

Giant squid photographed for first time

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A mysterious sea creature -- the giant squid immortalized by Jules Verne's novel "20,000 Leagues Under the Sea" -- has been photographed for the first time.

Japanese scientists, using a digital camera dangling about 3,300 feet below the surface of the Pacific, about 500 miles south of Tokyo, obtained the photos of the largest known invertebrate on Earth.

Tsunemi Kubodera and Kyoichi Mori, writing in the British journal *Proceedings of the Royal Society B*, said the giant squid was about 26 feet long, with tentacles measuring 18 feet.

The pictures were taken as the squid attacked bait trailing below a marker buoy.

"The initial attack was captured on camera and shows the two long tentacles wrapped in a ball around the bait," wrote Kubodera and Mori. "The giant squid became snagged on the jig."

The camera took 550 digital images during a four-hour period as the squid repeatedly tried unsuccessfully to free itself.

The tentacle subsequently was severed from the squid. The researchers wrote that when taken aboard their vessel, "the severed tentacle was still functioning, with the large suckers of the tentacle club repeatedly gripping the boat deck and any offered fingers."

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