

The Giant Squid On TV

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A Giant Squid specimen Photo: NASA

What has eight arms, a big beak, and two very long tentacles to grab its prey? If you guessed something from mythology, you'd be forgiven. But this creature has been filmed in the wild ... in the deep, deep abyss of the Pacific Ocean

The Giant Squid

Ten feet long, and way out of reach of prying human eyes, lives this giant squid, which has been caught on film by a crew from the Japanese TV NHK and Discovery Channel. It used to be the stuff of legend – the sea monster Kraken, and the Greek mythical Scylla, or the giant squid in *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea* – until one washed up on a beach a few years ago in 2004. That was when scientists realized that the deep ocean held many secrets that we didn't quite know yet.

And they went looking for it.

Then in 2006, one was found floating on the ocean. The scientists and the NHK TV crew then decided to dive deep. 3000ft below the surface of the North Pacific Ocean off the coast of Japan, and after 55 dives, they saw it. They went that deep in two submersive vehicles and using ultra-sensitive cameras, they filmed the first ever, live, giant squid. This creature was 10 ft long, with eight arms lined with suckers that had sharp teeth in them, two extra long tentacles, and a massive parrot-like beak.

What next?

Once they have the squid on film, scientists hope to study its movement, how it hunts and how it behaves in its natural habitat. "We are going to learn how this thing moves. How it swims, what it does with its arms when it swims" according to Richard Ellis, in an

<http://www.youngzine.org/article/giant-squid-tv>

interview given to the CNN. Ellis has written a book on the search for the squid. And in the length of time he was writing the book, the squid was not found!

Capable of reaching up to a length of 60 feet, giant squids are one of the largest known invertebrates and the largest of sea creatures. With their extra-large eyes, these creatures hunt for prey in the dark depths of the ocean, using their suction-cupped tentacles. Their main defense mechanism -- a dark, black ink which can be used to create a smoke screen. This ink can temporarily confuse predators, allowing the squid precious time to escape.

Wondering which animal could possibly be a threat to the giant squid? The sperm whale is at the top of the food chain. Many a dead sperm whale has been found with a giant squid in its belly, and suction cup marks on its skin from the struggle.

The footage

The footage will be aired later this month. Titled *Monster Squid: The Giant Is Real* it will show on January 27, 2013 at 8 PM ET/PT as the season finale of *Curiosity* on the Discovery Channel. Don't miss it!

Written response (2 paragraphs):

- Are there any other “mythological” creatures you think scientists will discover in your lifetime?
- What are your thoughts on this giant squid?
- Is this giant squid the “monster of the deep?” Could it attack a ship and sink it like authors have written about in stories?