



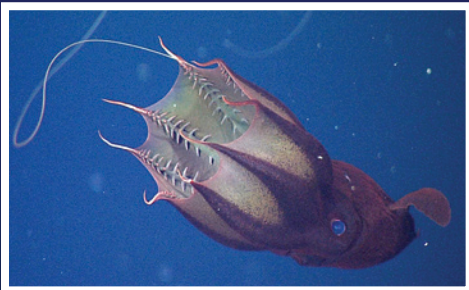
# 10 WEIRD OCEAN CREATURES



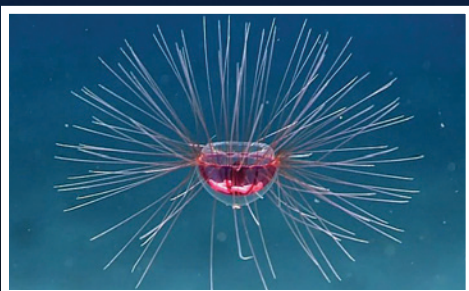
**1. Blobfish (aka Fathead):** Scientists call this fish *Psychrolutes Microporos*, but also, more directly, "Fathead." Smithsonian Magazine even notes that the weird looking creature is largely considered the "World's Ugliest Animal." But the blobfish is a pretty incredible sea dweller, surviving at depths in excess of 4,000 feet, where the pressure is 120 times higher than at the surface. And here's the thing: the blobfish is only actually ugly when it's brought up to the surface. Most fish have a swim bladder, or a sac of air inside its body to keep buoyant. When fish are removed from their typical environments, these sacs swell up, leading to the innards pushing out through the mouth. Technically, we only think of the blobfish as ugly when it's dead—so maybe think twice before pointing and laughing.



**2. Leafy Seadragon:** Found along the southwestern coast of Australia, the leafy seadragon, *Phycodurus Eques*, uses its fins not only to propel itself through the water, but as camouflage to resemble a piece of drifting seaweed. Because they have pretty big heads compared to the rest of their body, leafy seadragons are able to concentrate pressure at their mouth to suck in prey. Similar to seahorses and pipefishes, the males carry around fertilized eggs. But without a special pouch, the leafy seadragon carries the eggs beneath its tail.



**3. Vampire Squid:** Strangely enough, this form of sea life is neither a squid, nor an octopus, despite its appearance. Scientists have designated the vampire squid as a completely separate animal, even though it has eight arms and two tentacles. Again, the name can be confounding – these creatures don't suck blood and actually are pretty passive hunters, considering they're filter feeders. Instead, the name comes from the skin between its arms, which resembles a cape. Oh yeah, and this little dude lives in the pitch-black waters of the mesopelagic zone.



**4. The Psychedelic Medusa (*Crossota Milsae*):** This jelly's crazy colors and far-out appearance clued scientists into a unique find. Its wildly colorful appearance first tipped off scientists that they had found a previously unknown species. But a closer look offered scientists another surprise: This species is one of a handful of jellies that bear live young. The female psychedelic jelly broods her babies on those crimson canals that radiate out inside her bell. Mom carries more than a single baby at once. Her babies can all be different sizes, indicating different stages of development. When the juvenile jelly outgrows its shelter, it pulses free and swims off to live on its own. As the juvenile grows, its lavender color fades, developing the tangerine pigmentation typical of adults.

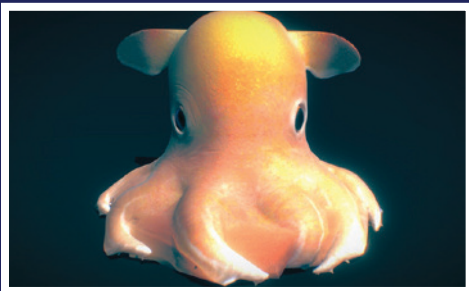




**5. Yeti Crab:** This furry-clawed crab looks so unusual that when scientists discovered it 5,000 feet deep on a hydrothermal vent south of Easter Island. They designated it not only a new genus, *Kiwa*, but a new family, *Kiwidae* — both named for the mythological Polynesian goddess of shellfish. It's likely blind and may use bacteria in its furry claws to detoxify its food.



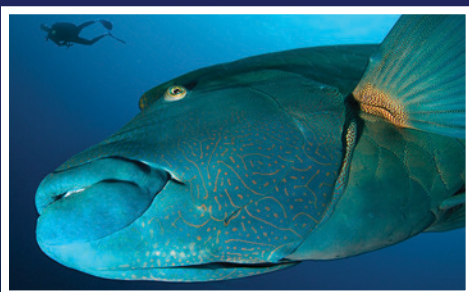
**6. Goblin Shark:** Long story short: Goblin sharks look scary as hell. The super-rare creature can grow up to 15 feet in length and has the ability to thrust its whole jaw outward in order to capture prey. Fewer than 50 goblin sharks have been spotted since 1898, so if you're hoping to see one, chances are slim.



**7. The Dumbo Octopus:** This *Grimpoteuthis* octopus, found over the Mid-Atlantic Ridge, is affectionately called Dumbo because of the way it flaps its ear-like fins to swim. Dumbo octopuses are known to be the deepest-dwelling of the octopuses, as they live at depths of at least 4,000 meters, but often even deeper than that. Because these octopuses are naturally rare, they've developed unique breeding habits to increase the chances of producing offspring. For example, the females carry eggs at various stages of development and can even store sperm inside their bodies for long periods of time after mating.



**8. Sea Pen:** The orange sea pen, *Ptilosarcus Gurneyi*, is actually a colony of animals that can withdraw into the soft sediment where it's found. Generally speaking, there are over 300 species of sea pens, named for their quill-like appearance. With stimulation, they glow with a green light.



**9. Napoleon Wrasse:** You can't really beat the description of this creature from the *Census of Marine Life*: Exceeding two meters in length, the Napoleon Wrasse (*Cheilinus Undulatus*) is one of the largest reef fish found in the warm waters of the Indian and Pacific oceans. The intricate blue-green design that decorates the face resembles New Zealand Maori war paint, which is the root of its alternative name, the Maori Wrasse. The designs are also unique to each individual, much like fingerprints. A protogynous hermaphrodite, this wrasse can change its sex from female to male.



**10. Black Swallower:** The black swallower fish has the ability to swallow prey much larger than itself thanks to the extended gut attached to its belly. This adaptation is especially useful since black swallows live in the deep and food can be scarce to come by in the abysmal depths of the sea.