

A Fish Story



Ithaca College's Ichthyology Department was renowned for its innovative approach to the study of fish. The college sported a first-class aquarium that featured hundreds of different species; however, faculty members didn't just confine their research to watching a humpback whale jump through hoops in exchange for a mouthful of krill. They much preferred the thrill of observing fish in their natural habitat. But those aquatic vertebrates were leery of air-breathing interlopers. After all, humans had turned their name into a verb to mean the industrial harvesting of millions of their kith and kin each year. Enter the college's School of Camouflage. Its crackerjack artisans whipped up a line of underwater attire that beautifully blended in with the surrounding marine environment. As a result, Ithaca's researchers could now swim undetected amongst their objects of study and learn, for instance, what role fins play when fish are feeling amorous. Of course, there can be a price to pay for being too lifelike. And that happened when a hungry grouper mistook seven teaching assistants for a school of toothsome flounder. It was all over in one horrific minute, however the resulting pall that hung over the campus lasted for ten and a half days – coincidentally, the gestation period of the zebra goby that the researchers were attempting to observe. Such an unpleasant irony!