

# Some common inshore fish found in the rockpools on the Thanet coast

## A) Shanny or Common Blenny (*Lipophrys pholis*)

Colour is extremely variable, this is the only British Blenny not to have tassels on the forehead. The Individual illustrated is a quite large specimen approximately 10 cms or so, when found inshore they are invariably much smaller. They tend to progress by hopping followed by short dashes and hide under or in the lee of rocks.

A1) **Tompot Blenny** - This is a much bigger and rarer species; note distinct tassels on the forehead, colouration tends to be a blending of brown and neutral shades.

## B) Sand Eels (eg *Ammodytes tobianus*)

Several similar species, all tend to live in large dense, fast moving shoals, inshore specimens tend to be left behind by the tide - quite small to a few centimetres at most.

## C) Five- bearded Rockling (*Ciliata mustela*)

Easily recognisable by the vibrating membrane just behind the head positioned in front of the long top fin and of course the five whiskers, four on the nose and one under the chin. Can grow to 25cms but those found in rock pools are usually youngsters and are much smaller.

## D) Small Herring (*Clupea harengus*) or similar

Found in large darting shoals in the deeper rock pools. Usually not much more than 5 cms in length.

## E) Sand Goby (*Pomatoschistus minutus*)

An inhabitant of shallow pools, can number literally hundreds of darting individuals. Can grow to 7cms, but usually much smaller. They have frog like eyes on top of their head, followed by a long slender body.

## F) Flatfish – Plaice (*Pleuronectes platessa*) and Dab (*Limanda limanda*),

The illustrations show two similar varieties. Nearly always found on the shore as young juveniles of up to 7cms, when identification is difficult to separate.

Arrows indicate aids to identification.

Images & text by Lester Hovenden, NEKMPA Coastal Warden

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The North East Kent Coast is one of the best sites in Europe for wintering birds, and marine life of the chalk caves, reef and sandy bays.

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