

# Aliens of the Deep

(Adapted from an activity from Earth Day Network [www.earthday.org/education](http://www.earthday.org/education))

## Directions (for teacher):

1. Explain that you are going to read descriptions of deep-sea animals and that your students have to try to work out if each animal is real or fictional.
2. Choose an animal at random from one of the Aliens of the Deep lists (either real or fictional) and read its description **without** revealing its name, where it is found or its picture. Then, ask your students if they believe the animal is real or if it is fictional.
3. After your group has come to a consensus, say whether or not the species is real. If the species is real, give its name, show pictures (provided by Harry but you could download some as well) and describe where it lives in the ocean. I have included YouTube links for you to use as well.

## Real

**Firefly Squid:** This mysterious deep-sea squid glows in the dark. Scientists call this bioluminescence. Although they live in the deep-sea, every year millions of these small squid come to surface of the sea at night and gather along the coast of Japan to mate. This presents an amazing light show at night. [www.arkive.org/firefly-squid/watasenia-scintillans/video-00.html](http://www.arkive.org/firefly-squid/watasenia-scintillans/video-00.html)

**Gulper Eel:** This deep-sea eel has a huge mouth. It uses this huge mouth like a net by opening it and ambushing its prey and is able to eat fish that are bigger than itself. Due to this eel's specialized body shape, it is a poor swimmer and relies on a glowing (bioluminescent) organ at the tip of its tail to attract prey. [www.youtube.com/watch?v=INJ5Tk7Nbi4](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=INJ5Tk7Nbi4)

**Cirrate Octopus:** These small orange octopuses lack "typical" octopus features, like ink sacs and the ability to move around by jet propulsion. Instead, they swim using fins on the sides of their heads. They have replaced their suckers with glow in the dark (bioluminescent) organs. Their arms also have finger-like structures called "cirra". [www.youtube.com/watch?v=caHjExs2qs8](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=caHjExs2qs8)

**Giant Isopod:** Anyone who says that bugs don't live in the ocean has never seen this species. Think of what pill bugs look like. That is what these deep-sea crustaceans look like, except much, much bigger. Their eyes are specially designed to have a wide field of view and be sensitive to fast movements. [www.youtube.com/watch?v=RJ1C1N4OG9s](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RJ1C1N4OG9s)

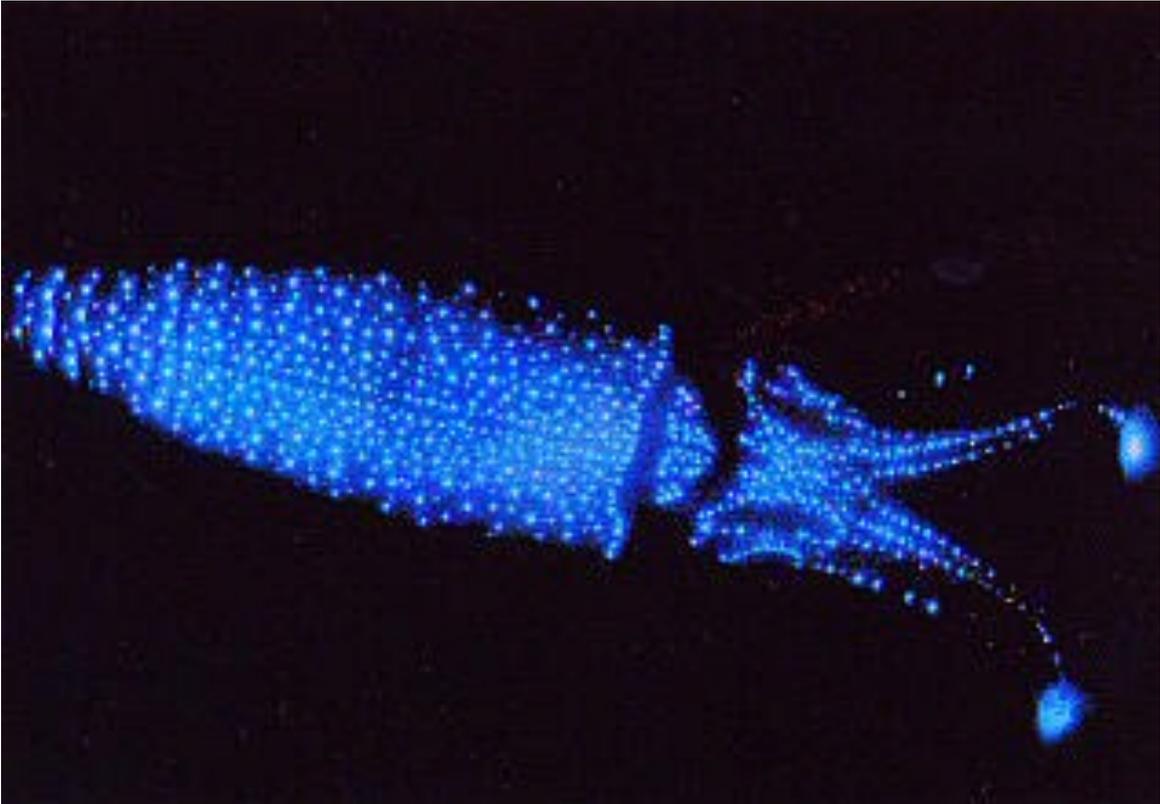
## Fictional

**Clawfish:** Named for its claw-shaped mouth, this large fish devours its prey by clamping down with its strong jaws. It eats small fish, sea jellies and sometimes crabs.

**Sonar Eel:** Like dolphins, these eels use echolocation, or signals of sound, to find their food. However, since they lack eyes, a nose or ears, echolocation is their main method of navigating the dark ocean depths.

**Paper Shrimp:** These shrimp are so thin that even if you were able to go deep enough in the ocean to where they live, you would probably never see them. Viewed head on, they are barely visible. This helps them to avoid being seen by predators.

**Wheeler Octopuses:** Considered to be the smallest octopuses ever to exist, these tiny creatures are famous for the way in which they move. They spread out their arms and quickly spin in a circle. Not only is this used as an escape mechanism but it can also hypnotize smaller fish.



**Firefly Squid** (Western Pacific ocean; 1,000 metres deep)

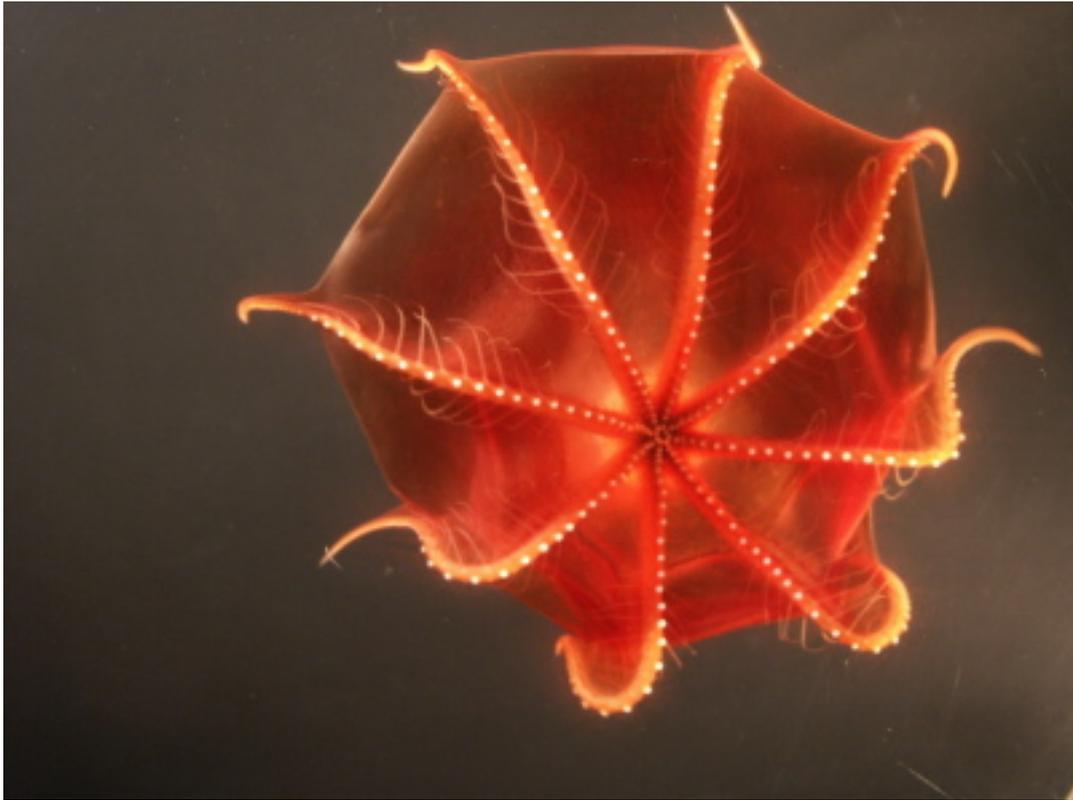


Photograph by Bruce Robison

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**Gulper Eel** (Worldwide; down to 3,000 metres deep)



**Cirrate Octopus** (Atlantic Ocean 1,000 metres deep)



**Giant Isopod** (Worldwide; over 1,300 meters deep)