

The mystery of the 'kiss of death' of the big-mouthed fish, which opens its mouth 4 times wider each time it fights

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The largemouth fish *Neoclinus blanchardi* lives mainly on the seabed in the northeastern Pacific Ocean. They live at depths of 5 - 70m, in coastal areas and choose crevices on the ocean floor and abandoned shells as their shelter.

This particular fish can open its mouth up to four times its size when closed. They use kissing to 'fight' rather than to show affection. Males use their huge, powerful mouths to intimidate each other during territorial fights. In fact, these fish are not trying to hurt each other, but with their sharp teeth, they can still hurt each other.



But this wide mouth prevents them from creating the suction needed to pull plankton towards their mouths, making it difficult to find food. Therefore, large-mouthed fish have to hunt for small fish or eat squid eggs.

Neoclinus blanchardi is quite a 'boss', considered a 'quite interesting guy' of the ocean because they are not afraid of anything, including humans. If you approach the shelter of the megamouth fish on the ocean floor, be careful because they can suddenly attack you to protect their territory.



The *Neoclinus blanchardi* is a catfish with fins running from its head to its tail. The lifespan of this 'alien' fish is quite short, only living for about 5-6 years. Female *Neoclinus blanchardi* usually lays eggs from January to the end of August every year with about 3,000 eggs per fish.



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