

Captain Cockle

Captain Cockle's Log



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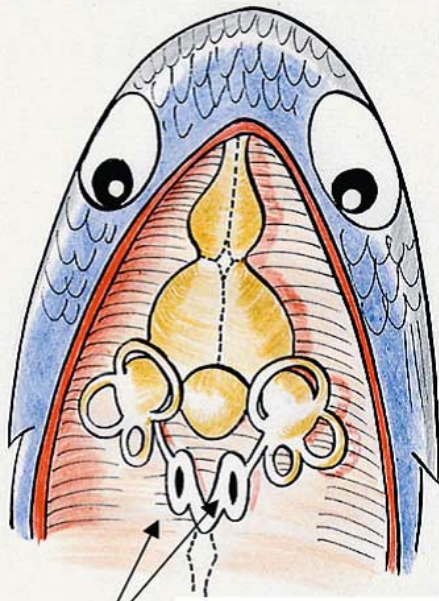


Measuring the Wind

Sir Francis Beaufort – the famous hydrographer and scientist – was born in County Meath in 1774. He was virtually self-educated, and spent most of his early life at sea – in the merchant marine and the British Navy. As a lieutenant on *HMS Phaeton* he was wounded 19 times.

As a young man, Beaufort became interested in weather conditions having been shipwrecked. He kept a weather journal for most of his life and is most famous for his "Beaufort Scale" for measuring the weather at sea based on easily recognisable sea conditions.

He became Hydrographer for the British Navy and died at the ripe old age of 81.



How Old is that Fish?

Fish have a pair of tiny stones called "Otoliths" inside cavities in their heads. These stones rest on sensitive hairs that send back signals to the fish's brain to tell them which way is up or down. Fisheries scientists need to know how old fish are so that they can tell how fast the fish are growing and how many it is safe for fishermen to take from the sea.

The otoliths grow in "rings" that can be read under a microscope like the rings of a tree to tell how old the fish is.



The largest ship in the world today is the supertanker *Knock Nevis*, which is 458 metres long – almost twice as long as the *RMS Titanic* (shown in black). *Knock Nevis* can carry 650,000 cubic metres of crude oil and is easily big enough to carry the Eiffel Tower from Paris lengthwise on its deck. She sits 41 metres high out of the water when fully loaded and is 69 metres wide. Her large size makes it impossible for her to navigate either the Suez or Panama canals. She is currently moored as a permanent floating oil storage facility in the Qatar Al Sharee oil field in the Persian Gulf.