

16 Scary Creatures From The Deep Sea

1. Frilled sharks



Scientific name: *Chlamydoselachus anguineus*.

This freaky shark is often referred to as a "living fossil" because of its primitive-looking features. Seldom observed by humans, the species lurks deep in the Atlantic and Pacific oceans at depths between 120 and 1580 metres.

Bonus creepy fact: The jaws of a frilled shark are lined with 25 rows of backward-facing, trident-shaped teeth. If your maths is any good, you know that adds up to 300 razor-sharp teeth in total.

2. Japanese spider crab



Scientific name: *Macrocheira kaempferi*.

If you thought spiders were bad enough, take a look at this ghoulish-looking species of marine crab. They have the greatest leg span of any invertebrate animal, boasting a spine-tingling length of up to 5.5 metres from claw to claw, and can weigh up to 19kg.

Bonus creepy fact: Spider crabs can survive with up to three legs missing, and are able to grow back their missing limbs during successive molts.

3. Deep-sea dragonfish



Scientific name: *Grammatostomias flagellibarba*.

Deep down in the Atlantic Ocean, at depths of up to 5,000 metres, lurks this ferocious predator. The conditions down here are extreme – there's no light, no plant life, and the environment is entirely still because it is unaffected by storms or ocean currents. To deal with this, the dragonfish uses light-producing organs called photophores to lure prey into its fang-toothed jaws.

Bonus creepy fact: An odd characteristic of this species is the absence of some vertebrae in its spine. This enables the dragonfish to have greater flexibility of its head, allowing them to feast on larger prey.

4. Vampire squid

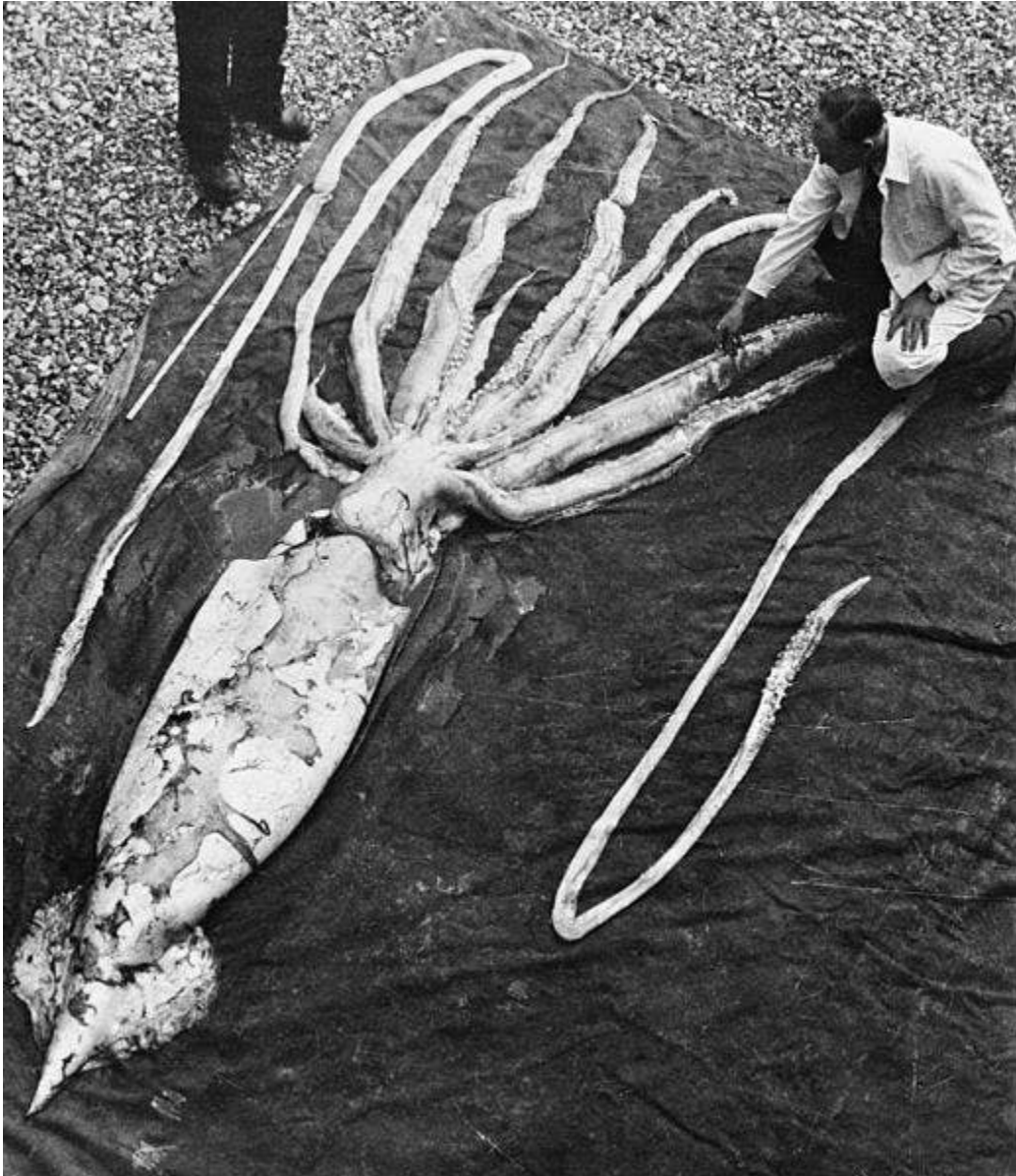


Scientific name: *Vampyroteuthis infernalis*.

Very little is known about this mysterious, scarlet-bodied creature that is thought to reside at lightless depths of up to 900 metres. Here the saturation of oxygen may be as low as 3%, but the vampire squid is easily able to thrive in these suffocating conditions.

Bonus creepy fact: The reddish colouring of this squid isn't the only reason for its spooky name. If you take a closer look, you'll notice that its eight arms, each lined with rows of fleshy spines, are connected via a cloak-like webbing of skin.

5. Colossal squid

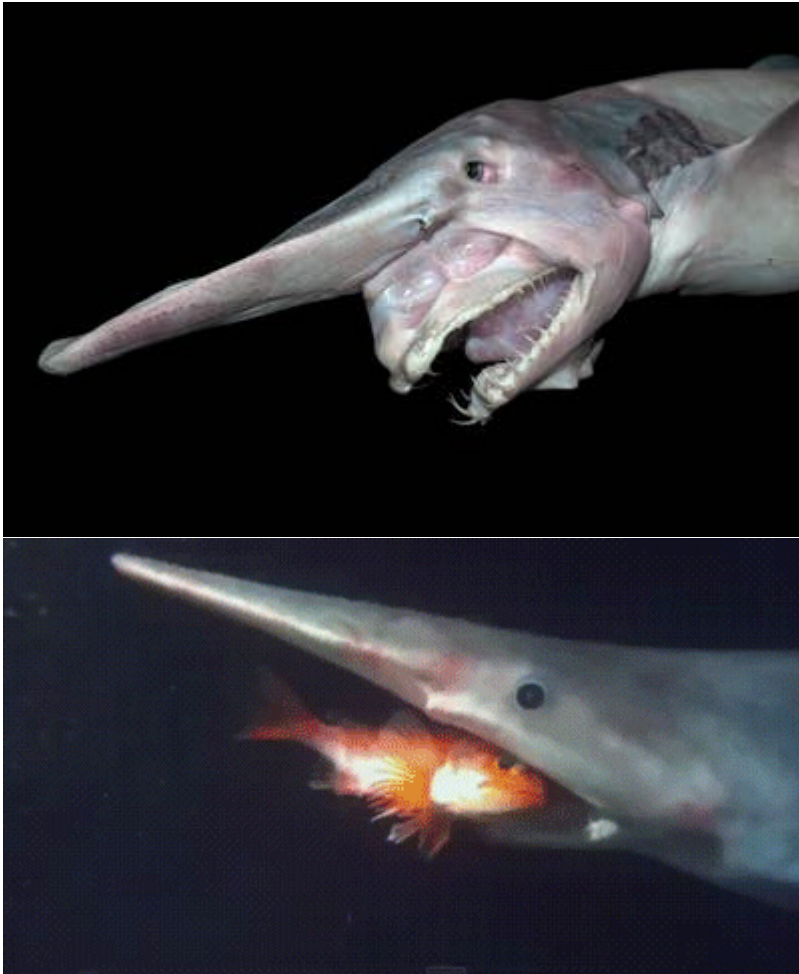


Scientific name: *Mesonychoteuthis hamiltoni*.

Thought the colossal squid was a made-up legend? Think again, because this marine creature is no bedtime story. Current estimates put its maximum size at 12-14 metres long with a possible weight of up to 750kg. The enormous species also has the largest eyes documented in the animal kingdom, with scientists estimating a 30-40cm (12-16 inches) in diameter.

Bonus creepy fact: Ever seen pictures of sperm whales with scars on their backs? Well those scars are believed to have been caused by the hook-like tentacles of a colossal squid.

6. Goblin shark



Scientific name: Mitsukurina owstoni.

Another prehistoric-looking creature from the deep is this goblin shark. Sporting an elongated snout and needle-like teeth, the most terrifying thing about this deep sea dweller is its highly extendable jaws. They are able to instantly snap forward to capture prey.

Bonus creepy fact: The goblin shark's skin is semi-transparent, so that pinkish hue you see is actually a direct look at their insides.

7. Terrible-claw lobster



Scientific name: *Dinorchelus ausubeli*.

Discovered in the seas of the Philippines is this appropriately named lobster with two very terrible-looking claws. They are also incredibly tiny, clocking in at around 31 millimetres long.

Bonus creepy fact: These lobsters aren't just small, but they're also blind, meaning that they'll probably take a good stab at anything that comes too close to them.

8. Atlantic wolffish



Scientific name: *Anarhichas lupus*.

It's clear where this bottom-dwelling wolffish gets its name from. Armed with four to six fang-like teeth on its jaws, there are a further three rows of crushing teeth behind that. And if that's not enough to make you squeamish, the Wolffish's throat is scattered with serrated teeth too.

Bonus creepy fact: Not pictured is the wolffish's long, eel-like body which can reach lengths upwards of 1.5 metres.

9. Fangtooth fish



Scientific name: *Anoplogaster cornuta*.

This menacing creature is one of the deepest-living fish ever discovered. It has been recorded as far down as 5,000 metres below sea level, where the pressure is 500 times greater than that of land.

Bonus creepy fact: The fangtooth holds another title to its name: the largest teeth of any marine species, relative to the size of its body. In fact they're so disproportionately large that the fangtooth is unable to fully close its mouth.

10. Pacific viperfish



Scientific name: *Chauliodus macouni*.

This deep sea dweller is the ultimate predator. Using photophores located across its dorsal spine, the viperfish lures unwilling prey before capturing them in its long, needle-like fangs. Definitely not a creature you should be messing around with.

Bonus creepy fact: Similar to the fangtooth, the viperfish's large fangs are unable to fit inside their mouth. Instead they curl back on the outside, resulting in an even more monstrous appearance.

11. Giant isopod



Scientific name: Bathynomus.

Giant isopods are creepy-looking crustaceans that could come straight from an *Alien* movie. They're generally scavengers, but have been known to use their four sets of jaws to feed on live prey. Oh, and they have seven pairs of legs too.

Bonus creepy fact: Although the largest species averages a length between 19-36 centimetres, there have been sightings of isopods that are 76 centimetres long.

12. Stargazer



Scientific name: Uranoscopidae.

In comparison to the other marine life on this list, this creature looks relatively docile. Don't be fooled by its looks though. The stargazer's usual method of attack is by camouflaging itself in the ocean sand, before using its gigantic mouth to suck in unsuspecting prey. To finish off the job, this tricky fish has two venomous spines.

Bonus creepy fact: Some species of the stargazer fish can cause electric shocks via a special organ located behind its eye.

13. Sea spider



Scientific name: Pycnogonida.

There are over 1,300 known species of sea spiders lurking both in the shallows and in waters as deep as 7,000 metres. And if that doesn't make you squeamish, their leg span can range from a tiny one millimetre to over 25 centimetres.

Bonus creepy fact: The sea spider's proboscis allows it to suck... out of its prey. *Huge sluuuurrrp sound.*

14. Spiny red crab



Scientific name: *Lithodes maia*.

Prowling the ocean floor at depths up to 2,400 metres are these spiny red crabs. Their fast movements, clutching claws, and armoured body make it easy for them to catch, tear, and feast on fresh prey.

Bonus creepy fact: This species is closely related to the hermit crab, with the shell being traded in for some gnarly spikes.

15. Anglerfish

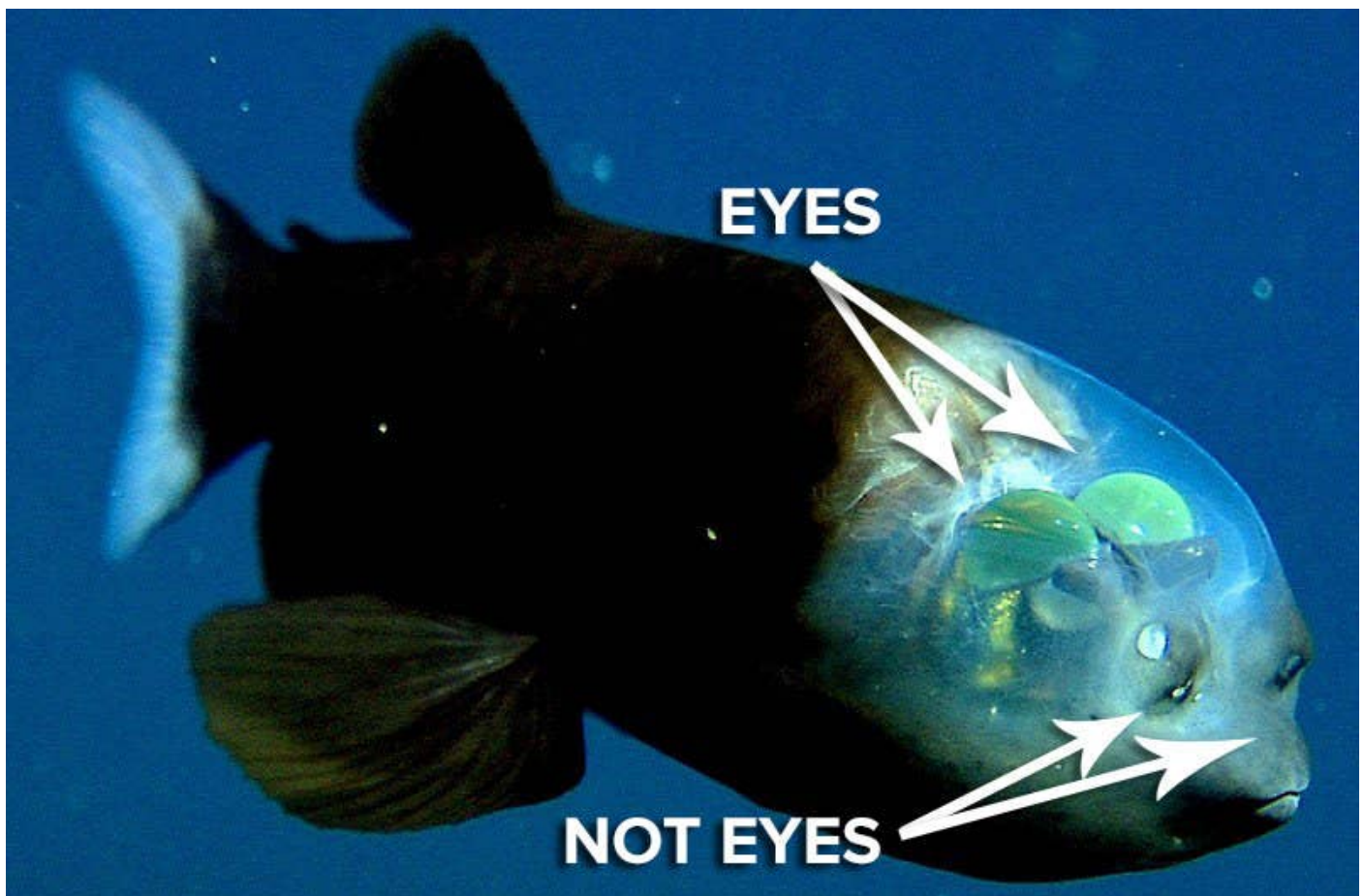


Scientific name: Lophiiformes.

Just like in *Finding Nemo*, the deep sea varieties of anglerfish have nightmarish mouths filled with long, fanged teeth. Their characteristic mode of predation is by using a fleshy growth from their head as a fishing lure, waving it back and forth to attract prey.

Bonus creepy fact: The jaws and bodies of anglerfish are highly expandable, meaning they're able to swallow prey up to twice their own size.

16. Barreleye



Scientific name: Opisthoproctidae.

This futuristic-looking fish is named for its barrel-shaped, tubular eyes that are directed upwards to detect prey. The eyes are enclosed within a large, transparent dome of soft tissue. Oh, and those dark shadows near the front of the barreleye aren't its eyes. Look up a little further, and you'll find them.

Bonus creepy fact: This deep-sea species has been known to scientists since 1939, but was only photographed alive in 2004.

