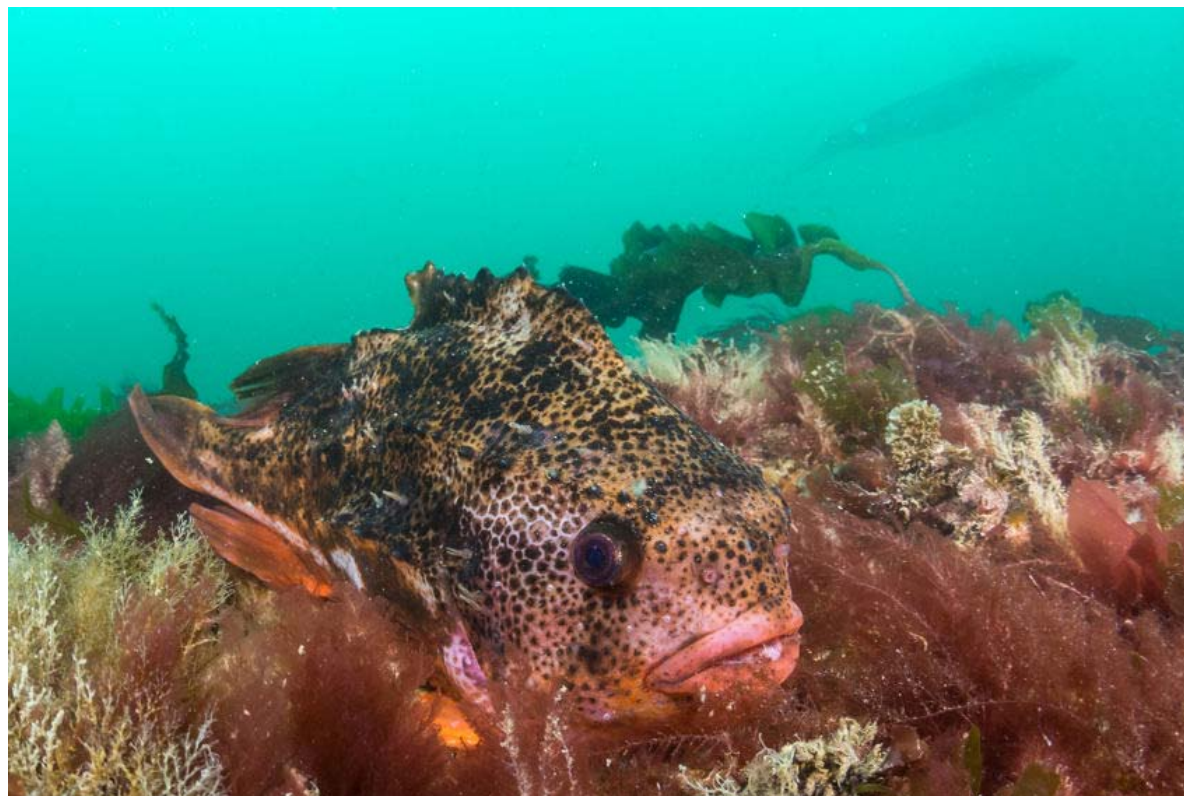


Parting Shot

When I started to write this Parting Shot for UwP I had an unnerving sense of déjà vu; hadn't I written this all before? Well as it happens I had, kind-of. Exactly 6 years ago in the May/June 2009 edition of UwP (no.48) I had a rather poor image of a female grey seal as a parting shot. It was accompanied by a moralistic tale of trying to enjoy the amazing experience that was playing out in-front of me rather than worrying about capturing a decent image. And so here I am again saying almost the same thing because I failed to follow my own advice - do as I say not as I do ;) Early spring is the only time us recreational divers get to see the extra-ordinary looking Lumpsucker, or Lumpfish (Cyclopterus lumpus). For most of the year this north Atlantic species lives in waters far too deep for conventional scuba kit, but the need to ensure the next generation of baby Lumps brings them into very shallow water, often an easily accessible 10m or less. Here a large clutch of eggs will be attached to a patch of vertical rock to which the male will dedicate his entire existence for the next couple of months. In the UK these colourful creatures are considered a northern species, but every year a few turn up

on the south-coast (where water temperatures can be 4 or 5°C warmer) and this year is no exception. In just my small patch of local dive sites I know of four males with eggs which presents a great opportunity to document them and the progress of their solitary lives while in the shallow coastal waters for this brief period. And so to the point of this particular Parting Shot; you can see the gorgeous Lumpsucker (for me it's like looking into a mirror) which was my chosen subject for the image, but also in the background is a large European squid (Loligo vulgaris). So focused was I on not spooking the resting Lumpsucker, while avoiding stirring up the silty sea-bed and maintaining buoyancy in a considerable swell, that I totally missed this encounter. This might have been forgivable if I was looking through an SLR's viewfinder, but being a m4/3rds shooter I had my Olympus E-PL5 at arm's length framing with the screen. So in theory could have, should have, seen it out of the corner of my eye. To add insult



Olympus E-PL5 in PT-EP10. 8mm fisheye. 2x YS-D1 strobes. f/7.1, 1/160th, ISO400

to injury the squid was obviously not just passing quickly through because later, at home, I could see it in various positions in a number of frames taken over a 3 minute period. I'm only so upset because there are a few species of UK marine life that I have yet to take a decent photo of and Loligo vulgaris is one of them. So lesson learned second time round? Probably not for me - I find close encounters with wildlife (marine or otherwise) so engrossing that, taking photos or not,

the chances of me seeing that squid were, at best, not good!

Dan Bolt

www.underwaterpics.co.uk

Do you have a shot which has a story within a story? If so email it with up to 500 words of text and yours could be the next Parting Shot.

peter@uwpmag.com

www.uwpmag.com