

Nature of the Headland in January

This month has started clear and cold and looks set to remain so far at least the first two weeks of the month.

Shoals of fish, probably pilchard have been noted feeding in the longshore current off Little Fistral; usually around high water. A small group of Gannets quickly assembled and dived on the shoal as it drifted toward Towan Headland. It was probably a small shoal but in any case it didn't attract any other predators (such as Dolphins) apart from the birds.



Gannet

Last month I was mentioning the number of different fungi species and how some of them again highlighted the quality of the grassland. I was extremely pleased to find another fungal indicator of improved grassland growing in a large area on the southern corner of the site. This belongs to the *genus Geoglossum* and is probably *G. Fallax* but will need closer examination to confirm that. The common name is Scaly Earth-Tongue and the spores are produced in the fertile head of the club.



Scaly Earth-Tongue

It was reported to me last month that the top mammal predator of the headland had been seen, hunting rabbits that were feeding on the grass by the shrubbery on the seaward side of the hotel. I had seen it three years previously heading into the gorse in front of the holiday village but had not seen it since. The European Weasel is a furtive and rarely seen predator but given the number of rabbits on the grassland it is not surprising to find the weasel living right amongst them.



European Weasel

Also seen on the grounds were some winter visitors, both members of the Thrush family – Mistle Thrush and Redwing, the latter are winter visitors from the Arctic and often arrive ahead of colder weather.



Mistle Thrush



Redwing

Please be aware when walking your dog – with short days and freezing temperatures birds need all the available time to feed, roost etc, so please restrain your dog from chasing birds at this time of year.