VIDEO TRANSCRIPT

Fascinating Fishes

Facts & Fishes

SUMMARY

This 6-minute educational video invites students to learn about the sentience and capabilities of fishes.

It provides an introduction to the biology and behaviour of the broad variety of animals falling under the umbrella of 'fishes'.

Busting various myths about their capacities, it offers an insight into the intelligent and social nature of these fascinating animals.

Through reflection, students are encouraged to critically think about whether human treatment of fishes reflects what we know about their intelligence and sentience.

Contains no graphic footage. Suitable for use in high school classrooms for Years 7 and above.

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Fishes make up 60% of all vertebrate species in the world.

We use the term 'fishes' and not 'fish' as scientists are realising that it clumps together a huge range of diverse aquatic individuals from over 33,200 species.

We used to believe that fishes weren't **sentient**. But new and emerging scientific evidence shows that fishes do feel pain and are capable of suffering, just like us. In addition to being sentient, fishes are also highly intelligent and social animals.

For example, fishes have more ways of communicating with each other than any other vertebrate group. They lead complex social lives and can remember hundreds of individuals. Fishes even play and have **cultural** traditions.

Fishes have been constantly evolving for millions of years, and have extraordinarily sophisticated senses and abilities, often outperforming humans.

Sharks are able to smell about 10,000 times better than humans.

Fishes can also see colours far more vividly than we do, and have a more refined ability to taste.

Contrary to popular misconception, they are also highly **intelligent**.

One way we can measure **intelligence** is to test for **self-awareness**, which is the ability to identify a separate sense of self, distinct from other entities.

One type of fish called a cleaner-wrasse became the first fish to pass the classic test for **self-awareness**, recognising themselves in a mirror.

This kind of **self-awareness** was previously thought to be reserved to humans, elephants, dolphins and crows.

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There's a popular myth that fish have short memories. This has now been proven false. One example of this is when frillfin gobies memorise a detailed mental map of the intertidal zone so they can safely jump between pools at low tide.

Just like **mirror self-recognition**, tool-use was thought to be unique to mammals and birds… until scientists observed a tuskfish using a rock to crack open clams. Since then, it's been found that many species of fish use tools.

Archerfishes use water as a tool. In a feat of innovation, archerfishes spit jets of water into the air to catch insects.

Fishes even manipulate their environments to attract mates, and to communicate with their complex social networks.

The white-spotted puffer fish spends weeks making geometric patterns in the sand to impress his perfect mate.

Other fishes cooperate, not only with their own kind but also with other species. Individual moray eels and groupers will often form a bond by teaming up in pairs. They hunt together over many years, because they're likely to catch more **prey** when they work together.

Some fishes have even been observed helping out their mates when they are having trouble swimming!

Scientists are discovering the surprising and fantastic abilities of fishes. And with ongoing research, we will soon learn even more about our wonderful underwater friends.

Words in **bold font** are defined on the Voiceless Animal Protection Encyclopedia on the Voiceless website.