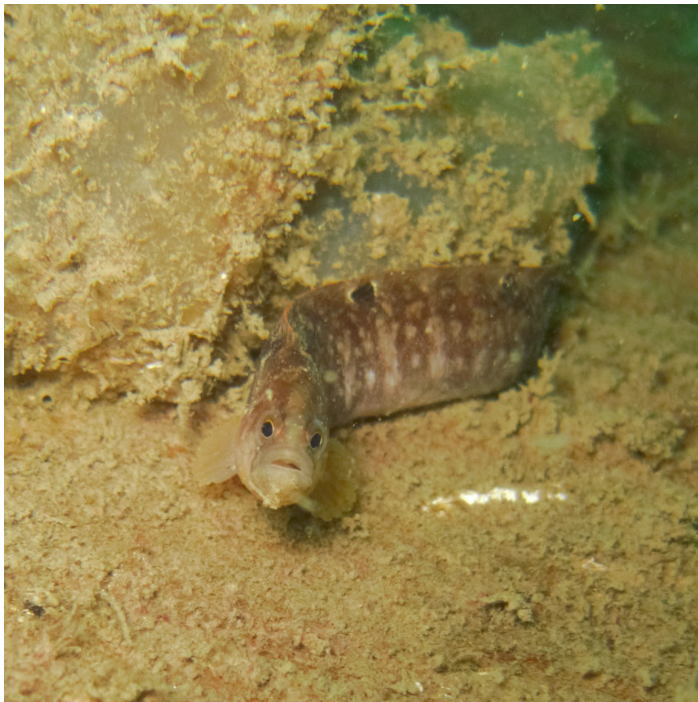


Butterfish (*Pholis gunnellus*)

Actinopteri(Chordata:Perciformes)



A long, slender eel shaped fish, the black spots ringed with white on the dorsal fin are the key identification feature of the butterfish. Typically found in shallow water, hiding among the sea weed (as below) they can be difficult to spot but when seen are unmistakable from any other fish species found in Irish waters. Colour can vary considerably from brown to red but all individuals have the characteristic spots on the dorsal fin.

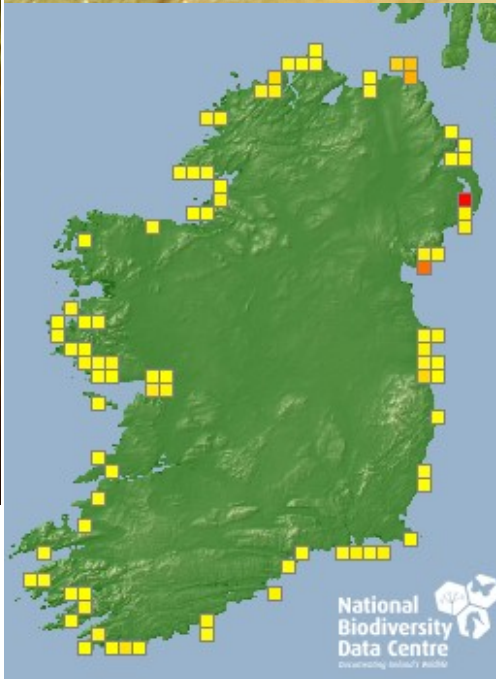


Found on all Irish coasts, due to its small size and cryptic nature it is likely under recorded in a number of areas. Salt Lake in Clifden and the Coral Strand are two sites where Butterfish are regularly seen.

Taxonomy: Chordata->Pisces->Actinopteri->Perciformes

IUCN Red List Categorisation: Not Assessed

Found throughout the North Atlantic from Iceland to France in the east and Greenland to Delaware in the west this shallow water species is found on all coasts in the British Isles. Small crustaceans make up the bulk of its diet with spawning occurring in December. Both the males and females of these species have been observed guarding the eggs and they reach a maximum age of 5-6 years.



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