

‘Doomsday Fish,’ One of Only 20 Reported Since 1901, Found Off California Coast

A fish with a bad reputation was found recently off the California coast, making it only the 20th so-called “doomsday fish” found in the state since 1901.

The oarfish found by some snorkelers off LaJolla Cove was 12 feet in length, according to Fox News.

The oarfish acquired the “doomsday fish” name as some believe its appearance “foreshadows natural disasters, such as earthquakes or tsunamis,” the Ocean Conservancy says.

Two days after the oarfish was found, a earthquake hit Los Angeles.

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Experts at the NOAA Southwest Fisheries Science Center and Scripps Institution of Oceanography will study the fish to determine how it died.

After that, the fish will move to the Scripps Marine Vertebrate Collection at the University of California San Diego.

Ben Frable, manager of the Marine Vertebrate Collection at UC San Diego’s Scripps Institution of Oceanography said oarfish “are not common here in California,” according to the Los Angeles Times.

“These fish are generally living in the deep-sea, open-ocean environment,” he said.

“People have studied them, but we’ve very rarely interacted with them alive in their natural habitat,” Frable said

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“It’s always been a fish of interest, this long, beautiful silver fish,” Frable said, “It definitely looks fanciful; it evokes the sea serpent mythology.”

The fish does not deserve its reputation, which in the 21st Century led it to be associated with the 2011 Fukushima nuclear disaster.

“There is no scientific evidence of a connection, so I don’t think people need to worry,” Hiroyuki Motomura, a professor of ichthyology at Kagoshima University said, according to the New York Post.

“I believe these fish tend to rise to the surface when their physical condition is poor, rising on water currents, which is why they are so often dead when they are found,” he said.

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