

off the fence.

Nature's Greatest Moments - Sea (Series 1)

17 x 5'

EPISODIC BREAKDOWN

1. The Great Hunter

The great white shark has long been the centre of media hype, but is it really the vicious killer it is made out to be? We take a look at the hunting strategies of this incredible shark and find that it actually is an intelligent, calculative and cunning predator.

2. Sea Riders

The most endearing mammals in the world are the dolphins. We follow a family of bottlenose dolphins as they move in their home waters and over a reef of the southern Indian Ocean. We watch them play, fight, love and 'cry'.

3. Grinning Predators

The sand tiger, or ragged tooth shark, is a sinister-looking humped back creature with a mouthful of wicked teeth – the embodiment of nightmares. Yet it is hardly the vicious killer of our imagination and on a reef off the coast of South Africa divers have grown to love this ugly shark. In this episode we follow the ragged tooth shark from its summer habitat in the Cape to its winter mating waters in KwaZulu-Natal. (Diver/shark interaction to show how close divers actually get to the sharks)

4. Bert the Bass

Off the coast of Mozambique there is a small reef which is the castle of an imposing king – Bert the Bass. He is a huge potato bass. Like all basses he has an unusual life history – he began his life as a female and changed sex when he grew into an adult. He now rules over his harem of females as well as this small patch of reef.

5. The Sardine Run

Each year, off the coast of Southern Africa, millions upon millions of sardines school together and move en-masse up the eastern coast. They are followed by many marine predators including sharks and bottlenose dolphins. We explore the dynamics of the sardine run and the hunting

strategies of some of the hunters. (I think we can manage a short 5 minuter on this without using Greatest Shoal footage and using mainly what is already in Blue Reef)

6. The Filter Feeders

Some of the largest fish in the sea feed on the tiniest of marine organisms. Manta rays and whale sharks feed by filtering the water and extracting the tiny creatures that form plankton. But they are able to do this by swimming forward in the water with mouth agape, but there are creatures such as corals and sponges that are attached to the reef and need to reach into the water with tiny tentacles to catch the passing plankton.

7. The Wonders of a Coral Reef

Beneath the tropical waters of our oceans lies one of the most intricate worlds ever evolved – tropical reefs. Although they occupy only one tenth of the earth's surface they achieve the highest productivity off all marine ecosystems, second only to the tropical rainforests in complexity and richness. And they are built by the most delicate of creatures no bigger than a baby's finger.

8. Friendly Stingrays

The Maldivian Islands form a beautiful string of coral reefs, popular with divers all over the world. A disused ship forms an artificial reef and is home to the friendliest stingrays you're ever likely to meet. Tempted by the fish the divers bring the stingrays sometimes get very cheeky and try to touch or catch the diver's equipment. Their long whip-like tail, with its poisonous spine, is designed to fend off potential predators but they do not need to worry about using it here.

9. Safety in Numbers

The proverbial saying is that there's safety in numbers and many fish species have found this to be true. Small fish huddle together and move as one through the water hoping to appear larger to a passing predator, while pelagic predators such as barracuda move in vast schools to hunt. We explore the different schooling strategies of both reef fish and deep-water inhabitants.

10. Sharks!

Sharks are some of the most fascinating creatures to roam the ocean. There are many species of different shapes and sizes each adapted to its own way of life. Some sharks, like the silvertip and blacktip, prefer to hunt in the open ocean. Grey reef sharks hunt at the edges of the reef. Leopard sharks have no teeth, but have developed a hard plate instead to crush mollusc shells. This episode will show that there is a lot more to sharks than is commonly known.

11. Rays

Unbelievably rays are related to sharks. They both have a skeleton made of cartilage, but as they evolved they developed flat disk-like bodies that 'fly' through the water rather than swim. Many rays have learnt to bury themselves in the sand for protection and to ambush their prey. Most of them have mouths on the underside of their flat bodies to dig into the sand and catch buried prey.

Others fly perpetually through the water in search of food. We compare the different species and show the rarest and a newly discovered one.

12. Camouflage and Deception

In the dangerous underwater world the easiest way to disappear from sight is to blend in with the reef. Creatures such as octopus and stonefish have perfected this art. The first to escape being eaten and the other to surprise potential prey. Deception on a crowded reef could mean the difference between life and death, butterflyfish have large spots that look like eyes near their tails to confuse a pursuing predator. In this episode we explore the different ways of camouflage and ways in which fish deceive both hunter and prey.

13. Living in a Cave

The vast ocean can be a dangerous place for many sea creatures, large and small. Some have taken to hiding in caves for protection. Caves are perfect hiding places for juvenile fish. The dark interiors provide a perfect resting place for fish which prefer to come out at night. Morays eels use the smallest of caves to their advantage, hiding in them and rushing out to catch unsuspecting passing prey. Caves are also used by sharks that can breathe while at rest, like the whitetip reef shark and the tawny shark.

14. Living on a Wreck

Coral reefs form wonderful and beautiful underwater worlds but they could also be the curse of the sea to unsuspecting mariners. One careless naval move and their ship runs aground and sinks. Once the wrecks reach the bottom of the ocean they are slowly colonised by sea creatures. We look at the animals that live on and around the wrecks of the Red Sea.

15. The Largest Fish in the Sea

The whale shark is the largest fish in the sea. It roams on secret highways through following the currents of the ocean, drifting in perpetual search for food. It is a magnificent and mysterious creature, yet despite its size it is a gentle giant which allows divers to get close to it. (We can show size by including a few diver shots)

16. Armed with a Hammer

The strangest looking shark is the hammerhead. But its odd-looking head is well equipped with incredible sensory organs used by the shark to detect the presence of food or danger. We observe a squadron of hammerheads as they glide over a reef in the Red Sea.

17. Reptiles of the Sea

The oldest living reptiles, more ancient than the dinosaurs, live in the sea. They are the turtles. Five species occur in the Indian Ocean. We follow one of them – the loggerhead, as it returns to its beach of birth and lays a precious clutch of eggs. Once the eggs hatch the little turtles face many perils on the beach and in the ocean.