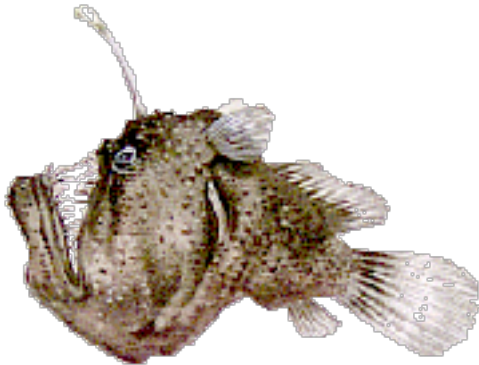


## Angler Fish



The anglerfish is an incredible example of how living organisms can find a way to survive in even the most inhospitable environment. The Angler Fish lives more than a mile deep in ocean water. There are over 200 species of anglers, which are named for their method of 'fishing' for their food. A spine of the dorsal fin acts as a 'fishing rod', tipped with a fleshy 'bait' which is often luminous. Other fishes are attracted to this lure and get eaten. Most anglerfishes live near the sea bottom. There are four kinds: batfish, goosefish, frogfish, and deep-sea angler. Angler Fish has a massive head, with grotesque features. It has a large crescent shaped mouth, with numerous sharp pointed teeth. It has a flattened white belly region, with the top half of the body taking a broad expansive posture. Color varies from greenish brown to blackish gray, with speckled and variegated markings. The head and body have an indistinct outline caused by the presence of numerous small flaps of skin. The gill slits are behind and lower than the base of the pectoral fins. Running along the mid-line of the head and anterior portion of the body, are a series of separate rays. Those above the pectoral fins give rise to the first dorsal fin. The rays on the head section form long spines. The foremost of which normally has a fleshy tip that the fish uses as a lure to entice it's prey. The second dorsal fin is composed of 11 to 12 fleshy membrane bound rays.



Another unusual adaptation in anglerfish is their sexual dimorphism. The males are very small in comparison with the females, and live as permanent parasites on the female. The male attaches himself, by biting, to the body of the female. His mouth fuses with her skin, and the bloodstreams of the two fishes become connected. The male is now totally dependent on the female for nourishment. In fact, the male begins to degenerate. His eyes grow smaller and he eventually loses them. His internal organs disappear. The male becomes simply a source of sperm. Breeding for anglerfish takes place from spring to early summer. The egg mass forms large gelatinous sheets 9m by 3m in size, which floats near the surface. Juveniles are planktonic, with noticeably elongated fin rays.

Anglerfish feeds on a wide variety of small and juvenile fish, including those of dogfish, skate, cod, haddock, whiting, sprats, sand eels, flat fish

<http://www.allthesea.com/Deep-Sea-Fish-Angler-Fish.html>