

SQUID

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SCIENTIFIC CLASSIFICATION

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| COMMON NAME: | squid |
| KINGDOM: | Animalia |
| PHYLUM: | Mollusca |
| CLASS: | Cephalopoda |
| SUBCLASS: | Coleoidea |
| ORDER: | Superorder: Decapodiformes Order: Teuthoida |
| FAMILY: | 27 families |
| GENUS SPECIES: | Approximately 250 named species |

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FAST FACTS

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| DESCRIPTION: | Squids have an elongated body with a pair of rounded, triangular fins. They have eight arms and two longer, non retractable tentacles. The arms have suckers that are lined with toothed or hooked rings. Squids have a thin, internal shell called a "pen." |
| SIZE: | Less than 5 cm (1.97 in.) to the largest squid, the 18 m (59 ft.) long giant squid, (<i>Architeuthis</i>). |
| LOCOMOTION: | Unlike other molluscs, squids are capable of high-speed swimming. They use water-powered jet propulsion—in which water is expelled from the mantle cavity—to swim. Squids are the fastest swimmers of any aquatic invertebrates, reaching speeds of up to 40 km/hr (24.9 mph). Many species can actually propel themselves through the air. |
| DIET: | Fishes, crustaceans, and other squids |
| FEEDING: | The two longer tentacles are used to capture prey and bring it to the mouth. The other eight arms help in holding the prey. Squids |

also have a pair of beak like jaws used for biting and tearing, and a radula to aid in swallowing. They possess a pair of poison glands to paralyze prey for easier consumption.

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| REPRODUCTION: | Squids are either male or female. Fertilization is internal. Males have a modified arm, called a hectocotylus, which is spoon-shaped and used to deposit sperm in the mantle cavity of the female. |
| RESPIRATION: | Squids have two gills that are used for gas exchange. Water circulation through the mantle provides oxygen for the gills. |
| LIFE SPAN: | About 1 to 3 years; Most squids die shortly after a single spawning. |
| RANGE: | Oceans worldwide |
| HABITAT: | Mainly the open ocean and deep sea. |

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FUN FACTS

1. Many mid- to deep-water squids are bioluminescent.
2. Squids possess a large ink sac, with glands that secrete a brown or black fluid. When alarmed, the squid releases ink from the mantle cavity into the surrounding water, hopefully confusing predators.
3. The eyes of squids are highly developed compared to other molluscs and very similar to those of fishes. Each eye has a lens which controls the amount of light entering the eye and can form images. The largest eyes in the world are those of the giant squid. They can be up to the diameter of a dinner plate.
4. Squid have chromatophores (color cells) covering their body which are responsible for their coloration. Chromatophores are controlled by the nervous system and hormones. The contraction and expansion of these cells creates changes in color.

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ECOLOGY AND CONSERVATION

Some squid species are harvested commercially for human consumption. Squid fisheries must be regulated in order to protect squid populations and avoid overexploitation.

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