







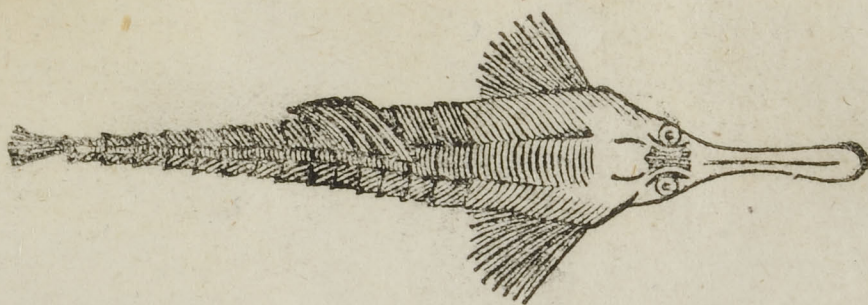
A

NATURAL HISTORY

OF

FISHES.

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FORTY ENGRAVINGS ON WOOD.  
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ALNWICK:

PRINTED AND SOLD WHOLESALE AND RETAIL

BY W. DAVISON.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

PHYSICS

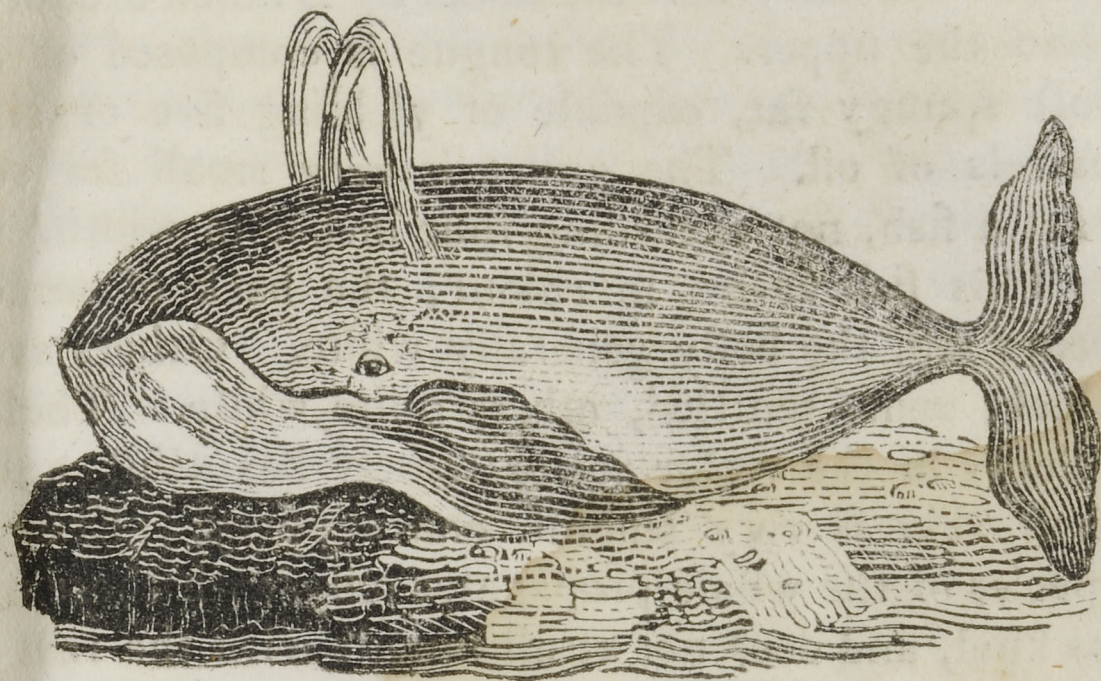
PHYSICS DEPARTMENT

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CHICAGO, ILL.

FISHES.



THE WHALE.

OF the whale, properly so called, there are no fewer than seven different kinds; all distinguished from each other by their external figure, or internal conformation. They are of the cetaceous order of fishes, and produce their young alive. The ancients have described them as being six hundred feet in length. At present they are only found in the northern seas ninety feet in length, and twenty in breadth; but formerly they were taken of a much greater size, when the captures were less frequent, and they had time to grow. Such is their bulk within the arctic circle; but in

the torrid zone, many are seen one hundred and sixty feet long. There are many turnings and windings in this fish's nostrils, and it has no fin on the back. The head is very much disproportioned to the size of the body, being one-third the size of the fish; and the under lip is much broader than the upper. The tongue is composed of soft spongy fat, capable of yielding five or six barrels of oil. The gullet is very small for so vast a fish, not exceeding four inches in width.

This fish varies in colour; the back of some being red, the belly generally white. Others are black, some mottled, others quite white. Their colours in the water are extremely beautiful, and their skin is very smooth and slippery. Every species of the whale propagates only with those of its kind, and does not at all mingle with the rest; however, they are generally seen in shoals of different kinds together, and make their migration in large companies from one ocean to another.

Whales are chiefly taken in the northern seas. The English send out with every ship six or seven boats; each of these has one harpooner, one man at the rudder, one manager of the line, and four seamen to row it. In each boat there are always two or three harpoons, several lances, and several lines, each one hundred and twenty fathoms long fastened together.

As soon as the whale is struck with the harpoon, it darts into the deep, carrying the instrument off in its body; and so rapid is its motion, that

the line should entangle, it would either snap like a thread, or overset the boat: one man therefore is stationed to attend only to the line, that it may go regularly out, and another is also employed in continually wetting the place it runs against, that the wood may not take fire from the friction. On the whale's return to breathe, the harpooner inflicts a fresh wound, till at length, fainting from loss of blood, the men venture the boat quite up to it, and a long steeled lance is thrust into its breast and other parts, which soon puts an end to its existence.

A whale, the longest blade of whose mouth measures nine or ten feet, will yield about thirty cuts of blubber; but some of the largest will yield upwards of seventy. One of the latter is generally worth about one thousand pounds sterling; and a full ship of about three hundred tons burthen will produce more than five thousand pounds from one voyage.

The whale fishery begins in May, and continues through the months of June and July: but whether the ships have had good or bad success, they must get clear of the ice by the end of August.

The whale goes with young nine or ten months, and generally produces one at a time. When she suckles her young, she throws herself on one side, and the young one attaches itself to the teat. Whales feed on a black insect of the size of a small bean, which is seen floating in those seas. They pursue no other animal, and are harmless in proportion to their strength to do mischief.



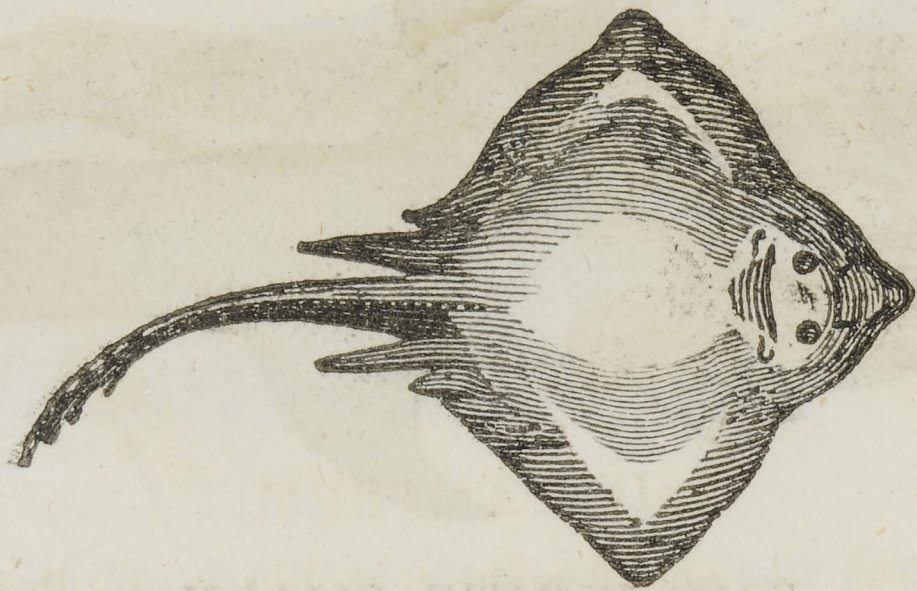
THE NARWHALE.

THIS fish is smaller than the whale, not being above sixty feet long. Its body is more slender and its fat not in so great abundance. But this great animal is sufficiently distinguished from others of the deep by its tooth or teeth, which stand pointing directly forward from the upper jaw, and are from nine to fourteen feet long. The extreme length of these instruments has induced some to consider them rather as horns than teeth; but they in every respect resemble the tusks of the boar and the elephant. Notwithstanding all its appointments for combat, its long and pointed tusks, amazing strength, and unsurpassable celerity, the narwhale is one of the most harmless and peaceable inhabitants of the ocean. The Greenlanders call the narwhale the forerunner of the whale; for wherever it is seen the whale is shortly after sure to follow. This may arise as well from the natural passion for society in these animals, as from both living upon the same food. They are always seen in herds of several at a time; and whenever they are attacked, they crowd together, and are often entangled by their tusks till they are taken.



THE CACHALOT.

THE cachalot, which is generally known by the name of the spermaceti whale, has several teeth in the under jaw, but none in the upper. This tribe is not of such enormous size as the whale, properly so called, not being above sixty feet long, and sixteen feet high. In consequence of their being more slender, they are much more active than the common whale; they remain a longer time at the bottom; and afford a smaller quantity of oil. The tongue of this animal is small, but the throat is very extensive; and with great ease it could swallow an ox. The cachalot is, therefore, as destructive among the smaller fry as the whale is harmless; and can at one gulp swallow a shoal of fishes down its enormous gullet. But how formidable soever this fish may be to its fellows of the deep, it is by far the most valuable, and the most sought after by man, as it contains two very precious drugs, spermaceti and ambergris. The use of these, either for the purposes of luxury or medicine, is universally known.



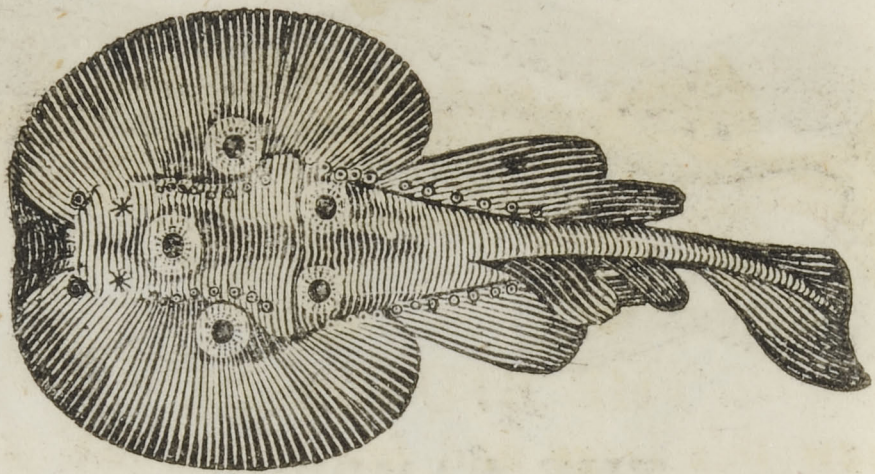
THE RAY.

ALL those of the ray kind are broad, cartilaginous swimming flat on the water, and having spines or prickles on different parts of their body, or at the tail. They all have their eyes and mouth placed quite under the body, with apertures for breathing, either above or near them. They all have teeth, or sharp rough bone, which answers the same purpose. But they are chiefly distinguished by their spines or prickles, which the several species have on different parts of their body. These prickles in some are comparatively soft and feeble; those of others are strong and piercing. Of all the larger fishes of the sea, these are the most numerous; and they owe their numbers to their size. They have been found in England to weigh above two hundred pounds; but that is nothing to their enormous bulk in other parts. They are found in such parts of the sea as have a black muddy bottom.



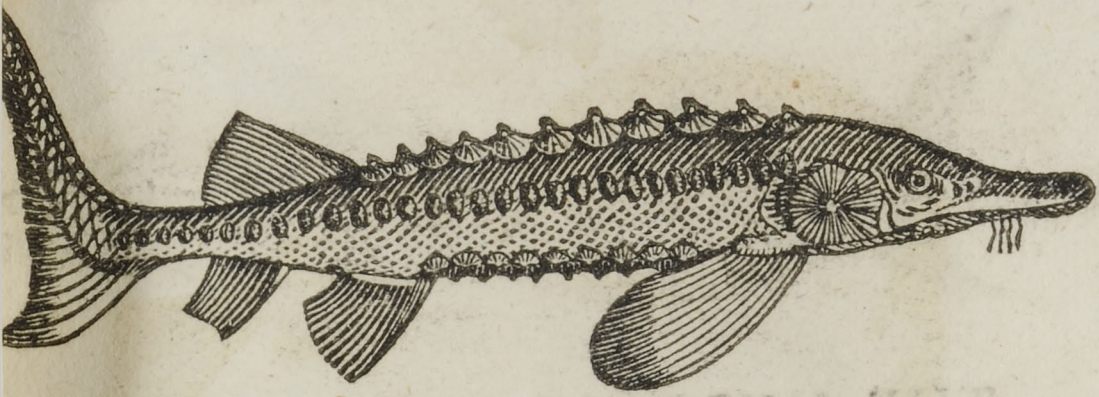
THE LAMPREY.

THIS animal resembles the eel; but is of a lighter colour, and a clumsier shape. The mouth is round, and placed rather obliquely below the end of the nose. It has an aperture at the top of the head, through which it spouts water like the cetaceous fishes. On each side are seven apertures for respiration; and the fins are rather formed by a prolongation of the skin than by any peculiar bones or spines. It possesses the singular property of adhering by suction to any substance to which it is applied. It sticks to stones so closely, that it is with difficulty removed. This power is supposed to arise from the animal's exhausting the air within its body, while the mouth is so entirely attached to the object as to exclude any from entering. It usually quits the sea about the beginning of spring, for the purpose of spawning; and, after an absence of a few months, returns to its original abode. Its flesh is esteemed according to the season in which it is caught. In April or May it is thought to be in the greatest perfection.



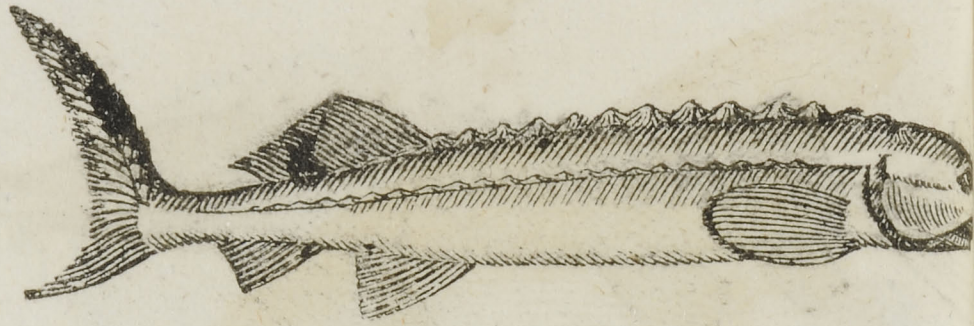
THE TORPEDO.

THE body of this fish is almost circular, and thicker than others of the ray kind; the skin is smooth, and of a yellowish colour, marked, of the kind, with large annular spots; the eyes are very small; the tail tapering to a point, and weighs from a quarter to fifteen pounds. To all outward appearance, it has no muscles formed for particularly great exertions; yet it is that unaccountable power it possesses, that in an instant it is touched, it numbs not only the hand and arm, but sometimes also the whole body. The nerves are so affected, that the person struck imagines all the bones of his body, and particularly those of the limb that received the blow, are broken and wrenched out of joint. Probably the shock proceeds from an animal electricity, which this fish has some hidden power of storing up, and producing on its most urgent occasions. It is found in great numbers on the coasts of France: and is there in common request as an article of food.



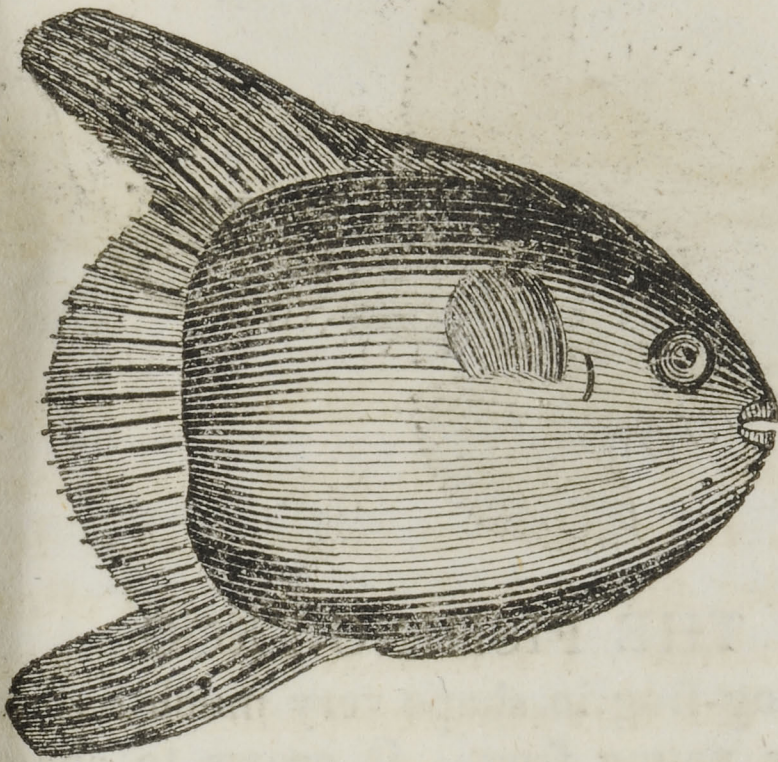
THE STURGEON.

HOUGH this large and fine-tasted fish is of a form terrible to view, it is perfectly harmless. The body, which is from six to eighteen feet in length, is pentagonal, armed from head to tail with five rows of large bony tubercles, each of which ends in a strong recurved tip. The snout is long, and obtuse at the end, and has the tendrils near the tip. The mouth, which is beneath the head, is somewhat like the opening of a purse. The upper part of the body is of a dirty olive colour, and the under part silvery. Sturgeons subsist principally on insects and marine plants, which they find at the bottom of the water, where they mostly resort. They are very timorous, and hide in flocks. They are found in every country of Europe at different seasons. They annually ascend the largest rivers in winter, in order to spawn, and produce their young in prodigious numbers. They are also found in North America. The flesh of the sturgeon is highly esteemed, particularly in England, where it is often pickled, and then accounted a delicacy.



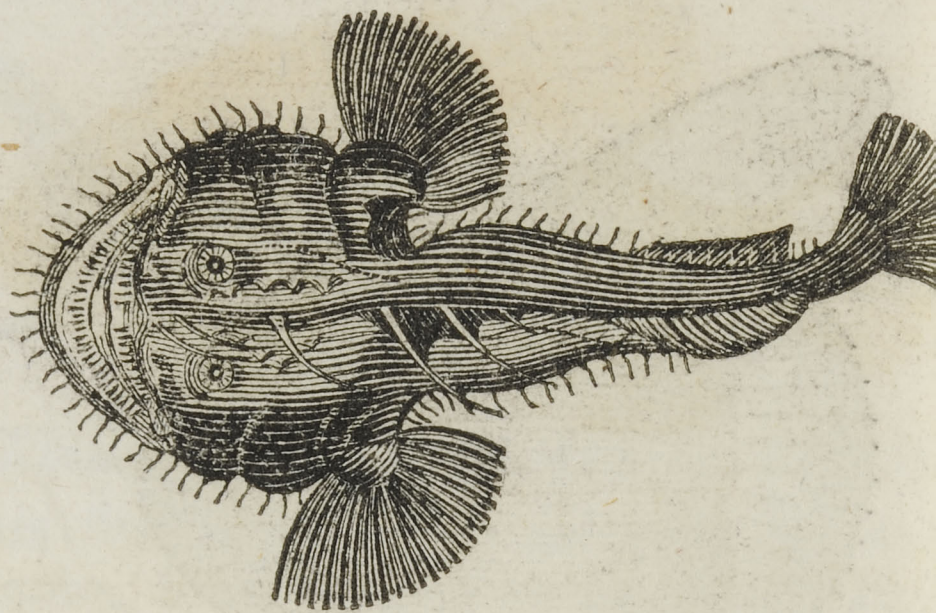
THE HUSO, OR ISINGLASS FISH

THIS fish is caught in great quantities in the Danube, from October to January. It is seldom under fifty pounds weight, and often exceeds four hundred. Its flesh is soft, glutinous, and flabby; but it is sometimes salted, which makes it better tasted, and then it becomes red like salmon. It is for the commodity it furnishes that it is chiefly taken. Isinglass is of a whitish substance, inclining to yellow, done up into rolls, and so exported for use. It is very well known and serviceable, not only in medicine, but in the arts; and very great sums are yearly expended on this single article of commerce. It is prepared in the following manner:—The skin, entrails, the fins, and tail, are cut into small pieces, and, after being macerated for some time in a sufficient quantity of warm water, are boiled over a slow fire till they are dissolved and reduced to a jelly. This jelly is spread on plates made for the purpose; and when dry it is rolled up into the form in which it appears in the shops. This commodity is principally furnished from Russia, where they prepare great quantities surprisingly cheap.



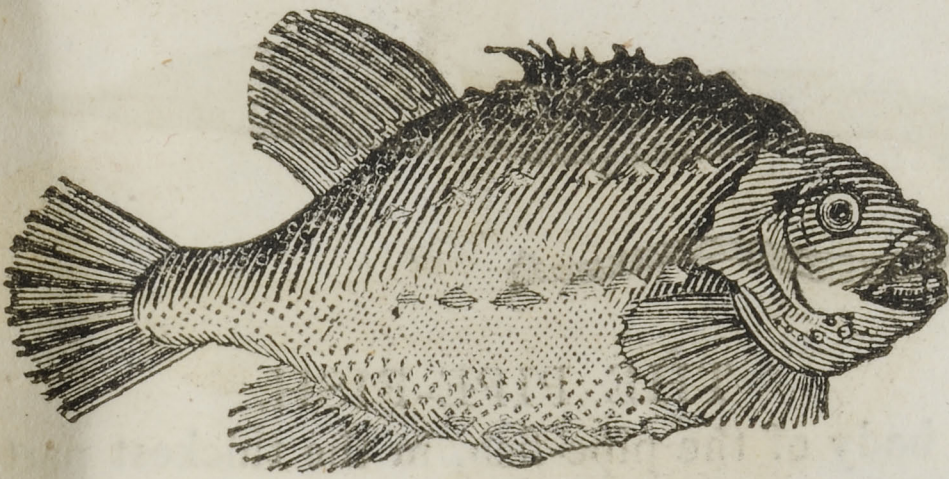
THE SUN-FISH.

THE body of this fish is broad and short; and its under extremity is terminated by a circular fin, which supplies the place of a tail. The whole animal appears like the head of a large fish separated from its body. It is destitute of scales, but covered with a hard rough skin. The back is black, the belly is white, and the sides are of an intermediate colour. The mouth is very small in proportion to the size, and the head has no projection from the rest of the body. The weight sometimes amounts to two hundred pounds. The flesh of this animal is very soft, and all its bones are gristly and tender. It is caught in the Mediterranean, and sometimes in the British seas. There are several species of this fish.



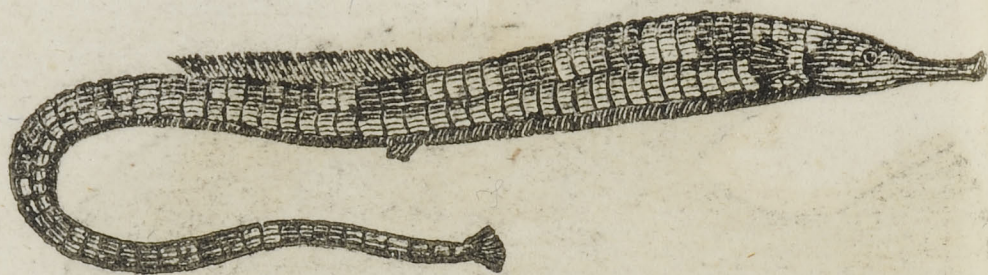
THE FISHING-FROG.

THE fishing-frog in shape very much resembles a tadpole or young frog. It grows to above a foot long, and its mouth is sometimes a yard wide. Nothing can exceed its deformity. The head is much larger than the whole body; the under jaw projects beyond the upper, and both are armed with rows of slender, sharp teeth: the palate and the tongue are furnished with teeth in like manner; the eyes are placed on the top of the head and are encompassed with prickles: immediately above the nose are two long beards or filaments, and on the back three others, which seem like lines hung out to attract fishes. The fishermen entertain a sort of veneration for this ugly creature, conceiving it to be hostile to the dog-fish, the body of that fierce and voracious creature being frequently found in its stomach; on this account, when they take the fishing-frog, they generally restore it alive to its native element.



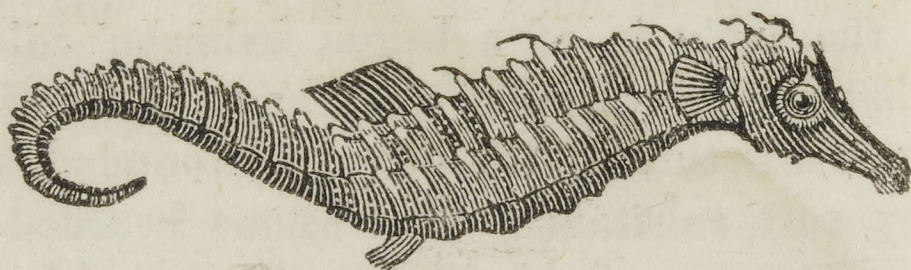
THE LUMP-FISH.

THE lump-fish is sixteen inches in length, and its weight about four pounds. The shape of the body is deep like that of the bream, and it swims sideways; the back is sharp and elevated, and the belly is flat; the whole skin is rough, with bony nodules; the largest row is along the ridge of the back; the belly is of a bright crimson colour. But what makes the chief singularity in this fish, is an oval aperture in the belly, surrounded with fleshy soft substance, that seems bearded all round; by means of this part it adheres with vast force to any thing it pleases. They are caught in many parts of the British seas, and sometimes eaten, but the flesh is flabby and insipid. During spring, they are very common on the northern coasts of Scotland, where they afford subsistence to seals and other predaceous inhabitants of the deep. In the Greenland seas they resort to the shores in vast numbers for spawning, about April and May. The roe is very large, and furnishes a delicious dish to the people of that country.



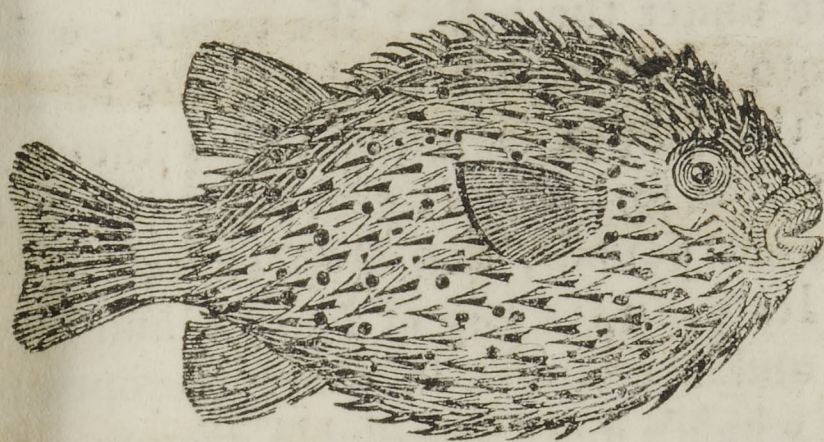
THE PIPE-FISH.

THE body of the pipe-fish, in the thickest part, is not thicker than the quill of a swan, while it is above sixteen inches long. Its general colour is an olive brown, marked with numbers of blue lines, pointing from the back to the belly. This species is viviparous, and is found in the sea of the East and West Indies.



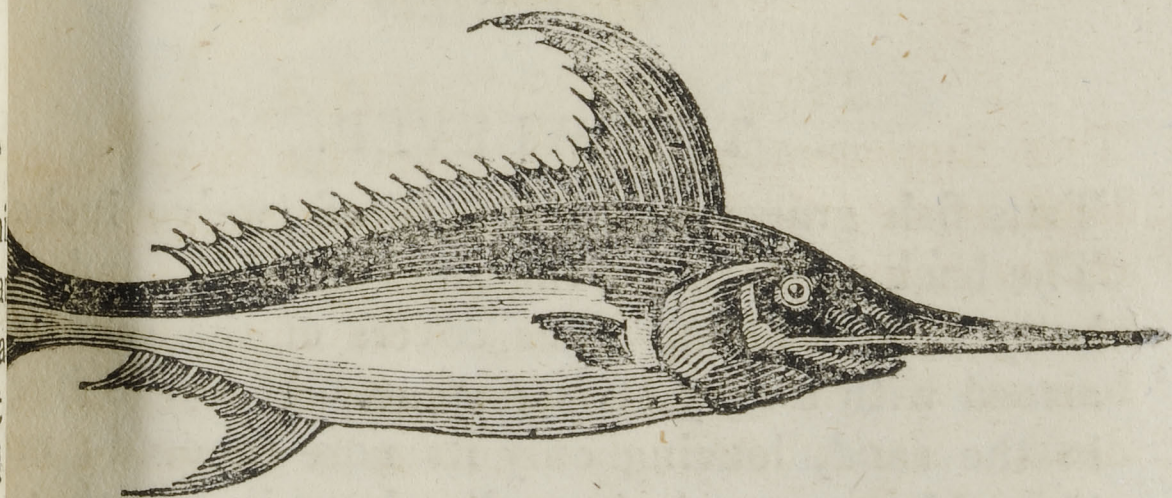
THE HIPPOCAMPUS.

THE hippocampus, which, from the form of its head, some call the *sea horse*, never exceeds nine inches in length. It is as about as thick as a man's thumb, and the body is said, while alive, to be covered with hair on the fore part, which falls off when it is dead. The whole body seems to be composed of cartilaginous rings, on the intermediate membranes of which several small prickles are placed. It is found in the Mediterranean; and more resembles a great caterpillar than a fish.



THE SEA ORB.

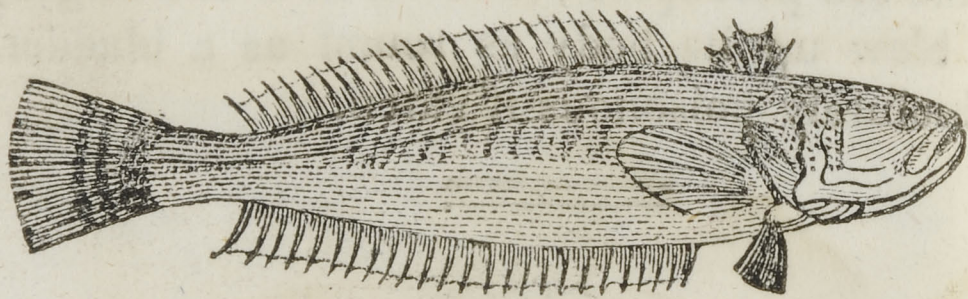
THE sea orb is almost round, has a mouth like a
 g, and is from seven inches to two feet long.
 Like the porcupine, it is covered with prickles,
 which point on every side, whence it is sometimes
 called the sea porcupine; and when it is enraged,
 can blow up its body as round as a bladder.
 It is absolutely poisonous if eaten.



THE SWORD-FISH.

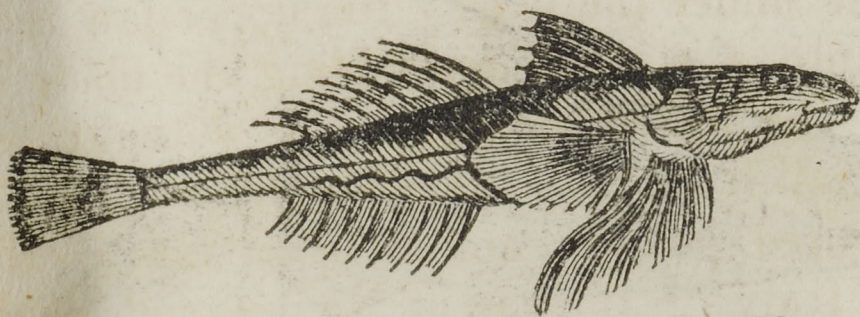
THE sword-fish is about fifteen feet in length.
 The body is of a conical form, black on the back,

and white under the belly; the upper jaw is prolonged into a weapon resembling the blade of a sword; the mouth is large, but without teeth, and the tail is forked. It generally weighs about one hundred pounds, and is often taken off the coast of Italy, in the bay of Naples, and all round Sicily; and sometimes in other European seas. It is the whale's most formidable enemy. At the sight of this animal, the whale seems agitated in an extraordinary manner, leaping from the water as if with affright, and flies from it in the opposite direction.



THE WEEVER.

THIS fish grows to the length of twelve inches. The back is straight, the sides are flat, and the belly is prominent. The covers of the gills are armed with a very strong spine. It buries itself in the sand, leaving only its nose exposed; if trodden upon, it immediately strikes with its spines that form its dorsal fins, which are very venomous and dangerous. Notwithstanding its noxious qualities, the flesh is excellent food.



THE DRAGONET.

THE dragonet is sometimes found a foot long. The body is slender, round, and smooth; the head is large, and depressed at the top; and in the hind part are two orifices through which it breathes, and ejects the water in the manner of cetaceous fishes. It is found in different latitudes, as far north as Spitzbergen, and as far south as the Mediterranean.



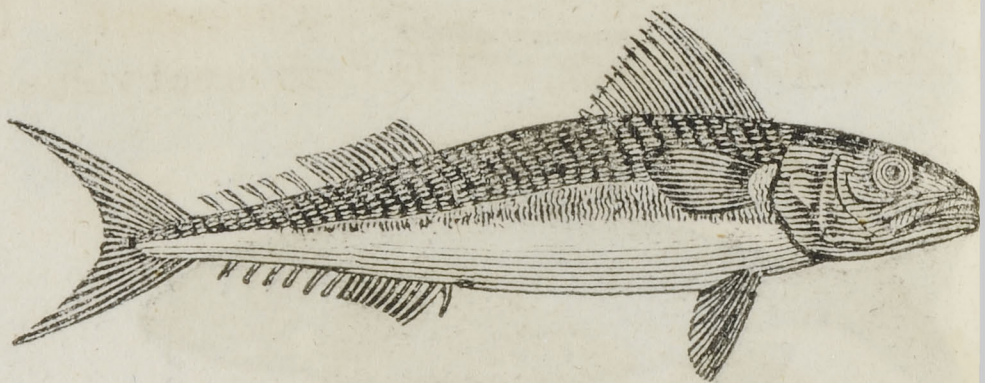
THE GUDGEON.

THE gudgeon is between five and six inches in length. The back is brown, the belly is white, the sides are tinged with red, and the tail is forked. They spawn three or four times during the summer, and feed upon flies which approach too near the surface of the water.



THE DACE.

THIS fish has a lengthened body, small head, forked tail. It is of a silver colour, except back, which is brownish, and rounded. This is found in the south of Germany, as well as France, Italy, and England.



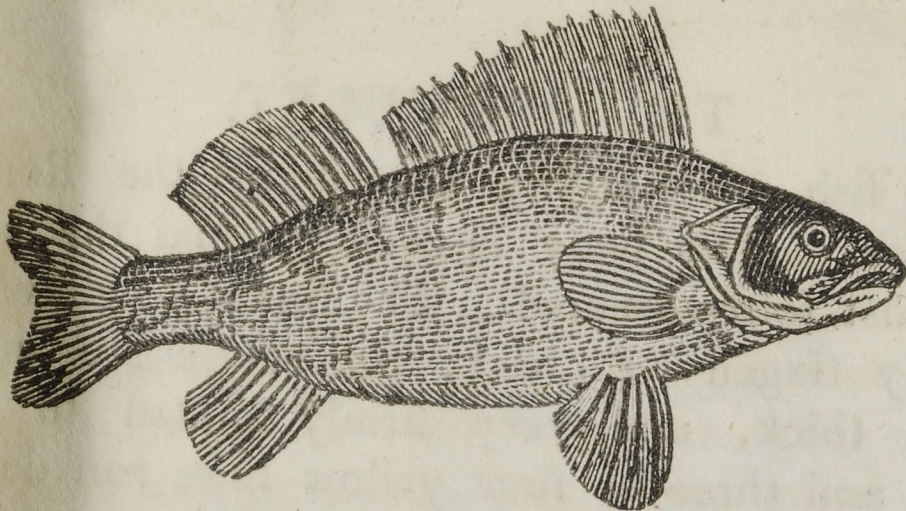
THE MACKAREL.

THE mackarel regularly visits our shores in numerous shoals during summer. They are delicate fish, but, owing to their tenderness, unfit for long carriage. They are capable, however, of being preserved. They are easily taken with bait: a piece of scarlet cloth being often sufficient for the purpose. They are well known in Europe, and were always a favourite dish.



THE BREAM.

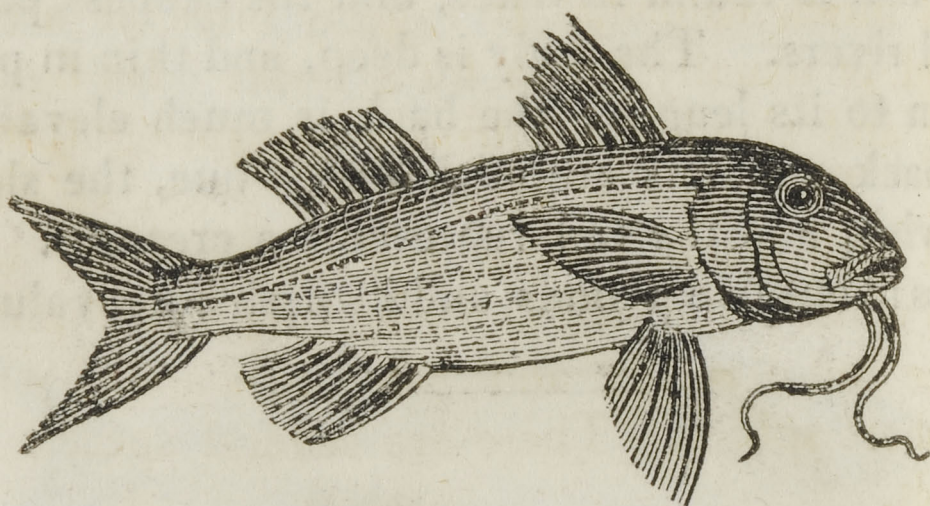
THIS fish is found in lakes, and the deepest parts of still rivers. The body is deep, and thin in proportion to its length; the back is much elevated. The back and fins are of a dusky hue, the sides yellowish, and the tail represents a crescent. It weighs about five pounds, and its flesh is not valued.



THE PERCH.

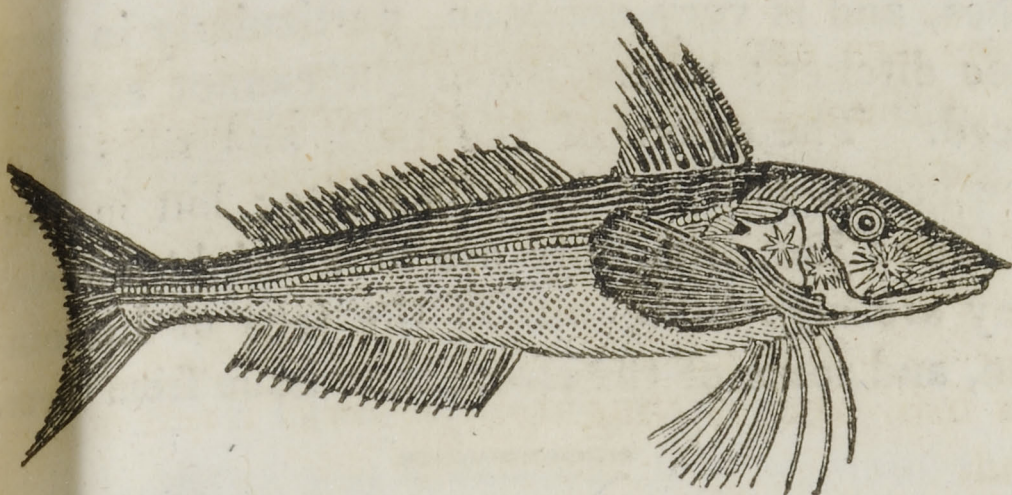
THE body of the perch is deep, the scales are extremely rough, and the back is much arched. The

colours are exquisitely beautiful; the back part of the sides are of a deep green, marked five broad black bars, pointing downwards; belly is white, tinged with red. It seldom exceeds three pounds in weight; but the flesh is firm, delicate, and is greatly esteemed. It is a gregarious fish, and is caught in several rivers of the island.



THE SURMULET.

THIS fish was highly valued by the Roman epicures. The body is slender, and the head is almost four-cornered. The fins are yellow, slightly tinged with red; the scales are large, broad, thick, and very firmly united to the flesh; and three or four yellow lines run down the sides, parallel to each other. It is caught in the Mediterranean; and in the British seas, especially on the Cornish coast; and is universally esteemed a great delicacy.



THE GURNARD.

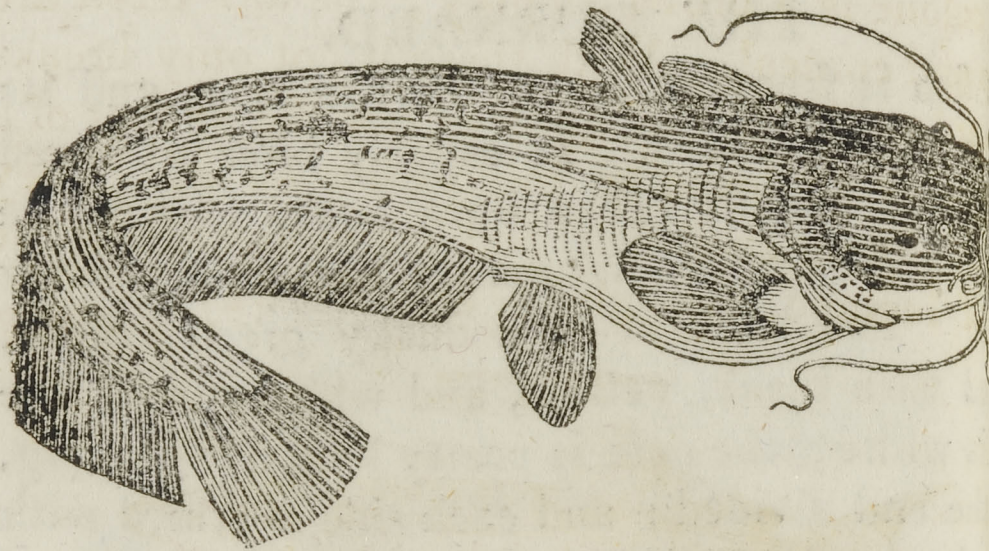
THIS fish is frequent in the British seas, and its flesh is much valued. It eagerly bites at a red rag, and is usually taken by a hook. Its figure is long and slender, frequently measuring thirty inches. The back is of a dusky green colour, marked with black, yellow, and white spots; the belly is white; the nose is pretty long and sloping, with the end divided; and each side is armed with three short spines. There are several species of gurnards.



THE STICKLEBACK.

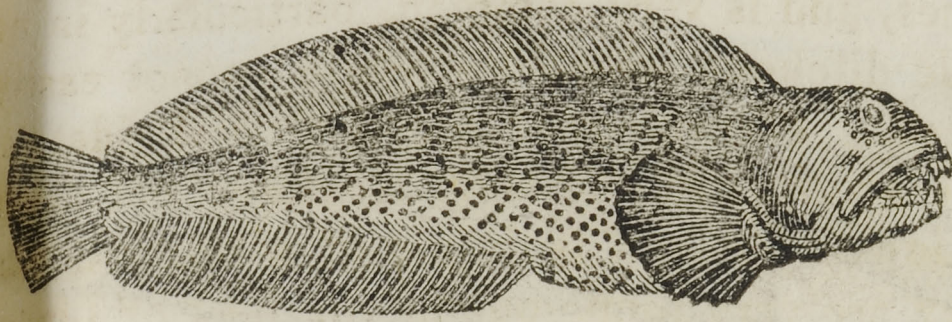
THIS fish is distinguished by having three spines on its back. It grows to about the length of two

inches, and is very common, particularly in
made ditches; where its origin cannot easily
traced. The colour of the back and sides
olive green, and the belly is white; but in
the lower jaw and belly are of a bright crimson.
They are very numerous in the fens of Lin-
shire, and some of the rivers that issue from



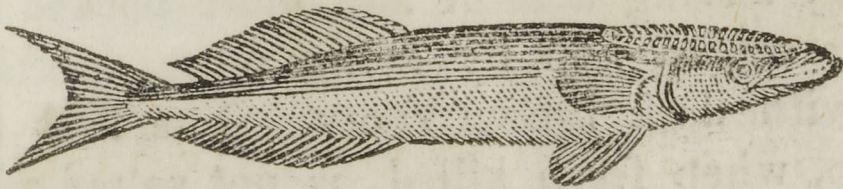
THE SILURUS, OR SHEAT-FISH

THE silurus, or sheat-fish, grows to a large
magnitude, some of them weighing sometimes eight
pounds, and measuring about sixteen feet in length.
In colour it resembles the eel, and has no scales.
It has only one small fin on the back, and a forked
tail. Its flesh is esteemed next to that of the salmon
and has a similar flavour. This fish is a voracious
depredator, and makes considerable havoc among
the smaller inhabitants of the rivers and
which it inhabits. They are found in the Danube
and several other rivers of Germany.



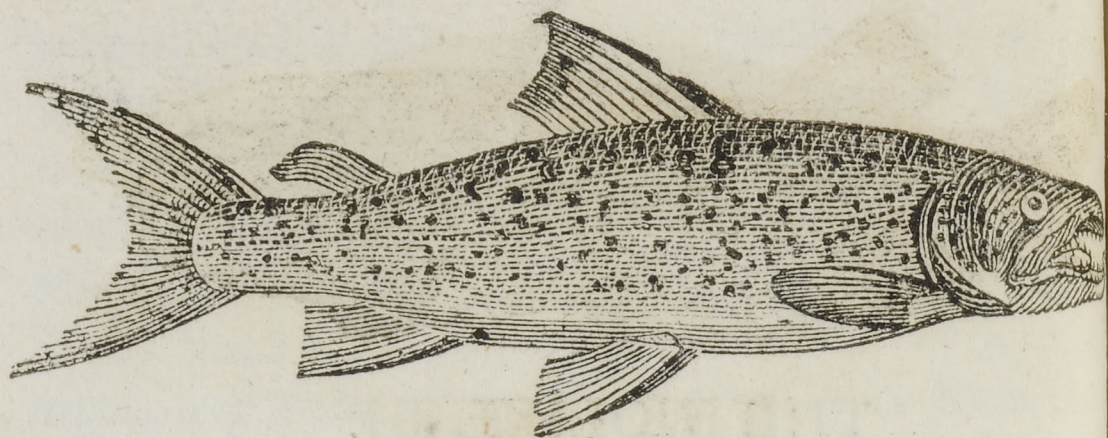
THE WOLF-FISH.

THE wolf-fish has a smooth body without scales. The colour is a brownish grey; the fore teeth are sharp and conical. With these it not only breaks the hardest shells, but gnaws even the anchor of a ship, so as to leave an impression on it. They feed chiefly on shell-fish, and are numerous in the seas of Iceland, Greenland, and Norway.



THE REMORA, OR SUCKING-FISH.

THE remora, or sucking-fish, is about a foot long. The head is thick, naked, depressed, and marked on the upper side with transverse rough lines, by means of which it attaches itself to any animal or body whatever. The shark has not a greater enemy than the remora; for, by virtue of its adhesive power, it sticks closely to it, and drains away its moisture. They are frequently eaten, and much admired. In taste they resemble fried artichokes.



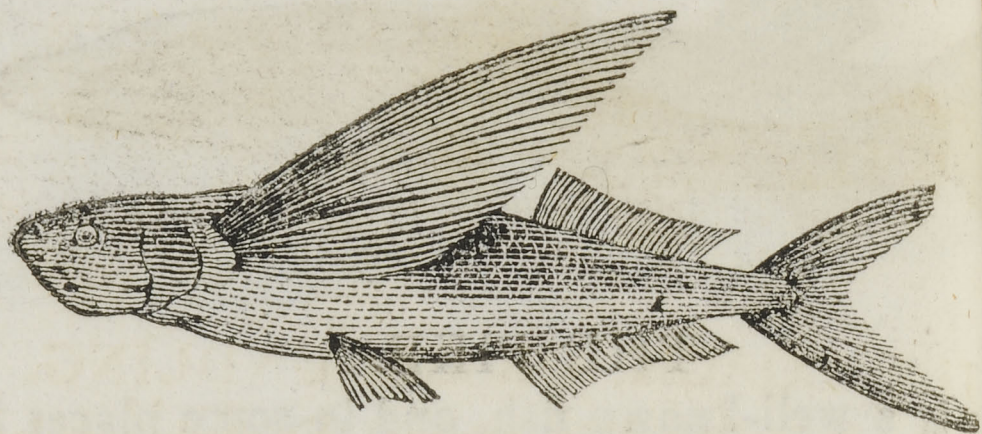
THE SALMON.

THE body of the salmon is longish, and covered with small thin scales; the head is small in proportion to the size, the snout is sharp, and the tail is forked. The back is of a bluish colour; and the other parts are generally white, intermixed with blackish or reddish spots very beautifully arranged. The female is distinguished from the male by having a large and more hooked snout, duskier scales, and by being more speckled all over with dark brown spots. The flesh of the salmon, when fresh killed, is not so red as when boiled or salted: it is tender, luscious, and flaked; and is generally preferred to that of any other fish. The salmon inhabits salt and fresh water alike; it quits the sea at certain seasons, in order to deposit its spawn with security in the gravelly beds of rivers, at a distance from their mouths. It is unknown in the Mediterranean, but extends as far north as Greenland. There are stationary fisheries of salmon in Iceland, Norway, and the Baltic; at Coleraine, in Ireland; at Berwick-upon-Tweed; and various other places.



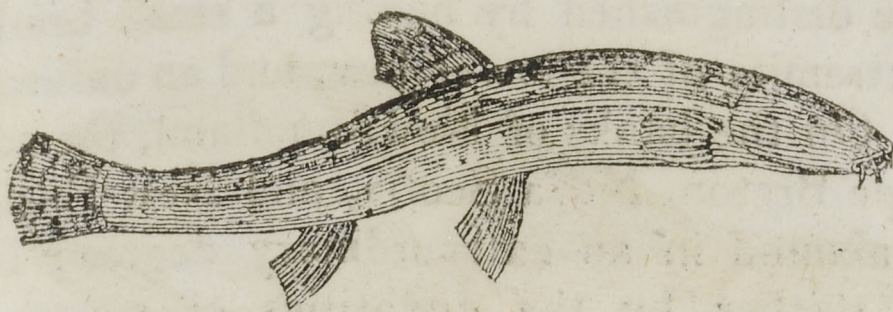
THE PIKE.

THIS is a well-known fish, and in some places is called the jack. The head is flat, the upper jaw is broad, and shorter than the lower, and the teeth are sharp. It has been sometimes caught of the weight of thirty pounds: but this is very rare, its general size being only about six pounds; and the flesh of such as are of the latter description is most esteemed. The pike has been poetically styled the tyrant of the watery plain; and, in fact, in proportion to its strength and celerity, it is the most active and voracious of fresh water fishes. It will attack every fish less than itself, and is sometimes choked by attempting to swallow such as are too large a morsel. Nor does the pike confine itself to feed on fish and frogs, it will draw down the water-rats and the young ducks as they are swimming about. They are common in most of the European lakes and rivers, but the finest are found in Lapland. In that country they are taken in great abundance; and, when dried, form an article of commerce. Pikes spawn in March or April, according to the mildness of the season.



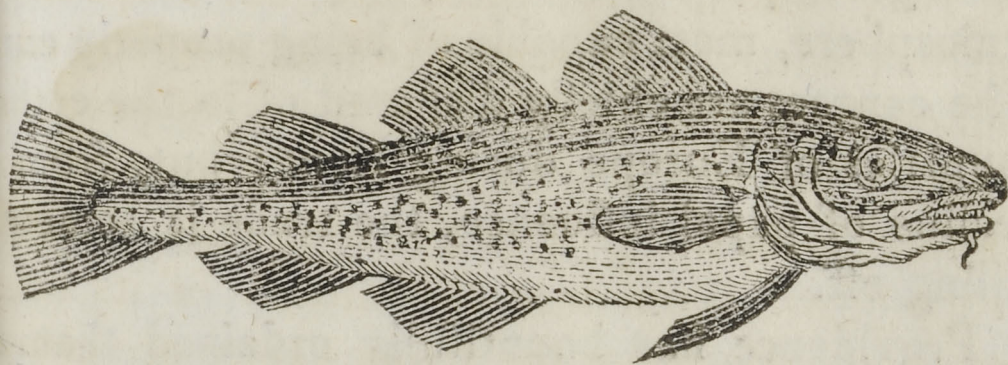
THE FLYING-FISH.

THIS fish is generally about nine inches long. The head is scaly; the belly is angular, and the pectoral fins, the instruments of flight, are very large. When pursued by any other marine animal, it raises itself from the water by means of these long fins, and can support itself in the air till they become dry, when it again drops into its native element. It seems to lead a wretched life, being constantly pursued by fishes of prey; and when it has recourse to flight, it frequently meets its fate from the gull or the albatross, or perhaps drops down again into the mouth of its original pursuer. Between the tropics they are common, and there their enemies are the most numerous. In those climates they are seen springing out of the deep by hundreds; and sometimes they climb themselves on board of ships, in order to escape their various assailants. They are of a white colour, and their flesh is reported to be palatable and nourishing.



THE LOACH, OR GROUNDLING.

THE loach is found in several English rivulets, particularly near Amesbury, in Wiltshire. It keeps close to the bottom, and seldom exceeds four inches in length. Sportsmen sometimes swallow it, for a whim, in a glass of white wine. The body is smooth and slippery; the colour of the head, back, and sides, is either white or a dirty yellow, elegantly marked with large spots.

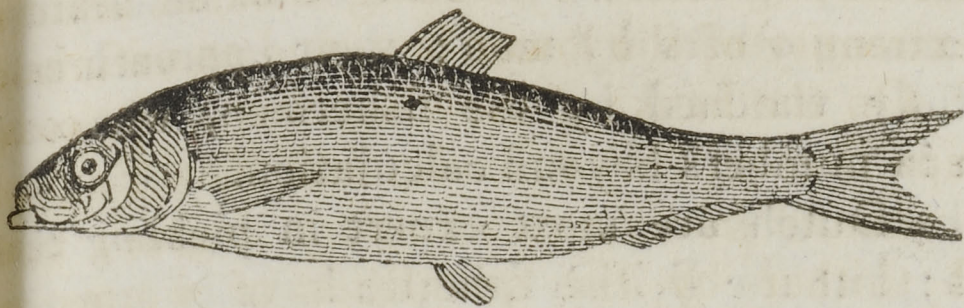


THE COD.

THIS fish is short in proportion to its bulk, and the belly is very large and prominent. The back and sides are cinereous, spotted with yellow, and the belly is white. But the cod varies considerably not only in colour but also in shape; though

all are distinguished by having a small beard at the extremity of the lower jaw, and an unfurcated tail. On the banks of Newfoundland, the coast of Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, and New England they abound in an extraordinary degree; being lured thither by the quantities of worms and small fish which the bottom supplies; and in the vicinity to the polar seas, whither they resort to spawn. They are found also in abundance on the coasts of Norway, in the Baltic, and in most parts of the British seas; but never farther south than the straits of Gibraltar. The cod-banks of Newfoundland are a sort of submarine mountains, and of more real and beneficial value to Great Britain than the gold-mines of Potosi to Spain. The fishing season generally commences in February, and ends in May; the fish being then at the highest perfection, and, from the state of the atmosphere, most capable of being properly cured. The cargoes are chiefly disposed of in the catholic countries of Europe during Lent; but, from the decline of papal influence, the trade is somewhat falling off.

Providence has bountifully ordained that this fish, so beneficial to mankind, should, by its astonishing fecundity, keep pace with the annual depredations that are made among its race. By the help of a microscope, nine millions three hundred and eighty-four thousand eggs have been counted in a cod of only a middling size. They generally weigh from fourteen to forty pounds.

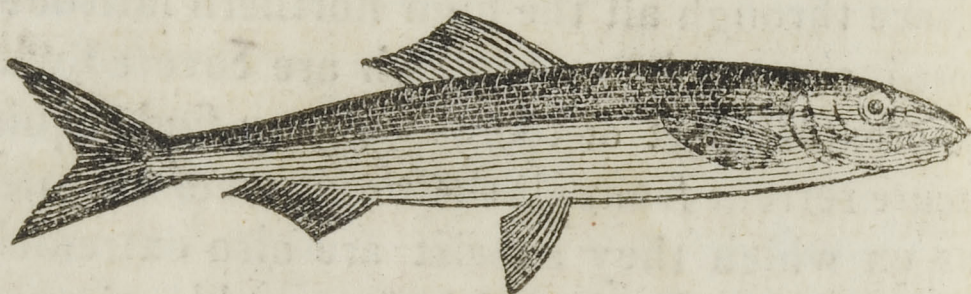


THE HERRING.

HERRINGS differ greatly in size, but the usual length is from nine to twelve inches. The back and sides are varied with green and blue, and the belly is silvery. They are found in the greatest abundance through all the high northern latitudes. In those inaccessible seas, which are covered with ice the greatest part of the year, they find a quiet and secure retreat from all their numerous enemies. Insects on which they subsist are also extremely plentiful there; from which favourable circumstance their increase is beyond conception, which obliges them to migrate in quest of new settlements. The great colony of herrings sets out from the polar seas about the middle of winter, but soon separates into two shoals: one body of which moves westward, and pours along the coasts of America as far as Carolina; while the other directs its course to Europe, and first appears off the Shetland islands in the month of April. From these islands this great army again divides; one squadron taking the western coasts of Britain toward Ireland, and another the eastern toward the Land's End. During their progress, they are

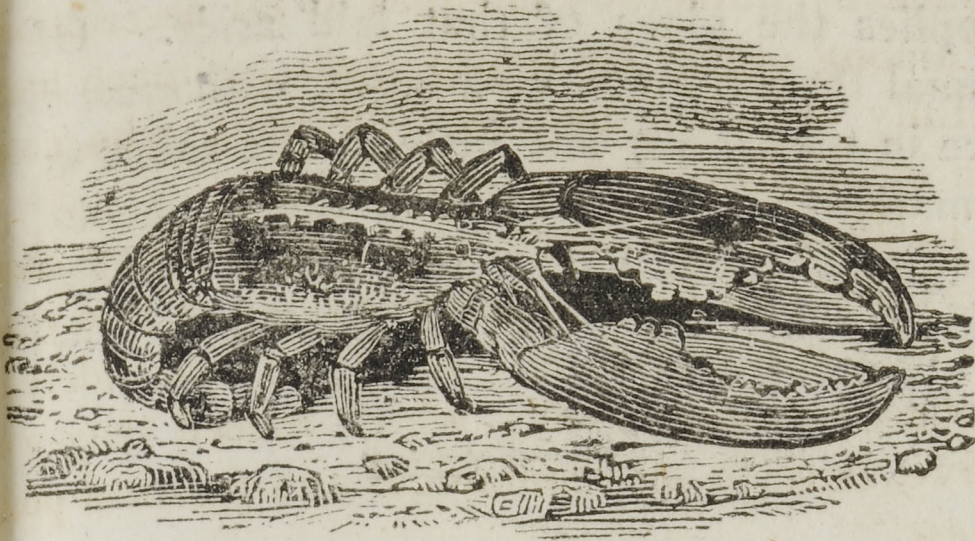
pursued by numerous enemies of all descriptions and among others by man; their approach being carefully watched by the fishermen, who catch them in numbers beyond calculation.

The Dutch are most expert in pickling these fishes; but the British fisheries have of late years been well conducted, and meet with considerable national encouragement; which indeed they well deserve, both in an economical and political point of view.



THE ANCHOVY.

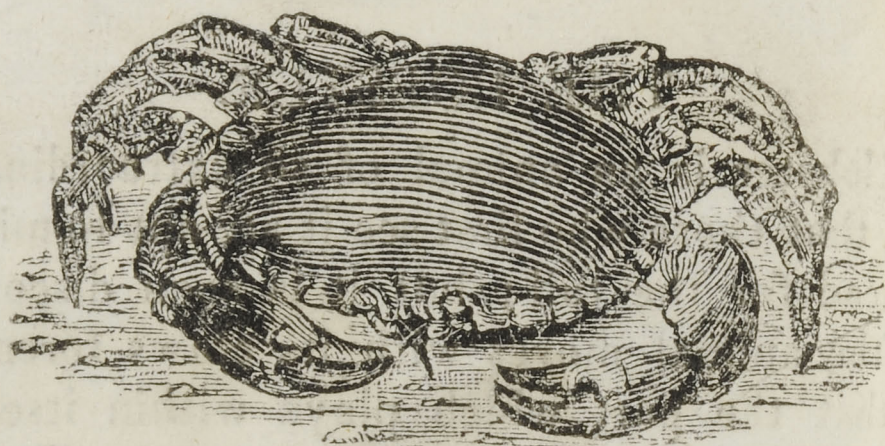
THE anchovy is a fish about four or five inches long. It has a long slender body with small scales; the whole is nearly transparent; the back is of a mixture of green and ash colour; the belly of a silvery white, the nose sharp, the eyes large and the tail forked. They are taken on the coasts of Italy and in the Mediterranean, salted and preserved in barrels, and so brought to Great Britain, and to all parts of the Continent; where they are esteemed a very agreeable relish in sauces and sallads.



THE LOBSTER.

THE lobster is an animal of so extraordinary a form, that those who first see it are apt to mistake the head for the tail; but it is soon discovered that the animal moves with its claws foremost; and that the part which plays within itself by joints, like a coat of armour, is the tail. The two great claws are the lobster's instruments of provision and defence; these, by opening like a pair of nippers, have great strength, and take a firm hold. It has eight legs, four on each side, and these, with the tail, serve to give the animal its progressive and sidelong motion. The lobster is a hermaphrodite, and is supposed to be self-impregnated. Lobsters cast their shells once a year. This operation is so violent and painful, that many of them die under it; those which survive are feeble, and their naked muscles soft to the touch, being covered with a thin membrane; but in less than two days this membrane hardens in a surprising manner, and a new shell, as impenetrable as the former,

supplies the place of that laid aside. Of animal there are many varieties, with some difference in the claws, but little in the habits or formation. These all live in the water, and bear its absence but a few hours. The is black when taken out of the water, but red by boiling.



THE CRAB.

THE crab is an animal found equally in fresh salt water. In shape it differs very much from the lobster, but entirely resembles it in habits and conformation. It resembles the lobster in the number of its claws, which are two; and its legs, which are eight, four on each side. Like the lobster, it is a bold voracious animal, and resembles it in every thing but the amazing bulk of its body compared to the size of its head, and the length of its intestines, which have many convolutions.

F I N I S.