

Rare goblin shark caught: May be the ugliest one yet

Outside the Gulf of Mexico, shrimp fisherman Carl Moore, 63, of Townsend, Georgia hauled up this unlikely wonder of nature, only the second of its species to be spotted in the area, on April 19. Moore's first comment at the time? "Man, he's ugly!"

Moore had been half-way through an 18-day fishing trip when he caught the strange beast, his first in 50 years of shrimping in the Atlantic and the Gulf. Though he reportedly caught all kinds of strange sea creatures before, the unique catch in the midst of a trawling net full of red shrimp left him in "disbelief".

Moore proceeded to take photos of the strange creature prior to releasing it back into the ocean as per his usual practice of releasing anything that's alive. Moore started carrying a camera with him on his fishing expeditions on account of his soon to be four year-old grandson who is eager to see pictures of his grandfather's journeys. Safe to say, the boy will definitely be satisfied with these.

Moore estimated the beast at between 18 and 20 feet in length, though marine biologist and shark expert John Carlson guessed it being a "mere" 15 feet. Nevertheless, Carlson deems it an important find, as the goblin shark are seldom seen aside from the Pacific coast of Japan, where the majority of sightings have been recorded.

Not much is known of the goblin shark, neither maximum life expectancy or growth period have been documented, but at its ample size the goblin shark is certain to have few natural predators, according to Carlson.

The goblin shark is believed to be the only extant of its family of species, a line dating back roughly 125 million years and it lives primarily at a depth of up to 4000 feet, where sunlight no longer reaches. The goblin shark relies instead on other senses than sight to track its prey, which consists mainly of crabs, deep sea fishes and shrimp. Its distinctive teeth function as a grasping claw once the shark has captured its intended victim, the long needle-like fangs meant to pierce and crack through crab shells with ease.