**Straightnose pipefish**

*Nerophis ophidion*

Order: *Syngnathiformes*

Family: *Syngnathidae*

External appearance

The straightnose pipefish is a small fish that lives along the coast of the sea. During the spawning period, females are brightly coloured with light blue stripes on the head and belly. Males can reach a length of 25 cm, whereas females can grow to 30 cm.

Distribution

The straightnose pipefish is widespread in the East Atlantic region, the European coast, and the Mediterranean and Black Seas.

Diet

Feeds on small zooplankton and invertebrates.

Development

Spawns in summer. The female and male perform a spawning dance before spawning. The female deposits the eggs into the male’s brood pouch on his abdomen, where they are then fertilised and develop.

Fishing

Due to its small size, the species is not important for commercial fishing or angling.

Interesting facts

The straightnose pipefish is related to the seahorse, an interesting-looking fish that lives mainly in shallow tropical and temperate coastal seas.