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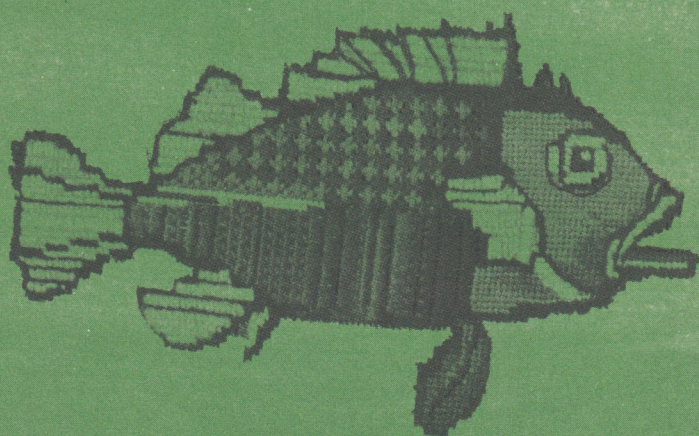
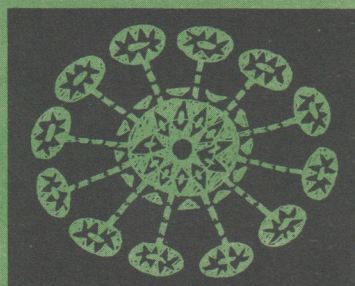
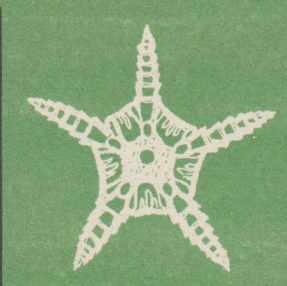
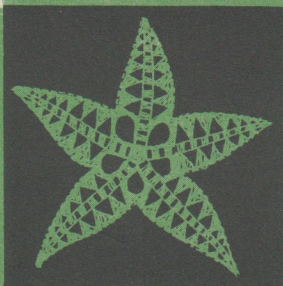
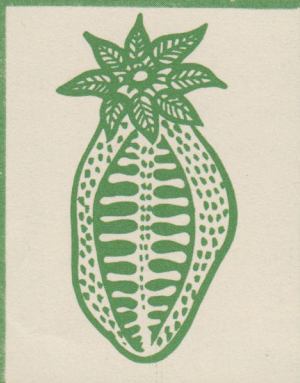
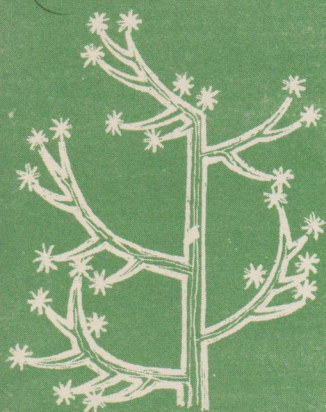
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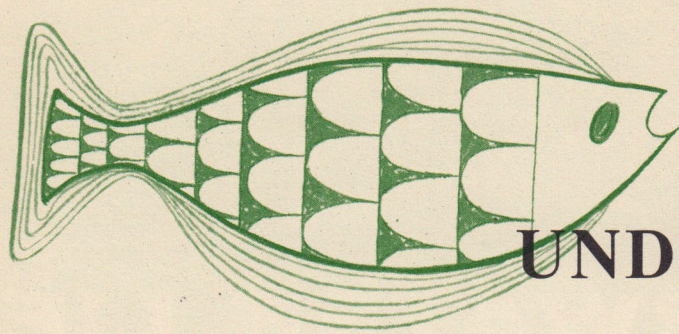
**Designing from**

# **UNDERWATER LIFE**



**NDS**

**Bulletin 32 <https://www.knittingand.com> And so to embroider**



*Designing from*  
**UNDERWATER LIFE**

Natural history is a source of endless inspiration for the designer. In previous embroidery bulletins numbers 26 and 29, you will remember that we studied leaves and flower forms to see how these could be used in embroidery. In this bulletin we are going to look at life under the sea to discover more new shapes and patterns but avoiding the conventional type of fish and shell motif which one finds being used again and again with so little originality.

We often see films and articles in magazines about underwater explorers who, using an aqualung, and with the aid of special photographic equipment, are able to record wonderful pictures of unusual fish, coral reefs and strange sea creatures. This type of research is, of course, of the greatest value to the marine biologist, but these fascinating views of the world under the sea can also provide a wealth of new ideas for the designer in many different mediums.

One of the most satisfying methods of finding suitable material for study is to search the beaches yourself and make a collection of interesting shells, pebbles, sea creatures and types of seaweed, for instance. You might also be able to visit an Aquarium or Natural History Museum where you can make sketches which can later be adapted as designs. Much valuable information can also be found in books, old engravings and photographs. Remember that a good design will retain the characteristics of the subject yet be simple and bold enough to be interpreted in your selected medium.



**Thread-Holder** (*Finished Size 18 in. × 20 in.*)

This can be equally suitable as a piece of classroom equipment or for your own personal use. It is planned to keep embroidery threads safe and tidy. The threads are cut into practical lengths and plaited through tape loops.

The thread-holder is made from a piece of dark blue fabric with 3 in. turned over at the top to form a decorative pelmet and 4½ in. turned up at the foot to make pockets which can be used to hold your sewing equipment, also patterns of fabrics and threads.

The five very simple fish shapes which are used for the pelmet design are each 3 in. long. The outlines are worked in Chain Stitch, Back Stitch and Couching. Notice how the effect of scales has been obtained by different lacy filling stitches (see diagrams). On every alternate fish the embroidery is worked over applé felt.

**Chair Pad**

This type of chair pad is simple to make and wadding, a piece of old blanket or foam rubber can be used for the padding. Make a paper pattern to fit your own chair before





starting to plan the decoration.

The motifs we have used were interpreted from a series of pen and ink sketches of sea anemones, shells, star fish and other creatures found on the sea shore. These sketches were reduced to simple basic shapes and the resulting motifs arranged in an orderly way on the chair pad. Bands of solid Stem Stitch, giving the effect of water, link the motifs together.

Choose a colour scheme which will fit in with the other furnishings in the room. Our combination of bright pink felt with black, white, grey and fawn embroidery is intended to strike a cheerful note in a dull corner.

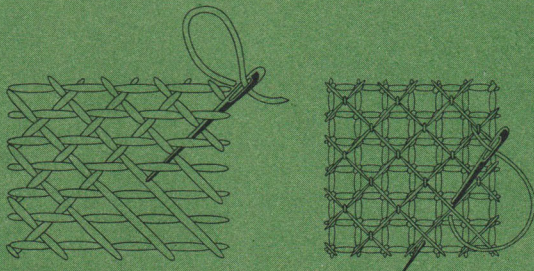
The embroidery is worked mainly in thick soft cotton threads with final details added in stranded embroidery cotton.

**Teacloth** (*Finished Size 32 in. Square*)

This teacloth of pale yellow fabric shows how a restrained and dignified design can be planned by the repetition of simple stylised motifs. The seaweed border and central decoration of shells and seaweed were worked out on graph paper so that both formed a satisfactory arrangement in correct proportion to the cloth.

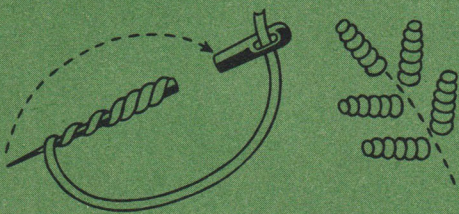
The embroidery is worked in cool shades of greens, blues and white using two strands of embroidery cotton. Among the stitches used are Bullion Knots and French Knots for the seaweed, and Stem Stitch and Double Knot Stitch for details.

*Embroidery Stitches*



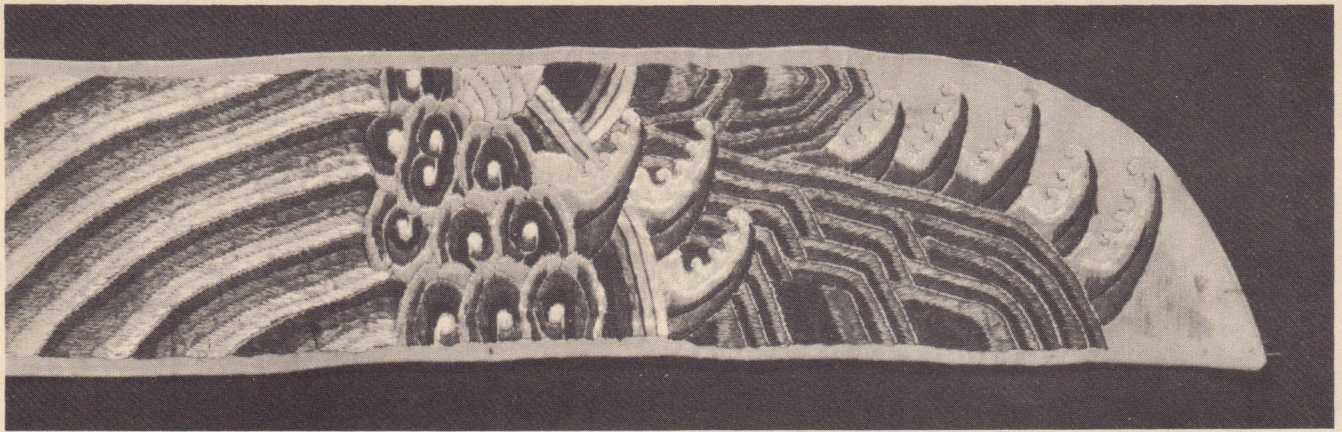
*Honeycomb Filling  
Stitch*

*Open Couched Filling*



*Bullion Knot Stitch*





*Sleeve band from a Chinese Mandarin's coat showing a traditional formal treatment of water. It is embroidered in Satin Stitch using shades of blue on a yellow silk background.*

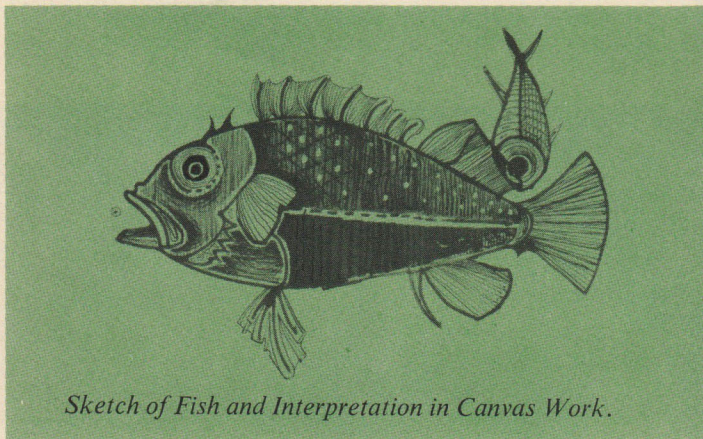
### Two Fish Motifs

There is very great variety of shape and pattern to be found in the study of fresh and salt water fish. They suggest endless designs which can be adapted for different types of embroidery.

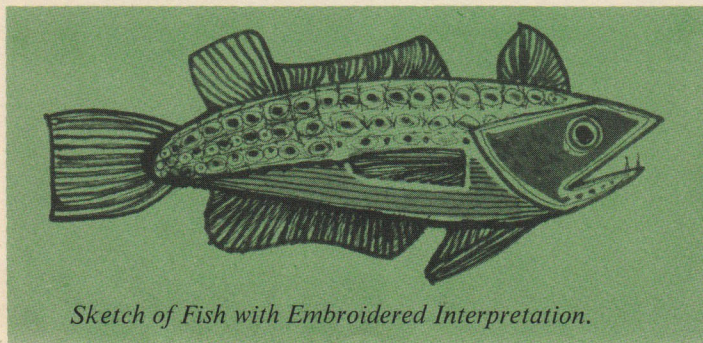
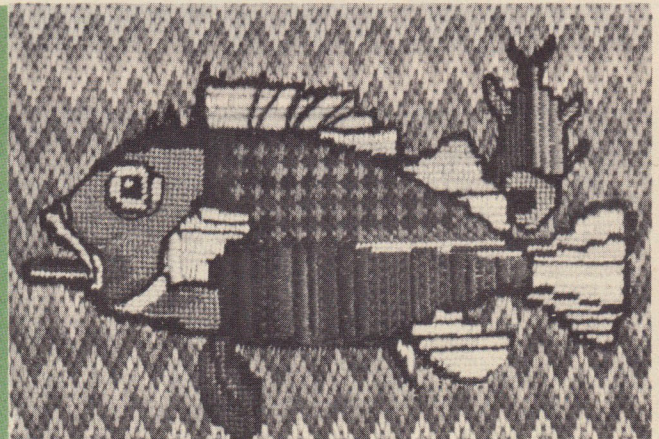
*Sketch of Fish and Interpretation in Canvas Work.* This type of decorative sketch is most suitable for interpretation in stitchery and it is interesting to notice how easily it can be

worked out on canvas. A "watery" background is added in Florentine Stitch using stranded cottons.

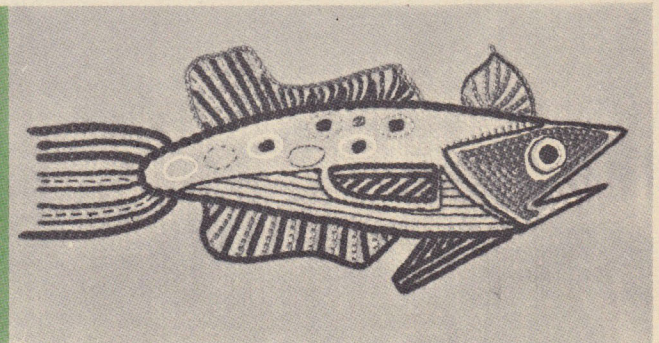
*Sketch of Fish with Embroidered Interpretation.* This sketch had to be slightly enlarged and simplified before it was suitable to be worked out in embroidery. Couching, Back Stitch and Chain Stitch were used on a turquoise blue poplin. This example emphasizes the need for careful selection of shapes and patterns when interpreting a design.



*Sketch of Fish and Interpretation in Canvas Work.*



*Sketch of Fish with Embroidered Interpretation.*



Our next bulletin will contain ideas for designing from the piece box

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