

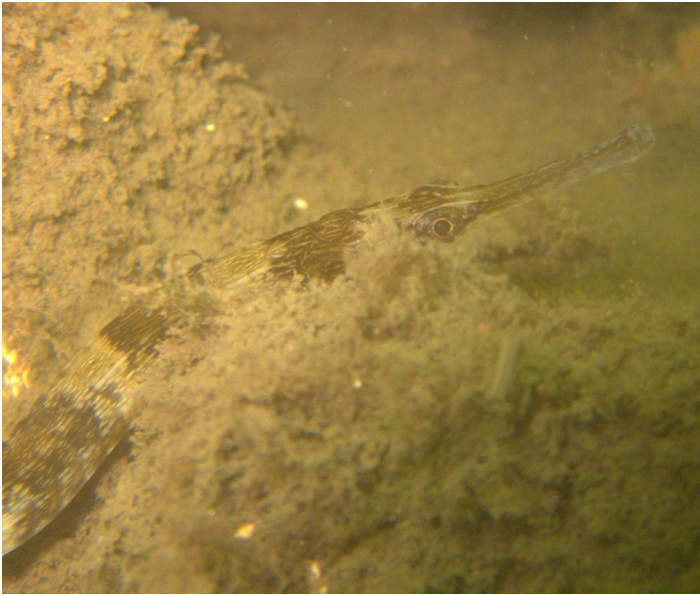
Greater pipefish (*Syngnathus acus*)

Actinopterygii (Chordata:Syngnathiformes)

Chordata->Actinopterygii->Syngnathiformes

IUCN Red List Categorisation: Least Concern

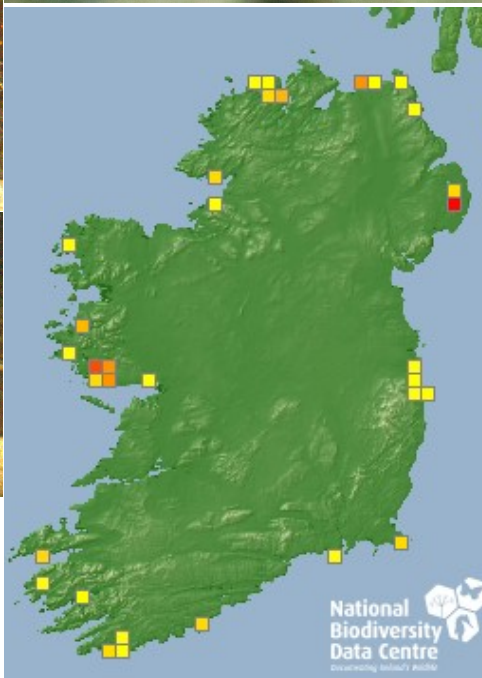
The family Syngnathidae to which the pipefish belong contains sea horses and pipefish are superficially similar in appearance. Male pipefish incubate eggs in their brood pouch and give birth to fully formed juveniles (~3cm in length). This species tends to live in eel grass or in algae and loss of eel grass habitat may impact on the species . A 2006 study found that juveniles have a limited ability to disperse or colonise new areas and this may increase the species vulnerability to habitat fragmentation¹.



A long thin body with a long, thin snout pipefish are easily distinguishable from any other group of fish in Irish waters. Quite a long fish they can reach up to 50cm in length (see photos below for scale) and are typically found in relatively shallow waters with muddy or sandy bottoms. 4 species of pipefish occur in Irish waters and they can be difficult to distinguish one from another. However the greater pipefish has a distinctive hump behind the eyes (right) which is lacking in other pipefish.



Most records of this species are from the west, southwest and north coasts of the island with few on the east coast and the data from the Irish Groundfish survey shows a similar pattern. However this species is likely to be under recorded by divers.



1. Silva, Karine & Monteiro, Nuno & Almada, Vitor & Vieira, Natividade. (2006). Development and early life history behaviour of aquarium reared *Syngnathus acus* (Pisces : Syngnathidae). Journal of the Marine Biological Association of the UK. 86. 1469-1472. 10.1017/S0025315406014536.

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