



Jonathan Bird's Blue World

Episode 15 • The Shark and the Lamprey • Study Guide

In 1998, Jonathan made a remarkable discovery about Basking sharks, the second largest fish on Earth. While diving with Basking sharks in the frigid waters of the Bay of Fundy, Jonathan saw parasitic lampreys on the backs of the sharks. This had never before been documented, so he returned the next year with a shark biologist and a lamprey biologist to attempt to recover living lampreys from the backs of Basking sharks. They didn't think Jonathan could do it. Wait until you see what happens!

Objectives

1. Introduces viewers to the biology of the Basking shark and the lamprey.
2. Illustrates how scientific discovery can begin with simple observation of nature.
3. Shows how biologists perform field work.

Questions for before watching the program

1. Basking sharks reach 45 feet long. Do you think they have huge teeth? What would a shark this large eat?
2. What is a parasite? Name a few parasites. Can fish have parasites?
3. Where is the Bay of Fundy?

Discussion for after watching the program

1. Why did biologists believe that lampreys could not parasitize sharks? (Hint: what do the lampreys eat?)
2. What does a lamprey have instead of a jaw?
3. What do Basking sharks eat? Could they eat a person?
4. Is a lamprey a parasite? Why or why not?
5. What did Mike's research discover about the lampreys?