

Red Blenny (*Parablennius ruber*)

Blennidae (Chordata:Perciformes)



Chordata->Actinopteri->Perciformes->Blennidae

IUCN Red List Categorisation: Least Concern

Though described in 1836 until recently there was debate as to whether the Red Blenny was a separate species or a breeding colour variation of the Toppot Blenny¹. However later morphological and genetic work showed them to be sister species². This has led to an under recording of the species in Irish waters or given its historical absence suggest a more recent colonisation (since the 1980s)¹. The species is now thought to occur in exposed shores on the west of Ireland but may be more widespread and under recorded due to lack of presence in identification manuals and difficulties in identification.

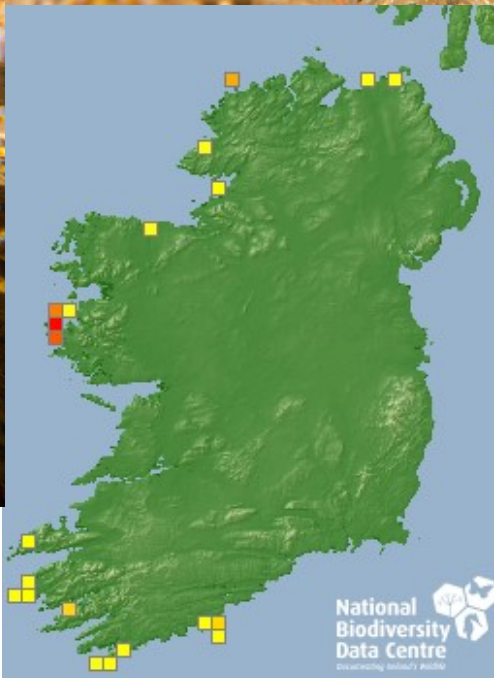


The Red Blenny and Toppot Blenny are extremely easy to confuse and photographs ideally should be submitted with records of Red Blennys. However when showing typical colouration the two species are markedly different. The bright blue spot on the dorsal fin in the Red Blenny is absent in the Toppot while the head tentacles are much smaller and less branched. Additionally the Red Blenny is more gregarious than the Toppot and are more likely to be seen in groups.

A more thorough description of the means of distinguishing the two species is described by Goodwin and Picton¹.



Areas with steeply sloping bedrock and limestone regions may be favoured¹. However in 2016 it was recorded at Hook Head, Clare Island, Brannock Island, Bere Island and Malin Beg indicated in it is more widespread than previously thought.



1. Goodwin, C.E. and Picton, B.E., 2007. The red blenny *Parablennius ruber* in the British Isles, with notes on field identification characteristics and ecology. *Journal of the Marine Biological Association of the United Kingdom*, 87(05), pp.1309-1313.

2. Almada, V.C., Domingues, V.D.S., Monteiro, N.M., Almada, F. and Santos, R.S., 2007. Molecular data confirm the validity of the Portuguese blenny (*Parablennius ruber*, Valenciennes, 1836) and its presence in Western Europe. *Journal of Fish Biology*, 70(sup), pp.248-254.

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