

THE NORTHERN PIPEFISH

A Northern Pipefish (Syngnathus fuscus) was captured February 2, 1981, at the West River Causeway and brought in to the Fish and Wildlife Division office. While this fish is considered to be common in the inner waters of Malpeque Bay, it is undoubtedly found in all our estuaries where seaweeds, eelgrass and warm waters provide ideal habitat. Their small size may be one reason why we seldom see them, or it could be that when we do see them they are perceived to be waterlogged twigs or broken bits of eelgrass.

The Northern Pipefish is greenish to brown in colour, cross-barred and darkly mottled. The colour can change to suit surroundings. It has a slender armoured body, tubular snout and no pelvic fins. Like the Spotted Seahorse and other members of the Syngnathidae, males are distinguished by the presence of a brood pouch under the abdomen. This one appears to be a female. The gills consist of tufts of several, rounded lobes instead of filaments.

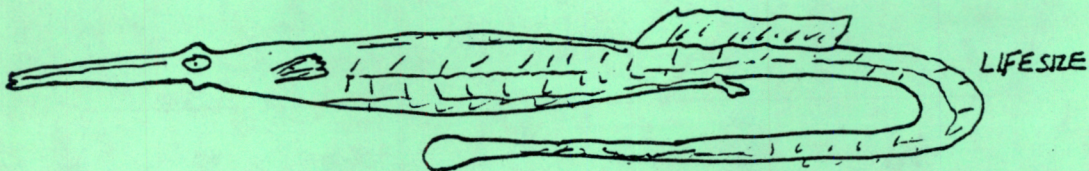
The length is rarely over 8 inches; however, there are records of up to 12 inches in length.

They swim chiefly with their dorsal fin; however, when alarmed the caudal fin and tail are used. They feed on minute copepods, amphipods, fish eggs, fish larvae, and probably any other available small organisms.

The female bears the eggs and transfers them to the brood pouch of the male, where they are fertilized and developed, being released when they are hatched.

Information taken from:
Fishes of the Atlantic Coast of Canada
By A.H. Leim and W.B. Scott
Ottawa, 1966

by John Bain
Fish and Wildlife Division



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SPEAKING OF PIPES
THE INDIAN PIPE IS A COLOURLESS MEMBER
OF THE HEATH FAMILY. IT BEARS WAXY
SCALE-LIKE LEAVES AND A SINGLE NODDING
FLOWER ON TOP OF A 10 TO 25 CM STEM.

