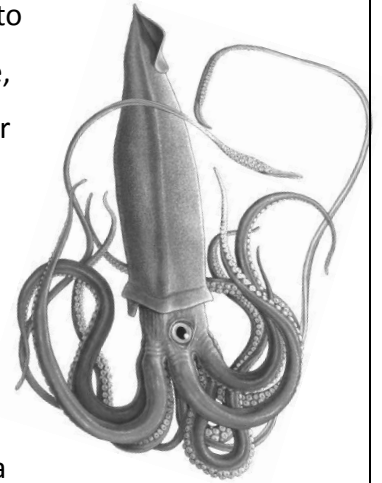


Mysterious Monsters of the Sea

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Giant squid have been called the mysterious monsters of the sea due to their size and inability to be captured. A member of the family Architeuthidae, they can grow as large as 43 feet from the tips of their fins to the ends of their tentacles. They are tricky to find in their natural habitat, the deep ocean. The fact that they are rarely seen reinforces the mystery surrounding them. Despite their elusiveness, scientists have been able to gather important information about the giant squid, mostly by studying their dead remains.



Giant squid belong to a group of mollusks called cephalopods. Cephalopods are mollusks with tentacles attached to their heads. They have a fully developed brain and move through the ocean by using their funnel to propel themselves through the water.

Much like an octopus, though larger, giant squid have two foot-wide eyes, a beak, eight arms, two tentacles, and a funnel. Their tentacles have hundreds of sharp, tooth-like suckers on them. They use their long tentacles to capture prey from a distance of up to 33 feet. Once the giant squid catch their prey, their eight arms guide it to their beak. The funnel is important for the squid, because it helps them to exhale, eliminate waste, lay eggs, and squirt ink, in addition to moving through the water.

The life span of a giant squid is about five years. They grow an average of 30 feet in just a few years' time. They need deep waters full of prey to help them grow. By studying the stomach contents of a dead giant squid, scientists determined their prey consists of deep water fish, squid, and other giant squid.

Giant squid are skilled at capturing food because of their long tentacles and foot-wide eyes. The length of their tentacles allows them to sneak up on their target. Their huge eyes make it easier to see their prey in the dark ocean. Their excellent vision also protects them from their only known predator, the sperm whale.

The giant squid's size and skill at seizing prey make them feared among other sea creatures. Their ability to avoid capture makes them difficult to study. The fact that they live in the deep, murky waters of the ocean adds a sense of drama to their existence. Due to these traits, giant squid remain the mysterious monsters of the sea.