

# Animal of the World: Fish



## SCORPIONFISH

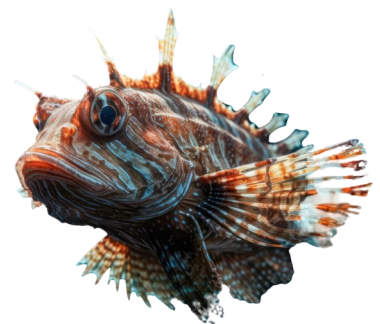


Like every summer, my brother and I looked forward to the holidays we would go to the beach to observe fish while we snorkeled. My brother and I put on our masks, snorkels, and fins and jumped into the sea to see as many fish as possible. And I must say that it was not just any summer because we were able to see one of the most beautiful and most dangerous fish on our coast: the scorpionfish.



It is a rather small fish, about 14 inches in length. Its colors are discreet, brown on the back and white on the belly, although sometimes it has brightly colored dots such as yellow or turquoise. This coloration allows it to hide and camouflage itself on the seabed to avoid being caught or eaten by predators.

Its head is big, with large eyes protected by spines. This is essential for them, since they usually bury themselves in the sand or muddy soil to flee from predators and need to be able to observe what is happening around them. With the spines found on multiple parts of their bodies, they defend themselves from their enemies since the spines are poisonous and serve as protection. Scorpionfish are not aggressive and only attack when they feel threatened.



During the summer season, scorpionfish prefer being by the coasts to reproduce. It also where they can come into contact with swimmers. Unfortunately, some of the swimmers will accidentally step on the scorpionfish, ending up with a poisonous spine digging into the bottom of their foot. These injuries require medical attention since the venom released causes enormous pain in the skin of humans.



When stung by a scorpionfish, the sting can be mistaken for a jellyfish sting. The area where the sting occurs reddens and swells slightly, depending on the poison introduced. In the most extreme cases, the spine must be removed at a medical center. The poison can cause sweating, drops in blood pressure, or vomiting, among other things. To reduce the effects of the poison, it is recommended to place heat on the affected area and to apply anesthesia and medication. This should be done by medical professionals. Rest is also recommended for a few days until the person recovers from the injury. The wound can take anywhere from weeks to months to fully heal, depending on the poison received.



Despite the fact that the scorpionfish has poisonous spines, it still has excellent white meat, which is edible and highly desired by some people. We have never eaten it, but we wouldn't mind trying it.

Scorpionfish feed on small fish and crustaceans, such as shrimp and prawns. To do this, it hides under the sand and opens its huge mouth to catch the prey just as they pass over it. It's a really fascinating feeding mechanism.

On the last day at the beach, we took some beautiful photos with the underwater camera of the scorpionfish on the seashore. How lucky! Hopefully, next summer, we can see it too.



Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

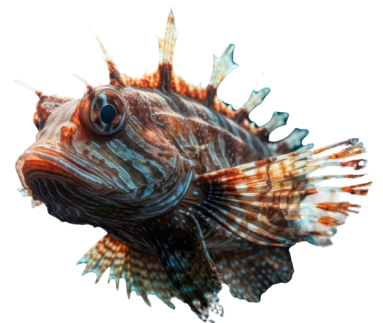


# SCORPIONFISH



Answer the following questions.

1. Which of the following is true about scorpionfish?
  - a. They have spines on their bodies to defend themselves from predators.
  - b. They are as large as a dolphin.
  - c. They are only found in the cold waters of the Arctic Ocean.
  - d. All of the above
  
2. Scorpionfish hide by \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. swimming with other fish
  - b. making high-pitched sounds
  - c. burying themselves in the sand
  - d. releasing a cloud into the water
  
3. Scorpionfish are not aggressive and attack only when they feel threatened.
  - a. True
  - b. False
  
4. Scorpionfish feed on \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. almost anything they find
  - b. only algae and plankton
  - c. nuts and plants
  - d. small fish and crustaceans
  
5. The sting from a scorpionfish \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. can take weeks to heal
  - b. is poisonous and painful
  - c. should be treated by a medical professional
  - d. all of the above



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# SCORPION FISH



6. What is the most common way to get stung by a scorpionfish?

- a. Stepping on a scorpionfish in the water by accident
- b. A scorpionfish attacking because of bright-colored swimsuits
- c. Trying to pick up a scorpionfish
- d. Catching a scorpionfish in a fishing net



7. Which of the following are used when snorkeling?

- a. mask
- b. snorkel
- c. fins
- d. all of the above

8. Using context clues in the selection, what are predators?

- a. animals that eat only plants
- b. animals that hunt and eat other animals
- c. animals that hunt in groups or packs
- d. animals that only come out at night

9. The meat from a scorpionfish can be eaten even if it is a poisonous fish.

- a. True
- b. False

10. The color of a scorpionfish \_\_\_\_\_.

- a. helps it hide on the seabed
- b. attracts other fish to eat
- c. changes according to its surroundings
- d. is pure white, like an angelfish

