



HIDDEN OCEAN LIFE



MSC Education -Saltwater Schools

HIDDEN SEA CREATURES



Harlequin Shrimp (*Hymenocera picta*)

The harlequin shrimp lives in tropical coral reefs of the Indian and Pacific Oceans. They grow to 5cm long and live in couples, feeding exclusively on starfish - including the invasive Crown of Thorns starfish. This makes the harlequin shrimp an important protector of corals!

Sea Slug (*Godiva rachelae*)

The godiva sea slug is a brightly-coloured nudibranch with no shell. It has orange and milky white 'rhinophores' which help it to detect chemicals in the water, locate food, seek mates, and avoid predators. They can grow to 4cm, and have been found in Tanzania and Queensland, Australia.



Giant Cuttlefish (*Sepia apama*)

The world's biggest cuttlefish can grow to 1metre in length, and weigh over 10.5 kilograms. They have 8 arms, 2 feeding tentacles, 3 hearts, and blue blood! They camouflage themselves by changing colours instantly to match their surroundings.

Spotted Garden Eel (*Heteroconger hassi*)

The spotted garden eel lives across tropical and sub-tropical waters of the Indo-Pacific. They rarely leave their burrows, but emerge their heads from the sand to catch drifting food in the water. They can live at depths of 15 to 45 metres below water, and grow to 40 cm long.



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Wire Coral Crab (*Xenocarcinus tuberculatus*)

This tiny spider crab lives in whip corals of rocky reefs in the Indo-West Pacific. Two species are found in Australia. They use the coral, or sometimes algae, to camouflage themselves. They have a short abdomen, 4 walking legs, and 2 clawed arms, and feed on plankton.

Giant Grouper (*Epinephelus lanceolatus*)

The giant grouper is a large bony fish which lives at depths of 1 to 100 metres. They can be found in caves and shipwrecks, while the secretive juveniles live in reefs, but are rarely seen. They eat a variety of fish, lobsters, crabs, small turtles, and sharks - all of which they swallow whole.

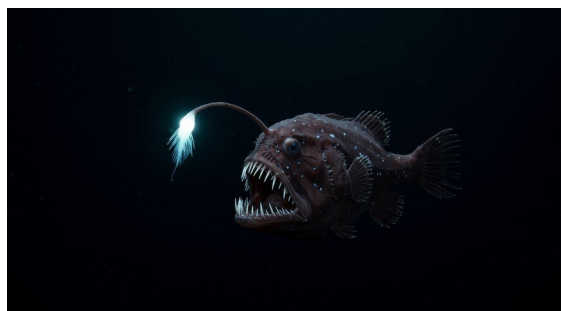


Painted Frogfish (*Antennarius pictus*)

The painted frogfish has a globulose (round-shaped) body and soft skin, covered with small spines. They can be many different colours - cream, pink, yellow, orange, and brown, and tend to match their environments. They can grow to 30cm, and live in reefs of the Indo-Pacific ocean.

Anglerfish (Lophiiformes)

Anglerfish are a deep sea fish which use their dorsal fin ray, with an illuminated tip, to lure or ambush prey. While the male fish are small, reaching only 16cm in length, female fish grow up to 77cm. They have a wide mouth, and very sharp teeth which they use to trap fish and crustaceans.



PYGMY SEAHORSE



(Hippocampus bargibanti)

Do your own research to find out...

In which oceans does the pygmy seahorse live?

What is its habitat?

How does it move?

What does it eat?

What size can it grow to?

What are its colours and how is this adaptation useful?





NOW CREATE YOUR OWN...

Using either a pen and paper, or an AI generation tool (like Adobe Express or ChatGPT), create your own weird underwater creature! Think about... Where does your creature live? What colours does it have? How many arms, legs, fins, tentacles, or claws might it have? What does it eat? How does it catch its prey? Can it light up in the dark? What other special skills might it have?

