

XLII.—On a species of Pipe-fish (*Syngnathus æquoreus*?) lately found at Scarborough. By J. LECKENBY, Esq.

[With a Plate.]

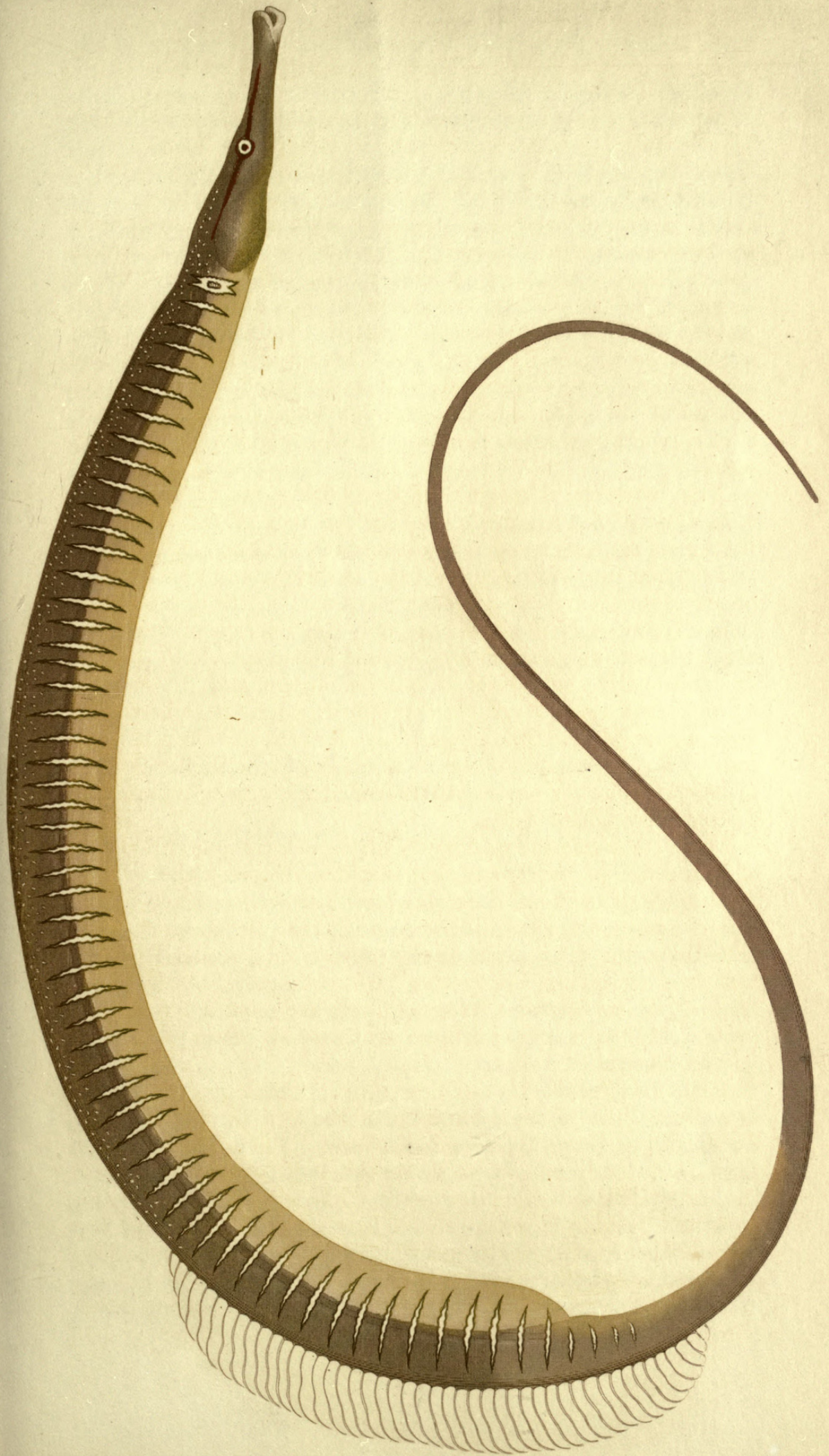
IN the month of June of the present year, a fisherman brought to the Scarborough Museum a Pipe-fish alive, which he stated had just been captured in a lobster-trap. It was placed in the aquarium of the Museum, where it lived more than a month. At first it appeared uneasy and restless; but after a fine plant of *Halidrys siliquosus* was introduced, it sought shelter amongst its branches, coiling its prehensile tail around the stem,—the colours of the plant and the Pipe-fish harmonizing so exactly, that a search was often necessary to discover it in its hiding-place.

This, however, it would sometimes leave (as though seized with a spirit of adventure), making the tour of the aquarium, paying its respects *en route* to the lobsters in their hiding-places, and darting inquiring glances from its bright and glowing eyes at the *Actiniae* and Star-fishes. It propelled itself rapidly by the undulations of its dorsal and only fin, the rays of which, by the quickness of their motion, became imperceptible to the eye. It occasionally made darts at minute objects, and, I believe, if suitable food could have been supplied, might have been kept alive a considerable time longer. Its forward motion was rectilinear; but when at rest, or in ascending to a higher level, it approached most frequently to the coiled appearance represented by the figure (Plate XII.).

I have compared the specimen with the descriptions and figures of Yarrell's Pipe-fishes, and find that it agrees very closely with Montagu's description of *Syngnathus æquoreus* as quoted by the former author, the chief difference being that our specimen does not exhibit the three slight angles on each side, which Montagu mentions as giving his species "an octangular appearance," the body of our specimen being regularly and most symmetrically ovate. Montagu says also there are thirty-six plates in the tail, ours numbering sixty-six.

But on reference to the descriptive 'Catalogue of Lophobranchiate Fish in the Collection of the British Museum,' by Dr. J.J. Kaup, page 66 (*Nerophis æquoreus*), the difference in the form of the body appears to be sexual, as it is there stated that the female has an octangular body, while the male has a flatter back and belly. It would therefore appear that Montagu has described as specific, characters which pertain to the female only, our example being a male in very fine condition.

The tail in our specimen is perfectly round until within three-fourths of an inch of the end, where it becomes very finely flat-





Leckenby, J. 1858. "XLII.—On a species of Pipe-fish (*Syngnathus æquoreus?*) lately found at Scarborough." *The Annals and magazine of natural history; zoology, botany, and geology* 2, 416–417.

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