

# How We Came to Be: Surprising Sea Creatures

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RECOMMENDED FOR: Lower to Mid Primary



## SYNOPSIS

Come with us on a deep dive through the ocean zones. Meet some of the most unusual creatures from the sea and hear their stories about how they have changed over millions of years to survive in the inky ocean depths.

Discover why the deepsea flounder is as flat as a pancake, learn all about the 500-million-year-old comb jelly and find out why yeti crabs are so hairy. From the barreleye fish to the tripod spiderfish, prepare to be amazed by the incredible creatures that inhabit our seas.

## ABOUT THE CREATOR

Sami Bayly is a natural history illustrator based in Armidale, NSW, who loves all things weird and wonderful. She finds the beauty and importance of all animals regardless of their appearance, and hopes to share her appreciation with others.

Sami's first book, *The Illustrated Encyclopaedia of Ugly Animals*, won the Children's Indie Book of the Year Award and the Australian Book Design Award for Younger Readers. It was a CBCA Honour Book and was shortlisted for an ABIA Book of the Year for Younger Children and longlisted for the ABA Booksellers' Choice 2020 Book of the Year Awards. Her second book, *The Illustrated Encyclopaedia of Dangerous Animals*, was a CBCA Honour Book, an ABIA Book of the Year for Younger Children, won an Australian Book Design Award for Younger Readers and was shortlisted for the Children's Indie Book of the Year 2020. Sami's most recent book, *The Illustrated Encyclopaedia of Peculiar Pairs in Nature*, has been shortlisted for the CBCA Eve Pownall Award and longlisted for the Children's Indie Book of the Year Award. Find out more about Sami on Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/samibayly/> and her website: <http://www.samibayly.com/>

## STUDY NOTES

### SCIENCE

- Study the life cycles and evolution of any of the creatures in this book.
- Study how each of these sea creatures employ unique survival skills in order to avoid predators, or be predators themselves.
- Camouflage is used by many of the creatures in this book. Research the four main types of camouflage: Concealing Coloration, Disruptive Coloration, Disguise and Mimicry. Apply what you have learned to your observation of other sea creatures.
- Research any other special skills or features which the animals in this book have developed for finding food, protecting their territories, and surviving harsh conditions. For example, the barreleye fish has glowing green balls for eyes to help it to see approaching animals.
- Research forms of adaptation revealed in any of the sea creatures included in this book. For example, the Venus

flytrap sea anemone has a mouth full of stinging nettles with which to capture its prey. And the grandpa Greenland shark has chemicals which stop it from freezing in the sea's extreme temperatures.

### HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES (HASS)

- Read about some of the threats to sea creatures and then discuss the decline or endangered status of any creature mentioned in this book.
- Research climate change in relation to any of the creatures included in this book. How should our government be responding to climate change in order to combat it? Examine such initiatives as the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) <[https:// www.ipcc.ch](https://www.ipcc.ch)> in order to respond to this question.

### ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

- The facts on each surprising sea creature are written in third person, as an expository text. There are also two texts in first person narrative 'speech bubbles'—one by the sea creature itself, and one by the narrator, Sami Bayly, who is seen to be exploring the deep in her compression suit. Invite students to write an expository text about any other sea creature which doesn't feature in this book. Then write a first-person narrative 'speech bubble' by the sea creature explaining more about its life cycle.
- Humour is another device used in this text—some of the comments made by the sea creatures are very funny. Which was the funniest, in your opinion?
- Invite students to write an acrostic poem using the letters in TRIPOD SPIDERFISH.
- Discover collective nouns for the following sea creatures:
  - Stingrays
  - Jellyfish
  - Sharks
  - Crabs
  - Barracudas
  - Sea Urchins
  - Squid
  - Dogfish
  - Whales
  - Seahorses
  - Rainbow Fish
  - Angel Fish
  - Dragonet Fish
  - Swordfish
  - Seals.

### Comprehension

- Can you name the five different zones of the ocean listed in this book? (Sunlight Zone, Twilight Zone, Midnight Zone, the Abyss and the Trenches).
- How does the spotted deepsea flounder hide from its predators? (It hides in the sand.)
- What is unusual about how the giant oarfish floats in the water? (It floats upright so hunters below can't see it as easily).
- What unusual features does a prickly footballfish have? (A glowing fishing rod on its head!)
- What does the barreleye fish have on its head? (A jelly head, which being transparent allows it to see what is above it.)
- Why do yeti crabs have such woolly legs? (They act like eyes in the dark; the tiny hairs allow them to feel their way around!)
- How have grandpa Greenland sharks adapted to the cold and dark? (They have chemicals which stop them from freezing in the extreme temperatures.)
- Why do tripod spiderfish have the name they do? (Over millions of years their legs have grown to allow them to

stand tall as they wait for food to pass; they pump fluid into their legs to make them rigid; just like a tripod!)

- What did the comb jelly develop before any other animal? (Their ancestors were the first animals to develop muscles to allow them to swim.)
- The chiton lives on exposed rocks; what protects it from predators? (Its shell has eight plates.)
- What is the deepest part of the ocean called? (The Challenger Deep.)
- How does the hadal snailfish survive in the water pressure of the Trenches? (It has a layer of jelly-like goo which allows it to swim and float there.)
- The cusk eel holds the record for what? (It is the deepest known fish.)
- Where does the dumbo octopus derive its name from? (It has big elephant-like 'ears' (which are actually fins) at the top of its head.)
- The blobfish has an unfortunate reputation of being what? (The world's ugliest animal.)
- What unique thing can the coelacanth do when feeding? (It is the only living vertebrate that can open its top jaw when feeding.)
- As its name suggests, the faceless fish has an unfortunate lack of facial features. What are they? (It is actually a cusk eel and has no eyes, a large nose that looks like a head and two pairs of nostrils and a small mouth.)
- What type of creature is a headless chicken monster? (A sea cucumber.)

### VISUAL LITERACY

- The images in this book have been created by a highly skilled natural history illustrator and she has combined them with her written text to highlight features of the various creatures described. However, it is the designer who created the speech bubbles, and selected the fonts, and the overall design of the text. How does this design complement the illustration?
- The cover of the book depicts a number of very surprising sea creatures. Invite students to identify them. What does this cover suggest to you about the book's content? Create another cover depicting other surprising sea creatures.
- The title page contains a giant oarfish. Draw another appropriate image to adorn this page.
- The end of the book features some extra images of creatures, and each one has a written explanation in a circle next to it. Create another endpaper featuring five creatures you have discovered in your research.

### CREATIVE ARTS

- Make an octopus using a paper plate as the template. Paint or collage craft paper glued to the plate for the body of the octopus. Paint the area around the octopus blue for the ocean. Glue strands of wool to the body to represent the octopus's tentacles.
- Create a Surprising Sea Creatures mobile.