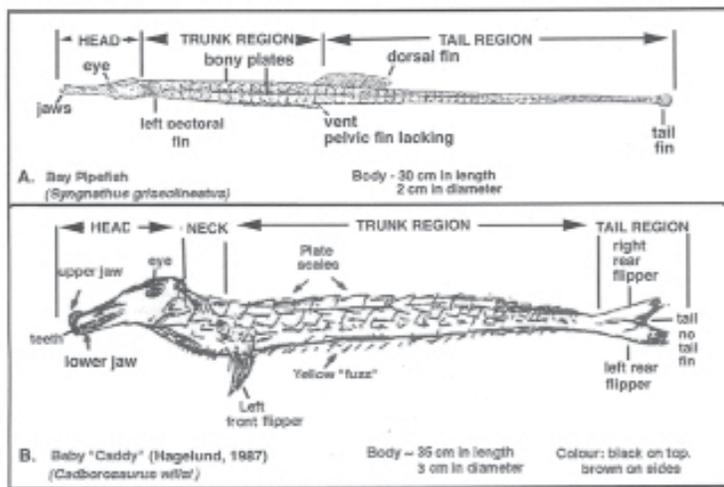


## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

## Pipefish or Pipe Dream?

This Letter is a reply to the research article “A Baby Sea-Serpent No More: Reinterpreting Hagelund’s Juvenile ‘Cadborosaur’ Report,” in *JSE* 25:3, Fall 2011 (Woodley, Naish, & McCormick, 2011). Naish and colleagues indulge in the common home-quarterbacking habit of insisting that anything described as different must be an erroneous description of something found in a book that vaguely looks like it. A comparison of Hagelund’s “baby-Caddy” with a pipefish (Figure 1) shows significant differences in the latter:



**Figure 1. A comparison of the pipefish (*Syngnathus griseolineatus*) (A) with Hagelund’s “baby Caddy” (B).** (Hagelund, 1987; Leblond & Bousfield, 1995)

- 1 – no neck;
- 2 – nearly fused jaws;
- 3 – no posterior paired appendages (pelvic fins);
- 4 – pronounced dorsal fin;
- 5 – very elongate post-vent tail region (> 1/2 body length);
- 6 – lateral plates encircling the body and tail region (vs. only dorso laterally on trunk region in Hagelund’s creature);
- 7 – presence of a small and vertically oriented fin.

Observed behavioral differences are equally great. The pipefish doesn't swim with its head continuously out of the water for more than a few seconds, not the estimated 5–10 minutes observed originally by Hagelund, and the pipefish cannot open its tiny jaws (*Syn-gnathus!*), whereas the baby Caddy opened its large jaws and displayed a mouthful of conspicuous teeth.

So much for the pipefish idea. As to whether Caddy eyewitness accounts relate to one or more unknown creatures: "*entia non sunt multiplicanda praeter necessitatem*" to quote William of Occam; and while there may be a remote chance that more than one single unconfirmed animal species may be hiding under the appellation *Cadborosaurus*, there is not enough evidence to introduce specific distinctions at this time.

We appreciate the interest expressed in *Cadborosaurus* and encourage commentators to look closely at the published evidence before jumping to conclusions.

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