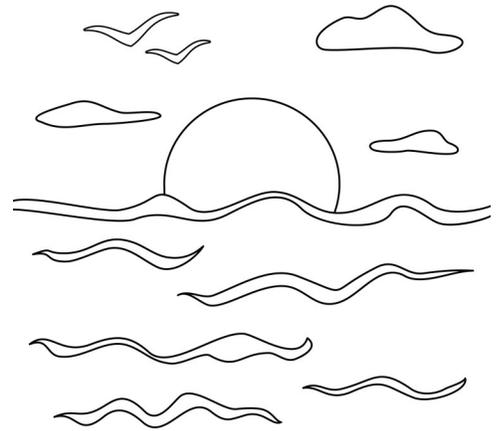


Life in the Ocean's Hidden Zones

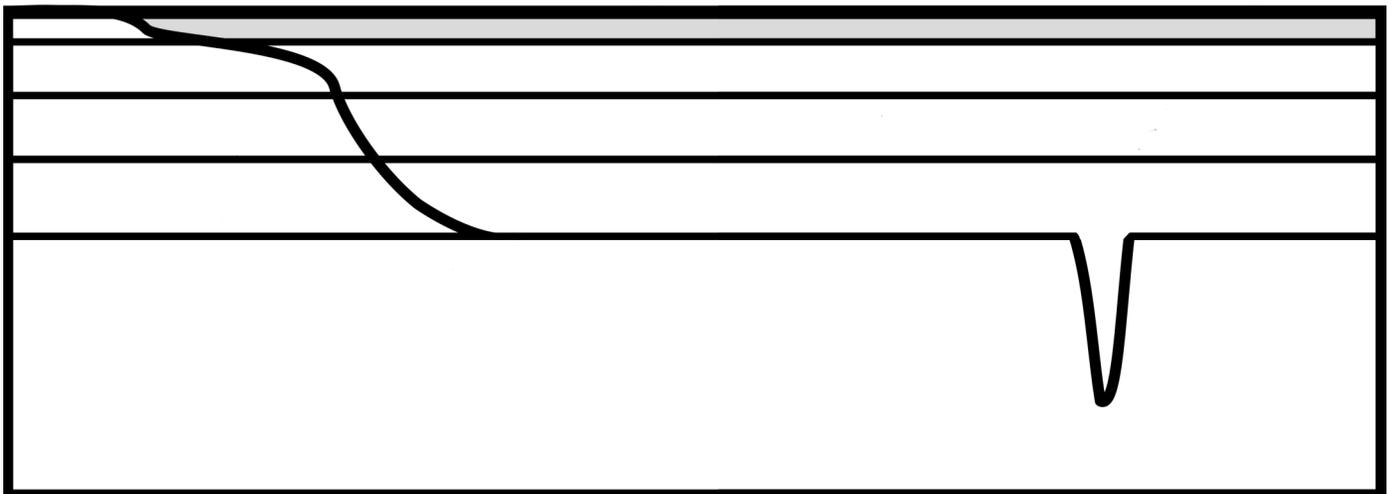
Have you ever looked at the ocean and just seen—water? I mean, there are some waves and fish and things like that, but it's pretty much just lots and lots of water, right? Actually, no. There are tens of thousands of different kinds of animals that live in the ocean, including some of the strangest and most amazing creatures you've ever seen. The ocean is an incredibly difficult place for animals to live. Once you get very far below the surface of the water, the temperature goes down, the pressure goes extremely high, and even sunlight can't reach. How could any animal survive in such a harsh environment? That's what we are going to find out.



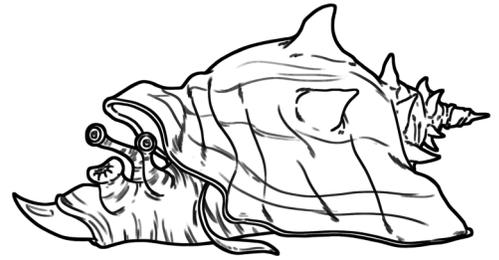
When we talk about animals that live in the ocean, it's helpful to divide the ocean into zones. Each zone goes deeper and deeper. Keep in mind that the deeper in the ocean you go, the colder and darker it is and the more pressure that surrounds every living thing.

Most of the ocean life we are familiar with lives in the first zone. This is called the **sunlight zone** (or the photic or epipelagic zone). This is the surface of the ocean and about 650 feet (200 meters) beneath it. This zone receives the most sunlight, making it possible for plants to grow using photosynthesis. Some of the animals that live in the sunlight zone can also dive deeper or live in deeper parts of the ocean but are commonly found in the top zone.

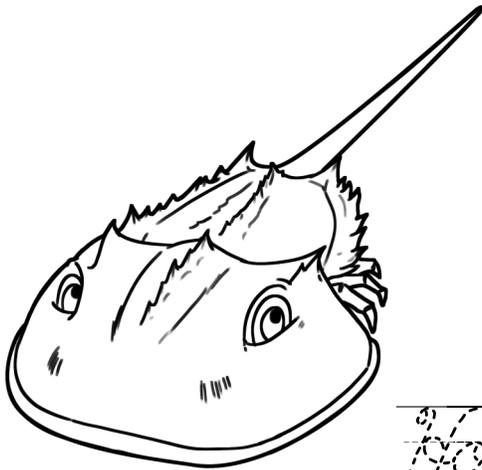
Sunlight Zone



The **conch** is a large sea snail most known for its beautiful white, pink, yellow, or orange shell. The queen conch that lives in tropical waters off of North America can grow as long as 1 foot (30 centimeters). Its long, heavy shell has been used as a trumpet for thousands of years.



Conch

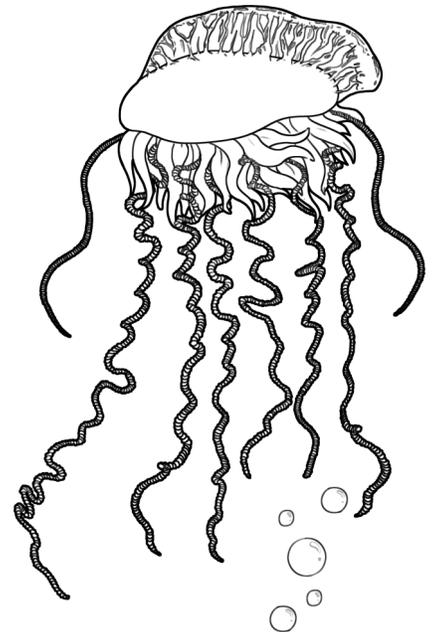


The **horseshoe crab** got its name because its hard shell is shaped a little like a horse's hoof. Some horseshoe crabs live along the eastern coast of the United States and Mexico, while others live in the waters of the Philippines and Southeast Asia. It has six pairs of legs and several pairs of eyes.

Horseshoe crab

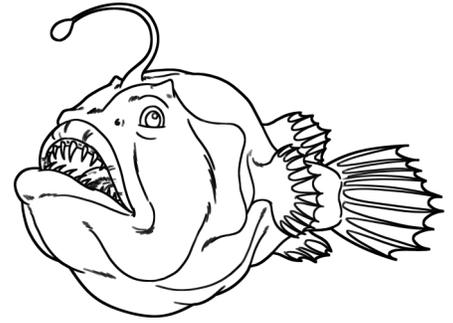
The **Portuguese man-of-war** is a beautiful and dangerous type of jellyfish that lives in warm waters all over the world, most often in the Gulf Stream of the Atlantic Ocean and in the tropical and subtropical parts of the Indian and Pacific oceans. It has a crest on the top of its body it can use like a sail. Underneath its jelly-like body are groups of body parts called polyps. Polyps do many different jobs, including eating.

Hanging down from the polyps are the man-of-war's tentacles that can grow up to 165 feet (50 meters) long. That is higher than 15-story building! These tentacles have stinging cells that cause a lot of pain to a person or animal when it stings them and can be extremely dangerous.

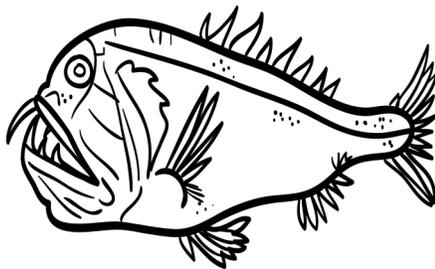


Portuguese man-of-war

The **anglerfish** has a unique way of hunting for food. It “fishes” for them using a spine on its head like a fishing rod. There is a small piece of skin on the end of the spine that glows. The anglerfish moves it back and forth, using it like a lure to draw fish and small shrimp into its large mouth, full of sharp teeth. Though the anglerfish looks rather scary, it’s a small fish only interested in eating other small fish.



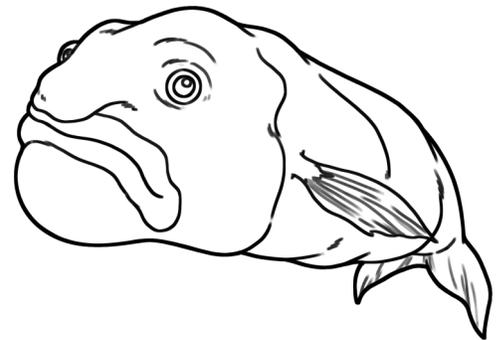
Anglerfish



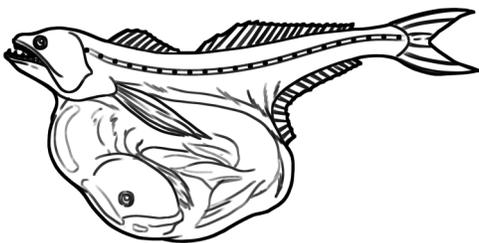
Like the anglerfish, the **fangtooth** looks incredibly scary but is really just a small fish. It is usually no more than 6 inches (15 centimeters) long. It is covered in scales and has very small eyes and poor eyesight. It senses movement in the water in order to find its prey. Its large teeth fit into special pockets in its mouth.

Fangtooth

The **blobfish** is a unique creature shaped just as its name suggests—like a blob. It has very soft bones and no scales. It doesn’t swim very well but usually floats slowly along. It eats sea slugs and worms, which move slower than it does. Some of the creatures it eats give off light through bioluminescence. The blobfish’s stomach is covered with dark tissue to keep the light from shining through to the dark waters outside and giving away the fish’s position to its predators.



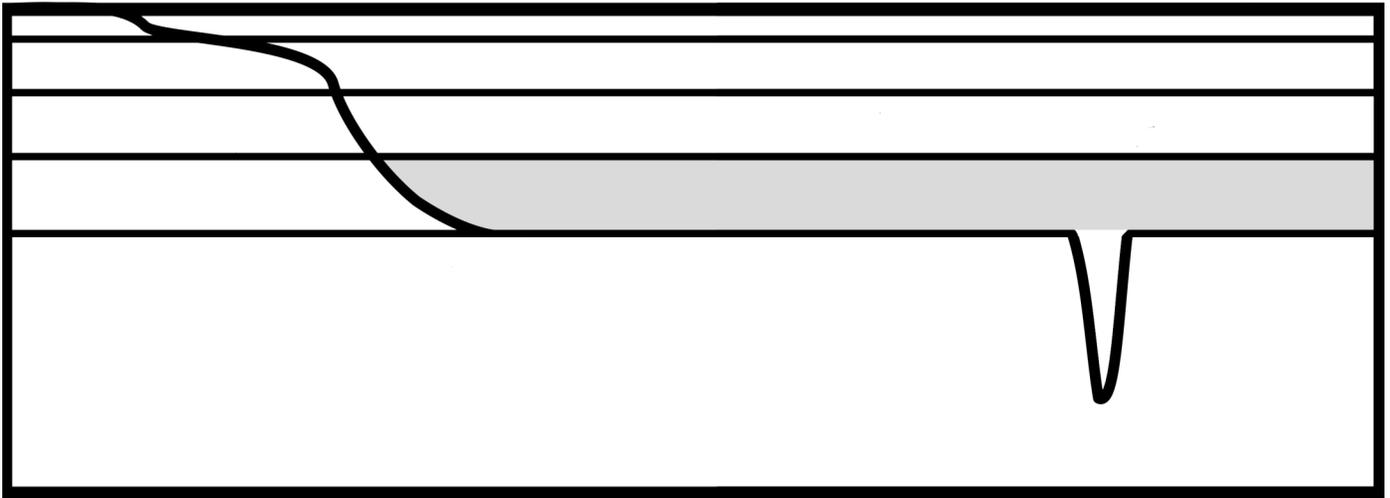
Blobfish



The **black swallower** is known for its rather strange stomach. Its stomach can stretch and grow many times larger than normal so the black swallower can actually eat and digest animals bigger than it is.

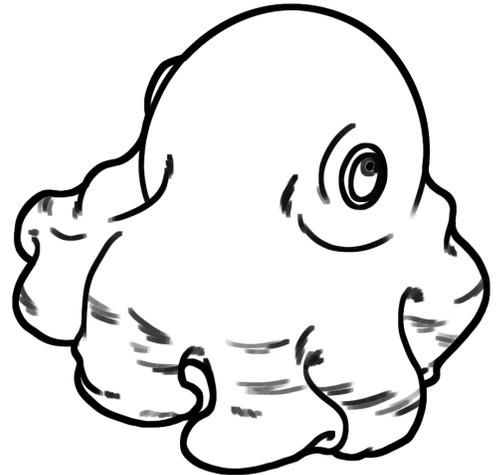
Black swallower

Abyssal Zone

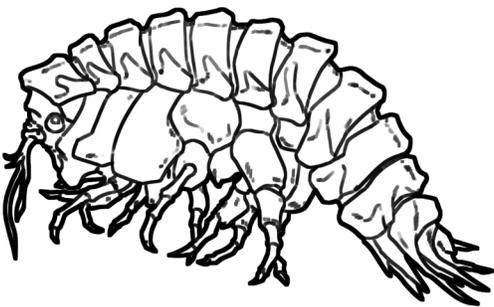


The name for the **abyssal zone** comes from a Greek word that means “no bottom.” It’s almost as deep as you can go, but not quite. It reaches from 13,000 feet to 19,686 feet (4,000 to 6,000 meters). There is no light here, and it takes a very special creature to be able to survive the near-freezing temperatures and incredible pressure. Let’s see if we can meet a few of them.

Like other octopus and squid, the **dumbo octopus** is part of a group of animals called cephalopods, but the dumbo octopus lives the deepest of them all. It has eight arms, and each arm has a row of suckers and thin projections called *cirri*. The octopus uses its arms to bring food to its mouth, which is on the underside of its head. The dumbo octopus can be more than 6 feet (1.8 meters) long and sometimes can grow up to 13 feet (4 meters) long.



Dumbo octopus



Amphipod

An **amphipod** is a crustacean and looks a lot like a shrimp. There are more than 1,000 different kinds of amphipods. Some live in the upper zones of the ocean or even on the beach, while others can live in the midnight or abyssal zones. Most are less than 1 inch (1 to 2 centimeters) long. They get their name from the Latin word *amphipod*, which means “different feet.” Their front legs are positioned and shaped differently than their rear legs.