



Editorial: Ugly, Useless Toadfish

I was walking on the beach at Gilbert's one day and came across the ugliest fish I'd ever seen. When I pointed it out my friend, who is a fisherman, told me it was just a toadfish.

The toadfish is also called dogfish or oysterdog. They are brown and gray with a huge mouth full of razor sharp teeth. They only get to be about 12" long. When caught they make a strange noise similar to a grunt or a croak. Some people say it even sounds like the cry of a baby. The sound comes from their swim bladder and not their throat. They also grunt to attract females for the purpose of mating, just like my ex-husband did.

The toadfish may not be impressive in length as it is in girth, so if you happen to find

one on the beach take a stick and roll it over and check it out, there will be no mistaking if it's a male.

The reason my friend and I found it on the beach was probably because fishermen don't want anything to do with them. If they hook one and manage to get the hook out they will throw them overboard or cut their line just to get rid of the ugly creature.

Although toadfish may possibly be eaten in other countries you won't find it on a menu in the Florida Keys. Toadfish made history one time when John Glenn took them on a space flight. They have a balance system very similar to that of humans and it as useful to study the effects of microgravity on them. See, toadfish aren't so bad after all!



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