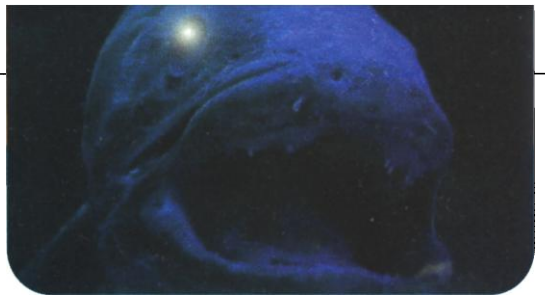


NETWATCH

edited by MITCH LESLIE

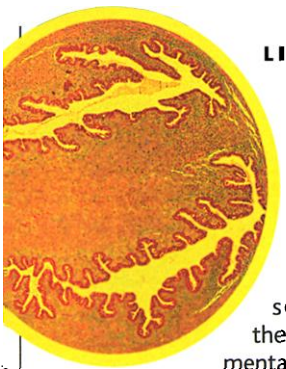
RESOURCES

This Fish Tale Is No Whopper

In 1938, a South African fisherman landed a remarkable catch: a husky, bluish-purple, meter-and-a-half-long fish with muscular fins. A local museum curator was astonished to realize that the specimen was a coelacanth, a cousin of the ancestor of all land vertebrates that supposedly died out more than 65 million years ago. Many more individuals have since turned up in the southwestern Indian Ocean, and scientists nabbed a second species in Indonesia in 1998.

Dinofish.com offers a lively roundup of the biology, history, and conservation status of coelacanths, including a bibliography, original sketches, photos, and a first-person description by Web master Jerome Hamlin of a submersible trip to the fish's deep-water home. Historical accounts cover the ups and downs of coelacanth studies—from the rivalries that have roiled the field since its beginning, to a tragic 2000 expedition in which a diver perished after surfacing too quickly. Hamlin, a coelacanth enthusiast in Greenwich, Connecticut, founded Dinofish.com (which sells T-shirts and videos) to help preserve these endangered fishes.

www.dinofish.com



LINKS

The Littlest Things

Microscopes have come a long way since pioneering 17th century microscopist Anton van Leeuwenhoek, peering through a crude early model, spied tiny "animalcules" swarming in a drop of water. A guide to the Web's teeming microscope resources, created by Douglas W. Cromey of the University of Arizona's Southwest Environmental Health Sciences Center, provides scores of annotated, practical links aimed mainly at the beginning graduate student level and above.

Tutorials explain how to operate the different types of instruments, including the good old light microscope, scanning and transmission electron microscopes, and the cutting-edge confocal microscope, which uses a laser to capture a series of sections through an object such as a piece of muscle or bone. Also available are lab protocols on preparing specimens, a primer on optics, sources of supplies and equipment, and advice on buying a microscope. Some links deliver visitors to galleries that show off the kind of striking images modern microscopes can produce. For example, this cross section of the cervix of a pregnant rat (above) comes from the site of the Imaging Technology Group at the University of Illinois. For a change of pace, you can also peruse museum exhibits, historical accounts, and memoirs of famous figures in microscopy.

swehsc.pharmacy.arizona.edu/exppath/micro/index.html

EDUCATION

Arm Saver

No need to lug around a massive biology textbook thick enough to stop bullets. If you're learning molecular biology or just want a refresher, try this Web hypertext instead. Intended for an introductory biology course at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the 11 clearly written, well-illustrated chapters cover topics such as basic chemistry, genetics, photosynthesis, immunology, and recombinant DNA. To make sure you've mastered the material, try your hand at practice problems at the end of each chapter.

esg-www.mit.edu:8001/esgbio/7001main.html

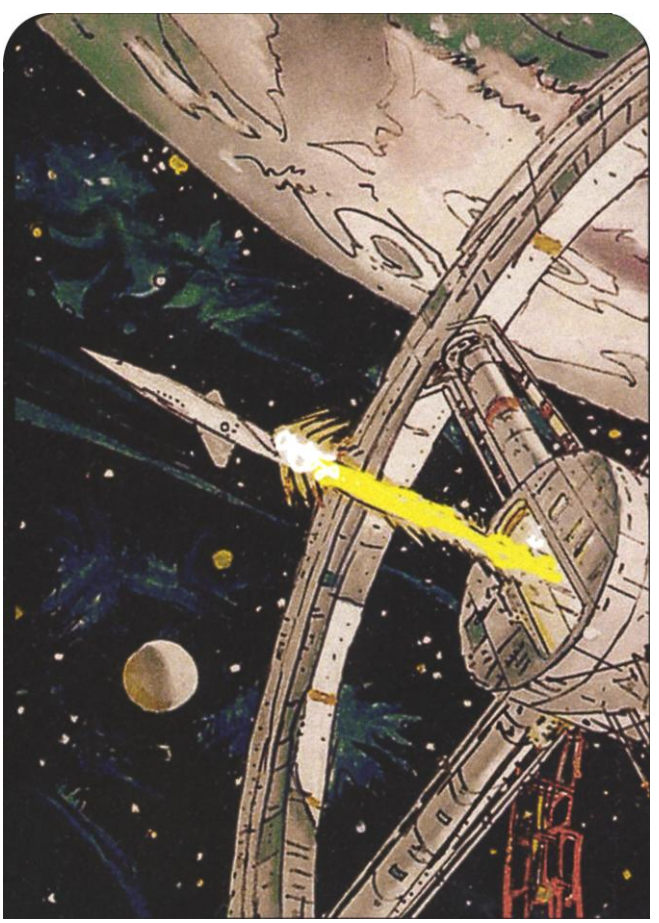
EXHIBITS

Space Odyssey Redux

Thirty-three years have passed since the movie *2001: A Space Odyssey* projected a stunning vision of the future, complete with waltzing spaceships, moon bases, and all-powerful computers running expeditions to Jupiter. Now that the year 2001 has arrived, maybe you're wondering if director Stanley Kubrick and author Arthur C. Clarke came close to predicting today's realities.

Find out at 2001: Destination Space, an online version of an exhibit at the Tech Museum of Innovation in San Jose, California. The site notes that some technologies portrayed in the film—such as flat-screen computer displays—have been developed, while others, including passenger flights into space, remain far off. You can also browse a gallery of works by visionary "space artist" Robert McCall, whom Kubrick enlisted to paint posters for the film and to help create the futuristic look he sought (right, McCall's anniversary version of one of his paintings).

www.thetech.org/2001ds/index.html



Send great Web site suggestions to netwatch@aaas.org

CREDITS: (CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT) JERRY HAMLIN; ROBERT T. MCCALL/WWW.MCCALLSTUDIOS.COM; O. DAVID SHERWOOD AND GLENN FRIED/UNIV. OF ILLINOIS, URBANA-CHAMPAIGN