

# Cuttlefish and Squid

Cephalopod (meaning head-feet) mollusc

## 1) The Common Cuttlefish (*Sepia Officinalis*)

The adults are very rarely found inshore. An intellectual giant amongst invertebrates, has been gifted with excellent sight and is capable of very rapid colour changes. The individual shown is pulling in its catch, a brown Shrimp back to the waiting crown of tentacles. It is depicted favouring an extremely light background disguise.

**1a) The Cuttle bone** that is usually associated with budgies! This is the internal support and controls the varying degrees of buoyancy for the creature and is often the only remains found after it is washed inshore.

**1b) Egg cluster** can consist of several hundred eggs and looks like a bunch of black grapes. Quite common, as they are washed up on our beaches during the early summer.

**1c) Baby** - Seen immediately after hatching, free swimming within 30 seconds; can even squirt ink in its defence at this age!

## 2) The Common Squid (*Loligo vulgaris*)

A rarely seen visitor in our rockpools, as either young or dead/dying specimens are generally found. The internal support called the pen has not been shown as it so rarely discovered.

**2a) Eggs** – are seasonally very abundant; the whitish grey, rubbery strings in clusters are quite distinctive – looking like the old style stringy ‘mop heads’!

**PLEASE NOTE:** That colouration in Cephalopods varies so dramatically between members of the same species, being largely dependent on the whim of the individual animal, so that it can only be used as a very rough guide. In death, any colour worthy of the name will quickly fade. The scientific name *Sepia* for the Cuttlefish relates to the ink used for an extremely effective defence strategy.

Images & text by Lester Hovenden, NEKMPA Coastal Warden

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North East Kent



Marine Protected Area

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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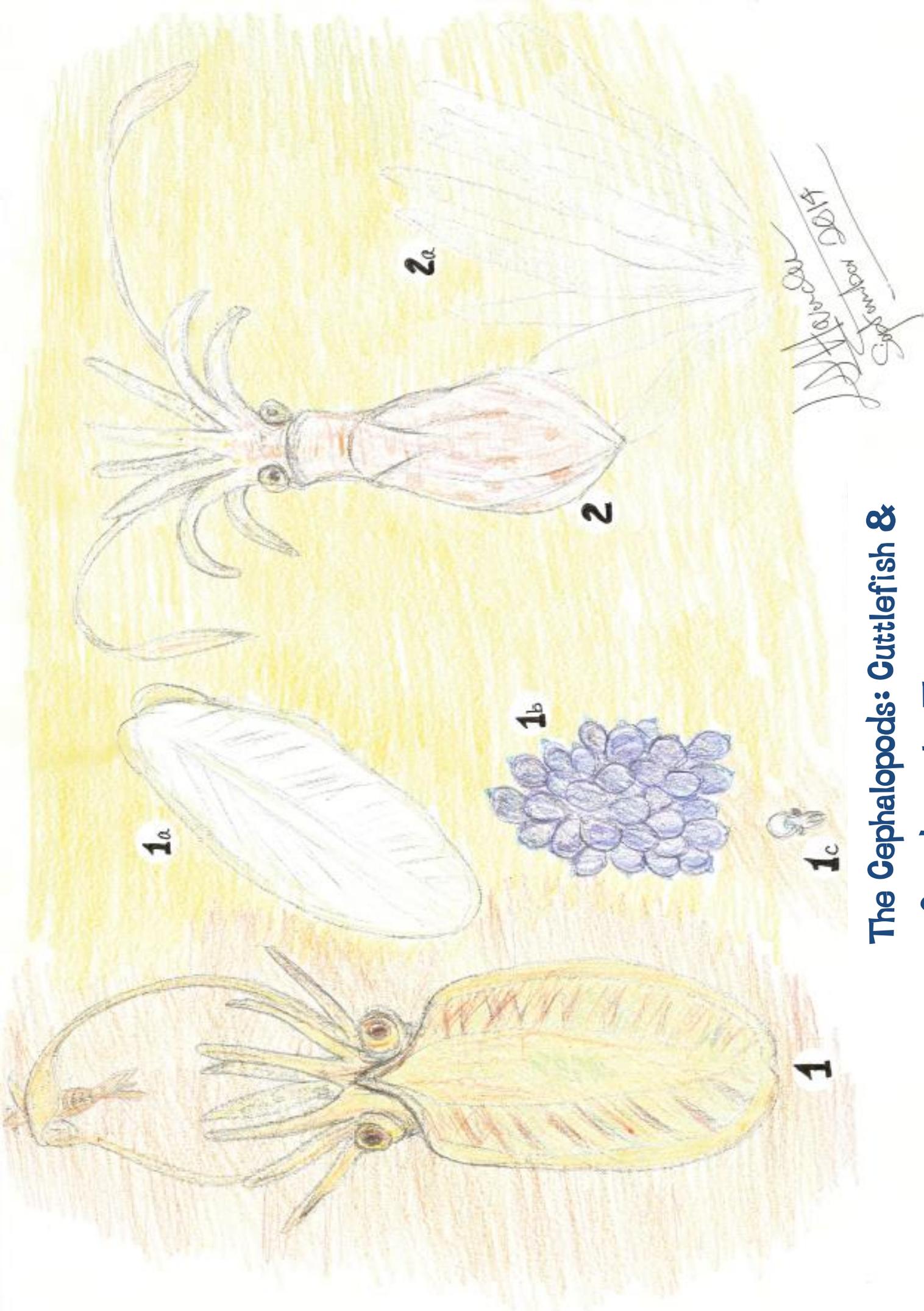
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The Cephalopods: Cuttlefish & Squids on the Thanet coast