

Marvels of Creation

Sensational Sea Creatures



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Sensational Sea Creatures

First Printing, October 2005

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Previously published as *Special Wonders of the Sea World*.

ISBN: 0-89051-458-5

Library of Congress: 2005907665

Cover by Bryan Miller

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PRINTED IN CHINA



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Barracuda

Twenty species of barracuda are found in deep water in the Mediterranean, western Atlantic, and tropical waters. They are also known both as sea pike (because they are related to freshwater pike) and tigers of the sea (because of their swift attack on prey).

The barracuda is long and slender, with two dorsal fins set well apart. Its body is silver, with darker specks and dark gray-blue stripes down the sides. The tail fin is broad and very strong. The most noticeable feature of the barracuda is its bottom jaw, which protrudes beyond the upper jaw. This shows off both sets of teeth: one row of small razor-like teeth around the outside of its mouth, and a larger set of tearing teeth just inside.

Barracuda are very good hunters, hunting and swimming in small schools. They attack quickly and grab prey with their powerful jaws and sharp teeth. Their eyesight is excellent, even in the muddiest water. The larger barracuda are solitary and may hunt on their own.

The female barracuda lays 5,000–300,000 eggs in the surface waters far offshore. The newly hatched fish begin to hunt immediately. Their food varies with their habitat, but they will eat almost any fish.

Barracuda are popular sport fish because of their powerful runs and leaps. However, they can be poisonous because of the toxins they absorb from their food. Barracuda have also been known to attack fishermen and divers.

Barracuda

PERCIFORMES • SPHYRAENIDAE • SPHYRAENA

LENGTH: Up to 6 feet (1.8 m)

WEIGHT: up to 100 pounds (45.4 kg)

LIFE SPAN: 10–15 years

SPECIAL DESIGN FEATURE: Barracuda have very acute eyesight even in the darkest, muddiest water.

DID YOU KNOW? Years ago, there were reported sightings of barracuda that were 15 feet (4.6 m) long.



Blue Angelfish

There are approximately 80 species of angelfish around the world. At one time it was thought that angelfish and butterfly fish were the same fish. However, there are differences. The most notable difference is the fact that most angelfish are larger than the butterfly fish with a larger spine. They are brightly colored with shades of blue, yellow, black, green, and red.

Angelfish get their name from their pectoral fins. They are located on the back and have a wing-like appearance. Angelfish have a compressed, narrow body shaped like a deep disk. They have scaly dorsal and anal fins. Angelfish are very graceful in their movements although they are very quick and active.

Angelfish are very popular in aquariums because of their shape and beautiful colors. There are some species of angelfish that live in fresh water, and some are marine ocean dwellers.

Angelfish have a very small mouth but it contains many small, crushing teeth. They feed on tiny barnacles, small crabs, and shellfish. They will go after bait that resembles crabs or shellfish, but are seldom caught. Angelfish are edible but they are not sought after as a food source.

Juveniles of some species of angelfish are different in color and pattern than the adults. Adults travel alone or in pairs. They are very territorial and warn other members of their species to stay away.

Blue Angelfish

PERCIFORMES • POMACANTHIDAE • HOLLANDIA
ACANTHUS BERMUDENSIS

LENGTH: 24 inches (60 cm)

SPECIAL DESIGN FEATURE: The bright colors of the angelfish warn other species to stay away from their territory. Also, they are very graceful and quick, enabling them to escape predators and defend their home territory.

DID YOU KNOW? Angelfish are the most beautiful and highly colored fish of the reefs.