



## Ten remarkable new marine species from 2020

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*Please contact authors of individual species for information on these, and Tammy Horton or Leen Vandepitte for information on the top-ten list and the World Register of Marine Species.*

*High-resolution photos available online. See section "Image available at:" with each individual species.*

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- [The E.T. Sponge: \*Advhena magnifica\*](#)
- [The Patrick Sea Star: \*Astrolirus patricki\*](#)
- [The Branch-Armed Nostril Copepod: \*Dendrapta nasicola\*](#)
- [The Yellow Sea Slug of Ørland: \*Dendronotus yrjarqul\*](#)
- [The Giant Plastic Amphipod: \*Eurythenes plasticus\*](#)
- [Haffi's Upside-Down Tapeworm: \*Gyrocotyle haffii\*](#)
- [The Beautiful Branching Bryozoan: \*Hornera mediterranea\*](#)
- [The Tree-of-Life Tardigrade: \*Neoechiniscoides aski\*](#)
- [The Feisty Elvis Worm: \*Peinaleopolynoe orphanae\*](#)
- [Red Wide-Bodied Pipefish: \*Stigmatopora harastii\*](#)

As for previous years, the World Register of Marine Species ([WoRMS](#)) has again released the annual list of the top-ten marine species described by researchers during the year 2020 to coincide with World Taxonomist Appreciation day - March 19th!

If you were unaware of this celebration of all the work that taxonomists do, you can find more here: <https://twitter.com/hashtag/taxonomistappreciationday>, here: <https://smallpondscience.com/2014/03/19/today-is-taxonomist-appreciation-day/>, and here: <https://cetaf.org/news/19th-march-taxonomist-appreciation-day>.

Every day in labs, museums, out on fieldwork, taxonomists are busy collecting, cataloguing, identifying, comparing, describing and naming species new to science. Some 500 experts globally also contribute their valuable time to keeping the World Register of Marine Species (WoRMS) up to date. Today is a chance for us at WoRMS to thank all our editors for this important task. And we celebrate the work of taxonomists now with the WoRMS list of the top-ten marine species described in 2020 as nominated and voted for by taxonomists and journal editors!

This top-ten list is just a small highlight of almost 2,000 fascinating new marine species discovered every year.

## How were the species chosen?

All editors of WoRMS and editors of major taxonomy journals were given the opportunity to nominate their favourite marine species. Nominated species must have been described between January 1st and December 31st, 2020, and have come from the marine environment (including fossil taxa). A small committee (including both taxonomists and data managers) was brought together to decide upon the final candidates. The list is in no hierarchical order.

The final decisions reflect the immense diversity of animal groups in the marine environment (including fish, crustaceans, molluscs, corals, sponges, jellies and worms) and highlight some of the challenges facing the marine environment today. The final candidates also feature some particularly astonishing marine creatures, notable for their interest to both science and the public.

Each of these marine animals has a story. This year the chosen species are in some cases particularly feisty, well-hidden, or have a sad tale...

We feature the “alien” E.T. sponge, fighting Elvis worms, the tiny tree-of-life tardigrade, cryptic bryozoans, and camouflaged red pipefish - even a nose inhabiting copepod!

## About the WoRMS top-ten list of Marine Species

After 250 years of describing, naming and cataloguing the species we share our planet with, we are still some way off from achieving a complete census. However, we do know that at least 237,000 marine species have been described because their names are managed in WoRMS by almost 300 scientists located all over the world.

In 2018, to celebrate a decade of WoRMS' existence, we compiled a list of our top marine species, both for 2017 and for the previous decade in order to highlight the fascinating discoveries of the numerous new marine species being made every year (see <http://www.lifewatch.be/en/2018.04.23-WoRMS-LifeWatch-press-release>).

We decided to continue this process every year as a celebration of the work that taxonomists do and of the fascinating marine species that are discovered each year. Our previous lists of the top-ten marine species described for the decade 2007–2017, for 2017, 2018 and 2019 can be found here:

- <https://www.lifewatch.be/en/worms-top10-2007-2017>
- <https://www.lifewatch.be/en/worms-top10-2017>
- <https://www.lifewatch.be/en/worms-top10-2018>
- <https://www.lifewatch.be/en/worms-top10-2019>

A list of the 'Top Ten Species' described from ALL habitats and taxa has been announced annually since 2008 (<http://www.esf.edu/top10/>). The oceans cover over 70% of the surface of our planet, and yet they still include the least explored regions (<http://theconversation.com/how-many-undiscovered-creatures-are-there-in-the-ocean-86705>). Although the ESF list often contains one or two marine species, we decided to pay homage to the '[largest habitat on earth](#)' by producing our own list of the top marine species.

We hope some of our favourites will make it to the global list!

- [Ten remarkable new marine species from 2020](#)