

Everything You Need to Know About the Dumbo Octopus

Learn about the cutest octopus in town for World Octopus Day

<https://oceanconservancy.org/blog/2018/10/08/everything-need-know-dumbo-octopus/>

I think we can all agree that the ocean is home to some pretty amazing sea creatures. There are [beluga whales](#)—that can make facial expressions like humans. The mantis shrimp—that has a powerful punch equivalent to a [.22-caliber bullet](#). But, in honor of World Octopus Day, we are focusing our attention to telling you everything we know about the *Grimpoteuthis*, aka the dumbo octopus, aka the cutest octopus in the world.

Brace yourself—there are 13 recognized species under *Grimpoteuthis* that consist of umbrella octopuses. Each species of dumbo octopus has the same feature that makes them so adorable—their ear-like fins. It is the dumbo octopus' ear-like fins that make them stand out among other octopodes. They use these fins to propel through the water and steer through water currents.

The dumbo octopus is small, compared to other octopodes. Its average size is between 20-30 cm (slightly larger than an adult guinea pig), but scientists found one specimen as large as 1.8 meters—that's almost six whole feet of adorableness! **They have a variety of shapes and colors and have the ability to “flush” or camouflage themselves to their environment.**

Unlike most octopodes, the dumbo octopus doesn't have an ink sac. Since they are one of the deepest living octopuses—found at depths of 400-4,800 meters below the ocean surface—they do not need the ink sac as a defense mechanism. Although they are believed to be found worldwide, they have only been observed around New Zealand, Australia, California, the Philippines and New Guinea.

Since they live in such deep water, predators (fortunately) and prey (unfortunately) are scarce. When a dumbo octopus does find something to eat, it swallows their prey with one mighty gulp.

Unlike many animals, the dumbo octopus does not have a breeding season. The male octopus simply gives the female a handy-dandy sperm packet so she can lay eggs continuously on shells, beneath rocks or on bits of coral. Once born, the dumbo octopus already has its trademark mantle fins and has a life expectancy of between 3-5 years.

Since they live at such deep depths of the ocean, we are only just beginning to learn about the dumbo octopus. Very little is known about them, but one thing is certain—we need to protect their ocean habitat so we can continue to learn and understand them.

Happy World Octopus Day!