

Name: _____

It's Not a Bird... Not a Plane... It's a Flying Fish!

by Guy Belleranti

Did you know there is a group of fish known as flying fish?

Flying fish are found in all the major oceans. There are over 40 known species. They are most common in warmer tropical and sub-tropical areas.

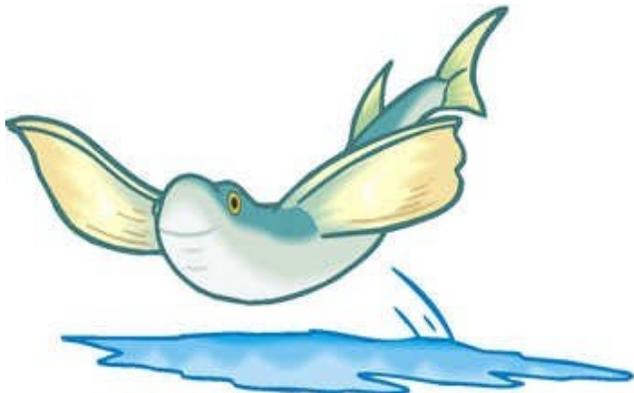
Of course, a flying fish doesn't actually fly like a bird does. But it can jump out of the water and glide through the air. How does it do this?

First, the flying fish swims near the water's surface. Holding its side (pectoral) fins close to its body, the fish's tail (called the caudal fin) propels the

torpedo-shaped fish at speeds of up to 40 miles per hour. The fish's body is much longer than its head. When the fish jumps above the water, it bursts above the surface. Then the fish spreads its pectoral fins and glides for a short way to escape predators like tuna and swordfish!

Flying fish have even been known to land on the decks of ships!

In some parts of the world fishermen scoop flying fish right out of the air with nets. Sea birds also sometimes scoop flying fish out of the air.



Night fishermen use lights to help them catch flying fish. The fish are attracted to the lights in the same way that moths are attracted to a light.



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California, is a time the tourists to see a large type of flying fish that might be seen on these reefs is the California flying fish. It's one of the largest species, growing up to 18 inches long. It is also one of the "four-winged" types of flying fish. This means that both its both pectoral fins and rear (pelvic) fins are enlarged.

Flying fish may not actually fly, but watching them shoot out of the water and glide above it is an exciting sight to see.

About the Author

Guy Belleranti works as a docent at Reid Park Zoo in Tucson, Arizona. The information in this article comes from his experiences working with animals and teaching others.

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1. If you were a fisherman trying to catch flying fish, which tools might you use?
- a. fishing poles and rubber lures
 - b. buckets, minnows, and rope
 - c. spotlights and nets
 - d. worms, sticks, and hands

2. Where would you be most likely to see a flying fish?
- a. Florida
 - b. Alaska
 - c. Maine
 - d. Ireland



3. Name some of the predators of the flying fish.



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4. Explain one way flying can make these fish vulnerable to predators.

5. Flying fish don't really fly. They glide. Explain how gliding is different from flying.

Something else to try: With a parent or teacher's supervision, go on the Internet and find a video of flying fish.

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Fill in the missing letters to create a word from the article.

Then, write the full word on the line. Be sure you spell each word correctly.

1. ___ r o ___ _ l

clue: to push forward

1. _____

2. ___ o ___ k e ___

2. _____

clue:



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3. ___ _

clue:

3. _____

4. ___ i ___ _ r ___ e ___

clue: people who catch fish

4. _____

5. ___ t ___ _ c ___ e d

clue: drawn or pulled towards

5. _____

6. ___ _ o ___ s

clue: small, skinny, open boats

6. _____

7. ___ _ l ___ _ d

clue: land that is completely surrounded by water

7. _____

ANSWER KEY

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3. Name some of the predators of the flying fish.

Predators include mackerel, marlin, tuna, swordfish, and humans.

4. How c



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4. Explai

When flying fish jump out of the water, they can be caught by birds and fishermen.

5. Flying fish don't really fly. They glide. Explain how gliding is different from flying.

When a bird flies, it uses its own power to go up into the air. Flying animals can stay up indefinitely, or as long as their muscle power allows. When animals glide, they are coasting through the air as they are gradually being returned downward.

Something else to try: With a parent or teacher's supervision, go on the Internet and find a video of flying fish.

There are many online.

One good one is at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8nEwte-x-iw>

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1. p r o p e l

clue: to push forward

1. propel

2. f o r k e d

clue:

2. forked

3. l u r

clue:



4. f i s h e r m e n

clue: people who catch fish

4. fishermen

5. a t t r a c t e d

clue: drawn or pulled towards

5. attracted

6. c a n o e s

clue: small, skinny, open boats

6. canoes

7. i s l a n d

clue: land that is completely surrounded by water

7. island