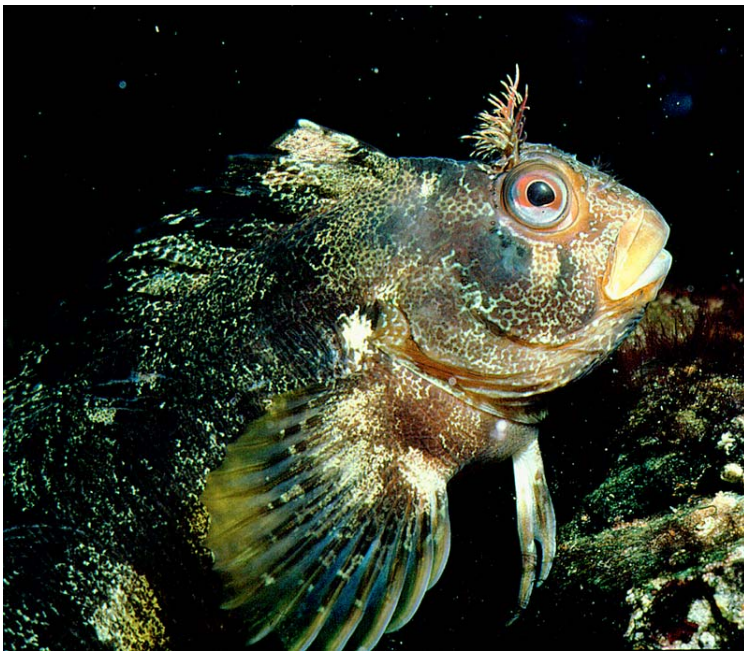


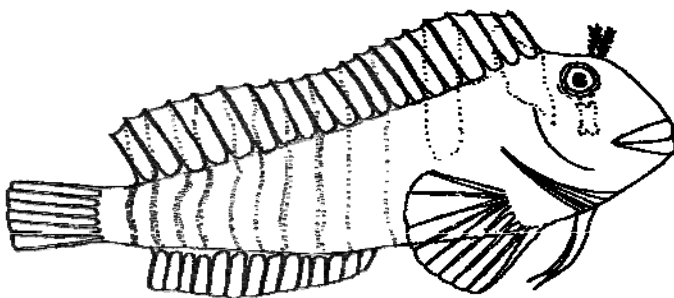
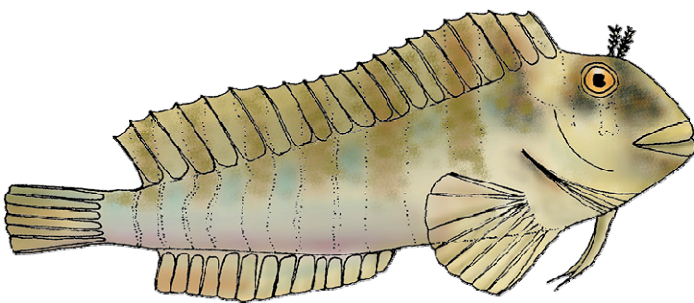
# Blennies



Images courtesy of Paul Kay

The Tompot Blenny is larger than other blennies and can be found in deeper waters. Note the tentacles on its head, which is a typical feature of many blennies.

### Colour in the Tompot Blenny



Sketches courtesy of Audrey Murphy, Cain/SIMS

Blennies are very shy fish. They are usually found in rockpools and under seaweeds on the seashore, in an area known as the intertidal zone, which is between high and low tide.

Though there are only a few blenny species in Irish waters, there are hundreds of species found around the world, both in tropical and cold waters. Most of them are quite small, usually less than 10cm in length. A few are larger, such as the Tompot Blenny, which measures up to 30 cm in length. Most of the species are found in the Indian and Pacific Oceans, but there are a number in Europe, particularly around the Mediterranean, with some in Irish and UK waters.

Their bodies are typically long and rounded. They have no scales and their skin is slimy to conserve water in their bodies. Most have blunt noses and long fins running along their backs and bellies and have pelvic fins at their throat. These pelvic fins are used to grip rocks in the intertidal zone, when strong waves come in. Many of the blenny species have tentacles on their head. They have comb-like teeth for eating food, such as barnacles and crabs.

Following spawning, when the female has deposited the eggs, the male will look after them for about a month, fanning them to produce a current of water over them so that they receive enough oxygen.



### The Shanny or Common Blenny

**Scientific Name:** *Lipophrys pholis*

**Irish Name:** Ceanruán

The Shanny is the most common blenny around Ireland's coast. It has similar characteristics to other blennies, but it has no tentacles on its head. With big eyes and lips, these blennies have a clown-like appearance. It has brown to green mottled skin, which helps it blend in with its surroundings.

### A fish out of water

Believe it or not, blennies are capable of living out of water for many hours. If caught out of a rockpool when the tide goes out, they can hide in crevices or under seaweeds until the tide comes in again, or even move over the rocks to another rockpool.

