



# MarLIN

## Marine Information Network

Information on the species and habitats around the coasts and sea of the British Isles

### Small-headed clingfish (*Apletodon dentatus*)

MarLIN – Marine Life Information Network  
Marine Evidence-based Sensitivity Assessment (MarESA) Review

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A report from:

The Marine Life Information Network, Marine Biological Association of the United Kingdom.

**Please note.** This MarESA report is a dated version of the online review. Please refer to the website for the most up-to-date version [<https://www.marlin.ac.uk/species/detail/148>]. All terms and the MarESA methodology are outlined on the website (<https://www.marlin.ac.uk>)

This review can be cited as:

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A small-headed clingfish resting on a rock.  
 Photographer: Jeff Blincow  
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See online review for  
 distribution map

Distribution data supplied by the Ocean Biogeographic Information System (OBIS). To interrogate UK data visit the NBN Atlas.

Researched by	Morvan Barnes	Refereed by	Admin
Authority	(Facciola, 1887)		
Other common names	-	Synonyms	-

## Summary

### 🔍 Description

*Apletodon dentatus* is a small fish reaching up to 4 cm in length. It has a depressed triangular head when viewed from above. It has single dorsal and anal fins that are rounded in shape and short and are positioned near the tail. The tail itself is rounded, as is the pectoral fin. The pelvic fin is a specialised sucking disc. The small-headed clingfish is variable in colour, often green with darker mottling, or maroon spotted with mahogany, and large white dorsal spots. Adult males may display a large black or purple spot on the dorsal and anal fins and purple areas on the throat.

### 📍 Recorded distribution in Britain and Ireland

Found in the western English Channel and in the northern Irish Sea and south-west Scotland.

### 📍 Global distribution

-

### 🏠 Habitat

The small-headed clingfish is a coastal benthic species although little is known about its habitat preferences.

### ↓ Depth range

## Q Identifying features

- Up to 4 cm in length.
- Depressed triangular head.
- Rounded fins with the dorsal and anal fins set far back on the body.
- Sucking disc under the body in line with the pectoral fins.
- Scales absent.

## Additional information

The small-headed clingfish is very hard to distinguish from similar species other than by colouration, and can only usually be distinguished by the proportional sizes of its main exterior features (given by Whitehead *et al.*, 1986).

## ✓ Listed by

## Further information sources

Search on:

    NBN WoRMS

## Bibliography

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- Whitehead, P.J.P., Bauchot, M.-L., Hureau, J.-C., Nielson, J. & Tortonese, E. 1986. *Fishes of the North-eastern Atlantic and the Mediterranean. Vol. I, II & III*. Paris: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO).

## Datasets

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- Isle of Wight Local Records Centre, 2017. IOW Natural History & Archaeological Society Marine Records. Occurrence dataset: <https://doi.org/10.15468/7axhcx> accessed via GBIF.org on 2018-09-27.
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- OBIS (Ocean Biogeographic Information System), 2019. Global map of species distribution using gridded data. Available from: Ocean Biogeographic Information System. [www.iobis.org](http://www.iobis.org). Accessed: 2019-03-12