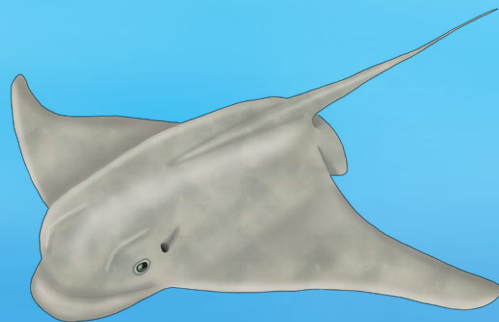
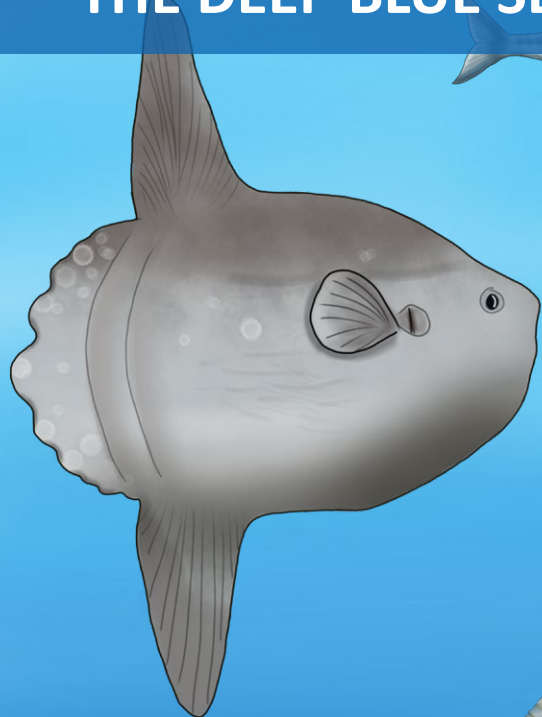


THE DEEP BLUE SEA AND THE SPECIAL FISH





THE DEEP BLUE SEA AND THE SPECIAL FISH

The deep blue sea gives us a sensation of weightlessness that we feel when looking toward the water column, with no reference point beyond the light that fades beneath us. A sensation that urges us to discover a horizon that we cannot discern and which for many divers, is one of the true reasons for the dive.

In addition, observing the deep blue sea often brings rewards such as seeing a special fish majestically swimming through it such as: eagle rays, sunfish, dolphin fish, snake pipefish or John Dories..., these make unforgettable encounters to share.

THE DEEP BLUE SEA

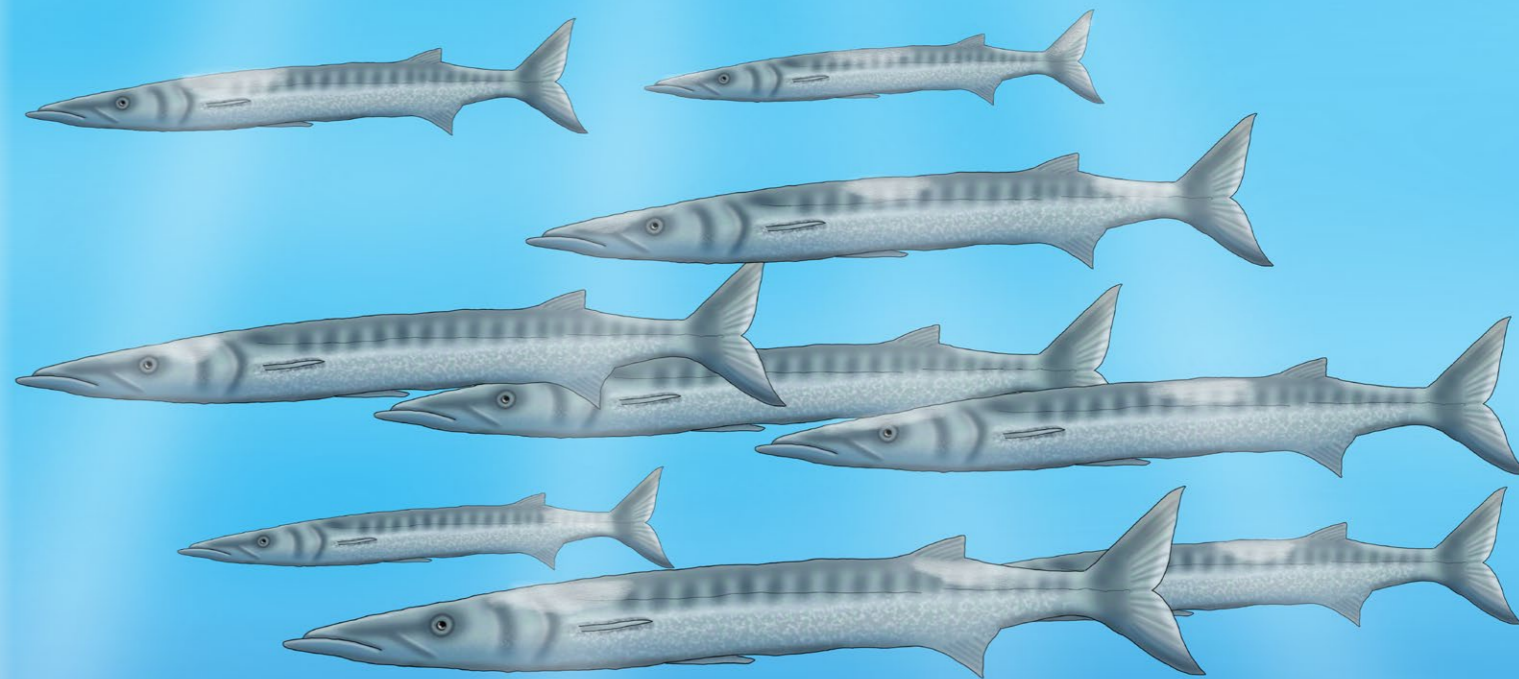
We discover the blueness of the sea in the descent from a deep diving point, during a wall dive, when we turn around and focus our view towards the open waters, or when hanging onto the chain, while waiting a few minutes to be able to go up to the surface.

But this is not just a sensation, it is also the water column, the temporary or permanent habitat of many pelagic species, in other words, ones that always live in the open sea. The currents are of vital importance and enable us to distinguish between the organisms that are dragged by the current, such as jellyfish and all kinds of plankton and the fish that may swim there.

SPECIAL FISH

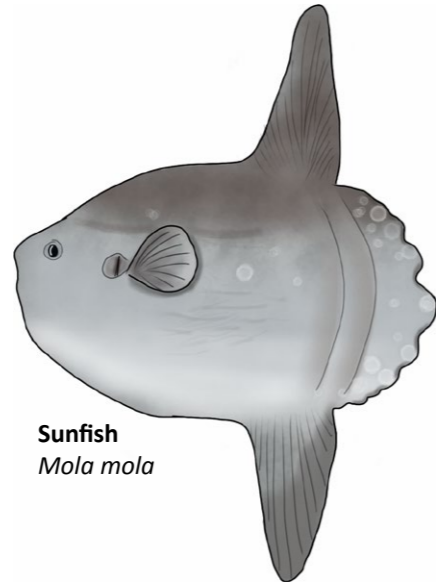
Almost all the fish we find in the deep blue sea are excellent swimmers; they are able to overcome the sea currents, they can travel long distances and they are not territorial. There are those that form large schools, such as sardines or anchovies, which you can find out much more about by reading the chapter: **As if they were one**, as well others that swim alone or in small groups, which are the ones that we have named “special fish”.

On the Costa Brava, the best known of the special fish are the sunfish, the eagle rays, the barracudas and the John Dories.

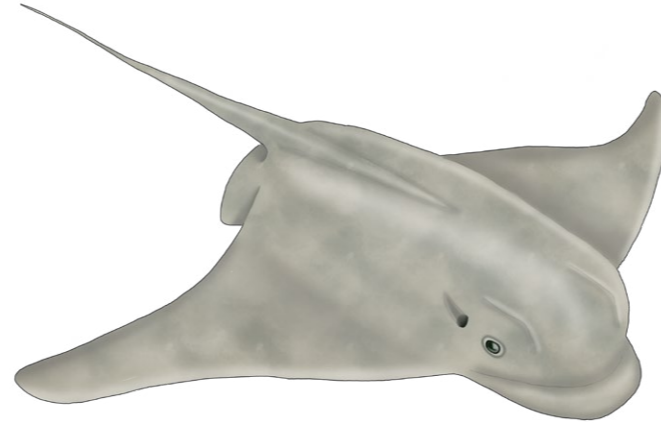


SPECIAL FISH

Sunfish, or the *Mola mola*, are solitary fish, they feed mainly on plankton although they may also eat seaweed. Oval-shaped and thin, their dorsal fin stands out. They can measure up to three metres long and can weigh over 1,000 kg, although the most common specimens we see are not that big.



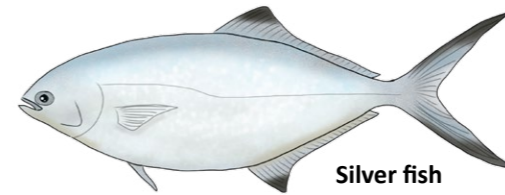
Sunfish
Mola mola



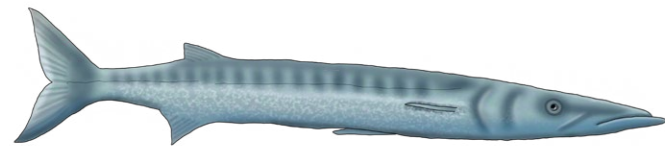
Eagle ray
Myliobatis aquila

Eagle rays are easy to identify due to their very characteristic pectoral fins and the long, thin tail. The way they swim is extremely majestic and we find them alone, as well as in small groups.

John Dories stand out for their dorsal fin with long spines which make it very easy to identify. They hunt both camouflaged along the seabed, as well as by slowly approaching their prey and then launching a sudden ambush attack. It should be noted that unlike the eagle rays, they don't live in the water column, but rather between gorgonians and posidonia, swimming in the open sea when they want some tranquillity.

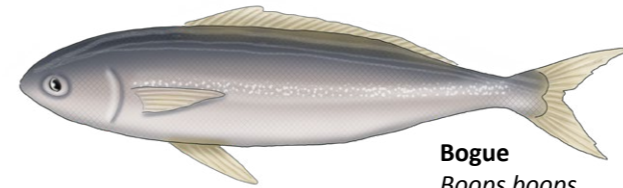


Silver fish
Trachinotus ovatus

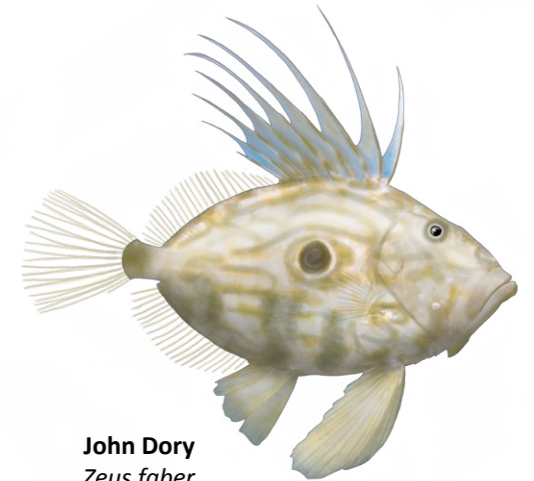


Barracuda
Sphyræna sphyræna

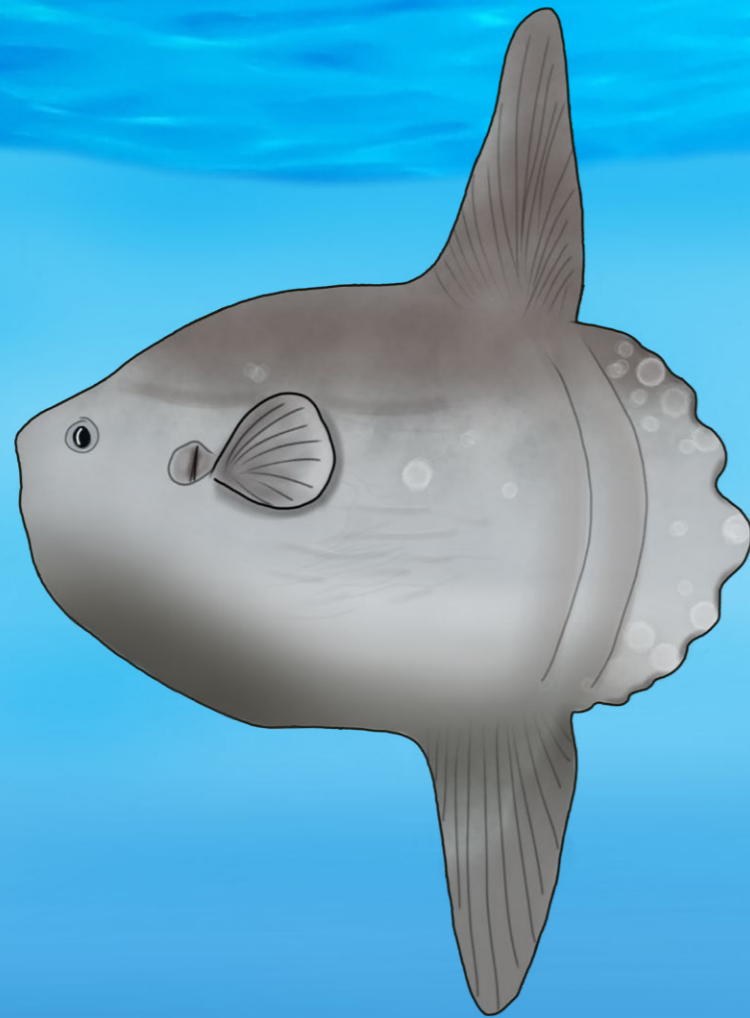
Barracudas have a long, narrow, silvery-coloured body, they can measure up to a metre long, although the adults are usually smaller in size. They are great hunters both in groups and individually.



Bogue
Boops boops



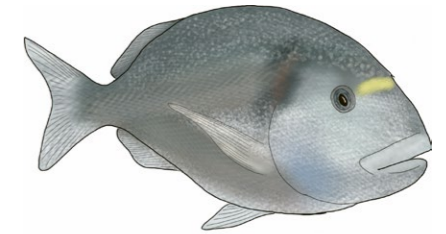
John Dory
Zeus faber



DID YOU KNOW THAT:

There are species that don't live in the water column but rather, they are grouped together into compact schools with a very specific objective. Just once a year and in the breeding season, gilthead seabreams, striped seabreams and the groupers, among others, congregate into large groups of adults and synchronise their spawning.

Luck needs to be on your side to coincide with this encounter, but there are many divers who have been able to enjoy this exceptional experience.



Gilthead seabream
Sparus aurata

WHERE CAN YOU OBSERVE THE BLUENESS OF THE SEA AND THE SPECIAL FISH

In dives which are most exposed to the open sea is where there are more opportunities to see the inhabitants of the deep blue sea: wall dives, deep dives, in areas far from the coast or on points and capes.

These are the places where we must be more alert, both in the descent as well as at the safety stops.

WHEN TO DO THE DIVE

Most species living in the water column are governed by annual migration and reproduction cycles that cause them to move away from or come closer to the Costa Brava diving zones. Therefore, we will have to bear in mind both the place and the season to get the chance to observe them.

In the spring, above all we will see schools of salemas, swarms of jellyfish, and sometimes even swimmer crabs and fish which have the ability to live amongst the gelatinous plankton.

From May until the end of summer, is when we might encounter the spectacular sunfish.

In the summer, schools of barracudas, eagle rays and greater amberjacks are relatively common and provide an impressive spectacle.

In September, the huge schools of anchovies and sardines formed by hundreds of thousands of fish are outstanding, and occasionally we will even see how they are chased by their predators, such as dolphin fish, Atlantic bonito, and occasionally a tuna or a sword fish.



PRECAUTIONS

As it is very difficult for us to have an impact on the environment, beyond mastering our buoyancy well, no special techniques are needed to preserve it when observing the water column.

We must be cautious and keep our orientation under control, as it is easy to lose concentration and go down deeper without realising it, especially in summer with very clean waters where it is difficult to perceive the depth. A visual reference point must always be kept, and divers must not get distracted by the silhouette of a fish in the distance and lose the group or the orientation points.

It is easy to be pulled by a current you haven't initially detected in the water column. The dive must be well planned, and you should stick to the initial plan.



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Co-funded project by the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund