Anglerfish

COMMON NAME: Anglerfish

SCIENTIFIC NAME: Lophiiformes

TYPE: Fish

DIET: Carnivore

GROUP NAME: School

SIZE: 8 to 40 inches

WEIGHT: Up to 110 pounds

SIZE RELATIVE TO A TEACUP:



The angry-looking deep sea anglerfish has a right to be cranky. It is quite possibly the ugliest animal on the planet, and it lives in what is easily Earth's most inhospitable habitat: the lonely, lightless bottom of the sea.

**Population**

There are more than 200 species of anglerfish, most of which live in the murky depths of the Atlantic and Antarctic oceans, up to a mile below the surface, although some live in shallow, tropical environments. Generally dark gray to dark brown in color, they have huge heads and enormous crescent-shaped mouths filled with sharp, translucent teeth. Some angler fish can be quite large, reaching 3.3 feet in length. Most however are significantly smaller, often less than a foot.

**Anglerfish Lure**

Their most distinctive feature, worn only by females, is a piece of dorsal spine that protrudes above their mouths like a fishing pole—hence their name. Tipped with a lure of luminous flesh this built-in rod baits prey close enough to be snatched. Their mouths are so big and their bodies so pliable, they can actually swallow prey up to twice their own size.

**Males vs. Females**

The male, which is significantly smaller than the female, has no need for such an adaptation. In lieu of continually seeking the vast abyss for a female, it has evolved into a permanent parasitic mate. When a young, free-swimming male angler encounters a female, he latches onto her with his sharp teeth. Over time, the male physically fuses with the female, connecting to her skin and bloodstream and losing his eyes and his internal organs. A female will carry six or more males on her body.







