

If Fish Ruled the World

Once a “pond” a time, water ruled the earth. Everything alive lived within and under it. There was no need for dry land. Quite a bit has changed in the million or so years since then. In the years that followed, intelligent life as we know it developed and lived above the realm of the seas and took to breathing air.



In this under water world, things were going along just fine. Fish and other marine life could swim about freely and explore their world. While it was true that they had natural enemies where a lunch date could take on the implication of “me or you,” generally speaking, life went on. The sea was a self contained world that played by its own rules . . . until we showed up.

Man has always been fascinated by water. From our perspective, we only see what’s on the surface. We invented boats to stay atop of it, and when we ventured into its depths, we needed aid in breathing. What goes on beneath the depths of our oceans and lakes that comprise over seventy percent of our planet is truly mind boggling. In a recent study, marine biologists determined that there are over 230,000 different species of marine life that do not need to come up for air! That report also estimated that currently there are 5 trillion, 78 billion, 422 million fish living in our earth’s waters. Compare those numbers to the current human population of approximately 7.2 billion and you can easily see that we are outnumbered by a margin of 36,564,638 to 1. That’s more than thirty-six million fish for every person on earth. Amazing! Let’s keep that number in mind as I continue with my story.

Fish are smart

Fish have been around for a long time, and judging from the numbers we now know about their extensive population, they aren’t going away any time soon. They have mastered the process of evolution as well as the art of survival. Their sheer numbers testify to that fact. From our perspective, they aren’t nearly as intelligent as humans, but instinctively speaking they are smart. Fish are known for their excellent schools. In those schools, they interact with others of their species and learn the basics of how to survive in their wet world. Attendance at school is mandatory in fish life because the consequences of not attending are severe – stay in school or get eaten! In fish school, you learned everything you needed to survive. Young fish learned their “fishly” duties that consisted of swimming, gathering food, and mastering the art of sleeping with their eyes open. They also learned to avoid hooks, nets, and of course, larger fish.

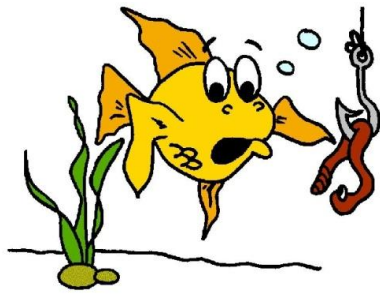


Graduation from a fish school was viewed with mixed emotions. Parent fish knew that their little ones had grown up, and with growing up came the risks and responsibilities of adulthood. Now their youngsters would be on their own and subject to the dangers, adventures, and predators of the real world. Despite the advice based on experience that parents freely gave to their new graduates, those words of wisdom fell on deaf ears. Perhaps that's partly because young fish simply have to find out for themselves, and mostly because fish don't have ears.



If it's too good to be true, there's probably a catch!

Despite the numerous classes in survival taught at every fish school, millions of fish are snagged by the oldest trick in the book . . . food that suddenly appears in front



of them with the hidden hook inside. Perhaps it's a lack of discipline, or simply an uncontrolled urge to eat that gets them caught, but it happens all the time. Fish are constantly reminded that while there is plenty of food out there, rarely does it just appear in front of you. Fish are hunters, and part of the fun of being a fish is hunting for food. Somehow, many fish simply ignore the rule that states that if it's too easy to catch, there's probably a string (and a hook) attached.

This looks like a trick, but I'm really hungry!

There are thousands of documented accounts of missing fish. If fish drank milk, the panels of those milk cartons would be filled with pictures of the ones that disappeared. These were fish that wandered from the safety of their comfortable surroundings and often times never returned. In each case study, the story is basically the same. A fish swimming home after a long day of working in the sea, apparently spots an appetizing snack out of the corner of its eye. Because there is a slight movement, the fish's basic instincts take over, disregarding scores of warnings and hours of training. The bite, the snag, and suddenly the fish is forcefully pulled from its home element and finds itself gasping for survival on either dry land or the deck of a boat. Often times the story ends right there, but there are other instances when a fisherman is simply sport fishing, and deems the newly caught fish either too small, or in a "humanitarian" gesture, yanks the hook out of the fish's mouth and throws it back into the water. To the fisherman, he did the right thing, but to the fish that had to swim back to his waiting family with a wounded cheek, jaw, or wherever else that hook might have dislodged, it was a truly traumatic experience. The questions that followed from his family were not always pleasant. They were a mixture of concern and reprimand.



"What happened to you? Did you get into a fight? How do you explain those bandages?" Fish are not good at learning as individuals, but as a species, all of these

collective occurrences were somehow stored in a massive database to be used as needed by future generations who would know what to do with those facts.

Global Warming

There are numerous studies on this controversial topic, but their data universally supports this fact . . . the earth is slowly warming. Our average temperature has risen by almost two degrees Celsius since the early 1900s. That increase is barely perceptible, but what does it mean? Well, since water freezes at 32 degrees Fahrenheit (0 degrees Celsius), polar ice that has been kept just below the freezing threshold for thousands of years is beginning to thaw. This is contributing to a disturbing fact – sea levels are rising and that trend is accelerating. Much of this phenomenon can be attributed to the slowly melting polar ice caps. These “frozen continents” at each pole contain a significant amount of ice and if they melted into water, our seas would rise and flood much of our coastline and return many low-lying areas to undersea worlds. While there are many factors contributing to global warming, it is the rise of the seas that will perhaps have the greatest impact.



Fast Forwarding to the Future

When something slowly moves into our realm of consciousness, its effects are not immediately perceptible. The erosion of an inch at a time of coastline eventually has a cumulative effect. An unremitting series of drips from a leaky faucet can fill up a bathtub if allowed to continue. After an extended period of time, not only are those results noticeable, but they can eventually have unforeseen consequences, especially if we fast-forward into the future.

The year could be 2110, but the actual date doesn't matter. The seas have risen each year, and today, most of the coastal areas of our country are nothing but distant memories. Gone are the seaside resorts of Daytona Beach, Florida, and the Outer Banks of North Carolina, since much of those states is now under water. This phenomenon wasn't limited to the United States. There is virtually nothing left of the “playground of the rich” otherwise known as the resort areas of the Mediterranean. That sea has swallowed all but the highest peaks of Italy and Greece. Recently, California joined Hawaii where only their mountainous terrain



remained above water. In Egypt, the tips of the pyramids are visible, but not much else. The Statue of Liberty now stands on her toes overlooking the eerie scene in New York Harbor. The view from the space shuttle orbiting the earth shows much more “blue” area than in the past. As a result, people have packed their belongings and trudged inland in an attempt to find high and dry land.

So much had happened in a relatively short time that it virtually overwhelmed earth’s resources. World leaders as well as climatological experts were not sure what to do. Nobody had answers, but one thing was for certain . . . we were losing the battle to keep and maintain dry land. If we consulted history on this subject, we would see that this event was the high point of a cycle, and it would eventually return to what we considered normal. But when would that be? Has this situation peaked or will it continue to get worse? How much longer would our world remain like this, and more importantly, what strange events would accompany this phenomenon?



Years before - somewhere deep in smoke filled waters . . .

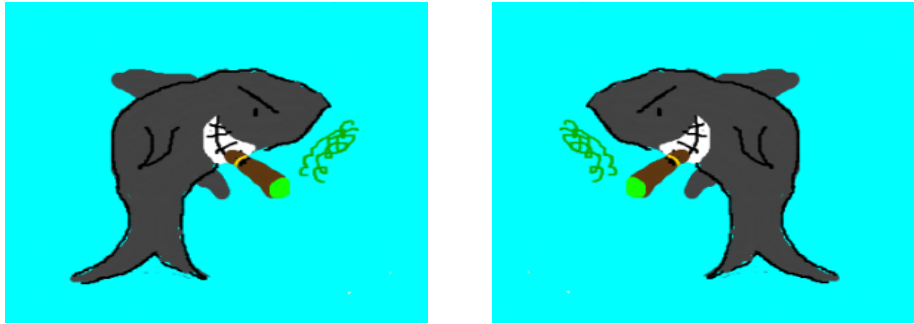
When did it happen? Nobody is sure, but somehow the fish population had enough. After years and even centuries of abuse by humans in their quest for food and



Early attempts by fish at infiltrating the world of humans were mostly unsuccessful.

“sport,” it had to happen. A constant undercurrent of discontent with the situation relating to missing and wounded fish finally came to a head. It was a common cause that screamed for leadership, and it would take a strong and ruthless team of leaders to carry out the plot. Amid constant complaints from marine life of all species, perhaps the sharks were the most vocal. Everyone knows that sharks are a different breed altogether. For the most part, they are loners, but they have been known to join forces for a common cause (like

when a ship sinks and people are scurrying for the life boats). Because they are ruthless predators, they are focused in their purpose and have a keen sense of their surroundings. They were akin to a dictator who rose to power in an impoverished or

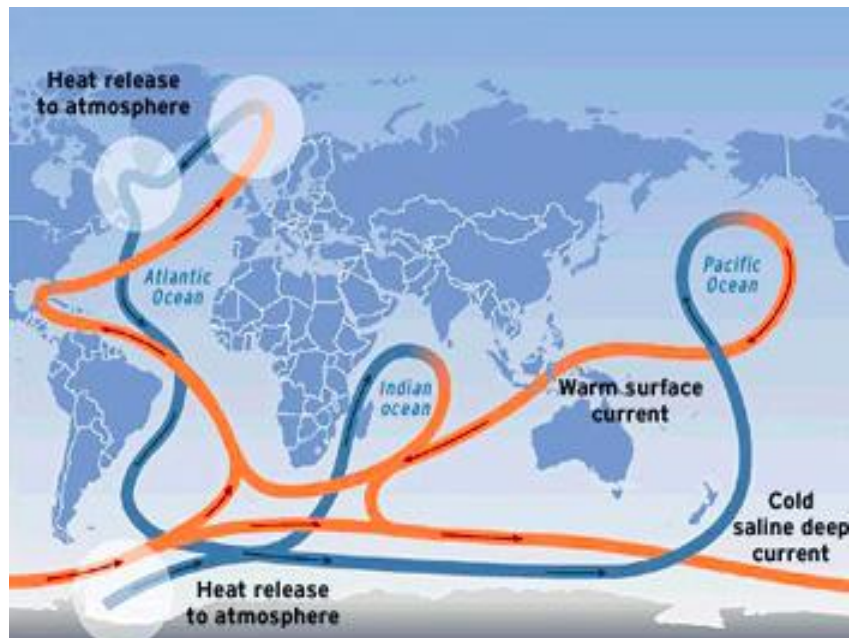


Shark leaders devised the plan in dark hidden caverns while smoking what are obviously waterproof cigars.

economically repressed third world country where the general population craved direction and strength in leadership. It didn't matter if those leaders were good or bad, they just had to be strong. Sharks have always had the proven ability to get things done.

Looking back to the early part of the twenty-first century, nobody knew exactly when the plan for revenge was formulated, but it proved to be timely and brilliant. What transpired in those hidden, smoke-filled, under-sea caverns was a cold and calculated plan to punish those abusive humans by severely reducing the one of the most important things that people need – dry land!

Ocean currents play an important part in our climate. Because we live above the surface, it is difficult for us to completely understand the ebb and flow of these currents and how they could possibly be manipulated. They flow at different speeds and at varying depths. The key to this plan was to speed up the warm currents and direct them to the polar regions of the earth. The more warmth that could be channeled to the north and south poles, the sooner it would facilitate the melting of the ice caps.



Water, the ultimate conductor

Once the strategy was formulated, it was easy to get it out to the masses. According to the laws of physics, water is the ultimate conductor. Its molecules are able to transport sound four times faster than through air. That process is called fluid dynamics (which is the speed of sound in a fluid medium like water), and it is how this strategy was distributed to the more than five *trillion* under-sea inhabitants. Every fish knew its role and they began to carry out the plan.

As people moved inland towards higher ground to escape the rising seas, marine life became much more

aggressive. Hidden hooks were discovered in human food purchased at drive-ins, grocery stores, and in restaurants. Sometimes their lines were concealed in the packaging. Other tactics were more blatant and aggressive. Fish began luring humans with many of the same tricks were used on them in the past. (Remember that database of stored information?) Large nets were placed at exits of sporting events and movie theaters capturing thousands of unsuspecting people thereby disrupting their lives. Many times people were hooked and then released, leaving that telltale mark that would



permanently scar one of their cheeks. Others were captured and sadly never made it home for *their* family dinner. It became a popular sport complete with prizes and ocean-wide recognition for fish that managed to make the biggest catch, or who “bagged” a person who put up the best fight. Human taxidermy became a growing and vastly popular profession in the undersea world. Fish love their trophies. It was clear that the “tide” had turned and now it was the fish that were having all the fun at the expense of the human race.



All good things come to an end.

When things are acquired too easily, it is in everyone's nature to relax and let down their guard. We fall into routines, and as a result we begin to take things for granted. That is also true if we perceive that we are in a rut and do the same boring things each day. Those repetitive acts take their toll on our self-esteem and we crave a change of venue. This is exactly what the undersea world began to experience.

There were rumblings of dissatisfaction among the trillions of fish that were ordered to swim rapidly in precise and seemingly unending patterns. This was done to insure the precise movement of the ocean's currents according to the master plan laid out by the sharks. To the masses of fish, they were merely laborers who weren't realizing any of the benefits attained by their leaders as they swam. The sharks were getting fatter and isolated themselves from the sound of discontent that was all around them. That subsequent apathy contributed to the letting down of their guard and it allowed others capable of reason and thought processes to step up. They no longer feared humans because they were pretty much contained on shrinking patches of dry land. Besides, what were other fish going to do to the dreaded sharks? They felt they were truly invincible.

Perhaps the most intelligent members of the undersea community are the dolphins. While dolphins aren't fish (they are sea dwelling mammals), they are important



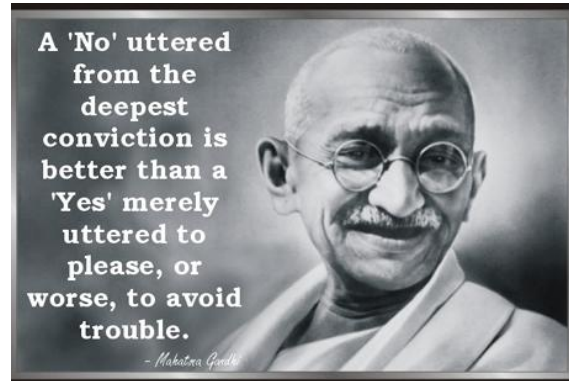
When the dolphins sent out signals, we listened.

components of sea life. Also, they are not afraid of sharks! During the years of global warming, the dolphin community could be viewed as silent dissenters. Peaceful by nature, they never looked for trouble, but could be fierce competitors. As the shark inspired transgressions became more widespread, it was the dolphins that first voiced their dissatisfaction. Dolphins rank at the top of sea life's pyramid of intelligence. Yes, they are smart, and they are also capable of influencing other sea creatures if warranted. Scientists like

John Lilly ran studies in the 1970s relating to the psychic abilities of dolphins and their "cosmic connection" to humans. He was one of the pioneers in establishing the fact that dolphins do indeed communicate with each other, and can to a certain extent with humans. Dr. Lilly's study also showed that dolphins are capable of feeling emotion. It was then that a unique bond was established, and that bond would prove to be invaluable.

Passive Resistance

By taking a page out of Mahatma Ghandi's book of passive resistance, the dolphins used their influence to persuade trillions of fish to systematically resist and abandon those mandated and rigorous swimming patterns that served to keep warm currents flowing to the polar regions. If those currents were left alone, they would eventually regulate themselves and ice would again return to the poles. In fact, it would take far less time for the ice to re-form and the sea levels to subside than it took to create that imbalance.



Initially there were voices of concern from the masses. “What if the sharks get upset and eat us?” Well, it isn’t really feasible that a few million sharks can eat five trillion fish! There is safety in numbers. Besides, most of those sharks were now too fat to swim like they used to. Advantage fish.

The revolution was quick and peaceful. Very few fish were swallowed up by the sharks with their expanding waistlines. The more fish that resisted, the slower those ocean currents flowed. After a while, the sharks simply gave up. All of that cigar smoking took its toll as well.

The sea levels lowered as the cold, crisp air returned to the poles. Glaciers re-formed and ice became the norm in those areas of the globe as it always had been. Masses of land that were submerged under the reaches of the sea were dry again. People began moving back to their homes that were again livable.

Back to the present

You cannot watch television network news without seeing or hearing something relating to the phenomenon of global warning. While there are many aspects to that story and a number of things that can contribute to the rise in the earth’s temperature, I only touched on one. You’re probably shaking your head and saying, “No way! This could never happen.” But I had a dream. I woke up from a sound but restless sleep and my head was spinning. Fish were everywhere and I couldn’t hide. I overheard mutterings about how I was going to be made an example or something to that effect. I did wake up before I got to see what they were going to do to me, but I’m pretty sure it wouldn’t be pleasant.

Every so often, I get these terrifying flashbacks . . .



I think it's time to feed my goldfish. You never know when these random acts of kindness will be repaid!

