**Amazing facts - Angler Fish**

A compilation of fascinating facts on angler fish will give you a glimpse of some lesser known attributes of its marine life. Continue reading for more information on anglerfish species which are renowned for their amazing adaptations.

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The angler fish species have a fleshy growth on their head, which is used by them to lure their prey. As the prey closes in on this fleshy growth assuming it to be food, they open their jaw in a reflex motion and devour it. It is this distinct method of predation which earns the angler fish species its name. There exist several facts about this species. each of which is more interesting than the other. Sadly though, not many people are aware of these facts...

**Facts about Angler Fish**

You get to see a great deal of diversity when it comes to angler fish species. While some of these species are pelagic in nature (i.e. they occur or frequent the open ocean) others are benthic (i.e. they occur at the bottom of the ocean.) Such diversity in this species is not really surprising as such, considering that they are known to have evolved around 130 million years ago. In course of these 130 million years, the species have undergone tremendous change and their amazing adaptations make it more than evident. Given below are more of such facts about the anglerfish species with special emphasis on some interesting attributes of their life.

**Habitat:** Right from continental shelf to deep sea, [angler fish habitat](http://www.buzzle.com/articles/angler-fish-habitat.html) spans the globe. All the oceans of the world are home to some or the other species of anglerfish, and the freezing waters of Antarctica are no exception. While the sea devils (aka deep sea anglerfish) are found in deep waters of the tropical regions and off-coast Antarctica, frogfishes are restricted to continental shelf in the tropical and subtropical regions. In fact, [deep sea anglerfish](http://www.buzzle.com/articles/deep-sea-anglerfish.html) inhabit the aphotic zones of the oceans, wherein even sunlight penetration is either minimal or totally absent.

**Appearance:** More than 200 species of angler fish inhabit the planet, most of which are found at depths wherein the conditions are pretty much inhospitable. In terms of appearance, the species are not just ferocious but very ugly as well. The diversity you get to see in this species is also reflected in their size, with some of these species measuring mere 20 cm and others measuring around a meter in length. Similarly, this deep ocean fish species can weigh anywhere between a few ounces to 110 lbs. As we mentioned earlier, the females in this species have luminous fleshly growth on their head from which they derive the name angler fish.

Interestingly though, the male species do not feature this luminous flesh which is a prominent characteristic of female anglerfish. This can be attributed to the fact that the males in this species practice permanent parasitism as opposed to active predation. The male anglerfish species latch onto the body of a female with their sharp teeth and derive nutrition from her. In course of time, their bodies fuse physically wherein the male loses his eyes and internal organs, and connects to the female's skin and bloodstream.

**Adaptations:** The foremost thing that you are likely to notice about the angler fish species is the fact that their mouth is disproportionately large as compared to their entire body. More importantly, their jaw is specially adapted to grab the prey which closes in on the luminous flesh on its head. The fact that their bodies are pliable works in their favor, as it allows them to devour prey which can be twice their size. Their large mouth also assists them in defying the odds when it comes to predation. The carnivorous fish species is known to feed on other species of fish like the dogfish, cod, haddock, etc.

**Mating:** While the males lose all their body parts in course of fusion with the female anglerfish, the pair of gonads - which facilitate the release of sperms, stay intact. When the hormones in the female's bloodstream indicate egg release, this pair of gonads release the sperm. Such sexual dimorphism ensures that the female has a mate readily available when she is ready to spawn. How the anglerfish spawn is also quite interesting, as their spawn consists of a thin sheet of transparent gelatinous material - wherein the eggs lay in a single layer, which can be 25-30 ft long and 2-3 ft wide.

Some of the angler fish species - like the American angler, black-bellied angler, goosefish, monkfish, are considered to be delicacies in regions where they are found. In fact, large-scale fishing of angler fish for human consumption has resulted in drastic decline in angelfish population, so much so that species like the American angler and the black-bellied angler have been added to the list of Seafood Red List compiled by Greenpeace International. According to environmentalists, the use of bottom trawls and gillnets - which is quite common practice - is a serious concern. Since the former tends to destroy seabed habitats while the latter is known to harm species dolphins and porpoises, and disturb the food chain.

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