

Deep Sea Discovery!

Scientists realize there are many more animals in the deep ocean.

Some animals live near the top of the ocean, such as dolphins or jellyfish. But many more creatures live deeper in the sea. Scientists recently studied fish that lived between 200 meters and 1,000 meters below the surface. On Friday, they announced that *10 times* as many animals may live there than people thought!

The scientists traveled all over the world to learn about the area of the deep ocean called the **mesopelagic zone**. (People also call it the “**twilight zone**” because almost no sunlight reaches it.) They found many odd animals, such as the funny-looking hatchet fish and the spooky vampire squid. And they **estimated** that about *10 billion tons* of fishes live there. That’s more than any other part of the ocean!

Why were the scientists wrong about their counts before? They had used nets to estimate the number of fish in the deep sea. But the fish swam away from the nets! Now the scientists have to change what they know about animals in the ocean.

It is hard to get to the deep ocean in order to study the animals that live there. But scientists will continue to try to learn about them — and more about our planet.

By Russell Kahn (Russ)

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The hatchet fish has big eyes because there is little light in the deep sea.

FACT:

The scientists worked in a ship called the *Malaspina Expedition*. Its crew, from Spain, traveled more than 36,000 miles for the study!

ACT:

Next time you visit an ocean, lake, or pond, look for some creatures at the shore. You never know what you might find!

VOCABULARY:

mesopelagic: middle of the ocean (not the top or the bottom)

zone: area

twilight: dusk; nightfall; time after sunset

estimated: guessed

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Spain



Spain is a big country in Europe. But it is only seven miles from Africa!